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NEW AGE

Oct

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THE NEW AGE

VOL. V]

OCTOBER 1938

[NO. 5

UNITY OF THE LEFT

The Delhi session of the AICC brought out two important lessons. It revealed to us how deep the rot of compromising and capitulating tendency had entered our National Organisation. The European War crisis which coincided with the session, threw into sharp relief our unpreparedness in the face of the grave dangers to which the compromising policy of our leadership exposed our whole movement. With the war crisis and the consequent imperialist repression threatening over its head, it refused to give a call to the nation to resist in practice the repressive war measures, e.g. to organise protest demonstration against the Army Bill. It not only refused to give any lead on the issue of the Federation but threatened to throw the militants out of the Congress threatened to hand them over to the imperialist machine of repression. (Resolution on Civil Liberties).

It was also revealed that the left was powerless to check the drift of the leadership and do anything more in the critical hour than criticise it. It was then that the need for a united and concerted action of the left, for a permanent unity of the entire left was felt as keenly as never before. On the issue of

opposing the Civil Liberties resolution there was a spontaneous unity of all the lefts, Communists, Socialists, Royists as well as left Congressmen who came together urged by the common danger. The imposing walk-out which came as a protest against that resolution, after all the efforts to persuade the Working Committee to circulate the same had failed, was the symbol of the growing need for unity and united action which was being keenly felt.

The common danger which has brought the left together is not merely the danger to the militants but the grave danger which threatens the great organisation which embodies the unity and the anti-imperialist will of the Indian Nation. That is the crux of the problem of left unity as it is being posed to day by life.

The Left does not merely ask for a more radical lead. It stands for implementing and not attacking the programme of the Congress. It attacks the leadership for refusing to lead, for disrupting rather than maintaining the unity and integrity of the Congress. The Left whose loyalty to the Congress used to be questioned, pleads for nothing more than loyalty to the Congress. The

dominant Right threatens to hand it over to the enemies of the Congress. What is behind this?

This raises fundamental issues—the basis of our movement, the course it has taken and the role of the Right and the Left.

The New Congress—Programmatic of the Left

Imperialism crushed the two Civil Disobedience movements but it could not kill the spirit of our people. After a period of self-criticism, and evaluation of the past of our movement, a new policy took shape. The programmatic departures (Constituent Assembly, democratic state, formulation of the demands of workers and peasants, mass contact and etc.,) made at Lucknow and Faizpur Congresses and their further concretisation and clear enunciation in the election manifesto, meant the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Congress. They constituted a programmatic victory for the Left, official adoption by the Congress of the programme, adapted to new conditions, which the Left had been advocating for a decade. The Left won but it failed to work out the implication of its own success. It failed to realise that this constituted a new stage in our movement and necessitated a change in the role of the Left. The Left was no longer the protagonist of an alternative programme to that advocated by the Right, the Congress itself had accepted the programme persistently put forward by the Left. The problem now was to implement it in practice.

The role of the Left became not merely that of agitators for a rival programme but active organisers of a common programme. The Left had to make a sharp turn from being the opposition to the

Right to becoming the driving force behind it. The Left however continued to play an oppositional role concentrating merely on pushing the leadership still more to the Left instead of organising a movement on the basis of the programme which had already been accepted by the Congress. The Right therefore, continued to look upon the Left as the traditional opposition and went its own way. The Congress had adopted a new policy but the Left failed to impart it a new practice. Large sections of the Left continued to argue that the new policy could not be implemented without overthrowing the old leadership and they directed their attack not only against Imperialism but also against the Right. This was wrong in as much as it took the leadership as a whole to be homogenous and failed to understand the significance of the fact that the new policy had been put across by Nehru himself, the official President. Further, the new policy of The United National Front, generalised not the experience of a section of our movement represented by the Left alone but that of our national movement as a whole. Unity was its living core, unity of the entire people who had faith in their existing leadership against Imperialism. The tactic of struggle on two fronts—against the Right and against Imperialism was not only against the very policy of United National Front but isolated the Left within the National Front as a dissident sect.

This led the Left to adopt the mistaken tactic of concentrating merely on the sectional struggles of the toilers as “independent” struggles, hoping thereby to increase its own independent mass basis and at some future date to

overthrow the Right. In practice this meant keeping the Congress *i.e.*, the rest of the people, away from these struggles, not broadening sectional struggles into people's struggles, not building the United National Front here and now in the way it could be built but postponing it to some future date when it could be built under our own leadership.

The organisational lay-out of our movement continued as before.

Victory in the Elections

The new programme was put to the test in practice during the elections under the new constitution. The overwhelming victory of the Congress and the rout of its enemies was proof of its essential soundness. For the reasons suggested above the line of propaganda during the elections differed from that of previous elections but the method of organisation remained the same. The victory came from the new programme but it was capitalised by the older leadership. The elections however meant more than a victory at the polls, more than a demonstration of the soundness of the new programme, they accelerated the tempo and broadened the sweep of the mass movement which had already begun and unified it around certain common slogans on a nation-wide scale.

Miscarriage of a Plan

A section of the national leadership represented by Nehru and Bose had gone Left, reflecting the new needs of our movement and the experience of the world movements allied to our own, and had pushed through the new policy. A rapid radicalisation had been proceeding among the Congress rank and file (whose advanced elements had already

been organised in the C. S. P.) which gave it a ready response. The new policy was carried through without any serious opposition. This did not mean that the entire old leadership either accepted or understood it. While not categorically rejecting the official policy of the Congress, Gandhiji in the *Harijan* worked out an alternative line, "the experiment of office acceptance" to expand the bounds of—(instead of wrecking) the Constitution, which in the final analysis boiled down to nothing more than the illusion of achieving freedom without struggle. In other words, this was the re-application of the old policy of compromise, after the mistakes and effectiveness of the Left had been understood anew. Gandhiji did not rule out struggle for all times, but he separated the parliamentary work (for the present period) from the extra-parliamentary struggle (at some future date, as a final resort,) and did not see their unity as indicated in the Election Manifesto. His policy would have transformed the Congress from a mass organisation into another Liberal Party, for the Congress would have to carry through, the line of disirring peace with Imperialism and conciliation with its enemies. Gandhiji's experiment did not come off as desired by him, his mechanical calculations were disturbed by the emergence of the new wave of mass movement which objectively became the extra-parliamentary movement however undesired by him. The policy of compromise had to cross a human wall and overcome mass resistance.

This new mass movement arose from the working-class, peasant and student section of our National Front. It was based on their immediate demands, took

the form of militant demonstrations, marches, and strikes. It gathered a new momentum under the civil liberties given by the Congress Ministries. Above all it was under the leadership of the Left. Day to day experience of a rising mass movement led the Left to see its own mistakes and shortcomings and understand its own line better. This new development is epitomised in the Cawnpur General Strike—the struggle of the workers, fought and won as the struggle of the whole people, conducted and lead in unity by the Majdoor Sabha and the local Congress. The Left did not ask for unity but worked it out and scored a roaring triumph. Cawnpur became an inspiring example.

The Line of the Enemies of the Congress

In this new period, after the acceptance of Ministries, the line of Imperialism became clearer as months passed by. It facilitated the acceptance of Ministries by the Congress to get the leadership within its own parlour and as the "Government" make it administer imperialist law and order i.e., use the imperialist machine of repression against the mass movement and thus create a breach between the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary fronts (between the broad masses and the Congress organisation, between the leadership and the rank and file) and through a disruption of the national front and the suppression of the militant wing, pave the way for imposing the Federation.

After the formation of the Congress Ministries the vested interests, big Zamindars and Big Business, have raised a storm not to let the Congress Ministers implement the economic demands of the Election Manifesto in the toilers in-

terests or at least to considerably whittle them down. In unison with their class-brothers inside the Congress they threaten civil war against the Congress.

The pressure upon the Congress is from two sides but is directed by one mind. The line of British Imperialism and of its Indian allies is one. It constitutes a virtual offensive against the Congress as such, switching it off its mass basis, cutting out its growth.

This offensive is not being met with a planned—out counter-offensive. The compromisers who dominate our leadership understand it differently as accidental provocations caused by the unruliness (if nothing more uncomplimentary) of the Left. Their policy of compromise makes them blind to the fate of their own organisation and its future.

The reactionary offensive against the Congress and the whole mass movement is not going through uncountered. It is meeting with heroic unofficial resistance down at the base, among the rank and file, through local Congress Committees and other mass organisations.

The Congress Ministries are being pulled at by two sides, the enemies of the people and the people themselves.

This dual pull resulted for some time in the leadership as a whole following a policy of drift, attempting to act the mediator between its enemies and its own rank and file. This in turn has further worsened the situation, emboldened the enemies, and disheartened the rank and file.

What Next ?

In the background of a rising mass movement giving strength to the people, coupled with the rapidly maturing war-

crisis making imperialism less and less tolerant of any mass movement, a policy of drift could not be kept up. It must either become a counter-offensive against the peoples' enemies or lead to the disruption of the popular movement. There is ample evidence to show that the situation is deteriorating. The interference by the Governors is becoming more frequent, civil liberties are being restricted rather than extended. A Huq or Hayat can boast that their agrarian bills give as much relief, if not more, as given by a Congress Ministry. In Behar agreement with the Zamindars has been achieved despite the protest of 20 lac Kisans in open demonstrations. In Bombay the Trade Disputes Bill is being rushed through with the blessing of European and Indian Chambers of Commerce and despite the threat of a protest strike by the workers. We are asked to await the imposing of the Federation before we are given a plan of action to combat it while the information that some leaders at the top are negotiating a deal becomes more definite. During the war-crisis Working Committee sat from day to day looking for a move from the Government of India and not calling for a movement of India and not calling for a movement of the people to resist war measures.

The line of drift is already passing over to the practice of disruption and repression. If it continues it will split our movement and leave us helpless soldiers in imperialist war and unwilling slaves under Imperialism.

Check the Drift

This fatal drift must be checked, imminent disruption prevented and the anti-imperialist integrity of the Congress maintained unsullied. The greatest and immediate obstacle is lack of unity in

the Left itself. We have already stated how it was that though the Congress adopted the programme of the Left the latter was unable to endow it with a new practice. The old leadership remained working in the old way, it did not regard the new policy as its own, and the Left failed to work up the Congress organisation at the base to create the organisational basis for the new policy and make it the flesh and blood of the Congress, get the old leadership itself to carry it out or stand isolated. The organisational initiative remained with the old leadership, it pursued the line of drift and the Left of verbal opposition and organisational isolation. Imperialism, in league with the vested interests, seized this opportunity of conflict and confusion within the National Front to drive a wedge within the national ranks, relying on the conciliatory illusions of the dominant leadership it has sought to divert it from implementing the new policy of the Congress and still more severely isolate the Left. Behind all that we are going through are the attempts of the national enemy to make the national leadership turn disloyal to the National Congress.

The Left stands loyal to the Congress; but even from this vantage position it is unable to move the Congress. The greatest obstacle in this has been the lack of unity in the Left camp itself. They have been working at cross-purposes or independantly of each other. How could a disunited Left become the lever of activating and unifying the Congress?

Unite the Left

The forces of struggle are growing but our common organisation, the National Congress, is being threatened with dis-

ruption, while the imperialist offensive against our very future, the imposition of the Federation and the preparations for the imperialist war, is being rapidly carried forward. If the situation develops unchecked our fate is already sealed, defeat without a battle.

The immediate necessity is to achieve the utmost common agreement to carry out in practice those items in the programme of the Congress on whose fulfilment depends the progress of our movement and unite the entire Left on its basis into a Left Block.

The platform of the Left Block could be (1) No bargain with imperialism in its war-plans and active resistance to war-measures (2) Uncompromising hostility to the Federation and broadening the present struggles of our people and developing them to become the mass movement against the Federation (3) Active assistance to States people struggle. Repudiation of the non-interference policy (4) Extension and not curtailment of civil liberties (5) Bolder ministerial policy to implement the economic pledges of the Election Manifesto and above all to grant freedom of organisation to workers and peasants. No truck with anti-national vested interests, mass mobilisation of the people behind ministerial measures (6) Democratisation of the Congress. (7) Building up of a National Volunteers organisation and political trainings of cadres.

A United Left implementing this platform with inspiration and vigour can yet turn the scale. This would not happen merely by a general agitation for this platform under the leadership of a united top Left Committee. The agitational tasks and the organisational steps will have to be carefully planned out. A very wide-spread mass movement of different sections of our people is already on. The entire energy of the united Left must be thrown into raising its tempo a hundred fold and bringing within its fold new strata of the yet unawakened people by initiating a powerful agitation for their immediate demands. To achieve the democratisation of the Congress it is necessary to ensure the democratic functioning of Congress organisations wherever possible. To achieve greater unity of our people it is necessary to start fraternisation between Congress units and other mass organisations. A great need is the organisation of a politically trained National Militia as the organiser of the daily struggle of our people, as the soldiers of the Congress, as our army against the Imperialist Army.

Mere unity at the top would not do. Left Unity must be made the weapon of moving the Congress not against its present leadership but against Imperialism. It is thus that the unity of our people will be saved, the game of our enemies foiled, and our struggle advance to victory.

DEFEATISM LED TO COUNTER— REVOLUTION

by John Strachey

(Continued from September issue)

So far however, I have only given one side of the conspirators' position. I said above that two things began to happen in the world ten years ago. On the one hand, the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union took the offensive and in the end succeeded in establishing a Socialist Society. But things began to happen just then in the Capitalist world also. In the first place Capitalism sank into a new economic crisis of unprecedented severity; but also, beginning with 1932, certain Capitalist countries found a way of temporarily overcoming the crisis; and that way was nothing more nor less than turn to Fascism.

Fascinated by Fascism

Now Bukharin above all, but also Trotsky was fascinated by this process of the decisive turning towards Fascism of the Capitalist class of Europe, led by its most powerful section, the German Capitalist. Bukharin came to believe (and this was, as a matter of fact, a natural development of his whole theoretical position), that although Fascism was the last, logical and most ferocious phase of Capitalist Imperialism, yet it was also in some sort of way, a new kind of economic system which could stabilize Capitalism. Ivanov, one of the minor conspirators, gives a fascinating account

of a conversation he had with Bukharin on this subject:

"You know," he said, "that capitalism had now entered a new phase of development, and at this new stage, capitalism is revealing new and fresh strength, which actually amounts to a technical revolution and the rejuvenation of capitalism, as it were. And that, correspondingly we must revise our view of the contradictions, of the classes, of the class struggle, and so on. Fundamental amendments must be introduced to Marx. Marx's treatment of the question of proletarian revolutions was no longer suitable. The doctrine of Lenin and Stalin that the epoch of imperialism is an epoch of proletarian revolutions was," he said, "a most harmful utopia. This, in fact, was the position from which we proceeded, and which led us to fascism. Here I am obliged to anticipate a little. Bukharin returned to this question several times, because, I just could not get it into my head, seeing that the contradictions, of capitalist society were just forcing themselves to the surface. I mentioned facts to Bukharin which would now be clear to any schoolboy. I pointed to the growing acuteness of the relations between the Capitalist states in their struggle for the redivision of markets (the seizure of

Abyssinia by Italy, and the seizure of Manchuria by Japan). I pointed to the crisis of 1930. I pointed to the growth of unemployment. And in the end I pointed out that, as a matter of fact, Facism grew up on the acuteness of the class relations of capitalist society becoming extremely accentuated. Is it just such accentuation that the outrageous and bloodthirsty bourgeoisie needed so that capitalism could somehow extricate itself from the acute condition of capitalist society?

Bukharin said that I had not thought over this question deeply enough. *Fascism, he said, corresponded to the latest trends in the development of capitalism. We arrived directly at Fascism*". (page 118 of the report).

This passage and many others show that Bukharin had come to the conclusion that not only was it impossible to build up a Socialist society in the Soviet Union, but that it was possible for the Capitalists in the rest of the world to re-stabilize Capitalism by working along Fascist lines. It is almost incredible, as Ivanov himself says in the above quotation, to think that a brilliant man like Bukharin, can have fallen into such an error, but Bukharin does seem to have supposed, not only that Fascism might succeed in certain definite areas in crushing all working class resistance to it for the moment, and, *in that sense*, re-stabilizing Capitalism, which is unfortunately, all too true; but he also supposed that Fascism could somehow avoid leading the country which it had captured on to path of Imperialist aggression. Bukharin, in the teeth of all the evidence, really seems, to have thought, as late as 1936, that the Fascist empires were establishing some sort of balanced,

organised economic system which would not drive them out into aggressions which must be ultimately self-destructive. In August 1936, for example, he came back to the Soviet Union from a visit to Capitalist Europe and made a sort of report to one of his fellow conspirators, Khodjayev:

KHODJAYEV: Bukharin had just returned from a visit to Europe.

VYSHINSKY: From abroad?

KHODJAYEV: From abroad. He spoke about the stabilization of capitalism and said that fascism, particularly German fascism, had played a great role in this.

VYSHINSKY: He praised fascism.

'Soviet doomed to defeat'

KHODJAYEV: I understand it as praise for fascism. He said that fascist Germany was now exerting every effort to secure hegemony in Europe, that the method Germany had adopted for this was the fascization of the whole of Europe, the fascization of Germany, and in this way to create the necessary conditions in European countries for the creation of a European bloc, or of what is called a PLACE D'ARMES. Agreements were being arranged with the big Asiatic states, with Japan in particular, that an agreement between fascist Germany and Japan to fight the U. S. S. R. was possible. We had long known of Hitler's intentions; and a word or two was enough to understand what it was all about. From this he drew the conclusion that a bloc of these two Fascist states, the alliance of these two states, the Fascization of Europe, would make it difficult for the U. S. S. R. to hold out in a war, and that the U. S. S. R. was doomed to defeat in such a war. Then he reviewed the internal situation in the

U. S. S. R.—the difficulties encountered in the rural districts. He said collectivisation had triumphed, but nevertheless there were considerable strata of the rural population who had not joined the collective farms—these were the individual peasants, and we should take their discontent into account. There were enormous short-comings in the collective farms, the collective farms had not yet taken sufficient root. Although industrialization had triumphed, industry was working with interruptions, there were enormous short-comings in industry, the industry manufacturing articles of general consumption was in a worse state than the rest, there were such defects in the sphere of commodity circulation that enormous additional discontent among the population was inevitable. From this he drew the conclusion that we must stimulate the activity of our counter revolutionary forces". (page 230 of the report)

This quotation exhibits two strands of the profound defeatism which was the basic motif of all the conspirators' treachery. They all had believed, both that it was impossible to establish Socialism in the Soviet Union, and that it WAS possible for the Capitalist to re-establish Capitalism on a stable basis in the rest of the world. Even in 1936, when they had to admit that, in the main, the Socialist offensive in the Soviet Union had succeeded, and that fascism, far from re-establishing a stable Capitalism was leading directly to world war, they were sure that the fascists would be able to unite with the democratic capitalisms in an overwhelming attack on the Soviet Union.

Why Defeatism led to Betrayal

Now the reader may accept the facts that the conspirators thought all this,

and it may make much of what happened explicable to him. And yet he may still have great difficulty in realising how it was that these men, even after reaching this profoundly defeatist conclusion, derived from it the lesson that they should themselves work for the defeat of the Soviet Union. Despair and defeatism on the part of these already aggrieved leaders is comprehensible enough. But how and why did despair and defeatism pass over into active treachery? Why, to go back to the last sentence of the above quotation, did Bukharin, speaking to Khodjayeve, "draw the conclusion that we must stimulate the activity of our counter-revolutionary forces?"

A reading of the 800 closely printed pages of the verbatim report in its entirety is really necessary to answer this question. But the conspirators reasoning was something like this. It is all up both with Socialist offensive in the Soviet Union, and with any hope of avoiding a Fascist—Capitalist stabilization in the rest of the World. Therefore we must retreat; therefore we must transform the Soviet Union into a State Capitalist, and rich peasant, community. Therefore also, we must make terms with the Fascists, giving them great concessions, including whole out-lying provinces of the Soviet Union as their colonies, in the hope that by so doing they will allow us to carry on our state Capitalist, rich peasant, society in the heart of Russia. This is the only hope, in the present world situation, for our survival at all.

But, the conspirators continued to reason, Stalin and the majority of the Soviet Union will not see all this; they will not retreat; on the contrary they are, like maniacs, pressing on with the Soviet

offensive. This will lead to certain and irrecoverable destruction for all of us. Therefore Stalin must be made to retreat; but he will not. Therefore he must be got rid of. How can he be got rid of? There are only two methods. First he must be discredited by the failure of all his economic plans of Socialist construction. Then he and his colleagues must be arrested and or assassinated, and we must replace them in the Government.

It does not much matter whether the conspirators really believed, as I have expressed it here, that they were doing all this to save a remnant of the Soviet regime, or whether they had become simple political bandits struggling for nothing but personal power, facing the fact that the result of their success would be nothing more nor less than a complete Fascist conquest of the whole of the Soviet Union. In my opinion Bukharin was to a certain extent at any rate sincere in his sense. The others, by the end, had become mere political bandits.

Wrecking and terror

In any event this is the reasoning which all the conspirators adopted, the first logical conclusion which they drew from it was wrecking, the second was terror. I have no place to give quotations from the long, extremely detailed, and extremely terrible, accounts of the wrecking which the conspirators undertook. But if readers have any doubts as to the reality of wrecking, let them read, for instance, Khodjayev's evidence of what he and his colleagues in the leadership of the Uzbekistan Communist Party did to the irrigated agriculture of their country. (pages 231, 239 of the report)

Again I have no space to give quotations from the still more terrible story

of the terrorist plots against the various Soviet leaders, some of which succeeded, as in the cases of Kuibishev and Gorki, and some of which failed as in the cases of the attempts on Stalin, Molotov, etc.,

The last Stage

The last stage of the conspiracy was reached in 1936—37. The conspirators had become convinced that in spite of all they had believed, and in spite of the enormous difficulties, the Socialist offensive had won out. The economic life of the country, entirely contrary to their predictions, was improving instead of deteriorating. They had no hope of coming into power except by a terrorist coup, and that even if this succeeded they had no hope of holding power unless simultaneous attack on the Soviet Union was made by the German and the Japanese armies.

We must remember that in 1936 and early 1937, the conspirators were apparently, in an extremely strong position. They included, not only the Trotskyists and Bukharinists, who were held in a good deal of suspicion, and occupied relatively minor Government positions, but Yagoda, the head of the police himself, and four or five of the most important generals in the army, including Tukhachevsky. It seemed to them that a coup d'etat could hardly fail to arrest or assassinate the Soviet leaders and occupy the Kremlin. But they did not dare to move until and unless foreign aggression had begun. They were in close touch, generally through Trotsky, with the German and Japanese Governments but the logical, resolute diplomacy of the Soviet Union, and the antagonisms, which Bukharin had overlooked, but which existed none the less, between the various Capitalist powers

delayed the Fascist attack from month to month and year to year.

Gradually the position of the conspirators became critical. Beginning with the suspension of Yagoda, investigations undertaken independently by Yezhov, began to be made by the Soviet Government. One by one they can strike or all will be lost for them; and still the foreign intervention which they needed was delayed. Another of the minor conspirators, Ikramov describes a conversation which he had with Bukharin in December 1936:

Ikramov: "It was during the Congress of Soviets in November or the beginning of December 1936. During the Congress I asked him about this. He answered in the affirmative, and formulated it as follows: if there will not be a war just now, there will not be intervention soon, it is all over with our business. They will bag us all, yet we cannot expedite war because of England, which in certain respects is an international arbiter. As long as she does not decide one way or another, as long as she does not arrive at some decision, there will be no war." (Page 361 of the report).

Notice particularly the key role, which, as Bukharin recognised, is played by England in the whole balance of the world. What matters above all, is the course taken by Britain. This is the measure of our responsibility.

"Strike now—or all is lost"

In 1937 the story takes on a break-neck speed. Wrecking reaches a climax. On the other hand, conspirator after conspirator falls under suspicion. Trotsky is sending message after message saying "Hurry; hurry, hurry, strike now or all is lost." Yagoda had already been

dismissed from his key position, the head of the police. The new chief, Yezhov begins driving his counter-move into the deep, complex and formidable mine of the conspiracy. Bukharin, Pyatakov, Radek, etc., have all been arrested. But even now the conspiracy is by no means finally broken. Certain political leaders such as Krestinsky are still at large, as also are the generals. They still feel that everything may be saved if they can bring off their *coup d'etat*.

But the Soviet Strikes First

In the spring of last year, 1927, this still formidable remnant of the conspirators finally decide that they can wait no longer for foreign intervention. They must at all costs strike at once. They decide with Tukhachevsky that he must strike at the Kremlin, with a hand-picked detachment of troops reliable to himself, in the first half of May. But the Government struck first. This is how Krestinsky describes the end of the business.

"Ever since 1935 I had been in contact with three responsible officials of the Moscow Party organisation who were covert Trotskyites—Postolovsky, Furer and Korytny, who were busy getting covert Trotskyites into responsible jobs in the Moscow region and the city organisations, were maintaining contact with the Party for Moscow—and they knew from me that the time might come when a certain number of promotions would be needed for the central apparatus also.

I got in touch with them and told them that the time for action was drawing nearer, and therefore they must draw up lists of people in Moscow to be arrested and removed from their posts

at the outbreak of the coup, and lists of people who could be appointed to these vacancies. As at the time a whole series, of local district conferences was was taking place in Moscow and various changes in personnel were being made, it was settled that I would have the lists approximately by May 12. But early in May, the debacle of the counter-revolutionary organisation began, changes on the active list of the military department were published. Gamarnik was removed from his post of First Assistant People's Commissar and Tukhachevsky from his post of Second Assistant People's commissar. Tukhachevsky was transferred to Samara, Yakir from Keiv, Uborevich from Byelorussia, while Kork and Eidemann were arrested. It became clear that a coup was now impossible, so that the question whether the coup should take place in the middle of May became obviously irrelevant.

I began to get ready for my arrest."

They were all arrested, But it had been as near a thing as that. And all this was happening in Moscow only just a year ago.

Here I have only attempted to deal with one particular aspect, the political aspect, of the report of one of the trials. This book of 800 pages is by far the most extraordinary, the most exciting, and at the same time the most instructive, State paper that I have ever read. There are a dozen whole themes which I have not touched on at all. The gruesome story of Yagoda's indirect assassination of Gorki; the half-comic, half-tragic, episode of Chernov's fall into the

hands of the Gestapo; the whole theme of the bourgeois nationalists of the outlying republics of the Soviet Union; the, in some ways, supreme question of Trotsky's maniacal hatred for the Soviet Union, and his relations with the Fascist Governments.

I can only say that no man can advance his political education more than by studying this supreme historical document of our time. If he is a friend of the Soviet Union, of Socialism and the working class, he will emerge from the reading of it with a profound sense of the peril through which the Soviet Union has passed but with Supreme thankfulness that this peril has been overcome. This many sided, formidable attempt to destroy the Soviet Union from within, at the same moment as she was attacked from without, has failed. In the course of the struggle the Soviet Union suffered cruel blows. Her industries were appreciably affected by wrecking and by the inevitable disorganisation which the detection of the conspiracy, and the highly place conspirators, caused. Above all the very failure of the conspiracy was used with great skill by every enemy of the Soviet Union in the world to attempt to discredit her; and because so few of the peoples of the world understood or could be made to understand the real situation, this attempt had considerable, though transitory, success.

Nevertheless the Soviet Union still forges ahead—like one of her own ice breakers, crashing and crushing her way through the frozen seas. Upon that voyage is staked the future of the human race.

STABBING THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION IN THE BACK

(A DOCUMENTARY EXPOSURE OF TROTSKYIST TREACHERY IN SPAIN)

By Francisco Anton

Two years of war have sufficed to show the world that the anti-fascist people of Spain are fighting with the greatest enthusiasm and fire, and that periodic reverses have not been able to damp their fighting ardour. Such reverses have rather inspired the people with greater courage and imbued them with the firm resolve not to lay down their arms until fascism is completely destroyed and the invaders cleared from every inch of Spanish soil.

Two years of war have also proved that the people of Spain will continue to remain unshakably united under the banner of the People's Front, and that they will be guided in their struggle by the Government which has sprung from their ranks. This unity of leadership continually increases the enthusiasm of the Republican fighters and the effectiveness of their weapons; for this reason the war will cost the fascists, dear. It will be of long duration and we can be sure that the invaders will not attain their objective.

We may be convinced that the Government troops will offer stubborn resistance to the new offensive and will smash the desperate attacks of the fascist armies. This resistance will, just as on the battlefields of Guadalajara, finally scatter and destroy the invading

forces. This is a risk which fascism and world reaction does not wish to run.

Undoubtedly they want to win the war—and this as quickly as possible. But since they know very well that the Republican troops will continue to offer unshakeable resistance to their attacks, they are on the one hand making more and more use of the weaknesses of the European democracies and on the other hand they are resorting to espionage and treachery, which is carried out for them by their Trotskyist agents, and by provocateurs of all kinds, which they send into Government territory.

In the Service of Franco

In Spain also, at a time when the whole people—Socialists, Anarchists, Communists, Republicans and all non-party people who strive for a future of justice and freedom—were fighting bitterly, confronted by immense difficulties—at a time when the whole people was pouring out its blood to save the inviolability, liberty and independence of the country, at this time the Trotskyists are working in the service of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini, in Republican territory, for the defeat of the Republic, to deliver up the Spanish people, bound hand and foot, to the mercy of the fascists, the enslavers and destroyers of the people.

In Spain, it is possible to point to a whole series of recent facts which show how the Trotskyists have, for a long time, been working towards this disgraceful and criminal end, and how, as difficulties increase and the decisive struggle draws nearer, they are more and more openly putting forward the enemy's slogans and sowing defeatism, mistrust and disunity among the masses; how they are resorting more and more openly to a protracted activity of espionage, provocation, sabotage and crime, on a large scale.

Splitting the People's Forces

From this endless series of facts, we can give to the workers and anti-fascists of all countries the most eloquent and irrefutable examples. The most characteristic of these, and the most convincing proof of these Trotskyist crimes is their PUTSCH, in May 1937, BARCELONA. At that time the fascists needed a split in the bloc of the anti-fascists forces, and a weakening of the Republican hinterland, in order to carry their offensive in northern Spain to a successful conclusion.

Agitation in the Press and at meetings, and "ultra-revolutionary" propaganda no longer sufficed. Deeds were necessary. Thus they resolved to organise a revolt in the hinterland, to urge the troops to desert from the front, and to produce chaos in Government Spain. Fascism needed this situation in order to land troops on a large scale in Catalonia and on the east coast of Spain, and thus deliver a heavy blow to the Spanish people.

The Barcelona Revolt—An Attack From the Rear

This revolt broke out in BARCELONA on May 3, 1937. The Spanish people

and the Spanish Government possess enough proof that the organisers, leaders and instigators of the revolt were the P. O. U. M. Trotskyists, who were carrying out the orders of Franco and the interventionists.

Many days prior to the revolt the atmosphere had been prepared and the necessary conditions created.

At the same time, the P. O. U. M. was actively preparing to attack the people and the army from the rear. The BATALLA, the organ of the P.O.U.M., transformed itself into the organ of the revolt. More violently than ever it attacked the People's Front, the Government, the Communist Party, the United Socialist Party of Catalonia, and the Soviet Union. The provocateurs of the P. O. U. M. were active both in the barracks and at the front.

The P. O. U. M. openly raised against the People's Front Government, the banner of armed revolt. In a manifesto published in the BATALLA on May 1, it said:

"On May 1, this year the Spanish proletariat must strive towards a higher goal, the attainment of power."

Events followed one another in rapid succession. Undoubtedly fascism was urging on to immediate action.

There are still further proofs of the active part played by the P.O.U.M. in the crime of May, 1937, in Catalonia. We read in the BATALLA of May 1, under the heading "Stop Press" the following urgent announcement:

"All active members of the P. O. U. M. who belong to the People's Military Academy and who have been assigned to various posts in Catalonia or at the fronts are urgently requested

to report to the military executive committee room as soon as possible on a most important matter."

Thus the military executive committee of the P. O. U. M. mobilised its men. But how was the provocation extended to the front?

How does one damp the real revolutionary ardour? How does one demoralise the army? How does one break up the war front?

Inciting Desertion and Mutiny

In the same paper on May 1, we read:

"There are enough tanks, aeroplanes, rifles and money. But they don't want to send them to Catalonia, to the revolutionary proletariat, because it is revolutionary, because we want to combine the war at the front with the revolutionary reorganisation of the hinterland; because we do not regard ourselves as ordinary soldiers in a milk and water army, but as fighters for the revolution."

But how does one lead the troops to desert from the front and involve themselves in the worst kind of excesses?

"We cannot tolerate it any longer that the militia on the Aragon front are oppressed and shabbily treated, while a life of uncurbed and bestial licence is carried on in the hinterland. If Valencia will not give us the money to live, if it cannot supply the troops at the front with food and clothes, we are prepared to plunder and tear the clothes off the bourgeoisie in the open street".

In this atmosphere of provocation, and after such preparations, the revolt began. From the beginning of the rebellion the Trotskyists added fuel to the flames.

The Revolt—a Part of Fascist Plan

There are proofs provided by the fascists both in Spain and abroad.

The whole reactionary and fascist press throughout the world spoke during these days of "chaos" in Catalonia, of the "collapse of the Valencia Government" and of the "independence of Catalonia."

At the same time the rebel transmitting stations in Salamanca and Saragossa repeated unceasingly, day and night, instructions such as the following, which sound exactly like those of the P. O. U. M.

"Hold out steadfastly, weapons in hand." "Do not cease to fight." "Unite with your brothers at the front." "Set up your own Government."

Further, we know that the enemy at that time interrupted their activity on the Aragon front and kept planes ready to aid the rebels in Barcelona.

During these days the London Non Intervention Committee with the agreement of the fascist Powers, wanted to land troops in Catalonia and at other points on the Mediterranean coast, on the pretext of "restoring order".

Its Suppression—a Great blow to Fascists

This was well known. The Government knew it, indeed it was common knowledge. But we will here reproduce a piece of secret information:

"According to reports from official and semi-official sources, we were able to establish that Gestapo (German Secret Police) and O. V. R. A. (Italian Secret Police) agents took part in the recent events in Catalonia. The Gestapo and O. V. R. A. agents at the

various embassies gave regular reports to official German and Italian circles concerning the course of events in Catalonia. It was possible to prove the direct connection between the agents of the Gestapo, the O. V. R. A. and General Franco, whose agents were living in Freiburg (Switzerland), and the Catalonian Trotskyists and fascists. It is known that bayonets and machine-guns have continuously been smuggled into Spain across the Catalonian frontier, and that this is still going on. It is also known that valuables have disappeared from Catalonia and have latter been handed over to fascists abroad, in person, to pay for the weapons thus sent. It is known that it was the intention of the fascist agents to do all in their power, so that the revolt in Catalonia should last some days, and thus give the international control commission the opportunity of intervening. We know that the German and Italian delegates on the control commission had already discussed with *Lord Plymouth* the necessity of landing troops in Catalonia and at other points on the Mediterranean coast, and, in case the rebellion lasted any length of time, of restoring order. *The speedy liquidation of the Catalonian revolt was regarded by fascist circles as a great blow.* We know that one of the Gestapo agents declared that the fact that general POZA had been entrusted with the organisation of the fighting forces on the Aragon front was a heavy blow to the work of sabotage in the hinterland, since different methods would now have to be used to supply the groups of 'uncontrollables' with weapons. He also stated that he was disappointed because in spite of all

the work done in this sphere it had proved impossible to disintegrate the Aragon front; for this the agents sent from abroad into the ranks of the extremists were blamed, because they had been unable to gain the confidence of all the military leaders on the Aragon front."

But although the nature of the despicable rebellion in Barcelona itself forms conclusive enough proof, there exists further evidence which completely reveals the true face of this band of counter-revolutionaries.

During the month of April and May the Madrid police succeeded in discovering a widespread espionage organisation. More than 200 arrests were made.

The Fascist Network

Among those in the service of this espionage organisation were elements which were active on the general staff and in units on the central front. They had succeeded in extending their network of communications over the Republican National Guard, the army ambulance service, the information service of the ministry, the deputy for the organisation of anti-aircraft, the naval and air ministry, the Red Cross, etc.

Their activities were of a most varied nature. They supplied the enemy with secret information of a military character, such as the plans of operations, positions of batteries, etc.

The police investigations showed still more clearly what a serious danger was presented by the organisation of an armed revolt in MADRID:

The assembly of fighting forces for a movement in the hinterland, however, is progressing rather slowly.

Nevertheless we can reckon with 400 men ready for action. They are well armed and are stationed in favourable positions on the Madrid front. The penetration of our people into the ranks of the extremists—the Anarchists and the P. O. U. M.—is being carried on successfully. We lack a good propaganda leader who—in order to be able to act with greater security—would [have to carry on this work independently of us. (A code section follows). In accordance with your orders to me, I myself went to Barcelona and met N., the leader of the P. O. U. M. I inform you of everything which he told me. Communication could not be established between you and him, because the transmitter broke down; but while I was still there, the apparatus began to function again. You will already have received the answer to the main problem. N. most emphatically demands of you and our friends abroad that I and I alone shall be the only person to maintain connection with him. He promised me to send people to Madrid to spur on the activity of the P. O. U. M. Through these reinforcements the P. O. U. M., as in Barcelona, will prove a strong and effective aid to our movement.”

The Leader of the Traitors

This is the most irrefutable proof that the P. O. U. M. had connections with Franco. Who is this “N” who is mentioned here?

It is ANDRES NIN himself the leader of the traitors: That is why he was arrested and brought up for trial.

And Nin’s disappearance, or rather his “abduction” by fascist agents, is further proof of his guilt. The fascists wanted

in this way to prevent the Spanish officials from discovering fresh and still more irrefutable proofs of these crimes.

But it was not only Nin, within the P.O.U.M. who was acting on Franco's orders. The whole of the P.O.U.M.—if we make a distinction between the deluded workers and these spies and traitors—is in the service of fascism.

The members of the P.O.U.M. themselves admit it. Their betrayal is so obvious, their crimes have been so completely revealed, the proofs are so irrefutable, that the wretched creatures in the P. O. U. M. admit their guilt.

In the illegal number of the BATALLA of July 19, it said in an article entitled “The Counter-revolutionary Nature of the Suppression of the P.O.U.M.”:

Assuming that the accusations of espionage and co-operation with Franco which have been made against our leaders, were well founded, the most natural thing to do would be to punish the criminals speedily, and publicly, as an example—not, however, to punish the whole organisation”.

The provocateurs of the P.O.U.M. do not only act in the service and under the leadership of Franco. Another important proof is available: a letter which was found in the P.O.U.M. premises, from the German Gestapo agents, and addressed to ANDRES NIN personally:

“Bayonne, July 12, 1937. To the executive committee of the P.O.U.M. I confirm herewith my previous statements. In the groups of the Basses-Pyrenees, of which we have already spoken, differences have arisen which accrue to our advantage, because if we examine them carefully they may prove the nucleus for the formation of another group of our party. The best

elements in this group—among them Walter, Babinot, etc. who exert considerable influence, have come into conflict with the group at St. Jean de Luz. The latter refuse to send people for a journey which may be necessary, if they do not receive any concrete instructions from the C. N. T. We must get a power of attorney from the C.N.T., even though the people in Bayonne want to undertake something from which they hope for good results." This document contains a most interesting statement: 'Barcelona should send us money and material to make known the attitude of the party, then we will work firmly and unceasingly, to steel a group which shall be prepared for anything.' These then, are some of the views of the 'dissenters.' But more and better is to come: 'The wife of "Generalissimo" Franco is in France. Do you remember what was said in a previous report regarding the possibility of a stay in Barcelona? And what possibilities will there be for us, in respect to that which Bonnet said concerning "Quim": 'I insist, above all, on the necessity of supporting this group materially and ideologically, since this group may bring us much profit; but for this reason you must see to it that Walter goes to Barcelona. Comrade C. has found a connection in Perpignan. There, where I am finally going to-day, it is difficult to get concrete news. I require an answer by telegram, in which you must confirm all this and let me know whether you will apply it into actual practice. Salud and P. O. U. M. (signed) IMA."

The P. O. U. M. has direct connections with the bureau in SANT JEAN

DE LUZ. What is this BUREAU? As everyone knows, an agency, of the Gestapo, one of Franco's espionage centres in France. And the people who are mentioned in the letter are German espionage agents.

These are documents well known to the authorities. All these proofs are of a recent date. Can we conclude from this that the relations of the Spanish Trotskyists with the enemies of the Republic date from today?

Not at all. Like their pope, Trotsky, the Spanish Trotskyists have been carrying on their communications with the fascists for some years.

Trotskyists as Fascist Spies

In a letter which recently came to light, from the lawyer ENRIQUE DE ANGULO to GIL ROBLES, when the latter was war minister, it says:

"My dear friend! A friend from the lawyer JOE MARIA PALLES, who, in consequence of his profession and his interest often goes abroad, where he maintains important connections with the international world, informs me that he intends to conclude an agreement with the *Paris White Guard and Trotskyist organisations*—which will keep him informed about the machinations of the Communists in regard to Spain....."

Enclosed in the letter is an enumeration of the questions on which the White Guardists and Trotskyists offer the Spanish information.

"Information regarding the activity of the Spanish section of the Third International, the leaders of this section, their instructors, and their journeys abroad with details of these journeys."

"Information regarding the system of correspondence functioning between the Third International and Spain.

"Information regarding the illegal activity of the C. P. in Spain itself.

"Information regarding the attempts to create a People's Front of the Left parties under the leadership of the Third International and the Communists. Further, information regarding the People's Front movement in France, which may have political consequences in Spain."

Trotskyism is an international espionage organisation. Who were its agents in Spain? NIN, ANDRADE and GORKIN who, as every one knew, kept up their communications with their French accomplices quite openly.

Its agents were the cronies of Nin, Andrade and Co., the Trotskyists of all countries who, at a time when the workers and anti-fascists of the whole world demand more and more emphatically, aid for Republican Spain, and hasten to support this movement with a spirit of self sacrifice, to overcome the resistance of their governments, when the working classes, Socialists and intellectuals in France, Great Britain, the United States and other countries are moving into action—who at a time such as this, say that the Government of Spain is not a People's Front Government, but a counter-revolutionary one, which persecutes "revolutionaries" such as Nin, and that hence the world proletariat and the anti-fascists must not support this Government or the Spanish Republic.

Identical Aims

This is also the main object of Hitler, Mussolini and Franco: to isolate the

Spanish Republic, to prevent the world from aiding it in its struggle. This is the aim of the whole of reaction and world fascism, as is proved by the activity of the Non-Intervention Committee. And it is all the more the goal of the Trotskyists, the most devoted and efficient servants of fascism in all countries.

In order to prevent this, Spain needs the assurance that there are no spies in the country, that no one is planning betrayal at a difficult moment; that there are no murderers preparing to stab the country in the back.

They Help Fascism Everywhere

Yet this certainty cannot be obtained if the people do not know how to smash the Trotskyists relentlessly—the most important driving force of the fascists in organising revolts, assassinations and betrayals. The same Trotskyism must be smashed which in the Soviet Union betrayed the country to help Japan and the Third Reich, to enslave and divide up the magnificent fatherland of Socialism which murdered many of the best of the Soviet people, such as Comrades KIROV, KUIBYSHEV and the great writer MAXIM GORKY; which with its criminal sabotage activities continually destroyed the lives and wealth of workers and peasants in the happiest and most genuinely free country in the world. It is the same Trotskyism which we saw in Spain carrying on espionage work in the service of Franco and German and Italian fascism, and provoking criminal revolts, such as that against the Spanish people in CATALONIA, which was unleashed at a most serious and critical moment. It is the same Trotskyism which, as we have seen,

handed over exact information enabling Franco's guns to murder hundreds of heroic anti-fascists in Madrid with unerring aim. It is the same Trotskyism which organised the assassination of leaders of the proletariat and the Spanish anti-fascists, which works for the defeat of the Spanish people so that the fascist criminals—Germans and Italians—can divide up Spain among themselves, and the people of Spain be subjected to the

most terrible regime of enslavement, and the blackest decline of culture.

All the vigilance of the Spanish masses is concentrated on this clique of unscrupulous criminals, who are just as bad as the open fascists. The people of Spain will see to it that they cannot find support even in the remotest corners of the country, so that wherever they are found they may be delivered up to the implacable law of the People's Justice.

COMMUNIST INITIATIVE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

By Kurt Funk

Not a day passes on which the workers, and all peace-loving and law-abiding people, are not disturbed and alarmed by fresh acts of war and provocation on the part of the fascist Triple Alliance Berlin-Rome-Tokyo. Reports of the cowardly slaughter of Spanish women and children by German and Italian interventionists, and news of the barbaric atrocities committed by the Japanese troops against the Chinese people, who are fighting for their independence, have lately been supplemented by announcements of increased provocation on the part of German Fascism against Czechoslovakia. The question of whether, in the immediate future, these new provocations will give rise to a new world war is the deep concern of wide masses of the people in all countries.

Not all politicians who hate fascism and desire to save peace draw the correct conclusions from this situation,

conclusions which alone can save peace. In this heavily charged atmosphere, proposals are coming from various quarters, purporting to serve the cause of the preservation of peace; to carry out these proposals, however, would mean to capitulate to the fascist aggressors. In this connection, let us recall the words of Dimitrov, which reveal most clearly and realistically the development of the relation of forces:-

Two Opposing Forces

"A casual observer sees only one side of the events which are developing; namely the attacks of the fascist aggressors, the kowtowing of the pro-fascist sections of the bourgeoisie of other countries, the thunder of big drums beaten by the fascist press. In reality, however, there is another side to these events: the movement of the working class against the policy of supporting fascism is growing; nations which are threatened by fascist aggression are on the move; in the

various countries and on the international field the anti-fascist forces are uniting.

"Thus, in the course of international affairs, two opposite processes are developing. While the reactionary capitalist rulers in the bourgeois democratic countries are tending more and more towards agreements with the fascist aggressors and a pro-fascist policy at home, growing throughout the whole world.

The people of Spain and China, by their heroic struggle daily give us examples of this growth of the forces against war and fascism. In Czechoslovakia, on May 21, the people already once held up the fascist offensive, by their firm resolve to resist Nazi aggression. The working class of all countries, in its struggle for peace, can count upon the help of wide sections of the population who, politically and ideologically, belong to the bourgeoisie. The response awakened in all countries by the Soviet Union's forceful and emphatic answer to Japanese provocation at Changkufeng shows clearly what widespread sympathy would be accorded to a policy which stands up to the aggressors, for the preservation of peace.

In face of fascist acts of war provocations, the people demand of the democratic Governments, of the working class organisations and of all who possess the will to peace, that they make a firm stand. This is in contrast to the despicable capitulationist intrigues of certain bourgeois politicians in various capitalist countries, who are following in the footsteps of Mr. Chamberlain. The numerous demonstrations which have recently borne witness to the growing anxiety and opposition to war, in countries which are oppressed by fascism. The numerous cases, in which soldiers and those due

for terms of military service, have fled over the frontier from Germany and Italy, are an expression within the fascist countries themselves, of increasing opposition to the hazardous war policy; *opposition which is now crystallising into direct acts of resistance against the regime.*

Communist International Shows the Way

With regard to this development of events it is both necessary and instructive to recall the great international gathering which in 1935 took the initiative in creating the unity of the international working class, and in establishing a broad, unbreakable People's Front against war and fascism, namely, the **Seventh world Congress of the Communist International**. When, three years ago, on August 20, 1935, George Dimitrov in his concluding speech, summarised the results of this Congress, he was able to say and with truth, that the Congress had laid the foundations for a mobilisation of the forces of the working class on a scale as yet unknown in the history of working-class struggle. Dimitrov said:

"Our Congress has placed before the International proletariat, firstly, the task of consolidating its forces, both politically and from an organisational standpoint and overcoming the isolation into which it has been forced by the Social-Democratic policy, of co-operation with the bourgeoisie. It has set the workers the task of assembling the people around the working class in a broad People's Front for the struggle against the offensive of capital and reaction, against fascism and the danger of war in each separate country and on the international field."

"Concentration of the fire of our struggle against the arch enemy of peace against German fascism" and *"the slogan of peace become our main slogan in the struggle against war,"* said Ercoli in his special report on the struggle against war and fascism. The Congress debates were concerned with working out suitable and efficient means and methods to be used in carrying out the great tasks.

What, however, made the decisions of this Congress one of the strongest driving forces working in the cause of the unification of the masses of the people for the preservation of peace?

In the words of Dimitrov:

"This Congress expressed the complete triumph of unity between the proletariat of the land of victorious Socialism—the Soviet Union—and the proletariat of the capitalist world, which is fighting for its liberation.....This victory consolidates the work of peace among the peoples; it increases the international importance of the Soviet Union and of its role as a powerful bulwark of the workers in their fight against capital, against reaction and fascism."

A policy which has a foundation of this kind is a stronger weapon in the hands of the working class than are, on the other hand, all the fascists' instruments of murder. Precisely this special character of the VII Congress of the Communist International and its decisions guaranteed the successes which, during the past three years, have been gained in the struggle against the fascist aggressors. This is the reason why, during the stormy times of the past three years, the Communist International and the Communist Parties of the various countries were able to steer a firm

course. The Communist International has endeavoured and will endeavour untiringly to bring about, and further the unification of the peace forces. It unhesitatingly took the initiative in organising working class action against the predatory war of Italian fascism in Abyssinia. At a time in which, in the Social Democratic circles, illusions were rife as to the policy of the British Bourgeoisie, the Communists everywhere emphasised the necessity for the working class to take independent action against the Italian aggressors. The concrete proposals which Georgi Dimitrov, in the name of the Communist International, placed before the leaders of the Second International, are an indication of the seriousness with which the leadership of the Comintern undertook to carry out its decisions.

Dimitrov, in his concluding speech at the VII Congress, had said that the Communist International did not "think out" the task of assembling the people around the working class in a broad people's front. *"The experiences of the international working class movement, above all the experiences of the French proletariat have set us this task."* *The Communists, in accordance with the example given by the VII World Congress in the events of the past three years, have not approached "the living revolutionary process in the life of the Peoples with academically thought out schemes and fixed dogmatic standards" (Manuilsky), but on the basis of a thorough and fundamental study of the correlation of class forces in every country, at each moment; they have carefully considered the position of each class, each of the groups, within this class; they have studied all class conflicts in their entirety and the methods*

by which the proletariat can exploit these conflicts; they have taken careful account of the international situation in its entirety."

The Glorious Example Set by Communists in China and Spain

In this connection, the Communist Parties of Spain and China have set us a brilliant example. Their achievements in the heroic struggle against the fascist interventionists are a model for all working class organisations, for all friends of peace throughout the world. During the two years in which the Spanish people have been fighting against the fascist interventionists, and by their struggle, have prevented the outbreak of a new world war, the working class has passed through many instructive experiences, some of them extremely bitter ones. The Governments of the important bourgeois democratic countries have introduced a policy of "non-intervention," the result of which is to provide direct aid to the fascist interventionists and to blockade the Spanish Republic. In spite of the honest indignation of the Social Democratic and Trade Unionist workers, and in spite of numerous resolutions of sympathy from its bureau, the II International has consistently refused to co-operate in the establishment of international unity of action for effective support of Republican Spain. The reactionary forces who achieved this result are the same forces which under cover of "neutrality" are again trying to prevent the fascist aggressors from being opposed by a solid system of collective security; these people put forward all kinds of dangerous and harmful proposals, the consequence of which could only be to weaken and cripple the fighting forces of Republican Spain.

Ever Prepared for Joint Action

The Communists follow the words of Dimitrov:

"We communists are members of a revolutionary party. Yet, we are prepared to undertake joint action with other parties which fight against fascism. While fighting for our aims we are at the same time prepared to carry on a joint struggle for such immediate problems whose solution will weaken the position of fascism and consolidate the position of the proletariat."

For this reason the Communists of all countries work in fraternal co-operation with all progressive men and women to obtain effective support for the Spanish people. The words of Stalin, that "the liberation of Spain from the yoke of the fascist reactionaries is not the private affair of the Spaniards, but the common cause of all advanced and progressive mankind," are backed by the material strength of the Soviet Union and the agreement of all true friends of peace throughout the world, are a constant inspiration to us to increase our efforts to this end.

For this reason, the Communists today regard it as one of their most urgent tasks to aid the Chinese People in their struggle, as was said in the resolution of the Presidium of the E. C. C. I. this resolution embodies a number of concrete proposals which can immediately be carried out. Their aims are; (1) to provide political, moral and material aid for China, (2) to increase all kinds of difficulties and hindrances for the Japanese military clique in carrying out its campaign of aggression in China.

For this reason the Communists are to be found fighting everywhere, where

the struggle is being waged for peace and progress and against the fascist aggressors and reactionary capitulationists.

Let us once more quote an extract from Dimitrov's concluding speech at the Seventh Congress. These words are to-day especially applicable:—

"We are prepared to do all this because in the countries of bourgeois democracy we are burring the way to reaction and the offensive of capitalism and fascism, and preventing the liquidation of bourgeois democratic freedom; we want to hold up fascism's terrorist campaign of revenge against the proletariat and against the revolutionary section of the peasantry and intelligentsia, and to save the young generation from physical and spiritual degeneration. We are prepared to do all this because we want to prepare and hasten the overthrow of the fascist dictatorships in the fascist countries. We are prepared to do all this because we want to save the world from Fascist Barbarism and the Horrors of an Imperialist war."

Whoever wants to help to force back the aggressors and defend peace will find in the Communists, steeled and tried initiators of this struggle, who are prepared to sacrifice themselves and with whom words correspond to deeds. This can be seen quite clearly if we glance back at the discussions and decisions of the Seventh World Congress which say:—

"The Seventh Congress of the Communist International stresses the danger of fascism in all capitalist countries and warns against the underestimation of the fascist danger. The Congress also rejects the fatalist standpoint, that the victory of fascism is inevitable; this standpoint is fundamentally wrong; it can only produce passivity and weaken the mass struggle against fascism. The working class can prevent the victory of fascism if it achieves unity of action, and by promptly developing its active struggle, prevents fascism from gaining strength; thanks to a revolutionary leadership, it is able to rally round itself the broad masses of the workers in town and country."

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AGRARIAN CRISIS IN INDIA

By Bhowani Sen

Nature of the Problem

The world economic crisis has exposed the danger to which Imperialism has delivered the people. There is no corner of the earth left untouched by its tentacles. The world economic crisis is a crisis of Imperialism. In all its phases, agricultural countries have been most hard hit by this devastating plague and it is in colonial countries that it has staged the most horrible death drama. The first phase of this crisis, the phase of collapsing production and exchange has now passed into the phase of depression of a special kind and through this phase, a new one is developing with lightning rapidity, that of a terrific imperialist world war. Being a colonial country, India has become and shall continue to be the theatre of devastating destruction, poverty and famine during the whole course of this crisis. In order to realise its meaning, to grasp the seriousness of its extent and to find out the proper solution in so far as the present condition of India is concerned, we must first of all understand the specific nature of India's social economy and its bearing upon the present crisis.

Indian society is dominated by remnants of feudalism. There is a belated appearance of capitalist production but only an insignificant part of the population is dependant upon capitalist industries. The great majority of the people earn their living by agriculture and greater part of cultivated land is engaged

in the production of food crops. In spite of this, food grain production is insufficient from the point of view of national need, but this insufficiency, instead of raising economic demand and thereby the price level, has been accompanied by relative over-production and falling price. Landlordism by its medieval exploitation, has extremely impoverished the peasant and is depressing the productivity of land to an alarming degree. Primitive method of cultivation, feudal form of land-ownership and capitalist mode of exchange are combined in agricultural production and leading the peasant to an inescapable ruin.

Though production of food crops occupies the greater part of our land in cultivation, yet food crop production does not regulate India's rural economy. Our rural economy is regulated by production and exchange of raw materials for Capitalist industries. The movements of the food crops market are determined by fluctuation in the prices of raw materials, the latter being dependent upon conditions of capitalist production. Therefore the crisis of world capitalism has created a devastating agrarian crisis in India.

India is exploited by British Imperialism in its own interests. Its interests consist in purchase of raw materials at cheap prices, sale of finished goods manufactured by British capitalists at high prices, investment of surplus British

Capital to profit by the use of cheap labour, to earn profits by transport and financing the sale of raw materials and finished products, to utilise Indian productive resources, man power and military apparatus in world Imperialist rivalry. Consequently Imperialist domination has obstructed the course of India's industrial development to such a deplorable extent that even to-day most of our factory made consumption goods are imported from abroad and our exports mostly consist of agricultural commodities. This character of our international trade, being itself an outcome of India's industrial backwardness, always keeps her an inferior partner in International trade bargain. The supreme financial and political control being reserved to British capitalists, Indian people cannot and could not secure any relief from the crushing blow of the world crisis.

All these indicate that the citadel of Indian agriculture has been so besieged on all sides, that there remains no pacific way out, no automatic remedy, no capitalist solution of our agrarian crisis. The only solution lies in a successful agrarian revolution that will completely sweep away the colonial character of our national economy. There is only one way, the revolutionary way, out of the crisis.

This conclusion does not rule out the value of concrete relief measures. When a ship crashes in the mid sea, another ship becomes necessary to save her crew but before the rescue ship arrives, the captain of the sinking ship never withholds life belts from the terrified passengers. Concrete relief measures like life belts will give temporary relief to the people, thereby strengthening their fight for final solution.

Out of 36 crore of India's population, 67% live by agricultural occupation. Besides, there are almost 11% of the population who are engaged in partly agriculture and partly domestic service. Industries give employment to 10% of the population, of which barely 2% are employed in capitalist industries. The rest of the industrial population is engaged in handicraft production known as cottage industries. The large majority of those engaged in cottage industries, partly earn their living by agriculture. Thus more than 80% of the population are peasants. From this fact we can imagine the importance of agriculture in our national life and also the nature and extent of the agrarian crisis. The total cultivated area amounts to almost 228 million acres, 85% of this area is engaged in the production of food crops. From the nature of the case, the peasantry consumes the greater part of these crops and from this it might be assumed that only the surplus over consumption is sold in the market. Had it been so, the crisis would not have affected the peasantry in such a serious scale as it has actually done. But the record of abnormal slump in prices tells a different story. Between September 1929 and March 1934, the prices of rice and oil seeds fell by 52% and 55% respectively. The seriousness of the situation will be more easily grasped by an analysis of the conditions under which the peasant raises and sells his products. The holdings of 80% of the peasants are uneconomic. For these peasants it is impossible to earn their living by the sale of their products. Out of the proceeds of his commodity sale, the peasant has to pay rent to the landlord in zemindary area, to the Imperialist Government in ryotwari area

If he fails to pay up his dues, his holding will be confiscated and sold in auction. During the period of economic crisis there has been an abnormal increase of auction sales in lands. Capital required for cultivation is not supplied by the lands. Even the registered cooperative societies give only short term credit, but short term credit does not solve the problem of capital requirements in agriculture. Rent, taxes and capital are supplied by the poor peasant himself whose holding of land is insufficient for even his own maintenance. When the products are raised from land, the peasant cannot afford to keep it for his own consumption nor can he stock for sale in a favourable market. He immediately sells it to a middle-man at any price and the balance of his requirements is supplied by loan from a money lender at an abnormally high rate of interest. The total amount of peasant indebtedness amounted to Rs.900 crores at the time of Banking Enquiry Committee's investigation. The

enormous burden of rent, debt and interest together with government taxes and other assessments of the landlords has impoverished the peasant to an alarming extent. The degree of this impoverishment can be imagined by the fact that between 1921 and 1931 the number of landless labourers has increased from 21 million to 31 million, the number of land owning peasants has diminished and the number of cultivating tenants i.e., of peasants with subordinate titles in land increased. The confiscation of peasants' land by landlords, moneylenders and the state and its resale by them has increased subdivision and fragmentation of land-holdings. Primitive method of cultivation, uneconomic size of the holdings, constant fragmentation and subdivision, and want of proper irrigation, all these factors are combined to deteriorate agricultural productivity. The degree of this decline can be estimated from the following figures :-

Periods.	Average annual acreage under wheat.	Average yield of wheat.	Average Productivity.	Decline of Productivity in relation to period I:
I. 1919-20 to 1923-24	23,000,694	9,258,000 tons	.40 ton per acre	
II. 1924-25 to 1928-29	24,500,433	8,583,000 "	.35 " "	12.5%
III. 1931-32 to 1934-35	34,333,750	9,414,250 "	.27 " "	32.5%

Assuming that conditions of wheat production indicate in general the main trend of agricultural productivity, specially of food crop production and accounting for the possibilities of over-estimation that might creep up into the calculation which is made on the basis of

effective statistical materials, it may be safely said that in course of the last 20 years productivity of agricultural labour has diminished by at least 20 percent. The peasant, by spending the same amount of labour power to-day loses 20% in commodity value through pro-

duction and another 50% in money prices through exchange. By using The same capital and same labour, he realises only 30% of actual exchange value while his liabilities to the landlord, money-lender and state have increased many folds. This is one aspect of the agrarian crisis in India. It tells undoubtedly a story of starvation and death. It is the toll, the peasant is paying to the remnants of feudalism.

Capitalist Crisis and Indian Agriculture

Raw materials produced by Indian peasants are purchased by monopoly capitalist groups. Jute is purchased by English capitalists investing their capital in India and Dundee. Cotton is purchased mostly by Japanese capitalists and also by the textile industries of Great Britain. Rice is purchased by Germany as raw material for glue making. The present crisis at the first phase brought these capitalist industries almost to a state of collapse and now it is a phase of depression of a special kind in which the collapsing stage has been passed over by the capitalist at the cost of workers and peasants through wage cuts, reduced price of raw materials, and restriction of production on the one hand and on the other by speeding up the production of war materials. Under the pressure of the crisis, the capitalist industries were unable to maintain the level of their profits owing to the fact that production was carried to a point when under the competition of monopoly groups, prices began to fall abnormally below the actual values of the commodities. In both the phases of the crisis production was restricted, unemployment increased and workers' wages were reduced. Consequently sale

of raw materials as well as food crops was abnormally cut down. Prices of raw material fell down and stocks were accumulated above the demand. Condition of Indian peasants is such that they cannot afford to keep accumulated stocks and as such fall in the price of raw materials reached out of all proportions. This factor increased the poverty of the peasantry and brought about the collapse of industries resulting in unemployment and wage cuts. In consequence the market for food crops tremendously shrunk both externally and internally. In this way the price of food crops fell down along with the prices of raw materials. Between September 1929 and March 1934 the price of raw Jute fell by 53%; and of raw cotton by 51%. Since then, there has been no substantial improvement of the situation. The following table showing the fall of exports of agricultural products will give us an idea about the extent of the crisis and its effect upon the Indian peasantry.

Export of Raw Materials

	RAW JUTE	RAW COTTON
	Rs.	Rs.
1928-29	32.35 crores	66.25 crore
1934-35	10.87 „	34.49 „

Export of Food Grains

	RICE	WHEAT
	Rs.	Rs.
1928-29	26.46 crore	1.69 crore
1934-35	10.34 „	10.61 Lakhs

The record of this fall tells a story of unbearable suffering for the impoverished peasantry. The export level of 1934-35 is not the lowest level; such a level was reached in 1932-33 and it is after a slight rise that the level of 1934-35 was reached. This is not the

whole story about the sufferings of the Indian peasantry. During the phase of collapsing production the prices of agricultural products fell far more rapidly than those of the factory products and now during the phase of depression of a special kind, the prices of industrial products are rising while those of our agricultural products have remained almost stationary. In market competition, the impoverished peasant confronts the wealthy capitalist as his competitor. In this competition the superior bargaining power belongs to the capitalist,—hence the disparity between the prices of agricultural products and the prices of industrial products. This disparity acts as an additional drain on the peasant. In addition to rents, taxes and interests on debts, he has to pay relatively higher prices for his consumption goods, but owing to capitalist crisis, he cannot even realise the costs of production by selling his commodities. This is another aspect of the agrarian crisis in India.

Imperialist exploitation and Agrarian Crisis

We have seen that under the existing mode of production in India, economic conditions of the country largely depend upon the condition of our foreign trade. Our imports mostly consist of primary products such as raw materials and food grains. Besides export of merchandise, we have to export treasure as tributes to imperialism in the form of profits, interests, and home charges. Our export of merchandise are ordinarily greater than imports; so under normal conditions there should have been net imports of treasure but our forced exports of treasure but our forced exports of treasure create a different situation.

From the point of view of national finance Indian-export-commodities have less elasticity of supply; any shortage or delay in selling our commodities to the foreign market will put a severe drain on our national treasure for realisation of our tributes to imperialism. Likewise the peasant producer's tributes to feudalism have, as we have seen, played an important role in making the supply of our export commodities almost inelastic. On the other hand, the demand for our commodities mainly comes from the monopoly capitalist industries of other countries, crisis of these industries (falling profit, declining production and closing of factories) has made the demand extremely elastic, i.e., they can refuse to purchase our products unless prices are abnormally cut down. Thus our commodities are sold under conditions of elastic demand and inelastic supply. Concretely speaking, India has weaker bargaining power in her foreign trade. This is one of the reasons why India has been so hard hit in the crisis, why prices have so sharply fallen below value.

One of the fundamental causes of this national weakness lies in our industrial backwardness. Conditions of progressive industrialisation on all directions will change the character of our foreign trade. India will then be either self-sufficient, or exporter of a large quantity of manufactured products which can be economically produced in India and profitably purchased by at least many Asiatic and Arabic countries without any injury to the latter's own industrial development. In either case Indian peasantry will get greater bargaining power in selling their commodities. Industrial development will give more

employment to the land-less peasants, relieve the pressure of population from land, and create an 'expanding home market for raw materials, on condition industries are developed planfully with the motive of national welfare with a progressive policy of raising the worker's standard of life and of giving fair selling price to the peasants for their raw materials. But under imperialist rule both the conditions are being and are bound to be disregarded :—(1) India is being deliberately kept a backward country, (2) Industries which have developed disregard the question of workers' standard of life and fair selling price for raw materials.

The crisis of the Indian coal industry is a glaring example how Imperialist interest stands in the way of industrial development. Indian coal cannot compete with south African coal. The cost of production of Indian coal is higher than the import price of South African coal which enjoys railway rebates for exported coal from the South African railways. The Indian railways do not give corresponding facility to Indian coal and the Govt. Of India has refused to make any provision for this help to a key industry in India. Indian Railways are worked by British capital and the British capitalists, and the main railways are owned by Govt. of India paying annuities to the owners of capital. Industries producing heavy chemicals have great potentiality in India, but it does not enjoy any protection against the foreign imports. [About Rs. 2.5 crores worth of heavy chemicals are annually imported in India of this import almost Rs. 1.5 crore worth of chemicals come from Great Britain. Foreign industries producing heavy

chemicals are highly trustified and it is impossible for a nascent native industry to grow at all without state protection and state bounties. The Government has similarly refused to protect the Glass industry and it should be noted that glass goods of the value of nearly Rs. 2.5 crores are imported into India. Indian paper industry produces 38000 tons annually and India consumes every year 99000 ton of paper. The rest of this commodity is imported from abroad and the bulk of the imports comes from Great Britain. Instances can be multiplied to show how Indian industries cannot develop due to imperialist control with the result that she remains a backward country and thus most vulnerable to the agrarian crisis of a colonial character.

Besides the interests of English Monopoly industries, there are other reasons why Imperialism cannot tolerate India's industrialisation. India has abundant sources of raw materials : this is shown by the volume of export and the nature of the commodities exported. There is a vast home market for the consumption of national industry's products ; this is shown by the volume of imports and the nature of the commodities imported. It follows that if India is industrialised the present extent of our foreign trade will be diminished and it is from this foreign trade of India that British banker, merchants and mariners earn huge profits. 80 % of our foreign trade is dealt in by British merchants. Almost the whole of the Merchant's profit derived from India's foreign trade goes to Britain. Our foreign trade operations are financed by the Exchange banks and these exchange banks are entirely owned by British Bankers.

These banks earn an annual profit of about Rs. 90 lakhs by financing our foreign trade. India's coastal trade is the monopoly of British ship owners. India has no mercantile marine of her own. By carrying our exports, the foreign ship owners earn about Rs. 11 crores per year as freight charges and of this amount nearly 70 % goes to the British mercantile marine. If this wealth remains in India and be spent in India's National Welfare, it can substantially lessen the acuteness of the agrarian crisis.

Immediate Relief for the Peasants

In order to mitigate the sufferings of the peasants we must vigorously fight for the reduction of land rent by fifty per cent. Prices have fallen more than that ratio, so the landlords must not be allowed to make extraordinary gains at the cost of the peasants, rather the peasants must mitigate their sufferings at the cost of the landlords, who have built up their fortunes by exploiting the peasants. We must redouble our energy to diminish the tax burdens on the peasants and get new Tenancy Acts to protect the actual tillers of the soil from expropriation by landlords and money-lenders. In the new Tenancy Acts, actual tillers of the soil must get full proprietary rights on the land and during the course of the agrarian crisis seizure and sale of peasants' properties for rent and debt arrears must be prohibited. Uneconomic holdings must be rent free and debts must be liquidated through state action by declaring the poorest peasants absolved of all liability, and by re-writing the debts of well-to-do peasants on the basis of the latter's capacity to pay. We must redouble our energy to compel the

state to regulate the prices of agricultural products by legislation in order to raise them to the pre-crisis level. In order to eradicate the middle man's exploitation legislation must be introduced by the provincial legislatures for compulsory registration of trading agencies dealing in agricultural products, by making it obligatory on the latter to pay the statutory price to the peasant for his commodities, as a condition for granting registration. We must strongly put forward the demand for the levying of an emergency tax on the firms dealing in export of primary products by specified rates on their annual gross profits and a specified processing tax on the native capitalist firms using raw materials. The proceeds of these taxes must be earmarked for providing cheap, long term credit to the peasants, for granting fertilisers free of charge and to constitute an agrarian relief fund. Management of the fund must be given to democratically elected village committees specially organised for the purpose or to the Kisan Sabha. Special Acts must be passed by the central legislature to make it obligatory on the Indian Railways and Mercantile Marine to reduce the freight charges on agricultural goods.

Agrarian Revolution

It must be remembered that the above measures are only relief measures and that relief is not the solution of the crisis. Only a successful agrarian revolution can go a long way to eradicate the causes responsible for the crisis. It means that landlordism must be abolished, land must belong to the tillers of the soil, rents must be abolished, and in its place, a system of income-tax instituted on the basis of exempting uneconomic

holding from all taxes. It further means that a comprehensive plan of industrialisation must be adopted to reduce the agricultural population, raise the amount of average holding and thereby to increase the productivity of land. These tasks cannot be fulfilled unless India is free from Imperialist rule and a national revolutionary democratic Government is established through a Constituent Assembly. Agrarian revolution, therefore, means the achievement of complete independence, establishment of a national revolutionary democratic Government, nationalisation of mercantile marine, foreign trade, and the key Industries,

planned industrial development under state measures and state bounty, removal from land of all remnants of feudalism, confiscation of the properties of landlords, princes, imperialist state and the churches without any compensation and encouragement to develop co-operative farming.

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MALGUZARI SYSTEM IN C. P.

D. L. Jayawant

The Malguzari system in C. P. is a modified form of the Zamindari system prevalent in U. P., Bihar and Bengal. It is not an antiquated system. It was, for political reasons purposely imposed on the C. P. between 1854 and 1864 by the British Government.

According to the ancient Hindu Law, the land belonged to neither the King nor the land-lord but to him who broke it up from the waste. According to Koran: the land belongs only to "Almighty God."

In the Maratha period, the revenue was collected through a Revenue Collector called the *patel* or the *Malguzar*. The ownership of the land, however, did not vest in him. He was only entitled to a commission of less than 15%. In the early British period, much of the land was held by hereditary peasantry which

paid land revenue through the *Patel*—the *Patel* getting a commission of about 5.25%. The proclamation of 1858 formally conferred a proprietary right, as a free gift, on persons chosen by the Government. These persons are now called the Malguzars. Even though, some persons were thus created Malguzars by the ruling power, the rights of a number of ancient peasants could not be ignored—they could not be relegated to the position of mere tenants of the Malguzar. Some of them were, therefore, made full plot proprietors—called, *Malik* *Makbuzas*, while others were given a tenant right of some fixity called *absolute occupancy* right. The rest of the tenantry (excluding the sub-tenants) held *occupancy* rights.

At present, in C. P. only 3.4% of the Malguzari land belongs to the *Malik*

Malguzas and out of the occupied land 9.4% is held in absolute occupancy rights and 68.4% in occupancy rights.

Ownership Rights

In law, the *Malguzar*, is the owner of the lands held by the tenants. His tenants have only the right to cultivate them. As such, the tenant cannot transfer the land i.e., he cannot sell, mortgage or lease it or make a gift of it—these being incidents of ownership and not of a cultivating right. Actually law allows the tenant to make some transfers within a restricted sphere—the restrictions being more stringent in case the of the occupancy tenant than that of the absolute occupancy tenant. Thus, the latter can let his land for a maximum period of 10 years while the former can only make a lease for one agricultural year. Of the land that can be sub-let, 12% is thus in the occupation of sub-tenants. If an absolute occupancy tenant wants to transfer his land outside the legal limits, he must inform of it to his *Malguzar*. The *Malguzar* on hearing of it, has a right of purchasing it in preference to others. Even if the *Malguzar* does not want to purchase, the tenant has to obtain the consent of the *Malguzar* for transferring the land to an outsider and for giving this consent, the *Malguzar* is entitled to a specified *Nazarana* (consent money).

If an occupancy tenant wants to transfer the land outside the legal limits, the *Malguzar* has again a right of pre-emption. If the tenant transfers it without the *Malguzar's* consent, the *Malguzar* is entitled to get the transferred land in his own possession.

The *Malguzar* being the owner of the land, the periodical settlements are made with him. The Settlement Officer

fixes not only the revenue that *Malguzars* have to pay into the Government treasury but also the rents of the tenants (excluding those of the sub-tenants). The revenue that the *Malguzar* pays is about half of the rent he is permitted to collect. Thus, a *Malguzar* realises about 50% as his profit or commission on the rents paid by the tenantry.

Ingenious methods of exploitation

Even though the rents are fixed by the Settlement Officer and they cannot be arbitrarily increased by the *Malguzar*, the law permits an ingenious method by which the *Malguzar* can extract higher rents than the officially fixed level. When a peasant wants to obtain land from the *Malguzar* for cultivation, the *Malguzar* is entitled to demand from him a premium (a lump-sum taken in advance) as *Nazarana*, in addition to the annual rent fixed by the Settlement Officer. There is no legal limit to this *Nazarana* and the *Malguzar* may extract as much from him as possible. Thus, the peasant takes land not only with an initial burden but the actual rent he has to pay is masked off by the annual rent.

The law has placed in the hands of the *Malguzar*, stringent methods for collecting rents.

If a tenant fails to place the rent in the hands of the *Malguzar*, the *Malguzar* can recover it by filing a civil suit and obtaining a decree. In the execution of that decree, the *Malguzar* can not only bring to sale his cattle and other moveable property but can also get him arrested in execution of the decree. The holding of an absolute occupancy tenant, can be sold in execution of the decree and the *Malguzar* has a prime charge over the standing crops in whosoever hands they may pass. If

an occupancy tenant fails to pay the rent, the Malguzar can eject him from the *whole* of the holding and take it in his own possession no matter how small the arrears and how high the price of the holding from which he is ejected for failure to pay the arrears. It is a very frequent sight to see an occupancy tenant thus losing to the Malguzar a holding worth a couple of thousands for just a score of rupees in arrears. Of late, owing to a succession of crop failures, scandalously low prices, heavy indebtedness, the number of ejection proceedings have increased apace as will be seen from the following table* :—

1928-29	1526	1933-34	6946.
1930-31	5115	1934-35	8332.
1931-32	7337	1935-36	9384.
1932-23	6816	1936-37	

It should be remembered that the bulk of the C. P. tenantry, holds land in occupancy rights and is thus liable to be ejected.

The restrictions placed on the tenant's right to transfer their rights in their holdings drive them to the very verge of despair. When a tenant is in need, he finds himself unable to sell even a part of his land or to raise money by mortgaging it or leasing it, unless he first lets the Malguzar have his pound of flesh. These restrictions cripple him in the open market and completely prevent him from getting a fair price for the right he proposes to transfer, even after he lets the Malguzar have his pound of flesh in the form of the hated *Nazarana*. They ruin his credit in the market and the only remedy the tenant has, is either to

surrender his holding to the Malguzar for a mere crumb or to run to his money-lender for more and more debts. And not unusually, the Money-lender is no other person than his Malguzar himself.

The Malguzari system in C. P. thus bristles with features which have been reprehensible even to the bourgeois jurists—a series of middle men, right of pre-emption, restrictions on transfer and the replacement of contract by status.

A class of idlers

The Malguzars are out and out a class of idlers. The smaller ones do not even collect the rents; they simply get their share of *village profits*. The bigger ones remain in cities, among their multifarious attractions while their *Munims* (agents) exploit the peasantry for them in the villages. These *Munims* are usually, extremely low paid servants and hence, are devilishly unscrupulous. Without the least regard for the ignorant, humble and exhausted pesantry, they see to it that by means transparently dishonest their own as well as their master's coffers are filled to the brim. If proof is needed that the Malguzars in C. P. are a class of idlers without any useful social function to perform, one has only to glance at the number of applications made by Malguzars in the whole of C. P. for permission to make improvements in their tenants' lands.

1925-26	4	1931-32	5
1926-27	8	1932-33	1
1927-28	2	1933-34	13
1928-29	4	1934-35	1
1930-31	0	1935-36	1

It should be remembered that this is so, inspite of the fact that an improvement made in the tenants' lands entitles a land-lord to enhance their rent.

* The * and the other figures in this article are all taken from the annual reports on the Land Revenue Administration in C. P. issued by the Government.

Now compare with this the number of applications made by the Malguzars for permission to enhance the rents of the occupancy tenants on some pretext or the other.

1927-28	27	1932-33	58.
1928-29	32	1933-34	59.
1930-31	27	1934-35	103.
1931-32	69	1235-36	349.

The Malguzar—the Supreme Lord

The ownership by the Malguzar of his tenants' land is so complete that a tenant is not entitled even to the trees growing in his own land. They belong, not to him, but to the Malguzar—the tenants being entitled only to its *usufruct* i.e., to take its fruit and other produce. Valuable trees like orange, mango, Mahua etc. may grow in the tenant's land but they do not belong to him. The only exception is the *Babul* tree which a tenant is allowed to fell, to use as fuel.

But the Malguzar is not the owner of the tenants' fields alone. He is the owner as well of the waste land (*banjar*), the tanks and the streams in the village, the adjoining forest and the *abadi* (the land in village allocated for residence). The result is that no one can graze his cattle or even allow them to rest on the waste land, no one can fish or grow *singaras* in the tank, no non-agriculturist can live in the *abadi*, unless he pays the Malguzar his due. The ownership of the Malguzar over the village is thus complete and unchallengeable. He is the monarch of all he surveys. Does the tenant transfer his holding, a villager graze his cattle or a fisherman fish in the stream? No. He cannot do so without filling the Malguzar's coffers. A Malguzar will jealously watch for every little pie

that accrues to him from his ownership of land. Do the cattle resting on the *banjar* with his permission discharge the waste from their alimentary canals? He will claim that it is not the owner of the cattle but he—the owner of the *banjar* on which it is deposited—that is entitled to it.

Illegal Exactions

But these forms of legal exploitation are nothing as compared with the illegal forms in which the Malguzar has opportunities to exploit the villagers and make their life impossible. His domination over the very means of subsistence of the villagers, enables him to bend the most recalcitrant villager with a thorough going ease. If a peasant dares to fight with him even on a strictly legal footing, he can always find out excuses to put the peasant's cattle in the pound, arrange for action to be taken in respect of the boundaries of the peasant's holding, see to it, that the village Panchayat levies a tax on him or the police officer starts proceedings against him. Otherwise he can himself drag the peasant to the Court at an awkward time for arrears of rent. He being economically the most dominant in the village, he has always up in his sleeves the village and police officers. On the strength of the laws and customs of his creation, he can himself levy taxes on the peasantry in kind or in coin for anything that the villagers are capable of doing, from being born to resting in eternal peace. Not satisfied with this, he compels the peasants and the landless labourers to work free of charge (*bigar*) on his home farm, even though at the very time the peasants may have to work on his own land or the landless labourer may have just the

chance of getting tempting wages anywhere else.

Usually, the Malguzar in C. P., exploits not only as a Malguzar of the peasantry but also as their money-lender. He exploits the peasantry and lends the money so obtained to the same peasantry over again as a source of further exploitation. In the role of the money lender, he not only resorts to the usual dishonest practises of the money-lending class but has an additional feather in his cap. Law requires that any payment made by the tenant must be first appropriated towards the rent. But it is usual for the Malguzar in C. P. to appropriate the payment to the tenants' old debts or to the Malguzar's illegal exactions, to show the rent to be in arrears and to realise it, and as such to collect it. Receipts, though by the stringent methods available, demanded are not usually passed. All laws are brushed aside because the tenant has neither the courage nor the resources to fight it out in courts. Even though the number of applications by the tenants against the Malguzars for this evasion of the law are few they are steadily growing. Within the course of ten years ending with Sept. 1936 their number increased more than two fold.

An Anti-national and reactionary class

The Malguzari system is not only an unjust and an exploiting system. It is something more. It has created in the villages a class of vested interests intensely reactionary, which on the slightest opposition from the tenants, flies into the arms of the bureaucracy and of the Governor. It has ruined the peasantry economically and reduced it to a condition of abject slavery and humiliation, always in dread of the Malguzar, of the Police, of the Revenue officers, leading a life as precarious and undignified as that of stray cattle.

But this will not go on long. The burden of indebtedness, legal and illegal exploitation, the ever present fear of being thrown on the streets by ejections, the miserably low price level and the heavy load of rent, helping to make his holding uneconomic, are teaching the peasants the lessons of their lives. They are having their first lessons in organisation. They are learning to raise their voice and to detect their enemies. This will continue and their class consciousness will grow, no matter that leaders like Mahatma Gandhi may try to lull them by their message of love, truth and non-violence.

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STUDENTS AS TORCH BEARERS

T. Godivala

"In the midst of darkness, depression and death we infused new light and life; in the frozen veins of the poor farmers, we inoculated new blood and vigour; in the deadened atmosphere of the distant cast-off villages, we spread a new message of hope. Our stay in the villages electrified the whole outlook round about; it revitalised their benumbed limbs; the spirit of confidence that was long lost, was rekindled in them. We armed them with strength to raise their heads against the crushing onslaughts of the various inhuman and selfish agencies, whatever they be."

These were the words of a student worker who returned after a month's stay in a village. He felt, he was triumphant. He felt as if he had given a fitting reply to the elders, who till now, were challenging his seriousness and accusing him of frivolty and petty-mindedness. The 'quill-driver' of yesterday proved himself to be the torch-bearer in the distant no-mans' land; the 'arm-chair politician' who did not look beyond the portals of the college life, rushed to the god-forsaken villages and testified to his zeal for genuine work.

He left the cosy life of the parlour, not in a vein of service or benevolence. He did not look down upon the villager from a citadel, nor did he go there like the Messiah to spread a new gospel. It was an urge—the urge of duty that goaded him to this rustic life. He stooped to this urge. He went as a humble duty-bound servant and returned as a triumphant warrior.

The adventures of about a hundred students who stayed for a month and more in the village are full of thrill and romance. They went as soldiers of the rigorous anti-illiteracy campaign organised by the Bombay Presidency Students' Federation. Their experiences were unique; their hardships were innumerable, and the lessons they brought were invaluable. Being the first experiment of its kind in the country, it was bound to be full of interest and knowledge. And so did it actually happen.

Before launching upon the campaign, we badly needed funds. We approached some of the 'big guns' and alas! we failed with most of them. However, we remained unperturbed. "Be always in need of funds"; "do the work and money will come of its own"—such were the blessings and the golden maxims given to us by the elders.

The different phases of the campaign, abounding in varied experiences, each one rich in itself, would speak chapters and volumes for our work, for our people and for ourselves. The unwelcome task of begging was made into our profession. A very highly placed lady belonging to one of the noblest families of our country, claiming to be socialistically inclined would offer us a huge amount of Rs. 3, that too, offered through her servant. It was not even worth our trouble of visiting her place thrice or more. We gracefully refused to accept it and her reaction to our refusal was "we shall not be dictated by the beggars". Another gentleman talked a lot about the good

old days when he himself was an active student leader. "You fellows, dabble too much into politics, these days" he said and safely sought shelter under this convenient excuse. Still another lady—very sympathetically inclined—turned away from us, almost with the same suddenness as the light would disappear on putting off the switch. Obviously, it was a case of wire-pulling by some of our well wishers! We said to ourselves, "we live and learn" and we marched ahead.

The actual work of literacy in the villages was started from the 25th of April. Nearly 30 students from Bombay, 20 from Surat, 10 from Ahmedbad, 10 from Bijapur and about 30 from Poona and Jalgaon scattered themselves all over the presidency. Some of these, had already received some valuable tips from the learned lectures of the eminent educationists and social workers who helped us to conduct the 'trainers' Class which lasted for a fortnight in Bombay.

The Presidency was divided into three provinces based on linguistic differences. In Gujarat, two centres were opened. One of these—Lavet—had 27 students in all—spread over six villages round about. Some of these were in Baroda territories and the rest were in Mandvi taluk. The other centre was opened at Watwa (near Ahmedbad) having ten students to work with.

Three centres were opened in Maharashtra—one in Thana district the other near Poona and the third one at Jalgaon. More than 45 students in all, did their job efficiently in these villages.

Bijapur, in Karnatak was the centre of our activities in that province. Equipped with a newly evolved method of teaching alphabets, about ten workers from Bijapur, along with our representative, went to Nagathan. They started social work and literacy classes with the help of the local Congress Committee and spread the work of literacy in other two villages. Permanent centres have been opened in this district.

The net result of all this was that about a hundred students went to the

villages; about 1200 villagers became literate, more than 25 villages saw the light of the distant world; a live contact between the urban and the rural life established, and the isolated villager cut off from the rest of the world, has learnt to look beyond his narrow groove.

Games were played and tournaments organised in the village and outside to teach them the elementary lessons in discipline and sportsmanship; gramophones were used to recreate them; lantern lectures were arranged to impart them lessons in social welfare and the like; drill classes were conducted in order to organise them, and small circulating libraries established to carry the work forward. At the end of the month or forty days, when the students left their respective centres, the villager was equipped with weapons moral and material. Some of the villages have opened permanent centres of learning and in some of them regular volunteer corps, drill and games classes still continue. The literacy work too continues in most of the villages. Apart from the innumerable difficulties, moral and physical—these facts speak volumes for the work done. The conspiracy of starvation of the scorching sun, dysentery or diarrhoea could not deter us from our task.

Of the various novel experiences, one deserves special mention. That the wall-news-paper becomes the unique expression of the immense creative potentialities of the meek and the modest; it is, at the same time, an excellent vehicle of knowledge and propaganda—this is the moral of the experiment with it, in the villages.

Still more, the students enriched themselves with a fund of a first hand knowledge rarely to be found in books. The social and economic survey of these villages has unreservedly exposed the ruthless exploitation of the poor villagers; it has narrated the woeful tale of pathos that no words however eloquent nor writing, however powerful could have narrated.

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