

P. C. Joshi, Leader of the Communist Party, Speaks at Calcutta

FOR LIFE AND LIBERTY, FIGHT!

Not Among Ourselves But The Common British Enemy

Wire from Nikhil Chakravarty, Calcutta, January 12.

P. C. JOSHI, General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, on January 8, addressed at Mohammad Ali Park, Calcutta, a General Body meeting of Communist Party members and close sympathisers numbering 5,000. He said:

"We say it is a life and death struggle for our Party, not in the sense that it is a battle between our Party and other parties. In an enslaved country like ours, the battle must not be between our own patriotic parties, but it should be the common battle of all for freedom. If any Communist thinks that the present is the time for struggle among our own parties, he is 'no Communist at all'."

Stressing the three main slogans of the Party, Joshi said:

"India can be free here and now. This is what our Party stands for. We stand and fight not only for what we ourselves desire, but for what every Indian desires. In an enslaved country, freedom is no exclusive banner of any single political party. It is the banner of all political parties."

"But in such a country every freedom-loving Party wars against the others, defends its own war against the others, that country shall not be free. In the manner the leaders of our political parties are at present going, we will not get freedom."

"To-day the parties that have caught the Indian people patriotic and roused anti-British hatred among them, are warring among themselves. We say, if we fight among ourselves, who will get the British?"

Explaining the Party's new

CHITTAGONG ONE LAKH Protest Rally Joint Action Of All Parties Against Military Outrage

CHITTAGONG, January 12.

The entire people of Chittagong rose in protest against the military atrocities of rape, looting and arson against village people on January 11. There was complete hartal in the town on the 10th and a mass meeting, a lakh strong, was held demanding withdrawal of the Military, compensation, punishment of those who committed the crimes in an open court, relief to the victims through a Public Relief Committee.

There was complete hartal also in Itakunda, Durgapur, Fatehabad, Kakrail, Dhalghat; peaceful and big mass meetings were unalteredly held under the common banners of the Congress, League and Communist parties. Everywhere there were unique and unprecedented demonstrations. In the rallies voiced similar demands.

The Central Rally at Chittagong called for the maintenance of peace and the withdrawal of the military now as the people's united will had been demonstrated and appointed a Committee to approach the authorities for immediate acceptance of the above demands. A promise was given that results would be announced in a public meeting immediately and it was decided to hold a Central Mass Rally on the 13th to chalk out the future programme.

REPORT ON 11TH: The city has returned to normal activities. The public is very eager to know whether the demands have accepted the demands.

The Deputation Committee consists of Rafiquddin Siddiqui, Abul Husain, Zakur Ahmed (from League), Manoranjan Sen (from Communist Party) and Dr. Sachin Choudhury (Congress) met Divisional Commissioner Mr. Carver and the District Magistrate, Macaulay, who gave an oral assurance that an official enquiry would be held and that the criminals would be punished if found guilty.

They assured them that an inter-Communist arrangement between the Communist and the Public Deputation would be held on the 14th on the question of an open public trial for the



programme, Joshi said:

"It supports the Congress on the issue of self-determination for India as a whole. But it demarcates itself from the Congress on the same principle of self-determination, demanding it to be applied among our own peoples."

"Similarly we call on the League for common struggle against Imperialism showing how fighting among ourselves makes us pawns of the British. Every other party is supremely confident that it alone is in the right and the other parties are in the wrong."

"It is we alone who see the danger that if we fight among ourselves, it is we who are going to lose and the British will impose on us their own plan of slavery."

Analysing the present policy of both the Congress and the League leaderships, Joshi showed how our patriotic parties are going back on all the achievements of our own national movement and heading towards another Simla:

"Both the Congress and the League leaderships are hoping that the British will settle with each side against the other and

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PEOPLE'S AGE

Freedom Week Number

FOR A FREE INDIA OF BROTHER PEOPLES!

For Free Towns, Free Villages, Free Homelands!

With Jobs For All, Food For All! (See Poster Inside)

both are blind to the new danger of British Imperialism imposing every Communist:

"Only our Party is aware of it and regards British Imperialism as the main enemy. Our slogan is:

**FOR LIFE AND LIBERTY, FIGHT;
FOR LIFE AND LIBERTY, RISE
AGAINST BRITISH IMPERIALISM.**

"To be able to rouse our people our Party not only talks of liberty but of the new life in a new and free India."

He stressed three key jobs for every Communist:

"Firstly: explain the Party policy; what sort of a Communist you are is proved by how you defend the Party."

"Secondly: sell Party literature. Mr. Jinnah says 'Ropes Bullets', I say, 'Pamphlet bullet'."

"Thirdly: collect cash."

Urging Party members to hold on to the mass bases where a common movement of all the oppressed has already been built up under the Red Flag, Joshi referred to the type of candidates the Communist Party is putting

up at the elections:

"No body believes that we can win any Muslim seat against the League. No Congressman believes we can win any General seat when Congress is fighting us. Never has the Party put up such a large number of Scheduled Caste candidates who are actually from among the unlettered."

"We are putting up the actual chaste and musdoors as our candidates. Imagine Chaturall (leader of Calcutta Tramway workers) facing Subrawardy in the Assembly and thundering against him. Imagine Ismail (another Tramwaymen's leader) making all the profiteers squeal."

In conclusion Joshi said:

"The Communist Party is fighting the biggest battle in its life as an independent political party. We are not asking the people for a vote of confidence as other parties are doing. It is not we who are asking the people to become our camp followers. We tell the people:

"For your sake, for the sake of the country, for the sake of every section of our people, organise yourselves and build with your own hands a new life on the basis of our programme."

"We thus stand for a new democracy, side by side, with freedom."

At the end of the meeting, Joshi appealed for funds for the Party's work. The response was tremendous. Mr's sari was auctioned for Rs. 550. Joshi's own big photo fetched Rs. 2,000, while another one of his raised Rs. 500. A worker who used to attend Joshi's first workers' circle in Cawnpore twenty years ago, came and met him at the end of the meeting and offered his ring, which when auctioned brought Rs. 100.

FULL STORY OF MILITARY ATROCITIES IN CHITTAGONG See Page 12



At a Bengali Peasants' Rally in Calcutta, demanding food, cloth, rehabilitation.

CHITTAGONG PEOPLE'S VICTORY Through Hindu- Muslim Unity (See Col. 1)

CHITTAGONG, January 14.

Mr. Abul Husain Khan and Zakur Ahmed from the Muslim League; Manoranjan Sen, Ranadhir Das Gupta and Kalyana Dutt from the Communist Party, together went in a deputation to-day (14th January) to the Commissioner's bungalow. The Magistrate and the Military representative, Colonel Lang, informed us that all the public demands had been accepted.

These demands are: Open trial of the miscreants, relief and full compensation as per non-Official Enquiry Report and under supervision of the All-Parties Relief Committee, immediate release of all educational institutions commandeered by the authorities.

Next week, the college hostel and within a month, all educational institutions will be evacuated. Regarding the withdrawal of the Military, they assured that this would be done in the shortest possible time, and that the Military would not stay a single day longer than was necessary depending upon how quick transport was available. Three months ago there were 150,000 Military personnel, now there are only 65,000.

This is a big people's victory we have achieved through our own unity—Hindus and Muslims together—and with our joint strength.

★ All-India Strike - Wave

★ What Freedom - Struggle Demands

★ Present Attitude Of Congress Leadership

THE COUNTRY IS TODAY PASSING THROUGH ONE of the biggest waves of workers' struggles ever seen in our history.

In CALCUTTA, over 25,000 workers of various industries (Engineering, Textiles, Potteries, even Rickshaw-pullers who so far had remained unorganised and backward) have been on strike in the last few months under the leadership of the Red Flag; some of these strikes have been going on now for over three months.

In BOMBAY, workers from over 15 various industries (Oil, Dockyard, Transport, Engineering) have been forced to go on strike to fight back the employers' offensive. In ORISSA, all the daily newspapers were suspended for one month, the Cuttack Press workers were on strike.

In the KOLAR Gold Fields (Mysore State), 20,000 workers have been on strike since January 7 and in Gwalior State, workers are on strike in three towns, Gwalior, Lashkar and Morar.

A country-wide general strike is brewing on the Railways—involving no less than eight lakh Railwaymen all over the land.

In every one of these strikes, the workers are doing no more than defending their most elementary and vital interests.

They are fighting mass retrenchment and unemployment which the bosses have launched as part of their post-war plan of shifting all the economic burdens on to the shoulders of the workers and keeping up their soaring profit-level of the war years.

They are fighting arbitrary victimisation of militant workers and Trade Union leaders.

Besides this, the workers' demands are for a minimum living wage (long overdue); for adequate dearness allowance (the cost of living has in no way come down with the end of the war); for bonus (a tiny fraction of the huge war-profits made by the employers).

A most cursory glance at the profits made by industrialists during the war-years is enough to show whether the workers' demands are just or not.

British Profiteers And Our Own Industrialists

Take a look first at the industries controlled by British Big Business.

During the six years of war, the Railway Board's income has gone up by one hundred and seventeen crore rupees. They have over a hundred crore rupees in Depreciation Funds. Yet they have not granted any wage increase to their workers, during the last 16 years. Today there are thousands of Railwaymen who get the miserable sum of Rs. 11 a month and the Board are now threatening to throw three lakh Railwaymen out of their jobs and on the streets.

The dividends of the British Mining Companies of the Kolar Gold Fields have reached 18 times the total capital invested—yet 20,000 workers of the Kolar Gold Fields are forced to go on strike for the demand of a living wage of 14 annas a day for underground workers!

Things are no less scandalous with our "Swadeshi" Industrialists.

The industry of Cotton Textiles is mostly in their hands. The profit-index for the cotton-textile industry had reached 645 by 1943 as against 100 in 1939. All this went into the bosses' pockets. And what about the workers?

The cost of living index had reached 320 in 1943 (as against 100 in 1939), while the general wage increase in 1943 was only 8% over the 1939 level. Yet the Bombay millowners for the last two years, have been consistently refusing the demand of the two and a half lakh textile workers for adequate dearness allowances and bonus.

Police Terror

True to this role, they are everywhere seeking Police aid quite openly to terrorise and crush the workers. Lathi-charges and arrests of peaceful satyagrahis (as in Birla's Calcutta mill—see story on page 11 of current issue); lathi-charges, use of tear-gas and arrests of over 50 strikers (as in Bombay); Police firing, killing 17 people and seriously wounding two hundred (as a sequel to the strike in Birla's mill in Gwalior: the full story of this will appear in next issue of P.A.); these are becoming common features everywhere.

Against this Police zoolum, the workers are fighting with such disciplined heroism and unity (Hindu and Muslim shoulder to shoulder), that will evoke admiration from every freedom-loving Indian.

It is this coupled with the essential justness of the workers' demands that is everywhere rallying honest public citizens in support of the workers.

The workers' struggle for their just elementary rights and against Police terror is part and parcel of the anti-Imperialist militancy that is rousing all sections of our people today. It is part of our struggle for freedom.

War-Time Profits

The Birlas are the sponsors of the Hindustan Mazdoor Sewak Sangh, founded on the theory of "Trusteeship of Capital over Labour." Their Kesoram Mills in Calcutta (employing 8,000 workers) made a gross profit of nearly Rs. 77 lakhs in 1944-45 alone. That year the Birla Brothers set aside Rs. 43 lakhs for taxes out of the Kesoram profits alone. Yet they consistently refused to give any bonus to their workers—even after the workers had gone on strike for 46 days, and the Calcutta public itself had raised its voice in support of the workers' demands.

The Indian Hume Pipe Co. Ltd. of Bombay is owned by Seth Waichand Hirachand, another "patriotic magnate". He is known to have been reaping huge war-profits out of this one factory alone. Yet the workers are being retrenched wholesale and thrown on the streets—and have been forced to go on strike, even for the demand that, at least, retrenchment should proceed on the basis of seniority claims!

The Engineering industry of Bengal is in the hands of British and Indian Big Business. Everyone knows they made roaring profits during the war years.

Dalmiah and Birla, once rivals in business, are today known to have joined hands and each has launched mighty new expansion projects out of their war-profits. The Dalmiahs have invested five crore rupees in a Motor industry; the Tatas have launched big projects in the Aircraft industry.

Yet they are retrenching their skilled workers en masse—because they want to bring down wages and maintain their war-time profit level; it does not matter what happens to the thousands of unemployed workers and their families.

Sixty-thousand workers in Bengal's Engineering industry alone have been thrown on the streets during the last few months. Nearly three and a half lakh war-time workers are faced with the same fate in the coming months.

Deals With British Capital

These are the grim facts which lie behind the present strike-wave all over the country.

In their greed for profits, these "patriotic magnates" are not only callously attacking the workers' living standards, but going in for alliances with the most hated enemies of our country—the lords of British Monopoly Capital and men who are the masters of the British Tory Party and of its Empire. The Tata-I.C.I. and the Birla-Nuffield deals are pointers.

WHILE THE ENTIRE COUNTRY IS PREPARING FOR THE FINAL BID FOR POWER AND TO COMPLETELY ELIMINATE BRITISH MONOPOLY FROM INDIAN LIFE, THESE MEN ARE LETTING IN MORE OF IT.

by N. K. Krishnan

Congress Leaders' Words And Deeds

But the attitude of the Congress leadership to it seems to be entirely different.

The Congress Election Manifesto speaks of standing "for the rights of all those who suffer from social tyranny and injustice and for the removal from them of all barriers to equality"; but what is the Congress leaders' attitude in deeds to struggles that are so heroically being carried on by workers here and now, for their just rights and against the zoolum of the vested interests and the Police?

Most of these strike struggles are naturally being led by Communist leaders and under the Red Flag, because it is under the Red Flag, with the Communists playing a leading part, that the organised working-class movement of this country has grown up to be what it is today; and it is under the Red Flag, and with Communists playing a leading part, that the biggest workers' struggles have been fought in this country ever since the 'twenties.

But anti-Communism today is making the Congress leaders go against the masses of the workers themselves and their heroic struggles, and support the most reactionary vested interests.

They bolstered up the Hindustan Mazdoor Sewak Sangh (Birla-sponsored) as the "Congress-Labour" organisation; as against the All-India Trade Union Congress, the oldest and most trusted organisation of the Indian workers, because they called the latter "Communist-dominated." The leaders of the Hindustan Mazdoor Sewak Sangh in all the present strike struggles have openly sided with the reactionary employers—the Birlas and the like—and deserted the workers' cause.

The shameful part they played in the Calcutta strikes (fully told in successive issues of People's Age) is being repeated everywhere else.

Blinded by anti-Communism, the Congress Press is blacking out all news of the workers' struggles (as has been happening in Calcutta quite often); and even keeping quiet on the Police terror (as the Marathi Congress Press is doing in Bombay).

The most shocking attitude was taken up by the Working Committee members themselves when the strikers of Birla's Kesoram Mills (at the instance of the A.I.T.U.C. President, Sjt. Mirinal Kanit Bose, who is not a Communist) approached them for their intervention for a reasonable settlement. While Sardar Patel was staying as Birla's guest and Pandit Nehru could even go to the Stock Exchange to get an address from the Share-brokers, neither of them even acknowledged the workers' appeal!

When the top Congress leaders themselves—those that have led big freedom struggles of our people—today let anti-Communism blind them to the living struggles for justice that are going on in the country and back reactionary vested interests in their offensive against the worker masses, one can imagine where the lesser ones will go.

An Ominous Development

IT is an elementary democratic principle that when political parties fail to agree on any vital issue, they refer the matter to the people, allow the people to hear what each party has to say and give its verdict. This principle forms the cornerstone of all democratic political life.

The patriotic parties in our country which have sprung from the people and grown by serving the people, adhered to this principle. That is why every effort on the part of the foreign government to prevent free and fair elections by intimidation and pressure was condemned by all. Such tactics we have always associated with the present government and its lackeys—the seminadars, taluqdars and their likes.

Fratricidal Clashes

Today, however, we are witnessing a strange and tragic spectacle. Attempts to break up meetings, assaults and even murders are being reported from various parts of the country. And these clashes are in most cases between the adherents of our political parties themselves.

In Bombay, an active worker of the Scheduled Caste Federation was murdered and there were clashes between Congressmen and supporters of the Federation.

At Ludhiana, an Ahrar was killed and several persons injured as the result of a clash between Muslim Leaguers and the Ahrars.

In a village in Mardan, North-West Frontier, eight persons sustained injuries during a clash between Congressmen and Leaguers.

Attempt was made by Muslim Leaguers to break up a meeting of the Nationalist Muslims at Patna.

The Akalis have done similar things at Congress meetings in the Punjab.

At several places in Sind, Leaguers disturbed meetings addressed by Pandit Nehru.

Elsewhere in this issue, we publish a report of a serious clash between Congressmen and Communists at Cawnpore.

All these incidents have taken place in the course of a single week, and in widely-separated localities. If this is what is happening today when the election campaign has not yet begun in right earnest in the majority of provinces, what will the picture be like a few weeks hence?

As for the Press that moulds public opinion, it has made no comments on the ominous development except to blame "the other party" and to appeal to the police to be more strict against that party.

Moral Responsibility Of Leaders

And after all these things had happened—these incidents themselves being nothing more than mere flashes in an atmosphere surcharged with hatred and animosity—Sardar Patel, while addressing a mass meeting at Ahmedabad, said:

"The Muslim League has captured all the Muslim seats and it may celebrate 'Victory Day' and believe that Pakistan has been achieved, but Pakistan cannot be achieved in this way. Pakistan is not in the hands of the British Government. If Pakistan is to be achieved, Hindus and Muslims will have to fight. There will be civil war. (Bombay Chronicle—Jan. 15.)"

Similar speeches pouring venom and hatred against the Congress and the Hindus are being made from League platforms by its foremost leaders.

No one will charge Sardar Patel, Pandit Nehru or Mr. Jinnah with deliberately inciting riots. But the question we would ask them to put to themselves is: Can we escape all moral responsibility for these tragic happenings?

You cannot go on staging hymns of hatred against a brother party without creating a situation which helps the most irresponsible and chauvinist elements inside your own party. You cannot go on denouncing followers of every party, other than yours, as traitors without letting loose forces of strife and discord. What is happening today is nothing more than the relentless working out of the logic of a policy which our foremost leaders are pursuing.

Many seem to think that these clashes, though regrettable, are nothing much to worry about and will cease after the elections. That is an illusion. The flames that are being lit today will engulf the whole country if steps are not taken to combat them here and now.

Helps Common Enemy

Those who talk lightly about civil war seem to forget the simple fact that the British Government is not yet dead. It is very much alive and seeking to perpetuate its rule and nothing will help it as much as the mutual strife among ourselves.

Its spokesmen, basing themselves on these clashes and on the statements of responsible leaders will announce to the whole world that while the want "some measure of self-government" to be given to the Indians, the army and other organs of effective power must be kept in "neutral" hands in order to prevent civil war. And we, disunited and therefore weak, will be unable to make a determined bid for power.

Must this happen? The answer lies with our patriotic parties and their leaders themselves. Let them condemn hoodlumism not merely in general terms but every specific manifestation of it, addressing themselves mainly to their own followers.

Let them, while placing their own case before the people with all the emphasis at their command, refrain from inciting hatred against each other.

Let them never forget that in a slave country fighting each other is the easiest thing to do, but it goes against the fight for common freedom and only helps the common enemy of us all.

What is happening in Cawnpore and all over the U.P. is an example of this. The story of Cawnpore is told elsewhere in this issue (see Page 4). In their efforts to "capture" Labour from the Communists, the local Congress leaders are going all out to create conditions that will only lead to civil war in the city between the working-class and the middle-class.

Not only this. The Nationalist Press of the U.P. is full of stories that the wicked Communists are engineering strikes all over as part of an anti-Congress conspiracy! Even a respected journal like Pandit Nehru's National Herald is splashing these cock and bull stories.

Pandit Balkrishna Sharma (Central M.L.A.), a leading Cawnpore "Congress-Labour" leader, has recently issued a public statement to this effect. According to this statement (National Herald, January 4), the Communists are engineering a general strike in Cawnpore "on the basis of those fictitious demands which have already been agreed to on behalf of the Government of India by the Labour Member, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar." (1) Pandit Balkrishna Sharma's state-

ment is nothing but a direct invitation to the European employers of Cawnpore and the U.P. bureaucrats to go ahead with their offensive against the workers and crush any attempt of the workers to fight back.

Bad Day For All Of Us

It has been the age-old excuse of the Imperialist bureaucrats in India to dub any strike struggle of workers as "Red-inspired" and both blood and iron against it. Today both same advice, tragically enough, come to them gratuitously from one of our Provincial leaders of our foremost freedom organisation!

One has only to see the facts unfolding in the present strike-wave all over the country to realise the worth of Pandit Balkrishna Sharma's statement. It is a bad day for our country, for our people when the leaders of our foremost freedom organisation, backed by anti-Communism, try to do that organisation against the interests of our working-class and on the side of the reactionary vested interests.

Press Workers' Biggest Strike

NO DAILIES FOR ONE MONTH

Citizens Back Workers, Pay For Strike Fund

TODAY is the twenty-fifth day of the suspension of all the daily newspapers of Orissa, namely, *Samaj*, *Naba Bharat*, *Dainik Asha* and *New Orissa*—as the result of the long-standing dispute regarding working conditions between the press workers and employers of almost all important printing establishments of Cuttack.

Some months ago, arising out of the same demands, workers of the *New Orissa Press* had struck work on account of which two dailies, *New Orissa* and *Dainik Asha*, ceased publication for over one week; at that time, a settlement was arrived at only when the owners had partially met the demands of the workers.

This time, the fight has been bitter and prolonged. Provisions of the Defence of India Rules (DIR) are being invoked to defend the interests of the newspaper bosses and bring the workers to their knees. The authorities are being mobilised to do so. The Cuttack District authorities contemplate application of the DIR to make the presses work, if the workers do not come to an immediate settlement and resume work.

Negotiations For Eight Months

Any honest person who knows the facts of this strike will, however, see for himself the justice of the workers' stand. The struggle of the Cuttack press workers for higher wages and better conditions of work, which has now culminated in the closure of all the presses, is a very old one. It is as old as 1938 when the Press workers first started their Union.

Their present demands for increment in basic wage, bonus, leave and service regulations have been before the employers for the last 8 months. There have been continuous negotiations between the Employers' Association and the Press Workers' Union. The demands of the workers have been voiced and supported from numerous platforms.

The reasonableness of these demands is so patent that Sjt. Naba Krishna Mehtab, member of the Congress Working Committee, unhesitatingly accorded them his wholehearted support when he presided over the workers' conference in July last. The Secretary of the Cuttack Town Congress Committee, and the Assistant Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee have fully supported the Press workers' cause from public platforms.

Workers' Conditions And Demands

But the employers took no action until the Government referred the matter to them for speedy settlement some six months ago. Here are some facts to show how the Newspaper bosses treat their workers.

In Cuttack, the starting salary of a compositor is somewhere between Rs. 5 and Rs. 9 per month. There are men whose monthly wages have not gone beyond Rs. 15 even after ten to twelve years service and the minimum expenditure for food in Cuttack town, excluding clothing, house rent, etc., itself comes to not less than Rs. 40 for a family of four members.

Naturally, in order to make both ends meet, the workers have put in extra hours of work, very often involving three times the work they ordinarily put in for their basic wages. Even so, a very large number of workers are deprived of this advantage for the simple reason that owners cannot always give them extra work.

The workers were not given any Dearness Allowance during

the whole of the war period. Only last year, after much agitation, a very small number of presses gave Dearness Allowance as prescribed by the Employers' Association. About half the presses did not give any allowance at all.

While the workers are so miserably treated, printing charges have been increased to double the pre-war rate, and the owners have been making fat profits.

Under such circumstances, the Press Workers' Union, after its reorganisation in 1945, drew up the minimum demands of the workers for immediate fulfilment. These demands were:

• Twenty-five per cent increase in basic wage; fifty per cent increase in piece rates.

• A dearness allowance of fifty per cent.

• Thirty-one days' holidays, one month's sick leave and twelve days' casual leave in a year.

• Payment of the month's salary in the first week of the following month.

Bosses Go Back On Promise

After protracted negotiations between the Workers' Union and the Press Association, the latter instructed its members to grant dearness allowance as claimed by the Union. But as already stated, except in two or three cases, none of the owners implemented their promise. There was also agreement on demands about holidays, Provident Fund, sick leave and a wage increment of 15 per cent.

The Union urged immediate implementation of these agreed demands and the reference of the remaining unsettled demands to a properly constituted Arbitration Board. But the Press Association would not agree, and instead wanted to put new fetters on the workers by increasing hours of work, and introducing a new system of work and payment, etc.

The Union refused to accept this and gave 15 days' notice to the Press Association for reconsideration of their demands, failing which the workers would resort to strike. Instead of giving any consideration to the workers' demands the employers closed down the presses on the date of expiry of the notice.

The Employers' Association hoped that in this way, they would be able to deprive the press workers of the moral support of the public in their fight for better living conditions. This would also give them a plea for further increasing the printing charges and fleecing the public more.

Support From Public

The employers' game has, however, failed, because of the patent justice of the workers' demands and their willingness for a reasonable settlement. Over 1,200 citizens of Cuttack, including lawyers, teachers, shop-keepers, publishers, students and others readily responded to the appeal of the Union for contributions to their Strike Fund. Workers were determined not to give way to threats and coercion. They would go to work only when a non-official Arbitration Board took up the responsibility for settling the issue.

Subsequently, the District Ma-

gistrate was forced to set up a Conciliation Committee of the representatives of the public, the Workers' Union and the Press Association. On invitation from this Committee, the Union submitted a panel of six names for constitution of the Arbitration Board.

The Union's panel included names of two top Provincial Congress leaders, namely, Sjt. Naba Krishna Choudhury, Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee and Sjt. Bhagirathi Mahapatra, the newly elected member of the Central Legislative Assembly. In addition, Mehtabji was proposed as the Chairman of the Arbitration Board.

The Union is led by the Communists; but they expected Congress leaders to forget Congress-Communist differences and accept their invitation to take the lead in enquiring into this vital issue and giving their impartial verdict on the workers' demands.

Role Of Congress Leaders And Nationalist Press

The attitude taken up by the Congress leadership, however, came as a shocking revelation. Sjt. Naba Krishna Chowdhury not only refused acceptance of the Union's invitation to be on the Arbitration Board, but said that he would not allow any other Congressmen too to 'help

the Union! Just because the Union is led by the Communists, the Congress leaders were refusing even to help in the arbitration as demanded by the entire Press workers of Cuttack!

The most amazing part of the whole story is however yet to come. For the same reason—that the Union is led by the Communists—the News Agencies have been dishonest enough to blackout the real truth about the strike completely from the Indian public and circulate lies.

Cock And Bull Story

Even responsible Congress papers like Jawaharlal's *National Herald* splashed despatches from their "Special Correspondents" which completely distorted the truth and cooked up an anti-Communist "story" out of the strike.

The Cuttack correspondent of the *National Herald* sent a story which made out that the Press owners are poor innocents and had conceded all the demands of the workers; and that the workers, misled by the wicked Communists, have nevertheless struck work as part of a Communist attempt to muzzle the Congress Press and handicap the Congress in the election fight.

A shameless way of covering up their support to the News-

paper bosses under the convenient cloak of anti-Communism!

The *National Herald* (20th Dec.) splashed this cock-and-bull story with big headlines:

"COMMUNIST CONSPIRACY IN ORISSA.—PRESS STRIKE AS PART OF ANTI-CONGRESS CAMPAIGN."

The same dishonest story was repeated in other Nationalist papers all over India, like the *Hindustan Standard* of Calcutta.

Why does the *National Herald* suppress the fact that the Communist leaders of the Union invited the Orissa Congress leaders themselves to be arbitrators—and the latter refused, to the delight of the big Newspaper proprietors and the authorities?

Every honest man in Orissa knows the facts I have given above about this strike.

Negotiations for settlement are at present going on. The Union will try its best to see that a settlement just to all parties is arrived at and implemented; nothing will deter it from this end.

Late News

As we go to Press news has been received that an Adjudication Board has been constituted and that pending the award of the Board, the workers decided to resume work from January 11. The suspended newspapers have now resumed publication after nearly a month.

Jiban Dhupi Released

11 Years In Jail

SCHEDULED CASTE FIGHTER AGAINST SOCIAL INJUSTICE

Dhobi's Son Who Found His Way To Communism

(Primary Elections are going on in Bengal for the Scheduled Caste seats for the Provincial Assembly. The Communist Party in Bengal is putting up its own Scheduled Caste candidates in Rangpur and Dinajpur.)

What our Scheduled Caste comrades represent in the life of our people, what they have fought for in the past and what they will fight for in the future, can be seen from the life-sketch of Jiban Dhupi, Scheduled Caste Communist fighter, just released after eleven years in jail.)

Dingamanik is a fairly big village in Faridpur District (Bengal) inhabited mostly by Hindu and Muslim middle-class folk. Here and there in this village live a few washermen families; they wash the clothes of the babus and help them go about cleanly-dressed.

THE dhobi families, of course, have no land of their own and are just village serfs. Generation after generation, they have washed clothes and in other ways served as serfs of the babus—in return for being allowed to live there. If they do not obey any of the orders of the babus, they are beaten mercilessly. If the babus want, they can drive these serfs from their hearths and homes.

His Father's Dream

It was in one such slave family that JIBAN DHUPI was born. The little land which Jiban's father had got as a serf (or "chakran" as it is called), could not, of course, feed the family. Jiban's father had therefore to work as a field labourer and a share-cropper. And forced labour at the Burra Baba's house was of course obligatory.

With no hope for the present or the future, the family had to drag on its miserable existence like dumb cattle from day to day. This was the immutable fate that present-day society had fixed for them and their people.

Even under these conditions, Jiban's father would sometimes

dream of getting his son educated, so that he could read and write, like the children of the babus. It was a very daring dream. Education for a dhobi's son? If the babus only heard of it, they would laugh their faces off. And where could he find the money for it, any way?

And so the dream of Jiban's father remained unfulfilled: his eldest son followed his profession and became a dhobi.

That was a memorable day in Jiban's life! From his early school days, Jiban showed unusual intelligence and thirst for knowledge. The village bhadralogs were not very pleased to see the dhobi's son standing first in all the examinations from first to last. Jiban thus got admitted into the local English High School.

This was too much for the babus of the village. One of them burst out straight on Jiban's face: "This is horrible—allowing a 'dhobi' boy to become a scholar! At this rate, we shall not be able to show our face in the village any more."

The inhuman treatment and social oppression by the Caste Hindus on his community, which society had sanctioned and made sacrosanct, affected the young boy's heart deeply. From those days as he grew up, he became steeled in the determination to fight for social justice and equality, to fight against all the humiliation and oppression inflicted by Caste Hindu society on their unfortunate brethren.

To this day, Jiban cannot forget the incidents of one dreadful night. It was a dark night—raining heavily. The big lord of the family ordered lights to be brought. One had to trudge a long distance in the pouring rain to bring the lights. Jiban's father was ordered to do it. He refused. All the babus went wild with rage. Jiban's mind rebelled at this unjust order and insolent behaviour towards his old father. The young boy could hardly control himself.

Jiban not only grew up as a good student at school. The strength of his character and the warm trust he evoked in all his fellow-students made him the acknowledged leader of his class.

Joins Terrorists

The terrorist movement had swept all over Bengal in those days even into the remotest villages. The boys of Dingamanik High School were also roused by the call of patriotism. The con-

WORKERS FIGHT BACK OWNERS' ZOOLUM INSIDE MILL

Unworthy Role of Congress Leaders And Press

Workers' Leaders Attacked, Calumnies Against Premier Trade Union

Cawnpore alone, but from Congressmen also.

What Are Congress Leaders Heading For ?

At a meeting of 15,000 that met in the evening, Kallishankar and Yusuf congratulated the workers on the unity they had shown.

"I know", said Yusuf, "that the Muir Mill workers alone can beat the goondas to pulp but we shall not do that. It will lead to civil war, war between the workers and the middle-class who no matter how prejudiced they are against us to-day, are our natural allies. We do not want that. We want a common war against our common enemy—the British Government and the oppressive capitalists."

Dealing with the face-saving announcement made by the Muir Mills Management that they would not victimise the workers but "not surrender the right to punish," Yusuf said:

"We could make them yield even on this point by continuing the fight and calling out on the streets the entire body of workers in Cawnpore. But that would be inopportune to-day. We have to strengthen our organisation and the unity in our ranks."

The meeting ended in the midst of thunderous cheering.

More assaults have taken place since then and are still continuing.

If this is what has started happening even now, one shudders to think what will happen during the elections. In their election campaign, are the Congress leaders of Cawnpore rallying the people to fight the Imperialists—or are they preparing for war against the working-class of Cawnpore?

Shocking things have been taking place in Cawnpore during the last few days—clashes between Congressmen and workers, attempts to snatch away the dead body of a worker, assaults on Mazdoor Sabha (Cawnpore's leading Trade Union, organised under the Red Flag) workers by persons calling themselves Congressmen. As usual the daily press has given a distorted picture of these happenings. The real facts are given below.

ON January 2, HIRAI, a worker in the Muir Mills, who was suddenly taken ill, asked for leave. This was refused and on his repeating the request, Hiral was beaten by Mr. Mathur, the Supervisor of his department. Shortly afterwards he died.

This was followed by the workers spontaneously downing tools. They were warned by Mr. Arrindell, the Secretary of the Millowners' Association, (the most notorious labour-baiter in the U.P. whom every Cawnpore worker hates for the role he played in the general strike in the days of the Congress Ministry) who had reached there, that action would be taken if they did not at once return to work. As the threat had no effect, the local Congress and Mazdoor Sewak Sangh leaders—Ganga Sahai Chaube, Rajaram Shastri and Suraj Prasad Awasthi—were sent for by Mr. Arrindell to "pacify" the workers.

These gentlemen however were not able to get a hearing by the strikers who made it clear that they wanted to see YUSUF, the Communist leader of the Mazdoor Sabha, who was waiting outside and who had not been allowed to enter the mill. The Manager had to yield. Yusuf spoke to the workers. A sum of Rs. 68 was collected on the spot to perform the funeral ceremony of Hiral, and his body was sent for post-mortem examination.

How It Began

The self-appointed leaders of the Mazdoor Sewak Sangh were not particularly happy at this turn of events. They gathered a small crowd at the Parade Maidan and made their usual speeches—attacks on the Red Flag, the Mazdoor Sabha and the Communist Party.

An ugly clash would have taken place but for the timely and tactful handling of the situation by Yusuf, Santosh Chander Kapur, Kallishankar and other Communist leaders. They persuaded the workers to leave the maidan and proceed to the hospital to take charge of the dead body.

The Police at first refused to hand over the body, but as the workers were determined and the relatives of Hiral also wanted the body to be given to the Mazdoor Sabha workers, they had to yield. A big procession was formed with the bier decked with Red Flags.

Procession Attacked

The bears of the workers were heavy—it was a tragic death that one of their comrades had met. Their surprise and anger knew no bounds, therefore, when on reaching the Parade Maidan, where a large number of Congressmen had collected, the procession was attacked and an attempt was made to snatch away the corpse.

Stoutly the workers resisted the attempt and changed the route of the procession to avert further clashes. But they were again attacked.

This gave the police the opportunity they had been waiting for. They took possession of the body.

What the Congress leaders wanted was obvious. They wanted to make capital out of the death of Hiral. If the funeral procession could be taken out under

the Elgin Mills by Sitaram, a henchman of Hariharanath Shastri (Congress Socialist leader) and some goondas.

● Anand Madhav, a Mazdoor Sabha worker, was beaten with lathis.

If by this campaign of lies and assaults they wanted to break the solidarity and morale of the workers, they failed miserably.

At a meeting of 15,000 workers held at Gowaitoli on January 3 and at another of 10,000, Yusuf said:

"Comrades, this is your testing time. You are on trial. Let our opponents do what they like and resort to dishonest tricks, but we must not lose our heads. Coolness, organisation and unity—these will lead to our victory."

The strike in the Muir Mills continued. The workers were not prepared to go in till they knew that there would be no victimisation.

January 6 was observed by the workers as 'Hiral Day' in memory of the man who had become the symbol of the suffering workers of Cawnpore.

Over fifty worker volunteers gathered on the Parade Ground from where they went in batches to announce the meeting. At Deputy Ka Parao, a batch of them was attacked by goondas, Babu Ram Nishad, the Sabha organiser for Deputy Ka Parao and ten others were injured.

the Tri-colour and funeral orations made by Congress leaders—would that not prove to the workers that the Congress and not the Mazdoor Sabha were their real champions?

Hence, disregarding the most elementary notions of decency, disregarding even the wishes of the friends and relatives of the dead worker, they wanted to take possession of the body—by fair means or foul.

Cremation Ghat Clash

Even after their initial attempts had failed, they did not give in. Expecting that the body would be taken to the cremation ghat, they sent a number of 'volunteers' and 'pandas' to gather there. Some workers too had gone to the ghat with Red Flags. These were attacked without any provocation and nearly forty were injured in the clash that followed.

The body was not burnt but buried as Hiral had been a Kabir-panthi. There in the presence of 5,000 workers, Yusuf made a solemn speech after which the entire body of workers—Hindus, Muslims and Untouchables—swore with clenched fists to maintain unity in their ranks and fight relentlessly till the system that caused such tragic deaths was ended.

Campaign of Falsehood

In the meantime, inside the city it was being announced by beat of drums that the Communists were beating up Congressmen! Fantastic stories were spread that it had been the Mazdoor Sabha men who had attacked the procession. How self-contradictory and absurd these stories were can be seen from one example alone. A statement signed by prominent Congress leaders like Dr. Jawaharlal, Pandit Balkrishna Sharma and others, appeared in the Congress paper Pratap in which it was said:

"When the body reached the Parade Maidan, the Communists tried to snatch it away."

But in the report published in the Pratap itself of the same day, it was said:

"After post-mortem examination the body was handed over to the nephew of Hiral. As soon as it was taken out, the Communists put their Red Flag on the bier. When it reached the Parade Maidan, Congressmen and workers who had collected there joined up."

These two reports published in the same paper and on the same day flatly contradict each other. But such things do not bother the Congress leaders; for them, any argument is good enough against the Communists!

A statement signed by 3,000 Muir Mill workers themselves telling the whole truth, was at the same time blacked out.

Assaults Follow

The middle-classes were inflamed by false reports which were spread, that the Communists had tried to tear national flags. This was followed by organised assaults.

● Four Communist students were beaten up on Meston Road.

● Ramswarup Gupta, the treasurer of the Mazdoor Sabha and others, were attacked before

At Darshan Purwa two severe attacks were made on Mazdoor Sabha workers and among those seriously injured were Dildar Khan of the Muir Mills, Baldeo Prasad of the J. K. Cotton Mills and others—all of these, actual workers inside the Mills. Lathi blows were showered on them and brickbats thrown. Raja Ram Shastri and Sheo Bolak Ram, who were present on the spot, encouraged the goondas.

Ram Sewak, the Mazdoor Sabha worker in this area, when assaulted and asked to shout "Trirangi Jhanda Zindabad" answered, "We honour all the flags of our people. We always say, Trirangi Jhanda Zindabad." He was then asked to shout, "Communist Party Mardabad" and on his refusal to do that, he was beaten and robbed of his fountain pen and rupees thirty-two which he had in his pocket—the proceeds of People's Age sales and Mazdoor Sabha membership fees.

War Against Whom ?

These are only a few instances of the attacks that were made.

The Cawnpore workers have on many occasions in the past demonstrated their courage and steadfastness. Who does not remember the glorious days of the Cawnpore general strike during the days of the Congress Ministry?

But it would be no exaggeration to assert that never before have they shown such discipline and coolness as they showed now in the face of intolerable provocation, this time not from the white Bosses of

LIFE-STORY OF JIBAN DHUPI

(Continued from page 3.)
tempt and insolence of Caste Hindu society against him and his community could not keep Jiban away from the common patriotic fight for freedom.

The Episode of the Festival

Together with his friends among the bhadralog boys, Jiban started organising libraries, Gymnasiums, Sports Clubs, etc. in the village. The Caste Hindu village elders were startled and angry, but afraid of their own boys, who were Jiban's comrades, they dared not say anything.

On many an occasion there was commotion and protests were raised when Jiban sat on the chair in the library of the masters. It was a crime the like of which had never been done before. But the youngsters took a firm attitude and so the elders had to shut up each time.

Many of these young lads, Jiban's comrades of those days, are now inside the Communist Party along with him.

Once a young girl of a Caste Hindu family fell seriously ill. Somebody was urgently required to nurse her. Jiban was called in to do the job. He hesitated a bit. Had he the right to sit by the bedside of a bhadralog? But the call of duty proved strong enough. He acted as nurse tirelessly day after day and in the end brought the patient back to health.

But this incident caused not a little trouble in the village. The gentleman who had taken Jiban's help was socially boycotted. Jiban could never forget this incident and the barbarous behaviour against the 'Achyutes' (untouchables) by the Caste Hindus. From those days, he strove his utmost to educate the untouchable boys and make them stand up for their human rights.

The elders of the Caste Hindus could never forget that Jiban was an Untouchable. They were forced by their own children to allow them to play with him, but none of the parents would even let him touch their food.

Ram Thakur's festival in the

village. It was to be held in the house of a well-to-do Brahmin. Prasad would be distributed to nearly six to seven thousand persons. School boys would be acting as volunteers. Brahmins would do the cooking, but the other Caste Hindus would serve the food.

The Untouchables were of course outlawed from this whole festival; they had no right to play any part in it. But the school boys elected Jiban as the Captain of the volunteers. Jiban was aware of his status so he declined the honour. But the boys would not listen—they insisted on making him Captain and got down to work. At the end they organised the Kitchen and Jiban was sent to serve the food to the invitees.

The bhadralogs were furious, they hurled filthy abuses and left the festival in protest. But the festival did not stop; the boys continued the whole show very efficiently and saw it through. The whole village was in an uproar.

Jiban's father was panic-stricken and was counting the days for his ejection from his hearth and home. But because Jiban's own masters were against the holding of the festival, the matter did not go further.

Into Active Political Career

The year 1933. Jiban was only a young lad then. That was the time when most of the leaders of the Anushilan Party (a terrorist group) were arrested. A section of those who were outside began to think in terms of socialism—Jiban came in contact with them. Terrorism—for a Socialist aim—shook his young mind and drew him into a political career.

Those were the darkest days of repression against the Terrorists. The 'Black and Tan' rule was the order of the day. The District Magistrate of Faridpur himself visited the schools and forbade the boys to mix with the terrorists. Everybody among the boys listened in silence, but not Jiban. He got up and asked:

"Why shall we not mix with the Terrorists? What is their crime? And if you do not tell us their names, how are we to know them then?"

The teachers and local bhadralogs present hearing Jiban's words were struck dumb with terror. What the District Magistrate wrote subsequently in the Inspection Book is not known, but all the boys were thrilled and inspired by Jiban's fearlessness.

Things could not go on quietly in this way for a long time. A revolutionary Terrorist absconder took shelter in Jiban's house. The Police got scent of it, surrounded the house and arrested the absconder and together with him Jiban. This was in the year 1934. Jiban was then a student of the Matric Class. He was sent to jail.

Jail: Under The Banner Of The Communist Party

In Faridpur jail he came in touch with Muzaffar Ahmed (the Bengal Communist leader) and for the first time came to know about the Communist Party. After two years of jail, in the famous Titagarh Conspiracy Case Jiban was awarded five years' rigorous imprisonment.

Later on, during the period of the 'Release Political Prisoners' movement, he was offered a conditional release, but he refused it; he would submit to no condition from the Imperialist rulers. After serving full five years, Jiban was again held back as a Security Prisoner for four more years.

But eleven years of rigorous jail life and untold sufferings, far from killing the fire of patriotism in him, have made it strong. He has taken the path of the Communist Party as his own. He believes that the policy and programme of the Communist Party alone will break the shackles of the life-long inhumanity, injustice and oppression of the down-trodden millions of Untouchables of India and help our Motherland to march forward to freedom and progress.

20,000 PEOPLE RALLY AT MONGHYR

MONGHYR woke up to new life on January 1 to find all shops in the town on *hartal* and *Bidi* workers rickshaw-pullers and *Eikka*-drivers on strike in protest against the authorities' inadequate supply of cloth for the people. Processions from different parts of the Sadar Sub-Division and Monghyr town got together, formed a mammoth demonstration of over 10,000 and paraded the town with Red Flags and then assembled to hold a meeting, 20,000 strong, at the Townhall Maidan from where they again marched through the streets demanding increase in cloth quota.

The Sadar Sub-Division of Monghyr has been suffering from acute cloth scarcity for a long time. It was the Communists and Kisan Sabha workers who by their continued campaign, since March 1945, had managed to ease the situation to some extent by winning rights for the People's Committees to intervene in the distribution of cloth. As a result of this, what little cloth was available was judiciously distributed. But the total supply of cloth remained woefully inadequate in spite of people's agitation.

Cloth Famine

Now with the coming of winter and old clothes wearing out, shortage of cloth has become much worse. How miserable the plight of the people is can be gauged from the following.

Out of the miserable eight yards of cloth allotted per head per year, only four yards of cloth have arrived in the last nine months, out of which only half-a-yard is utility cloth, i.e., cloth intended for lower middle and working-classes!

Very recently a quota of 260 bales of cloth came for distribution in Monghyr, but out of this, nearly two hundred bales consisted of non-utility cloth. Not a single dhoti or sari was received. As for blankets, people came to know of their arrival only after they had all been sold out.

Three cases have recently been reported of kisans burnt to death while sleeping round a fire at night for want of clothes to protect them from the cold. Report has also come of a child actually dying of cold.

Cloth Campaign

The Communist Party and the Kisan Sabha had to take up this issue single-handed, Congress and League leaders did not think it was important enough to engage their attention. Numerous meetings condemning the Government, and cloth hoarders, and demanding increase in the cloth quota

were held under the auspices of the Communist Party and the Kisan Sabha all over the Sadar Sub-Division. Three big rallies were held at Lakhiserai, Barbiga and Sheikhpura, where attendance ranged from 2,000 to 3,000 in spite of bitter cold.

As the climax to this campaign, the Communist Party and the Kisan Sabha decided to hold a Central Rally at Monghyr.

In preparation for this rally, a whirlwind campaign was conducted in the Sadar Sub-Division in which a few Congress and League-minded people also participated. Response came from every quarter and from every section of the people, in spite of the indifferent attitude of the Congress and League top leaders and even active opposition from the local Congress leaders as in Jamalpur.

Opposition

Here the President and Secretary of the Thana Congress Committee went around with others trying to sabotage the rally by raising the bogey of anti-Communism and calling the demonstration an election stunt. When this failed, they tried to frighten the people away by spreading stories that there would be police firing at the rally and finally that plague had broken out in Monghyr town! These childish stories were however swept aside contemptuously by the people.

In Lakhiserai and the neighbouring thanas, from where 200 representatives of 50 villages came to the rally covering distances of 30 to 60 miles on foot, there was no opposition; but when a *jatha* was passing through the villages of Rampur and Sarpura where Sjt. Gita Prasad, the ex-Congress Socialist leader, and Sjt. Jang Bahadur, a lieutenant of Shree Krishna Babu, ex-Premier, live, a few miscreants showered filthy abuses and threw stones at the processionists. At Rampur they even hit the processionists with lathis from behind, inflicting injuries on two.

10,000 Demonstrate

Besides these *jathas*, processions of 3,000 tobacco factory workers,

of villagers residing near about Monghyr town, of *Bidi* workers, of *Karamcharis*, of *Eikka*-drivers and rickshaw-pullers—all came to Monghyr town and formed a mammoth demonstration of 10,000 which went round the town with Red Flags and shouting slogans as, "Engraji Raj Nash Ho," "Nafakhori Nash Ho," "Kapra ka quota Barheh," etc. The demonstration by the time it reached the Town Hall maidan for the rally had swelled to about 20,000. The rally was held under the Presidentship of the working-class leader of Monghyr, ANIL MITRA.

It was addressed by JNAN BIKAS MAITRA, leader of Jamalpur Railway workers, KARYA-

NAND SHARMA, Kisan leader and other Provincial Communist leaders. The rally put forward demands for increase in the quota of cloth to 18 yards per head, and for more prompt and regular distribution of the available cloth.

Results

At the end, the entire audience marched peacefully to the District Magistrate's bungalow and handed over to him the resolution conveying the people's demand. The Magistrate had to promise immediate rectification of all defects in distribution and stated that he would convey the people's demand for increased quota of cloth to the higher authorities.

This meeting and demonstration have made all sections of the people realise how strong they could be if they all stood and fought together. The middle-class people in general, including most rank and file Congressmen and Leaguers, are glad that such a demonstration was organised by the Communists and the Kisan Sabha and the bureaucracy faced with united people's strength.

Village elders who had come to the rally from Lakhiserai and other thanas declared that similar demonstrations should be held in all centres of the Province and promised that they would go back and themselves organise them.



A view of the Monghyr Cloth Rally. Communist leader, Sunil Mukherjee, addressing it.

A Patriot's Notebook

Behind the Bars in Rajahmundry

K. P. R. GOPALAN'S AND 56 OTHER POLITICAL PRISONERS' LIVES IN DANGER

I have just received news of the hunger-strike of fifty-seven political prisoners in Rajahmundry Central Jail (Andhra), led by K. P. R. and his three lifer-comrades, KUNHIRAMAN, RAGHAVAN AND NARAYANAN, all convicted in the MORAZHA CONSPIRACY CASE of 1940 (Malabar). Very grave developments have followed this hunger-strike.

YOU will remember K. P. R. (Gopalan Nambyar) the famous Kisan - Communist leader of Malabar who was sentenced to death in 1942, but later, as the result of countrywide agitation, it was commuted to life-sentence. The other three co-accused comrades of his all got life-sentences. They are now in Rajahmundry Central Jail.

Callous Treatment

Reports about their health given by a prisoner, who was recently released from the same jail, are extremely alarming. Conditions of life inside the jail are atrocious; and the climate in Rajahmundry is known to be most unsuited to prisoners coming from the Malabar Coast.

This has severely told upon the health of the four comrades, coming on top of continued incarceration for the last five years. K. P. R. is suffering badly from rheumatic and urinal complaints, heart and stomach troubles and piles. He has lost nearly 25 lbs. in weight and is almost a physical wreck now. His other three comrades have also been losing weight steadily and are getting fever intermittently.

In jail, they are denied even the books they want to read. The medical authorities have been notoriously callous. K. P. R.'s request for X-Ray test was summarily refused.

For nearly a year now, these comrades have been demanding that they should at least be transferred to Cannanore or Coimbatore, which are near their home district and where the climate is more suitable for them. But the



K. P. R. Gopalan

authorities have turned down their demands. I learn that they were not even given a chance to represent their grievances to the Inspector-General of Prisons when he recently visited the Rajahmundry jail.

Hunger Strike

As a last resort, they went on hunger-strike from January 1. Fifty-three other convicted prisoners, mostly from Malabar and Andhra, also joined them in a sympathetic strike. Their demands were for immediate better conditions in jail (proper diet, medical

aid, sanitation, clothing, and against maltreatment by the jail authorities), and transfer as soon as possible to Cannanore or Coimbatore.

The jail authorities kept the news of the hunger-strike secret. After three days like this, they called K. P. R. and the other strikers and gave them the assurance that their main demands would be conceded. On that, the hunger-strike was withdrawn.

I now hear that fifty-three prisoners would soon be transferred to their respective home-places, but not K. P. R. and his three comrades. The Inspector-General of Prisons gives as the reason for this refusal the excuse that the Malabar Police object to their being sent there!

This is nothing but a vindictive move to isolate K. P. R. and his three comrades whom the authorities regard as the "chief ring-leaders," separate all the others from them and continue to keep them in Rajahmundry. Is the life of these four leading patriots to be sacrificed to please the notorious Malabar Police?

Small-Pox Outbreak

On top of all this, comes the grave news just received that immediately after the hunger-strike was called off, small-pox broke out in the jail and affected all those who had taken part in it. It is common knowledge that the medical aid given in the Rajahmundry jail is extremely callous and inadequate and unless the public intervene immediately in this matter, the results will be serious and in some cases even fatal.

Prominent patriots, patriotic organisations and the Nationalist Press all over the country must raise their voice immediately if the precious lives of these political leaders are to be saved. Public meetings must be held, editorials written and telegrams sent to the Madras Government demanding that proper medical aid be rushed to these prisoners and they be transferred as soon as possible to places near their homes.

K. P. R. and his three comrades must without delay be transferred to Coimbatore or Cannanore. Only if the mass pressure of public opinion is brought to bear on the Madras Government and that quickly enough, then alone can the lives of these comrades be saved.

M. Krishnan

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AMONG THE MUSLIM PEASANTS OF TIPPERA, E. BENGAL

TWENTY YEARS OF CONSTANT STRUGGLES:

The writer of this article is one of the leaders of the Communist Party in Bengal. He was a noted Congress worker & Gandhiji in his early days...

ALIMUDDIN is a Muslim village which is supposed to be backward. As we struggle our way into the village, there stood before us a palatial mansion...

Ashraf Ali's Story My acquaintance was ASHRAF Ali, who is a day-labourer on the land. For the whole of our life he had hardly said anything but when I asked him...

Old Days of Battle Ashraf Ali himself is an illustrious man. This impressive understanding was not the product of a day's work...

At Chaschaganer, the police tracked him down along with the local Ashrafis, workers, Ashraf, and others. They had illegal bulletins in their possession...

Police Behind Zamindar Ashraf was not satisfied. That day Hasanabad had closed the way to the village of Bragal.

Zamindar's Rout Ten years have gone by! How many have loved? I took another look at that huge building which stands like a woman in a desert...

Congress Leader Turns About But not all the Kisan leaders had taken to density. Mulla Rahmatullah was searching for a way out...

1928: Bulldozed Of Kisan Bahas The appearance with the District Party led to understand that the Kisan had organized themselves...

Khilafat Movement And Kisan Struggles In the year 1921, a movement started in the district with the slogan 'Service of the people'...

20,000 KOLAR GOLD MINERS' STRIKE Struggle Against British Bosses TWENTY thousand miners of the KOLAR GOLD MINERS' STRIKE...

Storm Over Tippera Under Tippera's plan which a storm of protest. At the same time, the Kisan League of a limited nature...

Two Assam Congress Leaders Resign Protest Against Policy of High Command THE ASSAM CONGRESS has broken up into two camps...

A Correction Not By Mr. Kabir But His Union Men A mistake has inadvertently crept into the article entitled 'All-India Railwaymen Prepare for General Strike'...

From that day, Mulla Bahadur carried banners with Ghanshyam Datta. In fact, he went on hunger-strike with Ezzah Mirza, Qurban Ali and others.

Drains Silenced The first fruits of the struggle came not till 1929-30. GOSPI DAR, an agricultural labourer, is really the life and soul of the Kisan Bahas...

League Leader Caught MOHAMMAD ALI had received nice education, with a smattering of English. He is employed in a free primary school...

Ill-Wind Over The Land Admitted to go about the locality of the village of the village...

Communist Candidate From Tippera Muslim Constituency ZEMINDARI OPPRESSION BOYHOOD In a certain way land and labour, which passed into the hands of zamindars and capitalists...

Civil Disobedience In 1930 In the 'thirties came the Civil Disobedience movement, led by the Congress...

Famous Struggle Of 1920-30 During The Famine During the famine years it was Mulla who was active at the head of the people...

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Bengal Assembly Election Contest

For Chittagong Rural Seat

SUPPORT FOR KALPANA DUTT, COMMUNIST CANDIDATE

Chittagong Bar Association President's Appeal Famous Armoury Raider's Call From Behind The Bars

The election set-up in Chittagong has now become clear with the nomination of Mrs. NELLIE SEN-GUPTA (wife of the late Deshapriya J. M. Sen Gupta) as Congress candidate against KALPANA DUTT (of the Chittagong Armoury Raid), the Communist candidate for the Chittagong Rural seat.

THE candidates stand for two parties, each of which represents a part of what is great and good in Chittagong, and the general sentiment has been one of regret that the two are opposing each other. Kalpana's stand has been that a vote for her is a vote for Congress-Communist unity which every Chittagonian desires. The kisans have been rallying to her banner, for the organised base of the Communist Party is in the countryside, the Kisan Sabha, but the town-folk are still thinking very hard.

The New Year has brought support for Kalpana from two men with decisive influence in Chittagong. We are giving their letters and statements in full.

"Duty of Every Chittagonian"

Sjt. ATUL CHANDRA DUTT, President, Chittagong Bar Association and President of the Sadharan Brahma Samaj, issued the following statement dated January 1, Rahamatganj, Chittagong:

"When Kalpana decided to stand for the election to the Bengal Legislative Assembly, her membership of the Communist Party and the consequent probable contest with the Congress, set me thinking. I took time to consider the matter.

"The present deplorable differences between the two freedom-loving parties cannot last long. The brink of struggle in the crisis ahead will certainly remove all petty Party bickerings. The freedom struggle of an undivided India is not far off.

"Education, valour and self-sacrifice—the very qualities that are indispensable in the freedom battle are undoubtedly ingrained in Kalpana. The way in which she has served with all her power, and at her tender age, destitute and starving men and women and children with untiring energy surpasses her entire previous record and is admirable in the extreme.

"That the Congress principles or any part of its constructive programme or the freedom struggle will be jeopardised through Kalpana's election is a baseless apprehension.

"Kalpana's claim on the people of Chittagong from the standpoint of efficiency is supreme. From all



points of view, I consider it the duty of every citizen of Chittagong to stand by this heroic girl of Chittagong."

Mrs. Sen-Gupta Writes To Atul Babu

After the publication of this statement, the following correspondence passed between Mrs. Sen Gupta and Atul Babu:

Jammal Khan, January 2, 1948.
Dear Atul Babu,

I have been elected unanimously by the District Congress Committee to represent Chittagong in the Bengal Legislative Assembly Rural.

Will you please give me your help and request the members of the Bar Library to do so also in the coming elections?

I am leaving for Calcutta to see Mahatmaji, or I would have seen you.

I shall do so on my return. I trust you are well.

Yours sincerely,
Sd. Nellie Sen Gupta.

His Reply To Her

District Bar Association,
Chittagong.

Your letter of the 2nd instant reached me yesterday. I thank you for the same. I note with pleasure that the District Congress Committee has nominated you to represent Chittagong for the second time in the Bengal Legislative Assembly. I have passed on your letter to members of my Association for their information as desired by you.

As for myself, after anxious and thoughtful consideration, I thought it proper to support the candidature of Mrs. Kalpana Dutt, the Chittagong lady of good standing, possessing courage, patriotism, selfless devotion with real spirit of service, whom you know very well.

I think her membership in the Communist Party should not disqualify her candidature and justify her rejection from the public service and that she should be given an opportunity to serve the country in the wider field.

I am inclined to think that both the Congress and the Communists have the same objective, to secure independence of India, though they may differ as to the ways and means how quickly the same could be realised. When the freedom fight will be on, the present regrettable petty squabbles shall disappear. Both of them will march shoulder to shoulder, on the same plane and reach the same goal.

I hope you will kindly excuse my inability to support your candidature this time as I did last time.

Yours truly,
Sd. Atul Chandra Dutt
President, District Bar Association,
Dated 5th January 1948.

AMBIKA CHAKRAVARTY, famed leader of the Chittagong Armoury Raid who has spent twenty-seven out of his fifty-five years in jail and is at present serving his life-term behind the bars, has sent the following letter from jail to his elder brother:

Ambika Chakravarty's Appeal

Accept my respectful regards. I have already written to you two letters in the last two months. But no reply has yet been received.

In those letters I had expressed my desire to stand as a candidate for the coming Provincial Assembly elections. But now I find it will not be possible for me to do so. Two of my friends who wanted to stand for elections have not been allowed by the Government. In spite of that, I had applied to the Government to allow me to have legal consultations in the matter. A whole month is over and I do not yet know whether the Government would allow me to do so.

However, I am immensely happy to know that Kalpana, who symbolises in herself our ideals and aspirations and who stands for our ideology intends to stand as a candidate for the next elections. Mine and Kalpana's candidature are one and the same thing. In fact, I did not have the great opportunity which Kalpana had during the last 7-8 years, of standing by the people in the days of their trials and tribulations in times of crisis.

By her love of the people and selfless service during the dark days of famine and epidemics, Kalpana has endeared herself to the people more than anyone of us.

For dealing with the problems of post-war reconstruction and for helping a united battle against all kinds of injustice and oppression her contribution inside the Assembly will be invaluable. I am sure of that as I am also sure of the fact that no one in Chittagong will oppose Kalpana.

But for the prison walls separating me from the people, I and my co-workers would have gone to every house in Chittagong and appealed to the people to vote for Kalpana. I hope, however, that this appeal will reach the hearts of my sisters and brothers of Chittagong. I know that their love and blessings which we value more than anything else in life are still with us. I hope that you and other friends will do all you can to see that Kalpana wins—for Kalpana's victory will be the people's own victory.

Yours etc.
Ambika.

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NONE BETTER THAN YOUR OWN REVOLUTIONARY DAUGHTER

Calcutta Professors Hail Kalpana Dutt's Nomination

Twenty-one Professors of all the principal Calcutta colleges have issued the following statement hailing Kalpana Dutt's nomination as a Communist candidate for the coming elections from the Chittagong Rural Constituency. The statement reads:

WE have come to know that Shrimati KALPANA DUTT—foremost among the daughters of Chittagong and even all India—is standing as a candidate for the Chittagong general seat.

It is necessary for such a candidate to be elected from Chittagong who is capable of carrying forward the proud traditions of Chittagong, who has thrown herself heart and soul into every national struggle to prove to the world that Chittagong leads Bengal, who will act as a tribune around whom the present amazing new awakening will be rallied.

From this point of view we believe there is no one else in Chittagong who can be a better candidate. She has become the symbol of the people's movement in Chittagong by taking part in every revolutionary effort in Chittagong from the days of her girlhood and youth.

We hope her words will re-awaken the deepest love of country in every breast, that she will bring the message of unity and put an end to destructive recriminations and divisions among us all.

We firmly believe that the people of Chittagong will not fail to select her—who voices all their hopes and aspirations. Chittagong youth had defied the whole world and raised their fists to shatter the shackles of bondage. They kept flying the banner of patriotism despite adverse criticism at home and abroad.

Chittagong will once again prove to India—"Chittagong marches ahead of all!" She will lift her voice above that of all her critics and declare—

"It is not enough to say 'Quit India' to the British, to put this battle-cry into practice, we want the steeling of hearts in one common front and that is why we want a representative elected who will conduct a struggle against all compromise with imperialism and build a solid wall of unity."

Kalpana Dutt alone can shape the revolutionary urge of the people of Chittagong and by electing her they will give proof once again of their undying thirst for freedom.

"We believe she will not only swell the number of representatives in the Assembly but go there with the problems and demands of the old and the young—the entire womanhood of Chittagong. In her voice will find expression the sorrows and hopes of the whole country. Her presence in the Assembly will help bring about the unity of representatives of different parties. We earnestly hope Shrimati Kalpana will win the elections.

Signed:

- Santirnanjan Sen (City College).
- Bomprasad Das (City College).
- Karuna Gupta (City College).
- Rajindra Bhattacharjya (City College).
- N. Bagchi (Berhampore College).
- Pravaschandra Ghosh (Vidyasagar College).
- P. Das Gupta (Vidyasagar College).
- N. Kaviraj (Vidyasagar College).
- Mukundlal Chakravarty (Bangabasi College).
- K. Banerjee (Bangabasi College).
- P. Banerjee (Bangabasi College).
- Karuna Mukherjee (Bangabasi College).
- Anil Sen (Women's College).
- Saroj Acharya (Women's College).
- Santosh Bose (Women's College).
- Nalima Sen (Women's College).
- S. Roy (Women's College).
- Sunil Sen (Michael Madhusudan College).
- Nihar Sarkar (Scottish Church College).
- A. P. Mitra (Victoria Institution).
- Hiren Mukherji (Ripon College).

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FESTIVAL OF MASSES

Policy of Leaders Divides City Into Communal Camps

LAHORE, Jan. 13.

JANUARY 11th was the Muslim League's Victory Day to celebrate the success of the League in the Central Assembly elections. It was just one week after the release of the Indian National Army Officers. My report last week described the huge demonstrations which took place on their arrival in Lahore and the danger which had arisen of the I.N.A. itself becoming an issue of factional bitterness between political parties.

Every day that has passed since then has confirmed this. The wedge between the two sections of our people supporting the Congress and the League is being driven deeper. The manner in which the I.N.A. release demonstrations were utilised for partisan Congress election propaganda, dulled the enthusiasm of Lahore's Muslims for the release, which they had first hailed as a great anti-imperialist victory. They soon became indifferent to the whole affair.

And this indifference changed to sullen resentment when they found the I.N.A. men visiting the offices of non-League Muslim organisations like those of the Ahrars and the Khaksars. The Khaksars rushed round the city in lorries announcing that Captain Shah Nawaz was a member of their Party.

Barking At Each Other Over INA

The Hindu and Muslim Press took the lead always to attack each other. The League daily *Navabqat* began to write disparagingly of the I.N.A. The entire League press repeated Mr. Arthur Moore's imaginary story about the I.N.A. and Subhas to the effect that, their aim was the forcible subjection of minorities.

The Hindu press, on the other hand, wrote glamorously of the I.N.A. and day in and day out used it against the League, and against self-determination. I was ashamed to hear a Congressman say, "Now these Officers will be able to train an army to fight the League and Pakistan."

The result of all this bitterness was that the League's Victory Day on the 11th was sought by the leaders to be celebrated in a spirit of competition with the I.N.A. demonstrations.

"If Hindus can illuminate their houses and shops, so can we—and a hundred times better." And with that spirit, the desire for freedom among the Muslim masses was sought to be canalised against the Congress.

But among the common Muslim masses, among the Muslim town poor, it was not this spirit which dominated the celebrations of 11th January. For them it was a big festival demonstrating their urge for freedom.

The Muslim bazars and shops were gaily decorated with flags and bunting and slogans. Sweets were distributed to the poor. Mosques were crowded for the afternoon prayers. And at night there was a festival of lights. The Provincial League Headquarters were brightly lit with thousands of electric lamps.

Muslim students and others brought out cycle processions with green flags of paper, of cotton and silk, flying on every cycle. There were tongas and cars with League flags. Little boys ran about with flags in their hands. Spontaneous processions were formed in bazars. The Ad-Hoc Mohalla Committees formed by ordinary Muslim citizens made arrangements for decorations and illuminations in their respective areas.

There were a few minor clashes with the Police who tried to prevent the bringing out of some processions but there was nothing which could dull the enthusiasm of the people.

This morning, among the vast throng of Muslims who came to greet Mr. JINNAH at the Railway Station on his arrival in the Punjab, there was exactly the same sentiment as there was in the crowd which greeted Pandit NEHRU when he first came to the Punjab after his release this

brated Divali then were dark today. Had there been a common festival, the city would have been a mass of lights—none but Glancy, Khizar and the I.C.S. bureaucrats would have had darkness in their homes.

Rival Threats In Place Of Common Festival

But far from making our people think of such a common festival on the day of our common freedom from the Imperialists, there were leaders and speakers taking our people on to the path of war—war against each other.

Young announcers of the League Victory Day in tongas fitted with loudspeakers, flushed with pride, unthinking in their bravado, talked provocatively. "If the Hindus do not yield Pakistan to us, we shall take it by force."

There were some who raised meaningless slogans against the I.N.A., rousing the wrath of the Congress-minded citizens who heard them. And the reply came from communal Hindus who quickly put out saffron flags as a counterblast in the Hindu bazars and donned saffron caps.

In Anarkali (the main shopping centre), Congress shopkeepers put up innumerable Tri-colours to compete with the green League flags. Two camps—communal camps—began to be formed—green and saffron—Muslim and Hindu.

Yesterday, inside the city, the Hindus staged anti-Pakistan demonstrations in the mohallas, singing, "We shall not allow them to make Pakistan; Hindustan shall remain Akhand."

I have heard of small unpleasant incidents where Hindus passing through Muslim mohallas and Muslims going through Hindu mohallas have been waylaid, ridiculed and made to shout slogans against their convictions.

Men who have forgotten Imperialism and only want fratricidal war are busy. Must the newly-roused people of Lahore fall victim to their provocation, to the joy of the Glancys and Khizar?

by **Romesh Chandra**

year—the sentiment of a people awaiting a call to fight Imperialism.

In the afternoon, at a giant meeting in Islamia College grounds where Mr. Jinnah spoke, there were full-throated cheers when Raja GHAZANFARALI welcoming the League President declared:

"We are no more afraid of Deputy Commissioners and Officials. For we are now prepared for the struggle against the British and await your call for action."

Anti-Imperialist Upsurge

Again and again as I watched the celebrations, I saw the repetition of the I.N.A. celebrations a week before. It was the same patriotic fervour, the same zeal—flags and lights—laughter, crowds dancing in the streets with joy—slogans. Only this was the other half of our city. The forms were the same, only the actors were different—the sentiments were the same, only the words were different.

Houses and shops which were dark last week were brightly lit up today, and those which cele-

In Calcutta, Kesoram Mill Strike

WORKERS' SATYAGRAHA AT BIRLA'S RESIDENCE— Press And Citizens Back Strikers

Calcutta, January 11.

The workers of the Calcutta Kesoram Mill (Birla-owned) have made history by their heroic strike which entered its seventh week on January 11. The strike, as I have reported in previous issues of P.A., was deliberately precipitated by the Birlas by refusing the workers' just demand for bonus, in order to crush the workers' Union and the Red Flag. Police terror was mobilised to break the strike. The Union was always prepared for a reasonable settlement on minimum terms—one month's bonus, non-victimisation of workers and withdrawal of police cases and warrants. But the Birlas did not budge.

Last week, the management had at first tried to sow confusion among the workers by spreading a whisper campaign that as soon as the workers resumed work, the management would on their word of honour meet the workers' demands. But this trick deceived only a handful.

Meanwhile, Birla's agents went as far as Orissa to recruit blacklegs.

More Police Terror

When these measures failed, police terror was started. On the morning of Jan. 8, nearly a thousand pickets arrived at the mill-gate. The police lathi-charged, wounding about ten workers. Three truck-loads of a Police contingent with the Deputy Commissioner had arrived earlier. It included armed Gurkha Police and Sergeants.

The Deputy Commissioner first threatened to turn the hose-pipe on the workers to disperse them. When the workers refused to budge, a lathi-

charge was ordered in which an old woman of sixty was trampled underfoot. The workers dispersed and regrouped themselves.

When the workers from neighbouring places reached the factory to attend to the wounded, another lathi-charge was made and the police arrested one of the wounded. This time also about ten workers were wounded.

When I visited the spot, the Mill management claimed that 3,000 hands had joined work and only the Communists were creating trouble. On going round the factory, however, I found that not more than two hundred and fifty had done so, out of a total complement of eight thousand workers.

by **Nikhil Chakravarty**

FAROOQUI, the Union President, was arrested by the police, but later released.

Crowds Curse The Birlas'

A squad of Kesoram strikers with Communist leader, BHUPESH GUPTA, went round the city the same day. The Stock Exchange was crowded and nearly 5,000 gathered round the car fitted with a mike as it stopped in front of the Birla Brothers' Office. They listened with great interest to the speeches, and cries of "Down with the Birlas" rose spontaneously from the crowd. A Marwari Congressite spoke up, "Birla is a curse of our community."

The police tried to intercept but the crowd would not let them. Later, at the Esplanade, the police cordoned off the squad and took them to Lal Bazar where Bhupesh strongly protested and after a long argument they were let off.

Both Basumati and Amrita Bazar Patrika, leading pro-Congress papers, came out with editorial comments condemning the Management's obstinate refusal to meet the workers' just demands.

Satyagraha

From the same night a group of seventeen workers went on hunger strike in front of Birla's palatial Ballygunge mansion, called the Birla Park. The next day, groups of local people, men and women, visited them and greeted them.

In the morning, the police cordoned the whole mill-gate area and tried to sabotage the picketing, but even then the strike was not broken. The police also came to the Birla Park and bullied the hunger-striking Satyagrahis and at night arrested two of them and snatched away the Red Flag from

there, though the workers were in a way blocking the Birla Park gate and were entirely peaceful.

Previous to this, the Birlas tried to dissuade the Satyagrahis from the hunger strike by soft words and offer of food, but they refused. The arrested pickets soon after the Mill Secretary, Mr. Bagari, was seen entering the Birla Park with the Deputy Commissioner of Police.

On Friday morning, (January 1) more Satyagrahis came to the Birla Park, while picketing was more effective this morning. The milk-squid propaganda in front of Birlas' office the Stock Exchange roused keen indignation against them among the public today also.

Students are expected to picket Birla Park today.

Trusteeship In Practice

An interesting revelation was made by one of the Directors of Kesor. Asked why the Company was so averse against the grant of bonus to the workers, he said that they did think that the workers could claim share of the profit. Profits were produced by the owners' own concern! We reminded that such an attitude is not tally exactly with Gandhiji's idea of trusteeship, he replied bluntly: "I am a business man believing in profit. Trusteeship is Gandhiji's theory to which I do not subscribe. This is no doubt illuminating, but as it does from one of the Directors of Birla's concern, and one who is a pukka Congressman, one who has to jail. And Birla is the great patron and sponsor of the Hindustani Sewak Sangh whose ideal is 'Trusteeship'!"

As we go to press news has received that the workers have resumed work from January 14. Story of the settlement will be next week.

LEADERS of KISAN POOR CHALLENGE BIG ZAMINDARS

Candidates Of 'Hari' Committee

THE Sind Hari (Kisan) Committee has put up four candidates for the ensuing elections to the Sind Provincial Assembly. For the first time in the history of this zamindar-ridden province, poor kisans' own representatives are challenging the monopolistic grip of their oppressors over the political life of the province.

Politically, one of the most backward provinces of India, Sind is dominated by big zamindars and jagirdars. More than 70% of its population is Muslim; and the majority of the Muslim masses are Haris—landless semi-serfs. The Sind Hari has no rights over his land. He is a victim of every possible oppression—forced labour, illegal exactions, and the Batai system (share-cropping).

The Congress never became a mass movement in Sind as it did in the U.P. and Bihar. It has remained a preserve of the Hindu money-lending and mercantile community and of the traditional Hindu intelligentsia, belonging to the old official class.

The Muslim League leadership is dominated by big zamindars, whose rival factions fight among themselves for power and sabotage whatever measures are proposed by progressive League workers to ameliorate the conditions of the Haris. Neither the Congress nor the League has done anything for the Sind Haris and even their election programmes do not hold out any promise to fight for their interests in future.

It is the Sind Hari Committee which has organised the Haris, roused them, built up their strength, and fought for their interests.

Today the Hari Committee wants to send the Haris' own representatives to fight their Parliamentary battles.

And the Congress, the Nationalist Muslims and the League are all putting up their men—big zamindars and money-lenders—to fight the Hari candidates.

The four candidates set up by the Hari Committee are HAIDER BAKHSH JATOL, ABDUL KADER, RAMJI KOLHI and KAZI FAIZ MOHAMMED.

Haider Bakhsh Jatol

He is the General Secretary of the Sind Hari Committee, and is the Hari candidate from Dokri Warah Constituency in the district of Larkana. This is a politically backward area with no units of the Congress or the League. Out of a population of one lakh and seventy thousand, eighteen thousand are voters, 80 per cent of whom are Haris and small-holders having five acres or less.

Jatol is a leading progressive poet and writer of Sind who resigned his post of Deputy Collector to serve the Haris through their own independent organisation.

Against him are two candidates—one supported by the Muslim League, a reactionary toady, Nawab Ameer Ali

Lahori, and another, a notorious zamindar, Hasan Ali Isran, standing on the Jamiat-ul-Ulema ticket and actively helped by Congressmen.

Abdul Kader

ABDUL KADER, another Hari candidate, is an ex-President of Hyderabad District Congress Committee and one of the first organisers of the Port Trust Labour Union.

By 1934 he began to organise the peasantry in Sind and succeeded in building up a militant Hari Committee which was later on affiliated to the All-India Kisan Sabha. He organised the struggles of the Haris of the Jagri areas and started a movement in Tando Jam in the district of Hyderabad. His name is a terror to the landlords, jagirdars and sabukars. He has undergone a sentence of two years' imprisonment for championing the cause of the kisans.

Years of hard struggle in the cause of the Haris have shattered his health, yet the fire in his heart is still burning. He is the President of the Sind Provincial Hari Committee and a member of the All-India Kisan Committee.

He is opposed by Syed Miran Mohammed Shah, ex-Speaker of the Sind Assembly, a League candidate, and Mir Ali Ahmed, a Khaksar candidate.

Ramji Kolhi

RAMJI KOLHI is a depressed class Kolhi, a small Khatedar of James Abad in the District of Thar Par Kar.

The Kolhis, Bhilis and Menghwaris are small peasant proprietors and Haris in this district. There are very few Hindu Haris in Sind. Ramji represents them. He heard about the Hari Committee and started working among his community under the slogan of 'Hari Haqdar'. He is contesting the seat against a big money-lender, Seth Prataprai, a reactionary toady, not standing on the Congress ticket, but having the support of Congressmen.

There is considerable stir among the Hindu vested interests, for this is the first time a poor Kolhi among the Hindus in Sind has dared to challenge the top bosses.

Kazi Faiz Mohammed

He is a practicing advocate who went to Bengal to help and serve the afflicted people of that Province during the last famine. He was a Khaksar but after returning from Bengal joined the Nawabshah District Hari Committee.

He is opposed by two candidates—one is Syed Mohammad Ali Shah, ex Minister of the P.W.D., originally League candidate, but deprived of the League ticket for breach of office discipline. The official League candidate from this constituency is Ghulam Nabi Daharaj, a notorious illiterate zamindar.

AGAINST MILITARY ATROCITIES

Hindus-Muslims, Whole People Of Chittagong, Rise As One Man

[Small news items recently appeared in the daily press about Military atrocities on the outskirts of Chittagong town. Following this, the biggest joint Hindu-Muslim anti-Imperialist demonstrations are taking place throughout Chittagong District led by the Congress, the Muslim League and the Communist Party. Very little of this news has so far appeared in the Nationalist dailies.

In the following dispatch wired to us from Chittagong, Kalpana Dutt gives the full story of this incident and the people's protest movement that is sweeping the whole District.—Ed.]

CHITTAGONG, January 9.

ON the morning of January 8, we heard that the Military had set fire to a locality about five to six miles from the town, and that not a single hut had been left standing. Assaults on women were also reported.

A Muslim came and reported the matter to our Party Office and added that he had been to the League Office too, but they laughed his story away, dismissing it as incredible.

Immediately on receipt of the report, two of our comrades, JYOTIRMOY DUTTA and SUMATI MAJUMDAR, were sent to the spot on cycles. A little later, Sjt. MANIK BANERJEE (writer), ABANTI SANYAL, ANIL, our local boy photographer, KALPATARU and myself followed them.

Whole Village Guttled

The first scene that struck our eyes was one of heaps of ashes of gutted huts, broken pieces of utensils, a few tin cans and whisks of smoke issuing from the burnt-out remains. Bamboo poles or hay-stacks solidly held, were still burning. A few petrol cans could also be seen lying here and there.

The whole spectacle revealed how little these villagers had which they could call their property: they had only their shelters made of bamboos and other hard-earned meagre resources.

In some corners, houses a little better-built could be discerned by their clay walls that were still standing black and burnt out. Not only hay-stacks, even spaddy granaries had been destroyed or were still burning.

People Pushed Into Fire

People from neighbouring villages all flocked here. Muslim women, particularly those without Purdah, were trying to avoid the gaze of the crowd by standing grazing the trees.

As I was passing by them, they said with curious looks, "There is a Memsahib." I went up to them and quietly answered, "I am no Memsahib, I am a Bengali girl like you all." Hearing us speak in the Chittagong dialect, they all cried out, "She is one of us. She talks like us." This broke all barriers; elders among them could not hold back their tears, while their words choked their throats as they gazed at the smouldering ashes in front.

Some broke down pointing out, "Here was our hut." I could say no words to console them.

A little later, when they calmed a little, some among them said, "Come, let us show you all that happened. Last evening they came and set fire to our huts. Hundreds of dark soldiers came pouring in. Our menfolk had all gone in the hat (weekly fair), while they surrounded each one of our huts and set fire to them. As women dragged their honour, while ornaments were snatched away from Main Re persons of those who had them.

Those who resisted were thrown into the fire. We could do nothing and were overpowered by a large number of soldiers. As men were being assaulted, we all died for our lives and honour and as they started looting everything

they could find in the empty houses."

She Had Forgotten How To Beg

With these words, the women spontaneously took me along with them; a blind old woman hearing our footsteps came out led by her little grandson; weeping, she told her tale of woe:

"I am blind and live by begging; it is for this grandson I kept the little that I saved. In this room—there is nothing left behind. After setting fire to those houses, they came and looted my novel too."

Her vacant and tearless eyes seemed to give the picture of helplessness; she seemed to have forgotten how to beg.

A row of seven to eight huts next to hers were completely gutted; somehow her shelter escaped the fire, but not the looting of the soldiers.

Nearby there was another row of huts. An ailing old woman seeing me cried out: "They have beaten me to death; I won't live longer." Her daughter-in-law explained:

"As the fire and looting began, I started running with this in a search for food and honour, but hearing some noise I turned round and found an old woman being dragged by the soldiers and then thrown into a tank."

The next hut looked a little better off. Here we found a mother with her daughters and relatives weeping in front of a single Sindhuk (family chest) and seeing us their cry went up. The mother said, "Only yesterday I got my daughter back home from her husband's place. She had nothing but what there was in this Sindhuk—400 tolas of gold and Rs. 400 in cash." The daughter added, "My brother sent us money yesterday, here is the money-receipt too."

Cow, Goats, Poultry Burnt

We moved on to a heap of ashes about twenty yards away and found a half-burnt cow and the stinking smell of burnt goats, chicken, etc. all over the place. Nearby four or five old women and some young and middle-aged women were sitting grimly. One of them burst into tears:

"We are poor folks. We had sat down for our meal of rice and vegetables, but even this little boy of mine could take nothing, for this visitation came just then."

One of them named Kanchana, added:

"I am a widow and have nobody in the world. So I used to go to the Depot for work; to provide for a rainy day I had patiently saved up Rs. 400 and kept it locked up. Everything is burnt out now."

The Beasts Raped

Pointing to a girl of fourteen or fifteen she went on:

"She is my niece; her name is Shakuntala. I kept her with me as her husband won't keep her. Young as she was, I never took her to the

Depot. Yesterday, the soldiers dragged her to the camp despite our frantic efforts. We hovered round the camp and heard her wailing. All through the night they raped her and let her off in the morning. What fate awaits us?"

And she poured forth again:

"They started the fire with our huts. They dragged out Maoda Khatun aged about 22 or 23 and before our very eyes four or five of them together raped her. We tried to stop them. But two or three of them grabbed us. I was saved as they found a baby in my arm and thought that I was an old hag."

"Maoda after being raped was feeling stark naked, but they caught and raped her again."

"Rajjabi, a 50-year old woman, was not spared. They broke her head with one blow and she is in hospital."

A little distance away, we found some blood-stained clothes and learnt that they belonged to those who had been wounded. Another woman told us with tears in her eyes that her husband was at home, but the soldiers forcibly threw him into the fire. He had to be removed to

Within half-a-mile, all houses were burnt down. One person died at night and the condition of four, two men and two women, is precarious. It is not yet possible to assess the financial loss involved; but certainly it exceeds a few lakhs and 58 huts have been totally razed to the ground.

Immediate Relief Rushed

Following our visit, other bodies, both official and non-official, visited the spot. On our way back, we discussed about relief, food and shelter for hundreds of shelterless and penniless men and women.

A little further up, we found a kitchen with two big chaulas under trees where food was being cooked by some villagers. They said that some local gentlemen had arranged for two meals for them, and we also learnt that Muslims from the neighbouring villages had already raised Rs. 1,153 for their brothers and sisters in distress.

It seemed amazing; we were thinking of holding meetings for organising relief, etc. But those whom we meet as being uneducated and backward had not wasted time making plans like us, but shown through their own effort how relief is to be organised. On the way, we found some prominent Leaguers sending cart-loads of cloth for the distressed.

It was decided by all parties and organisations, the Congress, the Muslim League, the Communist Party and all others, to hold a joint meeting in the afternoon; it was necessary that all parties together should form joint Relief Committees, set up a non-offi-

Rs. 15,000 had already been sent for relief to Kasalpara village. The M. E. S. (Military Engineering Service) had sent word to get all available poles and coolies had already been sent to Kasalpara to repair the damage to the huts. The Military camp too had been removed to Patenga.

The Commissioner requested the Muslim League leader, Siddiqui Sahib, to invite all representatives to his house where he himself would come, for many might not like to come to the Commissioner's bungalow.

Toadies Oppose Hartal

At Siddiqui Sahib's house, representatives of the Congress, the League, the Communist Party, the Students' Federation etc. in all over 400, met.

Some loyalist traders, like Khan Bahadur Fazlul Qadir, said, "It won't be right to call a hartal, for that would harm our people. Let us put forward our demands to the Commissioner, who has already promised relief, etc." Spontaneous protests came from the other Muslims. Abdul Qasim Khan, ex-Munsif said, "We must call a hartal, for it would demonstrate our anger against the atrocities."

The Commissioner arrived. His story was that the criminals were not military men but belonged to the Civil Pioneer Corps. He said that like all Indians he was also grieved at the happenings, and that arrangements were being made for relief to the victims and for the punishment of the culprits, etc. He said, "Don't have a hartal."

The ex-Munsif replied promptly that the description of the Pioneer Corps as civil coolies was incorrect, that they were in uniforms, engaged in Military construction and the helpless villagers particularly in view of the absence of menfolk, were cowed down by the Military. He added:

"To-day, even if 10,000 ordinary civil coolies had attacked the village, they would not have come back alive. Does the Commissioner think that in a free country, a single culprit would have returned unscathed after such outrages on mothers and sisters? We do not want mere relief, we want the removal of the root cause, so that in future such things can never happen."

People Must Take Relief In Own Hands

After this, Manoranjan Sen and Ranaidur spoke on behalf of the Communist Party, demanding open trial, speedy punishment of the criminals, a Non-Official enquiry and demanding that all funds for relief should be handed over to an All-Parties' People's Relief Committee.

The lady Fazlul Qadir interrupted them and blamed patriotic organisations, saying, "Just now news came that some people have prevented the villagers from accepting relief from Government. Immediately the entire Muslim members shouted, 'It is a lie.' 'We do not want to listen to you.' 'Sit down.' 'Get out,' etc. No one would agree to leave the whole relief in Government hands, because they know it would be coercive, inadequate."

Then spoke Sjt. Jamini Bosa, the President of the District Congress and he made a very good speech. He said that the people had heard lots of promises till now from the bureaucrats. "Fifty-five lakhs of our people died of famine, but the gaddis of the Governor, magistrates and commissioners were untouched. We want an end of all this."

The Commissioner was non-plussed. He adjourned the meeting saying it was time for Namaz (prayers).

Chittagong's Pride Reawakens

Everyone who was present declared that the hartal would take place and a rally of 10,000 should be held and no leaders of the Congress, the League or the Communist Party, would be allowed to stand in the way. All that the Commissioner had said would be told to the people at the public meeting.

As the people came out of the meeting, I was very much inspired by the spontaneous slogans of the Muslim public who shouted, "Down with British Imperialism," "Down with Khan Bahadur," "Hindus, Muslims Must Unite," etc.

I wished that those who slandered the Muslim people as blind, backward, not desirous of unity, etc. were there to see what our Muslim brothers in Chittagong were saying and doing. The incidents of the last two days alone had shown how those League leaders, who bask in official smiles and patronage, are openly denounced by the Muslim people.

Those who say that the League is in alliance with the Government, let them come and see what intense anti-Imperialist hatred there is among the Muslims, young and old, and how full-throated is their cry, "Down with British Imperialism."

At our Party Office, a number of Muslim youth had come to find out what happened at the meeting. As they heard the report about the Khan Bahadur's attempts to stop the hartal, one of them told the others, "Mark them out, we must choose our leaders properly and not be deceived by their lies."

After a long time, I once again felt confident that the long and noble tradition of Hindu-Muslim unity that was Chittagong's pride would last despite a thousand tempests.

Full Story by Kalpana Dutt

Kasaipara-Story of The Village

KASAIPARA is the name of the village only about five or six miles from the town; it lies in the jurisdiction of Pancholathana. Most of the inhabitants are butchers, some are traders who had taken up contracts supplying meat to the military.

The war had brought some added income to many of them. But they had not the sense or experience enough to put their savings in a bank, and so most of them had kept paper currency notes in trunks, Sindhuks or hidden them in lofts. So some may have suffered a loss of twenty to twenty-five thousand rupees, while the total loss amounts to lakhs.

It is a Muslim village. Only a quarter of a mile from here the Military had their previous camp. From our talks, we were able to gather that the Military had previously also visited the village and there were a few girls in the village who had gone bad. Finding the soldiers frequenting it, the youngmen of the village decided to teach them a lesson, when they next came to the place.

That night a Hindu passer-by fell into a ditch, knocked down by a military truck. Two Muslims mistaking him to be a military man, shouted, "This military fellow has been taught a lesson." But when the man from the ditch shouted that he was not a military man, one Muslim called the other, "Hurry up, and get him out of the ditch. He is our man. Don't you know that from to-day Hindus and Muslims are all united?"

On the 9th morning, the Students' Federation decided to call a strike in schools and colleges to go propaganda for the hartal on the next day. At 11, students came out on strike—first the Medical School boys, then of the Collegiate School, of the Colleges, and finally of all Madrasahs and Pathshalas. It is learnt that the Collegiate School authorities locked up the gates, but the boys peacefully climbed over the gates.

Military was posted in large numbers at street corners—two or three military policemen standing everywhere. A little later, it was learnt that no military truck or lorry would be allowed to come into the town and that was why this arrangement. The town became out of bounds for military trucks! Two white sergeants came to the Communist Party Office to enquire if any meetings or processions would take place that day, for they were anxious to avoid any possible incident.

Soon after came the news that the Commissioner wanted to meet representatives of all parties and organisations.

On the day of the occurrence two married Muslim women had gone to the tank to fetch water, while on the opposite bank some soldiers were sitting in mufti. They began making ugly gestures at the two women. On coming back, they reported the matter to their men, who went out and gave them a sound beating. As a reprisal, it appears that the soldiers brought in a number of friends, but they too had to fall back after a beating.

That was also the day for the hats (fairs) in two neighbouring centres. The menfolk had left for the hat and in the meantime a gang of over 200 soldiers with their Captain came back with daylight petrol lamps in hand and surrounded the village. They belonged to the 16th Ganjam Regiment—they poured petrol on the huts and set them on fire, then they looted and raped women.

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