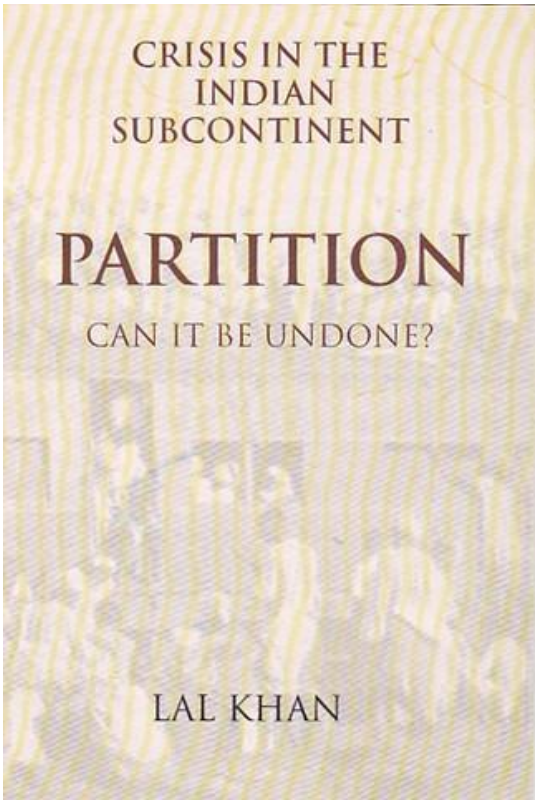
# Partition: Can It Be Undone: Crisis in the Indian Subcontinent

**Crisis of the Subcontinent**

Lal Khan




January 1, 2007

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Dedication:

To my mother, Anaran, who never accepted the idea of Partition all her life

# CHRONOLOGY

1600 The British arrive in India
1757 Robert Clive victorious at Battle of Plassey
1857 Indian rebels begin the first war of independence
1885 The Indian National Congress is founded
1906 The All-Indian Muslim League is founded
1922 Gandhi is imprisoned following terrorist attacks against the British
1925 Communist Party of India is founded
1929 Meerut Conspiracy Case
1930 Allama Iqbal calls for a separate homeland for the Muslims
Gandhi unleashes 'civil disobedience' against the British
Lahore conspiracy case ordinance
1931 Bhagat Singh and three comrades hanged at Lahore Central Prison
1937 First elections are held, won by Congress
1942 Nehru replaces Gandhi as the recognized leader of the National Congress Party
1946 Rebellion of the Sailors of the British Navy
Cabinet mission arrives in India
Muslim League Council meets in Bombay
1947 Lord Mountbatten announces the partition of India and Pakistan
The dominium of Pakistan inaugurated on August 14th
The dominium of India inaugurated on August 15th
One million people die in communal violence due to the partition
Following rioting by the Muslim majority in Kashmir, Pakistani troops attack India and occupy part of Kashmir
Jawaharlal Nehru becomes the first Prime Minister of India
Hyderabad incorporated into India
1948 Mahatma Gandhi is assassinated by a Hindu extremist
Muhammed Ali Jinnah, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, dies and is succeeded by Liaquat Ali Khan
India refuses to allow the plebiscite in Kashmir and Kashmir separatism is born (40,000 people will die in 55 years)
1951 Pakistan's leader Liaquat Ali Khan is assassinated, while general Muhammad Ayub Khan is appointed chief of the army
1954 The USA becomes the main provider of military goods and training for Pakistan
1956 Pakistan enacts a new constitution and becomes an Islamic republic
Prime Minister Nehru of India fosters a neutral stance
between communism and capitalism and founds the
Non-Aligned Movement
1957 India annexes Kashmir
1958 General Ayub Khan takes over Pakistan's government in a coup
1961 Pakistani president Ayub Khan signs a cooperation pact with the USA to counterbalance Soviet influence in India
1964 Indian Prime Minister Nehru dies
1965 India and Pakistan fight another war over Kashmir

1966 Indira Gandhi, daughter of Nehru, becomes Prime Minister of India

1969 Pakistani leader Ayub Khan is succeeded by another general, Yahya Khan

General strike in Pakistan

1971 Defended by India, East Pakistan separates from West Pakistan and becomes the independent country of Bangladesh under the rule of Sheikh Mujib

War in Kashmir

1972 Simla accord signed by Indira Gandhi and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto

1973 Zulfiquar Ali Bhutto becomes Prime Minister of Pakistan

1974 Pakistan recognises Bangladesh

India detonates an underground nuclear weapon

1975 Embroiled in scandals, Indira Gandhi declares a state of emergency, under which her political foes are imprisoned, constitutional rights abrogated, and the press placed under censorship

1976 India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi signs a cooperation pact with the Soviet Union

1977 The corrupt government of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto is overthrown by a military coup led by general Zia ul-Haq

1979 Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto is hanged

1980 US uses Pakistan to help rebels fighting the Soviet Union in Afganistan

1984 Indira Gandhi is assassinated by Sikh bodyguards and is succeeded by her son Rajiv

1988 Zia, the US ambassador and top Pakistan army officials die in mysterious air crash

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's daughter Benazir wins the general elections in Pakistan

1990 Benazir Bhutto is removed from Prime Minister of Pakistan, on charges of incompetence and corruption, and is succeeded by Nawaz Sharif

Pakistan funds and arms Islamic volunteers to fight the Soviet Union in Afghanistan

Islamic terrorism in Kashmir increases against the Indian occupying troops

1992 Hindu extremists destroy a mosque in Ayodhya

1993 Benazir Bhutto wins national elections again in Pakistan

1996 Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is removed again on charges of corruption

Pakistan helps the Taliban overthrow the Afghan government

1997 The Muslim League wins general elections in Pakistan

Nawaz Sharif is elected Prime Minister of Pakistan

1998 The Nationalist Party wins the elections and Atal Behari Vajipayee becomes Prime Minister

India and Pakistan conduct nuclear tests

1999 Benazir Bhutto is sentenced to jail in absentia

Escalation of violence in Kashmir between Indian troops and freedom fighters backed by Pakistan

The Kargill war

2001 King Birendra of Nepal and his entire family are killed by a crown prince, and Gyanendra becomes the new king

Pakistan helps the US fight the Taliban in Afghanistan

2002 Islamic militants increase attacks on Kashmir and other Indian states

The first democratic elections since 1999 are held in Pakistan and Zafarullah Khan Jamali becomes Prime Minister

# PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

Today one fifth of the human race lives in the South Asian subcontinent. This region has one of the oldest civilisations and rich cultural traditions that have contributed immensely to the development of human knowledge in various fields of science and the arts. Several religions and movements of enlightenment originated from this ancient society. It also has a rich heritage of architectural artefacts that are expressions of the historical periods of its social development. The literary history encompasses some of the greatest works of poetry and prose. In ancient times, the South Asian subcontinent was known as the land "flowing with milk and honey" because of its advanced economy and agriculture. After the fall of Rome, whilst Europe was in the dark ages, the Indian subcontinent's economy, arts and culture were flourishing. One of the ironies of this development and of this set of rich socio-economic conditions is that throughout its history, the subcontinent has attracted wave after wave of invading armies from central Asia, the Middle East, Iran, Afghanistan and Europe who ravaged the Indian subcontinent's culture, economy and riches.

The Indian subcontinent had the capacity to absorb the invaders and re-emerge on a higher plane of socio-economic and cultural development. However, due to the intrinsic conservatism of the ruling elites it stagnated and fell behind in the second half of the last millennium. After the industrial revolution, the West had developed superior scientific and technological skills. This allowed the West to exert its superiority over this ancient civilisation in the form of advanced technology and weaponry leading to further invasions of India. These invasions by the Dutch, Portuguese, French and British resulted in a new form of colonialization over the people of the subcontinent.

The native industries, economies and cultures were subjected to new forms of plunder. Due to the reactionary character of the effete local ruling elites the invaders, particularly the British imperialists, were able to conquer India through a strategy practiced by imperial Rome... namely, "divide and rule". Although the masses waged heroic struggles against these invaders, their lack of leadership and their primitive weaponry meant they were unable to defeat the aggressors.

After more than 200 years of direct imperial rule, a new wave of mass movements challenged the British Raj. The strikes and struggles of the workers and peasants, mutinies within the army and the intrinsic weakness of British rule forced the British to abandon India. Once again the British, in collusion with the political leaders and parties of the local ruling classes, were able to divide the subcontinent through Partition.

Fifty-six years on the subcontinent still suffers from this division. Literature, art, film, politics and culture have not been able to shed the trauma of partition and still the stories of Partition haunt the creative consciousness of poets, writers and artists to this day. Similarly ever since 1947, the politics of both India and Pakistan have been dominated by the need to check and control domestic dissent and protest.

The subcontinent's economy has been eroded and undermined by the same policies that brought about the Act of Partition. The societies of the subcontinent are still burning in the fires ignited by Partition.

Comrade Lal Khan's work on Partition is an epic. It is a unique and creative addition to a long series of works on this subject. He has analysed dialectically, the history, culture, economy and politics of the subcontinent from a materialist point of view. Lal Khan has exposed historical and factual details that were conspicuously omitted by most historians and analysts. He gives a clear critique of pre- and post-partition society from a class perspective. Lal Khan gives a compelling account of historic events, the betrayals by the leaders and provides an erudite Marxist analysis of the movement of national

liberation. Lal Khan explores in depth, future perspectives that can bring about a socialist renaissance and offers a viable and comprehensive solution to the daunting problems that afflict the societies of the subcontinent.

Today, conditions in the subcontinent are worse than before Partition. In India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh poverty, hunger, disease and ignorance have reached untold proportions. Life for most inhabitants in this region is unbearable. The ruling classes are unable to develop society and improve living standards and solve even the most basic of problems. As in other colonial countries, the bourgeoisie made a belated entry into the arena of history and therefore play a subservient role to multinational companies working as their stooges.

In South Asian countries namely Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka the fight for democracy continues however during the last fifty-six years, none of them have achieved democracy. India has a so-called democratic system, but for whom? However democracy in India has not delivered its promises to the masses and the working class. Capitalism can be said to rule the people by using them to continue the exploitation of the people and India is a prime example of such exploitation.

Like other peoples of the subcontinent, a large section of the Indian populace has sunk into a bottomless pit of poverty. A cursory look at the industrial infrastructure and the conditions of the vast majority of the masses exposes the rulers' claims of development in this region.

Parliament has been dissolved in Nepal, and no date has yet been set for new elections. Last month parliament in Sri Lanka was suspended, and a state of emergency was imposed in the country. Similarly, the opposition is continuing its yearlong protest and boycott of Pakistan's parliament. In Bangladesh, the democratic system is going through various experiments and it can be concluded that the democratic system in these countries has absolutely failed the common people and is nothing more than a farce.

The ruling classes in the subcontinent have not developed the political system during the last fifty-six years. The threat of religious fundamentalism in these countries is on the increase. The activities of the rebels in Nepal and the threat of Tamil rebels in Sri Lanka indicate that the subcontinent still faces the worst kind of civil strife. The intervention of advanced monopolies combined with the backwardness of these societies can only give rise to greater contradictions and bloodshed. Such is the destiny offered to the masses by capitalism. All dreams of future advancement in living standards remain unfulfilled.

India and Pakistan are both nuclear powers and Kashmir is the bone of contention between them. Throughout India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan, the problem of the national question has become more complicated with the passage of time... the rulers are unable to solve this basic issue. Kashmir, the most complicated issue of all has led directly to three wars between India and Pakistan. Lal Khan devotes a whole chapter to this question in his book in which he gives the only possible solution to the excesses of repression and conflict in Kashmir. Despite superficial ranting by the representatives of the ruling elites, relations are at their worst ever.

India and Pakistan are equipped with nuclear weapons and launching missiles. Last year, both armies were poised against each other and anything could have happened. In these conditions, if war had occurre, it would have brought untold disaster to both countries. We believe that the rulers Indian and Pakistan cannot afford war, because in the wake of a nuclear holocaust they would perish along with the masses. By the same token they cannot sustain a durable peace. Peace would undermine the interests of the ruling classes who feed on the hatred between the two countries. The workers' movement has a marvellous tradition of fighting to the finish to transform society. War is a weapon of the ruling class which they use to subjugated the masses. Their peace initiatives are merely empty posturing.

This book has an important part to play in awakening the oppressed masses and providing a means for the working class to envisage and execute its revolutionary role.

The Indian subcontinent is one of the most fertile and richest places on earth, yet hunger, starvation and poverty are on the increase. The budget spent on health and education is one of the lowest in the world and this further aggravates the situation. The industrial and social infrastructures are obsolete, uneven and deteriorating, and hence cannot provide a basis for modern industrialised states. Around 1.5 billion people will continue to suffer in this quagmire. Is this the destiny of future generations? The

author answers this question effectively. Until the wounds of Partition are healed and the capitalist system is eliminated by the insurrection of a socialist revolution in any one of the countries, there is no viable future. A socialist federation of the subcontinent would enable the people of this great civilisation to embark on a new journey and to take destiny into their own hands.

Comrade Lal Khan's book is an insightful and informed analysis of the great and ancient civilisation of this region, the causes of its decline and its future resurrection on the basis of revolutionary socialism. The author presents a clear way forward to enable the deprived and destitute to start a new and prosperous life in a quest for a better future. A future in which the people of the subcontinent can create a society free of hunger, disease, ignorance and unemployment. A developed socialist subcontinent would serve as a beacon of light and emancipation for the rest of the world.

Kasur, Pakistan

December 2003.

# CHAPTER 1: THROES OF THE RAJ

## 200 YEARS OF OPPRESSION

> The East bowed low before the blast
> In patient, deep disdain
> She let the legions thunder past
> And plunged in thought again
> - *Anon*

The Partition of the Indian subcontinent led to the largest transmigration of mankind in modern history. It was also the bloodiest migration...at least one million innocent souls perished and about 16 million crossed borders. This was how the 200 years of direct British colonial rule ended in India. It ended with the same policy with which it had begun...divide and rule.

## From Trade to Conquest

History's most grandiose accomplishments can sometimes have the most banal origins. Britain was set on the road of this great colonial adventure for five miserable shillings. This represented the increase in the price of a pound of pepper by the Dutch who controlled the spice trade. Incensed at what they considered a wholly unwarranted increase, twenty-four merchants of the City of London gathered on the afternoon of 24 September 1599 in a decrepit building on Leadenhall Street. Their purpose was to found a trading firm with an initial capital of £72 000 subscribed by 125 shareholders. Their enterprise was inspired by the simplest of motives... profit. This quest for profit expanded and transformed, would ultimately become the most powerful creation of the age of imperialism... the British Raj.

The Company received its official sanction on 31 December 1599, when Queen Elizabeth I signed a royal charter that assigned exclusive trading rights with all countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope for an initial period of fifteen years. Eight months later, a 500 ton galleon named 'The Hector' dropped anchor in the little port of Surat, north of Bombay. It was 24 August 1600. The British had arrived in India. Their initial landing was modest. William Hawkins, captain of The Hector, a dour old seaman who was more pirate than explorer, marched off into the interior, "...prepared to find rubies as big as pigeon's eggs, endless stands of pepper, ginger, indigo, cinnamon... trees whose leaves were so enormous that the shade they cast could cover an entire family, potions derived from elephants testicles promising eternal youth".

Little evidence of that India was seen along the captain's march to Agra. Hawkins' encounter with the great Mughal Empire, however, compensated for the hardships of his journey. He found himself face to face with a sovereign who made Queen Elizabeth look like the ruler of a provincial hamlet. Reigning over 70 million subjects, the Emperor Jehangir was the world's richest and most powerful monarch... the fourth and last of the great Indian Mughal rulers. Hawkins, the first Englishman to reach his court, was greeted with a gesture that might have disconcerted the 125 worthy shareholders of the East India Trading Company. Jehangir made him a member of the Royal Household and offered the most beautiful girl in his harem, an Armenian Christian, as a welcome gift.

Fortunately, in addition to the enrichment of his sex life, Captain Hawkins' arrival in Agra also resulted in benefits of a nature more likely to inspire his employer's esteem. Jehangir signed the imperial firman that authorised the East India Company to open trading depots north of Bombay. Its successes were rapid and impressive. Soon, two ships a month were unloading mountains of spices, gums, sugar, raw silk and muslin cotton onto the docks along the Thames and sailing off with their holds full of English goods. A deluge of dividends, some of them as high as 200%, came pouring in for the firm's fortunate shareholders. Inevitably, however, as their trading activities grew, the company's officers became enmeshed in local politics and were forced to intervene in the squabbles of the petty sovereigns on whose territories they operated in order to protect their expanding commerce. Almost inadvertently, thus, the irreversible process that would lead to Britain's conquest of India began.

On 23 June 1757, an audacious general named Robert Clive, marching through drenching rainfall at the head of 900 Englishmen of the thirty-ninth Foot and 2000 Indian sepoys, routed the army of a rebellious Nawab in the rice paddies outside the Bengali village of Plassey. Clive's victory opened the gates of northern India and the British conquest of India truly started. The British merchants gave way to the builders of empire and territory rather than trade became the primary objective of the British in India.

In less than a century, a company of traders was transformed into a sovereign power, its accountants and traders into generals and governors and its race for dividends into a struggle for imperial authority. With that change began the period the world would most often associate with

the British Indian experience the Victorian era. Its self-appointed poet laureate, Rudyard ☒Kipling, maintained that white Englishmen were fitted uniquely to rule "lesser breeds without the law". The responsibility to govern India, Kipling proclaimed, had been "placed by the inscrutable decree of providence upon the shoulders of the British race". Collins and Lapierre give us a glimpse of the rule of the Raj in India in their epic "Freedom at Midnight":

> Ultimately, responsibility was exercised by a little band of brothers, 2000 members of the Indian Civil Service, the ICS, and 10,000 British officers of the Indian Army. Their authority over 300 million people was sustained by 60,000 British soldiers and 200,000 men of the Indian army. No statistics could measure better than those the nature of British rule in India after 1857 or the manner in which the Indian masses were long prepared to accept it. The India of those men was that picturesque, romantic India of Kipling's tales. Theirs was the India of gentlemen officers in plumed shakos riding at the head of their turbaned sepoys; of district magistrates lost in the torrid wastes of the Deccan; of sumptuous imperial balls in the Himalayan Summer Capital of Simla; cricket matches on the manicured lawns of Calcutta's Bengal club; polo games on the sun...

James S Mills said:

> India, was a vast system of outdoor relief for Britain's upper classes.

India represented challenge and adventure, and its boundless spaces an arena in which England's young men could find a fulfilment that their island's more restricted shores might deny them. They arrived on the docks of Bombay at 19 or 20 years old, barely able to raise stubble on their chins. They went home thirty-five or forty years later, their bodies scarred by bullets, by disease, a panther's claws or a fall on the polo field and their faces ravaged by too much sun and too much whisky but proud of having lived their part of a romantic legend.

Britain ruled India, but the English dwelt apart. The aristocracy of the Raj lived in cantonments, golden ghettos of British rule attached like foreign bodies to India's major cities, stricken with misery. The British soldiers from working class families, however, suffered great hardships. Thousands perished in their teens from malaria and other tropical diseases if not on the battlefields. The British working class had to pay a price with the lives of their children in the perpetuation of the Raj for the English

Crown. British cemeteries in Calcutta and in cities across the subcontinent are a memorial to those whose class exploitation continued thousands of miles beyond the coast of Britain.

## War of Independence

The first major resistance to the British colonial rule was the Indian War of Independence in 1857. The defeat of this war of national liberation resulted in the consolidation of British rule. During the 1857 Indian War of Independence against the British colonialists, Marx wrote a series of articles in the New York Times. These later were compiled and published as a book "The First Indian War of Independence 1857–1859". In these articles, Marx made the point that every mile of the railway line laid down by British imperialism would create the basis of its demise. Marx meant that the railway in India would play a pivotal role in uniting this huge subcontinent.

The patterns of development in the subcontinent under the yoke of the Raj were distorted and highly uneven. The rationale for creating an infrastructure in India was to extract and plunder the riches of this land rather than facilitate social and industrial development and lay the foundations of a modern state. The British conquered India with Indian troops: the historically obsolete and weak kings, rajas, maharajas and rulers of fiefdoms capitulated to the British one after another.

In India itself the original inspiration had gradually faded because the mind and the soul became overworked and undernourished for lack of fresh currents and ideas. As long as India kept her mind open, gave her riches to others and received from them what she lacked, she remained fresh, strong and vital. But the more she withdrew into her shell, intent on preserving herself uncontaminated from external influences, the more she lost that inspiration and her life became a dull round of meaningless activities all centred in the dead past. Losing the art of creating beauty, her children lost the capacity to recognize it.

Before the Raj in 1522, Paes, after he visited the Italian cities of the Renaissance, wrote the following about the city of Vijaynagar: " It is as large as Rome, very beautiful to sight, is full of charm and wonder with its innumerable lakes, waterways and food gardens". A British visitor to Muradabad in 1759 wrote that this ancient capital of Bengal was equal in population and wealth to London, with palaces greater than those of Europe. At that stage, the balance of trade was heavily in favour of India, amounting to almost £1.8 million, which at that time constituted more than 10% of England's annual revenue.

India's successes and achievements were on the whole confined to the upper classes; those lower down the scale had very few chances, and their opportunities were strictly limited. The ruling class failed to develop the modes of production and hindered social development. For example, in the War of Independence of 1857, the same gun used by Babar (founder of the Mughal dynasty in India) in the famous battle of Panipat against Ibrahim Lodhi two centuries before was used by the Indian forces against the British. While Asia became dormant, exhausted, by its past efforts, Europe, backward in many ways, was on the threshold of vast changes. A civilisation decays more from inner failure than from external attack.

## Concepts of Feudalism

In the Indian subcontinent, the whole concept of the power of the monarch differed from that of European feudalism, in which the king had authority over all persons and things in his domain. This authority was delegated to the lords and barons who vowed allegiance to him. Thus, the hierarchy of authority was built up. Both the lands and the people connected with it belonged to the feudal lord and through him to the king. This was a development of the Roman concept of the dominium. In India, the king had the right to collect certain taxes from the land, and this revenue collecting power

was delegated to others. With disastrous results, the British broke up the traditional village communes known as Punchayats and introduced the concept of oppressive feudalism.

## Imperialist Plunder

After the defeat of the 1857 Indian War of Independence (misnamed by most Western historians as "mutiny") and the boom in the 1860s and 1870s, the imperialists consolidated their power and control and destroyed large parts of the local textile and other indigenous industries in India. India became both a market for British goods, which received tariff protections under a system known as imperial preferences, and an exporter of cheap raw materials to Britain. Food exports to Britain continued in spite of a severe famine that killed millions in India. Marx, in his writing of that period, explained the economic and social basis of British colonialisation and its impact on future developments in India. On 22 July 1853, he wrote:

> ...if we knew nothing of the past history of Hindustan, would there not be the one great and incontestable fact, that even at this moment India is held in English thraldom by an Indian army maintained at the cost of India? England has to fulfill a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating the annihilation of the old Asiatic society, and laying the material foundations of Western society in Asia. Arabs, Turks, Tartars, Moguls, who had successively overrun India, soon became *Hinduised*, the barbarian conquerors being by an eternal law of history, conquered themselves by the superior civilisation of their subjects. The British were the first conquerors superior in culture, and therefore, inaccessible to Hindu civilisation. They destroyed it by breaking up the native communities, by uprooting the native industry, and levelling all that was great and elevated in the native society. The historical pages of the British rule in India report hardly anything beyond that destruction. The work of the regeneration hardly transpires through a heap of ruins. Nevertheless it has begun. The political unity of India, more consolidated then it ever was under the great Mughals, was the first condition of regeneration. That unity imposed by the British sword will now be strengthened and perpetuated by the electric telegraph. The day is not far distant when, by combination of railway and steam vessels, the distance between England and India measured by time will be shortened. The ruling classes of Great Britain have had till now but an accidental transitory and exceptional interest in the progress of the India. The aristocracy wanted to conquer it the moneyocracy wanted to plunder it, and the milliocracy to undersell it...Nowhere more than in India, do we meet with such social destitution in the midst of natural plenty, for want of the means of exchange...The profound hypocrisy and inherent barbarism of bourgeois civilisation lies unveiled before our eyes, turning from its home, where it assumes respectable forms, to the colonies where it goes naked...Did they not in India, to borrow an experience of that great robber, Lord Clive himself, resort to atrocious extortion, and simple corruption could not keep pace with their rapacity? [Published in the "New York Daily Tribune" No. 3840 of 8 August 1853]

## The White Man's Burden

The attitude of the British imperialists towards its subject people was illustrated by Palmerston, British foreign secretary at the time, who infamously remarked about the Chinese people: "...such half barbarians as the Chinese need a dressing down every ten years or so". The history of the British Raj in India is littered with similar attitudes and statements. A terrible smugness set them apart from those they ruled. Never was that attitude of racial superiority summed up more succinctly than by a former

officer of the Indian Civil Service in a parliamentary debate at the turn of the century. There was, he said:

> ...a cherished conviction shared by every Englishman in India, from the highest to the lowest, by the planter's assistant in his lonely bungalow and by the editor in the full light of his presidency town, from the chief commissioner in charge of an important province to the viceroy upon his throne...the conviction in every man that he belongs to a race which God has destined to govern and subdue.

A whole string of heinous acts of barbarism was inflicted on the impoverished millions. The most significant of these was the brutal genocide in Jallianwalla Bagh in Amritsar. This atrocity took place on 13 April 1919 when there was a large protest rally in a closed park in the heart of the city. The whole gathering was totally unarmed, and the British troops blocked and besieged the rally. Only one entrance existed to the compound through a narrow alley between two buildings. Through it, just after the meeting had begun, marched Amritsar's martial law commander, Brigadier R E Dyer, at the head of fifty soldiers. He stationed his men on either side of the entrance and, without warning, opened fire on defenceless Indians with machine guns.

For a full ten minutes, while the trapped people screamed for mercy, the soldiers fired. They fired 1650 rounds. Their bullets killed and wounded 1516 people. Convinced he'd "...done a jolly good thing", Dyer marched his men out of the Bagh. His "jolly good thing" was a turning point in the history of Anglo-Indian relations. Dyer was reprimanded for his actions and asked to resign from the army. He was allowed, however, to retain full pension benefits and other rights due to him. His demonstration was applauded by most of the British in India. In clubs across the country, his admiring countrymen took up a collection on his behalf, amassing the then prodigious sum of £26 000 to ease the rigors of his premature retirement.

Most rightwing politicians in Britain projected colonialism as a civilising act and the colonies as "the white man's burden". With one hand, they practiced brutal repression and with the other the policy of divide and rule. The British conquered and left the subcontinent still under the imperialist yoke through the extension of this policy. One of the prominent leaders of the independence movement, Maulana Mohammed Ali Johar, while addressing the round table in London, said: "It is the old maxim of divide and rule but there is a division of labour here. We [Indians] divide and you [British] rule."

The political system that emerged under the Raj was formed along the lines of the British parliamentary model. The educated Indian elite was either from the ruling dynasties, which had betrayed the masses, or from the middle and ruling classes, which were sponsored and pampered by the British civil service to perpetuate their rule. This new generation of the elite was educated and trained in Britain in order to implement the British political setup in the Indian political arena. In reality, two British universities, Cambridge and Oxford, trained and indoctrinated the Indian elite into the British political system, culture, customs and lifestyle. It is an historic irony that not only were the leaders of pre-Partition India from these institutions but that the present day rulers of the independent states also are products of those two universities and Lincoln's Inn. Even in their revolts and independence stunts, leaders like Nehru, Gandhi and Jinnah were hostages to the British parliamentary setup and its economics and to capitalism on which it was founded. The independence movement was mainly in control of this emerging bourgeoisie, influenced and propped up by the Raj. They aped the politics, customs and behaviour of the British ruling class. They participated in various state, provincial and regional parliamentary programmes setup by the colonial rulers...and this participation undermined and tamed the militancy of the independence movement.

Throughout the Raj, resistance continued in varying forms. Peasants participated in upsurges. Individual folklore heroes attacked the British forces and were termed bandits by most western historians. Apart from the Afghan wars, no period was without some form of challenge to the rule of the Raj. Later on, in the twentieth century, we witness the proletarian struggle of the soldiers' and sailors' revolts in the armed forces against direct imperialist domination.

## A Tamed National Bourgeoisie

The British educated Indian politicians set up Congress. According to Collins and Lapierre:

> A dignified English civil servant founded Congress in 1885. Acting with the blessing of the Viceroy, Octavian Hume had sought to create an organisation which would canalise the protests of India's slowly growing educated classes into a moderate, responsible body prepared to engage in gentlemanly dialogue with India's English rulers.

During the First World War, Congress fully collaborated with British Imperialism. All its representatives in the Imperial Council supported the British. In criminal silence, they acquiesced to the hangings of members of the Gadar Party, which represented the militant youth who had taken up arms against the British. While presiding at the 1915 session of Congress, Sir Satendra Sinha said:

> It is the task of India that at this difficult and delicate juncture of history it should prove its gratitude and thankfulness to the great British nation. This nation leading us for a hundred and fifty years acquainted us with civilisation and culture.

In the 1915 and 1916 sessions, Congress paid its respects and gratitude to the British governors who were in attendance. In a letter to the secretary of state, Congress pledged that the people of India would deliver all the resources of their country to the service of the British monarch. In the 1918 session at Delhi, a resolution was passed in which total allegiance and loyalty to the Crown was proclaimed. In the 1920s, Congress blatantly opposed the strike of the textile industry workers in Bombay. The main reason was that Congress was receiving huge funds from the owners of the textile mills. In the same period, Gandhi showed his anger towards "Bolshevik-type lawlessness" in Gujarat. Opposing the demand for the strike, he said: "...from me it should never be expected that I could ever participate in any fight which could result in anarchy and red destruction." In contrast to the Stalinist claims of the progressive nature of Congress, Trotsky had rejected outrightly any such claims. In 1930, he wrote:

> There is ferment amongst millions in India. With their own methods they have demonstrated their strength in such a way that the national bourgeoisie has gone quiet. This bourgeoisie has reluctantly entered the field of activity mainly to blunt the rising tide of the revolutionary movement. Gandhi's static weak and lethargic resistance movement was such a fetter that it had subdued the innocent and scattered petty bourgeoisie by the deceit and treachery of the cunning liberal bourgeoisie. The more Gandhi was sincere to his cause the more he would have controlled the revolting masses and would have become an instrument for the interests of his masters.

In 1934, Trotsky further exposed Gandhism:

> We must expose the treacheries and deceptions of Gandhism in front of the colonial peoples. The main aim of Gandhism is to water down the burning revolutionary fires amongst the people and to continue their exploitation for the petty interests of the national bourgeoisie.

Further on, Trotsky gave a clear analysis of the real character of the Indian bourgeoisie. In 1939, in one of his last writings on India, he wrote the following:

> The Indian bourgeoisie can never lead a revolutionary struggle. It is the slave of British capitalism and fully reliant on it. It has gone mad in its quest to protect its properties. It is terrified of the people. It wants to come to an agreement with British imperialism no matter at what price. It is singing lullabies of hopes of reforms to the masses. The leader and prophet of this bourgeoisie is Gandhi. He is an artificial leader and a false prophet.

From its inception, Congress was the party of the Indian domestic ruling class. Congress leaders always had close relations with the British Viceroys in India and were awarded honours and awards by the British Crown. Gandhi was given the Kaisar-e-Hind medal by Lord Harding, viceroy to India from 1910–1916. Such was the subservience of Congress leaders that the British viceroys sang their praises. On 9 March 1931, Lord Irwin, viceroy at the time, wrote his views on Gandhi in a letter to his father:

> I kept asking myself all the time was the man completely sincere? I came to have no doubt that if Mr. Gandhi gave me his word on any point, the word was always secured and that I could trust him implicitly.

In this matter, Lord Irwin was the victim of unconscious self-delusion. It must be unusual for a colonial oppressor to have such views about the leader of a national liberation movement intent on ending imperialist rule. In another instance, the British viceroy who replaced Irwin, Lord Wellingdon, wrote the following about Gandhi on 16 May 1931:

> I have had my first talk with Gandhi yesterday and we renewed our acquaintance of many years ago. He was at the top of his form, most friendly, most eager to cooperate with me. Indeed no one could be more desirous to be helpful. But the trouble of it all is that he has roused this movement of civil disobedience and having done so, I am much afraid he cannot control it... This letter exposes the strategic alliance between the upstart Indian bourgeoisie and the British rulers.

## Gandhi the Appeaser

Gandhi also had very close relationships with Lord Mountbatten and Lady Edwina. Gandhi the pacifist would, according to one of his intimates, find in the soul of Mountbatten, the professional warrior, "the echo of certain of the moral values that stirred in his own soul". When the Mountbattens travelled to London for the wedding of Princess Elizabeth to their nephew Prince Philip, whom they had brought up since childhood, Gandhi manifested his affection for them with a touching gesture. Packed into their York MW 102, along with ivory carvings, Mughal miniatures, the jewels and silver plates offered to the royal couple by India's former ruling princes was a wedding gift to the girl who would one day wear Victoria's crown: a teacloth made from yarn that Gandhi had spun himself.

Gandhi's passivity and pessimism were in reality a device to subvert the youth from fighting for a better life. Such were his sermons that, on 15 January 1948, he said, "Death is a great friend to all. It is always worthy of our gratitude because it relieves us of all sorts of miseries once and for all". Gandhi also stressed the ownership rights of the capitalists and landlords. He said:

> I will never be a participant in snatching away the properties from their owners and you should know that I will use all my influence and authority against the class war. If somebody wants to deprive you from your property you will find me standing shoulder to shoulder with you.

Gandhi's appeasement of imperialism can be understood further from the fact that two major volumes of his work are devoted to his correspondence with the imperialists. One glaring example of Gandhi's treacherous policy is the incident of the Garhwal rifles in Peshawar. In 1922, Hindu soldiers from the Garhwal rifles, displaying enormous courage and bravery, refused to open fire on an anti-imperialist demonstration by the Muslims. Gandhi opposed this act of non-violence. Commenting on the incident, he said:

> When a soldier refuses to fire then he is guilty of betraying his oath. I can never advise soldiers to defy the orders of officers because, if tomorrow I form a government, I will have

> to use the same soldiers and officers. If today I advise them for any defiance then tomorrow they can also refuse to obey my orders.

## Class Contradictions and the National Liberation Movement

The British and local rulers had a common aim to confine the struggle within the bounds of bourgeois rule. They were terrified that the national liberation movement would lead to a revolutionary outcome. Nehru's relationship with the British aristocracy was even stronger and warmer than Gandhi's. In his book *Viceroy Curzon to Mountbatten*, Hugh Tinker wrote:

> Nehru paid a flying visit to Malaya in March 1946. On arrival he went directly to the Singapore YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] where Lord Mountbatten and Lady Edwina were present to greet him. He responded to their warm welcome and agreed not to carry out an engagement, which might raise the political temperature. He at once cancelled a visit to lay a wreath on the site of the Indian national army, now demolished. He had responded warmly to the Mountbatten charm.

Such was the reality of Indian nationalism and patriotism that was being instilled into the movement to keep the struggle from moving onto class lines. One standard existed for the bourgeois leaders and another for the oppressed classes of the subcontinent.

Jinnah was no less anglicised. His habits, lifestyle, dress and attitude were much more British than those of the Muslims of the subcontinent he claimed to represent. He actually never contemplated a total break with the British. In April 1947, in his negotiations with Lord Mountbatten, Jinnah said:

> I do not care how little you give me so long as you give it to me completely. I do not wish to make any improper suggestion to you, but you must realise that the new Pakistan is almost certain to ask for dominion status with the British Empire .

Such was his passion for Partition that in August 1946 he vowed: "We shall have India divided or we shall have India destroyed". Jinnah made a complete u-turn, however: at an "oyster dinner" held in 1933 by Cambridge student Rahmat Ali at London's rather non-Islamic Waldorf Hotel to propose a country called Pakistan for Muslims, he laughed at the idea. This idea was later described by Muslim leaders, including Jinnah, to the Joint Select Committee of the British parliament as "only a student's scheme chimerical and impractical". Before 1940, Muslim hardliners were still dismissing the idea of a separate nation for the Muslims as absurd.

Jinnah never let contradictions hinder ambition. With his first speech as elected president of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly in Karachi on 11 August 1947, Jinnah told the house: "In the course of time Hindus will cease to be Hindus and Muslims will cease to be Muslims, not in a religious sense because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as the citizens of the nation". With the establishment of the new Pakistan, Jinnah was himself already contradicting the necessity for its creation. Once he got what he wanted through religion, religion was, he said, to have no further role in politics. He also declared Urdu the national language of the new Pakistan although he himself spoke none.

Mohammed Ali Jinnah, a man with a weakness for a drop of whisky and a ham sandwich, used the creation of Pakistan to try to secure the economic and political ambitions of the Muslim bourgeoisie. Christina Lamb, in her 1980s book "Waiting for Allah", wrote the following:

> In fact, were Jinnah alive today, he could be flogged under Pakistan's strict Islamic laws. A cold nationalist who disliked connecting religion and politics and who, right up to mid 1930s, claimed he was an Indian first and Muslim second, Jinnah saw in the Mullahs' slogans the route to safeguard both his own future and that of the Muslim landowning elite .

What Christina Lamb forgets, or is reluctant to mention, is the biggest factor in the equation: the interests of British imperialism because of the necessity for Partition to preserve the continuity of capitalist rule and imperialist exploitation. The class contradictions within the movement of national liberation in India were evident, however, right from the beginning. The bourgeois leaders were trying to woo the movement into submission by channelling it into colonial political structures. The masses were restive, and movements in the towns and countryside were exploding one after the other. The currents of class struggle were cutting across the national liberation struggle. The decisive turning point for the national liberation struggle came with the advent of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia. A whole cross-section of activists and leaders in the national liberation struggle were inspired by the mighty events that were taking place in Russia. Indian soldiers in Europe during the First World War brought back the experiences and influences of the Bolshevik revolution. Their interactions with the workers, and especially the soldiers of the European armies, had an important impact on their consciousness. Even religious leaders like Maulana Hasrat Mohani were so enthused by the Russian revolution that they moved rapidly to the left. Poets like Iqbal called Marx: "A prophet with a book [Capital] but no prophet-hood".

These tendencies reflect the enormous influence and authority that the October Revolution exerted on India and across the world. This rising influence in the national liberation movement not only alarmed the British but also sounded alarms in the palaces of the Pukka Sahibs (the local elites). The impact on youth was tremendous. The formation of the Hindu Socialist Revolutionary Army (HSRA) was the main expression of this radicalisation. The heroic deeds of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Raj Guru and Dutt, although ultra left, were actions of youth seething with revolt against the British tyranny. Unable to find a Marxist road to independence and revolution, they resorted to armed struggle.

## Bhagat Singh

The chain of events started when Lala Lajpat Rai, a radical peasant leader, was beaten up and severely injured by the police while demonstrating against the Simon Commission. He died on 17 November 1928. Some of the militants of the Gadar Party shot and killed an assistant superintendent of police, John Poyants Saunders, on 8 April 1929. Two young men were arrested for throwing bombs at the treasury benches of the central legislative assembly in Delhi. One of them was Bhagat Singh. Most of the youth arrested went on hunger strike in prison. Jatin Das, a young man, is believed to have died during an attempt to feed him forcibly after he had completed sixty-three days of fasting.

The trial of Bhagat Singh, and those of the other accused men, gained enormous publicity throughout India, and a mass base started to form around this radical left trend. The case was much discussed in society, and such was the sympathy for the accused that witnesses started turning hostile to the prosecution. Even a British policeman refused to identify Bhagat Singh as a person present at the time of the murder. As a result, the government issued the Lahore Conspiracy Case Ordinance 1930, which dispensed with the need for a defence counsel, defence witnesses and the presence of the accused. Bhagat's Singh's trial lasted five months. Judgment was pronounced on 7 October 1930. The popularity of these radical youths and their assertion of left ideas in the movement for national independence sent shock waves through the bourgeois leaders in the movement.

Evidence shows that Gandhi could have saved the lives of Bhagat Singh and the other accused by making a plea for clemency in his negotiations and pact with Viceroy Irwin. In fact, more violence erupted from his strategy of non-violence. This strategy was in reality, a device to subvert a revolutionary outcome of the liberation struggle. It was fomented as an alternative to the mass liberation struggle that was raging throughout the country. A British visitor to India, C F Andrews, wrote in 1932:

> The scene in India at the present time is that of the Roman Empire nineteen hundred years ago. There was the same vast order outwardly maintained. But within this area of apparent

> calm a surging, heaving ferment had suddenly begun to appear like volcanic lava cracking through the surface of the soil. Men call it the national movement .

Gandhi led the "gimmicks" of the long march, the breaking of the salt law and the 450 km Gandhi march as tokens of mass disobedience. Actually, the December 1929 Congress convention in Lahore (at which Jinnah actively participated) voted for the Poorna Swraj resolution. This allowed Congress to take control of the national liberation movement and to stop the surging left radicalisation in India. British rulers fully collaborated in this effort. They continuously imprisoned and released Congress leaders including Gandhi, which prompted the media to give extensive coverage of the sacrifice, courage and commitment of Gandhi and other bourgeois leaders. The civil bureaucracy played its part. Gandhi indulged in cosmetic and demagogic gestures to create a people's image by appearing semi-naked and living on goat's milk. In reality, he detested the revolutionary ideology and was anti-Marxist. All his fanatical efforts were directed towards keeping the movement within the confines of nationalism and maintaining class rule. The most sententious and conservative sections of the British bourgeoisie, including Churchill, detested Gandhi, but other sections of the British ruling class used Gandhi in a manipulative manner to quell the rising tide of the left. In less than two months, Gandhi and most of the leaders and activists of his non-violent (Stya Gana) movement were released.

Discussions between the Raj and Gandhi went on from 15 February to 5 March 1931. The negotiations involving mediators such as Taj Bahadur Sapru and the viceroy resulted in the Gandhi Irwin pact. There was outrage against this pact, as it ignored the position of Bhagat Singh and others. Reaction from within Congress, however, was also intense. Dr Subhash Chandra Bose, a leading figure of the leftwing in Congress, told Congress supporters that: "Between us and the British lays an ocean of blood and a mountain of corpses. Nothing on earth can induce us to accept this compromise which Gandhi has signed".

Wherever Gandhi went, youth with red flags met him with angry questions; sometimes he was even manhandled. At the All India Congress meeting in Karachi, the main slogan chanted was "Gandhi's truce sent Bhagat Singh to the gallows". Gandhi had to give explanations and justifications. He only remained at the helm because of the support of the "brown" political elite, whose main protector from revolution was Gandhi. On the day of Gandhi's visit to Lord Irwin (19 March 1931), Bhagat Singh and his comrades, encouraged by their friends, sent a letter to the viceroy. In that letter, instead of asking for clemency, they asked the viceroy to treat them as prisoners of war and to have them shot rather than hanged. Four days later, however, on 23 March 1931, the four were hanged at Lahore central prison. Bhagat Singh's prison diary makes very interesting reading; in it, he described the evolution of his ideology and thought while languishing in his death cell. He renounced individual violence, but condemned Gandhi's non-violence. He came very close to the Marxist position and put forward the proposition that a socialist revolution in the Indian subcontinent was the logical conclusion of the liberation struggle.

These conflicting views of the two irreconcilable class positions were an important trend in the liberation movement right up to Partition. Most historians have distorted Bhagat Singh's political evolution and have derided him as a populist national hero. Even subsequent Indian rulers have used Bhagat Singh's name to justify bourgeois parliamentary rule in India. It should have been the responsibility of the Communist Party of India to unite, develop and take forward the left currents that inevitably develop in every struggle for national liberation . If the Communist Party of India (CPI) been a Communist Party based on Marxist methods and perspectives, the whole course of history would have been different and the tragedy of Partition averted.

# CHAPTER 2: COMMUNIST RENDEZVOUS WITH PARTITION

## Communist Party in India and The Movement Lost

> There is no real connection between these two unrests, labour and Congress opposition. But their very existence and coexistence, explains and fully justifies the attention, which Lord Irwin gave to the labour problems.
>
> London Times, 29 January 1928

The Communist Party of India (CPI) was founded in India at the Kanpur communist conference of 26–28 December 1925. It was convened by Satyabhakata and the chairman of the reception committee was Hasrat Mohani. Comrade Singaravelu delivered the presidential address. The first nucleus was set up in Berlin in 1919, and an organisation in the name of Indian communists was established in Tashkent USSR in December 1920. Manabendra Nath Roy, the main theoretician of the party who was in exile, played a leading role in establishing the CPI in the Third International. Although Roy operated from Europe, he was the main theoretician of the party.

The Kanpur communist conference brought together various left groups across India. The main leaders were Muzaffar Ahmed from Bengal, Shaukat Usmani from the United Provinces, S A Dange from Bombay, Abdul Majeed from Lahore and representatives from other regions of the subcontinent. Earlier, a circular from "Inquilab" Office, Railway Road, Lahore, signed by Comrades Ghulam Hussain and Shamsuddin Hassan to twenty-five prominent leftist leaders was issued on 27 April 1923 to form a party on Dr Manilal's manifesto. Several other efforts to form a party were made.

M Singaravelu's presidential address at the Kanpur conference, though fluent, was politically and ideologically confused. It contained strong nationalist overtones. Similarly, Hasrat Mohani's speech was dangerously flawed. He projected Islam as even more egalitarian than the communist programme. Another shortcoming of the conference was a hesitation towards linking the CPI to Bolshevism. This was probably because of pressure from the imperialist and nationalist propaganda against communism, but, above all, it exposed the ideological weaknesses of the leadership and the low level of Marxist understanding. Manabendra Nath Roy was critical of this soft stand and was infuriated by the reluctance of the leadership to affiliate to the communist international.

The rising tide of the workers' struggle and the interest in communist ideas that swept through the wider layers of society terrified the British imperialists. The activities of the intelligence agencies against the communists were much greater than against the bourgeois leaders, and

marked difference existed in the methods, intensity and ferocity of state repression. Communists, right from the beginning, had to work under clandestine conditions, whereas the leaders and parties of the bourgeoisie worked more or less in connivance with the British rulers.

The regime instituted several cases against the CPI. Two of these cases gained mass publicity. The first was the Kanpur Bolshevik conspiracy case, which took place in 1924. The main accused was Manabendra Nath Roy, who was convicted in absentia. Eight other leading members of the CEC (Central Executive Committee) of the CPI were arrested: Shaukat Usmani, M Singaravelu Chettair, S A Dange, R C L Sharma, Muzaffer Ahmed, Nalini Das Gupta, Maula Baksh and Professor Ghulam Hussain. The prosecution case lodged on behalf of the Crown made a mockery of British democratic values:

> The accused are charged under section 121A with conspiracy to establish a branch organisation of the communist international throughout British India with objective to deprive the King Emperor of the sovereignty of British India...

This case gained wide publicity in India and abroad, and, as a result, the Indian Communist Defence committee was set up. The committee gained solidarity in Europe and raised funds for the comrades and their families. Those funds were also used to develop the work of the CPI. In the British Communist Party's paper "Workers Weekly", an Indian Defence Fund was started. Eventually, only four of the accused were convicted: Muzaffer Ahmed, Shaukat Usmani, SA Dange and Nalini Gupta (Roy's emissary from Berlin); they were sentenced to four years of rigorous imprisonment. All four appealed to the Allahabad High Court, but the court upheld the sentences in November 1924.

Although the newly emerging network of the CPI was damaged severely by this repression, the mobilisation of the International Communist movement brought the Indian comrades to a closer understanding of Marxian internationalism. Roy and other leaders tried to form front organisations: one was the Labour Kisan Party, which was founded in Madras on May Day 1923. Several uncoordinated efforts were going on elsewhere, and this created rifts and antagonisms between communists in different parts of India.

At the fifth congress of the Comintern held on 17 June 1924, the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) emphasised the importance of working in the newly formed Peoples Party in its report on India. On several other issues, Roy criticised and disagreed with the ECCI's stand on India and the position put by Maulinvsky, the chairman of the Colonial Commission. Roy was opposed to the idea of the Communist International establishing connections with the Indian national liberation movement. His argument was that this would lead the Comintern to be indiscriminate and to establish relations with all classes. He gave the example of Egypt, in which Zagul Pasha had come to power through the nationalist movement. He had not changed the condition of the Egyptian masses at all and had thrown Egyptian communists into jail.

The main purpose of the centre set up in Tashkent was to train and send cadres to India to spread communist ideas. Most of these communists, known as Muhajirun, were arrested as they filtered into India from the North West Frontier at the end of 1922. Except for one or two, the rest abandoned Communism. In spite of the setbacks, however, communist groups had sprung up in major cities throughout India: Madras, Bombay, Lahore, Karachi, Calcutta and parts of the United Provinces.

After the People's Party failed to take off, the efforts of the upper echelons of communists in Congress did not get very far. Ideas for a new mass alternative party were considered. The party was to act as an organised pressure group within Congress. This party was to be the counterpart of the Swarajist Party... the moderate wing of the Congress party. The name of this party was to be Workers and Peasants Party (WPP), and Roy wanted a radical programme for it. The leadership and control of the organisation would remain with the communists. An underground, strong, centralised Communist Party of India was to be retained. In the late 1920s and 1930s, the WPP was the main front organisation of the CPI, while the All Indian Trade Union Congress (AITUC) was its labour wing.

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, two major upsurges occurred in the mass movement against the British Raj. The first wave was in the period 1919–1922 and the second more militant upsurge began in 1926–1927. These were the first major strike waves of the Indian proletariat that was making its mark on history. When the Simon Commission landed in Bombay in February 1928, it was greeted by nationwide strikes. Unrest was growing among the industrial proletariat, and from 1928–1929, 209 strikes took place compared with 129 in 1927. A mass general strike led by the textile workers was held in Bombay. This textile strike caused the shutdown of fifty mills and lasted from 26 April to 6 October 1928.

In the Bardoli district of Bombay state, the peasants went on a campaign of non-payment of taxes. At the steel works of Tata Limited, staff dismissals and wage decreases led to a strike that lasted five months. The workers of the Eastern Railway Company at Liloolah were locked out for four months.

From the North Western Railway (NWR) to the South Indian Railway (SIR), the railway workers went on strike in almost all sectors of the huge Indian railway network. The WPP played a major role in most of these strikes and protests. An increase in the armed struggle also occurred, and, in December, a bomb explosion wrecked parts of the train in which Viceroy Irwin was travelling. Not surprisingly, Gandhi, Nehru and Congress condemned the attack.

Chronic unemployment among the educated youth and deteriorating conditions created enormous discontent and turmoil amongst peasants and workers. In the northwest frontier the conflict became more violent. According to the Simon Commission report, between 1858 and 1922 British troops carried out seventy-two expeditions against rebellious tribesmen in the this region. In the United Provinces, agricultural prices had been falling throughout the year. In Gujurat at the end of June, a movement for the non-payment of rent and revenue began. In Bengal, a student movement developed and semi-guerrilla insurgency increased.

## Repression

The Communist Party led these struggles. The British imperialists were terrified of this red threat. They used the Indian national bourgeoisie leaders to distract the movement and started a new wave of repression against the Communist Party. This culminated in the infamous "Meerut Conspiracy Case" in 1929. This was similar to the Kanpur Bolshevik conspiracy and aimed to crush the CPI's leadership. Thirty-one leaders of the CPI were arrested on 20 March 1929 after the preparation of an elaborate dossier by the state's secret agencies against active communists. The trial of the Meerut conspiracy case began in June 1929. Not until 16 January 1933 did the trial court conduct its hearings and sentenced all but four of the accused to terms of imprisonment varying from life to three years. Phillip Spratt and Benjamin Frances Bradley, who had come from England to India to work for the CPI, both were sentenced to transportation for ten years. The Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court dismissed all the appeals, the sentences were reduced, and by the autumn of 1935 all the prisoners were released. During the trial, the accused had been able to evoke considerable national sympathy by exploiting anti-British feelings in the nationalist movement. The Indian bourgeoisie retaliated and formed a defence committee including Motilal Nehru as chairman and Jawaharlal Nehru as a member. The accused took advantage of the opportunity to propagate communist ideas provided by the trial. The Chief Justice observed:

> They took an inordinately long time in reading out well-prepared statements, which the court had to take down word for word. In most cases they had nothing more than an exposition, on an elaborate scale, of the doctrines of communism, its tenets and its programme.

"The British Raj In India" by SM Burke and Salim Aldin Qureshi commented:

> Through invisible terms the removal of the leading communists from the political scene had the effects of improving the industrial climate, intellectually the country became more aware of the communist philosophy, and young nationalists viewed the courage and secret methods of the communists with a certain amount of admiration. The statements of the accused during the trial, which were widely publicised naturally painted communism in the best possible colours.

After the Meerut trial began, attacks were launched against the Girin Kamgar Union... the textile union of Bombay. The government not only arrested the communists and the leading trade unionists but also appointed a Riots Enquiry Committee and a Strike Enquiry Committee, with the intention of removing all the communists from leading positions in trade unions throughout India. The Whitley Royal Commission on Indian Labour was also appointed and arrived in India in October 1929. The "Manchester

Guardian" reported that the real aim behind this commission was to repress the communists. On 25 October 1929, it wrote:

> Experience of the past two years has shown that the industrial workers in the biggest centres are peculiarly malleable material in the hands of unscrupulous communist organisers naturally, and this is one of the circumstances which give such importance to the recently appointed commission on Indian labour.

Although the Giri Kamgar union was forced to call off the textile strike, more strikes broke out in other parts of the country. The tinplate workers in Jamshedpur took strike action. The strike of oil and petroleum workers in Calcutta and dock workers in Karachi threatened the supremacy of the Raj.

## Ideological Debate On The Colonial Question

The question arises as to why the Communist Party could not take the lead in spite of the sacrifices and struggle of its workers. One of the explanations that most Stalinists tend to give is that repression was the main cause of the failure of the CPI to take charge of the situation. The Meerut Conspiracy Case is cited often as an example. It is true that repression does damage an organisation and leads to serious setbacks. A Marxist organisation has to able to built solidarity and support out of repression... both nationally and internationally. Some of the CPI leaders of the time accepted this position. Soumy Endranath Tagore in his pamphlet "Historical development" wrote,

> Nothing made so much propaganda in India for communism as did the Meerut conspiracy case. The entire attention of political India was focused on this case and hundreds of radical youth were drawn to the Communist Party because of it. There was also a good bit of propaganda in the international press. One can say with justice that the Meerut conspiracy case placed communism on a sure footing in India.

The main causes of the inability of the CPI to take over the leadership of the national liberation struggle lie elsewhere. Although there had been enormous ideological and tactical confusions ever since its inception, the general lines were to a certain extent correct. M P T Acharya and Abani Mukherjee attended the second congress of the Comintern, which met from 19 July to 7 August 1920, but both of them had consultative roles. M N Roy, although an Indian, represented the Mexican Communist Party. He and Michael Borodin had helped transform this party from socialist to communist in 1919 and got it affiliated to the Communist International. M N Roy's American wife, Evelyn Roy, also represented India, although she too had a consultative vote. A heated debate on the colonial question and the national liberation movement followed. The debate was mainly between Lenin and Roy. Lenin had expressed the view that the communist parties of the colonial countries must assist the national liberation struggle. Roy had pleaded that the national liberation struggle, led by the genuine revolutionary communist parties, instead of assisting the bourgeois leaders, should organise separate working class movements. The Communist International adopted Lenin's position as the main thesis. It also accepted Roy's position as a supplementary thesis on the national liberation movement in India, The Programme Of The Communist International, which was adopted at the second congress and published in September 1920. It stated:

> Tendencies like Gandhi's in India, thoroughly imbued with religious conceptions, *idealize* the most backward and economically most reactionary forms of social life, see the solution of the social problem not in proletarian socialism, but in a reversion of these backward forms, preach passivity and repudiate the class struggle and in the process of the development of the revolution become transformed into an openly reaction force. Gandhi's is more and more

becoming an ideology directed against mass revolution. It must be strongly combated by communism.

The degeneration of the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) and the Stalinisation of the Comintern had a devastating impact on the ideological and tactical development of the communist parties of the east. The lack of maturity of the CPI and the ideological differences within the leadership further perpetuated this ideological confusion. The movements of the proletariat, however, had a positive impact towards linking the class struggle to the national movement in India. The movement of 1927–1929 had an important role to play in keeping the line more or less correct.

As late as 1928, M N Roy had a relatively correct Marxist position on the question of the character of the Indian revolution, the role of the national bourgeoisie and the role of the proletariat. During this period, there was insurrection in Colombo, the mass demonstration of the Workers and Peasants Party in Calcutta and inspiring strike movements in Bombay, Karachi and elsewhere. Roy wrote on this question in the winter of 1928 in his article "Role Of The Proletariat In The Nation Revolution", which appeared in exhibits of the Meerut conspiracy case record on page 1676:

> Ever since 1919, when the national movement became a mass movement, the workers and peasants played an important role in it. But the reformist bourgeois leadership systematically obstructed a full and free play of the revolutionary mass energy; and the petty bourgeois sought to belittle the role of the working class. The tactics of the nationalist leaders were to use the awakened masses as pawns in their game for petty concessions and reforms. Such a relation of the classes is not the peculiarity of the Indian revolution. All the revolutions of the modern history were fought and won by the masses but except in the case of the Russian Revolution the leadership was with the classes who consequently appropriated all the fruits of the revolution. Naturally, the Indian bourgeoisie believes and hopes that such would be case in India and couldn't be otherwise. Had not Indian revolution been taking place in national and international conditions entirely different from those obtaining in the epoch of the bourgeois democratic revolution in Europe? The working class is not only the fighting factor of Indian revolution; it is the driving force. It not only pushes other classes in the revolutionary struggle; but also prepares itself to assume the leadership of the democratic revolution in its decisive stages. The recent events herald appearance of the proletariat on the political scene in this role of potential leader...
>
> ...When the national bourgeoisie frantically seeking a strategic retreat into the camp of counter revolution and the petty bourgeois radicalism was cowed by imperialist sabre rattling, the proletariat in Colombo and Bombay challenged the power of the state, and proved that, organized on wide scale under revolutionary leadership mass action can defy and ultimately overcome the formidable forces of repression. ...The failure rather than the refusal of the bourgeoisie to lead the national revolution caused the rise of radicalism; the instability of the latter to capture the leadership opens the way for the proletariat to appear on the scene independently. The proletariat must assume the leadership itself; otherwise it will be used by its present owners, the bourgeoisie, to liquidate the revolution. ...This shows that the proletariat is the only class that can really fight imperialism; that it is not afraid; that it can really sacrifice while others talk hypocritically and that it possesses potential powers that when fully mobilised will be able to meet and overcome the most powerful enemy. History had bestowed upon the Indian proletariat the role to hold high the standard of national revolution.

## Degeneration Of The Comintern

The zigzags and right and left turns of the Stalinist Comintern resulted in the defeat of several revolutions, as well as some important revolutionaries throughout the world.

After Roy's return from the China mission in 1927, he had fallen from Stalin's grace. He was eventually expelled from the Comintern in 1929. This expulsion was also attributed to his affiliation with the Brandler group in Germany, which already had been expelled from the Communist International. Although he kept his position and authority for some time, as the Stalinist repression and stranglehold on the Third International tightened, he was purged with several other comrades from the Communist Party. He returned to India in 1930, was arrested and sentenced to six years of imprisonment in 1931. After his release in 1936, he engaged himself in the work of a "Special Cultural Renaissance". Several Indian communists ended up in such tendencies. For a short period, Roy joined Congress, but he split away from it in 1940. Lost in the wilderness, he was unable to play a role in the left opposition against Stalinist degeneration led by Leon Trotsky. Perhaps he lacked the necessary will and determination needed in so harsh an internal conflict. Roy was a broken man and repudiating scientific Marxism, he degenerated into petty bourgeois humanism.

After 1928, in response to the third period of the Comintern, the CPI leadership took the path of sectarian and isolationist policies. It failed to take the party's programme to wider layers of the masses. In this period, the CPI launched the "Draft Programme of Action". In this programme, it vowed to expropriate imperialist trading and commercial institutions, the landed estates of the feudal lords, the properties of the ruling British elite and major foreign assets. It called for a reduction on trade and rent on peasants, the end of the caste system and other similar demands. This was the programme of a bourgeois revolution. On one hand, it held ultra left positions and isolated itself from the movement; on the other hand, it made U-turns and capitulated to the bourgeoisie nationalist leadership at a later stage. In its ultra left stance, corresponding with the third period of a Stalinised Comintern, the CPI policies led to the division of several trade unions on political lines; the inevitable result of which was the crushing defeat of several strikes. The most significant example was the defeat of the Bombay textile strikes. In 1934, the All India textile strike, which, apart from other demands, demanded the release of political prisoners, was crushed by the regime. The main cause was internal dissent on the various policies of the adventurist position taken by the CPI leadership.

In spite of mistakes, the CPI still maintained a considerable base, mainly because of its links with the heritage of "October 4th". In 1936, the railway strike that paralysed the British Empire in India had an important impact on the newly emerging proletariat in other sections of industry. In 1938, with the slogan of a "Workers Socialist Republic", the CPI was able to mobilise 50 000 workers in Calcutta. It was able to lead a massive strike under the slogan "Government of Workers and Poor Peasants". Similarly, a new wave of class struggle had forced the CPI leadership to move further left. In the 1938 Kissan Sabah [Peasants' Conference] of the CPI, more than 500 000 poor peasants had registered for attendance. In 1939, the resolution passed by this conference strongly criticised Congress Ministries of Home Government. The resolution demanded the full political freedom and independence that could be obtained only under the rule of the people.

The rulers were terrified of the rising revolutionary propaganda, sentiment and agitation among the masses. Apart from the Kanpur Bolshevik conspiracy case in 1924 and the Meerut conspiracy case, the rulers earlier had instigated these fabricated cases with the "Peshawar Conspiracy Case" in 1922. The CPI's appeal got a limited response from the workers movement, because of their sectarian attitudes and ultra left tactics. They still achieved some success, however, because they were still raising class issues. Throughout the 1930s, the CPI activists faced further fabricated cases. The Communist Party was banned until 1937. In Maharashtra and the United Provinces, thousands of members of the CPI were put behind bars. In Bengal and Punjab, they were subjected to atrocities and torture. In Sholapur, four leaders of the Communist Party were hanged; these included one main trade union leader. In Malabar,

the workers of the Communist Party were subjected to constant repression. In Madras, several workers were hanged.

## Historic Betrayal Of The CPI

Unfortunately, during the whole decade of the 1930s, the CPI leaders and its official policy were subject to the whims of the bureaucratic elite in Moscow. Like most other communist parties, it was a pawn of the foreign policy needs of the Stalinist rulers. The changes and zigzags in the policies of the Moscow bureaucracy influenced the policies of the CPI leadership. The policy of "defence of the fatherland" severely dented the clear class perception of the revolutionary struggle among the activists of the CPI. The ultra leftist and sectarian policies of the CPI intensified when the Stalinist rapprochement took place with Nazi Germany. This pact exposed the instability and stupidity of the Stalinist clique in Moscow.

At the beginning of the Second World War, and especially after the Stalin–Hitler pact, the CPI launched an intensive anti-war campaign. It called it an imperialist war, and the CPI was in the forefront of anti-war and anti-British agitation. This was a golden chance for the CPI to present itself as a revolutionary alternative to the masses. At the start of the anti-war campaign, the CPI took the courageous step of organising mass strikes against the war. The first ever anti-war workers' demonstration in the world took place in India on 22 October 1939 with a one-day protest general strike: 90 000 people participated. The main slogans of the demonstration were "Defeat This Treachery Against The Human Race", "Down With The Imperialist War", "Long Live The Freedom Of India", etc. The British colonialists increased state repression. Thousands of CPI workers were put into jail during this anti-war agitation. Congress was polarised, and a number of leftist groups, including those around Dr Subhash Chandra Bose, identified with the CPI. In the 1939 convention, Bose defeated Gandhi in the election for President of Congress. There was a strong possibility of forming a United Front with the left wing of Congress. This would have led to a formidable force of the left which with a correct Marxist programme and methods, could have led to a socialist conclusion of the national independence movement.

While the process of left unity on the basis of the anti-war and anti-British posture of the CPI was forging ahead, changes in Moscow's policy struck a devastating blow. On 22 June 1941, Hitler attacked the Soviet Union. The Stalinist bureaucracy made a 180 turn on its policies and ° analysis of the forces in the international arena. The Kremlin masters, having abandoned every trace of revolutionary international perspective, were totally unaware that Hitler was preparing a devastating blow against them. This is what disarmed the Soviet Union in the face of its most terrible foe. From the outbreak of the Second World War right up until June 1941, when Hitler attacked Russia, Nazi Germany received a large increase in exports from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Between 1938 and 1940, exports to Germany rose from 85.9 million rupees to 736.5 million rupees, which greatly assisted Hitler's war efforts. Stalin had attempted to come to an accommodation with the imperialist powers between 1944 and 1945 at the Big Three Conferences at Teheran, Moscow, Yalta and Potsdam. His humiliating capitulations at the altar of imperialist diplomacy sealed the fate of several communist parties and revolutions in a number of countries.

Certain countries would now fall under the sphere of influence of Stalinism or the imperialists. Stalin washed his hands of the revolution in Greece. He told the Yugoslav partisan leader Milovan Dijilas: "The uprising in Greece will fold up... [it] must be stopped, and as quickly as possible." And according to Churchill:

> Stalin adhered strictly and faithfully to our agreement of October and in all the long weeks of fighting the communists in the streets of Athens not one word of reproach came from Pravda or Izvestia.

Stalin wanted Mao to make an agreement with Chiang Kai Shek. In Yugoslavia, Stalin favoured the restoration of the monarchy under King Peter.

The masses looked to the communist parties for a revolutionary way out after the bloody lessons of the war, but Stalin had other ideas. On instruction from Moscow, the Communist Party leaders entered bourgeois coalition governments in France, Italy, Belgium and Finland as a means of blocking the revolutionary movements of the workers. This failure of the working classes of the advanced capitalist countries to take power predetermined the fate of revolutions that occurred in other colonial countries. The Stalinist compromise with British and American imperialism forced the CPI to change its attitude towards British imperialist rule. In 1942, Comrade Khushi Mohammad, a CPI leader, spoke at a mass rally in Azamgarh-Uttar Pradesh. He gave a fiery anti-imperialist speech. When his speech was at its peak, he was passed a note that had just been brought by a messenger from the CPI's high command. After he glanced at the note, he made a U-turn in his speech. He retreated from his staunch anti-imperialist position and said that as British democracy had formed an alliance with fatherland Russia, the main thrust of agitation and struggle had to be directed against the fascists (Germany and Japan). Although some leaders and activists had resisted these policy blunders and Stalinist onslaught on Marxist ideology, most of them were eliminated. The behaviour of Comrade Khushi Mohammad is a reminder of the extent of Stalinist purges in India.

The CPI paid a heavy price for this opportunistic turn. Apart from its attitude of appeasement towards the British, it started to develop a conciliatory attitude towards the national bourgeois leadership. In reality, large sections of the CPI were absorbed into Congress. At the same time, its reversal of previous policies lead to a head-on clash with Bose and other left wing tendencies within and outside Congress; Subash even went to the extent of forming an alliance with the Japanese imperialists in his frantic crusade against British rule. This led the Japanese imperialists to provide military and logistic support to the growth and development of the Indian National Army (INA). This military outfit originally was created and led by Bose; so much so that the officers and ranks of the British Indian Army who were languishing in Japanese jails as prisoners of war became the main recruits of the INA. The Japanese gave them better food, clothing and conditions to induce them to join the INA. Apart from the fight against the British, however, Bose and the Japanese had little in common.

To a large extent, the CPI merged with Congress at the beginning of the 1940s. The CPI cadres who were in Congress were moving to form a block with liberal socialists like Nehru and social democrats like Jay Parkash Narayan. Nehru actually was used as a tool of the British to control the workers' and the peasants' upsurge and to subvert the radicalisation of the youth. The CPI continued with this policy throughout the post-independence period and went so far as to hand over the CPI trade unions, the All India Trade Union Federation (AITUC), to Congress socialists.

There is no doubt that it was important for the CPI to make inroads into the national liberation movement. In some instances, it even cooperated with the bourgeois nationalist leaders at the heart of the movement, but they should have been aiming to develop the movement on class lines and to break the stranglehold of the bourgeois leaders.

The preliminary draft thesis on the National and Colonial Question, which Lenin had drafted and was presented to the Plenary Session on 28 July 1920 at the second Congress of the Communist International, stated:

> ...The Communist International should support bourgeois-democratic national movements in colonial and backward countries only on condition that, in these countries, the element of the future proletarian parties, which will be communist not only in name, are brought together and trained to understand their special tasks, i.e., those of the struggle against the bourgeois-democratic movements within their own nations. The Communist International must enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in the colonial and backward countries, but should not merge with it, and should under all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in its most embryonic form...

The CPI cadres should have exposed the real class interests of Nehru and Gandhi to the toiling masses. They should have striven to overcome and eliminate the images of the bourgeois leaders from the minds and consciousness of those who were taking part in the struggle to overthrow the Raj. Their main aim should have been to recruit the socialist youth and militants who were in Congress into the CPI and create a mass movement of the workers and peasants to put an end to imperialist rule. That would have been the real revolutionary course of the struggle... a class war.

The change in the CPI's position on the war created disillusionment amongst the masses and confusion and apathy in the party ranks. One of the most prominent Communist leaders of India, E M S Namboodripad admitted the damage done to the Communist Party by its sudden U-turn in its attitude towards war. In his book B.J.P/R.S.S: "In The Service Of Right Reaction", he wrote:

> In the first phase of the war the Communists had launched a countrywide movement in demand for total independence. In the second phase they felt a change in the character of the war, the result of the attack of Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union. It had become a 'peoples' war. The CPI leadership opposed the "Quit India" demand, and isolated themselves from the movement.

On the other hand, Nehru and other congress leaders tactically supported the allies in the war. They stressed that India could not fight under British rule and demanded an independent India. Gandhi launched the "Quit India" movement on 8 August 1942. Like his previous manoeuvres, it was passive in character and did not threaten the British rule or the colonial structures. It aimed to water down the militancy of the struggle and at the same time consolidate and perpetuate the bourgeois leadership and ideology of the national liberation struggle.

The role of the CPI at this critical juncture of history was one of outright betrayal of the national liberation movement. The CPI should have demanded that the workers and peasants be united into a revolutionary people's army against both the British and the Japanese usurpers. This would not only have gained mass support but would have bolstered the gains of the October Revolution in the Soviet Union and expanded the anti-imperialist struggle. The Churchill–Stalin alliance was preferred, however, to the liberation of India by the CPI. Stalin had abolished the rudimentary organisation of the Third International to appease Churchill and Roosevelt, but he was still calling the shots in the CPI's policy and actions in India.

The imprisoned CPI leaders started a secret correspondence with the British rulers from their jails. They were laying their "voluntary services" at the doorstep of the colonial rulers. They were offering to put up resistance against Congress activists and "fifth columnists" who were still active in the struggle against the Raj. Dange, the general secretary of CPI at the time, wrote a letter to the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, pledging the services of the Communist Party in the war effort.

The CPI leadership not only isolated itself from the ever-rising tide of the national liberation movement but also frustrated and disillusioned its own cadres and members. In April 1942, the CPI leaders sent a secret memorandum to their jailers:

> Today all the Indian communists are burning with desire to cooperate in the war effort, even if it is under the present government. We request official assistance so that we can launch a resistance against the Japanese. We have no doubt that the government will find our paper the most influential organ of war propaganda. Such propaganda has not been initiated till now.
>
> They explained how they would render their services if they were released from prison: To raise the patriotic feelings of the masses in defence of our country, steps to increase the recruitment in all the departments of the war forces, the creation of a bond of brotherhood between the army and the people, develop new schemes to enhance production, and other similar steps could extend full co-operation with you from the bottom of our hearts. The

> government should have no need to be afraid of any strikes. We 'communists' wherever and to what extent possible would provide full assistance.

In this period when Congress leaders were behind bars, thousands were being hanged, lashed, tortured and imprisoned; leaders and activists of the CPI were being released from prisons. The ban on the party was lifted, and CPI publications started getting funds from the British Colonial government. In his book "Nehru-Ideology" and Practice, E M S Namboodripad described the situation:

> ...for the first time in history the CP worked openly as a party. They organised big public meetings and gatherings. They were now publishing newspapers and journals in almost all the languages of India. The network of party organisations was such that it could never have been envisaged in the past.

Ironically, the first congress of the CPI was held in this period of collaboration with the British in 1943. During this period, the party was trying to stop strikes and restrain youth from going on demonstrations and soldiers from deserting. As a result of this betrayal, the mass reaction against the CPI was enormous. It became so severe that CPI offices were attacked. Ranadive, the CPI ideologue of the 1940s and 1950s, confessed: "The voice of the CPI was reaching deaf ears. They had never been so isolated from the masses".

Namoodripad also accepted:

> ...a major section of the masses which was participating in the 'quit India' movement with such enthusiasm was unable to understand how the communists, who till yesterday were known for their waging of an irreconcilable struggle against British imperialism, could refuse to join such a movement today. The only proclaimed objective of which is to force the British to quit India... for them this was totally incomprehensible.

The Communist Party took several years to rebuild the credibility it lost during that period. Still today in election meetings, Congress leaders hypocritically use this criminal record of the CPI. This has also been a cause of the CP(M) (Communist Party Marxist) overtaking the CPI in later decades. These somersaults cost the party dearly, but the leadership did not learn from the series of mistakes it had made during the decades of the pre-independence struggle.

The inevitable result of this disastrous policy was the growth in the burgeoning fortunes of Congress. By conducting this policy of appeasement of British Imperialism, the CPI leadership handed the national liberation struggle to the bourgeoisie on a platter. The British imperialists could not have been happier. Ranadive again conceded: "Congress increased its prestige and influence amongst the masses enormously".

## The Mass Movement

In the 1940s, a revolutionary blizzard swept across Asia and the world. In India, 1946 was the year of revolution. It began with a mass movement that forced the British rulers to release the leaders of INA who were imprisoned in Indian jails facing charges of treason. The massive popularity of INA at that timed revealed that the masses had no sympathy for the non-violence and passivity of Congress or loyalty for the stricken CPI. The mass support of INA was such that just after the trial and the sentencing of Shahnawaz and other officers of INA by a military court, they had to be set free by the British. After the Second World War, there was enormous ferment and tumult in the British army. The British soldiers and young officers, exhausted from the war, led widespread revolts from Hong Kong to Egypt. At the same time, the mass upsurge was unstoppable and gained momentum day by day. In the countryside, the sleepy hamlets and small towns had been awakened by these winds of change and the end of imperialist rule was in sight.

When it was announced in October that three officers of the Indian National Army... a Hindu, a Muslim and a Sikh... were to be court martialled the following month, the "Mughal Red Front" in Delhi immediately raised a storm of protest. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad wrote that the upsurge for freedom was no longer a secret. The same spirit moved all sections of the services. Men and officers of the defence forces declared openly that they had given their blood during the war on the assurance that India would be free. They demanded that this assurance must now be honoured. Azad related:

> Wherever I went during this period young men of the defence forces came out to welcome me and expressed their sympathy and admiration for the movement without any regard for the reactions of their European officers.
>
> On 1 March 1946, a revolt of the soldiers occurred in the military barracks at Jabalpur. On 18 March, the Gurkha Sepoys deployed at Deradoon revolted against the regime. The unrest among the Indian officers manifested itself in many incidents in the army and the air force.

## The 1946 Rebellion of the Sailors of the British Indian Navy

One of the most spectacular episodes of the revolt against the British Raj was the uprising of the sailors of the British Indian Navy in 1946. On 18 February of that year, the sailors and shipmen of the British Indian Navy battleship HMS Talwaar, posted to the Bombay harbour, went on strike. They were protesting against the bad food and poor conditions.

Although on the first day it was a peaceful hunger strike, signs of an imminent and much bigger rebellion against the British rulers were evident. On 19 February, the sailors announced the strike to the naval personnel stationed in the fortress and to those in the naval barracks. They took over the naval trucks, boarded them, hoisted Red Flags and started patrolling the city of Bombay. They invited the masses of the city to join in the struggle they had started. As a result, anti-British imperialist sentiments started to spread like wildfire throughout the region.

On the eve of 19 February 1946, increasing numbers of naval personnel joined this revolt. The Union Jacks on most of the ships of the Royal Indian Navy in the Bombay harbour were torn down, and the rebel sailors hoisted Red Flags along with the flags of the political parties involved in the struggle for independence.

Within 48 hours, the British imperialists were faced with the largest ever revolt of their naval units. The message of this rebellion started to spread by word of mouth and then over the radio (the radio station had been taken over by the rebels) to military garrisons and barracks across India. Some of the sailors' leaders broadcast the message of the uprising, as well as revolutionary songs and poetry around the clock. The revolt spread to 74 ships, 20 fleets and 22 units of the navy along the coast. These naval stations included Bombay, Calcutta, Karachi, Madras, Cochin and Vishapatam. On 20 February, only ten ships and two naval stations were not in complete revolt.

In the beginning, this revolt was considered to be spontaneous, but that is not completely true. On the eve of 19 February, a strike committee was formally set up. Signalman M S Khan and petty officer telegraph operator Madan Singh unanimously were elected president and vice president of the committee. Both of them were under the age of 25 years. One was a Muslim and the other a Sikh: this was a conscious act to reject the religious divide being fed into the liberation movement by the native bourgeois leaders and their British masters.

Apart from the other tasks on the strike committee agenda, it was also agreed to involve the political parties in this movement and to gain their support. Tragically, the CPI lost the leadership of the independence movement because of its disastrous policy of supporting the British imperialists under the so-called "anti-fascist front" policy dictated by the Stalinist elite in the Kremlin. This led to rapidly diminishing support for the CPI in the Liberation movement. At that time, the Indian bourgeoisie and

their leaders were negotiating a settlement with the British. They were as hostile as the British to any revolutionary upsurge at this delicate juncture in the history of the subcontinent.

Gandhi outrightly condemned this uprising of the sailors. The CPI leaders even lost the opportunity to link this naval revolt with the strikes taking place in the textile industry, on the railways and in other industrial sectors throughout India. Likewise, leaders like Subhash Chandra Bose were unable to connect this movement with the revolts taking place in the British Indian army. Chandra had gone too far in launching the Indian National Army to fight British forces under the auspices of the reactionary Japanese regime!

Congress and the Muslim League were afraid that revolutionary and class struggle ideas would penetrate into the movement they had done so much to tear apart along religious lines. In spite of this betrayal and the contemptuous attitude of the national bourgeois leaders, the revolutionary momentum of the uprising continued unabated, and the whole country was filled with the echoes of the slogan "long live the revolution".

The passions and sentiments of these slogans resonated throughout the whole of Bombay. One of the poets of the era, Josh Malihabadi, wrote enthralling verses like:

> My task is my growth; my name is martyr. My slogan is revolution, revolution revolution.

On 21 February, British shock troops opened fire on the sailors as they came out of their barracks in the Bombay fortress. This provocation changed a peaceful uprising into an armed rebellion. Armed clashes occurred between the British elite troops and the rebellious sailors throughout the day. On the first day, one death was reported in Bombay, but on the second day 14 sailors were martyred in Karachi. The industrial workers who had joined the revolt with the sailors were subjected to brutal attacks by the British forces.

On 22 and 23 February, 250 sailors and workers were martyred by the imperialist forces. According to some eyewitness accounts, on 21 February, it seemed that the oppressed masses of the whole subcontinent had risen up in a revolutionary movement against British rule. In these events, the revolutionary strike committee had shifted its command to the Narba fleet. The sailors now aimed the barrels of their guns at ships and targeted British Naval installations and command centres on the coast. Sirens were sounded from all ship decks. The sailors announced through loud speakers that they would destroy the British military bases and installations to defend their comrades in the cities and in the harbour if the British dared to attack.

The British government in London was in shock. The British Labour Prime Minister Clement Atlee ordered the uprising to be crushed. The commander of the British Indian Navy, Admiral Godfrey, threatened the rebellious sailors to "surrender or perish". The leader of the independence movement and one of the stalwarts of the Indian National Congress, Sardar Vallabhbai Patel, openly came out on the side of the British. He denounced the uprising and supported the imperialists' ultimatum. In this uprising, the national leadership of India, both Hindu and Muslim, became allies of the British imperialists. This exposed their real class character and their collaborationist role in the saga of transition from British to native rule to independence.

> Meanwhile, British fighter aircraft were carrying out sorties over the rebellious fleet. In such conditions, Sardar Patel made the following infamous statement:
>
> *Only a small band of insolent, hot headed and insane youngsters are trying to get involved in politics through these acts, when they have nothing to do with politics.*

Isolated, desperate and disillusioned by the treacherous role and attitude of the national leadership towards the uprising, M S Khan proposed surrender to the strike committee. The 36-member committee, however, rejected this plea. Several tense hours passed. The mainstream national leadership intensified its efforts to isolate the naval uprising from the mass movement for independence that was surging across the subcontinent. Demoralisation started to set in among the members of the strike committee.

Another session of the committee started in the early hours of 24 February on HMS Talwaar. By now it was evident that the only option was to surrender and lay down arms. At 0600 hours on 24 February 1946, black flags were raised to announce surrender. In its last session, the strike committee passed a resolution, which became the last message of the revolutionary sailors to the toiling masses of the South Asian subcontinent. The resolution stated:

> Our uprising was an important historical event in the lives of our people. For the first time the blood of uniformed and non-uniformed workers flowed in one current for the same collective cause. We the workers in uniform shall never forget this. We also know that you, our proletarian brothers and sisters shall also never forget this. The coming generations, learning its lessons shall accomplish what we have not been able to achieve. Long live the working masses. Long live the Revolution.

After the surrender most leaders and activists of this uprising were prosecuted, imprisoned and executed in spite of their surrender. On 15 March, the rebellious sailors of the Royal Indian Navy who were still imprisoned started a hunger strike. The nationalist bourgeois leaders refused to raise any protest. The nationalist parties, masquerading as upholders of independence, also made no protest.

This episode stands out, however, as one of the greatest chapters in the history of the struggle for independence from British rule. Although this uprising was defeated, the movement showed the British what lay ahead. As a direct result of this uprising, the British Prime Minister Clement Atlee announced that the British would leave India before June 1948. Such was the blow inflicted on the confidence of the British rulers that they were forced to beat a retreat. The British, in connivance with the native bourgeois leaders, hastened the process of Partition along ethnic and religious lines. After this episode, they were determined not to leave the subcontinent united in any form whatsoever-either as a confederation or with any political superstructure they may have envisaged before these revolutionary events. The British policy of divide and rule thus came into play.

The details of this glorious uprising remain unrecorded both in India and Pakistan, just as several similar events and great episodes have yet to see the light of day. Rising generations of youth and workers have the task of carrying out the message and aspirations of the sailors' strike committee of the February 1946 uprising. This can be accomplished only by carrying out a successful socialist revolution in the countries of the subcontinent. A socialist victory in any of these states would lead inevitably to the formation of a voluntary socialist federation of the south asian subcontinent.

## Reaction of the CPI

In the mid 1940s, the Communist Party had a cadre membership of 48 000. This was a significant force that could have taken the liberation struggle forward to a socialist transformation. The mass upsurge jolted the CPI leaders and the impact of the uprising was enormous. The leadership was under pressure to do something. There was enormous ferment within party ranks, full-timers and the youth. The CPI called a general strike in Bombay, which paralysed the city. When the armed personal carriers were sent to crush the protest, the workers put up barricades and stopped their advance; street battles broke out throughout the city. In three days, more than 400 people were killed and hundreds were injured in clashes with the state forces.

On 19 March, a strike wave penetrated the police force throughout the major centres of the country. At Allahabad, the police went on a hunger strike. The Delhi police joined them on 22 March. On 3 April, 10 000 police personnel in Bihar joined the strike movement. Soon the workers also joined this mass wave of strikes. On 2 May 1946, the workers of the North Western Railway went on strike. On 11 July, more than 100 000 postal workers started an all-India strike. Industrial workers across the subcontinent joined the movement with massive strike action. The whole of India was engulfed in these

mass uprisings, revolts and strikes. The British were losing control over the armed forces. The first to come to the rescue of the imperialist Raj were the political leaders of all religions.

The revolutionary outburst alarmed Congress leadership. The president of Congress between 1939 and 1946, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, thought that it was not the appropriate time for direct action: "we must watch the course of events and carry on negotiations with the British Government".

Nehru said:

> ...what has happened clearly demonstrated how anti-social elements in a vast city like Bombay exploited a situation. Our freedom is near at hand today. We have all the virtues for winning our freedom, but I confess we lack discipline, which is essential in a free country.

The commander-in-chief of the Indian Army, Field Marshal Claude Auchinleck, assured Azad that if the mutineers returned to duty unconditionally, there would be no victimisation and their grievances would be considered sympathetically. Through the personal efforts of Patel, who had the support of Jinnah and Nehru, the mutineers' surrendered on 23 February 1946. At the same time, outbreaks occurred in Calcutta and Madras. A serious uprising at Karachi was suppressed with considerable loss of life, and many casualties occurred among the revolutionary sailors and soldiers.

In a telegram to Whitehall, London, Auchinleck said: "...if you don't grant them independence in three days they will take it by force". India's chief of staff, General Lord Ismay, who had been Winston Churchill's chief of staff from 1940 to 1945 and a veteran of the subcontinent in the Indian army, stated: "India was a ship on fire in mid-ocean with ammunition in her hold." The question he asked Lord Mountbatten was whether they could they get the fire out before it reached the ammunition? Because of this revolutionary ferment throughout the subcontinent, it was obvious that the British imperialists would not be able to leave behind a united India. India had to be divided.

## Prospects of a Proletarian Revolution

Again during the movement of 1946, Hindu and Muslim soldiers fought shoulder to shoulder. More than half of the armed forces personnel were Muslims. Rejecting sectarianism, Muslim soldiers, navy sailors and air force personnel fought alongside their Hindu brothers. Muslim and Hindu workers jointly set up barricades during the Bombay strike. In Calcutta and other cities, Hindus and Muslims launched a united movement and demonstrations for the release of the INA personnel of all faiths. The Red Flag was the symbol of the mass uprisings that had spread throughout the subcontinent. Although the leadership wavered, thousands of CPI workers and young full-timers were burning with the desire to march on the road of socialist revolution.

The whole idea of transforming the national liberation struggle into a proletarian revolution was generally accepted in the ranks of the CPI. The documents and minutes of the various rank and file conferences, aggregates and meetings of the party are proof of this. This abandonment of the class position led to the diversification and disarray of left workers and activists, and as a result, a whole variety of tendencies emerged, such as peasants' organisations (like those of Lohia, and Chotu Ram) which undermined support for the CPI amongst the population.

> The condition and frustration of the CPI activists and young full-timers is portrayed in some of the literary writings of that period. The liberal novelist and critic Khushwant Singh, in his famous novel on Partition, *Train to Pakistan*, described the state of mind of CPI full-timer Iqbal Singh who had been sent from an advanced urban locality to the hamlet of Manomarja near the new Indo-Pak border:
>
> *Lying on a cot in the courtyard of the village Sikh Temple, gazing at the stars he thought, 'Everyone, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Congressite, Leaguer, Akali or communist was deep in it.*

*All that was needed was to divert the kill and grab instinct from communal channels and turn it against the propertied classes. That was the proletarian revolution, the easy way.' To his anguish, the party bosses would not see it in this light.*

That innumerable CPI cadres saw it that way is a historical reality... and they were right. A workers' movement on a class basis and a proletarian revolution was the only way out of the communal frenzy unleashed by the Partition. The ingredients of a proletarian revolution were there, but they lacked leadership. Or, to put it more correctly, the party and leadership were there, but it was a shell, devoid of a Marxist ideology, a clear programme, tactics, strategy and methods...there was no lack of will, determination, courage and daring to carry the revolution to a victorious conclusion. Revolutionary periods are historical exceptions. Such revolutionary moments come seldom in history. They are most delicate and tender. When the custodians of the proletariat err in such times, generations have to suffer.

# CHAPTER 3: TRAUMA OF PARTITION

## A Movement Gone Berserk

> When the curve of historical development rises, public thinking becomes more penetrating, braver and more ingenious. It grasps facts on the wing, and on the wing links them with the thread of generalisation... When the political curve indicates a drop, public thinking succumbs to stupidity. The priceless gift of political generalisation vanishes somewhere without leaving even a trace. Stupidity grows in insolence, and, baring its teeth, heaps insulting mockery on every attempt at a serious generalisation. Feeling that it is in command of the field, it begins to resort to its own means
>
> *Leon Trotsky (1909)*

A revolutionary or a pre-revolutionary situation does not last forever. Mass movements and upsurges move in ebbs and flows. Once a movement ebbs, the darker side of society comes to the fore. After the Second World War, massive upheavals occurred across the globe. It was perhaps the largest mobilisation and upheaval of mankind, since the fall of the Roman Empire.

## British Imperialism Retreats

The betrayal of the mass movement in India was not unique. In a number of countries, Social Democracy and Stalinist leaders betrayed the post-war revolutionary movements. As the movement ebbed in the subcontinent and the revolution was betrayed, the impoverished masses suffered the consequences.

With the exit of the CPI from the leadership of the national liberation movement, the political representatives of the Indian bourgeoisie took over. Even in the absence of any real opposition, they were unable to keep the struggle united and carry out a peaceful transition. If the truth be told, the Indian bourgeoisie never fought a freedom struggle. They actually negotiated and bargained the struggle of the masses with the British rulers. They wanted direct rule in their own hands. The British could not hold on to power. As the movement surged ahead, mass revolts and desertions occurred in the British armies.

On 14 August 1945, two atom bombs were dropped on Japan... not only to defeat the Japanese but also to bring the war to an abrupt end. The wave of desertions of the soldiers and young officers of the Allied armies made it more and more difficult for the capitalists to continue the war. At the same time, anti-war sentiment in Europe and the United States of America was on the increase. Several anti-war movements were emerging. Winston Churchill and his Conservative Party faced a humiliating defeat in the first post-war elections in Britain; anti-war sentiment had had a strong impact on the electorate. On 26 July 1945, the results of the British national elections were announced. Labour, under the leadership of Clement Attlee, won a sweeping victory, winning 388 seats in the British Parliament. The British government now had no choice but to quit India.

The Labour administration, in spite of its reformist posture, was as committed as the Tories to the continuation of capitalist rule in what would become the former colonies of the Empire. All their efforts were directed towards the goal of continued imperialist exploitation of India in the post-independence period. Attlee's choice of Lord Mountbatten (a grandson of Queen Victoria) as India's last Viceroy made it clear that the Labour government would continue with the same policies as its Tory predecessors.

As the movement intensified, frantic efforts were made to undermine the National Independence movement among the British rulers in India, Congress and Muslim League leaders. To substantiate its stance on Partition, the Muslim bourgeoisie hired Jinnah, who was a competent barrister from Lincolns Inn, London, and gave him carte blanche to plead their case for a separate Pakistan. The bourgeoisie showed that their loyalties remained with the British during this pre-Partition period, and on the verge of independence, their behaviour exposed their reactionary character. Partition has been a heated debate ever since.

The actions of Nehru, Gandhi, Patel and other Hindu and Muslim leaders of Congress belied their words. As we will see shortly, their rejection of the British Cabinet's Mission Plan in 1946, and other acts of subversion, actually paved the way for Partition. The revolutionary tide had peaked, and leadership was now ebbing because of a lack of a clear perspective.

The British Empire and its political representatives had no fixed plan for how to leave India. Like all rulers, on one hand, they were afraid of a revolution, and on the other, they wanted to avoid anarchy. Both outcomes would have hindered and disrupted the profit system and endangered the properties and assets of the ruling elites. They therefore tried to effect a peaceful transition. They sent several missions from Whitehall to develop a feasible plan that would ensure the continuation of the capitalist rule and imperialist plunder. One of these missions was the Cabinet Mission sent to India in 1946.

## Cabinet Mission

The Cabinet Mission arrived in India in early May. On 16 May, the Cabinet Mission Plan was published. The central government would be responsible solely for defence, foreign affairs and communications. It divided the subcontinent into three zones: A, B and C. Section B would include Punjab, Sindh, NWFP (North Western Frontier Province) and British Baluchistan. A majority of Muslims would be in this area. In section C, which included Bengal and Assam, the Muslims would have a small majority. The Cabinet Mission thought that this arrangement would give assurance to the Muslim minority and satisfy all the legitimate fears of the Muslim League. At first, Jinnah was opposed completely to the scheme. The Muslim League had gone so far in its demand for a separate independent state that it was difficult for it to retrace its steps. Azad, president of Congress, was in favour of accepting the proposal. The Muslim League council deliberated for three days before coming to a decision. On the final day, Jinnah seemed to favour acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan. He told the council that the scheme presented by the Cabinet Mission was the best that they could hope for and, as such, he advised the Muslim League to accept the scheme. The council voted unanimously in its favour. This in reality meant a retreat from Partition. The acceptance of the Cabinet Mission plan both by Congress and the Muslim League was an important event in the history of the liberation movement of India.

Later on, however, a difference of opinion in the inner circles of Congress started to emerge. At the same time, the question of a new president for Congress had to be considered. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had been the president from 1939 to 1946. His retirement was long overdue. On one hand, Sardar V Patel and his friends were vying for the post; on the other hand, as the factional struggle heated up, it became more and more evident that Jawaharlal Nehru would become president. On 26 April 1946, Azad issued a statement that proposed Nehru's name for the coveted post and appealed to Congress that they should elect him unanimously. Later in Azad's memoirs, he called it:

> Perhaps the greatest blunder of my political life. It was a mistake which I can describe in Gandhiji's words as one of Himalayan dimension.

Nehru was accepted unanimously The Muslim League Council had accepted the Cabinet Mission plan, as had the Congress working committee; however, needed the approval of the All India Congress Committee (AICC). It was thought that this could be a formal matter, as the AICC always had ratified the decisions of the working committee. Accordingly, a meeting of the AICC was called at Bombay

on 7 July 1946. After an intense debate, a vote was taken, and a resolution of acceptance was passed with an overwhelming majority. On 10 July 1946, however, Nehru held a press conference in Bombay in which he made an astonishing statement. Some press representatives asked him whether the passing of the resolution meant the AICC Congress accepted the plan in total, including the composition of the interim Government. Jawaharlal

Nehru in reply stated that Congress would enter the constituent assembly: "completely unfettered by agreements and free to meet all situations as they arise". In reply to another question, Nehru said emphatically that Congress had agreed only to participate in the constituent Assembly and regarded itself free to change or modify the Cabinet Mission plan as it thought best.

## The Die is Cast

This change of heart on Nehru's part made it impossible to avoid Partition on a bourgeois basis forever. This sudden turn by Nehru exposed the narrow-mindedness of the Indian bourgeoisie and the secretive forces that were working behind the scenes bent on partitioning the subcontinent. Obviously those forces were afraid that in an unpartitioned India, the threat of class struggle and revolutionary upheavals against capitalism and imperialist domination would remain very much alive and vibrant. Nehru's position reflected the majority views of the ruling elite. The extent to which Lord Mountbatten, Lady Edwina and Mount Menon played a role in coaxing Nehru into this remains a secret of history.

The Muslim League had only accepted the Cabinet Mission plan under duress. Naturally, Jinnah was not very happy about it. In his speech to the League council, he had clearly stated that he recommended acceptance only because nothing better could be obtained. His political adversaries started to criticise him by saying that he had failed to deliver his promises. They accused him of having given up the idea of an independent Islamic state. They also taunted him, asking why had Jinnah made so much fuss about an independent state if the League was willing to accept the Cabinet Mission plan that denied the right of the Muslims to form a separate state?

Nehru's statement had been a complete surprise! Jinnah immediately demanded a complete review of the whole situation and asked Liaquat Ali Khan to call a meeting of the League Council to issue this demand. Now that the Congress president had declared that Congress could change the scheme through its majority in the constituent Assembly, this left the minorities at the mercy of the majority. Jinnah's felt that Nehru's declaration meant that Congress had rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan and that, because of this, the Viceroy should call upon the Muslim League, which had accepted the plan to form the government.

Jinnah had always deeply resented Congress leaders. The turning point in his career had come after the 1937 elections when Congress refused to share with him and his Muslim League the spoils of office in the Indian provinces where there was a substantial Muslim minority. Jinnah was a man of towering vanity and he took Congress's action as a personal rebuke. It convinced him that he and the Muslim League would never get a fair deal from an India run by Congress. The former apostle of Hindu–Muslim unity became the unyielding advocate of Pakistan, the project he had labelled an "impossible dream" barely four years earlier.

A more improbable leader of India's Muslim masses could hardly be imagined. The only thing Muslim about Mohammed Ali Jinnah was his parents' religion. He drank, ate pork, religiously shaved his beard each morning and just as religiously avoided the mosque each Friday. God and the Koran had no place in Jinnah's vision of the world. His political foe, Gandhi, knew more verses of the Muslim Holy Book than he did. Jinnah had been able to achieve the remarkable feat of securing the allegiance of the vast majority of India's Muslims without being able to articulate more than a few sentences in their traditional tongue, Urdu.

Jinnah despised India's masses. He detested the dirt, the heat and the crowds of India. He delighted in touring India's Muslim cities in princely processions, riding under victory arches on a kind of Rose

bowl style float, preceded by silver-harnessed elephants and a band booming out "God save the King" because, Jinnah observed, it was the only tune the crowd knew. Jinnah had only scorn for his Hindu rivals. He labelled Nehru a Peter Pan, a "literary figure" who "should have been an English professor, not a politician", "an arrogant Brahmin who covers his Hindu trickiness under a veneer of Western education". Gandhi, to Jinnah, was "a cunning fox", "a Hindu revivalist." Jinnah never forgot the sight of the Mahatma in his mansion, stretched out on one of his priceless Persian carpets with his mudpack on his belly.

## Congress and Partition

The Muslim League Council met in Bombay on 27 July 1946. Jinnah in his opening speech reiterated the demand for Pakistan as the only course open to the Muslim League. After three days' discussion, the Council passed the resolution rejecting the Cabinet Mission Plan. It decided to resort to direct action for the achievement of Pakistan.

Azad and several leading members of Congress were perturbed by this new development. They demanded an immediate meeting of the Congress working committee. Nehru reluctantly agreed. The Congress working committee met on 8 August 1946. In the meeting, Azad pointed out that if they wanted to save the situation they must make it clear that the statement of Congress at the Bombay press conference was Nehru's personal opinion and did not conform to the decisions of Congress. Nehru responded that it would be embarrassing to Congress and to him personally if the working committee passed a resolution maintaining that the statement of the Congress President did not represent the policy of Congress. The working committee was now in a dilemma. Ultimately, it drafted a resolution that made no reference to Nehru's statement. A paragraph of the resolution read as follows:

> ...the committee wishes to make it clear that while they did not approve of all the proposals contained in the statement they accepted the scheme in its entirety... The committee hopes that the Muslim League and all other concerned, in the wider interests of the nation as well as of their own, join in this great task.

Jinnah was not taken in by this, however, and, convinced that Nehru's statement represented the real mind of Congress, he argued that if Congress could change its position so many times while still under British rule, what assurance could the minorities have that Congress would not again change its mind once the British left?

## Black Days in the History of India

Commenting on these events, Azad, in his book "India Wins Freedom", dedicated to "Jawaharlal Nehru, friend and comrade", attributed the tragedy as follows:

> This was one of the greatest tragedies of the Indian History and I have to say with the deepest regret that a large part of the responsibility for this development rests with Jawaharlal. His unfortunate statement that Congress would be free to modify the Cabinet Mission Plan reopened the whole question of political and communal settlement. Mr. Jinnah took full advantage of his [Nehru's] mistake and withdrew from the League's early acceptance of the Plan.

In most of the works on Partition, Gandhi is portrayed as the crusader of unity. Azad, his close associate and the former president of Congress, in "India Wins Freedom" said about Gandhi's position on Partition:

> But when I met Gandhiji again, I had the greatest shock of my life to find that he had changed. He was still not openly in favour of Partition but he no longer spoke so vehemently against it. What surprised and shocked me even more was that he began to repeat the arguments which Sardar Patel had already used. For over two hours I pleaded with him, but could make no impression on him.

Sardar Vallahbhai Patel was India's quintessential politician. He was an oriental Tammany Hall boss who ran the machinery of Congress Party with a firm and ruthless hand. Patel had a well-earned reputation for ruthlessness. In his days as a practicing lawyer, he was passed a cable announcing his wife's death as he was pacing the floor of a Bombay courtroom summing up his case for the jury. He glanced at it, thrust it into his pocket, and continued his peroration. The incident formed a part of the legend of Vallahbhai Patel and was indicative of the man. Emotion, one of his associates once observed, formed no part of his character. He was probably the most reactionary leader of Congress and was the first man in India to fall for Lord Mountbatten's idea.

When Lord Mountbatten suggested that Partition might offer a solution to the present difficulty, he found Sardar Patel receptive to this. In fact, Sardar Patel was half in favour of Partition before Lord Mountbatten appeared on the scene. He was convinced that he could not work with the Muslim League. Again, Azad describes the role of Patel in *India Wins Freedom*: "It would not perhaps be unfair to say that Vallahbhai Patel was the founder of Indian Partition."

Patel was very amenable to Lord Mountbatten's charm and the power of his personality. Privately Mountbatten always referred to Patel as a walnut a very hard crust outside but soft pulp once the crust was cracked. Azad continued:

> I was surprised when Patel said whether we liked it or not, there were two nations in India. He was now convinced that Muslims and Hindus could not be united into one nation. It was better to have one clean fight and then separate than have bickering everyday. I was surprised that Patel was now an even greater supporter of the two-nation theory than Jinnah. Jinnah may have raised the flag of Partition but now the real flag bearer was Patel.

When Patel was convinced, Lord Mountbatten turned his attention to Nehru. Again according to Azad:

> Jawaharlal was not first ready for the idea and reacted violently against the idea of Partition. Lord Mountbatten persisted till Jawaharlal's opposition was worn down step by step. Within a month of Mountbatten's arrival in India, Jawaharlal, the firm opponent of Partition had become, if not a supporter at least acquiescent to the idea. I have wondered how Jawaharlal was won over by Lord Mountbatten. He is a man of principle but he is also impulsive and amenable to personal influences. I think one factor responsible for the change was the personality of Lady [Edwina] Mountbatten. She is not only extremely intelligent but has a most attractive and friendly temperament. She admired her husband very greatly and in many cases tried to interpret his thoughts to those who would not at first agree with him.

Azad's analysis highlights the contradictions between the Indian bourgeois leaders and the British rulers.

The AICC met on 14 June 1947. Congress, which had always fought for the unity and independence of India, was considering an official resolution for dividing the country. It was an abject surrender on the part of Congress. Sardar Patel argued that the resolution for the division did not arise out of weakness or compulsion but was the only true resolution in the context of the existing circumstances. After the first day's debate, there was very strong feeling against the Working Committee's resolution. Neither Pundit Pant's persuasiveness nor Sardar Patel's eloquence had been able to persuade the people to accept this resolution. It therefore became necessary for Gandhi to intervene in the debate. He appealed to the

members to support the Congress Working Committee. Political realism demanded the acceptance of the Mountbatten Plan, and Sardar Patel appealed to members to accept the resolution moved by Pundit Pant. When the resolution was put to the vote, only 29 voted for Partition while 15 voted against. Even Gandhi could not persuade more members to vote for the Partition of the country!

In the meeting of AICC, the members from Sindh vehemently opposed the resolution. They were given all kinds of assurances. In private discussions, they were told that if they suffered any disability or indignity in Pakistan, India would retaliate on the Muslims in India. This implied that both in India and Pakistan, hostages would be held responsible for the security of the minority community in the other State. This was a barbarous idea and could only escalate racial tensions. Acharya Kripalani, who was president of Congress at this time, realised these dangerous implications and understood that once such a feeling was allowed to grow, it could only lead to oppression and the murder of Hindus in Pakistan and Muslims in India. The rivers of blood, which flowed after Partition on both sides of the new frontier, had their origins in this concept of hostage and retaliation.

The British Government had originally fixed a period of fifteen months for completing the transfer of power. Attlee had in fact explicitly stated in February 1947 that it was the definite intention of the British Government to affect the transfer of power to "responsible Indian hands" by a date no later than June 1948. A great deal had happened, however, between 20 February and 3 June. Now that the plan for Partition was accepted, Mountbatten stated that the scheme be brought into effect as quickly as possible. He probably feared that delay might bring up new

impediments to his plan. Mountbatten set a deadline of three months for the Partition of India. It was decided that the Indian Dominion would come into existence on 15 August 1947. The Muslim League decided that Pakistan should be constituted a day earlier on 14 August.

On 14 August, Lord Mountbatten went to Karachi to inaugurate the Dominion of Pakistan. He returned the next day and at midnight on 15 August 1947, the Indian Dominion was born. Once again, according to Azad: "If a united India had become free, there was little chance that British could retain her position in the economic and industrial life of India".

The two new states were born amidst the slaughter and bloodshed that Ghandi wanted to avoid. Thousands of years of religious, ethnic and communal harmony was shattered in a matter of days, as families were uprooted from their ancestral towns and villages and whole trainloads of people killed in the carnage. Partition of the Indian subcontinent was probably one of the most horrific episodes of the twentieth century. The dawn of 14th August 1947 was red not with revolution but with the blood of millions of innocent oppressed people...blood spilled by the reactionary madness of religious bigotry. The magnitude of the carnage stunned even those who had been the main advocates of Partition. The atrocities committed have become horror stories for future generations. The most brutalised regions were Punjab and Bengal. The irony is that the first two papers of the Communist Party of India came out in Punjabi (Kirti (Worker) from Amritsar) and Bengali (Langal (Plough) from Calcutta). Yet the workers and peasants of Bengal and Punjab suffered the biggest massacre of Partition. The stiletto of Partition drenched in the poison of communal hatred had pierced two nationalities right through the heart.

## Callousness of British Imperialism

Mountbatten knew one thing that could sour in an instant the "celebratory" atmosphere he was so carefully creating: the "boundary award" that Sir Cyril Radcliff was completing in his green-shuttered bungalow. On no account did Mountbatten want the details revealed before the independence ceremonies were held. He knew that Radcliff's decision would cause grave complications. India and Pakistan would come into existence without the leaders of either nation being aware of two of the vital components of their nationhood: the number of citizens whose allegiance they commanded and the location of their most important frontiers. Thousands of people in hundreds of villages in the Punjab and Bengal

would have to spend 15 August in fear and uncertainty... unable to celebrate because they would not know to which Dominion they were going to belong. In addition, there would be areas without proper administrative and police arrangements. Knowing all this, Mountbatten was still determined to keep the boundary decision a secret until after 15 August. Whatever award Radcliff had decided on, it would, he realised, infuriate both parties. "Let the Indians have the joy of their Independence Day", he reasoned, "...they face the misery of the situation after". "I decided," he advised London, "that somehow we must prevent the leaders from knowing the details of the award until after the August 15th; all our work and hope of good Indo-British relations on the day of the Transfer of Power would risk being destroyed if we did not do this."

Radcliff's ICS (Indian Civil Service) aide delivered the report to Viceroy House in two sealed brown manila envelopes on the morning of 13 August. On Mountbatten's orders, the envelopes were locked inside one of his green leather vice-regal dispatch boxes. The box was set on his desk just before his midday departure for Karachi and the ceremonies marking the birth of Pakistan. For the next 72 hours, while India danced, those envelopes would lie in the viceroy's dispatch case like the evil spirits in Pandora's box, waiting the turn of key to deliver their sobering message to a "celebrating" continent.

At the moment when India was about to attain her freedom, 3 million human beings in Calcutta lived in a state of chronic undernourishment, existing on a daily calorie intake inferior to that given the inmates of Hitler's death camps. Men murdered in Calcutta for mouthfuls of rice. With the savage killings of Direct Action Day in August 1946, that violence took on a new dimension, fed by the religious and racial fanaticism animating its Hindu and Muslim communities. While India waited to celebrate her long-sought freedom, the wretched of Calcutta's slums stood poised to compound their infinite miseries in a frenzy of communal slaughter and destruction.

Slowly working in bits and pieces, taking the easiest and most evident things first, Radcliff stretched his boundary down the map of India. As he did so, one thought haunted him:

> I am going through this terrible job as fast, as well as I can... he told himself, ...and it makes no difference because in the end, when I finish, they are all going to start killing each other anyway!"

## The Carnage

In the Punjab, they had already started killing each other. The roads and railroads of what had been the best administered province in India were unsafe. Sikh hordes roamed the countryside like bands of Apaches, falling on Muslim villages and Muslim neighbourhoods. A particular savagery characterised their killings. The circumcised penises of their male victims were hacked off and stuffed into the mouths of murdered Muslim women. In Lahore, one evening, a cyclist raced out of an alleyway past the crowded coffee shop where the city's most notorious Muslim criminals held court. He hurled an enormous, bell-bottomed brass pot used to carry milk at its packed terrace. The pot went clanging through the coffee house, sending its occupants diving for cover. When it failed to explode, a waiter opened it. The pot contained a gift to the Muslim criminals from their Sikh counterparts in crime in Amritsar. Stuffed inside, instantly recognisable, was a supreme provocation: scores of circumcised penises.

In Lahore, murder and arson were so senseless, so chaotic, that to one British police officer it seemed "like a city committing suicide". The Central Post Office was flooded with thousands of postcards addressed to Hindus and Sikhs. They depicted men and women being raped and slaughtered. On the back was the message: "...this is what has been happening to our Sikhs and Hindu brothers and sisters at the hands of the Muslims when they take over. Flee before these savages do this to you." These postcards were part of a campaign of psychological warfare being conducted by the Muslim League to create panic among Sikhs and Hindus. Between August and September 1947, Punjab was a living hell. This was a cataclysm without precedent, unforeseen in magnitude, unordered in pattern and unreasoned in its

savagery. For six terrible weeks, like the ravages of a medieval plague, a mania for murder swept across the face of northern India with no sanctuary from its scourge. Half as many Indians would lose their lives in that slaughter as Americans had in four years of combat in the Second World War. Everywhere, the strong assaulted the weak.

Collins and Lapierre relate:

> Capt. R. E. Atkins of the 2/8 Ghurkhas gasped in horror at the sight at his feet. A figure of speech he had heard but had never believed had taken on reality under his eyes. The gutters of Lahore were running red with blood. The beautiful Paris of Orient was a visa of desolation and destruction. Whole streets of Hindu homes were ablaze, while Muslim police and troops stood by watching. At night, the sounds of looters ransacking those homes seemed to Atkins like the crunch of termites boring into logs. In nearby Amritsar, broad sections of the city, its Muslim sections, were nothing but heaps of brick and debris, twisting curls of smoke drifting above them into the sky, vultures keeping their vigil on their shattered walls, the pungent aroma of decomposing corpses permeating the ruins. Everywhere the face of the Punjab was disfigured by similar scene. In Layallpur the Muslim workers in a textile factory turned on the Sikhs who shared the misery of their looms and slaughtered every one of them.
>
> Robert Trumbull, a veteran correspondent of the *New York Times* noted:
>
> *I have never been as shaken by anything, even by the piled-up bodies on the beachhead of Tarawa. In India today blood flows oftener than rainfalls. I have seen dead by the hundred and, worst of all, thousands of Indians without eyes, feet or hands. Death by shooting is merciful than to be beaten to death with clubs and stones and left to die, their death agony intensified by heat and flies.*

The warring communities seemed to rival each other in their savagery. One British officer of the Punjab Boundary force discovered four Muslim bodies "roasted like piglets spits in a village raided by Sikhs". Another found a group of Hindu women, their breasts mutilated by Muslim zealots, heading for slaughter.

Horror had no race, and the terrible anguish of those August days in the Punjab was meted out with almost biblical balance... an eye for an eye, massacre for massacre, rape for rape, blind cruelty for blind cruelty. Few were the Punjabi families that did not lose a relative in the senseless slaughter. For years to come, the Punjab would be haunted by memories, each recollection more poignant and harrowing than the next... terrible accounts of a people suddenly uprooted from the lands to which they had been attached for years.

In the late summer of 1947, trains became the only hope for hundreds of thousands of Indians to escape the nightmares that surrounded them. For tens of thousands, however, the trains became rolling coffins. During those terrible days, the appearance of a train in Punjabi stations provoked the same frenzied scenes. Like a ship's prow cutting through a heavy sea, the train rolled through the mass of scrambling humans choking the platforms, crushing to a pulp of blood and bone the hapless few inevitably pushed across its path. Sometimes passengers would wait for days, often without food and water, under the merciless sun of a summer the monsoon refused to end. In a concert of tears and shrieks, the crowd would throw itself on the doors and windows of each wagon. They jammed their bodies and the few belongings they carried into each compartment until the flanks of the train seemed to swell visibly from the pressure of the humans inside. Dozens more fought for a handhold at each door, on the steps, on the couplings, until a dense cluster of humans enfolded each car like a horde of flies swarming over a sugar cube. When there were no handholds left, hundreds more scrambled onto the rounded roofs, clinging in precarious uncertainty to the hot metal until each roof was lined with a dense wall of refugees.

Collins and Lapieree graphically relate the scenes of the Punjab in the summer of 1947:

> Crushed under that load of misery, the odour of coal smoke overwhelmed by the stench of sweating bodies, their whistles drowned by shouts of the wretches whom they carried, trains rolled off, bearing their pitiful burdens to death or a Promised Land.
>
> As the pace of flight in both directions grew, those trainloads of wretched refugees became the prime targets of assault on both sides of borders. They were ambushed while they stood in stations or in the open country. Tracks were torn up to derail them in front of waiting hordes of assailants. Accomplices smuggled into their compartments forced them to stop at pre-chosen sites by pulling on the emergency cord. Engineers were bribed or cowed into delivering their passengers into an ambush. On both sides of the border a man's sexual organ became, in the truest sense, his staff of life. In India, Sikhs and Hindus prowled the cars of ambushed trains; slaughtering every male they found who was circumcised. In Pakistan Muslims raced along the trains murdering every man who was not. There were periods of four and five days at a stretch during which not a single train reached Lahore or Amritsar without its complement of dead and wounded.

Along the roads, the refugees plodded dumbly forward, eyes and throats raw with dust, feet bruised by stones or searing asphalt, tortured by hunger and thirst, enrobed in a stench of urine, sweat and defecation. They flowed on in their filthy dhotis, saris and baggy trousers, often barefoot. Elderly women clung to their sons and pregnant women to their husbands. Men carried invalid wives and mothers on their shoulders and women their infants. They had to endure their burden not just for a mile or two but for a hundred, two hundred, miles for days on end, with nothing to nourish their strength but a chapati and a few sips of water.

The crippled, the sick and dying often were hung in slings tied to the middle of a pole, each end of which rested on the shoulder of a son or friend. Strapped to their backs were bundles that surpassed a man's weight. Balanced on women's heads were precarious piles of what they had been able to salvage from their homes: perhaps a few cooking utensils, a portrait of Shiva, the guru Nanak or a copy of the Koran. Some men balanced long bamboo staves on their shoulders: an infant in a sack at one end and a shovel, a wooden hoe or a sack of seed grain hanging from the other.

These helpless Indians and Pakistanis were not just making a brief trip to another village. Theirs was the trek of the uprooted... a journey with no return across hundreds of miles, each mile threatening exhaustion, starvation, cholera and attacks against which often there was no defence. These Hindu, Muslims and Sikhs were innocent illiterate peasants whose only life had been the fields they worked. Most of them did not know who a viceroy was, were indifferent to Congress Party and the Muslim League and had never bothered with issues like Partition or boundary lines... hey were unaware of the freedom in whose name they had been plunged into despair.

Following them from one end of the horizon to the other, compounding their miseries, was the cruel, remorseless sun. Their haggard faces turned to the blazing sky to beg Allah, Shiva, the guru Nanak, for the monsoon that refused to come. Worst of all were the pitiful sights of children left behind to die because their parents no longer had the strength to carry them and the elderly resigned to death, tottering off into the fields in search of the shade of a tree under whose comforting branches they might await their end. The human debris left behind was gruesome. The forty-five miles of roadside from Lahore to Amritsar became a long, open graveyard.

As in every conflict since the dawn of history, the tragedies and atrocities of Partition were accompanied by an outpouring of sexual savagery and rape. Tens of thousands of girls and women were seized from refugee columns, crowded trains and isolated villages in the widest scale kidnapping of modern times. If a women was Sikh or Hindu, her abduction usually was followed by a religious ceremony... a forced conversion to make her worthy of her Muslim captor's home or harem. The Sikh's tenth guru specifically instructed his followers against sexual intercourse with Muslim women in an attempt to prevent what happened in the Punjab. The Sikhs ignored the guru's admonishment and gave free rein to

their fantasies, falling upon Muslim women everywhere; this resulted in the legend that Muslim women were capable of particular sexual prowess.

Winston Churchill, who had always opposed Indian freedom, commented on the spectacle of the people: "...who had dwelt in peace for generations under the broad, tolerant and impartial rule of the British Crown, throwing themselves on each other 'with the ferocity of cannibals'". It is ironic that Churchill and the British ruling class who had engineered the Partition and were responsible for this holocaust could so callously insult the people of the subcontinent. They were responsible for this tragedy and yet they used it to justify the colonialisation of India. Jinnah, Nehru, Gandhi, Patel, Liaqat Ali Khan, Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan, Nishtar and all those leaders from the Hindu and Muslim ruling elites had glorified the British imperialist Raj in India. The CPI's leadership had failed to come up to the tasks posed by history: crippled by Stalinism it had lost its way. Margaret Thatcher, the former Prime Minister of Britain during the Common Wealth Conference at Kuala Lumpur in October 1989, said with characteristic bluntness in an interview with Sky television: "Britain is attacked as exploiting the colonies. I sometimes think they were jolly lucky it was us who colonised them and not other people."

For the millions of victims of Partition, long and painful months of resettlement and reintegration lay ahead. They had paid the price for freedom. An embittered group of refugees starving in a Punjab camp in a cry or rage and frustration shrieked to a British officer: "Bring back the Raj!" In 1995, a demonstration of the East German workers had chanted a slogan, "We want the Wall back". Neither the Raj can be revived nor the Berlin Wall resurrected. The masses have to move forward and avenge their wounds. Only through a socialist revolution can the atrocities of the past be avenged and a prosperous future be ensured. The blood shed shall not be in vain.

## Fighting For Bones

During Partition the rulers of India and Pakistan were more concerned about the division of assets than the agonies of the Hindu, Muslim and the Sikh masses. They wanted to create new states. The tragedy of Partition was compounded by the overwhelming desires of the Indian and Pakistani ruling classes to gain as much as they could of whatever was being left behind by the British. In terms of the distribution of armies, assets and wealth, they exhibited meanness and greed. Days were spent arguing over who would pay the pensions of widows of servicemen. Would Pakistan be expected to pay all Muslim widows wherever they were? Would India pay Hindu widows in Pakistan? Pakistan would windup with 4913 miles of India's 18 077 miles of roads and 7112 miles of her 26 421 miles of railway tracks. Should the bulldozers, wheelbarrows and shovels of highway department and locomotives, coaches and freight wagons of the railways be divided according to the 80/20 rule or the percentage of the track and road mileage each nation would have?

Some of the bitterest arguments came over the books in India's libraries. Sets of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* were divided up religiously, alternate volumes for each dominion. Dictionaries were ripped in half, with A to K going to India, the rest to Pakistan. Where only one copy of a book was available, the librarians were supposed to decide which dominion would have the greater interest in it. Some of those supposedly intelligent men actually came to blows over which dominion had greater cultural interest in *Alice in Wonderland* and *Wuthering Heights*!

Certain things could not be divided. The Home Department noted with some foresight: "...the responsibilities of the existing intelligence bureau are not likely to decrease with the division of the country." Its officers stubbornly refused to yield up so much as a file or an inkpot to Pakistan. Only one press on the subcontinent was capable of printing two of the indispensable insignias of national identity, postage stamps and currency. The Indians refused to share it with their future neighbours. As a result, thousands of Muslims had to manufacture a provincial currency for their new state by stamping huge piles of Indian rupee notes with a rubberstamp marked "Pakistan".

The Muslims wanted the Taj Mahal broken up and shipped to Pakistan, because Mughal had built it. Hindu saddhus insisted that the Indus River, which flowed through the heart of Muslim India, should somehow be theirs, because their sacred Vedas had been written on its banks 25 centuries ago.

Each dominion was extremely interested in owning the gaudiest symbols of the imperial power, which had ruled them for so long. The gold and white vice-regal train, whose majestic silhouette had crossed the parched plains of the Deccan, went to India. The private cars of the commander-in-chief of the Indian army and the Governor of the Punjab were assigned to Pakistan. The most remarkable division of all, however, took place in the stable yards of the viceroy's house. At issue were twelve horse-drawn carriages: with their ornate, hand-wrought gold and silver designs, their glittering harnesses and their scarlet cushions, they embodied all the pretentious pomp and all the majestic disdain that had fascinated and infuriated the Raj's Indian subjects. Lord Mountbatten's ADC (Adjacent Cadet), Lieutenant-Commander Peter Howes proposed that this should be settled by the simple flip of coin. India won the toss. Fate had decided that the gold carriages of India's imperial rules would convey the leaders of a new "socialist India". Howes then divided up the harnesses, whips, coachmen's boots, wings and uniforms that went with each set of carriages.

After weeks of arduous negotiation, India and Pakistan finally reached agreement on the division of the last financial and material assets. At Independence, India's cash reserves had totalled 4 billion rupees. Pakistan had been given an immediate advance of 200 million rupees. Under the agreement, she was to receive as the balance of her share an additional 550 million rupees (about £45 million at that time). India argued that the money would be used to purchase arms to kill Indian soldiers and refused to pay the sum until the Kashmir problem was solved. It has yet to be resolved and under the bourgeois rule in the subcontinent it never will be! This decision put Jinnah into a desperate situation. His new nation was almost bankrupt. Only 20 rupees of the original 200 million rupees remained. Gandhi later persuaded the Indian government to hand over that money to Pakistan.

Partition was a wound inflicted on the living body of one of the oldest civilisations on earth. A civilisation that was rich in art, architecture, music, literature and other forms of human culture... its cultural diversity was its greatest beauty. The pain still remains and has left an indelible scar upon millions of people. Partition was one of the most counter-revolutionary events in recent history. More than half a century later, one question is asked throughout the subcontinent... can Partition be undone?

# CHAPTER 4: MIRAGE OF FREEDOM A TRYST WITH DESTINY...YET AGAIN

Whom should I tell that the night
Of sorrow is a terrible affliction,
For me it was no tragedy to die
So long it were only once.
*Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib (1797–1869)*

After the disastrous summer of 1947, the leaders of India and Pakistan tried to take control. They had envisaged building new modern capitalist states. The newly emerged bourgeoisie in India and Pakistan thenhad an enormous opportunity to show its calibre and capabilities: they had the state, a massive market and a subcontinent rich in natural materials, together with a huge reservoir of human manpower. Nehru, unlike Gandhi, had envisaged building a modern state more along the lines of a European social democracy.

Jinnah also wanted to create Pakistan as a modern industrialised secular capitalist state. He believed in sound law and sound procedures. He was, according to one intimate: "a parliamentarian in the mode of Gladstone..." At the inauguration of Pakistan, Jinnah was a frail, sick man who already, in the words of his physician, had been living for three years on "willpower, whisky and cigarettes". When he became Pakistan's first governor general, Jinnah said to his new ADC, Syed Ahsan, "Do you know, I never expected to see Pakistan in my lifetime". He died in mysterious circumstances on 11 September 1948. On its inception, Pakistan went into an internal crisis, which intensified after Jinnah's death. Disagreements within the feudal hierarchy and the semi-capitalist elite created political chaos. Pakistan's first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, was assassinated by Akbar Khan at Company Bagh Rawalpindi, in 1951.

## Domestic And Foreign Policy In The Early Days Of Partition

Most domestic and foreign policy decisions of the 1950s reflect these conflicts. Pakistan was founded as a theocratic state, and the newly emerging ruling elite tried to impose this artificial ideology on a multinational, multilingual and multiethnic society in order to perpetuate its rule.

Jinnah's promised secularism was fading fast. The educational curriculum was modified to fit in with the state's official theology. The history syllabus was distorted to reflect the official line. Urdu was imposed as the national language, although the state bureaucracy, commerce, trade and the elite continued to use English. The first two commanders in chief were British: although the Muslim league had refused to accept Lord Mountbatten as a joint governor general of Pakistan and India, the army was receptive to a British commander as head of the armed forces to ensure the continuity of colonial structures. The first commander-in-chief of the Pakistan Army was General Messervy, who was later replaced by Major General Douglas Gracy. The land revenue system, military chain of command, civil administration, legal code and judicial system continued as created by the British. In fact they still

remain intact to a large extent in all countries of the subcontinent. Even "left-hand drive" is still in practice.

The ruling elite tilted its foreign policy towards the United States of America and became its stooge at a very early stage. The United States and the Central Intelligence Agency became involved in the affairs of the Pakistan army early on. The first planning commission of Pakistan formed in 1948 was made up of a majority of American experts. With the rising insecurity, the elite further tilted its position towards the United States. The Pakistani elite was so weak that it was unable to develop and promulgate a constitution in its first decade. The first elections on the basis of adult franchise were held twenty three years after the creation of Pakistan in December 1970. The first national crisis erupted in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) on the question of language, and this ultimately led to the break up of Pakistan with the secession of Bangladesh.

Ten years after Pakistan's creation, the political and economic crisis had deteriorated considerably and led to the proclamation of martial law in 1958; this set a precedent for direct military dictatorship in Pakistan. The dictatorship of Field Marshall Ayub Khan lasted for another decade and was fully supported and sponsored by American imperialists; Pakistan also developed ties with Mao's China as a consequence of the Sino–Indian conflict and the 1962 border war between them. The Ayub Khan dictatorship came into power at a period when the world's capitalist economy was in an upswing and the cold war was at its peak. These two factors led to relatively rapid economic growth in Pakistan. On one hand, a spin-off from the boom occurred in the West, but on the other hand, as a strategic front state, Pakistan benefited from American aid and grants.

The whole pattern of development was very uneven and contradictory. These contradictions and the repression of the students and workers movement of 1964 resulted in enormous tensions in Pakistan. A similar process occurred in India. These internal tensions came to the fore during the second war over Kashmir between India and Pakistan in September 1965. This seventeen days' war ended with both sides losing. The aftermath of the 1965 crisis further exacerbated social tensions, as the economic and industrial development of the 1960s had not improved living standards or the development of society as a whole. The only progressive element was the creation of a fresh virgin proletariat in Pakistan...from a class in itself to a class for itself; it shook the whole of Asia.

## The Revolution of 1968–1969

The 1968–1969 revolution in East and West Pakistan began as a class movement to overthrow the dictatorial regime. It developed a socialist and revolutionary consciousness at lightening speed. The pro-Chinese left was running Pak–China friendship associations. This was in reality an Ayub–Mao friendship. The few who rebelled from the Maoist camp joined the movement when Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was already riding the wave of a mass upsurge. The pro-Moscow left condemned the upsurge. Bhutto was surprised by the enormous support of the masses. The movement and vigour of the upsurge were so intense that he was carried along. He sensed that the masses were in a mood to storm heaven, and he struck at just the right moment.

The period between 1967–1972 was one of enormous social upheaval. The whole of the Indian subcontinent was engulfed in a revolutionary storm. The unevenness of socio-economic development caused a mass revolt against the Ayub Kahn dictatorship. In the aftermath of the 1965 war, the prices of flour, sugar and other foods increased tremendously. The people were suffering from price rises and sharply rising unemployment. A large cross-section of engineers and college graduates were unemployed, and shortages of food affected the whole population.

The upsurge started with a minor incident in Rawalpindi. It happened as a student shopping trip was returning to Rawalpindi and was stopped by custom officials who confiscated their goods on charges of smuggling. This led to a confrontation between the students and the police and triggered mass demonstrations by students of Gorden College and Government College Asghar Mall in Rawalpindi. Little did

the students know that they were igniting a revolution. On 7 November 1968, two thousand Gorden College students demonstrated, and one student was killed by the police. On 8 November, sixty people, including two student leaders, were arrested in Karachi. Schools and colleges were closed in Hyderabad, Lahore, Peshawar and Karachi, troops were called in and a curfew was imposed in Rawalpindi. On 13 November, Bhutto and eleven other political leaders were arrested and on 15 November, a general strike took place in Peshawar, Karachi and other cities. Students and lawyers demonstrated in Dhaka against the repression in West Pakistan. On 8 December, clashes took place in East Pakistan, and two people were killed. In Chittagong, police opened fire on a crowd of a thousand of people. On 13 December, seven people were killed and fourteen were injured by police gunfire at Dhaka.

By January 1969, the uprising in West Pakistan had spread to every major city in the province. This spontaneous movement sustained itself over two months and showed no signs of exhaustion. The people had decided to take the extra-parliamentary road and were discovering that this was the real way to success. This discovery hugely affected the consciousness of the masses and what they learnt from their experiences was worth a hundred free elections.

The student action committee in Dacca decided to join with the other opposition forces and to observe 17 January 1969 as Demand Day. This was the first time that such coordinated action had been possible in both East Pakistan and West Pakistan, and the first coordinated general strike in Pakistan on Demand Day brought the economic life of the country to a complete standstill. Mass demonstrations took place in Dacca, Lahore, Karachi, Rawalpindi and the other main cities of the country.

January 25 saw furious street battles in Karachi, which was the largest industrial city in the country and had the largest single concentration of urban proletarians. The battle lasted eight hours, but the workers and students were tired, as they had been fighting continuously for two days. Workers, students and the unemployed burnt buses, trams, petrol pumps, oil stations and government offices; they raided banks and brought safes out into the streets where they blew them up. The class hatred of the Karachi proletariat was unequalled in the country. Hundreds of people were injured and over five hundred arrested. The government thought that by arresting the leftist student leaders of Karachi they would be able to control the upsurge, in fact exactly the opposite happened. Enraged by the arrest of their spokesmen, the workers and students fought even more violently. In one area of Karachi, over a thousand students marched on the house of a prominent member of Ayub's Muslim League who, seeing the crowd approaching, shot and critically wounded a student. The next day 10 000 students marched on his mansion. An army unit was stationed outside, with a young officer in command. He asked students what they had come to do, and they told him that they had come to set fire to the mansion. After they had explained their reasons, the army officer suddenly ordered his unit to another area and the mansion was burned to the ground.

In the provincial capital of Lahore, students attacked the offices of a pro-government newspaper and set it on fire. Over 50,000 students and workers marched through the streets, burning cars, battling with the police and laying siege to government offices. On 26 January, as night fell in Lahore, a large fire was burning near the building that housed the Supreme Court of Pakistan. It had been lit in order to highlight the servile role played by the majority of the Supreme Court's judges during the ten years of Ayub Raj. In Lahore, Karachi and Rawalpindi, students stopped cars that carried leading civil servants, pulled the civil servants out and forced them to shout anti-Ayub slogans...not a single bureaucrat refused... much to the amusement of the student onlookers. In Lahore, the most senior police official was stripped of his uniform and forced to march at the head of a large student demonstration. Journalists, teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers, architects and even prostitutes participated in demonstrations throughout West Pakistan.

From 17 January 1969 onwards, the movement against the dictatorship continued to gather momentum, and fierce street battles were fought. The bureaucracy used all its legal powers to try and contain the turmoil, but the masses were determined to let nothing stand in their way. A strong force of police and army units was stationed permanently outside Dacca Government House, where Ayub's provincial satrap resided. During the day, he was virtually a prisoner there.

For three days, from 24 January to 26 January, police killed demonstrators throughout East Pakistan. The reaction of the government-controlled press to the killings so infuriated the students that on 24 January, they set fire to the offices of the "Morning News" and "Dainik Pakistan" in Dacca. Four people were killed in Dacca that day... one of them a 14-year-old schoolboy. His father told a large student meeting: "Today I have lost one child, but in his place I have got a thousand children amongst you students. Go forward."

A complete strike also took place in the industrial areas around Dacca. Workers and peasants came from outside the city to take part in the demonstrations. Some of them carried ploughs and sticks with them; later, pickets went to government and semi-government offices, calling on the employees to join the strike. Employees in most of the offices, including the East Pakistan Water and Development Authority, the East Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation and the General Post Office, responded to the call, but trouble began when pickets arrived at the East Pakistan Secretariat. When the first group of demonstrators walked up to the gate and called to the employees to come out and join the strike, the EPR (Eastern Pakistan Rifles) and the police closed the gate and warned the demonstrators to disperse. They refused and continued to picket the secretariat, so the police opened fire.

During the night of 23–24 January, twenty-five students marched with torches in the streets of Dacca and pledged themselves to fight for total victory. They demanded the acceptance of their eleven-point manifesto. To achieve victory, however, a revolutionary leadership was needed, and none existed. The movement was so far ahead of the existing political leadership that even the old Maulana had difficulty keeping up with the demands of the masses. A day later, the foreign minister tried to cool down the demonstrations by announcing in parliament that the Chinese leader Chou Enlai had accepted an invitation to visit Pakistan, but the movement was too far advanced for these sops to be taken seriously. Something more was needed.

Throughout West Pakistan, the revolt continued. The dominant slogan was: "No compromise and Ayub must go". On 13 February, an angry demonstration consisting of students, workers and some members of the intelligentsia marched to the showrooms of the Oxford University Press in Lahore and burnt them down. The Press had published Ayub's memoirs, and the students who had had the book thrust down their throats in schools and universities were now wreaking their vengeance. Every single copy of the book was destroyed, and Oxford University Press suffered a loss of over £20 000.

## The Tide Ebbs

On the same day, 13 February, over 30 000 railway workers marched on the main streets of Lahore, having persuaded their pro-Chinese leaders to organise a demonstration. They carried red flags and chanted: "Destroy capitalism", and "Keep religion out of politics". On the same day, five other demonstrations by workers took place, and traffic was at a complete standstill. The workers seemed to be in control of the city, and the correspondent of *The [London] Times* reported on 14 February 1969:

> "With the entry of the working class into the revolt, hitherto limited to students and political parties, observers are beginning to doubt whether the government or the opposition can control the forces unleashed in Pakistan."

In other cities of West Pakistan, particularly Karachi and Peshawar, police opened fire on demonstrators, and on 14 February, they killed at least six people... one of them a 16-year-old

student in Lahore. On the same day, the students sabotaged the signals near Lahore railway station, disrupting train services. These protests were the real answers to Ayub's offer of talks and were in stark contrast with the bourgeois parties' attitude of compromise and reform. They had no one to articulate their demands, so they remained on the streets until these demands were met.

The situation deteriorated to such an extent that the ruling class considered imposing martial law. Ayub Khan was in regular consultation with the army, he clearly was negotiating with the bourgeois

alliance on one hand and the army on the other. In the first week of February, according to some senior civil servants, the army was preparing to impose martial law and save Ayub. The date had been fixed, and the relevant martial law regulations printed, but at the last minute, the situation in East Pakistan forced the army to change its mind.

On Monday 17 February 1969, during a demonstration, a soldier bayoneted to death a professor from Rajshahi University. When the news of this killing reached Dacca, the atmosphere became charged. A curfew was imposed on the city, but both the army and the bureaucrats in Dacca realised that it would be defied. Bullets failed to frighten the movement. Student leaders felt that if a few hundred students died facing bullets, it was a small price to pay in the struggle for freedom. On the night of 18 February 1969, over a hundred people were killed in the streets of Dacca, but the newspapers were silent. Once again, the workers and the urban poor had defied the ruling classes.

The Student Action Committee agreed to meet the local bureaucrats across a conference table; considerably more important than the Round Table Conference which had been previously suggested. The students demanded the curfew be lifted and all political prisoners released. They warned the government publicly that unless the curfew was withdrawn they would defy it. The general commanding the Dacca garrison reported to his boss in Rawalpindi an extremely pessimistic picture of the situation in East Pakistan, and this report was crucial. On 19 February, Ayub Khan summoned the three commanders in chief of the armed forces. No public reports of the meeting have ever been published, but the following information was obtained from sources close to Ayub Khan. Evidently, he asked the three commanders to impose martial law in all cities in East and West Pakistan, but the army chief, General Yahya Khan, refused point blank. He had received reports from his man in Dacca that suggested that if martial law was imposed, they might be able to contain Dacca, even if they could not give any assurances for the rest of East Pakistan. The officers that Yahya Khan had consulted had told him that they were not opposed to martial law to save the country, but that it would have to be martial law without Ayub Khan. In West Pakistan, Bhutto refused to sit at the same table with Ayub Khan and would not attend the conference. Whatever the real reasons behind this move, it had the positive effect of increasing the ideological rift between the reactionary and progressive students. A revolutionary leadership organised throughout the province could have used this opportunity to seize power and to wage an armed struggle in Dacca and defeat its oppressors.

## The General Strike, March 1969

By the middle of February 1969, the movement was reaching new peaks. On 21 February, the president and military dictator Ayub Khan retreated significantly and announced that he would not contest the presidential elections scheduled in 1970. This retreat further boosted the morale of the movement. The nationwide civil servants' strike paralysed the functioning of the government. The strike of the grade III and IV clerks and workers of the West Pakistan secretariat in Lahore initiated this. Within hours and days, the mood was changing. In less than a week, the workers of the public works department, government hospitals, banking sector, post office department, telegraph and telephone department, railways, road transport, water and power and several other state and private sector organisations entered the arena of the revolution. The enormous pressure of the workers in the movement forced the trade union leaders to a more radical course. The newly formed Joint Labour Council announced the first week of March as Workers' Demands Acceptance Week. After that, the call for a general strike on 17 March was made.

Pakistan was brought to a halt by the massive strike that paralysed industry and society. Such was the gallantry of the striking workers that the electricity supply was cut off from the general headquarters of the Pakistan Army and the presidents' house and secretariat in Rawalpindi. This was inconceivable in ordinary times. This one act shows how rapidly power of the mass consciousness influenced and enabled and the masses to conquer their fears in such revolutionary conditions.

In an interview in 1973, reminiscing the events of those days, the power workers' leader, Bashir Bakhtiar, said, "this was our signal to Ayub Khan: 'If you don't go, we will keep this up'".

The "gherao" movement was also in full swing. Workers laid siege to factories, and the management virtually was imprisoned inside. They were not allowed to leave the factories until they had agreed to wage increases, which varied from 25% to 100%, depending on how many days the managing director had been deprived of food and water!

The army had made up its mind to "save the nation" once again. Their aim was to put forward the picture of a country on the verge of destruction, portraying themselves as the saviours. Ayub Khan had used the same method in 1958. On 26 March, President Ayub Khan asked the army to take over, and he handed his powers to them. Senior officers had seen the revolutionary uprising as a serious challenge to the army and the social system in Pakistan, with which the army leadership was well integrated. They had to reassert their authority, but this time without Ayub Khan, as he and his family had brought them only disgrace.

One of the mightiest revolutions of the modern epoch had lost its way. Martial law was proclaimed by Yahya Khan and was supported by the bourgeois politicians, left leaders and reformists alike. Ayub retired to his son-in-law's estate at Sawat, but he continued to meet Yahya Khan. Three months of hard and sustained struggle had been betrayed. Another army takeover had taken place. Marx wrote in "The Eighteenth Brumaire Of Louis Bonaparte":

> Instead of society having conquered a new content for itself, it seems that the state returned to its oldest form, to the shamelessly simple domination of the saver and the cowl.

The people of Pakistan were crushed yet again, but this did not stop their commitment to the struggle.

## Pakistani People's Party

The Pakistan People's Party at its inaugural conference in Lahore on 30 November 1967 put forward a very revolutionary socialist programme. It stated: "The ultimate objective of the Party's programme is the attainment of a classless society which is only possible through Socialism in our times". However, it lacked detail.

History is witness to the fact that in most revolutions of the last and present epoch, the momentum, intensity and dynamics of the revolutions and mass action always decided the policy of the leadership. Only one exception exists: the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia. In that instance the Marxist leadership of Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolsheviks had developed in advance the perspective and methods to determine the course and fate of the socialist revolution. In most other revolutionary movements, we see the intensity and speed of the movements surprising the leadership and taking them unaware. Paradoxically, the character and dynamics of the movements rather than the leaders determined the course of the movements. Alterations in party policies reflected the moods of the masses; however, these policies should have been developed according to strategies set out by the leadership. The main reason for this was the lack of a Marxist understanding on the part of the leaders. This resulted in a flawed strategy, which did not develop the correct perspectives and methods in advance so that proper intervention in the movements could be made. The spontaneity of such movements and the accidental nature of such a leadership have led to some revolutions facing disastrous fates, while even those that succeeded often had a distorted development. This process was summed up in Trotsky's brilliant dictum: "The historical crisis of humankind is reduced today to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership".

At the end of the 1960s, Pakistani society became a casualty of this process. With the rising intensity of the movement, the impact of radicalisation could be seen in a swing to the left within the Pakistani People's Party, its programme and the speeches of its leaders. Revolutionary rhetoric in Bhutto's

speeches intensified. Addressing the Pakistani People's Party's Sindh convention at Hyderabad on 21 September 1968, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto said:

> ...we, the torch bearers of Socialism, believe that the introduction of real democracy and political freedom is impossible without economic justice...I believe in socialism; that is why I have left my class and joined the labourers, peasants and poor students. I love them. And what can I get from them except affection and respect? No power on earth can stop socialism, the symbol of justice, equality and the supremacy of man, from being introduced in Pakistan. It is the demand of time and history. And you can see me raising the revolutionary banner among the masses. I am a socialist, and an honest socialist, who will continue to fight for the poor till the last moment of his life. Some ridicule me for being a socialist. I don't care.

From 1967 to 1970, the struggle further radicalised the programme of the Pakistani People's Party. The 1970 manifesto of the Pakistani People's Party was even more radical than the 1967 inaugural programme. It called for the nationalisation and expropriation of the assets and wealth of the Imperialists and the Pakistani bourgeoisie, nationalisation of landed estates and radical land reforms, dissolution of the present army and the setting up of a people's militia. The running of the state and the management of the economy were to be transferred systematically to the democratic control of the engineers, technicians, experts and workers. Such a programme would send shudders down the spines of Benazir Bhutto and her camarilla of sycophants at the helm of the Pakistani People's Party leadership today!

## The Civil War

The occupation of factories by the workers, the seizure of land by the poor peasants, the awakening of women and the valour of the students and youth created a revolutionary situation in both East and West Pakistan. The delay in the revolution diverted the movement along national lines in East Bengal. War euphoria was whipped up, which led to a ferocious civil war and the separation of Bangladesh in 1971. The Pakistani Army suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Bengali masses. During the civil war, hundreds of thousand of people were brutally killed and women were raped by the Pakistan Army.

In the aftermath of the Pakistan Army's surrender of December 1971, a new conflict began in Bangladesh. In the areas liberated from the Pakistani Army in East Bengal during the national liberation struggle, a form of soviets developed. The invading Indian army in connivance with the Islamic fundamentalists and the reactionary bourgeois nationalist forces of East Bengal tried to crush them. It is significant that during this time the seventh fleet of the American Navy was anchored in the Bay of Bengal with marines on board. American imperialists feared that the Indian Army might fail to crush the soviets, who were mainly controlled by the Mukti Bahini and the JSD (Jatyo Samajtantrik Dal), the left wing of the national liberation movement.

## Cricket Not War

The fraternal spirit inspired by common service in the old India still remained a quarter of a century after India and Pakistan had fought three wars. One day after India and Pakistan had faced each other on the battlefront at the end of the Bangladesh war, a group of officers of the Pakistan Armoured Corps sought an Indian unit to which they could surrender. They finally located an Indian cavalry officer in the bar of a newly conquered club: before accepting their surrender, he insisted on standing them a round of drinks. When the Pakistanis brought in their unit to lay down arms, Indians and Pakistanis fresh from the battle in the rice paddies of Bengal organised a round of hockey and football matches. Sheikh Mujib Ur Rehman sent a vigorous protest to New Delhi. From the office of Prime Minister Indira

Gandhi came a sharp message to the Indian Commander: he was engaged, he was reminded, "In war, not cricket".

## Naked Reaction Follows Failed Reforms

Had the social revolution gone ahead in East Bengal, it would have been almost impossible to prevent it from spreading to West Bengal, where the left was already strong and society already radicalised. In the post-war crisis ridden subcontinent, a red Bengal with its traditions of uprisings and protests would have led to revolution throughout the whole region. This would have threatened not only the rule of capital in the subcontinent, but its impacts would have had devastating repercussions for American and western imperialism on a world scale. The advent of the Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal was not accidental.

In West Pakistan, the defeated, humiliated and shattered Pakistan army was in no state to resist a new mass uprising. The advanced workers had lost the majority of their supporters and were exhausted and bewildered. Bhutto went on a spree of radical reforms calculated to diffuse any new upsurge, but he was destined ultimately to failure in the crisis ridden capitalist system that was suffering from the first post-war recession of the world economy in 1974.

The Bhutto government was overthrown by another military coup led by General Zia ul Haq in July 1977. He executed Bhutto by hanging in April 1979. Bhutto's reforms not only diverted the socialist revolution but led to one of the most vicious eras in the history of Pakistan. In his last book, "If I am assassinated", written from his death cell in Rawalpindi Jail, Bhutto confessed to the failure of his reformist methods and class compromise. He wrote:

> I am suffering this ordeal partly because I sought an honourable and equitable via media of conflicting interests in order to harmonise our disjointed structure. It seems that the lesson of this coup d'etat is that a via media, a modus vivendi, a compromise is a utopian dream. The coup d'etat demonstrates that the class struggle is irreconcilable and that it must result in the victory of one class over the other. Obviously, whatever the temporary set backs, the struggle can lead to the victory of one class.

Bhutto came to this conclusion rather too late. Neither his daughter Benazir nor the other leaders of the Pakistani People's Party ever learned from the events of his political life, which he had described in his last work from his prison cell. During one of his last meetings with his wife, Nusrat, when she visited him in the Rawalpindi prison, Bhutto asked in desperation: "Why is the party not doing anything for my release?" Nusrat replied: "Did you leave behind a Bolshevik party, that you expect them to mobilise the masses for your release?"

After Bhutto's hanging, Zia began the most brutal period of repression in Pakistan's chequered history. His dictatorship was sponsored and propped by the United States and was used to carry out the counter-revolution in Afghanistan and to crush the rising protest movement in Pakistan. This vicious dictatorship ended when Zia was killed in a plane crash, which probably was engineered by the Americans. The Afghan war spilled over into Pakistan. The crisis in society and the plight of the masses deteriorated during the next eleven years of bourgeois parliamentary democracy.

Today, the rise in Islamic fundamentalism, ethnic conflicts, the drug trade, a whole arsenal of weapons in society, the spread of violent crime and a massive black economy are the legacy of Zia's Islamic dictatorship. In the space of fifty-four years, Pakistan has gone from a nation searching for a country to a country searching for a nation. With impending crisis, Pakistan stands at the crossroads pointing to revolution or bloody conflagration.

## Nehruvian Socialism

The events and crises after independence overwhelmed Jinnah, Gandhi and Liaquat Ali Khan. Their dream of a modern, democratic and industrialised capitalist nation state had not been realised. Nehru, who had been projected as a demigod by the bourgeois intellectuals in India and the West, came to power. Initially, Nehru faced resistance and barely saved his regime against the Socialist Party's parliamentary challenge led by Jay Parkash Narayan in 1951.

The concept of Nehruvian socialism was basically a replica of western social democracy. At the peak of the emerging cold war, Nehru manipulated its main contenders the Soviet Union and the West. He could only accomplish this because of the sheer size and strategic and economic importance of India. He posed as a non-aligned, socialist, liberal democratic and secular leader. As such, he tried to get economic and other concessions and grants from both the United States and the Soviet Union. The main thrust of his policy was to nationalise large sections of the infrastructure, to impose trade and tariff barriers and to develop the state apparatus in such a way that the emerging Indian capitalist class could carry through the national democratic revolution. Through Soviet aid and concessions from the West, Nehru was able to build a huge industrial base and a massive infrastructure: 74% of the economy was in state hands. To a large extent, India was protected from foreign competition by high tariff barriers. India in the 1950s, and 1960s, and to some extent in the 1970s, also gained from the spin-off effects of the world economic upswing. On instruction from the Soviet Union, the Communist Party supported the Congress government until it split in 1964. As a result the CPI and Congress controlled the unions. The main struggles were led by the Hindu Mazdoor Sabha (HMS) trade union federation, which was affiliated to the Socialist Party. It is not accidental that, even after the near disappearance of the Socialist Party from the political scene, the HMS dominated the trade union movement in India. The CPI's leadership promoted the belief that Nehru and Congress represented the progressive and secular bourgeoisie and supported the national democratic revolution in India.

India now had the largest capitalist market (in terms of population) in the world, a subservient state, massive manpower, low wages and cheap raw materials, and yet the nascent Indian bourgeoisie failed to carry through an industrial revolution and develop a modern democratic state. Most of the business houses had been developed under British imperialist rule, and in reality were subsidiaries of the British and unable to compete with western multinational giants.

Post-war world trade had expanded by more than 12,000%. In this era of aggressive and ever expanding monopoly capitalism, the Nehruvian policy of propping up the Indian bourgeoisie through subsidies, tax exemptions and other similar means contravened the general laws of capitalist development. Through not competing on the world market and confined in the straight jacket of a secluded market (even one as large as India), the Indian bourgeoisie had no chance to play the role the capitalist classes of the advanced countries had played during their industrial revolutions. Paradoxically, if the Indian ruling class had opened up their market to competition, they also would have failed.

In the post-independence era, the whole mode of development and growth of industry was massive but very uneven. This was mainly because the Indian bourgeoisie could not generate enough revenue for the state to build a modern and viable infrastructure. This impoverishment of the state gave rise to colossal corruption throughout government and society. At the same time, bureaucratic bottlenecks hampered growth and industrial development.

The technological and financial support from the soviet bloc was of little avail in a chaotic capitalist market. In any case, the Soviet Union and other Stalinist countries were facing their own crises. Because of its economic, technological and industrial debilitation, the Indian ruling class could not complete or carry out any of the tasks of the bourgeoisie revolution. The land question remains unresolved. India is more disunited and splintered than it was at the time of Partition. Secularism has been one of the greatest victims in post independent India.

The infrastructure and industrial conditions in India are a graphic illustration of the theory of combined and uneven development. The uranium for the modern Bombay nuclear power plant is brought

on bullock carts. Scientific research institutions, ultra-modern industrial houses, computer software company headquarters and director's boardrooms are adorned with statues of ancient gods. Hindu mythology has 330 million of them. The bosses of these advanced technological industries begin their day by performing prayers in front of these stone idols. It is perhaps not an accident that India's present education minister, Murli Manohar Joshi, who is introducing Hindu mythology and religious teachings into the education curriculum, is an ex-lecturer of physics from the University of Allahabad.

The Indian bourgeoisie never really fought the freedom struggle. All the momentum and force of the masses in the freedom movement was diverted into parliamentary, diplomatic and political channels set up by the Raj. The fight of the political leaders and representatives of the Indian elite never won the independence of the Indian subcontinent. It was negotiated with the British... and the stronger partner in the negotiations dictated its terms.

## Class Struggle In India

The Indian masses have been in constant struggle throughout the post-Partition period. Massive strikes have been organised by huge trade unions throughout every sector of the economy. Several of the general strikes culminated in pre-revolutionary situations. Classic proletarian struggles occurred, through which a revolutionary change in India might have been achieved. In the early 1970s, the Indian generals in Bengal won an historic victory...90,000 Pakistani troops surrendered. The Indian proletariat at home, however, defeated Indira Gandhi. The railway strike and the workers played a decisive role in defeating the Indira Gandhi regime and ended the monolithic rule of Congress, the party of the Indian bourgeoisie, that had ruled India ever since Partition.

Even when the workers overthrew the Indira Gandhi government, the leaders of the traditional parties continued along the road of parliamentary politics, obsessed with promulgating the ideas of bourgeois democracy. This policy stemmed from the Stalinist *Theory of Two Stages*, which they followed religiously. The CPI supported Congress and the CPI (M) offered support to other sections of the progressive bourgeoisie. In the upsurges of the 1970s, they were playing parliamentary games with Desai, Charan Singh and others. Instead, they ought to have been organising the workers, who were out on the streets, to form a revolutionary alternative on the basis of class conflict. The CPI (ML) and other factions resorted to guerrilla tactics and ultra-leftism.

> As the class struggle erupted, so did the conflicts between the revolutionary and reformist tendencies in the CPs, other left parties and in the working class movement as a whole. The rise of a new wave of class struggle sharpened these contradictions. It also strengthened existing revolutionary wings and created new revolutionary wings in the political and trade union organisations of the Indian proletariat.

A universal law is that as long as classes exist, the class struggle will continue. Inevitably, the class struggle goes through its highs and lows. Its resurgence is a decisive verdict of history. The oppressed classes have no choice but to struggle. The conditions of the masses are miserable; half a century of freedom has become a curse for the vast majority of the people of the subcontinent. A new struggle has to be waged; a new war has to be won. Once again, it will be a class war. Betrayed in 1947 and brutalised by Partition, generations have grown up in the misery of post-independence. The masses are questioning the status quo and are refusing to accept this false dawn as genuine independence. Sooner rather than later, they will come to the conclusion that it is yet another tryst with destiny.

# CHAPTER 5: THE BALANCE SHEET OF INDEPENDENCE

## Futile Crusades of a Debilitated Bourgeoisie

This trembling light, this night bitten Dawn
This is not the Dawn we waited for so long.
This is not the Dawn whose birth was sired
By so many lives, so much blood.
An elusive dawn
*by Faiz Ahmed Faiz*

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the Indian subcontinent still is besieged by its past. The deteriorating economic crisis is tearing the whole social fabric apart. A decaying society is experiencing all the vices of the past: black magic, witchcraft and demon spells, superstition, mysticism and sorcery have re-emerged.

The centuries' old caste system is in the ascendancy throughout the subcontinent. "Caste is worthless and so is its name", proclaimed guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion. Yet the village of Sidhwan Khurd in Punjab, one of India's richest states, has two "gurdwaras" (Sikh houses of worship): a scruffy one for the village's scheduled castes, the official name for people who used to be called "untouchables", and a smarter one for other Sikhs. Today, India's 160 million scheduled castes call themselves Dalits and suffer worse privation than segregation at prayer. The Sidhwan Khurd's two gurdwaras clearly demonstrate the deep-rooted ostracism of the untouchables, even after the Sikhs abolished the caste system 500 years ago and the Indian state fifty years ago. India's president, K R Narayanan, is a Dalit. Yet quotas and job preferment have not brought equality, dignity or even safety to India's lowest castes. Dalits barely are represented among the grandees of business, which is one reason why some demand preferment in the private sector. They are over-represented, however, in the ranks of the landless agricultural labourers and illiterates. Such humiliation as the "two-tumbler system" (separate glasses for Dalits and non-Dalits) persists in some places. In some villages discrimination can lead to violence as well as segregation. Between 1997 and 1999, recorded crimes and atrocities against scheduled castes averaged 26,000 a year, including 570 murders and 931 rapes. People of Dalit stock also are discriminated against in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal, and even Dalits themselves are not free of prejudice. In the matrimonial section of the website for Dalits (www.ambedkar.org), advertisers boast of prospective spouses' "fair complexions".

The multinationals have dealt a severe blow to the secular Indian bourgeoisie. They have not only taken over large sections of the market but have also undermined and weakened them. Nehru's dictum: "...it is better to have a second rate thing made in one's own country than a first-rate thing one has to import" has been ignored by the subsequent development of Indian capitalism. The reforms and opening up of the market to multinationals have failed to revive the economy, however; in fact, the intervention of monopoly capitalism has severely aggravated the combined and uneven pattern of India's economic development.

Since 1991, the number of serious car manufacturers has increased from three, which made 190 000 old fashioned vehicles, to ten, which make 500 000 modern cars. The numbers of daily flights between Delhi, India's political capital, and Mumbai, its commercial capital, have risen from three on one badly run state-owned airline to twenty-two on three competing airlines.

Yet India's development is far from modern. Agriculture, which accounts for a quarter of economic output, remains tied to the vicissitudes of monsoon rains. Growth dropped for the second year running in 2000 to an estimated 6.0%, which was depressed by unseasonable monsoons and an overhang of industrial capacity created in more buoyant times. Growth of 9% per annum is the minimum required for India to cope with an expected expansion of the labour force by 2% a year over the next decade. Agriculture needs to grow at an annual rate of 4.5% and non-agricultural sectors at an average of 10%. Even if annual growth in the productivity of land, labour and capital picks up to 3% (after being stuck in the 1990s at close to 2%), India will need to lift its investment rate from 25% of gross domestic product to 38%, which means that approximately $40 billion (this includes $5 billion from foreign investors) of extra investment spending every year. This is an impossible task for Indian capitalism to accomplish.

The country's $6.2 billion diamond industry, which is its biggest export earner, is largely in the hands of Palanpuri Jains from Gujarat. The illegal Hawala market, a system for transferring billions of dollars mainly from Indians abroad, works smoothly. But these sectors, which are part of a rising black market, are undermining the economy. A major impediment to development lies in the failure to improve the infrastructure and to invest in roads, power grids, ports, telecommunications and public facilities. As a consequence, costs increase, transactions are slowed down and investment is deterred. One reason it takes more than a week for a company in Bombay to send a lorry to Nagpur, 750 km there and back, is because of the poor quality of the roads. The other is due to Octroi, a local tax collected several times along the way, which goes mainly into the pockets of the collectors and their associates. India's power sector is insufficient largely because the utilities turn a blind eye to people stealing electricity. Delhi's 200 000–250 000 bicycle rickshaw pullers collectively pay bribes of 22–25 million rupees a month for the privilege of being allowed to pursue their lucrative profession.

Agriculture accounts for 25% of the Indian economy and 60% of the labour force. So much food is produced that the government's store houses are overflowing with unsold grain, yet 250–300 million people do not have enough to eat. Just over 25% of all farmers produce 60% of the total output. The rest are either landless labourers or subsistence farmers on plots of land that become less fertile with each generation. According to an Indian journalist, agriculture has become a "parking space for the poor".

The water table in Punjab is dropping fast, which is putting soil fertility at risk. A third of the Food Corporation of India's supplies are rotting in the open, and one third of the wheat and rice meant for the poor is diverted from the public distribution system. After waste and corruption have taken their toll, the cost to the consumer is 60% higher than the price paid to the farmer; the poor are unable to afford these high food costs. About 20% of the total agricultural output, and 40% of the fruit and vegetables produced, is lost along the way. A long chain of intermediaries further widens the gap between what the consumer pays and what the farmer receives. Public investments in irrigation and other agricultural projects have been falling since the 1970s. The peasantry is now in crisis. The government is thwarting the consolidation of land holdings as laid down by the land reforms. In Utter Pradesh, the biggest state, 20 million farming families subsist on 17 million acres of land. Even in Punjab, the average holdings are too small to make mechanisation worthwhile. Farmers get around this by illegally leasing out their land and working on it for a wage, but neither the landlord nor the lessee is willing to invest. This is one of the main reasons that India's wheat and rice yields are just a third of international levels.

Under these conditions corruption thrives: a recent study found slum dwellers working indirectly for well known Indian and multinational firms. The working conditions are often wretched, and women are encouraged to enter the work force. This exploits them but paradoxically advances them socially by the very act of drawing them into the workforce. India has failed to achieve the double figure growth required to earn profits from its many investments. As a result, thousands of ventures have disappeared.

Out of 1000 finance companies, perhaps 200 remain. A generation of private airlines has come and gone, and local television stations have vanished. According to one expert: "there are many sick industries but not many sick industrialists". India also has a malfunctioning judiciary. It has too few judges (10 per one million people) with a resulting backlog of 27 million cases.

Large sections of the Indian bourgeoisie crossed over to the BJP (Bharti Junta Party) when Congress betrayed their traditional allegiance by opening up the Indian market to the multinationals. Once in power, however, the BJP had to abide by the laws and dictates of the capitalist economy and the state. This created chaos in Indian bourgeois politics, unprecedented even by Indian standards. One-party government has become a relic of the past, and coalition governments are now the order of the day. This political anarchy reflects the rising conflicts among the different sections of the ruling class. Their lust for state power in order to protect their wealth has come close to madness, and corruption scandals, malpractice and crime are increasing. In spite of a population of more than a billion, the market is restricted to no more than 200 million of the middle class. More than 800 million have been abandoned to utter poverty and destitution. How long can such a situation last?

## Conditions In Bangladesh And Sri Lanka

Bangladesh has had independence not once but twice in a short span of thirty years. Yet thirty years after the second independence from West Pakistan, the situation has not improved, and the Bengali nationalist bourgeoisie has failed the people. The wounds inflicted on the people of East Bengal during the 1971 conflict by the Pakistan army, instead of healing, have become a sore. Their independence has given them nothing but poverty and destitution. Bangladesh ranks highest in the subcontinent in the business of girl trafficking. Bangladesh has been at the hub of non-governmental organisation activity, yet living standards have declined and the misery of life has worsened. In such a situation, how can the people remain loyal to the concept of nationalism?

The story in Sri Lanka, if anything, is bloodier and more tragic. The economic conditions in this traumatised island are deteriorating... a working class with such rich traditions of struggle is not going to take this capitalist onslaught lying down.

## Fifty Years On

Half a century after independence, the situation across the subcontinent has worsened, and the people, becoming more vocal, question the whole idea of independence. Today, the Indian subcontinent is inhabited by 1326 billion souls... more than a fifth of the human race... and the numbers are rising sharply. The official statistics, however, show a situation that is far from unsatisfactory. These figures are fabricated for two reasons: first they have to show some progress to the electorate and the media to justify the actions of the government and the bureaucracy; second, they have to present a positive picture of progressive development to the imperialist funded aid agencies. These false figures are an attempt to play down the masses' miserable plight and to allay the imperialist fears of a social explosion.

The situation of the non-governmental organisations is not very different. To ensure funding from Western donors, they also have to put forward their case as reformers improving the lot of society. More than 500 000 non-governmental organisations are working in India. The numbers are also very high in other countries of the subcontinent. Their main role, however, is to water down the anger and resentment of the ex-political, mainly left wing activists. These lost crusaders are offered lucrative jobs, and their talents are used to help develop future imperialist strategies. At the same time, they are used to spread the ideology of reformism, class collaboration and the presentation of capitalism as the only realistic system. The picture that emerges from the figures given by the state agencies and the non-governmental

organisations negates the case put forward by these newly recruited advocates of capitalism. Ironically, they undermine revolutionary thought and so prevent the possibility of a socialist revolution.

Although it is useful to present the case and figures for the whole of the Indian subcontinent, statistics can distort the picture. For example, the Maldives is atypical, as it only has a population of 0.3 million and a high gross domestic product per capita, but it is included in the figures for the whole of the Indian subcontinent. Overall, 22% of the subcontinent (276 million people) is without any sort of health service at all, and 80% of the population (994 million people) have no access to sanitation, which in itself is an environmental catastrophe. In total, 208 000 women die annually because of pregnancy and birth-related complications.

According to the 1993 figures, there are 2273 people to one doctor compared with 1316 in the rest of the developing world. Similarly, there is one nurse for 4091 patients. The state expenditure on health in the Indian subcontinent was 0.8% of the gross domestic product between 1990 and 1998 compared with 1.9% in the rest of the colonial world. Between 1975 and 1991, 84% of pregnant women between the ages of 15 and 49 years suffered from anaemia. The statistics with respect to infant mortality rates, hospital beds and other health-related issues are even worse. Most of the subcontinent's population is forced to seek treatment from "quacks" or charlatans, because they cannot afford to pay for health care. On the other hand, chains of luxurious hospitals, like the Apollo hospitals in India, exist throughout the subcontinent. The room charges by these hospitals are so exorbitant that a normal worker cannot afford to pay for proper treatment, this would amount to several years of salary. In the tribal areas of India, 90% of children are born underweight.

Instead of being a modernising influence, the penetration of capital into rural areas has further distorted life in countryside. More than 65% of the diseases in the Indian subcontinent are related to poverty. According to a 1983 report of the World Health Organization (WHO), the health and hygienic conditions in India in 1857 were better than those in the 1980s. In 1997, 45% of the population of South Asia was living below the official poverty line. The trends of the last four years show that a further large section of the population has been driven below the poverty line.

Heath and education have become a profitable investment sector: profit margins are higher than in manufacturing. The state health and education sectors have collapsed, however the private sector does not provide for the masses. Pain and illiteracy are exploited commercially. In Pakistan, the main investors and exploiters in this sector operate within the black economy and the drug mafia. It is a fact that 78% of the population has to seek health care from private sources. Proper health care and good education have become the privileges of the ruling classes, the bureaucrats and the upper middle classes.

Throughout the Indian subcontinent, enrolment in all kinds of educational institutions is 52% compared with 59% in the rest of the developing world. On average, men receive 3.5 years of schooling compared with 4.5 years and women 1.2 years compared with 3.0 years. In the Indian subcontinent, there is one teacher for every forty-nine enrolled students; the figure for the rest of the developing world combined is one teacher per thirty-three pupils.

In the Indian subcontinent, 43% of children drop out of school before reaching grade five, and 134 million children under the age of 15 years are employed in child labour. They will never go to school and learn to read and write under the capitalist system. The state expenditure on education is 3.3% of the gross domestic product. At the other end of the spectrum, there are 0.3 scientists and postgraduates per 1000 people. Most schools are without ceilings, furniture, books or stationary. Teacher's salaries are so low that they are forced to give private tuition to make ends meet.

## Islamic Fundamentalists

In Pakistan, Islamic fundamentalists viciously exploit impoverished parents and children. There are 32 000 madrassas (religious schools) that admit children without fees. The pupils are fed, clothed,

indoctrinated in religious bigotry and fanaticism and kept in chains at night. The parents, unable to feed, clothe and educate their children, have no other option. Hundreds of thousands of such children exist, most of whom never see a woman until they reach adulthood. In adolescence, many end up as psychopaths. The drug trade and the gun-running mafia fund most of these Islamic madrassas. The drug barons use these fundamentalist fanatics for the protection of their interests in the black economy. Similar institutions are run by the RSS [Rashtrya Sevak Swanyam Sangh], a Hindu fundamentalist party, and other religious fundamentalists in India, and similar practices are prevalent in other countries of the subcontinent. The vast majority of the Taliban in Afghanistan was mainly educated and trained in these madrassas in Pakistan. The main cadre of the RSS and other groups also come from similar institutions. These madrassas contribute to the rampant violence, murder, hooliganism, lumpenisation and vandalism in societies throughout the subcontinent.

## Sex Inequality

An important indicator for the evaluation of society is the status of its women. In 1997 the late Dr Mahboob Ul Haq, a renowned bourgeois analyst, described the South Asian subcontinent as "the least gender sensitive region of the world". Currently, there are 94 women to every 100 men; this is mainly because of the lack of care given to female children within the family and society and by the state. South Asian women suffer because of the low status accorded to women. Increasing communalism, religious fundamentalism and conservatism is limiting women's mobility and security. Two thirds of the people who live in poverty in the subcontinent are women. In Sri Lanka, more than 80% of women who use public transport report harassment, yet it is very rare that charges of sexual harassment are filed. South Asian working class women work from dawn to dusk, yet their work hardly is recognised in the national accounting system. Much of the work done by women is at the value added stage of production. The cruellest fact of all is that women from the oppressed classes work extremely long hours, but many of them are not even considered to work at all. Sex-specific inequalities in pay and job security are widespread. Most women engaged in economic activity are paid less then men for the same or even greater amount of work.

Thousands of rape cases are not reported. Rape is viewed first and foremost as an offence against the honour of the male members of the family and only second against the dignity of the woman. More than 90% of the women raped belong to working class families and the oppressed classes. In Pakistan, draconian laws mean that a rape victim cannot testify, as two women witnesses are considered equal to one male witness. Islam is a very different thing in the opulent air conditioned houses in which bourgeois politicians argue points over a whisky and soda in cut crystal glasses to in rural villages and shanty towns, where the mullah is often a man to be feared. Ironically, his battery powered megaphone is often the closest thing to modernisation.

Fear of the religious parties prevented Benazir Bhutto from keeping the pledges to remove those mediaeval Islamic laws that discriminate against women. Woman who are raped and go to court are liable to end up in prison, where 43% are raped again. To prove rape in Pakistan, a woman must provide four male witnesses. Under Islamic fundamentalist law, part of the "Hadood Ordinance" was imposed by the Zia dictatorship. Such is the state of bourgeois politics in Pakistan that in spite of being Prime Minister for two terms, Benazir Bhutto... herself a woman... could not repeal this draconian law.

Constitutional guarantees and laws that prohibit caste and sex discrimination in India have failed to protect low caste and working class women from acts of cruelty and violence. Dowry deaths of women from poor families are on the rise throughout the subcontinent. In 1984 there were 40 000 known cases of foeticide in Bombay. India's primary health centre's record reveals 3178 cases of female infanticide in six districts of Tamil Nadu. In 1989 it was estimated that there were 10,000 cases of female foeticide were estimated every year in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. An estimated 150 female infants were put to death each year in a cluster of twelve villages in Rajasthan. In one of these remote villages, fifty young girls

live in a population of 10 000 people. In 1999 84% of gynaecologists in Bombay admitted to performing sex determination tests; most female foetuses were aborted.

The question of sex inequality is closely linked to the class question. Social bias against women is used to exploit women workers. In the subcontinent, the difference in earned income between female and male workers is 33 to 100. Trained health personnel and midwives attend only 30% of births, and these are mostly upper and middle class women. Independence has not improved conditions for working-class women, who still suffer, while those from the middle and upper and continue to enjoy luxuries.

## Weapons Of Human Destruction

The ruling class has failed to solve any of the crushing problems faced by society yet are piling up weapons of human destruction. In May 1998, the Indian and Pakistani rulers carried out a series of nuclear explosions. This was also an attempt to whip up reactionary chauvinism to bolster dwindling support for their rule. Expenditures incurred by nuclear build-up could have gone a long way towards eliminating illiteracy and disease and providing the basic facilities desperately needed by society. The total expenditure on these nuclear programmes is a closely guarded secret, but independent analysts put it at $28 billion for Pakistan and $43 billion for India.

Sections of the intelligentsia and analysts of the ruling elite assumed that conventional arms expenditure would decline with the acquisition of nuclear power. On the contrary, the accumulation of conventional weapons has continued unabated. In 1985, the military expenditure of all the countries of the subcontinent was US$ 9839 million (1993 dollar prices), and by 1997, it had increased to $13 900 million (1998 dollar prices). In 2001 India has further increased its defence budget by 28%.

In 1995, the total military expenditure of the subcontinent was 71% of the total expenditure on health, education and other basic and essential services. This proportion has increased progressively in subsequent years. In 1988, the armed forces personnel of all countries of the subcontinent numbered 1 882 000. By 1997, this had risen to 2 014 000. This whole arms build up achieved at the expense of the exploited millions is a threat to the whole region. In 1993, William Casey, director of the American Central Intelligence Agency, called the South Asian subcontinent the "most dangerous place on earth". With its entry into the nuclear club, this threat has reached alarming proportions. The madness of the rulers of the subcontinent can drag not only the whole region but also the world into a nuclear holocaust. A new war in the subcontinent would spell disaster for this 5000 year old civilisation and devastation for one fifth of the human race. The possibility of another war between India and Pakistan cannot be ruled out... the working class is the only force that can avert this catastrophe.

Half a century after "independence", the subcontinent is worse off than it was at the time of Partition. The rulers of the subcontinent, having solved nothing, refuse to admit their shameful failure. Any possibility of improving the living standards of the masses and of developing society on a bourgeois basis is a utopian dream. All indicators point in the opposite direction. They can neither afford war nor maintain peace. All their games of war and peace are deceptions to conceal their failure and divert the attention of the masses from their burning problems. For most of the people of the subcontinent, the promise of peace is as injurious as the destruction threatened by war.

The manoeuvres of war and peace, the conflicts of fundamentalism and secularism, the chauvinism of nationalism and sectarianism and the tactics of reform and repression are all part of a horrific drama being staged to perpetuate the rule of capitalism. This cannot endure for very long. National wars have to be converted into class wars. Peace between nations can only be established on the basis of the unity of the oppressed classes. Capitalism has to be abolished. Harmony and peace amongst the oppressed millions can only be achieved in the next epoch on the basis of a socialist programme.

# CHAPTER 6: WAR AND PEACE

## Kashmir- The Festering Wound

> The recognition of the right to self-determination does not exclude both propaganda and agitation against separation or the exposure of bourgeoisie nationalism.
>
> - *V I Lenin*
>
> (*The National Programme of the RSDLP Collected Works.* Volume 19.p.400–401)

The Mughal Emperor Jehangir called Kashmir "paradise, on earth", and the Kashmir valley has been the inspiration of much British and Mughal poetry. Today, this lovely Vale, whose name had been the last utterance of a dying Mughal, is drenched in blood. Since 1947 Pakistan and India have gone to war three times over Kashmir: first in 1948, then in 1965 and then in the Bangladesh War of 1971.

## Flash Point

Kashmir is the main focal point of conflict in the subcontinent, chiefly because it serves the purpose of the ruling classes. It is not, however, the only flash point in the subcontinent. From Baluchistan to Manipur and from Assam to Sri Lanka, there are insurgences and civil wars. Partition is a crime against all the people of the subcontinent, and the British imperialists, with their flawed policy of divide and rule, made certain that some major issue was left behind to ensure continued hatred and strife.

On 24 August 1947, Mohammad Ali Jinnah sent his military secretary to Kashmir. Exhausted by a week of difficult negotiations and weakened by an unforgiving disease in his lungs, Jinnah felt he needed a vacation. In mid-September he instructed his secretary, Colonel William Birnie, to go to Kashmir and arrange for him to spend two weeks resting and relaxing. The choice of Kashmir for his holiday was entirely natural. To Jinnah, as to most of his countrymen, it seemed inconceivable that Kashmir, with a population over three quarters Muslim, could become anything but a part of Pakistan.

The British officer, nonetheless, returned five days later with an answer that stunned Jinnah. The Maharaja Hari Singh refused him permission to set foot on his soil, even as a tourist. The reply gave Pakistan's leaders their first indication that the situation in Kashmir was not evolving as they had complacently assumed. Forty eight hours later, Jinnah's government infiltrated a secret agent into Kashmir to evaluate the situation and determine the Maharaja's real intentions. The report he brought back shocked them. Hari Singh had no intention of acceding the state to Pakistan. In mid-September, Liaqut Ali Khan arranged a secret meeting of a select group of collaborators in Lahore to decide how to force the Maharaja's hand.

The collaborators immediately dismissed the idea of outright invasion. The Pakistani army was not ready to start a war over Kashmir that might escalate into a war with India. Two other options were considered. Colonel Akhbar Khan, a Sandhurst graduate with a taste for conspiracy, outlined the first. He proposed that Pakistan supply the arms and money to foment an uprising of Kashmir's dissident Muslim population. It would require several months, but would result in forty or fifty thousand Kashmiris descending on Srinagar to force the Maharaja to accede to Pakistan.

The second option was far more intriguing. Its sponsor was the Chief Minister of the Northwest Frontier Province, and it would involve the Pathan tribesmen. The gathering closed with a stern warning

from the Prime Minister that the operation must be a complete secret and the finance would be provided by secret funds from the Prime Minister's Office. Neither the officers of Pakistan's army and her civil servants nor the British officers and administrators in the service of the new state were to be given access to this secret.

Just before five o'clock on the afternoon of Friday 24 October 1947, Major-General Douglas Gracey, who had replaced General Messervy, got his first intimation of what had happened in Kashmir through a secret intelligence report. It gave the raiders' strength, armaments and their location. Gracey did not hesitate. He immediately went to his predecessor's private quarters and communicated the precious information to the man who commanded the only force that could deny Kashmir to the raiders... the commander-in-chief of the Indian army: Lieutenant-General Sir Rob Lockhart, a Scot and Sandhurst classmate of Gracey's. Lockhart was stunned by his old friend's report. He in turn communicated it to two more people, both of them British: the Governor-General, Mountbatten, and Field Marshal Auchinleck.

Mountbatten received the news as he was dressing for a banquet in honour of Thailand's Foreign Minister. When the last guest had left, he asked Nehru to stay behind. The Prime Minister was shocked by the news. There was scarcely a piece of information that could have upset him more. He loved his ancestral home. To Nehru, Kashmir was like "a supremely beautiful woman whose beauty is almost impersonal and above desire".

He loved:

> ...its feminine beauty of rivers and valleys and lakes and graceful trees. Time and time again during the struggle for freedom he had gone home to contemplate the hard mountains and precipices and snow-capped peaks and glaciers, and cruel and fierce torrents rushing down to the valley below.

The Governor-General was to discover another side of Nehru on the Kashmir issue. The cool detached intelligence, so admired by Mountbatten disappeared, to be replaced by an instinctive, emotional response driven by passions that even the Kashmiri Brahmin could not control. "As Calais was written upon the heart of your Queen Mary", Nehru would cry out to him one day to explain his attitude, "so Kashmir is written upon mine".

In an interview with Field Marshal Auchinleck, the supreme commander told Mountbatten that he wanted to immediately airlift a brigade of British troops to Srinagar to protect and evacuate its hundreds of retired British officers and their families. If they were not evacuated, he warned, they would be victims of a frightful orgy of rape and massacre. "I am sorry", Mountbatten said, "I cannot agree". However ghastly that prospect was, he could not endorse the use of British soldiers on the soil of a subcontinent that had become independent. If there was going to be military intervention in Kashmir, as far as he was concerned, it would have to be by Indian and not British forces.

The following afternoon a DC3 of the Royal Indian air force landed on the abandoned dirt strip of Srinagar airport. It carried V P Menon, the civil servant who had presided over so many princely accessions to India, Colonel Sam Manekshaw of the Indian Army and an air force officer.

Mountbatten had realised that India would not send her troops into Kashmir until the Maharaja had officially acceded and his state had legally become a part of India. Shortly before midnight on Saturday 26 October, yet another refugee joined the greatest exodus in history. To the 10.5 million Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims who had fled their homes that autumn was added one more figure... Hari Singh, the Maharaja of Kashmir. His bullock cart was a comfortable American station wagon that led a caravan of trucks and cars into which his most precious belongings had been packed. After a difficult seventeen-hour trip, the Maharaja's caravan reached Jammu. The exhausted Hari Singh went immediately to his private quarters to retire. Before going to sleep, he called an ADC (Aide-de-camp) to issue his last order as a ruling Maharaja.

"Wake me up only if V P Menon returns from Delhi," he said, "because that will mean India has decided to come to my rescue. If he does not come before dawn, it will mean all is lost."

As soon as they had returned to Delhi, V P Menon and the two officers who had accompanied him to Srinagar made their report at another meeting of the Cabinet's Defence Committee. Their words made sombre listening. The Maharaja was ready at last to present Kashmir to India, but the Pathan raiders were only 35 miles from Srinagar and could at any moment seize the only airport in Kashmir on which India could land her troops. The British commanders of India's army and air force both raised objections to military intervention. It would be a distant and dangerous operation in the midst of a population that could well prove hostile. Sensing the intensity of Indian emotion on the issue, Mountbatten overruled them. He warned that the operations they were embarking on could be long and could involve far more men and resources than anyone might foresee. While the frenzied preparations for the operation were underway, Lord Mountbatten ordered V P Menon to fly to Jammu. Menon reached the Maharajah before the expiration of the ultimatum he had given his ADC. He carried with him, awaiting only Hari Singh's signature, the Act of Accession, which would provide a legal framework for India's action.

Menon was back in his Delhi home late on the evening of that same Sunday, 26 October. Alexander Symon, Britain's Deputy High Commissioner, joined him for a drink a few minutes after his return. Menon was jubilant; he poured them each a stiff drink and as they sat down, an enormous smile spread across his face. He raised his glass to Symon. Then he pulled a piece of paper from his jacket pocket and waved it gaily towards the Englishman. "Here it is," he said. "We have Kashmir. The bastard signed the Act of Accession and now that we have got it, we will never let it go."

## Exploited Once Again

For the last fifty-four years, the rulers of India and Pakistan have exploited Kashmir in order to perpetuate their misrule. Kashmir has become a festering wound on the body of the Indian subcontinent. There have been three wars and endless rounds of negotiations, dialogue and debate, yet the Kashmir dispute remains unsolved. It is worse than it was at the time of independence. With the passage of time, it has become more complicated, bloodier and more painful. The reality is that the ruling classes on both sides of the divide do not want to and indeed cannot resolve the dispute. Its resolution will remove the main external contradictions that they have used consistently and meticulously to quell internal dissent. The problem now is that the Kashmir issue has erupted with a vengeance. It is spinning rapidly out of control and leading to internal conflicts within the state and ruling classes on both sides. The economic crisis has forced certain sections of the ruling class to end these conflicts and put more resources into the economy to save it from a total collapse. Other sections consider the continuation of hostilities in Kashmir and its status as an external conflict as a means of their survival.

With the increasing impact of globalisation, the Kashmir conflict is taking on a new dimension. Kashmir has been divided, with almost two thirds going to India and the rest to Pakistan. In 1972, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Indra Gandhi signed an agreement at Simla. According to the "Simla Accord" a line of control [LOC] was devised as a temporary border. Several proposals have been made to solve the dispute. None of them were acceptable to the parties involved in the conflict; however, none of the possible solutions within the existing system put forward can achieve any tenable settlement of the dispute.

From a purely Kashmiri perspective, three Kashmirs actually exist: the Indian controlled Kashmir, the Pakistani controlled Kashmir and the Chinese controlled Kashmir. "Greater Kashmir" has a total land area of some 220 000 km 2; almost 90% of Kashmir is mountainous. Of the 220 000 km 2 2 2 , around 100 000 km are currently under Indian control, 80 000 km are controlled by Pakistan and more than 42 000 km2 are under Chinese control. In 1962, China also annexed part of the Ladakh area of eastern Kashmir as a result of its victory in the Sino-Indian War.

With a total population of over 10 million, close to 80% resides in the Indian-controlled region, which has most of Kashmir's arable land area, and more than 30% live in the Pakistani controlled Azad

Kashmir. The United Nations again has failed in Kashmir has been unable to provide any satisfactory outlet of the crisis. Three main solutions have been put forward.

**Option one: continuation of the status quo and recognition of the line of control as an international boundary**

This solution would not be acceptable to the vast majority of the Kashmiri people. Apart from suffering severe socio-economic distress as a result of the wars, they feel strongly that they have been exploited by Delhi and Islamabad. They would never tolerate such an outcome.

The Kashmiri struggle would defeat the Indian army and liberate the Indian held Kashmir. In this scenario, a plebiscite would be held and the Kashmiri people, who are predominantly Muslim, would opt for Pakistan. Ultimately, Kashmir would decide to join Pakistan and would become its fifth province. This is a utopian and absurd idea of the Pakistani ruling class involved in the Kashmiri conflict. More and more leaders, even in Pakistan-held Kashmir, have now renounced this idea. The internal conflicts within the Kashmiri movement are no less than the conflict with Indian military aggression and the infiltration of Islamic fundamentalism. Involvement by the Inter Services Intelligence [ISI] with the liberation struggle have distracted, confused and disorientated the movement.

**Option two: a fully fledged attack by India, which would take over the Pakistani dominated Azad Kashmir**

By this act, India would inflict a decisive defeat (as in Bengal in 1971) on the Pakistan army and the whole of Kashmir would become part of India.

It is said "war is the only serious solution to political problems", but the conditions in Kashmir do not favour an outright Indian victory. This is not only wishful thinking on the part of the hawks in Delhi; such an outcome is inconceivable, as a war in Kashmir would rapidly spread across the 1500 mile Indo–Pak border. The wars of 1948, 1965 and 1971 would seem insignificant if we consider the arms build up that has taken place during the last thirty years in the Indian subcontinent. Leaving aside nuclear weapons, the "conventional" arsenal has enormous destructive power. Pakistan and India both possess long and medium range missiles. They produce advanced tanks, field guns, mortars and APCs, and fighter aircraft are being assembled. There is no doubt that India far outweighs Pakistan in weaponry, military hardware and armed personnel, but despite this, a military victory for India would not be easy. If Pakistan should get close to a defeat in the event of a war, there is no guarantee that there might be a fundamentalist general at the helm who would push the nuclear button...this is too terrible to contemplate.

Imagine the possible outcome of the insanity of the nuclear race in the subcontinent. If a nuclear device were detonated in Lahore, Delhi would not be saved from the nuclear fallout. Similarly, if a nuclear device were detonated in Bombay, Karachi would not escape the consequences of the fallout and vice versa. Through the use of nuclear weapons, the mutual destruction of India and Pakistan is an absolute certainty.

Hypothetically, in a scenario in which the war was restricted to the use of conventional weapons, destruction nonetheless would be on an unprecedented scale. The war would be fought equally at the fronts, as well as in the hearts of the cities and towns far away from the borders. With the present state and strength of missile technology, all cities deep inside Pakistan and India are in range of these missiles and could be targeted easily.

A full-scale war would devastate the already fragile economies of the subcontinent and the mass genocide and economic ravages of war would be impossible to repair for generations to come. Such would be the scale of destruction that the state and law and order could collapse and result in the demise of civilised society. Responsible sections of the ruling classes are terrified of such a scenario, but the irony is that the system through which they rule makes this disastrous outcome possible.

In the present situation, there is one soldier to every five Kashmiri person. India has deployed more than 600 000 troops in Kashmir. Yet such a massive military force has failed to crush the insurgency, and there is low morale, dissent and desertion in the Indian army deployed there. The current state of the Indian army means it would be difficult for the Indian state to control, subdue and crush the larger

population of Kashmir. History has shown that time and again a brutal military force, however large, can never crush a rising people.

The story in East Bengal was different. There, a whole people had revolted against the Pakistan army. The reality was that the Pakistan army already had been defeated before the Indian army went into East Pakistan. It was the resistance of the Mukti Bahani with the support of the vast majority of the population that defeated the Pakistani army. The Indian army went in to crush the soviets formed by the workers, students and peasants in the struggle and war of liberation. In Kashmir, the situation is completely different for the Indian and Pakistani army. The annexation of Kashmir by Indian military aggression is neither a solution nor a possibility. Serious strategists of both states are aware of this, which is why they opt for the ceasefires, the negotiations and half-hearted gestures of peace by Vajpayee and Musharraf. They are hoping against hope that they might be able to keep the conflict on the back burner and still control the situation. This stalemate has made conditions for the exploited masses of Kashmir more and more intolerable.

The infiltration by Islamic fundamentalists and the intrigues of the ISI in manipulating the movement have prevented the liberation struggle in Kashmir from striking a decisive blow and

breaking the stranglehold of the Indian state. Paradoxically, the ISI serves the cause of the Research and Analysis Wing, and vice versa. This, together with the ideological and organisational conflicts between diverse Kashmiri groups and the lack of proper perspective, strategy, methods and leadership, have prevented a victorious outcome of the struggle.

**Option three: balkanization of Kashmir.**

This option would involve dividing Kashmir into three parts: the Hindu majority areas of Kashmir would become a part of India, Azad Kashmir a part of Pakistan and the valley comprising Kashmiri Muslims would be declared an autonomous region under the United Nations. A balkanised Kashmir under the United Nations, if accepted by Pakistan today, would nullify Pakistan's avowed stand on Kashmir. The day would not be far off when the people of the independent valley would ask for unification with their brethren in Azad Kashmir. Some circles in Pakistan think that an autonomous Kashmir is a better option than a Kashmir under India's direct rule.

The division of Kashmir into three has also been a demand of the Hindu fundamentalists. The "Times of India" reported on 4 September 2000 that, according to the RSS spokesmen, M G Vaidya:

> ...the RSS was in favour of dividing Jammu and Kashmir into three. Most of the problems will be solved by creating a new state of Jammu and giving Union Territory status to Ladakh. The development of Jammu and Ladakh will be accelerated and these two regions do not require special status by Article 370 of the Constitution, only the valley demanded special status.

The general body of the RSS adopted a resolution on 18 March 2000 that formally supported this demand. This was a revival of a demand by the RSS' political arm, the Jan Sang ancestor of the BJP, made at its inauguration in 1951.

The views of Karan Singh, Hari Singh's son, are no less revealing. Shortly before he was sworn in as Governor of Jammu and Kashmir on 26 February 1981, B K Nehru met various people. He said:

> The only real briefing that I got was from Tiger [Karan Singh] who put the State of Jammu and Kashmir in correct perspective for me. He explained that the State was a wholly artificial creation, its five separate regions joined together by the historical accident that Raja Gulab Singh had conquered all the territories over which his father Maharaja Hari Singh was ruling at the timer of Independence and Partition. Those five different entities had nothing in common with each other. The hill area of Gilgit, Baltistan and Skardu and the Punjabi speaking areas of Muzaffarabad etc. were already in the hands of Pakistan. In out parts of the State, there were three clear divisions: Jammu, which was Hindu, Kashmir, which was

> Sunni Muslim and Ladakh, one part of which was Buddhist and the other Shia Muslim. Because of the lack of commonality between these three divisions, the sooner they were separated the better it would be for the future. My own knowledge of Kashmir was next to nil except for what I had been forced to learn about it during my ambassadorship in Washington.

The option of dividing Kashmir into three is reactionary from beginning to end. Kashmir is too delicate an issue to be treated in this way. The ruling class has built this issue up, blown it out of proportion and played with it for the last fifty years. The balkanisation of Kashmir offers no viable solution and would cause the situation to deteriorate further and create yet more bloodshed and conflict in the region than it can solve. The example of Yugoslavia is a horrifying reminder of such attempts at balkanisation. Those who have been involved in this issue for generations will never tolerate its division or balkanisation. Kashmir has to move forward towards higher forms of human unity and solidarity. The clock cannot be turned back. Like all other bourgeois manoeuvres, it will lead to disaster and catastrophe.

## What Solution Really Matters?

The most popular option for the solution of the Kashmir issue is the total independence of Kashmir through the formation of an independent state. It has a sentimental and nostalgic attraction among the Kashmiri people, even more so among those who live in Pakistan.

From a Marxist point of view, the Kashmiri people, like those of any other oppressed nation, have a right to self-determination, which could include secession. But this is only one aspect of Lenin's position on the national question. From here, the process of the Marxist solution to the national question begins. The condemnation of the national repression of an oppressed nation and the support of the right of self-determination from a Marxist standpoint means the linking of the rivers of the national liberation movement to the sea of class struggle. As Lenin pointed out, the national question is fundamentally the question of bread. This means that the real emancipation of an oppressed nationality is only possible through social and economic transformation. Semi-capitalist, semi-feudal systems and conditions cannot be the prerequisites for the formation of a modern state.

Kashmir is unable economically to provide the necessary infrastructure and other means to forge the unity in the rugged terrain of a population so diverse in colour, race, linguistics, religion, culture and traditions. If we take a deeper look at the Kashmir issue, the formation of an independent Kashmir is not viable in the present scenario.

First, the secession of Kashmir would shatter the ideological foundations on which the Indian and Pakistani states were set up. Intense national, ethnic and communal strife exists in the subcontinent. The secession of Kashmir would encourage national liberation movements from Baluchistan to Nagaland and from Assam to Sindh. Such a scenario would be intolerable for the ruling classes and existing bourgeois states of the subcontinent. Centrifugal forces would rise and pull apart the weak and decaying state structures. The ruling classes would never tolerate such a situation, which could trigger the demise of their rule. The prospects for the Kashmiri people if a new national state was based on capitalism or a democratic "united states of Kashmir" would mean, in practice, that the Indian and Pakistani ruling classes, with imperialist designs of their own, would escalate their exploitation of the Kashmiri people.

A capitalist Kashmir State inevitably would be controlled by the International Monetary Fund and other imperialist institutions. Within a global economy, the newly independent state of Kashmir would be dependent on aid and loans for its existence. This would lead to the further impoverishment of Kashmir, which would result in renewed ethnic, religious, racial and linguistic conflicts.

Eight official regional languages are recognised in the constitution of Indian-held Kashmir; this does not include Gilgit, Baltistan and other areas held by Pakistan. The vallies of Jammu and Ladakh are

under the domination of three different states, namely Pakistan, India and China. Ladakh, with a population of 200 000 mainly concentrated in Leh, is cut of from rest of the subcontinent... its only link is the Zojila pass 3450 metres above sea level. The majority of its population comprises people of the Tibeto–Mongolians races. Jammu has a majority of Aryans; the valley's inhabitants are mainly Dardict and non-Aryan. To unite such a diverse people scattered throughout this rugged terrain would be a Herculean task.

Unity could only take place with if it were possible to achieve a rapid rise in the living standards of these impoverished people. At the same time, massive investment would be needed to build up a suitable infrastructure to link the isolated areas in such a wilderness. In similar situations, India and Pakistan, with huge resources, failed to complete these tasks. How can this be achieved by capitalism in Kashmir?

Another notion mooted by some of the nationalist leaders in Kashmir is the negotiation of an Oslo-type agreement that would take place under the auspices of the United States and the United Nations. The inevitable failure of these talks would increase the threat of war. Even if partial agreement was reached, it would fade into oblivion and new political and diplomatic tensions would emerge and put the whole process into jeopardy. Every accord signed by adversarial parties under the auspices of the United Nations or the American imperialists has ended up in disaster. The current Palestinian situation is even worse than it was before the signing of the Oslo and Madrid accords. The American imperialists would never take any step that would antagonise the governments of the subcontinent, especially that of India. They need the collaboration of these governments to facilitate the exploitation of the markets and the masses of the subcontinent. The recent U-turn of American foreign policy throughout the region has demonstrated this fact. The question of Kashmir becoming a strategic base for the United States against China is absurd. There is no guarantee that the United States would treat the Kashmiri people any better than their Pakistani or Indian counterparts. This is a blatant insult to the people of Kashmir, who have struggled and made sacrifices for more than five decades.

A negotiated settlement of Kashmir is out of the question. Even serious bourgeois strategists are beginning of concede this. The real purpose of the negotiations is to diffuse the situation and to water down the heat of the struggle. The ruling classes make symbolic gestures so that they can agree to disagree peacefully. That is what bourgeois diplomacy is all about.

Wars and tensions have dominated fifty years of Indo–Pak relations and, during this period, there have been constant negotiations, peace efforts and diplomatic manoeuvres to perpetuate capitalist rule. These indecisive negotiations in reality have been used as a means to overcome the challenges of the class struggle. During the Kargill incident, American imperialists played a greater role in the subcontinent's diplomatic games. In January 1998, a senior American official who dealt with South Asia leaned back in his chair as he explained how Kashmir figured in Washington. "Sometimes we're concerned about war in South Asia," he said, "but we don't lose sleep over Kashmir." Indian and Pakistani nuclear explosions in 1998 shook Washington policymakers to the core, particularly as the Americans did not have advance intelligence that the Indians would conduct nuclear tests. The fighting between India and Pakistan near Kargill in the summer of 1999 reminded the world that Kashmir was a live issue.

## The Kargill War

In the summer of 1999, the Pakistani army, under the command of Musharaf, the commander-in-chief, launched a clandestine military operation in the Kargill sector of Kashmir. Nawaz Sharif, the prime minister, was given a short brief, but only after the operation had begun. The Indian army countered this attack with full force, and heavy casualties occurred on both sides. The Pakistanis captured a number of strategic peaks and territory from the Indians. Under enormous pressure from Washington, however, these hostilities were rolled back, and the Pakistani army was forced to retreat. This humiliating withdrawal by the Pakistani army was resented within the middle layers of the military elite and led to

serious conflicts within the Pakistani establishment, which resulted in the rapid deterioration of relations between the Sharif regime and the army. Ultimately, these contradictions resulted in a military coup that, although not thoroughly planned or prepared, was nevertheless bloodless. As a result, Nawaz Sharif's government was overthrown and direct military rule was imposed under Musharaf.

The Kargill war had prompted a serious crisis between the two new nuclear-armed powers and ultimately led to further diplomatic intervention. Bill Clinton's intervention had been instrumental in forcing Nawaz Sharif's humiliating withdrawal.

Up to this point, the American position on Kashmir had been noncommittal, but American interests in the region run wider than Kashmir. A subtle shift in America's attitude towards the region has been seen, and the once frosty relations with India have warmed slightly. Indo– American trade has also developed, and economic ties, helped by a productive bilateral relationship, continue to grow. India is a major market, and it is not only Indian software that appeals to western investors. Privatisation and a broadening consumer base for luxury imports make India an attractive market for American business. The drive for markets shapes the foreign and diplomatic policies of American Imperialism; the Americans want peace in Kashmir in order to capture the subcontinental market. Plutarch said long ago "conquerors were always lovers of peace; they like to enter your cities unopposed".

The militant groups themselves admit that Pakistan can probably cut off their access to Indian Kashmir, but this would be a major undertaking; as Brain Cloughley, a western defence analyst states, "the Pakistani army along the Line of Control would have to be willing to shoot members of the more Islamite militant groups". No matter how intact military discipline, he thinks that

such orders might be disobeyed. The real problem is whether action can be taken to curb the activities of radical militant groups in Indian Kashmir when Pakistan itself is most vulnerable to their activities. As the government searches for investors and domestic political stability, it cannot afford the uncertainties these actions might bring.

Although India formally lays claim to the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir, it does not expect or even want to rule the predominately Muslim northern territories and Pakistani Kashmir. Instead, it wants recognition of its current hold over Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh by the West and Pakistan. This may cause serious divisions within the Indian cabinet, with home and defence ministers L K Advani and George Fernandez, respectively, arguing that the ceasefire process was not delivering much. Divisions are also seen between those dealing with Kashmir. Officials in the prime minister's office, led by national security advisor Brajesh Mishra, support this process. Yet their counterparts in the Ministry of Home are said to be critical, in part because their responsibilities for Kashmir have been diluted. As India is seeking to legitimise the situation on the ground, the question of a legal title to Kashmir becomes more urgent. Even the bourgeois analysts accept that, in the present set up, the future of Kashmir looks much the same as it did in the past.

The Islamic fundamentalists are exploiting these primitive social and economic conditions, but a fundamentalist acquisition of Kashmir would kill its glorious culture and turn it into another Afghanistan. The people of Kashmir would not tolerate such an outcome. This is why the conflict between the Kashmiri youth and the Islamic fundamentalists of the "Afghan Jihad" is increasing. The 1988 movement that erupted fiercely in the Kashmir Valley has continued unabated. It was supported by hundreds of thousands of Kashmiri people lead by young nationalists from the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), who flooded into the streets in early 1990 to demand a plebiscite on the future of Kashmir. India responded with force; it called the insurgency a proxy war by Pakistan and sent security forces into the state. Pakistan in turn supported the militants. A JKLF ceasefire occurred in 1994, and the more militant Islamic groups, such as Lashkar-a-aiaba and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, were joined by hardened fighters from Afghanistan.

The Indian and Pakistani rulers are threatened by the struggle of the common people of Kashmir. Although the struggle may not go on with the same intensity, it will continue. The vast majority of the common people of Kashmir come from the deprived classes and have made enormous sacrifices in this struggle. They are the ones who have suffered the most. More than 65,000 people have been killed

in the last decade, and the conflict has created more than 100,000 orphans. More than 300 cases of suicide have been reported, 77% of which involved women. Every family in the Kashmir Valley has been touched by this tragedy. Each year that the insurgency has continued, fresh graves have been dug in Kashmir and families across the valley bury their sons, while Indian families receive news that their sons have fallen in the fighting. Kashmiri's are tired of the violence, but there seems to be no way out.

India pinned many of its hopes on restoring Kashmiri support through local assembly elections held in September 1996; despite a poor turnout, these resulted in a Kashmiri state government led by Farooq Abdullah. Between 1996 and 1998, Abdullah's arrival, accompanied by promises of jobs and autonomy, led to a brief period of optimism and some dampening of militancy, but all too soon this semblance of normality crumbled. Economic development is out of the question, as the government depends on subsidies from New Delhi just to pay official salaries. Abdullah's proposals for autonomy presented to the Indian government in 2000 were rejected unceremoniously. As a result, militant tendencies are once again on the increase.

Against this background, a much more radical option for the solution of the Kashmir conflict is needed. Nothing less than a revolution can free Kashmir from the influence of capitalist imperialism and the poverty and misery of the past. The resilience of the youth, students, women, workers and peasants of Kashmir shows that the struggle against the Indian and Pakistani states and the leaders of the Kashmiri elite can be won. This struggle ultimately is the struggle for a socialist Kashmir. In spite of the heroic role of the Kashmiri people in the past fifty years, the movement has been the victim of the ideological and programmatic confusion of its leadership and has not progressed much further.

World opinion has little sympathy with the people of Kashmir. Financial and power interests dictate all their diplomatic actions. Only the oppressed classes of India, Pakistan and other countries of the subcontinent will give support to the liberation struggle of the Kashmiri people. This has to be galvanised, however, by the workers of the advanced countries throughout the world. This means that the struggle for the liberation of Kashmir has to be linked on a class basis. An independent socialist Kashmir can be created only on the basis of class solidarity. To carry through a socialist revolution is the task of a class not a nation...to sustain and develop it is also a class question. A socialist revolution in Kashmir can become a beacon for the working classes and the oppressed peoples in the subcontinent and beyond. This would lead to the formation of a voluntary socialist federation of the Indian subcontinent and would lead to a socialist world.

A socialist Kashmir would give a human face to the raw beauty of this "paradise on earth" and reach far beyond the Himalayan glaciers, towering mountain peaks, rushing rivers, lakes and green valleys. People from all over the world would be able to see, enjoy and cherish the beauties of a Kashmir free of poverty, misery, disease and hunger. With today's resources and under a socialist plan of production, every Kashmiri and every human being on this planet would enjoy Kashmir... as the Great Mughal Jehangir did four centuries ago.

# CHAPTER 7: IMPENDING CRISIS

## The Largest Concentration of Poverty in the World

> Should this torture then Torment us,
> Since it brings us greater Pleasure?
> Were not through the rule Of Timur,
> Souls devoured without measure?
> - *Goethe's* Westostlicher Diwan, *"An Suleika"*

The growth of globalisation in the last few decades has had a profound impact on the social, economic, political and diplomatic outlook of our world today. Yet globalisation, instead of creating a harmonious and simultaneous development of the planet, has brought more inequality, exploitation and misery to the vast majority of its peoples. An unprecedented accumulation of wealth is in fewer hands, and more and more people live in poverty, ignorance, misery and disease. More rich people live in the world today than ever before. At the same time, more than two billion human souls are forced to live in absolute poverty. The ruling classes are beginning to be aware of the dangers inherent in the immense inequalities of human existence.

The "Economist", in its editorial on 16 June 2001 admitted:

> As for the poor, the gap between them and the rich is rising, even in the industrialised countries where for much of the 20th century the gap had narrowed. In America, between 1979 and 1997 the average income of the richest fifth of the population jumped from nine times the income of the poorest fifth to around 15 times. In 1999 British income inequality reached its widest level in 40 years.

Share prices have fallen and much of the industrialised world is heading either for recession or for slower growth. At such times, inequality of wealth tends to narrow, although not necessarily inequality of incomes, but such times also tend to be those when anger about inequality comes to the surface and start to have political and social consequences. In good economic times, even the poor feel better off. In bad times, the rich may lose money, but the poor lose their jobs, their houses, even their families and, finally, their acceptance of the way the system works.

## Globalisation And The Developing World

The developing world has never had any good times. There has never been any let up in pain and suffering throughout the whole of the twentieth century. If anything, the situation has gone from bad to worse with every passing day. This has inevitably resulted in the further aggravation of conflicts and contradictions. Proxy wars and ethnic cleansing plague large sections of the planet, yet despite reactionary forces bent on crushing society, there are yet again new stirrings of revolutionary upheavals. Although globalisation has ruined large sections of populations, paradoxically, it has also brought the people of this planet closer through its accompanying information technology revolution and telecommunications networks. The ruling classes have promoted these innovations in order to salvage a sagging world capitalist economy.

Apart from the stresses and strains that globalisation has inflicted on the workers of the advanced capitalist countries, it has played havoc with both the financial and cultural aspects of the societies of the developing world. Through the policies of liberalisation, privatisation, deregulation, restructuring and other conditions demanded by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other imperialist agencies, the control of the nation state over society and economy has been severely marginalised. A fierce struggle has erupted between the conflicting interests of the nation state and globalisation, which has had a deep impact on the countries of the Indian subcontinent.

The main countries of the Indian subcontinent under South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation [SAARC] are India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and the Maldives. Historically Iran, Afghanistan and to some extent Burma have been involved extensively in shaping the social, cultural and political scenarios of the South Asian subcontinent. Such is the intensity of crisis in the region, however, that domestic contradictions have led to severe national conflicts. This has resulted in [SAARC] virtually becoming a dead organisation. All countries of the region are going through intense turmoil and turbulence. The dictates of the imperialist institutions and the plunder of multinational companies in the guise of globalisation have strangled these economies.

## India

India's relative political stability has been undermined, and it is more than a decade since any regime has been able to complete its term. The present Vajpayee government is rocked by one scandal after another. The regime, which came to power on the rhetoric of "non-corrupt politics" and Swadeshi [nationalist] economy, has turned out to be the opposite. Resentment and disgruntlement is high not only among the masses but also in the ranks of the BJP. Delhi's main Ashoka Road shows huge posters of Atal Behari Vajpayee looking very pristine and presidential. The blurb accompanying one of the posters read: "Tried, tested and trusted". Below it, someone had scrawled with a red marker: "but failed in the final exam". The economy is in shambles and poverty, misery, disease, violence, ethnic strife and unrest is rampant throughout the land. A veritable Pandora's box of scams seems to have opened up, and, in each instance, there are linkages to the prime minister's office. A BJP minister recently admitted: "For the first time, we can't face our workers. Our condition has not been so bad since we got two seats [in the parliament] in 1984." The coalition parties of the NDA [National Democratic Alliance] regime are restive. Some have already left, like the Trinimul congress of Mamta Bannerjee, and joined hands with Sonia's Congress I. The government is virtually in the hands of the TDP's [Telugu Desam Party] leader N Chandrababu Naidu, who, with twenty-nine members of parliament, can decide the fate of the NDA regime. The hardliners in the coalition, including the reactionary Shiv Sinha leader Bal Thakery, have voiced their open resentment to Vajpayee's diversions from the Hindu fundamentalist agenda. The recent meeting of the central working committee of the BJP at Nagpur exposed the dissent and resentment within the party.

If push comes to shove, the government goes. But the question is who will do the pushing? Clearly, a process of political meltdown has begun. One push could send the government over the precipice. One factor that keeps it going is that nobody wants another election in the present atmosphere of mass disenchantment and cynicism towards this bourgeois parliamentary set up. It is a curious conundrum. The Vajpayee regime shows every sign of tottering, yet it will continue to limp along until someone musters the courage to give it a final heave⊠that push could well come from within the NDA. The opposition is no less in crisis. Congress has been discredited and the regional and ethnic parties owe their existence to the relative lull in the movement of the masses and the role of left parties. But that will change sooner or later. This will change the lines of the battle from the present day reactionary prejudices to a clear class conflict. Once the working class begins to move, the whole scenario will be transformed. The outcome of that class war in a revolutionary victory of the oppressed will change the face of the Indian subcontinent.

## Pakistan

In Pakistan, the second largest state of the region, the situation is no better. The beleaguered Musharaf dictatorship is lurching from one blunder to another. The contradictions in its policies and actions show the deep internal fissures opening up within the army and the state apparatus. The buffer of the black economy between a failed and bankrupt state and a turbulent society cannot keep things going for too long. The destabilising influence of this massive black economy could cause the break up of the state and lead to a civil war with disastrous consequences for society.

The military regime asserted itself rather hesitantly in the aftermath of the failed democratic experiment of the imperialists and the Pakistani ruling class. This democratic farce lasted for eleven years. In this so called democratic episode, living standards fell, the socio-economic crisis worsened and a further 22% of the population dropped below the line of absolute poverty. The military regime by rigorously imposing International Monetary Fund conditions has further aggravated the miseries of the masses. The economy is in shambles. The fastest rises ever in the prices of petroleum, gas, electricity and other basic utilities have been seen during the twenty months that the liberal military dictatorship has been in power.

The 1990s were a lost decade for the oppressed classes, as rulers amassed billions and stashed them into their coffers in the safe havens of the West. During this period, the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) fell from an average of 6.5% in the 1980s to about 4.1% in the second half of the 1990s. In the new millennium, it has further declined to less than 3%. According to official figures, unemployment doubled in the 1990s. In the brief span of fourteen years between 1987 and 2001, the proportion of the population living below the poverty line also doubled. Development expenditure fell from close to 9% of the GDP in the 1980s to 3% in 2000–2001. Debt servicing and military expenditure consume 105% of total revenues. Every financial year starts with a negative balance.

The situation is explosive and the masses are reacting with anger and resentment; it is doubtful that the rulers will be able to distract the masses this time. They are likely to try either another "democratic" transition or opt for full-scale brutal repression. Any such move, however, will further catalyse the movement and escalate tensions with India. Launching a small-scale military conflict will not let them off the hook. It is doubtful whether they are capable of learning from their humiliating defeat at Kargill. Even if they bring back Benazir Bhutto, she unlikely to be able to play the role she played in the past.

The fundamentalist threat has no profound social or political basis. The reason for its exaggerated dominance on civil society is mainly the vacuum created by the collapse of the left and the attempts of the imperialist sponsored media to blow this threat out of proportion and scare the workers both in this region and in the West. Another military counter coup based on nationalist chauvinism or fundamentalism will further destabilise the situation. In the past, the democratic and liberal rulers also played into the hands of the fundamentalists. They not only carried out anti-people policies to appease the imperialists, which resulted in aggravating their misery, but they resorted to Islam at every critical juncture when beset with a crisis. In a Bonapartist fashion, they tried to manipulate the primitive sections of society in order to quell the rising movement of the workers against these policies. Even if the islamicists come to power by any backdoor conspiracy, they would not be able to maintain control for long. This imposition of reaction, paradoxically, would trigger a mass revolutionary upsurge.

## Bangladesh

As in Pakistan, another revolutionary situation on the lines of the 1968–1969 upsurge could be a real possibility in the next period. Such a scenario could result in a gigantic wave of class struggle across the subcontinent and far beyond. Ever since its creation Bangladesh has been in the throes of military coups, revolutions and counter-revolutions, which have resulted in a state of constant turmoil.

Wave after wave of general strikes have occurred in Bangladesh. Probably the Bangladeshi proletariat has set a world record in the number of general strikes that have taken place. The historical tragedy of the lack of a revolutionary party and leadership has plunged Bangladesh into deep crisis with terrible consequences for its people.

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism is one of the causes of social decay in Bangladesh. Rather than gaining strength and a wider base, however, it remains confused and clustered at a particular point. As the crisis worsens, the disparity between rich and poor continues to rise. A Bangladeshi textile sweatshop female worker said in an interview, "Among girls in Bangladesh's textile industry, it is thought that those who can enter prostitution are the privileged ones". This statement highlights the malaise prevailing in society. According to a survey conducted by the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association in 300 of the country's 70 000 villages in 1997, more than 7000 children are trafficked out of the country every year. Most of them are sold by parents unable to feed them. Of these, boys are sold as camel jockeys (for camel races in the Gulf States, during which some of them get killed), while the girls end up in brothels. A 1996 report by the United Nation's Children Fund estimated that around half a million children have been smuggled out of Bangladesh since its creation in 1971. The Bangladesh labour minister, M A Mannan, confessed that an estimated 6.3 million children aged 5–14 years have to work for a living.

The recent border skirmishes between the Indian and Bangladeshi troops, caused by a "border dispute" further show the deteriorating situation in Bangladesh. These skirmishes can flare up into a wider conflict. With the glorious cultural and revolutionary traditions of the Bangladeshi working class, it is hard to imagine that they will endure the existing order for much longer.

## Sri Lanka

Since the end of the 1970s and the defeat of the 1980 general strike, Sri Lanka has been drenched in ethnic civil war and bloodshed. This civil war seems to be a horror without end. Both negotiations and war have failed to end the conflict. The hardliners and the reformists have failed to find any solution. On top of this, the Chandrika Kumaratunga popular front government is rapidly pursuing International Monetary Fund policies. This has further aggravated the miseries of the Sri Lankan working class. Several "left-wing" ministers in this reformist regime are attacking the masses... cuts in pay and job losses are rampant. The continuing civil strife and the crushing policies of the imperialists have led to a near collapse of the economy and a sharp decline in the living standards of the masses. Sri Lanka at one stage was the first country in South Asia to have a social welfare system... this was due to the rise of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party [LSSP], which was a mass Trotskyite party in South Asia. The policies of popular fronts of the LSSP leaders and the betrayal of the Stalinists, however, led to a tragic decline of the left and the subsequent defeat of the working class.

In its aftermath, the ethnic conflict between the Tamil minority in the north and Sinhala majority in the south flared up. This attained bloody proportions, mainly because of the failure of the left leadership to provide a revolutionary way out. Tremendous movements of the Sri Lankan proletariat had occurred in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Ever since the 1980s, the split and decline of the LSSP and other left parties led to a further aggravation of the political crisis. Privatisation, the opening up of the market and the War Effort Bill had a devastating effect on the economy. The last period, however, saw the beginning of a renewed wave of class struggle.

## Nepal

In true classical Shakespearean style, the recent palace killings and intrigues in Nepal have exposed the turbulent situation in this tiny state. Nepal is a small landlocked country in the foothills of the

Himalayas in the shadow of Mount Everest. It is the only official Hindu state in the world. The enthronement of the autocratic Gyanendra could widen the already large gap between the rich and poor. Most political and economic power in Nepal is controlled by parasitic, wealthy, high caste Brahmins and Chetris. The privileged rich live very well in Katmandu, with imported cars, western schooling, vast houses and elegant restaurants at their disposal. The country as a whole is painfully poor, the per capita annual income is just $231. At least 40% of 23 million Nepalese live in dire poverty. Some Nepalese are desperate enough to sell their daughters. About 12 000 girls are sold as sex slaves every year, mostly across the border to India (according to the International Labour Organization of the United Nations).

"News Week" 18 June 2001 stated: "It is a situation ripe for revolution, which is what the rebels have been fomenting for five years now". The uprising began in remote western districts, led by Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai, both are said to come from the high castes that rule the nation. Their method is to wage a "people's war" based on Maoist doctrine and following the example of Peru's Shining Path guerrillas. So far, the rebellion has claimed 1700 lives, including seventy policemen killed in a single day. The rebels are thought to have about 2000 fighters under arms. The Chinese government wants nothing to do with the Nepalese Maoists. Instead, the insurgents get ideological support from Maoist rebels in India. Although the rebel strongholds are concentrated in the rural areas, the Maoists are beginning to make their presence felt in Kathmandu and other towns by planting bombs and extorting money.

In May 2001, a three-day leftist political strike paralysed the city. The Communist Party of Nepal CPN [United Marxist Leninist] is the second largest party of Nepal. Again, because of the policy of two stages, it has become a reformist rather than a revolutionary party. Its base mainly results from the land and other reforms carried out during a short time in power. A few years ago, after getting elected, the Communist Party's prime minister, Adhikari, bowing before a reactionary Hindu monarch, did not say much about his "communist" credentials. The CPN is also at loggerheads with the Maoists and has become a part of the bourgeois set up. The possibility of a Maoist insurrection cannot be ruled out. The Maoists control half a dozen of Nepal's seventy-five districts, mostly in the impoverished hills, and parts of twenty-five others. The "Economist" 9 June 2001 stated: "If the masses storm the palace, the Maoists could conceivably take over." The Maoists already have issued appeals to the 48 000 strong Nepalese Army to revolt against the king. Such a takeover of a state like Nepal could have enormous repercussions across the whole of the Indian subcontinent.

## The Region

In the subcontinent, including Afghanistan, Iran and Burma (Myanamar), no stability is to be found and the two main adversaries, India and Pakistan, are at loggerheads. Despite being neocolonial countries, India and Pakistan each has its own imperial designs. After more than half a century of nominal independence, they have failed to develop modern societies. Conflict and bloodshed are constant features of the history and geography of this tragic South Asian subcontinent.

The last period has been rather long but even in these two decades the workers, however sporadically, have risen and fought back against their oppressors. In the shadow of the impending crisis that looms large on the horizon, they once again have no other option but to fight... and fight they will. They have some of the most marvellous traditions of class struggle and resistance. Once the movement erupts, it will move rapidly towards a revolutionary victory. The working people of this region will not only move towards human emancipation, putting an end to the crimes committed against them, but on the way, they will undo the crime of Partition.

# CHAPTER 8: UNDOING THE PARTITION

## Problems Of Reunification

> The working men have no country.
>
> What they do not possess cannot
>
> be taken away from them
>
> Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto (1848)</em

People everywhere relate their own situations to events in distant places. In the last few decades, important and tumultuous events have taken place. The formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] highlighted the flaws of segregation and the need for unity. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the unification of Germany made a deep impact on the peoples of those states, divided by historical accidents. The formation of the European Union and unions of different trading and economic blocks illustrates the increasing weakness of nation states. In the Koreas, Cyprus, Ireland and other states, there are active movements towards unity. The process of globalisation, transmigrations of people and the contradictions of the world economy have highlighted such processes. This is particularly true of the Indian subcontinent, where this situation has existed ever since Partition. Throughout the subcontinent, a large section of the intelligentsia has never accepted Partition. Anti-Partition supporters always have had divergent ideologies. The most reactionary and the most progressive elements are to be found in the crusade for reunification.

## Hindu Fundamentalists

The most reactionary groups that opposed Partition were and still are the hard-line Hindu fundamentalists. They claim India as the beginning and end of the world and consider India to be the motherland of Hinduism and the bastion of the gods Rama and Krishna. They consider all foreigners as intruders who have disturbed this cradle of Hinduvata. Even today, in Kashmir and elsewhere, the RSS and other Hindu fundamentalist groups call for the Hinduisation of Islam. They have never accepted that India is a multilingual, multicultural and multireligious entity. They believe in the concept of "Akhand Bharat", which is an imperialist obduracy focused on imposing Hinduism by force upon the whole people of the subcontinent.

The rise of fundamentalism in India in the last period has further aggravated this religious bigotry, which stems from ancient Hindu mythology. These fundamentalist zealots believe in the destruction of all historical and cultural vestiges of Muslim rule and existence in the subcontinent. Most acts of RSS violence are based on these dogmas. Nathuram Godse, the RSS fanatic who assassinated Gandhi in 1948, declared in his last will and testament that the only possession he had to leave his family was his ashes. He chose to postpone his entrance into immortality until the dream for which he had committed murder had been realised. Defying the canons of Hindu custom, he asked that his ashes should not be immersed in water flowing to the sea; instead, they should be handed down from generation to generation until they could be sprinkled into an Indus river flowing through a subcontinent reunited under Hindu rule.

Gopal Godse, Nathuram's brother, went back to Poona after his release from prison and took up residence on the third floor of a modest dwelling in the centre of the city. On one wall of his terrace, outlined in wrought iron, is an enormous map of the entire Indian subcontinent. Once a year, on 15 November, the anniversary of his brother's execution, Nathuram's ashes are set before that map in a silver urn. The map is outlined in glowing light bulbs. No twinge of remorse, no hint of contrition animates the bigots who gather there on that day. They are there to celebrate the memory of the "martyr" Nathuram Godse and to justify his crime for posterity. Standing before Gopal's wrought iron map, stirred by the strumming of a sitar, these unrepentant zealots thrust the open palms of their right hands into the air. They swear before the ashes of Nathuram Godse to reconquer:

> the vivisected portion of our motherland, all Pakistan, to reunite India under Hindu rule from the banks of the Indus where the sacred verses of the Vedas were composed, to the forests beyond the Brahmaputra.

Since India's Partition, such acts have become commonplace. The destruction of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya on 6 December 1992 was a manifestation of this aggressive Hindu fundamentalism. The main cause of this act is rooted in the failure of capitalism to develop India and the deepening socio-economic crisis. Since the demolition of the Babri Mosque, such acts have increased. The fundamentalists have an old saying that the Indus is incomplete without India and India is incomplete without the Indus. They intend to attack Pakistan, to drive all non-Hindus out of the subcontinent and to create a religious state based on the ancient mythological concepts of Hindutva.

The judgment of the "Citizen's tribunal on Ayodhya", published in May 1994, states that:

> on the basis of the available evidence we framed charges against L. K. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Ashok Singhal, Vinay Katiyar, Kalyan Singh, Acharya Dharmaendra, Ram Chandra Das, Parmod Mahajan, Ram Vilas Vidyarthi, Uma Bharti, Sadhvi Ritham Dara, Vijay Raj Scindia and members of the executive committees of RSS, VHP, BJP, ABUP, Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sehna the Prime Minister of India and the governor of UP [Uttar Pradesh]'.
>
> (Judgment and recommendations page 242)

Seven years have passed and these guilty men are not only free, most of them are now in the government of secular India. The rise of these reactionary trends has deepened the hatred between people from different ethnic, religious and communal backgrounds. Rather than promote the unification of the subcontinent, these reactionary trends actually strengthen the hands of the proponents, apologists and upholders of Partition.

The rise of these Hindu chauvinists can only lead to greater disaster and destruction in the subcontinent, but fortunately these mad ideas of driving out the non-Hindus cannot succeed. In no way can these evil forces dominate because of the existence of a massive proletariat in the subcontinent, even though it is currently dormant. In the face of such counter-revolutionary aggression, the workers will rise to defeat them decisively.

These reactionary trends are a product of a particular period of stagnation and inertia within the workers' movement. The political vacuum created by the collapse of the left and the conciliatory pragmatism or capitulation of the leaders of the communist parties has been a factor in allowing such ugly relics of the past to surface. Once the working class moves into action, these dark forces of reaction will be swept into oblivion.

## Islamic Fundamentalists

Surprisingly, sections of the Muslim fundamentalists were another force opposing Partition. The main organisation was Jamaat-e-Islami, headed by its founder Maulana Abdul Ala Maudoodi since

1940. Evidence shows that the Jamiat-e-Ulema Hind, especially in Uttar Pradesh, had aligned itself with sections of Congress in an attempt to prevent Partition. Similarly, several other Islamic parties and organisations were vehemently opposed to Partition.

The ideology of Jamaat-e-Islami is as reactionary and as extreme as that of their Hindu extremist counterparts. Their objective is to achieve pan-Islamism. They idealise the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, a despotic Islamic zealot who carried through a spate of terrible and repressive acts specifically against the Hindus and Sikhs. He enforced the building of Muslim mosques in close vicinity to Hindu temples and sacred places of worship. The Mosque at Mathura was built practically in the courtyard of the god Krishna's birthplace. Aurangzeb was a bigot, a puritan and no lover of art and literature. He infuriated the great majority of his subjects by imposing the old and hated jeziya poll tax on the Hindus and destroying many of their temples. He was such a brutal monarch that in the course of palatial infighting, he had his own father Shah Jehan (the builder of the Taj Mahal and other magnificent Mughal architecture, including the Shalimar gardens) and his brother Dara Shikoh (the legendary architect of Lahore's glamorous cultural renaissance, crusader of the development of music, paintings and other fine arts) cruelly executed in the Lahore Fort.

Shivaji Nalhorae, a Marhatta warlord from a Hindu sect, challenged Aurangzeb from Maharashtra in the South. The recent fundamentalist upsurge in Bombay and Maharashtar was based on a mythological reincarnation of this ancient conflict. The fundamentalist group Shiv Senha, led by the reactionary petty bourgeoisie leader Bal Thackery, takes its inspiration from this mediaeval clash. These religious fanatics fed upon each other then, as they still do today.

The present crisis is exacerbated by the hysteria whipped up by these groups. The aim of the Islamic opponents of Partition was to Islamise the whole of India and use it as a bastion of Islamic religious extremism. Although they were overwhelmed by other groups during those cataclysmic years, they still have organisations in India. Petty bourgeois liberal democracy is incapable of facing up to and defeating these frenzied attacks. It tries to gain support by putting up a facade of secularism, but this cannot succeed given the deteriorating economic conditions of the masses.

As well as the tide of Hindu fundamentalism, important sects within Islamic fundamentalism are involved in fanaticism, terror and communal bloodshed in India. Their limited social base, from the oppressed minorities of Indian Muslims, results in their lack of political direction.

More than 180 million Muslims live in India compared with the total population of around 150 million in Pakistan. Over the years, most of the Islamic parties have become reconciled to the creation of Pakistan. They have in fact tried to build up and strengthen their centres in Pakistan in order to spread the ideas of pan-Islamism. They have succeeded in doing this in Afghanistan temporarily, however, the bloodshed in Afghanistan continues, and society is being plunged into a morass. These Islamic fundamentalists have the same designs against India as the Hindu fundamentalists have against Pakistan. They combine a Pakistan nationalist chauvinism with religious obscurantism. Pakistan's social and political crisis is further aggravated through the infiltration of these Islamic fanatics into sections of the military and the bureaucracy.

## Liberal Reformers

In recent years, increasing gestures of goodwill have been made between liberal and enlightened reformists belonging to the more westernised sections of the upper middle classes on both sides of the border. A joint India and Pakistan chamber of commerce has been set up by certain sections of the bourgeoisie of these two countries. Activity is increasing among many non-governmental organisations and liberal bureaucrats aimed at improving relations between the two countries. They have been instrumental in setting up track II diplomatic channels to resolve the disputes between the two countries. Even liberal military officers have been involved in this process. A body known as the "Soldiers for Peace" has been established and is comprised predominately of retired senior officers from both sides. The main

organisation that initiated this process in the late 1980s and early 1990s was the "Pak–India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy". The core members were the bosses of various non-governmental organizations.

However, despite several cross-border visits, innumerable joint Indo–Pak conferences and many other similar activities, these initiatives have failed to make any significant impact on wider sections of the population and especially on the working classes of the two countries. The problem has been that they represent conflicting class interests and that different classes have different stakes in the process. The crisis-stricken bourgeoisie of both countries is desperately trying to preserve its rule and continue to exploit the masses.

In May this year, the visiting Indian trade delegation stressed that 600 items can be traded between India and Pakistan. The Pak–India Chamber of Commerce and Industry has demanded the end of trade sanctions between the two countries. They have claimed that lifting sanctions could generate $1 billion worth of annual trade. That this trade will only produce increased profits for a small fraction of traders and the business community is significant. The formal two-way trade between India and Pakistan is worth scarcely more than $180 million. Trade through unauthorised channels (such as smuggling and through third countries), however, amounts to well over $1.5 billion a year. This is a conservative estimate. Businessmen estimate that this trade exceeds $2 billion a year. A trader in the Bombay Bazaar in Karachi says:

> Name anything from India you need tools, cloth, garments, fruit processors, graders, tannery equipment, textile machinery spares... or are you looking for imitation jewellery, precious items, Indian perfumes, cotton saris, pajama-shirt suits, pickles from Madras, 'papads' from Bombay, Ratnagiri mangoes, pineapples, Ayuvadric medicines and cosmetics?

Indian brewers have obtained franchise rights for many brands of alcoholic drinks, which have started trickling into Pakistan markets, mainly through Dubai. A large number of traders in the Bombay Bazaar in Karachi offer packets of what they call "done trade", which includes a variety of goods for India-bound passengers. They are worth from 5000 to 10 000 rupees. The goods contained in these packets have a ready market in Bombay, Delhi or other cities. This is no secret trade; similar packets are said to be on offer in Lahore and some other cities. Notices hanging in the shops urge prospective India-bound passengers to seize this opportunity.

Whether or not Pakistan grants Most Favoured Nation [MFN] status to India, the two-way trade between India and Pakistan goes on. Those who benefit are smugglers and unscrupulous traders. Those who suffer are the consumers, both in India and Pakistan, who are forced to pay a lot more.

After signing the Uruguay Round Agreement, Pakistan is bound to give MFN status to all members of the World Trade Organization. By virtue of MFN status, both India and Pakistan would have to do away with all non-tariff barriers and allow access to imports from each other without any discrimination. These goods will be imported and exported at the same tariff rates as apply to trade with other countries. Pakistan is not offering India anything special. In fact, Pakistan has an obligation under the terms of the WTO. To give MFN status to India, or for that matter to any other WTO member country, does not confer the right of unhindered access to imports.

While the bureaucrats and decision makers in Pakistan have from time to time drawn a veil over anti-Indian sentiments, Pakistani industrialists have, for a long time, wanted to restrict imports of Indian capital goods. The engineering industry felt threatened when Indian goods started trickling into Pakistan's market. A Pakistani scooter assembler of an Italian brand protested when a few Indian scooters were imported into Pakistan a decade ago. The importation of Italian scooters is allowed, but not that of Indian scooters which are much cheaper. In the case of the National Logistic Cell [NLC], immediately after it was set up, placed orders for Mercedes trailers from Germany at a much higher cost. The company supplied trailers but sourced them from India rather than from Germany! These trailers are still being used by the NLC.

The textile sector earned a lot of money in 1999–2000, and many groups decided to revamp their production capacities so that they can become competitive when the textile quotas on exports are scrapped in 2004. Orders to import machines and equipment are being placed, but foreign exchange constraints are obstructing quick delivery of the equipment. Indian capitalists whose already dwindling market is threatened by Pakistani goods have voiced similar fears. Vast sections of the population remain oblivious to these concerns, which have little or no impact on the economic and social development of countries heavily dominated by multinationals. Not only are the multinationals taking over the service and infrastructure sectors, but they also dominate important manufacturing sectors. From automobiles to most other consumer goods, multinationals such as Lever Brothers, Phillips, IBM, ICI, Honda, Toyota and Suzuki dominate production and the markets of almost all countries on the subcontinent. Some sections of industry, however, are opposed rigorously to the lifting of trade and other sanctions. A case in point is the film industry; if sanctions on the Indian film and entertainment industry are removed, the already ailing Pakistani film industry would collapse immediately. Given the present political, strategic and social concerns, only limited changes can be made between the two countries in any important sphere of the economy.

There is talk of "people-to-people" contact and of initiatives for peace. Any peace efforts by the ruling classes are hampered by the lack of clarity of their aims and objectives . After more than a decade of deliberation, they are still uncertain as to what these objectives should be. The crisis of capitalism forces the rulers of the two states to confront each other in their efforts to divert and demobilise domestic opposition. It is futile to work for a peaceful settlement of issues alongside the existing ferment of conflict, contradictions and revolt. In addition, the main protagonists of this petty bourgeoisie initiative consider themselves to be Pakistanis and Indians an inevitable outcome of their class backgrounds. Their seminars, meetings, conferences and other gatherings are based on superficial agendas and cosmetic demands. At these meetings and cultural festivities they indulge in nostalgia rather than develop any serious strategies. The petty bourgeoisie on both sides of the divide make little attempt to address the real issues that might shake or dent the system upon which this division is based. They are ill equipped to address these questions of war and peace and of relations between the two countries from a class perspective. Furthermore the non-governmental organisations and other institutions and individuals that fund these projects and activities do not tolerate initiatives outside the constraints of the existing set up.

The left are ideologically confused, and this has intensified in the last period. The abandonment of the politics of class struggle inevitably leads to nationalist degeneration. No matter how soft and broad this nationalism might be it cannot play a progressive role in this era of capitalist decay. The intensifying crisis in these societies further impels the rulers towards reactionary policies and repressive actions. They try to perpetuate their rule by contradictions and gimmicks such as peace talks. The liberals and more serious sections of the ruling elite realise that war hysteria leading to a military clash could result in reducing their privileges and in the destruction of the present economic, social and political system. The imperialists also share this view.

## Reformists

At the opposite end of the political spectrum, people actually want unification. Most are not vocal because the half-hearted, "diplomatic" petty bourgeoisie milieu of their get-togethers prevents this. These forums put forward steps to open up borders, improve communications, end visa and immigration controls and ease tensions between the two countries. Even though these demands and gestures are limited, their implementation could create big problems for the ruling classes. They fear that concessions might unleash a spiral of events, which could crack the ideological grip that has been clamped on society for more than half a century. These concessions would enable people to share their problems, discuss their exploitation and misery and would lead to greater demands. The working people would see the

common causes of their problems and understand the need for a common struggle. Such a situation is far too dangerous for the ruling classes. However liberal they might sound, the Indian and Pakistani ruling classes will resort to the most reactionary brutal methods once they see the rule of capital being threatened by the unity of the oppressed.

The non-governmental and left liberals are granted concessions and privileges, while huge obstacles are imposed on the working classes and lower ranks of society. The families of these classes are usually prevented from meeting their closest relatives. For those who do travel, the journey to India or Pakistan is a horrifying experience. The immigration controls and customs checks are so humiliating that those who experience them never think of venturing on that journey again, whereas those travelling on business have no such problems.

There is no doubt that a significant cross-section of students and young intelligentsia want to unite the peoples of the subcontinent. Increasing numbers of women are also getting involved in the "people-to-people" initiative for peace and democracy; many come from the propertied and middle classes or are students and workers of non-governmental organisations. There is also some involvement from trade unions leaders and activists. Most of this movement, however, is made up of ex-left-wing activists of different parties and groups in both India and Pakistan. Their basic sentiment is genuine: they want to eliminate the borders, and they abhor this artificial divide. They are deluded into thinking that this reformist process might lead ultimately to the unification of the Indian subcontinent. A Partition imposed by imperialists in collusion with the subcontinental ruling elite can only be undone by overthrowing the oppressive forces that brought about the Partition.

## The 'Hawks'

The so-called Hawks include both fundamentalists and liberal nationalists who want to preserve the two states and keep the status quo. They dominate the ruling classes and its ideology on both sides of the divide.

In Pakistan some liberal nationalists attempt to justify the Pakistani state with their interpretation of 5000 years of history. They have a quixotic notion that 5000 years ago the Indus valley had a distinct entity and civilisation. In a recently published book, one of these liberals argued that Pakistan is a distinct entity because it is a continuation of the Indus valley civilisation of Moenjodaro and Harrapa. Recent historical fact, however, refutes this intellectual garbage. Pakistan was created as East and West Pakistan. The eastern part was more than 1500 miles away from the Indus. This ancient civilisation was based on the great rivers, namely the Bharamputra and the Ganges. These apologists for the Pakistani state refute the two-nation theory, the official doctrine, on which this theocratic state was supposed to have been set up. By postulating another hypothesis to justify the present state, the more traditional and contrived doctrine is undermined. Large sections of the ruling classes, and even some left reformists and trade unionist leaders, have their own justifications for Pakistani nationalism. In periods of political decay and reaction, nationalism proliferates and penetrates deeper into society.

The state media, educational institutions, entertainment industry, mullahs, petty bourgeoisie intelligentsia and other institutions and agencies of the ruling classes continue to promote this propaganda in order to instil chauvinism into the mass consciousness. The biggest beneficiaries and most ardent supporters of Partition are the nation states themselves, particularly the armed forces of India and Pakistan. The state structures and the military and civilian bureaucracy are indoctrinated with this chauvinistic viewpoint chauvinism. They use nationalism to crush any movement of the oppressed classes, nationalities, religious minorities and other enslaved sections of society under their despotic rule.

## Pakistan's Army

The character of the Pakistan army is revealed in the genocide and brutality inflicted in Bengal (in 1971), Baluchistan (1974–1976), Sindh (1983) and other places in Pakistan against people who dared to rise up against despotism. In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, American influences dominated the Pakistan army was seen. In the 1980s, with the Central Intelligence Agency's involvement with Afghanistan, the Pakistan army became more Islamic. With the advent of the Zia dictatorship, this process was accelerated. Slogans were changed, drinking was banned in most officers' messes and prayers were made compulsory. Steps were taken to use religion as a new force to impose discipline and increase the cohesion of Pakistan's army. The counter-revolutionary and reactionary intervention in Afghanistan was organised and controlled by the Inter Services Intelligence. The Afghan counter-revolutionary Jihad (holy war) was the biggest covert operation launched by the Central Intelligence Agency in its history. The Central Intelligence Agency used Saudi Arabia and other reactionary Gulf kingdoms for financial and military aid. Apart from direct financial and military aid from the imperialists, the financial sponsorship for this counter-revolutionary insurgence in Afghanistan came from the drug trade. The Central Intelligence Agency supplied the Afghan guerrilla organisations with advanced equipment for distilling heroin from poppies, and Islam was used as a cover for this whole operation. The aim was to get mass support for this counter-revolutionary civil war amongst the primitive and reactionary sections of society.

After crushing the 1983 movement in Sindh and other areas of Pakistan, General Zia-ul-Haq may have gone a little too far in converting the army to Islam. In 1979, he wrote:

> the professional soldier in a Muslim army pursuing the goal of a Muslim state, cannot become 'professional' if in all his activities he does not take on 'the colour of Allah'

Zia-ul-Haq introduced Islamic training and thought into the curriculum at the command and staff colleges. During this period, the military bureaucracy repressed the working people of Pakistan. General Zia-ul-Haq did not hide his intention to suppress dissent: the army was to defend the "ideological frontiers" of Pakistan, as well as its geographic ones. In 1980, the directorate of military intelligence issued a circular for the officer class, which read:

> Pakistan has to fight a three front war. First, there are the Indians, who cannot accept our existence. Then there are the Russians, who also want us out of the way. Finally there is the third front; at home against those who would destroy us from within.

This "process of Islamisation" was going well while the Afghan war was on and money was pouring in, but after the 1988 Geneva accords and the withdrawal of Soviet troops, American imperialists started to lose interest. Yet Zia-ul-Haq was serious about forming an Islamic fundamentalist state, initially comprising Pakistan and Afghanistan. He perceived himself as a self-proclaimed Caliph of Islam. He was very fond of going for Friday (holy day of the Muslims) prayers in Kabul.

The threat of mass revolt was rising, and the Americans did not want a mass revolutionary movement in Pakistan, especially in the aftermath of the Afghan civil war. The Soviets had withdrawn and the left-wing Najeebullah regime was collapsing. Zia-ul-Haq's fanaticism had become an irritant to his American masters, they got rid of him by engineering a plane crash in August 1988. To achieve their objective, they were prepared to lose their military attaché and another senior diplomat in the "accident". The Pakistan army also lost a large section of its top brass, including thirty-two generals and senior army officers.

In spite of the increase of American and Islamic influence within the Pakistan army, the chain of command and structures are still those set up by the British some 200 years ago. The top military brass has enjoyed an injection of wealth (this includes "black" money). In the 1980s, many of the serving and retired military elite started financial and trade activities. This has created fissures within the armed forces. The interests of the hardliners and the liberals in the Pakistan military elite are deeply

embedded in the doctrine of Pakistani chauvinism. The contradictions within Pakistan's military elite might trigger a bloody coup that could explode into civil war. This could well destroy their efforts to maintain the fragile unity of the state and army and incite a war between India and Pakistan. The counter-revolutionary implications of a conflict within the Pakistan army will have drastic repercussions throughout the region. The story of the soldiers in the ranks is different. With the upsurge of a class struggle and a mass movement in Pakistan, the soldiers, sailors, airmen and even junior officers will side with the revolution. They have enormous grievances of their own. This is exactly what happened during the 1968–1969 upsurges. As long as the Pakistan army and the state are intact, they will remain the bastions of Pakistani chauvinism, the nation state and the two-nation theory. This illustrates the internal contradictions and strains within the military officer class. In spite of its liberal posture, it cannot cast off it chauvinistic stance.

## Communalism

Across the border in India, the ruling class and the intelligentsia have continually inflamed the wounds of Partition. B L Sharma Perm, a top official of a sister organisation of the BJP, has been filming groups of refugees from Pakistan. His aim is to depict Muslim cruelty to Hindus and Sikhs. Horror stories are exaggerated to stir up hatred. According to one story, a respected doctor in Punjab confessed to murdering twenty-two women in his family to spare their defilement at the hands of Muslims. Similar stories have surfaced in India in the last fifty years. A special project, known as the "Partition project", has been started in India. A team of social scientists plan to talk to several hundred survivors in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in interviews which can last two years or longer. Its prime mover is Ashes Mandy, of the centre for the Study of Developing Societies in Delhi, himself a witness to the 1946 Calcutta riots that began the violence. The Indian government turned down a proposal by the Ford Foundation to support the project with a $270 000 grant. The reason is obvious: they do not want any publicity given to the atrocities committed by Sikhs and Hindus against Muslim refugees. Mr Mandy, however, has recorded several confessions by Hindus and Sikhs of homicide and mass murder. Many of the project's respondents have talked about the deep friendships that existed between Hindus and Muslims. One declared, "People were not evil. The times themselves were bad". This is not a comfortable conclusion, especially for the founders of the new states and their heirs.

According to the project analysis: "Two of these states are now nuclear powers, yet their enmity still partakes of Partition's madness". Nandy further exposes the characteristics of the Indian rulers:

> None of the successors to the British Raj established a tribunal for Partition crimes, one distinction between Partition and some other genocides of the 20th century. India, whose official creed is tolerant secularism, has pursued the Partition butchers with no more zeal than avowedly Islamic Pakistan and this indulgence towards their notions of justice today. Mr. Nandy points out that in India, the perpetrators of communal violence are rarely, if ever punished.

Innumerable films have been made on Partition. Most of those made by progressive filmmakers have failed to strike the right balance and have fuelled further bias, hatred and communal prejudices. This is inevitable whenever Partition is viewed from a communal standpoint. Even in the 1940s, the Congress president, Abdul Kalam Azad, admitted this during the period immediately preceding Partition. Arguing against Partition, he issued this statement on 15 April 1946:

> the opposition (Congress) acted as an incentive to the adherents of the (Muslim League). With simple though untenable logic they argued that if Hindus were opposed to Pakistan, surely it must be of benefit to Muslims. An atmosphere of emotional frenzy was created which made reasonable appraisement impossible and swept away especially the younger and

> more impressionable among the Muslims. When the present frenzy has died down opposition among political parties will continue, but based not on religion but on economic and political issues. Class and not community will be the basis of future alignments and policies will be shaped accordingly.

Nonetheless, as a result of the policies of the post-independence Indian government (which included Abdul Kalam Azad himself as an important minister), the frenzy was never allowed to die. As the crisis worsened, so the propaganda of the India states has intensified. India and Pakistan have made numerous commercial films that whip up mutual hatreds and antagonisms. The bourgeoisie media has also played a role in perpetuating this social chauvinism. Periods of reaction and pessimism further aggravate these hatreds. The rise of Hindu fundamentalism and the swift climb to power by the BJP (which won just two seats in the 1984–1985 elections) are an expression of the political economic and social deterioration of Indian society. The state bureaucracy and other institutions fuel anti-Pakistan sentiments and the advent of the fundamentalist BJP government in Delhi has further bolstered these prejudices.

## The Indian Army

The internal culture of the Indian army is more liberal than that of the Pakistan army, however: a thin line exists between national patriotism and reactionary chauvinism and elements of reactionary chauvinism within the army. Although the Indian army is portrayed commonly as having been founded on secularism, the existing economic and socio-political situation does not allow secularism to flourish. In the last fifty years, the Indian army has been involved in the bloody suppression of movements that protest against exploitation and the repressive rule from Delhi... from Telengana onwards, this has been a continuous process. In post-Partition India, the Indian army has been more involved in repressing domestic insurgencies than in fighting foreign wars. The role played by the army in the destruction of the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya is a clear expression of its religious bias. Essentially, the character of the Indian army is fundamentally not very different from that of the Pakistan army. It is no accident that, in the last parliamentary elections, the BJP put up more than 100 retired Indian army officers to contest the Lok Sabha seats.

India has always carried out repression and state terrorism under the guise of parliamentary democracy, but it is no less brutal and repressive than any other democratic or bourgeoisie totalitarian state. The only reason the Indian army has not imposed martial law is that it would be too dangerous. The overall impression created by the state and the media of the honesty and efficiency of the armed forces has facilitated their induction into capitalist enterprises. The recent Tehlka scandal and previous scandals have exposed corruption and nepotism; immoral practices and desertions are on the increase. In secular India, the army and the state are as much bastions of division and hatred as in Pakistan.

## Secular Parties

The state ideology that has evolved since Partition has strong overtones of communal bigotry; this is not restricted to the BJP and other communal parties. The BJP and Hindu fundamentalism surged into prominence in the late 1980s and 1990s as a direct result of the policies of Congress and other secular parties while they were in power. Above all, it resulted from the failure of the communist parties to put forward a revolutionary alternative. The Indian bourgeoisie, with its policy of communalism, failed to create religious harmony and protect the rights of the minorities. Since Independence, during the period that Congress has been in power, there have been continuous pogroms against Muslims and other religious minorities. In 1982, Congress leaders organised gangs of thugs to carry out pogroms against Sikhs: their homes were vandalised and their women raped. This was preceded by a wave of explosive events that culminated in the storming of the Golden Temple at Amritsar by the Indian army

in Operation Blue Star. The 1984 massacre of Sikhs after the assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi was reminiscent of the holocaust of Partition. Communal violence in India has led to more deaths than in the wars fought between India and Pakistan. The strategists of the Indian ruling classes seek to divert the struggle and the movement from developing along class lines. They also consciously orchestrate violence against the minorities. Such tactics cannot work forever.

## The Caste System

The caste system in India is still prevalent and shows the incapacity of the country to escape from its mediaeval past. The origins of the caste system were notably less divine than suggested by the Vedas. It was a ploy by Hinduism's Aryan founders to perpetuate the enslavement of India's dark, Dravidian populations. The word for caste, varda, meant colour, and centuries later, the dark skins of India's Untouchables give graphic proof of the system's real origins.

The five original divisions subdivided into almost 5000 sub castes, with 1886 for the Brahmins alone. Every occupation had its caste, splitting society into myriads of closed guilds in which a man was condemned by his birth to work, live, marry and die, the definitions are so precise that an iron smelter was in a different caste from an ironsmith. The rulers exploit this historical caste system and the religious contradictions inherent in India. Caste conflict is not, however, class conflict. It represents a previous period of history and outdated forms of productive forces. Any tendency to amalgamate these two contradictions of caste and class has always ended in disastrous results for the class struggle .

## Communist Parties

The leadership of the left parties has failed to develop the struggle against all forms of repression into a class movement, through a transitional programme and demands. The leaders of the communist parties not only subscribed to Indian nationalism but have also fabricated ideological justifications for it. In 1970, on the centenary of the birth of Lenin, the CPI produced a book "Lenin and India". This included various articles by the CPI politburo. CPI secretary S G Sardesi wrote an article on "The National Question And India":

> It was the organisers and leaders of nation freedom movement, the politically conscious people of India (!) that took friends and supporters abroad (!) that took pride in India's nationhood as the basis of its right to national independence...' The main point is that India's anti imperialist (!) patriotic movement and its spokesmen and ideologies, one and all (!) spoke of Indian national movement, of national unity and awakening of national perspective, and so on. And the main organised expression of this consciousness became the Indian National Congress (!)...The problem, which the rising Indian bourgeoisie in different parts of the country faced, was not for them being strangulated, or ousted from the home market. It had to be captured not by one group of the Indian bourgeoisie from another but by all of them from the dominating, oppressing British bourgeoisie. Under the given conditions, it was historically both natural and inevitable that the Indian bourgeoisie, irrespective of language, should seek to build a common (!) national movement.

On the question of language, the communist leader again attributes its solution to the most important representative of the Indian bourgeoisie:

> Gandhiji's solution of the language problem in India thus proved both for national, anti imperialist unification and a thorough democratic approach to all the languages in country... ...Even today we [CPI] and the CPI (M) continue to speak of the unfinished Indian revolution,

> the necessity of completing the anti imperialist, anti feudal, national democratic revolution in India...The class allies that the two parties seek to forge...are posed on the all India national plane. I am not here referring to proletarian unity...but to anti imperialist, anti feudal, anti monopoly allies sought by the working class.

Thirty-one years have passed since these words were written. India is even more disunited now than it was in 1970. During this period, however, the leadership of two parties [CPI and CPM] has descended into chaos in search of those "non-working class bourgeoisie allies" of the proletariat. Their analysis of the role of Congress in the freedom struggle has remained flawed. The tragedy is that such views and ideological positions could not offer the inspiration and guidance to the Indian proletariat whom they proclaimed to represent. Such leftist positions meant their virtual acceptance of Partition. The abandonment of the option of class struggle by the dominant Stalinist leadership of the workers' movement meant a subjugation of the working classes to the ideology of the "rising Indian bourgeoisie". The left reformists, starting with J Parkash Narayan, also capitulated to this Indian nationalism, with which the Indian bourgeoisie was unable to compete.

Throughout this period, the teeming millions in the subcontinent have been subjugated to relentless oppression, exploitation and extreme poverty and disease. Their conditions are becoming intolerable. The fundamental debate amongst the Indian left has been to ascertain the character of the Indian revolution. After the disastrous role played by the leadership of the Indian left in the independence struggle, it is self-evident that they have learnt nothing. Immediately after Partition a huge ferment occurred among the rank and file of the party. A factional struggle had already started from the August 1946 meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India. T S Sharma in his work "Communism In India, The Politics Of Fragmentation" documented these ideological zigzags and conflicts in the leadership:

> These differences further sharpened at the Central Committee meeting in August 1946. Here the question was: what attitude to adopt towards the national bourgeoisie, which was shortly going to occupy the ruling position?

In 1947, when the party attempted to determine the nature of the independence, these differences grew. If independence was genuine, then *ipso facto*, the national bourgeoisie was progressive, and the party should aid it in strengthening this independence, but if independence was a sham, then it followed that the Indian bourgeoisie was reactionary and had transferred its allegiance to the imperialist's camp and therefore had to be attacked. The party's Politburo and the Central Committee were divided. P C Joshi, the party general secretary, held the view that the country's independence was genuine and was a distinct achievement to the credit of the ruling bourgeoisie; the other two members of the Politburo B T Ranadive and G Adhikari held that the country's independence was a sham and was merely a manoeuvre by the British imperialists.

> ...Despite these party differences, the Central Committee at its meeting in June 1947 endorsed by a thin majority the General Secretary's view. It laid down that the party should support the ruling Indian bourgeoisie in order to strengthen the country's independence and to enable it to resist the imperialist's pressure. The majority of the Central committee also expressed the view that reactionary forces within the party were attempting to sabotage its independence and it was the duty of all progressive elements of the country 'to rally whole-heartedly and enthusiastically behind the government and pledge them all support.

However, at the December 1947 Central Committee meeting, the June 1947 line was abandoned. The Central Committee now expressed the view that the independence, which the country had won, was false. The Committee criticised the reformist understanding of the earlier period together with the policies of the ruling bourgeoisie as collaborationist. Thus differences on the question of the nature of

Indian independence could not be resolved at the Party Congress and factionalism continued unabated. The second important question on the basis of which the party attempted to evolve its strategy was to determine the stage of the Indian revolution: that is whether it was bourgeois–democratic or proletariat–socialist. The tasks of the party depended on the answer to this question. By February–March 1948 at the Second Congress held in Calcutta, the party had moved sharply to the left:

> The country's independence was a sham. The ruling bourgeoisie was of a reactionary nature and hence incapable of carrying the democratic revolution to completion. It was also incapable of preparing the prerequisites of a socialist revolution. In such a case the task of completing the bourgeoisie democratic revolution had also to be carried out by the proletarian classes themselves.

By 1950, three factions had developed within the party. C Rajeshwar Rao, who represented the Andhra faction, was more inclined towards the Chinese path of revolution. The Joshi and Rao factions criticised the Ranadive faction for its "Trotskyite left sectarian policies". Joshi, the general secretary, was standing on the right wing, compromising course. In the Joshi faction's view,

> ... most of the key postulates of Ranadive's Trotskyite policy had been taken over by the Andhra faction and incorporated in its programme.

Under instructions from Moscow, however, the ideological factional struggle was crushed. Dange, along with S V Ghate and G Adhikari, met the underground leaders of Andhra and Telangana (Rajesh war Rao, Ravi Narian Reddy and D Venkateshwara Rao) and evolved a new strategy that was acceptable to all the factions. The 1948–1950 line changed decisively, and party policy was purged of any revolutionary content. In October 1951, the Central Committee stopped partisan action in Telangana. According to the "Crossroads" of 26 October 1951, "The Andhra line was abandoned... had the full approval of Joseph V Stalin and was adopted at a special Party Conference in October 1951". The Telangana struggle was probably the last militant struggle in which the CPI officially participated. By 1956, the party had reached the antithesis of its 1948–1950 position.

The Third Party Congress was held in Madurai (December 1953–January 1954). The policies it endorsed continued until the Fourth Party Congress in Palghat in 1956. It was at the Third Party Congress that for the first time since independence the party took a clear pro-ruling bourgeois attitude and "highlighted the achievements of the Nehru government, particularly in the domain of foreign policy". The party resolution in Congress "applauded the Government's progressive role".

Nehru's foreign policy had worked. Through the Stalinist bureaucracy, he was able to subjugate the CPI and through that, to a certain extent, hold in check the Indian workers who were on their feet to rise once again against the rule of capitalist exploitation.

As with Roy in the 1920s and 1930s, the positions proposed by various factions, although confrontationist, lacked perspectives and a dialectical approach. Ranadive and his faction were fiercely anti-Trotskyite, as was Roy. Throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, the ideological confusion of the CPI led to varied political positions, including sectarianism and adventurism. These zigzags played a major role that retarded its growth. The decisive factor, however, was their failure to give a revolutionary initiative and programme to a proletariat yearning for change. The 1948–1950 position on the socialist character of the Indian revolution, a "one-stage revolution" as it was called it those days, although very vague, was nevertheless the result of pressure from the grass roots. With the relatively high post-war economic growth and the strengthened position of Stalinism, the Moscow bureaucracy had tamed these sections of the leadership into submission. Some dissent and opposition lingered on. It heated up again with the Sino–Soviet split. The CPI split into CPM–CPI in 1964, and the split of CPI (M) into CPI (ML) in 1967 was the result of the increasing influence of Maoism and guerillaism in that period. This happened in several parts of the world. Fundamentally, however, the Chinese bureaucracy promoted policies not too dissimilar from their counterparts in Moscow.

In reality, the left movement needed Trotsky's analysis of the role of the colonial bourgeoisie...the main issue that would ascertain the stage and character of the Indian and the colonial revolutions. With the failure of the bourgeoisie of these states of the subcontinent to complete any of the historical tasks of the bourgeoisie revolution and the impending crisis that were tearing apart the social fabric of these societies, the notion of completing it in the present set up was simply absurd. Relying on this rotten bourgeoisie would be criminal. Revolutions in the countries of the subcontinent have to be socialist. All other roads led to disaster.

The historically backward, "national" bourgeoisie of the colonial countries, both in the movements and in its rulers, uses every secondary and auxiliary method available to maintain control. In an epoch of crushing Imperialist domination, it cannot develop the capacities of the bourgeoisie of the advanced countries. The question of the nature and policy of the bourgeoisie is settled by these factors: the internal class structure of a nation waging a revolutionary struggle, the historical epoch in which that struggle develops, the degree of economic, political and military dependence of the bourgeoisie on world Imperialism, or on a particular section of it, and finally, and most importantly, the degree of the class activity of the native proletariat and the state of its connections with international revolutionary movements. A democratic or national liberation movement may offer the bourgeoisie an opportunity to deepen and broaden its scope for exploitation. The independent intervention of the proletariat in a revolutionary arena undermines the ability of the bourgeoisie to exploit the masses. Trotsky explains:

> Did not the entire activities of capitalism rouse the masses, did it not rescue them, to use the impression of the communist manifesto, from the idiocy of rural life? Did it not propel the proletarian battalions to struggle? But does our historical evaluation of the objective role of capitalism as a whole or of certain actions of the bourgeoisie in particular, become a substitute for our active class revolutionary attitude toward capitalism or towards the actions of the bourgeoisie? Opportunist's policies have always based themselves on non-dialectical, conservative, tailendist 'objectivism'. Marxism on the contrary invariably taught that the revolutionary consequences of one or another act of bourgeoisie to which it is compelled by its position, will be fuller, more decisive, less doubtful and firmer, the more independent the proletarian vanguard will be in relation to the bourgeoisie, the less it will be inclined to place its fingers between the jaws of the bourgeoisie, to see it in bright colours to over estimate the revolutionary spirit or its readiness for a united front and for a struggle against imperialism.

The other main aspect that led to the failure of the left in the subcontinent, was their understanding of the socio-economic development and the growth patterns and trends of the modes of production in the colonial countries. This was linked to the question of the 'maturity' of the socialist revolution. In other words the left leaders and intellectuals refused to understand the essence of the 'theory of the permanent revolution'. Baffled by the rapid but temporary escalation of development in Stalinist Russia and Maoist China they lost the instinct to look beyond these miraculous developments. Under the Stalinist doctrine, they used Trotskyism as an insult to hurl at anyone who disagreed and did not follow the official line, without really understanding Trotskyism.

## The Law of Civilised Development

In his epic work "The History Of The Russian Revolution", Trotsky further explains:

> ...The European colonists in America did not begin history all over again from the beginning. The fact that Germany and the U.S. have now economically outstripped England was made possible by the very backwardness of their capitalist development. The development of the historically backward nations leads necessarily to a peculiar combination of the different

> stages in the historic process. Their development as a whole acquires a plan less, complex, combined character. The possibility of skipping over intermediate steps is of course no means absolute. Its degree is determined in the long run by the economic and cultural capacities of the country. The backward nation, moreover, not infrequently debases the achievements borrowed from outside in the process of adapting them to its own more primitive culture. In this the very process of assimilation acquires a self-contradictory character...
>
> ...The laws of history have nothing in common with pedantic schematicism. Unevenness, the general law of historic process, reveals itself most sharply and complexly in the destiny of the backward countries. Under the whip of the external necessity their backward culture is compelled to make leaps. From the universal law of unevenness is thus derived another law which, for a lack of better name we may call the law of combined development by which we mean a drawing together of a different stages of the journey, a combination of separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms. Without this law, to be taken of course in its whole material content, it is impossible to understand the history...

There is a motorway between Lahore and Islamabad in Pakistan, which is more modern and advanced than most highways in Europe and America. Just ten meters from the motorway are villages and hamlets, which are at a historical distance of three to five thousand years from the technology with which the motorway has been built. Under capitalism that distance cannot be overcome. Without bridging that gap there can be no social or political harmony in society. There are thousands of similar examples of this uneven and combined nature of development throughout India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and elsewhere in the subcontinent. The present system is unable to cope with this crisis. Without a historical leap it can't be overcome. All the methods and strategies of the imperialists and the subcontinental rulers have failed. The subcontinent is on the edge of an abyss. Without a radical socialist change these tasks cannot be fulfilled. The masses will rise to the occasion but they will need a party and leadership to take them to victory.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the capitalist binge of the Chinese bureaucracy has further exposed the ideological bankruptcy of these left leaders. In the Indian states where the left front ruled, the leaders, while posing as anti-imperialists, were the first to bring in the multinationals. They have now further degenerated into parliamentary cretinism and alliances with the bourgeoisie parties. In the name of secularism, democracy and patriotism, they have degenerated into a right wing social democratic party. In November 1999 the CPI (M) speaker of the West Bengal Assembly Comrade Abdul Haleem told me in his chamber: ' the truth is that we are no more a communist or revolutionary party but in name. We in reality are another streak of social democracy'. Yet with the stormy events ahead and the working class in India are going to surprise them. The class struggle is far from finished.

In spite of the betrayals the CPs are the traditional parties of the Indian proletariat and the leadership cannot abolish revolutionary tendencies in these parties. The CPI and CPI (M) in reality have no fundamental differences yet they refuse to merge. Maoist guerillaism is now on the rise. The different fractions of the CPI (ML) and Naxalbadi groups are a reaction to parliamentary degeneration and compromises with the bourgeoisie parties by the main CP leaderships. Yet guerillaism and armed struggle cannot defeat the state and provide a solution. As Lenin said: 'Opportunism and adventurism are the two sides of the same coin'.

India has a massive proletarian base. Once it moves it will transform these parties into a genuine communist party. The leadership will either have to adopt a revolutionary policy or abdicate. The nationalist outlook, a crippling Stalinist manifestation will have to go. Marxism is internationalism or it is nothing.

# Proletarian Internationalism

The revolutionary party of the proletariat can only base itself on an international programme that is in tune with the present epoch. This international programme must proceed directly from an analysis of the conditions and tendencies of the world economy and of the world political system taken as a whole with all its connections and contradictions, that is, with the mutually antagonistic interdependence of its separate parts. In the present epoch, to a much larger extent than in the past, the national orientation of the proletariat must and can flow only from a world orientation and not vice versa. Herein lies the basic and primary difference between communist internationalism and all types of national socialism.

Revolutionary patriotism can only have a class character. It begins as patriotism to the party organization, to the trade union, and develops into state patriotism when the proletariat seizes power. Whenever the power is in the hands of the workers, patriotism is a revolutionary duty. But this patriotism must be an inseparable part of revolutionary internationalism.

A programme of revolutionary action cannot be approached as a collection of abstract propositions without any relation to what has occurred during the epoch. A programme cannot go into a description of the events of the past, but must proceed from these events, base itself upon them, encompass them, and relate to them. A programme, by the position it takes, must make it possible to understand all the major facts of the struggle of the proletariat. As Trotsky comments in 'Strategy and Tactics':

> It is a typical Menshevist dodge to shift the responsibility for the mistakes of the leaders onto the 'masses' or to minimize the importance of leadership in general, in order thus to diminish its guilt. It arises from a total incapacity to arrive at the dialectical understanding of the super 'structure' in general, of the super structure of the class, which is the party, and the super structure of the party in the shape of its central leadership. There are epochs during which even Marx and Engels could not drive historical development forward a single inch; there are other epochs during which men of a much smaller caliber, standing at the helm, can check the development of the international revolution for a number of years. Among the enormous difficulties in a proletarian revolution there is a particular, concrete, and specific difficulty, it arises out of the position and tasks of the revolutionary party leadership during a sharp turn of events. Even the most revolutionary parties run the risk of lagging behind and of counter posing the slogans and measures of yesterday too the new tasks and new exigencies.

The incongruity between the leadership and the party or between the party and the class can also be of an opposite character in cases where the leadership runs ahead of the development of the revolution. In other times, when the situation is ripe, the leadership lags behind. By the time the leadership succeeds in accommodating itself to the situation, it has changed; the masses are in retreat and the relationship between the forces abruptly deteriorates. The rank and file of the proletarian party is by their very nature far less susceptible to the pressure of bourgeois public opinion. Certain elements of the party particularly the upper and middle stratum of the party will unfailingly succumb in to a lesser or greater extent to the material and ideological terror of the bourgeoisie at the decisive moment. There is no overall solution. But the first necessary step in fighting a peril is to understand its source and its nature.

The re-emergence of the mass revolutionary party in India will have a big impact on the rapid growth of the revolutionary parties in other countries of the subcontinent. Such a development can regenerate the CPs in India, but only on the basis of analysing and correcting the follies of the past. As Lenin warned in the autumn of 1921:

> It is not the defeat that is so dangerous, as the fear of admitting ones defeat, the fear of drawing from it the conclusions... we must not be afraid of admitting defeats. We must learn from the experience of the defeats. If we adopt the opinion that by admitting defeats we induce

> despondency and weakening of the energy for the struggle, similar to a surrender of positions, we would have to say that such revolutionists are absolutely not worth a damn...Our strength in the past was, as it will remain in future, that we take the heaviest defeats into account with perfect coolness, learning from their experience what must be modified in our activity. That is to speak candidly. This is vital and important not alone for the purpose of theoretical correctness, but also from the practical point of view. We cannot learn to solve the problems of today by new methods if yesterday's experience has not made us open our eyes in order to see where in the old methods we were at fault.

Similarly a major split in the PPP on class lines, could lead to the creation of a mass revolutionary party. The workers, peasants, youth and exploited women together with other genuine left wing groups, trade unions, intellectuals and activists can be brought together through a genuine Marxist programme, perspectives and methods. A substantial Bolshevik Leninist Party can be developed in a relatively short period of time. This could develop into a subjective force for revolutionary change in Pakistan and similar events can develop in Bangladesh around a revitalised CP or traditional party like the JSD. The Sri Lankan proletariat can prove to be a 'black horse' in the struggle for a revolutionary change.

We have already mentioned the impact, which a revolutionary uprising even in a small state like Nepal can have on the whole of the subcontinent. It is true that a change in the objective situation is necessary for these forces to develop. Paradoxically the development of these subjective factors can have a forceful impact on the objective situation resulting in a revolutionary situation in different countries of the subcontinent. Only on a revolutionary basis can this process be peaceful. The other option for the subcontinent would be a further balkanization which could only result in bloodshed. The capitalist system, as Lenin put it, means 'horror without end'. A socialist revolution is the only way forward and its inevitable conclusion has to be the formation of a voluntary socialist federation. This is the only way in which the subcontinent can be reunited and Partition undone... and it will be on a much higher plane.

# CHAPTER 9: SOCIALIST FEDERATION OF THE SUBCONTINENT

## Utopia Or A Way Out?

> Philosophers have only interpreted the world. The point is to change it.
>
> - *Karl Marx*

History teaches us that it not only are war and revolution significant but also the intervening periods when the bourgeoisie make preparations for war and the proletariat for revolution. We are now living in such a period. In order to evaluate the different groups correctly, their activities must be examined during different stages: at moments of revolutionary upsurge and at moments of revolutionary ebb. Marxists view the problem as a whole and despite changes in circumstances, consistently carry out their basic strategies. This method is the only reliable method, but it does not achieve instantaneous results. Radicalisation in itself is not a principle; it is only an indicator of the temper of the masses. If an upsurge of the masses is not used at the right moment, it regresses culminating in a period of decline. The speed of the recovery of the masses will be influenced by exceptionally sharp periodic fluctuations in the situation.

The activity of the masses expresses itself in different ways, dependent upon different conditions. In certain periods, the masses may become absorbed completely in economic struggle and show very little interest in political questions. The absence of a fighting spirit encourages an increase in exploitation, which diminishes the fighting spirit of the proletariat. Such a period of decline accompanied by growing unemployment, especially after defeats, breeds demoralisation and disintegration.

The mood of the masses, however, is not predetermined, it changes under the influence of certain laws of mass psychology that are set in motion by objective social conditions. The political state of the class is subject, within certain limits, to a quantitative determination, such as the press, attendance at meetings, elections, demonstrations and strikes. To understand the dynamics of the process, it is essential to determine the mood of the working class and to understand why this mood is changing. Evaluation of objective conditions makes it possible to establish a tentative perspective of the movement... that is a scientifically based prediction; without this, a serious revolutionary struggle is inconceivable. A prediction in politics is not a perfect blueprint but merely a working hypothesis.

That the proletariat achieves unanimity only in the periods of revolutionary apex through the radicalisation of the masses should never be forgotten. Under the conditions of everyday life in capitalist society, the proletariat is far from homogeneous. The diversity of its layers manifests itself most sharply at turning points along the road. The most exploited, the least skilled and politically backward layers of the proletariat frequently are the first to enter the arena of struggle, and, in defeat, they often are the first to leave. It is precisely in the next period that the workers who did not suffer defeats in the preceding period are more likely to be attracted to the movement.

Despite the pessimism of the left intellectuals who have left the movement, the masses have no option but to rise up in order to escape their pain and agony. In the last epoch, the proletariat has grown in number. In 1985 285 million industrial workers were in the post-colonial world; by 1994, this

number had increased to 407 million. White collar workers and a majority of professionals have been forced to join ranks with the proletariat by the deepening crisis of capitalism. The potential forces of revolution have become stronger in the last period. In the wake of a mass movement, they will prove their capability and strength.

From an historical perspective, half a century is a relatively short period of time. The boom after the Second World War in the West, with its relatively high economic growth rates, unprecedented expansion of world trade and its inventions and discoveries, has made the latter half of the twentieth century a fast moving period. In the Indian subcontinent, these changes have had an important influence on all aspects of class relations and social and cultural development. These developments have had a singular impact on mass consciousness and psychology.

The countries of the Indian subcontinent in the second half of the twentieth century have existed within an environment of social turmoil, domestic and foreign conflict, economic crisis and a constantly widening gap between the classes. The ruling classes had failed to solve any of the problems faced by these societies at the time of Partition. More than three generations have now grown up and lived through the objective conditions of these nation states.

The nature of politics is transitional, as are the inevitable outcomes of a mutual existence in a particular time and space. A nation that did not exist 54 years ago now has the traits of an underdeveloped nation state. People who exist together in a political unit for a period of time develop common features, and an elusive national consciousness is born. The crisis that engulfs Pakistan, however, makes its existence fragile and its society volatile.

The state is trying to enforce Pakistani nationalism by exploiting the Kashmir issue. It has failed to achieve this and the objective situation has changed. The masses are becoming more and more indifferent to this bombardment of propaganda. In Lahore, a signboard on a grocery shop reads, "No credit, until the liberation of Kashmir", which symbolises the mood of the people in the face of this overwhelming avalanche of chauvinism.

Nationalist fervour in Bangladesh is also on the decline. The sacrifices and struggles for Bengali nationalism and liberation have amounted only to increases in poverty, misery and want.

The masses in India are challenging the ideologies that are used to subjugate them. At the surface of society is a strong anti-Pakistan feeling. Nevertheless, this thin veneer of national chauvinism changes into deep resentment and hatred towards the whole system. This is more pronounced among the working classes, but it is increasing among the professionals and middle classes who are being pauperised by the socio-economic crisis.

The hatred towards Pakistan changes into a peculiar curiosity and warmth. With a lingering sense of deprivation is a longing to join with the society across the border. Hope is seen in the eyes of the people wherever there is talk of reunification. However, the new generations that have grown up are much less aware of the wounds of Partition. The idea of a closer bond has a special resonance within the left parties and groups both in India and Pakistan. One of the most important aspects of this sentiment is the cultural affinity and common history of the peoples across the borders. The ruling classes, especially on the Pakistani side, have failed to develop a separate, distinct culture in spite of its crusades for Islamisation.

Indian films and music are so popular and common in Pakistan that they do not seem at all foreign; similarly, Pakistani poetry, television plays and folk singers have an enormous following in India. Cable television networks and the development of telecommunications have assisted this cultural exchange. Although some distinct differences are present in the general development of these nation states, they have far more things in common. Often differences in cultural and socio-economic development are greater in the regions within each of the nation states. The difference between Tripura and Himachal is as great as that between the cultures of Greece and Norway. Punjab, Karachi and Uttar Pradesh have much more in common than Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Bengal. Punjab and Bengal, two provinces divided on communal and religious lines and that were subjected to the full force of Partition, each possess a rich cultural history. Historically, the peoples of Punjab and Bengal were separate national

entities. They spoke the same language and had similar traditions, culture, rituals and land. It is interesting to note that their post Partition architecture is equally ugly and poverty stricken.

India has a larger industrial base, but the Pakistan per capita gross domestic product is higher than that of India. Certain sectors of the economy and infrastructure are stronger in India and others are stronger in Pakistan. A lot of similarities are noted in terms of the role of the individual and other aspects of the political culture. Even the political upheavals and changes in the regimes in the various countries of the subcontinent have things in common. The judicial and legal practices are the same in all countries. The penal codes are a continuation of the British legal system imposed during the Raj. The evidence is that independence has not brought about many changes on the subcontinent.

Partition took place against a background of contradictions that erupted because of a deadlock and the betrayal of the class struggle. Bias, prejudice and differences existed between Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Parsees and other religious communities. Different races, nationalities, tribes and ethnic groups were discriminated against. For instance, in pre-Partition India, in some Punjabi schools, Hindu and Muslim students used different taps for drinking water. Responsibility for failing to overcome these differences lies with the weak and reactionary character of the Indian bourgeoisie and its political leadership. They failed to unite a national liberation struggle and create a united India after independence. The prejudices of primitive and backward rural areas were imposed on the most advanced layers of the society... namely the proletariat in the cities and industrial areas. This also exposed the blatant absence of a proletarian vanguard and a revolutionary party, which could unite the proletariat and lead the national liberation struggle into a proletarian revolution. When the bourgeoisie failed, the next historically most advanced class, the proletariat, had to take the lead.

Fifty-five years on, these societies face the same questions and dilemmas. Religious, sectarian and communal conflicts have become more violent and bloodier. Ethnic cleansing and sectarian genocide go on unabated. In Islamic Pakistan, bloody clashes between Shias, Sunnis and other sects are rampant. In secular India, the killings in religious clashes outnumber deaths from other conflicts and have become part of everyday life.

Reunification is not possible within the existing conditions. Such is the impasse that the ruling classes can neither establish peace nor go to war. The threats of war and peace constantly are used to divert and diffuse the rising class struggle. These ruling classes lust for more power. They live in grand houses and are cushioned by overseas bank accounts, while the people are subjected to indignity, hunger and the blistering sun in the slums and dusty villages. Lacking water, sanitation and the basic facilities of life, these impoverished souls seek a way out from their misery. The political system is irreparable and the economy is in shambles... Partition and independence have failed to deliver. In the current political climate, improvement on a national basis is impossible. Even on a sub-continental basis, total emancipation cannot be achieved.

## The Law of Uneven Development

The law of uneven development governs the entire history of mankind. Capitalism finds various sections of mankind at different stages of development, each with its profound internal contradictions. The extreme diversity in the levels attained, and the extraordinary unevenness in the rate of development of the different sections of mankind during the various epochs, serves as the starting point of capitalism. Capitalism gains mastery only gradually over this inherited unevenness. It breaks and alters it with its own means and methods.

In contrast with the economic systems that preceded it, capitalism consistently aims at economic expansion through the penetration of new territories, the surmounting of economic differences and the conversion of self-sufficient provincial and national economies into a system of financial interdependent relations. Capitalism's ultimate objective is to equalise the economic and cultural levels of the most progressive and most backward countries.

By drawing countries economically closer to one another and levelling out their stages of development, capitalism employs anarchistic methods that constantly undermine its own work, setting one country against another and one branch of industry against another. Capitalists

develop some parts of the world economy, while hampering the development of others. Only by a comparative analysis of these two fundamentals, both of which arise from the inherent nature of capitalism, can this historical process be explained. Trotsky elaborates on this in his "Critique of the draft programme of the Comintern":

> The international revolution of the proletariat can not be a simultaneous act, of this there can be no dispute at all among grown up people after their experience of the October revolution, achieved by the proletariat of the backward country, under pressure of historical necessity, without waiting in the least for the proletariat of the advanced countries to 'even out the front'. Uneven or sporadic development of various countries acts constantly to upset but in no case to eliminate the growing economic bonds and interdependence between those countries.

Partition cannot be undone on the same basis and under the same system as was imposed on the people of the subcontinent. It has become a part of a totally failed system that rules the masses. The Indian subcontinent now stands on the brink of war. The only hope for this unfortunate region rests with the toiling classes... their enormous resilience and courage will ensure that they rise up again. These backward and fragile nation states cannot keep the lid on the rising mass discontent. These societies are bound to explode: the question is where and when?

Marx and Engels, prior to the imperialist epoch, had arrived at the conclusion that while on one hand, unevenness (that is sporadic historical development) stretches the proletarian revolution through an entire epoch in the course of which nations will enter the revolutionary flood one after another, on the other hand, the organic interdependence of several countries, developing toward an international division of labour, excludes the possibility of building socialism in one country.

The Marxian doctrine, which postulates that the socialist revolution can only begin on a national basis... that is, the building of socialism in one country is impossible... has been rendered doubly accurate today. In the modern epoch, Imperialism has developed, deepened and sharpened both of these antagonistic tendencies. On this point, Lenin merely developed and concretised Marx's own formulation and Marx's own answer to this question. On 23 August 1915 Lenin said:

> ...uneven economic and political development is an unconditional law of capitalism. Hence it follows that the triumph of socialism is, to begin with, possible in a few, or even in a single, capitalist country. The victorious proletariat of that country, having expropriated the capitalists and having organised socialist production at home, would be up in arms against the rest of the capitalist world, attracting oppressed classes of other countries to its side, causing insurrections in those countries against the capitalists, and acting, in case of need, even with military power against the exploiting classes and their governments.

This is even more relevant to the Indian subcontinent than perhaps to most other parts of the world. Trotsky explains further:

> Imperialism... aggravates to an exceptional degree the contradiction between the growth of the national productive forces of world economy and national state barriers. The productive forces are incompatible with national boundaries. Hence the flow of foreign trade, the export of men and capital, the seizure of territories, the colonial policy, and the last imperialist war, but also the economic possibility of a self-sufficient socialist society. The productive forces of capitalist countries have long since broken through the national boundaries.

> Socialist society, however, can be built only on the most advance productive forces, on the application of electricity and chemistry to the processes of production including agriculture; on combining, generalising, and bringing to maximum development the highest elements of modern technology

Socialism must not only take over the most highly developed productive forces from capitalism but immediately carry them onward and raise them to a high level of development that has been unknown hitherto. This means that the modern productive forces are incompatible with national boundaries. At the seventh plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, Trotsky said in his speech:

> What was the imperialist war? It was the revolt of the productive forces, not only against the bourgeoisie forms of property, but also against the boundaries of the capitalist states. The imperialist war expresses the fact that the productive forces are unbearably constrained within the confines of the nation state. We have always maintained that the capitalism is incapable of controlling the productive forces. It itself develops and that only socialism is capable of incorporating the productive forces which have out grown the boundaries of the capitalist states within a higher economic entity. All roads that lead back to the isolated state have been blocked...

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, this position is even more relevant, particularly in the Indian subcontinent.

## The Permanent Revolution

History never repeats itself exactly. Whenever it does, it always repeats itself on a higher plane. The repetition of a 1968–1969 movement in Pakistan, the great strikes of the Indian proletariat in the late 1960s and early 1970s and the revolutionary movement of the masses in East Bengal in the same period were on a much higher plane and had a much greater intensity. Nonetheless, the issue of a revolutionary programme, perspective, party and leadership remains. In the face of setbacks and distortions, the forces of revolutionary Marxism are gathering momentum in some areas of the Indian subcontinent. With the turn of the tide and the change in the objective situation, these forces will gain a mass basis...and, as Marx said, "when an idea gains a mass base it becomes a material force". In whatever country of the subcontinent the revolution takes place, it cannot and will not remain confined within that nation state. Such is the historical, cultural and geographical background of the Indian subcontinent that any change in any part inevitably affects the other constituents. The process of globalisation has further accentuated this phenomenon.

If a socialist revolution takes place in Pakistan, the Indian ruling class will immediately try to crush it. It will come to the rescue of the Pakistan ruling class and the state and vice versa, just as the Prussian bourgeoisie did for the Parisian ruling class during the episode of the Paris commune in 1871 and as the Indian military elite did in East Bengal in 1971. In the event of a revolution, there is only a remote possibility that the ruling elite of one state could crush the proletariat in another. Paradoxically, the impact of the revolution in one country will ignite the masses of the other countries...and the rise of a tidal wave of revolution will be sooner rather than later. This means that the process of the revolution will be more simultaneous in the Indian subcontinent now than in the past. The events and upsurges will be more closely linked than ever before. The cataclysmic revolutionary and counter-revolutionary upheavals during the period 1967–1972 will pale in comparison.

From a Marxist perspective, no other course for genuine change is possible. The ruling class sustains its role chiefly through the exploitation of the psychology and mass collective consciousness of the working classes. This exploitation by a privileged elite sometimes prevails in society for decades until

the masses arise again. The mullah, the pundit, the cleric, the reformist leaders, the ethics, the traditions, routines and the burden of the past on the workers are all tools for the perpetuation of bourgeois rule. The dismantling of the state and the total change of the economic structures and property relations is a necessary prerequisite to destroy the stranglehold of this network of bourgeois dominance.

Under these conditions, a revolutionary change would lead to a voluntary socialist federation of the Indian subcontinent. If it remained within the boundaries of a nation state, it would be doomed. A revolutionary transformation of the economies and societies is an essential prerequisite for the reunification of the subcontinent.

A socialist insurrection in any single country of the subcontinent will have enormous impacts on Asia and around the world. A socialist revolution in Pakistan will have a direct impact on Iran and vice versa, and socialist change in Pakistan will destroy fundamentalism in Afghanistan and steer the country toward revolution. A socialist revolution in Pakistan will also impact on the whole of the Middle East and be the inspiration for the working masses of this region to overthrow the reactionary monarchies, obsolete sheikhdoms and dictatorial bourgeois regimes in this sensitive oil-rich region. It will also herald the demise of Israeli Zionism. Historic cultural bonds make this development inevitable. By the same token, a revolutionary situation in Bangladesh will send tremors from Burma to Thailand and from Laos to Vietnam that will sweep down through the whole of South Asia.

A mass upsurge on a class basis will have revolutionary implications for all the countries of the subcontinent. These will not only be political... the social, cultural, psychological and traditional ethics and norms will go through a radical change and convert the reactionary forces to revolutionary change. Guided by this beacon for the future, the dark prejudices and hatreds of the past will be buried forever. A new vigour and resilience will pull the masses out of the morass in which they had been condemned for so long. This renewed courage, vigour and optimism will supplant the misery and suffering inflicted on the teeming masses by the past and the present betrayals of the leadership.

# EPILOGUE

> Unification of the Indian subcontinent will be on a much higher plane than the 1947 Partition.

Reunification cannot be imposed on any nationality, community, religion or ethnic group. It must be a voluntary socialist federation. The main dynamic will be the programme and perspective of the revolutionary party, leading the insurrection.

The programme must be based on the principles of scientific socialism. The eradication of misery, poverty, disease, ignorance, exploitation, national oppression and the subjugation of women and minorities in society is only possible through the overthrow of capitalism. The annihilation of the existing decaying and repressive states will be linked to the creation of a greater proletarian state based on a workers' democracy.

The "panchayats" (traditional rural communes) are probably the most ancient political structures in the world. The socialist revolution would bring them a new lease of life and they would be rebuilt along the most modern, advanced and revolutionary lines. A new transitional socialist state would emerge with the deepest possible democratic roots and foundations.

The workers and peasants' panchayats or soviets would function on the basis of Lenin's principles for running a transitional socialist state and society. Lenin put forward these basic principles in his work "State And Revolution", which was written during 1917, while revolution was raging throughout Russia. They can be summed up as follows:

• Free and democratic elections to all positions in the socialist state. • Right of recall of all officials by the Soviets (panchayats).

• No official to receive a higher wage than a skilled worker.

• The tasks of running society and the state to be performed by every one in turn, or, as Lenin stated: "Any cook should be able to be Prime Minister".

• There shall be no standing army but an armed peoples organisation within the soviets.

Such a workers' democratic state would have enormous authority, as there would be the maximum participation and involvement of the vast majority of the population.

The new proletarian state would end imperialist plunder and confiscate imperialist assets and wealth. Industry, banks, wealth and landed estates would be expropriated. Exploitation by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and other imperialist institutions would be abolished... not in the distant future but within hours and days.

With these measures enormous wealth would be created. The ending of the arms race alone would add vast wealth that is currently wasted on human destruction. The expenditure on nuclear technology would be redirected towards human development rather than mutual annihilation... add to this the extensive natural mineral resources and raw materials of the subcontinent. With these resources directed to human development, the lives of more than 1.3 billion human beings would be transformed in a short space of time. The exploitation, drudgery and misery of thousands of years would come to an immediate end.

The peoples of the oppressed nationalities of the subcontinent would be drawn to this programme and its implementation and voluntarily become part of the socialist federation of the subcontinent. A planned economy with a state monopoly of trade and the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy would provide a massive impetus to social and human development. The rapid development of the economy and society would root out the evils of religious and caste bigotry, communal hatred and other prejudices of the past. A socialist revolution would abolish national frontiers and a greater unity of peoples of all races, religions, nationalities, colours and communities would emerge.

In a socialist state, health and education would be a fundamental right rather than a privilege and trading in human pain and illiteracy would be a crime. Health, education and other basic human needs would be free and guaranteed for all. Unemployment would be rapidly decline through a reduction in working time.

The positive and joyful aspects of these diverse cultures and languages would flourish. A new proletarian culture would be born. The arts, architecture, music, drama and sport would attain new heights and new society emerge. One of the most ancient civilisations on earth, having experienced a socialist transformation, could lead the world towards the realisation of the greatest cause on earth... the emancipation of mankind. A civilisation devoid of want and need, liberated from all forms of oppression, would create a new consciousness. This would lay the foundations of a communist future for the human race. "Action," said Aristotle... "is the ruling law of the drama".

The masses of the subcontinent, having suffered the trauma of Partition, the drudgery of imperialist exploitation and the agony of capitalist rule are seething with revolt. The action of the oppressed will decide the fate of mankind. Only a genuine Marxist perspective, method, strategy, party and leadership will ensure victory.

*LAL KAHN*

*December 2003*

# APPENDIX 1

## Workers' struggle

After the crushing of the first Indian war of independence in 1857, peasant revolts were a continuing phenomenon. In the meantime, the newly emerging working class also entered the arena of struggle.

The first workers' strike took place in 1877 in one of the textile mills in Nagpur. Between 1882 and 1890, twenty-five major strikes took place in the provinces of Bombay and Madras. Apart from the industrial and railways workers, loaders and workers in the utility services took part in these strikes. The first significant strike of the railway workers took place in 1906.

The activities of Indian revolutionaries who had migrated to Europe also helped spread revolutionary ideas. In the period of 1856–1907, a circle of Indian revolutionaries in exile was set up in London and then in Paris. These émigrés established close contacts with Russian social democrats who imparted their revolutionary feelings to Indian revolutionaries. At the Stuttgart Congress of the Second International, Indian delegates delivered passionate speeches opposing colonialism and British imperialism.

The activity of this mass movement reached a zenith in the spring of 1907. Wide strata of the urban population, including the workers, took part in the mass meetings, demonstrations and strikes directed against the British. Petty bourgeois democrats led by Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh made contacts with the sepoy units who began to take part in the mass meetings. When Rai and Singh were arrested and sent to exile, this sparked off an uprising in the town of Rawalpindi, which was put down by British units. In Punjab, the local peasants supported demonstrations in the towns. The movement began to assume a national character. In this period, semi-legal revolutionary organisations and secret societies grew in Maharashtra and in Bengal.

At this time, revolutionary organisations led by Indian émigrés were also set up in Britain and later in the United States and other Asian countries. The first centre of Indian émigrés was set up in London in 1905. Another was set up in Paris and another in 1913 in San Francisco in the United States.

With the success of October Revolution, contacts between various centres of Indian revolutionaries in exile and the young Soviet republic were established as early as 1918. This paved way for the spread of Marxist ideology among the national revolutionaries at that time. Indians who visited Soviet Russia between 1918 and 1922 were impressed deeply by their meetings with Lenin, Trotsky and other Soviet leaders and all that they saw in Moscow, Petrograd, Tashkent, Baku and other Soviet cities.

One of the leaders of the revolutionaries, Maulvi Barakatullah, published a brochure in Persian, entitled *Bolshevism and the Islamic nations*, which was soon translated into other oriental languages. This brochure played an important part in spreading the truth about Soviet Union's policy on the national question in Central Asia, India and countries of Middle East. The next year, 1920, inspired by the activities of Acharya and Abdur Rab, about 200 activists crossed the Soviet–Afghan border. Later on, some came back to India and some left for Turkey, while thirty stayed in Tashkent and formed the Tashkent Branch of Indian revolutionary Association. As representative of this association, Acharya took part in the work of the second congress of Comintern in the summer of 1920. By this time, another group of Indians, which consisted mainly of soldiers who had deserted from British units in Khorasan (Persia), settled in Baku, where a newspaper in Urdu was brought out entitled *Azad Hindustan Akhbar*. Indian delegates also participated in the work of the Congress of the Oppressed People of East that was held in Baku in September 1920.

The political activities of workers reached its peak during 1928–1929. Glorious strike actions and anti-imperialist demonstrations were distinguished by powerful organisation and militancy. Overall, 150,000 textile workers of Bombay took part in the six month general strike of 1928: 21 million working days were lost as a result. This played a tremendous role in developing class consciousness of the proletariat. The revolutionary trade union of the textile workers, namely Gimi Kamgar Union, was created. By January 1929, its membership had grown from 370 to 65 000 textile workers. Solidarity was expressed by the workers of several other industrial centres in the country and by railway men. Along with this, strikes took place in more centres in the country: half a million workers took part. The workers demanded complete independence for India from imperialist British rule.

In 1934, the numbers of strikers increased to 220,808 and 4,775,559 working days were lost— more than twice the number lost in previous years. Many of the released communist leaders again were arrested and held in detention, and the CPI was finally declared illegal in July 1934. The working class actions assumed new proportions in 1937. There were 397 strikes—the most since 1921—which involved 606 000 workers. The huge general strike in Bengal involving 225,000 workers had the backing of the Bengal Province Congress Committee, and the Kanpur textile strike, which involved 40 000 workers, brought about a broad unity in support of the workers and lasted about fifty-five days, achieving a significant victory.

The working class of Bombay recorded its unequivocal stand against the war by a 90 000 strong anti-war strike on 2 October 1939—the first of its kind in the world during the Second World War. This was followed by the Dearness strike of 175,000 textile workers of Bombay on 4 March 1940, which lasted for forty days in spite of a severe repression and wholesale arrests of the leaders. Overall, 355,000 workers from several industrial and other sectors went on a one-day solidarity strike on 10 March. The Bombay strike was followed by a wave of strikes all over the country. These strike actions included 25 000 textile workers in Kanpur, 20 000 municipal workers of Calcutta, Jute workers of Bengal, oil workers of Dighoi, coal miners of Dhanbad and Dhadra and iron and steel workers of Jamshedpur.

## Peasant Uprisings

In most cases, the peasant struggle was against forced labour, eviction and rent enhancement, as well as the issue of canal water rates. In Bihar, the Bakhast movement of the late 1930s was renewed and spread to many new areas. In Punjab, the fight was for rent reduction and against the remodelling of canal moghas and the increase in water rates (mogha being the channel outlets for irrigation). In Pepsu, the fight was about conferring ownership rights to occupancy tenants and the abolition of feudal ownership. In Kerala, the tenants fought for a fair share of crops rather than confiscation. In Andhra, the fight was against eviction from "lanka" land. In Uttar Pradesh, the movement fought against the eviction of serfs from "sir" land. In Alleppey, Kerala, the movement against the tyranny of landlords led to massive police repression, which killed about a hundred activists in Punnapra–Vayalar. The Warlis, tribals of Thane district in Maharashtra, fought against forced labour and illegal exactions by the landlords. Within a year under the leadership of the All India Peasants Association (AIKS), and within a year, they achieved wage increases and the complete abolition of forced labour.

The Tebhaga movement was focused on one of the major demands of the sharecroppers: that they should be given two thirds of the crop, that the landlord should not make undue deductions from the produce before sharing and that the sharing should take place in the barn of the sharecropper, not in the courtyard of the landlord. The movement fought in 1946–1947 encouraged the sharecroppers to take their crop to their own barns and to fight the landlords' musclemen when they came to seize it. The demands articulated by the movement obtained support from the report of the Floud Commission of 1940, which criticised the share going to the landlord as exorbitant rent and commented that this system overrides the principle that the tiller of the soil should have security and protection from rack renting.

The movement was being fought at a time when life in Calcutta and elsewhere was being torn by communal strife that led to the deaths of thousands. In Tebhaga, both Hindus and Muslim sharecroppers fought shoulder to shoulder, irrespective of whether the landlord was a Hindu or a Muslim. Another interesting aspect was the participation of other sections, particularly agricultural labourers and poor peasants, in the movement. Although their own sectional interests were not affected, they understood that the scope of the movement went beyond the immediate demands of sharecroppers. Finally, as the movement progressed, the slogans became broader and more militant: "he who tills the land owns the land" became the battle cry.

In the course of the movement a great deal of heroism was revealed, and women also took part in large numbers. More than seventy activists were killed and many more were severely hurt or imprisoned, but the police repression and the terror let loose by the landlords failed to check mass enthusiasm for this movement. In order to neutralise the movement, the League Ministry of the time introduced legislation for the sharecroppers, but this was not carried out. The major outcome of this struggle was the 1950 Bargadar Act, which made evictions difficult, arranged for conciliation boards to settle disputes between sharecroppers and landlords and increased the share of the sharecropper to two thirds (provided he contributed the inputs and implements).

Another big movement took place in Tripura, where the Upajati Ganamukti Prishad, associated with AIKS, mobilised the tribal peasants against land alienation and encroachments on the rights of the Jhumia (the shifting cultivators). Thanks to this movement, Tripura stands today as a strong outpost of the left movement of the country, uniting both tribal and non-tribal peasants.

The epic struggle of the peasants of Telangana had no parallel in the contemporary history of the country. The movement began in 1946 under the leadership of Andhra Mahasabha, an affiliate of AIKS, and continued to 1951. The immediate issue was the oppression of the landlords and the deployment of armed thugs to intimidate the tenants. But later on, the abolition of forced labour (vetti), the stoppage of illegal exactions and the ending of the rule of Nizam (Monarch of the state) over Hyderabad, a princely state of which Telengana was a part, became the main demands. What began in a small number of villages spread to more than a few hundred villages within a few weeks. The Mahasabha not only guided them in battles but also helped to resolve disputes in their lives and boost their cultural activities.

In the course of the movement, landlords in many cases left the areas threatened by Razakars (state-sponsored thugs) who operated from village level to district level. At the peak of the struggle, about 3000 villages, with roughly 3 million people and an area of 16 000 square miles, were liberated and brought under the administration of Gram Raj (People's Soviets). In these areas, a guerrilla squad of 2000 and a people's militia of 10 000 guarded the villages, and about a million acres of land were redistributed amongst the landless. Usurious interests were slashed, forced labour was banned and a minimum wage was fixed through reforms introduced by the peasant revolutionaries.

The political situation took a new turn after 13 September1948, however, when the Indian army moved in and incorporated Hyderabad into India, thereby ending Nizam's rule. There are reasons to believe that the Indian authorities were alarmed by the prospect of the defeat of Nazim's army at the hands of the revolutionaries and its implications for the politics of India. The armed action by the Indian government was organised as much to drive away the Nazism as to suppress the people's resistance against feudal land relations. The revolutionaries thus now became the target of a vast army of 50 000 men who systematically combed the villages and tortured and uprooted the inhabitants.

This unequal armed combat could not continue for long. It was estimated later that the Indian government had employed more armed personnel and resources in Telangana than in Kashmir. The movement was withdrawn on 21 October 1951, but only after 4000 activists had lost their lives, 10 000 had been jailed for periods between three and four years and 50 000 had been detained, beaten up and terrorised in police and army camps.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**ADC** Adjacent Cadet
**AICC** All Indian Congress Committee
**APC's** Armoured Personnel Carriers
**BJP** Bhartia Junta Party
**CEC** Central Executive Committee
**CI** Communist Internation
**CIA** Central Intelligence Agency
**CP** Communist Party
**CP(M)** Communist Party Marxist
**CP's** Communist Parties
**CPI** Communist Party Of India
**CPI(M.L)** Communist Party of India Marxist Leninist **CPN** Communist Party Of Nepal
**CPSU** Communist Party Of the Soviet Union **ECCI** Executive Committee Of the Communist International **EPR** Eastern Pakistan Rifles
**GDP** Gross Domestic Product
**GPO** General Post Office
**I.T.** Information Technology
**ICS** Indian Civil Service
**IMF** International Monetary Fund
**JKLF** Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front
**JSD** Jatyo Samajtantrik Dal [Socialist National Party] **LSSP** Lanka Samma Samja Party
**MFN** Most Favoured Nation [Status]
**MP.s** Members of Parliament
**NDA** National Democratic Alliance
**NGO's** Non-Governmental Organisations
**NWFP** North Western Frontier Provinces

**PPP** Pakistan Peoples Party
**RSDLA** Russian Social Democrat Democratic Labour Party **RSS** Rashtrya Sevak Swanyam Sangh
**TDP** Telugu Desam Party
**UNICEF** United Nations International Children's Fund **UNO** United Nations Organisation
**UP** Utter Pradesh
**USSR** Union Of Socialist Republics
**VHP** Vishva Hindu Prashad
**WPP** Workers And Peasants Party
**YMCA** Young Men's Christian Association

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