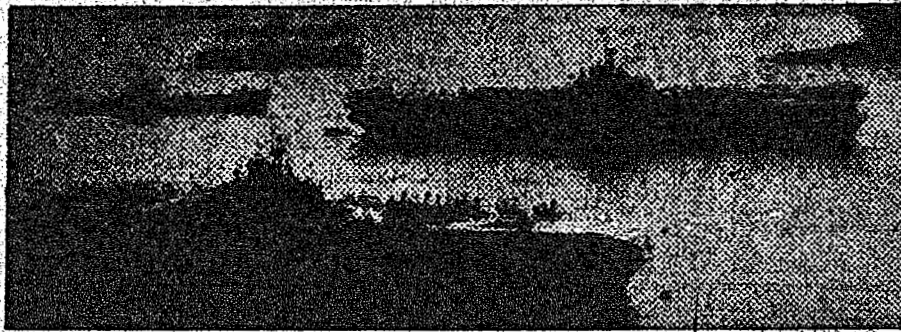


U.S. SEVENTH FLEET



An aerial photograph of a part of the 7th Fleet

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NEW AGE

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25 nP

THE BATTLE AGAINST THE SEVENTH FLEET'S ENTRY INTO THE INDIAN OCEAN IS ON. PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS ARE BEING ORGANISED IN COUNTRY AFTER COUNTRY. GOVERNMENT LEADERS ARE MAKING KNOWN THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE US AUTHORITIES.

LAST Saturday, Prime Minister NEHRU read out a statement in the Rajya Sabha, which went somewhat beyond his earlier regrettable efforts to underplay the significance of the US decision to extend the operations of the Seventh Fleet to the Indian Ocean. The Prime Minister made at least one categorical statement:

"To prevent misgivings, however, I would like to take this occasion to state emphatically, that while we are glad to take assistance from friendly countries in our defence build-up, there is no question of any foreign ships or foreign troops or foreign aircraft partaking in the actual defence of the country. This defence will be effected only by the Indian armed forces and the people of India."

Attempt To Underplay

This was a welcome assurance. That it had to be given was a sign of the realisation by government, however belatedly, of the deep consternation that the Prime Minister's earlier statements had created not only in India, but all over the world.

The Prime Minister's statements in the Rajya Sabha also indicated that govern-

ment had not yet said the final word on the question of the Seventh Fleet's activities in the Indian ocean. It was considered important that the Prime Minister emphasised that "if more information becomes available, we shall certainly consider the matter further in the light of such information."

The only "information" which the government of In-

dia insists that it has received is that of "a cruise by a few US naval ships in the Indian Ocean" (1), as the Prime Minister stated last Saturday. The object of this cruise: "becoming acquainted with the seas in this region." (1)

The Prime Minister's statement makes it clear that government would reconsider its attitude if it received "information" that it was not just a "cruise", but the "continuous presence of US naval forces in the Indian ocean, of a task force with nuclear potential, permanently posted there."

The Indian people are

aghast at the self-imposed blindness of the authorities. For months on end, all governments in the region have been sounded about the US proposal to extend the operations of the Seventh Fleet. General Maxwell Taylor made a special mention of the Seventh Fleet's new operations in a conversation with the Prime Minister himself.

What was the necessity

cruise, which government would have us believe that it is.

Misleading Argument

Again it is to mislead the people of India to describe an operation by the Seventh Fleet as one by "a few US naval ships." The record of the Seventh Fleet is sufficiently well known to the Prime Minister for him to understand its special role and distinguish its operations from those of just some naval craft or the other.

The argument that the

The Baltimore Sun (December 23) gave a clear indication of the "conditions" which the US imperialists wish to impose on India. In return for their "aid". Apart from surrender on Kashmir and the grant of virtual monopoly to the USA in supply of defence needs, the "conditions" include, ominously enough:

"Some willingness to join with the United States in containing Communism in South East Asia."

The Baltimore Sun knows the US imperialists' mind. If the Government of India does not come out categorically and clearly in the earliest future, denouncing the entry of the Seventh Fleet into the Indian Ocean, other governments and peoples in South East Asia will certainly consider that India is virtually giving its assent to the US move, and thus acting as a willing partner in the imperialists' designs in this region.

Keep India's Image Clear

India's image must not be blackened. No grist must be provided for the anti-Indian propaganda mill.

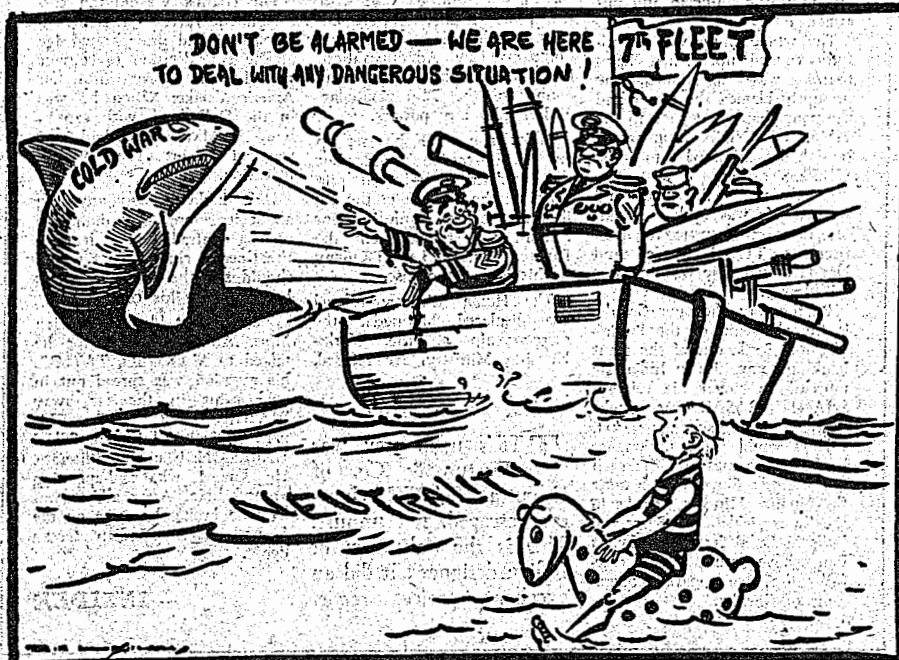
If those in authority refuse to do their duty by informing the US government

ocean outside our territorial waters is "open to the naval vessels of the United States as to the naval vessels of any other country"—is again, to say the least, fantastic. Who claimed that the ocean was not legally "open"? But this argument seeks in fact to justify and endorse the Seventh Fleet's advent into the Indian Ocean.

THE GOVERNMENT OF



INDIAN OCEAN



INDIA MUST REALISE THAT ITS DANGEROUS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SEVENTH FLEET HAS BLACKENED ITS IMAGE IN ASIA AND AFRICA AND ALL OVER THE WORLD.

Chinese Propaganda

The Chinese press has been quick to suggest, as always, that India's hesitations and vacillations on this urgent question arise from the offers of US "aid". And the latest news from the USA of plans for long-term military "aid" for India will not help to counter the Chinese propaganda, which has been given a new fillip, following the government of India's weak and hesitant stand on the Seventh Fleet.

of India's determination to keep the Seventh Fleet out of the Indian Ocean—then the Indian people must take this duty upon themselves.

● Let every patriotic son and daughter of this land raise his or her voice against the menace of the Seventh Fleet. This land is ours. It is NOT for sale.

● We refuse to be black-mailed and pressurised into selling our honour and our sovereignty, our independence and our policies.

● Let Uncle Sam know now: India shall never join the US imperialists in "containing" the fighting peoples of South-East Asia. On the contrary, India will join hands with all other peoples of the region, in "containing" US imperialism and all that goes with it.

by
Romesh Chandra

SCANDAL IN CAPITAL

Congress Bosses, Coops and Profiteering

★ From Our Special Correspondent

DELHI, December 23: Capital city of Delhi has recently felt the worst ever scarcity of essential commodities like sugar and gur, despite the fact that quantities released for sale are much larger than ever before (Delhi's quota has gone up from 60,000 to 80,000 bags per month).

CORNERING of stocks and smuggling out of Delhi have assumed alarming proportions. Wholesale traders and other vested interests as usual have been fattening with impunity on the exorbitant profits made out of artificial scarcity conditions created by them.

But what has really shocked the people all over the country are the allegations of profiteering in gur by the Delhi State Central Co-operative Store. This "Co-operative" is headed by the virtual "dictator" of the Pradesh Congress, CHOWDHURY BRAHM PERKASH, MP.

Out of roughly 1000 tons of gur allotted to Delhi for November 1963, 300 tons were allotted to the Store, which having paid a declared price (allegedly on the high side) of Rs. 59 per quintal sold it at Rs. 85 per quintal.

This price, according to a statement made by Chowdhury Brahm Perkash in the Lok Sabha, was fixed as a part of "business strategy", when on the same dates another syndicate was selling gur at Rs. 67

per quintal. So scandalous became the conduct of this cooperative store that the matter was repeatedly raised and debated in Parliament as well as in the Delhi Municipal Corporation. In fact, in the minds of the people, scarcity of gur and profiteering by the Co-operative and the Congress bosses have become synonyms.

Questions have been correctly posed: Will profiteering by the Stores be overlooked because it is a Co-operative Society? Or because influential Congress leaders are involved? Or because it is a "business strategy" worked out by a cooperative society to fleece the people and profiteer on their misery?

Small traders, on their failure to exhibit the price lists, had been arrested under the Defence of India Rules! Will the co-operative store and its Congress bosses be treated differentially and leniently?

Members of Parliament and the Delhi Municipal Corporation were restive and wanted a clearcut policy statement to the effect that the cooperative store will not be spared, that

both legal and administrative action will be taken against it, that no amount of political pressure of the Congress bosses will be permitted to shield the culprits.

And the entire Opposition joined hands and together with certain Congressmen, were able to secure these assurances from the Food and Agriculture Minister, SWARAN SINGH, from his Deputy, from the Home Minister as well as from the Chief Commissioner of Delhi.

A case has since been registered and handed over to the Special Police for investigation under the Essential Commodities Act.

But this has as yet failed to meet all the doubts raised earlier not only because proceedings have not yet been initiated, but also because, from the names mentioned in the press, the real culprits-in-chief seem still out of reach.

The story of the gur scandal of the cooperative store is a story of alleged contraventions, crimes and contradictions. The cooperative store dedicated to hold the price line, is itself accused of

profiteering and of immoral and illegal conduct, of being responsible for artificially raising prices and indulging in black-market.

It is alleged that gur was actually purchased from Muzaffarnagar and Barot (in U.P.) at Rs. 45 to Rs. 52 per quintal, when receipts and records show a purchase price of Rs. 59 or so. It is alleged that the freight paid at Rs. 7 to Rs. 8 per quintal over a distance of about 50 to 60 miles, is unreal despite the corruption money that may have been paid and was paid according to Chowdhury Brahm Perkash for having the railway wagons allocated.

Confused by the onslaught and the exposure of its misdeeds, officers of the store have been making contradictory statements.

Whereas Chairman of the store, Chowdhury Brahm Perkash in his Lok Sabha speech on December 4, and subsequently at his press conference on December 6, assumed full responsibility for the high sale price as a strategy, the Managing Director of the store, RAMLAL, a member of the Corporation however, declared that it was a case of genuine mistake by way of miscalculation and that some employee responsible for the same had been sacked. The lady secretary of the store, of course, pleads ignorance; her alibi is that she has to carry out the orders of the Board.

One wonders whether the bosses are now trying to cook up stories in order to find a scapegoat!

The store is an association of individuals described as a company under the Essential Commodities Act (Section 10) and as such it is the store, its directors, who have to be legally proceeded against. It is hoped that no one who has connived at the offence will be spared.

The gur scandal of the cooperative store has, however, merely brought into the headlines, allegations of persistent shady deals in most of the other commodities in the distribution of which the store has enjoyed near-monopoly. Distribution of steel, camphor, coal, sugar, butter, certain imported goods by the Store—all have at various stages been associated with various scandals.

And it is thus the demand of all sections of opinion in Delhi that a thorough probe is required into the affairs of the Store, its working and all commodities entrusted to it for distribution. It is well known that coal, gur, steel have not been sold by the store to consumers, but also have found their way into the black-market.

The Delhi State Council of the Communist Party, in a letter addressed to the Prime Minister on December 13, demanded a high level inquiry. All opposition members in the Corporation had earlier supported a resolution moved by Communist leader Prem Sagar Gupta, demanding a thorough probe into the affairs of the Store. And various other parties and organisations in the City have repeated the same request.

STRUGGLE AGAINST ERODING WAGES CAMPAIGN STARTS IN KERALA

★ From S. Sharma

As the clarion call from Bombay reverberates throughout the length and breadth of the country demanding control of price of essential articles, increased DA and bonus and nationalisation, the stirrings of a movement in the distant villages and towns of Kerala are being felt.

A public meeting held under the auspices of the Kozhikode mandalam committee of the Communist Party and the trade unions in the city appealed to workers, peasants and middle classes to unitedly agitate and demand the supply of essential articles of foodstuffs at controlled price through fair price shops and cash compensation to the working population to offset the rising cost of living.

The meeting criticised the complacent attitude taken by the state and union governments in this regard.

In Quilon district, a broad-based movement under the joint auspices of the Communist Party and the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the trade unions of the AITUC and UTUC affiliations, is rising against the steep rise in price.

Batches of leaders of these organisations, ranging from 10 to 101, will demonstrate in front of the collectorate, taluq and village offices by going on a token one day fast on December 23. In these demonstrations and fast, elected members of the local panchayats will take a leading part.

The Ernakulam district council of the Communist Party and the trade unions of the AITUC are launching a campaign with an

inaugural rally and demonstration on December 19 at Ernakulam.

In Trivandrum, the capital of Kerala, as many as 500 delegates to the Seventh All-India Conference of Telephone and Telegraph Employees Union set the pace for this campaign by staging an impressive and colourful demonstration throughout the city with placards and slogans echoing the above demands among others.

The rally was conducted as part of the concluding session of the joint conference. The open session of the conference was held under the chairmanship of V.S.R. ANJANEYALU, and inaugurated by ALEXANDER PARAMBHITHARA, Speaker of the Kerala Assembly.

Anjaneyalu touched upon the burning problems facing the working class such as increased DA and bonus, cancellation of victimisation, and democratisation of administration.

Member of the P&T Board Sen Gupta who participated in the conference assured that before the ensuing budget session, a final review of the cases of victimised P&T personnel will be made by the Board sympathetically.

The conference adopted resolutions demanding effective steps to control prices increased DA and scientific basis for the fixation of the cost of living index.

BURDWAN BYELECTIONS

Victory Of Correct Policies

CPI GREETS ALL VOTERS

The Central Secretariat of the Communist Party of India has issued the following statement on December 25:

THE Communist Party of India sends its hearty congratulations and thanks to the voters of the Assembly and Parliament constituencies in Burdwan who have returned the Communist candidate Benoy Chowdhury to the Assembly and the Independent Communist-supported candidate N. C. Chatterjee to Parliament. Both seats were previously held by the Congress.

These victories are victories for the national mass policies of the Communist Party. They are the decisive answer to the Right reactionary attacks on our Party.

The electorate has refused to be swayed by anti-Communist lies and demagoguery. The correct policies pursued by the Communist Party and its patriotic service of the nation and of the people have been endorsed by the Burdwan

electorate. The Burdwan vote is an indictment of the anti-people policies pursued by the Congress governments.

The victories in Burdwan are victories specially for the positive slogans and demands of the Communist Party in regard to the key issues today facing the peasants, the working class and other patriotic sections of people in our country.

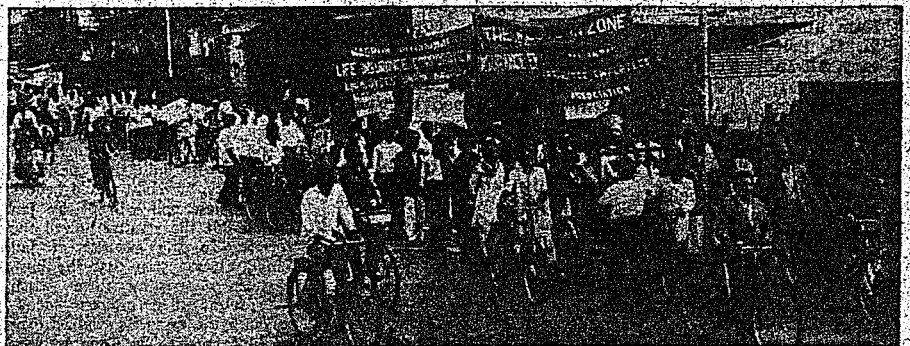
The peasantry, compelled to sell its paddy at Rs. 10 to 12 per maund, was bitterly indignant to see that there was hardly any upper limit to the price of rice when sold to the consumers in Calcutta. It had helplessly watched the vast profits being grabbed by middlemen and rice-millers. It enthusiastically responded to the Party's slogan of fair price to the grower and elimination of

profiteering in people's food.

The mass of people were fed up with the rapidly worsening conditions of their lives and saw the way out in the Party's call for mass mobilisation, mass actions for bonus, dearness allowance and fair prices as immediate relief and the adoption of the policy of nationalisation of banks, export and import trade, etc.

The victories in Burdwan are also an endorsement of the demand raised by the Communist Party throughout the country for the immediate release of all Communist detenus still in prison.

The Burdwan victory should give greater confidence to all progressive elements, including those inside the Congress itself, to whom it must mean the strengthening of the fight against reaction inside and outside the Congress, and for new policies which lead to tangible advance in the status and life of the common people.



Insurance employees' demonstration, Nagpur (Page 13 for report)