

BIHAR BELONGS TO HINDUS, MUSLIMS BOTH

Behind The Slogan Of Transfer Of Population

PEOPLE'S AGE

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In Bihar the riots are over. But the aftermath of riots is as terrible as the riots themselves.

YOU will see this aftermath and what it was in any of the refugee camps you may visit. Three to four lakhs of Muslims were affected in the five riot-ridden districts of Patna, Chapra, Monghyr, Bhagalpur and Gaya. Nearly one lakh of them—men, women and children—are refugees, homeless, uprooted from the soil. At least another lakh are panic-stricken and may at any moment join the army of refugees.

The refugees are going through hell—of that there are no two opinions. The food is bad, they have very few clothes, sanitation is almost nil. But more than anything else, the refugees suffer because they see no future ahead of them. Go back to the villages from which they had been hounded? The very thought makes them shudder. Then what?

'Migrate'

It has been in this situation of terror and panic and acute physical and mental suffering that the leaders of the Muslim League—rich and prosperous gentlemen coming from other Provinces—have put across the slogan: MIGRATE.

Premier Suhrawardy of Bengal opened a refugee camp at Asansol. The League began its propaganda: You are suffering here in Bihar's camps—go to Asansol, where a Muslim Ministry will give you shelter, milk for your children, food and clothes.

The refugees saw a glimmer of hope in their words and began migrating en masse.

The next step was obvious. Suhrawardy in a letter to Mr. Jaffar Imam, the Bihar League leader, declared that he could arrange to settle 50,000 Muslims in Panagarh. At the same time, he pledged to do all in his power to settle lakhs of Muslims in Bengal.

The same offer was repeated by Mr. Abul Hashem (Bengal League Secretary) and others who came to Bihar.

This appealed to the distressed and terrified Muslim masses and they saw in this proposal the only way to save themselves.

Congress Attitude

What has been the attitude which Congressmen and the Congress Ministry have taken towards this slogan?

There is no doubt that the Ministry made sincere efforts to provide relief for the refugees. But they relied only on the official machinery, and the Congress as an organisation appeared nowhere in relief work. On the contrary, the Ministry was so scared that the League top-leaders bullied it into handing over to them the management of all refugee camps.

As a result, the Congress was not able through relief work to restore the confidence of the Muslim masses.

When Pandit Nehru visited Bihar, he carried out an intensive campaign for peace and unity. Bihar's Congressmen did not follow his lead. No Congress campaign of any sort—not to speak of a Congress-League joint campaign—was launched.

Whatever Congressmen did was done as part of the administrative plan of the Ministry in cooperation with the bureaucracy and this could not in any way help in restoring any sense of security among the Muslims.

Ordinances were passed which aimed at helping to restore the refugees to their homes, and

by **Sunit Mukherji**

Congressmen felt that the Ministry had done all that anybody could possibly do.

Today they see that despite all the ordinances, refugees are not returning home, but they do not realise that this reluctance to go back arises from the refugees really not being able to see any real security for themselves behind a string of ordinances and laws. Congressmen attribute the failure of their ordinances entirely to the migration propaganda of the League, but make no effort to understand WHY that propaganda is effective.

Faith In Ordinances

While Congressmen are placing all their faith in ordinances to restore unity, already nearly FIFTY THOUSAND Muslims have migrated to Bengal.

Of course, the League leaders are delighted at this turn of events. But not one of them has given the slightest thought

and that the Muslim peasants there are starving. Why not go to the Punjab or Sind?

At once came the reply: "Those Provinces are so far away from home." And then they burst out feelingly and described their happy past in their village homes, how they really did not want to leave, but in the present situation nothing else could save them.

'Who Wants To Leave?'

I continued the discussion and asked them if it was not a fact that their Hindu neighbours actually helped them to save their lives and evacuate. They admitted that this was so, and then after thinking for a moment said that they would not hesitate to go back if only they felt sure they would be safe. They concluded by telling me:

"Who after all wants to leave his home, unless he is compelled to do so?"

Another poignant scene I witnessed while travelling, convinced me that the job of rehabilitating these uprooted peasants can be done.

About four Muslim families were travelling in the Delhi Express bound for Howrah. When I asked them where they were going, I learnt that they were

stand both the problems and what we have achieved.

● TARAPUR area in Monghyr district was swept by the riot. Mass evacuation of Muslims took place. But in one village—MAJHGAIN—forty Muslim families remained behind—safe and contented.

Why did this happen? What was there in Majhgain which was not there in other villages?

The fact is that in Majhgain, under the Communist leadership, the Hindus and Muslims united, kept together, the Hindus guaranteeing the safety of the Muslims.

And today, refugees from villages which are near Majhgain are returning home, on the assurance of the united Hindus and Muslims of Majhgain that they will be safe. The actual, practical example of Majhgain gives them confidence and a sense of security.

Active Intervention

● In the thanas of Lakhiserai, Sheikhpura and Barbigha in Monghyr district, the riot could not break out because of the active intervention of the Kisan Sabha and Congress and Communist workers.

But there were stray stabblings and as the news of the surrounding areas poured in, panic grew fast. Evacuation and migration began to be discussed. But im-

Sabha together campaigned, formed village committees and prevented migration).

● In Paliganj in Patna district, though there were no riots, forty families migrated to Bengal at the call of the League. But they were left stranded at Asansol and have come back. The welcome they have received from their neighbours and the treatment they received outside their homes have made them firm campaigners against migration.

Workers Stand Firm

● In Bihar Sharif, the worst affected area, 4,000 birt workers—Hindus and Muslims—are working together in the same sheds. Some of the workers did evacuate, but the majority remained behind, thanks to the real intervention of their union.

● At the Bata Factory, near Patna, though there are 150 Muslim workers from Noakhali itself, the workers have remained united. The Muslim workers genuinely placed before the union their fear of an attack from the surrounding villages and said that they would be forced to evacuate, unless they felt confident that they would be safe.

To ensure their safety the Communists immediately started an active campaign in the neighbouring villages.

● In the Monghyr Tobacco Factory, the union leaders (both Congressmen and Communists) worked to prevent migration and succeeded not only in keeping Hindus and Muslims together at work, but were able to start a united fight against the owners for better living conditions, right during the days of the worst panic.

Even where we had done no previous work, as in Nagarnaussa area (in Patna district), Communist squads went out and campaigned and met with so much response that Hindu kisans came forward and offered to rebuild the homes of the refugee Muslim kisans and restore to them all the looted property they could find, if only they would return home.

What Should Be Done

These are all first glimpses of what can be done—even by a small organised body like the Communist Party. Much more can be done by the Congress with its wide influence throughout Bihar provided it realises that ordinances by themselves cannot help.

Real practical help, restoration of confidence by active joint Congress-League cam-

(Continued on page 2.)

Congress Can Rebuild Unity Of Bihar's Villages

to the problem of settling so many persons in Bengal. Suhrawardy, of course, extended an invitation and promised help to all who cared to come to Bengal—but that was mere politics.

And today the refugees are lying in camps in Bengal, their condition even worse than what it was in Bihar.

Congressmen turn a blind eye to this migration and console themselves by saying that it is quite normal for the landless and unemployed to migrate to Bengal.

This, of course, is true. But to dismiss today's migration as only the "normal" migration, is to be blind to the reality that unless we can stop this migration now and quick, there will be a permanent breach in Bihar and civil war will become a permanent part of Bihar.

While Congress and League leaders give the refugees conflicting directions, what are the refugees themselves feeling, what do they want to do—return to their own villages, migrate or what?

The Leaguers vociferously assert that the refugees want to migrate. Congressmen equally categorically assert that the refugees are anxious to get back home, only League propaganda and activity prevent them from doing so.

Inside Refugee Camps

I wanted to get at the truth for myself and so I went to the refugee camps and met them myself.

In one refugee camp, I met nearly twenty-five refugees, mostly peasants and agricultural labourers. At the start, when I began discussing their problems with them, they shut up and would not talk and began to look at me with suspicion. Why should I, a non-Muslim, be so sympathetic?

But I was soon able to convince them of my genuine desire to learn their problems and we started discussing their present and their future. They said that they were migrating to Bengal as that alone could save them. I pointed out to them that Bengal is a poor Province

migrating to Bengal. They did not know exactly what they would be made to do, where they would be settled. They were apprehensive of their future.

But even then they were going because a Muslim Ministry is in power there. When the train passed through Fatwa, one old man with tears in his eyes pointed out the road leading to his village where his forefathers had lived and where he had been living in peace and complete amity with his neighbours for the last 55 years. He had his three acres of land and two bullocks. And now he was leaving it all behind.

They Would Come Back

When I intervened and began to talk to them, the old man and a few others burst into tears, saying repeatedly that they would come back the moment the situation permitted.

Another incident will help you to understand better the feelings of the refugees. Three elderly Muslims from Bachhwarra in the northern part of the district of Monghyr came to the Communist Party office in a panic and discussed the problem of migration. On the advice of some local League workers and the only rich Muslim in their area, they were ready to migrate.

But after a lot of discussion, we were able to make them see that the slogan of migration is only a slogan of power-politics and that it is not in the interest of the Muslim masses. They accepted our advice and decided against migration.

So much for the refugees. They do not want to migrate. They CAN be persuaded not to do so. But what about them among whom they have to live? Will they receive them back?

The Communist Party, the Kisan Sabha and the trade unions are in the midst of a campaign all over Bihar trying to build unity, to tackle the awful spectre of migration. Here are a few glimpses of our work. Our experiences will help to under-

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What Happened At Garhmukteshwar

O. P. Sangat

COMMUNIST INITIATIVE TO RESTORE PEACE

Our Correspondent's Full Story

At the Meerut Session of Congress, Sardar Patel raised the slogan: "Sword shall be met with sword." To understand what this slogan means in practice, Congressmen did not have to look to Noakhali and Bihar. The shadow of Garhmukteshwar hung over the entire Congress Session.

MADE extensive enquiries about the Garhmukteshwar incidents and met several correspondents of the Nationalist dailies, a U.P. Minister and those Communist workers who were present in the Garhmukteshwar Mela and who did their best to save human lives.

All these were agreed on one point: that the riot at the fair and the attack on the town were both well-organised affairs.

RSS Responsible

The Congress Minister mentioned above refused to specify who was responsible for the organisation of these riots. But Major-General Shah Nawaz of the INA in a statement held the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Singh (RSS) responsible for it and some other Congressmen shared his view.

One of them told me that a few days before these riots a big rally of RSS was held at Meerut, which was presided over by Rai Bahadur Gajar Mal Modi, notorious owner of several mills and factories at Begamabad, (also called Modinagar), district Meerut. Very provocative speeches were made at this meeting and people were called upon to avenge Noakhali.

Another gentleman who should be in the know of things told me that the Rohtak, Delhi and Meerut branches of the RSS sent their volunteers to the Garh Mela. It is reported the leaders had their plans ready but the volunteers were not informed where they were going. They were only told that they had to go to some unknown destination and should carry enough warm clothing with them.

Well-Organised

Communist workers who were themselves present in the Mela also told me that with their own eyes they saw members of the RSS and some volunteers of the Mahabir Dal of the Punjab organizing street-corner meetings and small processions in the Mela and heard them delivering inflammatory speeches and shouting provocative slogans.

I do not propose here to describe how the massacre took

place at the fair, how later the mob attacked Garhmukteshwar town. But I will stress one fact.

Eighty per cent of the total population of the minority community of about 2,000 in this town had in the last elections voted against the League and for the Nationalist candidate. The Congress Minister I met at Meerut told me that none of these 2,000 were to be found in the town after the riots but he could not tell me how many were killed and how many managed to escape.

Among the killed was Maulvi Nuruddin, a leading Congressman of the district. I feel that all patriots should know and remember these facts.

Police Absent

At Garhmukteshwar the riot had begun on November 6. By the evening of November 8 cases of assault had taken place in Meerut City too. But there were very few policemen to be seen patrolling the streets even on November 9.

As the number of assaults increased, the rationing system in the city collapsed and the municipal administration came to a standstill. Day-time curfew was clamped on the city. But the stabbings continued in spite of it and other repressive orders and went on for full five days.

In fact, a correspondent of a leading Nationalist daily of Delhi was of the opinion that during the riots there was a virtual breakdown of civil administration in the Meerut dis-

trict. He told me, "It might not have been sinful or communally inspired, but it certainly revealed utter negligence." He gave the following instances:

● The military was sent very late to Garhmukteshwar. There are reports that military officers demanded that they should be handed over the entire administration and all power in the affected areas before they would agree to send their force. After a lot of haggling between civil and military authorities some two or three platoons were sent.

Military Negligence

● The riot stopped for some time on the first day but owing to indifference and negligence on the part of the military that was posted on the road between the fair and the town, a mob succeeded in raiding the town on the second day.

The correspondent ended by saying that the Ministry was entirely non-communal and sincere in its attempts to check riots but was not getting sufficient cooperation from the services.

But the Minister of the U.P. Government whom I saw at Meerut denied this. He said that the Ministry's relations with the military have been consistently very good.

"But," he continued, "because of tension all over and the need of military everywhere, we could not send adequate forces to Garhmukteshwar. Even in the Meerut cantonment, sufficient forces were not available when the need was urgent."

However, the Minister could not give any satisfactory explanation about the negligence shown by the contingent that was sent to Garhmukteshwar. In fact, when I questioned him on this point, his self-confident tone disappeared and it became obvious that he was hastily searching for some explanation.

But he could not do more than give such excuses as:

"How could the police know that next day the town would be attacked? How could the military check people from infiltrating into the town?" And finally he admitted that "they were helpless before that huge mob."

But many among the common people—Hindus and Muslims—did not feel helpless even when faced with such mammoth mobs of rioters.

● At the Garhmukteshwar fair itself many Hindu peasants, a large number of Jat peasants among them, successfully saved their Muslim co-villagers and other Muslims by dressing them in female clothes. They brought them home safely along with the women of their family. To give only one name, Munshi Nandkishore of Pilukhwa, district Meerut, thus saved the lives of a dozen of his fellow-villagers.

People Save Lives

● In the city of Meerut also the good sense of the common people saved many lives. Thus Mian Munne, Mohammad Yaha and another Muslim Municipal Commissioner rescued many Hindus; a number of Hindu homes gave shelter to their isolated Muslim neighbours. Three young Muslim Communists living in the storm-centre of riots fought hard all the five days against the goondas of their own community.

● At Modinagar riot-mongers made frantic efforts to work-up a riot, but could not succeed due to the vigilance of the workers organised under the Red flag and of the peasants of the surrounding villages.

As soon as the news of Garhmukteshwar reached Modinagar, mischief-mongers got going and a worker was killed while coming out of the factory.

And to cap it all, the Manager of Modi's factories called a

meeting of Muslim workers and told them that the management could not take any responsibility for their safety and that those who wanted to go home would be given leave.

This naturally created great panic among Muslim workers and they began to fly from Modinagar.

Hindu workers and leaders of the Union tried to persuade them to say, "They told their Muslim brethren, 'Don't go. As long as any one of us is alive not one of you will be hurt.'"

But the panic among the Muslims was too great. Many of them left the place but after giving a promise to their Hindu brethren that as soon as the situation returned to normal they would come back to resume their united struggle against the millowner.

Communists Excluded

Communist leaders of the Union approached local Congress leaders to start a joint peace campaign. They refused to cooperate.

On Unnan Singh, Parliamentary Secretary to the U.P. Government, came and formed a peace committee at Modinagar but he also excluded the Communists from joint work pleading, "Such is Rafi Saheb's (Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, U.P. Home Minister) order."

But the Communists continued their work.

They organised a meeting of the Chaudharies (headmen) of Begumabad and organised a joint Hindu-Muslim volunteer corps which fought rumours and panic and guarded the approaches to the town. One day they caught a horseman who was spreading rumours that a neighbouring village had been attacked.

On November 13, Communist workers organised a meeting of Chaudharies (headmen) of 36 villages. All those who attended took a pledge to keep peace in their area, to defend each other and to beat back the attackers, no matter to which community they belonged.

Since then in almost all of these villages peace committees have been formed.

Later the Kisan Sabha organized a meeting of representatives of 18 villages at Bilochpura which is a Muslim village. This meeting decided to form a joint volunteer corps. Now these volunteers are touring the villages asking people not to fall prey to false rumours, and to keep peace.

A similar meeting was held at village Hiliwadi in which representatives of 14 villages took part.

In the town of Bijait, where tension was particularly high, the Communists held a public meeting on November 11, took out a procession which immediately eased the situation.

In Meerut City also the Communist Party sent out peace squads as early as on November 7 and also held a public meeting. The Party appealed to Congress and League leaders to join in its work but there was no response from them.

Riotmongers Go Free

Later, they organized an all-parties peace committee but in the meantime Minister Kidwai reached Meerut and he ordered that the Communists must be excluded from the peace Committee.

And now comes the news that Shanti Tyagi, leader of the Modinagar and Meerut Communists, and Mutsaddilal, another Communist worker, have been arrested by the local police.

But of course, the police has not thought it fit to take any action against the fat, rich patrons of the communal body responsible for the riots.

It has been reported in the Press that the Government of the U.P. is going to appoint a committee to inquire into the riots in the Meerut district. The people of Meerut must see that there is real inquiry, which will unmask the ugly face of the riotmongers and their accomplices inside the police and bureaucracy, and is not allowed to become an instrument to whitewash their black-deeds.

MEO TRIBES ASTIR

Conference Gives Fillip To People's Movement In Bharatpur And Alwar States

by Y. D. SHARMA

THE territory of Mewat beginning from north-west of Delhi and stretching nearly two hundred miles west, is at present cut up into parts of the Punjab (Gurgaon District), of the U.P. (Meerut district), Delhi, and Bharatpur, Alwar, Jaipur and Patna States.

It is mainly inhabited by tribes of Meos, a sturdy heroic people with an old tradition of struggle.

The revolt of the Meo peasantry in 1932 against the autocratic rule in Alwar cost the old Maharaja his throne.

The representatives of these Mewat tribes decided to hold a Panchayat (Conference) of the people of Mewat on December 2, in the village of Hanuman on the borders of Gurgaon district and Bharatpur State.

Significance Of The Conference

Recent events in the country and in the States imparted great significance to their Conference held in Bharatpur on December 2.

The States people's upsurge had affected Bharatpur and Alwar and the movement in these two States and the repression there were agitating the minds of all Meos.

The Bharatpur Darbar particularly had launched a policy of wholesale repression and arrested many people including the Meo leader Shafat Khan.

In Alwar state, Maulvi Ibrahim and Maulvi Abdul Qudus, both Meo leaders, had been arrested.

On the other hand, events of Bengal and Bihar and more particularly the massacre at Garhmukteshwar were affecting the people of Mewat and reactionary communalists were trying to disrupt the unity of the people of Mewat.

Only recently a big communal clash was averted in Androp village between Jats and Meos by the timely intervention of Choudhry Kanwal Khan, a Meo leader.

In such an atmosphere the Conference was called to clear the communal tension, pledge full support to the States peoples' struggles in Bharatpur and Alwar, etc., and to consider the future status of Mewat on the eve of the Constituent Assembly meeting.

The Punjab Government did its best to sabotage the Conference.

Despite the strenuous propaganda of Government agents, however, fifteen thousand persons including representatives from all the tribes in Mewat gathered for the Conference.

Under pressure from the Governments of Bharatpur and Alwar, the Punjab Government backed the Conference only a few hours before it was to begin, under the newly promulgated Punjab Public Safety Ordinance.

The people replied by shifting the venue of the Conference inside Bharatpur State itself. With buses sounding and war drums beating, the fifteen thousand marched a short distance, crossed into Bharatpur State territory, and held the Conference there.

Dr. K. M. Ashraf, the Communist leader, presided.

Demand For Responsible Govt.

The Conference considered the disastrous announcements of the Bharatpur and Alwar Maharajas and rejected the farcical reforms contained therein. It declared that the people would not accept any constitution unless the administration was immediately transferred into the hands of popular representatives and a Constituent Assembly based on adult franchise was invited to frame a constitution for full responsible government.

The Conference also condemned and demanded immediate non-official inquiry into the police firings at Bahelgarh and Suketi in Bharatpur State and Reta in Alwar State.

It demanded the abolition of the jagirdari system and of cattle tax and water tax.

It also demanded the immediate release of Choudhry Shafat Ahmed Khan and of other arrested persons in Bharatpur and Alwar.

The Conference welcomed the unity achieved in Bharatpur State by the Praja Parishad, the Muslim Conference and the Kisan Sabha and pledged its full support to these organisations in their struggle for responsible government in the State.

On Communal Situation

In the midst of wide-spread communal frenzy and in the face of recent events in the Muslim districts of Meerut and Rohtak, the Mewat Conference affirmed its determination to keep Mewat completely safe from communal disruption and to maintain their age-long traditions of cordial and fraternal relationship among the various tribes of Meos, Jats and Gulars, that live in Mewat.

Next day, representatives of various tribes elected an Organising Committee of 32 persons with Syed Muttasib as General Secretary. Delegations were formed to tour the areas and carry the message of the Conference. One thousand rupees were collected on the spot to meet the initial expenditure for setting up a Central Office at Ferozpur Jhirka.

Among others who participated in the Conference were Choudhry Meh-tab Khan, League M.L.A. (Punjab), Choudhry Ismail Khan, President, Muslim Conference, Bharatpur; Master Atendra, President, Praja Parishad, Bharatpur; Mr. K. E. Joshi, President, Kisan Sabha, Bharatpur; and Hoshim, Muslim League leader of Delhi.

The Conference has created a new atmosphere all over Mewat. The communal tension has been to a great extent cleared and the States peoples' movement in Bharatpur and Alwar has been greatly strengthened.

BIHAR

(Continued from page 1)

aigns to rebuild the homes of refugees, to help them harvest their crop, arrangement of genuine welcome meetings, the formation of Peace Committees and joint Volunteer Brigades—these CAN prevent migration, can heal the gaping wound in Bihar's body.

These things MUST be done. Biharis have suffered before, the earthquake, the police atrocities of 1942. But Biharis never fought Biharis.

The hope is there. Bihar is the home of its Hindus and its Muslims. No one wants to leave. Already some Leaguers in Bihar—such as Mr. Mahbub Warsi, Gaya League leader,—have begun to see the bankruptcy of the migration slogan and to campaign against it. Bihar's Leaguers must cooperate in every effort to restore the refugees to their homes.

It is the task of Bihar's Congress to win back unity, win back the refugees—NOT by administrative ordinances, but by rousing the great patriotism of the Biharis, which has carried them through holocausts before, and can and must carry them through this one also.

FIRST WEEK OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Our Special Correspondent's Report

When I arrived in Delhi, I found that Congressmen felt that the Labour Government which they had imagined was "for Congress" had now become Tory-like in its views and had turned "for League".

The liberal-minded Congressmen felt that unless Congress accepted the British Statement, their efforts would be useless like the Nehru or the Sapru Reports, and suggested that it would have been better if the Congress had done so earlier with good grace and saved its face.

Leftist Congressmen were of the opinion that there was no way out, that the path of compromise and cooperation with the British had now been barred and the Congress leaders must now call for struggle.

"Change Of Front"

The statement produced a lot of bewilderment and it was such a sudden "change of front" by the Labour Government that the Patel Group began to search for "reasons" for it.

This group of which Sardar Patel, Rajaji, Sjt. Kripalani and Dr. Pattabhi are the most important, came to the conclusion that the British Government had let the Congress down because Pandit Nehru had been "too anti-British", and, in their talks with Pressmen close to them, cited the following Nehru moves as "proof":

First, Pandit Nehru is in charge of External Affairs and from the very beginning, set Wavell against the Congress by his insistence on his Tribal area visit against Departmental advice and protests from Caroe (the Frontier Governor);

Secondly, he hurried the Krishna Menon-Molotov talks; Thirdly, the Indian delegation sent by Pandit Nehru to UNO had lined up with the Soviet against Anglo-America;

Fourthly, Pandit Nehru had made a tactical blunder in going to London.

Those who were at Palam Aerodrome when Panditji arrived from London, could see how agitated Sardar was as he hurried along to receive Pandit Nehru and carried him away for immediate Conference.

A Pressman remarked that the Sardar had broken his convention by coming to the aerodrome and it showed how eager Sardar was to get inside information regarding the London talks.

Asaf Ali's Appointment

How strongly this theory of the extreme Right-wingers worked can be seen from the fact (based on reliable information) that Sardar and Pandit Nehru had a burst-up regarding the issue of Mr. Asaf Ali's appointment as Ambassador to the U.S.A.

It seems that in the Working Committee meeting, a complaint was made that the question had not been discussed at all by the Working Committee and it was improper for Panditji to have appointed Asaf Ali like that.

It is said that K. M. Munshi was Sardar Patel's choice for the job.

Pandit Nehru is reported to have said that he had consulted Mr. Asaf Ali and that he had agreed, and that the question of discussion by the Working Committee had arisen only regarding the person who should take Mr. Asaf Ali's place in the Interim Government.

When many Working Committee members agreed with the Sardar that Panditji should have placed the matter before them at an earlier stage, Panditji is reported to have said that if he did not have even that much discretion, he would rather resign from the Interim Government.

The quarrel having been patched up without leading to any big crisis, the Working Com-

mittee went ahead to decide its line regarding the latest political situation, while the Constituent Assembly met as scheduled and carried on procedural matters.

Finally, the Working Committee, I understand, decided to carry on as if nothing had happened, avoid annoying the British more by any statement, but make it quite clear to the League that even with the British support it could not hope to browbeat the Congress into surrender.

Rajen Babu's Election

This matter came up quite sharply in the election of permanent Chairman of the Constituent Assembly and while Liberals and even a section of the Press fancied Gopalaswami Iyengar, the Working Committee decided to have Rajen Babu despite his expressed inability to manage both the Food Department and the Chairmanship of the Constituent Assembly.

Though Rajen Babu is the best choice as far as his fairness and justness goes, a Muslim Pressman told me that his choice was itself an indication of how little the Congress was in a mood for compromise with the League. When I asked why, he said that Rajen Babu was the man who was regarded by the Leaguers as having been very communal-minded regarding the Bihar outrages.

Inside the Congress Party meeting of Constituent Assembly members, various trends seek to assert themselves. In fact Congress nominees are a heterogeneous lot, with Mahasabaites like Shyamaprosad, Liberals like Jayakar, who have grown grey in pinning their faith in the British, and Akali chauvinist Sikhs like Gyani Kartar

Singh, not to speak of fat feudal lords like the Raja of Bobbili.

Each has tried to change the main resolution in his own way: some saying that the name "Republic" would frighten the Princes, others that the resolution itself should not be passed till the League and the Princes came into the Constituent Assembly; yet others that residual powers should not be mentioned, but only when the League came in and made its demands, it should be given as a maximum concession that the Congress would be able to give; and so on.

Various Trends

Discussion regarding the Political resolution was postponed on the fourth day because the Commons Debate was on that day. Congress leaders did not want to say anything that might anger the British more and waited to know what they would say about the Congress' complete silence on the statement of December 6.

Cripps cleverly said nothing about it and did not blame the Congress for ignoring His Majesty's Government's statement, but only said that unless the Congress came to terms with the League, there would be gory civil war, knowing full well that the Congress reaction to it would be that they are not afraid of it.

It is significant and many Pressmen have noted that the only important part of Cripps' statement was that the League had agreed to reconsider the Bombay Resolution; and it is said that Tandonjee's speech seconding the Political resolution was to give Mr. Jinnah a clear idea that if he comes in at all, he should do so "in a proper mood" and not riding the high horse.

A Muslim Pressman tells me that after the assurance given by the British, Mr. Jinnah would be acting very unwise if he came into this Constituent Assembly. (Continued on page 4.)

FIROZ KHAN NOON'S "THUNDER-DROPS"

THE MUSLIM WORLD

THE British Tory paper, the Daily Mail, has announced on its front page the news that it will publish in instalments the story of "the Bihar Massacre" by Mr. Firoz Khan Noon, who, it claims, is one of the "high and reliable witnesses" quoted by Mr. Churchill in the House of Commons.

Noon's outpourings will have the title, "The First Few Thunder-drops"—taken from Mr. Churchill's recent speech in Parliament.

Firoz Khan Noon has all his life been good friend of the British. San Francisco was merely the apex of his endeavours.

It was natural that the British Tories—the biggest enemies of Indian freedom—should turn to Noon when they wanted whip up one more big campaign in the world against Indian freedom.

Bihar is the shame of the whole country and we know that as far as world opinion is concerned, Bihar has done more harm to the cause of India than anything else has EVER done.

Through British Eyes

But any Indian—Pakistani or non-Pakistani—who wants to end British Imperialism's stranglehold and is not an inveterate bootlicker would refuse to parade our disgrace in our ruler's propaganda organs.

But with Mr. Noon—things are different.

Honest Muslim Leaguers need have no illusions. Churchill and the Daily Mail are not going to splash Noon's "golden" words, because they believe in the "justice of the League's cause". They do it because they want all Indian-Hindus and Muslims—in their grip, and Noon's horror-tale, they think, will help them turn the world against India.

By the way, what does Firoz Khan know about Bihar?

Yes, he spent some time there on behalf of the League. But from what I have heard through League sources in Bihar and in the Punjab, Mr. Noon spent a great deal of his time hobnobbing with the British military generals and officers and begging for their help.

I understand that at least on one occasion, the entire League delegation (the Khan of Mamdot, Noon and

others) was dispersed round the affected areas by high military officers in military cars—and saw and interpreted what they saw just as they and the white shibs planned.

From other members of the delegation, I have been able to gather that in various conversations which Noon had with British military officers, he stressed the following:

"Inner Struggle"

● What a great inner-struggle it had been for him to give up the knighthood the British Sarkar had given him, that at last he had chosen to make the sacrifice for his convictions.

● How much easier it would be for the League and for the solution of the Hindu-Muslim Problem, if Churchill were in power in Britain.

● How misrepresented he had been about his supposed threat to call for Soviet aid. He had been trying, he said, ever since to put things right with his English friends. He had "no intention, please believe me"—of calling for Russian help. (Of course, the entire conversation was carried on, on the basis that the Red Army could be hired at about four annas an hour!)

● How much the Muslims deserved British help, because they stood by them in 1942.

Noon's Bihar reports to the Daily Mail will doubtless be full of praise for the British officers, full of venom for the Hindus—just what Imperialism wants.

The real deliberate way in which the bureaucracy and the military helped to create and swell the riots will not even be hinted at.

Noon's "Thunder Drops" will be almost as big a job for Imperialism as his San Francisco efforts. But progressive people throughout the world know Noon, now. And like his San Francisco escapades, his "Thunder Drops" too will be understood for what they are: the utterances of one who has served the Empire well and loyally!

A PATRIOT'S NOTEBOOK

The Rulers Of Bihar

SEVENTY-FIVE per cent of the Bihar officials sabotaged all efforts at stopping the Bihar carnage—this is the private estimate of the Ministry, according to a Patna friend who has met and spoken to the Ministers and prominent Congress leaders of the Province.

Be that as it may be, it is interesting to take a look at the gentlemen who lord it over Bihar today.

First and foremost is General Russell, commanding the Fifth Division, which is in charge of the Bihar disturbed area. A correspondent who has seen him says he looks like Colonel Blimp in person—but quite unlike that proverbial gentleman, has very definite ideas of his own. He has experience of "independent" countries and is the Russell Pasha of Egypt, who is supposed to have played an excellent role in keeping "independent Egypt" "friendly" to the British.

The Thesis

Russell and his boys have been trying to put across to the Ministry the thesis that behind the riots is an organised "revolutionary" party and throwing veiled hints that it was the CSP and Jai Prakash Narain.

Of course, the army chiefs have no basis whatsoever for this, but due to their inherent hatred for socialism and the Left, born out of their Tory imperialist training, they are putting this across both in their private talks with each other and in their more formal pow-wows with the "evil authority"—namely the Ministry.

Creed, the Inspector-General of Police, well-known for his "work" in

1942, is also putting across the same thesis—only he adds the little embellishment that the Communist Party was also there with the CSP at the bottom of the trouble!

The Patna police chief, Ken Brooke, is a great deal smarter than Creed.

All together these gentlemen—police and army—are trying to cook up a Red conspiracy against Socialists and Communists together!

They count on the anti-Left prejudices of the Rightist Ministers to make them swallow this bait.

The game behind the thesis is not only to damn the Left, but also to hide the real culprits—the pet boys of the bureaucracy, the police agents, the zamindars, the communal gangs—and the active hand the military and the police have themselves played in fomenting the riot.

Big Guns

IN one of G.H.Q.'s many recent publications, I came across the following neat little item:

"At Kamareddi, 60 miles north of Secunderabad in the Deccan plateau, there is assembled the largest concentration of guns, or rather to be in one area in Bihar, over which the gunner manoeuvre alone equals the infantry strength of one division."

A pretty big business—quite obviously.

But it seems a little odd that there should be so much "concentration" in a place scarcely ever heard of before—where only "qualification" according to G.H.Q. is that it is in "the Deccan plateau".

What is so big about "the Deccan plateau", that guns are being re-

moved from other places and sent here?

The answer is not in "the geographical terms" in which G.H.Q. makes its announcement about Kamareddi.

Kamareddi is not merely in "the Deccan plateau"; it is in Hyderabad State, and it is the latter fact which explains the guns, not the former.

If the national movement forces the Sahibs to make a formal "quit" from British India, the States—the hospitable homes of the British propped Princes—are to be the new bases from which Imperialism and its army will operate. At least that is what the Empire plans.

And quite obviously the biggest such base will be in the land of the biggest and loyalest Prince of all—the Nizam. Kamareddi is the hub of this base. Guns are being rescued from all over British India and brought into the protecting and loving arms of His Exalted Highness.

The innocent little para is not so innocent as it would make you believe!

Princes' Armies

ON December 1, 800 soldiers of the Travancore State Army and 1,000 of the Mysore State Army landed in Bombay. They had been rushed back—post haste—from the Far East by the S. S. Ranchi.

I understand that all forces of the Indian States which are abroad are being urgently summoned back.

What for? Not very difficult to guess!

Sir C. E. did not wait for his beloved eight hundred to return. He declared Martial Law without them.

Other States are getting into position to emulate his "noble" example.

Separate

ON December 6, the Bombay Chronicle flashed an advertisement, which announced to the wide world that the Bharati Central Bank Ltd. ("A First-class National Institution" with 49 Branches all over India) had a new Chairman—a Muslim Chairman amidst a host of non-Muslim Directors.

This Chairman was "Sir Mohammed Yamin Khan, Kt., Bar-at-Law, C.I.E., Deputy President of the Central Assembly."

The advertisement did not mention that Sir Yamin is a prominent League leader and has for a long time been Secretary of the Muslim League Assembly Party.

I did not mention that Sir Yamin's Assembly party had been advocating vociferously only a month earlier that there should be separate trade unions for Muslim workers.

For Common People

And why should it? Sir Yamin believes in separation, only for the common people. For himself and for his fellow League capitalists—Hindu-Muslim—unity with a vengeance, especially when it makes you a Chairman of a "First-class National Institution", 49 Branches and all!

By the way, somebody said the League Nawabs and Knights are giving up their titles.

Then why all this pompous showing off of Sir Yamin's Knighthood in the Bharati advertisement?

Maybe, title-renouncing is only meant to be tom-tommed when one is on the political stage. And a knighthood is far too profitable to throw away, when it comes to banking.

So it is Mr. Yamin in the League, Sir Yamin in business... Pretty neat, what?

Romesh Chandra

Hyderabad Police Fire On Delegation From Andhra

ONE MEMBER KILLED, OTHERS SEVERELY BEATEN

(By Radhakrishnamurthy)

On December 13, at Chilapaguntla, the Nizam's police shot dead Sheikh Makdoom, a law student and a member of the delegation which had been sent by the citizens of Masulipatam to study the situation in Telengana.

The two other members of the delegation, B. Rama Rao (Trade Union leader) and Govada Nirikshan Rao (a Harijan worker), were beaten so severely that reports of those who saw them last indicate that they are dying.

The delegation left Masulipatam on December 8 for the Nallagonda district and after visiting a few villages, they reached Chilapaguntla on December 13.

CHILAPAGUNTLA is the village of the worst and most powerful feudal autocrat, Deshmukh Jannareddi Pratapareddi of Surya Pet taluk. After the extermination campaigns of the Nizam's military and police, the deshmukh's goondas are the virtual rulers here.

Soon after the delegation arrived, the village Patel summoned it and made his interrogation. After a few hours, the delegation was called once more but nothing happened.

Night Attack

At 11 in the night, when the delegation was sleeping in the house of Bikki Ramulu, the house was suddenly attacked by a party of 12 policemen and deshmukh's goondas armed with five rifles, four swords and lathis.

Two of the attackers with bayonets pulled Rama Rao out of his bed and beat him. Rama Rao fell to the ground and was dragged to the street.

Nirikshan Rao who protested against this senseless attack was also beaten and dragged to the street.

Then came the turn of Sheikh Makdoom; he fell at the very first blow.

The attackers tied them with ropes and dragged them to the deshmukh's palace, beating them all the way.

Sheikh Makdoom, who was beaten severely, was unable to walk. One of the gang who had a rifle shouted at Makdoom and then fired at point-blank range. Makdoom fell at once in a heap. The police hastily put the delegation in a cart and rushed off.

No one knows what has happened to the delegation, nor

FIRST WEEK OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

(Continued from page 3)

sembly, because by keeping out and calling for a separate Constituent Assembly for Pakistan areas, he could get the British accept it. But no one here knows for certain what Mr. Jinnah is likely to do.

Congressmen say he will come in as he did in the case of the Interim Government, and for this reason, the Congress, it appears, will carry on the preliminary Session till such time as the Central Assembly meets in January, though it is said that the Session will have to adjourn for Christmas Holidays on December 23.

In all these pressure tactics, the real enemy, the British rulers, is being forgotten.

It was only the Communist member Somnath Lahiri, who in his speech felicitating Rajendra Babu on his election as Chairman, sharply attacked British Imperialism, its Viceroy, its armies, its bureaucracy and its diabolical plan, that has already led to civil war and only strengthened the British rulers and sullied the name of India in the eyes of the world.

—by A. S. R. Chari

The latest news is that repression has been let loose on Warangal district also. The first village to taste the Nizam's Martial Law is Brahmanakottapalli in Manukota taluk.

On December 5, at dead of night, Jan Mia (banjardar) and Narsingrao (deshmukh) attacked Brahmanakottapalli with 20 of their rowdies and ten reserve police constables.

They arrested Bashu Mia and Ballmaj, local workers of the Andhra Conference, and Shrimati Priyamvada, leader of the Mahila Sangham.

The party raided the village again on the 7th and arrested Shri Gopalrao, leader of the Taluk movement.

What followed the arrest no civilised human being can imagine.

Inhuman Torture

The brutes cut the feet (soles) of Gopalrao with a knife "to prevent him from escaping." They wrapped a cloth round the wounds and compelled him to walk.

Then they tied Gopalrao with a rope and dragged him three miles to Ramannagadam. His feet bled profusely all the way. Finally, they took Gopalrao to Nellikuduru, another one mile and paraded him through the streets and lanes.

But all this terror failed to crush the village. The same evening 300 peasants marched in a procession demanding the release of those who had been arrested. When many more joined the procession, the police fired on them and the deshmukh's rowdies took to a little sword practice.

Several peasants were severely wounded.

their present whereabouts. Suryapet and Jangam taluks of the Nallagonda district have been the worst sufferers. But the Nizam's repressive machinery is spreading to the newer taluks and villages. Of late the military raids are increasing in the Huzurnagar taluk of Nallagonda district. The deshmukhs and the landlords accompany the military, together with their own private army of rowdies. They are the ones who advise the military whom to arrest, whom to beat up, etc.

On December 1, 500 soldiers attacked Mallareddigudam village in Huzurnagar Taluk.

Six hundred villagers—men and women—armed with lathis assembled to defend the village.

Seeing the big number, the soldiers tried to trick them by promising not to shoot if the villagers put down their lathis. But the villagers were not deceived.

The military then opened fire deliberately and coldbloodedly without the slightest excuse, and without giving any warning. Yarabolu Appireddi and Munji Veerayya fell dead on the spot.

Villagers Resist

The villagers put up a heroic resistance. Pitched against bullets, they used their slings. Two hundred women, who were in the background, pushed forward and faced the volley. The soldiers concentrated their fire on the women. This went on for full one hour!

One woman, Guravamma, was killed. Many others were wounded.

In all eight died on the spot. Fifteen are struggling between life and death. A hundred people were arrested.

A week later, the Nizam's military attacked Velidanda village (also in Huzurnagar taluk).

Vakkatulla Matlayya, the Patel (Munsif) of the village is an expert in making all sorts of feudal extortions from the peasants. By 'presenting' a part of the loot to the higher officers and other lords of the district, he secured unrestricted rights to plunder the people.

This went on till the people organised themselves in the Andhra Conference and learnt to resist Matlayya's extortions. Matlayya's ill-gotten income dwindled very fast.

So he rushed to the District Headquarters and 'fixed up matters'. On December 7, 300 soldiers marched into Velidanda.

Then followed the usual course of all military raids on Telengana villages—torture, loot, rape.

A woman was going to her neighbour's house. Two soldiers rushed at her and threw her flat on the ground. One soldier kept his bayonet digging into her body; the other raped her. The woman's cries brought her neighbours rushing to her rescue, and the cowards took to their heels.

The military made eighteen arrests on the spot.

Where Stands The Left?

THE SOVIET UNION AND INDIA

S Y. Ashoka Mehta, the CSP leader, in his weekly column in the Blitz, writing on India's victory at the UNO on the South African question, says:

"We acknowledge with gratitude and pride the debt we owe to Russia for the unstinted support given to India in her hour of need."

The CSP columnist Biral in his weekly "Attitudes and Latitudes" is also eloquent about the Soviet's support to India at the UNO.

"Biral is happy today to pay his unstinted homage to the Soviet Union for the gallant support that Power, with its satellite States, has offered to the Indian Delegation at the UNO.... It was the Soviet support that rallied the small nations round India and condemned South Africa before the bar of world opinion and human conscience."

And Biral ends with the hope "that the Friends of the Soviet Union will soon organize a meeting to convey the Nation's unanimous gratitude to our great and gallant neighbour on the North."

Both S. Y. Mehta and Biral are old anti-Sovieters. In fact, one of the main objects of Biral's column has been to all intents and purposes, to attack the Soviet Union.

The Congress Socialist leaders have always tried to ape the British "Socialists" (Messrs. Bevin & Co.) in their anti-Sovietism, and it is good that at least on this occasion, they have not let their prejudices stop them from joining the rest of the country in its appreciation of the Soviet support to India's just demands at the UNO.

White And Black

But that rank confusion in the CSP leadership still remains on even this apparently obvious issue is clear from the way in which their organ Janata spoke on exactly the same subject two weeks ago:

"No one thought seriously that before an overwhelming white body like UNO any coloured nation—especially one like India whose emergence into independence may upset the whole international balance—would get justice." (Janata, December 1).

"This hadderdash about white and coloured nations sounds a little strange today, when Mrs. Pandit has acknowledged repeatedly that countries like Russia, Yugoslavia, Poland and France consistently supported India—white nations, all."

No, Janata and the CSP will have to think harder about the UNO and international affairs as a whole. It is not just white versus black. It is something else in today's world.

Dangerous

But of this "something else" Janata is scared stiff. It does not like the fact that these "white nations" are supporting India.

"... Dangerous alignments are beginning to show. India found supporters invariably in Russia and countries under Russian influence." (Janata, December 1).

What is so "dangerous" about it? And "dangerous" for whom?

Two weeks later the same CSP leadership talks of "the debt we owe to Russia!"

This contradiction comes from the failure of the CSP leadership to make the slightest attempt to understand WHY the Soviet Union and countries like Yugoslavia and Poland supported India, and WHY Britain and USA opposed us.

Not white and black. But Imperialist Governments and their toadies on the one side and People's Governments on the other—that is the simple reality which the CSP leaders have consistently refused to see.

ROMESH CHANDRA



THE BASIS FOR AN INDO-BRITISH TREATY

—By K. M. Pannikar, Dewan of Bikaner State and member of the Negotiating Committee to decide the terms of entry of the States into the All-India Constitution-making Body meeting now at Delhi. Issued by the Indian Council of World Affairs and published by the Oxford University Press. Price Rs. 1-4-0.

THIS booklet sets out in cold print for the first time Princes' India's plans for a sham 'independence,' tying India up militarily, economically and politically to Britain.

It proposes a 30-year Indo-British Treaty, with fully worked out political, military and economic clauses.

It suggests a British military mission, covering all three branches of the armed forces—backed by permanent scientific and technical missions controlling our key industries, particularly our defence industries.

It thinks the best political arrangement 'in the present circumstances' is 'a tripartite treaty between Hindustan and Pakistan with Britain as the guarantor.'

It also wants a British guarantee for autonomy in the States:

It may be possible to arrange for the security of the States by an overall clause with a definition of British interests in regard to the dynamic system as the Princes themselves have claimed.

Economically, too, it proposes an all-round business partnership with the British. It lays special stress on the interlocking of British and Indian heavy chemical and other industries vital for defence. It cites as a model

of such 'co-operation'—the Nuffield-Birla deal by which, according to the company's annual report, British-made Morris cars are being sold as the 'Indian-made' Hindustan Ten.

As 'compensation' for the position of junior partner inside India, the Pannikar plan proposes a joint Indo-British Empire stretching from Aden or Africa to Bangkok in the East, right down to Indonesia in the far South.

These regions are to be under joint Indo-British military 'guarantee' and the market is to be shared out by British and Indian businessmen.

In short, it is a plan for the joint policing and exploitation of India and South-East Asia, with India as a junior partner.

It may sound fantastic. But it is terribly dangerous just because it has very powerful backing.

There can be no doubt, for instance, that the British are trying to work out some such plan. British military plans for the 'security' of the Indian Ocean region that have leaked out coincide with this plan.

In the economic sphere, the Nuffield-Birla business partnership has been followed by many more, covering key industries like dyestuffs, electric motors, textile-machinery manufacture, etc.

As far as India is concerned, Pannikar himself represents a strong section in the top coterie of Princely India (being a member of the States' Negotiating Committee for the Constitution-making Body).

Apart from that, it is noteworthy that J.R.D. Tata, the leader of the Indian Big Business, is prominently associated with the Indian Council of World Affairs which has issued Pannikar's book. Besides, the two journals of Indian Big Business, the Commerce of Bombay and the Eastern Economist, have splashed lengthy, favourable reviews of Pannikar's book, with sympathetic editorial comments attached.

The Pannikar plan suits the British, obviously because the only way they can hope to hold India and South-East Asia is by getting Indians as junior partners for the job.

It suits certain Indian vested interests, who prefer a share of the profits of a British-policed, semi-industrialised India to the 'risks' of a revolution and an independent, democratic India.

But Sardar Pannikar is too clever to put the matter straight.

So, he tries to justify the proposed Indo-British alliance by saying:

'It is clear that, without such an alliance, India must inevitably fall within the orbit of Russia.'

White Britain will want India to be strong, well-organised, industrially advanced because without a developed India, Britain cannot attack the Soviet Union.

Sell your independence, help Britain attack Russia—in return for the privilege of being turned into a war base with British aid. That is Pannikar's advice.

But the whole thing is blatant nonsense, because, as Pannikar himself says elsewhere in his book:

'So far as Russia is concerned, the Indian Peninsula is... of no particular importance either to her strength or her position... ALL THAT RUSSIA WILL BE CONCERNED WITH WILL BE TO SEE THAT INDIA DOES NOT JOIN ANY OTHER GROUP.'

The Pannikar plan is nothing but a plan to keep India enslaved in return for paltry profits and Princely security. It is a danger-signal and has to be scrapped.

—Arun Bose

WORKERS' BASIC NEEDS NOT MET

● No Provision For Living Wage ● No Guarantee Of Security Of Service ● Promised Housing Programme Dropped ● Machinery For Crushing "Unrest" Perfected

On December 6-7 the Government of India held a conference of representatives of employers and workers to discuss their programme of social legislation during the next five years.

PRIOR to this they had organised two conferences for the same purpose; first, of the Provincial Ministers (October 14-15) and second, of the States' Labour Ministers on November 29-30. The programme was reported to have been "generally accepted."

The third conference presided over by Sjt. Jagjivan Ram, Labour Member, Government of India, was attended on behalf of the owners by Sir Shri Ram, Shanti Prasad, Sir Homi Modi and A. W. Taylor, and on behalf of the organised workers, Manek Gandhi and N. V. Phadke, both Jt. Secretaries of the AITUC, put up the case. Two representatives of the Royist-led Federation of Labour also attended.

Background

In what background was this conference meeting?

India has been going through the most unprecedented strike wave ever since the end of the war.

Every section of responsible opinion in the country has recognised the basic cause of these strikes, namely, the tremendous economic mal-adjustments caused by the war—the already meagre wages reduced by even 60 per cent in some cases due to the enormous rise in prices, nowhere adequately offset by grant of dearness allowance, the menace of mass retrenchment, etc.

The workers resisted this onslaught on their miserable conditions by gigantic strikes.

To take the strike figures during the first eight months of 1946:

* The total number of workers involved (about 17 lakhs) was about four times the figure of 1940 and more than twice the figures for 1942 or 1945.

* The number of working days lost during this period (over 81 lakhs) is 2½ times that lost in 1945.

These figures do not include at least 20 lakh working days lost in the strikes in sympathy with the postal strike; or the number of workers affected, and working days lost, in the mighty strikes in the Indian States like Gwalior, Ratlam, Indore, Jodhpur, etc.

Further they do not include the strikes of clerks, of the postal staff, in business concerns, etc.

Cause Of Strikes

The official records of the Indian Labour Gazette show that these strikes were fought for demanding permanent improvement in working conditions such as minimum wage, Provident Fund, privilege leave, recognition of trade unions, and also of late most determinedly against victimisation and for security of service.

That was the background and that, therefore, the test for the Government's plan for social legislation.

This plan, affecting 35 lakh workers, apparently touches every aspect of the workers' life—wages, industrial relations, social insurance, health, welfare work, regulation of working conditions and working hours, etc.

Reports of official Government inquiries in 1944 had revealed deplorable conditions under every head. And the five-year plan of a Popular Govern-

ment was expected to mark an all round improvement.

Did it fulfil the expectations? With regard to the supreme issue of a living wage, the Government admitted that there had been "little or no change in the basic wage-level in more of the organised industries for a considerable period of time", and Sjt. Jagjivan Ram even said, "The slogan (is) increase the purchasing power of the masses"; and that "improvement in wages (is) one of the major items in our programme," etc.

How does the programme bear it out?

By not having even a single reference to granting a "mini-

by
P. B. Rangnekar

Bombay textile	Rs. 31-8
Over 54 per cent rail-ways	Rs. 23-0
Jute	Rs. 20-0
Mining	Rs. 8-0
Postman Runner	Rs. 8-0

It is enough to state here that the Divatia Committee (appointed by the Bombay Congress Ministry in 1938) recommended Rs. 55 as a minimum living wage for the Bombay textile worker. And the Bombay textile worker is the best paid worker in the country.

Why did the Government evade the issue of a living wage? The clue is to be found in their attitude to the one million tea plantation labourers, who alone

are assured sometime of "steps for a living wage."

And even then they had at first decided (later under pressure they dropped this) "to proceed with a certain amount of caution because tea is one of the chief articles of export and nothing should be done to impair the ability of the industry to compete in the world markets."

Profits Must Remain!

In other words, no matter what happens to the workers, the profits of the owners must remain in fact so as to enable them to compete in the world market and the home market against foreigners. That is the Government's simple test for granting or not granting a living wage; their test for the industry's "capacity!"

But the test of a minimum living wage is something more than the capacity of the industry to pay. If profits were the only consideration then there would be no justification in Government taking over key concerns as public utility services.

The yardstick for deciding the minimum living wage is not the profit of the owners but meeting the minimum family budgets of the workers employed in the industry. If an industry is unable to pay even this, then it becomes the Government's duty to take it over and run it as a public concern, fully guarding the workers' right to a living wage and not sacrificing it to the "capacity of the industry to pay."

That alone can guarantee "efficient production", "discipline" and substantial reduction in "industrial unrest" on which Sjt. Jagjivan Ram laid so much stress.

The argument that owners will 'recoup' at the cost of the community is, to say the least, far too naive in the mouth of a Popular Government and hardly needs any refutation.

As for the other vital right, viz., security of service, for which 40,000 S.I.R. workers fought their greatest strike, and many more thousands are fighting every day, there is no reference in the programme to any statutory recognition of this right even in the remote future.

The only noteworthy step in the plan is for amending the Indian Factories Act. Henceforth any concern employing two or more persons will come under the Factories Act and the measures taken to improve sanitation, etc., in the factory are proposed to be stringently enforced.

"Not Far Enough"

Regarding the rest, it is enough to quote the AITUC memorandum:

"Considering the programme as a whole, we have to point out that it does not go far enough in certain directions and not fast enough in any direction. At the rate of progress indicated in the programme, India will not be able to catch up with the rest of the civilised world within any conceivable period of time."

Government's attitude was further revealed in their refusal to totally abolish the scandalous system of re-allocating labour through contractors (despite repeated demands by trade unions) as also in their drift on the question of transferring the lakhs of Indian seamen from the Commerce Department (1) to the Labour Department. As at present very few laws of the labour legislation are applicable to them, as they are under the Commerce Department!

A surprise for the T.U.C. representatives at this conference was the way in which the Government—out to plan social legislation—at the outset went back on their promise about carrying out the housing programme.

In July 1946 with two Congress Labour Ministers, Nanda and Giri, supporting, the Standing Labour Committee of the Tripartite Conference had unanimously approved of a housing programme for industrial workers. Contributions from Central and Provincial Governments also were fixed.

And yet during the conference, the Government coolly announced dropping the programme, as "not more than one Provincial Government" was willing to implement its own pledge then given!

When the Popular Ministries assumed office eight months ago and naturally enough workers struck in expectation of better conditions, a clamour was made regarding want of time.

Industrial Peace

Now what the working-class is assured is nothing that helps them solve any one of their basic problems. The only point seriously taken up and taken up first under the plan is that of maintaining industrial peace and that by perpetuating sections of the hated Defence of India Rules to penalise strikes, legal or "illegal."

Government have no plan to secure living conditions for workers. And if the workers mean to fight for them, then there will be the amended Indian Trades Disputes Act to put down any such indiscipline!

The tragedy is that in their haste to crush this "unrest" the Popular Governments have only put their own stamps on all the legislation prepared by the bureaucracy. Out of all the 13 pieces of "social legislation" planned so far, almost all the bills are served out straight from the bureaucrats' tables just as the bureaucrats had prepared them!

The plan was brought into being as a measure to check and end the unprecedented "industrial unrest". But if this is the Government's promise of the future, it can hardly be expected to fulfil its aim. It does not satisfy the worker, the producer. It can never satisfy the people, the consumers.

"Cost Of Living Bonus Paid To Workers Insufficient"

— I. L. O.

"The rise in prices during the war was neutralised by the grant of a cash dearness allowance or the supply of foodstuffs to the workers either at pre-war rates or at 1913 rates or a combination of both these methods." Government of India's Note on Social Legislation.

"While the workers' earnings in organised industries increased between 1939 and 1943 by approximately 85 per cent, the cost of living increased during the same period by 135 per cent in Bombay, 218 per cent in Ahmedabad, 214 per cent in Cawnpore and 207 per cent in Lahore. It is evident therefore that the cost of living bonus paid to the workers was insufficient to enable them to maintain even their low pre-war standard of living unimpaired." (Reconstruction Planning in India—Published by the International Labour Office).

It is pertinent to note that the Government of India themselves never implemented the recommendations of their own Rau Committee with regard to dearness allowance to railwaymen.

imum" or "fair" wage, etc.

While this "fair" wage is nowhere defined, "minimum wage" (it is stated) "in most cases may not be a fair wage!" And even this minimum wage is assured only to the petty industries like beedi, coir-making, etc. ("sweated industries") and not to the major ones like the railways, textiles and engineering.

'Capacity To Pay'

In justification of this stand, the scare is raised about "due consideration for the capacity of the industry to pay". So much so that they are even nervous of imposing "a levy on employers (even if it be) for a scheme of Social Insurance."

"For the employers will", they argue, "in most cases 'recoup' themselves by raising the prices. Where this expedient is not available, the taxable profits will be reduced and the Exchequer will lose a revenue which if realised will be spent for the benefit of all sections of the community."

In other words, allow the owners to make the maximum profits so that maximum returns could be had for the Public Treasury!

What are the standards with which to judge this capacity? The plan mentions none.

But if it were the test of profits, then much more than a living wage could be had, if the employers are made to disgorge even a part of their war-profits. Even on owners counting the textile industry made over 650 per cent profit; engineering over 200 per cent; jute over 900 per cent; during war days.

Even the Postal Department piled up Rs. 23 crores during 1942-45 while the railways in six war years made a profit of Rs. 400 crores.

As against this the workers received a basic monthly wage—

★ Workers In Action ★

Military Accounts Clerks

FULL three months after the Interim Government assumed office, the bureaucrats of the Military Accounts Department are wreaking their vengeance on the clerks for their legal strike. And this despite Pandit Nehru's assurance that there "would be no difficulty in going back"—an assurance which led these 40,000 clerks to withdraw their strike against the threatened victimisation of 70 per cent of their colleagues.

This vengeance has, of course, taken the form of dismissing the "ring" leaders, after a farce of a trial!

At the beginning of October 1946 a deputation of these clerks waited on Pandit Nehru. They were, however, met by his Private Secretary who "assured" them of "an impartial inquiry."

This impartial inquiry came to Deolai (Bombay) on November 13-14-15 in the person of a White Sahib, one Lt. Col. Smallwood. The victimised clerks were NOT given the charge-sheet till each of them faced the boss in person.

Fantastic Charges

One is amazed to read some of the charges. 23 months after a Popular Government is in the saddle, thus Paul—a clerk—was charged—with calling his colleagues as "comrades". A picketer was charged with saying "Down with anti-Propaganda" as he opposed his officers' stories about the strike having "fizzled out everywhere." A third still was charged with being "a violent preacher of all strike movements". This was explained to mean "easily excitable!"

The farce allowed no cross-examination by the clerks. The officer only recorded evidence and left.

In a letter received on December 1 the Personal Secretary to Lingat Ali Khan, Finance Member, Interim Government, had assured some of the clerks that the matter was receiving the personal attention of the members concerned. And yet on December 9, orders were passed dismissing over 50 leading strikers all over India. (Full figures not to hand). And among them were the officers-lawyers of the various branches of the union.

When assurances had been given by our Popular Members, why were the bureaucrats allowed to set them at naught? The Government certainly owe an explanation.

Mysore Railway Workers' Victory

ELEVEN thousand Mysore State Railwaymen have won against their sabre-rattling Diwan their demands for bonus and interim relief and against victimisation.

In 1939 their 21 days strike had been ruthlessly suppressed. The authorities had used their 'victory' to perpetuate, even in war-days, such conditions as a daily wage of Rs. 8 to 12 (even after 10 years of service), no cheap grain shops, no compensation for injuries, etc. Even the Station Masters and Guards drew less salaries than employees on corresponding grades elsewhere.

Of course, in matters of inadequate leave, long hours of work, fines and suspension, corruption, etc., conditions have been just as bad here as on any other railway.

Management's Trick Fails

When recently the men demanded a better wage, etc., the General Manager pleaded the usual "financial inability" and the Diwan completed the story by threatening to "run the railway" even if they struck for three months.

But soon they tried a trick. They offered 50 per cent increase in dearness allowance and one month's bonus. Meeting the men "half-way"!

Such however was the opposition they met to their "generous" offer that even the Railway Audit clerks refused to prepare pay-bills incorporating the "increase."

The management now hit out by suspending or transferring Union leaders like Krishna, Subba and Rama Rao. Traffic workers of Bangalore replied by a strike on October 28, though the issues were: removing the corrupt Grain Shop Manager, opening more shops, etc.

They won this battle and quickly launched a full-scale campaign in preparation of the big show-down all over the 450 miles of the State Railway.

That broke the stiff back of the bosses. They agreed to give two months' bonus, Rs. 2-4 as interim relief, pending revision of scales of pay. They were, however, silent on the issue of victimisation.

The duty now from the workers' side was to intensify their strike preparations. For the first time the State Railway management now realised that the game was up and they withdrew their previous orders against the Union leaders. The workers won a complete victory.

BENGAL'S REVOLUTIONARY HEROES BATTLE FOR PEACE

Hindu-Muslim Kisans Swung From Communal War To Building Joint Life

All over the riot-affected areas of Bengal, the recently-released pre-Reform (ex-terrorist) prisoners are fighting a hard battle for brotherly peace and for a joint front against our common enemies. The martyrdom of Lal Mohan Sen first brought to the notice of our countrymen the work that they are doing.

Here are only a few glimpses of the vigorous anti-riot campaign that is being conducted by these revolutionary heroes.

AMBIKA CHAKRAVARTY has just returned from Chittagong after eight weeks of almost one continuous battle for Hindu-Muslim unity.

When he reached Chittagong with his other comrades, the Muslims were suspicious of them and the Hindus expected them to join forces against the Muslims. But their first meeting scotched these speculations. The Muslims came forward to receive them with open arms.

In Chittagong town itself, Leaguers welcomed them heartily. In the villages they had an overwhelming reception everywhere and at every place they got the biggest ovation when they called for Hindu-Muslim unity.

Allays Tension

On Bakri-Id Day, there was a feeling of tension at many places. Immediately Ambika Chakravarty went round these areas. Muslim kisans came to meet him in hundreds.

At one place, four to five hundred Muslims assembled for their prayers, waited for him despite his insistence that they should go on with their prayers, and after listening to him with rapt attention pledged: "Whatever happens, we won't let the riots come as long as we are alive."

Equally heartening was the response he received from the Hindus. At every village, young and old, men and women, literally besieged Ambikada and his comrades.

In his own village of Dewanpore, he met the entire village

by
Nikhil Chakravarty

in a baithak. It was through him that once they had learnt about the Congress as he was known as J. M. Sen Gupta's lieutenant.

He explained at length why he had joined the Red flag which stands for Hindu-Muslim unity against the British. They were so enthused that at the end of his talk, they decided to start regular day-to-day work, students to join the Students' Federation, kisans the Krishak Samity, and all remain with the Red flag.

Joint Meetings

Together with his other comrades, Ambikada held peace committee meetings (where both Hindu and Muslim leaders came and spoke of unity) at Gohira, Pahartali, Bagwan and many other villages. At places like Sripur, Kalisabar, Habildwip, Bidhugram, where Section 144 had not been extended to villages, joint meetings were held.

With the heightening of the tension after Noakhali the Armoury Raid comrades had to intervene in many cases. Here is the story of one such case—that of Chittagong itself in Ambikada's own words:

"The tension in Chittagong town was menacing. On the one side Muslim National Guards paraded the streets on horse back and took up an

aggressive attitude. On the other hand some explosives were detected with some Hindus which roused wild rumours. At this point an anonymous leaflet (suspected by many to be issued by the Intelligence Branch spies) appeared in the name of the Congress with attacks on Muslims hinting that they would be taught a lesson by the revolutionaries.

"The Congress contradicted it. The Armoury Raiders were openly hinted at in rumours and talks as being connected with the explosives found. Immediately we issued a leaflet condemning these 'defence' measures and met Muslim leaders to help ease the situation. Throughout this crisis, we stressed that any defence to be real must be by both Hindus and Muslims jointly."

Feelings changed so much that Muslim leaders openly declared that they would see that Hindus were protected. And Hindus saw that the only possible defence lay in looking on the Muslims as brothers and not as foes. Even the District Magistrate who in the past was an ace Communist-baiter, today openly admits that Ambikada together with Ganesh Ghosh and Ananta Singh has brought peace to Chittagong.

Biraj Deb Returns

BIRAJ DEB returned early in October to his village at Kalikaccha in Brahmanbaria Sub-division in Tippera district, almost next door to the riot-affected zone. Kalikaccha is a Hindu island with a number of Muslim villages all round.

From August 16, not only were Hindus and Muslims physically segregated, but tension was also growing. Hindu young men, backed by well-off big guns, thought in terms of "building up defence" while panic seized the general body of the people. The Muslims thought that the Hindus were preparing to attack them.

At his reception, Biraj found speakers talking of 'defence' but he stressed that the only effective defence was joint Hindu-Muslim defence against riots. Some anti-Communists started attacking him for this.

The food position is serious in the village. So Biraj took up relief work, called a village elders' meeting to form a relief committee and secure relief stocks from the Government.

After Noakhali, panic increased. The common people began coming to Biraj and Sailen Bhattacharya, member of the B.P.C.C. who joined in this work for Hindu-Muslim unity.

Volunteer Force Formed

Immediately they organised meetings in different areas where Biraj again and again emphasised the need for united Hindu-Muslim resistance. Doubts had to be answered. But he fought patiently and unflinchingly and so a volunteer force was formed.

They went to Muslim villages and met Muslim elders, and the volunteer force became popular.

Meanwhile amidst the panic all round, the women of the villages were upset by all they heard about Noakhali. One day a young housewife faced Biraj with a question: "We have heard you are revolutionaries, but what are you doing to save us?"

Biraj called a women's meeting and over 300 came. Sailen Babu and Biraj spoke. This was followed by two more meetings and in the last one over 600 women came, including ever-kai-bartya (fisher) women. Here too Biraj urged Hindu-Muslim unity and told the Hindu women to visit their Muslim neighbours.

In this manner his untiring efforts allayed tension and panic subsided. Placed in a lone-island as it were, Biraj Deb with all the zeal of a true revolutionary has fought for brotherly peace and brought new conquests for the Red flag through service to the people.

CLOSE on the heels of the Sino-American Commercial Treaty, commented upon in this column last week, has come a bilateral air-transport agreement between the United States of America and India, signed in New Delhi on November 14.

Like the former, it purports to be based upon perfect "equality" between the two contracting countries. What this means in actual fact is that as a result of this pact, the United States will IMMEDIATELY be able to run three weekly air services to India—the Trans-World Airways from New York to Bombay and the Pan American Airways from New York to Calcutta with possible halts at Karachi and New Delhi.

The routes which have been specified are respectively in the case of the two lines—(1) the U.S.A., Western Europe, North Africa, Near East, Bombay and from Bombay to (a) Calcutta, Burma, Indo-China, China and over the Pacific route to the U.S.A., or (b) Ceylon, Singapore and beyond; (ii) the U.S.A., Central Europe, Near East to Karachi, Delhi, Calcutta and thence to Burma, Siam, Indo-China and the U.S.A.

These routes may be operated in both directions.

In return, India gets the right of operating air-lines in and out of the United States whenever it wishes to do so.

U. S. Real Gainer

Dean Acheson, U.S. Acting Secretary of State, has described the pact as "rather significant". That it certainly is. But not because it ushers in a new era of politics and commerce for the two countries, as he seemed to imply, but because the pact closed the last remaining link for two of United States airlines which had already completed routes around the world except for the gap across India.

It is yet another example of the United States securing undoubted advantages over backward countries through the might of its economic superiority and industrial advance-



Indo-American Air Pact

ment. For, it needs little reflection to realise that from it India gains little except the doubtful and empty satisfaction of being recognised an equal of the United States. The real gainer is that country.

The provision of reciprocity can have meaning only between two countries of equal levels of economic and industrial development. India is still extremely backward in the matter of civil aviation and cannot for a long time to come think in terms of operating airlines in and through the United States.

Main Weakness

As even the Eastern Economist, organ of the Indian Big Business, and cordial supporter of the Interim Government that has signed the treaty, has commented:

"But in the present agreement, its main weakness is that it fails to regulate frequency of operation in the interest of a backward country like India. Equality of opportunity will be easily impaired by disparity in competitive efficiency."

The wider implications of the agreement have been clearly recognised by the New China Daily, the Communist organ in Chungking.

In an editorial on November 23, commenting on the Indian situation in the light of Anglo-American relations, it pointed out that India is increasingly becoming a fighting ground between the two imperialist powers.

It continued that the U.S. imperialist activities there are characterized by the Aviation Agreement recently concluded between the American Gov-

ernment and the Interim Government of India, and by the eagerness of the U.S. Government to exchange ambassadors with India. "Could these activities be interpreted as American goodwill towards the Indian people's movement for liberation?"

The paper adds that, though they succeeded in averting the revolutionary crisis in India during February last, the British will find it difficult to prevent the Indian bourgeoisie from looking for another new master under the same old policy of compromise and surrender.

It is strange that the Interim Government, signing the first commercial treaty of any importance after assuming office, should have concluded such a disadvantageous pact with the United States.

India wants to emerge as an independent country, free from the economic shackles of any other country, be it England or the United States, and cannot barter away her future economic development.

Planning In S. E. Europe

In the last issue of People's Age we gave a summary of an article by the eminent Soviet economist, E. Varga, warning that the capitalist world was threatened with an imminent economic crisis.

The process of sharp narrowing of markets, a fall in the production level, the closing of enterprises and a growth of unemployment—sure portents of approaching crisis—had already begun.

As a contrast, we gave figures of Soviet Budget of 1936-37 showing the growing prosperity of the USSR. We

also gave particulars of the economic plans on which the new democracies of Czechoslovakia and Poland have launched to increase the productive capacities of their countries and to raise the people's standard of living.

I have received details of similar planning in two other countries of Eastern Europe—Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.

In May this year, the Yugoslav Parliament set up State planning bodies which have drawn up both long and short term plans for national economy as a whole and for separate branches.

Nor has cultural development been ignored, for there are plans for education, science and art as well as social insurance.

To ensure the country's economic independence measures have been adopted to establish heavy industry. New iron and steel works are under construction which will have an annual productive capacity of 250,000 tons of pig iron and 100,000 tons of steel. New chemical factories are being built, and on the basis of the rich bauxite deposits and hydro-electric power available, the aluminium industry is being developed.

In Bulgaria

In Bulgaria too, a national economic plan has been drawn up providing for considerable increases both in agricultural and industrial productions.

Thus, the coal output is scheduled to increase to four million tons annually as against 3½ million tons before the war, and electric power production to 410 million K.W.H. as against 300 pre-war. The output of textiles and other consumer goods will be doubled, while wheat production will amount to 1,700,000 tons compared with 1,400,000 before the war.

And so while there is gloom and fear of the morrow in the capitalist world, in the Soviet Union and in the new democracies, the people can look forward to the future with hope and confidence.

—V. M. Kaul

The Bookshelf

SOVIET TRANSPORT. By Academician V. Obratsov and others. Profusely illustrated. Rs. 1-2.

The Soviet transport system is the most extensive in the world and has also to cope with extremes of temperature and terrain. This very interesting booklet deals with the beginnings, development under Soviet Government and the future plans of the transport system in Russia—Railways, Air Transport, Merchant Fleet and Inland Water Transport.

CHESS IN RUSSIA. By P. Romanovsky. Rs. 1-14.

Contains a history of Russian chess, biographical sketches of the best players in the Soviet Union and 18 famous games, with diagrams and fully annotated, played by Russian chess masters.

THE GREAT PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION. (October-November 1917). Published in the U.S.S.R. 650 pages. Profusely illustrated. Rs. 2-12.

This is the second volume of the HISTORY OF CIVIL WAR IN THE U.S.S.R., the first volume of which was published by the People's Publishing House two years ago. More copies have been received of this book which was first advertised in this column in the November 10th issue.

BOOKS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

ILLUSTRATED SOVIET BOOKLETS
SOVIET LAND AND PEOPLE. By N. N. Mikhailov. Rs. 1-2.

CO-OPERATIVES IN THE SOVIET UNION. By V. Batov. As. 12.

SOVIET SCIENCE. By S. I. Vavilov, President of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. Rs. 1-2.

FIVE-YEAR PLAN, 1946-50. Law adopted at the First Session of the present Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. As. 12.

PERIODICALS
LABOUR MONTHLY. As. 6. The November issue, now on sale, contains Melotov's final speech at Paris, and articles by Palme Dutt, Pritt, and others.

SOVIET WEEKLY. As. 2. Most of the issues carry a 4-page supplement giving the speeches of the Soviet delegates at the U.N.O. conference. The anniversary issue of November 7th contains a special 4-page photogravure supplement in colour.

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29 YEARS OF SOVIET UNION —ITS ACHIEVEMENTS

New Five Year Plan Will Register Further Advance

(We publish below an article by the well-known writer and M.P., D. N. Pritt, specially written by him for the October Revolution and published in the November issue of the Labour Monthly.—Editor)

TWENTY-NINE years now. What have the Soviet peoples done in those years? It is worth recalling some of the old achievements, just as our slanderers are trotting out the old lies—some borrowed from Goebbels, some of their own manufacture, of a vintage before Goebbels went into business.

The Soviet Union has eliminated unemployment; has put women on a real equality with men; has brought every national minority, however backward, or oppressed before, to the same position, as the old "Great Russians"; has ended the exploitation of man by man; has carried the class struggle to victory; made the backward prison house of scant industries and out-of-date agriculture into the second—soon to be the first—great power; and raised its peoples' cultural level to incredible heights.

And whilst devoting their energies to those great achievements, the Soviet peoples also prepared themselves to face, and faced, the heaviest blows of the most powerful and brutal enemy the world has seen, and waged a victorious war for four years through the most appalling human and material losses in history.

Losses During War

It is well to bear in mind these things when so many are ready to forget or ignore that the material losses alone amounted to—

- 70,000 towns and villages razed to the ground.
- Six million houses and buildings demolished.
- 4,100 railway stations destroyed.
- 30,000 industrial plants stripped.
- 90,000 collective farms destroyed.
- Sixty-four million livestock stolen or destroyed.

It meant (to give one general and one local example) (1) that the German invaders destroyed more dwelling space than had been created since 1917; and (2) that 20,000 wagon-loads of metal had to be moved out of one assembly shop in the tractor plant at Stalingrad before its reconstruction could even begin.

Even the Times was compelled to make the significant admission that:

"There is nothing in Europe, even in Germany, to equal in thoroughness the devastation of Western Russia. Between Lodz, in Central Poland, and Moscow there is no town of any importance which has survived the war with less than three-quarters of its buildings destroyed." (The Times, September 18, 1946).

It is even necessary at the moment to point out—what should be obvious—that these people, with that history do not want any more war. With their economic system they have no need for war; in their country there is no profit for anybody in war; they have no problem that can be solved or even alleviated by war—on the contrary, war would put off the solution of their problems and create new ones for them; and there is nothing in their world that could of itself, directly or indirectly bring about a war.

They have no motive to insist on any term in any treaty unless they are profoundly convinced that that term is essential to avoid future wars and keep peace safe; but they cannot be thought unreasonable if they hold that peace is safer if they remain strong themselves

and have friendly neighbours. Let us take the measure at once of what they are thinking of—so inconsistent with any idea of war—and of the magnitude of the tasks before them, by reflecting on some of the figures of the new Five-year plan.

It is a plan drawn to remedy as far as possible human losses reckoned in millions, and material losses, the volume of which I have indicated above.

New Five-Year Plan

In this plan, facing problems thus illustrated, the planned increase in the total wealth of the U.S.S.R. is 38 per cent—an important factor in the whole material and cultural condition of the people.

The industrial basis for this development requires an increase in the output of industry by 1950 of nearly half as much again as the pre-war level; while agricultural output must go up by a little over a quarter.

The main industrial targets set by the plan for 1950 include:

- Pig-iron output 19.5 million tons and steel 25.4 million tons, together making an increase of 35 per cent above the pre-war level.
- Coal 250 million tons, or over half as much again as pre-war.
- Oil 35.4 million tons, or 14 per cent above pre-war.
- Electric power 82 thousand million kilowatt-hours, or

70 per cent above pre-war. That such targets should be set in a country where the devastation exceeds anything hitherto known—the mere physical destruction wrought by the Germans, quite apart from deaths, dislocation of economy and war privations, amounts to five times the annual national income pre-war—is remarkable enough.

But, still more remarkable, this "five year plan for the restoration and development of the national economy of the U.S.S.R." aims at the restoration of industrial production to pre-war (1940) level by 1948; i.e. in three years. After first world war and the civil war it took all of six years to restore industry to the pre-war (1913) level. Now they will carry through their greater task at twice the speed.

Living Conditions

The details of these and a hundred other targets in industry, transport, agriculture, etc. together with the plans for each of the sixteen republics can be read and should be read, by everyone who wants to grasp the potentialities of a socialist State. But the figures which reflect the planned rise in the living conditions of the peoples of the Soviet Union are of particular interest.

The planned number of workers and employees for 1950—the end of the Plan—is over 33,000,000; and tremendous measures are being developed to secure higher and higher qualifications for more and more

of them. The "labour reserve" or trade schools designed for the intensive training of young entrants to industry—to make them skilled workers from the start—have to deal with 4,500,000 in the five years; and factory schools with many more.

Education

In industry itself, either in schools or in technical circles 7,500,000 will be taught; the total number of those already in industry who are to reach higher qualification are 14,000,000. Of the 33,000,000 total mentioned above, no less than 26,000,000 are to reach higher qualifications through one route or another.

Education, health, and social insurance will have a budget in 1950 over 2½ times as great as in 1940; in the same year, 1950, there will be 31,800,000 students in primary and secondary schools and 670,000 (15 per cent more than in 1940) in "higher" (i.e. university) establishments.

Technicians will have nearly twice that number, half as many again as in 1940. If the promise of greatly increased production tempo and efficiency given by these figures is fulfilled, production in 1950 will have a wholly new aspect.

Housing

Using difficulties, never small and appallingly multiplied during the war, will be tackled on a great scale; the planned investment in housing is Roubles 32,300,000,000 as compared to Roubles 15,500,000,000 in the

third year plan. State building alone plans to create an additional 72,500,000 square metres of housing space, whilst "individual building" with state financial help is to produce a further 12,000,000 square metres in towns alone. In the country 3,400,000 houses are planned, of which 2,240,000 are in devastated areas.

These tremendous efforts, helped on by Socialist competition, will not solve the housing problems; but they will go a long way, and will ensure a substantial solution within a few years after 1950.

Hospitals

Hospital accommodation will increase by 275,000 beds over 1940; children's places in institutions of all kinds will increase by 393,000 or 40 per cent. Payments in respect of confinements and to mothers of large families will total over five times as much as in 1940.

Truly, the Soviet peoples can face their anniversaries with shining eyes. And only lunatics could want to fight them, or could imagine that they want to fight anyone else; but capitalism makes some people behave like lunatics.

But Socialists can view their achievements with pride, can rejoice with them and can resolve that we, too, can improve both our politics and our economics, and can show them in due course that we, too, can perform our miracles.

INDEPENDENCE OF VIET-NAM REPUBLIC AT STAKE

French Reaction's Offensive For Reconquest Of Country

What is at stake in Indo-China today is the independence of the Viet-Nam Republic. In spite of the black curtain of censorship thrown across the whole country by the local pro-Fascist French officials, the truth can no longer be concealed.

THE situation in Viet-Nam is grave, for the French reactionaries have launched a big offensive for the reconquest of the country.

Sixteen hundred members of the French Foreign Legion, the refuge of pro-Fascist elements of all countries, are already on their way to Saigon.

The local French officials, backed by the reactionaries in France, have been trying for some time to blow up the March 8 agreement. Incident after incident has occurred. But the latest offensive is the most serious.

In the middle of October, the French established a Customs Office at Haiphong, in Tonking, to control the internal and external trade of the port. They also began to collect illegal import duties from French nationals residing in Viet-Namese territory.

President's Protest

President Ho Chi Minh sent an official protest to the President of the French Republic. It seems no notice was taken of this.

On the contrary, the French began to plan a general offensive. As early as October 21, orders were issued to all units in Haiphong for an attack on the Viet-Namese troops. Its object was to occupy the French inhabited areas of the city, seize control of the port and cut off the roads leading to it.

The French offensive, however, first began in Langson,

50 miles north of Haiphong. Between November 18 and 21, feverish preparations were made. Photographs were taken of Viet-Namese defence positions. French nationals were secretly ordered to evacuate and finally the French flag was hoisted in front of the camp of the Viet-Namese National Guards.

The Viet-Namese maintained strict discipline in the face of all these provocations. Actually official circles in Hanoi started negotiations with the French in order to prevent disorders.

Heroic Defence

On November 21, while these negotiations were still continuing, French troops attacked the camp of the Viet-Namese National Guards. The Viet-Namese troops put up a heroic defence. Other French troops occupied various public services establishments in the city. The Viet-Namese rushed to their defence and a free fight began.

On the intervention of the local Viet-Namese authorities, the fighting ceased; but intermittent firing continued and calm could not be restored.

At about the same time an armed clash took place at Haiphong over the illegal intervention of the French in the control of the port. Owing to the energetic intervention of the Viet-Namese authorities a cease-fire agreement was signed, only to be broken by the French, the next day.

The Viet-Namese Minister of

National Defence immediately lodged a verbal protest before General Morhère; the French Commissioner in northern Viet-Nam. He also addressed a memorandum to the General giving full details of what had taken place.

On November 23, President Ho Chi Minh personally appealed to both the Viet-Namese and the French to maintain peace. In a letter to General Morhère he declared that the French authorities were entirely responsible for these acts of aggression and requested him to take steps to prevent further disturbances. All these steps had no effect whatsoever. The next morning, the French authorities under instructions from General Morhère, addressed an ultimatum to the Administrative Committee of Haiphong, demanding the withdrawal of the Viet-Namese troops beyond a certain line and their disarmament.

Reign Of Looting

In spite of the cease-fire agreement, shooting continued in Haiphong. The French instead of withdrawing continued to consolidate their positions, and a reign of looting and destructions began. All communications with Haiphong were cut off and commitments to release captured Viet-Namese soldiers were not fulfilled.

On November 23, Mr. Thach, the Under-Secretary of State, again broadcast an appeal to the French, over Hanoi radio, to put an end to this useless bloodshed. In conclusion he said:

"I appeal to all my countrymen to remain calm; I appeal to the troops and self-defence formations of Viet-Nam to be ready to defend the national sovereignty and the proper-

ties of our citizens and foreign residents. The Government is always at your side to defend the fatherland. Long live the unified and independent Viet Nam."

On the same day at the expiry of the ultimatum the French launched vigorous attack on the Viet-Namese positions at Haiphong. French bombers attacked the city and outskirts, and mortars and machine guns supported the assault of the infantry.

The combative spirit of the Viet-Namese troops and the civilians, however, remained high. In a counter-offensive they dislodged the French troops from buildings they had occupied, cleared the streets in the Chinese area and marched to the aerodrome, where they set fire to the petrol and ammunition dump.

Next day, three French ships attempted to land troops at Haiphong. After a violent fight one ship was sunk and the other two had to leave. The French, however, continued their air raids over the city and its neighbourhood.

At Langson on the same day, the French occupied the customs house, the station, the post office and other military positions. They terrorised the civilian population and cut off all approaches to the city from the neighbouring areas.

Fighting Continues

Fighting is continuing in these areas. The French have brought in tanks; but have not been able to make much headway against the stubborn resistance of Viet-Namese troops and civilians.

The situation in Viet-Nam is grave.

The French are planning to send more reinforcements and there is no doubt that a period of struggle is ahead in which the people of Viet-Nam need help from democrats the world over.

The people of Viet Nam have been inspired by India championing the cause of colonial liberation at UNO. And they look to India too in the hour of need to champion their cause.

Extermment Of Kisan Leaders From Thana

GIVING POLITICAL COLOUR TO ECONOMIC STRUGGLE

S. A. Dange Replies To Govt. Communique

S. A. Dange, M.L.A., has issued the following statement:

PROMPTLY on the heels of the statements issued by Syt. N. M. Joshi (M.L.A. Central) and Prof. P. A. Wadia, condemning the Ministry's abuse of the 'Goonda' Act in externment six Kisan Sabha leaders from Thana district, the Bombay Government have come out with a vindication of the "action taken by the district authorities of Thana".

In a long Press communique issued by the Director of Public Information, the Ministry has tried to 'reveal' the 'menacing activities' of some leaders of the Maharashtra Kisan Sabha. If these "had not been brought to an end by the externments", they assert, "the situation in the Thana district would have become extremely grave."

The communique lists a number of alleged 'violent' incidents, speeches and activities on the part of the Sabha workers. There are repeated references to these taking "a fiery form" and assuming "serious proportions," all directed to "the over-emphasis on the need for the establishment of the Lal Bawta Raj", etc.

Glaring Fact Hidden

But behind this big smoke-screen of charges of violence, etc., the Director of Public Information has tried to hide one glaring fact.

On November 10, the strike of 15,000 Warlis for a better wage for timber cutting was settled.

On November 14, a state of emergency was declared in this area and on November 20 the externment orders were executed on just those Kisan Sabha leaders who brought about the settlement.

How does the Director of Public Information equate these facts?

The Kisan Sabha leaders had won the demands of the Warlis, while the Sabukars, who had tried their best to disrupt the strike and terrorise the Warlis every day of this one month old strike, had lost the battle. Who then could be more interested in disturbing the peace?

The fact is there are here Sabukars like H. K. Joshi, President of the Umbergaon Taluka Congress Committee, who have been employing as many as over 100 Warlis as bond-slaves on their fields and who are accustomed to 'systematically violating agreements entered into with the Kisan Sabha during the last year's strike for a better wage for harvesting and hay-cutting.

Sahukars' Mischief

It was these Sabukars who were out for an opportunity to violate this agreement also, brought about in the presence of the Government's Special Welfare Officer, who had even assured the Kisan Sabha against any further repression.

If the strike had been marked by a reign of lawlessness as the Press note alleges, why did this officer give such an assurance? Was he so ignorant of the situation or was he irresponsible?

The Press note refers to his appointment as an "important measure for the uplift and amelioration of the poor Warlis..." Then why did the Government violate this assurance?

It could happen only because they accepted at their face value the reports of the local bureaucrats, just those officers who had resorted to bring and had killed a number of Warlis during the last great strike.

It could happen only because the Ministry yielded to the pressure brought by the

vested interests who parade in the name of the Congress, while unashamedly exploiting forced labour in the same breath.

It is this that led the Ministry to take such extreme measures against civil liberties which will only lead to playing into the hands of the bureaucrats and the Sabukars, emboldening them to sabotage the agreement. It is this that led them to transfer their Special Officer who brought about the settlement, a fact not mentioned in the Press note.

And once having yielded the ground, the Ministry are now defending their action by painting a purely economic struggle in lurid 'political' colours.

Terror Against Warlis

Such an action can only result, as it has already resulted, in further intensification of bureaucratic and Sabukar terror on the Warlis, what with beatings, mass arrests, abduction of women, etc.

And if proofs were needed the Kisan Sabha is ready to prove, unlike the Ministry, these charges before any tribunal.

The Director of Public Information's note has just nothing to say about this reality, rather it hides this reality. And having nothing in facts he has conjured up a tale of 'violence'.

In justification of this he refers to the firing on the night of October 11, 1945, which killed five Warlis and wounded at least 25. This is said to have followed "assaults by labourers on landlords", "robberies", even "actual attacks", "policemen injured", "camp of D.S.P. attacked", etc.

It was during the first great struggle of these one and a half lakh Warlis led by the Kisan Sabha for a living wage for harvesting and hay-cutting.

Prove Your Charges

One wonders how with such damning evidence against them not even a single charge against any of the eight "ignorant, illiterate" Warlis, arrested during that struggle, could be proved. Is a Popular Ministry justified in putting up a discredited frame-up in support of its action?

Incidentally, is the Ministry aware that the Adivasi Seva Mandal (with Syt. B. G. Kher as its President) had then demanded an enquiry into this firing and that it had been turned down?

As for the "commission of offences of rioting, assault, intimidation and beating, including assault on police officers", the Press note is, to say the least, deplorable, as it seeks to prejudice a case which is sub-judice.

The note makes a show of freely quoting from the terror incidents and speeches. But the best that the Government could work up was repetition of vague, unspecified references, sometime, somewhere.

May one ask if they had such proofs in their hands, why have they chosen to use the 'Goonda' Act rather than have recourse to the ordinary criminal law?

The simple fact is that the Ministry is not sure of being able to prove its case before a law court. And hence this effort to become accusers and judges in the same breath!

If the Press note fails in its purpose of adducing proofs to carry conviction, it fails also to state the other side.

It falls for instance, to say why the Government could

not honour their pledge given last year to convene, in August 1946, a conference of representatives of Warlis, Sabukars and the Government to fix up the rates, etc.

The externments were ordered, if the note is to be believed, to prevent the establishment of a Communist regime in the Warli area. And what are the steps taken? Extermment of two women leaders and four male leaders of the Kisan Sabha from the district!

Is the Popular Government so naive as to believe that these six persons, if left free, would have brought this about? And are they satisfied that their externment out of the district has finally avoided this dangerous eventuality?

The shocking absurdity of it all is clear from the stating of it!

Save Civil Liberties

On behalf of the organised working-class I strongly protest against this wanton attack against the economic struggles of these agricultural labourers. It is not given to a Popular Ministry to toe the line of the bureaucracy in accepting police reports at their face value and then become accusers and judges in the same breath.

I appeal to the Ministry to reconsider the matter, and do justice to the Warlis and their leaders. I appeal to the popular organisations to bring pressure on the Ministry in defence of our common rights of civil liberties and struggles for a better life.

'PUBLIC SHOULD ENTER EMPHATIC PROTEST'

N. M. Joshi On Unjustifiable Use Of 'Goonda' Act

N. M. Joshi, M.L.A. (Central), General Secretary of the AITUC, in the course of a statement (December 5) says:

.....Under the "Goonda" Act the

Government had a legal right to proclaim an emergency during communal rioting, but to use the Act to put down an economic movement is clearly an abuse of powers....

I feel that the public of Bombay should enter a timely and emphatic protest against such unjustifiable use of these powers. To treat Mr. Parulekar, an ex-M.L.A., and Miss Sushobha Golchale, an M.L.A. of the Bombay University, and honest and hardworking Warli cultivators as 'goondas' is un-

The Warlis have every right to make an effort and carry on a powerful movement to free themselves from this age-long slavery and poverty, and the Thana Kisan Sabha is expected to help them in this effort.

If there are any breaches of ordinary law or violence committed, Government may deal with such breaches under the ordinary law. But to apply the emergency legislation to them is inexcusable.

'Possible Only In A Mediaeval Country Like India'

Prof. P. A. Wadia's Condemnation

Prof. P. A. Wadia, the well-known nationalist economist, in a statement on which emergency is to be declared, on the externment (December 22) says:

Here is a population under repression and in practical bondage. If any attempt on their part to improve their status resulting in a little squabble is to be followed by the declaration of the state of emergency and externment of workers—many of them university graduates, who have devoted their lives to a public cause—one has reason to despair of the future of our Province.

....The men at the head of the affairs may not have time or opportunity to look carefully into the reports

The ordinary law of the land would have more than sufficed to deal with activities suspected to be illegal.

To get behind the ordinary law by a declaration of an occasion of emergency under an act which was never intended for such happenings, as have occurred in the Thana district, is possible only in a mediaeval country like India.

May we hope that the Bombay Government will look into this matter and save us from the despair which alone can result from a perpetuation of practices like these?



Kisan women at the Chikli Conference.

GUJERAT KISANS DETERMINED TO EMULATE HEROISM OF WARLIS

7,000 Rally At Chikli Conference

Bombay's bureaucracy is not satisfied with what it has achieved in Thana district. It is determined to speed-repressive rule all over the Presidency, wherever the common people fight back against the oppression of the landlords and the police.

THE latest district in which a "State of Emergency" has been declared is Godhra in Gujerat.

For the last six months, the peasants of big landlord-ridden villages like Narsana, Angalia, Chhalla all have fought against begar (veth) and the illegal extortions of the inamdars and talukdars.

Arrests of Kisan workers have been made indiscriminately at the instance of the landlords. Goonda gangs paid by the landlords have beaten up kisans, active in the resistance campaign.

And now, again at the instance of the landlords, the whole district has been brought under the dictatorial "Emergency" laws to pave the way for the complete wiping out of the Kisan movement.

But Gujerat's Kisans will not be cowed down by the bureaucratic-landlord terror.

On December 4 in Chikli (Surat district) a conference of seven thousand Kisans (including one thousand women) rallied from one hundred villages under the Red flag right in one of the strongholds of the zemindars—the village Khamia.

The Kisan Sabha had recently fought successfully in

this talk for a wage-increase for the agricultural labourers from four annas to eight annas a day. Four thousand cart drivers, also organised under the Red flag, had won a 25 per cent increase in their rates after one month and ten days' strike.

These awakened kisans met and protested against the Thana externments, against the declaration of "Emergency" in Godhra and demanded that the Gujerat Kisan Sabha's memorandum to the Government on the rights of peasants, outlawing begar and illegal extortions by the landlords be implemented.

The fact that Godavaribal Parulekar, leader of the great Warli movement, was invited to preside over the conference was a sign of the determination of Gujerat's kisans to emulate the heroism of their Warli neighbours.