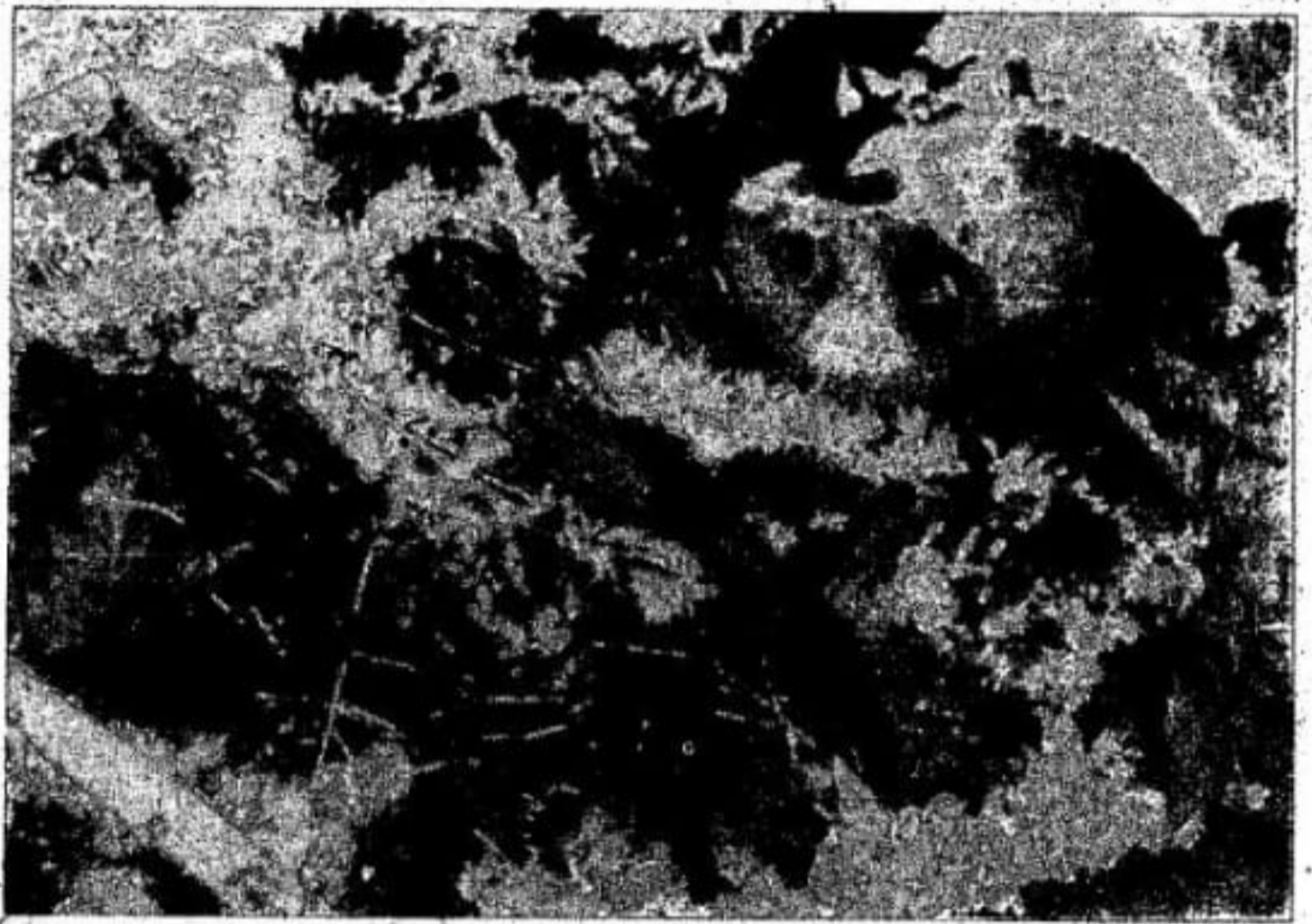


MAI TO US ALL . . .



Kahani Bai Syed (Mai) before she got cancer.



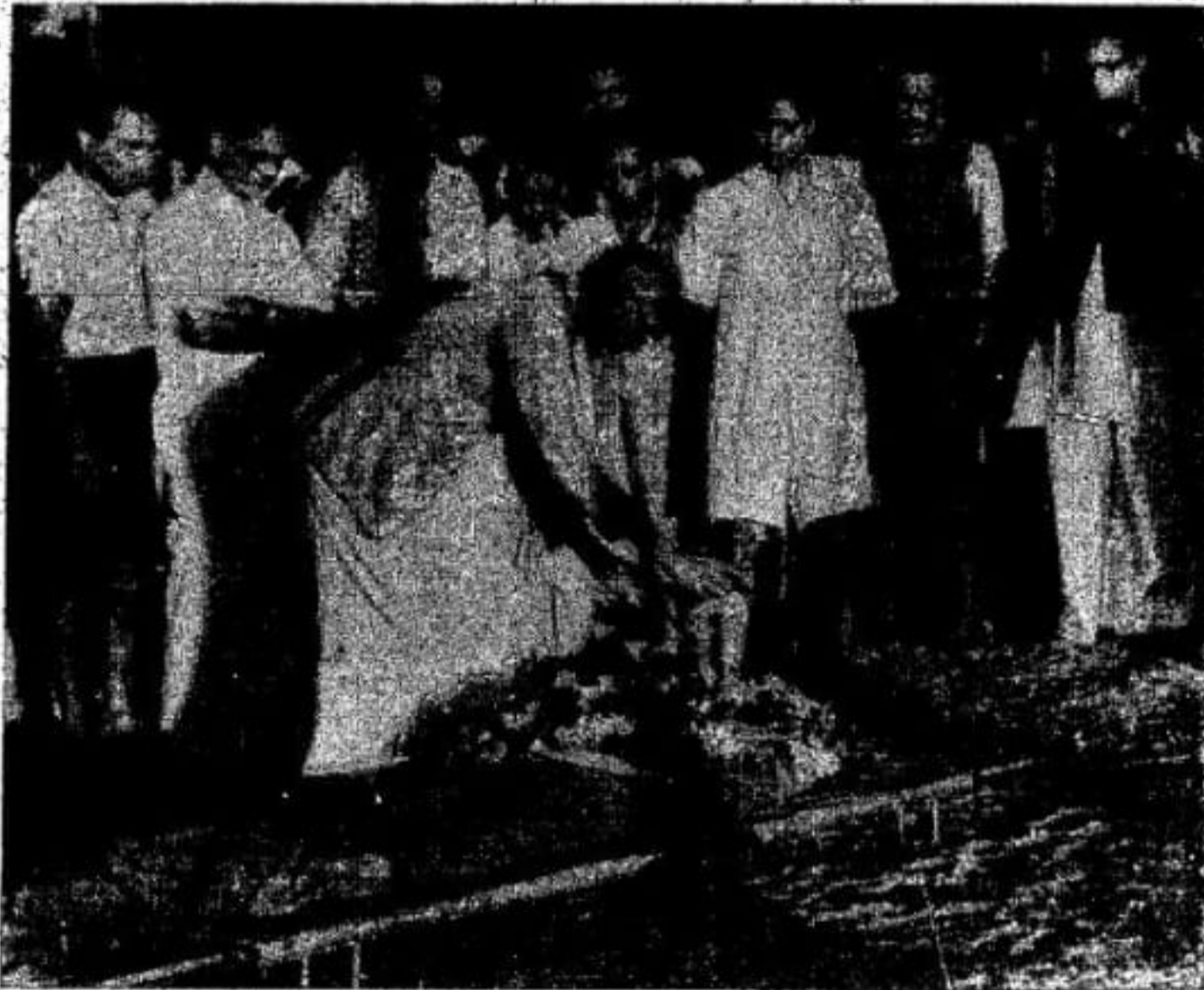
Mai at the crematorium.

Member Of A Great Family

(Story: Pages 6-7)

MAI IS DEAD. . . .
 A GOOD AND NOBLE WOMAN AND A REAL MOTHER TO US
 ALL IN THE COMMUNE. . . SHE DIED AS ALL OF US WOULD
 LIKE TO DIE, IN THE SADDLE, DOING HER PARTY JOB AS LONG
 AS SHE COULD STAND ON HER LEGS. . . MAI IS DEAD, BUT
 HER SPIRIT LIVES THROUGH THE GREAT FAMILY OF MAR-
 TYRS AND WARRIORS THAT IS OUR PARTY.

(From P. C. Joshi's speech at the Funeral on 16th December, 1945,
 Dadar (Bombay) crematorium.)



Dada (her husband) placing the last wreath.



Kanyur martyrs, Kuzhambu's family, all behind the Party.



Kanyur martyr, Abudaker's mother and young brother, both behind his Party.

RAILWAY WORKERS MOBILISING FOR ALL-INDIA GENERAL STRIKE

Growing Public Support For Workers' Demands

The General Council of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF), representing over two lakh railway workers, will be called upon to take the most momentous decision of its history when it meets in the middle of January. Unless the Labour Department of the Government of India intervenes to force the Railway Board to refer the workers' demands to adjudication, the country will very soon be faced with a general strike, a general strike on all the railways all over the country, involving their entire staff, workers, clerks, all, no less than eight lakh employees.

THE demands put forward by the workers are simple and just. Three lakhs of them, recruited for war-time work, face unemployment. All of them are denied any wage-increase. They may even be deprived of whatever dearness allowance they are at present getting, "should prices fall." The workers demand jobs and a living wage for everyone.

Railway administrations in their Conference (held at the end of November) have unanimously acknowledged "the loyalty and exemplary efforts of railwaymen in India during the years of war." And yet equally unanimously have they refused to concede or even consider their demands.

Army Work Versus Railways!

In the last category—working for the Army—are 8,000 men. In the workshops at Kanchrapara, Moghulpura, Golden Rock etc. they did direct war work manufacturing munitions, building pontoon bridges, etc. But the Board refused to be concerned with their case. They did "Army work"! The Railways had nothing to do with them!

Then there were the 75,000 workers employed against permanent vacancies. "In view of the Government's policy to find jobs for 70,000 ex-service men" (Sir Edward Benthall, Member of War Transport), 70% of these

intermittent workers, have to work, week-in, week-out, 12 hours a day, 31 hours a week, 52 weeks a year. They are just not allowed any calendar day's off, i.e., rest for a full day.

The Board's only reply to the demand for a 42-hour week was that the workshops were already working 48 hours a week. As for the rest, their hours would decrease, automatically as the war work decreases. And the essentially intermittent workers? Well, nothing could be done for them just at present.

Inhuman Exploitation To Remain

Another demand of the Federation was that the Railways should directly take over work at present done by "contract labour." Previously workers in railway service used to do such work as loading and unloading coal, cleaning ash-pits, etc. Now this work is done by labour employed by contractors. The result is that these middlemen extort over twelve hours of work, where railways employed them for nine hours, and pay Rs. 11 where the railways paid Rs. 21

even of the lowest paid! To-day thousands draw anywhere between Rs. 11 and Rs. 18 per month. And even here there are distinctions according as they are employed under the old or the revised scales of pay.

It was only when the Board was faced with this reality of their own making that they reluctantly agreed to appoint a Committee to go into the issue in co-operation with representatives of the AIRF. But such has been their reluctance that they have not yet fixed the date of the first meeting of this Committee.

It is worth noting here the state of Railway finances. They have over hundred crore rupees in Depreciation Funds. During the six years of war their income has gone up by one hundred and seventeen crore rupees, and yet they have not granted any wage increase to their workers during the last sixteen years.

Forcing General Strike

To anyone acquainted with the ways of the bureaucracy in India, the simple meaning of all this should be obvious. The Railway Board has just banged the

There is country-wide upsurge among the railway workers to-day.

October 31 was observed over all the railways as Anti-Retrachment Day. From the end of October, workers' meetings and conferences are being held throughout the country. From Chittagong in the east (Bengal-Assam Railway) to Bombay in the west (G.I.P. Railway Workers' Annual General Meeting), from Madras in the south, with its all-powerful S. I. Railway Labour Union (one of the mightiest Trade Unions in the whole country), to huge meetings of over 10,000 and processions of 5,000 at places like Ajmer in the north, workers have been getting ready for the battle the Board is forcing them into.

Even the slightly better paid clerical staff on the railways, who were supposed to be a vacillating element, are backing the demands of the workers. At Benares, a huge meeting, organised by the union of 1,500 clerks from the Traffic Accountant's Office, expressed their readiness to fight the common battle.

That was at the beginning of November. Once again, in the beginning of December, workers on GIP, BCCI, NS, SI, EI, NW, BA Railways, etc., held meetings and acquainted the Railway Board with their resolve to fight the impending retrenchment and the latter's refusal to concede their legitimate demands.

The BCCI Railwaymen's Conference at Ajmer, meeting after the failure of the Delhi talks, has given a call for a strike ballot. It was attended by 291 delegates from all over the line and over 10,000 workers.

While the overwhelming mass of the workers have thus been marshalling their forces, a small section of their leaders, here and there, are busy trying to disrupt them and play the White Bosses' game, either by abusing the Communists or praising the bosses.

Hand Over The Reds!

HUMAYUN KABIR is a representative of the Birla-sponsored Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh. On November 5, i.e. one full month after the Madras meeting of the AIRF, he held a meeting of his 'workers' at Chittagong. On the Bengal & Assam Railway they exact overtime without paying for it, and also wrongfully dismiss workers. But Mr. Kabir was unconcerned with all that. He exhorted his audience to get prominent Red Flaggers arrested on the plea that they were inciting the workers to strike. And a C.I.D. fellow attended this meeting.

The same attempt at disruption, with the same slogan of anti-Communism, was tried at the GIP Railway Workers' Annual General Meeting at Bombay in the second week of November. But so overwhelming was the unity of the majority of the sixty-five members and the hundred and twenty-five delegates that the disruptors beat a retreat. They had to join with others in a unanimous support to the slogan of general strike in case the Board proved recalcitrant.

"Assurance Trick" Exposed

B. K. MUKHERJEE, General Secretary of the East Indian Railway Workers' Union, recently issued a circular to all his branches that the Union had "secured from the General Manager, E.I. Railway, an assurance that there will be no retrenchment of the staff on the E.I.R." Of course, Mukherjee still advised against "lowering our voice of protest against contemplated retrenchment till the question is fully decided by all other Railway Administrations." Nice sentiment that!

The fact, however, is that Mukherjee has got no such assurance from the Manager! He had written a letter to the latter in which he wanted the Manager "to agree with the Union that retrenchment will not be necessary on this Railway." Further, "In the absence of any such information from you, we pre-

(Continued on page 3, Col. 1.)

RAILWAY BOARD BOSSES' PROVOCATION

vacancies will be thrown open for demobilised men. That will throw over 52,000 railwaymen on the streets.

But by far the largest number to be retrenched would be the "temporary hands recruited for war-time activities". According to Government estimates, these are over 2,50,000. Once again, the Board's attitude to their case had already been defined by Sir Edward Benthall. "Our ability to absorb these men will depend not only on the tempo of rehabilitation and the speed with which new projects are taken in hand, but also of course on the level of traffic offering."

First Engine In Three Years

In simple words the need of the hour is rapid industrialisation. But how does the Board propose to tackle it? Of course, the Board had many "new projects" on hand. They had decided "as a matter of policy" to manufacture locomotives in India. The Kanchrapara workshop would do it. Only the pace set for it was the stupendous achievement of Kanchrapara which had produced the "first locomotive in three years."

Neither the Chief Commissioner for Railways nor any Manager was 'able' to assure the representatives that there would be no retrenchment, even in the year to come. None was 'able' to state what the exact figure of unemployment would be in the near future!

But the Labour Department of the Government of India, in their Circular LR15, of July 20 and the Manager of the E. I. Railway in a confidential circular to his Divisional Superintendents (to quote only two instances), have already suggested how, and what categories of men are to be retrenched. The latter even treated it as a "very urgent matter." Only care has been taken to keep the whole affair very close.

With this attitude, with their unwillingness even to disclose facts, it was but natural for the Board to turn down the suggestion for a 42-hour week. The suggestion was meant to improve service conditions and absorb thousands of workers.

It will shock anyone that thousands, classed as essentially inter-

per month. Of course facilities for cheap grain, housing, etc. are just not available to these men.

If this inhuman practice were discontinued, it would absorb thousands of workers. But then that would also mean the administration would have to spend more cash by way of payment, high railway officials would have their easy access to corruption blocked. And so the demand was turned down by the Railway Board—after all the noble sentiments that have been expressed by Sir Edward Benthall about the "paramount importance of the human factor in Railways"

As for the other demands of the Federation, all that the Board did was to "duly take note of" them, nothing more.

Dearness Allowance May Go

Then came the question of revision of the scales of pay. The Federation had suggested certain scales for revision. The Board pleaded "inability to consider them till post-war price-level stabilised." That meant a year and more. Till then workers should just wait. But in the meanwhile prices would go down. In that case the Board reserved to itself its right to cut down and even to do away with whatever dearness allowance workers are at present getting.

What was shocking was the way in which the bosses asserted that the railway workers got better wages than those employed in private concerns. Indeed, Sir Edward had previously tried to misinterpret the workers' sense of patriotism, in not going on strike during the war years, as their "appreciation of the Government's square deal towards them."

Monthly Wage of Only Rs. 11

The facts, however, are that the wages are not based on any wage-level. The Royal Commission on Labour (1929) had pointed out that over 44,000 workers out of over seven lakhs got less than Rs. 20 per month then. They had strongly recommended their cases for revision. What the management did, however, was to cut down the wages,

door against any possibility of a reasonable compromise. The conclusions the fifteen representatives were forced to when they left the meeting were:

- (1) The retrenchment of about three lakh workers is a grim reality, no matter what "arguments" the Board pleases to offer. It had refused to pay heed to any suggestion whereby these men could be absorbed.
- (2) Increase in the scales of pay has not been guaranteed.
- (3) The Dearness Allowance may be stopped any day. And what followed from all this callous attitude—
- (4) The Board is not prepared to face adjudication, that is, an impartial verdict, based on examination of facts, from a third party.

Inside Story

GURUSWAMY, General Secretary of the AIRF, summed up the workers' case when he spoke at Ajmer, after the failure of the Delhi talks.

"We will fight this retrenchment cost what may... We were told we exaggerated when we put the figure at 2,50,000 at Madras. The fact is, not 2,50,000 but 3,35,000 workers are today going to be sacked. General Managers of different railways, appreciating workers' services during the war, had recommended a three months' bonus. But the Finance Department turned it down."

"I know it from reliable sources that during the war period, General Managers of various railways had recommended the application of the old scales of pay to all. But the Railway Board rejected this suggestion. I also learn that the Labour Department of the Government of India had recommended that the present Dearness Allowance be consolidated in the wages. Again the Railway Board turned it down. So long as the war was on, Government kept assuring the workers regarding revision of their scales of wages."

"Let me warn the Railway Board and the Government of India that if they reject our just demands the only weapon left for us to strike. Let the Board understand it quite well. 1943 is not 1935."

Workers Take Up Challenge

The Federation has now to return to the workers for their final verdict. And the workers have been expressing themselves in unmistakable terms.

Retrenchment Not Necessary

Is this alarming retrenchment, of one out of every three workers, unavoidable? Nothing of the kind. The AIRF at its Madras meeting in October, had suggested a 16-point programme to the Railway Board. It was aimed at improving the service conditions of railway workers (a 42-hour week, wage increase, etc.) and setting the pace for industrialisation in the country by adapting the extended workshops to serve the needs of Indian railways in engines, rolling stock, etc.

If the Board had accepted the proposals, it would not only have put an end to the threat of mass unemployment, it would have greatly improved railway travel for the public and helped the country's trade.

Railway Board Evades Question

But the Board was in no mood to accept these proposals. They would pave the way for rapid industrialisation of the country, which the Imperialist bosses of the Board do not want! In its reply to the Federation dated October 25, the Board could not challenge the reasonableness of these proposals, but they evaded the whole issue by conditioning everything on the "pace of rehabilitation and the speed with which new projects are taken in hand."

While not committing themselves to any assurance, they at the same time, wanted the Federation "to refrain from giving publicity to exaggerated statements" as they caused "undesirable and unnecessary alarm."

The reply was evasive. The Board was playing with the fate of three lakh workers. And yet the AIRF offered to discuss the matter through its representatives, in an interview with the Board. They meant to try all avenues of settlement. Fifteen representatives of the AIRF met the representatives of the Board at New Delhi in the first week of December.

There were three issues before the meeting. The retrenchment of temporary hands, revision of the scales of pay, and increased dearness allowance.

Of the workers threatened with retrenchment, there were those employed against permanent vacancies; those engaged in casual or temporary railway work; and those employed for work of other departments like the Army.



ANDHRAS TO THE FORE

TAMILS GET GOING

But Little Time -- Move Faster All!

ANDHRA is one of our Party's strongholds. The best and the majority of the Congress workers of the thirties are today in our Party at the head of 8,000 Party members...

On our Andhra leader SUNDARAYYA'S appeal in the Prajashakti, our daily, meetings were held in every nook and corner of Andhra, and the people rallied in their thousands...

And in many instances, it was the Party leaders who had to intervene and to tell the donors to think again and not pay beyond their means.

CHINNAPALLI PAPAIAH, a man with moderate means who had already paid Rs. 3,500 for the Party, had a couple of acres of land left. He wanted to do his bit this time by selling one acre of his land...

And the Manager wrote back to say, "The presumption contained in the last paragraph of your letter is correct." We have seen above from the Railway Board's answer to the Federation representative what such words are worth.

But such disruptors are pitifully handful. The railway workers are on the march. And they are not alone in their just fight.

They Are Not Alone

Workers from other industries have been backing their struggle. The Session of the Bombay Provincial Trade Union Congress (TUC) at Sholapur, attended by over 7,000 workers, supported them.

National organisations are supporting them in their fight. Sardar Patel in a press statement calls for suspension of retrenchment and revision of existing scales of pay, etc.

The Delhi Provincial organisation of the League, the Ajmer-Merwara Provincial Congress Committee, Rajputana Provincial Hindu Sabha, etc., progressive sections in Cochin Prajashakti, to quote only a few instances, support the railway workers.

The Railway Board stands isolated. The workers have expressed themselves emphatically. They are ready for their marching orders, should the Labour Department of the Government fail to force adjudication in the dispute.

Luxury Given Up

Another outstanding example is of K. VENKATASHWARA RAO, a rich man before he joined the Party. This year's call of the Party inspired him to do his best, he sold 10 acres of his land and gave Rs. 17,000 for the PRAJASHAKTI DAILY FUND, and Rs. 2,000 to the Party Fund.

Andhra comrades were the first to establish the tradition of giving their all to the Party. Sundarayya was the first to do it. Today there are numberless stories of comrades who are carrying forward this great tradition.

Workers' Response

On hearing of the appeal, PRESS workers of Gudivada promised each to pay a month's wage for the Fund.

The MUNICIPAL workers, the most oppressed among the workers, and the poorest, gave Re. 1 each.

ALUMINIUM workers of Rajahmundry collected Rs. 116 from amongst themselves and Adithi and Thefti workers have promised Rs. 116 and Rs. 500 respectively.

Agricultural Labourers

So also the worker in the countryside, the agricultural labourer, is not behind his town-brother. The agricultural workers of Bhatlo Peenamuru a village in Kistna District decided to give their share towards the Party Fund.

When the harvesting commenced, coolies and ryots organised a big procession and went to the President of the Panchayat Board. There were 144 ryots, 73 women, and 50 men labourers.

The reaping of fifteen acres of land was finished by evening and the entire earnings of Rs. 150 was paid into the Press Fund of our Telugu daily.

Women Come Forward

In Andhra too, the Party has done much to raise the women, to defend their rights. Inevitably, therefore, in every meeting where the appeal was given, women gave away bangles, silver anklets, rings etc. Outstanding story is that of a poor woman who had hardly anything of value excepting four silver toe rings which she gave away for the Party.

Equally striking is the story of SHESHGIRAMMA, who had lost her husband a fortnight before Sundarayya's call for funds—but bravely came forward to give Rs. 275 for the Party.

In Tamilnad

Largest base of our Party in TAMILNAD is the great trade union movement. Its heads and the trade union movement there is the oldest in our country. In fact, the militant workers of Madras, Coimbatore and Madurai, have been in the forefront of working-class struggles since the early twenties.

This is why in Tamilnad, even more than anywhere else in India, it is the workers who are in the forefront of collections.

In Madura, our comrades went for Hundi collections in the working-class area in 27 squads. In six and a half hours they collected Rs. 420. The working-class comrades knew that it is these comrades who organised cloth distribution for 25,000 people in Madura for Divali. 75% of the collection was from workers.

In Erode, railway workers' stronghold, workers collected Rs. 102-10-0.

Clerks Pay

A clerk from Kalugumalai sent us Rs. 5. In his letter, he says: "I am a clerk in a shop getting only Rs. 15 per month. I am sending Rs. 5 for the Party because the Party is the champion of our cause."

A regular reader of Janashakti, another clerk, while sending Rs. 2 for the Party Fund said:

"I have been following the activities of the Party with an eye that is not blinded by anti-Communist prejudices, or pro-Communist illusions, and I cannot help admiring the courage of conviction and the sincerity of purpose underlying your writings, speeches and activities."

After referring to the slander against us, he says, that the toiling masses are gathering behind the Party. He ends with the message: "May your Party become the bulwark of unity, freedom, democracy and progress."

Our Party comrades in Tanjore at a General Body meeting, decided to collect Rs. 1,000. T. N. Manikam of Tiruchengode presented his newly purchased watch after reading Joshi's appeal.

Kalyansundaran from the same place and his wife, both have given their rings for the Party.

In Madras

At a rally held to announce the candidature of JEEVANANDAM, who is the Party candidate for the Provincial Assembly in one of the labour constituencies, the workers collected a sum of Rs. 180-8.

T. M. Manickam, a cigar worker in the city, on hearing of the appeal pledged he would pay ten days' wages.

From Railway Workers

Desikar and Vaidyanathan from M.S.M. Railway Workshop came forward with Rs 15 and Rs 10. Party members and other sympathisers in the workshop promised to pay Rs 150 and a bag of paddy.

Even middle-class people—and our Party in Madras is weak among them—are coming forward. A Barrister walked into the local Party Headquarters, and said: "I read Joshi's appeal. I want to pay a small sum each month to your Party till the elections are over." He sent a cheque for Rs. 100.

Party Members

Krishnan, in charge of literature sales, donated Rs. 40 while Kantimathi, a girl comrade on the Janashakti, gave Rs. 15. Tramway worker, Kanniah, has promised his entire wages for this month together with the dearness allowance to the Party Fund. In all, 52 workers, Party Members and sympathisers have paid Rs. 783.

A Malayali worker, Unni Azari, a worker of the Golden Rock workshop while promising Rs. 89

"For Your Noble National Work..."

--Says 'Grand Old Man' of Maratha Letters

for the Party Fund, says:

"It will be difficult for me to name this sum before March—but my burning love for the Party has prompted me. I know that our Party should become strong to do away with the 6-11-4 'coolie system of the Stores Department."

And now that his advance from Provident Fund has been sanctioned he is sure to fulfil his promise by December end and also of collecting Rs. 300 from his department.

A Blind 'Reader'

D. M. Gokarn, who lost his sight and is now blind, contributed Rs 5 to the Party Fund and said:

"I am a regular 'reader' of 'P.A.' I do not miss a single issue and at times I walk some distance to get it read."

After referring to the services of the Party during the period of famine, he says, "Your policy of unity for forging a United Front appeals to me most. As a believer in truth, I sincerely wish your faith in the people will all the more strengthen your Party."

And so the collections are now coming in from every part of the country. Next week you will hear what Bihar has done towards the Party Fund, and I hope, Bombay and Maharashtra comrades will put their best foot forward and collect their quotas, and send in their stories.

There is very little time. So, do your job quick, for February is not far off, and there is yet a long way to get to the target.

--S. V. Ghanta

Sjt. G. S. SARDESAI is recognized all over Maharashtra as the Grand Old Man of Maratha writers. He comes from the generation of Mr. Rajwade and others, who, in the early nineties of the last Century, decided to devote themselves to write out the history of the Marathas in Marathi and from original historical sources in opposition to the distortions presented in the volumes published by imperialist historians like Grant Duff and others.

Sjt. Sardesai's monumental labour and single-minded devotion to his subject are today a by-word in Maratha homes. Apart from innumerable other publications, his main historical work consisting of twelve volumes extends to more than 8,000 pages. Now past eighty, he is still working on an English summary of his works which will cover about 1,500 pages, after which, he says, "I shall be happy to proceed on my final journey."

For long, Sjt. Sardesai has also been a member of the Indian Historical Records Commission and for some time, also worked on the History Board formed by Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

Writing to S. G. Sardesai, (his nephew) on the 11th December, he says:

"I was so happy to have your letter of the 5th instant and to learn that you have been all pushing on your party work with zeal and earnestness. We are passing through revolutionary times all the world over. A new order is coming and evidently those are the birth pangs. Everyone of us has to do his duty according to his conscience with sincere devotion to the mother country. I very much appreciate the noble national work your Party is prosecuting."

"I shall certainly be glad to subscribe to your Fund. As you know, my means are now limited having divested myself of all my belongings after Mai's (his wife) death. I will pay Rs. 50. Will that do? Let me know."

"My house is always open to you and the comrades."

Yours ever affectionately, G. S. Sardesai."

A Patriot's Notebook

HYDERABAD POLICE ATROCITIES

I HAVE just come across a statement issued by Sjt. NARAYANA REDDY, President of the Andhra Mahasabha (National organisation of the Andhra people), on Police atrocities in Nellore District of Hyderabad State (within forty miles of the Nizam's capital). It makes the most gruesome reading.

An oppressive zemindar of Visunur, one RAMACHANDRA REDDY DESHMUKH, tried to appropriate by unfair means the harvest in the field belonging to a poor washer-woman. The poor woman complained to the local officials, but they were of no help. She then sought the help of the Andhra Mahasabha who came to her aid.

Upon this, the Police put under arrest all the seven office-bearers of the Andhra Mahasabha in the District and subjected them to the most terrible treatment. They were kept in fetters and beaten up; their tortured by inhuman methods. Chilly powder was thrown into their eyes and into their rectum. When they could not bear the pain and cried out, they were gagged and beaten all the more. At the end of it all, they were forced to drink urine.

President Narayana Reddy says that all these atrocities were committed jointly by the police and roudies sent by Deshmukh. Finally, the police warned that there should be no more propaganda against Deshmukh in that locality!

The President says that such atrocities have been committed on Andhra Mahasabha workers in Nellore District by Police officials during the last one month. Complaints have been made to the authorities and when the Mahasabha workers try to secure witnesses, they are arrested, beaten and tortured—as a warning to all would-be witnesses!

For the last few months, Andhra Mahasabha workers have been bringing to the notice of the State Government cases of oppression and extortions of Ramachandra Reddy and other landlords of the locality against the poor people. The Government has

not taken any action on this yet. Instead, its Police officials, hand in glove with such reactionaries, have let loose terror on the Mahasabha workers.

President Narayana Reddy's statement lifts the veil off the feudal barbarism that passes for "Princely rule" in many parts of our country today. There can be no room for such an order in a free democratic India.

In this instance of Nellore, it is the duty of every patriotic organisation and newspaper to take up this matter and demand of the Hyderabad State authorities that a non-official enquiry be immediately made on these incidents and the Police officials responsible for them dismissed and punished.

Governor-Designate Of Bengal

- What Sort Of Guy ?

A LOT of ballyhoo has been made in the Tory Press in England (and by their camp-follower, the Daily Herald, official organ of the Labour Party) about Mr. BURROWS, the Governor-designate for Bengal to replace Mr. CASEY—that he is a "working-man" himself and a "Socialist", that he will be a "friend of the people" in India and so on.

I have just had a letter from a friend in Ceylon who knows circles with whom Burrows was closely associated while working with the Soulbury Commission there. They described Burrows as "lacking entirely in knowledge of the East and being little more than a cipher on the Soulbury Commission, the Tory and Liberal members leading him by the nose all the time." Burrows impressed them as an "extremely moderate" Trade Unionist; and when some Sinhalese official imagining him to be a Socialist tried to start a conversation with him about Socialism, all that Burrows could reply was: "I know nothing about that."

In other words, he is a good office-boy of Bevin!

M. Krishnan

NATIONALISATION OF INDUSTRIES, BUT NOT ABOLITION OF ZEMINDARI!

Mass Awakening Of Common People, Factionalism Of Top Bosses

"Nationalisation of key industries, mines and banks, promotion of co-operative methods in farming, in the sale of agricultural produce and in purchase of seed, manure and other necessities, a promise to raise the standard of living of peasants and labourers and of Muslims in general"—these are the highlights of the Election Manifesto passed by the Bihar Provincial Muslim League shortly to be released to the Press.

It is significant, however, that in this progressive democratic programme, the most vital issue for a Zemindari Province like Bihar, namely the abolition of the Zemindari system, does not appear at all. Everyone knows that there are any number of Muslim Nawabs and knighted zamindars here. How is it that the Manifesto is silent on this issue?

Behind it is the story of a battle royal inside the League between the progressives who were pushed on by the democratic mass awakening of the common Muslims, and the reactionaries who saw in it a threat to their feudal privileges.

What really happened in the end was that the progressives themselves, in the scramble for factional control of the League Party machine, made all kinds of opportunist alliances and threw away the progressive political platform which they had been fighting for.

Common Muslim On The Move

The common Muslims have awakened and they rally in large numbers to the Sub-divisional and Thana Conferences of the League even in the remotest corners of Bihar. Young Muslim workers of the Muslim Students' Federation and other college students are going in hundreds to the villages carrying the message of Pakistan and Muslim freedom and rousing the hitherto backward Muslim masses.

From Patna alone 150 students devoted one whole month to a campaign in the rural areas. Similar squads have gone out from other centres. To organise Muslim women a Women's Sub-Committee has been formed by the Provincial Muslim League and 500 women have been enrolled in Patna alone.

The enthusiastic response of the Muslim masses can be seen from the fact that within a month Rs. 30,000 have been collected for the Election Fund mostly from the village and town poor. They have shown a greater self-sacrificing spirit and loyalty to the League than the big Nawabs and wealthy men at the League top.

Choudhury NAZIRUL HASAN, owner of over 1,000 bighas of land, NAWABZADA MEHNI (annual income one lakh), and the wealthy President of the Provincial League, Mr. HOOSAIN IMAM, have as yet paid nothing. NAWAB ISMAIL, the biggest Muslim landlord of Bihar, whose income is two and a half lakhs has paid only Rs. 2,500, and even that only in return for a League ticket.

The Battle Royal

Owing to the pressure of this Muslim mass awakening a struggle for adoption of progressive policies has been going on ever since the 1945 election. When the progressive group came boldly forward to do joint work with Congressmen and the Communists and thus won all-round appreciation.

It was mainly due to this practical work that the progressive group led by SYED JAFFAR IMAM, MAZHAR IMAM and MAHBOOB WARS, consolidated itself and in the last elections to the League Executive decisively defeated the reactionary 'Sada-e-am' group which was backed by pro-British toadies and faction

of poor Muslims in the Province) and democracy in Pakistan, and merely contents itself with a vague, sentimental appeal in the name of 'Pakistan' and the 'Millat'. Even as it is, it is reported that some reactionary elements are even now working to shelve the Manifesto altogether and prevent its publication.

But the 'Sada-e-am' group did not give up the fight though defeated. Their organ Sada-e-am carried on a virulent campaign against the Jaffar Imam group and their joint relief work, sought to discredit them through religious obscurantism. The failure of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks, the fiasco at Simla and the declaration of war against the League by the Congress High Command at the Bombay AICC in September 1945—all these have made the progressives despair of unity and acquiesce in the communal and religious demagogic plank of the reactionary group.

Scramble For Party Machine

When the struggle between principles went into the background, all that remained was a simple factional scramble for control of the League machine. The progressives having abandoned the path of fighting for a popular democratic programme, now chose the easier course of unprincipled alliances with reactionary elements.

For example when the question of forming the Provincial Parliamentary Board came up, Jaffar Imam, leader of the progressive group made a shocking alliance with Choudhury Nazirul Hasan, a reactionary zamindar, a big profiteer and who before his elevation to the Parliamentary Board was a member of the National War Front.

This arch-toady never paid a pice to the League but spent thousands every year for the Shikar Party of the Governor. While he was taken in, progressives of Jaffar Imam's own group like the Provincial Secretary, BADRUDDIN, and Mazhar Imam, were excluded. This caused not a little discontent in the League ranks.

Vital Issues Shelved

It was in this set-up, that the Election Manifesto came up before the League for consideration. The original draft contained clauses for abolition of zemindari, for guaranteeing full Trade Union rights and adequate minimum wages to workers.

Heated discussions took place. The President, Hoosain Imam, Mazhar Imam and Mahboob Warsi wanted the clause for abolition of zemindari to remain. The Sada-e-am group backed by Nawab Ismail, Mehni and toadies like Nazirul Hasan vehemently opposed it. Most shocking of all the fact that Jaffar Imam himself, leader of the progressive group, and Badruddin remained neutral on the issue. It was the logic of opportunist alliances working itself out.

The reactionaries advanced all sorts of arguments in support of their stand. They said that the All-India League leadership did not want any such manifesto to be issued by the Provincial League units and that this was proved by the fact that it had not itself issued any manifesto.

So these vital progressive clauses were dropped. Only those relating to nationalisation of key industries, mines, banks, were retained, the feudal reactionaries not being directly affected by it. The Manifesto is also silent on Civil Liberties, the demands of weavers (who form a major section

of poor Muslims in the Province) and democracy in Pakistan, and merely contents itself with a vague, sentimental appeal in the name of 'Pakistan' and the 'Millat'. Even as it is, it is reported that some reactionary elements are even now working to shelve the Manifesto altogether and prevent its publication.

League Candidates

This factional alliance of the progressive group with reactionary elements is reflected in the choice of League candidates for the Provincial Elections. Out of a total of forty seats, twenty-one names have been announced. The general principle seems to be to favour younger and progressive elements as long as that does not upset the factional plans of the top bosses. As many as seven seats have been given to the members of backward sections among the Muslims. Thus five seats have gone to the Mominis, one to the Rayees (Kunjara-vegetable sellers) and one to the Mansoor (Cotton-cleaners). This decision has been generally acclaimed as a fair one.

Included in the list are top leaders like Jaffar Imam, Badruddin, Mazhar Imam and Latifur Rehman, leader of the pro-League Mominis.

The veteran Nationalist Muslim leaders will have to face young League candidates.

Dr. SYED MAHMUD, ex-Member of Congress Working Committee will have to contest young ZOBAIR KHAN (League) a school-teacher who is said to have been dismissed from his job during the Congress Ministry when Dr. Syed Mahmud was

a Minister. In Hazaribagh rural constituency a young Momin called ISHAQUE (League) will contest the Nationalist Momin leader ABDUL QAYYUM ANSARI. The choice of ALI RAZA of Gopalganj (Saran) is remarkable for the fact that he got the League ticket in preference to a notorious toady Khan Bahadur SAGHIRUL HAQUE, the sitting M.L.A.

These Should Not Have Got In

But of the twenty-one, at least four seats have been offered to notorious toadies and people's enemies. Chowdhury Nazirul Hasan, the arch-toady has got the League ticket for North Monghyr.

Nawab SHARFUL HASSAN, a reactionary and hated zamindar, half deaf and totally unfit to be in the Assembly has been preferred to a young enthusiastic League worker just because one of the top factions likes him.

Khan Sahab ABDUS SAMAD, another toady and a former member of the National War Front, whom the League itself had condemned, joined the League only the other day and has been given a ticket just because he happens to be of the Dhunia Community.

The last but not the least objectionable is the choice of Khan Bahadur Nawab Ismail who was ousted from the League Presidency last year. He was a League M.L.C. but he has now decided to stand for the Lower House so that he could worm himself into the Ministry if a Congress-League Coalition Government is formed. The fact that he

is a Sida has been laid thick in support of this unjustifiable choice.

Factionalism is rampant inside the League. Only the other day the local press reported that I.A. TIFUR REHMAN, the well-known League Momin leader had resigned from the League Executive. Though it was authoritatively contradicted soon after, there seems little doubt that there was quite a tussle about the distribution of seats to members of various factions inside the League.

This factionalism, and unprincipled alliances to consolidate one's own faction in high up positions is leading to disastrous results. The best and finest of progressive Leaguers have now begun to indulge in the most obscurantist and chauvinistic demagogy in their propaganda.

For example, Jaffar Imam himself, well-known for his progressive and democratic views, has begun to talk of "Muslim Kingdoms and Crowns"! The other day, replying to the Congress argument that the Muslims from minority provinces will have to migrate to Pakistan areas, he said:

"If Hindus talk of Hijrat (migration) let them understand what it means for them. The Prophet Mohamed did Hijrat. Of course, he migrated to Medina. But his followers strengthened and organized themselves and then re-conquered the kingdom of Mecca."

This was a threat that if the Muslims migrated to Pakistan areas they would do so only to prepare and re-conquer the whole of India! Jaffar Imam thus only brings prist to the mill of the Hindu chauvinists who try to frighten the Hindus that self-determination would mean Muslim conquest of India as a whole!

If a democrat like Jaffar Imam himself explains Pakistan in this manner, how rabis other Leaguers may go can be easily imagined. This would only result in strengthening anti-Muslim prejudices inside the Congress and making even the most progressive Congress leaders think that 'the Muslims are all fanatics and there can be no settlement with them.'

Assam Election Campaign

WHOLESALE CALUMNIES USED Against Communist Candidates

POLLING for the Provincial Elections in Assam is to take place between January 9 and 12. Since Nomination Day, the election campaign has been on in full swing.

Though there are only three General seats which the Communists are contesting, the Assam Congress leaders are concentrating all their men and money in these constituencies.

Their prolonged factional fights have been temporarily patched up in order to present a strong anti-Communist front. In the Srimangal Labour Constituency, where the Communist candidate, SHIV MAHATO, is contesting, the Tea-Garden bosses and babus are putting every obstacle in the name of the Congress against Red Flag propaganda.

In North Sylhet, BIRESE MISRA, who was, from 1938-40, Secretary of the District Congress Committee, thrice elected as A.I.C.C. Member and was also member of the Provincial Parliamentary Board, is the Communist candidate. He is universally respected for his integrity and selfless service of the people.

As against him the Congress has put up Sjt. RABINDRANATH ADITYA, the sitting member and a man the overwhelming action of Congressmen in the District had been opposed to in the last bye-election when he was chosen on intervention from the Congress High Command instead of Birech Misra.

This time, there was also another independent candidate, a man who had been anti-Congress all his life. The Congress leaders approached him and induced him to withdraw in favour of the Congress candidate by promising him a seat in the Upper House.

Efforts are being made in this way to get as many seats uncontested as possible so as to concentrate all energies on defeating the Communist candidates.

Assam Congress leaders also brought PANDIT NEHRU to campaign against the Communists.

Pandit Nehru at first went about saying: Communists are members of the Congress; they have joined hands with the reactionary Muslim League, etc. This, however, did not go down. For the people of Assam know that Misra and Karunsindhu Ray were the most energetic Con-

gress workers for many years and the leaders of the Left-wing inside the Congress. So here Pandit Nehru himself changed his line of attack and said, "Communists are good organisers, hard workers, but they have a leadership which adopts wrong policies." Local Communists are good, but their leaders P. C. Joshi and others who are in Bombay are bad! This is how top Congress leaders like Nehru campaigned against the Party and its candidates.

The rabid anti-Communists were disappointed with Pandit Nehru, because they felt that his attacks against us were too mild and so they are circulating all kinds of lies to create anti-Communist sentiment. At Chhatalbazsar some Leaguers asked Pandit Nehru some questions and demonstrated in favour of Pakistan. A whipper campaign was immediately started by Congressmen that the Communists had inspired the demonstration!

A foul lie was also spread that the Communists had held up Pandit's car between Sylhet and Chhatal. When challenged by us, to prove it, each Congressman denied that he had said any such thing and shifted the burden on to others.

In Cachar, where IRAWAT SINGH, the famous Manipur leader, is standing, local Congress leaders have realised that it is not easy to attack either his patriotism or his career service of the people, so they put out falsehoods that the Communist Party is getting special facilities from the Government.

At Bichar a meeting was organised by the Students' Congress for the release of the INA men. One B. Chakrabarty, a Lecturer in a local college spoke for forty-five minutes, thirty minutes of which he spent in putting forth all kinds of slanders against the Communist Party.

One has only to compare the sort of things he said with actual facts to realise the true worth of his false propaganda.

● He said, "While Nationalist newspapers are not getting necessary permits for paper, the Government gives permission to the Communists for bringing out dailies."

● The fact is the other way round. The Jora Sakti of Sylhet and the Surma of Bichar, Congress papers which ceased publication in 1943, reappeared some time ago. But the Sakhat, the weekly organ of the Communist Party in Assam, which ceased publication in 1940, has been refused permission to resume it. In Bichar, an application from a non-Party but progressive quarter (which is not anti-Communist) for a weekly has been thrice turned down by the Central Government.

● Mr. Chakrabarty said: "Two rotary machines are allowed to be brought from England by the Communist Party, while other people do not get any machinery."

● This is again incorrect. No rotary has reached the Communists at all.

● He also said: "While the Congress does not get mikes and loud-speakers easily, the Communist Party is getting priority consideration from Government."

● This is the biggest falsehood of all. Firstly, Government gives no permits for loudspeakers at all. Secondly, both the Congress and the League in Assam have their own loudspeaker sets. The Communists in Surma Valley got only one microphone and this too which was sent to Sylhet for the Kinn Conference for just two days.

● This is the way in which the anti-Communists are carrying on. They know they have put up a Congress candidate for this constituency, a big businessman and landlord who is one of the war-rich. They cannot say one word in praise of the Congress candidate or against Irawat Singh and so go on with their slanders against the Communist Party in order to discredit Irawat Singh, who stands out as the best patriotic candidate.

★ Countrywide Awakening Of Muslim Masses

★ Congress-League Election Campaigns In Bengal

★ Allowing Casey To Act As Arbitrator

The results of the Central Assembly Elections for the Muslim constituencies in Bengal and the Punjab, the two major Muslim majority Provinces, have come. In both Provinces, the Muslim League has swept the polls and won all the Muslim seats.

THE final countrywide picture ought to give serious food for thought to every Congress patriot. While the Congress has won all General seats (except two Landholders' seats and the two Sikh seats in the Punjab), the League has made a clean sweep of every Muslim seat in the Central Assembly.

And not only this, Congress and Nationalist Muslim opponents of the League in Muslim seats everywhere suffered the same fate as opponents of the Congress did in the General seats. They lost by overwhelming majorities. Quite a large number of them forfeited their deposits.

In Bengal, both the Congress Muslim candidates who opposed the League, Mr. Wallur Rehman and Mohuddin Khan (the latter, a veteran Congress leader of Rangpur who has undergone great suffering in the cause of freedom) have lost their deposits.

It is tragic the Congress leadership is still not waking up to the true meaning of the League victories and is trying to find cheap and easy explanations for them.

Muslim Awakening All Over Country

All eye-witnesses report that the election tour of the League leaders in Bengal districts was greeted by tremendous awakening and enthusiasm among the Muslim masses. When the Bengal League leaders visited Chittagong during the last week of November, a meeting of 25,000 was held, unprecedented since the days of Deshpriya Sen Gupta. The biggest applause from the audience came for the speech of Chaudhury Moazzem Hossain (Lal Mia) when he said:

"Chittagong is justly proud of its great Armoury Raid heroes like Ananta Singh and Ganesh Ghosh, Surjya Sen and Kalpana Dutt. If Hindus of Chittagong could give birth to such fighters for freedom, I am sure Muslims too could produce soldiers as heroic for Pakistan."

When a call for donation to League funds was given, an old Muslim peasant donated three oranges which when put to auction, fetched over Rs. 3,000. The total collections on the spot exceeded Rs. 65,000!

It is significant that everywhere during this tour of the Bengal League leaders, the speeches of Abul Hashem (progressive League) stressing the battle for freedom from Imperialism drew the biggest cheer from Muslim audiences.

The same feature about League meetings has been noticed by our Correspondent, Sajjad Zaheer, when he recently visited the Punjab and the Frontier. He has described them in recent issues of *People's Age*—the unprecedented crowds of Muslim masses and the Muslim poor who flock to attend League meetings; and the special cheers they give to the speeches of leaders like Iftikharuddin who stress the impending fight against Imperialism.

What our Bihar Special Correspondent describes on the opposite page bears out the same picture for that province also.

The Muslim masses to-day are showing such anti-Imperialist awakening as has never been seen before in the history of our land since the great Khilafat days. And this awakening is taking place everywhere under the League banner. It is the same urge for freedom that makes the Muslim masses rally under the League banner—as brings lakhs of their Congress brothers to flock to Congress meetings. To deny this, as Congress leaders are doing, is to deny reality and let prejudice swallow up reason. Where this

leads is shown by the story of the Bengal elections.

How League Was Fought In Bengal

How Congress leaders tried to fight the League in Bengal does no credit to our premier freedom organisation. Wallur Rehman, a District leader of the National War Front, was adopted as the Congress candidate against the League. Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, one of the top arch-toadies of Bengal, got Nationalist Muslim nomination and his election campaign in Mymensingh was conducted mainly by Congressmen. Sarat Bose openly directed the Hindu zamindars to "instruct their Muslim staff and tenants" to vote for Ghuznavi.

One of Ghuznavi's election meetings provided the unenviable spectacle of Congress Hindu volunteers shouting "Allah Ho-Akbar", while escorting him in the car of the Maharajkumar of Mymensingh, scion of one of the

If four crores of Englishmen coming from a tiny island could rule over forty crores of Indians, then why cannot ten crore Muslims establish their rule over thirty crores of Hindus, and over the whole world?"

He then proceeded to draw harrowing pictures of Congress rule in which religion would be destroyed, mosques desecrated and Qurbani abolished.

The League propaganda literature openly referred to the desire "to turn the country slowly into Pakistan and Islamistan," and the Quran was quoted to show that Pakistan is referred to in it. Directives to League workers emphasised the need to enlist local imams and other divines for the purposes of League propaganda. The Election Manifesto of the League Parliamentary Board spoke only in terms of proving the League claim as the mouth-piece of Muslims and dropped out everything democratic envisaged in the Draft Manifesto of the Bengal League last year.

Needless to say, abolition of the Permanent Settlement—which was one of the most popular slogans of the Muslim League in the last 1936 elections—was completely dropped by them this

by N. K. Krishnan

biggest Hindu zamindar families of Bengal.

The Congress Hindi daily *Vishwanitra* in its Editorial openly called for one crore of rupees to fight the League, appealing particularly to Hindu businessmen, as a good investment which would prove paying when an anti-League Ministry of their own choice came!

All this followed directly from the Congress leaders' understanding that the Muslim masses are just an ignorant backward lot and the Muslim League a bunch of moneyed toadies.

Bengal is a premier zamindari province of India and zamindari oppression is the biggest living issue for the Muslim kisan. Yet, throughout the Congress and Nationalist Muslim election campaign among the Muslims, not one word was said about abolition of the Permanent Settlement—which even the White Floud Commission recommended years ago. How could they do it when their main reliance was on the big Hindu zamindars 'buying up' the votes of the 'backward Muslims'?

Tarsing Bhattacharya Anti-Congress

Throughout the campaign, Nausher Ali (the veteran Nationalist Muslim leader of Bengal) went on denouncing the Muslim League as "agents of Imperialism." This was his main election slogan before the Muslim masses—lakhs of whom look upon the League as their freedom organisation.

The effect of all this was only to infuriate the Muslims and turn them anti-Congress—same as the anti-Congress speeches of top League leaders do to Congress masses!

This was fully played upon by the more rabid communalists within the League itself. In the vast majority of the election speeches of the Leaguers, the Congress was damned as Enemy No. 1 of the Muslims; Imperialism came only next. Pakistan was put not as Muslim freedom to be won by joint struggle with the Congress and defended jointly with the Congress—but as partition and separatism, as against the Hindus.

A typical example was that of Tamizuddin Khan who in a speech at Netrakona on November 10 said:

"We were fighting for a thousand years, even now we can do

time; the same as with Congress and Nationalist Muslim propaganda.

Bengal Famine: Imperialism Forgotten

Nothing could be more illustrative of how both sides ran the election campaign than the way they used the Bengal Famine.

Throughout the election campaign, Nationalist dailies in Bengal ran a regular tirade against the League as being responsible for fifty lakhs dead in the famine, while the League daily *Azad* attacked Huq and Shyamaprosad for the same dead. It would have delighted Amery's and Linnithgow's hearts to have heard all this. Both sides shamefully forgot British Imperialism and that it was the curse of Imperialist rule that primarily brought about the famine.

Police Protection Sought

Not only was British Imperialism forgotten in this election duel, but Casey's police was appealed to and brought in as arbiter between the two sides and to keep "law and order!"

The anger roused among the Muslim masses by the anti-League campaign of the Congress and Nationalist Muslim leaders was used by rowdy elements within the League to incite and organise hooliganism of the worst type during the election campaign. And Congress and Nationalist Muslim leaders in their turn forgot their nationalism so far that they openly appealed to Casey for protection and took police protection in the districts for their election campaign!

If you slander your own Muslim brothers as ignorant and backward and do not see their patriotic awakening, you obviously can have no faith that you can stop the Leaguers' goondaism by appealing to the democratic sense of their masses; and you are left to seek the protection of the alien Imperialists against a section of your own people.

Leaguers Rowdyism

In Mymensingh, the Leaguers organised systematic breaking of meetings organised by their opponents. Not only lathis and brickbats were used and heads broken, but when Fazul Huq went to Netrakona his car was smashed up and Nationalist Muslims had to flee for their very lives.

AMBASSADORS OF LABOUR IMPERIALISTS

IN the first week of January a delegation consisting of ten members of the British Parliament selected by the Labour Government will be arriving in India. It consists of two Peers, and from the House of Commons, five Labour M.P.s, two Conservatives and one Liberal. Excepting for the Labour M.P., Mr. Sorenson, who has wide knowledge of India and has espoused the cause of Indian freedom for several years, all the other members of the delegation are nondescript back-benchers who have very little knowledge of Indian political issues.

What is this rather odd assortment of individuals, pompously named Parliamentary Delegation, going to do in India?

According to the "clarification" given by Mr. Herbert Morrison in the House of Commons, some time ago, this delegation is neither to make any "official inquiry" in India, nor "to make any formal report" when it goes back.

We are told that the estimable members of the delegation will gather opinions and impressions by their observations in India and through their contact with Indian leaders, which they will be supposed to communicate later on to the British Government.

This delegation will no doubt considerably add to its own knowledge of Indian political conditions if it wants to, but it will not be in a position to add anything to what the British Labour Government already knows about India through its official sources. That is why it is all the more surprising that the expenses of this 'education tour' of the batch of Parliamentary back-benchers should be charged to India.

An Empty Mission

India would have given a generous welcome to a Parliamentary delegation which came as ambassadors of equality and goodwill after the Labour Government had recognised unequivocally the independence of India and the sovereignty of its people. The present delegation whatever the opinions and wishes of its individual members may be, cannot be considered by India as a mission of goodwill.

This delegation coming as it does soon after the announcement of the Wavell Plan—which instead of recognising Indian independence seeks to perpetuate British domination in alliance with the Princes and by utilising the Congress-League differences—has been looked at with suspicion by the entire Indian patriotic opinion and Press.

Pandit Nehru condemns the delegation as a huge job and a device to shelve the Indian question. He considers it derogatory to the self-respect of the Indian Nation that the Labour Government should send such a delegation to study the Indian question.

The entire Indian Press, both Congress as well as League, has sharply criticised the Parliamentary delegation as a futile snare. Amrita Bazar Patrika calls it a smoke-screen. The League daily Dawn asks what practical contribution it is going to make to the Indian political question.

Some Liberals like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Sir Maharaj Singh have a faint hope that the delegation may do some good. That is probably because they hug the illusion that where the Congress and the League do not agree the British Labour Government may act as a 'just arbitrator' and lead us out of the bog!

In England the Labour Government's mouthpiece Daily Herald tried to boost the delegation and even manufactured a message from India to report that it is being widely welcomed! The hoax was soon debunked. The fact is that many progressive Labour M.P.s themselves are sceptical about its utility in India and wonder what report such a mixed mission will make to the Labour Government.

The Communist M.P.s, Gallacher and Piratin, hit the nail on the head when they said, "We decided not to support such a delegation because the majority is Government Yes-men, and they voice the sentiments of Labour-Imperialists."

India's Demand

The united reply of the Indian people to these ambassadors of Labour-Imperialists should be straight: India, whatever our internal differences, wants the British Imperialists to quit. Let us tell them with one voice that we would like to greet them as Ambassadors of Indo-British goodwill based on equality and that is why we demand of the Labour Government that they unequivocally recognise India's independence.

Let us tell them that India has had enough of Parliamentary delegations and Enquiry Commissions and the Indian people are now determined to assert their independence through a Constituent Assembly elected on universal adult suffrage which is based upon, and derives its authority from, the democratically-elected sovereign constituent assemblies of all the natural National units.

At some places, as in Munshiganj, in Dacca District, even progressive Leaguers were noticed participating in such rowdiness, which alienated the sympathy of all decent men, both Hindu and Muslim.

Nausher Ali's meetings were systematically obstructed by Leaguers, while harassment trailed Mohiuddin Khan, veteran Congress leader of Rangpur. In some cases this went beyond the Muslims; for instance in Kusthia, the Congress leader Sasanka Sanyal, was mobbed by a League crowd.

Casey's Boast

Numerous cases occurred when the Police were called in and Nationalist Muslim leaders held their meetings under the protection of the most hated Bengal Police. In Jessore and Khulna, the veteran Nationalist Muslim leader, Nausher Ali, held many meetings in support of Wallur Rehman under Police escort. At Magura in Jessore, he held a meeting in a Dak Bungalow with a small Congress crowd and with armed police segregating them from thousands of angry Muslims. In Mymensingh, the Police came and formed a cordon between a Congress crowd escorting Ghuznavi, with thousands of Muslims charging them.

In Khulna town, both sides held their meetings in two maidans facing each other, with Police occupying the road in between; both sides were looking to the Police as "guardians of law and order!"

The growing drama of the whole

campaign came when Governor Casey boasted in a Police parade on December 5 that he would 'hold the balance' in the coming elections and pompously declared in his Press Note of December 13 that he had instructed his officials to be "impartial."

Playing The British Game

Bengal in miniature shows which way our country is going to-day. There has never been such anti-Imperialist awakening among our people as there is to-day. The Muslim masses, as part of this very awakening, are rallying all over the country under the League banner; they demand the right of self-determination in regions where they are natural national units. But blinded by mutual prejudice neither the Congress nor the League leaders see this reality and the patriotic masses behind each other's organisation. The one sees Hindu domination behind the Congress, the other Muslim backwardness behind the League.

The result is the Congress leadership goes more and more anti-Muslim and the entire strength of the major freedom-organisation in the country is being pitched against their Muslim brothers. On the other side, the League leadership is going more and more anti-Hindu and separatist; and the entire strength of the Muslim people is being pitched against the premier freedom organisation in the country, the Congress.

Each side is going more into the grip of its own recedencies and looking to British help as against the other, to realise its own partition claim.

This is just what the Imperialists are planning to use in order to deny our people real power and foist on us a bogus Constitution based on a dominant place for British Capital and the feudal Princes. They plan to use the League strength and the separatist demand of the League leadership against the Congress demand for such

(Continued on page 8, col. 3.)

Congress-Akali Election Pact

MANOEUVRE TO DEFEAT STRONGEST COMMUNIST CANDIDATES

Stepping-Stone To Congress-Unionist Coalition Ministry

On December 17—after over ten days of non-stop negotiations—the Congress-Akali agreement was hatched. During these ten days, the talks broke off at least half a dozen times only to begin again. The final agreement amounts simply to this: that in three seats the Panth (that is, the Akalis) will withdraw its candidates and support the Congress, and similarly in three seats, the Congress will do likewise and support the Panth [all these six seats are constituencies where the strongest Communist candidates are contesting.]

And thus it is hoped that unitedly six important Communist candidates will be defeated. For the rest of the seats—26 altogether—the Congress and the Akalis will fight it out.

EVEN if one glances casually at the terms of the agreement, the whole thing appears an unprincipled farce. The daily *Vir Bhavai* asks, if it is "an agreement or a joke?"

And yet the entire efforts of some of the most important men in this province have been spent on producing this formula. In their minds this agreement is the most momentous event of the elections in this province.

They have good reason to believe this. To them its importance is not merely that they hope now to throw their united might into the battle against six Communist candidates. The Communists are only the visible reason for the alliance.

Real Purpose Behind Deal

The hidden, but far more important purpose of the agreement is that it is the first really decisive step towards a Congress-Unionist Coalition Ministry. The Akalis led by the Unionist Minister, Sardar BALDEV SINGH, are the thin end of the wedge towards a complete line-up of the Congress leaders with the most hated men of the province—the Unionists.

Indeed, Premier KHIZAR and Minister Baldev Singh were the two key men who kept the negotiations going—and who were the keenest that there should be a settlement. Unionist Minister MANOHARLAL'S Tribune worked hard and wrote repeatedly in favour of such an agreement in the interests of the anti-League "United Front."

Who Led Negotiations?

Next to the Unionists, the most eager for this opportunist alliance was Dr. GOPICHAND BHARGAVA, whose intrigues for a Congress-Unionist Pact have made him notorious in every patriotic home of the province. He it was who led the Congress band of negotiators. With him was the Secretary of the Punjab Congress Sardar PRATAP SINGH KAIRON (himself a well-known Akali), who was anxious more to make sure of his own seat than anything else.

Another leading negotiator for the Congress was Sardar GOPAL SINGH QUOMI, a member of the Provincial Parliamentary Board, whose only anxiety was to remove the Akali opposition from his constituency, and lost interest in the negotiations when he found that the Akalis refused to oblige him under any circumstances.

And, of course, the Congress President, Maulana DAUD GHAZNAVI, was also a participant in the negotiations. Maulana Sahib had a fine record of public service to his credit when he was appointed President of the Congress in succession to Mian IFTIKHARUDDIN, on the latter's resignation.

Rank and file Congressmen looked to him to steer the Congress clear of the path of factionalism and opportunist deals with the Unionists. To-day most of them have lost all their hopes. For Maulana Daud has been a leading figure, playing the second fiddle to Gopichand, in all the worst opportunist pacts made in this province in connection with the elections: whether with the Mahasabha, the Beopar Man-

to the Nagoke-Majhail faction who were the chief Akali negotiators). Equally the SATYAPAL group inside the Congress opposed the agreement for their own factional reasons. These groups feared that an agreement would weaken them as groups inside their respective organisations.

Opposition

But the real reason for the failure of an all-in agreement over all the seats was the overwhelming opposition of the vast masses of Congress-minded Sikhs in the Province, who were dead set against any truck with the Punjabi Board of Ministers and title-holders, landlords and toadies. This opposition was not the factional opposition of the Satyapalites, but was the result of patriotic hatred for the pro-British Unionists.

From every district came voices of protest calling for an end of the negotiations. Sikh leaders like the veteran Master MOTA SINGH (now jailed and under trial for an election speech), the JHABBAL brothers (AMAR SINGH and SARMAKH SINGH, Baba KHARAK SINGH (President of the Central Akali Dal), Sardar SANT SINGH (Sikh Congress candidate for Central Assembly), Baba GURDIT SINGH (of the Kamagata Maru) all spoke plainly and sharply against any settlement.

The Gurdaspur District Con-

gress Committee declared in a resolution that they were opposed to an agreement between the Congress and the "reactionary and pro-Government" Akali Party. The Lyallpur District Congress Committee met and passed a similar resolution.

It was this opposition that prevented the Congress from being committed to an even more disgraceful pact.

In fact, the final agreement was made after formal negotiations had fallen through. Talks on a personal plane continued between the Gopichandites and the Nagoke-Majhail group.

Congressmen and, in particular, the Congress High Command will perhaps see more clearly what the agreement really means, if they know some of the candidates in whose favour Congressmen are withdrawing from the elections, and some of the Congress candidates to facilitate whose election the agreement has been made.

Helping Toadies

First, let us take a look at the Akali Panthic candidates who will not be opposed by the Congress.

● One is Sardar SHIV SARAN SINGH, who is to oppose the veteran sitting Communist M.L.A. Master HARI SINGH, known to be one of the finest parliamentarians in the Opposition. This gentleman was once a Session Judge in Nabha State, and is reputed to have played a leading part in crushing the Sikh people's movement there, resorting even to firing on demonstrations etc.

Later on he was appointed by the British Government on the notorious Sudhar Case which aimed at crushing the Akali movement of that period for the liberation of the Gurdwaras. Shiv Saran Singh's next act was to start a paper in opposition to the local Congress weekly—in this paper he regularly abused the Congress.

Then he joined the Congress to help him in his lawyer's profession and even became President of the City Congress Committee in 1937. But he never did any constructive service nor suffered imprisonment. In fact, after a short stay in the Congress, he became Headmaster of the Khalsa High School and started active anti-Congress propaganda.

This is one gentleman in whose favour Congress has withdrawn.

● Another is ISHAR SINGH MAJHAIL, who will oppose the Communist leader, SOILAN SINGH JOSHI. He came into politics not on the crest of any movement but as an arch-communal preacher, whose entire

training was to abuse other religions. He was one of those Akalis who opposed the Nehru Report—and all along he has been known as the most communal of the Sikh leaders.

He went to jail recently not in connection with the August struggle, but because of his alleged connection with an organisation called *Jag Paltan Dal*, started in 1940, quite independently of the Congress, and whose activities came under suspicion in 1942. In jail Majhail had the unenviable record of opposing every struggle for the rights of the detenus.

In Gujrat jail, Congress, Communist and C.S.P. detenus, all joined hands to fight against the C.I.D.'s practice of searching those who came to interview prisoners. They unitedly decided to boycott the C.I.D. and to refuse interviews. Majhail alone continued his interviews and during the worst days, when this struggle was at its highest, he entertained a Sikh C.I.D. Inspector to tea inside the barracks.

Will Congressmen think hard and ask themselves if such are the men in whose favour Congress should withdraw their candidates?

Which Congressmen "Gain" From It

And who are the Congressmen who are to "gain" by the agreement?

One is Sardar KABUL SINGH—who will now be supported by the Akalis to fight the old Ghadar hero Baba KARAM SINGH CHEEMA in Jullundur. Kabul Singh is a renegade from the Communist Party. Every political worker knows he was expelled by the Communists for a serious breach of discipline inside the Deoli Concentration camp.

During the last election it was the Communist Party and in particular Baba Karam Singh Cheema himself who were responsible for his success. Babaji himself travelled from village to village campaigning for Kabul Singh.

This is one of the Congressmen "benefited" by the pact. Another is one IQBAL SINGH who is set up to fight Sardar TEJA SINGH SWATANTAR in Gurdaspur.

I have tried to find out from leading Congressmen in Lahore who this gentleman is, but none of them knows. In fact he is a complete nonentity who has never been a Congress member. At the time the deal was made, the Congress candidate was one Shiv Singh—an Akali who had applied both to the Congress and the Panthic Board for their tickets. But this gentleman is so thoroughly discredited among local Congressmen and the general masses that at the eleventh hour, the Congress shifted its mantle on to the shoulders of the unknown Iqbal Singh.

Bringing Shame To Congress

So this is the meaning of the deal in hard facts. Will it succeed in defeating the Communists—said to be the main purpose of the agreement? Even a cursory glance at the record of the gentlemen set up by the great Akali-Congress front should convince anyone that in the first place such men cannot defeat veteran soldiers of freedom like Swatanter, Josh, Hari Singh and Baba Cheema, and secondly even if any one of them does, it will not be a credit to the national movement or to the Congress.

dal, or now, with the Akali Panthic Board.

Why Akalis Wanted It

On the side of the Akalis, the most interested in securing an agreement were (in addition to Minister Baldev Singh, of course) the naked communalists, Sardars UDHAM SINGH NAGOKE and ISHAR SINGH MAJHAIL and their faction of the Akali Dal. These gentlemen had two specific reasons for desiring Congress-Akali unity:

● First, they wished to secure Congress support for themselves in their own particular constituencies in the coming elections, as otherwise they had no chance of success whatsoever.

● Secondly, they felt that owing to their closer relations with Con-

VIOLENT PROTESTS FROM CONGRESS RANKS

gress leaders like Gopichand and Pratap Singh, a Congress-Akali agreement would strengthen their own faction inside the Akali Dal.

These were the personalities behind the negotiations.

Congress High Command's Sanction

No Congressman was particularly surprised at the keenness of these gentlemen to unite. But most rank and file Congressmen were amazed at the news that the negotiations were sanctioned by the Congress High Command. We have already reported how Sardar Baldev Singh and SARDAR PATEL had preliminary discussions at Bombay, and how three Akali leaders met the Congress High Command at Calcutta.

I learn that the main basis for discussion was the formation of an anti-League Ministry in the Punjab.

The Congress High Command was fully aware of the real nature of the Akali Party and of its alliance with the Unionists and toadies. PANDIT NEHRU had only recently visited the Punjab and knew all about their anti-national activities.

And yet they blessed Baldev Singh's endeavours—they put their seal of approval in advance on any deal Gopichand might make with the Minister and his Akalis. Why? Because they saw in it the stairway to a non-League Ministry. This is the terrible and shameful reality of to-day's political set-up in our country: Unite with the devil himself to beat your brother Party.

At various stages of the negotiations, different proposals were made: there was talk of a joint Congress-Akali ticket; there were proposals that each of the two parties be allotted ten constituencies while the rest could be left for a free fight; there was talk of each Party submitting a panel of names, from which the other could choose.

But all these proposals fell through. There was stern opposition to the agreement from GIANI KARTAR SINGH's faction in the Akali Party (opposed

to the Nagoke-Majhail faction who were the chief Akali negotiators). Equally the SATYAPAL group inside the Congress opposed the agreement for their own factional reasons. These groups feared that an agreement would weaken them as groups inside their respective organisations.

It was this opposition that prevented the Congress from being committed to an even more disgraceful pact.

In fact, the final agreement was made after formal negotiations had fallen through. Talks on a personal plane continued between the Gopichandites and the Nagoke-Majhail group.

Khizar Himself Intervenes

Finally, it is reported, Premier Khizar Hyat himself on the 17th called together the leaders of both parties: Maulana Daud, Dr. Gopichand, Pratap Singh Kairon of the Congress and Baldev Singh, Nagoke and Majhail of the Akalis and made them agree to the temporary arrangement which assured united efforts for the constituencies of Pratap Singh, Nagoke, Majhail and three of their close followers.

Baldev Singh tried hard to secure Congress withdrawal from his own constituency in Ambala—but local Congressmen had already made it clear to Gopichand, that they would fight the hated Minister in all circumstances, whatever deal the Congress leader may sign.

Moreover Gopichand knew that he could not make any rank and file Congressman in the province swallow an agreement which meant allowing Baldev Singh to go unopposed into the Assembly. Thus despite his own wishes, Gopichand could not satisfy the Unionist Minister—and Baldev Singh is reported to have walked out of the final negotiations in a high temper.

Honest Congressmen's Views

The news of the agreement was received with disgust by Congressmen everywhere. In Lyallpur, leading Congressmen like Sarmukh Singh Jhabbal, and Lala CHINT RAM THAPAR are known to have protested vigorously and to have proposed that even now, at least in Lyallpur, a

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- THE FATE OF FRANCO SPAIN
COMMUNIST - KUOMINTANG TALKS
REPORTED BRITISH NOTE TO CZECHS

A SHOW-DOWN is quickly approaching in SPAIN—the French have requested the Americans and the British to break diplomatic relations with Franco.

Others including the Premier of the exile government, Jose Giral, have also condemned the proposal, stating that Spain is a republic, all that had to be done was the overthrow of Franco and then democratic elections for the new Republican Cortes (Parliament).

The fact is that reaction in Britain and the U.S. wants to give Franco every chance of making arrangements and effect some face-saving change when resigning—and yet-keep Spanish Fascism installed in power.

A Globe despatch of December 18 reveals that Franco is planning "an ostentatious retirement, handing over authority to a Council of high-ranking army men."

The Council would have the job of restoring the monarchy with a new constitution which "because of its outward departure from Fascist character would satisfy at least the big Western Powers, if not Russia (my italics—M.K.)."

U.S. approval for this is already there; Indalecio Prieto, exile Spanish leader, to-day in Mexico and a member of the exile Republican Government, revealed that he learned in Washington two months ago that the U.S. "approved the idea of a plebiscite for Spain."

Prieto, himself belonging to the extreme-right and anti-Communist wing of the Socialists, has also approved of the plebiscite proposal, stating that the plebiscite should be held "under the supervision of an international organisation, with fair access to all to means of political propaganda and the adoption of measures to prevent any armed uprising."

Prieto's views have been sharply condemned by Dr. Juan Negrin, last Premier before the fall of the Republic who, comparing Prieto to Laval, said that all his proposal would do was to help to preserve Fascist reaction and to

prevent the free expression of democratic opinion in Spain. Unilevers, the biggest monopoly industry in Britain—and it is obvious enough that the Unilever bosses are bringing pressure on the British Government.

Which Way in China?

IN CHINA, the Inter-Party Political Consultative Council is meeting this week, composed of representatives of all parties—one-fourth Kuomintang, one-fourth Communist, one-fourth non-Party and one-fourth leaders of small parties—it is expected to discuss the urgent problems today facing the people—the question of ending the civil war and establishing a United Democratic Government.

Chiang has expressed his confidence that a "peaceful and cordial" settlement will be achieved. The Communists have said that they have a concrete proposal for ending the civil war.

But while Chiang talks of a peaceful and cordial settlement, his propaganda bureau is sending out big stories of Communist "atrocities"—while Chiang himself once more reiterates his proposal to call the undemocratic National Assembly, 'elected' in 1935 at the height of the dictatorship—which is no democratic move but only aimed at strengthening his own rule.

Chiang, in truth, is playing for time. For him everything depends on the attitude of the U.S.; if General Marshall promises him full armed help—in men as well as munitions—then there is no hope for unity in China; rather Chiang will stiffen and carry on the civil war.

But the democratic forces are growing fast, the shooting down of Kunming students (see page 12) has brought Chiang in for sharp condemnation from the leaders of the small parties, united together in the Democratic League; inside Kuomintang China criticism of Chiang's policy of complete subservience to U.S. imperialism is rising—and it is this that will finally determine the issue, for as the U.S. itself finds that intervention in China against the entire people is no easy job, they and their tool Chiang—will be forced to agree to the emergence of democracy.

For Gold, Not Democracy

THE real reason for the Anglo-American reluctance to recognise the new democratic Governments of Bulgaria and Rumania came out with a bang last week over Britain's attitude towards the plans of the Czech Government to nationalise her key industries.

Britain is reported to have sent a note insisting on adequate compensation if industries involving British capital are nationalised. (United Press of India, December 18). On December 24th a further report came through that:

"The British Government is threatening the Czechoslovakian Government with loss of British trade and credit facilities unless it drastically modifies its nationalisation policy." (Free Press Journal).

Among the biggest pre-war investors in Czechoslovakia was

This course is not going to deter the Czech or Yugoslav people from going ahead with their plans for democratisation of their economy; but it should make everyone realise just what is the real reason for Anglo-American hostility to the new democratic Governments of Eastern and Central Europe—not anxiety over 'democracy' and 'Soviet influence'—but worry about their gold.

BRITISH FASCISTS RAISE THEIR HEADS

Labour And Communists Demand Suppression

By Cable

December 21.

The biggest event of last week in Britain was the sudden re-emergence into public life of SIR OSWALD MOSLEY, Hitler's chief British agent.

On the 16th, "the amazing spectacle of Britain's Fascists raising their heads once again" was seen at a dance at the Royal Hotel in London. Gathered together were about 1,000 leading Fascist cadres—among them, CAPTAIN RAMSAY, former Tory M.P., SIR BARRY DOMVILLE of the notorious pro-Nazi organisation, called The Link, CAPTAIN GORDON CANNING who bought Hitler's bust for £500 recently and QUENTIN JOYCE, brother of quisling William Joyce, now condemned to death.

MOSLEY made the usual fascist demagoguery, his audience gave the fascist salute, the storm-troop bodyguard was there—the entire dramatic fascist outfit was on show.

On December 20, questions were asked by Labour members in the House of Commons about what the Labour Government intended to do about the revival of fascist activity.

Labour M. P. s. Heckle

The Home Secretary, CHUTER EDE, took refuge in the usual liberal phrases, saying:

"When Defence Regulation 18-B was revoked on May 9, everything connected with it went too. So Sir Oswald Mosley and his friends are as free as any Tom or Jones walking in the street."

Labour members heckled—LIEUTENANT LEVY asking whether "it is not nonsensical for us in the name of freedom to allow a man freedom to destroy freedom?"

Tory members heckled too—defending Mosley by declaring that various steps suggested for banning Mosley's activities amounted to the organisation of a Socialist Gestapo!

And the Home Secretary said nothing about taking any action.

In fact the re-emergence of Mosley—and the anxiety of the Tories to give him every chance

political activity and asking that pending such legislation, every form of Fascist propaganda be treated as an equivalent breach of peace.

"If Fascism is a crime in Europe" Pollitt asks, "which the British military authorities are engaged in suppressing and rooting out by every means possible in their power, how can it be permitted in Britain?"

"Union Jack" Attacks

Pollitt only echoed the widespread feeling in Britain; the Union Jack, Central Mediterranean Forces newspaper, has also written a strong editorial, criticising the Government for allowing Mosley's Fascists to poison the national life of Britain.

Pointing to the heavy British casualties during the war, the Union Jack said:

"Are we to countenance in our own land the flagrant advocacy of the way of life which our own Government publicly despised in Franco Spain? The men are finding it hard to stomach the re-emergence of Mosley in post-war Britain."

Protests in Britain against the Government's vacillation are steadily mounting—many are expressing their argument with the sharp question that the Daily Worker posed when it wrote:

"Why does the Government shrink from taking practical action along the lines urged by the Communist Party and approved by the Labour members?"

WORK IN REVIEW

(Continued from page 5.)

power; and to use the Congress strength against any League resistance to their plan and to curb the anti-imperialist militancy of the Negro masses.

Shall we walk into this trap—or unite our people on the basis of self-determination to every national unit and thus mobilise them jointly and all together for the final bid for common power?

In last week's "Work in Review", through a printer's mistake, the paragraph "Having enlarged on the point... help us to put down the League" which really refers to the National Council, was wrongly put as a comment on Hindustan Worker. We regret the mistake.

OUR MAI

(Continued from page 7.)

of three brothers of a family. Only when the whole family is united will there be happiness. The same with our country. It is in the stress of things that our Party is entering the elections with the country's cause as its aim. To say that the Communist Party is fighting the Congress is just like saying that the younger brother has no right to say anything about family affairs. I have already given to the Party my children and their everything. Here with Rs. 5 for the Election Fund. Please accept this small amount from a peasant.

Years,

Keruvadan Chaudan Nambiyar.

I have written of Mai as a son writes of his own mother. My own Ma died when I was a child, and I have only a faint memory of her. It was only when I lived under Mai's fostering care in the Commune that I realised what a mother means to one.

She lives not only in the heart of those who knew her in Bombay, but through hundreds of our Party mothers and fathers of whom I have given some examples from Chittagong in the extreme East and Kerala in the extreme South. She lives through the tireless activity of thirty thousand Indian Communists, young sons and daughters of every section of the Indian people, who will cherish her memory as a true and noble Party mother.

Bevin-Blum "Western Bloc" Move

TO BE GOOD NEIGHBOURS OR, TO BOLSTER TOTTERING IMPERIALISM?

Ernest Bevin is Britain's Foreign Minister,—and he likes to be known as a blunt man, a working man, a man who likes everyone "to put all his cards on the table", yet the fact is that of all the double-faced diplomats Britain has had over countless centuries, Bevin can easily find a proud place at their head.

Bevin made a big speech last November in which he espoused the 'Western Bloc' for the first time—defending it as a bloc of those "who were Britain's cultural friends and historical associates, and who acknowledged the same democracy as Britain did."

The desire for this 'bloc', according to Bevin, arose merely out of a desire for "good neighbours in his street" just as the Soviet wanted good peaceful neighbours.

In fact, this is the very opposite of the truth. Here we give extracts from an article by a prominent Soviet publicist, Evgeny Tarle, on the real meaning of the Western bloc—particularly as it is understood by its propounders in France and the real aims that gave rise to it.

ONE of the most zealous advocates of the Western bloc is Leon Blum, leader of the French Socialists. To be sure, he prefers to call it a "Western family," (like Bevin). That sounds cosier. Leon Blum goes out of his way to stress that the "Western family" is not aimed at the Soviet Union. But is it fortuitous that the idea of this bloc has been seized upon with such enthusiasm by all the sinister forces which in the past worked so hard to betray France to the enemy and to ruin her?

We know that the Soviet Union has incomparably more friends in France and in England than enemies. That is why we feel that in the end nothing will come of the "Western Family," or the "Western Ensemble," or the "European Federation," or whatever other fanciful name the proponents of a Western bloc may use to mask the true nature of their schemes.

Anti-Soviet Aim

With the same sincerity with which it justified the setting of dogs against Russian war prisoners in the Swiss concentration camps, the Swiss radio is now defending the rights of fascist Spain and boosting her services to the Western bloc.

"British statesmen," it broadcasted on September 16, "are evidently redoubling their efforts to create a Western bloc in conjunction with France. This calls for a more deferential attitude towards Spain, in view of the likelihood of ultimate co-operation."

And indeed, is it possible to do without the co-operation of the initiator of the lofty aim contemplated by the "Western family"?

"There is open talk of a Western bloc which will put a stop to the formation of Russophile governments."

The English Church Times, on October 12, stated frankly and in plain business like English that the direct purpose of the Western bloc was to create a battering ram against the Soviet Union:

"There is talk here and there of the need to face the issues squarely and to do a deal with the East. Deals of that sort brought about the deadlock." Such deals, the newspaper states, "must be backed by power. The urgent practical diplomatic task of the day—apart from the United Nations organization—is to band nations of good will into a firm and workable unity. The Western bloc, denounced of late in the East, must be forged."

"Military Commission"

A more detailed indication of what the "Western family" is intended to be is supplied in an article by Jean Chardonnet in the weekly France-Presse bulletin. It appears that the "family" is already experiencing an urgent need for its own general staff:

"In the strategic realm there is one question to be solved, to wit, the problem of defence against an invading enemy from the East... It would therefore be expedient to form a united military commission consisting of the chiefs of the

general-staffs of the allies."

Who is to be represented on this general staff of the "Western family"? France, Britain, Belgium, Luxembourg and Denmark. "Eventually it may be extended to embrace Spain and Italy." This in itself is highly reassuring, is it not? But next comes a truly modest aspiration:

"What Franco proposed last year is acknowledged to-day by the greater part of the Anglo-Saxon press. Franco proposed the formation of a Western bloc, which has now become a subject of discussion. Franco foresaw the impossibility of agreement with the Russians and presaged a crisis in Europe."

The Spanish gangster is per-

"Then, after the reorganization of Western Germany, it too may be included in this system."

Everything is now perfectly clear. The "family from the East" is not Germany, for Germany too "may be included" in the military organization of the "Western family," in which case who else could it be but the Soviet Union?

Fascist Franco's "Idea"

While giving due credit to the frankness of the propagandists of the "Western family," we must in all fairness point out that the original author of this "idea," the venerable progenitor, so to speak, of this "family," is—as Radio-Nacional quite rightly claimed (September 25, 1945)—no other than Franco, who was the first to suggest it, as far back as last year, in a letter to Winston Churchill, transmitted through the Spanish ambassador. Says Radio-Nacional:

"What Franco proposed last year is acknowledged to-day by the greater part of the Anglo-Saxon press. Franco proposed the formation of a Western bloc, which has now become a subject of discussion. Franco foresaw the impossibility of agreement with the Russians and presaged a crisis in Europe."

The Spanish gangster is per-

fectly right; he was the first. The history of great discoveries and inventions tells us that an unfair and forgetful posterity often ascribes the credit for them where it does not belong: not to the actual initiators, but to their disciples and followers. But in this end the truth always triumphs.

Franco, however, is determined to stick up energetically for his author's rights. This is what his newspaper, *Arriba*, wrote on September 27:

"Numerous territories are being lost to Europe in the face of Russian encroachment... and even Leon Blum has suggested the necessity of forming the Western bloc that Franco was the first to propose."

Franco's newspaper proudly declares:

"History will say... that in the midst of a world war, a Spaniard of a race of great leaders and statesmen, of Alexander and Caesarian lineage, attempted to save a culture and a continent."

Franco insists, with the backing of documentary evidence, that while, chronologically, he may come after Alexander of Macedon and Julius Caesar, he at any rate did precede Leon Blum in devising a plan, in the shape of a Western bloc, for the salvation of "a culture and a continent."

In the face of this it is utterly absurd, for the *Figaro* (October 14) to try to make it appear that the Western bloc is intended only for the defence of the Rhine:

"The defence of the Rhine undoubtedly interests all nations, but chiefly France, Belgium, Holland and Britain."

"Defence of the Rhine"

Let *Figaro* borrow a microscope and perhaps it will then discover on the map—besides Belgium and Holland—Russia, which seems to have escaped its notice. And perhaps some of *Figaro's* readers would realize, without the help of its editors, that at a critical moment the Soviet Union might be of no less effective help to the French than the

Belgians and Dutch precisely in the matter of the defence of the Rhine.

We may leave aside the purely "economic" arguments adduced in support of the Western bloc.

For, firstly, economic combinations do not necessitate the formation of a special general staff ("military commission"); they do not make it necessary to trumpet forth that the future bloc may have to take direct action against the policy of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe; nor do they make it necessary publicly to declare that the Western bloc (with the inclusion of Germany in its "complex") must have an eye to the "enemy" from the East.

A Threat To Peace

And secondly, the Western bloc, and its economic necessity to the Western countries, have been noisily advertised in the press and at public meetings for months, yet during all this period, with the exception of a trade agreement between France and fascist Spain, no treaties which would actually bring the countries of the future bloc into closer economic relations have been concluded, or even mooted.

And the only at all perceptible consequences of all these veracious preparations, of all these, now jubilant, now threatening, now ominously insinuating articles and press conferences was not "economic," but purely political, viz., an added skilliness in the brazenly aggressive and provocative tone of the publicists and politicians who are striving to the best of their ability to hasten a new world war.

What is the purpose of this playing with fire? Who is to benefit from it? None of the peoples who want peace based on freedom and equality of all; but every reactionary who is always dreaming of a war to destroy the Soviet Union.

ARE SOVIET SUSPICIONS UNFOUNDED?

A Review Of The Anglo-American Press

Prominent statesmen in Britain and the U. S. often say: "If only Russia was not so suspicious and would trust us, how much easier would be the path to peace."

Is Russia so "suspicious"—and unnecessarily so? One has only to read what the press in Britain and the U. S. is saying to know why the Soviet Union keeps a sharp eye on those who are plotting (as they have plotted ever since the great Revolution of 1917) to destroy her, to unleash a third World War.

THE propaganda of these elements of course runs along the usual well-worn lines.

We get the talk—as in the *Statist* (a journal of British financiers) of September that the time is not far off when the British Commonwealth (which naturally includes India) and the American Union will be jointly defending their common way of life and cultural heritage—as in Indonesia, you may suppose!

Old Hitler Slogan

The *Statist* followed this up in November with a more categorical call to war—stating that relations between the Soviet and the Allies in Europe and the Near East were so strained that the world may be thrown into an upheaval again at any moment.

Closely following on the heels of the *Statist* comes the *Observer*, the paper of the Astor family, which also is very 'gloomy'! On November 4 it wrote that nations which are not on speaking terms (obviously the Soviet and Britain) may soon be at daggers drawn.

And as though to comfort the British people that really this was nothing to worry about, it also put across (in October) a story from its Polish Correspondent that "there is again much talk about the Russian colossus with feet of clay"—very reminiscent of Hitler's propaganda before the Nazi attack on the Soviet, when he was persuading his people that war against the Soviet would be easy, profitable and good!

Again there is the atom bomb; many are the men in the West whom the U.S.'s possession of the atom bomb has made quite dizzy.

Among them is Paul Winter (who has made himself famous by bitter attacks on Russian 'censorship'). He declared in *World Digest* of October, that Britain and the U. S. must grasp the opportunity to speed their "influence" to all Europe (i.e. exclude the Soviet).

Russell's Humbug

Still another prominent Soviet-hater is Bertrand Russell who pleads for a Western alliance headed by the U. S., buttressed by the atom bomb, in which "every power in alliance would have to agree to concert its foreign policy by discussion with the U.S. and not to wage war, except jointly with the U. S.!"

And Russell then crudely, very crudely, says—"Russia could have no chance of waging a successful war against such an alliance."

Echoing Russell—but in a blatantly imperialist way is Kenneth De Courcy, notorious "Empire-propagandist"—who wrote recently in the *Tory Journal*, the *Review of World Affairs*:

"Our observers have reached this general conclusion: (1) Russia is going through a bad patch of weakness and, if she were heavily opposed now (my emphasis), would have to give in. (2) This will soon pass and she will regain her strength."

A very obvious call for an immediate anti-Soviet war.

French War-Monger

In France too, General Picard, the military correspondent of *L'Epoque* wrote on November 2, that he saw "the hand of Moscow" in the events in Indo-China and Indonesia! Another French colonel said in a speech in the town of Nimes that France, England, Holland and Belgium should

form a bloc which would be capable in the near future of opposing the only possible neighbour—the 400 divisions of the Red Army. (For more on this Western bloc, see article on this page).

Such is the talk in the West that inevitably—and rightly leads the Soviet Union to be on its guard—on guard against those who threaten the world with a new anti-Soviet war. And it is not only the Soviet that is on its guard. Progressive figures in the West are also alarmed at this growth of the drive towards an anti-Soviet war.

Democrats Warn

In the *United States News*, an influential U. S. paper, the conservative writer Lawrence, wrote recently expressing alarm at the foreign policy of the U. S. Government. He said that Americans are beginning to adopt the philosophy that the U. S. must possess a big army, navy and air force.

What for?—asked Lawrence. To fight Germany or Japan—or Britain—obviously not. To fight Russia?—some say so.

"Evidently" Lawrence goes on, "the U. S. has adopted a philosophy of force, instead of reason; of military demonstration, instead of the language of reason and justice. This is the sole solution Hitler had found for his difficulties. Hitler distrusts other nations. Now the U. S. also begins to distrust other nations and to build a military force as the U. S. spokesman to the world."

The well-known commentator, Eliot, of the *New York Herald Tribune*, asks sarcastically:

"Must we show such open suspicion of the good intentions of others while smugly assuming that our intentions are not open to that question?"

Another well-known U. S. commentator, Hill, points bitterly to the different standards applied to Europe and Asia:

"We send," he says, "a special envoy to investigate the Balkans but we refrain from sending investigators to Asia where the British, Dutch and French troops are attempting forcibly to restore the unpopular pro-western regimes. In the latter case, the U. S. only demands the removal of American labels from lend-lease weapons used for

the suppression of the independence movements of the Asiatic peoples."

In Britain also progressive and honest friends of peace and freedom are "suspicious"—as the Soviet is, about the way things are going. A. J. Cummings, the well-known liberal, wrote on the House of Commons debate just before Attlee left for Washington to discuss the atom bomb:

"It was quite obvious that the Labour back-benchers did not like Churchill's enthusiastic agreement with President Truman in declining to make known to other countries methods of producing the Atomic Bomb... When he finished... pained silence on the Labour benches gave way to harsh murmurs of dissent..."

Again commenting pointedly on Bevin's request for putting all "cards on the table," Labour M.P. Silverman asked:

"What is the use of asking other people to put their cards on the table if we keep the ace (the atom bomb—M.K.) up our sleeves?"

The truth is that in Britain and the U. S., while many big statesmen like Bevin talk of their desire for an enduring peace, (as he did in Moscow last week), reactionary newspapers in their countries with impunity—and they are never rebuked for it—talk of and plead for preparations for a third World War—against the Soviet.

And this is inevitable—for so long as imperialism exists—with its desire to retain its colonial empire, with its desire to preserve its capitalist blood-brothers, the industrialists of Germany and Japan, its old reactionary friends of the bankrupt landlord-capitalist cliques of the Balkans—so long will it always dream of and plan for the destruction of the Soviet Union which twenty-eight years ago overthrew imperialism and has since consistently fought for peace and freedom for all peoples.

Soviet On Guard

When this is so, is it surprising that the Soviet does not accept at their face-value all Bevin's platitudes but looks carefully to see what others are saying and whether Bevin is saying anything to them.

The Soviet—like all good honest peace-loving anti-imperialists—is on its guard. As Molotov said on November 6, 1945:

"As long as the roots of fascism and imperialist aggression have not been finally exterminated, our vigilance with regard to possible new violations of peace shall not be relaxed."

(Adapted by Mohan Kumar-mangalam from an article by A. Sokolov, in *New Times* No. 12, November 15, 1945).

Chiang's Troops Shoot Down Students

Mighty Upsurge Against Civil War, For A New Democratic China

We give below the exclusive story of the biggest student strikes China has seen since 1937.

Ten years ago in December 1935, a mighty demonstration of the students of the National University of Tsinghua, Peking, demanding the cessation of the Kuomintang (KMT)-Communist Civil War and United Resistance to Japan, was fired on by the KMT police.

The storm of protest that rose against this brutal act unleashed a huge people's movement that culminated in 1937 in the KMT-Communist unity to fight Japanese aggression.

To-day a similar thing is happening in China. The main story is here—but a reflection of it was seen in the World Youth Congress (WYC) held in London last month.

To the Congress had come twenty-five Chinese delegates—twenty-four from Kuomintang China, whose choice was endorsed by the Kuomintang Government itself; one, Chen Chia-kang, was from the youth movement in the Communist-led Democratic Areas.

But when the question of the election of the Office-Bearers of the WYC came up, the twenty-four KMT delegates unanimously put forward the name of Chen Chia-kang as China's candidate for the post of Vice-President.

Later Chiang Kai-shek's London Embassy intervened, objected to the choice of Chen, threatened the twenty-four delegates with all sorts of reprisals. On this Chen intervened and withdrew his name. A KMT delegate was elected Vice-President, while Chen—again unanimously—was elected to the Executive Committee.

The student strikes and the incident at the London Conference are parts of the same picture—a new democratic upsurge in KMT China which will surely sweep away reaction, give birth to a united prosperous China, and which can claim part of the credit for the renewal of the negotiations between the KMT and the Communists, negotiations that are going on in Chungking to-day.

(By Air)

CHUNGKING, Dec. 10.

SINCE THE GREAT ANTI-JAPANESE STRIKES OF 1935 and 1936 the biggest student upsurge defying brutal Kuomintang military and police terror is taking place in Kuomintang China today.

IT BEGAN WITH A MIGHTY MASS MEETING OF THE students of the four universities in Kunming, to protest against the Kuomintang (KMT) ruling clique's attempt to destroy the Communist-led Liberated Areas and to urge a cessation of Civil War on the basis of a democratic United China.

THE MEETING WAS HELD ON NOVEMBER 25 IN THE MEETING Hall of the Lienta University which is the biggest university in China and includes the famous Big Three of Chinese education, after they moved back in face of the Jap advance, the famous National University of Peking, the National University of Tsinghua and the University of Nanking.

To the meeting came also the students of Kunming's other three universities—the Yunnan University, the French University and the English University.

While the meeting was going on, Kuomintang regular troops and Secret Service police broke into the university grounds and opened fire to disperse the meeting. Four persons were killed and many wounded.

The news of this brutal attack soon spread throughout Kunming, China's present-day biggest centre. The next day all the stu-

dents of the four universities and twenty-eight high and middle schools went on strike in protest against the shootings and in support of the demand for the ending of the Civil War.

More Repression

The KMT authorities had thought that repression would smash the movement. But finding the opposite happening, they called an emergency meeting of the Presidents and Principals of all the schools in Kunming; here General KUAN LIN-CHENG, the Central Army Garrison Commander in Kunming, who had organ-

ised the attack on the Lienta meeting on the 25th, ordered the immediate resumption of work in all the schools—failing which he would hold the Heads of the institutions together with the Students' Union. Presidents responsible.

Exclusive

"The students," he said grimly, "may have the freedom to strike in their schools, but I also have the freedom to shoot from behind the school-walls!"

General Kuan's threats, however, were ignored by the students. The strike continued.

Throughout the 27th, 28th, and 29th, students thronged the streets, shouting anti-Civil War slogans, collecting money for their campaign, rousing the people. There were numerous clashes with the police—but nothing could stop the students. More and more ordinary citizens joined in shouting "Chinese must not fight Chinese" and "We Want Democracy."

The KMT authorities were enraged and planned to teach the students a lesson by a tremendous show of repression on December 1.

At 6 a.m. over one thousand troops broke into the school-yard of the Lienta University. Tearing down the students' posters and wall-newspapers, they beat up everyone—professors, students, university servants—they came across. At least thirty were wounded.

At the same time thirty heavily armed Secret Service men broke into the Normal School of Lienta University; they throw hand-grenades into the different class rooms—two students were killed and twenty more wounded.

The next day December 2, a huge meeting in the yard of the Lienta University, presided over by Professor YEH, paid tribute to those who had laid down their lives in the cause of democratic unity and contributed fifteen lakh dollars to the anti-civil war campaign.

The Old Bogey

By this time the KMT authorities finding that repression had only roused the students to greater unity, took fright and began to raise the anti-Communist bogey—alleging that the Communists had organised the anti-Civil War campaign and provoked the clashes.

The truth however is that the entire student community in a province which is reputedly 'backward' and where the Communist movement has never been strong and always underground, are solidly behind the demand for ending the Civil War.

Not only that; some of the biggest professors of the universities

are backing the students, speaking at their meetings—among them are FEN U-LAN, Professor of Ancient Philosophy, Research Institute in History, and Professor CHIEN TUEN-SHIN, authority on International Law and former colleague of China's present Foreign Minister, Dr. Wang Shih-chieh.

The entire teaching staff of the Lienta University has also joined in the student strike and has demanded that Garrison Commander, General Kuan Lin-chin and LI CHUNG-HU AN, Director of Civil Affairs in Yunnan, should be tried. So also seventy members of the teaching staff of Yunnan have vigorously condemned the actions of KMT authorities as "unheard of in the history of the Chinese Republic" and declared that what had inspired the students was nothing but the deepest patriotism.

Chiang's Message

The KMT authorities seeing the failure of their "Communist-are-responsible" slander, now began to use their bigger guns.

Immediately after the shootings of December 1, an official of the Ministry of Education was sent to appease the students—and particularly to win over the professors and persuade them not to send to Chungking the deputation of three leading professors that they had already planned to send.

But the official failed either to prevent the delegation from going to Chungking or to appease the students; the students refused to call off their strike unless their demand for the trial of those responsible was met and unless the KMT took steps to end the Civil War. The KMT authorities then resorted to the old trick (practised by the British in August 1942). Vacations were declared and the students were asked to go home.

At this stage, Chiang himself intervened with a message (that resembles our own alien Viceroy's messages—Ed.)

In it, he stressed the importance of maintaining 'order' and threatened 'lawlessness' with severe punishment—but there was not a word of regret about the massacred students.

Fake Prosecution

Simultaneously the KMT launched a fake prosecution against two officers—said to be responsible for the grenade-throwing on December 1. But no one in Kunming believes in the genuineness of the trial because:

- (1) While no major-war-criminal or fifth-columnist in Kunming was brought to trial for the last four months, these men were arrested in a day!
- (2) The trial is being held not before the ordinary court, but before a joint court of Garrison Commander Kuan and acting-Governor LI—whom everyone knows to be the actual criminals responsible!

(3) In the evidence given, the planned massacres are portrayed as individual acts of terrorism.

These desperate attempts to escape responsibility are not deceiving anyone. Professor FU, the Dean of the Lienta University was in Chungking during the week-end when the tragic events took place; learning what had happened, he took the next plane to Kunming and went to see Garrison Commander Kuan.

"As a representative of the University," he told him clearly and bitterly, "I express my horror and disgust at your actions. We were friends in the past; but now we are enemies, in opposite camps."

Kuan tried to argue but the Professor shouted at him, saying:

"You killed my pupils. It would have been better had you killed my sons and daughters."

Communists Appeal

The controlled KMT press in Chungking has almost totally suppressed news of this massacre. The Ta Kung Pao well-known centrist paper has demanded an enquiry but to please the Government, it has also accused the Communists of provocation.

The only Communist daily, the Sin Hua Pihao, is however giving great prominence to the news and wrote:

"All honest citizens of our country who have sons or daughters, brothers or sisters, are rightly indignant at the savage, cruel and bloody massacre of Kunming students by the KMT troops for the sole reason that they oppose the Civil War.

"In truth the voice of the Kunming students that resounds loudly today is the voice of the vast masses of our entire people—an expression of their desire for unity, against the Civil War.

"We express our greatest appreciation of the lofty and patriotic ideals that have inspired the Kunming students.

"We declare our sympathy for them in their struggle against suppression by the Kuomintang.

"We are confident that all honest people will give them every help and hope that the Government will forthwith punish the murderers, stop the Civil War and bring to birth the new democratic China, for which the Kunming students are struggling."

The Kunming demonstrations are no accident but a part of the increasing democratic ferment all over China, and the growing panic of the KMT. It shows that the demand for democracy in China is spreading over the entire country, and cannot but achieve success.

—(From Our Correspondent)

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Ode To Chinese Freedom

SPIRIT IMMORTAL

[This poem was written by the young Chinese poet Feng Chi after the firing on Kunming students by Chiang Kai-shek's troops.]

Come back to us our martyred dead,
Rise up, we need you as our guide.
But we are here—Lift up your head!
Why despair, we are at your side.
We live in hearts that justice seek,
In eyes aglow with freedom's fight;
In every youth's heroic deed—
In all crusaders for the right.
We are not dead—we cannot die,
Dry up your tears. Go, beat the drum;
United march, united try—
And Freedom, Justice, Truth will come!

(Adapted into English verse by Victor Kaul).