

REPRESSION AGAINST THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA. D. Cambey

The Government of West Bengal has declared the Communist Party illegal, arrested nearly 200 leading Communists in the trade unions, peasant leagues and youth organisations, outlawed the Party volunteer organisation—the “Red Guards”, and confiscated and sealed the press of the popular vernacular, organ of the Party, the daily newspaper “Swadhinata” (“Independence”)

A few days later the Communist Party of Delhi was outlawed, and similar punitive measures taken against it. The banning of the Communist Party was accompanied by police raids on all trade union offices in Delhi.

These attacks on the Communist Parties of Bengal and Delhi are not accidental. They are part of a general anti-Communist crusade which the Government of India and its provincial administrations have been carrying on for the last few months. The powerful Communist Party of South India is virtually illegal. Recently six of the members of the Andhra (South Indian province) Committee of the Party, all leaders of the working-class and peasant movements, were arrested. In the Central Province, as well as in the United Provinces, warrants were issued for the arrest of leading Party officials. In every province the Party press is gagged or made to pay heavy penalties for such “offence” as writing editorials against the fascist gangs who killed Gandhi and want civil war between the Hindus and Muslims, for criticising the Governments industrial and agrarian policy, and so on. The “Swandhinata” was temporarily suspended by the Government even before the ban was imposed. The central organ of the Communist Party of

India "People's Age" was by a gag order of the Bombay Government last December, prohibited from writing anything that concerned the daily life and struggle of the people.

The crusade against the Communist Party is part of the India Government's general offensive against all democratic forces. The Communist Party is selected as the principal target because it is the most militant and advanced organiser of all democratic forces. The Government of India, which owes its origin to the British imperialists and the big cartels of India, is unable to meet any of the legitimate needs of the working class and peasants, and therefore in its desperation hits out against the struggle that the working class is waging for a decent living standard and higher wages, and the peasants for a programme of agrarian reform. Instead of nationalising big industries and confiscating British monopolies, the Government is indulging in wage cuts. Instead of giving land to the peasants it is protecting the feudal landowners.

The democratic movement of the workers, peasants, middle-class employees and students depends, therefore, on their own strength to fight the industrial bosses and feudal lords. But everywhere the Government's armed police and administration are at the disposal of the exploiters and are turned against the people. The jailing of thousands of trade unionists, workers, peasants and members of the youth movement is a normal occurrence in India today. The shooting of peasants and students is an everyday incident. In Bengal alone the police have opened fire on students twice in the course of the last six months, once on peasants and three times on workers on strike. Last January the Government passed a fascist bill known as the Special Powers Bill which prohibits

even private gatherings. The Bill also gives the Government lavish emergency ordinance powers against all other forms of democratic activities. In these conditions the Communist Party has been in the vanguard leading the democratic forces for greater liberties and better living conditions. Hence the outlawing of the Communist Party branches of West Bengal and Delhi and the arrest of its members as a prelude to further attacks on all democratic popular movements and organisations. To quote "People's Age": The attack against the Party is an attack against the entire democratic movement. Reaction is heading towards the establishment of fascism in India."

There is every evidence to believe that the recent attacks on the Communist Party of India were undertaken by the India Government's provincial ministries under direct orders from Washington. Dr. Grady, the US Ambassador in India, recently expressed the hope that the Marshall Plan would be extended to South East Asia also. But his interest is not only in economic "aid". Since Bengal is one of the centres of the democratic movement of India and since the Communist Party is very strong in this province, the American Embassy recently undertook a special investigation of Communist influence in this province. As an Indian newspaper recently reported, it is reliably learnt that the Embassy sent an alarmed report to Washington about the extensive influence of the Party in this province. The ban order, coming as it does immediately after this, shows the hand of the American imperialists in the whole affair. The Washington order has been executed by Dr. B C. Roy, Premier of Bengal, who has recently return from a tour of America.

The offensive on the Communist Party of India clearly shows the role of the United States in suppressing the democratic movement not only in Europe, but also in Asia.