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# NEW TENSIONS IN INDIA

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**T**HERE is no denying that emotionally, politically and economically the upheaval in Bangladesh which followed within a fortnight of our parliamentary elections in March (reviewed *LM*, May 1971) has cast its shadow over all developments in India during the last eight months. Nothing has moved the entire country since independence as has the colossal suffering and monumental heroism of the people of East Bengal in this period.

For a time it appeared as though all internal problems would be sidetracked by the impact of the Bangladesh struggle. However, because of the profoundly anti-imperialist and national liberation character of the issue, what actually happened was that our internal problems got interlocked with the freedom struggle of our neighbours. After the parliamentary elections, as before, the crux of Indian developments continues to be the growing offensive of the popular forces against reaction, internal and foreign.

The new element in the situation is that, because of the unabashed support of the US rulers to the military junta of Pakistan which, in addition to genocidal terror in East Bengal, has been constantly threatening war against India, contrasted with the Soviet support to India and Bangladesh expressed eloquently in the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation, the people have now a far clearer understanding of who is their friend and who the enemy abroad.

More. The reactionary parties of the Grand Alliance (as also the monopoly press), whom the people routed in the mid-term poll as

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their worst enemies, are precisely the internal forces which have launched an attack on the Indo-Soviet Treaty ('India has become a satellite') and are turning and twisting in a hundred ways to make out that the solution of Bangladesh is to be found in Washington ('It has leverage in Islamabad'), and not by drawing closer to the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. It is no exaggeration to state that our people have seen the liaison between Indian monopoly capital and imperialism far more clearly in this period than ever before. Similarly, pro-Soviet feeling has broadened and risen to a height never experienced till now. It is thus that the internal social conflict between progress and reaction has developed an international relationship and dimension.

After its sweeping victory at the polls, the Government of the ruling Congress led by Indira Gandhi, as expected by our Party, has pursued certain sensible and reasonable policies, and also adopted certain very objectionable anti-people measures. It has refused to fall a prey to the military provocations of Pakistan and its threats of war. It has borne the burden of the flood of refugees pouring into India from Bangladesh, whose number has now reached ten million and whose maintenance cost will come to 525 crore rupees (1 crore = 10 million) by the end of December. It has stood up to the blackmail of the US on the Bangladesh question. It signed the historic Indo-Soviet Treaty, whose long-range economic implications are no less valuable than the immediate question of India's security. But material aid to the liberation forces of Bangladesh (the Mukti Bahini) can and must be given on a far bigger scale, for which the recognition of the Bangladesh government has become very urgent.

The Government has also proposed two amendments to the Indian Constitution which would enable Parliament to nationalise monopoly property and put a ceiling on land holdings on the payment of much less compensation than has to be given at present. Naturally these amendments have secured a very broad support.

On the other hand, the fiscal and monetary measures adopted by the Government to meet the new emergency are most highly objectionable and are leading to an explosive situation. The new budget adopted by Parliament in May provided for an increase in a number of indirect taxes which were already unbearably high. And now, in the name of refugee relief, still further levies have been imposed, by ordinance, on newspapers, railway fares, postal envelopes and cards. The state governments are vying with the central government by raising the sales tax and other impositions, all to be shouldered by the common people. Never since independence has money supply

increased at the rate recorded in recent months. Bank credit to the private sector (euphemism for monopoly industrialists, traders, hoarders and speculators) has increased by 600 crore rupees. Between April and October alone bank credit to the central and state governments has also gone up by 600 crore rupees. The management and policies of the nationalised banks remain virtually unchanged.

Such galloping inflation, added to the new taxes, has resulted in a most alarming spiralling of prices and rampant hoarding and black marketing in essential commodities. The index for consumer goods prices rose by ten points between May and August, and retail prices are still shooting up every passing week.

Meanwhile the industrialists have been declaring closures and sabotaging production in coal, textiles, engineering and a number of other industries to reap still higher profits by creating artificial scarcity. Recently the government came out with an ordinance to take over 'sick' mills and factories (meaning concerns ruined by the owners' swindling and embezzlement) but amazingly enough the take-over is to be accompanied by the suspension of all working class legislation providing for minimum wages, dearness allowance, security of employment, etc. In simple words this means massive

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(Constructional Section)

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Let 1972 Herald Peace in Vietnam

For the European Security  
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For Left Advance in the British  
Labour Movement

H. BARR, President

E. MARSDEN, General Secretary

*The Technical and  
Supervisory Section  
of AUEW calls on  
all trade unionists  
to work and fight  
so that 1972 may be  
a happy and  
Prosperous  
New Year*

### **AUEW—TASS**

Onslow Hall  
Little Green  
Richmond  
Surrey

retrenchment and increased work load plus starvation wages.

A strike wave in various industries is already on (e.g. the recent general strike of the textile workers in Bombay) to compel the Government to place the economic burdens arising from the emergency on the shoulders of the private corporate sector and big landlords and to protect the trade union rights and real wages of the workers. Naturally, in the new situation, mass struggles are related to the burning task of strengthening popular unity and morale to face the war danger which can materialise any moment. The slogan is, guard the rear, not only the front. A welcome development is that national trade union centres under the influence of different political parties are coming together for the formulation of common demands and mass campaigns and, in places, for common action.

It is in this extremely complex, contradictory and fast changing situation that the ninth congress of the Communist Party of India met at Cochin, in Kerala, between October 3 and 10. The congress was a unique success and undoubtedly a landmark in the development of the Party. Between the eighth and the ninth congresses Party membership grew from 172,902 to 243,238. Out of a total number of 995 delegates at the ninth congress 446 were industrial and agricultural workers, poor and middle peasants. Fraternal delegations from 22 brother parties attended the congress and in their warm and cordial greetings expressed deep appreciation of our political line and mass activity. The Kerala unit of the Party organised a mammoth march of 40,000 red volunteers to greet the congress. The public rally held on the concluding day had an attendance of over 300,000 and was judged even by bourgeois papers as the biggest mass mobilisation witnessed by Kerala in recent history. All the resolutions of the congress, after a thorough discussion in commissions, were adopted unanimously.

During the three years since our last congress our Party has gained a very great amount of new experience in leading militant mass struggles of the working class and the rural poor, and relating them to the political task of building a broader national democratic front. Rich experience has been gained in combining the difficult role of being in government and simultaneously organising mass struggles as in Bihar, Bengal and Kerala. Members have far better experience of fighting the ideological positions and disruptive tactics of the Communist Party (Marxist) while drawing the mass under its influence in common struggles. Work in Parliament has improved including the not so easy task of supporting the progressive policies of the Congress leadership while firmly opposing all measures of an

anti-people, negative character. All this was reflected in the maturity and confidence of the decisions taken at Cochin.

The political resolution of the congress brings out the radical change in the national situation that has taken place since our preceding congress. The mass swing to the left, the split in the Government party, the results of the parliamentary elections, the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty are all so many expressions of the offensive of the right having been replaced by the counter-offensive of the popular forces. The contradictions between the national bourgeoisie and imperialism have sharpened, together with the conflict between the monopoly and non-monopoly sections of the bourgeoisie. The prospect for building a national democratic front and of fighting for a government of left and democratic unity, which is our central perspective for the period, is more favourable than at any time in the post-independence period.

The resolution highlights that the massive majority of the Congress in Parliament is not going to bring about stability for bourgeois rule or the capitalist path of development. Sharp contradictions and conflicts lie ahead which are and will be reflected within the ruling Congress itself. Against this background, the resolution gives a ringing call for the organisation of powerful mass struggles, for the strengthening of the unity of the left and democratic forces outside and inside the Congress, for a consistent struggle against revisionist illusions as also the disruptive and adventurist policies of the 'ultra left', and for strengthening the independent role of the Party ideologically and in every sphere of political activity.

The organisational resolution adopted by the congress brings out that the expansion of the Party is not keeping pace with the growth in its mass influence. It pinpoints the looseness and inefficient functioning of the Party in various respects and calls for greater militancy, discipline and ideological purity at all levels of the Party organisation.

At the moment of writing (November 22, 1971) the situation in the country is full of tension and a feeling of unpredictability as to what is in the offing on the borders between India and Pakistan. Armed skirmishes on the border are growing. The Prime Minister's tour abroad has put the rulers of the Western powers on the defensive, made them realise that Bangladesh has come to stay, that no power can suppress it, and that there is no solution of the refugee problem and of the danger of an Indo-Pak war without a political settlement with the elected leaders of Bangladesh based on the recognition of its right to freedom. But this has made no change in the basic sympathy

and support of the US, Britain and West Germany for the Pakistan regime. No one in India wants to take the issue to the United Nations, because the fundamental conflict is not between India and Pakistan but between Yahya Khan and the people of East Bengal, and also because of India's bitter experience of having taken the Kashmir issue to the UN. But with so many contending national and international forces operating on the question what will happen is very difficult to say.

The only certainty is that we are in for a period of very big, sudden and sharp changes in which our internal and foreign problems will be inextricably intertwined. Our strength lies in the fact that never before have the reactionary forces in India been so isolated, never before has the multi-sided pressure of popular forces risen to the level we are witnessing now.