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THE NEW AGE

THE CONGRESS MUST DECIDE

By B. F. Bradley

The last year has been an eventful year, and one in which the national struggle has taken on new forms and developed at a speed that few of us thought possible a few years ago. A year ago, before the Congress Session, the *New Age* correctly pointed out these new forms of struggle; stress was laid upon two main immediate objectives—on the one hand the need to prepare for the offensive and active opposition to the Federation, as the final and totally unacceptable link in the slave-chains of the new constitution; and on the other hand, the need to forge and expand real national unity within the Congress, in order to be able to challenge imperialism effectively. *The novelty of the struggle, that faced us a year ago, lay in the fact that the Congress had achieved startling victories at the polls and had taken office in the majority of the Provinces.*

It was not an easy thing for an organization like the Congress to adapt itself to new forms of struggle; in the past its right to exist had been challenged by imperialism; its development had been through periods of intense repression; its ideology was born of the clash between a subject people and a foreign bureaucracy. It was difficult to effect the transition from non-cooperation to government with limited responsibility

in the Provinces, at the same time working all the time to smash the hated imperialist constitution. The left opposed acceptance of Office.....but were not ready with a practical and constructive alternative; the Right accepted Office without really understanding the change that had taken place within the Congress owing to its new mass basis. They thought of Office as a strategic point from which to bargain with Imperialism. *But all along the Congress has been bound together, in spite of the diversity of the class interests within it, by the common desire for Purna Swaraj. This unity of purpose is the same as that which unites the Chinese and the Spanish peoples in their heroic struggles.*

It was not only the acceptance of Office that necessitated new weapons of struggle, but the rising of new and powerful forces within the anti-imperialist struggle created new problems. The mass enrolment of primary Congress members and, in particular, the significant part played by the workers and peasants in their own organizations and in support of the Congress, had two immediate results in the political field. On the one hand, there was a hardening of the small and reactionary core within the Congress in defence of landlord and vested interests. This small section, acquiring influence in the governmental

machinery, disproportionate to its size, has become so isolated from the masses and frightened of their strength, that it tends to protect itself behind the skirts of imperialism, and in so doing to pave the way for some sort of compromise. On the other hand, there has been created an enormous potential army, capable of ensuring, even in the face of imperialist repression and safeguards, that the full Congress demands are implemented.

The Congress, like all national liberation movements, is a dynamic force. During the last year it has developed even more rapidly, as far as the internal relation of forces is concerned, than has the external situation. In this dynamic development conflicts undoubtedly arise. The Congress is a weapon against imperialism, that cannot be wielded by those who mistake a fire-arm for an out-of-date cudgel; people who make that mistake hinder the movement and disrupt it; in the confusion that is caused, there is bound to be danger that within our ranks antagonisms will arise and that those, who fear the appearance of new forces, will compromise with the enemy.

These dangers of disunity are symptomatic of a virile movement which is acquiring daily vast reserves upon which to call. The task of preserving unity becomes correspondingly all the more urgent as the movement gathers way; and it is the left, leading and uniting the workers and peasants, alone that can preserve that unity. For, Imperialism is not slow to realize the possibilities of splitting the national movement. Just as they tried to utilize the return of Neely from Europe three years ago as an opportunity to split the

Congress and to isolate the left from the main body of the Congress, so today they will try to use the old-stagers and those who fear the strength of the people to sow dissension.

A year ago we saw these forces at work fairly clearly; we saw that the sharpness of the issues at stake was becoming accentuated, that the scope for manoeuvring by the Right was being narrowed, that the tendency to capitulate was being offset by the growth of forces which, if properly led, would not only make capitulation impossible, but would effectively cement unity. In the situation as it was then, *the New Age gave a clear call for the united national front, for the genuine support of the Congress by all workers and peasants, and for a determined and planned fight against the Federation.* Estimating correctly the role of the working class in the developing struggle, we called for the satisfaction of the demands of the workers and peasants, the grant of civil liberties and legislation to relieve poverty and indebtedness, as being the central issues upon which the anti-imperialist fight could be directed. It was only if these demands were seriously tackled by the Ministries that Office acceptance could be used as a means of smashing the constitution and drawing all the masses into the struggle. For that reason *we organized the workers and peasants to put forward their demands persistently, not in order to embarrass the Ministries, but, in order to show imperialism what the country was determined to get. This conception of unity behind the congress is, and must be, based upon complete faith in the masses within the congress and their ability to over-ride the vacillation of this or that compromiser.*

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But over and above that, this conception is based upon two other principles—firstly, the necessity of not only political, but also organizational, unity of the left forces; and secondly, the building up and correct political leadership of the working-class and peasant organizations.

Unity is not something negative; it is not merely the watering down of the national programme to generalities that displease no one because they mean nothing. Some Congress leaders make this mistake, and try to silence criticism and ask us to "give the Ministers a chance." In so doing they take the vitality out of the movement. We shall never win freedom by waiting upon the will of imperialism or sitting at round table conferences with them; we shall not get freedom by thinking that imperialism is about to commit suicide; we shall get it only through struggle. *Unity consists in the acceptance of a common objective and the practical working out of immediate steps as to how to get it*; unity involves the active cooperation of all in the pursuit of this objective on the basis of their own particular class-demands.

How far has such unity been achieved during the past year? We can look back with satisfaction to the development of the Congress as the United National Front. In the face of sabotage from the bureaucracy and pressure from the Governors, the Congress movement has remained united. There have, of course, been moments of grave provocation; the Right wing leaders who are entrenched in parliamentary positions have succeeded in suing the bureaucratic machinery, in some instances, in order to hamstring the rank and file

movement, and in so doing they have played directly into the hands of the (to them) benevolent imperialists. It is not necessary to recount the story of the Bombay Trades Disputes Bill, or the Congress-Zamindar Pact in Behar or the somewhat too numerous instances of the use of section 144 and the breaking up of working-class demonstrations. These are facts of which no true Congressman can be proud and, as events have shown, have brought the right wing leaders into disrepute. *These acts of provocation arise not so much from a desire to betray the movement as the complete incapacity of the old leaders to understand the significance of the new struggle; against their will they are being driven to cooperate with imperialism because they do not understand what is happening around them.*

On the other side of the picture we have to record, big advances made, a large extension of civil liberties, debt and peasant legislation, and the extension, within the limits set by financial restriction, to the social services. It is well to remember that the Congress Ministers have to cope with a civil service that is hide-bound in its conservatism and a police force that has special access to the Governor and possesses secret reports that the Ministers may not call for. We must compare too, the Congress rule with that of Mr. Fazlul Huq. These two facts...one of throttling down the most militant section, cooperation with imperialism or other reactionary elements, and the other of using provincial autonomy to strengthen the position of the Congress, to fight the cause of the workers and peasants and to prepare for the clash with imperialism.....are inevitably due to the pull of forces within the national movement. What is to be done now is

not to give way to the provocative disruption of sectarians of either the left or the right. So far we have succeeded in avoiding such disruption. We have criticized where we felt the Congress leadership was weakening the struggle, and events have proved that the majority of the rank and file have supported our criticism. It has been obvious, and indeed the Congress President has openly commented on the fact, that there has been of recent months a growth of "neo-constitutionalism;" the Ministers were getting stuck in their parliamentary ways simply because they were becoming isolated from the masses. This lapse on their part was seized upon by landlord reactionaries, vested interests, reactionaries who have wormed their way into the Congress, and by the imperialists themselves to pave the way for a compromise over Federation.

It would have been fatal to the struggle for independence if, when the left was a small minority, we had allowed ourselves to sink into isolated sectarianism; it would have been fatal to have been provoked by the growth of this constitutionalism; but it will be still more fatal now, when events have proved the correctness of our stand and the strength of the rank and file demand for real action, if we allow ourselves to exaggerate the leftward swing of the Congress and to turn, on our part, to acts of provocation. Now, more than ever, unity must be preserved if we are to outwit imperialism.

The significance of the re-election of Subhas Bose as President is not lost upon us. Without doubt there has been some swing to the left in the last year, which is to be accounted for by the rapid politicalization of the masses and

a great improvement in our work in the Trade Unions and peasant organizations. This development has been remarkable and will have remarkable consequences.

But today the fundamental issue, the issue upon which Subhas returned as President, is that of a definite and outright challenge to imperialism on the question of Federation. This is the issue today; everything must be subordinated to the struggle to this end, and the preservation of unity for this purpose. Why have our friends and comrades been elected to go to Tripuri as Congress representatives? Simply because we have shown ourselves to be the most genuine, the most convinced, the most consistent, and the most honest anti-imperialists. We must continue to be so, not developing a sectarian conceit in our own sectional strength and challenging the right as a matter of course, but in real leadership of the broadest masses in the Congress, swinging the whole of the Congress into the attack on Imperialism.

The big strikes that have taken place this year, and the big advances in the peasant movement, indicate a spontaneous upheaval in India that is unparalleled. Still more tirelessly we have to organise and lead these movements, imposing a correct leadership and drawing the masses politically into the anti-imperialist struggle. Unity in the Trade Union movement is the first step towards coherence on a national scale that will have immense repercussions. But we still have far to go and much to learn; there is disunity of the left forces still, and little headway has been made in healing the splits that are seriously hindering our effectiveness.....The forces of the left

and only those forces can now preserve unity in the Congress, but they cannot succeed in this and take the leadership, so long as they remain at sixes and sevens. The coming year will be a year of upheaval; under President Bose we are stepping forward to challenge imperialism, but unless we have a united socialist movement, imperialism will yet beat us back. We must lay aside all recriminations, forget personal animosities and ambitions. The fate, not only of the working-class, but of all India rests in the hands of those leaders who are now standing in the way of unity.

There is no time for delay; Tripuri may be the last Congress session before war breaks out. The history of Chamberlain's betrayal of democracy and his obscene flirtation with the Fascists is well-known to all readers of the *New Age*. Rather than save democracy in Spain and cooperate with the U.S.S.R., Chamberlain is prepared to plunge us into a ghastly imperialist war. Make no mistake that imperialism is being weakened by Chamberlain; in his maniacal struggle, to defeat democracy, he has made concessions to Hitler.....concessions that are fatal to the *people* of England, who wish to save democracy and defeat fascism. But he makes these concessions only because he is preparing today or tomorrow to launch his mighty campaign of reaction. It would be suicidal to believe that Chamberlain is throwing the Empire away or that he is gravely embarrassed. No, Chamberlain is walking hand in hand with Hitler to defeat democracy wherever it exists. And one of his first steps will be to smash the movement in India that, by electing Subhas Bose, is laying such urgent claim to democracy in India.

In this situation the Congress meets at Tripuri. The forces of the left go to Tripuri with increased strength born of a year of great struggles. We must see to it that Tripuri gives the order for a challenge to imperialism on every front. The policy of non-intervention in the States, which even Gandhiji has renounced in fact, must be completely reversed, and all these oppressed people swung into the national movement so as to weaken Britain's reactionary allies. The peasant struggle must be developed and encouraged. Freedom for the workers to organize and build up their Trade Union. Democratization of the Congress and a re-orientation of Congress Ministerial policy. And above all an immediate people's offensive against the Central authority. Today it is not merely a question of resisting Federation; the struggle has advanced stage; we are approaching the moment for the transfer of power to the people.

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MILITARY STRENGTH OF THE U.S.S.R.

By W. P. Coates

[In our January issue we published an article by G. Miller on the Soviet Economic and Military strength. The following article by W. P. Coates gives a further insight into the might of the Soviet.—Ed.]

German and Japanese Opinion In 1934

The German Military Journal, *Deutsche Wehr*, in September, 1934 stated: The Red Army is very well armed. It is equipped with light and heavy artillery, armoured cars, small and large tanks, chemical warfare materials, etc., in great quantities, and its personnel is well-trained."

Captain Maydeo, former Japanese Military Attache in Moscow, declared in December, 1934, in the Press: "During the period of the First Five-Year Plan special attention was paid to the intensive development of the air force, the motor mechanised units, and chemical warfare materials. Immense progress has been made in each of these fields. I do not know the exact number of tanks at the present time.....The fact is that they possess a huge number of the newest types of tanks. The mechanisation of the Russian army amazes all the military attaches who attend the parades. Their achievements in aviation are especially remarkable."

Hitler, to Lord Londonderry

Herr Hitler, in the course of an interview with Lord Londonderry,* February 4, 1936, averred:—

"(1) In Russia one has to deal with a nation of 180,000,000.

* "Ourselves and Germany," by Lord Londonderry.

"(2) Russia is territorially immune from attack.

"(3) Russia can never be overcome by a blockade.

"(4) Its industries are safe from aerial attack, as the most important industrial centres are from 4,000 to 6,000 kilometres from the frontiers."

This is not all. The Fuehrer continued:—

"The present development of Russia gives cause for reflection. In 1917 Russia was down and out. In 1920 she was torn by civil war. In the years 1924 and 1925 the first signs of convalescence began to appear with the creation of the Red Army. In 1927 the first Five-Year Plan was begun and later carried out. In 1932 came the second Five-Year Plan, which is now in full swing. Russia has a solid trade, the strongest Army, the strongest Air Force in the world. These are facts which cannot be ignored."

These opinions were expressed in 1934 and 1936. Have the Japanese and Nazi leaders altered their conclusions in the meantime? The answer has been supplied by Major Lothar Schuttel in his "Luftkrieg bedroht Europa!" (Air War Threatens Europe!), published in Berlin in the spring of 1938.

Tsarist and Soviet Russia

The author is convinced that the Soviet Government has drawn correct conclusions from the defeat of the Tsarist Armies. He writes: "The Soviet Government has accomplished what was not possible for Tsarist Russia. It was sufficiently imaginative to draw from the geographical situation of the U. S. S. R. the necessary conclusions for its military policy.

"The Soviet authorities have learnt from the defeats of the Tsarist Armies in the world war, and recognised that the military and political catastrophe was not caused alone by the incompetence of the military and technical leadership, but, in the first place, by the economic and technical backwardness of the Tsarist Empire. The latter thought that it could rely in the world war on its enormous human and agrarian reserves alone; it did not appreciate the decisive importance of a strong national industry and therefore in the course of the war—which steadily developed into a war of materials—it inevitably collapsed as a consequence of the complete disorganisation of its economy which was exhausted to the utmost.

"The lessons of the world war became the basis on which the Soviet Government built its military policy. It put the word 'armaments' at the head of all economic plans and measures. It was evident that armaments had to be produced in gigantic quantities to meet the demands of an army of ten to thirteen million men."

Soviet Air Fleet

In the author's opinion the U.S.S.R. is well advised to base her defence on her air fleet. He writes:—

"Russia is indeed better situated than any other country to base her defence on the aeroplane. The air has considerably worsened the defence position, both politically and geographically, of smaller States, but it has not weakened that of the Soviet Union. On the contrary, it has opened to the latter, owing to her immense area, new ways of pursuing her aims in the realm of power politics. Russia is the only European State whose area is so extensive that for a really effective attack even the combined air fleets of several European Powers would not suffice. By the removal of the capital from Leningrad to Moscow during the period of armed intervention the capital has been removed from the arena of the air front. Apart from Leningrad, Kiev, and Odessa, there are no Russian towns of any size in the west within reach of hostile aeroplanes. Moreover, Russia is the only State which was in a position to remove her armaments industry beyond the range of an air attack.

"The Soviet Union, if she had no aggressive intentions, could be satisfied with a limited number of chasers for defence purposes. However, recognising her strategic superiority in the air, the Soviet Union is devoting her energies to the construction of an air force, which she places in the centre of her political aims as a definite instrument of attack."

The only comment that can be made here is that the Soviet Government has demonstrated by its whole foreign policy that it has no aggressive aims.

Soviet Aero-plane Industry

Major Lothar Schuttel is tremendously impressed with the productive capacity

of the aeroplane industry of the U.S.S.R. He writes:—

“The Soviet aeroplane industry will assume henceforth a leading position in Europe, in the development of the construction of military aeroplanes. One must expect that, if the curve of increasing production in the Soviet industry for military aeroplanes continues steadily, the *output figure will rise in 1940 to about 12,000, perhaps even to 15,000 aeroplanes.* That means that the Soviet aeroplane industry will be in a position to bring the Red Air Fleet—which, according to *Pravda*, August 19, 1936, consisted of 4,000 first-line planes, to-day, with the inclusion of second-line planes, consists of more than 7,000 aeroplanes—to a strength of at least 20,000 aeroplanes.”

The author continues: “This can only be compared with the gigantic increase in the figures of armaments and materials during the world war. England’s armaments industry during the world war had raised the strength of the British air fleet from 272 aeroplanes in 1915 to 22,171 in 1918.”

Is a parallel development possible in the U.S.S.R.? Major Schuttel apparently has no doubts. He avers: If such an increase in production was possible when that existing industry was still in its infancy, one can expect that an industry such as that of the Soviet Union, which in normal times can produce 8,000 to 12,000 or even 15,000 aeroplanes yearly, with the incorporation of numerous war and supplementary industries, will achieve an output which to-day cannot be expressed in figures... the more so since the Soviet aeroplane industry will be able to work in war time under the same conditions as in peace times.”

Armaments Industry Safe from Attack

The Soviet armaments industry is safe from aerial attack. Major Schuttel writes: “The area of Russia is so great that at present and in the near future an air attack can in no way cover her whole territory, whilst in Europe every State in all its parts can be flown over and bombed by the air fleets of neighbouring States.”

The author sums up: “Soviet Russia has at the present time numerically the largest air fleet in the world, and with regard to its capacity for carrying bombs its air force has the greatest striking power.

“The threat grows from year to year because of the advance in the industrialisation and technical progress of her air force, especially with regard to the range and speed of her aeroplanes.

“Soviet Russia will begin a war with continuous and persistently led attacks of her air force.....On the other hand with her enormous area, can hardly be injured by European air fleets for a long time to come. Russia can only be ‘scratched on the skin.’ Soviet Russia is conscious of her favourable position. She believes that in a war she will have little to risk and everything to win.”

In our judgment the moral of all this is that Germany will be well advised not to dream of attacking the U.S.S.R. because in the event of a wanton attack on her the Soviet Union would be able not only to defend herself but to carry the war into enemy territory.

A Japanese Opinion (1938)

Germany’s ally, Japan, is also keenly interested in the fighting forces of the U.S.S.R. A Japanese author, Yasuo

Mishima, recently writing in *Gendai* (Tokio), stated: "In the Far East alone the Soviet Air Force comprises from 1,200 to 1,300 aeroplanes and the Soviet Government is planning to increase its strength drastically. Even now aeroplane parts are still continuously being transported from Moscow to the Far East and it is certain that henceforth its number will become even greater. It is reckoned that in and around Vladivostok at least 30 per cent. of the Soviet Far Eastern Air Fleet is concentrated, that is, from 400 to 500 warplanes. Of these there are about 100 naval planes and more than 200 light and heavy bombers. Those machines, intended for the bombing of Japan, chiefly consist of the four-engined heavy bombers of the T.B.-3 type, with a speed of 175 miles per hour and a flying range of 1,560 miles. According to what we know there are about 100 such bombers in the Far East. With a view to menacing Manchukuo and Korea, the Soviet Union, of late, has been making every effort to replace old medium bombers by machines of a new type having a speed of 250 miles per hour."*

Comparing the naval forces of Japan and of the Soviet Union, the writer declared: "As to naval supremacy, Soviet Russia will not be able to contend with Japan. What she can do is to use naval guerrilla tactics, and this accounts for the fact that in the former days the Soviet Far Eastern Fleet consisted of only five destroyers, fifty to sixty submarines, sixty to seventy high-speed small torpedo boats, and thirty submarine destroyers—but no capital ships

and cruisers. It was only at a later date that warships for coastal defence, gunboats, and other special service vessels were added. These high-speed small torpedo-boats are really like horseflies which can cause the death of the cattle. As for the submarines, sixty is really a big number."

Vladivostok and the Soviet-Manchurian Frontier

As to Vladivostok and the Soviet-Manchurian frontier, Yasuo Mishima averred: "The forts are equipped with artillery of very large calibre, sheltered in steel and concrete emplacements capable of resisting large shells and bombs. Some time ago it was a question whether Vladivostok was fortified with guns of a calibre of sixteen inches upward and powerful enough to fight the Japanese fleet, but to-day the existence of such guns is no longer doubted. When these heavy pieces were put up has not yet been discovered, but it is certain that among them are 20-in. guns or even larger ones."

That is not all. He continued: "A permanently fortified belt consisting of *tochkas* [small forts] extends from the southern bank of Lake Hanka through Spassk and Chernigovka to Nikolsk, finally linking up with the *tochkas* in and around Vladivostok. It stretches along the Soviet-Manchukuo border for 100 miles. In spite of all these defences, preparations are made against a possible siege of Nikolsk and Vladivostok. Besides the military depots, war preparations, in the munitions and electric industries down to food supplies, are all complete and in order."

The writer concluded: "Most likely Vladivostok is even stronger now than what we have just described. It is said

* *Parade* (published by the Periodical Press, Ltd.), November, 1938. The subsequent extracts from Mishima's article are also taken from this issue of *Parade*.

that even in the city *tochkas* and similar defence works are built. Vladivostok is indeed very difficult of access, either by land or by sea; in fact it has become impregnable."

The Red Army of To-day

Russian soldiers have always fought courageously. The late Lord Kitchener, talking to Mr. Lloyd George before the world war, said: "I know the Russian soldier. He is the most fearless, tenacious soldier in the world."* In the autumn of 1914, as Mr. Lloyd George has reminded this country on many occasions, the Russian armies, though incompetently led and hopelessly inadequately equipped, saved Paris. "The shortage in rifles was so great," wrote the British Ambassador to Russia, "that a considerable percentage of the men had to wait unarmed till they could pick up the rifles of their fallen comrades."

The Red Army was born in the fires of the Civil War and foreign armed intervention. Time and time again hastily trained levies, ill-clothed and ill-shod, particularly after November, 1918, were thrown against the better trained and superbly** equipped troops, not only of the "White" Armies, but against the troops of fourteen nationalities. Moral inspiration and daring beat discipline and equipment. The Red Forces drove the "Whites" and the foreign invaders into the sea. But the Red Army of 1938 is very different from that of 1918-22.

To-day the Red Army numerically is the strongest in the world and in every

* Mr. Lloyd George speaking in the House of Commons, November 9, 1938. Hansard, col. 180.

** The "White" troops, particularly after the end of the world war, were supplied in abundance with the latest military equipment by the Allied Governments.

other respect is easily second to none. This has been explained with a wealth of detail by Regimental Commissar Feshankov in "The Soviet Comes of Age" (published by Hodge & Co.). Here we quote a few extracts from the chapter "The Red Army and Defence." The author states: "On the completion of the two Five-Year Plans the Red Army had changed beyond recognition. Large-scale industry, likewise the creation of the Soviet Government and Bolshevik Party, had provided it with first-class technical equipment."

Mechanised Troops, Infantry and Artillery

As regards the mechanisation of the Forces he avers:—

"The reconstruction of the army largely denoted the creation of motor mechanised troops and tank units, which it now possesses in the necessary quantity and of the required quality. These troops are equipped with every type of tank which are operated by fine men who have an excellent knowledge of their work and put all their soul into it. Thus a powerful base has been created which will be fully capable of satisfying the country's requirements in tanks, in case of an attack on the U.S.S.R."

Respecting the infantry and artillery, M. Feshankov declares:—

"Great changes have taken place in the infantry as well. Infantry equipment is now perfectly up-to-date, and includes automatic rifles, machine-guns of every system, and other automatic arms of home manufacture.

"Considerable attention is given to the artillery, which is growing and

improving. At the present time the Red Army is sufficiently equipped with every form of artillery, beginning with anti-tank and tank artillery, battalion and regimental artillery, light field artillery and anti-aircraft artillery, and ending with heavy long-range artillery."

Frontiers Guarded

But the Soviet Union has land and sea frontiers extending to 20,000 miles. How about them? The Regimental Commissar states:—

"The frontiers are well protected. The western frontier from Lake Ladoga to the Black Sea and also the sections in the Far East and Eastern Siberia, most open to foreign menace, have been covered with a network of fortifications. There has been a considerable increase in the number of fortified regions of coast defence on the Black and Baltic Seas, in the Murmansk district, and especially in the Far East. These fortified regions are equipped with heavy artillery."

And as regards the Navy, is it negligible? The author avers:—

"The sea frontiers are likewise well defended. The Government have achieved no small success in the technical re-equipment of the naval forces. The Soviet battleships, though they are of 1914-15 construction, have been thoroughly modernised and are perfectly up-to-date warships. Within recent years two new fleets have come into being—the Pacific Fleet and the North Fleet. The Baltic and Black Sea Fleets have been strengthened to a considerable extent, as have the Amur, Caspian,

and Dnieper flotillas. The number of minor warships, naval aeroplanes, and submarines, and the amount of anti-aircraft artillery have increased by several hundred per cent. as compared with the beginning of the Second Five-Year Plan."

The Human Element

Now as regards the human element, he places on record that:

"An elementary standard of general education is compulsory in the Red Army. In the old Tsarist Army 50 per cent. of the soldiers were illiterate, whereas when the Red Army celebrated its twentieth anniversary not a single man in it was illiterate. Half of the men have been through six or seven classes of the secondary school, while a large number of them have finished the secondary school and university. The students and cadets of the military academies and schools study foreign languages, as do thousands of commanders on active service."

And the training of officers. M. Feshankov writes:

"The junior commanding staff is trained in regimental schools. Red Army men who undergo a year's training in these schools become junior commanders, and subsequently, when they have served their time in the army, go on long leave. Some of them remain in the army for superogatory service while numbers of them enter military schools where they are trained as lieutenants. All roads are open to privates and junior commanders in the Red Army. They can enter any military school and, when they have finished it, become commanders and occupy high posts.....

"The majority of both the officers and privates are workers and peasants, and both defend their people and their fatherland. On duty the commander is the chief whose orders require unquestioning obedience. But off duty—at meetings, in the theatre, and so on—the Red Army private and commander are comrades."

In conclusion we would add that Dr. James Dunlop recently wrote: *In the call up of recruits for the army this autumn 93 per cent. passed the medical test necessary for admission to the army. This is a staggering figure which no other nation could even approximate and compare with the 30 to 40 per cent. of other countries.*"

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF MARX'S CAPITAL

By J. Alpari

I—The Necessary Preliminary Knowledge for a proper understanding of "Capital".

Repeated attempts have been made at a popularisation of *Capital*. The best known of them are G. Deville's and K. Kautsky's, the first in French and the second in German. Kautsky's work, owing to its numerous translations, has been more widely read in almost the whole world than *Capital*.

Deville and Kautsky are still to-day recommended as introductions to *Capital*. We definitely warn readers against them. They do not give a correct presentation of Marx's teachings, and in fact even distort them; they can therefore only create confusion. Whilst *Lenin*, in his brief sketch of the teachings of Marx written for the *Granat Encyclopaedia*, gives the main ideas of all three volumes of *Capital* in about ten pages, in the works of Kautsky and Deville, comprising 250 to 350 pages we do not find even the fundamental ideas of the first volume correctly presented. In a letter written to Kautsky just at the time

when he was working on his popularisation of Marx, *Engels* states:

"You will certainly avoid Deville's errors. The chief thing is that he presents Marxist theses as absolute, which with Marx are true only under certain conditions, which Deville omits to mention, and therefore they appear false."

This letter is dated February 5, 1884. Seven months later, on September 20, Engels had to point out to Kautsky that he had not grasped the Marxist theory of value. In spite of the occasional help of Engels, Kautsky's popularisation is not better than Deville's. In a certain respect it is even worse. He often quotes Marx immediately following his own vulgarisations, thereby causing complete confusion. *Victor Adler*, the well-known and brilliant leader of the Austrian Social Democracy before the war, used to say, he knew one good explanation of Kautsky's book—the first volume of *Capital*.

It is worth while dealing briefly with the chief faults of these well-known

popularisations. The exposure of these faults will provide valuable sign-posts to a correct understanding of *Capital*!

The chief errors are of a dual kind. Deville and Kautsky became infatuated with the Marxist formula: 20 yards of linen is equal to one coat, or is equal to 10 lbs. of tea, or is equal to 40 lbs. of coffee. Commodity—Money—Commodity, C.—M.—C. etc. Metamorphosis of Commodities—Circulation of Money, etc. They regarded it as their sole task to explain these formula. They thereby fell into the error which Marx so strongly condemned in the vulgar economists, namely, they confined themselves to giving a plausible explanation of, so to say, crudest phenomena. Just as these vulgar economists wrote text books of "political economy" for commercial high schools and universities, in which the most commonly observed phenomena of business life were made understandable for the bourgeoisie, so in the same way Kautsky and Deville proceeded when writing their books which were destined for consumption by the proletariat. Marx had a great respect for the classical economists who, contrary to the vulgar economists, dealt with the active and energetic life of men; but already in his first economic work, in his *Poverty of Philosophy*, written in the year 1847, he pointed out that they only explained to us how production takes place under the given relations.

"Economists explain how production takes place in the above-mentioned relations, but what they do not explain is how these relations themselves are produced, that is the historical movement which gave them birth."

The precursor of *Capital* was the *Critique of Political Economy* which appeared in the year 1859. In a letter to Lassalle, Marx said that here there is given for the first time a really scientific presentation of social relations. In his review of Marx's *Critique of Political Economy*, Engels stated that Marxist economics deals not with things but with relations between persons, and, in the last resort, between class; these relations are, however, always attached to things and appear as things. And Marx himself declared in the preface to the first edition of *Capital*:

"It is the ultimate aim of this work to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society."

Deville and Kautsky, however, see only the commodity market and the labour market; they see only formula and schemes which they painfully endeavour to explain.

Their second chief fault lies in the fact that they were completely blind as regards dialectics, i.e., "the science of the general laws of motion,—of the exterior world and also human thought." (Engels.)

Formerly the two small brochures by Marx, *Wage Labour and Capital*, and *Value, Price and Profit*, were usually recommended as a first introduction to *Capital*. They must, in fact, be thoroughly assimilated by every student before he proceeds to the study of *Capital*. But it is equally important that he becomes previously acquainted with some fundamental ideas of dialectics, namely of dialectical materialism, as Marxist dialectics is rightly called. For, *capital* is one of the most tremendous works of applied dialectics. "If mark left behind

no *Logic* (Hegel's chief work), he has nevertheless left behind the logic of *Capital*. In *capital* dialectical materialism is applied to a discipline (branch of study), wrote Lenin, in his article "Dialectics (Logic) of Hegel" (Berne, 1915.)

The main endeavours of Deville and Kautsky were, however, consciously directed to "purging" *Capital* of dialectics, which they considered to be a hindrance to an understanding of it.

Knowledge of dialectics is precisely the key to an understanding of *Capital*.

Dialectical materialism is set forth most profoundly in Engels' *Anti-Duehring* and *Nature and Dialectics*, as well as in Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, and his *Philosophical Notes*. But the study of these works requires almost as much mental effort as the study of *Capital*. We cannot simply say to him who wishes to study *Capital*: Before you venture to study Marx's chief work, you must first master these scientific works.

Fortunately that is not necessary. There are already available some works which convey the fundamental concepts of dialectics in a relatively easily understood manner. Thus we find in the recently published *History of the Bolshevik Party* an excellent introduction to dialectical materialism. But there are also in the works of Marx and Engels certain passages which present no particular difficulties to the unschooled reader and serve as an introduction to dialectical materialism. Here we should mention first the postscript to the second edition of *Capital*. Marx himself emphasises that it is an explanation of his dialectical method, which was employed in the presentation of *Capital*. Engels gives us a relatively easily understood

exposition of the fundamental ideas of dialectics in the second chapter of *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, and in the fourth chapter of his work: *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*.

For a correct understanding of *Capital* a training in dialectics is indispensable. As we wish to give an introduction to its study we cannot but for our part also make at least a few brief remarks on dialectics, namely, one of its *essential features*, which plays a prominent role in the first chapter of *Capital*—the identity of opposites.

What is called sound common sense knows only Either—Or,

If I ask myself, is vinegar sour? I can certainly answer: Yes, it is sour. To be sour is the most characteristic property of vinegar. Or let us put another question to which we expect a negative reply. Is drinking water sour? I can answer straight away: No, it is not sour. This way of thinking is called in the school philosophy *logical thinking*, and it is usually explained by the words of the Bible: "But let your communication be: Yea, yea: Nay nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil!"

In ordinary everyday life one can get along with such methods of reasoning. Profound thinking, however, immediately shows that they are altogether inadequate. Vinegar is only acid when applied to the tongue; applied to iron it has a dissolving effect. As regards drinking water, there are also mineral waters; there are many localities which obtain their drinking water solely from mineral springs. On the basis of the so-called logical method of thinking I must declare: He who is called Peter or Paul

remains Peter or Paul his whole life. Is that correct? One would, of course, promptly answer: Yes. Nevertheless, at bottom, this answer is not correct.

"Peter and Paul," we read in *Dietzgen's Positive Outcome of Philosophy*, "who remain the same men their whole lives, are in reality changed people every hour and every day, and like these two, so all things in the world are not constant, but quite variable quantities. Mathematical points, straight lines and round circles are only ideals. In actual fact every point is extended, every straight line, when seen through a magnifying glass, is connected with endless bends, and the roundest circles, as the mathematicians assure us consist in reality of an endless number of straight lines.

"Dialectics, in its very first paragraph teaches how the same things have the contradictory nature of being one and yet manyfold; how all things, processes and happenings are, without exception, not things, but resemble colours of that silk which, although it remains itself one of the same, nevertheless shimmers very diversely in the most varied shadings."

As the characterisation of dialectics there is used, in direct contradiction to the biblical words, the oft-quoted words: "Yes, no, no, yes!"

That which to-day is *yes* (a ruling class in a society split up into classes), will to-morrow be *no* (i.e., will be overthrown): that which to-day is *no* (the oppressed class), will to-morrow be *yes* (i.e., will be victorious).

So-called common sense views all happenings as they appear at the moment; it grasps only a certain side, and regards this one-sided appearance as something permanent. In reality, all happenings in nature, in society and also in mental

life, exhibit various sides and are in constant motion.

Dialectics is the science of the general laws of this motion.

In the preface to the second edition of *Capital*, Marx says: "The mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands, by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner." Although Marx did not simply take over the Hegelian dialectics, as the dialectical method of Marx not only differs from Hegel's but is its direct opposite; nevertheless in *Capital*, on the theory of value and in various passages, Marx makes use of Hegelian modes of expression. We can, therefore, in expounding, dialectics in connection with *Capital* cite examples from Hegel and in part also use his forms of expression.

The Hegelian "sacred formula" (Weihungsformel) is given by Marx in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, as follows: Affirmation, negation, negation of the negation. Or expressed in other words—every dialectical movement comprises three stages: Position, opposition and composition. Hegel himself gives an illuminating example illustrating this general summary in the preface to his *Phenomenology of Mind*.

"The bud disappears when the blossom breaks through, and we might say that the former is refuted by the latter; in the same way when the fruit comes, the blossom may be explained to be a false form of the plant's existence, for the fruit appears as its true nature in place of the blossom. These stages are not merely differentiated: they supplant one another as being incompatible with

one another. But the ceaseless activity of their own inherent nature makes them at the same time moments of an organic unity, where they not only do not contradict one another, but where one is as necessary as the other; and this equal necessity of all moments constitutes from the outset the life of the *whole*."

Life appears in manifold forms. In particular the form of development is everywhere a dialectical one, and for every development the brief Marxist definition of dialectics (in the *Poverty of Philosophy*) applies:

"That which constitutes the dialectical movement is the co-existence of two opposing sides, their conflict and their merging into a new category."

We believe that with this we have given an explanation of the identity of opposites.

We find in the works of Lenin a number of excellent formulations of the identity of opposites. Let us take, for example, the following from his article *On the Question of Dialectics*:

"Identity of opposites (or perhaps more correctly said, their unity) means recognition (discovery) of the contradicting, *mutually excluding*, opposed tendencies in all phenomena and processes of nature (including mind and also society). The condition for understanding all the world processes in their self-movement, in their spontaneous development, in their real life, is knowledge of them as unity of opposites. Development is 'conflict' of opposites."

As in everything that Lenin taught, he did not content himself here with simply repeating a thought that was originated by others, but he at the same

time enriched it. He speaks not only of the dialectical movement, but of self-movement, of spontaneous development. Lenin elucidated this idea in great detail. For those who do not adopt the standpoint of dialectical materialism, wrote Lenin in the same article:

"The self-movement, its driving force, the source, its motive, remains in obscurity (or this force is transferred outside—God, subject, etc.). The dialectical materialists concentrate their attention on recognition of the source of this movement. That is precisely the conflict of the mutually excluding opposites."

Thus the driving force of the movement is not some god or a mystic power, but that which is contained in the things, in the processes themselves: the clash of the inner contradictions—struggle.

In the same article Lenin explains the differences in the conception of development. To the non-dialectician, development appears as diminution or increase, as repetition. For the dialectical materialist it is "development as unity of opposites (splitting of the uniform into mutually excluding opposites and their mutual relations)."

A grasp of the foregoing is of enormous importance for a correct understanding of *Capital*. For where the classical economists observed only differences, there Marx showed sharply contradicting opposites; where they saw differences existing along-side one another, Marx pointed to their close connection, the unity of opposites.

The classical economists know only one system of production, which has existed from all time. For them the primitive fisherman or the primitive hunter is a producer of commodities, and each of

them, when he has collected a store for the winter, is a capitalist also. In the best case they recognise only differences of degree. Their conception of development corresponds completely with the conception characterised by Lenin as being that of the non-dialectician. They recognise increases or diminutions, a more or a less, but always only within the same system. Marx, on the other hand, sharply distinguishes between the various economic systems. He shows where gradual movement passes into something new, into the opposite. Quantity is transformed into quality.

This brings us to a new essential feature of dialectics. But this dialectical law plays a big role only in the later chapters of *Capital* (in the definition of capital, production of relative surplus value, to operation, division of labour and manufacture, machinery and big industry). Therefore it is not necessary for us to deal with it here. Our chief aim here is to give a brief explanation of dialectical development, that is to say of the identity of opposites which, of the dialectical essential features, plays, so to speak, the main role in the first chapters of *Capital*.

* * *

In his preface to Marx's *Letters to Kugelman*, Lenin recommends the letter dated July 11, 1868, as being of outstanding interest from the point of a fuller and more profound elucidation of Marxism and the study of *Capital*. He says:

"It is to be hoped that everyone who begins to study Marx and to read his *Capital* will read and re-read this letter when studying the first and more difficult chapters of *Capital*.

That the letter should be read and re-read does not merely mean that it is very important, but also that it requires a special study. In fact, it was far from Marx's intention to indite this letter to a sort of popularisation of *Capital*. He addressed the letter to Kugelman, who fully understood *Capital*, and was himself engaged in the fight against the clique of professors who attempted by all means to discredit the teachings of Marx. It was intended in the best case as an aid in the literary fight. We publish below those parts of the letter of Marx which are most important for us. In order to facilitate an understanding of this letter we will precede it by the following remarks.

The untrained reader usually raises objections to Marx's law of value, which objections, as Lenin said, are for that reason most persistently supported by the mediocre representatives of "professorial," bourgeois science. There is a whole series of phenomena which apparently contradict the Marxist theory of value. But we see the same thing in every science. Appearances are deceptive. 2,500 years ago the wise men of Babylon assumed that the earth had four corners; up to the time of Copernicus and long afterwards it was thought that the sun revolved round the earth. In support of this conception it was argued that it was evident from plain common sense. As is known, science has completely upset all these crude theories. Marx points out in his letter that it is precisely the task of economic science to discover beyond appearances the inner connection. It is indeed no great discovery when the vulgar economist proudly claims that in appearance things look different. "In fact, he is boasting that he holds fast to the

appearance, and takes it for the *last* word. Why, then, any science at all?"

The chief content of the letter consists in the refutation of the objection to the theory of value. In order to make this more easily understood it is necessary to go somewhat farther afield.

Marx distinguishes two chief forms of social production of commodities. The first form is the *directly associated* labour, the conscious coming together in a working community in order to produce goods for consumption, which are then distributed among the members of the community. The second form is the associated production of the producers of commodities, in which it is not determined beforehand what each must produce, where the products come by way of exchange into the possession of the individual members of society. For production of commodities is also a social production.

"In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; relations of production . . ." we read in the famous introduction to the "*Critique of Political Economy*."

At the time when Marx wrote *Capital* there still existed production communities with *directly associated labour*, such as the Communist communities in India and the Servian Zadrougas. In the latter there were several generations of one and the same family united, and producing corn, cattle, yarn, linen, clothing, etc., for their own use; but they also tanned hides, erected hut, etc. The conscious division of labour among the members of the family is here the starting point for the production of goods; the labour performed provides

the possibility and gives the right to enjoy the products.

In commodity production there is no division of labour beforehand. And yet it must take place here in a certain proportion; and in addition there must be here also a proportion between the work performed and the products which the individual members of society receive by way of exchange.

Right back in early time men had ideas on this subject, and they developed more or less correct views, as Marx says in his letter to Kugelman: "the concept of the value relation has always been the same, whether more or less clear, hedged with illusions or scientifically precise."

Let us take as an example the following passage from *Albertus Magnus* (1193-1280), the great moralist writer of the middle ages:

"The existence of the community is based on exchange in just proportions. A community can exist only when the requirements of the citizens are satisfied. This, however, is impossible without an exchange of one object for another in just relation. For nobody can satisfy all his requirements himself. If he possesses grain he needs shoes, a dwelling, a bed; and if he produces a thing himself he cannot possess complete skill to produce another thing. Therefore each one needs the other, and it is upon such an exchange that the well-being of civil society is based.

"The mason must obtain from the shoe-maker the product of his labour, and pay him for it what is due according to just recompense. For only then will agreement regarding labour and cost prevail. . . . If,

however, such exchange is not carried on in this manner, this failure to observe proportional justice leads to the dissolution of the community . . ."

The correct explanation of the inner connections was first provided by Marx: it is revealed in *Capital*, where it is expounded in detail. We find a brief allusion to it in the letter from Marx to Kugelmann. In order to understand it better one should read beforehand the following passage from *Joseph Dietzgen's* review of *Capital*:

"All economic relations are to be understood only on condition that we see in bourgeois society a kind of producer's co-operative. Because this society is only a historical growth and not consciously constituted, purpose does not prevail in it but blind necessity. What is to be produced, how much and in what manner, is left to the arbitrary will of the individual, which is indirectly regulated by society through the medium of the movement of the market. The producer has the freedom to do what he likes, that is to say, society does not prescribe to him but teaches afterwards by means of rewards and kicks."

After all this, the letter of Marx to Kugelmann, will no longer present any difficulties. It reads:

"As for the *Zentralblatt*, the man is making the greatest possible concession in admitting that, if one means anything at all by value, the conclusions I draw must be accepted. The unfortunate fellow does not see that, even if there were no chapter on 'value' in my book, the analysis of the real relationship which I give would contain the proof and demon-

stration of the real value relation. The nonsense about the necessity of proving the concept of value arises from complete ignorance both of the subject dealt with and of the method of science. Every child knows that a country which ceases to work, I will not say for a year, but for a few weeks, would die. Every child knows too, that the mass of products, corresponding to the different needs, require different and quantitatively determined masses of the total labour of society. That this necessity of distributing social labour in definite proportions cannot be done away with by the *particular form* of social production, but can only change the *form it assumes*, is self-evident. No natural laws can be done away with. What can change, in changing historical circumstances, is the *form* in which these laws operate. And the form in which this proportional division of labour operates, in a state of society where the interconnection of social labour is manifested, in the *private exchange* of the individual products of labour, is precisely the *exchange value* of these products.

"The science consists precisely in working out *how* the law of value operates. So that if one wanted at the very beginning to 'explain' all the phenomena which apparently contradict that law, one would have to give the science *before* the science. It is precisely Ricardo's mistake that in his first chapter on value he takes as given all possible categories, which have still to be developed, in order to prove their conformity with the law of value.

"On the other hand, as you correctly assumed, *the history of the theory*

certainly shows that the concept of the value relation has *always been the same*, whether more or less clear, hedged with illusions or scientifically precise. Since the thought process itself grows out of the conditions, is itself a *natural process*, thinking that really comprehends must always be the same and can only vary gradually according to maturity of development, including that of the organ by which the thinking is done. Everything else is drivel.

The vulgar economist has not the faintest idea that the actual everyday exchange relations need not be directly identical with the magnitudes of value. The point of bourgeois society consists precisely in this, that *a priori* there is no conscious social regulation of production. The reasonable and the necessary in nature asserts itself only as a blindly working average. And then the vulgar economist thinks he has made a great discovery, when, as against the disclosure of the inner connection, he proudly claims that in appearance things look different. In fact, he is boasting that he holds fast to the appearance, and takes it for the last word. Why, then, any science at all?

"But the matter has also another back-ground. When the inner connection is grasped, all theoretical belief in the permanent necessity of existing conditions breaks down before their practical collapse. Here, therefore, it is in the interest of the ruling classes to perpetuate this unthinking confusion. And for what other purpose are the sycophantic babblers paid, who have no other scientific trump to play, save that in political economy one should not think at all?

"But, *satis supraque* (enough and more than enough). In any case it shows what these priests of the bourgeoisie have come to, when workers and even manufacturers and merchants understand my book and find their way about in it, while these 'scribes'(!) complain that I make excessive demands on their understanding.

Yours K.M."

Apropos, I have received an article from Dietzgen about my book; I am sending it to Liebknecht.*

One can understand very well why Lenin recommended that this letter should be read and re-read. It contains in a condensed form, in about 80 lines, the greatest ideas: a characterisation of the methods of science, a summary of the essential points of the theory of value, strictly materialistic substantiation of scientific cognition, and finally, a thorough settlement of accounts with the professorial spokesmen of the bourgeoisie, who seek to conceal the theoretical bankruptcy of capitalism with a declaration of bankruptcy of their own science. For our immediate purposes we must note the following: Whatever form social production assumes, whether it constitutes an immediate socialised production or a commodity production, where the division of labour takes place without having been previously determined, it is always necessary that the division of labour shall assume definite proportions. The definite *form* of production changes only the form thin division of labour assumes. The proportional part of social labour, which is used in the various products, appears as commodity production as exchange value.

We shall see this elaborated in *Capital*. Let us briefly sum up what we have already said :

Capital is not a text book on the phenomena and concepts which we meet in business life, not a so-called book on national economy, but a work in which the law of movement of capitalist productive relations, of the economic structure of capitalist society is revealed in which this tremendous historical process is shown in its rise, development and decline. Before we proceed to the study of *Capital* it is necessary to acquire a certain preliminary knowledge. We

have enumerated above the works suitable for this purpose. One should take particular note of what Lenin said regarding the law of the identity of opposites.

After all this we can approach the study of *Capital*. The book begins with the sentence :

"The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as 'an immense accumulation of commodities,' its unit being a single commodity. Our investigation must, therefore, begin with the analysis of a commodity."

A LABOUR POLICY FOR THE COLONIES

By B. Ashe

The Labour Party is forced by the inescapable logic of events to evolve a colonial policy, not only because Labour stands for a constructive peace policy and for the elimination of the factors that promote aggression, but also because Labour stands for the preservation of Democracy (and therefore, presumably, for the establishment of democracy in those parts of the world where it is denied to the common people). It is necessary, therefore, that the Labour Party incorporate within its short-term programme a policy for the Colonies; to fail to do so is to invite failure in its attempt to lay the foundations of socialism and to betray all its ideals.

Every member of the Labour Party stands for certain things—for free speech for equal civil liberties, for freedom of Trade Union organisation, for popular education and for the principle of self-determination of all peoples. We realise

that Imperialism is the root cause of war and that British rule over coloured people is something which no socialist can justify in theory. In practice, however, we are apt to shirk the enormous task of liquidating Imperialism and to fear the violence with which imperialists are likely to protect their interests.

It must be admitted that colonial freedom cannot be achieved by simply standing up with a magic wand and declaring "Let there be emancipation." Freedom is not a thing which one nation gives to another; it has to be won by hard struggle and bitter experience, often by bloodshed.

Anyone who comes from the colonies knows that where the liberationist movement is weakest, it is so, simply because imperialism has been successful in denying those civil rights and liberties which enable a national struggle to develop. In India, where a strong nationalist

movement has grown and is likely to effectively challenge imperialism in a short time, this situation has been reached because, after bitter struggle, the nationalist movement has succeeded in forcing from imperialism a few limited rights.

I believe, therefore, that Labour has to declare in unequivocal terms that it stands for the independence of the colonies; that it believes such independence is possible even in the most "backward" areas in the space of a few years; and that it is prepared to legislate at once along lines which will make a reality of these declarations. Such immediate legislation would emphatically not be an alternative to complete independence, but a step towards it; simply by striking at the roots of imperialism it would escape that criticism. For anyone, who knows anything about the functioning of imperialism, knows that it admits of no reform, or, rather that reforms within imperialism are death-blows at imperialism.

To grant even one of the immediate demands of the colonial people is a greater blow at imperialism than all the mandatory systems, international or otherwise, that benevolent progressives can devise. In the rest of this article I want to give a list, but not an exhaustive one, of those demands which Labour should, immediately on coming to power, satisfy. I must repeat that such a programme is *not* an alternative to complete independence. Labour's stand for colonial self-determination has, in the past, been only a pious resolution simply for the reason that Labour has not evolved and put into practice a programme of satisfying immediate demands. The two things are comple-

mentary and part of one whole; to attempt to separate them is to display ignorance of colonial conditions and blindness as to what is the nature of imperialism.

Concrete Colonial Programme for the Labour Party

EDUCATION: Labour would insist upon free and compulsory primary education; free secondary and technical education for native children who desire it; and removal of restrictions upon, and financial assistance to native students in Universities. In the allocation of funds for Education there should be no preference given to white education. We find that in five colonies (Tanganyika, Nyasaland, Kenya, North and South Rhodesia) the State expenditure per head of European children is £10.18.2., £18.7.11., £26.7.5., £28.8.7. and £30.13.9. respectively; for African education the expenditure is 5/7d., 1/10d., 16/, 4/6d. and 13/9d. respectively.

HEALTH: If anyone doubts the inadequacy of health services in Africa, let him read the section on "Health" in Lord Hailey's "An African Survey." From numerous instances of this inadequacy we may note that in the Union of South Africa, out of 363 District Surgeons, 340 were, in 1937, "part-time"; in the Union also there are 544 hospitals (including private nursing homes, maternity homes, mine and factory hospitals) of which 260 are for Europeans only and 122 for non-Europeans only—in South-West Africa there are only 103 beds for African patients—in Basutoland "the health service in rural areas is poorly developed as the existing staff is only sufficient to deal with hospital work." But even then there are only 148

"native beds" in the Colony—in Northern Rhodesia "half the territory remains unprovided with medical facilities" and the dispensaries are "staffed by Africans many of whom are stated to be imperfectly trained", and so on. Hitherto in times of financial stringency the health services have been the first to be cut—posts are left vacant and research staffs are laid off. Labour would have to reverse all this, at least double the existing medical services, increased allotment to Research, train Africans on a large scale for medical work and vastly increase the rural medical and sanitary services and the factory dispensaries and clinics. It is not only a question of increased expenditure but a deliberate change in policy: native health like native education should be a first charge on the finances of the colony as a whole and not paid

for out of a separate "native budget". Labour would reject entirely the current theory that natives prefer to pay for medical attention on the assumption that what costs money is worth having.

TAXATION: Existing Hut and Poll Taxes are admittedly framed entirely to provide an adequate labour force by making it necessary for natives to leave their land and seek employment in mines and factories. Their incidence is without any equity and amounts from the equivalent of one to two months' earnings. Poll Tax is payable by all males over 16 or 18; in a number of colonies, failure to pay tax results in detention in a concentration camp, and forced labour. The following table shows incidence of direct taxation in four colonies. Hut and Poll taxes are not given separately. In most Colonies there is an additional Dog Tax of 5/-

| | Tax. | Plural Wife tax. | Imprisonment for non-payment. |
|--------------------|------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Union of S. Africa | 30 | — | 68,915 (1935) |
| Swaziland | 35 | 30 per wife | — |
| S. Rhodesia | 20 | 10 „ | 8,595 (1934) |
| Kenya | 12 | 20 „ | 8,966 (1935) |

Wage rates vary considerably, but according to Government reports (1936) we find 6/- to 10/- per month in Nyasaland; in Tanganyika (average for unskilled), 6/- to 15/- per month; in Northern Rhodesia 7/6d to 10/- for agricultural labour and 7/6d to 20/- per industrial labour per month.

On the other hand, taxation per head of the non-native population is only £1.13.9. in Kenya; £2.7.6. in Tanganyika; £ 7.11.11 in Northern Rhodesia; £4.0.2. in South Africa, and so on. As far as indirect taxation is concerned, taxes are generally levied on native pro-

duce and cheap goods bought by natives whilst the exports and imports of the white population receive preferential railway rates and more lenient customs duties.

The whole system of taxation requires overhauling so as to make its burden equitable and to free it from political motives. The record of the white population's resistance to Income Tax in Kenya in spite of instructions from Whitehall, indicates the necessity of a Labour Government insisting upon the Colonial Administrations revising their fixed legislation from top to bottom.

LABOUR: Forced labour of every description must be prohibited, not only in theory but in practice. At present forced labour at less than current wage rates is permitted on public works and natives who default in payment of taxes are placed, in some colonies in concentration camps and used as labour gangs. Of legislation regarding forced labour, Lord Hailey says, "it would be difficult and it would also be unsafe, to generalize as to the extent to which restrictions placed by legislation on the use of forced labour for public purposes are observed in practice." A Labour Government would have to post officials to the colonies who were willing and able to obey instructions.

Labour would legislate for the payment of wages in cash; for payment of wages weekly, and for a decent minimum wage with efficient social services and housing. One of the major abuses is the method of recruiting labour by contractors and the imposition of an inequitable contract on labourers for breach of which, even in the most technical sense, the worker is liable to imprisonment. In 1936 in South Africa 32,430 cases came before the Courts under the Masters and Servants Act and the Native Labour Regulations. The Labourer must be allowed freely to give or withhold his labour; he must be paid a decent wage; and he must be freed from the abominable system of Pass Laws that degrade him to the status of a fugitive criminal moving within times and limits imposed by a master race.

SUFFRAGE: Labour would introduce at once universal adult male suffrage. The exact form which voting and representation would take must be determined by and accommodated to,

local conditions or customs. But it would be a mistake to maintain that either custom or illiteracy is a bar to the introduction of democratic forms as they are known in other parts of the world. It may be desirable to base electoral constituencies both for local and national councils, upon tribal units, but the immediate objective is the creation of representative and responsible native councils with the right to initiate legislation and without whose consent no legislation could be imposed from above. At present native representation is limited to a few nominated dummies and the native is in effect disenfranchised.

CIVIL LIBERTIES AND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS: The most important immediate responsibility of Labour would be the repeal of all that body of legislation regulations, Governors' Orders in Council and Ordinances, which penalise heavily every expression of free speech or attempt to organise the native population to demand an improvement in living conditions, labour conditions or social status. Today, as in Mauritius, labour leaders can be deported without trial by an Order in Council; in Trinidad it is an offence under the Sedition Act for 10 people to meet together to discuss their grievances; and in the Gold Coast, Mr. Wallace Johnson can be prosecuted and convicted for referring in an article to certain types of legislation in use in African colonies.

An ordinary member of the Labour party in England has no conception of the repressive measures, both legal and extra-legal, employed by the Colonial administration to prevent even a whisper of complaint, much less the growth of an organised labour movement. Britain, which calls itself a

democracy has set up and maintains in the colonies a negation of democracy that is only surpassed by the fascist dictatorships. Labour's primary duty is to remove this scandal and by so doing to enable the colonial peoples themselves to develop successfully their national liberationist movements.

These demands, which are not exhaustive, are not simply attempts to reform whilst retaining imperialism; they are more radical than any demand for mandatory control, because consciously they cut at and undermine the foundation of political and economic

exploitation. Moreover, they would satisfy now—and not at some remote date—the crying needs of a repressed and oppressed people.

I have not yet referred to India, because for the Labour Party, India should present no cause for doubt or hesitation. India should be granted immediate and complete independence. As a free country she will throw in the weight of her enormous man-power and resources on the side of democracy and peace. The colonial peoples all over the world regard Labour's attitude towards India's freedom as the text of their good faith.

PEASANTS ASTIR IN 24-PARGANAS

By Ananta Mukerjee

(Secretary Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha)

The Background in Brief

What caused this sleeping army of lac of peasants, cut off from the civilised world, to arise against the feudal oppression of the Zamindars, thrusting before their astonished eyes the peasants' minimum demands? To know why, one has to know the origin of their distress.

The first Enquiry Committee composed of B.P.C.C. & B.P.K.S. members and set up by the Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha to investigate into the condition of tenants and landless peasants in 24-Parganas occupied by the Port Canning & Land Improvement Coy. reports:—

“The public may not be conversant with the devastating effect of the province-wide famine of B. S. 1342-43—but surely they are fully conscious of the plight of the thousands of homeless

tenants of 24-Parganas who were driven by poverty to the footpaths of Calcutta, relying on the charity of passers by. These people were not beggars. They were tenants of the Port Canning & Land Improvement Coy. In 1935 they cultivated their land on a **very very** meagre agricultural loan. In 1936, the harvest was partially successful, but hardly any of it was left for the tillers. The Zamindars realised their dues, by confiscating practically the entire harvest of paddy, which is the only crop grown in the area. For the last two years these have been good harvests, but we found that at the very beginning of the year most of the peasants were starving.....

“By investigation we have learnt that it was the forefathers of these very tenants who made this land cultivable.

As they had to take great risks in the Sunderbands, no one thought of imposing rent on them. But later on, rent was levied and increased from -8/- per *bigha* to Rs. 2/-, Rs. 3/- and even up to Rs. 5/-. It can be easily believed that after paying off this high rent, peasants starved even in good harvest. But these trusting and simple-minded peasants, though paying off their rent at the point of starvation, were not given any sort of acknowledgment for their payments. The officers of the Land Improvement Coy., did not care much about issuing any, and so the tenants were befooled later on when they found that the land was gradually slipping from their own possession—becoming “Khash”; confiscated by the Zamindar for supposed non-payment of rent. In a single locality of 14,000 *bighas*, 12,000 *bighas* have become Khash. How and why? The tillers, the true owners, do not know. The Zamindars call the peasants a “criminal race.” Feb. 1937.

The “Criminal Race” Unites

It was for the first time that the peasants of 12 villages met at Uchildah, a village in Haisa, P. S. of the district, from where the district's movement first began. Under the red flag, they formed their Primary Kisan Committee and resolved to fight against oppression. They looked upon this fight as something inevitable. The agent of the Port Canning & Land Improvement Coy. though later he continually shifted his position, openly announced in that meeting, that he was ready to come to a reasonable compromise, and he asked the General Secretary of the B.P.K.S., who was present, to go to the area and look into the detailed office reports of his Company which, in his opinion was not in the wrong. But the peasants,

inspired by the feeling of solidarity, that grew up in the meeting in the presence of their “Lord”, protested vehemently that the administration *was* wrong.

The news of the meeting rapidly spread throughout the whole of the “Abad” area of the Haroa P. S., and began to filter into other P.S.'s too. The peasant office bearer of the local No. 13 Union Kisan Committee collected grievances and sent a mass petition with specific formulated grievances to the office of the B.P.K.S. at Calcutta, from whence they were sent to the District Magistrate, Rev. Minister, S. D. O. and Prime Minister of the Bengal Government.

By the end of February, 1937, ten thousand Kisans rallied in the same village. But Comrade Bankim Mukerjee and myself, who were in Haroa at the time, were served with orders under section 144 by the S.D.O. on the pretext that “there is imminent chance of breach of public peace and tranquility” and “an unwholesome atmosphere is prevailing in the minds of the people by the speeches delivered in the meeting.”

Peasants Organise themselves

Leaders were prevented from entering the area. But the Kisans did not sit idle. They organised themselves, came up to the District Kisan Committee Office and to the Provincial head quarters, and brought in mass petitions from various parts of the area. The movement began to spread into the jurisdictions of other Zamindars, one after another. Peasants organised, elected members to the Kisan Committee and held their village meetings themselves. Zamindars began brutal repression. A Kisan writes: “50 persons of the Zamindars set fire to nine of my

houses, and forcibly took away 31 cows and 2 horses. They say I am a criminal as I have been making the peasants' rebellions by joining the Kisan Committee and Congress."

The Movement Becomes Extensive

By this time the movement had spread the B.S.'s of Haroa, Sandeshkhali, Canning and Hashnabad, and organisers of the District and Provincial Head-quarters toured the areas holding lightning meetings. In June the peasants formulated their grievances and arranged for the District Conference in June '37 at Baraset, which was banned by the Government. Joint repression of Police and Zamindars set in. Again peasant leaders, Comrades N. Dutt-Mazumdar, Bankim Mukherjee, Murari Chakravarty and Abdul Mansoor, on their way to the area were served with orders under section 144 Cr. P.C. Their report of the oppression of the Zamindars, details of which they collected from the mouths of the peasants on the way, revealed a lot. The All-India Kisan Bulletin writes "The Port Canning & Land Improvement Co.'s oppression of the peasantry has been featured in big headlines in the local vernaculars. The lands already made Khash (of course without any kind of notice and in many cases made *Benama* by the Zamindars' men) have now to be taken up for tilling on Borgia agreement.....The local peasants are very firm in their demands."

Police Reports disclose dread of Revolution in the Minimum Demands

"Calcutta leaders of Communist fame are expected to deliver lectures. The topics to be discussed are revolutionary. The effect will be dangerous, public peace will be at stake and serious disorder will take place in the Eleka"—

This is a part of the Police report to S. D. O. in June, 37. The topic in question was a peasant meeting called openly through leaflets by the local peasants in the name of their primary Kisan Committees. Another report of the said Police on the same date said "The handbills are very serious and I pray, submit a report to S. D. O. for issue of injunction U/S. 144"—(through C. I. Basirhat).

In the meantime cases were instituted against leading Kisans. Kisan office-bearers of the Union Kisan Committees were prosecuted U/S. 107, 144 and on charges of theft of paddy etc. 117 Kisans were externed from their villages and not allowed to re-enter, some were put in jail and some had to go away wandering in other districts leaving their families to weep helplessly.

The Minimum Demands

Harvest of the Khash lands not to be taken to Khash Khamar but to be kept at the control of peasants in their own Khamar. Jailing peasants for realisation of dues (Das tak) must be stopped; all decrees must be made payable in 15 instalments. All the cases, instituted against peasants to victimise them must be withdrawn. Small bridges and the bunds (embankments) must be properly repaired. Peasants must be given freedom to fish by abolishing the water-tax. Proper arrangements must be made for water to flow down. Cancellation of rents on uneconomic holdings. All lands acquired by Calcutta Corporation must be properly paid for. Crop-Survey in approximation must be stopped. Cancellation of all previous dues. Abolition of promulgating Sec. 107 and 144. Proper wage to agricultural labourers. Debt payment

to be made in 20 instalments and also in connection with the lands put to auction. Freedom to sell milk of the peasants' own cows. Halve the rent by 50%. Land and bread to agricultural labourers. Recognition of Kisan Committees, and unconditional release of all kisans and organisers.

District Authority Admits the Devastating Action of the Zamindars :

"Proceedings of the meetings" between, the representatives of the Port Canning & Land Improvement Company tenants of Uchildah and other lots of the above Coy., shows :—(1) "The maximum rate of rent will be that fixed by the Settlement Department viz. Rs. 2-12-0. (2) Annual Settlement on Cash rent will be allowed to all tenants. Half of the produce will be removed to the nearest Khamar of the Zamindars as security till the rent is paid. It may then be taken back. (3) The system of collection will be improved by sending naibs to the villages, to make collections after previous intimation, and the inspecting staff will check the collections locally. Rent receipts will be granted at the time of payment and a separate rent receipt will be given for each payment. (4) There will be no Kot Khamer (removal of paddy to the Zamindar's Khamer or Kutohery) except as described in item No. 2. (Sd/-M. O. Carter. D. Collector, 24-Parganas. Memo No. 4085-87. Basirhat Sub-Divisional Officer's E.)

By this time and especially after this negotiation the movement spread into Baraset, Sadar, Barrackpore, and also some parts in the far south. The Zamindary Coy. at Uchildat and other places, inspite of the intervention of the

District Magistrate violated the above agreements. A Peasants' meeting was organised by the President of Landholder's Association, Dt. Magistrate and S. P., to alienate the peasants from their Kisan Committee but without any effect. The Zamindary Coy. declared that the Zamindary did not belong to the District Magistrate and they had no obligation whatsoever.

Again, wide promulgation of Sec. 107 and 144 was made all over the area. Comrades Jyotish Roy along with others were arrested. The District Kisan Conference was called and it had to sit in Calcutta as the whole of the district was banned. More than thousand elected representatives of different villages attended the deliberation and decided to "seize" their harvest. The President of the All-India Kisan Sabha, Prof. N. G. Ranga's, statement on the promulgation of Sec. 107 on 113 Kisans says :— ".....Let the Ministry of Bengal know that the Kisans of the whole of India will stand by the oppressed Kisans of 24-Parganas".

Bengal Cabinet "A Happy Family"

The Revenue Minister of the Government of Bengal told the deputation of peasants in December that if the Kisan Committee would co-operate, he would be able to come to a happy compromise. But his personal enquiry into the area, where more than 15,000 peasants demonstrated with their demands, at Golkuthi in Canning, was nothing but an attempt to terrorise the Kisan Sabha and strengthen the lands of the Zamindars. The Secretary, 24-Parganas Kisan Committee, in his press statement on 19-12-'37 on the Revenue Minister's enquiry says :—"Far from considering the other minimum demands of

the Kisans of 24-Parganas the Revenue Minister's promise, to consider the question of fixing rent at Rs. 3 in the maximum, and his orders to deposit the harvest of Thika lands in the Zamindar's Khamar, was a definite mockery on the movement. Is this why he calls himself and Mr. Carter as the real helper of the peasants and the Kisan Sabha as their enemy?"

Kisans March to Assembly House

By the second quarter of 1938, Kisans from all over the district came up on foot and by boat to Calcutta, and marched with posters and festoons inscribed with their demands, to the Bengal Legislative Assembly House. The procession was stopped by police on Strand Road and the peasants met in the Town Hall. Again the Revenue Minister invited a deputation but no fruitful result came out. Mass arrests went on. Lots of cases were being instituted against peasants. Basirhat Jail was packed up to suffocation. Leading peasants were externed again. Armed soldiers were posted in the fields. Camp was started in the far Abad areas of the Sundarbands.

Kisan Organisers assaulted— Repressions make the Kisans more Organised

But the peasants became more organised than before. They carried on their organisational links semi-legally. Mass house-searches of the Kisans, assault on the organisers of the 24-Parganas District Kisan Committee, snatching away of Kisan Sabha receipt books, were the methods of the day. In a reply to the letter from the B. P. K. S., offices to the Bengal Cabinet, it was said, that no repression was known to

them. They were ready to mediate if the "Kisan Sabha co-operates with them."

Kisans' next move—Council of Action

Frequent clashes with Zamindars' men and the Kisans on the capture of harvest were being continually reported to the District and Provincial head quarters. At Bora Conference the delegates from 24-Parganas adopted the resolution of forming a Council of Action to devise ways and means to launch Satyagraha for reclaiming Khash lands after necessary preparations. Wide propaganda and formation of peasant committees in the Union Board and village bases began with progress.

Enquiry Committee to read the Whole Situation Again

The 24-Parganas Dist. Kisan Committee appointed an Enquiry Committee to read the strength of the Kisans' organisation and the exact situation prevailing. It toured for continuously two weeks in some villages and the parts, affected and submitted its detailed report.

"Russian Import has upset them"!

Leaflets and meetings organised by the Zamindars to pacify the Kisans and petty reforms with a tube-well in a village, stoppage of illegal exactions and feudal oppressions in most part, of course not in the whole area, were adopted. Statements in the press, calling the Kisan Sabha nothing but Bolshevik, were the stand in 1938. But this time not to speak of the small landlords, the head of the Zamindari Coy., the P.C. & L. I. Coy.'s agent writes to the B.P.K.S. office, in his letter for a compromise talk :—

"The majority of our tenants are good people and are very loyal to us. Only a few landless tenants are creating discontent. The teachings of the Russian import have upset their brain and they are putting up impossible claims. However, I want to explain our position to you....."

Black Repression From Dec. 1938 upto date

At Rupomori,—Eleven arrests. Two are externed. Four have not been granted bail.

At other villages of Hashanbad: Twelve arrested. Three are kept as internees outside their villages. Two have not been granted bail.

At Sadar P. S:—Eight arrested, including a woman named Bhutijan Bibi and many assaulted.

At Haroa P. S :—Four arrests. One of them Srikanto Patra has become mad due to continuous oppression by Zamindars and Police.

At Chaital P.S:—Ten arrested. Three interned.

At Sandeshkhali P.S:-Eight have been seriously assaulted by Zamindars' *Lathiwallas*.

At Daudpur:—Thirty-three arrested. Five have been interned.

At Mollakhat :—Hundred and sixteen have been presented. Out of them nine have been arrested including two internees. They were attacked by armed *Lathiwallas* of the Zamindars.

At Daudpur:—Moina Bibi and her daughter came to help Pagal Badyi when he was being assaulted by Zamindar's men. Moina Bibi got a serious wound on her head. She is in Basirhat Hospital.

In 98% cases the arrests were in connection with the capture of harvest.

Women peasants have been taking an equally important role, like their male folks, as they also labour hard in the field, unlike at other parts of the province. All the above cases are so-called sub-judice.

What is the Origin ?

The Enquiry Committee of the 24-Parganas Kisan Committee says, after investigating into the actual condition of the peasantry:—"Paddy is the only crop in the whole of the area. The Bhagetashi, having cultivated 12 *bighas* of land gets at the most only 30 maunds of paddy. Excluding 3 maunds as seeds, 27 mds. are his share and it costs to him Rs. 54—at Rs. 2/- per md. this year. If he and his members in the family are 4 in the minimum, how can he live ?

"Take the case of a peasant of proprietorship in land. He gets Rs. 114. He pays off 36 as rent at Rs. 3 per bigha. His family's annual income remains only Rs. 78. This is the case with most of them. They have to live on snails, 'Sesla', 'Bhat,' and even rats. This is a fact.

"Kisans, over head and ears in debt, are cheated by moneylenders and zamindars jointly. Even after exacting many times the money, lent through the land, mortgaged the lender by deliberately stopping rent to zamindar, had put the lands to auction and purchased them by another name.

"In the peculiar social conditions of this huge area, there are hardly any middle class people. The zamindars and moneylenders are in 98% cases identical. After the last unprecedented draught in this district there could be no balance in the peasants' condition. Dues with interests caused their lands go away to the zamindars or Mahajans."

"These are the processes in a nut-shell to show how the lands made cultivable by their fore-fathers have been going away from their ownership to the exploiters.

Slogans

"The peasants can only adopt two ways: (1) Reaping the harvest of all the Khash lands and 'Bhog Jami' and moratorium for a few years (2) Complete change in the assessment of the 'Lot Elaka' of the District. The Kisans can live if they get 25 bighas land per head in the minimum without any Salami agricultural loan at a very low interest, decreasing the rate of rent and increasing the price of paddy. Complete change in the assessment can be effected only in case a great determined Civil Disobedience movement or Satyagraha is started on a mass scale all over the area."—Enquiry Committee.

Council of Action Formed

The indomitable energy that has been marked during the last two years and the initiative taken by the Kisans themselves in their struggle, is a landmark in the history of the peasant movement of this province. The struggle that has only begun in an organised way is a struggle of not less than 500,000 peasants of the 24-Parganas. The District Congress Committee, the P.C.C. and the Congress President, have helped the District Kisan Committee in the pursuance of the struggle so long by moral support. Congress workers of the district have helped very much in the formation of kisan organisations. There is no doubt that the Council of Action of the peasants that has been formed recently, will crown themselves with success under the leadership of the Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha and 24-Parganas District Kisan Committee.

RENDER ALL AID TO THE CHINESE PEOPLE

Declaration of the Representative of the C. C. of the C. P. of China

1. The Communist Party of China was timely in foreseeing that robber Japanese imperialism would not limit itself merely in the seizure of Manchuria, but would strive to engulf the whole of China. In the interests of rallying all the national forces together for the defence of the fatherland, the Communist Party, on its part, did everything possible to put an end to the ten years of fratricidal war in China and to bring about friendly collaboration with the Kuomintang. These efforts also influenced the Kuomintang, particularly after the Communist Party, by its resolute stand for a peaceful solution of the Sian events, completely

defeated the vile attempt on the life of Chiang Kai-Shek, prepared by Japanese agents, and calculated on provoking a new internecine war in China. From that time on, a rapprochement began between the Kuomintang and the C. P. of China, leading later to collaboration between the two parties.

2. In the autumn of 1937, the Japanese fascist militarists set about to seize the vast areas of North and Central China, but they grossly miscalculated, in hoping for rapid and easy success, in hoping to compel the National Government to capitulate and to subjugate the Chinese people at the hands of the Chinese themselves. The Chiang Kai-Shek government and the Kuomintang

did not capitulate, as was expected by ruling circles in Tokyo, but came forward in defense of their country against the Japanese plunderers, while the Chinese people undertook a heroic struggle, one worthy of a great people. And very soon the bandit offensive of the Japanese plunderers, armed though they were to the teeth, met with such stubborn resistance of the Chinese people as inflicted heavy losses on the Japanese and transformed their invasion of China into a protracted war full of difficulties for them. With every day that passes, this war demands of Japan increasingly large armed forces, and the longer the war lasts, the greater are Japan's difficulties and the closer approaches the hour of the complete collapse of its bandit campaign.

3. But in the immediate period the Chinese people have still to overcome enormous difficulties which call for heroic efforts. The war of defense against robber Japanese imperialism is a tremendous test for all the vital forces of our people. *Only the mustering of all its forces for this great struggle will bring the Chinese people victory.* But the experience of recent months has already shown that it is precisely this liberation war which is the mighty force binding together the Chinese people. The age-old barriers that divide the country are being broken down in the heat of the war, and a great process is taking place in which the 400,000,000 of our people are being united into a single force, into really one united nation. It is this that constitutes the basic guarantee of the invincibility of the Chinese people.

4. *A united anti-Japanese national front* has already been established on the basis of collaboration between the Kuomintang

and the Chinese Communist Party, while the unification of the entire state power and of all the armies of China, under the leadership of Chiang Kai-Shek, is already taking place. These points constitute most important achievements of the Chinese national-liberation movement, and are the basis for a close fighting unity of the entire Chinese people. But this united front is not yet sufficiently extensive and sufficiently strong. *Its extension and consolidation are the decisive condition for the successful defense of China.* The anti-Japanese national front must embrace all the anti-Japanese parties and political groups of China. And what is needed is a really close rapprochement among all those participating in this front and the carrying out of the correct policy of the National Government. We need complete mutual confidence. We need thoroughly smooth joint, joint work and joint responsibility.

5. The poor state of organisation of the working masses of China holds up and retards the mobilisation of all forces of the people for the anti-Japanese struggle. In order to overcome this weakness it is necessary that the Kuomintang and the Communist Party energetically set about drawing the working people into various organisations, both already existing and newly formed, thus creating a strong mass basis of the united anti-Japanese national front among the masses. First of all, the thing is to organize the workers into trade unions (transforming the existing trade unions into really wide mass organisations which will constitute an especially important and reliable bulwark in the national struggle against Japanese imperialism). In the districts occupied by the Japanese it is advisable to organize a whole num-

ber of small bases of the trade union movement in the appropriate forms.

6. The peasants, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people, are a force of such magnitude as render it impossible to successfully conduct a protracted war, without their active participation in the struggle for the fatherland. In order to increase the harvest and raise the interest of the peasants in playing an active part in the national-liberation war, and in various spheres of work for the defense of the country, it is necessary to improve their material and legislative position and also to see to the conduct of political work among the peasant masses. In the districts occupied by the Japanese, the peasants are organising into guerrilla detachments for the struggle against the Japanese robbers.

7. At the same time, the task arises of developing the all-round activity of the youth in all spheres of the defense of the country, at the front, in the rear, and in industry, of helping not only the student youth, but also the working-class and peasant youth to organize themselves in various leagues, participating in the great task of saving the country. Primarily, the Communist Party supports the National Youth League created by the Kuomintang, assisting in developing this organisation into a real organisation of unity among the Chinese youth, an organisation working in the spirit of Sun Yat-Sen's three principles and embracing the widest masses of the young generation.

Extensive work is also required to draw the millions of Chinese women into organised participation in the defense of the country, in winning final liberty for

the Chinese people, and thereby a free and happy future for Chinese women.

8. There is nothing that the Japanese imperialists fear so much as the unity of the Chinese people. Not only do they conduct an offensive at the fronts, but they also engage in constant disruptive work behind the Chinese lines. Japanese spies and agents provoke the sharpening of relations between the political parties of China and between the Central Government and the local authorities. Especially subtle are the efforts of the Trotskyite agents of Japanese imperialism in spreading distrust and arousing hostility anew, both among the members of the Kuomintang as regards the Communists, and among the Communists as regards the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-Shek. Therefore, the C. P. of China is of the opinion that Communists and all honest Chinese patriots must keep a sharp watch on the base intrigues of the Japanese fascists and their Chinese agents, intrigues that are directed toward splitting the national united front in order to ease the position of the Japanese troops at the battle-fronts.

All the poison-bearing secret agents of the perfidious enemy must be rapidly disclosed and resolutely wiped out.

At the same time the Communist party strengthens its own ranks and discards those elements who operate against the united anti-Japanese front. The Party has expelled Chang Guo-Tao, former member of the Central Committee, as a deserter and traitor to the cause of the Party and the Chinese people. In the future, as well, it will act just as ruthlessly towards all those who place their personal interests above the interests of our great people.

The Communist Party of China is convinced that the policy of strengthening the united anti-Japanese People's Front in all directions will secure the complete victory of our people over the forces of the Japanese invaders. Our Party does not regard its collaboration

with the Kuomintang and with Chiang Kai-Shek, the head of the National Government, as a transitory affair, but is ready after the war, as well, to continue joint work with them in building a *great, free, democratic* China.

RAILWAY BUDGET—A SWINDLE

By D. S. Vaidya

(Secretary G.I.P. Workers' Union)

Before a few days the Railway Board published their Annual report for the year 1937-38. The annual report showed an increase in the earnings by three crores and twenty five lakhs. In the last week Sir Thomas Stewart, the Railway Member, presented the Railway Budget in the Central Assembly. The estimated budget shows an increase in the earnings at two crores and 5 lakhs in the year 1938-39, and 2 crores and 13 lakhs for the year 1939-40.

In presenting the budget the Railway Member has dealt with different subjects. He dealt with Railway Traffic; comforts of Travelling Public; the achievements by Railway; capital works on different railways; and at last he tried to prove the capacity of Railway Board to manage all these spheres most skillfully and yet contribute to the general revenue of the Government of India! But all the pleadings of the Railway Member are most theatrical and a face saving business. Sir Thomas Stewart presents the budget with full consciousness that he is presenting it to people who had no **right** to make any fundamental changes in the proposed budget. In presenting the budget the Railway Member states:—
“We have our financial obligations which

we must meet, and if over and above that obligation we make a profit it goes not to individual capitalists but to the relief of the general tax payers; or as at present arranged, to the assistance of provincieal Administrations whose financial necessities are only too well-known to all of us.”

Can there be any parallel to rank the hypocrisy demonstrated in the above statement of the Railway Member? None need any explanation over the fact that the disbursement of Railway Revenue is planned before hand and only a formal consent of the Central Assembly is sought which is of no material value inasmuch as its rejection by the Central Assembly does not in any way hinder the progress of the budget as it can be certified as passed by the Governor General in Council.

The Gross Total Capital works programme is to cost 15 crores. Can the Assembly reduce any amount of these fifteen crores worth the name? No, they cannot? Because the moment any Honourable Member of the Assembly tries to suggest any cut, certain member of the Railway Board will rise to express an opinion as an expert in the interest of safe working. If any member tries to

criticise the policy of purchasing some project another member will give his 'expert' opinion against it. In this way at best different members will point out something, and their opinion will be refused on the ground that it is not competent opinion. So out of estimated 94 crores of revenue 15 crores are gone.

Another item of 29½ crores as interest charges has to be paid, as this is the term of the contract. "As long as His Majesty's Government rules thou shalt be paid Rs. 29½ every year" is the promise made to Railway Princes sitting in London. Several similar items of expenditure are a standing burden on Railway Finance. Particularly the princely salaries of Railway Bosses, who draw in thousands, is the most unjustified burden. These Bosses are the pet subjects of His Majesty's Government and over them only the Secretary of State rules.

These are the expenses about which Sir Thomas Stewart says: "We have our financial obligations which we must meet." These items of expenditure according to Sir Thomas Stewart, are no profit. They are not the surplus value. Then what are they? They are the lion's share, a rent paid by a tenant to the landlord. These, according to Railway Member, are the necessary expenses to run the Railway. They are as necessary as coal or oil, locomotive or rails, to run the Railway. As Railways won't work if sufficient coal or other necessary raw material is not there, they will also, according to Sir Thomas Stewart, stop working if Railways do not pay 29 crores to Favourite Sons of God in England, or if they fail to pay thousands of rupees to Mr. Stewart and his battalion of about 2,000 working on all Railways. As a priest says to an ignorant

devotee that he would die if he does not pray, so says Sir Thomas Stewart, that Railways won't work if all this expenses were not borne. In the same stylish manner Sir Thomas Stewart sheds crocodile tears for the pitiable financial condition of Provincial Governments. Like a sinner, who, having made lot of money in the night in gambling, demonstrates his charity at Church Gates, so does the Railway Member. After having secured perfectly well all that he wanted he sets aside a paltry amount of few crores as a crumb before a hungry dog.

Thus in short Railway Budget is presented in the same old manner by which booty of all the British Capitalists and their henchmen, the Gazetted Railway Officers, is assured and only crumbs are thrown at the Indian People. Any self respecting Indian must reject this budget unceremoniously and must not be a party to this legalised swindle of so big an amount as 94 crores of rupees every year.

Railway Workers Ignored

After having dealt with the budget with national view point we come to discuss the question of 7 lakhs of Railway Workers who have been responsible to produce this huge amount of 94 crores. Sir Thomas Stewart has not without significance omitted in the whole of his speech on the budget any slightest reference to the condition of Railway Workers. Does he feel that conditions of 7 lakhs Railway Workers is no matter of importance to Railway Working? Railway Member perhaps does not consider Railway workers so important as even raw material, as coal, oil and other necessary items, as in old days a slave owner had no concern

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to consider the comforts and well-being of his purchased slave so feels Sir Stewart about Railway Workers. Conditions are still worse in respect of Railway workers. Slaves had had to be fed at least. But this is no responsibility of Railways at all. Railway has already thrown lakhs of Railway Employees on streets. This reserved army of unemployed creates such a panic in the minds of those who work, that they willingly prefer to suffer even with half a loaf. Sir Thomas Stewart and the whole gang is unconcerned as to how the workers who create such a big National Revenue live and how their families maintain. That is the main reason why Sir Thomas Stewart does not feel it necessary to refer the problems of Railway Workers.

Along with this probability there is another possibility for such an attitude. As guilty conscience is afraid even at a reference to its guilt so must have happened to Sir Thomas Stewart. Stewart and the whole gang is guilty of a very sinister crime. Seven lakhs Railway workers and 7 lakhs families have been cursing the Railway Administration for the most inhuman treatment. Railway Management is much more cruel than even a man-eating animal—the cruel Tiger. Tiger at times goes unconcerned with the life of human beings moving about when his thirst and hunger are both satisfied. But the appetite of Railway Board is always alive. It grabs more and more and never stops.

Sir Thomas Stewart and his Board has dismissed over a lakh of Railway Employees during last 9 or 10 years. Railway Board has deprived workers of their passes for their dependents. They have cancelled house allowances to thousands. They have dismissed with-

out reason thousands of employees. They have reduced rate of interest on Provident Fund holdings. They have abolished thousands of vacancies where people could seek promotions ordinarily. They are so shameless as to fix Rs. 13/- as monthly salary for a class pointsman in Bombay. They are shameless as to fix Rs. 12/- as salary of a gangman. They pass a ruling in 1938 and in accordance with it make recoveries of hundreds of rupees from the wages of workers on the plea that they were wrongly paid to the employee, who ought to have been paid less as per new ruling a five years back. They have deprived workers to have any leave upto first 3 years. Then again they have reduced leave to 10 days in a year to an employee after 3 years of service. They inflict fines so big as Rs. 30/- for a simple fault of having failed to clip a few tickets. They discharge many employees and thus eat up the gratuity of employees for several years. As a bug goes on sucking the blood of a sleeping human being so is the Railway sucking every ounce of the energy of Railway Workers making them as bloodless as possible by the time they are out of Railway.

By reducing the number of Railway Employees by a lakh they have made nothing less than a saving of 3 crores every year. We ask the Railway Board to publish the following figures if they dare to do so in justification of their management?

1. Number of Railway Employees in all Indian Railways drawing monthly salary of Rs. 75/- and below, in 1929 and 1938.
2. Amount spent over employees drawing Rs. 75/- and below in the year 1929 and 1938.

3. Number of employees entitled for Provident Fund in each Railway and number not entitled for Provident fund.

Railway Board publishes their annual report but the items of expenditure of ordinary employees are given in such a manner as to make it next to impossible for any one to find head and tail of it. As for instance, they have made only two heads under which establishment expenses are shown. These are, the Gazetted and non-gazetted employees. And here lies the trick. For instance a Loco Foreman and a call boy working under him are both non-gazetted Railway Employees. Amount spent over both these employees, will be shown as amount spent over non-gazetted Railway Employees. But the fact remains that two members belonging to the same category draw very different salaries. A Loco Foreman draws over Rs. 500 while a call boy draws Rs. 16. Thus while the amount of expenditure spent over non-gazetted employees might not show relative decline year by year, wages of ordinary employees go on declining rapidly. This swindle has to be exposed and it can be done if Railway Board publishes detailed figures as referred to above.

Causes of Railway Disasters

Then another daring deception of public by Railway Board is in respect of Railway Accidents. They try to maintain that the causes for accidents are most ordinary and natural. But a keep into the management of Railways will reveal very different things. For avoiding Railway Accidents first most essential thing is the proper maintenance of Railway Track. Since the year 1929 Railway Board is continuously reducing the number of employees engaged on the

maintenance work. As for instance on G.I.P. Railway where a gang of 13 gangmen was previously looking after a line 3 miles in length today 9 or 10 gangmen are called upon to look after a line $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length. Thus the work has been nearly doubled. In addition to this the work of replacing the old rails by new, the changing of the Rail Pots, the cleaning of metal, which was previously done by engaging new men, is being enforced on the same number. Thus one can just imagine when the number of workers is so comparatively reduced with such additional burden of work what can happen to the track. Whether the traffic declines or goes up, the track work does not change. It is not variable but constant. Yet the policy of cutting the wages of workers and reducing the expenditure on that count has resulted in meaningless measures being taken.

So much has been talked about Civility and attempts to maintain it. Civility towards passengers has got to be maintained. No one questions it. But what is the attitude of the Railway Administration towards the Railway Employees who are expected to maintain this civility? If at all any one is most incoivil it is the Railway Bosses who demonstrate callous indifference to the condition of Railway Workers. On G.I.P. for instance men have been punished sparing none for alleged conspiracy with the public to deceive the Railway. What is this conspiracy?

In these days when everywhere 8 hours' day is becoming an accepted principle, on several Railway Stations workers are doing 12 hours' duty.

Thus we find Railway workers, persecuted, impoverished to the core, indebted to the max and harassed by

the Railway Administration creating a revenue of no less than 94 crores.

Hindrance in organisation of Railway Workers

Railway Board and their Agents or General Managers are systematically hindering the growth of the Trade Union movement on Railways. Out of nearly a dozen and half Railway Unions nearly 14 are unrecognised. The remaining four have only a recognition in name. History of these recognitions is more of a negative nature. Not even a small percentage of redress through recognition can be maintained. Out of every hundred cases nearly 90 are decided against the workers. This is in respect of Unions which are recognised. In respect of Unions that are not recognised the position is still worse. In respect of all the Unions whether recognised or not recognised the administration is most adamant. They refuse permission for holding Union meetings in Railway premises. Union workers are freely victimised. Unnecessary transfers of Union workers to the remotest places are made. Terror is struck in the minds of workers against the Unions. All Railway Workers who were prominent workers of the Union are either discharged or dismissed or transferred to places from where they shall not be able to carry out any Union activity. The central organisation of railway workers, the All India Railwaymen's Federation, is disregarded by the Railway Board. We challenge the Railway Board to prove that they have conceded even 10% of the demands and proposals made by All India Railwaymen's Federation. Railway Board is creating calculated obstruction in the growth of T. U. Movement in Railways.

They know only too well that 7 lakhs organised Railway workers is a challenge to their irresponsible management. G. I. P. Strike of 1930, B.N.R., M.S.M., N.G.S.Rly. strikes are too bitter a pill for them to swallow.

Callous Indifference must be Retaliated

We are sorry to find that not only Railway Board but also the members of the public have demonstrated a poor picture of their mentality. In all the speeches of different members of the Central Assembly we do not find any reference to the conditions of Railway Employees. Only Sir Henry Gidney is found to be making a strong reference to the conditions prevailing in respect of Railway Employees. This is most unworthy of those members who go as Nationalists. We may again point out to all those concerned that conditions of Railway workers are most revolting. All must rise to help them against the conspiracy of the Railway Board to suck the blood of 7 lakhs Railway workers, who if helped are capable to challenge both the Railway Board and their masters, the British Imperialism. Will members in the Assembly lead a frontal attack on the Railway Board in this regard? We also warn the public against the plans of Railway Board to separate Railway entirely from the Indian public under the scheme of new Federal Railway Authority. The whole Railway Management is such a dirty and black robbery that even the criticism by certain Assembly Members upsets the Board. Railway Board does not want the Railway Budget even to be presented for the formal consent of the Central Assembly. They want as

absolute a budget as is the private man's own household budget.

Understand the rising tide and help it

Country wide movement of Indian Railway Workers is developing. Friends of labour must help its growth. We are not unconscious of the service that is being rendered by men like N. M. Joshi, Prof. Ranga, N. V. Gadgil, K. Santanam and others from the Central Assembly platform. But this is only a parliamentary struggle. Friends of Labour with influence on broad masses must enter the Railway Workers' movement. They must come forward and help development of extra parliamentary struggle of Railway Workers, the struggle of direct action to resist the onslaught. A Railway Workers' struggle of resistance alone is capable to make the Railway Board sensible and responsible to Indian People and the Railway Workers' mass of 7 lakhs strong. New Federal Railway Authority can be fought on the Railway Lines. Potentiality of Railway Workers' Movement must be understood in full sense. Organisation of Railway Workers is an organisation that challenges not only the Railway Managing Committee, the Railway Board, but it also challenges their master, the hated British Imperialism. The opposition of the Railway Board to Trade Union movement on Railways has definite significance. It is not so simple as the opposition of an individual capitalist to a Union in his enterprise. There is a definite Imperialist design behind this studied hindrance to Railway Workers' Organisation. The present is an oppor-

tunity to drag in the most powerful fighting force in the Political Arena. Railway workers are organising everywhere. The policy of Railway Board, vindicated in their ruthless attack on the standard of living of Railway Workers, has fully convinced them that only a powerful country-wide resistance by direct action will bring them the required relief. On G. I. P., B. B. C. I., M. S. M., B. N. and E. B., Railways, workers are getting busy. The nationalist element in the country must pick up this opportunity. Indian National Congress must instruct all Congress Committees through out the land to maintain live contacts with Railway Workers' Organisations; material help must come forward to help the growth of Railway Workers' organisations. We remind here the view of Pandit Jawharlal Nehru who referred the importance of Railway Workers' Strike in national Struggle. I. N. C. must understand that only by championing the cause of 7 lakhs Railway Workers, starved and persecuted by the Railway Board, can the Railway Workers develop a sympathetic political outlook towards National Struggle. This is of serious importance. Let it be understood thoroughly that Railway Workers are going to rise much more powerfully than in 1930 and in the present case on country-wide scale very soon. Will the Indian National Congress rise to occasion and help developing a strong Railway Workers' Front against the Railway Board and their masters' the British Imperialism?

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