

N. M. JOSHI'S REPORT TO THE AITUC

Worsening Conditions Of Workers: Scanty Basic Wage, Inadequate Dearness Allowance, Deplorable Housing, Threat Of Retrenchment

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR GROWING LABOUR UNREST AND STRIKES

(Below we print extracts from General Secretary N. M. Joshi's Report to the 22nd Session of the AITUC which answer effectively the hackneyed charges about "incitement to strike" and "violence during strikes.")

The All-India Trade Union Congress is holding its 22nd Session in Calcutta today.

Two years have elapsed since its last session in Madras in January 1945, years which have "witnessed several epoch-making events," the utter rout and defeat of the Fascist powers and a complete victory of the United Nations.

The UNO came into existence for peace, amity and freedom. On the Trade Union field, for the first time in the history of the world, an all-embracing World Federation of Trade Unions has been created.

The people of Asia are on the move and almost everywhere the freedom battle is on the agenda of the day.

Rapid Increase In Cost Of Living

THE period under report brought increasing misery to the people, particularly the working-class. Though the war ended in August 1945, the cost of living went on increasing rapidly.

The working-class cost of living index figure for Bombay, which was 229 in September 1945 as compared to 100 in August 1939, rose to 266 in September, 1946. Similar rise was recorded all over India.

The measures that had been taken by the Central or the Provincial Governments to check this rise in the cost of living were not effective.

The dearness allowance obtained by workers in different industries varies from Rs. 8 per month to Rs. 50 per month or more.

The jute workers get a dearness allowance of Rs. 12 per month and also grain at concession rates.

The mine workers get a dearness allowance at the rate of 50 per cent of their monthly basic wages, which comes to Rs. 12.

The municipal workers, who are some of the most low paid workers, get a dearness allowance varying from Rs. 8 to Rs. 25 per month.

The plantation workers, numbering more than a million, get no cash dearness allowance at all. They get grain at controlled prices.

Dearness Allowance Never Adequate

This shows that there is no uniformity or rational basis for the payment of dearness allowance. In no case is the dearness allowance sufficient fully to compensate the rise in the cost of living. Even the textile workers of Bombay and Ahmedabad, who are paid the highest dearness allowance, are compensated to the extent of 76 per cent only, thus reducing their already low standard of living.

It is estimated on a conservative basis that the real wages of workers in many industries have gone down by about 20 to 60 per cent since 1939. This estimate does not take into account the prevalence of the blackmarket which is a distinct reality in the workers' life.

On this question, the International Labour Office Report entitled *Wartime Conditions and Reconstruction Planning in India*, published in 1946, says:

"While the workers' wages in organised industry increased between 1939 and 1943 by 85 per cent, the cost of living increased during the same period by 135 per cent in Bombay, 218 per cent in Ahmedabad, 214 per cent in Cawnpore, and 207 in Lahore.

"It is evident, therefore, that the cost of living bonus paid to the workers was insufficient to enable them to

THE STRENGTH OF AITUC

"This period has witnessed gigantic growth in the Trade Union membership all over the world, particularly in the liberated countries. In our country, the Trade Union movement is no longer confined to the workers in large industries. It has spread to white-collared clerks, scavengers, peons and Government servants. Workers are becoming more and more conscious of their rights.

"The total number of Unions affiliated to the AITUC in January 1945 was 491 with a total membership of 4,51,915. Today 693 Unions with a total membership of 7,25,438 are affiliated to the AITUC. It is hoped that soon the AITUC will cross the million mark."

—From Sjt. N. M. Joshi's report.

maintain even their low pre-war standard of living unimpaired."

This statement is further borne out by the following table giving the percentage increase in the average earnings of workers in different industries since 1939, worked out by the Government of India and published in the *Indian Labour Gazette* of August, 1946.

Industry	Percentage Increase in Earnings in 1944 over 1939
Engineering	123.8
Textiles	115.9
Chemicals and Dyes	98.0
Wood, Stone and Glass	89.7
Mints	89.2
Skins and Hydes	86.2
Miscellaneous	82.7
Ordnance Factories	51.1
Paper and Printing	42.5
Minerals	25.4

It is thus obvious that the increase in money wages varies from only 25 per cent in the case of minerals and metals to 123 per cent in the engineering industries, while the cost of living has gone up by about 200 to 250 per cent.

Hopes In Ministries Not Fulfilled

THE formation of Provincial Governments responsible to the people raised hopes amongst the workers that energetic steps would be taken to end their miserable plight. Unfortunately, those hopes have not been fulfilled as yet.

Instead of adopting concrete and immediate measures to give some relief to the workers, the Provincial Governments have announced formation of several Enquiry Committees. Several months have passed but as yet the reports of the Committees are not ready.

In the meantime, there is not only no sign of prices going down but they are actually going up, making the discontent more acute.

Various Provincial Governments tried to check this discontent by introducing bills banning strikes without notice, enforcing compulsory conciliation and arbitration, and declaring strikes illegal during the

pendency of conciliation and arbitration proceedings, and also during the period during which the award of the arbitrators is made binding.

The Government of India have extended the operation of the Defence of India Rules banning strikes without notice for a period of six months from October 1946 to March, 1947 and, in the meantime, have brought forward a new bill to

restrict the workers' right to strike so as practically to annul it.

Fifty Lakhs Face Unemployment

If we examine the reasons of the present labour unrest, we will find that it can be traced to the transition problems of Indian economy. The demon of retrenchment hangs over the Indian worker like a



Sj. N. M. JOSHI

sword of Democles. It is estimated that five million workers are expected to be affected by it.

The scanty basic wages and inadequate dearness allowance coupled with extremely deplorable housing conditions are the other factors responsible for these strikes.

The statistics quoted below (see Box) show that a majority of the strikes are on the question of wages and dearness allowance.

The Commerce, the official organ of the British vested interests in Bengal, in its number dated 27-7-46 says that:

"The general unrest... must be attributed... primarily to the steady uptrend in the living cost and the relatively inadequate compensation which it has been receiving by way of dear food allowance, etc., in many cases."

All Embracing Strike Wave

This growing discontent has expressed itself in the form of a big strike wave, which has brought in its compass mills, factories, workshops, printing presses, offices, banks, schools, water works, power houses, railways, buses and even Government departments.

Strike has no longer remained the weapon of the factory operative only.

The sweepers and scavengers who were so meek and as yet not properly organised are organising themselves and leading big strikes.

Even the agricultural workers, taking their cue from the industrial workers, are resorting to strikes on ever increasing scale, if their demands are not

conceded by the zamindar.

	No. of strikes	No. of workers involved	No. of working days lost
1939	494	4,09,189	45,62,794
1940	322	4,52,539	75,77,221
1941	359	2,91,051	33,38,593
1942	694	7,72,653	57,73,965
1943	716	5,25,838	33,42,287
1944	658	5,50,015	34,47,366
1945	849	7,82,192	33,40,892
1946—January-September (9 months)	1,466	17,37,467	89,62,354

It will be found from the statement that the number of strikes during January to September 1946, was about four times larger than in the whole of the year 1940, which saw the first big strikes of the war for dearness allowance.

It may also be remembered that these figures do not include the strikes in Indian States. They do not include the general strike of the postal workers which lasted over three weeks, the one day strike of hundreds of thousands of workers in sympathy with them all over India and the general strike on the S.I. Railway embracing 40,000 workers.

These figures also do not include the large number of strikes which were illegal and also unauthorised by the Unions.

It was found that out of 1,466 strikes which took place between January and September, 1946, 558 were essentially for increase in wages.

During this period the country witnessed some of the most heroic and long-drawn out strikes all over India.

Important amongst them were the strikes of Calcutta tramwaymen, B.E.S.T. workers, Bombay, Press workers at Calcutta, Kesoram Mill workers, the general strike of textile workers of Gujarat, excluding Ahmedabad, embracing 1,30,000 workers, general strike of the postal workers, general strike of the S.I. Railwaymen, Province-wide strike of the Municipal workers in Madras, strike of the Amalner workers, and the strikes of Cawnpore, Gwalior, Ratlam and Ujjain textile workers.

The Government tried ruthlessly to suppress these movements, arrested thousands of workers and the police opened fire several times. A number of fatal and other casualties took place.

Use Of 'Goonda' Act

SEVERAL Provincial Governments such as Bombay, C.P. and Berar, Madras, the United Provinces and the Punjab, have either amended the present Police

Acts or passed new legislation or ordinances giving special powers to the police authorities to arrest, detain without trials or extern anybody on the ground of public safety or incitement to violence.

During the last two years, almost all the office-bearers and active workers of three textile Unions from Khandesh. Some of them are externed from the Province of Bombay for a period of two years.

The Government of the C.P. and Berar arrested and detained without trial for more than three months a number of Trade Union leaders under the charge that they were inciting strikes.

In Delhi, a number of Trade Union workers are being prosecuted on one charge or another.

The Government of Madras, under fantastic charges, a number of important Trade Union leaders, such as Com. P. Ramamurthy, member of the General Council of the AITUC, and P. Balachandra Menon, General Secretary of the MPTUC. Several other Trade Union leaders have been arrested and detained without trial.

Civil Liberties

THE President of the AITUC had to take up the question of the suppression of civil liberties in coal mines where no permission was granted to hold workers' meetings, even to elect their office-bearers and hold annual elections.

Normal Trade Union activities are not allowed in the plantation areas both in Assam and Bengal. Trade Union leaders are often assaulted by the men of the plantation owners.

Housing

THE problem of housing has become very acute since the war, particularly for the working-class. More than three hundred thousand workers have to sleep on pavements in the city of Bombay. The conditions in Calcutta, Cawnpore, Madras and other cities are no better. The houses in which the workers stay are worse than dungeons and are unfit for human habitation.

The question of providing adequate housing accommodation to industrial workers was taken up in the Standing Labour Committee. The Committee adopted a scheme prepared by its own Sub-Committee and requested the Government of India to implement that scheme.

Unfortunately, the Government of India have for the present shelved the scheme on the ground that certain financial estimates made by the Government Departments were wrong.

It is necessary that the AITUC should take up this question in right earnest and carry on ceaseless agitation to mobilise that the scheme is immediately taken up and that the problem of housing is given priority next to food.

WORKER-MARTYRS OF 1946

"Police frings and mass arrests seem to have become a frequent feature of strikes which the workers conduct to ventilate their economic grievances and secure redressment." —Sjt. N. M. Joshi in his Draft Report to the AITUC Session at Calcutta.

Below are some shocking facts about the frings on industrial workers. No official source has yet dared to challenge them by holding an independent enquiry. If anything, in a number of cases, these are understatement. Cases like fring in Travancore, fring in Bombay during the MIN mutiny in February last are NOT included.

Figures of those arrested run into quite a few thousands. To quote a few instances, over 1,500 during the great SIR strike, about 400 in a motor workers' strike in Dhulia (Maharashtra) in October; over 120 in the Anti-Victory Day demonstration (March '46) in New Delhi; over 200 in Madras, December '46; over 1,000 in Cawnpore, (January '47); etc.

	No. Killed	No. wounded
Gwalior (Jan. 12 '46)	17 (incl. 2 women)	about 200
Calcutta (Jan. 16)	2	
Dacca (March 27)	4	74
Ratlam (July 16)	10	50 (incl. 3 women)
Amalner (August 27)	9	69
Madras Corporation Strike (August '46)	1 (woman of 75 beaten to death)	over 100
SIR (Sept. 5)	5	over 100
Kolar Gold Fields (Nov. 4)	4	32
Colombatore (Nov. 11)	12 (incl. 2 women)	over 50
Madras (November 11)	8	over 50
Cawnpore (Jan. 6, 1947)	8 (incl. 1 woman)	over 50

In all these cases, no policeman has been reported to have been killed at any stage.

PUNJAB ORDINANCE AND LEAGUE MOVEMENT

SINCE January 24, the Punjab has been swept by a mass movement launched by the Muslim League. Meetings and processions defying the Ordinance, tear-gas and lathi-charges have become every day occurrences. At least two persons have been killed, many injured. According to League circles, the number of those who have been arrested since the movement began is 15,000, the number still detained is 1,000.

The Punjab Government itself has announced that action is being taken against no less than 520 persons—17 convicted, 100 awaiting trial and 403 detained in jails. These include 75 out of the 79 League MLAs in the Province—over FORTY PER CENT of the total strength of the Legislature.

Government communiques admit the tear-gassing and lathi-charging of women's demonstrations, culminating in the barbaric incident on February 3, when a group of women were tear-gassed INSIDE a police lorry and thrown out miles away from Lahore.

This brutal repression is typical of the notorious Punjab police and deserves the severest condemnation of all patriots, irrespective of the political party to which they belong.

The Punjab events are not isolated from the political situation in the country as a whole, but are an integral part of it. For weeks the India-wide communal situation had shown signs of improving. The glorious joint Hindu-Muslim struggle of Bengal's kisans for Tebhaga had taken the place of fratricidal war. It was the same in Bihar. Above all, the Punjab had remained singularly free of riots, despite provocation by the bureaucracy.

To crush the new upsurge which was surging through the country despite the riots, the new strike-wave, the new kisan battles, the British desperately needed another round of riots. Thus alone could they keep up their pressure for the enforcement of their plan for the forced partition and continued enslavement of India.

CONSPIRACY TO SPREAD RIOTS

It was no accident that the pre-British Premier Khizar was in New Delhi closetted with the Viceroy, when Governor Jenkins and his L.C.S. banned the Muslim League National Guards and the Bashtiya-Swamyam Sewak Sangh. The ban was decided upon after high-level discussions between Wavell and Jenkins, and was a deliberate conspiracy to spread the riots. Khizar was brought to Delhi to receive his instructions.

Wavell-Jenkins-Khizar counted on the Punjab League protesting against the banning of the National Guard and they hoped to convert this protest, and the excitement which would inevitably be caused, into a new round of fratricide not only in the Punjab but all over India.

There can be no explanation for the bans other than this—at a time when communal tension was almost absent in the Punjab and certainly was far less than in most other Provinces.

From January 24 itself, the day of the searches of the National Guard offices when the movement began, C.I.D. agents-provocateur began their efforts to provoke a communal clash:

- A brickbat was thrown from a nearby hotel at the crowd collected outside the League office on the day of the searches.
- On January 25, a group of Muslims (later discovered to be C.I.D. men) started shouting communal abuses at Sikh policemen, who had been sent to disperse a League meeting.
- C.I.D. men, dressed in khadi and Gandhi caps, teased Muslim women processionists in a provocative way during the first week of the struggle.
- The latest news is that a brickbat was thrown on a League procession from a house in Beadon Road.

But all these attempts to light the fuse of fratricidal war have so far been felled by the determined will of the common people—Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs.

League leaders like Mian Iftikharuddin, when they were out of jail, worked hard to fight attempts at fomenting riots and constantly stressed the imperative need for unity. These instructions together with the sound anti-imperialism of the Muslim masses have made the demonstrators sternly resist all provocation.

On the other side, the Hindus and Sikhs, themselves weary of the Punjab's Police Raj and anxious to fight against it, have not viewed the present League movement with the hostility with which they might have viewed a League movement which did not have the fight against Ordinance Rule as its main plank.

In fact, in a few places, they have been roused by the savage repression launched by the police and the courageous resistance by League rank-and-filers to give their tacit support to the movement. There have been cases

—very few of course—in which Hindus and Sikhs have actually helped and given first aid to tear-gassed and injured League demonstrators.

But the imperialist conspiracy to use the present movement in the Punjab to start another series of communal riots has by no means been scotched. In fact, with the decision of the All-India League Working Committee not to enter the Constituent Assembly and its appeal to the British to dissolve the Assembly, the Punjab movement may well assume a different character for all its present non-communal form.

The resolution of the All-India League Working Committee on the Punjab situation, while warning against the danger of communal riots and stating that the present struggle is only for civil liberties, has at the same time made a sharp attack on the Punjab Ministry as a whole, calling it "fundamentally unrepresentative and unpopular" and accusing it of "war upon the united political front of Muslims".

Already with the jailing of the entire League leadership, communal anti-Ministry slogans have begun, to be heard in League processions in contrast to the previous powerful anti-imperialist slogans. League leaders and volunteers from outside the Punjab (such as Khan Abdul Qayyum of the NWFP) are reported to be raising in their agitation such dangerous slogans as "Remember Bihar".

These developments can only mean that, despite the declaration of the League leadership that the struggle is confined to the question of civil liberties, the struggle will be more and more diverted into disruptive, communal channels.

The All-India League leaders have never raised their voices for civil liberties anywhere before. They are today themselves, through their Bengal Ministry, guilty of introducing an Ordinance in Bengal as reprehensible as the Punjab's, of declaring Section 144 in 15 districts, of issuing warrants for the arrest of five thousand kisans in the last two months and allowing the murder by the police and the jotedars of SEVEN kisan fighters.

Such a League leadership is not fighting the Punjab Ordinance for the sake of civil liberties alone. It is exploiting the anti-imperialist ferment and determination of the Muslim masses to use them in their game of power-politics. To them the Punjab movement is nothing but pressure for the enforcement of the British Plan in its most reactionary form.

Progressive and honest Leaguers, the common Muslim workers and peasants must resist all attempts at turning their present movement into communal channels. They must dissociate their struggle completely from the reactionary aims and power-politics of their all-India leadership, and so direct it as to win the support of the vast mass of Congress-minded Hindus and Sikhs, who hate the Ordinance Raj.

COMMUNIST PARTY'S STAND

The Communist Party and the organised working-class, kisan and student movements can clearly have nothing in common with a struggle with such aims as those of the All-India League leadership. The Communist Party fights such ordinances as the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance in every Province as an attack on civil liberties, on the freedom of the people.

In the Punjab, as soon as the Ordinance was promulgated, long before the League leaders dreamed of a struggle, the Communists approached leading Congressmen and Leaguers to launch a joint movement for civil liberties for the cancellation of the repressive Ordinance. At that time neither Congressmen nor Leaguers expressed more than lip-sympathy for such a campaign.

The Punjab Communists have been carrying on and will continue their campaign, their movement against the Ordinance. But this campaign among the united and organised Hindu-Muslim-Sikh masses will clearly be independent of the League movement, and cannot have anything to do with the factional power-politics of the League leadership.

The Communist Party will throw in its entire weight to prevent the League movement from being converted into communal riots. It will do this by bringing out joint Hindu-Muslim-Sikh actions of the working-class and peasantry against the Ordinance, by continuously warning against the dangers of riots and by actively intervening whenever provocateurs attempt to create communal conflict.

Already on February 3, twenty thousand Hindu, Muslim and Sikh workers of the N.W.F. struck work for four hours as a protest against Ordinance Raj, shouting the famous Khilafat slogan of 'Hindu-Muslim Bhai Bhai'.

This is the voice of the working-class. This is the voice which can and shall prevail both against those who make such dictatorial ordinances and those who would use the patriotic resentment against such ordinances for their own partisan reactionary ends. This is the voice which must foil the British plan to create a new period of riots out of the Punjab situation.

THE Globe agency's representative interviewed Sjt. Achyut Patwardhan, General Secretary of the Congress Socialist Party, in Bombay on January 30, with regard to his attitude to the Communist Party.

According to the Globe report, Sjt. Patwardhan declared that the capitalists in India would feel relieved if they could make the Communists and Socialists fight among themselves. But he added, that would not happen, as our foremost task is to continue the fight against the enemies of nationalism and progress.

All Left elements in the country would welcome such a statement, and it is a pity that it was not given greater publicity. The statement is in sharp contrast to the shameless glee with which Junata, the CSP organ, greeted the raids on Communist offices (as reported in this column last week).

'Janata' Thinks Again

It is also a welcome sign that the Janata has moved fast to change its former attitude towards anti-Communist repression.

In its issue of February 2, Janata condemns the "manhandling" of civil liberties and quotes the Madras arrests of Communists "under a Ministry-made Ordinance" together with the searches of CSP offices in Poona as instances of this "manhandling". This is very different from a fortnight earlier, when it pompously an-

WHERE STANDS THE LEFT?

ANTI-COMMUNISM AND C. S. P.

nounced that raiding was "the duty of all Governments" and declared its sorrow that the police had "woken up to the need" for raiding Communist offices six months later!

Both Sjt. Patwardhan's statement and the Janata's change of tone are the result of the strong condemnation by CSP ranks all over India of the shameful way in which the CSP leaders—blind with factional prejudice—have condoned repression against the Communists.

In Bombay, for instance, it is said that a large number of CSP workers compelled Sjt. Asoka Mehta to write a letter to those in charge of Janata, rebuking them for their support of the anti-Communist raids.

As Petty As Ever

But despite the change apparent in the two instances given above, the CSP leadership in reality continues to be as petty and factional as ever. The Calcutta Hindustan Standard, in its issue of February 8, publishes an interview with the CSP leader Dr. Biju Mencher Lohia, in which, when asked about the India-wide searches of Communist Party offices, he said:

"I do not favour any kind of sup-

pression. But in this case the Government and the 'Indo-Russians' (this is supposed to be a joke!—R.C.) are fighting it out between themselves, and each is choosing weapons without much discrimination. If I had considered Communism to be an Indian party, I should certainly have stood for the question of interference in civil liberties." There is hardly any need for any comment on this blatant applause for anti-Communist repression.

But Dr. Lohia is not alone among the CSP leaders who still find it impossible to make a speech or a statement without bringing in abuse for the Communists.

"Communist Violence"

Sjt. Achyut Patwardhan gave the statement at the head of this column to the Globe on January 30. And yet five days later on, February 4, when he called for the observance of Travancore Day, he was doing exactly what he said our enemies wanted us to do and we would not do—lighting the Communists.

In a rousing call to fight against the "Bribes' repression, Sjt. Patwardhan

goes out of his way to talk of "Communist-incited violence" and "the irresponsible policy of the Communist Party"—phrases which the people of Travancore are used to hearing from the lips of the hated Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer.

When Sjt. Patwardhan declares in his statement that "it is the negation of law to ban Trade Unions of working men and women", he again goes out of his way to add the totally unnecessary clause—"particularly when they were free from Communist control."

Why should any democrat, any Socialist, anyone who believes in the right of the working-class to organise itself add this clause, which can have only one meaning in the context of today's situation in Travancore: an open invitation to Sir C.P. to continue the ban on all Trade Unions in which Communists work.

Blitzing Sir C.P.

Sjt. Asoka Mehta (in his weekly column in the Blitz) wailed of the "Toll of Freedom in Travancore State", but instead of crushing him-

self to what he rightly calls "A Diwan's War on the Common People", he cannot restrain himself from pitting in a dash of anti-Communism, by declaring:

"The Communists, wanting to queer the pitch of the State Congress, launched a violent movement." This is another lie whose origin is Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer. How does it help Sjt. Asoka Mehta's case against Sir C. P.'s repression to repeat such lies?

Nirala's Applause

If any proof were needed that the CSP's anti-Communism helps the opponents of the common people, one can get it in the applause which Nirala's Hindustan Times, (in a recent Editorial on "Labour and the Communists") gives to Sjt. Asoka Mehta's assertion at Travancore that the "Communist Party constituted the worst menace to the peace and welfare of India."

All the enemies of Indian freedom and progress will applaud the CSP's anti-Communism. It is clear from Sjt. Patwardhan's interview to the Globe that the CSP leaders are aware of this. But petty factionalism seems to have become so much a part of their make-up that this awareness has not been able to root it out yet.

Ramesh Chandra

Pre-planned Disruption In Railwaymen's Federation

MOVE TO SABOTAGE VITAL STRIKE-BALLOT RESOLUTION

The Press has flashed the news of the disruption which took place at the recent meeting at Delhi of the General Council of the All India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF), of the expulsion from the Federation of the strongest trade union in India (the S.I.R. Labour Union) and Mirza Ibrahim (undisputed leader of the N.W.R. workers).

Who was behind this disruption? Why did it take place?

THE General Council was meeting eight months after it had decided in June last to withdraw the notice of a general strike on the solemn assurance given by national leaders like Pandit Nehru and Maulana Azad that railwaymen's demands would be met. Since then these leaders have become Ministers in the Interim Government. But ironically enough, the workers have been faced with greater hardships.

The Central Pay Commission is yet to submit its recommendations though eight months had elapsed since the workers honoured their agreement not to go on strike. Besides, there are enough straws in the wind to suggest that its recommendations will hardly touch the fringe of the problem. The same seems to be the story with the adjudicator's award regarding hours of work, leave rules, etc.

Managements' Offensive On Every Line

Meanwhile, the Managements everywhere went on the offensive, either through mass dismissals (B.B. & C.I.), victimisation (S.I.R.), cutting down of ration and even attempts at communal riots. The unprecedented number of strikes and demonstrations on the N.W.R., E.I.R., B.B. & C.I., B. & A., M.S.M., Jodhpur, Bikaner Ryvs., and the biggest railway strike on the S.I.R. bear witness to these offensives.

But such has been the workers' mood that nowhere have they taken these offensives lying down. In fact, in a majority of instances, they partially or wholly won their battles.

In most cases, where the militant leadership planned it, the unions enrolled thousands of new members. The most striking examples of this upsurge were seen in the B. & A. Railway Workers' Union, B.B. & C.I. Railwaymen's Union, G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union, S.I.R. Labour Union, where the membership recorded almost a steep rise, in some cases by about 100 per cent.

More. Eighteen new unions demanded affiliation to the AIRF. at this session. The N.W.R. Workers' Trade Union led by Mirza Ibrahim and formed just during this period had organised about 40,000 members all steered through innumerable strike actions, a record membership for any union, particularly when loyalist opportunists like M. A. Khan and Ram Awtar had already two rival "unions" put up on this railway.

Ry. Board Mobilises Royist Gang

That these events heralded a general strike was clear to the Railway Board. They mobilised the Royist gang to disrupt the Federation just on the eve of big events. And thanks to their anti-Communism, Congress and Congress Socialist leaders just played into their hands.



Mirza Ibrahim

In this background the session met, about 100 representatives attending.

Among them were:

Guruswamy (General Secretary, A.I.R.F. and M.L.A. Central); Congress labour leaders like B. K. Mukherjee, M.L.A. (U.P.), Humayun Kabir, Shibnath Banerjee, Diwan Chamanlal, R. A. Khedgikar;

Non-Communist T.U. leaders like N. V. Phadke, Assistant Secretary, A.I.T.U.C., and Dinker Desai, General Secretary, Bombay Provincial T.U.C.;

Communist T.U. leaders like D. S. Vaidya (G.I.P.), T. A. N. Swamy (B.B. & C.I.), Mirza Ibrahim (N.W.R.);

The great stalwarts of the S.I.R. M. Kalyanasundaram, Vice-President, A.I.R.F., A. Namdhar, and others could not come, thanks to the savage repression let loose by the Madras bureaucracy.

Main Issue—Strike Ballot

The supreme issue before the session was Vaidya's resolution condemning the delay in the publication of the Pay Commission's report and demanding a strike ballot before May 1, should the demands be not met before March 31. It also called for a token strike on February 27 in support of these demands.

The only way the Railway Board could hope to forestall it was by getting the Royists to disrupt the Federation. They hoped thus to force the Pay Commission's recommendations down the workers.

Monis of the B.B. & C.I. Railwaymen's Union proposed Sjt. R. A. Khedgikar, Vice-President A.I.R.F., to the chair. Strangely enough, this choice of a leading Congressman for the chair was opposed by B. K. Mukherjee, Congress M.L.A., who suggested the loyalist M. A. Khan to the chair. Backed by some Congressmen, Congress Socialists and Royists this was carried by 68 votes to 30. The unholy combine had taken shape.

No sooner did they see their strength than they demanded priority for the item about ex-

by **Y. D. SHARMA**

pellling the S.I.R. Labour Union and Mirza Ibrahim.

Mass retrenchment, delay by the Pay Commission, out in ration, nothing worried them so much as disruption. What was shocking, they did not even worry to condemn the savage repression on S.I.R. workers which had killed five and locked up over 1,500 railway workers.

Ramcharan Seni, General Secretary, N.W.R. Union (of opportunist Ram Awtar's—now President Aruna Asaf Ali) moved the resolution to expel the S.I.R. Labour Union (32,000 members) and Mirza Ibrahim (leader of the N.W.R. Workers' Trade Union with a membership of 40,000) for "organising strikes without the sanction from the A.I.R.F."

In vain was the resolution of the Advisory Committee of the A.I.R.F.—representing all sections and views inside it—read out; the resolution that had unanimously justified the S.I.R. strike after personal investigations on the spot and held the administration solely responsible for it. And on the Committee was no less a person than Guruswamy, General Secretary of the A.I.R.F. Khan over-ruled all such "points."

No Previous Notice Of Expulsion Resolution

It must be noted that no specific written resolution had been received by Guruswamy about such a serious move. No such resolution, therefore, could have been taken up. But such "trifles" did not worry the disruptors. No, not even when men like Dinker Desai and Phadke strongly opposed these tactics.

In their ugly haste Khan and Co. would not even allow the "accused" to refute the charges. No leader of the S.I.R.—whoever could be present—no leader of the N.W.R., Mirza Ibrahim or others, was allowed to speak.

Khan refused even to take the vote. He hurriedly declared the resolution passed and the meeting adjourned. In bare two hours two of India's biggest and most militant unions stood "expelled" from the national organisation of railwaymen—the N. W. R. Workers' Trade Union and the S.I.R. Labour Union, which had fought the biggest battle for all railway workers, viz., for the right of enquiry before dismissal.

It was obviously a premeditated conspiracy—crudely anti-working-class—to stifle the voice of the militant railwaymen fighting to better their lot. Khan and his Royist colleagues carried out their masters' will and Congress leaders played into their hands.

Serving Interests Of Administration

On the eve of the Pay Commission's report and the adjudicator's award and the almost certain retrenchment facing over three lakh workers, when unity was the supreme need of the hour, such disruption and paralysing of the A.I.R.F. served best the interests of the administration. And the first steps were neatly taken.

Immediately Khan's fiat was accomplished, his lieutenants rushed to the workers' outside to convey the tidings. But woe came unto Khan when the 2,000 railway workers demonstrating outside heard it. As he came out of the hall, he was chased and manhandled and only the intervention of Communist leaders saved him from the workers' wrath.

The workers now took out a procession and held a mass meeting at Gandhi Grounds where this conspiracy to disrupt the A.I.R.F. on the eve of big battles was strongly condemned.

Next day in the absence of Khan, B. K. Mukherjee presided and carried the Royist legacy forward.

When the proceedings began D. S. Vaidya protested against the election of S.I.R. delegates and Mirza Ibrahim who had been expelled at the same time. When the President said that they had been expelled, Dinker Desai protested that no such resolution had

been adopted by the Council because the resolution on the previous day had not been voted upon.

Challenging the validity of such a resolution, he demanded that the minutes of the previous day's meeting be read before the Council. As there were no minutes the President over-ruled his objection.

N. V. Phadke, Assistant Secretary of the A.I.T.U.C., also protested that the expulsion resolution had never been passed.

When Vaidya moved his resolution on the Pay Commission, the disruptors became nervous. From the amendments proposed, it seemed that their worker delegates could not have been held back from supporting his resolution, the leaders' anti-Communism notwithstanding.

Strike Resolution Not Even Considered

Hurriedly Ladhkram of the N. W. R. Employees Union, Karachi, moved for a Committee to frame an agreed draft. It was carried. But the Committee refused to consider the resolution on strike. It passed only the resolutions protesting against retrenchment and demanding publication of the Pay Commission's recommendations before February 29, 1947.

Two more resolutions, one condemning the cut in the ration and the other for fixing Calcutta as venue for the convention of the Federation were passed.

But no sooner did Vaidya move his resolutions calling for a strike, a strike ballot and a token strike for February 27, than Ladhkram once again sprang to his feet and moved for adjournment sine die.

Meanwhile, under instructions from Khan and his colleagues Miller, Khwaja and others, the police had rushed to the hall to arrest Vaidya, Mirza Ibrahim and Sewa Singh on the charge of assaulting Khan.

To forestall the worker delegates from expressing their resentment over this outrage B. K. Mukherjee and the Royists hurriedly put the adjournment motion to vote and had it carried.

And then in the presence of all with Khwaja and Umerdin pointing out Vaidya to the police, the latter effected the arrest under Section 141. They also tried to arrest Mirza Ibrahim at the railway station but could not.

In The Footsteps Of Jannadas Mehta

Thus ended the disruptors' day. Some years ago Jannadas Mehta, then President of the A.I.R.F., had also similarly expelled the S.I.R. Labour Union and the B.B. & C.I. Railwaymen's Union. And soon he was made the High Commissioner for Burma under the hated Lord Linlithgow. Khan has now followed in his illustrious footsteps.

By these tactics the Railway Board expect to paralyse the preparations for a strike ballot.

But railway workers are in no mood to oblige either these disruptors or the Managements. Experience of the last six months has amply proved this. Already on the N.W.R., B. & A., S.I.R., etc., they are beating back the attacks. And despite their leaders they will succeed.

DISRUPTORS AND THEIR "STRENGTH"

HOW could disruption be possible at Delhi? Are the disruptors so powerful in the A.I.R.F. as the Associated Press of India would fondly like it to be believed? Here is the reality.

The move was led by the Royists. They control the following "unions":

B.B. & C.I. Railway Employees' Union—Holds no influence anywhere and has effective membership of not even 1,000.

United N.W.R. Union (M. A. Khan)—Membership less than 1,000. Has not held even a single meeting for some years.

Martin Light Railway Workers' Union—Membership less than 500. No influence.

Darjeeling Hindkayan Railway Muzdoor Union—membership less than 500. No influence.

Their fellow-travellers have these "unions":

N.W.R. Employees' Union—Karachi. Has no membership at all. Led-

What Price Disruption?

Within a few hours after the expulsion of the S.I.R. Labour Union and Mirza Ibrahim, representation of the AIRF met the Chief Commissioner of Railways.

Asked about the 60,000 'casual' labour, the boss replied that it was "superfluous" and just had to go.

He refused to give any assurance about the likely dismissal of about 25 lakh "temporary" staff, whose lists are being hurriedly made.

Regarding complaints about cheap grain shops he said that there was "a consensus of opinion in the Railway Board that the whole system of cheap grain shops be abolished."

That is the reward for the disruption!

'RED SPECIAL' ARRIVES IN DELHI

THE morning of February 5 saw a glorious and unforgettable demonstration of railway workers. About 1,000 worker-representatives of the N.W.R. Workers' Trade Union arrived in a "Red Special". It was red all over. The carriages carried Red Flags, the engine carried Red Flags, the workers inside carried Red Flags. They came from such far off centres as Lahore, Ludhiana, Khanewal, Bhainda.

As the train steamed into Delhi station, it reverberated to the slogans of "Railway Board Murdabad", "Angrez Raj Murdabad", "Hamari Union Taslim Karo", "N. W. R. Workers' Trade Union Zindabad", "Railwaymen's Federation Zindabad", "Mirza Ibrahim Zindabad."

With the local railway workers they now took out a huge procession, Hindus and Muslims, Sikhs and Pathans, all. One worker, bound in ropes, was made to play the part of the Chief Commissioner of Railways. He had a board round his neck and a noose also! He apologised for his mistakes, recognised the workers' rights and their union.

The procession—led by a Sikh and a Pathan worker—carrying huge Red banners, shouting slogans like "Hindu-Muslim Ek ho", etc.—not only made the solution of Hindu-Muslim problem a live possibility, it also put the issue of the railway strike once more on the agenda.

Khan is notorious for running the show by numerous malpractices. Can not hold any meeting.

N.W.R. Union, led by Ram Awtar can at best claim effective membership of 5,000. No meetings held for some years now.

B. & C.I. Railwaymen's Union, S.I.R. Employees' Union (less than 1,000) S. S. Light Railway Employees' Union (less than 500).

How then could these 'unions' get this massed representation in the A.I.R.F.? The reason is to be found in the A.I.R.F. constitution. Under it any union having less than 3,000 membership and paying Rs. 100 as fees is entitled to send five representatives on the General Council, while the maximum that any Union can send is 15 representatives.

Thus, a Royist paper union can send five delegates while the mighty S.I.R. Labour Union (32,000 membership) could send only 15.

That is the secret behind the Royist and their co-disruptors' strength.

BRITISH RESSURECT PLAN FOR PARTITION OF PALESTINE

Anglo-American Rivalry For Domination Of Country

Britain's plans in the Middle East are going awry. The Palestine Conference has fared no better than the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty negotiations which came to an ignoble end last month. Having been pushed from crisis to crisis, the Palestine Conference has at last been adjourned for an indefinite period.

Even the puppet rulers of Arab States who attended this Palestine Conference dare not accept Britain's scheme of partition to keep the country under her thumb. Thereafter, the British Cabinet is reported to have approved new proposals for Palestine which have not yet come to light as we go to press.

MEANWHILE Palestine, that Biblical "land of milk and honey", has been turned into a veritable hell. Under the plea of crushing Jewish terrorism worst features of Martial Law are spreading their tentacles over the whole country.

Arena Of Active Warfare

This is how the British are ruling the country after more than a quarter of a century of occupation. To all intents and purposes, Palestine is an arena of active warfare. British troops in Palestine including the Fascist Polish brigands of Anders' Army total more than a hundred thousand.

The A.P.A. reports that troops from Egypt have been summoned and the Arab Legion of the Transjordan Army led and officered by the British is also employed in Palestine.

The full import of this can be imagined when it is realised that the entire population of Palestine is no more than eighteen lakhs, less than that of Bombay City.

But even with this formidable force in that tiny country, Britain is not sure of her ability to rule it in face of bitter opposition from both the Arab and Jewish masses. Hence the frantic appeals by Churchill and other spokesmen of British reaction that "United States come in on a 50-50 basis to shoulder agreed policy." (Hindu, 31-1-47).

And it is not the Conservatives alone who are pleading for America's active support. In May last when the Report of the Anglo-American Enquiry Commission was published, Mr. Attlee, the British Premier, declared in the House of Commons that the recommendations could be put into practice only if the USA took upon herself together with Britain full military responsibilities of doing so.

Britain's Interest

British ruling circles look upon Palestine as the strategic centre of their interests in the Middle East and the Suez.

Since the persistent cry of the Egyptians for a revision of the 1936 Treaty, the worth and utility of Palestine has increased many fold.

But unfortunately for Britain, America entered upon the scene and the apple-cart of the neatly kept balance between the Arabs and the Jews, favouring sometimes the one and sometimes the other and thus making them always fight each other, has been upset.

At the end of the First World War, Lord Balfour, the then Foreign Secretary, had played up the Jewish question by way of countering the Arab claim to independence.

Shortly before the Second World War, the British Government, in an effort to allay the Arabs' resentment, cancelled the Balfour Declaration and issued its White Paper on Palestine.

Under the new arrangement, Jewish immigration was limited to a quota of 75,000 annually for four years after which it had to stop altogether. The White Paper said that the question of Palestine's independence would be taken up in 10 years' time.

But this White Paper gave rise

(It should not be difficult for us to realise what this Partition plan is going to mean for both the Jews and Arabs of Palestine.

But the compromising leaderships of both the sections are said to be favouring this scheme.

The Zionist leaders whose illegal claims have no basis except the support of imperialist circles (formerly British, now American) are openly welcoming Partition.

Addressing the annual conference of the British Zionist Federation, the foremost Zionist leader Dr. Chaim Weizmann declared that Zionists "were prepared in certain conditions to accept a scheme of Partition." (Times of India, February 4, 47).

The conditions mentioned by Weizmann are considerable immigration immediately, a close Jewish colonisation "if not in the whole of Palestine, at least in a considerable part of it," and thirdly, "Statehood in some near future."

Only For Compromise

As for the terrorists the report went on to say, "Most Jews agree with these conditions. They only disagreed about the mode and the method."

For, in fact, the terrorists now operating in Palestine are only the most reactionary extremist sections of the Zionists, and are in no way anti-imperialist, nor anti-British, as they themselves declare in their leaflets.

One of these says:

"We have no interest whatsoever to weaken the position of Britain in the world, or in (Continued on Page 10)

by **Ali Ashraf**

to resentment among the Jews. And the war further aggravated their feelings. They continued to insistently demand unlimited immigration into Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish National State.

The Arabs opposed this violently and the hostility between the two reached a pitch of utmost intensity.

Boomerang

But this 'divide and rule' tactics is today proving a boomerang for the British.

With the rising revolutionary upsurge in all the Arab countries demanding British withdrawal and cancellation of the unequal treaties which Britain made with them in old days, Britain's rulers are anxious to show that they are on the Arab side. But American entry on the scene and Jewish terrorism are forcing Britain to cast off this facade.

In the period since the end of the Second World War, American interests have obtained oil concessions in Saudi Arabia representing 42% of the entire Middle East oil resources.

But "the development of the Saudi Arabian oil concessions is being delayed until the Palestine situation is cleared up", according to Mr. John Moseus and Charles Rayner, both officials of the Petroleum Division of the Department of State. (Times of India, October 19, '46).

Fishing in troubled waters, American imperialists tried to win over the sympathies of the Jews. They supported the claim for a Zionist State in Palestine, and President Truman insisted on permission for a hundred thousand Jews to enter that country.

The A.P.A. quoted a spokesman of the Colonial Office saying that "American sources are responsible for encouraging and directing the illegal immigration of Jews in Palestine." (Times of India August 19, '46).

Britain's Dilemma

This has placed the British ruling circles in a terrible dilemma. While not wishing to quarrel with the Arabs, they do not want to take any determined action that might displease the Americans. This explains the process of slow death through which the London Palestine Conference has been passing for the last so many months.

The formula which they had evolved, however, was no other than the old discredited recommendation of the Peel Commission for Partition of Palestine. The recommendation had to be rejected then.

But the success of the British Cabinet Mission's Plan in India seems to have enthused new hopes in the hearts of the imperialists. Writing under the caption, "The Pakistan Model," the notorious Sir Reginald Compland asks:

"Is a similar settlement out of question in Palestine? Might not partition in that modified form prove after all a practicable proposition?"

Having had a foretaste of the "similar settlement" here in In-

U.S. HALTS MEDIATION BUT NOT INTERVENTION IN CHINA

by Israel Epstein

American mediation in the civil war ended officially on January 29. The civil war itself goes on. Most of the shooting is being done with arms which the U. S. supplied to only one side in the quarrel—Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang Government—even while it was mediating. Aid to China has so far cost U.S. tax-payers over three billion dollars.

It has also been announced that U.S. troops in China will be withdrawn. But the withdrawal affects only units whose work was done once they had secured control of general strategic civil war spots to Chiang Kai-shek.

Since that time, these units have not around in barracks and hauled supplies for U.S. mediation personnel. Their return will be a good thing because it will lessen the chance of U.S. troops themselves fighting in China.

Not Out Of Civil War

But the U.S. is not out of the civil war. Military personnel who will stay include all those who are actually aiding Chiang's operations. This applies to about 1,700 army officers and has been done by President Truman as instructors, despite the fact that the China Military Assistance Bill, which sought to legalize the deal, never got through the last session of Congress. About 2,000 marines may also remain at the Tientsin training base in North China.

One possible reason for the move is that Secretary of State George C. Marshall wants to clear American skirts for the forthcoming Moscow Conference, where awkward questions may be asked about the troop withdrawal pledges made to other members of the United Nations a year ago.

A new international understanding on China, the UN aid to further efforts for unity, would be the best thing that could happen for the Chinese and American peoples, as well as for world peace.

But such hopes may not be justi-

ified. The New York Times, which is pretty close to State Department highbrows, asked on January 30, for more support to Chiang Kai-shek. It suggested that, now that America is no longer sitting down at the table with both sides, it will be easier to help Chiang.

Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg said the same thing in a recent talk. So did John Foster Dulles, the other Republican big-wig on foreign policy. The Vandenberg-Dulles speeches told Marshall what to do if he wanted support instead of obstruction from the Republican majority in Congress.

Marshall himself found out in China that the old policy has failed. Propaganda up Chiang Kai-shek has been an endless drain. He is so unpopular that the only result of this aid has been to make the Chinese people turn against America.

The Chinese used to like Americans because, unlike some other countries, the U.S. had never committed aggression against them. Now they regard their civil war, from which all suffer alike, as "made in America."

Marshall's Big Stick

Marshall holds a big stick over Chiang Kai-shek. He has still to okay a \$99 million dollar loan earmarked for the Chinese Government. But the record shows that the U.S. has never used its hold on Chiang to stop civil war.

The only time the State Department put real pressure on Chiang was when it wanted him to accept the Sino-American Trade Treaty, which gave U.S. businessmen very wide rights in China.

SMUTS FLOUTS UNO DECISIONS

Passive Resistance Leaders Refused Passport Facilities To Visit India

From our Correspondent,

Cape Town, Feb. 7, 1947.

Those who imagined that the censure on General Smuts' racialism administered at the last session of the UNO General Assembly would have a chastening effect on him, were sadly mistaken. For, it is too much to expect that a man who represents the interests of the ruling classes would extend democratic rights to the Indian people, without a struggle. The whole economic structure of South Africa is based on the exploitation of cheap coloured labour and such rights would jeopardise it.

KNOWING this, the Joint and Passive Resistance Council, meeting soon after the victory at UNO, reaffirmed its determination to continue the Passive Resistance struggle unflinchingly and issued a call to the Indian people "not to rest but to infuse the campaign of resistance with great vigour and renewed courage."

Gestapo Methods
The S. African Government having failed to get the co-operation of the Indian people in working the Ghetto Act, has decided to use Gestapo methods provided for in the Act by trying to force Indian owners of property to give information.

The penalty for refusal to give information is barbarous and inhuman. It is a maximum of one year's imprisonment or £100 or both, in addition to a continuing fine of £5.

And now has come the refusal by the Minister of the Interior of passport facilities to Dr. Naicker and Dr. Dadoo to visit India.

Dr. Naicker is President of the Natal Indian Congress and Chairman of the Natal Passive Resistance Council, and Dr. Dadoo—President of the Transvaal Indian Congress and Chairman of the Transvaal Passive Resistance Council. They had been selected to go to India for important consultations with Indian leaders.

General Smuts flouted the other UNO decision also. He declared that South Africa would not submit the Draft Trusteeship Agreement for South Africa requested by the United Nations. The territory, he said, would continue to be administered under the Union's laws, as it has been since 1920.

The hypocrisy of this man who talks of democracy abroad

This is yet another proof that Smuts does not mean business and wants to rely on brute force to impose White supremacy in his domains.

He was naturally afraid that the visit of important resistance leaders to India would further expose the wretched conditions prevailing in Africa and mobilise Indian opinion more solidly behind the demands of the Indian community in S. Africa.

For, Indians are not the only oppressed people in S. Africa. The eight million Africans, although constituting over 75 per cent of the population, have no rights of citizenship, and any struggle of theirs to improve their lot is ruthlessly suppressed.

This was high-lighted by the recent strike of the 80,000 African gold-miners, which was mercilessly crushed resulting in the loss of many lives.

The sequel to the strike is even more revealing.

Attack On Communists

The only party which is fighting doggedly not only against the Ghetto Act but also for the African people is the Communist Party.

And as the passive resistance movement of the Indians and the movement of the Africans for better living conditions and more democratic rights were gaining momentum, the Government decided to strike at the spearhead of these movements—the Communist Party.

Soon after the miners' strike, offices of the Communist Party were raided by the police and eight leading members of the Executive Committee of South African Communist Party were arrested.

The main charge levelled against them is "instigation" of the miners' strike. The charges will be formally made on February 18.

Lessons Of Socialist -- Communist Unity In Europe

JOINT WORK HELPS DEMOCRATIC FORCES; CAPITALISTS GAIN FROM DISUNITY

The disunity of the working-class, split under the leadership of the Socialist and Communist Parties, cost the European people dear before and during World War II. First Fascism and then direct occupation under Nazi rule was the price they had to pay for this disunity.

LEARNING from this bitter experience, united resistance movements grew up. Socialists and Communists joined together to throw out the hated Germans from their soil. This Socialist-Communist unity has been carried forward in a number of countries after liberation.

Where this unity has been achieved, the working-class and the democratic forces as a whole have been strengthened.

Who Gains From Disunity?

Where the Socialist leadership has followed a policy directed against the unity of the working-class, the capitalists, financiers and capitalist groupings have been the first to gain, and the Socialist Party has either been disintegrated as in France, or become an instrument of reaction as Schumacher's Party in Germany.

The following is a brief review of Socialist-Communist unity in the major European countries.

On November 28, 1946, an Agreement was signed at Warsaw between the Polish Socialist Party and the Polish Workers' Party (Communists) covering the following principal points:

1) Close co-operation between the two Parties in all sectors of social and public life with a view to securing the independence of Poland and the integrity of its frontiers, raising living standards in town and country and combating Fascism and reaction.

2) Co-ordination of the attitude of the two Parties on all important questions, before making public statements. Education of the members of both Parties in the spirit of working-class unity, essential factor in the consolidation of the victory of the working-class and of the new democracy...

Joint Efforts

3) Joint fight against all attempts to restore political conceptions hostile to unity. uncompromising struggle against fascist and anti-Soviet propaganda.

4) Joint efforts to liquidate the secret fascist and terrorist bands still active in certain areas.

5) Joint mobilisation of the working-class for reconstruction, for the fulfilment of the Three-Year Plan, and for the defence of the value of the Polish currency.

6) Recommendation by the leaders of both Parties to all their organisations to hold joint meetings and demonstrations, joint conferences of active members and without hampering their own educational activities, the organisation of joint political courses and schools.

Through ever closer practical and ideological co-operation the two Parties will endeavour to achieve full organic unity.

7) Both Parties, recognising the necessity for close co-operation between their youth organisations, undertake to induce them to reach an appropriate understanding.

Close and cordial relations between the two workers'

Parties have existed since the liberation of Poland, and this has been the essential factor in the successful development of reconstruction and the new democracy. This new Agreement is an important step along the road to Socialism in Poland.

In Eastern Europe

A similar development of Socialist-Communist unity has taken place in all the new democracies of Eastern Europe.

The Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist-Democratic Party, with five other leading Socialists, attended the Third Congress of the Hungarian Communists as fraternal delegates. In his speech to the Congress he stressed the importance of working-class unity.

The Communist speaker who opened the discussion at the Congress on the "Unity of the Working-Class" stated that the future of Hungarian democracy and of the whole nation depended on the maintenance of this unity.

He also reported that substantial agreement had been reached between the two Parties on such questions of principle as the people's democracy and foreign policy.

"There are two Parties yet," he said, "but on many points our ideologies are so closely allied that we often feel as though our Parties had already been amalgamated."

At the beginning of November, 1946, an important series of talks took place between the Central Committees of the Rumanian Communist and Socialist-Democratic Parties and a pact was drawn up and signed for close collaboration within the Government, Parliament and Trade Unions.

Mr. Sarba Voinea, a veteran Socialist leader and member of Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, stated recently that the new developments "would dispel former scepticism regarding the possibility of co-operation between the two Parties."

Fruits Of Unity

The fruits of unity were shown in the November elections with the striking victory of the Democratic Bloc.

In these elections the Socialist-Democratic Party emerged as the strongest Party with 81 out of 414 seats, and the Communists as fourth Party with 67 seats, while the dissident Socialists, who had split off on an anti-unity platform received a negligible vote and no seats.

The Unity Pact between the Italian Socialist and Communist Parties was signed on October 27. Once again the fruits of unity were shown in the tremendous gains made by the working-class Parties in the recent municipal elections.

Following the elections, a sharp attack on Pietro Nenni, President of the Socialist Party, and his support of working-class unity, was made in an interview in a reactionary newspaper by

two anti-unity Socialists, Saragat and Zagari.

Nenni, in his reply, declared that the earlier setback of the Italian Socialists was due to the petty-bourgeois influence within the Executive, and that the Unity Pact was already restoring the fortunes of the Party.

The municipal elections had shown, he said, that "north of the Gothic Line the position of the working-class is formidable, and south of the Line we are still able to face the Right with the aid of the People's Bloc (bloc of Left-wing Parties)."

The unity of the working-class, he stated, attracted and did not repel the middle class—the whole nation, and especially the middle-classes, will soon convince themselves that a strong Socialist Party leading the People's Bloc jointly with the Communist Party is the best guarantee against civil war and totalitarianism.

The Case Of France

The results of the absence of unity can best be studied in France. The anti-unity policy of the leadership of the French Socialist Party has not only held back the democratic forces of the country from a decisive victory over reaction, but has resulted in the disintegration of the Socialist Party itself.

In the December issue of the Revue Socialiste, M. Guy Mollet, the new General Secretary of the Party, showed the falling vote of the French Socialists in successive elections: 1945, 4,561,000;

June, 1946, 4,122,000; November, 1946, 3,451,000; that is a loss of over a million votes since the 1945 elections.

Merger In Germany

The biggest step in the achievement of working-class unity so far taken has been in Eastern (Soviet-occupied) Germany. Here the Socialist and Communist Parties have actually merged into one united working-class party—the Socialist Unity Party of Germany.

The united Party has been much maligned by the imperialists as they see in it the biggest danger to the success of their reactionary game in Germany. They have slandered it as Soviet-imposed, but facts speak otherwise.

The united Party was decided on at separate Conferences of both the Parties, attended by properly elected delegates, (25 of whom came from the West) after months of full discussion in all Party units. Opponents of fusion spoke and voted against it freely, but could not get a majority in any of the districts.

At the Unification Conference in Eastern Germany last Easter, 650,000 Social Democrats and 630,000 Communists were represented.

British Plan Partition Of Palestine

(Continued from page 9)

the Middle East or in Palestine. The purpose of the struggle is not to drive the British out from here. The purpose is to convince Britain that to compromise with us is to her own benefit." (quoted from Palestine News, published by Kol Haam, Tel Aviv.)

The Arab delegates to the London Conference dared not accept the Partition Plan, for it would have raised a storm of indignation in the entire Arab World that would have imperilled their own position. But King Abdullah of the new "liberated" Transjordan is reported to be willing to accept Partition if the Arab part of it is included in his kingdom to lay the basis for his pet scheme of "Greater Syria."

The very fact that the London Conference is again only postponed and the Arab delegation is staying over to discuss new British proposals indicates their willingness for compromise.

Compromisers All

The Palestine Higher Committee under the leadership of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem is definitely opposed to any scheme of partition. But it too is not averse to compromise with Britain. In a significant interview to the Times, the Mufti declared:

"I am not an enemy of Britain. What I always lay stress on was that it was impossible to convert Palestine into a Jewish State without continuous disturbances. My hopes and wishes are that Palestine

should live in friendly relations with Britain."

What the Mufti and his group of reactionary Arab nationalists are opposed to are not the British imperialists, but the Jews living in Palestine and even their just aspirations.

Thus, while the Zionist and Arab League leaders are considering British plans of compromise on the basis of partition in some form or the other, the country is fast heading towards the most bloody civil war that Palestine has ever seen.

Voices Of Protest

But already voices are being raised in protest against the British policy in Palestine. Recently united Arab-Jewish demonstrations were brought out in many parts of Palestine demanding:

"Shift the Problem of Palestine to UNO! Stop Negotiations With Imperialism! Build Jewish-Arab Agreement! Withdraw British Troops from Palestine! For a Jewish-Arab Democratic and Independent State!"

And all progressive Arabs and Jews including the Wafd (Egypt) and Communist parties in all Arab countries are demanding that the Palestine problem be presented to UNO, for under the present circumstances that is the only way to end the grip of Anglo-American imperialism over Palestine and put her on the road to progress and freedom.

The Bookshelf

RESURGENT INDIA—At The Cross Roads. By G. Adhikari. 26pp. As. 3.

A review of 1946, the year of unprecedented revolutionary upsurge of the people and compromising policies of the national leaders. This important pamphlet analyses the nature and extent of the great mass struggles, Britain's new strategy and Congress-League policies during this period—and it indicates the perspectives for 1947. A six-page diary of the events of 1946 is included.

INDO-BRITISH BIG BUSINESS DEALS. By Arun Bose. As. 14.

A sharp exposure of these new forms of imperialist exploitation and a critical study of the real nature and role of all the Indo-British joint firms in existence and the wider economic and political consequences of these deals. An appendix gives a similar study of Indo-American Big Business deals.

Foreign Publications

RUSSIA AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE. By Phil Piratin, M.P., As. 6.

Cuts right through the welter of distortion and anti-Soviet propaganda. A masterly explanation of Soviet foreign policy and the issues fought out at the Paris Conference.

SOVIET SOLDIER IN EUROPE. By Ivor Montagu. As. 6.

An authentic eye-witness account of the part played by the men and women of the Soviet Army in eliminating Fascism and speedily reviving a democratic form of life in the Soviet zone of Germany. It is a well-documented answer to the slanders directed, openly or covertly, against the Russian soldiers.

COMMUNISM IN RUSSIA. An. 1. Tells pointedly what the theory and practice of Communism can achieve.

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DISGRACEFUL WOOING OF PRINCES CONTINUES

Press Reactions To States Rulers' Challenge

The resolutions passed at the Princes' meeting at New Delhi last month were a challenge to the national movement—a defiant, sneering challenge, which meant:

"Do your worst! We shall continue to keep the States' peoples in the living horror which they endure today—we shall continue to keep the States as bastions for our gracious masters, the British."

Has the national movement accepted the Princes' challenge?

MR. K. M. MUNSHI, who seems to have become the spokesman of the Congress in the Constituent Assembly on all matters relating to the States, replied to the Princes' resolutions. But how? By denouncing them for what they are—agents of the British, enemies of the Indian freedom?

Certainly not. That would be impolitic according to Mr. Munshi, for it would 'alienate' the Princes and lose the Congress their 93 votes in the Constituent Assembly.

No Ground For Fear
And so in a lengthy explanation, Mr. Munshi has assured Their Highnesses that "every" point in Pandit Nehru's Objectives Resolution which had upset them has flowed from the State Paper of May 16 and that "there can be no ground for... fear" that anything would really be done without Their Highnesses' sanction.

The term "as may be determined by the Constituent Assembly" occurring in Pandit Nehru's Resolution "can only mean: 'may be determined by agreement,'" with the Princes! (Times of India, February 2.)

The basely corrupt and autocratic regimes in the States shall not be touched. No interference in the internal affairs of the States.

This was point No. 1 asked for by the Princes in their Delhi resolution.

The Times of India correspondent in New Delhi (known for having close contacts with Sardar Patel) reports that another "important Congress leader" has hastened to assure the Princes that their sole right to represent the States is in no jeopardy.

Who Said The People?

Why are you afraid of the words "to confer with other representatives of Indian States", in Pandit Nehru's Resolution? he asks. Those words "were not intended to mean representatives of the Praja Mandals or the States' Peoples' Conference." (Times of India, January 30.)

This was point No. 2 asked for by the Princes in their resolution.

The nationalist Press has voiced similar sentiments, only adding by way of background to the above overtures that the Princes must not ally themselves with the League.

The Bombay Chronicle, edited by the Congress Muslim leader Syed Abdulla Brolvi, complains that the Princes are "taking undue advantage of this uncertainty" in the Cabinet Mission Plan.

It does not, however, draw the most natural conclusion that such uncertainties have been introduced into the State Paper DELIBERATELY to provide ample power to their henchmen to bargain, or as a leader in the Times of India of February 4 says, to "induce fair play, so that the 584 British bases in India are not tampered with."

On the contrary, the Bombay Chronicle reassures the Rulers that:

"We are not aware of any responsible people who have asked the Princes to quit..." (February 2).

And thus, at one stroke, the Chronicle brands the entire

parties should join in constitution-making is meaningless." (January 31).

More pointed appeals to the Princes and warnings "for their own good" not to join hands with the obstacle-mongers, the Leaguers, have been made by the Hindi nationalist papers, Aj (Benares), Bharat (Allahabad) and Naya-Bharat (Nagpur).

This is the logical conclusion to which the compromising policy of the Congress must lead: Give up all talks of Sovereignty and Freedom, because these things frighten the Princes!

League Press Elated

On the other hand, the League Press is elated.

The Dawn (organ of the All-India Muslim League) expressed great joy at the "States' determination not to be hustled into entering the Union by accepting terms which may be imposed by the one-party Constituent Assembly, which is functioning as a packed Congress body."

This organ of the League which claims to speak for the poor Muslims is not bothered a bit about the fate of the millions of Muslim tenants, muzaras, mees, etc., living in the inferno of feudal India, and now rising to fight against it.

It asks, "Will the Indian Princes agree to abdicate their rights and privileges?" and then

appealing in the name of the "framework of the Cabinet Mission's Plan", says:

"Would it not be a sheer waste of time and energy on the part of the Princes to start negotiations with only one British Indian Party?"

The Bombay League Daily Inquilab (Urdu) follows the Dawn's line to its logical conclusion and shamelessly welcomes the Princes as colleagues in the battle.

"The States have so far preserved complete neutrality (1). They have declared that they do not consent to be a stumbling block in the way of constitution-making, nor would they let any one to interfere in their internal affairs. But now they too have been compelled by the attitude of the Congress to come down in the battle-field."

The entire League Press is full of such applause for the reactionary demands of the Princes. It is also full of offers for a joint League-Princes' front, guaranteeing sovereignty to the Princes in return for aid against the Congress in implementing the provisions of the slave British Plan.

Betraying The People

In fact, looking at both the Congress and League Press together, one cannot help but get the impression that an undignified race is on between the Congress and the League for the favour of Their Highnesses, each side bidding high at the expense of the States' peoples.

What is to be the policy to be adopted by the Princes is clear from the attitude taken by the

London Times, organ of Their Highnesses' masters.

In an editorial on January 31, the Times congratulates the Chamber of Princes, and especially its Chancellor, on the decision taken at Delhi. In the tone of a master putting a good servant on the back, it continues:

"The Chamber (of Princes) has now found itself strong enough to take a firm stand on the position that the States are free (1) agents in their dealings with British India." Then it warns that "leaders of British India will be well advised to meet with open minds the Negotiating Committee" of "the States" because, "without the States, the Indian Union will be incomplete, divorced as it were, from the essential roots of India's political traditions." (1)

What Imperialism Wants

What the Times wants us to understand is quite clear: Either accept the conditions laid down by the Princes or the Union formed by you without them will be "incomplete" and hence unacceptable to the Imperial Parliament.

The only decent, the only patriotic, reply that can be given to this insolent and unthought for advice is:

"To hell with you and your dogs—the Indian Princes. Our people will settle the score."

But unfortunately, as we go to Press, the newspapers flash the news that as a result of the meetings between the Negotiating Committee of the Constituent Assembly and the Princes, the "Princes' fears have been allayed."

This can have only one meaning, viz. that the Congress is thinking of giving into most of the Princes' scandalous demands.

This is the logic of the British Plan. If you want to work it, you can work it only on Britain's terms, and Britain's terms nullify independence.

RAMESH SINHA

PATIALA KISANS LAUNCH NO-RENT STRUGGLE

One Lakh Muzaras Fight Zamindari System

In Patiala State in the Punjab about one lakh tenants in 228 villages have launched a no-rent struggle.

THESSE muzaras (tenants) who make up 58 per cent of the 20 lakh population of the State have been fighting against the zamindari system (called biswedari) since it was imposed on them in 1877 (see column 5).

During the last one and a half years their struggle has become intense.

Separately the muzaras have fought in Barnala, in Kishengarh (Natha Singhwala), in Anupgarh, in the villages of Dharamgarh and Bakshiwala and in Dhandoli Khurd.

In these struggles they have physically occupied a total of 1,32,650 bighas of land of which their fore-fathers had been fraudulently deprived, and which by rights belong to them.

Many fighting muzaras have been killed, many more arrested, cases against many are still going on; but each one of these struggles was a landmark—a great object lesson—in their march forward.

And above all, the recaptured land is now theirs—in their possession, the biswedars and the police dare not set foot on it. Armed with sticks and stones and an unbreakable unity—the muzaras are mounting guard on the retrieved land.

The new struggle has come about in this setting.

New Battle Opens

Actually they were still organising, holding conferences in the thanas, and forming village and Tehsil committees. On December 10, they had elected an All-State Muzara Committee in a meeting of 20,000 peasants. In fact, they were still con-

ducting negotiations. On December 10, they sent a delegation to meet the Prime Minister. The struggle has been provoked by the biswedars.

In brief, the thing happened like this. On January 23, in Naraingarh village, the goondas of the local biswedar—Devendra Singh, who is also the Deputy Commissioner of the district—attacked some villagers. The goondas were given a chase. They went and hid in the biswedar's mansion.

Police Attack

After waiting for them for some time to come down, the villagers returned. At night, however, four lorryloads of police arrived at the biswedar's mansion and began to raid and attack the muzaras' houses early next morning, beating up people, breaking up their belongings, misbehaving with their women and so on.

As the news spread, muzaras began to pour into Naraingarh from the neighbouring village of Shafipur. The police ran off to the biswedar's house and fired 100 rounds on the muzaras, seriously wounding three and causing minor injuries to other 50.

Next day, i.e., on the 25th, when a jatha of muzaras was going to Patiala to wait on the authorities, the police came out again and stopped it. People again gathered and forced them to release them. Later, however, they rounded up 60 biswas and took them away.

And now the struggle is on. The Kisan Sabha, the Praja Mandal and the Communist Party—24 have pledged full support to it.

The struggle has spread out to 228 villages and is still spreading. Jathas of muzaras—with big Red Flags and singing revolutionary songs—are converging on Naraingarh from all directions. This movement has electrified the atmosphere in the whole of the State.

The State of Patiala was formed with the help of the British, by the leader of a robber gang in the 18th Century. The British needed him to divide the ranks of the Sikhs and to use this traitor against Maharaja Ranjit Singh. They employed him to crush the 1858 Revolt.

The robber-chief, turned into a Ruler, created the rapacious gang of biswedars out of his fathers-in-law, relatives and those others of his hangers-on and menials whose "services" he needed.

It is this gang which rules today. In the economic sphere as biswedars, they squeeze the muzaras; in the political sphere, as bureaucrats and officials of the State, like Devendra Singh, they have robbed the people of civil liberties and other human rights. That is why the struggle of the muzaras has become the struggle of the entire people of the State.

Muzaras' Demands

1. Abolition of the biswedari system and restoration of the proprietary rights to the tenants;
2. Restoration of all land grabbed by the biswedars from the tenants;
3. Withdrawal of all cases against the tenants and release of all the prisoners;
4. Writing off of all arrears of rent;
5. Establishment of a Responsible Government in the State elected through a Constituent

Assembly based on adult franchise; and, finally—

6. A clear declaration that only the people's representatives will be sent to the Constituent Assembly.

Past Struggles

The memory of the revolt led by Kubha, a peasant from Tebha village, in the last Century is cherished in every peasant hut in the State, whether it is of a Sikh or a Muslim or a Hindu.

● In 1922, they fought against the scandalous thapa system, under which after every day's harvest, a clay seal (thapa) was put on it by the biswedars' emissary.

The muzaras could not begin their work the next day till the emissary came and removed the seal. And if the thapa was removed, even by an accident, dire punishment was heaped on the muzaras.

The muzaras revolted and forced the Raja and the biswedars to end the thapa system.

● In 1929, they waged a successful battle against what was called the kankut system. Some bribed officials used to come and announce their arbitrary appraisal of the yield from a crop and the muzaras were forced to pay bata—the lion's share of the biswedars—on its basis!

● In 1932-33 (in spite of the fact that every organisation in the State—the Kisan Sabha, the Praja Mandal, the Communist Party—was driven underground in 1931) 100 villages rose against the biswedari system. The Government spent two lakhs of rupees on special police to crush them, 1,200 muzaras were arrested, two shot dead.

Yet the movement could not be suppressed.

Rs. 78 Crore Compensation To Bengal's Landlords

GOVT.'S DRAFT BILL NEEDS DRASTIC AMENDMENTS

It is reported that the Bengal Government is introducing a Bill for the abolition of landlordism. In the objects of the Bill, the Government is stated to have recognised the fact that land belongs to the real tillers.

ACCORDING to this Bill: "There will be no middleman between the Government and the tillers of the soil."

* No land-owner will be allowed to possess more than five bighas per head or 100 bighas per family, whichever is greater.

* The surplus land will be distributed amongst the poor peasants, landless peasantry and bargadars (share-croppers).

* The bargadar will be entitled to have at least 2/3rd share of the crop.

* Those who have at present land which is scattered at separate places will have their land consolidated.

* *Konk, gule, shanja* (illegal exactions) will be declared illegal.

People's Pressure

For the last ten years, the kisans have been fighting for these rights under the leadership of the Bengal Kisan Sabha. In this long struggle, thousands of kisans have suffered police repression and landlords' zulum. But repression could not crush their spirit.

The common people today are far more conscious about the evils of landlordism than ever before. Famine and the complete crisis in rural life have made people realise what landlordism has meant for Bengal.

The Government Bill has come as a result of both of these struggles of the kisans and the stark reality of agricultural crisis which faces the Government and the people of Bengal.

About 150 years ago, the British rulers in order to strengthen their hold, introduced the Permanent Settlement in Bengal (see column 5). That Permanent Settlement is on trial today.

But those who are acting as judges (i.e., the members of the Assembly) should also be in the dock for most of them are either landlords or jotedars.

Landlord Opposition

That is why we are very doubtful of this Bill being ultimately passed. The landlords and jotedars will strongly oppose it.

It is the job of the kisans to defeat this opposition; from every corner of Bengal should come the slogan:

"We demand the immediate abolition of landlordism."

The draft Bill has expressed a desire to abolish landlordism, but it has been left to the Government officials to implement it. It is nowhere said in the draft that with the passing of the Bill, the kisans would become owners of the land and the rights of the present landlords would be forfeited.

It only states that after this Bill is passed, the Government will have the right to abolish landlordism whenever it wants. It means that, according to this Bill, the Government can continue the system of Permanent Settlement for as many years as it likes. It is like asking the leaders of gamblers' den to punish the gamblers!

The Bill says that all surplus land, after leaving 100 bighas for a family, will be distributed amongst the kisans, the landless peasants and the bargadars. That means that the Government will be the owner of that

surplus land and it will be for the officials to distribute it.

We demand a Bill which declares that the kisans who till this surplus land today should own the same. This is the only way to guarantee the kisans their rightful share and save them from having to go begging for their own land to the officials who will make of the land another commodity like kerosene and cloth, in whose distribution corruption and nepotism prevail.

Though it has been stated in the Bill that its purpose is to give land to the tillers, there are so many safeguards for the landlords that it seems that the real sympathy of the Ministry lies with the landlords.

According to the provisions of the Bill, the landlords will be entitled to realise the old rents even after the abolition of landlordism and even obtain a decree confiscating the kisans' lands in lieu of the rent. The Government will give certificates to the landlords to enable them to realise the old rent.

The minimum demand of the kisans is—no payment of old unpaid rents.

Again, it is provided in the Bill that ryots will be given the tenancy rights and it has been hinted that those who do not till the land will not be recognised as ryots. But the tenancy rights have not been recognised in the case of bargadars and evicted tenants. This is nothing but the old policy of giving with one hand and taking away with the other.

Compensation

But the most serious defect is the provision of compensation for the landlords.

* Those landlords whose annual net income is up to Rs. 2,000 will get 15 times their annual rent as compensation;

* Those whose income is between Rs. 2,000 and 5,000 will get 12 times, with a minimum of Rs. 30,000;

* Those whose annual income is between Rs. 5,000 and

10,000 will get ten times with a minimum of Rs. 60,000; and

* Where the income is more than Rs. 10,000, the landlord will get eight times compensation with a minimum of Rs. one lakh.

Over and above this, there will be 10 times extra compensation for khas land.

According to the Government estimates, the total compensation will come to Rs. 78 crores. This amount will be obviously borrowed and paid to the landlords and then the people will be taxed.

The landlords have been getting for the last 150 years at least Rs. 13 crores as net income per year. And still the people of Bengal will have to give them compensation of Rs. 78 crores. With this huge amount, there could be schemes for education and agitation for the poor people of Bengal.

Will Take 25 Years!

The compensation is so high that the authors of the Bill

longs to the tillers of the soil.

The progressive people of Bengal demand that this Bill must come up before the next Assembly Session and the good clauses of the Bill which hit the system of landlordism must be passed. Those members who oppose them will be regarded as enemies of the kisans and held responsible for future famines. All must remember that Permanent Settlement is the basis of slavery and father of famine in Bengal.

Amend The Bill

Those clauses of the Bill which go against the interests of the people must be revised:

* There should be no compensation to landlords. Let there be an allowance for poor middlemen. Only those landlords who possess less than 25 acres of land should be entitled to this allowance.

* Let there be provisions in the Bill that as soon as it is passed, the kisans, bargadars and evicted tenants become

by **BHOWANI SEN**

themselves think it will take at least 25 years to abolish

landlordism in Bengal after paying the compensation. It means that even after this Bill becomes an Act, landlordism will continue for at least 25 years.

If the League Ministry does not abolish landlordism, the kisans themselves will do it and they are not going to pay any compensation. By providing for compensation, the League Ministry is acting as friends of landlords. It not only wants to realise the compensation from the kisans but also the old debt by issuing certificates. But there has been no attempt to decrease the rent of the kisans.

The Bill has promised the abolition of landlordism but left its implementation in the hands of the officials. The heavy burden of compensation has been put on the shoulders of the kisans.

Still the landlords are opposing this Bill. This is being done just because it has been recognised in the Bill that land be-

owners of the land they are tilling at present.

* The land that is taken away, when it exceeds 100 bighas in case of one family, should also be distributed like this.

* There should be no realisation of old rents. The present system of rent should be abolished and the income-tax system introduced.

Only by adopting these amendments can the objective of the Bill that the land belongs to the tillers, be realised. Otherwise the Bill will be just a paper plan.

Assembly Will Not Do It

This Bill, incorporating the above amendments, must be passed. It will not be done by depending on the Assembly alone. Landlordism will be abolished only when the kisans take possession of the land and refuse to pay any compensation. Till that time the Ministry will do nothing and make surrender after surrender to the landlords. The kisan movement of Bengal can and will defeat this conspiracy of the landlords.

WHAT IS PERMANENT SETTLEMENT ?

It was in 1793 that Lord Cornwallis introduced the Permanent Land Settlement for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and later extended it to parts of North Madras.

By this new system, the existing zamindars who were in reality tax-farmers, or officials appointed by the previous rulers to collect land revenue on commission (the authorised commission being 2 1/2 per cent, though in practice exactions exceeded this) were constituted landlords in perpetuity, subject to a permanent fixed payment to the Government.

This payment was calculated at the time at the rate of ten-clevenths of the existing total payments of the cultivators, the remaining one-cleventh being left for the share of the landlord.

At the time these terms of settlement were very onerous for the zamindars and the cultivators, and very profitable for the Government.

The figure of four crore rupees in Bengal to be raised by the zamindars for the Government represented a staggering increase in what had been raised under preceding rulers. Subsequently, however, the system worked the other way, in a direction not originally foreseen by the Government.

With the fall in the value of money, and the increase in the amount rack-rented from the peasantry, the Government's share in the spoils, which was permanently fixed at four crore rupees, became relatively smaller and smaller; while the zamindars' share became larger and larger.

Today the total rents in Bengal under the Permanent Settlement are estimated at about sixteen crore rupees, of which one quarter goes to the Government and three-quarters to the zamindars.

The Permanent Settlement is today universally attacked and condemned, not only by the peasantry but by the whole Indian people except the zamindars.

WHY PERMANENT SETTLEMENT ?

"If security was wanting against extensive popular tumult or revolution, I should say that the Permanent Settlement, though a failure in many other respects and in most important essentials, has this great advantage at least, of having created a vast body of rich landed proprietors deeply interested in the continuance of the British Dominion and having complete command over the mass of the people."

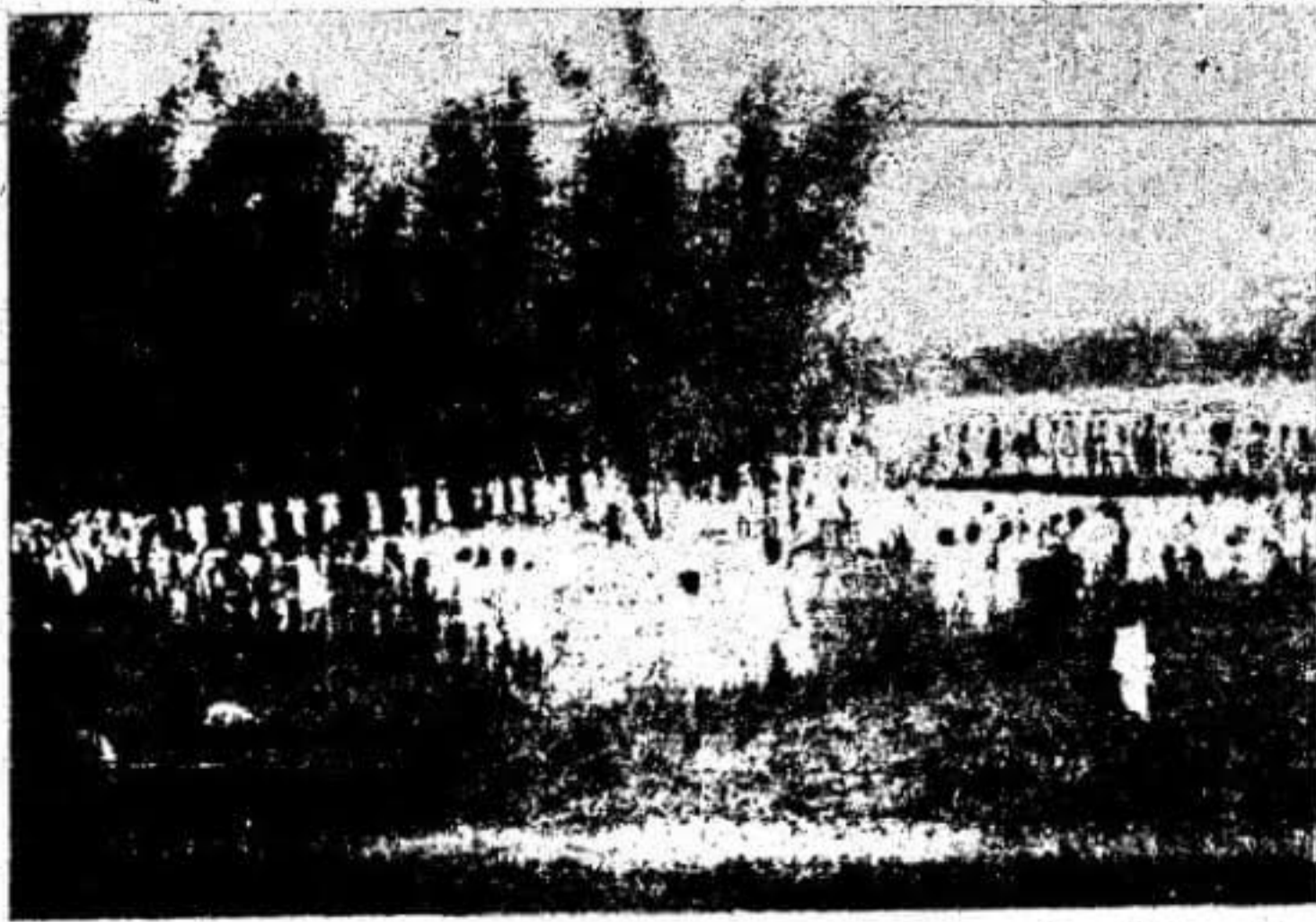
—Lord William Bentinck, speech on November 3, 1829.

WHY COMPENSATION AND DEBT RELIEF ?

"As an upper class intelligentsia they (the zamindars) have formed an integral part of the community and have always been looked upon by the rural people as the immediate embodiment of a power that largely influences their destiny."

"State purchase of zamindaris will cut off this privileged class from all connection with lands which have been a means of their living and influence.... If, therefore, the community of expropriated landlords are to be saved from utter ruin, it will be necessary to provide for measures enabling them to scale down their debts...."

Memorandum of the Bengal Government on the present legislative measures for abolition of zamindari.)



Volunteers stand guard, while Chitirbandar's (Dinaipur) peasants cut their paddy. (Photo: Ananda Pal)