

WORKERS' AND COMMON MAN'S HEROISM AGAINST FRATRICIDAL WAR

PEOPLE'S AGE

Flames Of Patriotism Kept Alight

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WE are proud to print this brief report from our Calcutta correspondent. When communal mania gripped the people of Calcutta there were ordinary common folk who held their heads high, clenched their fists, fought and became heroes.

The mania which seized Calcutta was no ordinary frenzy. We have got reports of headless corpses being taken in procession. Our correspondent has seen human heads being paraded through the streets—stuck at the end of swords and spears. He has seen young boys nailed to a mast and taken out in a procession of unspeakable brutality. He has seen children being thrown out of four-storey high buildings on to the streets below. Fiends have hacked the little dead corpses to pieces.

He has seen innocent people die because they were giving shelter to refugees. They were supplied with poisoned milk. And more... much more...

Against such devilishness let loose from hell, the glorious organised working-class of Calcutta stood firm as a rock! Hindu and Muslim workers fought together against all fiendishness. The Muslim worker stood up against Muslim mobs. The Hindu worker held back riotous Hindu mobs.

The main labour belt around Calcutta stood firm and encircled the riot. But in the thick of the riot were little islands of heroism. There were the tramway workers—both Hindu and Muslim—whose glory can never fade. There were also humble householders, shopkeepers, middle-class folks—who never flinched.

ALL GLORY TO CALCUTTA'S NAMELESS HEROES! NEVER AGAIN THIS MUTUAL SLAUGHTER! THE FORCES OF LIFE WILL WIN OVER THE FORCES OF DEATH!

From Nikhil Chakravarty. Calcutta Aug. 25.

Even amidst the insane carnage that drowned Calcutta in four terrible days come to light many instances of silent heroism which put together bring rays of hope and confidence despite the prevailing gloom.

FIRST of all comes the splendid record of the organised working-class. It was they who despite their acute differences with the League, had, in many cases, declared martial law to maintain the solidarity of the working-class and not to let Hindu and Muslim workers fall apart.

Thus the Tram Workers' Union decided to go on strike on the 16th and thereby helped to minimise the chances of disturbances.

In the industrial belt of Hooghly District, the Congress Committee issued a printed appeal asking the workers "to bring about the solidarity of the workers belonging to all communities by keeping the factories closed on the 16th".

Similarly, railway, textile, and other sections of workers were the only people who on their own initiative fought to guard against the communal war beforehand.

Working Class Stands Firm

When, however, August 16 actually brought in its trail murder and loot, the organised working-class kept away from it. For the whole vast jute-belt flames of fratricidal war could not spread.

The dock-workers, seamen, tram, gas, textile workers, in a body stayed away from it and maintained their solidarity.

Of all working-class areas only Metiabruz was seriously involved in the riot, but here it was not the workers but the local population, mostly tailors, who were drawn into the tur-

mole and the workers were mostly put on the defensive and even then they did not participate in looting.

On August 19, when Sjt. MRINAL KANTI BOSE, President of A.I.T.U.C., stated, "The working-class I know as a whole kept itself away from this turmoil," he was not making an empty claim.

Fighting The Flames

Not only that. They intervened at many places to put out the flames that raged all round.

In Tittaghur, Hindu and Muslim workers brought out a joint peace procession.

In Budge Budge, Hindu and Muslim workers held a public meeting and pledged to stand firm against riots.

In Kidderpore, seamen and port-workers refused to join in communal clashes and helped rescue work.

In Narkeldanga, B. & A. Railway workers raised Hindu-Muslim volunteers to keep peace.

Near Tiljala, 200 Hindus and Muslims living together, many of whom work in Heatley, Gresham and other factories, decided on the first day that it was their own duty to keep peace and they did so.

Ultadanga is very near to one of the raging centres of disturbance. But in certain areas of Ultadanga could be seen festoons notifying "Peaceful areas for Hindus and Muslims," and in these localities workers of the Lily Biscuit Co., Dakshindari Jute Mill, continued normal work despite dislocation everywhere.

Gas-workers living in one of

the very centres of mob violence at Rajabazar tried to save many in distress and themselves as a body abstained from hooliganism.

Tramway Workers' Glory

But the most glorious was the record of the tram workers, Calcutta's proudest Union under the Red flag.

In many areas the tram-workers even when left alone tried heroically to stop looting which was almost an impossible job in the prevailing temper.

Hindus and Muslims in many cases not only lived together but even refused to part when the rescue parties came to pick Muslims from Hindu areas and Hindus from Muslim areas.

And it was their heroic intervention, together with some Muslim students, which saved the Victoria Institute Hostel for girls on the Upper Circular Road from being looted.

Besides the workers, there were many individual cases of heroism which created almost a saga for Calcutta: in bustees as well as in middle-class localities, these cases actually hap-

pened side by side with gruesome butchery and looting.

Common Man's Heroism

● In Burra Bazar one Hindu-stani Sadhu gave shelter to nine Muslims. A Hindu mob raided his house, killed three Muslims, and seriously wounded the Sadhu, but could not spot the other six Muslims whom the Sadhu continued to give secret shelter even after the raid.

● The Tower Lodge Boarding House in Mirzapore was attacked by a Muslim mob but one Muslim boarder boldly faced them saying, "You cannot raid this place without killing me"; and another Muslim boarder challenged, "If you have to loot then loot my room first."

● One Hindu Postmaster in North Calcutta saved the family of his Muslim postman by risking his own life resisting a Hindu crowd.

● Three hundred mochis (shoe-makers) in Balhak Khana area saved the life of a group of Hindu tram workers.

● In Goabagan, North Calcutta, one old Brahmin stood blocking the lane leading into a small Muslim bustee in a dominantly Hindu locality and thundered against the Hindu mob that they could enter the Muslim bustee only over his dead body.

Later when the Muslims were evacuated he was threatened but he refused to leave the place saying that it would be admitting defeat.

Similarly, reports from Belgachia, Park Circus and Central Calcutta give many instances of Muslims coming forward to defend and shelter Hindu families hunted by Muslim mobs.

In many cases when the fury increased these brave men—many of them are just honest householders—risked their own lives and reached these Hindu families to safety or police protection. Some Muslim Leaguers could be seen at this job.

So also in Hindu localities in Shambazar, Bhowanipore and Ballygunge there were numerous cases of Muslims getting shelter in Hindu homes and be-

ing rescued to safety from the clutches of Hindu mobs. In this work I found many Congress and Communist workers working side by side.

Here it may be noted that mob fury had grown to such an unbelievable extent that those who were found giving shelter became the target of mob attacks and their lives were endangered.

Thus even when the distressed were rescued by the police or the military, many such Hindus and Muslims who risked their lives to honour fraternal ties between Hindus and Muslims were threatened with death by men of their own communities.

There were many instances of Hindus and Muslims in bhadralok localities standing up to the mob violence. I shall end by quoting what happened in our own locality:

Joint Defence

At Garcha Road, Ballygunge, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs held a joint meeting and decided to guard the entire area by volunteers to prevent outside mobs from penetrating; Hindus to resist Hindu mobs, Muslims to resist Muslim mobs invading.

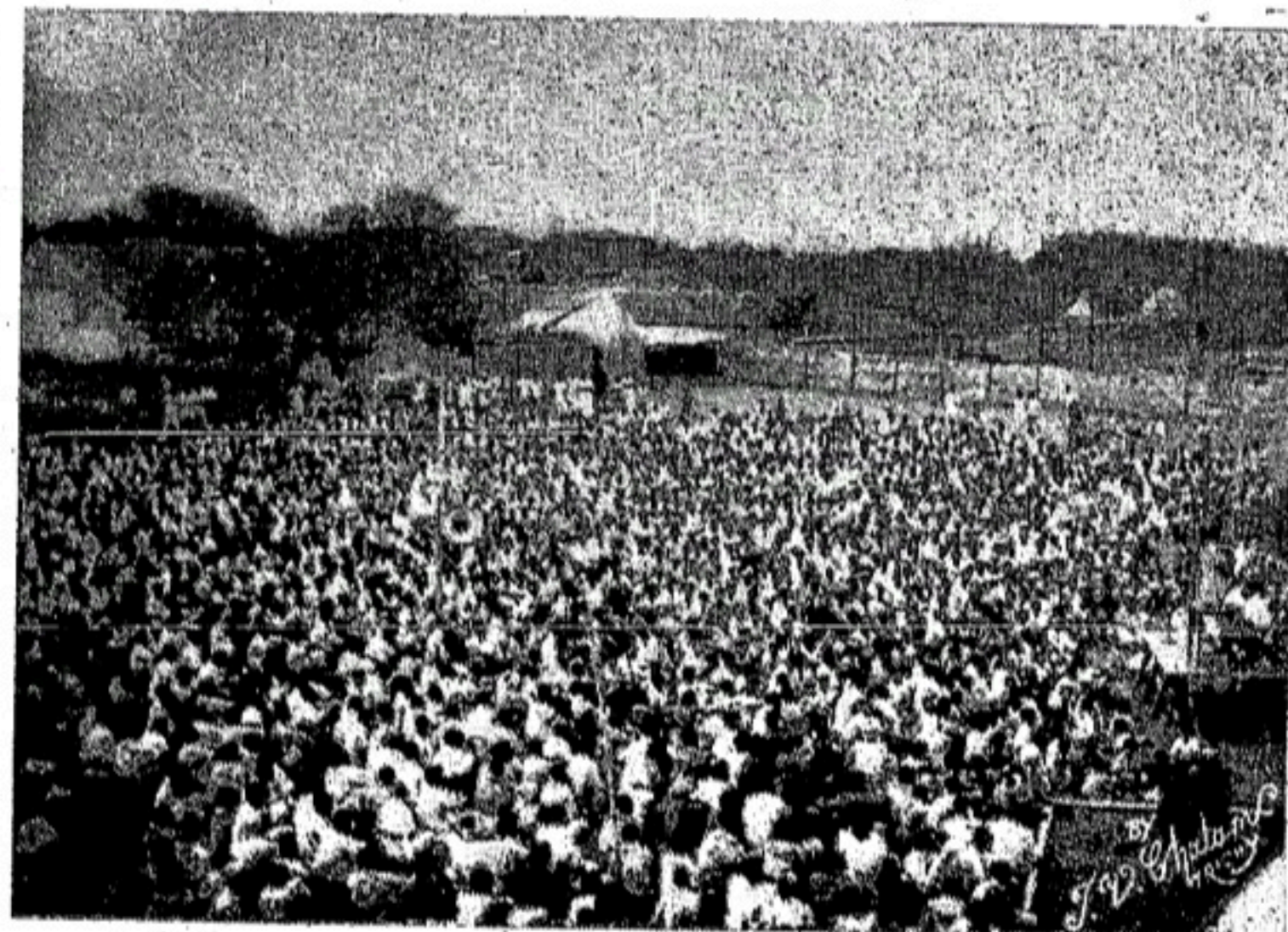
But on the 18th there was a tense crisis everywhere and they jointly decided to evacuate Muslims to safety which was done the next day. But even then the mosque in the area is still kept safe.

Across Gariahat Road in Ballygunge Place, I found Prof. NIREN ROY openly giving shelter to a number of Muslim workers in face of an infuriated Hindu crowd, and himself stood guard until they were rescued to safety.

Another professor, Dr. TARAK DAS of Anthropology Department, Calcutta University, himself barred the way to a Hindu mob trying to loot the house of Dr. Ahmed.

Thus even amidst the ruin and devastation of Calcutta there were people who refused to let patriotism be destroyed and who declared by their deeds that life must assert itself against death.

MANIFESTO ON COMMUNAL RIOTS—See Page 4 S. I. RAILWAY STRIKE—See Page 5



Mid-day meeting of strikers at Golden Rock, S. I. Railway. [Photos: J. M. Kalyan].



During the strike at Golden Rock (SIR), Anglo-Indian Foremen, Chargoemen, etc., being escorted under police protection to the workshop. 90 per cent of daily rated Anglo-Indians are with strikers.

WORKERS AND STUDENTS VOICE INDIGNANT PROTEST

Bans, Lathi-Charges, Tear-Gas Used Against Demonstrators

On August 22, 50,000 workers of Madras and large numbers of students came out of their factories, workshops and colleges, in response to the call of the Madras Provincial Trade Union Congress (M.P.T.U.C.) and Madras Students' Organisation (affiliated to the A.I.S.F.) to protest against police terror on the Corporation workers and express their solidarity with them in their just struggle.

The workers of tramways, Egmore Railway Loco-shed, automobile industry, engineering factories Binny Beach Engineering, Harbour, tanneries, press etc., came out with their respective flags. The Buckingham and Carnatic Mill workers joined the strike in the afternoon, Bus-workers (inspite of their leader M. S. Naidu who calls himself a Congressman and issued a leaflet for strike, but later on backed out) joined the strike in the evening.

Thus the entire organised workers of the city solidly demonstrated their indignation against the police terror.

IMEDIATELY after the announcement of a general strike the Police Commissioner banned all processions and meetings, and assembly of more than five people on that day. Under the very nose of the Congress Ministry, the police were attempting to strangle even the right of the common people—who had put that very Ministry in power—to protest against police raj.

During the previous night itself, police patrols had been posted throughout the city and especially in the working-class areas. Early in the morning, Balachandra Menon, Somasundaran and Karuppannan, labour leaders of the city, were served with prohibitory orders not to take part in the processions and meetings.

Chandrasekharan, a student who went to Saidapet, and demanded the body of the 70 year-old woman who had died the previous day after a brutal lathi-charge, was served with orders not to speak at any meeting. The police snatched away the dead body from the people, held a post-mortem, and gave out the report later that she had died a natural death!

The People's Park, where the workers' meeting was to be held, was specially guarded by armed Malabar Special Police. Throughout the day they chased away workers going in that direction.

In this tense situation, the Communist M.L.A. Venkateswaralu, moved an adjournment motion in the Assembly to discuss the serious situation arising out of police terror in the city. The motion was disallowed and Venkateswaralu was prevented even from speaking by Congress M.L.As by shouting.

Workers Defy Ban

A procession of Corporation workers coming from Pudukpet early in the morning (who had not known about the ban), and another procession coming from Egmore were lathi-charged; and workers came to know only then that there was a ban on meetings. They decided to defy the ban.

By 4 p.m. thousands of workers had gathered round the People's Park. In spite of the police guard, V. P. Chintan, labour leader and member of the Madras District Committee of the Communist Party, gathered them together, addressed the meeting and asked the workers to go to Premier Prakasam to protest against the police excesses and demand the withdrawal of the ban.

When this procession was passing along the Central Station, the police were ordered to lathi-charge under the direct instructions of the Police Commissioner.

Chintan, who was leading the

was meeting. There they were met by masked police bandobust.

Nearly a hundred students and workers at last forced their way and entered the Secretariat. There they demanded of the Premier that the Ministry withdraw the ban on meetings and stop police zoolum. Instead of meeting the demonstrators, Ministers ordered the police to clear them out by force.

Within the Assembly compound and in the presence of the Ministers and M.L.As, a brutal lathi charge took place. Subbiah, a student leader of Stanley Medical College, was singled out by the police and severely beaten up; he fell down unconscious in front of the Congress Ministers and M.L.As who were witnessing the whole scene.

Every one of the 600 non-Gazetted officer-clerks—who are themselves preparing for a fight for a decent wage—came out and witnessed this horrible scene. What everyone of them was thinking came out spontaneously when one clerk said: "It is Fascist rule in Madras."

Fighting Back Terror

If the Congress Ministry thought that all this would terrorise the people into submis-

sion, they were badly mistaken. Immediately after these lathi-charges, students and workers, now numbering over 5,000, marched along the Beach Road to Tilak Ghat shouting, "Down with Police Repression," "Disband Malabar Special Police," "Victory to the Corporation Workers," etc.

Heavy police escorts moved up and down in lorries fitted with wireless sets, but the workers and students were determined to reach Tilak Ghat where a joint protest meeting was to be held.

Meeting At Tilak Ghat

Eight thousand workers, students, and other citizens, including a thousand women, gathered at Tilak Ghat that evening, in spite of all the city-wide police terror, Balachandra Menon, Secretary of the MPTUC, presided.

Student, Labour and Communist leaders addressed the mass gathering condemning the policy of the Madras Ministry in using the police to suppress the workers.

As the meeting was ending, lorry-loads of armed policemen waiting by the roadside moved down and surrounded

the meeting. Without the slightest warning, they let loose tear-gas on the people: neither women nor children were spared. They lathi-charged indiscriminately for half an hour.

A section of the police then entered the nearby Victoria Students' Hostel compound and beat up several students who had not come to the meeting, but were merely standing there.

The people did not take this offensive quietly, they fought back heroically in defence of their elementary democratic rights.

Thus, when a section of the people returning via Ice House Road was attacked by the police, the indignant crowd beat them back with stones and sent them flying to take shelter in the Ice House Police Station.

A Great Day

August 22 was a great day for the working-class and the students of Madras city. On that day, the entire organised working-class of the city supported by large sections of the students came out on the streets in defiance of the worst police terror and fought it back.

They raised their voice in support of the just demands of the Corporation strikers and in condemnation of police zoolum to break a legal strike.

They gave a warning to the Congress Ministry—a Ministry our own people have returned to power to defend their interests and fight British Raj—that if this very Ministry turns against its own people and uses the very police of the British Raj to crush their just struggles, then the common man will no longer take this lying down.

CONGRESS HIGH COMMAND ON LABOUR UNREST AND STRIKES

Employers' Arguments Trotted Out Against Workers' Fight For Living Conditions

Not A Word On Recognition Of Trade Unions; Right To Strike Assailed

Hard on the heels of Gandhiji's article on strikes, comes the Congress Working Committee's resolution laying down the policy towards labour and strikes. It speaks in terms and sentiments which would be more worthy of employers and bureaucrats than of the High Command of a people's organisation.

THERE is no full-throated appreciation of the heroic, disciplined and organised mass resistance which the working-class and their trade unions are putting up against the conditions of starvation; there is no outright condemnation of the ruthless war profiteering both by the Government and the private employers which is the main cause of the workers' privations.

Instead we are told that "Labour unrest is causing heavy material loss... to the community as well as to the working-class" and that the "serious privations of the workers are due to the tremendous economic maladjustments of the war."

Rising Profits

● The profits of the textile millowners have increased by 65.0% during the war years while the real wages of the luckless textile workers have dwindled to 70.8 per cent of their pre-war wage, not to speak of other serious handicaps regarding non-availability of housing, food, etc.

● The number of railway workers has increased by 2½ lakhs in the years of war but the railway wage bill has remained stationary, while the Government and the Railway Board have funds enough at their disposal (made out of the huge war earnings) to increase the wages by 100 per cent.

Here is a situation of greedy profiteering by the capitalists, callous disregard of workers' interest by the bureaucrats face to face with an unbelievable degree of starvation and suffering among millions of workers.

It is not a situation which can be tackled by well-meaning homilies to the workers about "the need of discipline and respect for rights and requirements of others," nor by prayers to the employers and the Government "to take early steps to satisfy the legitimate needs and aspirations of the working-class."

The Congress Working Committee entirely misses the mark when it opines that "Labour troubles" have been aggravated because of the absence of a well-defined National plan or machinery of conciliation, arbitration and adjudication.

The fact is that the troubles of labour as well as the hardships to the community both arise out of the cussed attitude of the employers and the Government, who do everything in their power to hinder the growth of "a strong trade union movement" by refusing to recognise mass trade unions, by denying them the right of collective bargaining with the employers, by victimising active trade union workers.

Conciliation Machinery

A conciliation and arbitration machinery, however perfect, has no meaning in the absence of freedom for trade union organisation, and in the absence of trade union recognition by owners.

On the other hand, to talk of "impartial" examination of workers' demands, of prompt settlements through conciliation and arbitration—while saying nothing about the fundamental right of trade union recognition, while turning a

blind eye to the ruthless victimisation of trade union workers, which is being resorted to by millowners as well as by railway authorities at present, is to play the bosses' game.

Curb the unions, smash the strike, deceive the workers and fool the public by a show of "impartial agencies of arbitration"—that is the labour policy of the employers and the bureaucrats.

It is all the more amazing to note that the Working Committee resolution which is silent on the question of trade union recognition and victimisation, which is silent on the responsibility of the employers and the Government to ensure minimum living conditions to the worker—is quite emphatic on banning all strikes in "particular industries and services which are essential for the existence of the community and public administrations."

A Belated Sanction?

Is the Working Committee resolution giving a belated sanction to the policies which the Congress Ministries are already pursuing by rushing through legislations to ban strikes and forcing arbitration upon the workers by attempting to suppress strikes and militant unions?

And more: Does this foreshadow the labour policy of the coming Interim Government at the Centre which would begin by depriving the workers in railways, post and other public utilities of their right to strike?

The resolution, which has said nothing of war against profiteers and of guaranteeing a minimum living wage to the workers, however, talks of a "vicious race between prices and wages accentuating existing difficulties."

Apologists of profiteers have always talked of this vicious

circle of rising wages being followed by rise in prices to justify the freezing of wages at starvation levels and to give a wide berth to the capitalists to garner in crores of rupees at the expense of the workers and the community.

But this is not what the people expect of the Congress High Command and the Future Interim Government manned by it. They demand a ruthless war on profiteers, urgent steps to promote industries and a guarantee of a minimum living wage to workers. That is the people's way to smash the vicious circle of rising prices and wages.

Dangerous Trends

The resolution makes no mention of the All-India Trade Union Congress under whose banner the overwhelming majority of the organised workers are rallied. Instead, the Working Committee passed a special resolution recognising the activities of the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh, which in many places openly bolsters up boss-sponsored unions and disrupts the existing ones by setting up rival unions.

The resolution of the Working Committee is the harbinger of the most dangerous developments in the labour policy of the Congress. If carried to their logical conclusion, these developments would result in making Congress Ministries instruments of profiteers and vested interests, acting against the workers and the people. They would make Congressmen into strike breakers and opponents of the organised trade union movement. They would not only split the working-class movement, but would lead to disruption of the freedom movement as well.

EPIDEMICS TAKE HEAVY TOLL IN BIHAR

75,000 Fall Victims In Six Months, 1000 Dying Weekly

CONGRESS MINISTRY FAILS TO TACKLE PROBLEM

During the last six months 75,000 people have died in Bihar. A thousand are dying every week. The worst months—the post-flood months—are yet to come when rivers will subside and malaria will unleash a further crop of calamities. But the Congress Government in Bihar continues to dilly-dally with the problem.

THIS year's epidemic is more serious than that of 1944. Then it was only cholera and malaria. This time—in 1946—these two have been joined in by plague and small pox also.

Plague has taken a heavy toll of life—rising upto 500 deaths per week in March. The average death rate from small pox from January to June has been 100 per week. And Cholera has claimed over 15,000 people in the last six months.

Two thousand villages have been ravaged and razed to the ground, so that hundreds of acres of land are lying untilled. There are either no people to till them or the few that are left there have not the physical strength to do so. (Indian Nation, May 19, 1946.)

Conspiracy To Hide The Facts

Far from rushing to the relief of the people, the bureaucrats—who still seem to have the run of the Government in Bihar—tried to hide the true facts of

by
Our Correspondent.

the situation.

The Director of Public Health in Bihar said in a statement on the situation in Darbhanga that 583 people had died there in the week ending May 25.

Shri Hariharnath Mishra, a Congress MLA, issued a contradiction and showed that in 10 thanas alone of only one sub-division (Madhubani) of the district 518 people had died from cholera in that week! He quoted a number of instances to prove that cholera was even more virulently rampant in other sub-divisions of the district. (Indian Nation, June 10, 1946)

Dt. Board Chairman's Wrong Statement

Similarly, the faithful Chairman of the Muzaffarpur District Board, Rai Bahadur, Maheswar Prasad Singh MLC, (a new friend of the Congress) is-

sued a statement on May 5 assuring everybody that the situation was "not at all beyond control," and that only 40 villages were affected in Sitamarchi sub-division.

Another Congressman gave the lie to this shameful attempt to throw dust into the eyes of the public. Thakur Ramnandan Singh, MLA, wrote:

"Even taking a lenient view of the situation... it is clear that some 300 (not 40!) villages are already affected by cholera in this sub-division, though my information is that the approximate figure comes to 400 villages." (Indian Nation, May 19, 1946).

The Congress Ministry till almost the end of May kept on shielding the bureaucrats and Governor's yes-men in this policy of hiding the gravity of the situation. In May a storm of protest burst against this callousness, both inside and outside the legislature.

Minister Forced To Take Notice

The Revenue Minister was almost physically forced to undertake a tour of the epidemic-stricken areas.

Yet there was no relief. The Minister did not deem it necessary to issue any statement on the epidemic situa-

tion. No debate was allowed in the Assembly to discuss the situation. There was no ringing call to the people and their organisations to rise to the rescue of the sufferers. And the attempts to maintain a black curtain on the situation continued.

Later, Shri Ramnandan Singh, MLA, made a sensational disclosure from the floor of the Assembly that the criminal officers of the Government of Bihar had issued secret circulars for suppressing local death reports and encouraging garbled reports on the medical work done. (Amrita Bazar Patrika, June 15, 1946).

Farcical Plan Of Congress Government

Faced with this situation, the Congress Ministers announced a relief plan. Here are some relevant extracts from this plan, as reported by the Searchlight of June 23, 1946:

"The Government has decided to place a sum of Rs. 90,000 at the disposal of the District Relief Committees, which will be composed of District Magistrate, Chairman, District Board, Health Officer and such MLAs as agree to join them." (Of course, for a popular Government, there is no need to associate the people, their village committees, etc., with its work!)

"The Government are examining the possibility of prescribing a suitable scale of fees for the doctors...."

"The Government has a proposal of compulsory disinfection of sources of water supply...."

"The question of increasing genuine supply is under consideration."

And finally, "It has been proposed that a Committee will be formed to suggest the Provincial Government ways and means," etc., to help the people.

Still Under Consideration

Seventy-five thousand people have died, six months of unprecedented epidemic have passed, and the benign people's Government of Bihar is still "ex-

amining", "proposing" and promising measures of relief! And how beggarly and farcical this proposed relief of Rs. 90,000 is will be understood when we realise that even in 1944, three lakhs of rupees spent on relief work by various organisations were not considered adequate.

Let no one run off with the impression that the Congress Ministers—are helpless, because the coffers of the Bihar Government are empty.

Ministers Arming The Police

No, the other day, on June 27, 1946, only four days after the announcement of the epidemic relief, Sjt. S. K. Sinha, Premier of Bihar, asked for and got a sum of rupees one crore and eighty-eight lakhs sanctioned for spending on police and rearming it with the latest types of machineguns, tommy guns, rifles, hand-grenades, gas masks, steel helmets, etc. (Searchlight, June 29, 1946).

The epidemic has assumed such widespread proportions owing to the continued malnutrition, semi-starvation and food crisis which have ravished the resisting power of the people. There is no attempt to tackle this problem. Nor is there any attempt to provide to meet the critical situation which will arise after the floods.

Provincial Communist Party's Criticism

This is happening because, as the resolution of the Bihar Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of India points, out:

"The Ministry is more or less continuing the same policy as has been followed by the Governor and his advisers—the policy of relying on bureaucrats and of leaving a free hand to the food-thieves, drug-thieves, and of allying itself with zamindars.

Both the interests of the people of Bihar and the Congress Government demand that this policy should be immediately changed, and the people and all their organisations should be rallied to tide over the coming crisis.

A PATRIOTS NOTEBOOK

SQUADRONS

ON June 19, the British Air Ministry in London sent a cypher message to Air Headquarters in India on the subject of a "Strategic Reserve". This is what the cypher message said:

"1. Now agreed that your theatre should be capable of accommodating and operating for a minor operation the following interim strategic reserve force from the United Kingdom at two months' notice:
4 Long Range Bomber Squadrons
3 Day Fighter Squadrons
4 Transport Squadrons
Total: 11 Squadrons.

"2. You should plan for the above interim strategic reserve force in addition to the Garrison Force for December, 1946.

"3. A paper plan should also be prepared for the accommodation by July 1950 of the Plan "C" Strategic Reserve, namely:

6 Long Range Bomber Squadrons
3 Light Bomber Squadrons
3 Long Range Fighter Squadrons
5 Ground Attack Fighter Squadrons
1 Single-engined Squadron
Total—18 Squadrons."

The Indian Air Force had one squadron before the war, it grew to nine during the war—and in the great future, as the be-all and end-all of our aims, the Commander-in-Chief promises India the glorious prospect of having TEN Squadrons!

And so, the Royal Air Force, Britain's own, will be here to "protect" us—against ourselves. Eleven squadrons for "a minor operation". Eighteen squadrons planned ahead for 1950. And all, of course, in addition to the mighty permanent Occupation Air Force which is to continue to lord it over us.

I seem to remember Sir Stafford Cripps and Lord Pethick-Lawrence and Co. declaring solemnly that the question of the retention of British troops would be decided by the new Government of "Free India". Is it not rather strange that they are planning so far ahead as this?

This is only one of the secret messages which are passing to and fro between the British military bosses in London and those in New Delhi. There are more plans being cooked—bigger plans—all with the one purpose: of making India bristle with

British steel so that in fact she is always slave, no matter by what pretty title the Government is called. But some people count their squadrons before they are hatched—count them without reference to the red-hot anger of the Indian people. And because they do this, they count wrong.

ADVERTISING

I HAVE just come across a prize piece of "literature"—a note meant for India's big businessmen, by one Harish C. Jain, Director of the National Advertising Service, Ltd., Bombay, entitled: "Strikes, Management and Advertising".

Here are some extracts from this jewel of a note:

"To its labour, the management should trumpet about all the benefits it provides. Labour takes all the benefits provided to it for granted. Even the gains in wages and working conditions are credited not to the Company but either to the Union or to the Government.."

"It is very vital, therefore, that whenever a company institutes a benefit, it should put selling effort into it; it should let everyone of its employees know that it is just because the management is really interested in the welfare of its workers that it is providing this or that benefit...."

"Each Company should have an employee publication—a type of House Organ—which should play up in its columns whatever the company does for its employees."

Commerce, the organ of Bombay's Big Business, quotes Mr. Jain very, very approvingly. And maybe, you will find our millowners busy soon in a new form of advertising.

The only "trouble" is that India's working-class is getting a little too mature in struggle to be fooled by this type of balderdash. And Mr. Jain and his millowner friends will be hard put to it to convince a starving worker's child by the power of the printed word, that he has had a whole dish of pillau.

GOVERNORS

ENTERTAINING the British Governor has created a major crisis in the Punjab Congress. The Congress Minister Chaudhri Lahr Singh, entertained the White-Governor to breakfast in his native town Sonapat. The entire rank and

file of the Congress protested. This was a scandalous thing, had never been done before. They called on the Minister to resign.

But Mr. Bhim Sen Sachar, leader of the Congress Assembly Party and Finance Minister, declared that he saw no harm whatsoever in this function. He quoted in support the tea party given by the Bombay Governor, Sir John Colville, to Provincial Ministers at Poona, where, he said, Gandhiji had, more or less, blessed the tea and opened up a once tightly locked door for Anglo-Indian cooperation.

The rot has begun. Colville's tea began it. Lahr Singh's lunch for Governor Jenkins is the second slope down which the Congress has rolled.

It is good that Congressmen as a whole in the Punjab have protested against this hateful fawning on the White satraps. They must push their protest to its logical conclusion: ban this private over-friendship with the British. It disgraces the national movement.

COMPENSATION

THE very latest gossip going the round of the Burra Sahibs is that Government will offer "compensation" to all members of the ICS and the Indian Police if they want to retire, when a Congress Government takes power.

This compensation will equal a high percentage of their salary for their remaining years of service, and of course they will be given full pension.

Thus it is expected that the average civilian will be able to grab two to three lakhs of rupees of our money and retire to enjoy this loot in peace—a reward for his acts in 1942 and ever since!

And yet unfortunately it seems that the Congress Party in the Central Legislature has unofficially given its assent to this monstrous provision.

This is the most scandalous plan the British have. Not one pice for these war criminals—that should be the slogan of the national movement. If they get away without being sentenced for their crimes, they should count themselves lucky.

Ramesh Chandra

COMMUNAL WAR AN IMPERIALIST CONSPIRACY AGAINST INDIAN FREEDOM

League-Congress Policies Aid Enemy's Game

BROTHERS, The blood-curdling events of Calcutta come as a great warning to all fighters for freedom. For four days, from August 16, Calcutta was in the grip of the worst communal frenzy. Murder, loot, arson were rife in the city, perpetrated not only by hooligans, but by ordinary men.

Sense of common slavery, pity—in short all sense of decency—seemed to have disappeared. Houses with inmates inside were set on fire. Women were raped and killed; children were thrown from houses on to the streets and speared to death; heads of the slain were victoriously carried by the murderers in broad day light.

All the atrocities and sadistic outrages perpetrated by the British masters in the last two hundred years were repeated by the slaves on their fellow slaves—on their own brothers and sisters.

More than 3,000 innocent people were killed; over 10,000 wounded.

Who were killed? Those killed—Hindus and Muslims—were common men from the middle and the poorer classes—men who would have been proud to lay down their lives in the common struggle for freedom. Those who killed them were also ordinary men who any day would consider it a privilege to sacrifice their lives for the common cause of Indian freedom. That is the tragedy of Calcutta.

A Fortnight Ago—And Now

● Only a few months ago, the streets and pavements of Calcutta were red with the blood of Hindus and Muslims in the common fight against the British for the release of the INA soldiers. Hindus and Muslims sacrificed their lives on the barricades, boldly facing the British armoured cars with a death-defying spirit.

● Only a fortnight ago, Calcutta demonstrated on July 29 the unity of the Hindus and Muslims, when 15 lakhs came out on a protest strike to support the postmen's strike. Hindu and Muslim workers, middle-class employees, clerks, students—all joined hands against the policy of the Government of India.

Muslim League volunteers kept the Ministers away from work and the European sahibs were shown their place that day.

Before the demonstration of this united might of the citizens of Calcutta, the forces of Government had to retreat; not one policeman nor one soldier dared show his face on the streets. The city was in the hands of the people, solidly united for a common cause.

Whose Responsibility?

Who was responsible then for this sudden transformation of Calcutta into a boiling pot of communal frenzy? Who hatched this murderous plot against a whole people and how did the people fall a victim to it?

Workers, Citizens, the events of Calcutta constitute the culminating point of the imperialist policy of 'divide and rule'; of the policies of the two political parties which continually disrupt the forces of national unity.

The gathering momentum of mass struggles beginning with the INA demonstrations and the armed mutiny of the Naval ratings have revealed to imperialism that India can no longer be governed unless her own people are divided into warring camps—each seeking the help of the British against the other.

The Cabinet Mission's plan, while it seeks alliance with the Princes and other vested inter-

ests, exploits the Congress-League differences to divide the people; to stem the tide of revolution and force the two organisations to rely on British strength and awards. It forces each party to mobilise its following not against the British, but against each other, thus preparing the country for internecine mass conflicts.

Imperialist Conspiracy

The policy of 'divide and rule' today means civil war between Hindus and Muslims—civil war which is often referred to by the leaders of the Congress and the League—civil war in which Indian women and children are killed, while European bosses continue to rule over all as before.

On whom does imperialism rely to execute its plan of 'divide and rule'? In all shame it must be admitted that it is the policies pursued by the leaderships of the two main organisations, of the Congress and the League, on which imperialism relies to carry through its plan of a civil war.

How well did the imperialist

hoodwink them. In fact, the Muslim masses were trapped by the vested interests into a communal conflict and used by them as cat's-paw to play their own game of securing a compromise with British imperialism and seeking its aid against the Congress.

The Muslim League leadership by pursuing a policy of inciting its following against the Hindus, by deliberately screening the common struggle for power and by giving a call for action against the Congress, lent itself as an instrument for executing the imperialist policy of civil strife.

On the other side, the policy of compromise with British imperialism, pursued by the leadership of the National Congress, plays straight into imperialist hands.

Congress Policy

The imperialist power can be knocked out today in a single mighty blow if the Congress calls for a joint struggle of Hindus and Muslims, on a platform which brings all together. Not all the imperialist might would be of any use against such a powerful and decisive blow.

Communist Appeal To Workers, Kisans, Toiling People --Forge Hindu-Muslim Unity Through Joint Struggle

plot succeed? As soon as it became known that British imperialism was coming to terms with the National Congress leadership on the question of the Interim Government, the reactionary leadership of the League gave a call for "direct action" and fixed August 16 as the day to symbolise it.

League's Direct Action

During the many upheavals which India has seen, the League leadership has not even once given a call for "direct action" and joined the common struggle for freedom.

● The League leadership which claims to represent the 100 million Muslims of India dared not give a call for "direct action" when three million people, the majority of whom were Muslim peasants, died in the Bengal famine of 1943. It dared not lift its voice against the imperialist masters in defence of the Muslim peasant.

● When the heroic people of Kashmir—90 per cent. of whom are Muslims, and the most oppressed Muslims—rose against the tyrannical Maharaja—the League leadership would neither support them nor give a call for direct action.

● The League leadership opposed the common struggle of railway workers against the Government of India and today does nothing to protect the Muslim peasant of the Punjab from the Muslim landlord.

In whose interest then was its present call for "direct action" given and for what purpose?

Muslim Masses Trapped

The call for observing August 16 was a call to enforce the imperialist constitution, 'to rescue the British from the clutches of the Congress', to pursue the game of power politics—the game of Muslim vested interests against the Congress—not a call for fight against the British. It was a call for securing British help against the Congress, against the Hindus. It was a call which exactly suited the interests of British imperialism.

No doubt, the Muslim masses were told it was a jihad against the British—but that was to

use British military—against the Muslim masses. The same leadership which demanded the withdrawal of British troops in 1942, would now be calling them to its aid, as Sarat Bose has already done, to maintain its sham power and authority.

What could be more ironical, more disgraceful than this "power and authority" which relies on the British to keep order, because it cannot unite its own masses and people? Workers, Citizens, the Calcutta riot is not the last of the riots. India's hungry millions have yet to go through many a fiery ordeal—the worst among them will be orgies like that of Calcutta.

Disruption

The entire policy of the Congress leadership in recent years has been one which puts every obstacle in the way of the common Muslim joining the common struggle and thus enables communal leadership to secure a hold over him.

● Its alliance with Indian vested interests forces it to range itself against the struggle of the peasant against the landlord—a struggle in which Hindu and Muslim peasants come to common consciousness.

● Its opposition to strikes once again ranges itself against the common struggle of the Hindu and Muslim workers and behind the interests of the capitalists.

● Its support to the feudal Princes compels it to take a lukewarm attitude towards the struggle of the Muslim masses in States like Kashmir. Its policy thus continually disrupts common consciousness and enables the Muslim communalists to continue their hold over the Muslim masses.

That policy reaches its culmination in the present period when it goes in for compromise with the British and hopes to beat down the League with their aid.

Instead of working for a voluntary union of India, it relies on compulsory union under a British-made constitution, and thus offers an opportunity to the League leadership to incite the Muslim

masses against the Hindus. By its refusal to accept the right of self-determination for cultural, linguistic and homogenous units, which alone would knock out the reactionary cry of separatism, it enables the League leadership to feed the fires of communalism.

Face to face with its own bankruptcy, in solving the problem of national unity, it denounces the Muslim League in a manner which only alienates the Muslim masses and incites its own following against the Muslim masses themselves.

Instead of giving a joint call for a struggle of Hindus and Muslims on a platform which will draw both together, it prepares the ground for permanent conflicts.

Congress Interim Govt.

The danger of riots grows acute with the installation of the Congress Interim Government. The dire anti-national results of the policy of compromise will become evident if the Muslim League leadership again gives such calls and the Congress Governments are forced to

pon of bloody riots, of civil war among the enslaved people of India, will be more and more utilised to break the common movement and the bond of solidarity that unites workers and workers, Hindus and Muslims, Indians and Indians.

It will be used because imperialism is seized with panic at the rapid growth of the revolutionary forces of the working-class and peasantry—which are rising to challenge it in a final battle.

Repeated attempts will be made to use the communal weapon to disrupt the struggle against the imperialist plan, and give a safe passage to it with the aid of British awards.

It will be systematically used to disrupt the strike-struggles of the workers, who if united are for the first time strong enough to knock out better living conditions from the profiteering Indian and European employers.

It will be used against the common struggles of the Hindu and Muslim peasants who have already given quit notices to landlords and moneylenders.

Communal riot, civil war, is the conspiracy of imperialism against the people; of Indian vested interests against the workers' and peasants' struggles.

The policies pursued by the two leaderships continually aid and abet this conspiracy.

It is for the workers, for all honest citizens, to defeat these policies and this conspiracy.

All Together

● Let every worker remember that every riot that breaks out only helps the capitalist to enforce wage-cuts and unemployment.

● Every division among Hindu and Muslim peasants keeps landlordism alive—helping Hindu and Muslim landlords to fatten at the expense of the peasants.

● Every division among the masses keeps the hated imperialist rule alive.

● Raise your voice, therefore, in common protest against the imperialist plan; raise your voice against the policies of the two leaderships and warn the people against them!

● Announce to imperialism your firm determination to forge an iron unity in the ranks of the people and warn that any playing with peoples' lives, any sacrifice of Indian lives, will not be tolerated by the Indian people!

● Let the vested interests—the Indian Princes, landlords and capitalists—know that no longer shall we set fire to our own houses; kill our own brothers, and thus help to safeguard their profit and loot.

Cease To Be Pawns

● Let the two leaderships know that no longer shall we oblige them and play with our own lives, lives of our women and children; no longer shall we submit to being used as pawns in the dirty and selfish game of power-politics—of two groups of vested interests!

● And finally, let imperialism know that no matter what sacrifices have to be made, no matter how many lives may be lost—the Indian workers, the Indian people, are determined to defeat the incendiaries who set Indian homes on fire.

They are determined to march forward to a real Constituent Assembly based on adult suffrage and self-determination, a Constituent Assembly fully empowered and sovereign, the authoritative voice of Indian freedom.

The power of the Indian people is invincible. It can defeat every conspiracy against freedom, throw out all splitters of unity—and wrest independence from the hands of imperialism.

Greetings

Who can defeat this plot but the masses of India.

The Communist Party of India greets the heroic working-class of Calcutta, the brave tramway workers, railway and engineering workers—Hindus and Muslims—who stood firm, remembered the bond forged through many a class-battle, fought the flames of communal warfare and kept the working-class away from it.

Glory to the workers who kept alive the tradition of Red flag—of class unity, of national unity for freedom.

The oppressed workers of Calcutta have given a fitting reply to the splitters of peoples' unity.

The Communist Party greets all those men from the working and middle-classes—Hindus and Muslims—who recognised the common bond and saved many a life from mob fury.

We honour all those martyrs who fought the mobs of their own community to save brothers belonging to the other community—those Hindus who lost their lives saving Muslims and those Muslims who sacrificed themselves to save Hindus. They recognised the common bond, so easily snapped by the leaderships. They remained true to the salt of the motherland—heroic sons of our enslaved country.

Weapon Of Civil War

Workers and Citizens, in the coming critical days, the wea-

S. I. R. WORKERS STAND UP TO BOSSES' OFFENSIVE

Congress Ministry Backs Imperialist Ry. Board

Forty thousand workers of the South Indian Railway (SIR) and Station Masters all over the line came out on strike on the midnight of August 24 in response to the call of the SIR Labour Union (Red flag) and the Station Masters' Association. The entire railway traffic has stopped on the SIR covering over 4,000 miles from Madras city in the north to the southern-most tip of India.

THE strike has been precipitated by the SIR administration under Reynolds—backed up by the imperialist Railway Board—by its wanton action in dismissing scores of workers and union militants, and arbitrarily changing the Service Rules, to give legality to such dismissals and give unlimited powers to top officers to crush the workers.

Everyone will remember the great and just fight railwaymen all over India put up three months ago under the banner of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF) against the imperialist Railway Board for a living minimum wage and against retrenchment. The public all over India rallied to the support of railwaymen at that time.

Railwaymen withdrew their strike notice last June only because the Railway Board was forced to agree to refer their main demands to an adjudication and to grant an interim relief to the men amounting to nine crore rupees, and above all because an Interim Government at the Centre seemed imminent and national leaders like Azad wanted railwaymen to leave one more chance for a peaceful settlement of their demands.

Bosses' Planned War Against Workers

The Railway Board and its henchmen on the different railways have, however, taken advantage of this truce to launch a perfidious attack on the workers' unions, in order to smash them one by one.

Such an attack was started by the railway administration on the SIR workers and their union, the SIR Labour Union (Red flag), even while negotiations were going on for calling off of the last all-India strike, and it has been intensified since the strike was called off.

Nearly 10 union leaders—some of them being leaders of Workers' Shop Committees at Golden Rock (workshop centre of the SIR) and others, leading members of the Central Executive Committee of the union—have been arbitrarily dismissed by the administration, their right to a prior enquiry according to the Service Rules was scrapped.

Hundreds of union militants have been demoted, nearly 1,000 workers and union militants penalised and degraded by the SIR bosses, all over the line during this period.

It has been a planned all-out attack on the union to break it.

Drastic Changes In Service Rules

Not only this. The SIR administration, in the most high-handed fashion, has changed the Service Rules drastically to legalise their actions and give themselves a free hand to crush the workers and their union. Every one of these rules has been wrung by the workers out of the administration after years of struggle.

The vital clause in the Discipline and Appeal Rules—by which officers cannot dismiss any worker without a prior enquiry being held—has now been scrapped.

The provision enjoining that promotions for posts below Rs. 125 a month shall be strictly according to seniority has been scrapped and such promotions left to the "discretion" of the railway officers.

The undertaking given by the Management in the past that low-paid staff will not be transferred unnecessarily—a usual way of harassing and terrorising them—has also been scrapped; and the workers have been told that there is no appeal against their transfers made according to the sweet will and pleasure of the bosses.

What do these new rules mean?

They are a charter for the railway administration to sack and dismiss as they like union militants and leaders; a charter for favouritism and corruption to bolster up anti-union black sheep; a charter to terrorise lower-grade workers to prevent them from joining the union.

What they amount to is that the vital democratic rights secured by the workers under the lead of the SIR Labour Union through 10 years of struggles are scrapped overnight by the

preparing for a grand betrayal of the railway workers, to reduce the Pay Commission to a farce, and are set upon utilising the present truce to crush the organised strength of the railway workers to resist such a betrayal.

The SIR workers have been singled out for the most ferocious attack because they and their union form the strongest, the most militant and well-organised section within the AIRF.

The imperialist Railway Board is attacking the railway workers and their unions because it wants to keep safe the hundreds of crores of rupees which our imperialist masters drain annually out of our country from the blood of our railway workers. The workers' fight against this and for their democratic rights is part of the anti-imperialist fight of our people.

Strike -- Whose Responsibility?

The SIR workers did not take up the strike weapon hastily or indiscriminately. They tried every possible peaceful avenue of settlement including approach to the Congress Ministry. They gave the Ministry no less than 23 days for its intervention—between the strike notice, given on August 1, and the

by **N. K. Krishnan**

Reynolds administration; and SIR workers taken back to where they were in 1936.

Whom Are They Fighting?

The central issue raised by the workers in the present strike is that the railway administration cannot be allowed to scrap these hard-won democratic rights of the workers; that the administration must immediately stop further victimisation and reinstate those already victimised.

These are the simple facts of the present strike which are being hidden from the public behind a maze of lies and distortions.

The workers are fighting for their basic democratic rights; they are fighting in defence of the great union they have built up through years of struggle.

It is a lie to say they are fighting the Congress Ministry. They are fighting the imperialist Railway Board and its henchmen in the SIR administration.

Railway Board's Diablic Game

What is happening on the SIR is not an isolated incident. It is part of a well-planned all-India policy of the imperialist Railway Board—to crush the all-India railway workers and their organisation, the AIRF.

Such arbitrary victimisation of union workers and militants, such a planned drive to break railway workers' union, have been going on ever since the last strike was withdrawn, on the MSM, on the GIF, on the NWR. The public knows quite well that workers in the MSM workshop at Perambur and in the GIF Parel workshop have been forced to go on strike against this offensive of the railway bosses.

Emerson, Chief Commissioner for Railways and boss of the Railway Board, actually came down to Madras in the beginning of August, confabulated with Reynolds and his men, and okayed their plans.

The game of the Railway Board is plain enough. They want to go back on what they were forced to yield by the workers' strength and public pressure last June. They are

actual commencement of the strike, on August 24.

The Ministry failed to intervene and check the Reynolds administration; and left the workers no alternative except submit tamely to be crushed by the Railway Board or strike for their democratic rights.

A delegation of leaders of the AIRF from outside Madras Province visited Golden Rock during the last week of July and saw with their own eyes what the Reynolds administration was doing. They gave their full support to the just demands of the SIR workers.

Congress Ministry Backs Railway Board

Despite all this—despite the fact that Mr. Giri, Labour Minister in Madras, has been one of the leaders of the AIRF and himself knows quite well, the justness of the union's demands—the Prakasam Ministry is shamelessly taking sides with the Reynolds administration and against their own workers.

The Prakasam Ministry did not take a single effective step to check the administration's insolent war against the workers and avert the strike. They did not even care to force the administration to stop their offensive pending an adjudication on the workers' demands.

The union leaders met Sjt. Prakasam time and again for the Ministry's intervention for a just settlement, but in vain. The Premier who was all the time hobnobbing with Reynolds and Emerson only kept on repeating to the workers the devil's brief put by these men.

In the Madras Assembly, on August 24, Premier Prakasam declared that "the whole matter was within reach of settlement at one time, but the whole thing drifted away".

Why does Premier Prakasam conceal the fact that it is the refusal of the White bosses of the railway administration to call off their war against the workers that has precipitated the strike?

Why does not the Premier come out and admit the failure of his Ministry to pull up the railway bosses?

Why does a popular Ministry—put in power by the people to defend people's interests and



TRIUMPH WHOSE ?

THOSE who took over the militant war-cry, Delhi Chalo, to win election battles, have at last reached Delhi. But it is as clear as daylight that it is not the Delhi of the dreams of countless Hindu-Muslim martyrs who fell together facing British bullets in the streets of Calcutta and Bombay—not the Delhi of national freedom, national unity and national triumph.

It is yet the Delhi where Wavell waves the Field Marshal's baton and the C-in-C prepares to train the guns upon Indian people—the Delhi of national surrender, of national disunity, of national humiliation.

The Interim Government announced by the Viceroy last week-end headed as it is by the tallest leaders of the Congress, is hailed as a triumph by Congress leaders and by the Nationalist Press. Transfer of power is, they say, unreserved and complete, the transition to freedom has begun!

Transfer Of Power — An Illusion

This is an illusion. The British have not transferred power. They have transferred from their shoulders to those of the Congress manned Interim Government the responsibility of facing and mastering the ghastly civil war threatened by the Muslim League leadership, the opening chapter of which we saw in the fratricidal mass murder at Calcutta.

Mr. Jinnah has called it a "severe blow to Muslim India" and has threatened that the step is "fraught with dangerous and serious consequences." (Statement of 27-8-46).

The Congress High Command is meeting in New Delhi, and it is reported that it will make plans to deal with "firm hand those who incite mobs to violence and criminal frenzy."

Here is a situation which is the culminating triumph of the imperialist diplomacy of 'divide and rule' expressed in the Cabinet Mission's plan.

The reactionary leadership of the Muslim League in its mad gamble of power-politics drives the anti-imperialist fervour of its vast mass following into fratricidal fury.

The equally power-mad leadership of the Congress defudes its mass following by claiming that it has won power at the Centre to advance to Indian freedom and well-being, but it is really preparing to rely upon the force of British arms to crush the Muslim revolt.

Imperialism Happy At Turn Of Events

No wonder the imperialists and their Press in Britain were happy beyond measure at this turn of events in India. It ensured the success of their plan which was mainly directed against the growing revolutionary upsurge of the Indian people, the great strike struggle of workers, the peasant action against landlords and Government, and the rising tide of State peoples' fight against Princely rule, which threatens the very foundation of imperialist rule.

The raging fratricidal frenzy will destroy the growing common struggle from within, while imperialist police and army used in the name of curbing communal frenzy and sanctioned by popular Governments at the Centre and in the Provinces will destroy it from without.

Thus the present Interim Government is meant to be a tool in the hands of imperialists to carry out this diabolical plan. Wavell's broadcast makes it quite clear.

The Government is said to possess the maximum freedom to carry out the day to day administration and has an Indian "War Member". But the Viceroy has not repudiated his veto which he possesses under the old autocratic 1919 Constitution under which the present Government is formed.

He has emphasised that the army remains directly under him as the nominee of the British Sovereign.

Every freedom-loving Indian who heard or read the Viceroy's broadcast cannot but have felt a sense of national humiliation.

The Congress leaders are deluding themselves and their following when they claim that the Interim Government will have real power to ensure sense of freedom to the people and to initiate measures of popular well-being and thus be in position to win the support of the Muslim masses despite the League leadership.

Steps Which Could Build Unity

The freedom-loving common people—Congressmen and others—could take them at their word and demand:

Exercise your power to withdraw Indian troops from all neighbouring countries where they have been sent to suppress freedom-struggles of brother peoples.

There are some 6,000 of them in Malaya, 6,000 in Burma, 12,000 in Indonesia, 12,500 in Basra (Iraq), in all 32,500 Indian troops are abroad not for India's defence, but to prop up naked British imperialist rule over peoples like us. The Congress and the League have always demanded their withdrawal.

If the Congress manned Interim Government were to take a stand on this issue against imperialism and call for a broad support, it would get it from Hindus and Muslims, from Congressmen and Leaguers.

They could demand of it that it restores civil liberties throughout the country, that it pledges to the workers, peasants and employees that it would not use police force against strikers, but that it would use its power against profiteering employers, oppressive landlords and blackmarketeers, so as to afford immediate relief to the toilers who are demanding land and food and adequate wages.

Such an action would enable it to bring Hindus and Muslims together. They could demand, above all, that it rejects the present British imposed Constituent Assembly and declares its determination to convene a really free Constituent Assembly based on adult suffrage, and ensuring the right of self-determination to every linguistically and culturally homogenous unit.

Such a declaration would convince the common Muslims that the Congress is determined to solve the question of Pakistan and Indian unity not by the help of the British, but by the free will of the common people, and would create a basis for Congress-League joint front for our freedom struggle.

But they will soon find out that the Congress leaders would not be able to fulfil anyone of these demands.

On the contrary, they will see to their horror that the Congress manned Interim Government will be forced to become more and more an imperialist weapon of suppressing people's struggles and destroying the growing revolutionary upsurge.

The 2nd of September will not be a day of national triumph, but one of national surrender, disunity and humiliation.

fight the British Raj—have to shield the imperialist Railway Board?

Neither Prakasam nor any of his colleagues have so far uttered one word of condemnation of the Reynolds administration or the imperialist Railway Board and their planned offensive against the workers' rights.

All that the Madras Congress Ministers have done is to echo the words of the Governor, condemn the strike as "inopportune and ill-advised" and thus open-

ly encourage the railway bosses to continue their war against the workers.

Not content with this, the Ministry has even gone to the length of drafting 1,500 of the notorious Malabar Special Police to Golden Rock to back up the railway bosses and help them crush the workers.

The Tamilnad Provincial Congress Committee too has dittoed, word for word, this shameful line of the Prakasam Ministry.

(Continued on page 3)

TRAFFIC ON S. I. RAILWAY AT STANDSTILL

Workers' Strike--A Complete Success

PICKETERS LATHI-CHARGED, ARRESTED

By Wire— Madras, August 27,

Complete success everywhere. Except for a few stations south of Madura, and some stations on the Madras suburban electric train lines, between Beach and Tambaram; all other stations are closed. Pointsmen, gangmen, yard coolies, loco-shed workers, i.e., the entire menial staff and a good section of clerks and station-masters have come out. It is estimated that over 80 per cent of the entire staff is on strike.

BETWEEN Beach and Tambaram only five out of 22 trains were run every hour, manned by drivers and guards who were not on strike. Passengers travelled without tickets as all booking clerks were on strike. This became so ridiculous that street urchins got into these trains and travelled by Second Class, without being checked by anybody.

This alone gives the lie direct to all the Press propaganda that trains are running to schedule between these two stations and that over 80 per cent of the staff is working.

Only two station-masters out of a staff of 60 worked at Beach Station; only one out of 30 at Fort; only 25 out of a staff of 350, including loco-shed workers, at Egmore station. It is the same story at every other station and hence the difficulty to issue tickets and check them.

Police At Every Station

The police are stationed at every station. In most cases, they are made to do the jobs of pointsmen, gatemen, shunters, etc. At Chetpet it was a sight to see three police constables raising a point to close the gate; but not knowing how to bring it back in place they had to lock it up.

In the end station-masters and guards on duty had to replace the constables to do the

by
Our Correspondent

jobs of pointsmen, shunters, etc. The police constables are growing sick of this and many of them have said that they want to get away from this hell.

In Dindigul (important junction in Madura district) a goods train was about to be taken out when people came to know of this. Nearly a thousand people and workers demonstrated against this and demanded that the goods train should not be taken out.

In Madura, tear-gas was used on a demonstration of workers.

No Passenger Trains

From reports coming from the Southern Zone—Shencottah, Mandapam, Tinnevely—strike is successful except in the case of certain senior station-masters who are just keeping the station open in one or two places.

From Egmore to Tuticorin, the main line running from North to South of the whole Province, no passenger train has been taken out so far. Only two goods trains could carry newspapers and other food-stuffs.

It is obvious that the bankrupt management have completely failed to disrupt the strike. But in order to hide this truth, they are now putting out a

story that they have given up the idea of running passenger trains, for fear of a possibility of sabotage on the lines. The nationalist papers, like *Dinamani* and *Dinasari*, have not only swallowed it, they have even 'improved' upon it by saying that the workers have already started sabotage on the lines.

Congressmen are coming out with slanderous propaganda against the union and against the Communist Party. In the few places where they have got some influence on the workers like Villupuram, Chingleput and Tambaram, they have asked their followers to continue work.

But despite all their propaganda, Janaki Raman, Secretary of the Tambaram Branch Union, and 10 other Congress workers are the only blacklegs in Tambaram.

In Golden Rock also the position is very much the same.

Arrests

At Trichy yesterday workers picketed when one train was run between Trichy Junction and Srirangam. They were lathi-charged in three places. About 30 workers were arrested, 15 to 20 injured. At Erode, worker-leaders of the Union, J. B. Purushottam and K. T. Raju, were arrested.

The strike on the broad gauge line is a complete success, except in the case of the station-masters.

In Calicut

POLICE RAID COMMUNIST DAILY'S OFFICE

Manifesto On Moplah Rebellion Seized

—Is Anti-Imperialism A Crime Under Congress Ministry?

E. M. S. Namboodiripad, member, Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, and Chairman, Editorial Board of *Deshabhimani*, Malayalam daily of the Party, has issued the following statement:

At about 3 p.m. today, a posse of policemen headed by the Dy. Superintendent came and raided our office. They had a warrant for the seizure of our paper dated 20th instant which contained the manifesto of the Communist Party on the Malabar Rebellion which began on August 20, 1921. The warrant also ordered the seizure of all copies of my pamphlet on the rebellion.

The whole of our office was surrounded by armed police who prevented members of our editorial, managerial and printing staffs from coming in and going out of our press.

Indecent Language

I may add that I myself was thus stopped for about five minutes. Our town correspondents were also stopped for about half an hour.

What is most disgraceful of all, very indecent language was used by some constables and the Inspector against several members of our staff including our Sales Manager.

A cartload of news-print being brought from the railway station was also stopped.

I am shocked that such things can happen under a Congress Ministry. I would like to remind Mr. Prakasam and other

Congress Ministers of speeches and writings of Congress leaders themselves glorifying what happened in August and September 1942.

If glorification of August Revolution is patriotism, and no incitement, I cannot see how glorification of the anti-imperialist action of the Moplahs can be proceeded against.

Against Civil War

If it is argued that the 1921 rebellion ended as a communal revolt and fratricidal war and hence glorification of that rebellion would mean incitement to civil war, I would point out that a solemn warning against such an unhappy development was running like a red thread throughout the manifesto.

The endeavour of our Party is well known to be towards developing anti-imperialism and mass upsurge towards the final struggle for power and preventing this mass upsurge being turned into a civil war as is threatened by the policies of the Congress and League leaderships.

Anybody who reads the manifesto and my pamphlet can see that it is an appeal to the people to emulate the heroism and anti-imperialism of 1921 as well as a warning against its communal fratricidal war.

I must remind Mr. Prakasam, that every honest anti-imperialist in Malabar is proud of the 1921 rebellion and would try to emulate its anti-imperialist spirit and take all precautions against civil war.

August 25.

S. I. RAILWAY WORKERS FIGHT BOSSES' OFFENSIVE

(Continued from page 5)

Both the Congress Ministry and the Tamilnad Congress Committee have dishonestly used the critical food and cloth position in the Province to condemn the strike and back up the railway administration.

Famine—A Dishonest Argument

It is true the food position in the Province is serious and the strike may temporarily aggravate it to some extent. But on whose shoulders lies the responsibility for this—on the administration who started the savage attack on the workers or on the workers who are defending themselves?

Railway workers are well aware of the serious food situation and their responsibility towards the public. That is why last June they withdrew their strike on agreement that their main demands were referred to adjudication. That is also why the S.I.R. workers, even after issuing strike notice, gave the Congress Ministry and the public full 23 days to bring pressure on the administration.

If the food situation is serious, then that is all the greater reason why the Congress Ministry and leaders of the Tamilnad Congress should pull up the railway administration quick and not let them drive the workers to strike in sheer self-defence.

If instead of this, the Congress leaders bring in this issue to condemn the workers (while keeping mum on the Railway Board's zoolium) they are only giving a cover to the White oppressors and their bureaucracy to crush our workers and every

struggle of theirs for democratic rights and human conditions.

The imperialist Government's game is obvious. They want to crush every working-class struggle and every people's struggle in the country because they know the situation is explosive. They dare not do it directly, but want our popular Ministries to do the dirty work for them. They want to use the popular Ministries as cat's-paw for holding down our own people.

By its present attitude towards the S.I.R. workers' struggle, the Madras Congress Ministry is playing into the hands of the imperialist Railway Board and letting itself be used as a tool of the imperialist bureaucracy against our own workers.

S. I. R. Workers' Strength — A Complete Strike

But the 40,000 workers of the S.I.R. and their brother Station Masters are not taking the Railway Board's attack lying down. The S.I.R. workers have built up, through 10 years of hard struggle, one of the strongest and best-organised unions in the whole country, the S.I.R. Labour Union (Red flag). Their biggest weapon today is their own unity and strength. Under the Red banner, the banner of their union, they are standing firm with cent per cent solidarity.

The nationalist Press is repeating stories put out by the railway administration that "only 30 per cent of the staff is on strike." The public knows well the worth of these moonshine stories for they were put out at the time of the last all-India postal strike too—and

we know then what they were actually worth.

The real strength of the workers and solidarity of the strike is seen from the fact that right from the zero hour on August 24, not a single train has been running on the S.I.R. and railway traffic has been brought to a complete standstill. Even the Blimps of the Railway Board cannot hide this from the public.

Victory Will Be Theirs

Railway workers all over India will rally to the support of their S.I.R. brothers, for today they are all victims of the same oppression from the imperialist Railway Board. Workers of every other section and industry will stand with them in common class solidarity.

Nor will the railway administration succeed in fooling the Indian public.

When the R.I.N ratings struck; when the railway workers all over India took strike ballot last May; when the all-India postal workers struck last month; and everyone of these struggles secured countrywide public support, because people saw they were fighting bravely and fighting for a just cause.

In no less a measure will the S.I.R. workers secure the support of every other section of our people, for, their fight is a just fight and their oppressor is the imperialist Railway Board.

Neither the lies of the Railway Board nor police terror will be able to break the S.I.R. workers' struggle. Their cause is just. United as one man they will continue their fight till victory is theirs.

BOMBAY BANK CLERKS' STRUGGLE

(Continued from page 12)

some minor concessions in matters of Provident Fund, leave rules, etc.

No Arbitration

Congressman Abidall Jafferhoy, the leader of the Federation, as is wont with him, tried to hold brief for arbitration.

It did not matter to him that these were the minimum demands and unanimously asked by the Federation, and referring even these to the arbitration, to be cut down by "negotiations," would mean playing the employees' game.

It did not matter to him also that most of the bank bosses had refused to open direct talks with their employees to settle the demands but waited for an obliging Ministry to force an arbitration on them.

He even forgot that the employees of the Bank of India, will win.

over whose union he presided, had fought out a similar imposition of arbitration in their dispute.

But despite his advice, the General Council gave a call for strike notices to be served by all affiliated unions on their respective managements, on or before August 24. Next day the decision was ratified by a meeting of the General Body of the Federation.

Labour Minister Nanda has rushed to Bombay. It is reported that he has come here to impose arbitration or adjudication under the Defence of India Rules.

But unless some really dirty trick is played on them, these bank employees, peons and clerks, young and old, are determined to fight it out. And from their record in two earlier strikes, it is certain that they

NEW AWAKENING AMONG IRAQI WORKERS

No Longer Will British Oil Imperialist Be Supreme!

(From our Baghdad Correspondent)
BAGHDAD, JULY 15 (delayed)

Oil is the richest of all Iraq's resources; and naturally imperial Britain has won for herself undisputed control of this wealth of the country.

EARLY in the 20th century, the Turkish petroleum company in which there is nothing Turkish except its name, obtained rights to prospect and drill for oil in Iraq. This company was in reality a subsidiary of the British Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in which the British Government had through Winston Churchill got a controlling interest.

In 1925 this company (renamed the Iraq Petroleum Company in 1929) was granted a 75-year concession for oil prospecting and extraction in all parts of the country except the southern districts. And the only two other important firms engaged in the oil industry in Iraq—the Mosul Oilfields Company and the Kanqin Oil Company—are also controlled by the British.

The territories of the oil companies are virtually independent, British protectorates. They have the right to maintain their own lines of communications and their own troops. In 1935 a pipeline was built connecting Kirkuk, an important oil town in Northern Iraq, with the Mediterranean ports of Haifa and Tripoli—through which 400,000 tons of oil is exported monthly.

Horrible Conditions

In these oil territories of Britain the conditions of the work-

ers are very bad. The average wage is little over a rupee a day, and in the years of war, while prices have soared to fantastic heights, wages have risen little. The economic condition of Iraq has been described by the pro-British author of the Oxford University Press on Iraq thus:

The oil company, fully supported by the Government carefully saw to it that no trade union movement, uniting the workers to challenge this inhuman regime of exploitation, was allowed to grow. The Government actually declared that any attempt to form a trade union was illegal and the police—officered by British—was openly subservient to the or-

On this page we give the story of Iraq. It is a story of an exploited people, suffering under the heel of British imperialism, virtual ruler of Iraq. It is a story also of a new awakening, among the ill-treated workers of the oil-fields, the wretched fellahen (peasant) and the never-suppressed Kurdish minority. This is also one of the reasons why 6,000 Indian troops stay today in Iraq; British imperialism is afraid of the awakening people. It is afraid because Iraq is the centre of its entire strategic set-up in the Middle-East, provides its principal aerodromes on its Empire air route to India and the East, and is one of its biggest sources of oil. India can have no truck with the imperial interests, with the use of its sons to perpetuate the enslavement of another suffering people. Indian troops must be brought back to India from Iraq. All patriotic India must demand this and force their withdrawal. This for India is the lesson of the story of Iraq.

"The tendency had been for prices to rise with alarming rapidity and for those who could to speculate in land and commodities, taking full advantage of a rising market."

In addition to these low wages, the workers also had to suffer rotten conditions of life, no houses were built for them and they lived in hovels, often far

away from their place of work, so that they were forced to walk long distances every day.

Birth Of Organisation

Despite all this, the news of the battle of their brother oil-workers in neighbouring Iran and their own worsening conditions drew the Iraqi workers also into battle against the British oil monopolists.

During May, a new spirit began to move these traditionally "backward" workers in Mosul, centre of the oil-belt in North Iraq. The authorities and the oil company got scent of this towards the end of the month when they swooped down and arrested most of the workers' leaders; the ostensible reason was the need (as in Egypt) for stemming the advance of "Communism."

The workers were not cowed; on July 3 they came out on strike; their demands were:

1. Rise in wages from 80 fils a day (about a rupee) to 250 fils a day.
2. Transport to carry them from their dwellings to their place of work.
3. Construction of dwellings for workers, or the rent for such dwellings to be paid by the Company.
4. An end of arbitrary dismissals of workers.
5. Social insurance against unemployment and sickness.
6. Recognition of their trade union.
7. Release of their arrested leaders and the end of police terror in the oil area.

Militant Battle

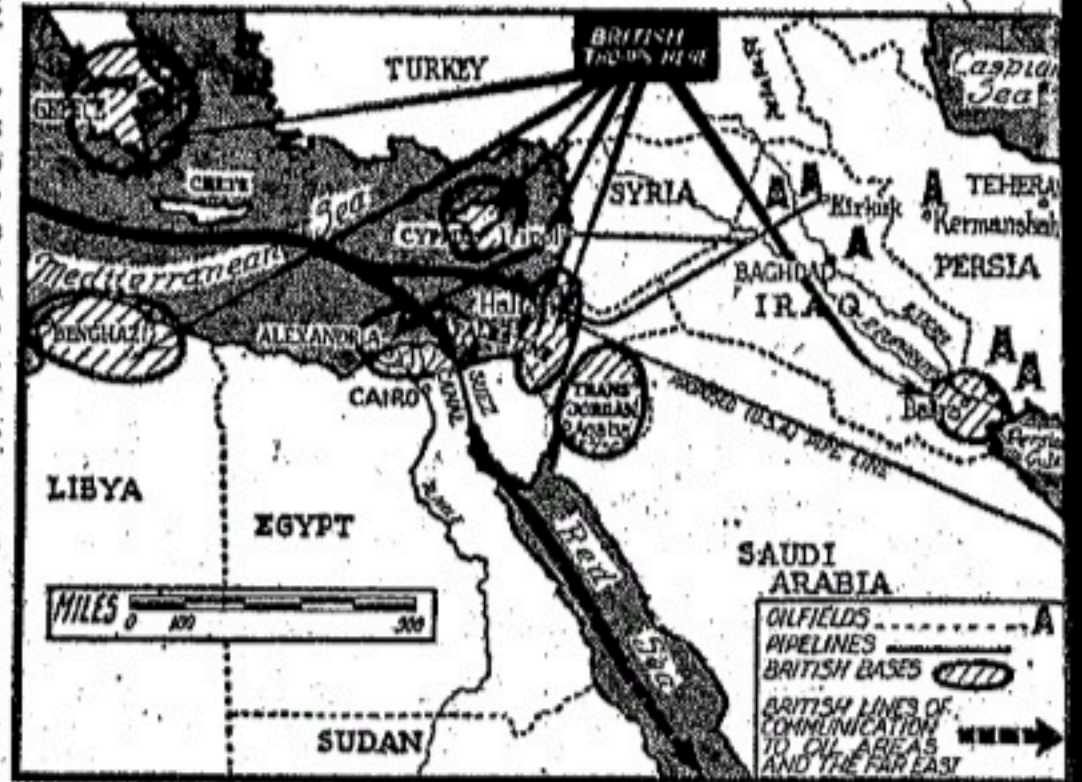
On July 4, 5,000 workers, with thousands of the inhabitants of Mosul, marched through the city, the biggest demonstration ever seen in Iraq. And on July 7, a further demonstration was held.

On July 8, the authorities, in panic, tried to hoodwink the workers by telling them that the authorities were negotiating with the oil Company.

But the workers would not listen. On July 12 they brought out the biggest demonstration of all. The oil bosses struck back; police fired mercilessly; six workers were killed on the spot, many more injured.

The next day a huge funeral procession in which for the first time women also marched, went through the streets of Mosul. The strike is going on as I write (we have received no news since this newsletter which reached us after great delay—Editor).

Thus something new is happening in Iraq today; no longer are the British oil bosses supreme. The workers are moving—and are confident they will not only win their demands but also head a new movement which will not stop till Iraq is free of its British enslaver.



BRITAIN'S COLONY AND MILITARY BASE

Iraq has become a war danger-point in the Middle-East with the arrival of strong contingents of British troops at Basra.

WHILE this has created mass indignation in Iran, Iraq's neighbour (Premier QAVAM-ES-SULTANESHI'S statement, Aug....), a New Delhi spokesman (i.e., mouth-piece of Wavell-Auchinleck) is said to have given the assurance that "the Iraq Government have no objection to the presence of British troops in Basra" (Hindustan Times, August 8).

And, of course! For what is the Iraq Government?

Anti-Democratic

Its anti-democratic nature can be seen from the fact that recently when the Government headed by TAWFIQ SUWAIDI set free all political prisoners, cancelled the censorship of the Press, allowed the formation of political parties, and gave a call for a free general election—that same day Tawfiq Suwaidi was asked to quit office by the Regent AMIR ABDUL ILAH, the man who rules Iraq in the name of FEISAL II.

And the first step of the Government of the present Premier AR-SHAD BEY, within a month of assuming office, was to join the anti-democratic drive of SIDKY PASHA, pro-British premier of Egypt. Forty members of the National Democratic Party were arrested for alleged "Communism" and 12 newspapers were suppressed!

A Puppet King

In fact, Iraq is a British colony in all but name. Thirty-five thousand British mechanised troops are the real rulers of the country.

Britain originally secured Iraq as a 'Mandate' after World War I. This was because of its strategic importance—"continental bridge to India"—and its vast oil resources which are in the hands of the British Iraq Petroleum Company.

Its first ruler, FEISAL I, of the Hashimite family—the same to which AMIR ABDULLAH, the British puppet King of Transjordan belongs—was set up on the throne by the British. This is how it was described by an Englishman, Hon. J. M. BALFOUR, a former diplomatic official in the Middle East, in his book "Recent Happenings on Persia" (1922):

"Feisal (I) owes his throne to British bayonets and were these removed, there is small chance that he would remain on his throne, or even risk a continued residence after the departure of his protectors."

The people of Iraq did not want Feisal for King; but the "British Cabinet had, however, decided that Feisal should be King" and so "the decree went forth that all officers should support his candidature."

Any Iraqi advocating that first the popular will be ascertained by a free and democratic vote was dismissed. "One prominent Pasha "was seized and deported to Ceylon" Kurdish Liberation Committee has been formed among the 200,000 Kurds in Persia."

Fake Sovereignty

Owing to popular anti-British feeling and struggle, in 1927 the British announced the "sovereign" status of Iraq. But this was only fake because the "sovereignty" involved British advisers on home (safeguarding of British oil interests, etc.) and foreign policy and the retention of British troops.

This treaty, despite the pro-British nature of the Iraqi Parliament elected on the basis of limited suffrage and indirect election was not ratified by Iraq!

In 1930, once more, the British were forced to sign a treaty ending "the mandate and conferring "independence" on Iraq.

However, the treaty, which still holds good today, gave the British the right to use Iraq's territory for the organisation of military bases and arsenals, for the movement of British troops. And Iraq's own army was to be trained by British officers!

Thus British domination—political and military—over Iraq, established during World War I, when British troops fought in Mesopotamia, remained as before.

The English historian, FOSTER, speaking of the treaty was compelled to admit:

"The new Anglo-Iraqi relations resting upon these agreements and beginning with Iraq's admittance to the League of Nations must impress the reader as much of a continuation of the old order."

In fact, no Government was stable that was not anti-democratic and pro-British. Since 1932, thirty-eight ministries have followed each other in quick succession! The most recent was the downfall of Tawfiq Suwaidi's Cabinet.

Pawn For New War

The British are now using Iraq as a pawn in their imperialist game in a big way. NURI ES-SAID, the President of the Iraqi Senate, is their principal agent in this.

In February 1946, Nuri es-Said visited Ankara (Turkey) in connection with the British-sponsored "Middle-Eastern Bloc" in order to prevent the strengthening of friendly relations between the Middle-Eastern countries and their Soviet neighbour.

It is no wonder then that the Iraqi Government, a complete stooge of the British, does not protest against the arrival of British troops, which have come to bolster it against Iraq's democratic movement and to protect British oil imperialism against Iranian workers and the rising people's movement across the border.

(Continued from col. 2)

Kimche (quoted above) has also commented that the "Kurds in Iraq... are becoming increasingly disaffected and are looking with growing and evident interest across the border to north-west Persia where a Kurdish Liberation Committee has been formed among the 200,000 Kurds in Persia."

LAND OF POVERTY AND EXPLOITATION

A proud country with a great and rich history, Iraq today has become a miserable poverty-stricken country, where the White man and his rich Iraqi landlord-friends are the rulers while the common Iraq's workers and peasants are the slaves.

Its population is 35 lakhs inhabiting a territory of 453,500 square kilometers.

ONCE rich and fertile, its land is today largely barren and unproductive. Rainfall is sparse and in older days it was the ancient Mesopotamian irrigation system that kept the land fertile and the peasant prosperous. Today British rule (as in India) has destroyed that system and barely 25 per cent of the land is cultivable, 20 per cent is cultivated.

The Sheikhs

Head of this class of Sheikhs, is the Royal family itself, it owns three large estates, two near Baghdad, which are extensively sown with cotton; very profitable for the King but difficult for the peasant.

Not only is the land owned by these men, but according to the very pro-British writer, Philip Ireland, they "employ the whole village population as labourers and shepherds on the usual share system, so that only 30 to 40 per cent of the yield is left to the actual cultivator."

And the Iraqi peasants' woes do not end here. On top of giving the sheikhs the lion's share of the produce, he has to pay taxes to the State and numerous local (and illegal) exactions. And the end of it all is that the average income of the Iraqi peasant is about Rs. 80 to Rs. 120 annually.

And as in all British colonies, the landed gentry who are Britain's allies, are the most corrupt scoundrels. One Minister of Finance actually got legislation passed, remitting revenue on lands irrigated by pumps, a legislation which saved him Rs. 40,000 annually!

What this has meant for the ordinary Iraqi citizen was summed up by a British writer in the Tribune, a London weekly, thus:

"About two million fellahen and coolies (two-thirds of the population) have been estimated officially to live on less than a penny a day and in the greater part, to be suffering from venereal diseases and eye infections. Infant mortality is the highest in the Middle East outside Persia; in the three larger towns of Iraq it has averaged 227 per 1,000 children born between 1929-1931." (Jon Kimche writing in

Tribune, January, 1946).

In the south and central Iraq it is the Iraqi fellahen who suffers from the despotic rule of his pro-British sheikhs; in the north it is the Kurdish people; about six and a half lakh Kurds live in northern Iraq, in the rich oil-bearing territory.

The Kurds have a great past of militant action, in defence of their national rights; but in 1920, their nation was split into three pieces, about seven lakhs in Iraq, five lakhs in Iran and fifteen lakhs in Turkey.

In Iraq they have been mercilessly oppressed; a correspondent in the Liberal weekly, New Statesman and Nation, wrote on January 28, 1946 that while "the Anglo-Iraqi treaty of 1930 provided for a relatively large measure of cultural and administrative autonomy for the Kurds, more theless, although not actually massacred, the Kurds in Iraq have been subjected to a policy of exception.... They are not happy there."

Rising Movement

There have been continuous risings among the Kurds against the Iraqi Government (the latest was in August 1945), all of which have been suppressed by bitter use of force.

Many Kurdish leaders have fled to neighbouring Iran where they have joined their countrymen who have established a Kurdish Committee of Liberation under the leadership of AGHA MOHAMMED GHAZI.

Most famous of all Iraqi Kurds, now with Mohammed Ghazi, is MULLAH MUSTAFA-EL-BARGANJI of a famous Kurdish family that has always been in the forefront of the Kurdish battle for freedom. It was a member of this family, Sheikh Mahmud Barganji, who led the Kurdish rebellion in 1918.

And there is no doubt that the awakening of the Kurds in Iran will rouse the Kurds in Iraq also.

In March this year, a correspondent reported that there was contact between the Kurds in Iran and Iraq through "the presence of Mullah Mustafa and his 3,000 Iraqi followers.... now in Persia."

(Continued on col. 5)

The Military Accounts Strike Continues

Popular Ministries Launch Repression-But Support From Public And Soldiers

(From our Correspondent)

Forty-one arrested in Patna, 22 in Jubbulpore, 12 in Lahore, 12 in Muttra, a similar story from other cities. Strikers lathi-charged, hand-cuffed and even refused bail. Sec. 144 introduced in a number of cities. Exceptionally heavy 'protection' for loyal workers. Military trucks ready to crush peaceful picketers under them in case they prevented blacklegs from entering offices. Threats of mass dismissals, orders to evacuate quarters, refusal to allow strikers to buy food rations from military shops, etc. That is the Government side in the nation-wide strike of Military Accounts clerks which began on August 15 to fight the Government's plan to dismiss en masse 25,000 of them, out of a total staff numbering 35,000.

Open defiance of Sec. 144 by the clerks, active opposition to blacklegs, growing popular support to them everywhere, that is the clerks' side of the picture.

RIGHT from the start of this great strike, Government plans were firmly laid out. "It is impossible," said their spokesman on Aug. 15, "for any Government to be philanthropic. When the Army has been reduced from two and a half millions to two and a half lakhs, how can we maintain all the 25,000 clerks?"

Lies And Distortions

It was a white lie to say that the Army had been reduced to 2½ lakhs. As it is, it is no less than 12½ lakhs, if the latest Government figures (and not this officer's) are to be accepted! Nor is it ever the intention of the G.H.Q. to reduce it to that plight, if the Army, to quote Wavell's latest broadcast, is to carry out its 'impartial' duty in our country.

What the clerks demand and what the bureaucracy distorts, is not philanthropy but "the right of every able-bodied Indian to secure suitable jobs," as M. A. Adhami, the General Secretary of the clerks' Federation, put it.

It is because the imperialist Government cannot grant this right that it is out to use its old weapons of disruption and repression to crush this strike. I can state on authority that secret circulars have long gone forth from the MAG on how to 'handle' publicity in this strike.

A Model Press Note

One such lays down a "Model Press Note," and wants these to be so worded as to carry the impression that "the authorities have done their best to meet the demands of the strikers and that the latter have only fallen victim to certain political parties who are interested in the strike for their own ends!"

Another circular asks the local authorities to get hold of a Muslim officer, 'preferably of a lower grade' (it pays!), who is to carry out a whisper campaign among Muslim clerks against the strike, on the plea that it will prejudice their representation in the services.

Obviously the boss was trying to repeat the unsuccessful trick employed during the preparation for the railway general strike or during the postal strike.

But unfortunately for him the clerks' Federation had already assured the minorities that their quota would be strictly maintained and hence the game fell through.

But where imperialism failed, Nazimuddin, Bengal League leader, tried his hand. He asked the Muslim clerks "not to join up with the Hindu clerks." He got his reply from Maulana Hadrat Mohani, member of the League Working Committee, who made a special appeal "chiefly to Muslims" to join hands in this strike "with the utmost enthusiasm they can command."

The only other weapon, now

cuffing of volunteers, even of prominent leaders, as in Jubbulpore, mass arrests are, of course, common events. But Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, U.P. Minister for Police and a member of the Congress Working Committee, even threatened the strikers to "be prepared to face the consequences" if they did not discontinue picketing.

Whither Congress Ministry

In Muttra, he introduced Sec. 144. When the clerks defied it and took out a procession, his police lathi-charged and arrested 12 men. But worse still, it is under him that the Lucknow Central Office of the clerks has been prevented, for a fortnight, from getting reports from its affiliated units!

In Patna, where the total staff of 250 is on strike, over 200 Gurkha soldiers, armed with machineguns, tommyguns, etc., and an equal number of armed and lathi police stood guard over the sacred precincts of the office. When the men lay prone during picketing, the boss

trampled over them, even kicked some. When the simple clerks warned him in the name of Congress Ministry, he hit back, "I don't care a damn for your Ministry!"

Trucks To Crush Them

At one stage this brute even got Military trucks to drive over these clerks. It was only the police who, terrified at the consequences, rushed in to lift the strikers to make room for the trucks. And yet Congress Premier, S. K. Sinha, expressed his 'inability to withdraw the military and the police unless the clerks gave up that picketing.' Why? Because it was "obstruction to traffic!"

No wonder then that the boss of the Rawalpindi Office appealed to the clerks against a strike in the name of the latest resolution of the Congress Working Committee on strike!

And it must be noted that the Ministries are taking up this attitude despite the fact that in every Province Congress MLAs are supporting the strikers, even addressing their meetings.

All Party Support

It is, however, just such repression that is leading our people and even the soldiers to support the clerks' struggle. In Patna, where Premier Sinha would not yield, the death-defying heroism of the strikers forced the authorities to withdraw the army and police within 24 hours.

People of Patna attended in thousands a meeting to

support the clerks, where leaders of every political party, Congress, Congress Socialist, Communist, Forward Bloc, and the Provincial TUC, spoke from a common platform. The strikers were even offered help by way of volunteers and cash.

At Lucknow, the peons would not carry the luggage of blacklegs. They even threw away the luggage of some into a tank nearby.

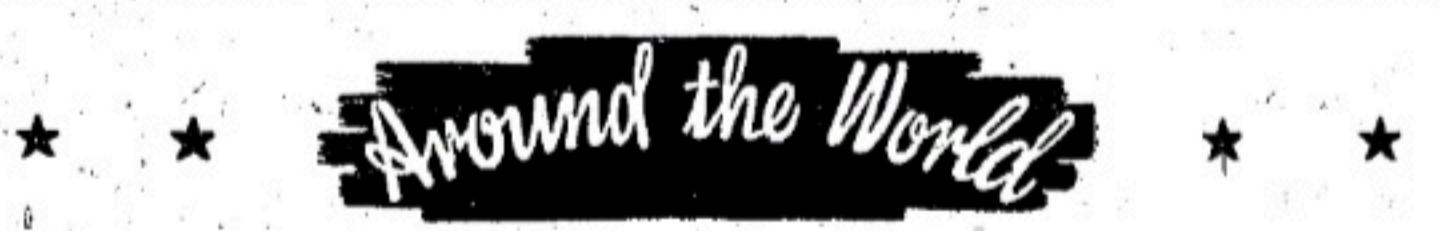
Soldiers Support Too

At Jubbulpore, bus-drivers refused to carry the 'traitors' to office and one of them was even fined Rs. 10 for this 'offence.'

At Lucknow, Military Havildars refused to give them food from the mess though they had orders for it.

At Lucknow and Jubbulpore, the military guards who were kept to 'protect' the blacklegs, would not allow some of the wretches even to go to answer the call of nature. "Traitors have no right to answer the call of nature," they said and even gave some blacklegs a blow or two. WAC (I)s at Agra are 'suspected' of helping the strikers and one of their officers is under orders for a summary Court Martial.

With such heartening response for their fight the ranks of the strikers are swelling. Lahore clerks joined up the battle from the 21st. Poona clerks have given notice of strike. Everywhere they are fighting it back in the firm faith that a just cause and people's support will certainly lead them to victory.



Farce Of Plebiscite In Greece

BY the time these lines appear in print, I suppose, the plebiscite for the return of King George to Greece will have been held—September 1 is the date fixed for it.

And George will probably be allowed to RETURN—the Monarchist Press has been openly saying so.

For instance, the Royalist organ, Atropolis, asserted: "On September 1, the Republic will be decapitated." (The Times of India, August 24, correspondent's report from Athens.)

"King George of the Hellenes will return to Greece on September 15," declared the semi-official Royalist paper, Bradynti, (Ibid).

"This shows how deeply convinced are the Royalist circles that the referendum will secure at least 70 per cent of votes for the King's return." (Ibid).

However, this same correspondent adds in the same report:

"It is rather difficult to understand how the plebiscite will be conducted in less than a fortnight with the constant deterioration of public order"; again, "eye-witnesses affirm that Thessaly is entirely controlled by armed bands." (Ibid).

Reign Of Terror

Now, I am sure, what this reporter meant to say was that the whole of Greece is today aflame against the Greek monarchist reign of terror.

Practically half the Greek Army (the entire 2nd and 3rd Army Corps) is engaged in large-scale battles against armed 'guerillas' in Thessaly (Central Greece) and Macedonia (Northern Greece).

On August 7, EAM (Greek National Liberation Front), composed of all the main parties of the Left, revealed that 2,000 people had been arrested and 441 murdered in just four months (April-July of this year).

And, of course, all this terror has the backing of the British—with 60,000 occupation troops still in Greece and British men-of-war in the principal Greek ports.

On July 29, acting Greek Premier Gonatas told the Athens Press that General Dempsey, British C-in-C, on his visit the previous day had "recognised the necessity for the army's intervention for the restoration of public order."

And the next day, Dempsey himself went up to Salonica (Macedonian capital), where he inspected Greek and British army units taking part in the military operations.

In the five months that the present Tsaldaris Government has been in office, it has taken Greece back to the 1935 Fascist regime of General Metaxas—mass deportations of democrats into exile, executions of political opponents, legalised house-to-house searches, anti-strike restrictions.

This was the object of the "Extraordinary Measures Act" passed on June 6.

Escape To Mountains

As a result, tens of thousands of peasants, workers, members of the Left parties, have fled to the mountains to avoid arrest, death or exile. And it is against them that General Dempsey is now using British troops alongside the Monarchist Greek Army.

Almost every single supporter or one suspected of sympathy with EAM has been purged from the Army, Navy and the Civil Service—as a "Communist." Ex-Premier Soupholis, leader of a section of the Liberals, bitterly told the Labour M.P.s of the British Parliamentary Mission that visited Greece in May, "They even call me a Communist!"

On July 25, the Government ordered the virtual winding up of the General Confederation of Labour (Greek T.U.C.—280,000 membership), by asking the elected Executive to hand over the organisation to Government control.

This evoked the following challenge from Leon Jouhaux (French), Vice-President of the World Federation of Trade Union (67,000,000 membership), who was in Athens when the order was passed:

"If the Greek Government refused to alter its decision we shall ask for the severance of diplomatic relations, and we shall take the same measures and the same attitude against them as we have decided in the case of Franco." (Statement at Athens Press Conference).

Having thus prepared the ground, the Monarchist-dominated Parlia-

ment then adjourned till October 15. It has handed over all power—pending the plebiscite—to the Government and 50 Deputies (with a solid Monarchist majority) to rule by decree.

In the present Parliament there are NO democrats except some Liberals, members of Soupholis's party. All the Left parties, who command the votes of two-thirds of the people, boycotted the elections of March.

Soupholis himself, then Premier, only agreed to participate in the general elections (March 31, 1946) after he had been specifically assured by Bevin (in November 1945) that the British would guarantee that if the elections were held in March 1946, the plebiscite would not be held till 1948.

And immediately after the elections, when the Monarchists decided for plebiscite in 1946, the so-honest Labourite Bevin turned round and told Soupholis that HE (Bevin) "could not interfere with an internal matter of a sovereign Government." (British Labour M.P.s statement at London Press Conference, May 12).

Plebiscite Being Cooked

The truth that the plebiscite for the King's return is being cooked by the Monarchists in conditions of unbridled military terror against the mass of people and total suppression of democracy.

This was just how the 1935 plebiscite was organised after a coup by the Fascist generals, Kondylis and Metaxas. At that time they cooked a 92 per cent vote for the King's return.

The fact is that in April 1924, this same king George had been kicked out by the Greek people by a two-thirds majority.

And interestingly enough, "George of the Hellenes" is not even a Greek. For more than a century now, the British have been importing kings into Greece. This has been part of their game to dominate Greece as a strategic outpost of their Empire route through the Mediterranean.

In 1829, the British-French-Tsarist imperialists appointed Prince Otho of Bavaria, the first King of Greece. The revolution of 1832 forced Otho

to abdicate. The British (by now sole boss) next set up on the Greek throne another foreigner, Prince William George Glücksburg. That was George I who was assassinated in 1913.

After two more monarchs who discredited themselves, came the present George II in 1922.

In 1924, George II was forced to quit in the post-World War I democratic upsurge in Greece—part of the world-wide revolutionary movement.

In November 1935, after the cooked plebiscite had brought him back, he overthrew the Liberal Greek constitution.

The King and General Metaxas abolished Parliament and established a Fascist dictatorship.

In April 1941, when the Germans invaded Greece, George fled to safety under British protection in Cairo and later London—while all his men joined the Germans and helped them in their exploitation of enslaved Greece.

All the parties of the Greek Resistance who fought the Germans—both inside and outside EAM—then declared for a republic for post-liberation Greece.

The King, during the war, pledged himself not to return to Greece until after a plebiscite which would decide the question of monarchy or republic.

Pledge Violated

When he saw that the British would back a monarchist Greece, post-war, he violated that pledge—what the Greek people are now being asked to vote for on September 1 is not for monarchy or republic, but for or against King George!

So, in spite of British aid and the reign of terror, George is still turned down, the Monarchists can still keep the question open!

And just how the hand of Labour's Bevin is behind this whole show is revealed by the statement that the British and American Governments have declined to 'supervise' the plebiscite. They think the electoral lists have "attained a high degree of fairness."

In other words, they have given the line clear to the Monarchists to falsify the returns as they wish, using terror, bogus voting and any other useful methods—so as to get the King back.

This is the British plot in Greece. But like all imperialist plots, it won't work out so easily, for it does not reckon with the people, whose opposition to King George and the present Fascist-Monarchist regime is the final decisive factor in moulding Greece's future—whatever be the 'result' of the plebiscite of September 1.

Shamsher Khan

BRUTAL TERROR LET LOOSE ON MADRAS CORPORATION STRIKERS

ONE WOMAN MURDERED, HUNDREDS INJURED

MADRAS, August 23.

Seldom has Madras city witnessed such savage police terror as is being used under the Prakasam Ministry against the 10,000 Corporation workers who have been on strike since August 13. These workers are mostly Harijans, they come from the most socially-oppressed strata and do scavenging work for the city's seven lakh population. For this work, the vast majority of them today get the starvation wage of Rs. 6 to Rs. 16 per month. Their crime is that they demanded a living wage of Rs. 35 a month, from the Congress Ministry in power.

FOR seven long months, their Union, the Madras Corporation Union (MCLU, Red Flag), negotiated in vain with the Corporation for a peaceful settlement of their demand. The Corporation, bossed over by an insolent ICS bureaucrat, Mr. Shenoy, refused even their request for an interim settlement, an increase in basic pay of Rs. 5 a month.

The Prakasam Ministry began by refusing to pull up the Corporation bosses, then openly went over to their side against 10,000 of the most lowly-paid city workers.

The men were left with the alternatives of going on strike or starving.

Malabar Special Police To Break Strike

Once the strike started, the Ministry let loose an orgy of police terror to break it. The right to strike, the right of peaceful picketing—contained

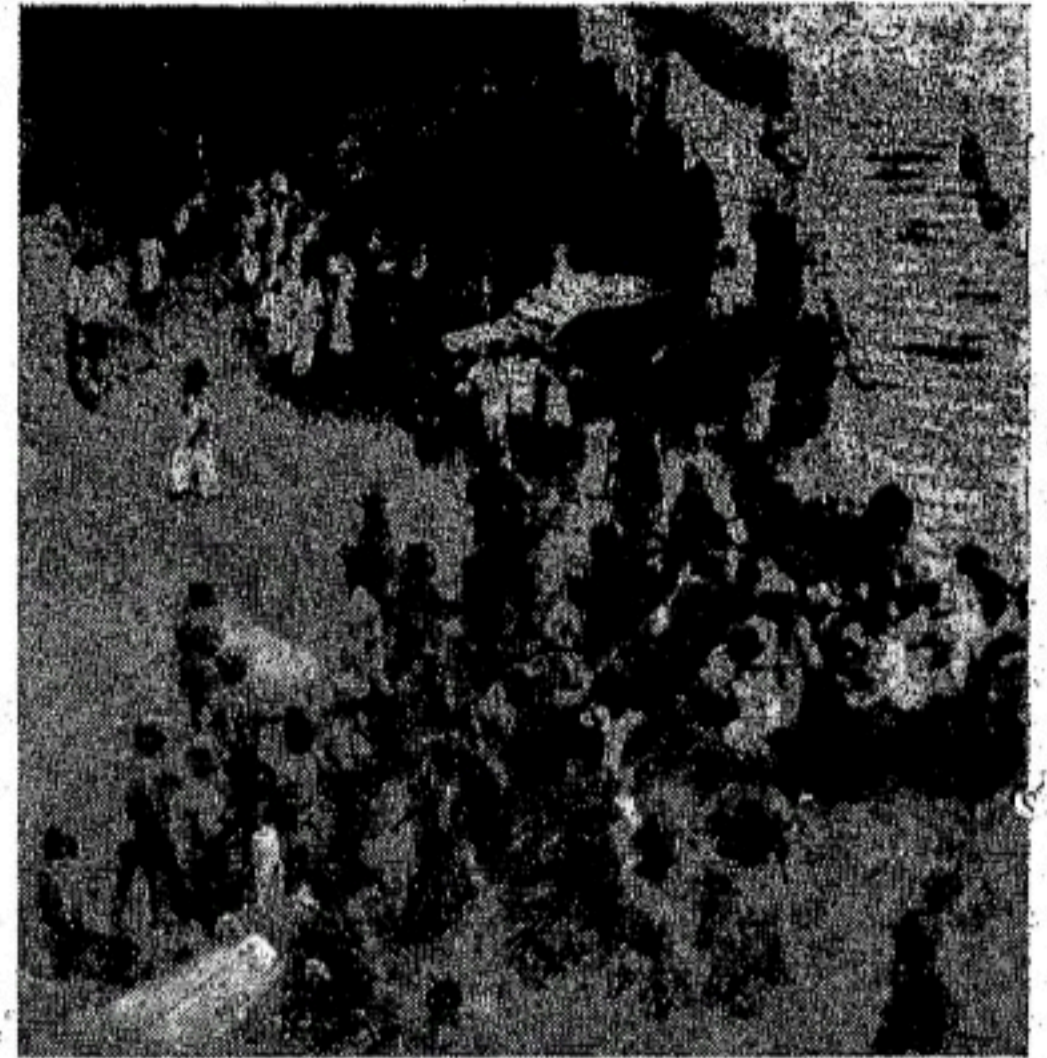


On 20th last, the police entered the huts of scavengers in Saidapet area (Madras) and beat up men, women and children. This old woman of 70 was kicked on the chest. She collapsed the same evening after struggling for life for six hours.

towards the Mylapore police station.

The police charged them with lathi several times mercilessly but the heroic workers did not budge an inch till they got the assurance that their leaders would be released on bail. More than 25 workers were injured by lathi charge.

Saidapet was the worst centre of police terror. At about 10 in the morning, 30 workers were arrested and were brutally beaten up in the lock-up. Their



Within the Madras Assembly compound police lathi-charging the people and workers, demonstrating in protest (on August 22) against repression on Corporation workers. (For full story of general strike and demonstration on August 22, see page 2).

a leading officer of the Corporation of Madras—entered the cheries, and began to beat indiscriminately poor workers' families. Men, women and children, about 200 in all, were beaten up, many heads were broken, their huts and all their belongings ravaged.

In the course of this brutal lathi charge, a 70 year old woman succumbed to head injuries within a few hours.

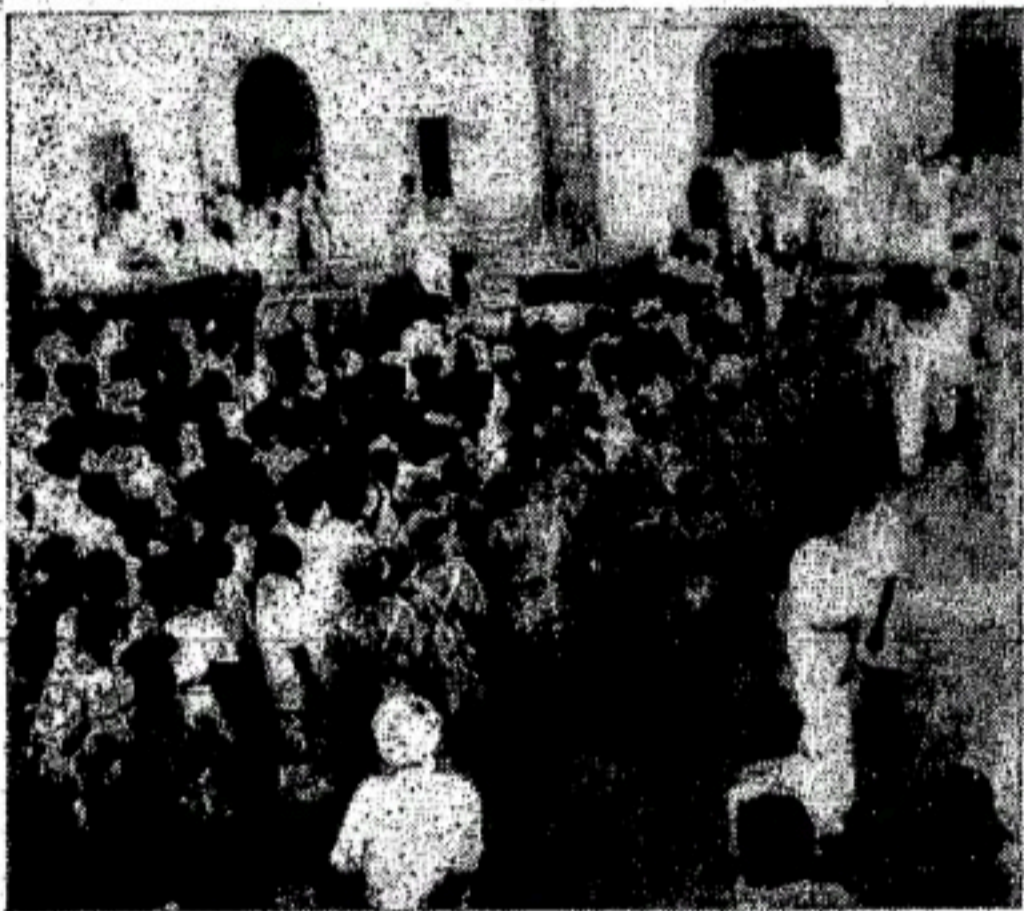
crime was that they went out of their cheries to dissuade a few blacklegs who had come with police escort to sweep the streets.

Not satisfied with the arrest of these strikers, the police decided to let loose terror in the workers' cheries. Three vans of the Malabar Special Police—accompanied, it is reported, by

cluding one woman, were admitted into the General Hospital in a serious condition.

Throughout the 20th and the 21st, the MSP kept watch at Saidapet; and their reign of terror continued.

The news about the murder of the 70-year old Untouchable woman worker has roused the indignation of the entire working-class of the city. Workers are asking everywhere: Is it to let the police murder our wives and mothers at the behest of the bureaucrats, that we have put the Congress Ministry in power?



Police cordoning a group of workers before the Assembly Hall on August 22. (Story: page 2). [Photos: J. M. Kalyan]

in the Congress Election Manifesto—have been reduced to a scrap of paper under the Prakasam Ministry in Madras Province.

Not content with using the ordinary police, the Ministry has drafted the hated Malabar Special Police (MSP) into the city to terrorise the workers.

Within the first week of the strike, over a hundred workers were arrested, picketers lathi-charged by the police over 50 times, and more than 300 men and women workers seriously wounded. The police nearly smashed a pregnant woman worker's head, she had to be removed to hospital unconscious. Seven other women workers were seriously wounded, they too had to be removed to hospital.

August 20: Reign Of Terror

This police terror reached savage heights on August 20, when a 70-year old woman was murdered as the result of a brutal lathi-charge; and MSP (Raj. reminiscent of Ashi and Chinnur, was let

loose in the Untouchable workers' cheries in Saidapet (a suburb of the city).

The day dawned with police terror in various parts of the city. Police-filled lorries began to move up and down the streets of Madras, terrorising peaceful picketers who wanted to persuade the blacklegs not to play into the hands of the Corporation Commissioner, Shenoy, and become strike breakers.

Women And Children Beaten

At Mylapore a posse of constables, led by a Sub-Inspector, entered into a workers' chery and began to beat the workers indiscriminately, mostly women and children. Pots, which were the only property of the poor scavengers, were smashed to pieces. Seventeen workers including P. Karuppannan, leader of the Corporation Labour Union, who had gone there to meet the workers, were arrested and taken to the police station.

The news of the arrest of their leaders spread like wild fire and brought hundreds of workers

September 8. Let every bank boss in Bombay, White or swadeshi, note that date. For on that day over 25,000 bank clerks (and peons) employed in 34 big and small local banks, will simultaneously down their pens.

THESE men who never even knew anything like an organisation till a few months ago, have today got ready for India's biggest bank clerks' strike. When it comes about, daily commercial business running into crores of rupees will be paralysed.

Such is their importance that Labour Minister Nanda, whose record has so far been only to send his police to meet every strike, has rushed down personally to Bombay to see if the demands could be met and the strike averted.

Their Demands

It is not the moon that these "poverty-sodden have-nots" have asked for. Seven years ago the Divatia Committee, appointed by Bombay's then Congress Ministry, had recommended an average wage of Rs. 55 for the textile worker of Bombay and that too as the barest minimum.

These clerks in 1946 have only asked for a starting wage of

Rs. 75 for themselves and Rs. 40 for the banks' peons, hamals, etc. Who would call their demands unreasonable?

Their other demands are for adequate D.A., leave with pay, schemes for Provident Fund, pension; regulated hours of work, extra payment for overtime work; scheme for life insurance, free medical treatment, etc. Their Charter of Rights demands that there shall be no victimisation and asserts that, "No rule or agreement shall be held valid which prevents any employee from becoming a member of the union."

A union for office employees was a thing unheard of till a few months ago the employees of the Bombay Mutual Life Insurance Co. fought a strike action.

Towards the end of June, 650 employees of the Bank of India (a 'swadeshi' firm) came out on strike and won.

A fortnight later, came the turn of the British-owned National Bank of India. They were 350 of them, clerks and peons, and they had to fight for 27 days before they could bend their bosses.

They Organise

These were shadows of coming events. Meanwhile employees of va-

rious banks were forming their unions. Despite the advice of some self-imposed leaders, the clerks included the peons in a common union and framed their demands along with their own. A Federation of Bank Employees' Unions was formed. A Charter of Rights for all bank employees was drawn up. In a meeting attended by thousands of bank clerks and peons it was adopted.

Such is the remarkable solidarity shown by these clerks and peons that in most of the banks, to a man, all the clerks and peons—except the officers—have joined their respective unions. Within two months the Federation has been able to record affiliation of all the local Exchange banks (except the National Bank of India) and most of the other banks.

It was a mighty organisation that opened negotiation with the bosses through its unions. But the bosses were adamant.

The General Council of the Federation which met on August 16 unanimously decided to go in for strike as the managements were in no mood to concede their demands for an increase in wages and D.A. They were 'generous' enough to offer

(Continued on page 8)

In Bombay

25,000 BANK CLERKS, PEONS TO STRIKE FROM SEPT. 8

Demand Fulfilment Of Charter Of Rights ★