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1 YEAR OF PEOPLE'S STRUGGLES



COMMUNIST PARTY
PUBLICATION

As. 2

One year has gone by since the masses celebrated with unprecedented joy and festivity, what they trustfully believed was their triumph over their hated oppressor—British imperialism. With implicit faith in the hypocritical proclamations of the imperialists and their Labour servitors, and in the wordy assurances of their own leaders, they imagined that the long-promised Mazdur-Kisan-Praja Raj was at hand at last, crowning their long-drawn struggles, sufferings and sacrifices with success.

BUT hardly had the din and dust of the officially put-up "freedom carnival" ended, when the class realities of the treacherous deal which the Congress leaders had struck with Mountbatten, began to reveal themselves in the lurid light of the developments that followed. The horrible communal carnage of the Punjab and Delhi that followed close on the heels of the freedom festivities, gave a rude shock to the faith which the masses had in the much-advertised miracle of a peaceful transfer of power to the Indian people.

Class Realities

British armed forces have indeed been withdrawn. The strings of administration and State in India are in the hands of the national bourgeois leadership. But it soon became clear that these superficial attributes of independence had been obtained by the Congress leaders by agreeing to an ignoble deal with the British imperialists against the rising tide of democratic revolution, against the cause of real independence.

The bitter experience which the toiling masses and the oppressed middle-class have gone through during the last twelve months, the vast sufferings of lakhs of uprooted refugees, the growing famine conditions,

high prices, starvation, wage cuts, unemployment, ruthless oppression by landlords, the continuation of the medieval oppression under the jagirdars and feudal Princes in the States and above all the brutal police repression launched by the Congress Governments against every effort made by the masses to change these conditions—all this has brought them face to face with the real role of the Congress leaders.

● Slowly but steadily the masses are coming to realise that what was ushered in on August 15 last year was not Mazdur-Kisan-Praja Raj, but the resuscitation of the same old dying raj of imperialists and feudal Princes—under a new name and under the auspices of the Indian bourgeoisie and their champions, the Congress leaders.

● Slowly but steadily the masses are coming to realise that those who strutted before them as the leaders of people's struggle for independence and democracy and as champions of the interests of the exploited masses against imperialist domination, Princes, landlords and capitalists, are coming forward as the open defenders of these classes—as the saviours of the imperialist-feudal order of brutal exploitation.

● Slowly but steadily sections after sections of the toiling masses and of the oppressed middle-class are taking up the position of struggle and resistance against the rising exploitation and oppression that has come in the wake of the new political set-up.

● Slowly but steadily a new round of mass struggles is rising to challenge the decrepit social order of imperialist-feudal exploitation which the Congress leaders are seeking to bolster up by forging a counter-revolutionary alliance of Indian vested interests with imperialists.

The year that has gone by since August 15 last, has brought us something more than riot disaster and frustration, deepening economic crisis and disillusionment. It has brought the revival of an upsurge of the struggle of the workers, peasants and the oppressed middle-class masses, which is gathering momentum in the face of unprecedented repression and which bids fair to develop into a powerful democratic upheaval against the present imperialist-bourgeois-feudal combine.

This new round of mass struggles which has begun to rise in the very first year of the "freedom" Government is neither a new nor a surprising development. It is a continuation, in the new political set-up, of the same post-war revolutionary mass upsurge which arose out of the deep economic crisis and the intensified exploitation of the war years.

The Congress leaders are never tired of denouncing this new round of struggles as anarchy and chaos, instigated by the Communists, who are alleged to be secretly plotting to upset the present Congress Government by

a coup. But that does not alter the fact that the driving force behind these struggles, as well as behind the post-war revolutionary upsurge of 1946-47, was the exploitation of the Indian masses under imperialist-feudal rule which had reached unbearable proportions during the war, quickening their political consciousness and their militancy.

The establishment of the "freedom" Government in August last, and the communal riots following it, interrupted and disrupted for the time being this upsurge which began with the mass demonstrations for the release of the INA men, and the armed revolt of the RIN men.

Historic Upsurge Of '46

The powerful wave of protest strikes embracing not only industrial workers, but also the police, military and Government servants, a new wave of mass peasant struggles for land and crops which swept the landlord-ridden area of Bengal, (Tebhaga), Bihar and the U.P., and the new round of the struggles of the States people beginning with the Quit Kashmir struggle, which rose to the pitch of armed clashes of Punnapra and Vayalar (Travancore 1946), and the first armed clashes in Telengana (1947 beginning), characterised the memorable revolutionary upsurge of 1946-47.

These struggles with their unprecedented sweep and armed clashes represented a new stage in the revolutionary struggle of the Indian people. These struggles were dominated by the great initiative of the working-class. The huge political protest strikes and the widespread economic battles of the workers were the driving and centralising force behind the upsurge

which was leading the entire struggle in the direction of an all-India general strike supported by the armed forces and Government servants.

As the Political Thesis of the Second Congress of the Communist Party of India put it:

"India has never seen such a sweep; never seen the armed forces collapsing so easily before the popular pressure; never seen the working-class fighting with such abandon and courage.

"It was the eve of the total collapse of imperialism."

The Congress leaders from the very beginning sought to curb and control this upsurge, and when they failed in this, they began openly denouncing and sabotaging it. They rode to power on the crest of this unprecedented and all-round mass revolt which they betrayed by reaching a compromise with imperialism.

Thus the historic upsurge of the Indian masses which marked the first post-war years of 1946-47 was temporarily disrupted and received a serious setback.

The first few months, after the coming of the 'National' Government in August last, were dominated by the Punjab-Delhi riots and their disruptive after-effects, as well as by the illusions and hopes which the masses had in the 'popular' Governments. Perplexed and disorganised by the communal riots and hoping for a new turn of events as a result of the measures of the Congress Government, the masses waited and stayed their hand for a while.

But it soon began to become clear that the policies pursued by the Congress leaders were neither popular nor national. They

were calculated to protect the rights and privileges of the capitalists and landlords, of the feudal Princes and of the foreign imperialists, who still occupied the positions of economic domination over India.

● What followed was not the betterment of the living conditions of the toilers but a deepening economic crisis, soaring prices, starvation, unemployment and famine.

● What followed was not the curbing of the capitalist and the landlord exploitation but on the other hand the unchecked offensive of the landlords and millowners against the toiling people; not more democratic rights and civil liberties but the brutal suppression of workers, peasants and the oppressed middle-class masses who dared to fight for bread, land and their just rights.

As a result, the process of the disillusionment of the masses started and a new round of struggles of workers, peasants, students, middle-class employees, both in the States and in the rest of India began to gather momentum.

Workers' Struggles

In this upsurge the organised workers under the leadership of the All-India Trade Union Congress and the Communists, are again the spearhead of the resistance of the entire working-class and the middle-class employees, who are faced with the brutal offensive of the capitalists, desperately trying to solve the crisis and maintain their fat profits at the expense of the workers—through cuts in dearness allowance and in wages, through retrenchment and raising of work loads.

One of the first blessings of the 'freedom' Government to the working-class and the middle class employees was decontrol introduced at the behest of the capitalist sharks backed by Gandhiji.

During the six months of decontrol the index of food articles has gone up from 275.6 (Jan. 1947) to over 420 in the first week of August 1948. (Economic Adviser's index of all-India wholesale prices)

The cost of living index of the working-class has shot up correspondingly as can be seen even from the defective indices published by the Government Labour Department. This means an invisible cut in the real wages of the workers amounting to about 25-30 per cent.

● The second gift of the 'freedom' Government to the labouring masses is the spate of Industrial Trade Disputes Acts which, in the name of industrial peace, deprive the workers of his only means of self-defence—viz., the right to strike—and imposes upon him an adjudication and arbitration machinery to force down the will of the owners. On the top of this the worker is asked to agree to industrial truce to guarantee the success of the capitalist offensive, miscalled national reconstruction.

● The third gift of the 'freedom' Government to the working-class is the wholesale use of the lawless laws, promulgated in the name of public security, to suppress the trade union movement itself by the wholesale arrest of the militant trade unionists, by searching of trade union offices, prohibiting meetings and demonstrations.

Faced with this all-round offensive of the capitalists and the 'national' Government, the working-class has come forward in a series of great and bitterly fought strike battles all over the country to defend not only its own living standard and wages, but the democratic rights of the entire working-class and all toilers.

The strike activity of the Indian working-class as reflected in the strike statistics, which registered a record figure for the year 1946, when the number of workers involved in the strikes and the work days lost rose to

almost three times the average figures recorded for the previous five years, recorded a still higher increase in the year 1947:

Average for four years—	Workers involved	Work days lost
1942 to 1945	6.4 lakhs	39.5 lakhs
1946	19,41,948	127,17,762
1947	22,15,317	159,83,464

The strike actions have proceeded with the same tempo if not greater in the first 6 months of 1948. These strike statistics do not cover innumerable one-day protest strikes and lightning stoppages of work, with which the workers have hit out against political repression, as against the anti-working-class labour policy; but they give a good measure of the major industrial strike activity of the working-class.

Bitter Battles

The major industrial strike struggles of this period have been bitterly fought battles in which the workers have had to face not only wholesale repression at the hands of the police but also murderous assaults by the hired assassins of the owners.

● This is seen in the tenacious four-month battle which the 38,000 textile workers of Coimbatore district fought against retrenchment and heavy work load. The strike was fought under conditions of complete suppression of civil liberties, with the 5,000 strong Madras Special Police force stationed in the strike area, with intimidation and goonda terror against workers living in mill colonies.

Despite arrests, despite the disruption caused by the INTUC leaders and by some Socialists, the ranks of the strikers remained unbroken and united to the last day—showing the new strength of working-class solidarity holding firm in the face of Congress-sponsored capitalist offensive.

● The same tenacity in the face of repression and solidarity of action in the face of disruption, marked the other strike struggle of the

textile workers, the strike of 38,000 Kanpur workers against the reduction in dearness allowance, as well as the strike struggles of the textile workers of the Central Provinces against the increase of work load. The strike of the drawers-in in Bombay and the complete support from other sections of textile workers was yet another event demonstrating workers' solidarity.

We see the same dogged militancy and united working-class action, rebuffing the game of the disruptors in the several strike actions of the railwaymen, on the SIR, on the GIP and the BCCI railways, against retrenchment, bad rations, and against the inadequate and unjust implementation of the Pay Commission recommendations.

It is seen in the strikes of the HMIS dock workers and Port Trust workers of Bombay as well as in the innumerable strike struggles of the workers of petty industries such as bidi workers, municipal workers, etc.

The most remarkable feature of this year's strike wave was the spate of one-day protest strikes which the workers in the various industrial centres frequently undertook to protest against the arrests of Communists and trade union leaders, to demonstrate against political repression, and the anti-labour measures of the Congress Governments.

Apart from the protest strikes in Bombay and Calcutta involving tens of thousands of workers, against the attack upon the Communist Party and the arrests of Communists, there have been a large number of protest strikes at various industrial centres against the arrests of local Communist and trade union leaders.

Political Actions

The strike of the Calcutta workers (100,000) on January 5 against the Public Security Act, the Martyr's Day strike of the Kanpur workers (80,000), the strike of 15,000 Telugu workers in Bombay to observe Telengana Day on April 25, the general strike of seven lakhs of Bombay workers on December 29, as well as the strike of two lakh workers in the C.P. against the anti-working-class labour policy of the Congress Government, are some of the great and united political actions of the working-class during the year.

Besides these major protest actions on political issues there has been a remarkable increase in the frequency of lightning protest actions on indus-

trial issues such as victimisation of factory militants, bad ration, harassment, and so on. Our Party Press in Hindi, Marathi and English alone records some 40 such actions involving over two lakh workers belonging to different industries all over India.

—One must bear in mind that these extensive strike struggles waged by the workers in defence of their wages, jobs and organisation, as well as their numerous protest actions against repression, anti-working-class labour laws, and in defence of democratic rights, have taken place in the teeth of blanket repression, arrests, shootings, lathi-charges and complete blotting out of all civil liberties.

—They have taken place in the face of the open disruption sought to be carried out by the Congress-sponsored INTUC unions which are supported by the Government to carry out their nefarious work in the interest of the bosses. They have taken place often in the face of opposition of the Socialist leadership.

These actions show how eagerly and spontaneously the working-class masses have rallied to the call of the AITUC and the Communists to forge an unbroken front of working-class solidarity and resistance to defend their living standard, jobs and organisation against the capitalist offensive.

The organised vanguard of the working-class has come forward to spearhead and champion the fight of all toilers against the Congress administration's policy of working in the interest of capitalists and landlords, enforcing decontrol and high prices, launching political repression, passing anti-working-class labour laws and curtailing democratic rights and civil liberties of the working people.

In the course of these struggles it has raised the basic slogans of the democratic movement, demand of liquidating the power of the foreign and Indian capitalists, nationalising key industries, ensuring workers' control and living wage, etc.

By its heroic fight in the face of repression and disruption, by its innumerable political protest strikes and solidarity actions, it has shown that it is forging working-class unity and building the fighting front of the toilers against the Congress-sponsored reactionary alliance of capitalists, landlords and Princes, that it is coming forward as the builder of the Democratic Front.

Middle-Class

One of the significant features of the 1946 upsurge was the coming into action for the first time of middle-class employees—clerks, teachers, Government employees, etc.—who lined themselves up with the trade union movement in the struggle for wages and jobs, in the struggle against political repression and for freedom.

The advent of freedom and 'National' Government did not bring the middle-class employees the fulfilment of their demands—a living wage, security of service and the right to organise, and freedom from political victimisation. On the contrary, they are now faced with lowering of their real wages because of soaring prices, retrenchment and with a regime of political intimidation from their new Congress bosses.

The result is that the year was marked with a number of militant actions of the middle-class employees and Government servants despite the desperate efforts of the Congress, and sometimes even Socialist leaders, to sabotage them and split their organisations.

—In December last, one lakh non-gazetted officers of Madras Province struck for a week demanding en-

hanced dearness allowance, and a committee to go through the question of revision of scales of salaries. In the course of the strike 4,000 employees took out a demonstration defying Section 144 and were tear-gassed by the Congress Government.

—In Calcutta, the fight of the tens of thousands of the Central Government employees against retrenchment which has been going on since December last culminated in a strike on April 2. The West Bengal Government of B. C. Roy, assisted by Pandit Nehru himself, sought to break the solidarity of the employees by political victimisation of their militants. Even the Socialist Aruna Asaf Ali joined in to justify the attack.

The struggle of the West Bengal Government employees to stay the threatened retrenchment of hundreds of them was also sought to be smashed by vicious repression and victimisation. A number of militant unionists had been dismissed on flimsy grounds or no ground at all. But the Government had to retreat before the unity of the employees, which culminated in July in the formation of a single federation of all employees' unions under the West Bengal Government.

Throughout the country, among primary and secondary teachers, among bank employees, among Government servants of various grades, there is a rapid disillusionment and seething discontent against the Congress Governments which have continued the conditions of starvation and political suppression. There is growing urge to organise, fight for better conditions, lining up shoulder to shoulder with the working-class in the fight for real democracy.

Kisan Struggles

The first year of freedom has not brought the millions of toiling peasants and agricultural labourers, who form the overwhelming majority of our poverty-stricken people, the deliverance from the age-old oppression of the landlord and the exploitation of the hoarder. On the contrary, the kisan in land-

lord-ridden areas is today face to face with the terror-regime of the zemindar and his goondas, and the repression of the police of the 'freedom' Government which reminds him of the days of imperialist repression of 1942! The poor peasants and the agricultural labourers, who have to buy their food for the best part of the year from the village trader and hoarder, are face to face with rice and wheat prices rising as high and as fast as in the Bengal famine days.

Where the peasants and agricultural labourers have united to rise against the landlord oppression and to retain their lands and crop as they have done in U.P. and Bihar, or where they have risen against the hoarders to seize their illegal stocks as in Malabar, they have met with a fierce repression which often surpasses anything that the people have experienced in the worst days of direct imperialist rule.

The Congress Governments are very much concerned about the landlords. There are frequent talks between the Provincial Governments and New Delhi in order to ensure that the zemindars get the maximum compensation. The land bills ensure that the zemindar can keep his khas land. Encouraged by this touching solicitude of the Congress Ministries, the landlords of Bihar and U.P. have gone ahead to grab every bit of land they can claim as the khas lands.

Our Party Press in Hindi records some 40 cases of violent ejections of tenants by zemindars in Bihar, between August 1947 and June 1948. These were accompanied with the terror of the zemindars' goondas, lathi-charges, shootings, assaults on

peasant women and destruction of peasant houses. Total number of kisans killed in these assaults is 20 while the number of wounded over 200.

When these atrocities and assaults against the kisans take place the police is nowhere to be found. When they arrive on the scene after the event it is often the peasants who are arrested and beaten. As a result of this violent and predatory war which the zemindars of Bihar are waging against the kisans, with the connivance and often with the assistance of the bureaucracy, over a thousand kisans have been arrested and jailed.

Brutal Treatment

Kisan leaders and Communists are being beaten and tortured. From Beguserai comes the report that local Communist leaders, Surya Narain Singh and Singeshwar Singh, were beaten and given brutal treatment after they were arrested by the police. (People's Age, July 25)

Similar conditions exist in U.P. where the zemindar-police offensive against the kisans has created a situation in certain districts which revives the memories of Hallet's 1942 regime.

The kisan and the agricultural labourer in the landlord-ridden regime are beginning to see that the Congress Raj which they yearned for and fought for, is turning out to be the same old zemindar-police raj under which they suffered under the British. A new wave of struggles of the toiling peasantry and agricultural labourers against the zemindars and their allies, for land and living wage, has begun to rise in the face of repression and terror.

The peasant struggles of the past year carry forward the militancy and the tempo of the anti-landlord struggles of the 1946 upsurge. Far from being cowed down by the lathis and guns of the zemindars' goonda, the poor peasants and agricultural labourers of Bihar and U.P. have begun to show the fighting spirit of Tebhaga kisan fighters of Bengal. They are resisting ejection, taking over lands which were rightfully theirs.

In Bettiah (Bihar) kisans and agricultural labourers seized 25 acres of fallow land. In Gorakhpur (U.P.) kisans occupied 88 bighas of land from which they were ejected. In Gorakhpur, agricultural labourers occupied a big farm of 1,800 bighas and planted the Red Flag over it.

In all parts of Bihar agricultural labourers, who are mostly Untouchables and condemned to live the most abominable life of poverty and humiliation, have risen under the leadership of the Kisan Sabha and the Communist Party to wage remarkable strike struggles, demanding abolition of forced labour, 8-hour day, and five seers of rice as daily wage. They are also demanding the complete abolition of zemindari without compensation and the distribution of land to the actual tiller.

The same fighting spirit as is being displayed by the toiling kisans and the agricultural labourers of Bihar and U.P. is abroad among the kisans of Ganjam district (Orissa) where they fought a bitter battle for the reduction of rents and stopping of evictions. Five thousand kisans marched to the police station to demand release of

their arrested leaders—despite police bullets—which killed six kisans and wounded 40.

● The epic struggle which the peasants of North Malabar have been waging against landlords and hoarders during the last six months in the teeth of repression of unsurpassed ferocity, launched by the Madras Congress Ministry, is no exceptional phenomenon. It reveals at once the deepening agrarian and food crisis, accentuated by the pro-landlord and pro-hoarder policy of the Congress Ministries on the one hand and the new fighting spirit of the kisans who are advancing to solve it by a direct struggle to end landlordism on the other.

Starvation Conditions

In Malabar, the price of rice has gone up by 100%, while the quantum of rice ration available to each individual has been reduced by 40% creating conditions of intolerable starvation for the poor peasants and labourers. These conditions have arisen because two-thirds of the net produce of rice goes into the hands of the jenni landlords, as rent in kind.

On top of this, Government procurement is so carried out that the hoards of the landlords remain safe while only the poor peasant is fleeced of his meagre stock.

These conditions can be ended not merely by the abolition of the system of rent in kind but by the abolition of landlordism itself—by giving land to the tiller. This is what the Kisan Sabha and the Communist Party are demanding and fighting for in Malabar.

But the North Malabar kisan, whipped by hunger, has today taken only the most elementary

step—a step which a really popular Government would have immediately taken—namely, the confiscation of the illegally hoarded stocks of the jenmis and their distribution to the starving peasants.

It was not an act of a handful of Communists—it was an act of revolutionary justice being done by the kisan masses themselves. Congress Ministers and leaders lost their heads and shrieked “Communist revolt”—“bandits”, and so on. Even Socialist leaders like Achyut Patwardhan were affected by the unseemly frenzy.

Repression was launched against the “Communist revolt.” Hundreds of cases have been launched involving 3,000 persons, of which 1,600 are actually under arrest. These 3,000 kisans are charged of crimes like looting, murder, arson, etc.

A terror regime indeed stalks the regions of North Malabar. Goonda gangs loot and burn the property of kisans. Their best sons like Moyarath Sankaran meet death in police custody. K. I. Narayanan Nambiar, V. Ananthan meet death at the hands of goondas. Their women are dishonoured.

It is common knowledge that the MSP is responsible for indiscriminate repression; the special volunteers organised by some Kerala Congress leaders are responsible for many of these atrocities. Trade union and Kisan Sabha offices are raided and smashed. Anybody known as a Communist or Communist sympathiser is beaten up by MSP or by the goonda volunteer army.

Naked Fascist terror is unleashed against the kisans of North Malabar under

the Congress administration which is openly coming forward as the defender of the jenmi landlords and hoarders. The repression which North Malabar is facing today is unsurpassed in the black record of the British regime in India.

Despite this monstrous repression, the struggle of the toiling peasants of North Malabar is not crushed. It will gather momentum and support. It is its enemies and traducers, the organisers of terror against it, who will be isolated. The struggle of the North Malabar peasants is bound to grow into a powerful struggle for the final abolition of jenmi-landlordism and to ensure land to the tiller. It will win the support of all toilers and the oppressed middle-class.

Fight For Land

But both the Malabar struggle and the kisan struggles in Bihar and U.P. show that the fight for changing the agrarian system and realisation of peasants' demands is going to be protracted and bitter. The vested interests, the landlords and the big capitalists are going to fight bitterly and ferociously against the toilers and the oppressed middle-class, in order to preserve their privileges and the right to exploit.

As the vast masses of the toiling peasantry begin to see through the hoax of the freedom raj that has come since August last and as the flame of the mass struggles against landlordism, for land and democracy become strong, there will be ever more desperate efforts by the Congress leaders to crush, slander and isolate the Communists and all those who will dare to join hands with them to conti-

nue the fight for real independence and democracy, ever more efforts to confuse and disrupt the ranks of the toilers and the oppressed middle-class.

This is true indeed. But their desperate efforts to perpetuate colonial economy in collaboration with imperialism to serve the sordid interests of the capitalists, landlords and Princes, will only accentuate the economic crisis which will strike the rural areas all the more ruthlessly.

New Type Of Struggle

This will set in motion colossal forces. The struggles in Bihar and Malabar are but the small harbingers of agrarian struggles of a still higher type—struggles for land and democracy, fought under Committees uniting poor peasants, agrarian proletarians and the middle peasants, bringing about the alliance of the workers, peasants and the oppressed middle-class for the victory of the democratic revolution.

One of the greatest boasts of the Congress leaders is about the miracle of peaceful and bloodless revolution they claim to have achieved in the 500 and odd Princely autocracies. The crazy pattern of these small and big autocrats was deliberately maintained by the British imperialists as centres of disruption against the democratic movement, as bastions of their own rule.

It is claimed that this pattern has been eliminated and replaced by some 25 integrated sizable States' Unions and States which have acceded to the 'freedom' Government at New Delhi, and in which democracy is now advancing from precedent to

precedent under the benevolent constitutional rule of the patriotic Maharajas and Rajpramukhs!

Paid scribes and sycophants of New Delhi are never tired of comparing the architect of this great achievement—Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel—with Prince Bismarck who unified the principalities and the Provinces of Germany into a single State.

Little do these ignoramuses know that that comparison is the best exposure and the most scathing indictment of Sardar's great achievement—as an ignoble compromise with feudal elements and betrayal of the cause of freedom and democracy. For this is just what Prince Bismarck did.

He consolidated the counter-revolutionary alliance between the German bourgeoisie and the feudal Princes, launched fierce anti-Socialist repression, suppressing the German Socialist Party and trade unions. He thus laid the basis for the marriage of reactionary Prussian junkerdom and German monopoly capitalism, out of which was born the hideous monster of Hitler Fascism.

The Indian pocket edition of the “iron” Prince and “iron”—like the German original—only against the democratic upsurge of the toiling and oppressed people, while he surrendered to imperialism and forged a compromise and alliance with the feudal Princelings on the basis of the recognition of the sovereignty of these Rulers, as dictated and required by the British. (Cabinet Mission Memorandum on States)

Thus, the first 'freedom' year has brought the long-suffering toiling people of the States

not the end of the medieval conditions of exploitation and oppression—such as serfdom and begar under the jagirdars and Princes, but their perpetuation in a new form.

● It has not brought them the fruition and success of the heroic struggles against autocracy and feudalism which they began in the post-war upsurge of 1946, but their betrayal.

● It has not brought them freedom and democratic rule for which they yearned and fought, but the unholy alliance of the Praja Mandal leaders with the Princes, jagirdars and capitalists. This alliance has been organised by Sardar Patel and the Congress High Command under the auspices of Lord Mountbatten, which now comes forward to take over from the shaky hands of the Princes the defence of the feudal order against the toiling people.

The new round of struggles against autocracy in the States which began in 1946 as part of the great post-war revolutionary upsurge beginning with the Quit Kashmir struggle, was already of a new character. Seeing discontent of the masses had broken through the restricting framework of satyagraha. The people were fighting with every weapon they could lay their hands upon, as was seen in Kashmir.

Working-Class At Head

Wherever an organised working-class existed it came forward to lead the struggles on its own initiative, raising the slogan of complete destruction of autocracy.

—In Travancore, the organised workers of Alleppy and Quilon fought under Communist leadership Sir C.P.'s terror regime with arms in the epic battles of Vayalar and Punnapra.

—In Hyderabad, the oppressed peasantry of Telengana under Communist leadership began its struggle against serfdom and begar—which became the forerunner of the Telengana struggle of today.

—Working-class strikes and peasant struggles were shaking the Prince-

doms in Rajputana and Central India as in Indore.

Terrified by the revolutionary sweep of the struggles and by the emergence of working-class initiative, the bourgeois leaders of the States' People's movement and Praja Mandals sought to curb, control and sabotage these movements. The Congress High Command too, while fully supporting the Praja Mandal leaders, was seeking to capitalise the upsurge in the game of negotiations which it was carrying on for a compromise and deal with imperialism and the Princes.

At the same time the year is also marked with epic achievements of struggles against autocracy, in which the working-class and the Communist Party have played a leading role.

● At the head of these achievements stands the great struggle of Telengana—whose beacon-light illumines for the suffering people of the States and of the States Unions, a new path—the path of building the Democratic Front of workers, peasants and oppressed middle-class for an uncompromising struggle against the unholy combine of the Princes, landlords and capitalists.

—In Mysore, in the struggle for Responsible Government, which was so woefully betrayed by the States Congress leaders, it was the working-class—textile, railway and tobacco workers—which was in the forefront of the struggle, paralysing the administration by total general strikes, facing lathi-charges, tear gas attacks and shootings.

—In Travancore and Cochin, the workers under the Red Flag came out repeatedly on general strikes protesting against repression. Of great significance is the five-lakh strong rally of the workers and people of Alleppy (Nov. 24, 1947) to receive the heroes of Punnapra and Vayalar. Equally significant was the general strike of the Quilon workers to demand the release

of the remaining prisoners of Punnapra battle.

—The remarkable struggle which developed in Tehri, a small State of five lakh people in the Himalayan ranges, under the joint leadership of the Communists and the Praja Mandal and which culminated in the seizure of police stations, customs offices, etc., illustrates how rotten and corroded is the rule of feudal autocracy in the States.

The base of the struggle in Tehri was the oppressed kisans of a small jagirdari region in the State called Saklana. Here the struggle for the non-payment of taxes and cesses culminated in the seizure of the region by the rebellious kisans.

Later the revolt spread to another part of the State, Kirtinagar, which too was seized by the kisans.

In this battle (Jan. 12) popular kisan leader Nagendra Dutt Saklani (a Communist) was shot dead. This led to another uprising throughout the State and the peasants began to march on the capital.

The sequel to this great struggle of the Tehri people and peasants against the rotten autocracy was an anti-climax symptomatic of the co-relation of class forces in the present phase of the struggle of the States' people. The armed police force of the Congress Government of U.P. marched on to Tehri and took over the administration.

The State was declared merged in U.P. In the name of preventing "chaos and anarchy", the feudal order here was saved and rehabilitated with the powerful backing of the Provincial Congress Government of U.P.!

A Fusion

Tehri was a microscopic State, but the lesson to be learned from the struggle of its people is of great significance and of universal application. Feudal order in one-third of Princely India, which was on the point of collapse, is being sought to be saved by the bourgeoisie, the Congress and Praja Mandal leaders who have now entered into an alliance with imperialism and the Princes. There are innumerable Tehris in the States and the States Unions, where a vast number of kisans live under the horrible conditions of jagirdari exploitation.

The struggle of the States' people for democracy and freedom is a fusion of the struggle of the vast masses of the toiling peasants and agricultural labourers for the aboli-

tion of jagirdari and landlordism—for land—with the struggle of the entire oppressed people for the end of autocracy. This will now go forward only under the leadership of the working-class and against the opposition by Praja Mandal and Congress leaders—the new defenders of the imperialist-feudal order.

● In the great struggle of the Telengana peasants in Hyderabad, we find this fusion of the agrarian revolution with the uncompromising struggle against autocracy proceeding under the leadership of the working-class.

Begun as a mass peasant movement against landlord oppression and forced labour in 1946, it rapidly developed into an armed revolt of the peasants against deshmukhs and the Nizam, and for the seizure of lands in the beginning of 1947.

After August 1947 when after the preliminary efforts at compromise with the Nizam, the Congress leaders sanctioned 'struggle' against the Nizam, the peasants of Telengana, who had by that time already organised their people's militia, began their epic armed resistance.

While the Congress leaders were stabbing the struggle of the Hyderabad people in the back by signing the Standstill Agreement and later by conducting negotiations for abject surrender to the Nizam, while the State Congress leaders were sabotaging the development of the struggle and slandering the Communists, the flame of the resistance of the peasants of Telengana shot up, striking terror in the heart of the Nizam and of his Razakar goondas, lighting up hope in the breasts of the people of Hyderabad suffering

under the atrocities of the Razakars.

In the very first six months of battle the fighters of Telengana suffered casualties: 409 men, 17 women killed; 706 men, 41 women wounded; while tens of thousands were arrested and fell victims of the Nizam's military, police and the Razakars. They suffered enormous loss of property and houses.

But at the cost of this stupendous suffering and loss the peasants of Telengana have created something unprecedented and new in the history of India's liberation struggle. In 2,500 villages the rule of the Nizam and his deshmukhs is no more. This is an area of 13,000 sq. miles with a population of over 40 lakhs. Over one lakh acres of land of deshmukhs has been confiscated and distributed to the peasants.

People's Committees rule the villages, keep register of lands. People's Courts deal well-merited justice to people's enemies and traitors. The People's militia—drawn from the poor peasant youth, yet inadequately armed—continues the running battle against the Nizam's forces and Razakars. People's cultural squads (Jaitra Yatras) politically educate and politicise the people.

Such is Telengana—the first hard-won bit of People's Democracy in India, the hope of the suffering victims of Razakar terror.

Against the heroic fighters of Telengana has risen a whole concert of evil forces—the Nizam, the Razakar thugs, the Congress Ministries, which arrest them when they come to the Indian soil, and Congress leaders, who slander them in and

out of season. Even the Socialist leaders sometimes join this evil concert—instead of forging a common front with them.

But Telengana fights on, striking armed blows against the tyrannical forces of the Nizam and the Razakars, building a new Democratic Front of workers, peasants and oppressed middle-class, for the liquidation of autocracy and for the complete victory of democracy.

Student Struggles

This review of the upsurge of the mass struggles of the last year would not be complete unless mention is made of the notable part which the STUDENTS have played in it. Students have fought in the front ranks of many an anti-imperialist battle. They were in the thick of the 1946 upsurge, demonstrations for the release of INA men, for solidarity with the RIN revolt in which they have counted several martyrs.

To them the first freedom year has brought the same frustration and disillusionment as to the entire oppressed middle class. Naturally, therefore, the students' struggles of the year have been struggles demanding reduction of school and college fees, expansion of education facilities, cheaper text books and so on.

Instead of fulfilling these justified demands or at least apologising for being unable to fulfil them, the 'freedom' Ministries have resorted to the most shameful practice of launching police attacks upon student demonstrations, caning, lathi-charging, tear-gassing of young boys and girls whose only fault is that they demand better and cheaper education facilities. This

has happened several times in Bombay, Calcutta, Kanpur, Malabar, Guntur and in many other places.

They Are Not Crushed

● Last December the student delegates to the All-India Students' Federation Conference defied the ban on their Conference and heroically faced tear gas and lathi-charges, asserting their right to organise and fight for the new India they want to build.

All this repression has not suppressed the student movement. Despite repression, despite the shameful efforts of some Socialist leaders to disrupt the student movement as an organised force, and to liquidate it by suggesting that students should be organised only in their colleges and schools under official tutelage, the student movement has continued to grow.

Under the initiative of the AISF, there have been more and more united student actions for their urgent demands; students are getting very rapidly disillusioned about the 'freedom' Government, and are coming forward to take their place in the rising Democratic Front for real independence and People's Democracy.

—On the very first anniversary of freedom—or what it really is: of the betrayal of freedom—we find a new upsurge of mass struggles growing, an upsurge which finds its characteristic expression in the great struggle of the Telengana peasants and in the resistance of the toilers of North Malabar.

—Led by the working-class and the Communist Party these struggles herald the gathering movement of the

toiling masses and the oppressed middle-class against the conditions of starvation, famine, unemployment and political suppression which the bourgeoisie is trying to perpetuate by its shameful deal with imperialism and feudalism.

—It is going forward despite repression, despite slander and vilification, gathering support from ever wider strata of the people. Cadres of Left parties, Socialists, Forward Blocists, Left Congressmen and others are participating in it.

Hard Struggles Ahead

Against the background of a rapid disillusionment of the masses, and under the inspiration of the Communist Party, which is ruthlessly unmasking the role of the Congress leaders as collaboration with imperialism and feudalism, which is boldly and faithfully leading the struggles of the toilers and the oppressed middle-class, and which is clearly putting before the masses the programme of full democracy and the slogan of a new people's democratic government, a broad opposition movement is growing—a People's Democratic Front of struggle is emerging.

The struggle would not be easy. The task of winning the majority of the people for the Democratic Front, for the fight for real independence, People's Democracy and Socialism will be protracted and hard. But the achievements of the very first year of struggle under the new co-relation of class forces, and the shift that has already begun in favour of the forces of the working-class and democracy and against those of bourgeois-feudal reaction, are a guarantee of final victory.