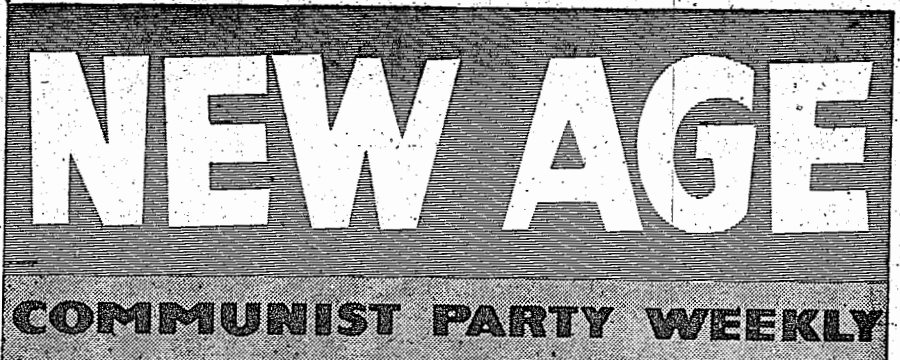


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# CHINAKURI DISASTER: White-Washing Enquiry

An explosion takes place in a mine. Nobody knows how many miners have been killed. Beyond doubt the mine-owners have been violating every code, regulation and rule under the Mines Act. Yet the Court of Enquiry, appointed with a High Court Judge, gives them a clean bill. The Department of Mines on whose efficiency and honesty depend the lives of our miners and safety in mines gives help all along the line to suppress the truth, abet the mine-owners' violations and get a good conduct certificate for them.



VOL. VII, NO. 7 SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15 1959 25 nP

# THE DEAD DEMAND JUSTICE

★ ARREST THE CULPRITS  
★ PUNISH THE GUILTY

## NATIONALISE THIS BRITISH-MANAGED MINE

IT is amazing that such things can still happen. But this is exactly what happened in the Chinakuri Coalmine in West Bengal. The explosion in Chinakuri pits 1 and 2 took place at 9.15 in the night of February 19, 1958. Rescue operations were undertaken after an undue delay of three hours and even then only one rescue team was being sent down at a time. None from the Mines Department went down the mine. Still they decided to give up the rescue operations, saying that the leader of the rescue team had seen fire inside while the team leader denied any such thing. The mine was then flooded.

There have been accidents in Indian mines before, but the one at Chinakuri was the biggest in our history; in a mine owned by the biggest owners in the private sector, the British-managed Bengal Coal Company (Managing Agents: Andrew Yule) whose claim it is that Chinakuri is the best-equipped mine in India.

At the time of the accident, the first official figures had placed the death roll at 183. Later it went up to 186 and then came down to 176. The number has gone on changing since then, and by the time of the report of the Court, it was:

"But on the data available, it appears reasonably certain that the casualties could not have been less than 115 and more than 176, and were probably a few more than 155, which is the number of cap lamps and oil lamps other than those supplied to supervisory staff, found underground on re-entry."

What is the truth? There was no way of finding out.

The first thing that the Department of Mines does after an accident of this type is to check up casualty figures and carry on a preliminary investigation under the Mines Act. This procedure had been followed in all accidents in the past. And it is a rather simple job.

According to regulations, the mine has to keep an attendance register in a cabin at the pit top in which is entered the name of every worker before he goes underground. Once the number of workers underground is known and the number rescued, the death roll can easily be fixed.

But in Chinakuri the Mines Department did nothing of the kind—for reasons all too obvious. The mine did not have an attendance clerk. It had a lamp register—which is entirely different from the attendance register and kept in a room at a distance from the attendance cabin. This lamp register was totally unreliable. Even the Court of Enquiry had to say, "the exact figures of lamps that were available for use on February 19, when the explosion took place does not appear in any of the documents."

Whatever evidence could have been available from the mine was mostly destroyed by the flooding. Even then, certain

things could have been found out. But when the dewatering operations were taking place, some time in May, not one representative of the workers was allowed to go down. The presiding officer of the Court, Justice Mr. S. N. Guha Roy, I.C.S., had at first ordered that representatives of the workers' organisation should be present together with those of the owners and Mines Inspectorate. But when the Counsel for the owners objected saying the mine was private property, the objection was upheld and the Court ruled that it had no power to allow the workers' representatives to be present.

Hundreds of workers had died inside the mine. Whatever evidence could be got of how many were killed and what was the cause of the accident was inside. But workers' representatives could not go inside to find it. The sanctity of private property became paramount and the entire dewatering operations were done, the location of lamps, dead bodies, machinery, exploders, etc., took place in the absence of workers' representatives. For whatever was found underground, the Court and the people were asked to rely on

the reports and ground plans prepared and presented by Mr. R. Rosser, Chief Mining Engineer of the Bengal Coal Company itself and the Mines Department.

The Court, while ruling that workers' representatives cannot go underground, had appointed a neutral observer, Dr. G. N. Badami, to be present during the dewatering of the mine. He did find some evidence and presented it to the Court. But whenever this conflicted with the facts as presented by Mr. Rosser, it was the Company official's version that was accepted by the Court, not that of its own neutral observer. Dr. Badami's observations were rejected without even asking him a question.

Apart from all this, the facts presented by Mr. Rosser himself should have led the Court to think that everything was not above board.

Mr. Rosser had submitted to the Court a set of ground plans—one complete and others sectional—of the affected pits at the time of dewatering, giving the positions of the dead bodies wherever they were found with or without skulls. He had also summarised the facts which were supposed to have been shown by the plans.

In his summary, Mr. Rosser said: there were 164 dead bodies with skulls, six dead bodies without skulls.

Five of those rescued and brought up had died. Much later, Mr. Rosser reported that one more dead had been found—making altogether a death roll of 176. This was the owners' figure and Mr. Rosser had explained the plans to exactly fit this figure.

But the Court need have only gone through the plans instead of relying entirely on the company officials' summary to find the truth—or at least that the truth was not what was being presented by the company spokesmen.

This is the story that the plans tell—plans prepared by Mr. Rosser himself and presented by him to the Court: 164 dead bodies with skulls, 24 without skulls (Rosser's summary said), 23 recovered from the 9 dip area (this plan was not submitted at all), five died on the surface: total killed 216.

Whatever the owners said, the Court could have easily seen from the blueprint and the plans submitted by the owners themselves that 216 dead bodies existed. Even that is not all. Mr. Rosser had admitted in

this report on the dewatering: "It is also possible that some of the bodies were partially or entirely consumed in the fires which started subsequent to the initial explosion."

And the Court itself had written: "It may be that all the skulls were not recovered. Some of them may be lying under the debris still to be cleared, and some may have been so crushed and mixed with the debris as to be really incapable of identification as human skulls."

The conclusion should obviously have been that the number of killed was more than 216—not less. And the Court's job was to find out how many more, not to bring it down to suit the owners.

The owners had resorted to plenty of what in very mild language can be called irregularities to press their figure of 176.

Every mine is expected to have a Man Power Distribution Plan prepared at the beginning of every month. The Company presented to the Court what was said to be the Normal Man Power Distribution Plan for February (Owners' Document No. 1) which showed that 176 workers were employed during the second shift during the month—exactly the same figure as the number of dead. One Company official, Mr. Taneja said it was just coincidence, but another official, Mr. Vasudeva, temporary manager who gave evidence after Mr. Taneja, admitted that the plan had been made after the accident on February 19. This evidence was before the Court, still it would not reject the management's version and expects the people to believe that only 176 were killed.

Even if the owners had some interest in doing this, what was the Department of Mines doing? Did it not have a responsibility to find out the truth? Or at least whatever of it that could be got at? But the Mines Department behaved scandalously just as the owners had done and to help them out.

First of all, the Department did not make any enquiry into the casualties, as it should have done right at the beginning. Its report did not mention this fact

## Does Nandaji remember his promise?

ON February 25, 1958, six days after the mine accident, Communist M.P. Parvati Krishnan said in the Lok Sabha, after a visit to Chinakuri:

"I had also been to the area and I found that after the Minister's visit and after he met some of the workers and recorded their statements, there is a tendency on the side of the management to intimidate the workers from giving further information before the Court of Enquiry that is to be set up. So what I would plead with the Hon. Minister is that steps should be taken in order to safeguard the workers from such intimidation, so that they will come forward and give open evi-

dence, as has already been done when we had gone there."

To this, Labour Minister Nanda replied: "Regarding the question of intimidation I spent a considerable time there in that area. I have met a number of workers. I have spoken to them and I have told them that they can fully rely on us with regard to their position and that anybody will be free without any kind of hindrance to have their say before the Court of Enquiry and there will be no penalisation on that account. I can assure the House on that score."

N. C. Dutta Roy was the Conveyor - Fitter-In-Charge in Chinakuri. He was the

only witness from the workers' side who gave evidence before the Court of Enquiry.

On December 1, his increment was stopped by the Company. This was immediately brought to the Labour Minister's notice by the Union. Later he was transferred from the pit.

A question was asked in Parliament and Deputy Labour Minister Abid Ali said he had no knowledge of victimisation.

On December 26, Dutta Roy was dismissed by the Company.

Will Sri Nanda remember his promise that nobody will be penalised for giving evidence and see that Sri Dutta Roy is reinstated?



# SALUTE THE PUNJAB PEASANTRY!

## Editorial

THE COMMON PEOPLE of the Punjab are in action against the unpopular policies of their haughty rulers, long used to turning a deaf ear to their grievances and demands. Two mighty mass movements, the like of which Punjab has not witnessed after Independence, are simultaneously sweeping through the villages and towns of the State.

The Punjab peasantry, under the leadership of the Kisan Sabha, is in action against the so-called "betterment levy" to be arbitrarily realised through an Ordinance for the use of waters from the Bhakra, even before the peasantry has garnered any actual gains. Even the AICC Economic Review has to admit, "The Punjab peasant already saddled with such impositions as land revenue, local rate, water-rate, advantage rate, has resented the Ordinance."

The Kisan Sabha and our Party have submitted memoranda making constructive alternative suggestions under which the State Government can pay back to the Centre not only the yearly interest charges but also the capital cost within 40-50 years, "a shorter period than any other such project."

The Kairon Government had calculated that after announcing the reduction of the levy by about half, the peasant may yet grumble but will pay up and take the Ordinance lying down. It did not know the temper of the industrious peasantry long and eagerly waiting for the waters from the famous Bhakra-Nangal Project for its parched fields. The dhols beat in the nights, prabhat pheris begin at dawn, announcing the time and place of the Jalsa of the day, from which start other jathas, to stir up the surrounding villages and all together marching towards the district town.

The State Congress headquarters talked to the Press of its plan to launch a "counter-offensive" but they have not dared hold a single public meeting or demonstration. The Congress Government is in a real fix, with its own peasant base shaken. The Punjab PCC met in secret session and the rural members expressed their utter helplessness. More, the kisan section of the PCC has passed a resolution demanding the postponement of the levy by two years.

A new and unique situation has developed. Instead of the usual official propaganda succeeding that the Communists were out to make political capital against the Congress Government, the mass of the Punjab peasantry is uniting itself in action and the peasant workers of the Congress are being themselves compelled to voice the justice of peasant demands. Such a united mass movement and for a just demand cannot but succeed. The men at Chandigarh and New Delhi used to issuing diktats will have to come to terms with the resurgent peasantry of the Punjab.

The Government Ordinance is enough to put the peasantry against planning and grand projects, Bhakra-Nangal would have meant to them just another burden. Their movement is to claim the Bhakra waters to help them increase food production, they are prepared to pay their just share and make such national projects lead to their own welfare and the nation's development.

Punjab is also the proud granary of our country. The biggest damnation of the Congress regime is that even Punjab had to suffer the curse of high prices and food scarcity during recent months. The Government went on making complacent statements and appealing to the Opposition not to exploit the difficult situation but taking no serious and concrete measures against the hoarders. Foreign food had to be rushed from Delhi to keep the Government-run food depots open. As the time to implement the policy of State trading came nearer, the hoarders grabbed more stocks and keyed up prices still higher to blow up the whole policy of State trading. The situation became tragic beyond words.

Our Party in the Punjab boldly took the initiative. Broadbased Janata Food Committees were formed under whose leadership hunger-strikes took place which electrified the atmosphere, the people held meetings and demonstrated in unprecedented numbers. Now satyagraha in batches has begun and they will go on increasing in numbers and filling the jails. The demands are simple and the only way to cope with the situation is to take effective measures against the hoarders, open food depots in rural areas, reduce the price of wheat to Rs. 15 a maund (same as in Government depots), give taccavi loans to rural workers to be able to buy food.

# SCRAP-BOOK

## WINNING KERALA BACK

SM. INDIRA GANDHI, the newly-elected President of the Congress, has announced her programme. Part of her programme is to "make special efforts to win back Kerala for the Congress." She is to meet prominent Congress leaders of Kerala "to devise ways and means to strengthen the organisation in that State."

Smt. Gandhi wouldn't have heard of Athanath Karunakaran Pillai. But in certain areas of Travancore, he is regarded as a veteran Congress worker who has spent thirty years of his life in the service of the nation as a staunch Congressman.

Sri Pillai recently wrote an article in a Malayalam daily and my request to Smt. Gandhi is that before she begins her confabulations with Kerala Congress leaders, she should read this article—if she is too busy, loaded as she is with the responsibilities of Congress presidency apart from all the burden she was carrying already, she should at least glance through the extracts I am giving here from the article.

Writes Sri Pillai: "I had the good fortune to know intimately and work enthusiastically with many fighters for freedom in jail and outside.... Surprisingly enough I am seeing a majority of them now in the ranks of the Communist Party."

"In 1942, I was arrested together with another Congressman for law-breaking and taken to the Kayamkulam police station. I saw the picture of a lean person posted on the walls of the station. I remember it even now. Below the picture was announced:

"A reward of Rs. 5,000 will be given to any person who helps to arrest this man, known as E. M. Sankaran

Our Party has been traditionally weak in the cities of the Punjab. The Congress Government relied upon the greater political influence of the pro-trader Jan Sangh and the undoubted Congress influence and ignored the pressing and constructive representations made by our Party and others. It now finds itself face to face with the people—angry and hungry.

The Congress Government had also tried the propaganda line to turn the city folks against the rural for refusing to pay the betterment levy and contribute to national development. Now it is witnessing that in actual practice the common people in the cities are greeting and organising receptions to kisan jathas that come trooping in. Real fraternal solidarity is being forged between the common people of the urban and rural Punjab.

People outside Punjab have long been used to the sad news of communal Akali and Jan Sangh movements poisoning the political atmosphere in Bhagat Singh's homeland. What now comes from there is the proud and inspiring news of united popular mass movements that are at present purifying and sweeping through our border State, strengthening and uniting its democratic and patriotic elements. We greet the cadres and leaders of our Party in the Punjab who have played their proud part in transforming and uplifting the whole political situation in the Punjab.

(February 10)

Namboodiripad.

"I had heard of him earlier as a member of the All-India Congress Committee. That 'wanted' man of those days is the Communist Chief Minister of Kerala today."

And what has happened to the Congress? Let Sri Pillai answer the question:

"Many such vanguard fighters of the freedom struggle who had stood firm under the Congress flag left the Congress and a large number of 'Independent Travancore-wallahs' and communalists crowded into the Congress. (The reference is to those people who supported the slogan of Independent Travancore—raised by the then Dewan of the State, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer. They were the strongest opponents of the State's people's struggle for democracy.)

"Were this going out and coming in accidental? Post-1947 experience shows it is not so.

"At first, honest Congressmen felt helpless at this metamorphosis taking place in the Congress; still they tried for some time to rally the masses behind the Congress and liberate the organisation from the vested interests.

## WHEN CONGRESS RULED

"But these attempts were of no avail. The Kerala Congress had already become a 'fortress' of the vested interests. Landlords, managers of Church schools, village oppressors and industrial magnates stood on guard to defend this fortress."

The Congress then became the ruling party and matters went from bad to worse. This is what Sri Pillai has to say:

"When the rulers here for ten long years did they not do anything for anybody? Yes, they did something for some people. Though

they did not distribute a cent of land among the landless, they got as much Government land registered in their names as was possible. MLAs and Mandalam Congress leaders divided among themselves billy tracts and backwaters in the name of their 'sacrifice'....

"On the question of dividing spoils, there were differences of opinion among the leaders which often led to factional fights. And on all such occasions, occupants of Ministerial chairs changed....

"Thus ten years passed and the people decided to put an end to this experiment. When the time to give their verdict came, the supreme tribunal, the people, decided to remove the Congress from office. The people decided to put the Communist Party there, the Party which had given its word of honour that it would not depart from the interests of the people."

## LUNATIC TACTICS

Did this, at least, become a good lesson for the Congress? No, says Sri Pillai: "The Congress organisation in Kerala could have become a model for opposition parties in other States....

"But Congress leaders lost even that opportunity. Thus they smashed even the last hope of sincere Congress supporters.

"Instead of acting as a responsible opposition, they made some wonderful calculations. The Congress in Kerala adopted utterly lunatic tactics in the last two years.

"Instead of trying to come back to power by regaining people's trust, their plan was to recapture power by getting the Central Government to remove the Kerala Ministry....

"When the hope of Central intervention faded, they wanted to inject new morale into their followers by giving the call for a 'liberation struggle.' Then followed the one-anna boat fare agitation, law-breaking, etc. People could not have forgotten these recent events....

"Some Congress leaders think that national reconstruction can wait till they come back to power. The result will be that the Congress will become a back-number and be crushed. Then it will not be able to rise again. The people will then be marching, raising high the victory banner of national reconstruction over the fallen body of the Congress."

— DIARIST

## INDIA WINS FREEDOM—Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Orient Longmans. Price: Rs. 12/50.

It is but natural that this autobiography of one of the topmost national leaders should attract country-wide attention. The late Maulana Azad was the President of the Congress at the most critical period in the struggle for Indian freedom.

OCCUPYING the presidential position from 1939 to 1946, the Maulana bore the brunt of guiding the Congress and the national struggle during the days of the Second World War, the 1942 Quit India movement and the negotiations with the British Government following it, negotiations which culminated on the one hand in the fateful partition of India, and on the other hand the independence of the country from British power.

These years were the culmination of the accumulated achievements of generations of Indians since the Great Rebellion of 1857 and they encompassed in the results all that was noble and glorious in the Indian struggle as well as much that was sordid and mean. Hence the contradictory character of the achievement—Independence and partition.

Who then could be a more authoritative person to write about these years and give us a clearer insight into the historic happenings of these years? The autobiography deals with precisely these years—the part dealing with the earlier and recent years, was yet to be written but death snatched away the Maulana before he could write them.

And yet it must be recorded that the autobiography both in its style and content falls to rise to expectations, falling to maintain the high literary and political standards set by his predecessors in the field—Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. The fact that the Maulana has spoken and Sri Humayun Kabir has translated his thoughts into writing has itself done away with the subjective reminiscent character of the book. The small incidents of daily life, the small changes in political life, which in an autobiography form the setting for big events and which fasten big events on the memory, the interweaving subjective experiences and personal incidents with social developments, are almost totally lacking, reducing the autobiography to a biography.

## Robust Nationalism

The Maulana was reliving the dream of his younger years—a dream which every nationalist had hugged to his heart. This hope was throughtly unreal on the eve of partition and yet this unreal hope was the full measure of the robust nationalism and passion for unity of this eminent Indian.

Azad's shock was great when one by one his colleagues of the Working Committee, the staunch opponents of Pakistan and partition, began to give way. These realist colleagues of his saw earlier than him that they were caught in a trap, that between the League with its mass following and the British, they were held in a double vice and reduced to impotence and the only escape was partition....

We have it on Azad's authority that Liaquat Ali Khan as Finance Minister made it impossible for Sardar Patel, the Home Minister, to appoint even a chaprasi without his consent. His budget directed against capitalists, most of whom were Hindus, frightened the bourgeoisie and their Congress champions. Sardar Patel was the first to accept the idea of partition followed by Jawaharlal. Maulana's shock was the greatest when even Gandhiji acquiesced in partition. He even toyed with the absurd suggestion of Gandhiji to ask Mr. Jinnah to form the Ministry in an effort to avoid partition.

But the inevitable had to take place. The partition be-

came a fact and the Maulana felt that he had been let down by everybody, including Gandhiji, Nehru and Patel. Had they only followed his advice, had they only accepted his plan, worked out in detail, there would have been no partition—this is what we are seriously and solemnly told by Azad.

This indomitable faith in one's own power of curing the ills of an entire nation and people is really naive and touching; it is subjectivism carried to its logical absurdity. Nonetheless it shows the Maulana's deep emotional attachment to united India. His refusal to accept partition, his belief that it can be avoided by petty adjustments in 1946, itself betokens his deep attachment to the cause.

After partition, another blow fell on Maulana. He became almost a mute spectator of the massacre and

sufferings of thousands of Muslims in Delhi and elsewhere. The blood-baths enacted in India and Pakistan broke this man who had braved many a British terror. And worst of all, perhaps, was the shock that some of his colleagues, the high-priests of nationalism, were tainted by communalism and were utterly callous to the sufferings of Muslims; that some of them regarded the Muslims as hostages.

In the past, the Communist Party had occasion to unmask some of these very leaders and charge them with aiding and abetting communalism. Now Azad delivers a caustic judgement on some of his colleagues:

"Sardar Patel was the Home Member, and as such the Delhi administration was directly under him. As the lists of murder and arson grew longer, Gandhiji sent for Patel and asked him what he was doing to stop the carnage. Sardar Patel tried to reassure him by saying that the reports which he was receiving were grossly exaggerated. In fact, Patel went to the extent of saying that the Muslims had no cause for complaint or fear. I distinctly remember one occasion when the three of us were sitting with Gandhiji, Jawaharlal said with deep sorrow that he could not tolerate the situation in Delhi, where Muslim citizens were being killed like cats and dogs. He felt humiliated that he was helpless and could not save them. His conscience would not let him rest, for what answer could he give when people complained of these terrible happenings? Jawaharlal repeated several times that he found the situation intolerable and that his conscience would not let him rest.

"We were completely taken aback by Sardar Patel's reaction. At a time when Muslims were being murdered in Delhi in open daylight, he calmly told Gandhiji that Jawaharlal's complaints were incomprehensible. Jawaharlal remained speechless for some moments and then turned to Gandhiji in despair. He said, if these were Sardar Patel's views, he had no comments to make."

When Gandhiji decided to undertake his fast to expati-

ate the sins through his own sufferings, Patel said that Gandhiji was acting as if he, Sardar Patel, was for the murder of the Muslims. Gandhiji replied: "I am not in China now but in Delhi. Nor have I lost my eyes and ears. If you ask me to disbelieve the testimony of my own eyes and ears, and tell me that Muslims have no cause for complaint, I surely cannot convince you nor can you convince me.... Patel almost shouted back 'What is the use of my staying? Gandhiji is not prepared to listen to me. He seems determined to blacken the name of the Hindus.'" (p. 217)

There is nothing surprising if the Maulana got the biggest shock of his life listening to this talk of his colleague in the national movement.

The Maulana had sung the virtues of the national movement and the Congress to the Muslim people. Now

importance attached to his own role.

Notwithstanding Azad's sincere efforts for Hindu-Muslim unity, his understanding of this vital problem seems to have been thoroughly superficial. He carried the illusion, earlier shared by all Congress leaders, that the Hindu-Muslim problem could be solved by a few adjustments at the top like larger proportion in services or some other compromise for sharing power. Hence his superficial remark that had Jawaharlal Nehru agreed to coalition with the League in 1937, Mr. Jinnah's influence would not have developed; or had Nehru not issued his Press statement in 1946 on the Cabinet Mission, Jinnah would not have got the excuse to press for partition and it could have been avoided.

To judge big social movements by the yardstick of individual incidents or personal behaviour and approach reveals a touching naivety in one who was supposed to lead the nation. In 1937, the democratic Left correctly opposed coalition with the League in U.P.; for that would have meant slowing down the fight against the Government. Political prisoners were yet to be released; people wanted land reforms and to use the Ministry for further consolidating the forces of national struggle. This was, of course, not possible in coalition with the League. The opportunity to win over the Muslim masses was lost not because there was no coalition, but because the Congress Ministry did not try to push ahead with radical agrarian legislation.

The open opposition of the Congress to a militant kisan movement, its continued compromise with the landlords—these played a dominant part in keeping away the Muslim agrarian masses from the Congress and made them a helpless prey of the forces of communalism. The failure to defend the Muslim peasants of East Bengal against the landlords, a large number of whom were Hindus, the opposition to tenancy legislation on many

\* SEE PAGE 13

# MAULANA AZAD'S "INDIA WINS FREEDOM"

under the first Congress regime he was a helpless spectator of the sufferings of the Muslim people and found some of his colleagues exchange the national outlook for a communal outlook. Though Gandhiji fasted, and brought about an immediate change in Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru strove and many others worked to heal the wounds, the shock could not be absorbed.

## Disillusionment & Frustration

The Maulana seemed to carry with him a bitter sense of disappointment, disillusionment and frustration. He gradually got estranged from everyone of his colleagues and became a lonely figure. A tragic end to a life devoted to national freedom. His autobiography is stamped with this loneliness, estrangement and frustration which is expressed inevitably in an exaggerated

## ANNOUNCING

a

New Feature

Russian Lessons

in

Moscow News

Moscow News, the illustrated bi-weekly newspaper will carry (as from January '59) Elementary Lessons in Russian Language by that popular author Nina Potapova of the pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages.

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## CURSED COMPLACENCE

THE important Budget Session of Parliament has begun. The Rashtrapati has delivered his address. The Government gives its estimate of the situation and the way forward through his address. If there is one single word in which the Rashtrapati's address can be characterised, it is complacency. In the situation of our country complacency is the worst curse, wilful blindness or just plain humbug.

The daily Press has given banner headline to the objectives of the Third Plan he has outlined. "A substantial increase in national income, rapid industrialisation, expansion of employment on a sufficient scale, and a reduction in inequalities of income and wealth. The Government will continue to aid and support small and cottage industries. The tempo of development already attained must be maintained."

These are welcome words, but only words. For, we all know that the nature, targets and success of the Third Plan will depend upon how seriously the Government is aware of the crisis of the Second Plan and what policies are adopted here and now to improve the situation. It is here that the real weakness lies, for the Rashtrapati's address discloses that the Government of the day proposes to carry on as before and there is no serious sign of an immediate breakthrough.

### OUR FOOD

THE most burning problem of the day is food and its rocketing prices. There is no awareness of the gravity of the situation in the Rashtrapati's address and we are regaled with the story: "The crop prospects for 1959-60 are in refreshing contrast to our plight the previous year." In official statistical terms, this is true. But what is the grim reality? The prices began rising from last April. The Government did not touch the hoarders but gave them a long rope and the prices went on mounting. Despite another harvest in hand the prices continue to mount. The only explanation of continued rise in prices, despite a good harvest, is that the hoarders are again cornering and playing with the stocks to blow up the policy of State trading which the Government has only announced but done nothing to implement in practice or even prepare the ground for it by getting hold of stocks, declaring fair price and enforcing it with all the rigour of laws and the cooperation of the people.

Despite the decision of the National Development Council on State trading, the Government has been drifting because of the pull of the hoarders and the pressure of reactionaries from within its own party. The Hindustan Times of February 5 carries a story from its Lucknow Correspondent which states: "The Uttar Pradesh Government is likely to ask the Centre to modify its scheme for State trading in foodgrains to make it more effective and less radical. The stiff resistance to the scheme by the U.P. grain traders is said to be among the reasons leading to the process of rethinking in the State Gov-

ernment circles... There is hoarding on a colossal scale. The Government, however, is unable to unearth the hoarded stock. Official market experts are convinced that the traders have organised hoarding to mark their protest against the proposed State trading. The traders are said to have bought the stocks from the farmers and kept them scattered in the villages so as to create an artificial scarcity. If the Government takes extraordinary steps to carry out large scale police raiding, they will make it unpopular."

Adjournment motions on the grim situation on the food front have been moved in the West Bengal and U.P. State Assemblies. A wide-spread mass movement is growing in the country and its peak point is in the Punjab which used to pride itself as the granary of India. It is this popular movement which alone will compel the Government to take effective measures and introduce State trading.

### LAND AND CO-OPS

"Self-sufficiency in food alone can provide a satisfactory solution. To this end, my Government will seek to promote agrarian reforms, co-operation and devolution of functions to village units." Last week, the fire-works started by Sri K. M. Munshi, Ranga and the like showed us the weight and boldness of pro-feudal elements within the Congress. There may be a tendency to understate the danger to land reforms after Pandit Nehru's rebuff and the Rashtrapati's announcement. Even the naive ought to sit up because Sri Munshi has announced his satisfaction with the assurances he has received and because of the aggressive confidence of reactionaries like him within the Congress.

Let us take the situation in Bihar. The Times of India of February 6 reports: "The enthusiasm that Congressmen in Bihar showed for the abolition of the zamindari system is absent on the question of ceilings on land holdings... Some influential Congressmen favour postponement of the fixation of ceilings until such time as joint cooperative farming becomes popular and is found to be successful."

Cooperatives before land reforms only mean enriching the landlords through co-operative facilities and aid and strengthening them still more to be able to blow up all schemes of land distribution. The land distribution has to precede and not follow the cooperatives, if they are to really aid the peasants, help build peasant democracy and lead to increased production which will really serve the nation's needs.

Now, let us take Uttar Pradesh, the biggest State in the Indian Union. The Lucknow Correspondent of the Hindustan Times (February 9) reports: "The State Government might even seek exemption from the Congress High Command on the question of ceilings because the objects of the measure were already being achieved through the present system of heavy tax on large holdings." Obviously, Sri Charan Singh and his like have not thrown in the towel after Nagpur but

## NOTES OF THE WEEK

are out to have their way as much as they can.

The same Sri Keshav Dev Malaviya, who spoke last week that those who oppose the Nagpur resolutions were "reactionaries" and should quit the Congress, has written this week a whole article on "Rationale of Cooperative Farming", in which he writes: "China has chosen the totalitarian method of collectivising its efforts in the rural domain. We do not wish to do so." Sri Malaviya has certainly read the reports of the Indian Government's own delegation that went out to study the Chinese cooperatives and he is resorting to anti-Communism just to assuage his own reactionaries and ideologically surrendering to their propaganda offensive instead of meeting and answering it boldly, the only way to defeat and isolate the gang.

Our Indian Ambassador to China, during our Republic Day function, however, spoke in a different tone. It is the irony of the Indian situation that an Indian diplomat can be more objective and principled than a leader of the "Ginger Group" of the Congress Party. One hopes that the reports that the Government sent delegations will bring from China will give more understanding and greater courage to the Malaviyas within the Congress to fight and defeat their Murshis.

### NATIONAL SECURITY

THE Rashtrapati's address is also very disturbing because it totally ignores the danger to our own national security from the imperialist camp and their bases abroad our country. The Communist M.P.s are doing a national service by rousing patriotic vigilance.

The Daily Mail of February 23 contained the story of its Correspondent James Messman, who wrote from Peshawar that the U.S. air force men were building a big Atlas inter-continental ballistic missile base high in the mountains of Pakistan's North West Frontier Province and that the deadline for placing the Atlas rockets in position was only four months off.

Both the U.S. State Department and Defence Department vigorously denied this report, but what they admitted was more than enough that the base being constructed was "merely part of a worldwide communications system and not missile site."

Two weeks later, the American magazine Newsweek published the story of a "base for intermediate range missile such as Thor and Jupiter... U.S. air force sources hinted it is so."

The Baghdad Pact Council meeting has only recently been held in Karachi where decisions to strengthen the Pact countries militarily were taken. Negotiations for a U.S.-Pak military bilateral pact are going on. All this just does not figure in the Rashtrapati's address. Has not undignified craving for U.S. economic "aid" blinded the Congress rulers to the threat to our own security and sovereignty from the U.S. aggressors and their bases in Pakistan? The Maldivian Islands in the Arabian Sea are important for

the security both of Ceylon and India. They have been regarded as strategically significant by the British imperialists especially since they were forced to withdraw from their military bases in Ceylon. In order to maintain their control over the islands, the British authorities "granted" Maldives the status of an independent Republic within the British Commonwealth in 1953, and secured from the then British-backed Government the right to build military bases there. Subsequently, the people of the islands overthrew the former Government and waged a persistent struggle against the establishment of British bases in the country. The local inhabitants have been turned into coolies working for the R.A.F. base.

Ahmed Zacki, the Maldivian Government representative in Ceylon, in a Press statement on January 28, reiterated the demand that the Maldivian Government, consistent with its position as an independent nation wanted acknowledgement of her full independence as a pre-condition for discussion of detailed matters between his Government and the United Kingdom on the issue of the establishment of a British air force staging post there.

The negotiations between Maldives and Britain to amend the 1953 agreement have reached a deadlock. The Congress Government has been too busy welcoming the British Royal Duke to respond to our neighbour Maldives' just demand for independence and take due note of the threat to Indian security that the existence of an alien base in the Arabian Sea implies.

### NATIONAL UNITY

THE new Congress President has frankly admitted that the Congress is lagging behind the Indian people. Even the old Congress leadership realises that it has not been able to deliver the goods and that the people did not take its claim of monopoly of patriotism and political wisdom for granted and that the demand for national unity for national development is widespread. Recognition of this national sentiment is contained in the Rashtrapati's address: "Planning is a national undertaking requiring the efforts of the whole nation at every stage. My Government have, therefore, called for and looked forward to a constructive, even if critical, approach by all and contribution in ideas from the different shades of opinion in Parliament and outside. To this end, my Prime Minister and the Planning Commission are seeking the cooperation of all parties."

Neither the above words nor the practice of the Congress Government advance the existing position, which is, "please give your ideas, we will ourselves formulate the policy and our Government will carry it out and you should then support it, that is national unity!" Last week Smt. Indira Gandhi began her career as the new Congress President with exuberant words about co-operation of all patriotic and democratic elements for development. The Old Guard, if the Right-wing Press is any real indication, seems to have got alarmed and taught her the paces the Congress President must tread. After the emotionally surcharged inauguration ceremony, she spoke in her Press Conference, threw a bouquet at the PSP and others who are out of the Congress or threaten to leave it and invited them to join the Congress, while she threw an old brick at the Communists. If the new Congress President cannot break through the old set-up and ways of the ruling party its own Right will drag it towards doom and the Indian struggle will become more complicated and tortuous, but inevitably march on towards its victory under the banner of national unity, with the active participation of the Communists. India cannot go forward under the banner of anti-Communism. Those who fail to see this have learned nothing from our own national or international experiences. (February 11, 1959)

### OUR DEMOCRACY

A FEW disturbing events have taken place this week which show the way the Congress rulers function and play with Indian democracy and the decencies of our political life.

The Government has nominated the INTUC alone to represent India at the I.L.O. Even the INTUC Chairman in its annual session has shrieked about the "challenge of Communism" in the trade union field and warned his followers that they are in danger of losing the race to the AITUC which on all accounts is growing all along the line. When the trade union movement is divided, how can the INTUC, dominated by one political party, represent the nation's labour in an international conference? It is a case of plain misuse of the authority of the Government to nominate the INTUC to represent India abroad.

What a contrast is provided by the Privilege Motion at the beginning of the last session of Parliament against Sri E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Kerala's Chief Minister, and this time against Sri M. O. Mathai, Sri Nehru's Special Assistant! Last time there was tension, passion and opposition; this time there was general excitement, a sense of shame inside the ruling party, and unanimity. History has wreaked its vengeance soon enough on the floor of our Parliament, but the gracious words of the Prime Minister should

—P. C. JOSHI

FEBRUARY 15, 1959

NEW AGE

PAGE FOUR

Following events in Pakistan makes for cynicism. It seems to be a never-never land where the "man of destiny"—Auyb—and his hand-picked gaudiers just bring about one improvement after the other and the people applaud. It is a sad spectacle—this temporary eclipse of democracy in a country whose people are quite literally our brothers.

NET, some trends do appear, shaping the events of the last days of January and the first week of this month.

First, the reactions to the recent Baghdad Pact meeting. The refusal of the United States OPENLY to guarantee aggression against non-Communist countries has caused a fair amount of resentment.

### Resentment Against U.S.

Typical of such resentment is the comment of Pakistan Times of January 29: "The Pakistan Government will now have to reappraise its policy, and decide whether the country's interests have been served by alignment with one bloc."

More on the lunatic fringe was Dawn's editorial comment of February 6: "It would, however, be idle for our senior partners in the Pact to ignore the fact that a wave of disillusionment is sweeping all the three Muslim countries because there is a growing feeling that Britain and the United States may well let them down after having brought them into these regional groupings at the cost of the hostility of the other side..."

Tragic it is to see the slave's desire for firmer chains! But complacent and dangerous it would be to draw from this the conclusion that the United States has given up Pakistan. It was a trifle too hotly denied that American missile ramps are not going to be set up as the influential and well-informed Newsweek had reported. Some sort of bargaining may well be going on.

In addition, on February 4, a news-item was prominently displayed that negotiations for a U.S.-Pak bilateral pact were proceeding satisfactorily. The Pak officials refused to comment when asked whether in this pact guarantees about non-Communist aggression would be included.

### Real Face Of Land Reform

The second trend in the events of the past ten days has been the clearer emergence of the pattern of agrarian reforms.

It is, of course, good that the military administration has begun to talk of agrarian reforms—a tribute to the sentiments of Pakistan's peasants and other democrats.

However, there is more than room for doubt and scepticism. Ceilings of 500 irrigated acres and 1,000 non-irrigated. In addition 150 acres of orchard lands. On top of this an allowance of 250 acres for alienation by gift. Convently vague are the provisions about division of landed property among members of the same family.

Even the Muslim League Agrarian Reforms Committee in 1948 had suggested a ceiling of 150 acres irrigated land, 300 acres semi-irrigated and 450 acres of Bavan land. This had been accepted in the First Five-Year Plan of Pakistan.

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## INSIDE PAKISTAN

# NEW TRENDS ARE DEVELOPING

People begin to stand up for their rights, Workers strike despite martial law terror

scale to twice at the top. It is a novel feature also that these will be paid out in forms of bonds, redeemable in 25 years, bearing a four per cent annual interest rate—i.e., the principal will have exactly doubled.

The tenants will have to pay off the principal, interest as well as the cost of the implementation of the scheme. It has been calculated that to own 122 acres a tenant will have thus to pay Rs. 7,200. No wonder the Pakistan Times continuously states, "one would wish the rates of compensation and interest were lower."

The best commentary on these land reforms is that of Mr. Z. A. Bhutto, Central Commerce Minister and self-acknowledged big landlord. He said: "The reforms announced for West Pakistan would not have been as magnanimous to the landed gentry as they are had it not been because of the big heart of the President. .... The delay in

the introduction of land reforms would only have resulted in increasing class hatred in the country" (Dawn, February 1)

The third trend is the posture of economic policies. These have been worked out by Dr. Voleke from West Germany, a close colleague of the "miraculous restorer" of capitalism Dr. Erhard. Dr. Voleke perkily announced that he was opposed to any sort of controls and for the removal, as far as possible, of direct Government regulation. The business of the State was to provide incentives to private enterprise and let it do the job.

The first tangible result of this "original" wisdom has been the export bonus scheme. Bonus licences will be given for imports which are likely to assist exports—the jute industry, for example, has no ceiling on its imports. There is no method for supervision of the utilisation of licences

and, it is likely that imports for the export industries will cost quite a lot more foreign exchange than these industries will earn.

And all this will assist the growth of monopoly as the Pakistan Times of January 31 points out: "Most business is now likely to pass into the hands of those who at present command more funds, larger contacts and bigger organisations."

Another significant result of this West German advice is to be seen in the new taxation policy. "There is every likelihood of reduction (of taxes) even in higher income-groups because it is felt that abnormally high taxation as in practice today does not leave any incentive for hard work." (Pakistan Times, February 9) A unique recommendation which has found immediate favour is that the more profits an industry earns, the less it is to be taxed. "This, Dr. Voleke thinks, is bound to result in greater production for earning more concessions." (Pakistan Times)

The fourth trend flows from the denial of any democratic rights. On the first of February, it was announced that there would be no abrogation of the ban on strikes. On February 5, the Election Commission was wound up because "the nature of franchise is not known and the shape of the future Constitution is yet to be decided."

On February 1 again, Auyb Khan himself came to reject the demand of the Pakistan Writers' Convention—which passed all manner of loyal resolutions—that the Government release all arrested writers or try them in an open court of law. The President stated that censorship and restrictions had to remain. As for the present—a princely donation of Rs. 10,000 should suffice to win silence!

That the Writers' Convention dared to ask for release or public trial testifies to the resentment of the people of Pakistan against the denial of all freedom.

### Heartening Trend

And the final trend is the most heartening. On February 8, 20,000 workers at the three Adamjee Jute Mills at Narayanganj struck work—the first strike since the Martial Law administration, which has prescribed ten years' rigorous imprisonment for agitating for or going on strike. Nine of the heroic workers were arrested for trial under Martial Law.

Despite Auyb Khan and all the other militarists, Pakistan moves and the people stand up for their rights.

—H. S.

February 9

NEW AGE

PAGE FIVE



# Khrushchov: Soviet Foreign Policy

Following are extracts from the Report presented by N. S. Khrushchov to the 21st Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The extracts are from the sections dealing with the Peaceful Policy of the USSR and International Relations and the World Communist Movement.

The conclusion drawn by the 20th Congress of the Party that war is not fatally inevitable has been justified. Today, we have all the more reason to reaffirm this conclusion. There are tremendous forces capable of rebuffing the imperialist aggressors and defeating them if they should start a world war.

What new elements will arise in the international situation with the implementation of the economic plans of the Soviet Union and all the other Socialist countries of Europe and Asia? There will be a real possibility of eliminating war as a means of solving international issues.

Indeed, when the USSR becomes the leading industrial Power in the world, when the Chinese People's Republic be-

comes a mighty industrial Power and all the Socialist countries together will produce more than half of the world industrial output, the world situation will change radically. The successes of the countries of the Socialist camp will doubtlessly serve to strengthen the forces of peace throughout the world. By that time the countries working for lasting peace will no doubt be joined by new countries that have thrown off colonial oppression.

The idea that war is inadmissible will take still firmer root in the minds of men. This new balance of forces will be so patently evident that even the most diehard imperialists will clearly see the futility of starting a war against the Socialist camp.

Backed by the might of the Socialist camp, the peaceful nations will then be able to compel militant imperialist groups to abandon their plans of a new world war.

In this way, a real possibility of excluding world war from the life of society will take shape even before the universal triumph of Socialism, with capitalism still existing in some part of the world.

Some may say: but capitalism will still exist, and hence there will be adventurers who might start a war. That is true, and we must not forget it. As long as capitalism exists there will always be people who, "contrary to common sense," will want to launch out on a hopeless venture. But in that way they will only bring nearer the ultimate collapse of the capitalist system. Any attempt at aggression will be curbed and the adventurers put where they belong. (Prolonged applause)

Such are the prospects, Comrades, that arise as we discuss our plans.

United Nations Organisation should be deputed to enforce this guarantee. We want negotiations on all these problems so as to find a sensible solution for them. Our proposals are in line with this purpose. They help to eliminate many of the causes of tension in the relations between States in the heart of Europe and to strengthen the peace.

It must be understood that the reunification of Germany is the business of the German people and the German people alone. Since there are two sovereign States today and neither can be eliminated without touching off a world war, Germany's reunification can only be achieved through negotiations between the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. There is no other way. (Applause)

All sensible people realise that the peaceful reunification of Germany cannot be achieved by abolishing the Socialist gains of the German people in the German Democratic Republic. Germany's unification on terms proposed by Adenauer would jeopardise European security, since it would mean the spread of

militarism, revanchism and reaction to all of Germany. Neither should we expect to unify Germany by abolishing the regime existing in the Federal German Republic.

Western propaganda accuses loudly the Soviet Union of opposing German reunification by free elections. We have never objected to free elections. But again, the issue must be settled by the Germans themselves. We want all questions pertaining to German reunification to be solved by negotiations between the two German States, and not the way Adenauer wants it—through pressure by foreign Powers, through their interference in the domestic affairs of the German people and by swallowing up the German Democratic Republic.

To help the two German States to reunify, we support the reasonable confederation proposal of the GDR Government as a first step towards establishing a permanent connection between the GDR and the FRG, and creating all-German organs. If there is any other way whereby the two German States could settle the reunification problem, we are prepared to cooperate in it.

## The German Problem

Allow me to turn to specific problems concerning the international situation. I shall not deal with all international problems, and shall touch on just the vital ones.

Of great importance to peace and international security is a proper solution of the German problem.

A situation is taking shape in which German militarism may for the third time plunge mankind into a world war. When we point to the danger arising with the rearming of West Germany we are told that it is kept under control within the NATO framework and is hence no longer dangerous. But all can now see that militarism and revanchism has been revived there, and that it is a menace to the peaceful nations.

In view of the mounting military threat from the Federal German Republic, the Soviet Union has recently made a number of new proposals on the German problem. We suggested a gradual reduction of foreign armed forces in Germany, or, better still, their complete withdrawal. We stand for a "zone of disengagement" of the armed forces. The farther apart they will be the less the danger of clashes and conflicts. The Soviet Union is prepared to withdraw its forces not only from Germany, but from Poland and Hungary, where they are stationed under the Warsaw Treaty, if all the NATO countries will withdraw their troops to their national boundaries and abolish their military bases in other countries.

The Soviet Union supports the Polish plan for an "Atom-Free Zone" in Europe and a reduction of conventional armaments in that zone.

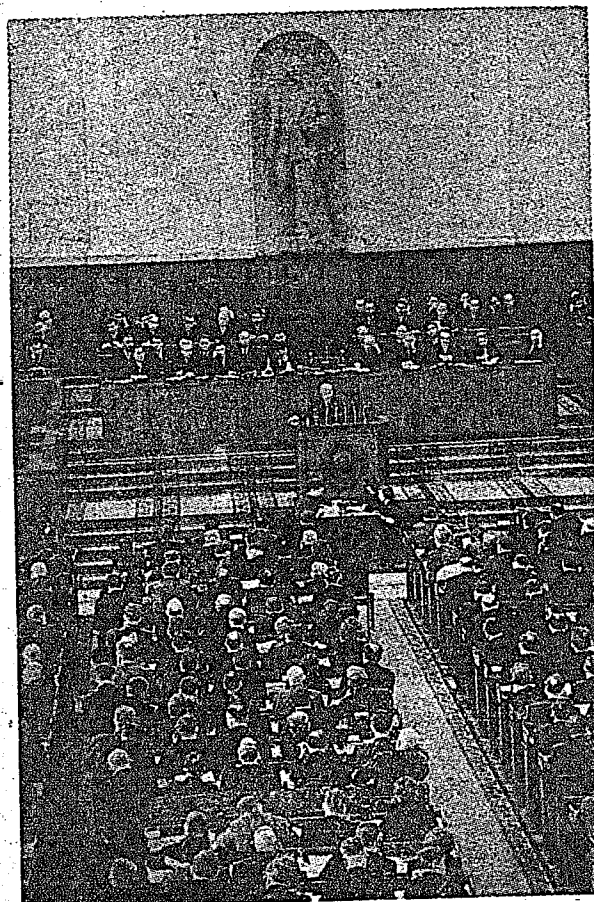
Last November, the Soviet Government approached the United States, Britain and France with a proposal to put an end to the remnants of the occupation regime in Berlin and make West Berlin a demilitarized free city. This solution of the Berlin problem corresponds to the interests of peace in Europe and would

serve to slacken international tension.

The draft peace treaty submitted by the Soviet Union blends measures ensuring the rights of the German people, their full sovereignty and peaceful democratic development with measures necessary to preserve security and peace in Europe. A peace treaty with Germany would immediately relieve tension in Europe. It would establish a reliable legal basis and cut the ground from under the revanchist trend in Western Germany. It

would rid the German people of foreign occupation and would enable them to handle all questions of home and foreign policy on their own.

For its part, the Soviet Union will spare no effort to have the peace treaty concluded. It will work for it consistently and tirelessly. A peace treaty would also serve to solve the Berlin problem on a peaceful and democratic basis. It would serve to make West Berlin a free city and provide the necessary guarantee of non-interference in its affairs. The



First Secretary N. S. Khrushchov delivering his report to the 21st Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

## SOURCE OF TENSION IN FAR EAST

In another part of the world—the Far East—the aggressive policy of the United States in regard to the Chinese People's Republic and other peace-loving States is the main source of tension. Some time ago the world watched anxiously how America's aggressive moves threatened to set off a terrible armed conflagration. It was the resolute stand of the Chinese People's Republic and of other peace-loving forces that averted this threat. The Pacific Ocean area has become the main proving ground for U. S. nuclear weapons.

All this creates a compelling need for action to avert war, particularly atomic war, in that region of the globe. The

chances appear to be better there than elsewhere, because the Soviet Union, the Chinese People's Republic, the Korean People's Democratic Republic, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, and also India, Indonesia, Burma and other countries in that area are working for peace. Their joint action for the prohibition of the atomic weapon and nuclear tests could to a very great extent help to preserve the peace in the Pacific. Their initiative would be supported by the people of Japan and other countries of the Pacific basin. A zone of peace, above all an Atom-Free Zone can, and must, be created in the Far East and the entire Pacific Ocean area.

## West Asia: Struggle For Liberation

Progressives have good reason to be pleased with developments in the Middle East. We welcome the national liberation movement of the Arab peoples and the other peoples of Asia and Africa who have shaken off colonial oppression. The ousting of foreign imperialist troops from a number of countries in that area is a major triumph of the Arab peoples and the peace forces. But we must not think that the chances of an exacerbation there no longer exist, because the colonialists, driven out of the colonies, will never reconcile themselves to their defeat. The Western Powers, above all the United States and Britain, are trying to set one group of Arab States against another, are plotting in Iraq and other Arab countries. They are looking for weak spots in order to divide the liberated peoples, principally the peoples of the

Arab East.

When a people fights for its national independence against colonial rule, all patriotic forces come together in a united national front.

This was the case during the struggle of the Egyptian and other Arab peoples for liberation from imperialist oppression. In Egypt all the national forces joined hands to evict the colonialists from the country and to nationalise the Suez Canal. The national liberation of Egypt was welcomed by all progressives. The reactionary clique, which served the imperialists, was overthrown in Iraq, which established an independent Republic. The Soviet people and the people of the other Socialist countries supported the just struggle of the Arab peoples. Such prominent leaders of that movement as

# And International Relations

Gamal Abdel-Nasser, President of the United Arab Republic, and Abdel Karim Kasim, head of the Iraq Republican Government, have won the warmest regard of the Soviet people.

After the colonialists are ousted and the all-national tasks are solved in the main, the people seek a solution to vital social problems. This applies above all to the agrarian and peasant problem and the problems of labour's struggle against capital. Social processes arise within the national liberation movement which inevitably engender different opinions about the further development of their respective States.

## Struggle Against Communists: A Reactionary Undertaking

Our country, like the other Socialist countries, has always supported the national liberation movement. The Soviet Union never interferes, and has no intention of interfering, in the domestic affairs of other countries. But we cannot remain silent in face of the campaign conducted in some countries against progressives under the spurious guise of anti-Communism. Since there recently have been statements against the ideas of Communism in the United Arab Republic and accusations were levelled at Communists, I, as a Communist, think it is necessary to declare at this Congress of our Communist Party that it is wrong to accuse Communists of helping to undermine and divide the national effort in the struggle against imperialism. Quite the contrary. There are no people more resolute and loyal to the struggle against colonialists than the Communists. There are no forces more resolute in the struggle against imperialism than the forces of Communism. It is no accident that the imperialists are spearheading their struggle against the Communist movement.

The struggle against the Communists and other progressive parties is a reactionary undertaking. An anti-Communist policy does not unite the national forces. It disunites them, and consequently weakens the effort of the nation in defending its interests against imperialism. It is wrong to accuse the Communists of acting against the national interests of the Arab peoples. It is also naive to draw a parallel between Communism and Zionism. It may be recalled that Communists, those of Israel included, are fighting against Zionism.

It is not sensible to see "Communist plots" in everything. Problems of social development should be weighed with greater consideration. There are objective laws of social development. They show that within nations there are classes with different interests. After imperialist oppression is abolished in the colonial countries the workers want shorter working hours and higher wages; the peasants want more land and an opportunity to enjoy the

fruits of their labour; both workers and peasants want political rights. Where as the capitalists want to make more profit, and the landowners want to keep their land, the progressives want their country to make social progress.

They strive to strengthen its national independence and to protect it from imperialist plots. Internal reactionary forces, often spurred on by the imperialists, are resisting all this.

These processes unfolding in the countries which have shaken off the imperialist yoke, do not arise by the will and wish of any party. They arise because there are classes and these have different interests. We Communists, and all progressives, naturally sympathise with those who fight for social justice. (Prolonged applause)

reason to delay the settlement of that issue. The people of all countries demand a stop to these tests, which contaminate the world atmosphere with harmful radioactivity. And this demand must be met.

Today all admit the successes achieved by Soviet science and technology, which have blazed man's trail into the cosmos. These achievements mirror the resources of the Soviet Union, of the world Socialist system. It is plain that if the Soviet Union can launch a rocket hundreds of thousands of kilometres into outer space, it can launch powerful rockets with pin-point accuracy to any part of the globe. (Applause)

We do not use the historic achievements of Soviet science and technology to back up a

military policy, or to dictate our will to other States. We use them to redouble our efforts in the struggle for world peace. And today, when we hold the advantage in rocket engineering we again say to the United States, Britain and France: let's ban for all time the testing, production and use of nuclear and rocket weapons; let's destroy all stockpiles of these lethal weapons; let's use this supreme discovery of human genius exclusively for peaceful purposes, for the common good. Our Government is ready to sign an appropriate agreement at any time. (Prolonged applause)

The only sensible policy for the Great Powers to adopt is to proceed to a peaceful settlement of international problems and to start on universal disarmament.



Ajoy Ghosh, General Secretary of the Communist Party of India and leader of the Indian Party's fraternal delegation to the 21st Congress, among delegates to the Congress.

We do not deny that we and some of the leaders of the United Arab Republic have divergent views in the sphere of ideology. But in questions of fighting imperialism, of consolidating the political and economic independence of the countries which cast off the yoke of colonialism, of fighting the war danger our positions coincide with their positions. The difference in our ideological viewpoints should not impede the development of friendly relations between our countries and the joint struggle against imperialism.

## DISARMAMENT

Measures designed to improve the situation in the various regions must be combined with an effort to improve the overall international climate.

The prime task today is to break the impasse in the disarmament issue.

The need to ban tests\* of atomic and hydrogen weapons is particularly compelling. Now when all have recognised that atomic explosions can be detected at any point of the globe there is no

## Mikoyan Visit And Relations With USA

More than a year ago, the Soviet Government proposed an East-West meeting of heads of Governments. No progress has been made on this score since then through the fault of the Western Powers. But we feel it to be our duty to the people of all countries to work for this meeting, on which all who want peace and security are pinning their hopes.

We have repeatedly had to point to the responsibility borne by the two Great Powers—the Soviet Union and the United States—in preserving the peace. As concerns the Soviet Union, it has on many occasions expressed its sincere desire to normalise relations with the United States, and has backed its words with deeds. The Soviet Union proposed a fifty-year pact of non-aggression. It proposed that the two countries should extend reciprocal trade, promote cultural relations, etc. But every time we came up against an outright refusal or

veiled resistance. We know that many politicians and financiers, Congressmen and newspaper publishers in the USA have an interest in maintaining such relations. But the number of people who favour friendly, good-neighbourly relations with the Soviet Union is growing in the United States. The reception accorded to A. I. Mikoyan in America is vivid proof of this. His visit evoked a manifestation of friendly sentiment among the American people for the people of the Soviet Union. Most of the Americans he spoke to expressed their sincere and outspoken sympathy for the Soviet people. They said that they wanted friendship and peaceful cooperation with the Soviet Union. Among them were people of different political and religious views—scientists, cultural workers, businessmen and the general public. Evidently, most Americans no longer believe the

anti-Soviet propaganda of the reactionary bourgeois newspapers in the USA. The attempts made by some elements to organise provocative acts during Comrade Mikoyan's visit were a total failure, because they did not represent the sentiments and views of the American people.

## WORLD COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

At present, there are Communist and Workers' Parties in 83 countries. Their membership adds up to more than 33 million people. That is a tremendous victory of Marxism-Leninism, a big gain for the working class. (Prolonged applause)

Reactionaries of all hues have waged dozens of campaigns against Communists. But nothing can destroy the Communist movement, for it is an offspring of the class struggle of the proletariat, of all working people, and it represents their interests. Many Communist Parties in the capitalist countries are now having great difficulties. Reaction has launched a new frenzied attack on them, which, we are sure, will end in another failure, while our fraternal Parties will emerge from the test steeled and stronger than ever before. (Prolonged applause)

## Fascist Danger

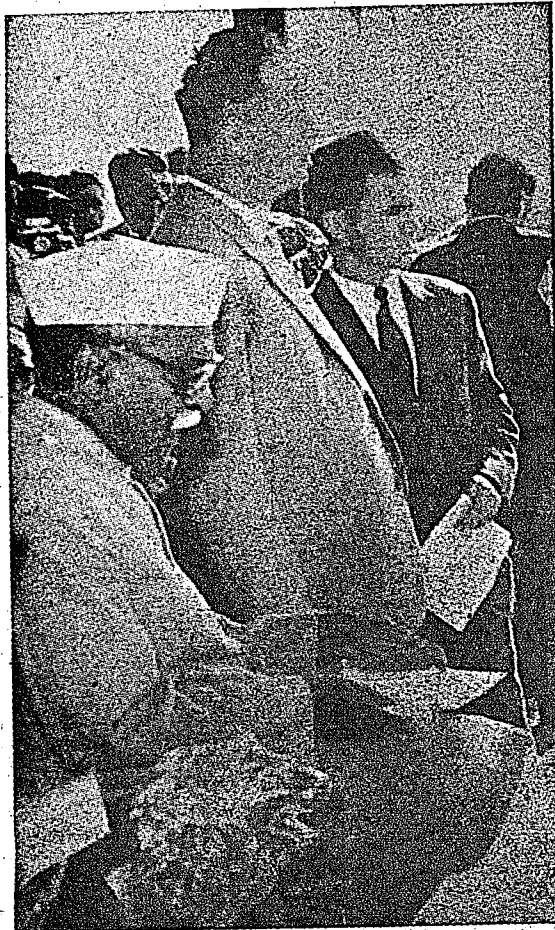
Today, though they still take advantage of the slogan of liberty, equality and fraternity, the imperialists turn more and more frequently to outright dictatorship. There are sinister signs in the capitalist countries' today of an upsurge of reaction and fascism. This is the reactionary path chosen by West Germany, where the Communist Party has been banned, democrats are persecuted, and fascist and revanchist organisations are given free rein. The trend towards open dictatorship has taken shape in France, where the democratic freedoms and the gains of the masses are being abused. The onslaught of reaction in France, a country known for its democratic traditions, causes concern to all friends of democracy and progress. The military coups in Pakistan and Thailand have shown that an attack is being mounted on the democratic gains of nations that have won national independence. The forces of reaction are rearing their head also in a number of other capitalist countries.

We are thus faced with a clear-cut general tendency, which obtains in many capitalist countries, rather than with isolated facts.

The reactionaries are using an old anti-popular weapon—they are doing away with the democratic system and setting up "strong-arm" Governments. But just as in the period when fascist dictatorships were established in Italy and Germany, the tendency towards the open dictatorship of the monopoly bourgeoisie is not a sign of strength, but a sign of weakness. Yet it



While The  
Big Business  
Press Boosts  
Rourekela

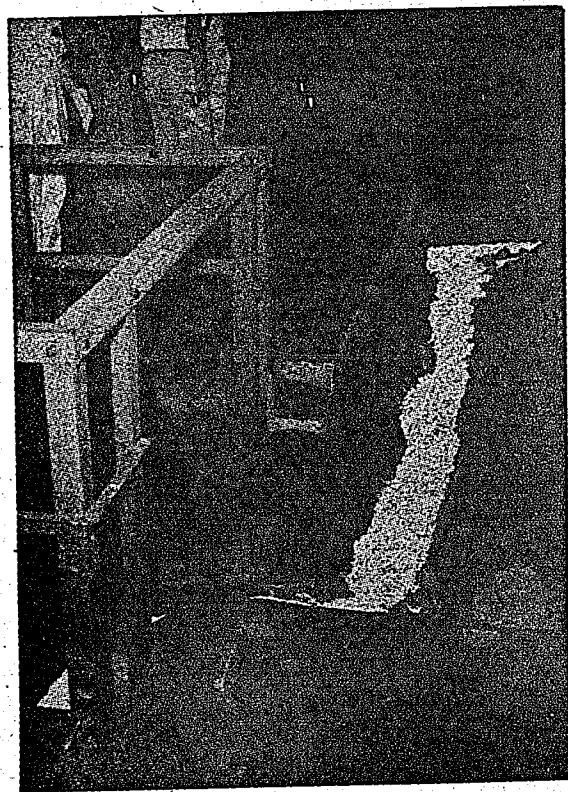


Soviet chief Engineer Dimshitz welcomes the Rashtrapati.

AT  
BHILAI

AT  
ROUREKELA

Molten pig iron flowing through the alley into the ladle at Rourekela.



# BHILAI PROVIDES THE CONTRAST

From ZIAUL HAQ

It is for the first time in the history of Indo-Soviet economic cooperation, which is only too recent a development, that such a large number of Soviet and Indian people are working together on such a vast project as the construction of the Bhilai steel plant.

WITH the completion of the first stage and the commissioning of the first blast furnace, the qualitative difference between the erection of a steel plant with the help of the Socialist USSR on the one hand and the building of such a plant with the help of firms from any capitalist country begins to reveal itself. This in spite of the deliberate campaign in the Big Business Press to parade an imaginary superiority of Rourekela over Bhilai and its being ahead of the latter in pace of construction.

## Mendacity Exposed

Incidentally, the mendacity of this propaganda is exposed by the official Yojna, weekly of the Ministry of Information, itself which writes in its latest issue:

"Rourekela has taken much longer to come to its present state of development than Bhilai..."

"The Rourekela plant is also costlier than the other two projects. Its ultimate extended capacity is 1.6 million tons as against the provision for 2.5 million tons at Bhilai."

Enumerating factors responsible for the delay, Yojna says:

"There has also been difficulty in agreeing to the revised estimates of Rs. 170 crores for the Rourekela plant as against the initial estimate of Rs. 128 crores. The various components being formed by about 30 German engineering concerns, coordination and collaboration has not always been smooth."

Coming back to the qualitative difference between Bhilai and the rest of such projects, despite its many slanderous and lying statements, the write-up in the latest issue of the American Time magazine carries some recognition of it. Writes Time:

"The Communists (the USSR) have guaranteed all the equipment they have sent and they have trained 370 Indians in Russian Mills. Soviet experts are under strict orders to let trainees handle as much machinery and press as many buttons as they wish. This does wonders for the confidence of young engineers who say that in German factories they are treated like sightseers."

"Though the 354 Russian technicians have brought along their families to India, they employ no servants. They ride in buses instead of private cars or jeeps. The Russians work 16 hours a day, are careful never to mention politics. But the most effective Soviet ploy of all has been their insistence that every Russian of top rank must have his Indian counterpart. Here, says one enthusiastic Indian at Bhilai, 'we work shoulder to shoulder with the Russians. Elsewhere we work under the foreigners.'"

TIME recognises that "the

Soviet Union has been sending India its top talent." This, according to TIME, the Soviet Union is doing "at cost to its own steel industry." TIME and all spokesmen of the capitalist West would have us believe that all that the Soviet Union and the Soviet personnel are doing in regard to Bhilai is just "propaganda," just in order to impress the Indian people. One would wish that the capitalist West also adopted these methods of propaganda. But this is where the basic difference lies. Just because they are incapable by their very nature of behaving as the Soviet Union and its representatives do, they dub these things as "propaganda" and thus seek to blind us also to their real significance.

Time's list of all that the Soviet technicians are doing in their line of "propaganda" is very far from complete. The journalists who visited Bhilai at the time of its inauguration were given a few more facts by the Deputy General Manager of the Project, Sri M. K. K. Nayar, and they themselves noticed some more.

Sri Nayar, for example, told us that of all the foreign experts employed anywhere in the country, the Soviet technicians at Bhilai were paid the least. He also revealed that at Bhilai they had declined the Indian authorities' offer to exempt them from prohibition laws in force there and to grant them special permits for drinks.

While at Rourekela the West Germans have their own exclusive Social Centre where entry for Indians is normally forbidden, in Bhilai, far from there being the slightest trace anywhere of a colour bar, the Indian and Soviet personnel mix on the most cordial terms.

The turn-out for the inauguration at the two places was significant in itself. At Bhilai, it seemed that almost the entire working force with lots of people from neighbouring areas had all turned up with their families attired in their best clothes. At Rourekela, the fact that the audience was much smaller was not all due to lack of arrangements and provision of accommodation and the almost total absence of women in the function was not without significance.

Both the Soviet experts and the young Indian engineers we met at Bhilai have left a very deep impression on us. Sagaldak, for example, is the Soviet expert in charge of the blast furnace at Bhilai. He is absolutely a top-notch man in his line in the USSR and has commissioned innumerable blast furnaces in the course of his 22 years at the job. He has been decorated a number of times. Yet it is his utter simplicity and modesty that attracts everyone towards him.

His Indian counterpart is a young man of 23 from Tamilnad, who has been through a fifteen-month training at the

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DELIVERING the concluding speech to the 21st Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on February 5, Nikita Khrushchov announced the completion of the first section of the Bhilai iron and steel plant.

Khrushchov said that although this project was started one or even one-and-a-half years later than the two plants put up by British and West German firms, the Soviet people, as a result of their joint friendly efforts with the Indian specialists and workers, managed to complete the first section of this powerful modern mills sooner than the Britons and Germans, and to produce the first coke and pig iron.

The Congress heartily applauded Khrushchov's words: "May the first iron of this plant be a symbol of the growing friendship

## Khrushchov Greets Builders of Bhilai

between the peoples of the Soviet Union and India."

May the flames of this blast furnace, Khrushchov said, scorch all the intrigues of the imperialists who are striving to preclude the further development of Soviet-Indian friendship, our joint struggle for peace, for the triumph of the principles of peaceful co-existence.

May the heat of this furnace warm up the friendship between our two great and peace-loving peoples, Khrushchov said. May our friendship be as strong as the metal produced by this plant put up by the joint efforts of the Governments and peoples of the Soviet Union and India.

Khrushchov greeted the Indian people for this big accomplishment of utmost importance for the industrialisation and strengthening of the country's eco-

nomie independence.

It is gratifying to note, Khrushchov said, that the President of the Republic of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad attended the launching of the plant's first section and expressed good wishes for the strengthening of Soviet-Indian friendship.

Khrushchov wholeheartedly greeted the Soviet specialists and workers who, jointly with their Indian colleagues, secured such remarkable successes and made a valuable contribution to the fraternal friendship between the peoples of India and the Soviet Union.

Khrushchov said: We regard this labour victory as a striking proof of the correctness of the Leninist peaceful policy, an example of the Soviet Union's unselfish cooperation with the peoples working to strengthen their freedom and independence.

# Impressions Of The Two Steel Plants

By RENU CHAKRAVARTY

FEBRUARY 3 and 4, 1959 were historic days for India. On these two days were inaugurated the two giant integrated steel projects set up for the first time in the public sector at Rourekela and Bhilai.

Many had been the hurdles to be crossed—the biggest the refusal at first of both the U. S. and the U. K. to set up a steel plant for us. When in 1953 the West German firm of Krupp & Demag at last signed an agreement, the terms were definitely disadvantageous to us. But we had no other alternative but to accept them and allow the unequal terms of the agreement to dog us at every step leading to spiralling costs, bungling, delays. Even to get the final project report after the agreement took two long years.

## The Soviet Agreement

All this time the mind of the Indian Government was full of hesitation regarding the technological competence of the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries to give us help in the form of the most advanced technique and machinery in steel-making. This feeling was further accentuated by the derogatory remarks made round about this time by the Industrialist Kasturbhai Lalbhai on his return from a visit to the Soviet Union when he spoke about the worthlessness of Soviet industry and science. I remember clearly how these same feelings were given expression to on more than one

occasion in Parliament by the then Finance Minister, Sri C. D. Deshmukh and the then Commerce Minister Sri T. T. Krishnamachari.

I watched the Rashtrapati pressing the button to allow the molten iron gush out from the furnace at Rourekela, felt that here before our eyes was unfolding the fruits of peaceful competition between the capitalist world and the Socialist world.

For days and nights the engineers and workmen at both the steel projects had worked ceaselessly round the clock. As one leading Indian engineer at Bhilai said: "We have hardly slept more than 11 hours a week!" And now they had the satisfaction of seeing their dream take shape in actual form and performance.

At Rourekela all work in other sections had been stopped and all men and materials

were deflected to one purpose—to start the blast furnace in time. The melting shops where the new L. D. process is to be installed, the rolling mill which is reported to have the only continuous strip mill in Asia, have all had to give right of way to the starting of the blast furnace.

The general feeling of elation at Rourekela was that Bhilai had only just started up its blast furnace on February 1. Sri Asok Chanda, the present Audit and Comptroller-General who had, as Secretary of the Ministry of Production, made the first agreement with Krupp-Demag in 1953, told me with smug satisfaction: "Now that you have seen Rourekela, there is little you will see at Bhilai, since they have hardly started off the

blast furnace properly and of course there will be no tapping of iron for you to see."

Under the huge giant flags of Germany and India the Rourekela furnace was opened by the President from the raised platform set on the blast furnace itself. In front of the blast furnace was a small enclosure for the distinguished visitors.

The leading personalities of the private sector, however, were significantly absent in this gathering. No amount of excuses that the Duke of Edinburgh was coming to Jamshedpur could explain away why not a single one of the directors of the Tatas nor any of the Indian Iron and Steel Co., Burmpur, had come. It was a silent protest against the breaching of their monopoly in the steel industry by the emergence of a powerful State sector.

As our special train moved slowly into the siding at Bhilai we could see in the pale grey light of the early dawn three streaks of puffing smoke emerging from three chimneys. Could it be that the impossible had happened?

As soon as we alighted, the word went round: "They have tapped iron." There were groups of technical experts and engineers, both Indian and foreign, who seemed excited by the news. I learnt that this was an achievement with few parallels in India—that within a bare twenty-four hours of the blowing of the blast furnace, iron had been tapped. A young Indian engineer beaming with pride calculated in great detail to correct my impression that it had taken twenty-four hours, by stating that it

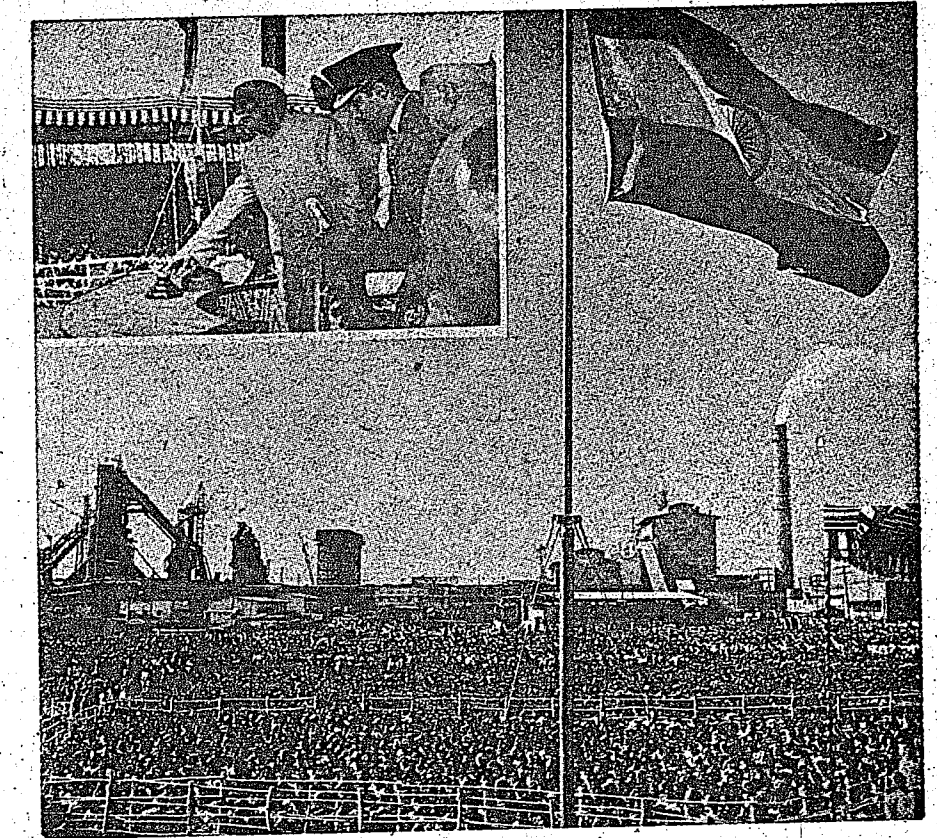
had only taken twenty hours to be precise!

It was this tremendous enthusiasm and pride in their sense of achievement that distinguished the young Indian technicians working at Bhilai from the other steel projects. The Soviet engineers, metallurgists and technicians—about a thousand strong—were there training the young Indians to do things with their own hands, giving them full know-how and experience, and out of this, we could see clearly, had been born a sense of confidence in our young engineers that they could do the job well.

## Inspiring Confidence

A young Bengali who had graduated from Sibpur Engineering College at Calcutta and had been to the USSR for 15 months training in rolling mills, acted as our guide. The first thing he told us pointing proudly to the blast furnace and other mills of the project was, "We have erected the entire machinery with our own hands, and now we can erect a steel mill anywhere in India if only Hindustan Steel will use us and give us a chance."

It was inspiring to see their confidence. The agreement with the Soviet Government has one outstanding clause which is of great significance for our advance. A technical institute to train hands to man the different jobs at the plant was an important part of the agreement which, however, was delayed not because



The huge crowd that gathered at Bhilai to see the Rashtrapati pressing the button (inset) to inaugurate the blast furnace (in the background).

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M. R. Venkataraman and E. M. S. Namboodiripad, members of the Communist Party of India's fraternal delegation to the 21st Congress of the CPSU, at a function in Moscow University.

should be borne in mind that under an unlimited dictatorship reaction has a better chance of starting a reign of terror and repression, of suppressing all opposition, of indoctrinating the masses to suit its ends, of poisoning them with the scourge of chauvinism, and of freeing its hands for military gambles. For this reason, the people must be ever ready to repel the reactionary offensive and the threat of resurgent fascism. Millions of people usually associate fascism with Hitler and Mussolini. But we must not rule out the possibility that fascism will revive in forms other than those which have already discredited themselves in the eyes of nations.

Today, when there is a powerful Socialist camp, when

the working class movement has much experience in combatting reaction, and when the working class is much better organised, the people have greater possibilities of blocking the advance of fascism. Broad sections of the people, all democratic, genuinely national forces, can and must join hands against fascism. In so doing, it is very important to stamp out all vestiges of sectarianism, which is liable to obstruct the mobilisation of the masses against reaction and fascism. The unity of the democratic forces, above all of the working class, is the most reliable barrier to the fascist threat.

Who obstructs the unity of the working class? Imperialist reaction and its henchmen in the working class movement, such as Guy Mollet and Spaak, the anti-Communist-minded

Social-Democratic leaders. We know all these chieftains of anti-Communism by name and do not count on them when we speak of joint working class action. Most of the rank-and-file in the Social-Democratic parties are friends of peace and social progress, although their idea of how to win them is different to ours, and to the Communist idea. And it is precisely in the struggle against reaction and fascism that Communists and Social-Democrats should find a common language. It is high time for the representatives of all the trends in the labour movement, after casting off the mountebanks of anti-Communism, to sit round one table and work out a mutually acceptable platform of joint working class action in defence of their interests, of peace.

## Yugoslavia : Revisionism Of The Leadership

The meeting of Representatives of Communist and Workers' Parties in November 1957 showed, that the fraternal Parties are united in their views. The Declaration of the meeting was approved unanimously by all Communist and Workers' Parties, and has come to be a charter of international unity for the World Communist Movement. The Declaration condemned revisionism as the principal danger, and dogmatism and sectarianism as well. Life has proved the conclusions drawn in the Declaration to be correct. And we take guidance from them at present.

The International Communist Movement has criticised the views and policies of the Yugoslav revisionists. The leaders of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia contend that the Marxist-Leninist Parties started an ideological campaign against them because they had refused to undersign the Declaration.

But this is utterly false. It is the Yugoslav leadership which, in contradiction to the Declaration, came forth with

its revisionist programme, in which they attacked the Marxist-Leninist positions of the International Communist Movement. I ask you, could Marxists really have ignored these facts? Of course, not. This is the reason why all the Parties which uphold Marxism-Leninism, criticised the programme of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia.

Our position in regard to the views held by the Yugoslav leadership is clear. We have defined it repeatedly in all frankness, while the Yugoslav leaders keep twisting and turning and evading the truth.

They want to conceal the substance of their differences with the Marxist-Leninists. And this substance is that the Yugoslav revisionists deny the need of international class solidarity, that they have abandoned working class positions. They are trying to tell the world that there are two blocs in it, two military camps. Yet everybody knows that the Socialist camp, which embraces Socialist countries of Europe and Asia, is not a military camp, but a community

of equal nations fighting for peace and a better life, for Socialism and Communism. The other camp is the imperialist camp which seeks at any price to maintain its system of oppression and violence, and threatens war. We did not make up these camps. They emerged in the process of social development.

The Yugoslav leaders claim that they stand outside all blocs, above the camps. Yet in point of fact they are in the Balkan bloc, which consists of Yugoslavia, Turkey and Greece. It may be recalled that the latter two countries are members of the aggressive NATO bloc, and that Turkey is also a member of the Baghdad Pact. The leaders of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia resent our telling them that they are sitting on two chairs. They insist that they are sitting on their own Yugoslav chair. But for some reason this Yugoslav chair is held up by the American monopolists! And it is precisely this "no-bloc" position, this neutrality which the leaders of the League of Communists of

Yugoslavia so highly extol that has a distinct whiff of the American monopolies, which keep giving handouts to "Yugoslav Socialism." The history of the class struggle knows of no case when the bourgeoisie materially or morally helped in building Socialism.

The crucial test of a country's administration is the progress it makes in developing the national economy, raising the culture and well-being of the people. We Soviet Communists think that our road to Socialism, shown us by the great Lenin, is the right one. By following it the Soviet Union has scored many victories, which have amazed the whole world. All the People's Democracies have followed the road blazed by the October Revolution, Lenin's road, and have also made remarkable progress.

And who achieved the least results? It is that very party, that very country, whose leaders extol their so-called Yugoslav road as being the only right road. People, look at it this way: the best road is the road which leads to the best possible economic and political results in the shortest time. And if we compare the living standards in the Socialist countries, we shall find, as indicated in economic publications, that it is rising more slowly in Yugoslavia. Yugoslav practice itself refutes the theoretical "discoveries" of the Yugoslav revisionists.

If Yugoslavia is behind in its development, if it does not march, but rather zigzags, along the Socialist road, the responsibility for this falls entirely on the revisionist anti-Marxist line of the leadership of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia which has its own special idea about the role of the Party in building Socialism. The Yugoslav revisionists minimise the Party's role and, in effect, reject Lenin's teachings of the Party being the guiding force in the struggle for Socialism.

The Marxist-Leninist Parties watch the developments in Yugoslavia with concern. The fraternal peoples of Yugoslavia have at the price of great sacrifice, with Soviet support, liberated themselves from German and Italian occupation, have overthrown the rule of their own bourgeoisie, and taken the road of Socialism. Yet now the policy of the Yugoslav leadership, aimed at opposing Yugoslavia to the Socialist camp and to the International Communist Movement, may lead to the loss of the Socialist gains made by the Yugoslav people.

We have the very friendliest feelings for the fraternal peoples of Yugoslavia, for the Yugoslav Communists, those heroes of underground and partisan struggle. In a number of questions of foreign policy we hold common views. We shall continue to develop trade with Yugoslavia on a reciprocal basis. We shall work for cooperation with Yugoslavia in all questions of the anti-imperialist struggle, for peace, in which our attitudes will coincide.

How will matters stand in the Party sphere? That will depend on the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. Its leadership has isolated itself from the International Communist Movement. Therefore, it is now up to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia to make a turn towards rapprochement with the Communist Parties on a Marxist-Leninist basis. This would also

be in the interests of the Yugoslav people.

The Communist movement has dealt revisionism crushing blows. But revisionism is not dead yet. It must be borne in mind that the imperialists will in every way seek to support and rally the revisionists.

There is also the need to combat dogmatism and sectarianism, which impede the development of Marxist-Leninist theory and its creative application, and cause the Communist Parties to lose contact with the masses. Lenin's injunction to strengthen the connections with the masses, to give utmost heed to the voice of the masses, and to stand at their head, is sacred to all of us Communists.

## Relations Between Communist Parties

As regards relations between the fraternal Parties within the framework of the International Communist Movement, we have always followed Lenin's approach. Lenin taught us that these relations are to be built upon the equality and independence of the national detachments of the international working class movement, upon the principles of proletarian internationalism. It is precisely because all the Parties have equal rights that they maintain relations of confidence and voluntary cooperation, that they voluntarily and consciously seek joint action as component elements of a single great army of labour.

All the Communist Parties are independent and shape their own policy, proceeding from the concrete conditions in their respective countries. They have scored successes in their work, are steadily extending their influence, increasing the number of their followers, and winning prestige in all sections of the people.

Imperialist ideologists, and the revisionists who take their cue from them, strive in every way to undermine the growing influence of the Communist Parties and spread the spurious tale about the Communist movement being "made in Moscow" and about the Communist and Workers' Parties being dependent upon the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Yugoslav revisionists, who allege that our Party seeks "hegemonism" in regard to the other Parties, show particular zeal. They went so far as to include a thesis on "hegemonism" in their programme. They contend that our Party interferes in the internal affairs of other countries and wants to control the other Communist Parties. And the reactionaries are very grateful to the Yugoslav revisionists for this slander.

It is ridiculous to think that a political party of the working class, which often has hundreds of thousands, and sometimes millions of members, could be organised in any country from outside. No one will believe, for example, that the Italian Communist Party of 2,000,000, the French Party of 500,000, the Indonesian Party of 1,500,000, the Indian of nearly 300,000 and other fraternal Parties have been "established

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FEBRUARY 15, 1959

## THE DEVILS AND THEIR ADVOCATES

The decisions of the Bangalore Session of the AITUC General Council have hit the "Devil" right in the eye. And the Hindustan Times could not conceal its agony. Writing editorially on January 21, under the caption "Devils Advocate", this Devil's Advocate writes that the AITUC "has thrown itself into an imaginary war of defence of the public sector against its detractors."

THIS Birla-owned Big Business mouthpiece tries to lull public vigilance by attempting to make out a case that the public sector is not only under no attack, all that the private sector is doing is to "point out cases of bad planning and mismanagement in the public sector" and that the Government should "look askance" at this "enthusiasm" and "tenderness" for the public sector shown by the AITUC.

It will be difficult to believe that the Mundhra game to cheat the biggest public sector financial institution, the LIC, with the help of certain helpful officials and politicians was just a case of pointing out "bad planning and mismanagement." Nobody would be so naive as to think that the Big Business ballyhoo against the Defence Ministry's plans to manufacture trucks in the public sector was a constructive endeavour undertaken with the best of motives towards the public sector.

In fact the year 1958 had seen a big concerted attack on the public sector and its expansion and growth. That is why even the Prime Minister had to hit out at Calcutta against these "purdah nasheens" and their activities behind the "purdah".

The AITUC, as the premier trade union organisation of the country has, therefore, discussed these developments

and adopted its important "Declaration" and it has quite understandably provoked the Devils and their Advocates.

The Hindustan Times tries to win a debating point over the AITUC by wailing about the AITUC trying to create "trouble" in the LIC and the Ordnance factories.

The Hindustan Times knows the inconvenient reality that

## Textile Bosses Get Rude Shock

BOMBAY'S textile bosses got a rude shock when the Industrial Court, Bombay, on January 29, 1959, rejected their plea for a 33 1/3 per cent cut in the dearness allowance paid to cotton textile workers.

After having created an all-India hue and cry about "crisis in textiles" and having unsuccessfully attempted to use the fictitious closures of concerns arising more out of mismanagement and lengthy and costly litigation among partners, to demoralise the workers, they thought that the public mind was now ready to receive their proposals to cut dearness allowance and "save" the industry. They had also calculated that

the AITUC stubbornly defends the rights and demands of the working class and with equal determination defends the public sector and the development plans that take the country forward while fighting all the troubles fomented by Big Businessmen and their bureaucrat friends.

The Hindustan Times outburst is only a compliment to the correct policies and the growing strength of the AITUC.

the workers' bargaining capacity was not quite up to the mark and their wish would be carried through.

The bosses pleased that the financial position of the industry at present was very precarious and that its profit-making capacity was on the decline. They, therefore, pressed for a one-third reduction in the dearness allowance paid to the textile workers.

But the Labour Court has turned down the plea and refused to take a "pessimistic view of the industry even in the near future."

Quite obviously the mill-owners could not conceal the fact that a mill in Bombay, closed down as an indication

## KHRUSHCHOV REPORT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

by Moscow" and that their members are "foreign agents."

Some say that the "dependence" of the Communist and Workers' Parties on Moscow is corroborated by statements to the effect that the CPSU stands at the head of the International Communist Movement. In doing so they refer to the well-known clause in the Declaration of the Moscow Conference, which says that "the camp of Socialist States is headed by the Soviet Union."

The Communists of the Soviet Union and of all the other countries think that thereby tribute was paid to our country and to our working class, which has, under the leadership of the Communist Party headed by the great Lenin, been the first to carry out the Socialist revolution, the first to take power. In these forty odd years we have travelled a long way along a difficult road of struggle and victory and have built up a powerful State, the bulwark of all the Socialist countries and of the World Communist Movement. (Stormy applause)

We convey our hearty thanks to the fraternal Parties for this appreciation of the historic role of the Soviet Union and the CPSU. (Stormy prolonged applause)

It must be emphasised, however that there has always been complete equality and independence for all the Communist and Workers' Parties and the Socialist countries in the Communist movement and in the Socialist camp. The

Communist Party of the Soviet Union does not control any other country. There are no "superior" and "subordinate" Parties in the Communist movement. All the Communist and Workers' Parties are equal and independent. All of them bear responsibility for the destiny of the Communist movement, for its failures and its success (Applause). And each Communist and Workers' Party bears responsibility to the working class, to the working people of its country, to the International Workers' and Communist Movement. In their struggle for working class interests, for Socialism, the Communist Parties combine the universal tenets of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete historical and national conditions in their countries. Only a Marxist-Leninist Party connected with the working class, with the people of its country, is able to know the concrete conditions of struggle; it alone can work out a political line conforming to these conditions and taking account of the traditions of the working class movement in its country.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union was built up by Lenin in the spirit of proletarian internationalism. We Soviet Communists have not only mastered Marxism-Leninism, but have defended it against enemies of all hues. Guided by this teaching, the Soviet people, with the Communist Party at their head, have built Socialism in grim struggle and are striding con-

fidently forward to Communism (Applause). We have always loyally followed the great international teaching of Marx, Engels and Lenin, and shall always do so. Figuratively speaking, our Communist Party regards itself as one of the forward detachments of the World Communist Movement, the detachment which is the first to be taking the summits of Communism. And on our way to Communism we shall not be stopped by any avalanche or landslide. Nobody can make us turn off the path leading to Communism. (Stormy applause)

We have always held the view, and still do so, that none must retire to their national "domains" and withdraw into their own shells. We think that the might of the Socialist camp must be reinforced in all ways and that the unity of the International Communist Movement must be further cemented in accordance with the principles adopted by all the fraternal Parties in the Moscow Declaration.

Concern for the solidarity and strength of our ranks is the supreme international duty of each Communist and Workers' Party. Success in the national cause of the working class is inconceivable without the international solidarity of all its detachments. (Prolonged applause)

[NEXT WEEK: EXTRACTS FROM N. S. KHRUSHCHOV'S REPORT FROM THE SECTION DEALING WITH COMMUNIST CONSTRUCTION]

NEW AGE

FEBRUARY 15, 1959

# LABOUR NOTES

BY RAJ BAHADUR GOUR, M. P. SECRETARY, ALL-INDIA TRADE UNION CONGRESS

of the so-called "crisis", was taken over by the Government and is now making even a profit. The Sitaram Mill in Kerala was also in "crisis". But since the Government has taken it over as a mortgage in possession, it is doing very well.

The "stocks" in Kanpur would clear in no time if there is a slight reduction in price.

No one would, therefore, agree that there is a "crisis" in the textile industry.

Yes! Anyone could see the crisis in the business morality of our textile bosses.

This Labour Court decision is an important victory for the textile workers and will strengthen them in their struggle against the fictitious "crisis offensive" of the textile kings in our country.

## MINISTERIAL BOOST TO INTUC

ON January 27 were held the so-called elections to the Telangana section of the INTUC in Andhra Pradesh.

Sri G. Sanjeeva Reddy is reported to have been elected "unanimously" as the President of the Telangana INTUC. And Sri T. Anjiah, the leader of the rival group, appears to have completely surrendered to the other group. He is now only a member of the Executive.

But the most glaring highlight of this trade union meeting was the fact that the meeting was presided over by the Minister for Irrigation and Power. It was addressed by the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Sri N. Sanjeeva Reddy, and the President of the Pradesh Congress, Sri P. Ranga Reddy. So it was in this atmosphere of awe created by the presence of these dignitaries of the Congress and the Government that "unity" was achieved inside the INTUC.

It is such open and shameless boosting of the INTUC by the Chief Minister and the Minister for Irrigation and Power that is taking place in Andhra Pradesh. It is the faction that supports and thrives on the direct patronage of the Chief Minister and his group inside the Congress that rules the roost in the INTUC in this State.

More Press reports indicate that the Chief Minister told this meeting that there was a "vast scope of work for the INTUC." And this scope "particularly" included the "Road Transport Corporation and the Singareni Collieries."

The Chief Minister was thus openly inciting the INTUC to resort to "splitting" activities among the transport and collieries workers, both of whom are well organised in their recognised unions—the Andhra Pradesh Transport Employees' Union (Independent with Mahkdom Mohiuddin, M.I.C., as its President) and the Singareni Collieries Workers' Union (AITUC; with T. B. Vittal Rao,

M.P. as its President). No wonder, therefore, that the INTUC workers resorted to beating the AITUC workers in Kothagudem recently and the police have faithfully launched cases both against attackers and counter-attacks against the attacked.

That is why Sri M. A. Rashid (now the General Secretary of the INTUC in Telangana) is trying his splitting activities in the Road Transport Workshop and had recently been forced to beat a shameful retreat when he tried to "organise" a meeting at the gates.

Such is the "code of discipline" advocated by the Congress Government in Andhra Pradesh. How then could the INTUC be expected to adhere to the Code of Discipline and the inter-Union Code of Conduct when the Chief Minister himself, who incidentally also holds the Industries and the Law and Order portfolios, is directly encouraging and inciting the INTUC to break all codes and conventions?

This attitude is not only a menace to the trade union movement but is also a danger for the democratic movement and orderly industrial relations.

## Workers Win E.S.I. Extension

THIRTY-TWO thousand insured workmen in Andhra Pradesh covered by the Employees' State Insurance Scheme now in force in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad; Vijayawada, Eluru, Guntur, Mangalagiri, Visakhapatnam, Nellore and Chittivalli have secured the extension of the scheme to their families since January 26, 1959.

But the benefits to the families are to be confined only to out-patient treatment and domiciliary midwifery.

## BONUS AGREEMENT IN KERALA COIR

FOR the first time in the history of the coir factory workers in Kerala, numbering 50,000, a bonus agreement has reached for a period of three years.

This agreement was reached in the Tripartite Coir Industrial Relations Committee at its meeting held on January 5, 1959.

According to this agreement, a minimum bonus of 5 1/8 per cent of the total earnings will be paid to the workers every year as a deferred wage irrespective of profit or loss in the trade. And in the event of an increase in the export of coir yarn, mats and matings from the State, an additional increase in bonus of 1 1/4 per cent of earnings would be granted as a share in profit for every 35,000 cwt. over 14 lakh cwt.

Thus for the year 1957-58, the workers would be paid a bonus equivalent to 7 3/8 per cent of the total earnings as the export figure was 17-1/2 lakh cwt.

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\* FROM PAGE 3

occasions, the identification of the Congress with trading and moneylending and usurer interests in the old Punjab—these played a big role in keeping the Muslim masses away from the national struggle. The ideological, religious and other factors found a breeding ground on this—and of course, there was the British Government to promote communal differences at every step.

Like all other Congress leaders, the Maulana chooses to ignore these basic factors and comes to childish conclusions on a profound subject. The acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan and the entire trend of negotiations preceding it, had made partition inevitable. The Cabinet Mission Plan, which the Maulana claims bore close resemblance to his own scheme which he got the Working Committee to endorse, was only a preparation for final partition. Anyone could see it. The facade of united India was kept only to see that the British Government escaped the blame for partition, to see that partition was "voluntarily" accepted by the Congress. In these circumstances it is unrealistic to suggest that had it not been for this or that statement from Nehru, partition could have been avoided.

The most amazing, most shocking thing in Azad's narration of events leading to partition is that while he criticises his colleagues for even minor lapses, he has nothing but praise for the British Viceroy and other agents of British imperialism who were openly undermining the unity of India. He is so much blinded by the resemblance of his proposals with the Cabinet Mission Plan that he forgets that the British may have had their own designs and objects in putting their plan. He says that Jawaharlal Nehru was influenced by Lord Mountbatten, ably supported by his worthy spouse, Lady Mountbatten. Whatever truth the statement may contain, the Maulana gives incontrovertible proof that he himself was charmed and influenced by Lord Wavell without the help of a Lady Wavell.

In 1942, at the time of Cripps's Mission, he summed up Wavell, who was then Commander-in-Chief as follows: "The entire discussion proceeded on political lines. It did not strike me for a moment that we were interviewing a military expert, for Lord Wavell spoke like an expert politician." This was a correct summing up and it exploded the excuse of Sir Stafford Cripps regarding transfer of defence to Indian hands. The difficulty was not technical but political.

But the same Wavell appeared as an entirely different person to the Maulana in 1945, when Wavell was no longer the Commander-in-Chief but the Viceroy of India. "I saw that his attitude was not that of a politician but of a soldier." (A strange person, no doubt. He talked like a politician when he was a soldier; and talked like a soldier when he was a politician.) It seems "he spoke frankly and directly." He was even better than Cripps "He made no attempt at embellishment and he certainly was not trying to make an impression."

So captivated was he by this false demeanour of shrewd

Wavell that the Congress President felt flattered when the Viceroy described Congress leaders as "gentlemen." "He also said that whatever their political opinion or their differences with the Government, Congress leaders were the Viceroy spread all over Simla and created a stir in both official and non-official circles." (p. 107) This far from dignified satisfaction at being described as gentlemen by an imperialist ruler shows to what extent the late Azad had fallen under the spell of Wavell.

Unfortunately, throughout the book Azad offers almost a clear alibi to the British on the question of partition and fails to see the game they were playing. Azad fully knew that the British Government and Wavell supported the League on the question of certain disputed clauses in the Constitution. Mr. Jinnah had stated that the provinces must compulsorily sit in the group Assam objected to it—and Wavell upheld Jinnah.

And yet, blinded by his love for the Cabinet Mission Plan, which he said was his own plan, Azad went on nursing the belief that Wavell and others were interested in keeping India united. The experience of the Interim Ministry with the League and the role played by Wavell were hardly noticed by Azad.

This was really a peculiar situation. The British imperialists were step by step forcing the Congress to sue for partition and the Congress President was totally blind to this role of the British. He carried his blindness to the extent of pleading with Gandhiji that the transfer of power be delayed for two or three years (p. 188) i.e. the British should stay here to arbitrate between the Con-

gress and the League. In fact this was Wavell's proposal: "Lord Wavell did not agree regarding the announcement of a date. He wished to persist with the Cabinet Mission Plan, for he held that it was the only possible solution of the Indian problem. He further held that the British Government would fall in its duty if it transferred political power before the communal question had been solved." (p. 177)

And finally in his abstract quest for unity, he went to the length of pleading with Mountbatten for postponing transfer of power to India. "Till now, it was the Congress which had been insisting that India should be freed immediately. Now it was the Congress which asked that the solution of the political problem might be deferred for a year or two. Surely no one could blame the British."

Such was the end of his unreal outlook which ignored the objectives of British imperialism and the reactionary class forces behind communalism.

This was more or less inevitable for the Maulana was really detached from the masses. In this book which deals with the most stirring period in the nation's history, the masses, the people hardly find any place. The rebellious mood of the people, the death-defying courage which really chased the British out of the country, the glorious R.I.N. rebellion and the huge strikes of the working class hardly find any place in it except perhaps a bare mention. The main actors are always the leaders, especially Maulana and the British representatives. From the point of view of understanding the history of the stirring times, the book is disappointing. The people, however, should

be obliged to the Maulana for blowing up a couple of myths sedulously spread by Congress leaders. That the Congress leaders and Congress as an organisation considered violence permissible in the 1942 struggle is made clear by Azad. It clearly shows that non-violence was observed as an expediency and not as a principle.

"From 14th July to 5th August, my time was taken in a series of meetings with Congress leaders... If, however, the Government arrested Gandhiji and other Congress leaders, the people would be free to adopt any method, violent or non-violent, to oppose the violence of the Government in every possible way." (p. 81)

Azad was satisfied with the violent deeds of the people. Writing in a subsequent chapter, he says: "In a word, the country had reacted violently to the leonine violence of the Government. The movement was not confined to non-violent resistance. This was what I had anticipated and to some extent even advised and discussed with our workers." (p. 90)

The Congress claim to adhere to non-violence as a principle, its claim to have won freedom only through non-violent means is blown to pieces.

Azad throws similar light on the strange transformation of Gandhiji who would not have any movement for freedom, lest he might be accused of exploiting the war crisis. He would not cooperate with the war even if freedom were granted. The idealist soon changes into a political leader and declared after the 1942 movement that he would participate in the war if India was freed. And later on when he found the war approaching the borders of India, he decided to launch

the Quit India movement to be able to protect India. Non-violence no longer determines his decision.

And finally, Azad had the following bitter words to say about the fatal attack on Gandhiji's life: "After the incident of the bomb, it was natural to expect that the police and the C.I.D. should take special precaution for his protection. It was not that such measures were difficult. Some people openly accused Sardar Patel of inefficiency." Sri Jaya Prakash Narain "clearly said that the Home Minister could not escape the responsibility for his assassination." To this day, Gandhiji's murder is a mystery. There is no explanation why no precautions were taken, though Gandhiji himself might not have liked them. Only Sri Nehru could throw some light.

The autobiography of Azad is of a man who strove for the people and yet remained aloof from them. His liberal bourgeois digests made him misjudge things but he was a stout champion in the cause of Indian unity and independence. On many events his judgements were wrong but there is an undoubted sincerity of purpose in all that he said and did. He was free from communal bias which cannot be said of many of his Congress associates.

His autobiography reveals the sorrows and anguish of a man who sees his dream disappearing—the dream of Hindu-Muslim unity—United India—and gets shocks from the narrow communal behaviour of some of his colleagues. It should be read with great care as the testament of a nationalist Muslim and should serve to teach the nation to treat its nationalist Muslims better than it has hitherto done.

(February 11, 1959)



The coke oven at Bhilai.

\*\*\*\*\* Bhilai—Last Word In Technique

\* FROM CENTRE PAGES

steel plants in the USSR. Modest and yet full of self-confidence, he explained to us all the latest instruments installed in the blast furnace which make it the last word in technique.

The Bhilai blast furnace when it was designed was the only one of its kind in the world. Since then some more of its type have been set up by the Soviet experts so that now on commissioning, it is one of seven of its kind in the whole world. In contrast to it, one senior

engineer who has received his training in the U.S. and has also been in Western Europe told us, the blast furnace at Rourkela is an "out-moded 1929 type."

Prior to the commissioning of the Bhilai blast furnace a sedulous whisper campaign had been carried on among the high officials of the Hindustan Steel (Private) Limited (HSPL), to some extent directly by the West Germans, that Bhilai's blast furnace would not be ready for commissioning on the announced date. They based this on the

fact that, according to their practice, they had started test tapping at Rourkela as early as January 24, because unless they did it so much in advance, they could not be sure that the furnace would yield pig iron on its ceremonial inauguration.

The Soviet people on the other hand proceeded calmly, perfecting every stage of their preparations and made the first test tapping only ten hours before the inauguration ceremony. The prophets of doom who had been spreading panic among the HSPL offi-

cialists were totally confounded that within 24 hours of firing the furnace, the first tapping had been made. Some then came rushing to see whether pig iron was actually coming out or this too was a piece of Russian propaganda.

Here it is apt to recall the tribute paid to the Soviet experts by Sri N. C. Srivastava, General Manager of the Bhilai Steel Project: "They are a cautious crowd," he says, "insistent on completion of every detail according to specification and on thorough testing of each machine before starting any unit."

V. E. Dimshitz, the Soviet Chief Engineer, speaking at the inauguration ceremony, said: "This Indian plant in Bhilai would be representing the last word in the metallurgical technique."

The keen interest that is continuously being taken by the Soviet people and particularly by the steel workers of the Soviet Union in the successful completion of the Bhilai project is shown by the fact cited by Dimshitz that more than 400 Soviet factories have worked to supply 360,000 tons of the most modern equipment—structural refractories and other materials.

Dimshitz showed how the first stage of the steel plant had been constructed in such a short period of time as an year and a half, calculating from the time of laying of foundations. Dimshitz assured that the plant had been constructed "with high quality, soundly, with a view to ensure the working of this factory for many, many years

to come." He also declared that the Soviet specialists "were doing everything to construct the steel plant at the high technical level within the shortest time possible."

"We are convinced," Dimshitz said, "that the Indian engineers, and qualified workers having undergone the course in Bhilai, will be setting up big industrial enterprises in India themselves."

Soviet Embassy's Economic Counsellor Serveev, speaking on behalf of the Soviet Ambassador, referred to the Ranchi Heavy Machinery Plant and oil explorations which India had undertaken along with Bhilai for construction with Soviet help. These, he said, were taken and testimony of Soviet-Indian friendship. He was sure that with the progress of the Soviet Union in accomplishment of its Seven-Year Plan, great prospects for Soviet Union's cooperation in industrial development of the so-called underdeveloped countries will open up. He referred to the numerous telegrams of good wishes that Bhilai had received on its inauguration from all the Soviet enterprises which had contributed to its erection by supplying material.

It was significant that the President extended his stay in Bhilai by several hours and, addressing a meeting of the Bhilai staff on the evening of February 4, he is reported to have expressed his profound appreciation of the work being done by the Soviet experts, particularly in training Indian engineers.

NEXT to the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, it is with Rumania amongst the Socialist countries that India's economic relations in the postwar period have been the most fruitful. This has been so not only in oil, in which Jwalamukhi (where work has been undertaken with Rumanian assistance) has blazed a new trail in State enterprise, but also a number of other spheres in which Rumania's fraternal cooperation has been equally profitable.

Taking oil first, besides the drilling operations at Jwalamukhi where a Rumanian rig has been in operation, two more rigs for installation in the Cambay region are stated to be on their way. This would bring the number of Rumanian rigs in operation in the country to three by March or April.

Besides collaboration in oil prospecting, Rumania has also contracted to set up the country's first oil refinery in the public sector. According to the agreement, concluded in this connection, Rumania will provide a long-term credit of nearly Rs. 5.3 crores to meet the foreign exchange cost of the refinery which will have an annual refining capacity of 750,000 tons.

Fifteen per cent of the credit offered will be repaid in six instalments, the first to commence 30 days after the signing of the agreement and the last 30 days after the commissioning of the refinery. The balance will be repaid in ten instalments with the first two commencing on December

31, 1961, and the last ending on December 31, 1965. The rate of interest will be 2.5 per cent.

The Rumanian Government would buy Indian goods as far as possible against repayments made under agreement, and the balance of rupee credit, not thus utilised, will be convertible into transferable free currency after April 1, 1961. It will also undertake, under the terms of the agreement: to design the refinery; to supply the equipment and materials for process units and auxiliary installations; to ensure that design as well as machinery and equipment supplied conform to the

standards as well as for drilling operations. The Government of India is, however, reported to have already invited a West German firm MANSMAN for collaboration in setting up a pipe-fabricating plant at Rourkela (The Hindustan Times, February 9). In view of the difficulties encountered in collaboration with a number of other West German firms in the establishment of a steel plant, it would be interesting to know the reasons which impelled the Government to accept MANSMAN's offer.

Rumania can also be a good source of supply of kerosene and other petro-

leum products to our country. There are also a few independent indigenous distributing companies in our country, willing to act as agents for the purpose. Somehow, however, their efforts in this connection have not borne fruit. The reasons behind it might be diverse, and paucity of storage capacity might be one of them. And yet, these could not have been insurmountable, especially when creation of an additional capacity of nearly 14 million tons was specifically envisaged in the Second Plan.

Rumanian oil is cheaper, and its price is also repay-

able in Indian rupees. Why should it then be difficult for the Government to remove obstacles in its imports, more so, when it can thereby strengthen its bargaining position vis-à-vis the western monopolies?

Another important line of production in which Rumanian assistance can be of immense benefit to us is the manufacture of road-rollers. Already we are importing nearly a hundred road-rollers from her, while our requirements stand at 600. Since our indigenous capacity is only 120, it would be more fruitful if additional local capacities could be created for its production. As it is, JESSOPs

semble the components, exported by them. Rumania's assistance can also be utilised in setting up a plant to produce carbon black (of which we import nearly 10,000 tons at present) from natural gas, available at Naharkatiya in abundance. Fertiliser manufacture and shipping are some of the other lines in which Rumania's industrial experience can be of great help to us. Similarly, in setting up, and also in manufacturing, small blast furnaces to convert our immense iron ore resources into pig iron (which fetches a better price in the market) we could invite her assistance.

In trade also, Rumania, in keeping with her Socialist character, has always been willing to import as much of our goods as we are willing to buy from her. The payment, too, being invariably in rupees, involves no foreign exchange.

In the context of the significant role which Rumania has hitherto played in discovering for us our most important mineral product, oil, and in helping to set up a plant to convert it into finished product, as well as in the light of the bright prospects which her developing industry offers for our own industrialisation, it is necessary that our Government and the people unreservedly accept her as a promising partner in the country's economic progress.

—ESSEN

February 9.

KERALA ASTIR

\* FROM BACK PAGE

while the contractor's men used to take five minutes. From Communist Party Secretary M. N. Govindan Nair, I could get an idea of how this drive has been possible. This switchover to nationwide construction drive has been possible because the Communist-led Ministry has, despite all the obstacles placed in its path, been able to take certain measures which help the toiling people. From the total ban on eviction to raising the salary of employees, from highest bonus to plantation workers to assured salary for school teachers, all of them have brought relief, however small, to the lot of the poor and the hard-pressed—all this has established the bona fides of the Ministry before the people. Whether it is in the new approach to the role of the police or the stress on strengthening the Panchayats, the Ministry has shown in which direction it wants to move forward.

The twin conditions that have made this mass drive successful are therefore important. For one thing, the ruling party does not make use of these village level efforts to augment its own position. It takes a truly non-sectarian approach, not merely appealing but actually mobilising members of other parties in the task. Secondly, the poli-

ties that the Ministry is pursuing and the measures it is undertaking are such that an overwhelming section of the people could feel that self-sacrifice is demanded from the common people not in a cynical way while the rich are kept practically untouched. They see from actual experience that for the sake of national reconstruction and advance, the rich have to contribute as much as the poor.

So, today in Kerala, you seldom come across talks about "breakdown of law and order." And, in its place, you could sense a new dynamism, for this campaign has shown the latent energy in our people.

That is but natural when the people see things moving.

Look at the case of a small irrigation scheme at Tellicherry. In 1937, the Congress passed a resolution demanding it. But the demand has been fulfilled only in 1959, the magic wand bringing it about in two weeks. At Bawali, a lift irrigation project was proposed in 1928, and it has started now.

The success of the minor irrigation drive has already led many to think whether the same shramdan effort could not also be harnessed for bigger projects as well. "I would like to show the Chinese that we in India can do it too," said Sri Krishna Iyer.

As I was driving through the picturesque countryside early in the morning, I pondered over this new turn in Kerala. Here is a truly national effort silencing all petty feuds. The great adventure of building the nation is on.

Suddenly the bus skirted a very ordinary-looking hamlet among coconut groves—Punnappara is the name. What memories it can still evoke in me who has only read about the bravery and martyrdom of hundreds who fell here in freedom's battle, against feudal autocracy. And with them came up in my mind's eye, the shining figure of Krishna Pillai, with his beaming smile.

Today, it is the heirs of Krishna Pillai who are taking the lead not only in building a new Kerala but beckoning the whole of India to new glories.

NEW AGE

Indo-Rumanian Economic Cooperation

best and up-to-date Rumanian technical standards in regard to quality and workmanship; to ensure by the Rumanian engineers and technicians technical assistance in construction work and technical supervision for the erection of the refinery; to train Indian technicians in refinery designing, erecting and operating in Rumania and to indemnify the Indian Government in case of infringement of foreign patent.

Rumania's experience in oil industry can also be gainfully utilised in installing factories for fabricating pipes for oil transpor-

leum products to our country. There are also a few independent indigenous distributing companies in our country, willing to act as agents for the purpose. Somehow, however, their efforts in this connection have not borne fruit. The reasons behind it might be diverse, and paucity of storage capacity might be one of them. And yet, these could not have been insurmountable, especially when creation of an additional capacity of nearly 14 million tons was specifically envisaged in the Second Plan.

(of Mundhra fame) produce road-rollers at their Calcutta works, but the amount of foreign exchange defrayed by them on the import of components (nearly Rs. 25,000) is almost the same as the price of a complete imported Rumanian road-roller.

This, however, throws an interesting sidelight on the tactics of the western monopolies. Jessops was a British company till Mundhra purchased its controlling shares. Hence, in collaborating with it in creating an indigenous capacity all that these monopolies did was to instal a few machines to as-

The Two Steel Plants

\* FROM CENTRE PAGES

At Rourkela we noticed the Germans had built their own exclusive club and hospital above which flew the German flag. Nowhere in Bhilai did I notice a single Soviet Red Flag—not even at the inauguration ceremony of this Indo-Soviet joint venture! When I happened to remark on this at the lunch table a Soviet friend hurried to say: "We are only helping you to run your plant. So essentially

it is yours, and therefore the Soviet flag is not flown." It showed the generosity and disinterested help the Soviet people desire to extend to the Indian people.

But as at Rourkela, I felt India should have shown the courtesy of giving a place to the flag of a friendly nation who was a partner in the joint venture, flying it side by side, with the flag of the Indian Republic. Very probably the remark of a Western Correspondent hit the mark when

he remarked with a laugh: "You see, the Red Flag has a meaning for the Indian people which the German flag has not!"

Bhilai had a spirit about it that breathed confidence and hope. As the young Indian engineer guide of ours said: "You will see, we shall be the first to produce steel." This confidence has been generated by the selfless help given to us by the Socialist Soviet Union.

PAGE THIRTEEN



# MINEOWNERS DISREGARDED ALL SAFETY MEASURES

\* FROM FRONT PAGE

at all. It kept silent on the subject till five months later the Court decided on a verification of the living to find out who were dead—strange procedure to say the least.

The Court entrusted this job to an Inspector of Mines—his name is still not known. This anonymous personality conducted a verification in the presence of an under-manager of the company—where and when nobody knows. This was five months after the mines had been closed when the argument from the workers' side before the Court was almost over. The workers' representatives were, of course, not even informed that such a parade was to take place. The result of the verification—the number of people missing was exactly 176. To what farce can enquiries be reduced to at times.

What is the truth? Or at least the nearest to the truth? There is one way of arriving at it.

Mr. Taneja, speaking about the man power distribution plan during his evidence had said that the variation between the first shift and the second on any day is negligible. On February 19, 1958, 310 workers had gone down the pits in the first shift. It could not have been very much less in the second shift—in fact, there is no evidence to believe that more workers went down because the number of explosives distributed in the second shift was more than in the first. It will be nearer the truth, therefore, to take it that near about three hundred workers got killed in the accident.

This was what New Age had said immediately after the accident and whatever has happened since has only confirmed it. To quote our report of March 2, 1958:

"But enquiries on the spot reveal that there are sufficient grounds to suspect that the official figure is not at all reliable. To quote only one instance.

Sri Sallen Saha, a miner apprentice, reported that he had come out of the pit 45 minutes before the explosion took place. Shortly after that, a contractor had sent down five of the workers employed by him. But, curiously enough, there is no record in the register of their having gone down the pit.

"Worse still, it is reported that the records do not show actually how many Gorakhpuri workers and labourers employed by contractors were inside the mine when the explosion occurred.

"There is thus a very strong basis for the widespread apprehension in the area that the total casualties might be nearer 300 than 200."

Add to this the report which appeared widely in the Calcutta Press: One night in July 1958, trucks belonging to the Bengal Coal Company unloaded dead bodies and human skeletons with bits of flesh still attached to them 18 miles away from Chinakuri along the Grand Trunk Road. Whose bodies were they? Why this nocturnal attempt to dispose off dead bodies? Was this the only case of disposal of dead bodies or were there more such cases?

Can there be any doubt that the Company had right from the beginning tried to conceal the real number of casualties with the full backing of the

Mines Department? And the Court acquiesced in this game. It could not have been otherwise with the type of procedure it adopted.

Space does not permit a detailed report of the procedure adopted by the Court but here are some of the glaring instances—and they are enough to show that what was going on was no enquiry in any sense of the word, enquiry to find out the truth.

None of the workers' representatives or anyone of their nominees were allowed to go down the mines during the dewatering operations to watch it and prevent the tampering or destruction of evidence.

The two most vital witnesses, Mr. Grewal and Mr.

## THE MINES DEPARTMENT CLOSED ITS EYES TO ALL VIOLATIONS

Jabbi of the Mines Department, who not only took all important decisions after the explosion, but dealt with all files regarding the Chinakuri mine prior to the accident, refused to give evidence. The application of the workers' union to the Court to direct them to give evidence was refused because of owners' objection.

Mr. Jabbi did not give evidence but cross-examined all witnesses of the unions. This despite the Union's objection that a top official of the Department should not be allowed to cross-examine the witnesses as they would be afraid to tell the truth. Needless to say, the court which upheld the owners' objections, rejected the union's objection.

We have already mentioned how the Court accepted Mr. Rosser's word against its own neutral observer, Dr. Badami's and how his observations were ruled out even without asking him a question.

The Court accepted most vital evidence from the owners after the argument of the unions was over and did not even care to ask the unions to examine them. Falling into this category is Mr. Rosser's note on a missing exploder. The Court says he found it on July 27 but nothing was mentioned about it till August 29 when the workers' representatives had left the court. On the basis of such evidence produced after the unions had finished their arguments, the Court rejected the contention of the unions.

The Court dismissed the criticism of the union that the Mines Department did not carry out proper preliminary investigation and had colluded with the management to suppress the evidence.

The Enquiry report has made the false statement in para 49 that the Mines Department had discontinued preliminary investigation after the announcement of the setting up of the Court of Enquiry. Records show that the Department was taking statements from the workers in the presence of the manager till April 24, 1958.

The Court visited the Chinakuri mine on a number of occasions along with Company officials and had discus-

sions with them without informing the unions.

The Court discussed vital pieces of evidence with the management, before disclosing them in the open Court.

Various documents were neither produced before the Court, nor were copies given to the unions. Certain documents were marked exhibits after the arguments of the unions were over. Of course, no copies were given to the unions.

One wonders why the Enquiry was instituted at all—if the idea was only to whitewash the owners' crimes.

If this has been the record of the Court of Enquiry, that of the Department of Mines is worse—fully substantiating the charge of collusion with the

## AND THE COURT OF ENQUIRY WHITE-WASHED ALL CRIMES

The Department did not conduct the preliminary investigation properly. It interrogated some of the workers more than once, but no statement was taken from the management side giving them ample time to build up facts to suit their theories. When statements were being taken from the workers, the manager of the Company was allowed to remain inside the room, but unions' representatives were barred.

The Department did not mention in its statement how many people went down in the shift, how many were killed, how many were injured—the first point of any preliminary investigation. Yet all the

records were with the Department after the accident.

The Department did not refer to anyone of the gross violations of the Mines Act, rules, regulations and safety laws—and there were plenty of them as can be seen later.

Just after the accident the Regional Inspector of Mines and five Inspectors of Mines reached the colliery even before the rescue team. But not one of them went down.

The Amlabad Court of Enquiry had recommended "the desirability of inspecting the condition of ventilation by a Mining Engineer and the condition of electric apparatus by an Electrical Engineer (both unconnected with the management and Department of Mines) immediately after an accident should be realised; otherwise such valuable evidence is likely to be lost."

The Department of Mines opposed this and the Industrial Committee on Coal-Mining had agreed to its suggestion that "as it is the function of the Mines Department to investigate into mine accidents, it was considered that the collections of evidence should be left to the Department." Yet in Chinakuri, none went down the mine.

Many, many more such instances can be narrated. And

after reading them, one feels like asking: Is the Department of Mines a part of the Government or has it been turned into a wing of the management?

Guilty are the owners of the Chinakuri mine for the death of these workers.

Just look at these figures from the owners' statement itself: average monthly output in the mine was 1,430 tons in 1955, 4,160 tons in 1956, 7,855 tons up to November 1957, 10,300 tons in December 1957, 11,700 tons in January 1958, and in February, the month of the accident, it was estimated to reach 14,000 tons. This rise in production was not due to any opening up of new working faces in the mine. On the contrary, the number of working faces had become less before the explosion because stone dykes had been encountered in the Eastern District.

How was production being increased then? By a reckless

production drive violating all safety laws and rules and regulations under the Mines Act.

These violations are too many to be listed here. But here are some—enough to show the enormity of the owners' crime.

The registers and records of the mines were false, unreliable and inaccurate; plans did not convey any picture of the mine and were either six months old or unrepresentative; gas was not being cleared from the mines; men had to be withdrawn repeatedly from underground because of accumulation of gas (even on the day of explosion contractors' men had refused to go down and Gorakhpuri labour had been pushed in instead); the treatment of

Roy's finger was pointing to the owners of the Bengal Coal Company, representatives of the Mines Department and Dr. Whitakker, one of the assessors of the Court of Enquiry. Dr. Whitakker, incidentally, was honoured with the Order of the British Empire in 1959.

Kalyan Roy demanded the arrest of the guilty under the laws of the land and walked out of the Conference.

After his walk-out, INTUC delegate E. P. Sinha said that the charges made were serious and supported the demand for a fresh enquiry.

Before he left the Conference, Kalyan Roy gave Deputy Labour Minister Abid Ali, copies of the booklet, *Whitewash-*

ing Enquiry at Chinakuri Coal Mine.

It is a terrible indictment—this book—of the mine-owners, the Department of Mines and the Enquiry Court.

The least of the Government of India should do now is to act quick, arrest the culprits, punish the guilty and nationalise the mines whose owners have behaved so inhumanly. An additional reason is that the Life Insurance Corporation is a major share-holder.

### ALL-INDIA DR. HAREN MUKHERJEE MEMORIAL DEBATE, 1957-58.

The above elocution contest in English on "India's neutrality is conducive to her interest" will be held in the Darbhanga Hall on Friday, the 27th February, 1959, at 2 P. M.

Two silver medals will be awarded to the best debaters of the occasion and presented at the Annual Convocation of 1959.

Applications for entry to the contest from the Heads of Institutions affiliated to Statutory Indian Universities will be received by the Registrar, University of Calcutta, upto Thursday, the 19th February, 1959.

The participants will have to make their own arrangement for travel to the city as well as for their board and lodging.

The medals are being awarded by the SADHANA AUSADHALAYA, Dacca, Bengal.

The Court itself had to remark: "... wherever there was an excess of gas found, it was due to defective ventilation..."; "... proper steps were not always taken in time to dilute gas"; "stone dusting in the mine does not appear to have been adequate even to meet regulations."

Every rule and regulation could wait, every safety measure could wait. But not coal production. That had to be raised. And so hundreds of workers were sacrificed. The owners must be made to answer for this crime. The Department of Mines which closed its eyes to all these violations should be put in the dock.

This was what the miners' leaders demanded when the Mines Safety Conference began in Dhanbad on January 29.

General Secretary of the Indian Mine Workers' Federation Kalyan Roy declared that the Federation representatives could not sit in a conference to discuss the question of safety in mines with people who were guilty of hiding the truth about Chinakuri, who had distorted and suppressed evidence and disposed of dead bodies in secret to hide the real figures of casualties.

For this, they need peace and friendship of all nations of our planet, they declared repeatedly. By now Khrushchov's concluding speech must have been widely read. In India, his remarks on the opening of the Bhilai Plant and on Soviet-Indian friendship must be familiar by now.

plauded the leaders of the international working class.

There was lot of frank and hard-hitting criticism at the Congress. Many delegates pointed out the need for struggle against drunkenness and illicit production of spirits. Consumption of vodka had gone down. This was a healthy sign. But further measures had to be taken in this connection. Khrushchov in his concluding speech supported this and suggested that laws be drafted by the Union Republics and widespread public discussion organised before their promulgation.

Academicians Under Fire

Speakers criticised those academicians who, after becoming life-members of academicians, drew big salaries but ceased to produce any useful scientific work. One such scientist had produced a treatise on the function of sheep's tails. It was suggested that academicians should be elected for a limited period and their terms prolonged on the basis of their work.

Pervukhin, Candidate-Member of the Presidium of the Central Committee, and Saburov, Member of the Central Committee, both spoke at the Congress. Pervukhin declared that on the question of reorganisation of industries, he had been doubtful and had opposed some proposals and supported the attacks of the Anti-Party Group. His wrong position had helped the Group in its plans. But when the demand of change of leadership, Pervukhin did not support the demand.

Saburov declared that the bankruptcy of the Anti-Party Group was now apparent; they had isolated themselves from life. But he himself had shown instability and had criticised Party policy from the position

plans had succeeded it would have meant slowing down of the tempo of development of the Soviet society, serious complications in the international sphere; large-scale building of Communism which the country had undertaken now would have been postponed for a long time.

But the main emphasis of the Congress was on the building up of the country and most of the time was devoted to it. Lavrentiev, Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences, said that the main task before the scientists was to harness thermo-nuclear energy for peaceful construction. He said the energy of natural hot water springs and active volcanoes was to be used to produce electricity on Kamshatka.

Scientific Cooperation

Famous Soviet scientist and Director of the Atomic Energy

Kozlov, member of the Presidium of the Central Committee, gave a detailed report on technical developments and productivity of labour. He said heavy manual labour would be completely liquidated in seven years. All branches of the national economy would be technically re-equipped. The main emphasis would be on large-scale automation and the change-over was going to be a real technical revolution.

The construction of high-speed electronic calculating machines had opened up great possibilities for automation and effective control of production processes. They were a great help in the work of designing planes, rockets and other new machines. The Soviet Union was still behind

MOSCOW, February 9

CONGRESS of builders of Communism is the popular name given here to the 21st Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union which concluded its work in Moscow this week.

The overall impression of anyone who listened to the wonderful symphony of figures of the Seven-Year Plan and the nine-day debate on the Khrushchov Report in the White Marble Hall of the grand Kremlin Palace, is that it was more than anything else the Congress of builders, the Congress of determined united men who have made a great leap from the storming of the Winter Palace to the storming of the Cosmos and who are now beginning another gigantic effort never before attempted by creative human genius. And it was a forum of those who are going to lay the foundations of Communism.

Demonstration Of Unity

Representatives of 72 Parties had attended the Congress and it was a great demonstration of the unity and strength and solidarity of the international Communist Movement on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, he said. All the delegates and representatives of the Brother Parties rose and the whole hall ap-

plauded the leaders of the international working class.

Friendship For India

But one had to be in the Hall of the Congress to feel the tremendous enthusiasm and sincere feeling of friendship for India displayed by all the delegates. I counted that Khrushchov's references to India and his remarks on our strong - as - steel friendship were interrupted ten times by loud and prolonged applause and it became a moving demonstration of friendship between our two countries.

Khrushchov declared that the Seven-Year Plan was the most convincing proof of the peaceful intentions of the Soviet Union. Let the Socialist and capitalist worlds display their goods and show under which system people live

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the United States in the productivity of labour but during the seven years there would be an increase of 45 to 50 per cent in this, he declared.

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NEW AGE

FEBRUARY 15, 1959

PAGE FIFTEEN



## A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT REPORTS

Kerala is astir. Today she is pulsating with a new awakening that has the promise of becoming a mighty movement tomorrow sweeping across the great land of ours. Even a brief stay of barely a week enabled me to feel this new stirring, to have a groping realisation of its great possibilities.

THE day I reached Trivandrum, I saw in cold print that during the Shramdan Week that the Government had sponsored between January 25 and 31, 370 schemes of minor irrigation had been inaugurated, and in each case, the villagers had offered shramdan. This may be an impressive record, but this by itself could hardly convey to me the majesty and the significance of what is happening in Kerala today.

It was only when I saw the Irrigation Minister, Sri V. R. Krishna Iyer and spent over three hours at his home, watching him in his busy chores, that I could get an idea of what has been going on. For, Sri Krishna Iyer is no ordinary Minister, he is a leader of tremendous dynamism, who, at the same time, can feel the pulse of the common people whom he tirelessly tries to serve.

It is no exaggeration to say that practically every one of his working hours is packed with endless jobs, for, it must not be forgotten that he is also the Minister of Home and Law.

As he was talking to his Chief Engineer in the course of his dinner, I could see that in his continuous tours through the countryside, the Minister's eagle eye had not missed whether a ramp for the cattle to cross a bund should be put up at one spot or a salt-water exclusion work should be simultaneously undertaken across a river which he happened to ford only two days ago.

While his officers would point to him the problems and difficulties, Krishna Iyer's only point of insistence—which ultimately prevails—is: "Whatever happens, they must get the water before the sowing." A new spirit has gripped those who are engaged in this venture—which from humble beginnings has grown into a terrific movement.

## THE BEGINNING

A few months ago, the Kerala Government had given the call for a self-help drive to collect green manure. This was the Glyricaeida Week. Then came the promising observance of an Irrigation Week at the beginning of November. The Government also had learnt of the great potentialities of the Rural Electrification Campaign, in which the villagers themselves were called upon to contribute poles and also to put them up.

The budget allocation for minor irrigation projects used to lapse because of the insurmountable red tape and legal quibblings about the method and the manner of sanctioning Government money. Very often funds used to lapse because of delay. Besides, there was often the wire-pulling by powerful interests. As a result the priorities were commonly known to have been decided upon the basis of family connections than the actual necessities of the local people.

So, when Sri Krishna Iyer took up the portfolio of Minor Irrigation, one of his first acts was to call a meeting of

MLAs and engineers of one district where a pilot scheme had been taken up. "I found that the mist was clearing up," he added.

It was about this time that the Communist Party itself decided upon a large-scale self-help drive which could mobilise the people cutting across all party barriers.

One could get an idea of the new approach by attending any of the District Conferences, spread over four weeks from the middle of December to the middle of January. Here came all the Panchayat Presidents of the District, all the M.P.s and MLAs of the District, all labour contract societies (replacing the contractors), also Block Development Officers, the Revenue officers and Irrigation officers and Collectors. Also invited to these Conferences were the Secretaries of the taluk committees of all political parties.

The Minister himself, presiding over them, would take up each scheme for minor irrigation in the District: first, those which had been checked up by the engineers. He would ask the Revenue officer or the Collector to state how many days they would take to sanction it. Then and there he fixed the next point in the sanctioning process, down to the date, time and details for the inaugural function.

The red tape was literally cut, for the officers were asked not to go through the elaborate ritual of despatch and postal communication but approach each other direct and speed up the preliminaries.

In the matter of making the grants, the contract system was totally eliminated. The Panchayats got the first priority; next came the labour contract societies (which are really cooperatives of labourers to get the contract for construction work); where there were no Panchayat or labour contract societies forthcoming, any other cooperative could be recognised for the purpose; and last of all, even a committee of villagers chosen by a meeting called by the Block Development Officer could be accepted for the purpose of being entrusted with a particular scheme.

## HEROIC EFFORT

It was almost heroic—the way the Irrigation Minister got round all the elaborate rules normally followed for the grant of money. Sri Krishna Iyer told me: "I must get at the job. If I can't break through, I try to bypass." Previously, the contractors had to deposit earnest money to get an assignment. But now the Panchayats have been given as much as 33 per cent advance to get on with the job, while in the case of co-operatives and other ad hoc

committees, the advance was up to 25 per cent.

The general rule followed was that only such schemes would be immediately undertaken where the villagers were prepared to contribute roughly 25 per cent of the labour necessary for the project through shramdan. "Back up your demands with your muscles," has been the slogan.

I have come across heartening examples of spontaneous enthusiasm on the part of the villagers. One Panchayat President, for instance, said he could give no shramdan but would donate money. The labour contract society of a neighbouring village interrupted him and offered 200 volunteers for shramdan and asked him to keep back his money. The Panchayat President was nonplussed but at once reacted and said he too would do shramdan and get his own villagers to offer it.

I heard of a Communist MLA who did not attend the District Irrigation Conference. So at the Party meeting, he was asked to explain his absence. He replied that the Panchayat President who was to have accompanied him had not turned up. The Panchayat

Hanging on the wall above me in the Minister's room was a photo with the inscription—"Kindangood Lift Irrigation Scheme Opening—An Achievement—that had failed to materialise for the last 30 years."

Actually many of the Ministers themselves have participated in this shramdan; these include Sri C. Achutha Menon, Sri Joseph Mundasserry, Sri Majid, Sri Chathan, Sri K. P. Gopalan, besides Sri Krishna Iyer himself. And of course these were also the indomitable veteran, A. K. Gopalan.

The movement has cut across party barriers. "The thawing process has at last set in," commented a prominent Kerala leader. From Trivandrum to Kasargode in the north, all political parties are joining this great venture.

At Chittari in Hosdrug Taluq, an anecdote is to be built. The Kisan Sabha offered 3,000 shramdanis. At once, the Kisan Panchayat (run by the PSP) promised 3,000 more. And this happened at a village meeting presided over by a PSP MLA.

Ten miles from Trivandrum, the local Kisan

I came across the case of a well-known Communist leader taking the constables for shramdan in the same police van which in the past had carried him as a prisoner for political activities.

The consciousness of the engineers themselves has been changing. They too are getting a democratic approach. You can find an engineer with a lantern in hand moving through the fields, checking up the schemes. They are feeling that they too have a role to play in this people's movement. They are truly becoming "people's engineers" as one leader put it to me.

Today the most praised government servant in Kerala is the Irrigation Engineer and it is not a rare sight to find him being loaded with garlands that the villagers bring in their effusion and gratitude.

With this enthusiasm, the engineers also go in for improvisation and effecting economy. Their latent initiative and resourcefulness come up and they are learning as much from the people's direct experiences as they had learnt from their books and official directives.

## THE SAVING

The arithmetic of shramdan fetches in more resources for developmental activity. One small example may be given: normally when the contractors used to be called, the practice was to add 15 per cent as contractors' profit above the schedule price to come to an assessment of the cost of a project. Now, 25 per cent is deducted as it comes through shramdan and in place of the contractors' 15 per cent, hardly ten per cent has to be allocated for the labour contract cooperatives. Roughly, each scheme effects a saving of one-third.

This way the newly-formed labour contract societies receive a new impetus and no room is left for contractors.

This way too the small but effective contribution of the villagers is pooled, the rural resources—particularly in labour—are mopped up. "It is by these methods that we have to think of garnering the resources for the Third Five-Year Plan," observed the Minister.

As their experience grows, the villagers came forward with improved technique and better skill. I heard that at Edacheri near Kozhikode, 90 days' work of rural electrification was done by the villagers in nine days. At first, they were only putting up the poles, but watching the technicians they themselves picked up the job of fixing the wires on the poles. It was here that the villagers came and garlanded everyone of the staff from the linesman to the engineer.

I heard of another instance where the difficult job of putting up a river bund in flowing water was done by the villagers themselves engaged in shramdan.

And the buoyancy with which they work often lead the villagers to do better than the contractors. At one place, the Kisan Sabha volunteers were found to be filling the huge lorries with earth, each in one-and-a-half minutes

\* SEE PAGE 13

## KERALA ASTIR

President, when asked about his absence, said he had never expected that conferences could decide anything more than passing good resolutions.

Both the MLA and the Panchayat President are having a difficult time, because the villagers feel that the claims of their area could have been pressed harder if they had attended. But both of them have already made up for their absence by devoting wholeheartedly to shramdan work.

In the area from which this MLA comes, 27 minor irrigation works are going on and everybody, Congress, PSP and Communists, are working shoulder to shoulder. In Malabar, I am told, out of the actual turn-out of five lakhs, one lakh and 25 thousand are on shramdan basis. At Quilon, the Communist Party's Committee has decided that every Party Member has to do one day's shramdan a week.

## FLOOD OF REPORTS

If you look at the Communist daily, Deshabhimani, you will find that the paper cannot cope with the flood of reports pouring in from every corner of the State about the shramdan drive. All the dailies of Kerala have brought out Irrigation Supplements.

The psychological impact of this drive has been tremendous, the people have come to feel that something tangible will come up. "The people in our country have lost faith in the Government's promises," Sri Krishna Iyer remarked, "and this is true of entire India. And we have to sneak through this deadening grip of disbelief."

"We must create in this country, a people who should have the confidence to execute work by themselves and gain from their own experience."

Sabha organised shramdan for the renovation of a local tank. When the Minister visited the place, he found that the rival Kisan Panchayat wanted a different tank to be renovated. There are actually three tanks in the area and the Minister called for the renovation of all the three tanks; and so, there was great enthusiasm and Communist, PSP and every group are on the job.

In North Wynad, at the Kaniyaram project, a Catholic priest participated in shramdan. The President of the local Panchayat is a landlord who had at first objected to the channel being dug through his own land. But he too was infected by the enthusiasm and joined in.

A Congress MLA had indulged in a rather unseemly joke in the Assembly last year saying that these Ministers were good for nothing but producing comfort for themselves. Today he is so overwhelmed by this new atmosphere that he considers this drive as coming from a people's Government.

Among the participants at some places could be seen government employees and Auxiliary Cadet Corps.

## GARLANDS FOR POLICE

In fact, it has affected the bureaucracy as well. The police are participating in large numbers in shramdan and the Minister himself pointed out that shovels are replacing the lathis in the hands of the police today. The Malabar Special Police which has a record of brutal oppression in the past, has offered to volunteer for shramdan on a regular quota basis.

The very police who have indulged in beating up the people and even shooting them down have at places been garlanded for their participation in shramdan.