

MATTHAI CONTINUES IMPERIALIST RAILWAY POLICY

False Theories To Keep Down Wages, Increase Fares, Hold Back Industrial Development

The speech of Dr. John Matthai, delivered by him while presenting the Railway Budget before the Central Assembly on February 17, has caused great disappointment all over the country. Although the Interim Government has been in power for nearly six months, the whole Budget smacks of the old imperialist bureaucratic attitude to the railways in India.

NO provision for an increase in wages of the majority of nine lakh railwaymen getting only between Rs. 11 and 18 as monthly basic wage has been provided for in the Budget. Rather, Dr. Matthai's Budget speech has shattered all hopes of the railway workers of any future betterment in their condition.

While assuring that "decisions on pay and conditions of service will be taken by Government as rapidly as possible after the reports of the Arbitrator and the Pay Commission have been received by Government", Dr. Matthai has harped on the oft-repeated imperialist economists' theory that an increase in wages will result in inflation.

Profiteers' Argument

Dr. Matthai says that "if wages and salaries are pitched too high, they may not merely not result in any benefit to the workers themselves (one does not know how—PSG), but may cause serious damage to the economy of India as a whole."

Thus, increasing the note issue, rising prices and cuts in wages, is his theory. No better argument has ever been put forward by these worried more about their profits and loot from the people rather than the life of the people.

As is generally known, the recommendations of the Pay Commission are not likely to meet the workers' demands even half way. But even these are probably not intended to be implemented.

And as is usual with the Railway Board, this time too reliance is being placed upon driving a wedge between the railway workers and middle-classes and isolating the former from the main strata of our people.

The demand of the workers is being pitched against an increase of fares for the travelling public. Already there are universal protests against the increase in fares and freights, an increase which is said to be unavoidable for a "normal balancing" of the Budget in view of its being deficit.

And then the public is again threatened with supplementary demands to provide for increased wages to the workers after the Pay Commission's recommendations are out.

Thus, through a cool calculation that the support of the middle-classes will be with the administration in case it rejects or delays the Pay Commission's recommendations, the way is being paved for provoking and crushing in isolation an all-India railway strike.

Deficit Budget?

A flat increase of one anna per rupee in existing fares and an increase in freights has been announced by the Railway Member on the plea that the Budget is deficit to the extent of Rs. 16½ crores.

What actually is the position? The expected gross traffic receipts for the year 1947-48 are placed at a mere Rs. 183 crores. But as the Hindustan Times wrote in its editorial of February 18, "the actual figures disclosed by Dr. Matthai do not warrant any addition to the existing fares or freights. There is evidence that the Budget estimates for 1947-48 have been underestimated."

For last year too, the estimate was as low as Rs. 177 crores, but

by
Prem Sagar Gupta

the revised figures show a big increase of Rs. 29 crores on this original figure. And there is nothing to show that conditions of traffic this year will be any worse—causing a decline in revenues.

The much-trumpeted deficit too is not a genuine deficit. After allowing for all the working expenses, there is a net expected surplus of Rs. 48.92 crores, out of which Rs. 15.34 crores is proposed to be transferred to the Depreciation Fund and as much as Rs. 26.58 crores meant to be disbursed as interest charges. Even after this, there remains a surplus of Rs. 7 crores.

But a deficit Budget is deliberately created and an increase of fares imposed on the people only to make a free gift of Rs. 7½ crores to the central revenues, and to put Rs. 5 crores into the Betterment Fund and another Rs. 5 crores into the Reserve Fund.

To Enrich Its Coffers

Rather than give relief to the over-taxed masses of travelling public, an overwhelming majority of whom are poor third-class passengers, the Interim Government increases the fares and that too only to hand over the surplus to the general coffers of the Government.

Moreover, the increase in fares is a flat increase and hence the whole burden is meant to fall on the poor passengers. In the words of the Bombay Chronicle, this step is "impossible to approve of on the grounds of national economy and social justice."

The present Budget does not propose or visualise any economies in the administration at all. The whole issue is shelved till after the deliberations of the Indian Railways Enquiry Committee (1947).

Strangely enough, there is not a word in Dr. Matthai's speech about the long-standing demand of the Indian people for Indianisation of the railways by giving the sack to the British officers getting on an average nearly Rs. 1,500 a month and scaling down the pay of the others.

The burden of interest charges remains as usual. This year too as much as Rs. 26.58 crores is to be paid as interest to the bond-holders; although on the total capital of nearly Rs. 800 crores, more than this amount has already been paid as mere interest.

The contributions to general revenues (Rs. 7½ crores this year) too continues; in fact, as indicated above, fares have been increased only to meet this self created liability.

Out of vast surpluses (Rs. 235 crores) earned during the war-time, 1939-40 to 1945-46, as much as Rs. 194 crores has been given as a free gift to the general revenues (arrears and fresh contributions).

This indirect taxation of the poor travelling public is in direct contrast to the return of the entire Excess Profit Tax reserve to the war-time profiteers.

As usual, the contributions to the Depreciation Fund too are much more than necessary for replacement with the result that the unspent Depreciation Fund

is expected to stand at Rs. 101.92 crores at the end of 1947-48. At the end of 1935-36, the balance was only Rs. 9.61 crores and in 1939-40 only Rs. 31.15 crores.

The Railway Reserve is estimated to stand at a huge figure of Rs. 26.45 crores and the Betterment Fund at 14.56 crores at the end of 1947-48.

No amenities for third-class passengers have been promised at all, despite the new levy of one anna per rupee in fares. Manufacture of new design vehicles (while maintaining the present gradation of I, II, Inter and III class coaches) is expected to start in April 1948, we are told that designing itself will take one year!

Silence On Retrenchment

While giving a big sermon to the workers against "strikes or go slow policies", Dr. Matthai has not only voted against any increase in their wages and improvement in their conditions of living, he has failed to give assurance even about the retention of the railwaymen in their present jobs.

He has satisfied himself merely by stating that since the end of the war, out of a total of about 9,25,000 employees only 37,100 were declared surplus of whom only 29,000 have been provided alternate employment. He

has maintained a significant silence over the future prospects of 2½ lakh "temporary" staff and the 60,000 "casual" labour.

And why not, for he too, like his advisers, the British imperialist Railway Board, seems to believe that economies in the administration can be effected only through retrenchment of the surplus staff (by the way, that should according to his theory be the biggest deflationary measure too), that in the peace-time the railway transport cannot be developed at all and fall in earnings is inevitable.

No Industrial Advance

There is no plan given by him for developing railway industry in India, for the manufacture of locomotives, etc. As the Free Press Journal wrote on February 18, the representative Indian Government seems to be "more tardy in concrete industrial work than a foreign Government."

Last year, the imperialist Benthal gave a definite assurance in his Budget speech that the first 30 locomotives would be turned out at Kanchrapara in 1948.

And today we are suddenly told by our own Cabinet that "none of the capacity of the Kanchra-

para shops could be spared for manufacture" and the workshop will be used merely for repair work as during the war!

Orders Abroad

A new plan at a cost of Rs. 11.4 crores is promised to be set up by September 1949 and till this plan turns out the first locomotives, the question of developing Indian railway industry is shelved. Instead what is flung in the face of the Indian people is a fresh advance order placed in Britain (16 in USA) for the supply of 384 locomotives to India by 1950.

Expenditure on new constructions and restrictions of dismantled lines is placed at Rs. 2.47 crores but probably not meant to be spent as shown by last year's experience when against a provision of Rs. 2 crores for this purpose only Rs. 42 lakhs were spent.

Thus the existence of the Interim Government has made absolutely no difference in the Budget. It is a manifestation of the continued imperialist policy of the Railway Board—a policy of denying the workers the very right to live, of forcing greater burdens of fares on the mass of people, and of preventing the growth of heavy railway industry and expansion of railway lines in India.

ORISSA GOVT.'S CONFIDENTIAL CIRCULAR

Move To Suppress Workers, Peasants And Students Struggles ★

We give below a confidential Circular of the Orissa Government which calls upon the police and the local bureaucracy to go full-steam against the Communists, prosecute them as fast as they can.

Large-scale arrests have already taken place and police measures, suppression of civil liberties applied in Ganjam and Cuttack districts.

RAMAKRISHNA Pati, member of the Secretariat of the Provincial Committee of the Party, Gurucharan Patnaik, Editor of our Oriya weekly Mukti Juddha, and Ramachandra Misra, Secretary, Cuttack District Committee of the Communist Party, have been arrested under Section 151 Cr. P. C. on the charge that they were suspected to be parties to a plan to organise violent action.

They have also been externed from the Cuttack district pending their trial in a court of law.

Sixty-seven persons have been arrested from among the workers of the Barang Glass Factory and the kisans of Patia Kill and Sankarpur.

Warrants of arrests have been issued against leading trade union workers including Durgacharan Mohanty, Assistant Secretary of the Provincial Trade Union Congress and Secretary of the Barang Glass Workers' Union.

Violence—Usual Plea

The circular is a typically bureaucratic document containing the usual imperialist outlook against all popular movements.

Once upon a time it used to be Congress workers; today it is Communist workers who "have been guilty of incitement to violence and acts of coercion..." "The Communist Party, as you know, believes in the cult of violence and their political objective is the destruction, by violent means, of the existing social, economic and political structure."

Exactly the same was the charge in the Meerut Conspiracy case and Pandit Motilal Nehru then took the initiative to start a Defence Committee and the whole country demand-

ed withdrawal of the case. It is the usual charge of imperialist Communist-baiters all over the world.

The real game is exposed in the lines: "The Communist Party is making an all-out effort to capture the allegiance of peasants, industrial labourers and students."

This reveals it is a clear case of political victimisation, suppressing normal activities of a legal political party.

Imperialist Game

The imperialist game is clear; in 1929 it was to have all working-class leaders in jail before the 1930 struggle broke. In 1947 it is the same; lock up most of the Communists in jail before the Cabinet Mission's Plan falls to pieces and the Congress starts a struggle.

But the issue is: Can Premier Mahtab sanction in 1947 what Pandit Motilal Nehru struggled to stop in 1929?

This is the way to let the bureaucracy destroy the freedom movement piece-meal.

POLICE RAJ today CANNOT LEAD TO SWARAJ tomorrow.

We are confident Oriya patriotic opinion will stop the shameful development of the police being permitted to act their old way, particularly concentrating against the Communists. A Popular Ministry cannot be allowed to give the police free run, act in a factional partisan manner against a brother patriotic party and trample democratic liberties under-foot.

It is only the bureaucrats and profiteers and British-created landlords who are afraid of the Communists working among "workers, peasants and students"; it is all to the good of the people of Orissa and its

place in the final struggle for Indian freedom.—Editor

GOVERNMENT OF ORISSA,
Home Department,
Special Section.

D/O. No. 133 (6) 18-1-1947.

Dear Mr.....

The recent activities of Communist workers in almost all the districts of the province have given Government great anxiety. The Communist Party is making an all out effort to capture the allegiance of peasants, industrial labourers as also students.

The C. P., as you know, believes in the cult of violence and their political objective is the destruction, by violent means, of the existing social, economic and political structure.

The operations of the C. P., therefore, constitute in the nature of things a growing menace to the maintenance of public order.

In fact, instances have already come to notice where in pursuit of their objective of bringing about a social and political upheaval, Communist workers have been guilty of incitement to violence and acts of coercion.

Government consider it highly important therefore,

- 1) That Communist activity and propaganda in your district should be under your close and constant watch;
- 2) That you should without hesitation apply the full rigour of law to all Communists whose activities transgress the bounds of law, and
- 3) That you should promptly and fairly take such preventive measures as may in your opinion be required to check any Communist activity which may in the end prejudicially affect the law and order in your district.

You will no doubt pass on these instructions to the Superintendent of Police.

Yours etc.
Sd/ B. C. Mukherjee,
CHIEF SECRETARY.

PUNJAB LEAGUE MOVEMENT--ITS CHARACTER AND POSSIBILITIES

It is exactly one month since the Punjab Muslim League launched its satyagraha against the Public Safety Ordinance.

Despite the efforts of the official communiques to play down the sweep and extent of the movement, it is quite clear even from the communiques themselves, that far from succeeding in throttling the League, repression has only acted as an incentive to the League masses to increase the tempo of their struggle.

THE courageous manner in which the League masses—men and women—have resisted repression, the way they have faced bullets, lathi-charges and tear-gas, picketed law courts and jails—the militant anti-imperialism with which they have burnt Union Jacks—have, despite all political differences, won the admiration of Congressmen and other non-League fighters for freedom.

If Only . . .

Through the minds of all, but the blindly complacent and factional, must have passed the thought:

"If only all this courage and heroism, this fighting anti-imperialism could be united with the courage and heroism, the fighting anti-imperialism of the Congress, of the Communists, the Socialists, of the national movement as a whole—the united trade unions, Kisan Sabhas, Students' Federation . . ."

The *Chronicle*, columnist of the nationalist Sunday *Chronicle*, an avowed opponent of the League, voices this sentiment in his latest despatch from Lahore:

"Today, at last in one Province the League HAS been forced by the logic of circumstances to oppose and agitate against the bureaucracy in a manner taught by the Congress . . ."

"I believe that if honest hearts and intelligent minds are applied to it, this situation can be moulded into a pattern of unity."

Transformation ?

A similar hope, it seems, dominates the minds of the progressive rank and file of the Muslim League in the Punjab and they feel it may be possible to "transform" the present League movement into a united Hindu-Muslim-Sikh movement against the Ordinance and Police Raj.

In their well-justified enthusiasm at the colossal sweep of the League movement and, above all, at the successful prevention of the movement being converted into communal riots, despite the worst efforts of the CID, the League progressives forget both the all-India and the Provincial context in which the anti-Ordinance struggle is being fought. They forget:

- That the All-India League leadership supported the Punjab struggle in the beginning not because of any fervent desire for civil liberties (which it itself has suppressed equally ruthlessly in Bengal), but as a means of exerting pressure on the Congress to get the most reactionary parts of the British Plan—grouping, etc.—implemented.

- That today, after the Attlee statement, and its machiavellian "offer" to "transfer power" to the Provincial Governments "existing" in June 1948—the League leadership sees in the Punjab movement a battle for the Ministry and consequently for Pakistan itself.

- The fact that a day after the Attlee Award the League started a similar movement in the Frontier against the Congress Ministry highlights this new character which the League leadership will strive to give to the Punjab movement.

- That for exactly the same reasons, after the Attlee Award, the Congress leadership will oppose the Punjab movement through thick and thin in order to keep the Ministry out of League hands and thus keep the Province out of Pakistan.
- It is for these reasons that the hopes of "transforming" the movement are false hopes, based on wishful thinking and blindness to the political realities of today.

Partisan, Factional

Already the special care which used to be taken to keep the movement strictly non-communal, strictly for civil liberties, in order to win the support of the Hindu and Sikh masses, seems to have been abandoned even by the progressives inside the League, in their flush of excitement

at the seeming success with which they are meeting.

- The Pakistan and anti-Ministry slogans—which do nothing but alienate the non-League masses—are again dominant.

- With the burning of Union Jacks, which of course wins the sympathy of the patriotic Hindus and Sikhs, there is also the hoisting of League flags on public buildings, which rouses the suspicions and the opposition of non-League.

- The campaign for the release of ALL political prisoners has once again been reduced to a demand for the release merely of Leaguers—thus failing to win the support of Congressmen, who could be roused if the demand for the release of all victims of Police Raj were raised.

Bureaucracy's Plan

This growing partisan twist which the movement has taken has given renewed opportunity to the bureaucracy to carry out its plan to make the Punjab a riot-arena. The opportunist and chauvinist leadership of the Akali

Party—at the instance of loyalists like Baldev Singh—has come out with the threat of a counter movement against the League. Reports are appearing of an assembly Akali Fauj being recruited, marching, shouting anti-League slogans.

There is no doubt that this will bring the riot-danger nearer than ever and enable the more rabidly communal elements to come to the top on both sides.

Negotiations

League progressives and rank and filers must have already begun to see the real aims of the League leadership in the negotiations and intrigues being carried on by Khwaja Nazimuddin and Mr. Ghazanfar Ali with the Governor and the Unionists.

The outcome of the negotiations will be known in the course of the next few days.

But from what has appeared in the Press and from the speeches of League leaders, it is clear that the main strategy of the League leadership—both the all-India leadership as represented by Nazimuddin, and the Provincial, as represented by men like Feroz Khan Noon and Mamdot—is

being directed to win over the loyalist Khizar and his group of 13 toadies in order to tip the balance in favour of the League and thus form a League Ministry.

Nazimuddin has had long confabulations with Governor Jenkins (who earned notoriety during the first Simla Conference in 1945, when, as the Viceroy's Private Secretary, he was reputed to have played the none too laudable role of intriguer-in-chief of the British, telling the Congress and the League different stories in order to prevent them from coming together).

Jenkins' Bait ?

It is reliably reported that Jenkins, true to his reputation, made Nazimuddin get the impression that the League could count on his (Jenkins') "sympathetic" help in "persuading" the Unionists to join with the League at a later stage—IF they called off the movement now. On this basis, some face-saving "formula" for calling off the movement is being sought. Nazimuddin is reported to have been prepared even to agree

that all the repressive provisions of the Ordinance should be incorporated in a Bill, which the League would support in the Assembly!

And Mr. Jinnah in his latest interview to the Press at the Lahore railway station on February 24, clearly gives his assent to this proposal to turn the Ordinance into an Act.

All the demagoguery about civil liberties vanished pretty fast when the rich bait of a Ministry was dangled before the League leadership.

Give the Ordinance another name—call it an Act—so that we can save our faces and withdraw—this is the meaning of Nazimuddin's dirty deal. All the blood and suffering for a tricky change of the name by which repression is called.

No Formula Yet

But despite this willingness to capitulate, in return for the Ministry at some future date, on the part of the feudal lords of the League—there appears to be a hitch. The Governor wants a complete and open surrender with no mask to hide it. The League leaders know that they cannot make the roused League masses accept such a surrender. A compromise formula has not yet been evolved.

Whatever happens immediately—whether a compromise formula is finally found or not, whether the struggle is called off or continues—it is clear that the League leaders' main aim is going to become more and more the winning over of the toady Unionists in order to form a League-Unionist Ministry instead.

The Attlee statement makes the Punjab Ministry a key deciding factor in the battle for and against Pakistan. And the struggle in the Punjab will surely degenerate more and more into a sordid and fac-

tional battle for Ministry through the favour of Jenkins and his boys—with riots thrown in, if the bureaucracy can manage to provoke them.

Aimed At Upsurge

A heavy responsibility, therefore, rests today on the Communist Party, on the organised working-class, kisan and student movements.

The bureaucracy and the vested interests are determined to crush the rapidly growing tenant movement against feudal extortion (which will reach a new peak with the harvesting of the wheat crop in April) and the fast increasing organised might of the working-class, led by the railway workers.

The Ordinance Raj is primarily directed against this mass upsurge of the tenants and the workers which has changed the face of the once dark and "loyal" Punjab.

Equally also is the conspiracy to create communal riots in the Punjab directed against this upsurge, in order to divide and disrupt it.

The Communist Party and the organised working-class, kisan and student movements must, therefore, step up their own independent united Hindu-Muslim-Sikh campaign against Ordinance Raj and against the bureaucracy's plans to drown the upsurge in civil war.

They must make extra special efforts to draw into this campaign all the fighting anti-imperialist masses who stand behind the Congress and the League—and in particular all those Muslims who have so bravely faced tear-gas and bullets today in the cause of civil liberties, and who will more and more find their leaders forgetting the cause for which they declared they were fighting in the game of power-politics and Ministry-making.

by Romesh Chandra

COMMUNISTS AND THE LEAGUE MOVEMENT

FROM the Secretariat the lie is being spread that the Communists are directing the League movement. This lie has appeared in the despatches of correspondents of such papers as the *Times of India* and the *Free Press Journal of Bombay*—and is being freely circulated in the Punjab.

On the basis of this cooked up lie, the Punjab ICS actually placed before the Cabinet the question of taking action against the Punjab Communist Party, arresting its leaders and raiding its offices.

The bureaucracy's aim is obvious: to smash the organised leadership of the tenant and working-class upsurge.

Long before the start of the League movement, local bureaucrats were writing to the Ministry calling upon it to declare the Communist Party illegal as that was the only way to crush the tenant and working-class upsurge.

The League movement is merely an excuse for taking this action.

The Punjab Communists have issued a statement sharply denouncing this Secretariat-manufactured lie.

The statement explains how while carrying on independently a resolute campaign against the repressive Ordinance (a campaign launched long before the Provincial League leadership thought of a civil liberties campaign), the Communist Party can have nothing whatsoever to do with the factional, partisan movement of the League, which, for all its pretensions to being purely an anti-Ordinance movement, is in reality part of the League's battle for the fatal and reactionary division of India.

DEFEND YOUR "PEOPLE'S AGE"

THE first contributions for the "PEOPLE'S AGE" DEFENCE FUND have already started coming and from all over the country.

From the North has come a demand draft for Rs. 45-12-0 representing collections made by the Communist Party unit in Gidderbaha (Ferozpur District, Punjab).

From the South, a donation of Rs. 5 from Gurusji Nayidax of Madras and another of Rs. 2 from Abdul Salim of Perambur were among the first to arrive.

From the East, B. N. Banu of Calcutta has sent us a cheque for Rs. 20-4-0.

From Bombay itself a number of donations have come in.

From the States, N. Krishna Murthy of Mysore sent a Money Order for Rs. 50 with the message:

"I heartily congratulate you on the patriotic duty done by your Party and Party organ and hope that you will continue to do it with a new courage and strength."

From the Forces, an R.A.F. reader, who sent Rs. 2, was among the first contributors.

The money has started to roll in. More and more must come. Every Party unit and every reader should decide now, without waiting for any further instructions or for a lead from anybody else, how it can carry out its duty by the Party organ, how it can raise the maximum funds for the "PEOPLE'S AGE" DEFENCE FUND.

Remember Sales Drive Too

And don't forget: Every unit and agency must make every effort to raise its weekly sales and increase the number of subscribers.

This is the best answer to repression. In Tamilnad, the sales of our Tamil weekly, JANASAKHI are shooting up after the terrific repression launched against the Tamilnad Party.

And you can read for yourself on pages 6 and 7 how the securities demanded from JANASAKHI and from DESHABHILLANI were overfulfilled double quick.

This is the spirit, which can and will beat back the offensive against "People's Age" and keep it going, helping it to do its job better and better. Send in fast the stories of your collections, your fight to increase the sales and enrol subscribers.

Mark all donations to:

"People's Age" Defence Fund,
C/o. People's Age,
109-B Chetwani Main Road, Bombay 4.

(All cheques, money orders, postal orders, demand drafts etc., to be made out in the name of Kamfial J. Shah.)

AITUC STANDS FOR SOCIALIST STATE

Fundamental Conditions Of Freedom Constitution

(Below we are printing two of the most vital resolutions unanimously passed by the Silver Jubilee Session of the All-India Trade Union Congress. A special review article on this session will appear next week—Editor.)

THE All-India Trade Union Congress reiterates its objective of Socialism and declares that the aim of the working-class movement is to work for a Socialist State in which all power will be in the hands of the producing masses, and industry will be completely nationalised; in which man will no longer exploit man and production will be organised for the need of the people.

Immediate Objective

At the same time, the AITUC realises that the immediate objective before the country is that of national freedom and of emancipation from British rule.

Recognising this immediate objective and the need for a constitution for the transitional period, the AITUC declares that a democratic constitution really embodying the will of the people can only be framed by a Constituent Assembly based on adult suffrage.

The AITUC further considers the following fundamental conditions of a Freedom-Constitution:

- 1) Withdrawal of all British troops and complete independence of India;
- 2) Abolition of Native States;
- 3) Self-determination to linguistic units;
- 4) Fundamental rights of the people including rights of association, freedom of speech and Press, right to strike, living wage and work;
- 5) Abolition of landlordism and

AITUC

OFFICE-BEARERS

PRESIDENT: S. A. Dange.

VICE-PRESIDENTS: Aftab Ali, S. S. Mirajkar, R. A. Khedgikar, K. N. Joglekar and S. S. Yussuf.

GENERAL SECRETARY: N. M. Joshi.

TREASURER: Peter Alwarner.

ASST. SECRETARIES: Mrs. Shanta Matherjee, N. V. Phadke, Manek Gandhi and Dinker Desai.

other feudal relics from the land:

6) Taking over by the State of British industries and banks and nationalisation of key industries, banks and finance so that the producing people are able to control economic life;

7) Control of profits, and—

8) A fully democratic constitution based on adult suffrage and proportional representation, so that people are really able to assert their will and exercise their sovereignty.

The AITUC calls upon the working-class to agitate for such a constitution and not to pin their faith in promises of British Imperialists, or the vested interests.

Observe March 18 As Basic Demands Day

THE AITUC (in the course of another resolution) calls upon the workers to realise that no radical improvement in

their economic conditions is possible unless the workers, through their unity and strength, win the basic rights and secure legislative sanction for them, thus compelling the owners to implement these rights.

The unity that has been gained during the recent months must, therefore, be further strengthened to unitedly fight for basic economic rights.

The AITUC, therefore, calls upon all industrial workers as well as the middle-class employees to effectively voice their demands for basic rights, such as a living wage, social security, right to work, no retrenchment, by observing March 18, 1947 as **BASIC DEMANDS DAY** throughout India by organising meetings, demonstrations and passing resolutions and sending copies thereof to the Provincial and Central Governments.

The AITUC also appeals to the people in general to support these demands of the working-class as part of the general struggle for economic and political liberation of the people and as part of India's battle against poverty.

Next Week

SPECIAL REVIEW

ARTICLE ON

AITUC SESSION

By

B. T. Ranadive

Where Stands The Left?

CSP AND ATTLEE DECLARATION

AMONG the first to comment on the Attlee declaration was Dr. Bhan Manohar Lohia, the C.S.P. leader, who, in an interview to the Press in Calcutta, stated:

"So far I had been eighty per cent sceptical and only twenty per cent hopeful of British democracy and Socialism. Today, I am more largely than otherwise."

The Press report goes on to say: "Dr. (Dr. Lohia) congratulated the brave people of Hindustan and England who were in the background and said that he was happy that democratic Socialism has after all something of a world character."

In other words, Dr. Lohia's opinion is: it is certainly WAS that the Attlee declaration shows that the British Government has done what a really Socialist Government would do: QUIT, Army of Occupation and all, and leave India to decide its own future.

Naive Faith

This naive faith in the British Government's "sincerity" we have witnessed in right-wing leaders before—on many occasions—but NEVER so blatantly as those who call themselves LEFT, who claim to base themselves on scientific Socialism, with a perfectly clear understanding of the character of imperialism.

But Dr. Lohia's reaction was not the reaction of all the C.S.P. leaders. On the contrary, Acharya Narendra Dev, in an interview to the United Press, declared:

"I am surprised to read in the papers that Congress members of the Central Legislature are jubilant over the latest statement of His Majesty's Government."

Sri Achyut Patwardhan, in an interview, stated:

"That power will have to be seized, that it will not drop from heaven by an act of British grace, is the first lesson that the Prime Minister's statement underlines."

These are both welcome indications that the Congress Socialist leaders as a whole have not gone as lyrical over British "Socialism" as Dr. Lohia.

But what is it that even these two top leaders of the C.S.P. object to in the Attlee declaration?

According to Acharyaji, the crux is that:

"It seems that Mr. Jinnah's slogan of 'Divide and QUIT' is going to be realised while the Congress wanted the British to quit and leave us to our fate, without deciding anything." According to Achyut Patwardhan, the trouble is that:

"Their (the British Government's) advice to those reactionary elements in India whom they have supported and bolstered up for years seems clear that is: 'Make much trouble as you can, frighten the Congress, grab what you can while we are going!'"

Thus the key to the Congress Socialists' understanding of the present situation is that the British are 'going', 'quitting'—only they are trying to help reactionaries, "while they are going"; they are going to "divide", but "quit".

From this thesis follows the political line that we must turn the entire edge of our sword no longer against the British, who are 'quitting'—but against those who would oppose the Congress—that is, primarily, the Muslim League.

That is, in fact, exactly what the Attlee declaration is intended to do—set us fighting more vigorously than ever before, so that it gives the imperialists an opportunity to "impose" a Partition Constitution, which provides for their armies to STAY in order to "save us from chaos."

And yet the immediate programme of action put across by Achyut Patwardhan in his statement is:

"It is for the Congress to muster its total strength in the Punjab and Bengal, as well as in the States. The struggle for power will have to be waged intensely in these areas, when the issue between freedom and reaction is still undecided...."

Sri Patwardhan is right about the States, but his emphasis is on the Provinces.

Caught In Attlee's Trap

The Attlee declaration's offer to hand over power to "existing Provincial Governments" was meant to start civil war in each of the Provinces claimed for Pakistan. The C.S.P. leaders, instead of making a bold programme for a united assault on British imperialism, for winning over the Muslim masses for such a struggle, give a call which amounts to just what Attlee wanted.

Some of its leaders may not say quite as openly as Dr. Lohia that they trust the "Socialism" of the British Labour Party, but at bottom their policy is guided by exactly the same faith as Dr. Lohia's.

This is the tragedy of the Indian Socialists.

—Romesh Chandra

Behind Wavell's Dismissal

A friend who has close links with the Viceroy's House in New Delhi has sent me the real inside story behind Wavell's dismissal and Mountbatten's appointment.

It seems that as soon as the deadlock inside the Interim Government reached a breaking point, the Labour imperialist experts—Cripps and Co.—decided that Wavell would have to go. He had discredited himself with the Indian people quite enough, carrying out the imperialist policy of "divide and rule."

No future declaration of their "good intentions" could satisfy India without making a "practical demonstration" of their "sincerity" by sacking Wavell—the symbol of British double-dealing.

With the question of Wavell's dismissal settled, the question of his successor came to the fore.

A Labour Government was naturally expected to appoint a Labour man as Viceroy.

The name of Lord Staunton (formerly Wedgwood Benn and once Secretary of State for India) was mentioned.

Mr. A. V. Alexander was another hot favourite. It was an open secret that he had been specially included in the Cabinet Mission in order that he may step into Wavell's shoes.

There were any number of other Labour men available for the job, if the job was the simple one of handing India over to the Indians.

Why Mountbatten?

But none of them was appointed. Why? My friend gives the following reasons, based on his talks with "people in the know."

● For a long time now, anticipating Wavell's recall, the imperialist site numbers in C.I.F.C., New Delhi, have been stressing both the importance of India as a military base for the "coming Third World War" and the likely increasing use of the Army to crush "civil disturbances" in India. From these they have been concluding the imperative need for a **MILITARY VICEROY**.

A PATRIOT'S NOTEBOOK

● Similarly, the Political Department in New Delhi and, at its command, the Indian Princes have been strongly putting forward the plea that a "commoner" (that is, a Labour man) should not be appointed Viceroy, as his duties as Crown Representative involve dealings with the Princes and only a scion of the British nobility would do!

● British business circles have, of course, been putting all possible pressure through the Conservative Party for the appointment of a safe and strong representative of imperialism, who will see to it that British imperial, commercial and economic interests in India are safeguarded.

It was this three-pronged pressure, carefully worked up by Churchill and Co., that led to the appointment of the arch-reactionary Admiral Lord Mountbatten—an ace military chief, a scion of the Royal House itself, the rankest of Tory reactionaries, one of Churchill's favourite lieutenants!

The backlash about Wavell being sacked because of his differences with the Congress, about Churchill's displeasure at his dismissal—is all eye-wash to make us throw open our arms and welcome Mountbatten.

Charge Sheets

WE have been sent some of the so-called "charge-sheets" which have been handed over by the Madras Government to the Government at Delhi in Vellore Jail.

N. K. KRISHNAN, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, has been served with a "charge sheet" giving "the grounds of his detention."

These sheets with a speech he made in August 1946 at the All-Kerala Stu-

dents' Conference in Calicut and go on detailing all the political work he has done since then, through his arrest on November 7, 1946, and his detention up to 1947, to his work on the staff of People's Age ("the literature and propaganda sections of the Communist Headquarters in Bombay").

Political Activity A Crime?

All these were his "crimes". It amounts to saying: "We detain you without trial because you are a Communist leader and are carrying on political activities."

Finally, of course, comes the following:

"Since then (August 1946) he has been secretly working and issuing instructions to the local Party leaders to bring about general strikes in January this year, including a mass uprising attended with violence."

"After the arrests early in January 1947 in connection with the Madras Communist Conspiracy Case, he took over the work of the Party Office at Madras and took necessary action to carry on subversive activities and maintain contacts and for the production and distribution of unauthorised news-sheets. Since he is likely to go underground to carry on subversive activities, his detention is essential."

All these vague, general unspecified charges of "secret instructions", "violent uprising", would not hold water in any Court of Law. And yet they are made here by the bureaucracy—just to provide some sort of "justification" for Krishnan's detention.

All the other charge-sheets are exactly similar. The bulk of the charges are just a list of the perfectly open legal work done by each detainee in legal mass organisations.

In one case—that of Imbichi Baba—the chief crime listed is that—

"He is a good speaker and has condemned the Congress Ministry in his public speeches for its alleged failure to carry out the promises

contained in the Election Manifesto and for curtailment of the civil liberties of the people and oppressing the labourers."

One could almost laugh. Beware, all you "good speakers", you are liable to be detained under the new Ordinance Raj which is being introduced everywhere!

Beware, all you, thousands and thousands of Congressmen, who every day declare that the Congress Ministers are not fulfilling their election pledges! Stop talking—or you will be in jail, double quick!

Yes, one could almost laugh. Only these comic "charge-sheets" hide the grim tragedy which is spreading all over our land—the increasing atrocities of the imperialist bureaucracy and the acquiescence in them of the Popular Ministries.

"Civil Liberties In 1946"

AND talking of anti-Communist repression, here are the facts in a nut-shell—the Government of India's own nut-shell:

On February 26, in a written reply to a question in the Central Assembly, Sardar Patel declared that during 1946, **ONE THOUSAND, NINE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY** Communists were arrested in various Provinces.

This Sardar made it clear that this figure did not include those arrested in the Indian States or those arrested during 1947 (which means it exclude the mass arrests in Madras Presidency).

Of course, this answer is based on the Intelligence Bureau's calculations—but it gives a good idea of the "civil liberties" which prevailed in India in 1946.

Parachutes

QUITE a sensation was caused when People's Age published a report in its issue of February 1947 of the sale of parachutes by the De-

fence Department to the French Government.

The Generals and the ICS Sahib—guilty of this crime, which had disgraced the name of the Interim Government—rushed to the official news-agency—the Associated Press of India—and made it put out a clever news-bit on February 5, that "Official quarters here today described" the People's Age report as "baseless".

A smart piece of work, this—for it gave the impression of an official contradiction and yet it did NOT bind down a single official at all!

But somehow this did not satisfy anybody. More and more questions began to be asked. The representative of Indo-China, I gather, informally requested Pandit Nehru to investigate the allegation.

And on February 13, the Government of India was compelled to come out with a Communiqué, admitting that "the facts are that 3,000 supply dropping parachutes... WERE sold to the French Government."

Fantastic Excuse

But, of course, like all bureaucratic admissions, it trotted forth an excuse: the transaction was carried out "under the previous rules framed to meet conditions prior to the present emergency in Indo-China."

Anyhow, we are proud that thanks to the information which People's Age was able to publish, the Interim Government have moved and put a stop to "any further" transactions of this shameful character.

If Pandit Nehru were to move to make enquiries into some of the many other "official secrets" we have published, he would also be compelled at least to move to put a stop to "any further" military murder plans of the sort we have exposed.

And may be, it will help him to realise that the Parachute-selling Generals are not so innocent as the Communiqué would have us believe—just acting on "previous rules"—but really, dastardly enemies of Indian freedom and honour who would be hanged in a free country.

Romesh Chandra

Not British Withdrawal But Continued Domination Through Divide And Rule

R. PALME DUTT ON ATTLEE'S DECLARATION ON INDIA

The following statement has been issued to the Press by R. Palme Dutt, well-known Communist leader of Great Britain:

WAVELL'S dismissal and his replacement by Mountbatten and the new statement of policy for India reflect the further deepening crisis in India and the bankruptcy of the Cabinet Mission Plan. The new statement of policy is the most reactionary document yet issued by the British Government since the opening of the Cabinet Mission's negotiations.

This document has been widely presented as if it were a great step forward, setting a date for British withdrawal from India in June 1948. In point of fact it has nothing to do with the British withdrawing from India—what the document really lays down is something very different.

- It makes it absolutely and finally clear that the Constituent Assembly will not be recognised as valid unless it contains both the Congress and the Muslim League.
- It further makes it definitely clear that any constitution which may be drawn up will only be ratified by the British Parliament on the condition that it conforms completely with the requirements imposed by the Cabinet Mission Plan and is accepted by both the Congress and the League.

Thus, this question which was left without an explicit answer in the Parliamentary debates following the London Conference (when Mr. Alexander was pressed thrice to state whether the British Government regarded the present Constituent Assembly to be valid or not and he declared thrice his refusal to answer yes or no)—this question has now been explicitly answered in the negative.

It is made clear that the Constituent Assembly is in no sense whatsoever sovereign but entirely subject to Parliament and the British Government and that its decisions are not valid unless agreed to by the Congress and the League.

Intensifies Congress-League Differences

The obvious effect of this is not solving the antagonism between the Congress and the League but intensifying it, placing a premium on the League stand of irreconcilable opposition, since the British Government guarantees that such opposition, if firmly maintained, will be successful.

Even the London Times editorial has noted that the effect of the document will not diminish but inflame and intensify political and communal antagonism.

What is new in the document are the definite steps now proposed to be taken in the event the deadlock continues, which in fact this document does everything possible to continue as a consequence of its provisions.

The White Paper makes it absolutely clear that in the event of the continuance of the deadlock between the Congress and the League, the British Government after a period of 15 months will impose its own solution, that is, it will impose a British-made constitution on India.

Further, the language of the statement indicates a preparation for that British Award taking the line of partition. In respect to British India it laid down that the British Government will decide if a single Central Government, or separate Provincial States or a State based on grouping of Provinces, is to be set up.

In regard to the Princes it is emphasised that Britain retains paramountcy rights in her own hands independently of any In-

dian Government, and that any future relations between Britain and the Princes will be decided by Britain.

Here it is important to note that the official announcement of the appointment of Mountbatten declares, firstly, that he is appointed the Viceroy and secondly, that he is also appointed as the representative of the British Crown in its dealings with Indian States.

Thereby it is implied that even if the formal position of the Viceroy and the Governor-General were to be modified, the status for Mountbatten in India as the representative for the Crown in its relations with the Princes will remain.

Should Open Eyes Of Indian Patriots

Thus, the general character of the scheme continues to the extreme point the policy of divide and rule, to be the basis for continued domination over India.

The terms of the declaration should open the eyes of serious Indian patriots to the real character of the policy which Britain is pursuing in India, and the consequent dangerous entanglement of the Indian political organisations in the Cabinet Mission Plan.

The greater the entanglement, the more open and ruthless the British declaration of their intention to impose unilateral decisions on the constitutional future of India.

It should further be noted that the appointment of Mountbatten (renowned for his active military record in South-East

Asia) is accompanied by the appointment of General Ismay to be his Chief Adviser. Ismay was Churchill's former Chief-of-Staff.

This throws a sharp light on the concentration of military

preparations for the period now opening in India.

It is more than ever clear that the path forward for Indian freedom lies through the development of a united Indian

national front, breaking completely with subservience to the British imposed Plan and leading the way to establish a constitution on the basis of the wishes of the Indian people.



Hangmen Put on a Pious Face!

Editorial

Not Hail But Beware

THERE is no reason to hail but every reason to be suspicious of Premier Attlee's new statement in the House of Commons. It is not a British pledge to quit India but an imperialist manoeuvre to gain time.

Their constitutional plan had reached a deadlock through the refusal of the Muslim League to enter the Constituent Assembly. The Interim Government was faced with collapse through Pandit Nehru's threat of Congress resignation.

Anyone who knows India of 1947 knows that the Congress in opposition would bring the British rulers face to face with Indian revolt here and now. Not the British but only the Congress can keep the country peaceful because the Indian situation is so explosive today, anti-British hatred so universal, the demand for freedom so urgent.

The biggest strike wave that India has known is sweeping the industrial centres, popular struggles are breaking out in State after State, even the traditionally backward peasant is rising to his feet, all seeking solution of problems that British rule has created.

The British need is desperate that Indian Ministers should face the rising Indian people, while they themselves can get behind the scenes to plot how to stay on in the new situation.

The dateline of June 1948 is the cleverest imperialist trick to keep the Interim Government going and to raise new illusions among Indian leaders and put on a pious face before the world outside.

The date is set not to transfer power but to bargain over all issues that constitute the reality of power, issues which have been kept deliberately vague to hide their final objective of dictation.

This becomes clear from a close examination of clauses that are supposed to be negotiated in the meanwhile.

FIRST, the British want to have a say even in civil administration, where "efficiency" has to be "maintained". This means either retention of the British personnel of the I.C.S. and the I.P.S. or payment to them of fantastic compensation as Under-Secretary Henderson had come here to demand.

SECONDLY, the defence of India has to be "fully provided for", which means not only retention of the British control of India's GHO but also that British officers are to compose the bulk of officer cadre in India's armed forces as G-in-C Auchinleck does not know whether it will take ten or twenty long years to Indianise them!

It further leaves for the future to settle the treaty provision to use India as a British base, like Egypt and Iraq.

THIRDLY, British commercial and industrial interests have to be guaranteed a "fair field", and a glimpse of what the British Government considers fair was given by the British delegation that came to India not to negotiate but to dictate over sterling balances.

FOURTHLY, what is British India today may be partitioned into more than one State, and the British will negotiate with each separately. A divided India would be a weaker India, easier victim to British pressure and machinations.

LASTLY, the Princes have been declared "sovereign", free to deal either with the Congress or the League and, of course, they are free to have independent relations with Britain as well. Thus the British imperialists get their own puppets lined inside either united or partitioned India of the future, while the British remain also free to use Princely territories as their own permanent bases, military, economic and political, studded all over our vast country.

It is thus not an offer to quit India after a year but an open plot to carve our common motherland into a number of satellite States of Great Britain. Indian patriots must not read their own wishes into British declarations, but judge British intentions from British practice. That alone can lead to correct conclusions.

Again, the new Attlee declaration is a calculated endeavour to salvage the Constitution-making Body and make it function to British design.

The British whip over the Congress leadership is that they must accept grouping without equivocation in order to get the Muslim League in, or alternatively face partition.

The British whip over the League is that it must go inside the Constitution-making Body in order to get a dominant voice in the affairs of six Provinces or it must remain content with partition and only two Provinces to begin with.

The dateline and Attlee's statement have enabled the British to come on top out of a very grave situation. They have astutely turned political issues upside down.

By fixing the dateline they have kept Congress co-operation in the Interim Government and escaped India-wide mass revolt.

By posing the alternatives of compulsory grouping or forced partition they have further intensified Hindu-Muslim differences, bad as they had already made them, to an unprecedented extent even if both the Congress and the League are inside the Constitution-making Body.

The British policy of divide and rule is thus reaching its final culmination in the real threat of partition and a bogus offer to quit. A Tory Field Marshal goes, but a Tory Admiral, accompanied with one of the cleverest imperialist Generals, Ismay, both Churchill's favourites, comes.

Premier Attlee's statement only shows that the British are not pledged to quit by June 1948 but are determined to intensify Indian differences so as to settle India's fate as suits them best by that date.

WORLD'S LOWEST-PAID MINERS BATTLE FOR LIVING WAGE

Strike-Wave Sweeps Jharia's Coal-Fields

By Indradip Sinha.

An unprecedented strike-wave is sweeping over Jharia's coal-fields. And it is a united battle of thousands of miners, led by Socialists, Communists and others.

BETWEEN September to middle of December 1946, strikes took place in over 20 collieries, small or big, involving over 20,000 workers, resulting in a loss of about 80,000 work days.

If these strikes were short-lived, it was because in most of the cases the complete unity of the workers forced the all-powerful colliery owners—White and Black—to concede the demands, in some cases even in a few hours after the strike began.

Today 20,000 are on strike in these fields and more are joining their ranks.

Lowest Paid

Paid the lowest in the world, with a pre-war average daily wage of Rs. 8-10, the Indian miner's lot has always been extremely miserable. But during the war years, the miner's real wage fell to one-third of even this figure, resulting in a sharp fall in the output of coal which is now four million tons short of the actual needs. Today the average miner earns only about Rs. 20-25 per month, including dearness allowance, attendance bonus and free rice.

He is not entitled to a single day's leave with pay during sickness. His housing conditions are shocking. He has no security of employment and is constantly played off due to "shortage of tubs". And on the top of it all, prices are rising; food rations are being cut; the quality of rations supplied is deteriorating.

While all this has happened to the coal-miners, even the recorded profits of the colliery owners during this

period have been fifteen times their pre-war profit.

The coal-miners are demanding that they should get a share of this huge profit; four months' wages as bonus; a living wage; leave with pay; regular supply of food rations and cloth; steady and secure employment; and their unions to be recognised.

As elsewhere, the coal profiteers are reluctant to meet these demands and hence the strike-wave.

Most of the earlier battles had been sporadic and spontaneous. The owners organised in the Indian Mining Federation (European) and Indian Colliery Owners' Association (Indian) were then not united and both of them got it hot from the workers.

Today, the two gangster teams have joined hands under the Britishers' leadership. They threatened to raise coal prices and even to close down "their" mines unless the unrest was firmly put down. And their efforts seem to have borne some fruit.

Strikes Banned

In the first week of February, the Government of India announced a Conciliation Board and banned all strikes in Bengal and Bihar coal-fields pending its conclusions. In case the Conciliation Board failed, an Adjudicator would be appointed.

Thus, the strikes in the coal-fields are banned for at least 5-6 months during which period the employers expect to get an anti-strike bill passed.

Encouraged by these first successes, the owners are getting more and more aggressive. They are trying to eject

the strikers from their "dhow-rals" (slums). Agarwala of North Damodar Colliery planned large-scale goonda assaults on workers. The goondas used lethal weapons, including firearms and more than a dozen workers were seriously wounded. Government has rushed truck-loads of armed police reinforcements. Even blacklegs are being supplied under the Directorate of Unskilled Labour Supply.

Against all these odds, the coal-miners are unitedly fighting one of the most determined strike battles. To quote just two instances.

● Despite the banning of strikes and goonda terror, for 45 days 6,000 workers of Agarwala's North Damodar Colliery refused to call off their strike.

● The three week-old strike of 8,000 workers of the Kustore Colliery was settled only after the release of their leaders.

People Must Help

But leaving them to fight on unaided will only help the bosses. Indian industries are in the danger of being starved of coal and the workers threatened with mass unemployment unless the coal profiteers are forced to disgorge a part of their ill-gotten wealth so that the miners get a living wage and get back their industrial efficiency.

The Interim Government by banning strikes has only played into the hands of the owners' combine. To the people in general it means continuation of a coal famine, a spectre of mass unemployment and shortage of industrial goods.

Coal miners are not prepared to accept this position and hence their battles. It is the job of all our people to raise their voice against the Government's anti-strike order and force it to give up its policy of surrender before the coal profiteers.

Calcutta's 50-Mile Long Water-Front Paralysed

22,000 PORT EMPLOYEES ON STRIKE

Once again a British bureaucrat's perfidy has paralysed a giant undertaking.

From February 5, Calcutta's entire 50-mile water-front, from the Hooghly point on the Bay of Bengal to Baghbar and Howrah is at a standstill. Twenty-two thousand Port employees, Hindus and Muslims, clerks and workers, Bengalis and Biharis, all are on strike.

Men from Signalling, Survey, Despatch, Dredger, Vessels, Marine and Loco sections; cranimen, porters, permanent way staff; all are in the battle. Even the ration shop and hospital staff are with them though voluntarily working at the direction of the Strike Committee.

SO complete is their strike that even ships bound for Calcutta had to be directed to Bombay or Madras, and in the Port itself there was none even to put off the electric lights and they kept on burning for days on end.

Such is their unity that even the National Union of Port-workers, led by Congress labour leader Maitreyi Bose, which had at first refused to join in the strike, nay, had even campaigned against it, soon agreed to join and form a joint Council of Action.

During the war, universally recognised as operating one of the world's most efficient Allied bases, the workers were assured against retrenchment (August 1945). The temporary workers were even promised confirmation at an early date.

Promise Not Kept

But how could Sir Thomas Elderton, the Port boss, keep his own word and yet be a bureaucrat? Promptly he started mass dismissals, of those in the A.R.P., etc.

Then in March 1946, he promised that in case of retrenchment he would consult the Workers' Association (Red Flag). But soon 200 workers were thrown out and no consultation took place. In April he promised preference to the retrenched

DEMANDS

- (1) Minimum basic wage: Rs. 40 for workers; Rs. 80 for clerks.
- (2) Three months' wage as bonus.
- (3) End to retrenchment.

staff in case of future vacancies.

But in November and December, new staff was taken in through advertisements in the daily Press. Just no heed was paid to the April promise.

Even a list of his methodical breaches of promises in June, September, October, November, etc., makes a sickening reading. Its only result has been that well over 1,000 men were retrenched in 1946, and still he was out for a New Year's gift on January 7.

Is this all really superfluous staff? Far from it. The authorities have on hand any number of big projects for expansion. During war years they put by a net profit of Rs. 236 lakhs, apart from a Reserve Fund of Rs. 4 crores.

And when against all this the workers struck, even the Chief Labour Commissioner, Government of India, had to admit the full justice of their cause. He had to admit that Elderton had violated his own promise. But he was helpless as the White boss would not have him intervene.

No Disruption Will Work

But the workers are foiling all right the boss's efforts at disruption. The latter tried to keep away the 3,000 key men of the Marine Section—mostly Muslims from East Bengal and Nonkhal, both by communal appeals and cash. That only saw them soon leading the strike.

Another key section—400 men of Loco Section, again mostly Biharis Muslims, could not be kept away even on communal appeals.

Their last hope—disunity between the two Unions, led by Red Flaggers and Congressmen—even that was dashed to pieces. Nothing ever has been able to stand against the terrific working-class pressure.

And so police zoolom, lathi-charges, forcible eviction of workers' families, blacklegging through Chinese and Anglo-Indian workers, even stabbing of three Muslim pickets, everything is being desperately tried, of course, with Premier Suhrawardy "watching the situation."

But who can beat this great strike, with its 5,000 Hindu and Muslim volunteers welded into a solid phalanx, with Calcutta's toiling millions fully supporting them? They will fight and win.

The question that is uppermost in the minds of Calcutta's citizens is what is the Interim Government doing? Can even it not intervene to call the White bureaucrat to his senses?

P. B. Rungta

—by Nikhil Chakravarty

Workers On The March

CALCUTTA'S working-class is in the arena. Strikes are on in the Port Trust—22,000 workers (since February 5); tramways—8,000 (since January 21); Lipton's—1,500 (since February 13); Jute—10,000; cotton textiles—5,000; engineering—4,000; and many thousands more are ready to enter the field.

Over a million working days have already been lost. But the Ministry watches on. Non-intervention with a vengeance!

A great event recently took place in working-class Calcutta. The World Youth Delegation of common people from England, Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, etc., cemented new ties with Indian workers.

They spoke at the Trade Union Congress. They contributed to the relief and success of the 22,000 Port Trust strikers. After 1928, when Soviet Trade Unions contributed to the relief of the Bombay textile general strike, this was the second glorious occasion of its kind.

"Indo-Russian Influences"

On February 5, two weeks after 8,000 Calcutta tramwaymen had struck for a living wage, Dr. Lohia the CSP leader, wished them success. But on one condition: the Union must "cleanse" itself of "Indo-Russian influences," even though, as he himself admitted the Tramway Company is a British concern, amassing huge profits; the union's demands are "less than just"; Hindus and Muslims jointly fight under its banner; and two previous experiences have shown the utter futility of Adjudication!

You may even tell him that 7,572 (out of a total of 8,000) workers are union members. But to Dr. Lohia all that was secondary. And hence his "appeal" right in the midst of the strike when it is obvious that such an appeal can only weaken the strikers and help the British Tramway Company, by sowing seeds of disruption.

Despite Dr. Lohia, however, the tramway workers are fighting it out, grim and determined.

READ the background story (on pages 6 and 7) of the big textile strike in Coimbatore (since settled). All the Communist "inciters" whom the Madras bureaucrats could lay their hands on were safe in His Majesty's Vellore Central Jail. Surely that should have prevented the strike. But the obstinate workers willed it otherwise. Led by the Tricolour and the Red Flag, they struck and the Prakasham Ministry issued a statement that they were "watching the situation."

Then things started moving. The anti-owners in a statement on February 12 charged: "The Union leaders' tactics—intimidation and violence—were worse than those adopted by the Communists."

The Press, however, uniformly praised the peaceful character of the strike. Still, on February 14, a Government spokesman threatened "to take strong action" against incitement to violence; no matter, he said, if the strike is led by a Congress Union. There is impartiality for you; take it or leave it!

Even If Congress Backs

A similar study in "impartiality" is reported from the U.P.

On February 13, the U.P. authorities arrested in Benares under the Maintenance of Public Order Act, Communist labour leader Rusim Satin. Near about that date in Bareilly, they arrested under the Essential Services Ordinance, along with 20 others P. C. Sarawat, Labour Organiser of the Provincial Congress Committee itself.

It was during a strike of 700 sweepers for a living wage, adequate dearness allowance and free quarters.

Obviously the P.C.C. was backing it, but that was no bar to the bureaucrats "discharging their duties." Dare to lead workers' strike and we lock you

up, Communists or Congressmen—that seems to be their battle-cry.

As usual the arrests could not cow down the scavengers' families. They demonstrated—the wives with black-flags—and the local cart-drivers also threatened to join the strikers' ranks.

A Wedge That Failed

THE daily Press reports a remarkable story from Sargodha (Punjab).

The Municipal scavengers there were on strike because the men asked the Municipality, and it refused, to honour its own promise of an increment of As. 8 per head, though this had been the suggestion of the Punjab Minister concerned!

The Municipality had counted a great deal on the citizens condemning the "unsocial" scavengers and had imported blacklegs. But when the blacklegs clashed with the strikers, the authorities had the surprise of their life. To a man the shopkeepers came out on a protest hartal and expressed their solidarity with the scavengers.

Insurance Clerks

SIX months ago clerks' strikes would have been unthinkable. But then came the postal strike, strike of the Imperial Bank clerks, of the Military Accounts' clerks and so on, each involving many thousands. Today they are battling everywhere. In Bombay City, clerks from insurance companies are contemplating (their Central Executive Committee has already decided upon it) "a general strike for an indefinite period till justice is done" to their co-clerks from two insurance companies, who are on strike.

See how they battle—Hindus, Parsis, all—and you will take your hat off to them. Eighty days in the case of the Empire of India Assurance Co., and 74 days in the case of the Bombay Life Assurance Co., and just no yielding!

And how can they? In the first concern, while 200 of them are paid Rs. 11,046 per month, a bare seven of the managerial staff draw Rs. 11,200 a month. And prices are rocketing sky-high!

Could not the Ministry do anything for them? It has expressed itself against intervention in strikes led by Communists. But every citizen knows that Communists are not leading these strikes. Obviously then that excuse cannot be put up!

And after all the owners are neither hostile nor strangers to the Ministers. The Empire of India's Ram Rattan Gupta and Morarka have often been hosts to Congress Working Committee members.

In the other case, Sjt. V. L. Mehta, Bombay's Finance Minister himself, before he joined the Ministry, was one of the Directors. Mrs. Llavati Munchi, Congress M.L.A. (wife of Bombay's ex-Home Minister, K. M. Munchi), is another Director. Then why this callousness?

But, perhaps, that is just the reason why the Ministry is unable to do anything!

Airways' Solidarity

THE strike of Bombay's Mistri Airways (since January 14) against the wrongful discharge of 10 union leaders has thrown up another instance of fighting solidarity. On February 15, the management employed goondas against the strikers. In protest, the workers of the Tata Airlines, Ambika Airways and Air Services of India, came out on a strike. Despite police interference they met and condemned this goondaism.

The same demand of India negotiations when similar strikes took place in Delhi (Indian National Airways) and Karachi (British Overseas Airways Corporation). Bad days these for the bosses!

P. B. Rungta

—by Nikhil Chakravarty

★ DUTCH PLOTTINGS IN INDONESIA ★ ISSUES OF GERMAN PEACE TREATY ★ ANTI-SOVIET ANGLO-U.S. PLANS

THREE months ago after protracted negotiations, an Indonesian-Dutch agreement was signed at Cheribon. It laid down a complicated constitutional structure by which while de facto sovereignty of the Indonesian Republican Government was recognised, it was also circumscribed by the creation of an Indonesian-Dutch Union under the overlordship of the Dutch Royal House.

It was obvious at that time itself that this agreement by no means signified the final victory of Indonesia's freedom struggle and that the Dutch would try their hardest to use the terms of the agreement and the breathing-space before the agreement was ratified, as a weapon to reimpose Dutch domination over the Indonesian people.

Faced with the indomitable resistance of the Republican Army and the people, they wanted to temporise, to gain time, reinforce their troops (with, of course, Britain's aid) and then launch a crushing counter-offensive against Indonesians.

Military Provocation

And in fact this is what has happened.

As soon as the Dutch had taken over from British troops the main centres of military occupation in Indonesia, they started issuing threatening ultimatums, demanding the extension of the areas of which they were in occupation.

They insulted Republican officials, in some towns the Mayors were killed and in a large number of places, particularly Medan (Sumatra), they provoked armed clashes and used them to increase the areas under their control.

In Borneo also widespread fighting broke out and in the Celebes in their attempts to "pacify" (i.e., terrorise the people into submission), the Dutch have resorted to Martial Law.

All these clashes have been utilised by them to postpone ratification of the Cheribon agreement. While it is the Dutch who have carefully and consciously provoked all these armed clashes, yet they hypocritically use the fact of these very clashes to demand certain stringent guarantees from the Indonesians—which in fact, would mean virtual surrender by the Indonesian Army.

The result of all this has been that though three months have gone by, the agreement has not yet been ratified.

At the same time the Dutch while carefully refusing to ratify

by
M. Kumaramangalam

the agreement, are going forward as fast as they can to consolidate their position in Indonesia.

The Cheribon agreement required a reduction of Dutch forces in Indonesia; but in actual fact these have been steadily increased and the training and arming of Dutch troops by the British military authorities in England is continuing.

The political counter-part of this military plan has also been put into action; recently the Dutch called a Conference to determine the constitution of "East Indonesia" (which under the agreement is to be one of the three parts of the United States of Indonesia).

This Conference was attended by a number of hand-picked stooges of the Dutch and nobody from the Republic (not even journalists) were allowed to be present.

The result is that "East Indonesia" is now fully equipped with a puppet government that regularly joins its Dutch master in protesting against "Republican atrocities."

Lessons For Asia

It is clear from all this that the Dutch whose action in signing the agreement was hailed three months ago as one of granting freedom to the Indonesians, did not and do not intend today to do anything of the sort. Rather they want to use the agreement as a cover to gather strength for a further attack on the young Republic.

And this is in fact the common strategy of all the imperial powers; faced with a rising colonial people.

● On March 6, 1946, the French "recognised" Vietnam's independence, but today Nam's fighting is going on in Indo-China, fighting was carefully provoked last December by the French after they had utilised the breathing space to build for a counter-attack.

● On November 18, the Dutch "recognised" Indonesia's independence, but a similar war may break out any moment.

● So also to our country (and in Burma), the imperialists have made big promises of quitting by June 1948.

Events in Indonesia and Indo-China teach us in India also what store to place on such promises, they teach us that the promise of "independence" in the future is only a

cover behind which the imperialists are planning to suppress the rising freedom movements of the colonial countries.

Issues At Moscow

THE meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the U.S.A., Britain, France and the U.S.S.R. to discuss the Peace Treaty with Germany takes place in Moscow next month. What are the issues before this meeting and what are the present differences between the four Powers?

Eighteen months ago the Potsdam agreement was signed, pledging the demilitarisation of Germany, the breaking-up of the great capitalist trusts and the big landed estates, the real driving forces behind Hitler's policy of aggression, and the denazification of all spheres of public life.

Since then, however, much has happened.

In the Eastern (Soviet-occupied) zone, the military authorities have put into practice the Potsdam policy fully and comprehensively.

● The big landed estates have been divided among the poor peasantry and landless labourers, benefitting some five lakh families.

● All the major industrial concerns that were owned by the trusts have been na-

tionals; the big Nazis at the top have been swept out of office and into jail, the smaller Nazis taken out of key positions.

● At the same time a rigorous closing down of armament factories, combined with a stepping up of production of consumer goods, has brought comparative prosperity to the German population of the zone.

Backing Reaction

In the West, however, the situation is very different.

● The big trusts remain virtually intact; for instance the Rhenish Westphalen Coal Syndicate, biggest coal combine of Germany, continues to operate in the British zone under virtually the same leading figures as before and only nominally under British control.

● So also in the American zone, German Big Business has retained its hold; Opel Motors (a German subsidiary of U.S. General Motors and one of the biggest producers of cars, lorries, etc., for Hitler) continues to function as before.

● The situation regarding the breaking-up of the landed estates is the same; as Reynolds News, Left London Sunday paper, wrote on November 10:

"The agricultural administration in Germany which is still operating on the lines set up by the Nazis, must be purged and an immediate programme of land reform drawn up."

The result of this has been that while in the Soviet zone rigorous implementation of the Potsdam agreement restored production swiftly and thus comparative prosperity, in the West there is yet chaos and crises for the people.

Coal output has gone down considerably while the food situation is in a state of chronic crisis—because the Big Business magnates who yet control industry, continue to sabotage production.

Equally the Nazis have not been purged effectively. This was shown by the startling

news of a big round-up organised by American and British intelligence officers of leaders of an underground Nazi movement. This organisation was headed by big Nazis and was "mainly central in the British and U.S. zones."

Thus to the Moscow Conference will come representatives of Powers which have functioned very differently in their zones.

But this is not all; for the Powers have functioned differently because their aims have been different.

The Soviet stands by the Potsdam agreement because she wants an independent, united, democratic Germany, in which the real planners of aggression—the industrialists and junkers—will have been eliminated.

Peace Or War ?

Britain and the U.S., however, have other ideas; they are playing with the idea of using Western Germany as an anti-Soviet spearhead—which necessarily involves the preservation of the men who would act that part, the industrialists and Junkers.

A German friend of the British, former Minister President Lehr of North Rhine Province, in an interview with the Chicago Sun, expressed their view very frankly when he pleaded for "discarding the Potsdam declaration and rebuilding Western Germany as a cordon sanitaire against the Soviet Union."

At the Moscow Conference, therefore, it is these two very different policies towards Germany—one making for division of Germany and its use as an anti-democratic war-base against the Soviet, the other for a united democratic Germany—that will come into conflict. And there can be no doubt that only the success of the second policy can both ensure prosperity for Germany and peace for Europe and the world.

February 25.

World Labour In Action

Two Million Communists In Italy

THE Italian Communist Party now has a membership of 2,200,000.

The figure was announced by Pietro Sacchi at the Party's Congress which was held in January 1947 in Florence. He said that the members were organised in 8,800 branches and more than 25,000 groups.

In the agricultural regions where the Communists had the greatest influence, agricultural production was highest.

"Thanks to the 'Red Provinces,'" he concluded, "Italy has been saved from starvation this winter."

L'Unita, central organ of the Italian Party, will reach a circulation of one million copies a day if the Congress appeal is successful.

"When we achieve a million sale a day," said Sacchi, "three-quarters of our battle for the conquest of the majority of the people will have been won." (London "Daily Worker," Jan. 31).

MacArthur Bans Japanese Strike

GEN. Douglas MacArthur intervened directly to prevent a strike of five million Japanese workers scheduled for February 1, threatening to use U.S. troops to back up his no-strike order.

The strike date was set after the Yoshida Government flatly refused to consider demands for wage increases, abolition of anti-labour legislation and improved conditions.

The workers asked a 300 per cent increase in wages, which still would not bring their weekly earnings anywhere near in line with inflated living costs.

According to conservative estimates, living costs in Japan have soared 4,700 per cent since the start of World War II. Wages have gone up only about 500 per cent.

A principal aim of the strike movement, on which every corner of the labour movement is united, was the overthrow of the Yoshida Government. This Government has encouraged and fostered the monopolies and chalked up a notorious record of anti-labour legislation.

Unions directly involved in the original strike call were those of three

million Government workers. As the movement gained momentum, about two million other workers in iron and steel, electrical, machine tool and other industries either put forward their own demands or voted to walk out in sympathy.

The strike was cancelled less than three hours before the deadline, MacArthur's order turned the projected strike a "deadly" weapon and described the impoverished workers as a "minority" who "might well plunge the great masses into a disaster not unlike that produced in the immediate past by the minority which led Japan into the destruction of war."

Threats And Intimidation

According to union leaders, they were called to a secret meeting at MacArthur's headquarters. After the order was read to them, they were placed in separate small rooms where each union head was threatened with imprisonment and other severe penalties unless he capitulated. The union leaders were not allowed to confer with each other or with other officials of their unions.

Meanwhile, an entire U.S. army division had been mobilised and was kept ready with armoured cars to rush to any spot where the order was not observed.

Although the MacArthur order was the first official announcement that U.S. authorities had intervened, the occupation chiefs had actually been directly involved in the situation for over a week.

About 10 days before the strike deadline, MacArthur gave his labour division 31 hours to prepare a plan to prevent the strike. A plan was drafted which would have forced Prime Minister Yoshida to go a long way toward meeting the unions' economic demands. MacArthur turned this down.

By intervening without supporting any of the workers' demands, MacArthur left them no weapon with which to protect themselves. The workers have now appealed for support to the 4-Power Allied Council which acts as an advisory body to the Japanese government. (Allied Labour News, Feb. 3).

Unprecedented Strike Wave In Australia

AUSTRALIA is in the midst of the biggest strike wave in its history, involving not only the labour movement but small shopkeepers as well.

Strikes are brewing on the waterfront, in foundries and among postal workers. A general coal strike is imminent. All transportation in Sydney and railway service throughout New South Wales, largest of Australia's six States, may be cut off.

In most of these industries, workers have been holding a series of 1-day stoppages to force an increase in Government-controlled basic wages and a reduction in the work-week from 44 to 40 hours, but the Government has stalled on their demands. The workers now threaten longer walk-outs.

The Government recently tried to calm the troubled waters by allowing an increase of a little more than \$1 (about 10 per cent) a week in basic wages but union leaders say the strike wave will continue till the basic wage is raised by at least \$2.50 and the 40-hour demand is met.

Shop-Keepers Line-Up With Labour

Shop-keepers are feeling the pinch because, though price control still exists, monopolies like the American-owned Swift meat packing company have forced a break in whole sale ceilings. Even when the Government permits a corresponding hike in retail ceilings, the shopkeeper finds people cannot afford to buy as much.

For the first time, the shopkeepers are lining up with labour to take the play away from the monopolies. A recent instance was the strike of retail butchers in the industrial area of New South Wales. The butchers closed down to protest monopoly profiteering and went to the labour movement for support.

The Government dodged the issue by allowing an increase in retail ceilings. But the butchers, who accuse the Government of betraying the strike against (Allied Labour News, Feb. 4).

ANGLO-U. S. RELATIONS

(Continued from page 11)

The clearest symptoms pointing this way were the recent American elections and the "revolt" of Labour M.P.s in the British Parliament.

At a meeting held in London on November 22, Crossman defined the position of the "rebels" as follows:

"We cannot consent to the American interpretation of 'free trade' which permits America to export her unemployment, to dominate the world markets to the detriment of other countries, and to use loans as a means of political pressure. We shall be weak if we side with either America or Russia. We shall be strong if we remain independent and cooperate with both."

These words are very significant. Crossman, as we see, is not demanding friendship with the Soviet Union. He obviously favours the traditional British policy of taking and giving. But one thing is quite clear to him, namely, that Britain must be unharnessed as soon as possible from the American chariot. Of course, it would be un-

warranted to draw far-reaching conclusions from this Parliamentary "revolt" of a large section of the Labour M.P.s. But it is certainly a symptom of the growing alarm of Attlee and Bevin.

The broad masses are beginning more and more clearly to realize that the momentous question facing Great Britain today is whether she is to remain independent in international affairs or become the European outpost of American imperialism.

Foeling against the latter alternative is growing in the country and that is the background of the "revolt" of the Labour M.P.s. The Government has so far shown by its policy that it puts the struggle against the democratic forces of Europe higher than the vital interests of the country, higher even than an independent policy.

(NEW TIMES, January 1.)

THE HOAX OF BARODA'S "PATRIOTISM"

The Bookshelf

INDIA AND UNO. By Mohan Kumaramangalam. As. 2.
Who are our real friends and who are our enemies in the international arena? This question came up sharply when our delegation fought out the issue of South African Indians at the last session of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organisation (UNO).

In this booklet, the author sets out in his usual lucid style how the UNO functions, what the actual set-up inside it is, who our friends are and who the enemies there, and what the lessons we can learn from it to guide our future international relations.

YUGOSLAV MUSLIMS' MESSAGE TO INDIANS. As. 2.

Once the most backward people exploited both by their own religious leaders and the Serbian "master race" the Yugoslav Muslims are today free and equal partners in the new Republic and the great new life they are building.

This 16-page booklet gives their inspiring message, relating their own experiences and suggesting to the Indian peoples the correct path in the struggle for national liberation.

Recently Published

MARXIST MISCELLANY: Vol. 8.

Edited by G. Adhikari. Rs. 1-8.
This issue contains: Social Democracy and Communism by R. Palme Dutt; Wartime Economic Planning in Capitalist Countries by E. Varga; Capitalist Agriculture by George Matthews; Science in Soviet Central Asia by Prof. E. Steinberg; On Study Inside the Communist Party by Mao Tse-tung; The Trusteeship Question; etc.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION.

By R. Page Arnol. Rs. 1-8.
A very readable short history of the Russian Revolution, from 1905 to 1926—of the events leading up to the great October Revolution, the victory of the Bolsheviks and the building of Socialist society in the Soviet Union.

Have You Got Your Copy?

INDIA TODAY, By Rajani Palme Dutt. Size Demy 8vo, 534 pages, cloth-bound, Rs. 7-8.

The first Indian edition of the great classical work on India. It is a monumental study of the nature and effects of our servitude to British imperialism, of our struggles for freedom, of the historical development and nature of today's political, economic, social and nationalities' problems, and a guide to our struggle for national liberation. It is the text book of the Indian Revolution.

Foreign Publications

FREEDOM ROAD. By Howard Fast. Rs. 7-7.

An outstanding novel by a well-known American writer, which has become a best-seller in many countries. Set in the period at the close of the American Civil War, the novel relates with great sincerity and passion the story of a negro labourer who became a leader of his people, rose to be a Congressman, fought and was killed fighting for the rights of his people.

CLEARER THINKING. By A. E. Mander. 150 pages. Rs. 1-8.

A simple guide to clear and logical methods of thought which should be of practical help to people in all walks of life.

LABOUR MONTHLY. January Issue. As. 12.

The first number of the new enlarged edition. (Note the increase in price). Contains articles by Palme Dutt, Zilliacus, Arthur Horner, Leonard Barnes and others.

Postage Extra on All
PEOPLE'S PUBLISHING HOUSE

PEOPLE'S AGE

ORGAN OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

Managing Editor: M. E. Rao

Subscription Rate (Indian):
Yearly Rs. 8-; Half-Yearly Rs. 4-5;
Quarterly Rs. 2-8.

Subscription Rate (Foreign):
Yearly Rs. 12, Half-Yearly Rs. 6.
Telegrams: Peoplesage.

All cheques, Money-Orders, Postal Orders, Demand Drafts etc. to be made out in the name of KANTILAL J. SHAH.

Printed by M. H. Rao at the New Age Printing Press, 190B, Khetwadi Main Road, Bombay 4, and published by him at People's Age Office, 190B, R. K. Building, Khetwadi Main Road, Bombay 4.

Lust For Territory--Secret Behind Negotiations With Congress

The entire Nationalist Press is full of enthusiastic eulogies for Baroda, its Gaekwad and its Diwan.

The reason given for this is that by settling the question of the State's three representatives to the Constituent Assembly directly with the Congress leaders, Baroda has delivered a blow to the imperialist conspiracies of the Princes' Chamber and its Chancellor, the Nawab of Bhopal, and set a patriotic example before other Princes to follow. It is said that this action of Baroda has caused a "rift"—a welcome rift—in the Princes' Chamber.

Does Baroda really deserve all the tributes it is receiving? Here are the facts.

THE following resolution was passed by the Princes on February 10, the day following the Negotiating Committee's talks with the Congress leaders:

"This meeting declares that the statement made by the Chancellor at the meeting of the Negotiating Committee had the unanimous support of the Standing Committee of Princes and the Constitutional Advisory Committee and was the result of the unanimous opinion expressed at the meeting of these committees, where there were no differences of opinion or threats of defection."

The Free Press Journal of Bombay, in its issue of February 17, published a statement of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer about a closed meeting of the Princes and their Ministers in the course of which Sir C. P. said:

"I know that Sir E. L. Mitter was present during the last joint meeting of the Rulers and Ministers... on February 19, at which he stated that he had informed Congress leaders that most of the fundamental propositions advanced in the Princes' resolution were clear and really outside the scope of any discussion and, therefore, it was really needless to emphasize them."

What Diwan Said

The Times of India of January 3, 1947, reporting a Press conference of the Diwan of Baroda, said that the Diwan had made it absolutely clear that Pandit Jawaharlal's objectives resolution in the Constituent Assembly asserting the sovereignty of the Indian Union and saying that sovereignty rested in the people, was meaningless—"academic."

It possessed no "statutory" i.e., legal "force", and was not binding on any State in any way. Hence Baroda's "joining the Indian Union would entirely depend on what took place in the Constituent Assembly."

Regarding the demand of the people inside the States, Sir Brojendra Lal Mitter made it clear that "Responsible Government" was out of the question. "Even if it were possible", it would be "inexpedient" to grant it.

The same thing he said against introducing "adult franchise" in the State.

Where's The Difference?

Thus, vis-a-vis the people and the national movement—vis-a-vis the Constituent Assembly or the future Union of Free India—there are no differences among the Princes. They are unanimous in their effort to maintain their States as vast prisons of our peoples, as "checks and brakes" in India's march towards the fulfilment of its destiny, and as strong economic and military bases of their British masters.

The Political Department sees to it that on these fundamental issues all their stoogelings remain firmly welded together as one.

Why then did Baroda negotiate with the Congress leaders "independently" of the Princes' Chamber?

For the answer one has to go back to 1944, when the Political Department "attached" 255 little States (covering an area of over 6,000 square miles with a population of 7½ lakhs) to Baroda.

Attachment meant that they became a part of the Gaekwad's Empire.

But Baroda wants more—and wants the whole of Kathiawar and Gujerat States as part of a "Greater Baroda."

Other bigger States of Kathiawar—led by the Jam Sahib of Navanagar—want to maintain

And one might add—the Gaekwad wants not merely the territories it has grabbed already but more.

All this, however, depends on the support it can win of the Congress leadership in the country as a whole and in particular in Baroda.

As far as Baroda is concerned, the Gaekwad and the Diwan seem to have already made a deal with the leadership of the local Praja Mandal.

It was not difficult to make this deal in view of the character of its leadership, which is dominated by capitalists and landlords.

It is a leadership which opposed the introduction of adult franchise in the election to the State Dharma Sabha; opposed the demand for a "Republic"; opposed the workers' demand for an 8-hour day; and above all, has opposed the affiliation of the Baroda Praja Mandal to the All-India States' Peoples' Conference (AISPC) lest it should have to fall in line with the central organisation's policy.

It did not prove an insuperable difficulty, therefore, for the Gaekwad to rope in this leadership.

Shameless Fawning

Here is a specimen of what Syt. Pranlal Munshi, one of the topmost leaders of the Praja Mandal and its Secretary for six years, an industrialist and Director of the Paramount Insurance Company, wrote in the Praja Mandal's organ "PRAJA MANDAL" in December 1946.

"I will go round the whole of Kathiawar staging panegyrics in honour of the generous-hearted Ruler of Baroda. To the cause of

winning over the people of Kathiawar under the leadership (slavery?—Ed.) of our Gaekwad Mahataj I will dedicate my whole life....."

What more could the Gaekwad desire? What better propagandists and supporters could he get for his cause—for his dream of an empire in Gujerat and Kathiawar?

It was after this "deal" with the Praja Mandal that the Diwan went to Delhi. Apart from his Ruler's sanction, Sir Brojendra carried with him, as he revealed in his Press conference at Baroda on February 13, a letter of the Secretary of the Baroda Praja Mandal expressing full confidence in him. (Hindustan Times, February 16.)

Self-Interest Alone

He relied on the support of the local Praja Mandal and the desire of the Congress leaders to somehow win over the Ruler to strengthen their weight and position in the Constituent Assembly. And he succeeded in the sense that he got all the credit and goodwill of the all-India Congress leadership and the nationalist Press as a patriot—without surrendering any one of his autocratic rights, as the quotations above show.

Thus the Baroda deal has not split or weakened the imperialist front of the Princely order. Such "rifts"—such jealousies among Princes or groups of Princes as make them even more subservient to the British—such dubious and double-dealing methods to dupe the people—are in fact fostered and encouraged by the Political Department of the British Government to further its conspiracy against the Indian people.

by
Ramesh Sinha

their independence and would like, if anything, to have a share in the domination of the little States.

Big Fish Vs. Bigger Fish

For a long time there has been a "conflict" over this question between the Baroda and the Jam—but it has been nothing more than a conflict between a big fish and a bigger fish—a fight among empire-seeking lords.

It is this conflict which is at the root of the independent negotiations which Baroda entered into with the Constituent Assembly.

The Statesman—organ of British imperial interests—puts the case baldly in its issue of February 7:

"Under the Cabinet Mission's Plan, paramountcy will end after the interim period and all States, big and small, will become independent entities."

"Viewed against this background, Baroda perhaps has genuine fear that it will lose its attached States and, therefore, prefers to put its case direct to the Constituent Assembly in the hope that agreement may be reached whereby it retains the territories concerned on more or less the existing terms."

★ ★ IN THE STATES ★ ★

Tehri Leaders Released

SIX Tehri leaders of the Praja Mandal, including the veteran Sgt. Daulat Ram and the young Communist leader—of Tehri, Syt. Nagendra Dutt Saklani, have been released after a fortnight's heroic hunger-strike.

Terrible and inhuman tortures were being perpetrated on them inside the notorious Tehri Jail, where, in 1945, the great Tehri martyr, Shri Dev Suman, had been done to death.

The anguished cries of the prisoners had been heard outside the jail, and a powerful campaign had begun for their release.

On February 10, the six heroes began their hunger-strike, and as the news broke through the jail walls, a wave of sympathy and anger at the barbaric ways of the Tehri Raj swept all over the United Provinces.

The Provincial Congress and the Communist Party issued a call for a campaign for the release of the Tehri leaders and the breaking open of the murder-bastille.

From Bombay P. C. Joshi, General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, appealed for an India-wide campaign for their release.

A flood of letters and telegrams was sent to the Tehri Ruler, warning him that if the leaders were not released, jathas from all over would march on his little kingdom.

The autocrat has yielded, released the leaders. But they are in a precarious state of health after their long and terrible ordeal.

Tehri's people have won a great victory. It must be consolidated, so that the little Raja does not dare to repeat his atrocities ever.

Bharatpur Struggle

LAST month when Wavel's "duck-shooting" plan was upset by the Bharatpur people, the first man to be arrested was Mr. Shafat Khan Pahat, an important leader of the local Muslim Conference.

On January 15, when men and women satyagrahis were speared at the Palace Gate, there also the blood of the workers of the Praja Parishad,

the Muslim Conference and the Red Flag Kisan Sabha flowed together.

This unity frightened the Raja. He told the leaders of the Praja Parishad that he was prepared to negotiate with them if they broke off with Jinnah's followers of the Muslim Conference.

He released Mr. Shafat Khan from jail and said to the militant Muslim Meos:

"Why do you come in the way of my fight against the banias and Brahmins? I shall accept all your demands if you cut off from the Praja Parishad."

I learn that the Raja had the impudence to complain about the Praja Parishad's association with the Muslim Conference to Pandit Nehru also.

In Wavel's Footsteps

It was the all too familiar game of Wavel—being played by one of

his pet boys, to destroy a glorious and unique example of united Hindu-Muslim struggle against the Princely autocracy.

The Central M.L.A. Shri Krishna Dutt Paltwal's group, which was assisting the struggle in Bharatpur from Agra, fell a victim to it and insisted that the Praja Parishad break with the Muslim Conference.

Sjt. Dwarkanath Kachru also, who was deputed by Pandit Nehru to go and see if a settlement could be brought about between the Raja and the people, showed a studied disregard of the Muslim Conference. He did not have a word to say about the heroism and sacrifice of the Muslim masses.

It is a tragic tale. After 20 days of hard and courageous stand Bharatpur people's movement has been suppressed and hundreds of their sons are still in jail.

The people must draw inspiration from their previous unity to defeat all disruptors, to regroup their ranks to wrest their leaders back from jail, and to fight again.

Talking of Kachru's visit to Bharatpur, I hear that he was badly insulted by the Raja when he went to see him and offer his "mediation".

The Raja kept him standing all the time that Kachru talked to him.

The Raja told him that his "help" was not needed. The best thing for him would be to get out of the State.

On Syt. Kachru's protesting the Raja flared up still more and ordered him off saying, "Do paise-ki topi laga kar aya, aur mere samne bari-bari batch karta hai....." (By putting up a two-pice cap (Gandhi cap) he thinks he can come here and talk tall).

Cannot we put a stop to this policy of courting the Princes and running up to "mediate" in every struggle that breaks out, which brings such abject indignity and humiliation to the people and their representatives?

Patiala Fights On

AFTER the firing at Naraingarh in Patiala last month (People's Age, February 10, 1947) an enquiry was conducted for four days.

The Revenue Minister who had been deputed to hold the enquiry tried all his tricks to intimidate the tenants (muzarsas) to lay the blame for the trouble on the Communists and the Praja Mandal.

The arrival of about a dozen big jathas from the neighbouring villages upset his plans and he had to go back disappointed.

After his departure, 500 volunteers went round the villages and a huge demonstration was held to reaffirm their determination to carry on the struggle till all their brothers are released from jail, the officials responsible for firing are punished and the system of Bhwedari is abolished.

Nabha Unbent

IN spite of the inhuman treatment meted out to the prisoners in jail in order to terrify the people, the people are unbent and fighting.

The number of arrests has gone up to over 200. This includes many young girls and school students.

These demands are the release of political prisoners, withdrawal of civil liberties and setting up of Responsible Government—not bogus promises.

Jathas from Faridkot, Jind, Mulerkotia and Kapurthala are pouring in the State to reinforce these demands.

—Ramesh Sinha

MUST BRITAIN BECOME EUROPEAN OUTPOST OF AMERICAN IMPERIALISM?

THREE PHASES

GENERALLY speaking the history of Anglo-American relations since the outbreak of World War II may be divided into three quite distinct phases. The first embraces the early period of the war—from Germany's attack on Poland down to June 22, 1941. This was a time when Britain almost entirely depended on the United States, especially so after the collapse of France.

On the other hand, Britain had to part with funds to pay for all she received from the United States (the lend-lease act had not yet been passed). Concretely, this meant the transfer to American hands of British investments in the United States.

In those days many Englishmen were uneasily saying that if things went on in this way, Great Britain might by the end of the war find herself, economically speaking, "annexed" to America.

With Hitler Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, Anglo-American relations entered the second phase. Hitler's campaign in the East not only considerably eased the military strain on Britain; it also substantially diminished her dependence on the United States. She now had two powerful allies instead of one. True to her old-established tradition, she began to manoeuvre between the two.

Position Improves

When on December 7, 1941, the United States also entered the war, Britain's position still further improved, and not only from the military standpoint. For the balance of forces between a neutral United States and a belligerent Britain was less favourable to the latter than balance of forces between a belligerent United States and a belligerent Britain.

By the end of the war Britain's status in the councils of the "Big Three" was fully equal to that of the Soviet Union and the United States and such as permitted an independent foreign policy.

With the defeat of Germany and Japan, a third phase in Anglo-American relations was ushered in. The world was now faced with the problems of the post-war settlement. Britain emerged from the struggle weakened economically and politically, but not to such an extent as to materially affect her world status.

Given a proper line of conduct, she could quite easily have preserved the international position she had acquired during the second period of the war, and at any rate could have pursued an independent foreign policy.

Junior Partner

But it turned out differently. When the war ended, British foreign policy, in spite of the fact that a Labour Government had come to power, definitely turned against the Soviet Union and in favour of an Anglo-Saxon bloc. And since the United States was now superior to Britain in economic and military power, Britain had naturally to become, and actually did become, the "junior partner" in the Anglo-Saxon line-up.

What is the underlying purpose of the Anglo-American bloc? People like Churchill and his friends in Britain and America are quite frank about it. It is primarily to establish the "leadership" of the Anglo-Saxon powers in the post-war world. In other words, it is a scheme put forward by influential monopoly circles, to establish their joint world hegemony.

The facts go to show that this scheme has already passed beyond its preparatory stage. It is more and more taking the shape of a definite policy.

It goes without saying that this policy, parading as a rule

in a garb of anti-Communism, is fundamentally prejudicial to the independence and sovereignty of all nations, big and small, who are unwilling to assume the status of dominion or clients of the Anglo-Saxon bloc.

Schemes of world dominion by one power or group of powers have always been reactionary and utopian, and this is truer than ever today when the world has been so radically changed as a result of World War II.

Freedom Upsurge

Not only has the awareness of the independent nations of the need for freedom and independence become greatly enhanced; there has been a gigantic growth of the urge for liberation among the peoples of the colonial and dependent countries, who are determined at least to secure the elementary conditions of independent existence.

The British supporters of the Anglo-Saxon bloc are motivated by the consideration that under present circumstances the British Empire is not strong enough to wage a fight for world hegemony unaided. They are accordingly disposed to content themselves with the role of junior partner and to harness their country to the chariot of American imperialism.

That is one aspect of the relations between the United States and Great Britain.

But there is also another aspect, in which the factors of collision between the two Anglo-

compared with £4,000,000,000 in 1935.

In other words, her income from this source must diminish by about half. As to shipping earnings, they have been gravely imperilled since World War II.

Post-war Britain, therefore, faces the problem of a greatly increased adverse balance of payments. If the deficit is not liquidated, Britain will sink to the status of a permanent debtor. And in view of the big part which foreign trade plays in Britain's national economy this is bound to affect her entire economic life, especially the stability of her currency.

But how can the adverse balance of payments be eliminated?

The Only Way

Present-day Britain has only one way open to her, and that is to substantially curtail her imports and just as substantially to increase her exports.

How can imports be curtailed? This can only be done by importing less foodstuffs and manufactured goods, which before the war (1938) constituted over 70 per cent of Britain's total imports.

Economy at the expense of the import of raw materials is scarcely feasible, for raw materials will be wanted for the ma-

AN ANALYSIS OF ANGLO-U.S. RELATIONS

nufacture of goods for export, of which Britain will now stand in very great need.

ECONOMIC CONTRADICTIONS

SINCE the middle of the last century, Great Britain has had an unfavourable trade balance; she imports more than she exports. Having become the "workshop of the world," Britain tended to neglect her agriculture. Her upper classes found it more profitable to import raw materials and food from other countries, paying for them with the industrial products of their own country.

However, the unfavourable trade balance was more than compensated by invisible exports, that is, income from foreign investments, the earnings of shipping companies from the carriage of freight of other countries, and middlemen's commissions on international trade and financial transactions.

The result was that down to World War I, Great Britain always had a favourable balance of payments. In 1913, for example, it amounted to £181,000,000.

After World War I, Britain's economic position began to deteriorate, and this was at once reflected in her balance of payments. Suffice it to say that in the five years immediately preceding the war (1934-38), Britain's balance of payments showed an average annual deficit of £19,000,000.

Situation Worsens

World War II further aggravated the situation. On the one hand, the trade deficit has, if anything, increased rather than diminished after the war; on the other hand, invisible exports have sharply declined. For the major items of invisible exports are income from foreign investments and from shipping. In the years 1934-38 Britain's average annual total of invisible exports was £238,000,000 of which £92,000,000 came from freight earnings.

But during the war Great Britain ate up nearly half her foreign investments. They now scarcely exceed £2,000,000,000, as

manufacture of goods for export, of which Britain will now stand in very great need.

How can exports be increased? This can only be done by exporting larger quantities of manufactured goods, which before the war (1938) constituted about 77 per cent of Britain's total exports.

This is the primary condition—a condition of an internal character—if Britain's balance of payments is to be put on a sound footing.

But there is another and no less important condition, a condition of an external character. To dispose of her exports Britain needs markets and big markets at that. Can they be found? This brings us to one of the cardinal factors in Anglo-American economic relations.

Export Geography

What was Britain's export geography before the war?

In 1938, exactly half of Britain's exports went to the countries of the British Empire and another 33 per cent to European countries. The American continent absorbed only 12 per cent, and the countries of Asia a little over 3 per cent. Hence, the most valuable markets for Great Britain before the war were those of her own Empire and of Europe.

And now? Now the position is very much the same, with only one difference: the imperial market is today far more important than it was in 1938, since it suffered comparatively little from the war, whereas Europe has been extremely impoverished.

It is, therefore, obvious that in order to improve her balance of payments Britain will have to fight stubbornly to retain her old markets and make every effort to acquire new ones.

But America's need of markets is no less acute. During the war her production facilities increased nearly two and a half times. A return to the pre-war level of production would result in an economic crisis accompanied by great unemployment over a fairly long period.

What was America's export geography before the war?

In 1938, 43 per cent of America's exports went to Europe, 34 per cent to the countries of North and South America, 19 per cent to Asia and Oceania, and 3 per cent to Africa. Hence, the most important markets of the United States were Europe and the American continent.

And now? Now the American continent is a no less, and if anything, even a more important market for the United States than it was before. The importance of Europe has greatly declined owing to the war, although the United States has of late been making no little effort to recover, and then to expand, its former position in Europe.

United States Aim

With all the more energy, therefore, are American business circles endeavouring to open new markets for their industrial goods, and their eyes turn most particularly to China and—to the British Empire.

In China they have already pushed Britain into second place. As to the British Empire, here they are preparing for a decisive onslaught. The Anglo-American financial agreement of 1945 contains a clause which provides, if not for the complete abolition, at least for a substantial reduction of the existing imperial preferential tariffs, which so far have enabled Great Britain to dispose of 50 per cent of the exports within her Empire.

But the abolition or even a

There is still another realm of friction between Britain and the United States. This is the question of bases—military, naval and air—Britain possesses hundreds of such bases, located wherever she has possessions, in other words, in practically every part of the world.

But, side by side with this, a world-wide network of American bases has sprung up and is being continually enlarged, not infrequently running parallel to or intersecting the British. The fact that Britain can do nothing to prevent this does not of course make the British any happier.

Nor is Britain any better off as regards the atomic bomb. Since it is more than likely that the secret of the atomic bomb remains a secret as far as Britain is concerned, it is easy to understand with what dangerous potentialities this is fraught for the future of Anglo-American relations.

Another danger zone is the problem of the colonies and sources of raw materials. Britain is the biggest of the present-day colonial powers: she possesses a wealthy Empire with a population of 530,000,000 people.

The United States, which is just now in a period of vigorous expansion, finds itself up against the frontier posts of this Empire in many different parts of the world. So far this has not led to any serious conflict, but is there any guarantee as to the future?

If to all this is added the incessant, now overt, now covert, struggle between Britain and the United States for political influence in Latin America, Europe, the Near East, India, Malaya, Japan and in many other places, the picture of the military and political contradictions between the two powers becomes still more clear and distinct.

BEGINNING OF NEW PHASE?

AS is obvious from the above, there are both linking factors and factors of collision in the complex skein of Anglo-American relations. So far—since the end of war—the former have definitely prevailed—for two major reasons.

The first reason is the traditions of the war period, when, in the struggle against the common enemy, Britain and the United States did everything they could to reconcile their positions on major questions.

The second is the joint struggle launched, as soon as the war ended, by reactionary elements in both countries for the establishment of Anglo-American world hegemony directed against the democratic forces of the world. The most glaring manifestation of this was the speech delivered by Churchill in Fulton, U.S.A.

It is in a situation like this that the Labour Government has harnessed Britain to the chariot of the United States and has gone quite far in the promotion of an Anglo-Saxon bloc, as is shown, for instance, by the negotiations for the standardization of the two countries' armaments.

Protests At Home

Lately, however, there have been manifestations of another tendency, arising out of the contradictory interests of Great Britain and the trans-Atlantic republic. For, the contradictions between the two countries have been only muffled for the time being, but not eliminated.

And as the epoch of the war recedes farther into the past, as the futility of the hue and cry against the Soviet Union becomes more obvious and the resistance of the forces of democracy to the Anglo-American schemes for world hegemony more effective, the more distinct become the differences between the interests of the two powers.

(Continued on page 9)

L. TAIGIN