

Dange (S.A.) : Statement in the Court of
the Additional Sessions Judge, Meerut
Conspiracy Case, Meerut.

V. 2. 1932.

PART III

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Part III

What I have Done

4/12/31 (Morning Part II).

Section I

(106) The growth of the Bombay textile bourgeoisie - its profits which were the bases of the Bombay strikes.

The General Strike of 1928 in the textile mills of Bombay would have happened all the same even if the accused in this case who were charged with responsibility for that strike had not taken part in the events of that strike. It would have been as much prolonged and as much stubbornly fought and it shows a complete lack of understanding of the forces that had brought about and kept on the strike, when it is said that the prolonged nature and stubbornness of the fight were exclusively or in a large measure given due to the Workers and Peasants' Party and the Communists who devoted their energies to it. The strike was an inevitable outcome of the objective conditions existing in the industry at the time and a series of historical developments that had taken place in previous years in the textile industry of Bombay in particular and generally of the whole world. My part in that struggle was to put whatever energy and capacities I had at the disposal of the working-class and on the basis of the fighting capacity of that class to lead it on to victory.

The growth of the textile industry in Bombay and India illustrates one of the internal class contradictions of capitalism. It is a well known fact that before the advent of the British in India the cloth requirements of the people were met by indigenous production, which was carried on in scattered village units. That scattered and slow method of production was interrupted by the British conquest of India. The foreign merchant possessing political power used it to forcibly destroy the weavers guilds wherever it could. The place of Indian goods was being given to the products of Lancashire mills. Though it is a fact that this forcible destruction, in some places, of Indian textile manufactures was one of the methods employed to kill Indian trade, it is insufficient, as has been already shown, to explain the complete capture of the vast village markets by foreign textile goods. The main cause was the cheapness and superiority of machine made textiles over handicraft products and the advantages of a vast coordinated organisation of the new bourgeoisie. The work of destruction first begun by force was completed by the superiority of machine manufacture. The Indian textile market was completely captured and fed by the British textile manufactures. Once having captured it, it was in the nature of things for Lancashire to hold on to the market and not allow it to be recaptured by any other agency. But the internal class contradiction of capitalism itself created the competing

agency. If it was British capital in textiles that destroyed our textile manufactures in order to live on profits from exports of India, it was again British capitalism in heavy industries, in machine manufacture, that supplied the machinery to build up the textile industry in India and thus to destroy exports of British textiles?

Before 1870 Capitalism in England was consolidating itself and exporting only mainly consumption goods to foreign countries. But side by side with this, one branch of capitalism was developing machine manufacture. After the necessities of the expanding home industries were met where was the surplus of products in machine building plants to go? After supplying power looms and spindles to the continent, the balance had naturally to be exported to some other countries. After 1870, capitalism in England and the continent had to change its character. Instead of exporting ready made consumption goods it began to export the very machinery that made these goods. The birth of syndicates and combines, the hunt for colonies, the export of iron and steel material began in this period. The quest for profits is the only motive for capitalist production. So while the Lancashire textile owner was interested in the export of ready made cloth from his mills and opposed to the growth of mills in other countries, his neighbour who manufactures looms and spindles must also dispose of his goods. Since his brother capitalist has enough of them, he had to export

those spindles and looms in those markets where his brother capitalist was selling ready made cloth. It was Lancashire which exported cloth to India, it was Birmingham which exported textile machinery. On a certain amount of capital being available for investment, the Indian capitalist started his own mills and British and Indian cloth began to contest for the market. The first mill in India was built with British machinery in 1851.

It is not that the Birmingham manufacturer of machinery was a less patriotic Englishman than Lancashire fellow. It is not that he did not see that the machinery he was exporting would ultimately compete with the other patriotic Englishman next door in Lancashire. He saw it but it was the law of capitalism that was governing him, the law of profits, not the law of patriotism. If he did not export machinery he would have to close down and go to the walls or find market for his looms even if that market were ultimately to fight his another patriotic brother. He chose the latter as every bourgeois would do and does. Here was the biggest class contradiction running to the help of India and in fact of every dependent colony. Both sections of British capitalism were united in holding India as a market. But interests of the two sections in relation to each other were in the last instance contradictory to each other. But as they did not conflict immediately both pursued their own course without friction. The result was: starting in 1851,

the textile mills had arisen to 51 in 1877 with over 12 lacs of spindles and 10,000 looms.

For a time this was allowed to go on imperceptibly. The slave capitalism of India began to build up a textile industry of its own. In England the bourgeoisie in political power had changed its colour. The relatively peacefully inclined section of the British bourgeoisie who were fed on the exports of consumption goods were ousted from power which was hence forth seized by heavy industry, which stood for colonies, militarism and wars, for the pacelling out of the world. The interests of textile capital of the Liberal bourgeoisie, not being dominant, the rise of textile industry in India was not much troubled till 1896. In the meanwhile the 12 lacs of spindles had grown up to 38 lacs and 10,000 looms to 35,000.

The Indian mills that were being built were mostly producing yarn that was consumed by the Indian handloom weavers and exported to China and the East coast of Africa, where the Indian merchants were migrating. Though it is a fact that the internal class contradictions of capitalism allowed the Indian capitalist to buy machinery from British firms, yet the British bourgeoisie did not intend to allow the Indian bourgeoisie to completely oust the British textiles from the Indian markets. So long as they were merely producing yarn on a small scale it did not much

matter but when the looms began to be installed it was serious business. A continually growing 200 per cent increase in spindles and looms within 20 years, in a subject colonial country was threatening. The appeals of textile capital to the ruling heavy industry interests, the appeals of the Liberal Bourgeoisie to the Conservative Iron-clads were successful. Once again national capitalism for a time bridged over its internal conflict and an excise duty of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on Indian manufactures was levied in 1896.

The Imperialist bourgeoisie preaches to the school boys that politics should not be used for the purposes of commercial gains. The excise duty is the standing answer, exposing the lie of that lesson. The political power, the State, exists to fortify the economic gains of that bourgeoisie which controls that State. The repeal of the excise duty became henceforth a standing demand of the Indian bourgeoisie and was made by it a part of the struggle for national freedom.

In spite of this the industry prospered. It was mainly due to the long hours of work and the low wages paid to the Indian workers by the Indian bourgeoisie. The English spinner working 10 hours a day in a good cold climate was getting 25 shillings or Rs.13/- a week while the Indian worker working 14 hours a day got 4 shillings or Rs. 2/- a week, in 1890.

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The swedeshi agitation of 1905, the first organised outburst of the rising bourgeois nationalism in India, gave an impetus to the industry. The jump was remarkable not so much on the side of spinning as weaving. The spindle strength of 51 lacs and looms, 50,000 in 1905 rose to 62 lacs spindles and 82,000 looms, an increase of 20 & 40 per cent respectively by 1910. In spite of the excise duty for which the Indian bourgeoisie paid Rs. 3,31,00,000 from 1896 to 1910, the industry was prospering and its huge profits were drawing more and more capital into it. On the eve of the Imperialist war, the spindles and looms had risen to 68 lacs and 108,000, representing an increase of 10 and 30 per cent respectively. (1915). The effect on production was also surprising while in 1900, imports of foreign cloth were 2191 million yards, the Indian output was 102 mill.yds. only. According to bourgeois nationalism, if the ratio of foreign imports to swedeshi cloth is to determine our love of the country, the Indian people were so ungrateful to the Indian bourgeoisie and so much attached to saving money by the purchase of low priced foreign goods that the Indian tincture of patriotism was only 4 per cent strong. But the Indian bourgeoisie was sparing no pains to raise that strength. By 1914 the Indian production against imports of 3197 mil. yds was 1164 milyds. In the total demand the Indian strength had arisen to 27 per cent.

When thus bourgeois patriotism was on the rise and

the textile industry making millions and attracting more and more capital to it, the working-class was ruthlessly exploited and overworked. There is not much data available on the conditions of the work and wages before the war period. The period before the war was one of wholesale expropriation of the workers. There was no limit to hours of work, no weekly holiday, no effective Factory Act. When the Government, of course, in the interests of the British bourgeoisie proposed a Factory Act in 1881, it was opposed. The acts of 1881 and 1891 remained dead letters. The peasantry in the villages was terrorised by the Government forces and the zemindars, its economic power sapped by the confiscatory rents, famines and taxation. Impoverished, a section of it went to the towns, in the textile mills and railways. There it carried with it the terror-stricken mind of its village and the despair born of defeat. It had no strength to fight for human conditions of work and treatment. But, as the Communists say, capitalism is its own grave digger. It creates its own contradiction. If with the rise of the industry, textile capitalism was becoming stronger so was the working-class. The outbreak of the Imperialist war gave an impetus for the seeds of class consciousness, of the working-class to blossom forth. The key to the 1928 struggle of the working-class of Bombay and other places lies in the war period developments of the bourgeoisie and the working-class.

D/5.12.31

Morning 1st Part.

The outbreak of the war gave the Indian bourgeoisie free field to develop to the extent it could. But the weakness of the bourgeoisie prevented it from taking advantage of the opportunity and on account of the absence of any industrial country other than England, capable of supplying machinery to the Indian bourgeoisie, the expansion could not take place. It could only exploit the existing plants. In the textiles no increase in the installation of new plants took place, but exports from England having fallen, the Indian production increased. Foreign cloth imports into India came down from 3197 milyds in 1913 to 1081 in 1919, and the Indian production with practically the same spindle strength rose from 1164 milyds to 1640 in 1919. Each mill share had gone up from 27 per cent to 40 per cent of the total mill supply.

The Indian bourgeoisie during the Imperialist war refused to strike politically but followed very quickly the slogan of "Rob while others war." Reliable data is again lacking regarding the profits made by the textile magnates in the war period. But not even the bourgeois historians now dare to contradict the assertion that profits were fabulous. Though the rate of dividends declared can give a certain idea of the profits, it is not adequate. The capitalist methods of accounting and presenting of

balance-sheet have a hundred & one ways of cancelling the real magnitude of the surplus robbed from the workers. Excessive depreciation, reserve funds of several kinds, converting reserves into bonus shares are some of the methods, by which, the working class, peasantry and the small section of the petty bourgeoisie, who are allowed to hold a few shares by the monopolists, are given a false idea about the surplus values extracted from the workers. The visible profits according to the balance-sheets of the Bombay companies ~~are~~ were :-

1917 -----	302 lacs	1920 -----	1010 lacs
1918 -----	228 "	1921 -----	846 "
1919 -----	615 "	1922 -----	387 "

According to Mr. J. A. Wadia visible profits were 52 crores net between 1914 and 1920. The reserves of the industry in Bombay mounted up from 2.36 crores in 1917 to 12.44 crores in 1922 and the block valuation from 17.98 crores to 42.94 crores in 1922. This is the picture of the Bombay magnates. Those in other industries fared even better. The jute industry paid in dividends 400 per cent and over, annually. When the Indian bourgeoisie was thus making huge profits just as their brothers in England and Germany were making millions from the war boom, while their workers and peasants were cutting each other's throats for the interest of their "fatherland" i.e. their bourgeoisie,

the industrial worker in the towns could not get a rise in the wages, even though prices were rising. The peasant in the villages was being oppressed by the war loan and the taxes, even when famine was at the door and influenza was carrying away 6 million people in 1917-18.

(107) No rise in wages though prices and profits rose and real wages fell - the resulting strikes and increase of wages.

It is said that the strike should be the last weapon of the working class. We are told that capitalism, when prospering, is ever willing to pay higher wages and so when it is in depression, the working class should suffer wage-cuts for the sake of the industry. This is a lie circulated by the bourgeoisie. Capitalism has never yielded a single pie or a right to the workers until it was fought for. The capitalists are never willing to give an increase and are ever ready to rob the workers. The trait of capitalism common all the world over was responsible for everything that happened in 1928. The bitterness of 1928, the hatred of capitalism was not new; it was there already. It never was expressed in any literature, because the Bombay working class till that time had not found spokesmen who could speak out its thoughts, its own needs and ambitions. Communists express and emphasise, while others try to gloss over and hide the existing class struggle and class relations. Capitalism, the owner of the means of production, ever wants

to increase the surplus value produced by the working class. It is waging every minute a continuous class war on the worker. The worker in order to live, to survive, has to resist, which he does every slowly and many a time reluctantly. The war had increased the prices of commodities and the price level in India with 1914 at 100 was soaring up thus :-

<u>Level of prices. 1914-- 100</u>	
1915 -- 110	1919 -- 195
1916 -- 130	1920 -- 200
1917 -- 145	
1918 -- 175	1921 -- 180

Were not the mill-owners aware of this? Certainly they were. The most sensitive organisation of the stock exchange was every day showing a rise in the commodities market, whose reflection it is. Did the mill-owners come forth offering a rise of wages to the workers? Did they not see that the real wages of the workers would depreciate severely when the prices were soaring? The mill-owners saw it and waited to see if the workers would take some steps to express their grievance. From 1914 to 1916 for three years the workers somehow pulled on. Indebtedness increased but when the tide could not be stemmed, strikes began with the modest demand of 10 per cent increase in wages. The strikes broke out one by one in individual mills and it was the first attempt to strike for wages.

The waves spread to all workshops and factories in Bombay in 1917 and the increases were given. It may be pointed out that the increase was not given so that the workers might live happily but that they may not stop production, which the owners could not afford in times of high profits. With the price level at 145 the 10 per cent could not satisfy anybody; and when the price level went up to 175 in 1918 the workers had to strike again and got only 15 per cent increase i.e. 1/5th of the rise in prices. The mill-owners went on resisting the demands and January 1919 saw again a complete General Strike in the textile mills in Bombay lasting for 15 days. It secured an increase of 20 per cent. The third and last of the successful General Strikes to secure a rise in wages took place in 1920.

The changes in wages and price level in Bombay in this period are given below :-

<u>Increases in textile wages and prices levels in Bombay</u>						
	1914	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921
Price levels - 100		145	175	195	200	200
Wages - 100		110	115	135	155 Time 175 Piece	170 1 180 P1
Textile General Strikes lasting		Series of strikes	General	General	General	
days			11	15	30	

This will show that the wages of the workers never caught up the rising prices or the cost of living index as

compiled by the Government agency. The treatment which capitalism meted out to the workers in Bombay during this period was sufficient to plant in them a lasting hatred of capitalism. Taking advantage of the monopoly over the grain market the prices were pushed up so high that the grain merchants and ultimately the Imperialist Government machinery had to step in and establish control prices in order to prevent food riots. The land owners continued to raise the rents until the petty bourgeois middle class, which today is so patriotically supporting the big bourgeois in its protective tariff and boycott campaigns had to clamour for some control over the rapacious bourgeoisie by means of a Rent Act. During this period of 1914-22 when the Bombay textile profiteers made 52 crores of visible profits, the workers had to make five strikes to secure an increase in wages which never pulled them up to the level of the rising cost of living. What must have the workers done to fill up the deficiency each year, each month? Either they must have starved themselves more than what they were already doing before 1914, or gone into debts. The deficit between cost of living and wages (granting for a moment that both coincided in 1914 at 100 - which is not a fact) in the case of Bombay weavers alone comes to ten crores of rupees between 1914 to 1920 according to my calculations which I had submitted to the Fawcett Inquiry Committee. (D 523, page) This was a clean gift to

capitalism by the weavers from their own necessary minimum, apart from the ordinary surplus values produced by them as on the pre-war level. In face of such a robbery of the working class who has the impudence to say that the class war is artificially created by the Communists or that we preach class hatred whereas without us the working class would simply overflow with love for the vampire capitalism? It must require an amazing ignorance or slavishness for a man to preach to the workers in Bombay to love the bourgeoisie or assist it. The workers can never forget the miseries heaped upon them in the war days and continued even today. While the textile magnates were rearing up palaces for themselves, 60 per cent of the population in Bombay was confined within a filthy area of 1/5th of the whole city. In small one room tenements the workers' families were closed as in the box and compelled to live like beasts. In the report of the lady doctor appointed by the Government of Bombay to investigate conditions of women industrial workers in Bombay in 1922 we find the following appalling state of housing:-

"In the outside chawls I have several times verified the overcrowding of rooms. In one room, on the second floor of a chawl, measuring some 15 by 12 feet I found six families living. Six separate ovens on the floor proved this statement. On enquiry I ascertained that the actual number of adults and children living in this room was 30. ...

When I questioned the District Nurse, who accompanied me as to how she would arrange for privacy in this room, I was shown a small place some 3 feet by 4 feet which was usually screened off for the purpose. The atmosphere at night of that room filled with smoke from six ovens and other impurities might handicap any woman or infant both before and after delivery. This was one of many such rooms I saw." (D 548, page 28). In such one room tenements 97 per cent of the workers have to live and as a result 600 children out of 1000 births die off. That is the family life permitted to the worker by capitalism."

It was during these four years 1917-21, that the working class in Bombay, as also in other places, learnt that its life is influenced by international factors, that somewhere on this globe when the people at the instigation of Imperialists fought wars they influenced its living in Bombay, threw it into debts and forced it into strikes. The Imperialist war taught the working class & peasantry in India that the splendid isolation of feudal India is broken up, that its economy is now influenced by international factors. The reluctance of the bourgeoisie to increase wages voluntarily and the readiness with which they gave increases in order to guard their profits, when strikes were forced on them, made the working class conscious of its power, and taught the workers that strike is not the last weapon, but the only effective weapon in their hands to save themselves

from starvation. The lesson of active class war was learnt, though in very indistinct lines, and through elemental outburst of demands, during this period. We simply summarised this experience of the workers and held it before them in a clearly formulated manner.

The bitterness of class war increased after 1921. With the termination of the Imperialist war the available stocks of goods so long held back were thrown on the export market by Europe in order to meet the immediate demands of the war burdens. The sterling exchange having deteriorated and relatively the rupee having risen imports into India became easier. To this were added the feverish schemes of the bourgeoisie for expansion as it was a boom period. The mill-owning rings inflated the capital by recapitalising some plants at high prices by the simple method of book-entries and change of the names of the companies. A large part of the sudden jump of textile capital from 9.40 crores in 1919 to 16.98 crores in 1920 is due to this trickery of finance. This was later on used to spread exaggerated ideas about the losses of the industry and was one of the causes of the prolongation of the General Strike of 1928. (D 4

(108) The depression in industry and attack on wages - the strikes of 1924 and 1925.

However here again, as in 1907, nationalism came to the help. A severe boycott campaign checked recovery of

Lancashire imports though only for a time. Indian production kept on rising and the mill-owners did not create much trouble in the matter of wages. From 1920 to 1923 there was no serious stoppage of work in Bombay. Foreign imports of 1510 milyds in 1920-21, as against the Indian production of 1581 milyds, fell to 1090 milyds (a drop of 33 per cent) as against the rise of Indian production to 1734 milyds. What advantage did the Indian bourgeoisie take of this? It engaged itself in stock exchange speculation and when prices fell, unloaded stocks on the gullible petty bourgeois investors. With the gradual fall in prices, with the exchange troubles created by a foreign Government, which was out to restore the credit of the British exchange, and the inexperience and grab of the speculators in the industry, the visible profits came down from 10.10 crores in 1920 to 8.46 in 1921 and 3.87 crores in 1922. As is always the case under capitalism the first made to suffer from this were the workers.

5/12/31 (Morning Part II).

The mill-owners stopped their bonus that was being paid to them since 1919. When the workers were informed by a sudden notice that they would not get bonus payments, there was a general strike of the mills beginning on 17th January 1924.

The strike lasted for two months. There was up till now no organisation of the workers to lead the strike. The spontaneous lead of the conscious elements of the workers and their unconscious and unorganised solidarity was able to keep up the strike. The bonus question was not a small question. The real loss to the workers from the loss of bonus is not grasped because the loss is not so evident as it is in wage cuts. But the stoppage of bonus was virtually a wage cut. The annual bonus, according to the Bombay Labour Office, had added 8.3 per cent to the earnings of the workers in 1921 and therefore its stoppage meant an as much wage cut. (D 548).

The mill-owners took the attitude that the bonus was merely a present from them to the workers who had no "customary, legal or equitable claim" on it. The workers took the stand that the plea of the mill-owners that their profits were in danger was false and their balance-sheets faked. Moreover the mill-owners had never given a wage increase commensurate with the increase of the cost of living and the two ends had never met. After over a month's

struggle the workers refused to give in. Attempts were made to get the strike called off on the promise of an arbitration committee to decide the dispute, but the workers refused. It is said that the Communists in 1928 preached to the workers an uncompromising attitude on the question of arbitration and by refusing to accept arbitration or reference of the whole dispute to an Inquiry Committee including the terms of settlement, prolonged the strike and used it for their revolutionary conspiracy purposes. But then what about 1924? There at that time there was no communist in the strike. Still the workers refused arbitration and also refused to call off the strike on the simple condition of referring the dispute to Inquiry Committee. The mill-owners even resorted to starve out workers by holding back the payment of due wages. But the workers did not break down. On February 19, 1924, the Government of Bombay appointed an Inquiry Committee presided over by a High Court Judge. While the Committee was sitting, the workers held a meeting where the workers and police clashed and a firing took place on March 7,. In it 5 were killed, 4 wounded and 13 arrested. On the same day the Governor of Bombay realising the situation, asked the mill-owners to pay off the workers' wages which had been held back. The Inquiry Committee declared its verdict on March 11, and rejected the workers' claim. The strike collapsed through exhaustion and the work was resumed by

25th March 1924 after a struggle of 7½ million working days. The fight was lost. If the average annual wages is taken at 6 crores, the mill-owners had saved nearly 50 lakhs a year by the abolition of bonus.

At the same time the workers in Bombay learnt some lessons from the actual struggle they had to wage. In this class struggle, the workers were starved, fire opened on them, their wages withheld; and finally had come a Committee which claimed to be impartial, which claimed that it had no class affiliation. That Committee in the face of the visible profits of the industry, the swelling block accounts had declared that the workers need not get bonus. It was the biggest service that Imperialism did to the workers in Bombay. It had associated a high functionary of bourgeois justice with an acute manifestation of class struggle and through this functionary declared half a crore of the workers' earnings forfeited thus showing bourgeois justice to be against the workers. It was but natural that the workers in Bombay should lose faith in Inquiry or Arbitration Committee or the High Courts of Imperialism. The workers learnt in 1924 from real objective conditions that he is not with them he is against them. In the class struggle there are no neutrals. So when we, in 1928, expressed our disbelief in Arbitration or Inquiry Committees and rejected proposals of submitting the fate of the strike to another class court of Imperialism and the bourgeoisie,

we were simply repeating their own lesson which the workers had learnt in 1924. Not only that. We being young and ignorant of all the happenings of 1924, were in fact warned by the older workers against such committees and we ourselves were given lessons in the past struggle by the class conscious and older workers. The most class conscious and experienced workers are generally better teachers of the class struggle than many a petty bourgeois intellectual bookworm.

The second lesson they had learnt was that in times of huge profits, the workers were not the first but the last to get even a meagre increase and that in times of even a small fall in profits they were not the last but the first to be hit. As the industrial crises of the bourgeoisie continually recur and have become chronic after the x war, the workers have always to wage an offensive or defensive struggle to snatch better conditions and prevent the worsening of the existing conditions. Thus at all times they have to engage themselves in a continuous class struggle and in this class struggle the Imperialist State will always side with the bourgeoisie as against the workers.

After having inflicted a loss of 50 lakhs a year on the workers the mill-owners got emboldened and made another attack on the workers' wages in 1925 September by announcing a wage cut of 11½ per cent that is a cut of 70 to 80 lakhs a year in the earnings of the textile workers in Bombay.

The strike began on 15th September 1925 and extended to all the mills, lasting till December, a fight of 11 million working days - $3\frac{1}{2}$ million more than the previous one. This strike and the next one of 1928 illustrated the cowardly nature and the inability of the Indian bourgeoisie to fight its own battle, the battle of freedom to develop the productive forces of the country, which would yield them their profits. The mill-owners in Bombay made the abolition of the Excise Duty on cotton goods an issue in the strike. The strike in fact was not a strike but a lockout asking the workers to take $11\frac{1}{2}$ per cent less wages or in the alternative asking the Government to abolish the Excise Duty. It was actually a monstrous demonstration organised by the bourgeoisie against the Excise Duty and a demonstration based on the starvation and killing of the workers. The bourgeoisie dared not rouse the workers directly for political struggle against the Dictatorship which was hampering the development of industries in India by excise duties, mischief in exchange and such other means. Not daring to lead a revolutionary struggle for national freedom which would create conditions for the development of industries, not daring to even mildly fight for vital reforms for its own class, the bourgeoisie pushed the textile workers to the front, and forced a strike on them and put up the banner on which was inscribed their demand that "Government should abolish the Excise Duty or we shall

starve the workers by lockout until they choose to starve voluntarily by 11½ per cent". As Bombay produces half the total mill production of cotton goods in India, a strike in Bombay and the issues involved in it reach almost every big town in India. A long stoppage of Bombay mills disturbs the equilibrium of the economy of the whole of India. Therefore it was the Bombay bourgeoisie which chose to bring the Excise Duty question to the fore by this vile form of demonstration. The bourgeoisie was using the workers to bring pressure on the Government machinery, to get relief for its own class, of about two crores a year by the abolition of the Duty, a task which it had failed to accomplish in the toy legislatures in which it had sat from year to year with a show of ridiculous opposition and speeches.

The Imperialist Government granted the demand of the Indian bourgeoisie and abolished the Duty and the Cotton Duties Act was repealed in April 1926.

The abolition of the duty was not done by the Government in order to save the millworkers from wage cuts. Neither was it an indication that the British bourgeoisie and the Indian Government had disagreed. It was also not an indication that Government favoured the industrialisation of India and an accelerated growth of the Indian bourgeoisie. The interests of Indian capitalism are directly opposed to those of the British bourgeoisie and the abolition of the

Excise Duty does not vitiate this proposition. It is a fact that conditions in England were not favourable for such a step on the part of the Government of India which exists first and foremost to protect the interests of the British bourgeoisie. The Liberal Industrial Inquiry Report says on this period, "From the middle of 1924 to the middle of 1925 in fact we actually lost ground due to a number of causes, including a general cessation in international trade, the cessation of the special stimulus to British industry, of the Ruhr occupation and the prospects and effects of the British return to gold in April 1925. In June 1925 the numbers of unemployed were some 250,000 more than in the year previously." (page 270). Yet within this general picture of British decline, the textile industry was relatively in a better position. The unemployment of textile workers which was 120,000 in 1923 was only 60,000 in July 1925 out of 576,000, the total number of textile workers in England. While the percentage of registered unemployed in mining and metal was 20 per cent it was 8 per cent in textiles. It is a fact that India being the largest of Britain's cotton market in a big setback here would hit the British bourgeoisie, though not seriously yet substantially. But it must also be seen that just after the abolition of the Excise Duty, the imports from United Kingdom into India were rising from 955 milyds in 1922 to 1319 and 1614 milyds in 1923 and 1924 and were becoming steadier. These

fluctuations are not much expressed in the total exports of British textiles to all countries including India, which were steady from 1922 to 1925 round about 4150 to 4450 milyds. Though this was an absolute decline over the pre-war figure of 7000 milyds yet the industry had hopes of recovery and was not so much organised as in others, like the coal, iron, engineering etc which formed the largest part of the total exports. Since the heavy export industries with their protectionist policy for themselves ruled the day a concession to India's textiles was not going to create insuperable obstruction.

There was also another consideration and that was far more influential than the position of Lancashire as such in determining the fate of the concessions. It was the necessity of keeping Indian bourgeois and petty bourgeois sections engaged with few concessions here and there. With a crisis in unemployment rising in England, a very complicated situation on the continent and rising discontent in China, it was paying to keep the Indian bourgeoisie, just relieved for a while. With the Non Cooperation Movement crushed, the bourgeoisie, at the earliest available moment, was running to the Councils. The abolition of Excise Duty, the passing of the Steel Protection Act and such other things were the best toys with which to tempt the people to cling to the road of Swaraj through the Councils till other matters could be settled. Thus the abolition of the duty was in no way a policy to industrialise India.

The Government by abolishing the duty benefited the textile capitalists of the whole of India by about two crores a year and Bombay city by 96 lakhs. When the concession was made they cancelled the notices of wage cut, called off the lockout and the workers resumed work in a mood of victory, in December 1925. The strike had lasted for nearly three months. The textile capitalists of Bombay in two years had made a saving in cost of production of 50 lakhs a year by cancellation of bonus payments in 1924 and 96 lakhs a year by remission of the Excise Duty in 1925. They had asked for a wage cut of 11½ per cent yielding them only 70 lakhs a year, while actually they got 96 lakhs equivalent to a wage cut of 16 per cent. For all this the workers had been starved for three months losing 1½ crores in wages, several killed and wounded in firing and there was an increase in their indebtedness. The Indian bourgeoisie had fought its anti-Imperialist battle against the Excise Duty on the corpses of the Bombay workers and having won, it was out again within a year, with its hired bayonets turned towards the workers, for forcing another wage cut on them.

(109) The Japanese competition and Tariff Board -
rationalisation and attack on wages - partial
strikes and their failure.

The Imperialist war had destroyed once for all the equilibrium of capitalist economy and the violent oscillations felt all the world over, were not showing signs of

returning to normalcy, though the violence of these oscillation had mitigated since 1923, the year of the defeat of the German proletariat and the beginning of the period of partial stabilisation. The imperialists of Europe started schemes of reconstruction and stabilisation; international loans, guarantees and building up of new combines were renewed with vigour. As usual the first onslaught of these movements was felt by the workers. British capitalist economy undertook superhuman efforts to rationalise production and effect wage cuts. The working class resisted, a general strike of 1926 followed and was smashed. With a strong Conservative Government, a defeated working-class and corrupt labour aristocracy, a drive to assemble, the Empire's resources to suppress the colonial discontent and to arrest the decline of British capitalism, was begun. The result was that the Chinese Revolution was suppressed with the help of the counter revolutionary Chinese bourgeoisie; in India the exchange ratio was turned in favour of the British export trade, the suggestion of the Indian bourgeoisie to give it more political reforms was rejected and an all-Imperialist, all-British Simon Commission was announced.

Just as the Indian bourgeoisie had taken advantage of the war, so had other countries. In the textile trade, Japan and China had advanced very rapidly. Whereas the all-Asiatic spindle strength in 1913 was 9,384,000 it rose to 17,827,000 in 1927 - a rise of 90 per cent - while the British increase was only 3 per cent.

(Dange) D/7.12.31.

Morning 1st Part.

Out of these 17 Millions Japan claimed 6 million spindles. During and after the war, the Japanese had not in any way penetrated the Indian market. But long ago she had shown signs of competing in goods like long cloth and shirting with the Indian mills. Proposals of an alliance between Lancashire and Bombay were discussed and almost agreed upon through the diplomatic services of one of the richest Bombay mill-owners, Sir Ness Wadia. By that arrangement Lancashire was not to compete in lower counts with Bombay while Bombay would not move up to higher counts, and both were to keep out Japan. But the arrangement for higher political reasons did not find support with the Government of India who refused a protective duty against Japan. But the competition of Japanese textiles began to increase and their imports into India from 155 milyds. in 1924-25 began to mount up to 217, 214, 323 milyds. in 1925, 1926 and 1927 respectively. In the total imports of over 2,000 milyds. this amount was negligible. But the fact that the bulk of the imports competed directly in price with some of the varieties produced by the largest mills in Bombay gave strength to the cry of Japanese competition.

The Bombay bourgeoisie soon after the 1925 strike asked the Government of India for a protective duty. The Government refused. They next asked for the appointment of a

Tariff Board to enquire into the state of the industry and its claims for protection. The Government of India agreed to this and the Tariff Board started its enquiry into the industry.

The demand for the Board had come from the Bombay mill-owners. The mills in other centres were not interested in it. Having once asked for the Board the mill-owners could not but appear before it with some materials. These materials were mainly directed to showing the so-called high wages the owners were paying in Bombay. But the main ground on which the Bombay magnates had asked for protection and enquiry was the Japanese competition. As regards the mill-owners attempts to substantiate their claim on this ground, the Tariff Board observed, "The attitude adopted by the Bombay Mill-owners' Association in this regard calls for some comment. We consider that we were entitled to expect from that body, which had applied for protection against unfair competition from Japan, full information as to the nature and extent of that competition It was also, we consider, reasonably to be expected that some information as to the markets in India into which the Japanese goods have penetrated would be placed before us. Little or no information was forthcoming from the Bombay Mill-owners' Association upon any of these heads." (Quotation in Exh: D 401, page 17). Another ground that the Bombay magnates advanced was the severity of the competition from the

upcountry mills due to low wages prevailing there. On this point also the Board observed, "All that can be said is, therefore, that the cost of production statements show that production both in yarn and cloth in Ahmedabad and in efficient up-country mills is as high as it is in Bombay." When the Board asked them to submit cost of production accounts 21 mills out of 275 supplied them. Acting on such information, the Tariff Board made its recommendations on the basis of which, the mill-owners in Bombay started their attack on workers' wages and standards in 1927 and 1928.

The workers in Bombay also submitted representation to the Board on their conditions of life and work, on the horrible practices of unlimited fines, assaults, forfeitures of wages etc. The result was that the Board asked the mill-owners to take more work from the workers for the same wages and this recommendation to increase exploitation, they christened with that deceptive phrase "increasing efficiency".

The news of the recommendations was not understood in all its aspects by the Bombay workers, until the mill-owners launched a direct attack and held the Tariff Board report in their front as their passport to the support of "public opinion". Where the workers worked 180 spindles on Rs. 26/- a month they were asked to look after 360 on Rs.39/- Half the increase of wage for double the increase in work. The Tariff Board found that there was a marked disparity

between spinners' and weavers' wages and thought that the disparity ought to be removed. The mill-owners in order to remove the disparity instead of raising the spinning wages, proposed to bring the weavers down. Schemes of wholesale rationalisation, not by means of improved technique or amalgamation of scattered plants or capital but by the simple and inexpensive method of doubling the work of all spinners and weavers, were planned out and the strongest of the financial syndicates took upon themselves the task of launching out the first attack and breaking the workers' resistance which was rightly expected to be most determined. Once again the workers found a committee of so-called impartial judges - the Tariff Board - supporting the ruin of workers' peace and his life in the interest of the bourgeoisie. There are no neutrals, the workers learnt, and no impartial third parties in the class struggle. He who is not for us is against us was the lesson repeated.

The work of breaking the workers' resistance and introducing new methods was begun by the E.D. Sasson & Company Ltd. which is one of the biggest combines in the textile industry of the whole of India. With the financial backing of a banking house organised on an international scale, immense credit, age old experience associated with the name of the Sassoons and an efficient technical staff that high finance can command, this company was the only one in Bombay to dare such an experiment. They began the

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introduction of the new sweating system in August 1927 in two of their mills. Immediately there was a strike which lasted for a whole month and ended in the beginning of September. The workers resumed work on the understanding that the adoption of the three loom system would be optional. On resumption one by one all who did not accept the system were dismissed.

For two months there was no flagrant attack, but the beginning of the year 1928 saw a concerted attack in 9 mills, 8 of the Sassoons and one of Sir Ness Wadia. The Spring Mills introduced double frame working and piece rates in spinning. The Sassoon Mills introduced double frame working only. The strike affected over 16,000 workers. The Sassoons strike broke down by February 25th and the Spring Mills' ended in compromise on 16th January. One by one the strongest of the owners began their attacks, the three principal parties being the Sassoons, Wadias and Fazalbhoyas. These three amongst themselves combined the largest part of the spindles and capital in Bombay, employing about 52,000 workers. These three houses are the dictators of Bombay textiles and consequently of Bombay finance. Between August 1927 and April 1928 there were as many as 24 strikes. In this the Apollo workers' faced two strikes (1st August-2nd September 1927 and 2nd January-25th February 1928), the Spring Mills twice (2nd January-16th ~~Jan~~ January 1928 and 31st January-6th February 1928), the

Textile Mills three times (21st February-25th February and 17th March-3rd April and 7th April-24th April 1928), the Rachel Sassoon twice (2nd January-25th February and 3rd-4th March 1928). Out of them 21 disputes were lost, one was compromised and two merged into the general strike. Out of these 24 disputes 12 arose out of the measures adopted by the Sassoons, 5 by Sir Ness Wadia, the textile magnate with very big reserves and unique in some of his working methods. Two arose from the Fazalbhoys and the rest from individual owners. If along with this it is remembered that the general strike began with the whole Fazalbhoys group closing down on 16th April, the trend of the mill-owners' attack, the chief sources of it and the huge combines that stood behind it become clearly visible.

The mill-owners had seen the resistance of the workers in 1924 and 1925. Though beaten they had held out for nearly two months in one case and three months in another. Even though without any solid organisation they had combined when attacked. So the mill-owners were unwilling to face a general strike every year and especially when the trade prospects of 1927 were better than in previous years. They therefore adopted the tactic of breaking the workers' resistance by groups and as shown above the first battle was given by the strongest syndicates and was won by them. 40,000 workers' standard of work and living were made worse.

Thus by five instalments and within one year i.e. by the end of 1928, the mill-owners would have introduced the new sweating system in almost all the mills, increased the hours of work in several departments and reduced the rates of wages of weavers, wherever the three-loom system could not have been introduced. By the end of 1928 30,000 workers, if the above policy had been allowed to continue, would have been absolutely thrown out of work, the working time of over 20,000 would have been raised by 18 per cent and the same number would have lost 21 per cent in earnings by the forced increase in hours of work, without a corresponding increase in the rates of wages. This new attack was unprecedented in the history of Bombay's working class or the working class of Europe and America, which also was being beaten down in wages but not on such a monster scale. In the isolated battles the workers had lost completely. The strikes had lasted for nearly 1½ million working days, (the Bombay Labour office has not given an exact data on this) and the workers had lost over 20 lakhs in wages by the stoppage apart from the permanent loss resulting from the defeat. If it had been spread over the whole industry the stoppage represented 11 days' general strike. Such four instalments covering the whole industry would have meant a stoppage equivalent to two months at the most, if we take into consideration the fact that the single stoppage of the Sassoon group of 24,000 workers lasted for one month

and 24 days. The advantage of the new tactic lay in this fact. It was a system of "guerrilla lock-outs". The general introduction of the new systems, increase of hours and a wage-cut would have generated such a tremendous opposition that the resulting strike according to previous experiences would have gone on for more than three months at least. By the tactic of isolated attacks, the mill-owners rightly calculated on easy victories and a saving in the prolonged stoppage of work of 1 to 1½ months. The plans of the bourgeoisie were well laid and based on shrewd business calculations.

Section 2

(110) The failure of partial strikes necessitated a general strike - direct causes of the 1928 strike.

Having broken the resistance of 1/5th of the workers the mill-owners proceeded to launch their second attack on the workers of the big Fazalbhoy group which is comprised of 11 mills employing 21,000 workers. One of their mills, the Kastoorchand Mill, was already on strike since the 3rd April for reduction in rates of blanket weaving. On 16th April, 1928 7 more mills of this group struck work (P.W. 245-Hassanali) along with three other mills in the immediate vicinity of this group. The closing down of this group, the firing on the workers and the death of one of them, Parsharam Jadhav, on 23rd April, brought about the

general strike, the conditions for which had been ripening since January.

The method of attack followed by the Fazalbhoy group was different from that of the Sassoons and Wadias. Though the Fazalbhoy group were a big syndicate, they had not such strong financial reserves as the Sassoons and Wadias. Therefore that group could not afford to meet the workers with a direct attack on clear cut issues. They followed a method of subterfuge. They transferred a large number of their looms to weave finer varieties of cloth, mostly new patterns of dhotis and bordered grey goods with an introduction of artificial silk yarns. While they raised the counts of yarn woven, they did not raise the rate of wages per pound with the effect that as the output in finer counts weighed less and the rate per pound remained the same, the workers received less earnings. They transformed their Pearl Mill, all on finer counts and artificial silk. They also introduced the high draft system in spinning. But the machinery set up was of such a type that the management agreed to alter it in December 1928, i.e. after the general strike. Having put up on higher counts, the doffing was low in spinning and the management started reducing men in the spinning on this account. But their book calculations about the percentage fall in doffing and the consequent reductions in number of assistants to the spinners (that is doffer boys etc.) were vitiated by one factor, which they

had not taken into consideration, and that factor was bad mixings in cotton. The accumulated result of all this was reduction of the employed workers, increase of work for those employed in the spinning and fall of earnings of the weavers. This development ultimately affected every worker in the textile process and bred serious discontent. That the mills were put up on finers is evident from the returns of spinning counts. Counts 11 to 20 s had come down from 153 million pounds in 1926-27 to 131 in 1927-28. Counts 21 to 30s had risen from 104 million pounds to 107. But the jump is more noteworthy in 31s to 40s. From 9.2 million, it rose to 12.3 million pounds, a rise of more than 33 per cent. In above 40s from 4.3 million pounds to 5, an increase of 16 per cent.

I.H.K.

7/12/31 (Morning Part II).

It is not so much the actual increase that matters as the trend of production and the inevitable suffering of the workers arising from it. It was this that brought out the Fazalbhoy group. It was this that caught hold of imagination and feelings of the workers. They had seen 40,000 of their comrades beaten down alone in an isolated single handed fight. They now saw that it was not a question of one or two mills but of the whole industry heaping more burdens on their head. The 40,000 already defeated in the previous three months were convinced of this by their personal experience. But they alone were not powerful enough, in the absence of organisation, to convince the whole textile working-class of the on-coming waves. It was necessary for another big mass of workers to learn from experience of the danger threatening all of them. Such a big mass was only to be found in the Fazalbhoy group. I say even this that had the mill-owners not attacked the workers either in the Petit Mills or other individual mills, it is doubtful whether the general strike would have come about in April. The fact that the next group of workers to be affected by unemployment and fall in wages were those from the Fazal group at once turned the scale in favour of the strike. Because these combined with the 40,000 already embittered formed a strong bloc of 60,000 men, coming from mills situated in the

most densely populated part of the textile city and of the largest and widest system of contact for the propagation and exchange of thoughts, feelings and experience. Any general mass discontent or even a strong grievance only among the weavers of the Sassoons, Fazals and Wadias, can at any moment form a solid basis for a general strike. Such a situation had not matured in January, but it had matured in April. Therefore in spite of appeals, a general strike did not come about in January but was an accomplished fact after seven days of the pay day in April. The historical development of the industry, the personal experience of rank and file workers and the conviction borne of that experience that nothing but a general strike could stay the threatening wage cuts, unemployment and worsened conditions, brought about the general strike in April 1928.

The Prosecution allegation in the matter of this general strike is that in fact the strike was engineered and brought about by us; that the workers had no grievances, that we formulated grievances and demands long after the strike had taken place and this we did because we want the general strikes as rehearsals for the final act of insurrection - we do not care whether the workers have or have not anything to gain immediately from the strikes. They brought the Superintendent of the Office of the Mill-owners' Association (P.W. 234) with a document purporting to be a letter from the Joint Mill Strike Committee to the Mill-owners' Association, putting before them the demands of the workers. The

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argument behind the presentation of this witness and that document was to show that the letter of demands was dated 3rd May and the strike had taken place 10 days earlier, the grievances formulated in that letter were purely an after-thought of those leaders who had brought about the strike for the purposes of a "rehearsal" for advancing Communist influence amongst the workers. But after the witness had been called the Prosecution changed their line and decided not to put in that letter, which was then brought on record as a defence document (Ex. D3). One would fail to see the reason of bringing this witness before the Court if the above points were not remembered. Because once the Prosecution had given up the idea of putting in that document as their exhibit to support their argument of "a general strike without grievances" and their attempt to prove the 1928 strike as a bad deed of the Communists, the need for this witness vanishes altogether. But in order to justify their waste of money and to remove the absurdity of the whole show, they put him in the box to testify to the well known historical fact that there was a general strike of textile mills in Bombay in the year 1928 and that he, the Office Superintendent of the Mill-Owners' Association, actually remembered that historical fact! But the memory of that excellent office Superintendent was not sure when that historical fact, which according to the Prosecution was a rehearsal for insurrection, came to an end. He "thought" that it ended on 4th October 1928.

The same line is followed by the Prosecution in their examination of two other witnesses who were personally cognisant of those 24 disputes that took place prior to the general strike and other facts leading to it (P.W. 244, R.S. Patwardhan and P.W. 245 Hasanally). Not one question that would have suggested the existence of grievances and strikes prior to and leading to the general strike was put to them by the Prosecution. Their trend of questions is to show that suddenly in April 1928, Bombay found itself in the grip of a general textile strike and that some of the accused here were the cause of it. It was the Defence that showed by cross-examination of these witnesses the existence of long drawn out disputes arising from the introduction of new rational systems of work and other grievances, that the general strike had not come up suddenly as if raised from the hell by the evil spirits of Communism. It is to refute the allegations of the Prosecution that I have stated so far the development that inevitably and historically led to the general strike in April 1928. This can also be shown by reference to the Fawcett Committee's Report which says, "On the 3rd May 1928, the Joint Strike Committee published a list of terms to be conceded by the mill-owners, which has now come to be known as "17 demands" and which formed one of the items submitted to us for consideration. But we may state here that many of these demands were not put forward for the first time when they were so formulated. During the few months immediately preceding the general strik

there were several strikes in individual mills and in groups of mills in connection with one or more of the grievances submitted in the 17 demands for removal." (page 4). The report then gives a list of the sixteen strikes that occurred between August 1927 and May 1928, to which I have referred above. This list has also been confirmed by P.W. 244. After a mention of the fact that in all instances prior to April 1928 the strikes ended in favour of the employers, except in one case, the Committee summarises the main grievances of the workers prior to the general strike :-

(1) Direct cut in wages (2) Reduction in monthly earnings owing to the following indirect causes: (a) Introduction of new varieties of cloth at rates which did not bring the level of wages to those earned on the production of the old sorts; (b) reduction of piece rates to meet unanticipated high production by individual operatives; (c) adjustment of rates made to bring them in line with the rates prevailing in other mills; (d) no adjustment made to increase rates in cases where mills went on finer counts (e) the introduction of artificial silk and inferior raw material (f) gradual withdrawal of bonuses such as good attendance and efficiency bonus, free railway passes to workers etc. (g) introduction of a method of paying wages on the weight of the cloth after it had undergone a subsequent process instead of the actual weight produced on the loom. (3) The introduction of new methods of work involving a reduction in the number of

operatives employed, notably in the Sassoon group (that is the looms and double frame working) and the fear of the spread of this system to other mills in the city. (4) The increase in the hours of mechanics in some mills from $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours to 10 hours per day and the declaration of a general intention to level up the hours of work for all mill operatives in all mills to 10 hours per day.

In addition to the above there were several minor grievances, in connection with the infliction of fines, dismissals, the practice of handing over spoiled cloth to the weavers in lieu of wages. It would, we think, will serve no useful purpose to go at length into the exact causes of the general strike or to attempt to apportion blame for it on either side. There were no doubt various contributory causes, but in our opinion it can be safely said that the chief reason for its commencement and continuation for a period of nearly six months was the fear of unemployment created by the new methods of work introduced by Messrs. E.D. Sassoon & Co. in their mills." (P. 697). As regards the strenuous propaganda carried on by certain leaders in favour of a general strike and the suggestion that it was due to them that the strike came about, the Committee observed that "had there been no grievances it would have been impossible for a handful of men to keep so many workers on strike for a period amounting very nearly to six months." (page 2). This knocks out the allegations that we were the

sole or chief cause of the general strike, that the workers themselves had no grievances and that we brought about the strike - grievances or no grievances, to further the aims of the conspiracy. The general strike of 1928 just as any other previous strike was an outcome of the objective conditions of world capitalism in general and of Bombay's textile industry in particular.

By this it is not meant to suggest that individuals and groups of individuals played no part in this event. To rule out altogether the role of the individuals and groups would mean becoming adherents of predestination, fatalism and such other similar creeds which are totally incompatible with the scientific attitude of historical materialism. Ability, experience, daring, intellect and such other qualities of the leadership do affect the course of events to a certain extent. But while Marxism does recognise their place, it does not subscribe to the proposition of bourgeois individualism and hero worship, that an individual man can make and unmake history, in spite of or against the course of historical development. With these limitations I do say that I along with others did play a certain part in the making of and guiding the general strike. I shall deal briefly with that part now.

(111) The attitude of the B.T.L. Union and Mr. N. M. Joshi - the G. K. Mahamandal's changing attitude - general strike complete.

I took no part in the strikes that took place before

1928 January. It was only in January that I went to the mill area along with Mr. Bakhale, with whom I was a Joint Secretary of the All-India Trade Union Congress. Mr. Bakhale negotiated the Spring Mill strike and I was present on one or two occasions at these interviews with the management. That strike was partially successful. But we could do nothing in the Sassoon Mill strike. There was no room there for compromise and negotiations. I found that due to my ignorance at that time of the intricacies of the industry, the burdens on the working-class and such other things that a unionist ought to know, I could be of no use to the strike. So I ceased to take an active part in the strike and retired to acquaint myself thoroughly with all facts of the situation. Moreover I found hesitation amongst the other leaders as to the course to be recommended to the workers. There was one trend that argued that without a general strike these grievances would not be solved; there was another trend which argued that as the grievances were not felt by a sufficiently wide mass, the general strike would not come about and succeed. The Bombay Textile Labour Union issued a statement on 8/1/28 in the name of Mr. N. M. Joshi disapproving of the idea of general strike. That statement was not wholly against the general strike as such. Mr. Joshi had seen and taken part in two big general strikes and even as a moderate Trade Unionist he could not be expected to oppose the general strike on principle. What he did was to

oppose it on the ground of possibility, feasibility and possible success. Being out of touch with the rank and file of the fighting workers and not believing as we do in the immense power of the proletariat he doubted their capacity, solidarity and intelligence. All these doubts are typically put in one sentence of his statement. He says "As regards the present strike I feel sure that there is a possibility of its spreading, although I may not wish it, if no satisfactory solution is found out almost immediately. And I do not feel that a general strike under the existing conditions may fail. There is very large number of workers who are not yet affected by the new system and they may not come out; and even supposing they come out they may not hold out long enough to make the general strike a success. I would not therefore risk a general strike, if I feel that it would fail." (Ex. D 567 and D 390 A.I.T.U.C. Bulletin, April 1928 page 111).

That settled the attitude of the Bombay Textile Labour Union and the large section of workers in a group of mills which were under its influence.

But the largest section of the workers in the most crowded part of the mill area were under the influence of the G.K.Mahamandal. The Sassoon Mill Strike was led by the G.K.M. The G.K.M. reflected the opinion of the most advanced group of workers in the mills. Though not possessing an upto date, well kept organisation, the Mahamandal,

with a membership varying between four and six thousands, had a sufficiently wide organisation and contact. The Mahamandal did not take up the idea of the general strike in January. And when a statement in the press in the name of the Workers' and Peasants' Party was issued in January 1928 stating that the mill-owners wanted to crush the workers section by section in order to avoid a determined resistance as was given in 1924 and 1925 and that only a general strike could stop the rationalisation and wage cut drive, the Mahamandal did not take that statement seriously. (P 928, P 1016 and D 519). This was quite in keeping with the workers mood at that time. The Sassoon Strike had not broken down, the attack in the mills was not yet very evident. The plans of the mill-owners were not yet thoroughly known; therefore it was that the G.K.M. in its leaflet said "Men in those factories in which no change has taken place should continue their work and help the men in the E.D.Sassoon Company by taking them as substitutes by turns and by collecting contributions." Strikers were asked not to go and demonstrate near the other mills which were working. (D 439(33)).

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Till the Sassoon group strike was on and others had not taken place this mentality prevailed. With the B.T.L. Union and the Mahamandal both against the general strike, it was impossible for any group of persons to bring about a general strike. Because the two organisations put together and agreed on a point meant the opinion of the textile workers. In a handbill (issued between 13th and 24th February 1928) the Mahamandal wrote "Men in those mills in which no sort of change has been effected should strengthen themselves by continuing their work" and asked the workers to taboo the proposal of a general strike coming from "nondescript upstarts" unless it came from the Mahamandal which "if it is thought proper to declare a general strike will give a public notice to all to that effect." (Exh: D 439(30)).

The tactic of localised strikes failed, the Sassoon workers were beaten and the mill-owners commenced the second instalment of their attack just as was predicted by those "nondescript upstarts". The effect of this was at once reflected in the Mahamandal. The workers began to consider seriously whether it was possible to stem the advancing attacks by isolated strikes. The Mahamandal in a handbill says (about 26th March 1928): "As the strike in the Sassoon group was broken other owners have begun to foist upon the workers the system of three looms and two frames. So also

attempts to cut down wages are being made by resorting to various stratagems We workers cannot be able to cope up with this unless in the end we all become one and tenaciously declare a general strike." (Exh: P 1464 which is same as D 439(31)). The words "in the end" and "future general strike" still express hesitation to recommend unequivocally the general strike as the only weapon because the workers themselves were hesitating and not a very large section of them was yet convinced that they were being attacked as the result of a general plan of the textile bourgeoisie. They still thought that all the wage-cuts and new systems of work were the freaks of individual owners and therefore the strikes could be localised to those individual mills. On 1st April 1928 the Mahamandal issued a statement asking the workers of the Textile Mill to resume work and removing some of the misunderstandings prevalent in the workers about spinners' wages. (Exh: D 497). The workers resumed work on 3rd April (Vide Fawcett Report and P.W. 244) but came out again on 7th April as they were asked to clean machinery every day which was not the former practice, and to drop tickets. The Simplex Mill strike could not be negotiated and the Kastoorchand Mill came out on 3rd April, the same day on which the Textile Mill resumed work. The Simplex Mill was in the Jacob Circle area, a mill doing very skilled silk work in weaving; the Kastoorchand Mill was at Dadar and the Textile Mill at Parbhadevi, three

situated at long distances from each other, which meant a great difficulty in organisation and control of the strike by the financially poor Mahamandal. This guerrilla tactic of the mill-owners, the fruitlessness of the isolated struggles for the last six months naturally had their effect on the G.K.M. Hesitation and vacillation gave way. The three strikes shook the Mahamandal's ideology and they had to accept the viewpoint held by the W.P.E. as early as January 1928. On 9th April 1928, the G.K.M. issued a handbill saying, "You are aware that this danger and the wicked attack of the owners on wages cannot be averted without a general strike." (P. 1465 - P.W. 245). It also said, "In every mill the owners with the intention of devising means for reducing the workers' wages by 25 per cent are resorting to one or other of devices

"All this scheming of the owners is going on in order to take revenge upon us workers who gave a fight in the year 1925, got our 25 per cent and became successful

If you want to maintain your wages, there is only one remedy for it. Our unity is that remedy. The men in the mills of Bombay must declare a general strike, " (Exh: D439(29)).

In the meanwhile rumblings of reduced earnings and dismissed men began to grow louder from the Fazalbhoj group. The Mahamandal decided unequivocally on preparing for a general strike on 13th April 1928. (Minute Book of the G.K.M. Exh: D 420, page 12). But in the absence of a wide organisation,

funds and other requisites, the resolution remained as a prophetic reading of the workers' mood or feeling of their pulse. Nothing beyond a meeting here and there of the two mills already on strike was done or could be done. The spontaneous strike of the workers on 16th April in ten mills confirmed the idea of the Mahamandal that the workers were now veering round to the idea of the general strike as a remedy to stop the mill-owners' attack. The leadership became confident and on 17th April the G.K.M. came out with a definite appeal this time to make the general strike complete and resist the attack of capitalism. (Exh: D 439(28)).

(112) B.T.L. Union joins the strike - was the G.K.M. controlled by the W.P.P.? - how it was pushed into the general strike by the rank and file.

On 18th April at Nagu Sayaji Wadi meeting a strike committee of 85 members was elected at the instance of the G.K.M.

So long the Bombay Textile Labour Union after its statement of 10th January showing a defeatist attitude about the idea of the general strike had followed the policy of "tail-endism". But when the workers struck on 16th April it moved forward to take charge of affairs and again guide them into a channel of submission and to stop the spreading of the strike. On 18th April they also called a meeting to elect a Strike Committee at Delisle Road. But before they

could collect even a handful of listeners, the Mahamandal had finished its meeting at Nagu Sayaji Wadi. The same audience went to the Delisle Road to frustrate the attempt of the B.T.L. Union to side-track the workers into a defeatist policy. At Delisle Road we secured a complete victory and Mr. Ginwalla of the B.T.L. Union plainly saw the following that our lead had secured and agreed to our Strike Committee with some additions of his followers.

The conclusion from this is: the world conditions of capitalism affected the Bombay Textile bourgeoisie, as a part of world capitalism. In order to secure its profits it attacked workers' standards. The workers first resisted by groups as they were attacked by groups. But when they saw through the general plan of attack, they became convinced that a general strike alone and not a resistance by groups would help them. The conditions for a general strike and this conviction became ripe in April. The proposal of a general strike though made in January was not taken up then by the workers' organisations. The G.K. Mahamandal's gradual development towards the acceptance of the necessity of a general strike grew in proportion as the intensity of the mill-owners' attack increased. The various handbills and decisions of the G.K.M. only reflected the growing inclination of the workers towards the general strike and the conviction that it was necessary to save them from wage-cuts and unemployment. From a complete repudiation of the idea

and of those who advanced it, the Mahamandal advanced towards accepting it in a hesitating manner and ultimately was forced by events to agree to it, to work for it and lead it. The very fact that the B.T.L. Union which with 10,000 members at first opposed the strike, and then had to fall in line on 18th April shows that in this strike the rank and file was forcing the lead on the organisations and not that the leadership was consciously and effectively guiding the rank and file which in fact ought to be the case, because it is the function of leadership to anticipate the enemy's attack and meet it in advance rather than follow like tail ends.

The fact that the G.K.M. had one member of the W.P.P. as its adviser for a long time, that the W.P.P. since January 1928 had given the slogan of a general strike does not affect the above view. The G.K.M. had never accepted the objects or the policy of the W.P.P. nor even that of the Party member, whose help the Mandal took from time to time. The history of the Mandal's connection with the Party member itself illustrates the reactions of the G.K.M. to the outside situation. The Secretary of the Mandal and the President as also the Managing Committee did not accept our Party member's advice and even when no personal and other issues a split was threatened between the two sections of the Mandal, one led by Mr. Mayekar and another by Mr. Alwe, both were agreed upon not accepting the general strike slogan. The W.P.P. on the advice of the Party member on the

G.K.M. had denounced the Secretary (Exh: P 1016) but the Mandal as such was far from endorsing it. In its meeting of 4th February 1928 it blamed our Party member for the denunciation (D 420, page 7) but the failure of the Sassoon group strike of 25th February changed this attitude and in its meeting of 28th February the Mandal disapproved of the policy and conduct of its Secretary whom it had wanted to defend as against our Party member, in its meeting of 4th February. A few more strikes strengthened this attitude as found in its meeting of 20th March 1928 and the Managing Committee came out with a handbill completely vindicating our Party member's policy and conduct. (Exh: 1462). The split came to a head on 27th March and the Secretary was dismissed and asked to hand over charge which he refused to do. This was announced to the workers about 30th March (Exh: P 1463) by the President of the G.K.M. The anti-general strike section weakened; the pro-general strike section under the pressure of mass opinion became dominant. When the general strike did come, many members of the Workers' and Peasants' Party were found associating with the Mahamandal. But the Mandal as such had never adopted consciously or unconsciously the general platform of the W.P.P. It was still shy of what the bourgeoisie calls the "outsiders". It was still frightened of the bold lead of the W.P.P. members given to the workers in their public meetings, the uncompromising class ideology held up before them and

accepted by them. The Mahamandal Executive had lagged behind and it dissociated itself from the W.P.P. members' speeches; though it could not dare to make this resolution public as the rank and file approved of our policy (Exh: D 420, page 15 dated 2nd May 1928). This was the effect probably of the nervous reaction of the Executive to the monster May Day demonstration on 1st May 1928 unheard of amongst the textile workers on such a large scale before. Though the moderate B.T.L. Union, the Seamen's Union and some others had participated officially in the May Day, the Mahamandal was not officially a party to it. None of its Executive members was there. On 30th April it had appointed Messrs Jhabwala, Nimbkar and myself as advisers, but on 2nd May it repudiated responsibility for our speeches amongst the workers (D 420). This shows that we had not captured the G.K.M. and that the G.K.M. was not a section of the W.P.P. nor was it under the influence of the W.P.P. This naturally reverts the process as is alleged against us with regard to strikes - that we form fractions, capture unions, foment grievances and then bring about a general strike, as a prelude to the insurrection. Here the process started with small strike and then the general strike. We expressed our opinion as to how to fight the enemies' attack and analyse the situation. Our predictions came true and our advice was accepted by the workers. Still we had not captured the organisation of the workers nor had built one of our own. The strike was not

our creation, but we were the creation of the strike. organisation had not brought about the General Strike 1928, but the strike had brought forth an organisation. The causal process of the 1928 strike was exactly the reverse of that of the 1929 strike, and it was quite natural in view of the state of the class-consciousness and organisation of the workers at the beginning of 1928.

H.K.

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And as for the last link in the allegation - that is the question of insurrection - it has not come at all nor was there even a talk about it. The function of leadership is to anticipate the movements of the enemies forces. We did anticipate to a large extent. The function of leadership is to discuss and find out the methods to meet successfully the attack. We found that the general strike alone at that time could stop the mill-owners' attack. The function of leadership is to organise and lead the battle of the masses. We could not do that before the masses themselves were convinced and took to the general strike. In this we were not open to the charge of "khvostism" because we were inexperienced, without any roots amongst the workers, without any organisation and other requisites necessary for an organisational leadership. Therefore we could only give an ideological lead and wait for its acceptance by the workers themselves.

The bourgeoisie, the Government and those parties who were against us advanced one more argument to prove that we were the sole or the major cause of the general strike. The very fact, they say, that it was necessary to give a slogan of general strike and that it was given by the W.P.P. as far back as January 1928 and throughout February and March, was sufficient to show that unlike the previous general strikes

this strike was not spontaneous. The answer to this is very simple. I have already shown the reasons of the previous general strikes in the Bombay textile industry. The first series were due to the rising prices and the refusal of the mill-owners to increase wages. The workers fought four such general strikes and won. The next series were due to the concerted and unanimous attack of the mill-owners on the wages of the workers. In those two strikes, the mill-owners as a whole announced the stoppage of bonus and wage cuts. The nature of the attack was quite plain to the workers and was common to all. Therefore it was not necessary at all to call for a general strike. They were in fact half general strikes and half lockouts. Such was not the case in 1928. The mill-owners would not adopt wage cuts and rational systems throughout the whole of the industry in an open manner and by a decision of the owners as a whole and made known to the workers. The wage cuts were introduced by several underhand methods and group by group of mills. Therefore it was necessary for some one who had the perspective of the whole industry to study the trend of the attack, its reasons and modus operandi and apprise all the workers of it. In the absence of an all embracing Trade Union organisation this task had to be done by the W.P.P. The isolated attacks of the owners were part of a general attack. Therefore the isolated strikes had to be substituted by a general strike. By the very nature of the attack, the general strike

as affecting certain groups of mills had to be anticipatory. Therefore a slogan had to be given in advance. Though the slogan was given it could do nothing as is shown before until a large section of the workers by their own experience found themselves victims of wage cuts and rationalisation.

(113) Did we prolong the strike? - negotiations and classes - how the bourgeoisie uses the different general strikes - strikes becoming longer and fought harder since 1917 - compromise with the B.T.L. Union and formation of the Joint Strike Committee.

I will now take up the question, did we prolong the strike, did we try that the strike should not be negotiated and called off so that discontent should spread more, the stronghold of textile capitalism be dislocated and the workers grow revolutionary, without caring whether their immediate demands were satisfied or not, whether they starved or not?

As soon as a big strike takes place, the petty bourgeois humanitarians get busy and begin a hypocritical wailing about the suffering and starvation of the poor workers and their innocent children. So long as the workers are producing wealth for the bourgeoisie these humanitarian gangs never feel for the poor workers and their innocent children who may be dying slowly by hunger on starvation wages. But

they come out of their holes when the strike is on. Because then they feel not that the workers are starving but that the fountain of their masters' wealth, their wealth, has stopped flowing. Then another set of the so-called third party men get busy trying to negotiate between the owners and the strikers. They call themselves neutrals but are not really so, because there are no neutrals in the class struggle. These third party men by their ideology, if not their actual economic interests, are affiliated with the bourgeoisie. Their efforts at negotiations are efforts to convince the workers about the necessity of a wage cut, and shrewd business agents as they are, they do not fail to bring forward the argument of patriotism, the necessity of helping the Indian industry, by which is really meant the Indian bourgeoisie, as against the foreign competition, that is the foreign bourgeoisie. These humanitarians are the most dangerous enemies of the working-class, more than the capitalists themselves. The latter stand naked as class enemies before the workers and therefore cannot by themselves create hesitation or corruption in the working-class so easily. But these humanitarians and neutrals come as friends of the working-class and as in India even today the majority of the working-class leaders are invariably from the middle class, they easily get access to the matters under dispute. They are too easily accepted as negotiators. But where the Trade Unions are strong, the leadership firm and the class

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consciousness of the workers quite alive and clear, no harm comes from these negotiators. In fact they are then skillfully used for the smaller needs of the strike, without in any way being allowed to work for the interest of the bourgeoisie.

The slogan of the Bombay bourgeoisie in the 1925 strike was the abolition of the Excise Duty. The slogan in 1928 was the change of the exchange ratio. The Indian bourgeoisie in its constitutional fight had lost the battle of the exchange ratio in the Legislative Assembly. While the question was being fought most constitutionally, the Hon'ble Finance Member, Sir Basil Blakett, accused the Indian bourgeoisie of trying to depreciate the workers wages by advocating a low exchange ratio of 16d. He said, "The inevitable result of a reduction of the exchange to 16d would be a series of strikes all over the country". (Page 1750, Legislative Assembly Proceedings, dated 7/3/1927). Sir Basil adopted the attitude of a patron of the working-class and for their interest wanted an 18d. ratio. But the Indian bourgeoisie, the employers of the working-class, also said the same thing. "If we still decide upon 18d. we shall be giving a mandate to the parties concerned to reduce wages and salaries.....". If there is any effort on the part of the parties concerned to oppose the reduction of wages and salaries which must follow the 18d rate it will mean serious struggles between capital and labour. And in this connection

we may point out the fate of the highly organised and politically supported labour in England in the coal industry.", said Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas in reply to Government, (Legislative Assembly Proceedings, dated 7/3/1927, page 1803); and Sir Victor Sassoon at that time agreed with him. (Ibid page 1785). The Government carried its point and therefore the Indian bourgeoisie had to show that the natural result of Government policy would be as predicted by it, that is a series of strikes in every industry. Both the Imperialists and the bourgeoisie used the interest of the working-class as an argument to support their own class interest which amongst themselves were contradictory. But when the strikes did occur both the Imperialists and the bourgeoisie united in crushing them, because Imperialism harmed the Indian bourgeois interest, the Indian bourgeoisie did not go to the working-class and peasantry, to organise them politically against Imperialism as a bourgeoisie which is really revolutionary would have done.

So when the textile strike began the bourgeoisie and its papers first opened a campaign against the 18d ratio. This lasted throughout the January and February strikes. But the problems of the ratio was not so easy as the problem of the Excise Duty. The problem of the ratio affected the whole of the Imperialist economy. The problem of the Excise Duty was a small one, limited to a fraction of the textile industry. A general strike in Bombay and determined

agitation helped by some other factors could solve the latter. But such forces were quite powerless against the ratio question. The Indian bourgeoisie knew this very well and therefore it concentrated more on crushing the strike than on the new ratio. Moreover the bourgeoisie also knew that even if the ratio were to be changed, the strikes would not be prevented for the simple fact that world economy was approaching another intense crisis which later on broke out in October 1929. The solution of the ratio question is not and was not a panacea for the deadlock in Indian capitalism.

It is a fact that the 1928 strike was the longest of all the textile strikes. But the reason for it is not to be sought in the leadership of the strike. The Prosecution says that it is the boast of the accused that they prolonged the strike. Well, if such a boast is there it is not of our personal powers or plans but it is a boast of the proletarian heroism and sacrifice that stood for six months the attacks of Government and the Indian bourgeoisie. Such a fight was not unexpected. If you examine by means of a graph the periods of duration of the strike since 1917 you will find that the strikes were all along becoming longer and being fought harder. In times of super-profits, the bourgeoisie being unwilling to lose profits by stoppage of work yields to the workers' demands without much resistance. Therefore the strikes in the boom period of 1917-1921 were over in a few

weeks. But those after 1921, began to be resisted stubbornly by the mill-owners and the periods of duration began to rise steadily until it became longest in 1928. In that year the world trade depression had become more acute and was rising, while the workers in Bombay since the 1925 strike had got some respite due to the fall in the prices of agricultural commodities and the consequent level of real wages going just above the previous starvation level, which increased their capacity of resistance. To these factors was added the determined resistance of the big financial house of Sassoon on the side of the bourgeoisie and the determined resistance of the new leadership on the side of the workers. All these factors combined to make the struggle a prolonged one. But the main factor was the unwillingness of the mill-owners to negotiate the settlement with the workers and their leaders.

I shall now state what we did to negotiate the settlement and not to prolong it a day more than was necessary in the circumstances and how we explored all avenues of settlement except the criminal one of surrendering willingly the workers' cause.

It has been already stated that the general strike action began on the 16th April 1928. The workers on strikes organised processions and meetings. On 18th a Strike Committee was formed. On the next day the Bombay Textile Labour Union which had kept aloof from the strike appointed

its own Strike Committee and refused to accept our Committee. But the Strike Committee of the B.T.L.Union was merely a watching committee. The membership of the B.T.L.U. mainly came from the Mohamedan weavers in the Madanpura area, the Kurla Mills and a few workers from other mills. The skilled weavers of the B.T.L.U. had not been yet hit by wage cuts and so there was no driving force for the strike from that section. The B.T.L.U. was the last union in the world to preach militant solidarity to the workers and ask them to strike. It did not fight strikes but negotiated them with "good will" which invariably turned out to be good for the bourgeoisie and ill for the workers. Still the B.T.L.U. was financially strong with a reserve of more than Rs.10,000/- and was in a position to command some more funds if necessary from the welfare organisations with which it had connections. The G.K.M. and the militant Strike Committee of the strikers had not more than Rs.100/- and their organisers could scarcely pay their conveyance for organisation of the workers.

From 16th onwards, the mills began to stop one by one. On 23rd April the Police opened fire on a mass of the workers in the Sewri area. One of the workers by name Parsaram Jadhav died of gunshot wounds on the spot. Contrary to the expectations of the police the firing did not break the strike but strengthened it. It aroused the solidarity of the workers. It made them indignant. The firing showed them

that the police, the Government and the mill-owners who had sought the help of the police were one and that the workers must stand as one against them. The conservative anti-strike B.T.L.U. even was overrun by the strike feeling and all the mills closed down by 26th April 1928 (P.W. 245).

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During this time serious negotiations were going on between the B.T.L. Union and us on the question of forming a Joint Strike Committee and presenting a united front to the mill-owners. The B.T.L. Union was opposed to calling a general strike but once the strike was an accomplished fact and even its own sections were involved in it its main grounds for keeping aloof from us vanished. Though we possessed the leadership of the strikers, we had no finances to guide and keep such a huge organisation going. We also wanted unity with the 30,000 workers who were more or less under the influence of the B.T.L. Union. Unity at that time with those confirmed Genevites and class collaborators would have strengthened the strike. Unity with them at that time meant a unity of one section of workers with another section and not merely a unity between leaders. A large section of workers by their own experience had yet to be convinced that our policy was the only right policy. Unity with the B.T.L. Union at that time gave us the opportunity to demonstrate the correctness of our policy and secure large contacts and financial strength, without in any way making us lose our direction of affairs and the right to criticise if necessary our allies. Therefore steps were taken to form a Joint Strike Committee which ultimately was done on 2nd May. The Joint Strike Committee consisted of 30 members, 15 from the

B.T.L. Union - Mr. Joshi's section, and 15 from our section which had advocated the militant policy and was in the thick of the fight. It appointed two Joint-Secretaries and two Joint-Treasurers and in order to avoid a possible cause of friction it never appointed a permanent President of the Joint Strike Committee as such. Those of the members of that Joint Strike Committee who are now prisoners in this case are all from that section which advocated and fought for the general strike till the workers' demands were granted. (An attempt has been made by some accused, who now find it profitable to differ from us to divide in a peculiar manner these members between three unions. I shall deal with it separately).

(114) P.W. Hassan Ali's mistakes - the Governor's visit, 27th April - the mill-owners' communique in May - our reply - Sir Cowasji Jehangir's visit - mill-owners refuse negotiations, 15th May.

The first thing that the Joint Strike Committee did was to send to the Mill-owners' Association a formal draft of the demands of the strikers, which it did on 3rd May 1928 (P.W. 234, Exh: D 3). It has already been shown that these demands were known to the mill-owners before the general strike, informally, because all of them at one time or another had been issues in the several individual strikes that took place prior to the general strike. I have already dealt with this aspect.

P.W. 245 Sh. Hassan Ali was in charge of the Labour Branch of the C.I.D. in Bombay from 1st March to 30th June 1928. This witness gave his evidence from his notes which, he says, had been made at the time he was on duty from day to day. But mostly his reports were based on newspaper reports and cuttings. He has made mistakes about certain dates, which serve to show the unreliability of these records. The B.T.L. Strike Committee was not formed on 18th April as he says but on 19th as the Fawcett Committee has noted in its report. (Page 3).

The Joint Strike Committee was not formed on 27th or 28th April but on 2nd May (Ibid page 3).

On 27th April, the Governor of Bombay, Sir Leslie Wilson, showed tremendous "self-sacrifice and interest in the welfare of his subjects" by coming to Bombay from his summer resort at Mahabaleshwar. His coming to Bombay was nothing but one of those meaningless gestures of high Government officials, which are intended to make the people believe in their "personal goodness", while in actuality they are intended to bring about no results in favour of the people. His Excellency came to find out avenues of settlement. He interviewed the mill-owners at the Government Secretariat, the leaders of the Bombay Textile Labour Union and the insignificant section of the G.K.M. which had split off under the leadership of Mr. Mayekar from the major body. On the day His Excellency arrived, our section sent a letter

to him saying that no settlement arrived at without us would be acceptable to the strikers, as the largest section of them did not recognise the other unions. This was, as can be seen from the dates, done before the Joint Strike Committee Compromise was arrived at. His Excellency came and went and the strike continued as before. Though the Joint Strike Committee sent a letter of demands to the Mill-owners and expressed willingness to negotiate on the basis of the draft, the mill-owners showed no desire to open negotiations. They began by opening a campaign of vilification and threats and spoke the language of war lords. They did not send any reply to the Joint Strike Committee and refused to recognise it. In reply to its letter of demands they sent directly to the press a communique embodying their answers to the workers' strike. They published the communiques in the press on May 3rd, 10th, 12th and 17th. The Joint Strike Committee replied to these statements in the press on May 11th and 21st. All these except the owners' statement of 3rd May were reprinted in a leaflet by the Committee (it is D 401). In the first place they categorically refused to accept any of the essential demands of the workers on the question of wage-cut, rationalisation, increased hours of work, fines, retrenchment, forfeiture of wages, ill-treatment and oppression of workers and victimisation in the second place they used the most insolent language towards the workers and their leaders. We have been blamed for using

the language of "insolence" and hatred towards capitalists. It is perfectly justified. Those who abuse the workers every minute in the factory or the field cannot expect to be praised and addressed in a polite manner. In the third place the mill-owners showed an uncompromising determination to fight to the finish with their backs to the wall, as one of them put it. In their statement of May 10th they said, "What the Committee of the Association desire to make quite plain is that they are determined to carry out whatever reforms they believe to be absolutely necessary for the existence of the textile industry in Bombay x irrespective of strikes (D 401, page 9). On May 17th, they announced that they considered all the 150,000 workers of the industry as dismissed from work and that they would be re-engaged only if they unequivocally agreed to the terms formulated by the mill-owners. These terms were increased hours of work without increased pay, new standard rates of wages, retrenchment in all departments to the extent of 10 per cent and new system of disciplinary rules, fines etc. These were considered absolutely essential for the existence of the textile industry in Bombay and on 18th May 1928 the mill-owners were determined to carry them out. But this determination was broken on the rocks of proletarian determination, against which it clashed. It is now December 1931 and yet the industry exists without these absolute essentials, which the workers are not going to allow in spite of the determined onslaughts.

While referring in the press to the Joint Strike Committee's letter of demands, the mill-owners described the Committee as "certain people" who are outsiders to the industry but have entered Labour ranks to create trouble. (D 401, page 22). Now the composition of the Joint Strike Committee is on record. It represented all the three Textile unions in the industry. Among those "outsiders", sat Mr. N.M. Joshi, the member of the Royal Commission on Labour; - there were members of Legislative Councils and Solicitors like Messrs. Asalave and Ginwala. Now from our point of view it is not a very happy thing for the workers to have Solicitors and M.L.C.s dominating their class action. But these gentlemen were on the Committee on behalf of the B.T.L. Union and I am pointing out their names in order to show that the mill-owners were opposed to negotiating not only with the Communists and Left Trade Unionists but with "respectable genuine Trade Unionists" also. They bluffed the Governor and the public by saying that they would negotiate only with registered trade unions and as two of the unions in the Joint Strike Committee were not registered they could not negotiate with it. They were out to enhance the prestige of the Trade Union Law by compelling us to register. But that this was a bluff can be seen from the fact that though the B.T.L. Union of Mr. N. M. Joshi was registered the mill-owners had not recognised it and resented its "interference" in any dispute. The mill-owners

were out to fight not only Communists but all Trade Unionists; they were out to enforce wage-cuts and rationalisation, and the result was prolongation of the dispute, as they hoped to win by starving out the workers.

On 15th May the General Member of the Government of Bombay, Sir Cowasji Jehangir (Junior), came to Bombay to bring about a settlement. He interviewed the mill-owners and the Joint Strike Committee. The fact that there were Communists on the Strike Committee and that it was composed of unregistered trade unions did not prevent the government's representative from negotiating for a settlement with us. But the morals of these owners of a national and swadeshi industry were opposed to Communists more than those of the Imperialist Government. The Agent of the G.I.P. Railway, a Government concern, had no scruples in talking to Bradley as a representative of the railwaymen. But the Swadeshi mill-owners refused to speak with us, in spite of the fact that many of us had fought in the ranks of the Congress in the days of 1920-22. The General Member's visit proved fruitless, "as the mill-owners could not agree to enter into any discussions with the Communist members of the Committee and the Strike Committee were equally adamant in adhering to the view that if a Round Table Conference were to be held at all, the Committee as a whole, would nominate the members ~~at~~ to it and that they would not be dictated to ⁱⁿ the matter by the owners." (Fawcett Report, page 7). The All-India Trade

Union Congress Bulletin of which Messrs. N. M. Joshi, F.J. Ginwalla and R.R. Bakhale (editor) formed the Managing Committee and with which the Communists had no connections, wrote in its May number, "It has been plain from the tactic adopted by the mill-owners that they want the strike to be prolonged so that the workers can be starved into unconditional surrender." "The uncompromising and threatening attitude on the part of the mill-owners naturally led to a corresponding determination on the part of the workers to continue the fight to a finish." (Exh: D 390, page 117).

(115) Mill-owners' plan of rationalisation in January -
the Governor's speech and Mr. Joshi's reply -
picketing troubles - the conflict of two duties
of an Honorary Magistrate and strike leader.

It has been already stated that the mill-owners wanted the workers to come back to work according to the owners' new scheme of standardization and retrenchment. It has also been stated on the mill-owners' behalf that before the general strike they had no intention of and they did not resort to cutting the wages of workers or increasing their hours of work. But when the strike was forced on them, the mill-owners then formulated their terms. If there had been no strike they would not have on their own account disturbed the peace of the industry. But this contention has been proved to be false from the minute books of the Association which were placed before the Fawcett Inquiry Committee appointed by the Government of Bombay.

L.K.

9/12/31 (Morning Part II).

Therein it was found that the Association had appointed a Committee on standardisation on 6th January 1928. Thus that standard scheme, and the wage cuts and retrenchment embodied in it which were the cause of the general strike and its subsequent prolongation were contemplated in a definite outline in January, three months before the strike. The first report of this Sub Committee came before the mill-owners on 3rd May and criticisms were invited from the mills on 24th May 1928. Yet the mill-owners wanted the workers' consent to an almost non-existent scheme on 10th May. The spinning scheme was discussed and many mill-owners opposed it on 5th June and yet they wanted the workers to agree to it on 10th May! The scheme was again altered on 7th June 1928 and adopted on 9th. The whole scheme including weaving was adopted by the Association on 23rd June. The proceedings also reveal that the mill-owners had decided to embody in the scheme a wage cut of at least 12½ per cent, the basis being that the average wage of the weaver shall not be more than Rs.42/-, whereas according to the Labour Office figures of Government it was Rs. 48/- in 1926. But when the workers denounced the scheme as one of wage cuts pure and simple, under the guise of standardising wages from mill to mill, the mill-owners denied that it contained a wage cut until the admission was forced by facts and figures later on. Thus the position till the end of May was that the mill-owners

themselves were not ready with any satisfactory reply to the workers' demands. Their scheme of wages on which they wanted the workers to resume work did not get ready till the end of June and even when ready they did not know what the exact effects of it would be. They also refused to negotiate with the Joint Strike Committee though the General Member of the Government of Bombay had seen nothing wrong in negotiating with us. It was the mill-owners thus who wanted the strike to prolong. It was not we who prolonged it.

In spite of this the Governor of Bombay from his privileged position delivered a speech at the Mahabuleshwar Club in which he attacked the militant leaders of the workers. It has been a hobby with the Governors and Governor Generals to attack us in their dinner speeches and Lord Irwin went so far as to do it even when we were arrested and awaiting our trial. Sir Leslie Wilson in his speech said, "I can not help saying that the responsibility for the mill strike and sufferings of the mill-hands rests entirely on the shoulders of those who made the workers leave their work - whether they wished it or not - without giving the mill-owners an opportunity of even considering what the grievances of the men were". His Excellency also advised the workers very generously to follow rather the lead of men like Messrs. N. M. Joshi and Ginwalla (D 518, Times of India). But unfortunately for His Excellency the very man on whom he

asked the workers to rely betrayed him. Mr. N. M. Joshi wrote to the press contradicting the above statement of Sir Leslie Wilson and regretted that His Excellency should have made such a statement. (Times of India 26/5/28, D 518).

Referring to this chapter in the history of negotiations the Government of India have accepted in toto the version as given by the mill-owners. In their Annual Report to Parliament, India 1928-29, the Government of India have made a false statement with regard to the Strike Committee and its attitude towards negotiations. They say "But during the first two weeks in May, though the mill-owners were willing to open negotiations with the officials of the Bombay Textile Labour Union (a registered body), they refused to have anything to do with the Joint Strike Committee as it was then constituted. The Joint Strike Committee on the other hand refused to allow the officials of the B.T.L. Union to carry on negotiations over their head." (page 10). It is absolutely false to say that the mill-owners were willing to negotiate even with the B.T.L. Union though it was registered. It is best to quote the President of that Union himself on this matter. Mr. N.M. Joshi says, in a signed statement to the press, "If the intention of the Bombay Mill-owners' Association was to say that they would deal with the B.T.L. Union, they should have said that clearly instead of bringing in the consideration of registration. If their original object was to negotiate with the B.T.L. Union it

has not only been frustrated but they have put that Union on the same level with a union which may have only a dozen members. Even His Excellency the Governor has been led into the same error on account of incompetent advice." (Bombay Chronicle 7/6/28 Ex. D.518). As regards the second statement in the above quoted Government Report, the question of not allowing the B.T.L. Union to negotiate separately did not arise at all, because after the Union of all the three organisations into the Joint Strike Committee, the mill-owners never approached the B.T.L.U. or any other union singly for negotiations. The compiler of this report has been so accurate that while the August Conference was held under the presidentship of Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, he names Sir Cowasji Jehangir, who at that time was not a member of the Bombay Government at all.

The nationalist press and the Anglo-Indian newspapers which ordinarily fly at each other's throats on bourgeois patriotic issues joined hands against the workers in the campaign of vilification. There was not a single paper in Bombay that did not blame us and call upon the workers not to be "misled" by us. Every Congress and non-Congress paper mourned for the loss to the mill-owners and asked the starving workers to save the "national" industry. They spread false reports of our speeches and stories about fizzling out of the strike while the workers in fact were becoming more and more determined.

The Bombay bourgeoisie thus enlisted the services of the Governor, the General Member and the press to further its cause and break the strike. Having set up such influential propaganda machinery against us, they proceeded to use force and in this as usual they sought the aid of the police batons of Imperialism. The Commissioner of Police was requested to supply a special police force for the "protection of the mills". At every mill-gate a party of 5 to 10 policemen was stationed so that the blacklegs might muster courage to go in. When the workers posted their pickets, they were stopped from picketing, though there was no law or ordinance prohibiting picketing at that time. A crisis arose on this question and we decided to vindicate our right of picketing by violating the orders of police officers not to picket (5-5-28). But before taking that step the Joint Strike Committee decided on 7th May 1928 to send Messrs. N.M.Joshi and Asavale, curiously enough, both of them Justices of Peace in the city of Bombay, to the Commissioner of Police to talk over the matter. The Commissioner was convinced that prohibition of picketing was illegal and unwise and allowed it. Thus no necessity arose to test the right by disobeying the police orders. But after having allowed the pickets the police started trouble by harassing and arresting them for alleged disorderly behaviour tresspass, annoyance, and obstruction of traffic and such other sections of the law. By this method our best workers and organisers were sent to jail or fined one by one. One such arrest

created a very funny but very significant situation for a bourgeois member of the Strike Committee from the B.T.L. Union. Mr. Asavale who was a member of the Legislative Council and a rich contractor was a member of the Strike Committee also on behalf of the B.T.L. Union. But he was also an Honorary Magistrate of Imperialism commissioned to administer His Majesty's law in his spare time for no wages. It was a hard task for this man to reconcile his duty to His Majesty's law with his duty towards the workers, when one morning, a strike picket was brought before him to be tried for disorderly behaviour. The picket straightway began to fraternise with the Magistrate, smiled with him familiarly and asked him to release him. The simple defence of the picket was that the Honorary Magistrate should recollect his experience as a strike leader, how the workers are harassed and then judge why he was being brought there by the police. The poor strike leader and Magistrate was in a fix. Ultimately his sense of loyalty and fear of being criticised as being partial to the strikers led him to decide against the picket whom he fined Re 1/- (Ex.D 518 Times of India 26/5/28). It is said that next day, he himself paid that rupee to the picket. The contradictions of the servants of Imperialist law and a humanitarian Trade Unionist lead to such results. He could pay Re 1/- because it was only one man but had there been such thousand cases, the result would have been that the strike leader would

have been overpowered by his duties as a Magistrate and he would have become the open saboteur of the strike. The workers understood this and therefore rightly demanded from their leaders unequivocal devotion to their class interest and complete severance of connections with the bourgeoisie and the Imperialists.

The police, the press and all other forces of the Imperialist State and the national bourgeoisie were hurled against the workers in their purely economic fight against wage cuts and loss of employment. Yet the Imperialists and the bourgeoisie tell the workers not "to dabble" with the question of political power which fights them on all fronts at all times. We are asked not to mix economic with political questions. That is throwing dust in the eyes of the workers. Every big economic struggle is ultimately a political struggle and the workers even for a few rights and economic gains are compelled to fight political battles along with the every day economic struggle.

(116) The Russian textile workers' help - the nationalist attack on this help - Municipal Corporation refuses relief - the exodus of 80,000 workers.

We had also to meet another attack this time from the petty bourgeois nationalist public and some pseudo Trade Unionists. It was on the question of the money for relief received from the Russian Textile Trade Unions. According to the Prosecution evidence, on 28th April 1928 dollars 7690

were sent by the Deutsche Bank Berlin acting on behalf of M. Vermoff to the Bombay Branch of the National City Bank of New York to be paid to Mr. S.H. Jhabwala, Vice President Bombay Textile Labour Union. (Ex. P 1542, P.W. 231). This telegram was received by the Bombay Branch on 30th April. In the usual course the bank makes an enquiry about the person and his credentials to receive the money. The Prosecution witness stated that he did not know who made the enquiry in this case. However, on the same date the City Bank wired back that as Mr. Jhabwala was not a Vice President of the B.T.L. Union, fresh instructions were required (Ex. 1543). It is to be noted that the Bank did not say that they could not trace Mr. Jhabwala. It did not consult Mr. Jhabwala and there is reason to believe that it did not consult the B.T.L. Union because Mr. Jhabwala was a Vice President of the B.T.L. Union when this telegram was received. Why was such an obviously false telegram sent? The explanation is that probably the Government was afraid to give the money in the hands of a person who at that time was working on the lines of militant Left Wing Trade Unionism and was still a member of the W.P.P. Allowing such a large sum to go to the strikers through a W.P.P. man meant helping the W.P.P., the Communists and Trade Union radicals to consolidate their influence. The Joint Strike Committee with its "safety valves" of moderates had not yet come into existence. The police and Government were

yet undecided on their attitude. They wanted to take chance with Vernoff and the Russian Trade Unions, whom they expected to withdraw the remittance after hearing that Mr. Jhabwala was not the Vice President of the B.T.L. Union. But Vernoff and the Russian Trade Unions valued the interest of the workers more than the name. They wanted to give relief to the workers no matter through whom it reached, if in the first instance it could not reach through a person who was nearer to the workers. On 7th May the Bank was instructed to pay the sum to Mr. N.M.Joshi, President of the B.T.L. Union and Government was confronted with the problem of the Soviet Trade Unions sending money to a "yellow man" for the relief of the workers. Meanwhile the Joint Strike Committee had come into existence. The two wings had united and Government played the tactic of making the Moderate group the financial arbiter of the strike by handing over the money on condition that it shall not be given into the hands of the W.P.P. men. On 9th May 1928 Mr. N.M.Joshi received Rs.20,916-12-9 (P.1546) and it was given by instalments to the Joint Strike Committee for purchasing corn for relief of the workers. Every pie of the sum was spent on relief.

The next day the whole nationalist and Imperialist press splashed full page headlines like "Red Money for Bombay Strike" and "Bolshevik gold for Bombay Strikers". The bourgeoisie abused the Government for having allowed

the money to pass on and the patriots fell foul of Mr. Joshi. Mrs. Beasant from Madras denounced him and asked the excellent question, "will the bond of sympathy thus established in a period of privation be allowed to weaken?" The answer to this will be given by the heroic working-class of India when the Imperialists of the world will raise their armed hand against the workers' republic. Mr. C. F. Andrews gave an interview in Colombo in which he said that "he had no objection to receiving such money in times of distress but to receive money from the Third International for strike purposes was quite a different proposition. The Third International openly advocated violence and class war and was opposed to constitutional Trade Unionism which it tried to wreck. Therefore he could not conscientiously welcome money from that quarter." (Colombo 30/5/28 Ex.D 518). This most truthful and Christian gentleman, the follower and prosperous biographer of another most truthful and Christlike gentleman, Mahatma Gandhi, started by telling a lie that the money was sent by the Third International. Secondly this man, who had dabbled with the most stubbornly fought Kharagpur Strike in 1927 and knew that that strike had also received help from the Soviet Trade Unions now finds that times of distress and times of strike are not the same things, as if the workers on strike are less starved than those in famine! He made this distinction probably because he remembered

that the Gujarat Flood Relief Committee had taken the help received from the Communist Party of Great Britain .(P 1381). So to condemn receiving help from Communist sources at all times would have carried its own exposure. Thirdly this gentleman, who abhorred class war, was himself paid by the Imperial Citizenship Association of Bombay, an organisation of the Indian bourgeois interests in Africa, to carry on incessant propaganda on their behalf to support the class war between the white settlers and the Indian merchants in Africa. Paid by the mill-owners of Bombay he was willing to wage the class war of the Indian merchants against the Negroes and the white settlers, there in Africa, but in India he attributed the flaring up of class war to the Third International and abhorred it!

(Dange) D/11.12.31

Morning 1st Part.

When Mrs. Besant had spoken against the money, her spiritual son Mr. Shiva Rao from Madras naturally followed suit. Still it must be said to the credit of Mr. N. M. Joshi, that he did not waver in his attitude towards this money. He gave an interview to the press that he was not opposed to receiving and using money from whatever source it came for the relief of the strikers. He stood for the right of the workers to receive help from the international proletariat and asked the bourgeoisie whether it was not trading with Russia and receiving profits of red roubles. This interview silenced the storm for a time. It showed how the petty bourgeois intellectuals and saints, apparently not belonging to the big bourgeoisie, all the same engaged in its class service and sabotaged the struggle of the workers and even aided the Imperialist Government in cutting off the help coming to them from the international working class.

Another disillusionment came from the Bombay Municipal Corporation. This body is dominated by the mill-owners, the merchants and the petty bourgeois voters paying rent of Rs.10 and over. A resolution was brought before them that Rs. 100,000 be sanctioned for opening some relief work for the strikers. The resolution was lost. The workers were a bit surprised. In 1925 this Corporation had sanctioned a

like sum, but in 1928 this was refused. Because in 1925 the Bombay bourgeoisie was using the strike to get the excise duty removed and had strong hopes of success; in 1928 it had no such hopes, and wanted the strike to be smashed outright. In 1925 the workers were not led in a manner that acted on clear cut class lines. At that time there was not much harm in giving relief. The workers who had come to look upon the Corporation as a body, not entirely opposed to them as a class, speedily revised their viewpoint. They knew from this single act that the Corporation belonged to none but the bourgeoisie.

Thus by their own experience the workers saw that those middle class layers who posed as pro-Labour and repudiated all suggestions that they too were a part of the bourgeoisie, were really chips from the same bourgeois block and in times of an acute class-struggle never forgot their parentage. The Imperialist State, the big bourgeoisie, the Police, the Municipal Corporation, the nationalist and imperialist press and petty bourgeois saints and breeders of World Teachers, all of them ranged themselves against the Bombay workers, for the simple reason that they had refused to produce surplus value for the bourgeoisie. They saw the Marxian truth, "the emancipation of the working class shall be its own task."

Accordingly the workers stiffened their attitude. They received their outstanding wages and such of them as had

homes or relations in the country left Bombay before the end of May. The Joint Strike Committee obtained concessions from the Cooperative Steam Navigation Company to the extent of 25 per cent of the fares to the coast-line places. But no concession could be obtained from the railways. It was estimated that about 80,000 workers had left Bombay. Others were either completely proletarianised or had no means to go to their homes, which were far out on the railway lines.

(117) Making way for negotiations - registration of the Girni Kamgar Union.

However, we did not neglect to take steps to make the way of compromise easier. The mill-owners were not willing to negotiate with unregistered trade unions. They had given out this as an excuse for not negotiating with us. Because they expected that as some of us were Communists we would refuse to do anything that the mill-owners would want us to do and refuse to get our union registered under the law of the Government. But the mill-owners had misjudged in this respect. We were quite willing to have our union registered if that alone stood in the way of settlement. We were perfectly sure that the registration of our union would not remove the difficulties at all. So when this excuse was very much relied upon as the real difficulty in the way, during our talks with the General Member of the Government of Bombay, we immediately proceeded to get the Girni Kamgar Mahamandal registered. The name of the G.K.M. since the

split between the Secretary and the President was used by both the factions. When we went to the Registrar's office to get it registered we found that the former Secretary had already registered the name for his faction (24th May) and the Registrar could not register it in our name. (P.W.245). This was a difficulty of the first rate importance and caused a serious crisis amongst the group of those organisers who were so long working under the banner of the Mahamandal. They had cherished the Mahamandal since 1923. It had grown in the General Strike of 1924. It had fought through the 1925 strike and now they were asked to surrender and bury that name in the midst of the third General Strike, simply because some dirty law had registered that name for a handful of persons opposed to the general strike while the real flower of the G.K.M. was in the full swing of the strike. A mere trick of law and of the Registrar, they said, was not going to deprive them of those traditions and the credit of the work of the last five years. If they were out to fight the powerful bourgeoisie, they could as well neglect this trick of the law and go without it and stick to the Mahamandal as their own and nobody else's. It was the simple logic of the worker, who was not willing to surrender the name and register under another simply to please the mill-owners and open a way for negotiations. For two days the fight went on. We suggested that new union be formed and registered. If we were the real workers of the Mahamandal, it mattered very little who carried away the

name, so long as the true traditions and the workers remained with us. We would remain the same powerful body if we worked vigorously and would create the same respect, credit and leadership for the new union. When ultimately the leading workers were won over to the idea of taking up a new name, another difficulty arose over the question of admission of "non-workers" in the union. The Mahamandal had special provision in its constitution that no non-worker shall be admitted into the union and the leading workers were brought up in that idea. The reason why the Mahamandal had made such a rule is shown in a handbill issued by it. (P.1462). It was a reaction to the tricks practised upon the workers by the petty bourgeois persons that had entered trade unionism to make a career. It was a repetition in a sense of the famous reaction of the French proletariat to the betrayal practised upon it by the Second International Socialist leadership, when Clemencrau took ministership under the bourgeois Government. The French proletariat as a result of that betrayal began to hate politics and the Communists had to fight out this wrong tendency. Similar was the case with the Mandal. They distrusted all petty bourgeois trade unionists and distrusted us also for a time, even though they had made us their advisers. Now when they had been persuaded to form a new union they wanted to repeat the example of the Mandal and exclude us from it. We had to fight this tendency also, because it is historically necessary for the working class to use the services of the

revolutionary petty bourgeois who make common cause with the proletariat and work for the working class on the basis of the programme of proletarian class power. Such a petty bourgeois intellectual unites in him all the advantages of the bourgeoisie, of which the working class is deprived, with the revolutionary class theory of the proletariat. And as such, the distrust entertained by the workers against the petty bourgeoisie as a class though quite healthy and necessary in its class-struggle, must not be allowed to be applied to each and every individual of that class without any reference to the character and ideology of the individual concerned. That would hamper the development of the party of the proletariat. Apart from these general considerations the immediate consideration was that unless we were officially in the new union we would not be in a position to control the strike and the negotiations as we would have no effective voice in the official deliberations of the union. The position was explained to the workers, and the opposition which was limited only to a small group of the G.K.M. Managing Committee was overcome, mainly because they knew that if they rejected us, the rank and file stood with us to whom we could appeal over their heads. The Bombay the Girni Kamgar Union was formed in a workers' meeting at Nagu Sayaji Wadi on 22nd May 1928 and was registered the next day with a membership of 174 and a cash balance of Rs.43-8-0. (Exh: P.958 Minute Book of the G.K.U.). About

the same time Mr. Jhabwala got the Mill-Workers' Union registered, while the B.T.L. Union was already a registered body. Thus the Joint Strike Committee now consisted of three registered unions. The fourth one, the Mahamandal, which was opposed to the general strike and had split away from the main body of the workers was not admitted to the Joint Strike Committee. The new G.K.U. office-bearers were: President - A.A. Alwe; Vice Presidents - Bradley, Nimbkar, Jhabwala and Tamhanekar; - General Secretary - myself (S.A. Dange); Joint-Secretaries - Satum, Tawde and K.N. Joglekar; Joint-Treasurers - B.T. Alve and S.V. Ghate. Later on Jhabwala resigned and G.R. Kasle was elected in his place (25.10.28) and Mirajkar was elected Joint-Secretary vice Satum resigned (25.10.28). (Exh: P958). The G.K.M. has contributed 9 of its 13 office-bearers to this case.

(118) Pandit Malaviya's visit and our "sins" -
Khilafat Committee's communal help rejected -
The Police arrest me and Nimbkar - mill-owners
open talks in June.

About 25th of May, I was surprised one day to receive a verbal call from Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya to see him in connection with the strike. I think he also called one or two other members of the Strike Committee. About this visit one incident happened which illustrates our ideas of forming alliances in the matter of the class-struggle. When I was informed of Panditji's desire I asked if besides

myself and other members, Mr. Joshi also, was informed, because it was generally understood in the Strike Committee that if any negotiations were to be carried on, representatives of both the wings of the Committee should be present. I was told that Pandit Malaviya would not like to have Mr. Joshi in the Conference chiefly for the reason that he was a Moderate in politics (think of Pandit Malaviya saying that!) and did not cooperate with the Swarajists and other nationalists in the Assembly. This had reference to the voting on the 18 pence controversy and the protectionists measure brought before the Assembly. I told the intermediary that no negotiations or any important step in that behalf could be taken without the presence of the representative of the B.T.L. Union. Moreover, if in bourgeois politics Mr. Joshi did not side with the bourgeois Swarajist Reformists on a particular issue, specifically limited to their class, there was no reason why we should not cooperate with him on the Trade Union front for the time that he was standing by the class-struggle that was being waged in the general strike. Of course as Communists we would do away with both bourgeois and Trade Unionists Reformists but in the given situation and when it came to a choice between the two, we preferred to cooperate with Mr. Joshi, the Trade Union Reformist, who first opposed the general strike but stood by it when once it was on, than with the bourgeois Reformists with their phrase-mongering about the welfare of the masses.

I should however make it clear that I am referring here to Mr. N. M. Joshi of 1928. When Pandit Malaviya was informed of this he sent for Mr. Joshi also. A small conference was held in Mr. Birla's house at Sandhurst Road, Bombay, where Mrs. Naidu and a few Congressmen were also present, and the workers' side was explained to them. We told them how wages were being cut and hours of work increased and rationalisation introduced. We told them that though we were willing to negotiate the strike, the mill-owners were insolently refusing. Panditji promised to place our case before some of the mill-owners and probably did so. To our surprise when he met us next day he started quite a new song. He gave a long lecture on the losses of the industry and asked us how much reduction in wages we were prepared to accept. This was an astonishing proposition. We refused pointblank to talk about any wage-cut at all. Then from wage-cuts the Pandit jumped to the relief of the strikers. He said that it was necessary to arrange some help for them. We of course agreed. Then with a pious expression he told us that it was sinful to accept Russian money for that purpose. He entered into the history of the Russian Revolution, the massacre of the landlords and princes, the confiscation of their property and so on. Now we had no time to teach Panditji the history of the Russian Revolution. But we respectfully pointed out to him that on the point of accepting "sinful money" Panditji was greater sinner than

ourselves. The most pious Hindu University was built on the donation of princes, the list of whose hideous sins was famous throughout the world. If the holy Shankracharya, for heavy fees could perform the conversion and marriage ceremony of a dethroned prince, who dared a murder for a concubine, if "Mr. A." could spend millions of the peasants' taxes for a scandal in London and if the donations of such men could not be sinful for the Pandit why should the money sent by the revolutionary Proletariat of Russia to feed the starving workers in India be considered sinful? If they had massacred princes and confiscated their property, it was the will of the whole working class and peasantry, it was the revolutionary action of the whole people against the exploiting handful and as such historically justified for their social progress. The tidal laws of revolutions are more profound and greater than those of the knee-deep pools of Benares. We did not see why we should reject their help on the grounds shown by the Pandit. Such a reply naturally exasperated Pandit Malaviya and we did not hear about him again in the strike.

11/12/31 (Morning Part II).

While on the one side we had firmly to justify the taking of help from one quarter, we were called upon on principle to reject help from another quarter. The Khilafat Committee of Bombay sent to the Joint Strike Committee a letter saying that they had collected Rs.27/- which they wanted to give for relief of the Mohammedan workers and wanted the Committee to appoint three Muslim mill-strikers to distribute relief in the Muslim quarters. This was an insidious attempt to import Hindu-Muslim distinctions amongst the workers and we had to be particularly careful about it. It was communal reservation in another form and acceptance of such proviso in the relief distribution would have meant a recognition of communal and such other claims in the Trade Unions. We had no objection to take money from the Khilafat Committee but we objected to its being reserved for Mohammedan workers. It must be remembered that the Joint Strike Committee was composed of workers of all castes and religions, of Hindu and Muslim workers. They unanimously rejected the condition and refused the money, if it was to be accompanied by that condition. (20-5-28); and the Khilafat Committee was informed accordingly. The class solidarity of the workers proved greater than the considerations of communal gain.

After the failure of the police to break the strike by firing, just when it had started, their attention was

turned towards the pickets. Because the imprisonment, fines and beating of pickets did not have any effect, so they turned their attention to those whom they considered as particularly useful to the workers at that moment. On 31st May two blacklegs were caught by the workers while going into the mills at 4 in the morning. They were taken to the Nagu Sayaji Wadi for being put before the meeting as specimens of blacklegs. It appears that in the interval between the meeting and their "arrest" their faces were besmeared with black soot and when I went to the meeting early that day I found them sitting in the meeting. They were brought before me by some workers and I was asked to deal with them. I explained to them what blacklegging meant and how it was a treachery to thousands of workers. Then they were told to go away. It appears that the police who were all along watching this, followed and persuaded them to register a complaint of intimidation, assault and a wrongful confinement which they did. The next day in the morning on 1st June 1928, at the Joint Strike Committee meeting in the Damodar Thackersey Hall, I was arrested on the basis of that complaint and taken to the police lockup. An identification parade was held but the two complainants did not identify me as the man against whom they had the complaint. I was released on bail and the police proceeded with their investigation. After a few days they arrested two workers on the same charge and put us all the three for

trial. In the meanwhile the two complainant workers had compounded the case and withdrawn the complaint. Thus the efforts of the police failed.

The second attempt was made on Nimbkar. A meeting of the members of the B.B.C.I. Ry: Union was being held in the same D.T.Hall where the C.I.D. reporters claimed entry by right, which was resisted by the workers assembled and the reporters were asked to leave the meeting. As they refused to leave, the meeting was dissolved (4/7/28). As a result of this Nimbkar was arrested on 6th July for "an assault on a public servant" and prosecuted. Unfortunately for the police, on the evidence given the Magistrate held the offence to be merely technical and he was fined Rs.50/-. Thus again the game of sabotaging the strike failed. (30/7/28) (Ex. P. 1744).

In the matter of negotiations, after the registration of our Union and Malviya's abortive talks, thousands of workers left Bombay and the strike stiffened more. The mill-owners first refused to speak with us on the ground that we had not a registered union. Now when the Unions were registered they objected to the Unions' forming a Joint Strike Committee. It was such a foolish attitude that Mr. N.M.Joshi wrote to the press on 7th June 1928 saying "It is my duty to point out to the public in Bombay how the Bombay Mill-owners' Association once having either foolishly or out of a spirit of mischief adopted a wrong

attitude are obstinately sticking to it thus prolonging the dispute which is doing good neither to them nor even to the mill workers." After pointing out how the mill-owners avoided negotiations with the B.T.L. Union which was registered long before the strike and how in order to remove the minor difficulties, the Strike Committee had its constituent unions registered, Mr. Joshi asked the mill-owners if they meant business or humbug. In fact there was no need for the question. The mill-owners were clearly humbugging because they had no basis of negotiations, no standard scheme with them, which they were asking the workers to adopt, even before it was ready and they had no agreement among themselves, as it was quite evident from their minutes of meetings in June already referred to.

As all attempts to break the strike by force failed and the standard scheme was got ready in some form, the Association asked the Joint Strike Committee Unions to meet them in a conference. The Committee elected a Negotiations Committee of six which met the Millowners' Committee on 9th June. The strike had started on April 16th and was complete on 26th. Thus the mill-owners had taken more than 1½ months to open preliminary talks with the workers' Trade Unions. Can such a state of affairs be found in any ordinary bourgeois democratic country? It is this trait of Capitalism and Imperialism that makes even the trade union struggle of colonial workers most bitter and prolonged?

When we met the Mill-owners' Committee, we found them full of anger and insolence. They were under the impression of meeting those types of men they had seen in the previous general strikes who believed more in the parliamentary language, its meaningless polish and a policy of not "exasperating" the mill-owners. Moreover the mill-owners had still hopes of breaking the strike by force and starvation. On the first day there was mutual recrimination, charges and counter charges. Then we were given copies of their scheme of standardised wages. The mill-owners gave us to understand that by their scheme of wages in spinning they had made no saving to the industry, on the contrary they had given increases in wages. Their weaving scheme was not ready which they gave later on. With regard to weaving also they emphatically denied that there was any wage cut on the whole. They maintained that a few rates had been brought down because they were very high, but as a whole the scheme represented no wage cut. The mill-owners wanted to fool us into believing this because they knew that there was no textile expert amongst us, who would analyse the scheme and expose the wage cut hidden in the complicated technique of that scheme. Amongst the mill-owners themselves the scheme was the product of two or three persons the chief amongst them being Mr. F. Stones of the Sassoon group. Though at the beginning, we could not find where and how the wage cut was hidden, yet our class

outlook and the understanding of the capitalist system had convinced us that the mill-owners would not undertake such a trouble unless they profitted by it. With the statistics that were available to me, I undertook to go through the scheme in detail. We also held conferences with the mill-owners in order to get explanations from them of their own figures. The conferences sat on 9th, 11th, 16th, 19th and 26th June 1928. The mill-owners eluded all attempts to show the exact reduction in the number of workers and the percentage of the wage cut. However, we made a statement that more than 10,000 persons would be retrenched under the scheme and weavers' wages would be cut to the extent of 20 per cent. I personally was not definite as to the exact extent of the wage cut. But my investigations showed that it might have been any where between 20 and 30 per cent but certainly not less than 20 per cent. The mill-owners first simply laughed over the statement and they could well afford to do that because they had the pride of having on their side textile experts who had been in the industry for thirty years, while my studies, with the help of the intelligent workers in the Union had not been more than three months old. But I had this advantage which the mill-owners can never have. I could consult the workers in each and every mill about their actual earnings, output, the nature of production, state of machinery and the composition of materials. This information could not be available to

the mill-owners because of their internal competition. Each mill-owner was the competitor of the other though for the purpose of the strike all were united. And none of them would allow the other to consult his costing sheets and layout on the ground of trade secrets. When the mill-owners were given the challenge to prove that our statement was not correct, they gave up the talk of further negotiations or amending the scheme. The negotiations fell through on 26th June.

When the negotiations fell through the mill-owners issued a communique to the press explaining the basis of their standard scheme (1/7/28). They said that it embodied "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work". Now the strikers were not concerned with such vague and propagandist definitions of the standard scheme. They were working on a definite contract of rupees, annas and pies for a certain amount of work under certain definite conditions. We showed that the scheme was effecting a cut of 20 per cent in one case and a retrenchment of over 10,000 men in another case. The mill-owners avoided a clear answer to this. They repudiated the idea of a direct wage cut. They said that the scheme as containing a demand of increased efficiency from the workers was the alternative to a wage cut. Such language was alright for the ignorant to consume, who did not know the technique. Increased work for the same wage is called efficiency by the capitalists. The workers can

not be "efficient" in that sense. Efficiency also means retrenchment and unemployment of the workers. The workers can not accept "efficiency" of this sort, however much that body, called "public opinion" which today means bourgeois opinion, may like that word.

(119) Relief begun - attempt to open mills under armed protection in August - The Hidayatullah Conference and its failure (15/8/28).

The Joint Strike Committee had decided to start distribution of relief from June 12th i.e. two months after the commencement of the strike. It had on hand Rs.32,000/- for that purpose. At first there were ten centres which later on were increased to fourteen. By 19th June Rs.15,000/- had been spent, leaving about two weeks' rations on hand, In the Municipal Corporation another attempt was made to procure relief and a resolution to spent Rs.1000/- daily for relief of the strikers was brought before it. But, as expected, it was shelved to a committee for report. This committee reported against the proposal. Their report was discussed in the Corporation on 9th July and all proposals made therein were thrown out. When the proposals were being discussed, a meeting of the strikers was held before the Corporation Hall. x The Hall is situated in thorough bourgeois quarters which had never seen such a mass of workers nor had the workers ever visited these quarters. There are two Bombays - one of the bourgeoisie

and one of the proletariat. We brought our Bombay to have a look at the bourgeois Bombay, built on the profits of the toiling workers. The two Bombays faced each other and between them stood the Imperialist armed police for the help of the bourgeoisie, which was abusing the proletariat from its shelter in the Corporation Hall behind the Imperialist arms. It was a vivid proof of the counter revolutionary nature of the Bombay bourgeoisie.

We had spent on relief very large sums at the beginning which was unwise. It was due to the fact that we ourselves did not expect that the strike would last so long. When the negotiations broke down, we were hard pressed for relief money, because as many as 30,000 men and women were asking for it. We had therefore to cut down the amount which was brought down to Rs. 4000/- per week. The centres of distribution were reduced to seven from 11th July 1928. (Kranti 8th July). A vigorous campaign to get help from the Unions in other industries had to be undertaken as a result of which the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union gave Rs 1000/-, the Bombay Port Trust Union Rs 200/-, the G.I.P. Railway Employees' General Union Rs. 200/- and the Bombay Tramwaymen's Union Rs. 50/-. (Kranti 12/7/28). Volunteer bands were sent to go round for collections in the city. The police followed the volunteers and when the shopkeepers and others were inclined to give money they were asked not to give it. The petty shopkeepers were

on the whole not enthusiastic & at all to pay and when they got the warning of the police, they would certainly not dare to pay. We also held meetings in the petty bourgeois areas to collect money for relief and explain the case of the strikers. It was a time when the petty bourgeoisie in Bombay was roaring loudly in support of the Bardoli Peasants' Satyagraha and the bourgeoisie had opened its purse for the bourgeois leaders of the peasants. But for the workers in Bombay when a meeting was held, the expenses of the Hall came to Rs 14/- while the collections amounted to Rs 19/-, the grand sum of petty bourgeois support to the Bombay workers.

D/12.12.31

Morning 1st Part.

Thus June and July saw the failure of negotiations through Government and directly with the mill-owners, failure to enlist the sympathy of the petty bourgeois public and failure to secure help from the capitalist Municipality. This development strengthened the class consciousness of the workers and taught them again that the emancipation of the working class shall be its own task. The workers carried on their fight with determination and refused to accept wage-cuts and retrenchment.

When the mill-owners saw that of their own accord the workers would not resume work, they planned a big offensive in August, with the help of the police, military and the press. The European Chamber of Commerce, the Share-brokers' Association, the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay, all called for vigorous action to end the strike. The vigour was not to be shown in granting the workers' demands but in a big offensive to break the strike. Mr. H. Sawyer, the Deputy Chairman of the mill-owners and a prominent member of the European Chamber and Mr. Tairsee, at that time, presiding over the Annual Meeting of the Indian Chamber, spent much vigour in denouncing the Communists and asked the Government to take a strong action. The Indian Nationalist Press in Bombay also agreed.

Accordingly the mill-owners published a plan to reopen the mills group by group in seven instalments. Police help was requisitioned on a large scale and the first experiment was fixed for 6th August 1928. (List and dates in D 524). The workers were asked to resume work on the wages as given in the owners' scheme. The Strike Committee in reply to this drew out a scheme of intense picketing, which was no longer left to the volunteers alone. Each member of the Strike Committee was given personal charge of picketing on a number of mills from the group to be opened on a particular day. The picketing time was changed to 4 in the morning, when the Police force was ordered to be at the mill gates. 50 mounted police, 50 armed police and 200 ordinary police were the strength put at the disposal of the owners. With the help of such a force the gates of 11 mills were opened at the usual time and the sirens whistled. But to the discomfiture of the bourgeoisie and the Government, not a single worker turned up. The cavalry paraded through the lanes and by-lanes to restore courage into the "intimidated workers", but the workers smiled on at them from their chawls. The Police found them quietly cleaning their teeth, while amusedly studying with black powder in hand the crest-fallen cavalry passing up and down. Not only did the workers not go to work but even those blacklegs who had kept going into the mills to do sweeping and a bit of cleaning here and there did not turn up.

The attempt stiffened the strike rather than break it. After a trial of 8 days the mill-owners decided to give up the show. The Commissioner of Police expressed his unwillingness to continue the supply of the Police force since there appeared to be no necessity for it. Thus ended the big armed offensive, the attempt of the bourgeoisie to give protection to the textile workers against the "intimidation" of Communists and help them come to work. The working class in Bombay proved the bourgeoisie to be a liar; it proved that not by intimidation but by voluntary decision they had refused to accept the axe on their wages and that the Communist leaders only carried out their will.

On 8th August a resolution was moved in the Bombay Legislative Council asking the Government to appoint a Conciliation Board for the strike. The Government agreed to call a joint conference of the mill-owners and the Joint Strike Committee to ascertain if they would agree to submit the dispute to a Conciliation Board. Accordingly a conference was convened presided over by the Hon'ble General Member, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah. The Hon'ble Sir Ghulam Hussain was not an impartial President, a role which he wanted to assume before the public. He is a gentleman who has made himself quite "famous" by having bought lands in the Sukkur Barrage area of Sind, when he was the General Member of the Bombay Government and therefore

in a position to know which lands would fetch better price by reason of Government operations in the Barrage. He was openly charged in the Bombay Council with having used his position to buy lands cheaply and in an advantageous area. Such was the gentleman we had now to deal with as President for bringing about "conciliation" between the bourgeoisie and the workers. Once, on May 15, a mill-owner in the garb of a Government Minister had the audacity to impose himself upon the strike as an impartial conciliator. Now we were offered a feudal landholder who owed his minister-ship to the mill-owners' and landholders' support. That is how the bourgeoisie assumes a thousand roles & hides the class nature of its operations by getting them carried out through the so-called third party or impartial agents. The conference was held & a committee was agreed to, which would consider and report upon the standard scheme and the workers' demands. Suddenly the mill-owners sprang a surprise on us in the midst of the conference by asking us as to when we would call off the strike. Now this question was not expected to crop up as relying on the experience of 1924 when the calling off of the strike was not a condition precedent to resumption of work, we did not expect the mill-owners or the President who supported the proposal to raise it. However, the raising of that question was not so important as the question of wages that would be paid in the period till the Committee reported.

The mill-owners wanted to leave that question also to the Committee which would be appointed. This we rejected. Then they proposed to pay to the weavers the standard scheme wages which was the subject matter of the dispute, with an increase of about 11 per cent on the scheme wages of the weavers in the first month, 5½ per cent in the second and in the third, the workers to work on the scheme as it was. This of course could not be accepted because we had held that the scheme represented 20 to 30 per cent cut in weavers' wages besides the retrenchment in spinning and increased hours of work in other departments. We proposed that in the first place we would not like to call off the strike before the report of the Committee was out. In the alternative if the strike was to be called off, then we could go back to work only on the pre-cut wages and conditions of 1925. To this the mill-owners would not agree. The impartial landlord President even threatened us that such a behaviour on our part would bring disaster; he did not say exactly what kind it would be. We said that we must consult the whole Strike Committee on such an important issue. At this statement, a derisive laughter greeted us from the other side. Had we not plenipotentiary powers to settle the strike? were we not the virtual dictators? If the Strike Committee had not complete faith in us or we had not complete faith in ourselves, why we had come at all to negotiate with such incomplete powers? were some of

the questions hurled at us. It would have been a deadly thrust at petty bourgeois vanity in us had we not been fortified by the idea of complete subordination of individuality to the will of the rank and file. We could not go beyond our mandate, and consultation with the rank and file was the safest guide, especially in a situation when two wings of the Trade Union Movement were united in a strange wedlock on such a mighty issue. We refused to be taken in by flattery, derision or threat. Our simple reply was that the plenipotentiaries of the biggest bourgeois States while in the conference chamber carry a magaphone in their sleeves which continually delivers to them, their Master's Voice from the finance syndicates. The bourgeois hireling plenipotentiaries hide the master of the voice from the world in their stiff collars and ample sleeves. But the leadership of the proletariat is never ashamed to openly avow that everything that it does has to be done according to the voice of the rank and file.

The conference was adjourned. We consulted the Strike Committee which expressed itself against the calling off of the strike during the inquiry period unless the wage-cut and 1925 conditions were restored. Next day, 16th August, this was communicated to the conference. The mill-owners then withdrew their consent to an Inquiry or Conciliation Committee. Their game was clear. They wanted to get the strike called off, put the workers on the

standard scheme of 20 per cent cut and then throw over the committee into the dustbin. But they failed in this tactic altogether. There was no reason for the mill-owners to reject our proposals except that they still hoped to smash the strike by prolonging it. The Communists did not stand to gain by prolongation. The mill-owners accepted in the October settlement almost in toto what we had proposed at the August Conference. Even if they had accepted our alternative proposal of the committee to work and the strike to continue, the results would have been the same as they were afterwards, except perhaps in the matter of the verdict of the committee. The Fawcett Committee took 29 full days and 18 half day sittings to complete its work, i.e. 38 full working days or about 7 weeks. If it had been appointed at the August Conference, and the strike continued, it would have finished its work in October. By rejecting the proposals also the strike lasted till October. Thus whether on the question of demands or the duration of the strikes, the mill-owners derived no gain by rejecting the proposals in August.

(120) Mill-owners' admission about wage-cut -
the Assembly letter - the Mayor fund.

Just about the beginning of August we scored another victory over the mill-owners. Since the publication of their scheme and throughout their negotiations with us and

public propaganda, the mill-owners had refused to admit that their standard scheme did not only standardise wages for the same class of work as between mill and mill but it also retrenched men, saved a lot on spinning wages (which they claimed to have raised) and effected an absolute cut in the weavers' wages. When they put up the rates of wages on the mill gates in July we explained to the workers that the scheme contained 20 to 30 per cent cut for the weavers. The mill-owners could not hold long to their falsehood in front of our figures and calculations, and more because of the fact that they themselves were ignorant of the actual effect of the scheme. At last in August, the Deputy Chairman in exasperation admitted that the scheme did cut $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent wages. The whole fraudulent game of hiding the cut thus began to collapse. Then another mill-owner Mr. Usman Subhani declared that they did not know what the cut was but he thought it to be between 5 and $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I seized these two pronouncements and wrote to the press exposing the falsehood of the mill-owners' claims. Therein I still stuck to my 20 per cent estimate. Later on when negotiations were resumed with the owners, many of them in their individual capacity confessed to their utter ignorance of the scheme. This was not surprising to us because even the bourgeois Tariff Board in its report had said, "Of the 175 directors of the mills in Bombay there are only 11 who have received

practical training." It is quite natural. In modern industrial capitalism, all the work of production and distribution is socialised and carried on by the workers and a hierarchy of salaried officials and experts. The capitalist is in no way connected with these processes. He only cuts coupons and pockets the profits. This illustrates how the whole system can run without the capitalists and is ripe for socialism.

In the further negotiations the mill-owners modified their peremptory orders to the workers to accept the scheme as it was. Mr. S. D. Saklatwala, the Chairman of the Association was more courageous than the Deputy Chairman and said before the Fawcett Committee, "Our original standard scheme was based on a cut of about 11 per cent" (D 523, page 10) and then added, "I hope to convince you that a cut not of 7½ per cent but at least of 30 per cent would be fully justifiable in the weaving section." (Ibid). If they considered it fully justifiable can any one knowing the bourgeoisie, believe that they did not incorporate it in the scheme or that they took pity on the workers? Were we then wrong in our estimate of 20 per cent? Still the mill-owners held very fast to one of their lies that they had increased wages in the spinning and that they gained nothing in that department. On this point it took more than a year to force the partial truth out of them. Their Chairman giving evidence before the Royal Commission on

Labour on 30th November 1929 admitted that they gained 2 per cent in spinning also. But in this even they introduced some amount of falsehood. Before lunch time Mr. Mody, the Chairman of the Association said before the Commission, "The standard scheme has nothing to do with reduction of workers." After lunch the same day Mr. S.D. Saklatwala, the Chairman of the previous year, said, "Under the scheme there would be a reduction of 2,000 doffer boys and the industry would profit to the extent of 2 per cent." In this evidence the question of reduction in other departments is skillfully omitted and naturally of profits from retrenchment.

J.K.

12/12/31 (Morning Part II).

I put the figure at 10,000 which meant a saving of 6 p.c. in the wages bill by retrenchment alone. The refusal of the mill-owners till August to tell openly to the workers that their wages were cut was deliberate dishonesty to which they could not hold consistently to the end simply because of our vigilance and our intense efforts to know and study the scheme and its technique, in order that we may not reject it on suspicion only but after knowing thoroughly the reduction of wages and men it proposed to carry out. The admission of the mill-owners was forced out of them by our studies and determination and that made the issue of the strike clearer for all. It was henceforth admittedly on all sides a question of wage cuts and retrenchment and no longer of a mere scheme of standardised wages.

Two days after the failure of the negotiations in Bombay, the Government of India released for publication on 18th August the famous "Assembly Letter" now Ex.P 377(1) in this case. It caused quite a sensation in the bourgeois and petty bourgeois world and was intended, as subsequent events show, as a preliminary overtures of an alliance with the nationalist bourgeoisie against the workers' movement. But the letter had no effect whatever on the workers. On the very day of its publication, we explained to the workers

the implications of this tactic of the Government, - that it was intended to rouse the Indian bourgeois and petty bourgeois against the Communist in particular and against all militant working-class movement in general. That the publication was intended to smash the leadership of the strikes, cripple whatever petty bourgeois sympathies there were for the working-class movement and create an atmosphere favourable for a strong offensive against the working-class leadership on an all India scale could be seen from the leading articles of the whole bourgeois press in India and from the fact that seven days after this, on August 25th, the Gazette of India published the proposed Public Safety Bill moved in the Assembly on 4th September 1928. The leading article in the Evening News of Bombay of 20th August 1928 said, (Ex.D 518) "Comrade Roy's letter, if anything, reveals something more of the secret force behind all the labour troubles. One of the leaders of the millhands and railway workshop employees in Bombay is in correspondence with the League against Imperialism, an organisation brought into being under Moscow auspices and which acts as a sort of post office for the Communist International. Let us admit at once that it is not a crime merely to correspond with Moscow directly or indirectly. It may be that Mr. Jhabwala has simply asked for more financial help to the Bombay strikers or is kicking against some of the conditions under which the C.I. would give

additional funds." The article further points out that the C.I. is not out for philanthropic help. It wants return for its money in the form of a Red Revolution in India, which is revealed by the Roy letter. "Moscow means business" is the conclusion in the article. Any one can see from this how exactly the Prosecution is repeating almost word for word what is written in this article of 1928. It would be difficult to say whether it is a part of the leading article of an evening paper in Bombay or the address of the Crown Counsel in this case. Not only that. A statement has been made before the Hon'ble High Court by Mr. Kemp to the effect that the poor and most amicable gentlemen of the C.I.D. were hardworked for full four years in unearthing the correspondence of the prisoners here. Yet here we find an evening daily quoting from the "most secret" correspondence of one of these terrible conspirators and the astounding and terrible discovery sought to be proved in this case that the League against Imperialism is a subsidiary of the Comintern was known to the evening daily in Bombay and published by it as far back as August 1928. So it would be an interesting question whether the overworked C.I.D. was running this paper or the paper running the C.I.D. and preparing in advance the outlines of the Crown Counsel's Address. But the performance on the Roy Letter was not thought sufficient. The same paper on the same day, and perhaps others of its

family also, published a garbled summary of comrade Kusinenn's speech, on the question of the agrarian revolution in India and the role of the Communists in it.

This outburst of activity on the part of Government was not going to affect our line of action because ours was not a conspiratorial activity which demands a change of line according to the fact whether or not the Government has come to know of it. The end of the strike depended solely on the question whether the mill-owners withdrew the cuts and retrenchment and not on the question whether the so-called plans of the C.I. to be worked through the strike were known to the Government and the bourgeoisie. We were prepared to compromise if the wage cut was withdrawn or to go on as before, if it was not. In such an atmosphere the Mayor of Bombay, Dr. G. V. Deshmukh, one of the leading and rich surgeons of Bombay, called a conference of the representatives of the Strike Committee, the mill-owners, merchants, share-brokers and such others, in the Corporation Hall of Bombay. It may be remembered that the Corporation as such had shown itself definitely hostile to the strike. In June it had rejected the proposal of Rs.1,00,000/- for relief to the strikers. On July 9th it had thrown out a proposal of Rs. 1,000/- daily relief to the strikers or their children. In such conditions it looked a bit curious that the President of the Corporation should come forth to work for the settlement of the strike. He started

unofficially a relief fund for the children of the strikers on 12th July 1928 called the Mayor Relief Fund for children. The suggestion for it had come during the debate on 9th July when the grant of relief to the strikers was rejected. The subscribers to his fund were most of them mill-owners and big share-brokers. The total collections of this fund amounted to Rs. 48,995/12/0. This sum was collected from only 134 subscribers, giving Rs. 365/- per subscriber. But this does not give an adequate idea of the class of the subscribers. Sir Victor Sassoon gave Rs. 10,000/-, Sir Fazalbhoy gave Rs. 5,000/- and Raja Partabgirji of the Pralhad Mills gave Rs. 5000/-. Thus three of the textile mill-owners alone gave Rs. 20,000/-. Mr. R. Birla gave Rs. 1500/-. Then ten of them contributed Rs. 10,004/- that is 1000/- and odd each. In this category are found His Excellency, the Governor of Bombay, the Mayor himself, Mr. Sasakura of the Toyo Podar Mills, and the Native Share and Stock-Brokers' Association, the remaining five being of the big ring of share-brokers on the Exchange; the third category paid Rs. 500/- and odd and consisted of 16 subscribers making up Rs. 8006/-. Thus 30 persons out of 134 made up an amount of Rs. 40,000/- i.e. 4/5th of the fund. If you leave the five mill-owners standing at one end and also the 20-25 small donors who were either members of the Corporation or middle class humanitarians, the whole phalanx of about 100 donors was composed of the big

speculators on the Stock Exchange, through which they were directly affected by the strike. Thus the Mayor Fund was a combined effort of the big textile masters and stock exchange speculators.

Why had this exploiting gentry suddenly thought of the starving children of the strikers? Because they wanted to capture the strikers' goodwill through their children and thus break their determined hatred of Capitalism. It was a game of humanitarian Mondism operating through the workers' children. But the Bombay bourgeoisie, just as it lacks the highly advanced technique of the British bourgeoisie, which produces Mondism, also lacks its subtle propaganda and corruption methods. The more or less realist industrialist manufacturers among the donors of the fund were overcome by the spirit of the nervous bania stock exchange speculator who reconciles his gambling and his God by humanitarian charity. So when it came to the question as to who should be benefitted by the relief, the industrialist donors did not object to the relief being limited to the strikers' children only. In fact they had paid with that idea. But the speculators objected. They said it would be a direct help to the strikers. Both the sections wanted some gain. The one wanted to prepare a ground for class collaboration, the other wanted a reputation for charity; and all wanted the big middle class petty bourgeois strata to think that after all the bourgeoisie was not

so bad, not so cruel as to cut the wages of the workers. Otherwise why should it feel for the children of the strikers and pay Rs. 50,000/- for them? Ultimately the fund had to be named the Mayor Relief Fund "for children " and not "for strikers' children".

The game of the bourgeoisie was seen through at once and I wrote an article in this strain in the Kranti of the 15th July 1928 (Ex. P 1744) headed "The deceptive Vampire of the bourgeoisie". It said "the owners cut down Rs.50,00,000/- from our wages and when the workers go on strike they pay out of this sum Rs. 20,000/- for the children's relief. One belly of the vampire eats us workers and after having eaten up, offers consolation to our children that they may not cry. Its one mouth orders wage cuts in order to crush us and another mouth tries to cheat us with sweet talk through our children. One hand of the bourgeoisie throws us out from the houses on the street with our children because of the arrears of rent and another hand pretends to feed our children. All these are the deceptions of the cruel blood-sucking vampire. If the deceptive temptor gives you good food, eat it; if it gives a palace, take it; but afterwards when it tells you to resume work on its conditions and be a slave, kick it out and go on with your strike."

The distribution of relief started on 23rd July at seven centres. Here again the bourgeoisie behaved insolently

towards the workers. They would not give milk or food intended for the children to their mothers. The reason they gave was that the parents might eat the ration and starve the children. Could any one but a corrupt and callous bourgeois think of such a thing. It is the bourgeoisie and the feudal princes, who have been known to sell, kidnap or murder their sons or daughters on the question of family partnership of the stolen millions. Naturally they cannot see better morality in others. Secondly, on the centres of distribution, boards were hung saying "For the relief of children of the poor". (Reference Exts. of speeches). That board had a string of ~~xxxxxxxx~~ humiliation since all children were to be treated as of beggars. Now though we recognise that beggars and thieves and such other sections are byproducts of poverty and exploitation yet the working-class resists and must resist being classed with these lumpen sections. The working-class is poor no doubt, but its poverty has nothing in common with the poverty of the beggars or the thieves. Because it is a class that has the consciousness and self-respect of being the producers of social wealth. The workers resented the boards and we apprised the Committee of the Mayor Fund of this fact. They then struck out the words "of the poor" from the headline. The Kranti of the 15th made suggestions to the Mayor about the management of relief but they were not heeded to by his Committee. The

third form of insolence was the selection of places wherefrom relief was distributed. The centre at Chinchpokli was the plague inoculation centre of the Municipality and the one at Parel was the centre for small-pox vaccination. It was due either to grim and insulting satire or a sheer lack of imagination. The mention of these centres in the announcement was sufficient to scare away any intending receiver of relief from going to those places to receive it. We had to tell the workers, in order to persuade them to send their children to receive relief, that they would be quite immune from the plague of the bourgeoisie, if they went with a strong injection of proletarian class-consciousness.

D/14.12.31

Morning 1st Part.

The effect of all this was that very few families took advantage of the fund, though it is some pleasure to us that the orphans of the street, at least, had some food for a few days.

The fund was closed on the calling off of the strike. Not a few contractors made money out of it. The Municipal Commissioner had taken charge of the arrangements, with his big staff that managed the city of a million souls. Naturally the bureaucratic management cost more than what it cost to the Strike Committee to give relief to 30,000 strikers, with the aid of a few workers, who were not "experts in administration." In the whole disposal of the fund the actual relief given was 72 per cent of the collections, excluding the balance or 79 per cent if we include the balance (7 per cent) of the account. This omits the consideration as to what was the quantity of food for equal amounts paid by the Mayor Fund and the Strike Committee. This was an important factor as the arrangements of food of the Mayor Fund were done by contractors while ours were made by direct purchases from the grain market on a large scale and by distribution without the profits of intermediaries. The actual relief delivered to the strikers from our fund constituted 88 per cent of total collections while it was 72 per cent from the Mayor Fund. 21 per cent in the

case of the Mayor Fund were administrative expenses of relief alone while in our case the balance of 12 per cent represented all the activities of the Strike Committee. Actual relief administration cost us not more than 3 per cent of our total collections. If we allow ten per cent margin to the contractors, the value of the Mayor's actual relief comes to 65 per cent, with 28 per cent for intermediaries and the administrative bureaucracy. The workers' management thus cost three per cent while the bourgeois management cost 28 per cent of the collections.

(121) The Mayor's efforts at negotiations - M. Shaukat Ali comes out to break the strike - alternative proposals - our standard scheme.

It was with such traditions that the Mayor called a conference for settlement of the strike. The conference took up the question of negotiations at the stage, where it had been left off, at the Hidayatullah's Conference of 16th August, i.e. the question - on what terms the strike should be called off, if an Enquiry Committee is to function. Some three or four alternative schemes were proposed by us. The Mayor and his supporters accepted some of them. He also brought some alternative schemes (which we were willing to accept), "but none of which were accepted by the Mill-owners' Association", observes the Fawcett Committee on page 8 of its report. So this attempt to end the strike also failed because the mill-owners refused all schemes of

settlement. This shows who prolonged the strike and how the mill-owners were trying to smash it by prolongation.

During the negotiations through the President of the Corporation, another party had come on the scene to take active interest in the breaking up of the strike. This was the notorious Maulana Shaukat Ali. I have already referred to the attempt of the Khilafat Committee and the Maulana to bring communalism into the strike by proposing to give money to the Strike Committee, ear-marked for Muslim workers only, and how that offer was rejected by the workers, both Hindu and Muslim. Since that time, the Maulana was not heard of. Now suddenly he appeared at the Conference in the Corporation Hall and very soon around him was collected a group of Mohammadan business men, corporators and others. He was particularly pushed forward by Mr. Usman Subhani, the agent of the Prahlad Mills, and the brother of Mr. Usman Subhani, the famous millionaire of the early Congress and Khilafat days. It was soon evident that this group was being pushed forth at the instance of the Fazalbhoy group also. We smelt some sinister game in the appearance of the Maulana. He in fact understood nothing of the dispute or the industry. But like a goonda always on hire he had come and wanted to trade on his one time patriotism and services to the country. He almost assumed the airs of a dictator and threatened that if the strike were not called off he would ask all the Mohammadan workers to break away and resume work. On the

failure of the Conference he attempted to carry out this threat. He hired some ten or fifteen unemployed goondas and went to the locality of the Mohammadan workers. He harangued the workers, abused the Strike Committee and told them to go back to work. He also made his goondas preach the futility of strikes. But the trick was soon exposed when the workers began to ask these fellows about their wages, what mill they worked in and what they knew of textile work. The goondas were found to be merely dummies, dressed as workers. The Maulana got enraged and had to beat a hasty retreat. The Maulana's defeat was due to the fact that the class solidarity of workers is superior to their communal prejudices. Here was a class war with the bourgeoisie. Amongst the workers on one side were Hindus, Mohammadans, Parsees, etc. Amongst the bourgeoisie, on the other side, there were Hindus, Mohammadans, Parsees and Europeans. Both the sides were fighting each other bitterly, irrespective of their caste or religion. Muslim mill-owners and Hindu mill-owners were united in starving Muslim workers and Hindu workers, without any reference to their respective gods or holy books, except their holy books of bank accounts. The workers of Bombay had cultivated sufficient consciousness, through the several general strikes that they had fought and were not going to be duped by an agent provocateur of British Imperialism. The whole episode was exposed in the Kranti in a workers' letter, Exh: P.1744 dated 20th September 1928; & the Maulana

failure of the Conference he attempted to carry out this threat. He hired some ten or fifteen unemployed goondas and went to the locality of the Mohammadan workers. He harangued the workers, abused the Strike Committee and told them to go back to work. He also made his goondas preach the futility of strikes. But the trick was soon exposed when the workers began to ask these fellows about their wages, what mill they worked in and what they knew of textile work. The goondas were found to be merely dummies, dressed as workers. The Maulana got enraged and had to beat a hasty retreat. The Maulana's defeat was due to the fact that the class solidarity of workers is superior to their communal prejudices. Here was a class war with the bourgeoisie. Amongst the workers on one side were Hindus, Mohammadans, Parsees, etc. Amongst the bourgeoisie, on the other side, there were Hindus, Mohammadans, Parsees and Europeans. Both the sides were fighting each other bitterly, irrespective of their caste or religion. Muslim mill-owners and Hindu mill-owners were united in starving Muslim workers and Hindu workers, without any reference to their respective gods or holy books, except their holy books of bank accounts. The workers of Bombay had cultivated sufficient consciousness, through the several general strikes that they had fought and were not going to be duped by an agent provocateur of British Imperialism. The whole episode was exposed in the Kranti in a workers' letter, Exh: P.1744 dated 20th September 1928; & the Maulana

afterwards did not come in the workers' area, until his sinister presence was again requisitioned by his masters, four months later, in the Communal Riots of February 1929.

During the negotiations at the Corporation, we found that the slogan of demanding wages and rates of 1925 or any other year had its own danger also. So far as fixed wages were concerned, there was not much trouble in finding out what they were, as there were no material changes in the fixed wages directly since 1925. The change in such cases was in the increased work for equivalent wages due to reduction of the numbers of men per thousand spindles. The difficulty lay in the piece work rates. There were hundreds of varieties of cloth and consequently hundreds of piece rates. The mill-owners resisted all attempts at inspection of their books to verify these rates. The rates were so many that the workers could not be expected to remember all of them correctly. Moreover, if a change of two or three counts were made in the same variety of cloth it was very difficult to detect the change at once, until it led to a fall in the total wages and had run for some time. Such were some of the difficulties of demanding restoration of conditions and rates, to those found in a particular year. But we had to do it and rely on the vast memory of the hundreds of intelligent workers as there was no other alternative. When the standard scheme was put forth, its one merit was that it left nothing to vagueness and if

operated carefully would have given very little chance to the bureaucracy in the mills to cheat the workers by variation of counts or false rates, provided there was a vigilant union to get the scheme correctly applied. But the scheme could not be applied in its present form, since it contained many discrepancies; even the mill-owners did not know its implications, except the two or three framers of it. It contained a big wage-cut on an average and the cut mounted even to 30 per cent on previous rates in some cases. The workers could not be expected to have technicians to understand the scheme and therefore the easiest way found was to reject it altogether. But, then if it were rejected, we had to fall back upon the demand of wages for a particular year, which was definite regarding fixed wages but vague regarding piece rates, especially in the weaving department. We had already in our demands endorsed the principle of standardisation, and we could not reject it if it could be done without any harm to the workers. Once the workers were prejudiced against the very idea of standardisation it would be a difficult thing to standardise wages and conditions at any time afterwards, which would not have been in their interest. Therefore we had to find an alternative. And that was to stand by the original demand of 1925 wages and rates or to ask for 30 per cent above the standard scheme. (12th August 1928). The latter was adopted only to bring home to all parties, the exact extent of the cut

involved and it had the beneficial and tactical effect of forcing the mill-owners to acknowledge for the first time that they had incorporated a cut of wages in the scheme. But this slogan of 30 per cent also was not every definite. Because on the ordinary lower count sorts the cut was not 30 per cent but less. The simple addition of 30 per cent to every rate in the scheme would not have solved matters and this is what the mill-owners demonstrated at the Mayor's Conference. We were naturally asked how we would distribute this 30 per cent. Such a question was purely a tactic, because the mill-owners expected us to plead ignorance of the mechanism of the scheme. We had to take up the challenge and show how the 30 per cent could be distributed. We therefore decided (28th August 1928) to frame a new standard scheme of ours, incorporating in it the wages, conditions and rates that were demanded by the workers. We told the workers about this (see any speech in exhibit about this time) and asked them to come forth with their suggestions. A host of very intelligent workers from the rank and file came with information, without which it would have been impossible to frame any scheme. (Some of the strike meetings, reports about which are put into exhibit, were held for this purpose). With their assistance the task was carried out. The challenge of the mill-owners benefited us in more than one way. It called forth several intelligent workers and linked them up actively with the

work of the strike. We discovered potential leaders and technicians. The principle of the standard scheme was studied and understood by us and the workers more thoroughly than before. We overcame the danger for the time being of permanently prejudicing the workers against standardisation per se, and most important of all, the wages and conditions demanded were formulated in most definite and unequivocal terms, leaving no room, if agreed upon by the owners, for mischief according to the whims of individual mills and bureaucrats. Henceforth our demand thus was "We too want a standard scheme. We have made one. Give us wages according to it or alternatively restore the pre-cut-wages and conditions."

It is not possible here nor is it necessary to explain the mill-owners' standard scheme which prolonged the strike and the amendments we proposed to it. But I will give a few examples of the rates proposed for weaving varieties by the mill-owners and those proposed by us. I will also show the changes proposed in spinning wages. From that, it can be seen that we did not make such demands on the mill-owners as could be called exorbitant or could not be met by them. It will also show that, as in the General Strike of 1924, the impartial Inquiry Committee, this time the Fawcett Committee, in its report wholly agreed with the mill-owners' proposals. It will also show how our demand of increase in the weavers' rates had to be distributed in a complicated manner in the whole scheme.

Spinning Section

1 Department	2 Wages as proposed by the mill- owners' scheme in July 1928	3 Wages as proposed in the workers' scheme in September	4 Wages as proposed by the mill- owners in their amended scheme in October.	5 Wages as approved by the Fawcett Committee.
	Rs.As.Ps.	Rs. As.Ps.	Rs. As. Ps.	Rs. As. Ps.
<u>Blow Room.</u>				
Nowganies	30- 9- 7	34- 0- 0	Do (As in Col.2)	Do (as in Col.4)
Lattice Freeders	23-12- 9	26- 6- 0	Do "	Do "
Pickers & Sweepers	17- 0- 0	20- 7- 0	17- 8- 9	Do "
Oilers	30- 9- 7	34- 0- 0	Do (as in col.2)	Do. "
Exhaust and Breaker) Scutcher, Inter Finisher }	27- 3- 3	28- 8- 0	Do "	Do. "
<u>Card Room</u>				
Grinders and Strippers	27- 3- 3	28- 1- 0	28- 0- 9	Do. "
Fly gatherers	25 -8- 0	25- 8- 0	Do(as in col.2)	Do. "
Lap carriers	25- 8- 0	25- 8- 0	Do "	Do. "
Can boys	22- 1- 7	25- 8- 0	22-15- 2	Do. "
Flat Grinders	27- 3- 3	30-10- 0	Do(as in Col.2)	Do. "
Oilers	30- 9- 7	34- 0- 0	Do "	Do "

Inter & Roving Frames

Drawing Tenter	33- 4- 0	35- 0- 0	Do	Do
Slubbers	38- 0- 0	38- 0- 0	Do	Do
Inter Tenters	35- 0- 0	36- 0- 0	Do	Do
Rovers	32- 0- 0	38- 0- 0	Do	Do
Doffer boys	20- 6- 6	23- 0- 0	Do	Do (as in col.4)
Bigaries	23-12-10	27- 4- 0	Do	Do

Ring Spinning

Siders Singleside upto 300 spindles	26- 5- 9	27- 4- 0	Do	Do
Single side up to 309/360	27- 3- 3	28- 8- 0	Do	Do
Single side up to 361/420	28- 0- 9	29-12- 0	Do	Do
Doffer boys	20- 6- 6	23- 0- 0	Do	Do
Tarwalla	25- 8- 0	28- 1- 0	26- 5- 9	Do
Oilers & Banders	34- 0- 0	37- 7- 0	Do(as in col.4)	Do
Doff carriers	23-12- 0	30-10- 0	Do "	Do
Fitters	85- 0- 0	102- 0- 0	Do "	Do

Winding

Grey winders		24- 0- 0	19- 8- 0	Do
Colour "		30- 0- 0	22- 0- 0	Do

Warpers	52- 0- 0	60- 0- 0	52	52
Creel boys	20- 6- 6	24- 0- 0	21- 4- 0	Do

Two Examples in Weaving

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Sort : Plain Khadi Width 24 inches	Allowance as per millowners' list	According to workers' scheme	As amended by mill owners during negotiations.
Weight 6 3/4 Lbs.	Width 20 per cent	20%	20%
Reed 40	Weft 7 %	12%	9%
Pick 40	Pick Rate 1.33 pies per Sq.yard	1.53	1.36
Warp 14	Result: 16 sq.yards at 1.33 pies per sq.yard	Result:-	Result:-
Weft 9	plus 27%		
	Whole piece paid at 27 pies	<u>32.31 pies</u>	<u>28 pies</u>
	Increase of column 3 over 4	= 15.4 %	
<u>Sort: Patti Pacha Dobby Dhotie.</u> Width 30 inches	Width 6%	6%	6%
Length 7 yards	Dhotie 17%	27%	17%
Weight 1 1/16 Lbs.	Dobby 6%	12%	12%
Shafts 8	Pick Rate 1.13	1.30	1.16
Border 1 1/4"	Result: 5.83 sq.yards at 1.13 pies per sq.yard		
One runner 1 1/2"	Whole piece paid at <u>8.5 pies</u>	<u>11 pies</u>	9.12
Reed 40	Increase of column 3 over 4	= 20 per cent.	
Pick 34			
Warp 24			
Weft 32			

However the specific mention about 1925 wages and rates had to be dropped altogether at a later stage. The demand of 1925 wages was formulated when we were not thoroughly aware of the slow change that had come into the character of production in the Bombay textiles. We became aware of the details of this only after the general strike was on. When we began to deal with the details of standardisation we found that there were hundreds of varieties that were not being produced in 1925. So the demand of restoring rates of that year did not cover all grounds. We also found that March 1927 was a period which satisfied our demand. So we adopted that as an alternative to 1925. This period also had one other advantage. The minor objections of the mill-owners, dictated by their pride about granting our demands exactly in the same terms we wanted, were also satisfied by the change we made. Thus our main demand embracing the majority of workers contained three alternatives for compromise: (1) workers' standard scheme of wages or (2) 30 per cent above mill-owners' standard scheme or (3) the wages and conditions of 1927 March. The second most important demand was the discontinuance of the rational scheme introduced in some of the mills and of retrenchment. This was the only outcome of the Mayor's Conference.

14/12/31 (Morning Part II).

(122) More proposals for compromise - discussions with mill-owners broke down again in Sept: 1928 - settlement of October 1928 and the end of the general strike.

When the Conference failed many individual merchants, mill-owners and intermediaries began their own efforts to settle the strike. One such effort was done by Seth Mangal Das, the co-arbitrator of Mahatma Gandhi in Ahmedabad mill disputes. This gentleman called me to his house to have a talk about the strike. Seth Mangaldas expressed great sympathy for the starving workers and with that prelude asked me on what conditions we were prepared to call off the strike. I told him the conditions stated above. To my surprise, Seth Mangaldas expressed himself strongly against the mill-owners' standard scheme and offered me the tempting proposals of making common cause with us to get the scheme scrapped. I asked him how many mills would join hands with him in that proposal. Without promising anything I asked him to ascertain that. He sent for me the next day, and told me that about 20 mills would be willing. In the meantime I had not been idle. I had a suspicion that those who would accept Seth Mangaldas's proposal must be such mills as would be required to pay somewhat higher rates if the standard scheme were applied to them, than they were doing at the time and that some of these mills must be of the

worst lot and not belonging to the big syndicate. I had an idea which mills were of this type. So next day, when Seth Mangaldas told me of the 20 mills my suspicions were confirmed, though he refused to give directly their names. Then without much beating about the bush I asked him what his next proposal was if the standard scheme was scrapped. Then the gentleman with a smile wailed over the plight of the industry and ultimately said that we should negotiate a direct cut on the existing rates. On this I gave him a direct reply there and then. I told him that his group wanted to make common cause with us against the standard scheme because under that scheme they would have to pay higher rates in some departments. That is their present wages were lower than those obtaining in the bigger syndicates and even lower than what those syndicates wanted to pay after the cut as presented in the scheme. So it was sheer nonsense to ask us to negotiate a wage cut even on those lower rates and there the talks ended.

Another proposal came through the Madhavji Dharamsi Mill that a certain group of mills were ready to accept the demands of 1925 wages, if the Joint Strike Committee would agree to call off the strike for their mills and if it wanted, continue it for other mills. We could not consider such an absurd proposal; because it meant a break up of the solid front and a reversion to conditions of 16th April, after five months of suffering. However we did not refuse

the proposal at once. We told the intermediary that we could not consider such a proposal from a group of mills separately. It should come through the Mill-owners' Association or the group concerned should leave the Mill-owners' Association first. Then we would consider it. The group would not dare to leave the Association as the banking interests, guided by the bigger syndicates, would have at once descended on them and ruined them by a credit boycott, foreclosures and such other methods. The intermediary confessed this as much to us. But since this time, dissensions amongst the mill-owners grew and gradually, except the Sassoons, they were ready to restore the conditions of March 1927. The Sassoons would not agree to give up their rational system. Still they changed on one point. Formerly they would not allow the Association to negotiate except on the standard scheme and their rational system. Now they were prepared to let the standard scheme go and also the cut if the others desired but themselves would not give up their system.

When the mill-owners were threatened with disruption the negotiations were resumed and several sittings between them and the Strike Committee were held. We went through the whole scheme item by item. We got important changes effected in the spinning section in the matter of rates and number of men. But when we came to the weaving section we again struck against rocks. Apart from other sections, the mill-

owners insisted on a cut of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on weavers' wages, to which we could not agree. In order to draw out the real intentions of the mill-owners, in one of the sittings we said we would think of a cut of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The mill-owners interpreted this as the beginning of the end of our opposition and after a good deal of thinking they brought down their proposal to 5 per cent; but they would not come lower in the hope that we had now begun to break up and would soon accept the whole cut as proposed by them. The next day they went to the press with the announcement that we had agreed to the principle of a wage cut. We replied by repudiating the suggestion and saying that the offer did not stand any longer and had been made only with a view to effect an immediate compromise.

The month of September was the fifth month of the strike and in our negotiations we kept on saying that we could hold out another five months. Our relief operations were being replenished from time to time by the working-class of every country and every industry. But as I have already said the staying power of the strikers did not depend on the sum of money available for relief though it helped the poorest sections to a certain extent. To remain unemployed for a period of five months was not an ordinary test for the fighting workers whose average daily wage not been more than 20 annas. It was still more trying for the workers of the Sassoons and other mills, who had already

suffered for more than two months prior to the general strike. Naturally here and there, small groups of people did become anxious for a settlement. The pressure of hunger began to be visible in the small success that a few mills had in recruiting a few hundred workers for cleaning, bundling and godown work. Though a few hundreds in a mass of 1½ lakhs, did not constitute any appreciable strength, yet it could be read as an indication of the general pressure that was slowly accumulating. Naturally the question arose if we should still stick to an uncompromising position and risk a break up and defeat. Such a question has no hard and fast answer. In certain situations a compromise becomes necessary while in others a defeat does more good than a compromise. If we were thinking of compromise we were doing it because at that time it was necessary to save the strike from defeat; a defeat at that stage would have meant the wiping out of the new outlook from the Trade Union field before it had struck roots. It was the first strike that was being carried out consciously on the principle of class struggle and under a revolutionary leadership. If we could secure the demands for the majority of workers but not all the demands of all the workers and if we could not hold out longer it was advantageous to try a compromise, to accept a little retreat in order to advance with double vigour.

The compromise suggested was that the rational system would not be extended to mills where it was not working

prior to the general strike. That the conditions of 1927 March that is wage cuts and retrenchment would be restored. The compromise did not benefit the workers in the Sassoon group - the rational system was to remain there as it was and this was what made the proposed agreement a compromise and not a complete victory. The whole agreement was to be in force till the Inquiry Committee, to be appointed, had reported on the subject matter of the dispute. It was going to be on the whole a victory for us as it restored the wage cuts and retrenchment. A general outline of the compromise was discussed and agreed upon.

On September 4th the Public Safety Bill was moved and it soon became clear that in spite of the Bolshevik bogey raised by Government, the Bill met opposition from sections of the nationalist bourgeoisie. This opposition was not due to any desire on the part of the nationalist bourgeoisie to shield the radical Trade Unionists and revolutionary working-class leaders against whom the measure was intended, but because the bourgeoisie was afraid that the same weapon might be used against its own institutions and movement also.

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D/15.12.31

Morning 1st Part

There was not one speaker who defended the right of free speech and association for the Communists. They all opposed because Government had not taken them, the Indian bourgeoisie, into confidence. Take us into confidence and then we shall support Imperialism to go at the Communists and help the Government to cut off the support of the international proletariat to the working class of India as they want to do through the Bill. Such was the essence of the whole opposition. The Government would not compromise and the Bill was defeated. While the Bill was being discussed several members in the Assembly pointed to the Bombay textile strike as the proof of Communist wickedness and the necessity for the Bill. In Bombay the mill-owners' spokesmen demanded the arrest of the Communist leaders of the strike (vide Exh: The Kranti). But none of these things helped them. The winter trade beginning with Diwali was also being lost and some of the weaker mills were going down completely. (Exhibit: The Kranti, dated). So amongst the mill-owners also the desire for a compromise grew stronger at the end of September though the big syndicates were unmoved.

Some of the mill-owners gave a hint to the General Member of the Government of Bombay, Sir Ghulam Hussain

Hidayatullah, to call another conference for the settlement of the strike. With the agreement of both the parties, on October 4th, a conference was held, where an agreement was arrived at and the strike was called off from 6th October 1928. The struggle had lasted for 22 1/3rd million working days, three times longer than that of 1924 and twice than that of 1925.

What had we gained on 4th October, which was not being yielded by the mill-owners before, that we consented to call off the strike? Had we suddenly, as is alleged, given up our wickedness and wanton desire to prolong the strike, which was inflicting losses on the capitalists and hardships on the workers or had we compromised somehow or other to save our faces and get out of a difficult position as the late Mr. James wanted to put it?

I have already shown that till the August Conference, the mill-owners wanted a complete surrender. So there was no question of settlement and compromise. It was a fight to a finish as it looked then. At the August Conference they insisted on resumption of work, before an Inquiry Committee was appointed and without any settlement as to the conditions of work and wages during the period of inquiry. The mill-owners in fact wanted the workers to resume work on their own standard scheme. At the October Conference the dispute was not finally settled. An Inquiry Committee as proposed in the August Conference was proposed

again and agreed upon. But the most important point was the conditions of wages and work during the inquiry period. When the terms on this point were being agreed upon everyone had the conviction that whatever the Inquiry Committee may say, these terms would have to continue for a long time to come. Had it not been so, there would not have been that intense opposition from the mill-owners and insistence from our side prior to and at the October Conference on this part of the agreement. In this part lay the essence of the agreement. The mill-owners agreed to restore the wage-cuts and retrenchment, i.e. to give the wages, rates and conditions of work of March 1927 and agreed not to extend their rational system. We, however, did not succeed in overthrowing the rational system from the Sassoon, Finlay and Koh-i-noor Mills but we succeeded in stopping its extension. This was not being agreed to by the mill-owners at the August Conference. But they had to do it in October. So the strike had to go on till October. Every breakup of negotiations on our part was due to the determination the bourgeoisie to smash the strike completely. Every day added to the prolongation of the strike was due to the mill-owners not agreeing to the above terms, before October and the workers' determination not to work on reduced wages and worsened conditions. If the strike was unusually prolonged it was due to the determination of the mill-owners to enforce what they called discipline and standardisation,

wage-cuts and retrenchment. It was due to the fact that the mill-owners learnt very late that these things could not be enforced on a fighting class-conscious workers led by a militant leadership working for the interest of the workers only and not corrupted by class-collaborationists' dope, as is found in Ahmedabad. If the strike was prolonged, it was not that prolongation of strikes is a principle with us, but because it was necessary to win the demands. The struggle at that time was a defensive struggle. The mill-owners had attacked us and were determined to hold on till the workers surrendered. We could certainly not be expected to tell the workers not to hold on. In answer to the attack, it was our duty to tell the workers to defend themselves, till the attack was withdrawn; and not only to tell them but also to take steps to make it possible for them to defend. It has been suggested that we told the workers that if they prolonged the strike capitalism would collapse. To expect Communists to make such a statement in its literal sense is absurd. No Communist believes that a simple stoppage of work and prolongation of strike, even on a national scale, can starve out and kill capitalism. Capitalism is based on the violent exploitation of the workers and forcible seizure of the produce of labour power, sanctified in the capitalist system by the so-called laws of free contract and bourgeois property. A system based on force and compulsion refuses to die of anaemia. Strikes,

Satyagraha etc. however prolonged, if not followed by a positive form of mass action for the seizure of power, only result in a temporary anaemia of the system. When capitalism sees signs of it, it forcibly drinks the blood of the working class. Knowing this we cannot be expected to say that if strikers only hold on for months and years capitalism will collapse. Capitalism does not die. It is beheaded. So says History.

(123) Did we "use" the strike meetings and speeches during the strike - their relation to strike matters and educative function.

It has been shown so far how the General Strike of 1928 in the Bombay textile industry arose out of long standing grievances and new attacks of the mill-owners on the workers' wages and conditions. It has also been shown how the mill-owners refused to negotiate till they were forced by the resistance of the workers. The strike was what the bourgeoisie calls a genuine trade dispute. Its origin or its duration was not a part of any conspiracy of Communists to bring ruin to the industry or to overthrow the Government. There was no political demand as such in the 17 demands which were the subject matter of the strike. There was no demonstration, no resolution in any of the strikers' meetings as such even of a seditious character, let alone an incitement to insurrection against the State. It was not a strike preparatory to an insurrection, a general

rising against the State or intended to develop into a general political strike to overthrow or bring pressure by violence or threat of violence against the State. The draft of the 17 demands, the various stages of negotiations and the final agreement show this quite clearly.

Not being able to prove that this strike was a part of a conspiracy to overthrow the Government the Prosecution bring forward the speeches delivered during the strike and say that the Communists in the Strike Committee and the Girni Kamgar Union were "using the strike to further the aims of the conspiracy" or in the words of a press note of the Government of Bombay, "endeavouring to use the cloak of trade unionism as a mask for revolution." The late Mr. James, while speaking about our strike activities said that "The main objectives" of the Communists in a strike is the education of the workers in mass action and "to provide so to speak a rehearsal for the general strike in the mass revolution." (Pages 94-95 of his Opening Address - foolscap edition). The other objective is to glorify the Communists before the workers as their real leaders. I fail to see how if the Communists convince the workers that the Communist Party alone works in their interest, it become automatically a step in the conspiracy alleged in this case. Every party, including that of the bourgeoisie, is trying to convince the workers that it alone works for their good. If the other parties fail it is not our fault. The other parties

fail because they fail the working class in its hour of need. If the parties of the bourgeoisie have freedom to secure the leadership of the working class, why not we, when you talk of equal rights and opportunities? To seek the reasons for a general strike in the desire of the Communists to have a "rehearsal". Is a philistine notion born from a stage manager's conception of the working class? It conceives of the working class as consisting of puppets ordered about as the Communists (who are not supposed to belong to the workers) may wish "to further their own masked interest". Such a conception is anything but Communist. The general strike is not brought about for the sake of a rehearsal of mass action though its effect may act like a rehearsal. The working class is not an idle army of mercenaries doing mock battles and rehearsals at command. Strikes and general strikes are brought about, either at the call of an organization or without it, when the class position of the workers becomes worse and worse, grievances accumulate and the class struggle in an acute form becomes necessary. The resulting discipline, mass formation, etc. follow from the needs of the struggle. They arise as byproducts but the strikes are not called specifically for them. Strikes are called or happen for a definite grievance of the whole class or a section of it.

If only a rehearsal were the reason of the 1928 strike, it was unnecessary. Because the textile workers in Bombay

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had seven such rehearsals previously. And each of them was getting more and more acute and prolonged as has already been shown. Except one (of 1924) all of them were successful completely and yet Bombay was far from a mass revolution. The way in which the Prosecution speaks of the 1928 strike would lead one to suppose that Bombay should have at least 9 mass revolutions by this time. Yet we have not seen even the top-mast of the approach of one. The fact is that general strikes alone, even on a national scale, cannot lead to mass revolutions. The mass revolution to start requires an all-national crisis, affecting both the exploiters and the exploited, a strong Communist Party with its roots, not only in the workers but in the Army and Navy also. (See the Thesis of the Second Congress or any relevant article of Lenin). With such authoritative expositions it is absurd to charge the Communists who owe allegiance to Leninism of contemplating, in 1928 conditions, the overthrow of Government, by simply setting up or capturing trade unions and leading strikes in textiles or railways or other industries.

It is a fact that we seized the leadership of the Bombay textile workers through the general strike. But it is not a fact that the strike was brought about in order to create an opportunity to seize the leadership. It has been shown how the strike arose out of the attack of the mill-owners and took place only when conditions became ripe for it

though appeals for it may have been issued months in advance. It was not brought about "according to a definite plan" as the Prosecution alleges, by any of the accused.

When it cannot be proved that the Communists wanted to make the strike the beginning for a revolutionary uprising, when it cannot be proved that the strike was brought about to ferment the atmosphere and begin a seizure of factories or begin the overthrow of capitalism, when it cannot be proved that there was a general conspiracy, "a definite plan", to bring about a general strike either in 1928 or in 1929, the Prosecution's last thread, by which they hang their case, is that we used the strikers' meetings to preach the principles of Communism, of Proletarian Revolution, the success of Soviet Russia and the necessity to have a like revolution in India also. During the strike, 170 meetings were held according to the Prosecution. Now this number is arrived at by purely guess work or by taking it for granted that meetings were held only when Police reporters reported that they were held. Some of the Police reporters have deposed that meetings were held almost every day and many a time two or three meetings were held on one day.

I.H.K.

(P. W. 276).

15/12/31 (Morning Part II).

From April 16th to October 4th, it is 172 days which indicates how the Prosecution have arrived at the figure of 170 meetings. This leaves no room for more than one meeting on any of the days. According to me at least 250 meetings were held in this period and at least 700 speeches delivered. The records here contain only 55 speeches by shorthand reporters (P.W.276 and 278) knowing Marathi, the language in which the speeches were delivered and 14 reports are by a man who knew nothing of Marathi and therefore was not in a position to understand what was spoken. He has simply imagined the speeches, which is not a rare thing in journalistic history. (It is P.W. 273 - Macwan). One P.W. No.245 has filed in an attendance role of his duties rather than a record of our activities. He has made a table showing the dates, when meetings of strikers were held, the accused who were present and spoke and whether he himself was present at that meeting or not. When he was not present he has filled in the dates and places according to what he was told by his informers. On such material this witness has reported a substance of speeches at two meetings only. He does not file in reports as such of speeches taken on the spot. Thus out of a total of 700 speeches only 71 i.e. 1/10th are brought here in any form. According to one witness, P.W. 278, he reported 88 meetings consisting of

more than one speech; from him 35 speeches are on record. So out of 700 speeches one need pay some attention only to 55 - those reported by shorthand reporters who knew Marathi. Thus the Court is asked to form an opinion as to the kind of education we were giving to the workers through the meetings from a record of our "educational" activity, of which 92 per cent record is not available or not kept before the Court and only 8 per cent can be given some consideration. Even these 8 per cent of the speeches do not fairly represent the speech-activity in the strike of all those who participated. 23 out of these 55 speeches are put on the name of one person only and thus the largest part of the red pencil of the Prosecution has been spent on 3 per cent of speech-activity during the longest strike in textile history and with the help of this profuse use of the red pencil, a minute part is so magnified as to over-shadow the remaining 97 per cent of which nothing is kept before the Court in any form deserving consideration. From such a performance a generalisation is made that the strike meetings were used as a cloak to foment violent revolutionary activity. My reply to such an unwarranted formulation, on insufficient and distorted data, is that there is no doubt that we held meetings during this strike on such a large scale as had not been done by any one in the previous strikes in Bombay. But to draw the inference about the subject matter of all or most of these meetings, from the large

number of speeches of one or two persons only, which, however in the total number of speeches form a very small fraction is a faulty and unreliable method. For example if from the lectures delivered by a college staff of professors, only those of the professors of history and politics and especially only those of his relating to the period of violent revolutions in British history were reported and all the other lectures were suppressed, would it be an accurate inference, to say that the particular college and its staff always lectured on nothing but politics and violent revolutions? But that is exactly what is being done here.

The strike period is the only period when the cultural level of the workers can be raised on a mass scale. The very low wages and high hours of work leave no margin of leisure to the workers to pay attention to their cultural equipment. Neither does the State give any educational facilities and even if it does on a small scale, they are useless unless the wages are raised and hours of work lowered, so that there is less exhaustion and deterioration of the intellectual system of the workers and less incentive to withhold the children from schools and put them on earning some pittance to support themselves and the family. During the strike period a will to acquire some power, to win the strike, agitate and awaken mental powers and ample leisure are elements that urge the workers to acquire

knowledge and rise superior to their conditions; though the increased pressure of starvation cripples much of his awakened activity. Therefore it is during the strike period that mass education can be carried on effectively and on a large scale. The mass scale can operate only through meetings and lectures. One lecture on any subject in a strike is more valuable than one month in a night school. So one of our reasons in holding such large number of meetings was to carry on education on a mass scale. Lectures were delivered on the economic construction of present day society, on the history of India and other countries, on class war, dictatorship, the stock exchange, industrial development, agriculture and several other subjects. There is no denying the fact that when Communists spoke on these subjects they did it from the Marxist point of view. Certainly they could not be expected to do it according to the bourgeois text books. The bourgeoisie with its monopoly of education and political power preaches its own class point of view on these subjects, in order that its own class rule should be accepted as the best and eternal. Thus culturally and mentally incapacitating the revolutionary class from thinking or working for any better system. The Communists who have a better social order to introduce can bring their point of view forward only through meetings, books, and papers and they claim the right to do so. Just as the modern bourgeoisie has the right to explain history

as the eternal movement of men to acquire private property and the good deeds of the propertied men and their agent-heroes, just as the innumerable religious sects have the right to explain it as the eternal oscillation of the head or the tail of their respective favourite gods and devils, so we claim the right to explain it by the materialist method of Marxism as an unceasing class war to be terminated only when the Communist society is established.

It would be, however, a one-sided statement that the lectures were only for this purpose. Meetings were held to make announcements about relief distribution, about the various negotiations for settling the strike, about picketing about attempts to break the strike, about the standard scheme and so on. The Strike Committee could not spend money on handbills on a large scale and the illiteracy and poverty of the workers prevented the medium of newspapers being utilised to its full effect. That is why we considered meetings most essential for the conduct of the strike. Knowin this full well Imperialialism and the Indian bourgeoisie now adopt a course of stopping all meetings of workers, as soon as there is a strike, under S. 144 on the pretext that it will cause breach of public peace. The workers are forced to wage struggle for the right of meetings, which is being denied to them. When we denounce the Imperialists and the Indian bourgeoisie for prohibiting meetings, they say, we use inciting language in our meetings, we go beyond "our

limits", therefore Government is forced to prohibit meetings and the Indian bourgeoisie supports them in this. If that is so why do you gag under S.144 even the pro-Government yellow internationalists, the most respectable moderates, like Messrs. Joshi and Giri? Mr. N.M. Joshi was forbidden to enter the S.I. Rly strike area in 1928 and Mr. Giri was debarred from going to Hyderabad and Mysore in 1928 and 1931. None can accuse these gentlemen, who speak "within limits" and believe more in the efficacy of Sir George Rainy's smiles and the Railway Board than in the proletariat, of ever attempting to break the peace. Yet they are also gagged, Why? Because Imperialism does not want to tolerate even the least Trade Union activity and is out to smash all the elementary rights of the workers.

(124) Our meetings did not incite violence - fall in the cases of damage to property and crime in the mill area during the strike period - the evidence of speeches and the Riots Inquiry Committee.

Our meetings had the effect of preventing any possible breach of peace rather than causing it. The assembling of thousands of workers in one place morning and evening gave them consciousness of a solid class strength, reduced the irritation and provocation that arises from the feeling of personal individual weakness or suffering, gave them additional courage and patience and prevented isolated clashes as far as possible. Of course a strike without clashes is

impossible. The insolence of the police force, the blacklegs etc, necessarily results in clashes which are inevitable. But on the whole our strike was free from these. This has been recognised even by the officers of Imperialism, and some of them have been puzzled by it. Having been all along fed on the fables created by the Imperialist lie factories, about the atrocities, arson and murder and all sorts of conceivable or inconceivable cruelties which the bourgeoisie could invent and attribute to the workers, these Imperialists expected a riot every day, and a murder every hour during the strike, because they were told that the Communist leaders as such were telling the people to revolt rebel, destroy and burn. But nothing of the kind happened during or after the strike. For certain reasons you find Imperialists and the Indian bourgeoisie disagreeing for once about the Communists and the stories about violence, advised or committed by them. You find the Indian bourgeoisie more reactionary and lying than the Imperialists. During the strike and after, the Indian capitalists thundered for our blood. But the Imperialists refused at that time. The reason for refusal is not that Imperialism had grown democratic, honest or truthful. The reason was that all the sections of the Indian bourgeoisie, including the extremists had not yet consented to our beheading as they did later on. However, that apart. Whatever the reasons, when a deputation of the European and Indian Merchants Chambers waited on

the Governor of Bombay and in consistency with their counter revolutionary and pro-Imperialist role asked that we should be arrested and put in prison or dealt with otherwise for the sake of their profits, because we had created "a state of terror and violence in the mill area", the Governor in reply, agreed to their demand but said, "What has struck me most as far as I have been able to study the history of the last nine months as a whole, is that during that time in spite of the large number of hands involved in the stoppage of work, there has been on the whole so little damage done to person or property." The Governor claimed the credit of this for his police force, which, by the way, had done everything possible to provoke the men. But even then he had to add, "credit is also due to those of their leaders who had advised them in their own interest to refrain from creating disturbances and so losing the sympathy of the public." (Ex.D.526 Communique dated 21/2/28 by the Director of Information, Bombay). The mill-owners' deputation said that law and order of the British Government had ceased to exist in the mill area of the city and a state of violence and terror, under the guidance of the Communist leaders, prevailed in a part of the city where lived 5/6th of the whole population. Now it would be a very flattering and pleasing state of things, if the British law and order has really ceased to function. But however pleasing it might be, it was not a fact. Though we had the greatest influence over the workers, yet that part of Bombay had not

into a Soviet and it is a lie to say that our influence meant violence, terror and crime. If it were as this gang of merchants said then how do you find the police report for the year 1928 saying "there has been a reduction of 30 per cent in crime compared with the crimes of six years ago the Delisle Road Police Station, which is in the centre of the mill district had a reduction from 514 cases in 1927 to 346 in 1928. This is remarkable in view of the fact that all the mills were on strike for six months in the year." (page 4 It would mean that the greatest influence of Communists in the city leads to reduction in crime and not to its increase, even if crimes were to be interpreted according to the Imperialist code. In the very heart of the area, where we were said to have almost established our raj, the reduction of crimes was 67.3 per cent on the previous year, in which there was no Communist influence. This in fact makes out a case in favour of the workers' law and order, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the influence and activities of the Communists rather than against them. The same police report on another page while complaining about our preaching "incessantly against Imperialism and Capitalism" observes "though the strike lasted for such a long period, it was comparatively peaceful". (page 21).

(Dange) D/16.12.31

Evening 1st Part.

There is another pronouncement from Government on these speeches. After the Hindu-Moslem Riots in Bombay in February 1929, the Legislative Council on 20th February asked for an Inquiry Committee, which the Government appointed on 22nd April 1929 consisting of The Committee actually assembled for taking evidence on 24th June 1929. It signed its report on 22nd August 1929. Evidence regarding our strike speeches commenced in the Lower Court with P.W.245 (Lower Court no. 147) on 30th August 1929 and regarding those reported by P.W.278 (L.C.no. 190) on 11th September, by P.W. 276 (L.C.no. 192) on 12th September and P.W. 273 (L.C. no. 269) on 4th October 1929. Thus before these speeches were brought here on record they were produced before the Inquiry Committee which has quoted extracts from them in its report in an appendix. (See report pages 9 & 41). Thus while the Court here was "judicially" going to enquire into the case, another Government Committee had already considered a part of the evidence to be produced here and given its verdict. With the seal of approval of an Inquiry Committee, Government became confident and brought these speeches before this Court. A comparison between the extracts in that appendix and the evidence here given will show that that Committee has quoted in advance almost verbatim, in a report signed on 27th August, a part of the deposition regarding

my speech, of P.W. Hassan Ali given in this Court on 2nd September and also extracts from speeches which here are exhibits P 1699, 1702, 1709, 1711, 1714, 1717, 1718, 1719, 1722, 1724, 1726, 1715 and 1731. With these exhibits before them the Committee took evidence of the Hon'ble Mr. J.E.B. Hotson, at that time the Home Member of the Government of Bombay and later on the Acting-Governor for some time. This is what he said on 16th July 1929 on the matter of these speeches which were put before him and many more :- The Chairman asked witness what he had to say with regard to the suggestion made by certain witnesses that earlier and stronger action should have been taken by the Government against the Labour agitators who had been making inflammatory speeches.

Mr. Hotson replied that underlying the suggestion was the assumption that there was a direct connection between the Labour disputes and the disturbances, the Government were not quite certain that such a connection could be established

The Chairman pointed out that a representative of one of the oil companies giving evidence had stated that the Labour leaders preached class hatred which developed into a communal riot.

The Home Member replied that the Government was bound to observe the strictest neutrality between the employers and the workers. Even when violent speeches were made it

was not always justifiable to rush into a prosecution. At all events in times of excitement people did use words stronger than what they really meant. For many months at all events whatever inflammatory speeches might have been made they did not result in violence. For a long time during the progress of the strike the Government were justified in holding their hands.

Another thing was, the Home Member continued, that there were "stories" going about the city as to what these Labour leaders were saying at these meetings. The Government used to have reports of all the speeches made at such meetings and they never came across any inflammatory passages which some witnesses had attributed to the Labour leaders and all the enquiries made by Government failed to get corroboration of such speeches. He thought therefore that there was a good deal of exaggeration in the statements made by witnesses regarding the inflammatory speeches. After all the Government had to produce evidence that would stand in a court of law. (Exh: D 386, The Times of India dated 18.7.1929).

When the speeches were before the Government for a long time they thought themselves justified in holding their hands and thought that they were not sufficient to stand in a court of law. The failure of the Public Safety Bill, the failure to smash the strike, the increasing strength of our

Union and the failure of machinations to involve the militant workers in a pogrom changed this opinion. The conscience of Imperialism is elastic enough for that! Perhaps the speeches too had to undergo an operation to suit the new opinion. Till July, till the evidence of the Home Member, everything perhaps was not quite all right with the speeches, "to stand in a court of law." But the verdict of the counter-revolutionaries on the Riot Committee and the illogical and cowardly insistence of the Committee to throw everything on the shoulders of the Communists and to characterise the speeches as inflammatory and inciting every sort of crime emboldened and pleased Government, with the result that here we find them in their present form "fit to stand before a court of law."

From the foregoing I want to make two points: that during the strike and in the speeches, there was no incitement to acts of violence, that there were no acts of violence due to our speeches or because of the strike as such. But at the same time I do not assert that we were observing the "principle of non-violence". We could not be guilty of asking the much oppressed workers to surrender their heads to the lathi blows of Imperialist violence on the one hand and on the other of wailing at the feet of the armed Black and Tans. "Oh! the people are non-violent. Beat, if you must, but not unto death." We neither accepted non-violence as a principle, nor incited the people to acts

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of violence. Our attitude was to carry on the strike peacefully and if the Police and agents of the mill-owners tried to terrorise the workers into submission, to resist it with all the might that they could command. Toleration of lathi blows on the heads of women and children may excite romantic tears and admiration from reverent preachers, it may help to move the big pro-Imperialist bourgeoisie to signing a hypocritical protest, as the Bombay bourgeoisie did, with the callous and cowardly slogan "Beat, but not unto death." But, though as a result of such protests, Imperialism may substitute canes, covered, if, you like, with khaddar yarn, in place of the long lathis (as the Commissioner of Police did in Bombay last year) it does not serve to overthrow the Terror, to win freedom.

There is no contradiction or opportunism when on the one hand we asked the strike to be conducted peacefully and on the other hand spoke out one of our principles that no class power is overthrown except by violent revolution. The former was the immediate necessity of the objective situation. The latter is a deduction from historical experience, showing the inevitable way taken by all social revolutions in the past and that will be taken by them in the future also. The advocacy of the Socialist principle that a Socialist society will expropriate the property of the bourgeoisie has nowhere, as yet led even the ingenious bourgeois law to charge a Socialist with conspiracy to

commit house trespass, robbery etc. It would be equally absurd to charge a Communist with conspiracy to commit acts of violence or to incite acts of violence, because he believes that independence from Imperialism and overthrow of capitalism do not come except through a violent revolution. In this connection may also be pointed out the thesis adopted by the Communist International in the Third World Congress in the year 1921. The thesis had an eye especially on European conditions of that period when the proletariat there was making a straight bid for power and overthrowing the bourgeois States, - Republics and monarchies as well - by an armed revolution. In some cases the workers after seizing power had magnanimously released the bourgeois counter-revolutionaries who on obtaining freedom dynamited the revolution. In some cases the workers accepted anarchist and social revolutionary tendencies while in the majority of cases wherever possible the bourgeoisie shot, hanged and tortured the workers. About such conditions the thesis says, (Exh: P 2369) "With regard to the acts of White Terror and the fury of bourgeois justice, the C.P. must warn the workers not to be deceived during crisis by a hypocritical appeal to their leniency by the enemy but to demonstrate proletarian morality by acts of proletarian justice, in settling with the oppressors of the workers and in times when the workers are only preparing themselves, when they have to be mobilised by agitation, by political campaigns and strikes, armed

force may be used solely to defend the masses from bourgeois outrages. Individual acts of terrorism may demonstrate the revolutionary rancour of the masses and however justified they may be as acts of retribution against the lynch law of the bourgeoisie and its social democratic flunkeys, such deeds will not raise the workers to a high level of organisation or make them better prepared to face the struggle. Acts of sabotage are only justified when used for the purpose of hindering the despatch of enemy troops against the workers or for conquering important strategic points from the enemy in direct combat. Personal terrorist acts while they can easily be justified in view of the lynch law of the bourgeoisie are by no means the correct method for increasing the proletarian organisation and militant preparedness, for they give rise to the illusions in the minds of the working class that the heroic deeds of individuals can take the place of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat." Such was the attitude of the C.I. in the European conditions of 1921. Could it be expected of Communists in India, while conducting a purely economic strike and that too with the conditions of 1923, which were not advanced to even one hundredth of what they were in 1921 Europe, advocate a contrary policy to the above and think or conspire to commit acts of violence as is alleged?

(125) My three strike meeting speeches - Exhibits

P 1701M3, P 2242 and P 2245.

Out of the total of 71 reports of strike speeches of which 55 are by two shorthand Marathi reporters, 14 are by a newspaper reporter employed by the C.I.D. and not knowing Marathi and shorthand reporting and 2 merely short notes by a Police-station Inspector, (P.W. 245), 3 speeches are put in evidence against me individually. (1) P 1701 M.3 reported by P.W. 278, Deobhanker and delivered on 21st July 1928 in the Marwari Vidyalaya Hall; (2) P 2242 of 2nd June & (3) P 2245 of 7th June, both reported by P.W. 273, Macwan and delivered in Nagu Sayaji Wadi.

I have not kept any diary of the meetings I attended and the speeches delivered. Therefore I am not in a position to say, if I attended and delivered speeches at those places and on those dates which have been deposed to by the witnesses because there have been cases during the strike under reference where reporters reported in the press that I was present and spoke, while in fact I was not present at all at the meetings. When a glaring instance of this type occurred, reporting an imaginary speech of mine on the Bardoli Satyagraha in a meeting which I had never attended and therefore I had never any occasion to deliver the speech, I sent a contradiction to the press which was published once. (If I am allowed the opportunity, I can produce that contradiction as a defence exhibit). But when I found that it was becoming a practice and was part of a game against us, I did not again bother myself with such corrections.

Many a time it happened that no reporter attended a meeting, but saw some one of us at his room or office, inquired where and when the meeting had been held and who attended. He would then go, put a para or two in the mouth of one or two of us, make out several copies and pass it on to a group of reporters for several papers. Then a report would appear with some such introduction. "The Labour leaders, as usual, harangued the strikers to day at" (See a sample in D 548). Though the report was the same one circulated to all, some of the sentences used to get coloured in the editorial offices, according to the politics of the paper concerned.

I wonder how with the depositions of the two witnesses concerned with the three speeches of mine, I can be expected to explain. I will take the case of P 1701. According to the witness P.W. 278 it was delivered in English, before an English knowing audience of intellectuals of the Deccani petty bourgeois area of Bombay city, called the Girgaon area, where the Hall is situated. As such I should have been easily making hundred words a minute. The witness who reported this speech is not an English reporter and he himself says that this was known to the Deputy Commissioner of Police who posted him on duty. He acknowledges that he cannot take verbatim report in English longhand and he himself did not know English shorthand.

16/12/31 (Evening Part II).

When I suggested to the Court about this witness that I would like to carry out a test of the reporter in English, I was told that the question did not arise and the conclusion was obvious that the man could not report English speeches. The witness says "I took only what I thought important in the speaker's speech as it is impossible to take verbatim in English longhand. My report is not a full report". In the face of such facts it is needless to comment on the attempt of the Prosecution in re-examination to get the statement from the witness - "whatever I have put down was said, though it is true that I missed a good deal". The witness has missed such a "good deal" that the report looks like that of an incoherent sleepy talk rather than that of a lecture delivered before an intellectual audience. Moreover, the reporter's knowledge of English is so meagre that he is incapable of following any speech in English, even to the smallest extent, let alone the important parts. This can be seen from the corrections made by the Deputy Commissioner of Police in the gist reports submitted by the witness and also in the present exhibit. I disclaim any responsibility to explain a report which has "missed a good deal".

Then I come to the next two exhibits. With regard to this the process of reporting is exactly the reverse to that of the above. The witness here is a Christian by birth,

(a point especially brought forth in re-examination by the Prosecution itself), has the Gujrati vernacular as his mother tongue, is a newspaper reporter in English shorthand while the reports in exhibit are of speeches delivered in Marathi. You can never get such a perfect piece of evidence! I do not mean to suggest that his Christianity would stand in the way of his reporting the speeches of an anti-religious Communist or that his mother tongue Gujrati would resent the entrance of Marathi on such a tongue of his as could very generously accommodate an evidence of falsehood and contradictions. Neither do I suggest that English shorthand reporting incapacitated his fingers from reporting in Marathi longhand or shorthand. None of these by themselves are mutually exclusive factors. But then we find all of them in all their worst distortions, that can be found only in a reporter, acting as a C.I.D. informer, as he himself says, while serving as a chief reporter on the most patriotic daily newspaper, the "Bombay Chronicle", whose "sheet-anchor" we are told, "is non-violence" and whose chief reporter of the political weather around, helping to steer that sheet-anchor, is an Imperialist police spy. No wonder the "Chronicle" never anchored at a single point of truth regarding the workers' movement in the Bombay island. "Asked whether whenever he had been employed by the police it was in his professional capacities as a reporter the witness said 'in the whole world the press and the police have to cooperate

and they give us news and we give them something in return.' This "something" in the present instance is his fourteen reports put into exhibit in this case against us and out of these fourteen "somethings" I am asked to explain two. What else can I say than that these reports are merely "somethings in return" for the news and the 300-400 rupees that the police paid him and have no other value. The witness unconsciously and in indignation has spoken the truth. In the whole world the class press and class police of the bourgeoisie have to cooperate and produce "something in return" for each others' services, in order that the class enemy of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat, may be decimated on the strength of that "something" of a piece of evidence in the courts of that bourgeoisie.

Let us see what processes these two speeches have been subjected to by this reporter. These speeches, delivered in Marathi, he followed in English, mentally translated them on the spot as they were being delivered and took notes of this mental translation in English shorthand. The witness says he knows simple Marathi but is not a Marathi scholar. Being not given to sticking to one thing either in life or in evidence, he also followed a Marathi speech by mental translation in Gujrati longhand and mixed it with English shorthand. (P 2237 of Nimbkar; vide his deposition). Thus this prodigy, who has been a journalist and English shorthand reporter for the last 22 years, heard our speeches

in Marathi, mentally translated them either in Gujrati or English, took them down in a mixture of Gujrati longhand and English shorthand, and finally gave them a form of "something" which now stands here as Prosecution evidence of what we spoke to the workers. Had it been a case under S. 124 A for seditious speeches, Government would not have dared to bring these against me even before a packed jury but in a charge of conspiracy not only "something" but anything can become evidence.

The Prosecution finding that the reliability of the witness was very rudely shattered, hit upon a very ingenious device of proving that he knew Marathi and consequently Marathi reporting also. They got from him the following statement "our church services and prayers are conducted in Marathi". Thereby the Prosecution want to challenge the effect of our cross-examination showing that the witness knew nothing of Marathi or Marathi reporting. The logic of the Prosecution unfortunately is undermined by History. The church services and prayers of an Indian Christian may be carried on in Marathi. But the Prosecution failed to ask this most Christian reporter if he himself ever attended his church. I think the Prosecution thought the question superfluous. Because they knew that the necessity to attend his church prayers is very preemptory for a man like this reporter, who while on leave with full pay from a patriotic daily was doing the work for the C.I.D. Certainly the need

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to wash his sins must be very pressing and I am prepared to grant that he regularly attended his prayers. But then history shows that God has never ordained that his devotees must understand the language of the divine utterance. On the contrary, the practice has been that all the transactions between God and his devotees have been carried on in something like a code language. The Parsis do not understand the Pahlavi of their prayers, the majority of Mohammedans do not understand the Arabic of their Quranic prayers, the Hindus have at least a hundred keys to decode the Vedas; and for the Christians they have Latin for Roman Catholic services. Contrary to this most conservative march of history is there any reason why our most Christianly conservative reporter of 22 years experience in English reporting should and must understand the Marathi of his prayers? I again grant that this devout double dealer did understand the language of his church, which church also, I grant for a moment, was, unlike its historical traditions, not practising double dealing between God and his devotees in this case. Because otherwise if the church were affected by its devotees, then it might also begin mentally translating the original Latin prayers in Biblical English shorthand and deliver them in a mixture of Gujrati longhand with an accent or alphabet of Marathi, and especially for the benefit of so versatile a devotee as Mr. Macwan. But I grant that the excellent church did not do this and our Mr. reporter understood the church

Marathi. But what about understanding our Marathi, the Marathi of the Bolshevik speakers and also of ordinary men? Unfortunately for the Prosecution their own expert Marathi witness, direct from the Oriental Translators' Office of the Bombay Government Mr. Ezekiel, P.W. 275, says "the Marathi translation of Bible, Old and New Testament is in what is popularly called missionary Marathi. Marathi used in churches is very different Marathi." Mr. Ezekiel has been put forward as a witness who has translated the Marathi documents and newspapers for the Prosecution and yet he has so carelessly undermined the foundations of the Marathi of a brother witness. Mr. Ezekiel is a Jew and the Prosecution is certainly entitled to argue that Mr. Ezekiel for a time forgot his role of a brother witness and as a Jew took his ancient revenge against the Christian Mr. Macwan. The fact is that both the witnesses are faithful to their sole master, but contradicted each other's interests and opinions simply because their master is a bundle of contradictions.

The Defence did not leave the matter at that. A number of Marathi sentences from the speeches on record were read out to the witness - Macwan. In one case, of a simple sentence of six words, he said "I can not follow the words spoken nor read the Marathi writing" (D 617). Many of the sentences dictated by one of the accused and taken down by this reporter were shown to the Marathi translator Mr. Ezekiel. In one case he said, "it is however not good

Marathi. There are also many mistakes in spelling and grammar". Regarding another sentence taken down by him the translator says "similarly (the sentence) is gramatically wront". "The sentence (follows) sounds to me as if the writer were a Gujrati".

The obvious conclusion is this. When the police found that the Times of India reporter Mr. Sirur who was formerly doing work for them got into trouble with the strikers for false reporting, they searched for some man who would not be suspected of doing work for them. They got this man, Macwan, and his cloak of a nationalist newspaper reporter served them well for some time. For the sake of the handsome sum of Rs 400/- for sixteen meetings (see his deposition) he bluffed the police that he knew Marathi. He took leave with full pay from his paper, did the work of the police and produced what he calls "something" of reports. And the Prosecution in all seriousness want in their turn to bluff the Court into believing an evidence based on and produced from nothing but bluff.

I disclaim any responsibility for the speeches put in through this witness.

(126) The help of the international proletariat to the strike.

I will now take the question of the financing of the strike. I have already mentioned the two big sums received

from the Trade Unions in Russia for the relief of the strikers. The Imperialist and nationalist bourgeois press made much propaganda against us feeding the petty bourgeois public on stories of how the Reds killed the bourgeoisie in the revolution and how the money received for the strike still carries the red colour of their blood. Many patriots and reactionary feudal landlords in the Assembly and elsewhere directly incited Government to stop this money from being delivered or to take action against us for receiving it.

(Dange)

D/17.12.31

Morning 1st Part.

The balance-sheet of income and expenditure of the Joint Strike Committee shows a total income of Rs.1,11,527-9- from 7th May 1928 to 31st January 1929. The income and expenditure after October 4th when the strike was called off are merely readjustments and minor items. Out of this income Rs.82,238-5-5- were from foreign contributions and Rs.26,383-6-3 from inland contributions. The balance of Rs.2905-5-3 is something like cross entries, being refunds of tickets and sale of gunny bags bought with corn. This shows in the first place that the largest part of help for the strikers came from the European workers. Leaving aside the refunds etc. money from foreign contributions was 75.7 per cent and from inland 24.3 per cent of all contributions, as such. For every rupee received from inside the country Rs.3 were received from the European workers.

The money came from different organisations of workers in Europe. Money was sent both by the Yellow and the Red organisations, as the Prosecution would like to classify them. It would appear from the accounts that the Yellows sent Rs. 43,073-0-8 and the Reds Rs. 39,165-4-9 of the total of Rs. 82,238-5-5. This shows in the second place that the Reds alone were not desirous that the strikers should be helped in their struggles. The Yellows also wanted the strike to succeed, at that time at least. It may be noted

that in the total of Rs. 82,238-5-5 mentioned above Rs.17,660-11-0 were not received during this strike, but were the balance left over from the moneys received during the General Strike of 1925 in which none of the Communists here were participants. It would appear as if the innocent Yellow leaders had kept this balance ready for the coming strike of the "mischievous Reds"!

Now if we take the third test as to who from the Strike Committee, the Reds or the Yellows, received these moneys for the strikers, we find that Rs.18,095-5-8 only passed through the hands of two of the accused here and Rs.64,142-15 came through Mr. N.M. Joshi and his organisations. That is 78 per cent of the "financing" of the strike came through absolutely "safest for the Empire" hands.

While dealing with these figures it may be remembered that though these sums by themselves look very imposing in the poverty-stricken Indian conditions, where Relief and Charity Fund collections do not swell beyond a few thousands, their importance must not be exaggerated. The collections for the Bardoli peasants' fight which was proceeding parallel to the strike did not go beyond Rs.2,00,000 when the whole of the nationalist bourgeoisie in all the provinces stood behind that movement with its men, money and press. We will be over-estimating the utility of this money if we lose sight of their relation to the wages and living of the workers who were put on relief. The relief operations began

from June 12th and lasted for 114 days. The round sum of Rs. 95,000 spent on corn relief gives Rs. 833 per day, whereas the wages of the textile workers per day, which they had ceased to receive, amounted to Rs. 2,00,000. The relief distributed over all the workers comes to 248th part of their wages. These "tons of foreign money" against which the Government and the bourgeoisie shrieked do not give more than one pie to each worker who earned Rs. 1-6 per day on an average. If his family had consumed $2\frac{1}{2}$ seers of flour a day it was being offered now a homoeopathic wheat flour pill of near about one fourth a tola per day for the whole family! Even supposing that the whole money was spent on the 30,000 strikers only, who came to receive relief and were the neediest of all the workers, they received only 38th part or pies 5 per head per day. Such a paltry sum can never explain and take the place of the self-sacrifice of the workers. It is not the tons of foreign money that encouraged the workers to fight vigorously for their demands, though it may be recognised that the help of the international working class did render partial aid in saving the very needy from complete starvation and death in many a case.

Neither did this money play any part in aiding the organisational work of the strike. The organisational expenses of the Strike Committee were about Rs. 13,000 in round figures. The money collected inside India was double this sum and even if the transport expenses of the exodus

of the strikers from Bombay (Rs. 3,310-2-3) were not considered as a form of relief but as a part of organisational work, the total would still be far less than the inland collections. Without money coming from outside, the inland contributions would have fully covered our organisational expenses which certainly are one of the most important demands on the resources of a strike-leading organisation.

By this analysis about the source of the moneys received and its recipients, I am not trying to take any shelter behind the fact that even the most loyal-to-Imperialism organisation like the International Federation of Trade Unions and its affiliated organisations like the British Trade Union Congress or the International Federation of Textile Workers' Associations sent money to help the strikers and the largest part of it through such an excellent Socialist and Trade Unionist like the Rt. Hon'ble Tom Shaw who has succeeded in reconciling his Socialism, which in words denounces war, with his War Ministership under Imperialism itself. The analysis shows partly the character of the strike of 1928 and the way it was being looked at by the world trade unions. The class struggle of the Bombay Textile workers had not yet assumed a definite uncompromising form of class war fought exclusively under the leadership and influence of the Red Flag and all that it connotes. The workers had not yet ideologically, organisationally and practically taken the definite role of revolutionary trade

unionism. The big trade union drive that burst forth after October 1928 was not visible in even the faintest symptoms before or during the strike and the sincere determined trade unionism of the Communists was treated as the exuberance of "rusticated college students" as the Times of India put it. Little had the pro-Imperialist I.F.T.U. dreamt that soon a mighty wave of organisational activity unheard of before would be set in motion by the working class in Bombay, just being awakened into class consciousness. The I.F.T.U. hoped to demolish the new leadership by financially propping up the Geneva heroes and making them appear before the workers as their saviours from hunger. Hence the great activity and sympathy shown by the I.F.T.U. and I.F.T.W.A. in sending money for the textile workers.

If the desire of the I.F.T.U. had been genuine, if it had only the idea of working for the success of the workers' strike, it would not have refused help to the strike in 1929 or allowed its largest constituent, the British T.U.C. to condemn the textile workers next year. But the I.F.T.U.'s pro-Imperialist game was lost. After the strike of 1928 the Bombay Textile workers organically bound themselves on a large scale to what is signified by the Red Flag and naturally the I.F.T.U., the British T.U.C. and the I.F.T.W.A. which were so generous in the preceding years in their appeals for help to the Bombay workers, became louder in

their shrieks of hatred next year. The Socialist Pacifist Tom Shaw, who previously was hurling bank drafts for the strike was next year - a War Minister - mobilising his "men-of-war" against the workers. But unfortunately for these gentlemen, class war does not sail on bank drafts nor does it halt for the armed pacifists who are pacifists in Imperialist wars and armed against class wars.

The complaint of the Indian bourgeoisie against the Imperialist Government for allowing the money to come into India for the help of the strikers was quite justified. The bourgeoisie knew that the I.F.T.U. and the colonial working class cannot pull together for long; that we would soon break up with the Genevite sweet speakers and it also knew that the I.F.T.U. will desert but the workers of the Soviet Union will not. And if the workers of the Soviet Union are allowed to help the colonial workers, where will the bourgeoisie be? Naturally if it had to live and also appear as the nationalist leaders of the working class, it must break the Indian working class away from the U.S.S.R., away from every militant section of the world proletariat. Hence it asked for and got the Public Safety Bill.

At the same time we are also justified in insisting on our right to take the help of the international proletariat. Capitalism has destroyed the national barriers by ramming down the Chinese walls of national isolation by its cheap commodity production, export of goods and capital.

Imperialism, its next stage, by its world organisation of exploiting the working class and peasantry, has created a world society. But it has also divided the whole world into two hostile camps, the world bourgeoisie and the world proletariat. When the smallest part of this world bourgeoisie by its international contradictions threatens a collapse and thereby a danger to the world bourgeoisie, the most powerful sections of Imperialism act internationally to prop up the collapsing sector though the prop does not help to save it. For example the shortage of gold of the Bank of England calls in the help of the Federal Reserve Bank of the U.S.A. The bourgeoisie also cooperates internationally to suppress the colonial workers, as in China. As against this the world proletariat is bound to cooperate internationally and if the working class of India is attacked in its standards of wages, whose help is ^{it} to seek but that of the world proletariat and especially of the Soviet Union? All the weak capitalist nations run to the U.S.A., the banker of the world bourgeoisie, for help. All the oppressed workers of the world naturally run to the U.S.S.R. for help, the banker of freedom for the world proletariat. Possessing political power, experience, the resources of a vast country, the Soviet Union is the best fitted to help the world proletariat. In our need are we to ask help from the victorious working class of the U.S.S.R. or from the bankers of the U.S.A.? The Central Council of Trade Unions

of the U.S.S.R., the Red International of Labour Unions is for us what the Council of the International Chamber of Commerce is for the world bourgeoisie - with this difference that the latter suffers from cut-throat competitions within itself and is the organ of a declining class while the former has no internal contradictions and is the organ of the advancing class. Knowing this the Indian bourgeoisie tries to break the solidarity of the Indian workers with those of other countries and especially with those of the U.S.S.R.; and knowing this we have to stand and work for the maintenance of this solidarity. It can never be destroyed by laws of banishment, prohibition of entry of money and fraternal delegates into India from the workers of other countries, because that solidarity is grounded on the organisation of modern world economy.

(127) Inland help to the strike - collections in
Bombay, Poona, Ahmedabad etc. the Congress help.

Our insistence to retain international solidarity will be clearer when some attention is paid to the attitude of the Indian nationalist bourgeoisie towards the relief funds of the strikers. I have already referred to the pious advice of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mr. C.F. Andrews and Sadhus of their ilk. The nationalist bourgeoisie is not opposed to receiving foreign money from any source as such. It does not want the Indian workers to get help from the international proletariat and especially from that of the

Soviet Union. The nationalist bourgeois is jubilant at the prospect of dollars and francs if they come for his toy-fight with Imperialism. When the rouble was crashing in value in 1920, he bought the rouble - the Red rouble - and speculated heavily on it; and one member of their class was ludicrous enough to institute a suit in the court of British Imperialism against the Soviet Union asking for redemption of the paper roubles he held. But the bourgeoisie would not like the workers to receive roubles to relieve them of hunger. Such attitude would have had some show of justification if the nationalist bourgeoisie had itself rendered help. It not only did not render help but even sabotaged any being given; and the leadership of this sabotage belonged to the big bosses of the National Congress, including Mahatma Gandhi.

The Strike Committee organised street collections of relief money from the shopkeepers and the petty bourgeoisie in Bombay and elsewhere and from the workers in Bombay and outside. In every place it was met with opposition from the nationalist bourgeoisie.

17/12/31 (Morning Part II).

The nearest to us were the workers in other industries and unions, whom we approached for help and some collections on pay-day were made by our volunteers at the gates of factories. We also approached individual Trade Unions in Bombay and some help was obtained from them. But the low wages of the colonial workers prevent them from accumulating big reserves of funds in their Unions, which besides being young are attacked from all sides and not allowed to grow. Therefore the help from these resources was small though not poor. Then we tackled the bourgeois and petty bourgeois sections which were not directly under the influence of the textile capitalists. The Citizens Relief Committee working mostly under the direction and influence of Mr. N.M. Joshi and his people of the Servants of India Society was organised in August 1928 in a meeting at the Servants of India Society. This Committee collected a small amount from the merchants and petty traders. In a young bourgeoisie, as we find in the colonies, a highly sensitive class consciousness of the interest of its class as a whole as against another class has not penetrated to all its various sections as it has done in the capitalisms of the U.S.A. or England. Therefore we meet with such aberrations as a Grain Dealers' Association paying a thousand rupees to the Strike Relief Fund through this

Committee. However, such aberrations were few. Generally the bourgeois and petty bourgeois were hostile to the relief fund and naturally so. They certainly were not going to aid a class war against their own class interest. During the next six months, this class outlook grew so strong and organised that not a single aberration of the kind mentioned above was found in the attitude of the whole of the Bombay bourgeoisie towards the strike in 1929.

Next we approached the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee. This body has of late boasted very much of its interest in the masses and has said that the workers should throng into its ranks and make it their own so that it can wholly look to their welfare. Now the workers have no time to waste in making experiments each year, to measure how far the Congress has moved towards the workers and away from the bourgeoisie. Our experience has confirmed our statement that the workers can never capture this bourgeois stronghold by votes and elections. Can the workers capture the mills and banks of the bourgeoisie by votes? Certainly not. It is something like that with the Congress also. In 1928 we possessed nearly half the votes on the B.P.C.C. and the General Secretary was ours, while most of the Sub Committees had majority of our members. In all the meetings, where the interests of the bourgeoisie were not touched, where financial helped except for the benefit of the financial ring in control was not asked, the members left

the working majority to us and were slack. But when we asked money for the Strike Relief Fund and held meeting for it the game of sabotage was started. They lured away many of the young men that generally supported us and prevented a quorum being formed. (Exhibit reference of speeches). Ultimately by several manoeuvres we succeeded in holding the meeting. Shamelessly enough, some of the members, who were the hirelings of the pro-Shaukat Ali groups, wanted to sanction money with the proviso of communal distribution which we refused. Then they wanted to come themselves with their petty contribution of Rs. 3,000/- and distribute it personally. We were not going to consent to a parallel organisation to function in the strike area and then allow it to become a source of dissensions. In order to hush up our opposition in public and denunciation of their bourgeois character, at last a sum was sanctioned. Then the bureaucracy sabotaged the handing over of the money. The treasurer had no money! The cheques had to be obtained from the Trust Committee, which first must decide for itself, if it had any margin at all to pay for this extra demand, not budgeted for before. Thus the thing dragged on for days. The B.P.C.C. which had written off thousands of rupees given out to questionable characters posing as Khadi merchants and producers, had invested large sums of its Swaraj Fund collections, in foreign goods stores (for example the Ashoka Swedeshi Stores Ltd.) and

Motor Car Companies, because the directors of the Fund were the directors of these companies, sabotaged relief being given to the strikers. With the self same coterie still in control of the Congress, we are told that it has now suddenly become a Congress of workers. Can the Congress dominated by the agents of Fazalbhoy and Birlas ever be a Congress of the wage slaves of Fazalbhoy and Birlas? Impossible.

Were we not aware of the nature of the Congress and of the petty bourgeoisie? Why then did we ask help from them, if we did not expect them to help? Because we wanted them to expose themselves by their own actions before the workers. It is never sufficient that the few conscious workers should know the behaviour and attitude of the nationalist bourgeoisie. The whole working class must be convinced by actual experience of their own about the correctness of our attitude. The sabotaging activities of the bureaucracy of the Congress helped us to secure this experience for the workers.

We also sent delegations to Poona and Ahmedabad to collect money and win support for the strike. In Ahmedabad they met Mahatma Gandhi personally and requested him to render help through his Union. His first and foremost statement was (Reference exhibit speech P 1702) "I am not convinced that the workers are in the right. How can I

help them?" That revealed the bourgeois in him. He did not begin by doubting the bourgeoisie. But he started with the assumption that the workers were wrong and that is what the bourgeois does. Our delegation left him to his prayers and his mill-owners and went straight over his head to the workers in Ahmedabad. Directly they collected there Rs.5863/6/3.

So who ultimately came to the rescue of the Bombay workers in their starvation and strike? The Bombay Municipality made fun of their suffering; patriots of the Congress sabotaged our attempts to secure money; the Mahatma presumed the workers to be in the wrong. What did the mill-owners do? They asked the Imperialist armed forces to help them in forcibly opening the mills, got our volunteers arrested and sent to prison, clamoured for our arrest, the Public Safety Bill and the Trade Disputes Bill, joined hands with Imperialism against the workers. Thus the bourgeoisie was pro-imperialist and its patriotic agents hid their likeness with their creators - the bourgeoisie - under a padding of coarse khaddar. But unfortunately for them Marxism is a powerful enough ray to tear the veil. In 1925 the Gauhati Congress had passed a resolution favouring the workers and peasants. In 1931, we find Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru telling the Bombay workers that the Congress will side with the workers in a dispute between them and the capitalists. But when the class war actually begins, the workers find these

pandits on the other side of the barricade ready to render the only service they can do, that is to appoint Inquiry Committees to determine whether the patriotic and most swedeshi mill-owner had or had not telephoned for the armed forces to come and beat the women workers assembled before the mill-gates to demand their dues. (Example of a latest case in Bombay). It is only the international working class that sincerely helped the Bombay workers. The Russian, British, German and other workers in the foreign countries and Indian workers at home together gave 94 per cent of the total relief money for their comrade strikers. It was this solid objective experience that taught the workers the slogan "Workers of the world unite" - it is this that convinced them that along with Imperialism must be abolished the Indian bourgeoisie also and that the fight will be carried on by the workers and peasants organised in their own class organisation and not under the leadership of the "tax-gatherers of Imperialism" like the bosses of the Congress.

Section 3

- (128) Small revolt against the October agreement
- Ex. P 966 - the task after the strike -
competitors of the G.K.U. - volunteers and
the Union - Ex. P 967 and P 929.

The strike was called off by a monster meeting held in the Nagu Sayaji Wadi on 5th October 1928, where the agreement arrived at on the previous day with the mill-

owners was explained. Tremendous enthusiasm prevailed and the agreement was endorsed by the workers. Almost every prominent member of the Joint Strike Committee of both the wings was present and spoke in the meeting. A handbill over the signatures of the Joint Secretaries of the Committee was also issued explaining the terms. It is a fact that the agreement did not remove the rational system - the three loom and two frame system - from the Sassoon, Finlay and Koh-i-Noor Mills. Nearly ten thousand workers who were directly hit by the system remained dissatisfied; and had every reason to revolt against the agreement, which they did. When on Monday morning 6th October, the mills were reopened and the workers in these groups found that they had to work under the old rational system, they considered themselves betrayed. They came out and started a campaign to close down the mills again. Herein was going to be tested the new leaders of the workers. In former days and even today in many cases where the reformist leadership is predominant, the rule was that when an unfavourable agreement in any respect was repudiated by the workers, the leaders decamped and refused to face the fury of the dissatisfied workers. We could not afford to do this. We had to stay with the workers, we belonged to them, wholly and solely. Therefore we went straight into the meetings of the dissatisfied workers and explained to them how the system could not be overthrown. The workers

had held out for nearly six months, the mill-owners had agreed to the demands of almost all the workers excepting the Sassoon section and in the present conditions it was impossible to continue the struggle any longer on that sole issue. But if they insisted upon continuing the struggle we were bound to carry out their mandate; our signatures over the agreement had no value by themselves. Any agreement entered into in the name of the rank and file must be endorsed by the rank and file. If they refused to endorse, it must be scrapped. We had given our definite opinion and lead that work ought to be resumed. But in order to measure the exact extent of the resistance, we issued the handbill - Ex. P 966. The Prosecution claim that this handbill shows that immediately after we had settled the strike, we wanted to stop the mills from working normally and therefore called upon the workers to start a boycott of some of the mills. This handbill was also brought as an exhibit by the mill-owners before the Fawcett Inquiry Committee of 30/10/28 and is printed in their proceedings at page 113. (Ex. D 523). The mill-owners argued exactly as the Prosecution argue now. And this action proves the identify of though of the Indian bourgeoisie in Bombay and the Prosecution here and confirms the statement of Spratt that this case is a strike-breaking Prosecution and nothing else. However this handbill does not lend itself to the interpretation of the Prosecution.

It did not call upon the workers to continue the strike though we would not have hesitated to do so if necessary. The question form of the sentence at the top which they have failed to notice itself shows this. It was a question, as I have said, to measure the extent of the resistance to the agreement in order to aid us in deciding our line of action. The response to this handbill as we expected was negligible. After one or two meetings it became clear that the Sassoon workers also were exhausted and the majority of them were unwilling and unable to continue the struggle at that moment just then. This was quite natural. They had been the first victim of rationalisation and had been fighting for over one year. Within four days the agreement had been accepted on all sides and accepted with thorough understanding. The greatest factor in bringing about this result was the fact that the workers found that here was a leadership that was not going to desert their struggle, though it might have to face ups and downs in the process.

The resumption of work confronted us with greater tasks and new problems. The experience of the world proletariat had taught us that Capitalism, when forced to make concessions or withdraw its attacks on the wages and hours of workers, tries to nullify them by devious ways, unless the leadership is vigilant and organisation strong. The agreement of 4th October contained three soft spots,

where we were sure the mill-owners would try to drive in spikes to break the gains of the strike. One was the elasticity of the clause, restoring wages and conditions of March 1927, the second was that the question of musters would not be raised.

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The third was the payment of fixed rates of wages for the provisional period of October and November till full work commenced on older rates, after the machinery and equipment had been set in proper order for work. The mill-owners' tactics of depriving the workers of the gains of the strike through these soft spots two of which were in fact the essential demands at the root of the general strike, could not commence in October. Because the workers who had gone back to their villages did not return till the third week of October. But smaller complaints of victimisation did begin to pour in and we had to set up an organisation to deal with them and therefrom arose the organisational work of the Girni Kamgar Union.

As has been stated, the G.K.U. was founded on 22nd May 1928 during the general strike, under circumstances which have been fully shown elsewhere. During the strike the Union as such did not function, except in so far as it was a participant in the Joint Strike Committee. All meetings, picketing, relief distribution etc., were done in the name of the Strike Committee, though the moderate group of Mr. N. M. Joshi took care to mention wherever it could, that the foreign remittances for relief were received by the Bombay Textile Labour Union and were contributed by that Union to the Strike Committee. During the strike the

G.K.U. income from May to October was Rs. 88-12-0. When the strike was over, though the Strike Committee, composed of three unions, continued to exist, the three unions began to separately build up their own organisations. The Bombay Textile Labour Union had a ready-made apparatus, which so far as its office work went, was well organised. That Union had been working since 1926 and its first year of report showed 6,000 membership with Rs. 17,000 as collections. The second annual report showed 4,000 members with Rs. 12,000 as collections. (A.I.T.U. Bulletin, October 1928). When it started competition with us it had Rs.13,000 to back it up, four centre offices in the mill area and a paid office staff. Our Union had no centre offices except the Head Office whose rent also was in arrears. We had committed ourselves to pay Rs. 2,000 for relief grain as our contribution, when the money for relief distribution in the last week of the strike fell short. So while our debts were over Rs. 2,000, we had Rs. 14 to our credit with our treasurer. But we had one thing which our rivals had not got. We had the immense strength of a revolutionary theory and a scientific faith in the creative capacity of the proletariat. On such foundation and Rs. 14 we started to build up the G.K.U., backed up by the additional credit of our work during a victorious strike. In our lectures during the strike, we had already from time to time emphasised the necessity of a strong union embracing the

majority of workers with an efficient staff and volunteer corps. Accordingly we issued on 12th October 1928 a handbill (P 967) explaining to the workers how and to whom they should pay subscriptions, the necessity for raising a substantial fund and a cadre of organisers to push up organisational work. This handbill also had been used by the mill-owners against us before the Fawcett Committee and the same is now being brought in this case.

The Prosecution has raised a tremendous structure over this handbill and the scheme of volunteers' and speakers' corps outlined therein. The Committing Magistrate says, "This provision of an army is an unusual feature of Trade Union propaganda but from the point of view of the revolutionary it is an eminently sound proposal." The Magistrate also quotes a handbill (P 929) issued by me on 12th December 1929.

The programme outlined in these two handbills contains nothing very serious to warrant the remarks of the Magistrate or the use of it made by the Prosecution. The Prosecution have raised a structure of a revolutionary conspiracy to overthrow the British Empire. But to unearth a conspiracy extending over several years and not to find an "army to wage war" would make the Government look disgraceful and discredited. An army or at least plans of raising one is an absolute necessity in such a conspiracy extending over three continents and aimed at the overthrow

of the mightiest Empire on earth. Now for four years the secret Police careered over the whole world for documents but they had to find some army in India ready to pounce on the King's sovereignty. Otherwise the drama would be without any romance. Having found the roots of the conspiracy at Moscow, the Prosecution should not have been so very anxious to unearth a Red Army in India. They should have contented themselves with the Soviet Red Army and our appreciation of the heroism of that body. But the subtle legal brains refused to consider the conspiracy quite complete, until some Red Army, drilling right down here under the very nose of Imperialism and shaking the beer bottles of the Imperialist bureaucracy by its heavy march were found; and after a tremendous search of six hours of the offices of the Girni Kamgar Union they found these two handbills. Well, if you cannot find the Red Army, the next best is an army of Red handbills. At last the whole Red Army had vanished, perhaps converted into "invisibles" and bottled up in the three mysterious bottles of tincture iodine for First Aid, (another army apparatus) found with Spratt. The handbills were seized and exhibited, for do they not actually contain the words "Red Army"?

Anybody who is not previously told that these handbills are issued by some terrible conspirators and are valuable evidence to show that these conspirators were raising a Red Army like the Bolsheviki to overthrow the Empire will

not take these leaflets for anything more than what they actually say, i.e. they call for a volunteer corps and a staff of worker-speakers and organisers for the organisation of the Union.

(129) The functions of Red Trade Union Volunteers.

The Magistrate thinks that it is an unusual feature for a trade union to have such an army or corps but he thinks it a sound proposal from the point of view of the revolutionary. I do not think that to have a volunteer corps or to call it a Red Army or to dress it in Red clothes is a revolutionary act. It is the function discharged by that body which would make it revolutionary or otherwise. Almost every institution in India or in the world maintains some sort of volunteer corps. And if a coloured dress or badge and the word Army were sufficient, the most reactionary Salvation Army would have been the most revolutionary body. I do not put the G.I.K. on par with the Salvation Army. What I mean is that mere names and descriptions do not help. It is the actual task carried out that makes one revolutionary or reactionary. The task allotted to the volunteers that were to be raised was definitely laid down in the handbill. A trade union if it is to function properly on a wide area must have a volunteer corps. They are required for picketing, for keeping order at meetings, for acting as couriers from mill to mill in emergency times and to

defend the union, its offices and workers from murderous attacks of the Police and its henchmen. The most important of all is the last task. These were purely defensive and trade union tasks and the handbills do not say anything beyond this - only it is said in a forceful manner.

British Imperialism allows only reactionary organisation in India to have even armed volunteer corps. Every European and Anglo-Indian in India is an armed man flourishing his revolver at the poor workers and peasants that he meets with. Hunting and shooting parties of idle Magistrates, Bank Managers and business men trample over fields and forests, arms in hand and many a time shoot a peasant in place of a deer and escape with a fine of a few rupees for a human life. But if the poor peasant were to enter the forest for a piece of fuel wood without a permit he would straight off be marched to jail. British, American and Australian tourists roam about the country with arms in hand in a disarmed country and shoot rickshaw coolies (as in the famous Simla case) and ekka-drivers (as in the recent Madras case) for demanding larger fare of a few annas. The law of the bourgeoisie and its bourgeois administrators negotiate compensation in money value of the lost life of the poor worker. But when an infuriated peasantry harassed by famine and taxation kills a zamindar, a planter or a Magistrate, the armed forces of Imperialism, aided by its corps shoot and hang hundreds of the peasants

for one life of an exploiter. The working class and the peasantry have no protection of law or of the State, because the State and the law belong to their enemies - the Imperialists and the bourgeoisie. Naturally the working class and peasantry have to organise their own machinery of protection against the armed White Terror. Such a machinery in the circumstances of the Girni Kamgar Union could only take the form of a volunteer corps.

As such the functions of Red Volunteers are quite different from those of the bourgeoisie. The volunteers of the reactionary organisations, like that of the Salvation Army & Scouts of the Powell breed are auxiliary forces of Imperialism against the movement of national freedom, and against the workers and peasants. In times of strikes and acute national struggles, they play the role of the murderers of workers and peasants, as was shown by the role of the Kitchner Corps in the G.I.P. Railway strike, the territorials, and the Anglo-Indian Rifle Clubs. The functions of the Red Volunteers are also different from those of the Congress and such other organisations. The Congress volunteers are not given the task of protecting the people. For this the volunteers are not to be blamed. Some of them personally have shown the highest heroism like any soldier of the Revolution. But the effect of their heroism is not to further the cause of national freedom but make peace with the exploiters; because the Congress

bourgeoisie uses their heroism for compromise and sabotage of the struggle of the youths, workers and peasants. In the innumerable massacres that the Police have carried out of the peasants in U.P., the volunteers of the Congress were sent under the command of respectable leaders with an ambulance car and the slogan of peace and surrender after the Imperialist Police have shot and looted the peasantry.

The functions of the volunteers of the militant trade unions must be quite different from these. In the first place our corps is definitely built on class lines. The men being drawn from the working class in the towns (and the poor peasantry in the villages), secondly our volunteers are out to carry out the needs of the class war and not of class peace, thirdly our volunteers are under the control and command of the class leadership of the workers. Necessarily some more features arise from this.

H.K.

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The Trade Union volunteers or Red volunteers must not be mixed with elements from the petty bourgeoisie. They must be from the class conscious ranks. The workers are not afraid of discipline and we do not hesitate to maintain it. The Red volunteers must be equipped with whatever weapons are possible in the present circumstances of the country, and must not hesitate to use them in order to protect workers' demonstrations, meetings, offices of organisations, working class houses, men, women and children, But the use of force if necessary must be done with care and precision. Though we are not pledged to non-violence, we are not out for the use of violence in each and every case. Such use for example were justified when the hireling Pathans of the Oil Companies began to loot shops and workers' quarters in Bombay. Such use was justified when the Pathans attacked the head office of our Union in February 1929. In that period of organisation such use had to be purely of a defensive character. The Red volunteers must become the tower of strength and confidence to the workers. Every Red volunteer must know his locality and must become the organiser of protection for the poor workers, men and women, from the violence of moneylenders and the harassment of the landlords and the Police. But it is also necessary to carefully distinguish

between the separate clashes which are erratic manifestations of class war, the general line of class war from the individual quarrels. The working class as a whole is exploited and abused every hour of its life. The bourgeoisie as a class practises violence and terror against the workers, at every step. Therefore there exists continuous class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the working class. In this struggle, the factory managers and supervisors administer the bourgeois law inside the factory, and ill-treat the workers. When the workers' consciousness is just beginning to rise and organisation is not yet strong, the workers' resist such ill-treatment by attacks and physical violence against the factory bosses. However justified such resistance may be because of the oppression, the Red volunteers can not assist the workers in carrying out such actions on the ground of defending the class. They have to prevent such attempts. But the method of prevention must not be the Gandhian method, which asks the furious peasants, who have carried out such an action to surrender and be killed by the police. Our method is to explain to the workers the futility of such attacks and to explain to them the superiority of class struggle as a whole. Similarly in individual quarrels on personal grounds or minor bickerings unconnected with the general grievances, the Red volunteers must try for restraint and retain peace. In fact there

can be no hard and fast rules showing where they should resist with their strength and where they should not for separate situations. But such a corps is an absolute necessity in a colonial country, overridden with feudal conditions, where most innocent gatherings and demonstrations of workers are attacked by the police and the men of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, moneylenders and factory goondas.

The Red volunteers in villages also have to carry out a similar work. The Congress volunteer under the guidance of bourgeois leadership is made to act as the revenue tax gatherer of the Government and the zemindars and to squeeze the peasantry in the interest of the zemindars under the false excuse of the truthful observations of an untruthful Pact. The Red ~~rs~~ volunteer acts exactly contrary to this. He develops the existing class struggle according to the form suitable for his province or place. He does not squeeze the peasants money to save the zemindar and help class peace. Under the present conditions class peace means peaceful exploitation by Imperialism of the workers and peasants. The bourgeois leadership uses the Congress volunteers to maintain class peace that is to maintain exploitation. The Red volunteers are directed to overthrow exploitation, which naturally means not class peace but class war.

The Red volunteers can not take part in the reformist manoeuvres of the Congress bosses to sidetrack the energies of the militant self sacrificing volunteers into the work of picketing liquor shops and foreign cloth. We must fraternise with the Congress volunteers who are under the influence of the bourgeoisie of the village rich, since these volunteers are actually poor peasants and land workers. We can join hands with them or draw them on to our side in a work like that of no-rent campaign, resistance to compulsory labour, mass demonstration and defend the peasants' property and household from the exploiters.

The control and command of such work and the volunteer corps must lie with the class organisations concerned. It must be remembered here that I am not speaking of the Communist Party organisations but of Trade Unions and peasant organisations. The command of all such corps must be proletarian both in the towns and in the countries. If this care is not taken then the most self sacrificing and fighting elements from the proletariat and peasantry commanded by the Congress bourgeoisie, the shopkeepers, merchants and fashionable youths, who hanker more after the romance of the "movies" than the grim class struggle, are used by the bourgeoisie to fight in the interests of the bourgeoisie and the zemindars and against the interests of the fighters themselves. For example, Babu Genu who died of satyagrah under a lorry of foreign cloth in Bombay was

himself a worker. His heroic death increased the sale of swedeshi cloth, and the Bombay mill-owners did double shift work. But as soon as the Pact was signed and trade slacked a bit, it was the comrades of Babu Genu himself, the textile workers, that were thrown out of employment. The bourgeoisie that negotiated for a democratic constitution on the strength of the millions of Babu Genus in India is not prepared to give in that constitution or even in the present Municipal Government, a democratic franchise to the Babu Genus because they have no property and do not pay high rents to qualify themselves to vote and sit with the rich bourgeoisie.

It was not an unusual feature to have volunteer corps for Trade Unions in Bombay or anyother place at that. The G.K. Mahamandal had its volunteer corps and it did work in the 1925 textile strike. The Bombay Textile Labour Union had one of its own. The Joint Strike Committee had also a corps to do picketing and other work during the strike of 1928. So when the G.K.U. began its work, it was quite natural for it to have volunteers for its work.

But our volunteers were not going to follow the traditions of the previous ones. We wanted them to do proletarian class work, the work of the Trade Unions as such. It means that we did not want them to land their services to communal meetings or demonstrations, celebrations of the anniversaries of feudal kings of the old times

or heroes of this or that religion. We had found that the volunteers of the Unions that had preceded us in the textile industry had indulged in this sort of things which ought to be foreign to the Trade Unions of the true type. In order to stamp our corps with quite a different tradition, a tradition which is rich with the history of the international proletariat, we used to describe our volunteers as Red Army, Red Corps etc. But because we used these epithets it would be ridiculous to argue that we were organising a real Red Army. It would be also ridiculous to argue that we were trying to build up a Red Army by merely issuing handbills and cloth belts. We were neither creating a bogus Red Army by painting white shirts in red, "to save in washing", as the militant hero of the Congress bourgeoisie Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan has said regarding his "red shirts". (The true Red Shirts should have protested against such an imbecile explanation of their historically heroic uniform). Nor were we creating a real Red Army at that stage. The epithets we used simply to demarcate ourselves from the traditions of the previous corps which worked on anything but proletarian class lines. However we could not fulfil the programme till the time of our arrest. This is evidenced by my complaint in the handbill of December 1928, P 929. We had not raised more than a hundred men and those too were not all according to our ideas of highest standards. This was due mainly to

the fact that the G.K.U. was never given time to carry out this programme by the several strikes that were being forced on the workers between October 1928 and March 1929.

(130) Complaints about violation of the agreement by the mill-owners - the 71 individual mill strikes after October - were they incited by us?

In October the largest number of complaints arose on the question of reengaging those workers who were working in April 1928 when the strike began. Though there was no specific clause about it in the agreement it was understood in the discussions. It was also understood that though in the agreement the daily advances to be paid according to schedule were liable to be adjusted according to piece or fixed rates and work done, the adjustments would not be made and the mill-owners would forego deductions to be made in the cases of overpayment. In the whole of the industry, the wages bill of the workers on attendance roll was more by several thousands, according to the daily rate of advances than it would have been according to the prevailing schedule of wages. The mill-owners intended to deduct the overpayment advances from the next month's wages, which we refused to allow; and they agreed to it. Similarly several mills refused to reengage workers who came back very late in October or even in November. We had to get their places reserved till the end of October and there also we succeeded. We had to go through more than five

thousand complaints in October of this type and got them satisfactorily settled in the majority of cases.

The organisational results from such success were magical. As soon as the two weeks' payment was made workers rushed in thousands to the office of the G.K.U. to pay their subscriptions. We did not expect such a rush. Never in the history of Bombay Unions had any one met with such a rush and therefore having no previous experience to rely upon we had not kept ready any staff to meet the situation. But immediately after the first two weeks experience we decided to open six centres (that is sub offices) of the Union in various localities. Each centre was given in charge of a responsible member of the Union, with paid clerks, organisers etc. (Resolution of the Managing Committee of 16/10/28 Ex. P 958). An account was opened in the Imperial Bank of India in the name of the Union and operated upon by any three of the five officers of the Union authorised to do so. Such authority was vested by a resolution of the Managing Committee in the President - A. Alwe, Vice President - R.S.Nimbkar, Joint Treasurers - B. T. Alwe and S. V. Chate and the General Secretary - myself. (16/10/28). That a vast organisation was springing up was clear from the fact that though the workers had been on strike for six months, yet they recognised the claim of the Union as the first upon their poor earnings of the first two or 3 weeks. All the workers had not yet come

back and the mills were not working in full capacity. Still our October collections were Rs 6794/- that is on the basis of 4 annas per member we had over 27,000 members, one-third of the total number of workers that had returned to work.

The workers contrary to all expectations of the mill-owners showed quite a new spirit of initiative. They were not going to tolerate any longer the insults from the mill bureaucracy. Bribery, abuses, beating etc. were resented, resisted and even retaliated. This had a very panicky effect on the bureaucracy which lived so long on bribery and extra exploitation apart from the one carried on by Capitalism in the ordinary process of production.

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The bureaucracy tried to resort to its old method of terrorism. The first easiest method was worked through the clause, "The question of musters shall not arise," in the agreement. We interpreted this clause to mean that the particular mill may not engage exactly the same worker it had on a particular job. A shifting of labour from mill to mill was allowed and thus the musters so far as specific individuals were concerned may become quite different from what they were in April 1928. The mill-owners refused to accept this interpretation. To them it meant a right to retain as many workers on a particular job as they liked. They virtually claimed the right to carry out retrenchment as per their standard scheme, which, however, was yet a subject matter of dispute according to the agreement. So in many cases where they had four men per frame of spindles they retained only 2. Several mills asked some of their departments to work longer hours which also was a subject matter of dispute. By the agreement all matters of dispute arising from it were to be submitted to the Fawcett Committee. This Committee was appointed by the Government on 13th October 1928 and began its public sittings on 29th October. On 31st October we submitted before them some of the important disputes, as many as 12, and the Committee

ruled 10 of them in our favour. But at the same time it called the Director of Information, Mr. Jennings, to give his views on the interpretation of the muster clause. After his evidence the Committee upheld the mill-owners' interpretation which became one of the causes of the lightning strikes. Already the workers had made three strikes in different mills and had forced favourable agreements out of the mill-owners. When the mills began work full steam, the century old class nature of the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie rose up and began to attack in a very cunning manner the wages and rates of the workers. They attacked the fixed wage-earners through the muster clause. The piece workers in weaving were attacked in a more ingenuous way. They gave them the old sorts of 1927 with a changed number and fixed a lower rate per pound than what it was in 1927. Or they got out quite a new sort under the old number and paid the same rate though the changes in the warp, weft, etc. required a higher rate. When the workers questioned, they kept on repeating that everything was what it was in March 1927 according to the agreement. One mill, the Shapurji Bharucha, was impudent enough to introduce the rational system in direct breach of the agreement and had to withdraw it when the Fawcett Committee upheld our objection. The workers by such actions on the part of the mill-owners were becoming convinced that the 5 ½ months of a general strike in the industry and a solemn agreement

had not changed the bureaucracy. Naturally the workers were forced into direct action of individual mill strikes, wherever a grievance cropped up. They began to build up their mill committees and departmental leaders in each mill. The highest possible pitch of vigilance on the rates the material supplied, the fines, the conduct of officers etc. was instituted. The general result was that bribery, assaults, cheating and such other forms of exploitation began to be reduced. The mill bureaucracy became weakened and in many places its terror completely smashed. The workers regained confidence and organised with greater determination and intelligence. The following table shows how the months of November and December were the hardest fought though as yet the workers had not taken a full meal of a full month's wages.

Number of strikes :-

Month	Success- ful	Unsuccess- ful	Compro- mised	Undeci- ded	Tot
October 1928	2	0	1	0	3
November "	11	7	2	0	20
December "	10	12	2	0	24
January 1929	2	5	0	0	7
February "	7	1	..	0	8
March "	..	6	..	*3	9
	32	31	5	3	71

* The undecided 3 merged in the General Strike of 1929 April.

Thus out of 71 disputes as many as 44 (62 per cent) took place in November and December. As regards the results if the "compromises" are added on to the "successfuls" and those that were left undecided in March till our arrest are omitted from consideration, we find to have won 37 out of 68 strikes, a 54.4 per cent success. I have already referred to a remark of the Fawcett Committee that all the individual mill strikes prior to April 1928 were lost. But when the workers began to organise according to our methods they not only won the General Strike, stopped rationalisation and wage-cuts but they also won against the underhand attacks, begun soon after the big strike, by the bourgeoisie who thought the workers were too exhausted to resist immediately. In fact we won almost every important strike. Though the percentage of success is actually 54.4 per cent on the total number of disputes, the losses were not so serious as the gains. Many of the strikes lost were not in fact strikes in the real sense. Some of them were due to misunderstanding. Such strikes were at once called off by us without hesitation and did not last for more than a day or two. The reformists and Imperialists charge us with inciting meaningless strikes without any reasons. But such a charge is absolutely unfounded. From October 1928 to March 1929 we had occasions to advise an immediate liquidation of some of the small strikes, when we found that there was no immediate grievance that would not be removed by a

simple negotiation. While doing this we have not at all given up our principles or deviated from a correct attitude towards the strikes. While writing about strikes the Third Congress of the C.I. says, "Our organisational activity must not lay itself bare to the accusation of stirring and inciting the workers to non-sensical strikes and other inconsiderate actions." (Exh: P 2396, page). The large majority of these 71 strikes were not non-sensical or inconsiderate and where there appeared to be the slightest reason to suppose that they were so they had to be liquidated, though in some instances they inflicted some amount of humiliation on the Union at the hands of the mill-owners. However, such occasions are bound to occur during the progress of the rising proletariat that has begun to learn initiative and to create its own militant leadership from its rank and file committees and groups. When such mistakes occurred we did not disown or denounce them before the mill-owners but fought against their being used by the bosses as levers to demoralise the workers, though before the workers themselves we had to expose the mistakes ruthlessly and criticised them. And that is what every trade unionist, I think, must do, if he is to build up an intelligent and disciplined working-class leadership.

(131) The agreements and wage increases secured through the small strikes - the formation of mill committees.

The agreements arrived at between us and the mill-

owners will show that the most hard fought strikes were completely justified. They prove that the mill-owners had introduced lower rates for new varieties of cloth and had embarked on retrenchment. Some of these agreements are on record as defence exhibit, (D 432), while some are to be found in the files of the Union brought here in search. The longest of these strikes was that in the Kohinoor Mills (30th November to 26th December 1928.). The agreement arrived at between this mill and ourselves is the longest and most exhaustive one on record. The agreement shows that even in December 1928, there existed attempts on the part of the capitalist bureaucracy to receive bribes, to assault the workers and forfeit wages. On weaving rates some of the typical increases are shown below:-

Mill	Average increase on New Sorts secured by our agreements	Dates
1. Manekji Petit	6 %	21-11-28
2. Morarjee Cokuldas	8 $\frac{1}{2}$ %	24-11-28
3. New Great Eastern	17 $\frac{1}{2}$ %	26-11-28
4. 9 mills of Currimbhoy Group	2 %	5-12-28
5. Moon Mill	7 $\frac{1}{3}$ %	7-12-28
6. Framji Petit	11 %	9-12-28
7. Simplex	17 %	-12-28
8. Kohinoor	14 $\frac{1}{2}$ %	26-12-28

Apart from these increases in wage rates there are several agreements restoring retrenchment of workers & cancelling

increased hours of working introduced in some of the departments without a corresponding increase in the wages.

In passing we may note here a fact which will show the character of the patriotism of the national industry for which the workers are asked to sacrifice. An examination of the agreements will show the rates paid on khadi weaving. For example, our agreements with the New Great Eastern Mill, and the Framji Petit Mill show rates to be paid on khadi cloth and khadi dhoties. In one case, of which the specification was 52" x 24 yards x 14 5/8 pounds, we got the rates raised from three pies per pound to four pies, an increase of 33 1/3rd per cent. In another mill the rate was raised from 4 pies to 4½ pies per pound for the specification 44 x 24 x 11. More instances can be found in the agreements in D 432. Now it is well known that Communists are opposed to the khaddar movement as a plank in the political platform of the National Emancipation Movement. The grounds for this opposition have been stated before in para 102. The attitude of the mill-owners and the Indian bourgeoisie is contradictory to ours. The whole of the Indian bourgeoisie including the textile mill-owners applaud Gandhiji for his khaddar movement. Because it advertises Swadeshi and consequently the goods of the Indian mills.

19/12/31 (Morning Part II).

Hundreds of times complaints have appeared from the sincere but misguided Khaddarites that the Indian mills manufacture cheap khaddar and sell it thus killing the trade of "genuine" khaddar. The Bombay khaddar interests who have invested thousands (not from their pockets but from the loans given for good from the enormous Congress funds) and who are in league with the Indian mill-owners, in reply to these complaints have always charged the Japanese merchants for doing such treacherous business. The Indian mill-owners also solemnly affirm that they never have any intention of making profits from sale of mill khaddar by taking advantage of the Khaddar Movement; and the petty bourgeois leaders of the Congress, tied as they are to the chariot wheel of the bourgeoisie utter simply dark warnings against the sinful mill-owners who protest innocence and pay a few thousands for intense swedeshi propaganda. When this was going on in 1928, the textile bourgeoisie was cutting down the weaving rates on khadi cloth and dhotis surreptitiously in order to lower costs and sell them at the best khadi rates with a genuine Khaddar Bhandar stamp. The mills mentioned above had cut down rates by $33 \frac{1}{3}$, $13 \frac{1}{3}$ and $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The bourgeoisie patriotically lied before the public who were its victims and reaped super-profits. At the same time in spite

of the agreement of October, it cut down rates of the workers. Prospering on treachery to the peasantry, treachery to the workers and treachery to its own organisation. India Capitalism can not but become counter revolutionary and give the country in the hands of Imperialism. When the workers in Bombay fought against this gang, the Congress sided with the bourgeoisie. Though the workers never intended it, the fight for higher rates on all varieties including khadi cloth and dhotis, in fact was indirectly saving the khadi producers, the ideal patriots, from the severe competition and fraud of the mill-owners. Yet the Congress tried to sabotage the workers' struggle.

These 71 strikes were completely initiated and conducted by the workers themselves. During this phase of the struggle the whole rank and file was drawn into the direct conduct of the strikes for which a new type of a live and flexible organisation was born. It was the Mill Committees and rank and file departmental leaders. The constitution of the G.K.U. (Ex. P 939) which was copied from that of the B.T.L.U. contains a provision for establishing Mill Committees and the rules for their elections, management and functions. But neither the B.T.L.U. nor the G.K.U. or any other union had ever brought into being the real rank and file leadership in the form of Mill Committees. But when the struggle assumed new forms the Mill Committees

began to spring up at the end of November 1928 and rapidly became very popular and powerful. The Mill Committees were not strictly created by regular elections nor did they function in accordance with the rules of the constitution. The reason was that the rule was originally framed without any experience of rank and file working. We gave the slogan of forming Mill Committees not from any pre-arranged plan as such. If that had been so it would have been done long before November. We had no experience of these things at all. When the November strikes in individual mills began, we found it impossible to cope with the whole work. So, when we attended the meetings of the workers and used to call out the men who knew the working of the mill, their grievances, the wages etc in detail and could explain them. When such men came forward we gave them the power to draft their case in full and put it before the management in the name of the workers and under the authority of the Union. After one or two such examples, it was found that this worked very well, reduced the strain on the small number of officials of the Union and also trained the workers. So a general slogan to form Mill Committees was issued and very eagerly taken up by all the workers. Within two months we had a Mill Committee or a group of intelligent workers in almost every mill. The Mill Committees carried out the following work. They enrolled members and collected subscriptions. They watched the bureaucracy and prevented it from harassing the workers by asking for bribes or molesting

the women workers or in any way worsening the conditions of work. They formulated grievances, collected information and directly approached the management and negotiated. When they failed to get a hearing they either approached the head office for advice or embarked on a strike if it was immediately necessary. They prevented victimisation, dismissals, fines and abuses. The Mill Committees by January 1929 had developed into one of the important controlling factors in the management of the mills so far as the workers' side was concerned. They called forth the best elements from the rank and file and began to prove superior to the corrupt mill bureaucracy even on questions of technical management.

(132) Millowners' move against mill committees & G.K.U. collections inside the mills - The Pearson Court of Inquiry for the 1929 General Strike - My evidence refused.

This development was strongly resented by the mill-owners and by December they had decided upon a strong hand policy. They issued two circulars, one prohibiting collection of Union subscriptions on the mill premises and another asking the mill managers not to allow the Union officials to enter the mill buildings beyond the office at the gate, in order to see or hear on the spot the grievances of the workers. The second circular was issued in order to prevent the Union officials from acquainting themselves directly

with the lay out of machinery, the rest house and sanitary arrangements etc. Since long before the G.K.U. was born, it has been the practice for all Unions to collect subscriptions inside the mills on pay day. When there were no Mill Committees and no intensive participation of the workers in Union work, the usual method of collection was almost semi-official. Each Union had a number of sympathetic jobbers or foremen. The jobbers have powers to engage or dismiss a man. He often acts as a moneylender also. (Vide Whitley Commission Report). So a sympathetic jobber if captured by a Union, was able to bring many "members" and regular subscription, for he virtually was the master of the large group of his workers though the system of work was not a contract system. The Unions also were naturally dominated by jobbers. But they being themselves collectors of Union dues, no objection was ever raised by the management to the collection of Union dues inside the mills; and moreover such collections also were not very large. The G.K.U. however overthrew the power of the jobbers and head jobbers and brought the rank and filers into activity. Many of the jobbers thus lost the backing of the prestige of the Union, commissions on subscriptions and their illegal earnings. The mill-owners (in some cases prompted by the jobbers) naturally raised the cry of discipline being lost and production suffering on account of subscription collection inside the mill though this was done only once a month

and during pay hours of the mill. We were not going to give up this right, and some of the mills had to strike for this. Till our arrest, we continued to realise dues on pay days inside the mills though the opposition from the mill-owners was growing.

The biggest grievance of the mill-owners was about the Mill Committees which according to them were becoming almost parallel organs of supervision and control. This was expressly voiced by them before the Pearson Court of Inquiry appointed after the general textile strike of 1929. The Court in its report observes: "There is ample evidence to show that in the middle of November the G.K.U. had collected sufficient strength and that the effect of its policy was being keenly felt by the mill-owners. One of the chief grievances of the mill-owners which is said to have caused most of the strikes that took place from the middle of November was the working and methods of the Mill Committees formed by the G.K.U. for each mill and the doing of the members of such Mill Committees." (page 13). Further on it observes: "The interference by the members of the Mill Committees with the management was subverting of the discipline and the lighting strikes which were brought about by these members were not such as could be tolerated by the mill-owners". The Pearson Court sat from 6th July 1929 to 21st July, as constituted under section 4 of the Trade Disputes Act of 1929. It was asked not only

to enquire into the general textile strike then going on but also to report on disputes and agreements which had taken place before the Meerut arrests of 20th March 1929, and with which the new office bearers elected after our arrests were not expected to be fully convergent. All the papers affecting these methods were lying here in Meerut in the charge of the Additional District Magistrate who was enquiring into this case. When I applied for certain paper being sent to assist the Union in its case before the Court of Inquiry the Prosecution informed the Magistrate that they were required by them though in the end they never put in those papers before this Court as their exhibits. As the Court of Inquiry was going to enquire into agreements arrived at in some cases between myself on behalf of the G.K.U. and the mill-owners and also those negotiated by the other office bearers, I wrote to the General Member of the Government of Bombay on 7th July 1929 saying "some terms of reference before the Court of Inquiry refer to the period and to mills, the agreements and understandings regarding which were mainly arrived at through me. And if I remember aright I have been accused of not observing them by the President of the Mill-owners' Association. Will you let me know how the Court can enquire into the dispute, when the office bearers of the Union who were present during the parties to agreement in the first stage of the dispute (that is of 1929 April) are not allowed to give their

view point and evidence on those matters and especially when such matters are made a part of the terms of reference. Does your Government think that an enquiry conducted without the view point of such principal parties to certain agreements and disputes under enquiry can be considered exhaustive, impartial and fair". A copy of this letter was sent to the Court also. The General Department of the Bombay Government acknowledged receipt of the letter in its no. 7565-D-PT2, dated 20th July 1929. The question was also raised by the representatives of the Union before the Court. In para 5 of their report the Court observes: "In the course of the enquiry it was suggested to us that Mr. Dange and possibly some others who were standing their trial at Meerut should be called to give evidence before us on the ground that they being the officials of the G.K.U prior to their arrest on the 20th March were the proper persons to depose relating to the affairs of that Union prior to that date. Ordinary speaking that was the suggestion to which effect might reasonably have been given". The Court however refused to do what "reasonably " should have been done. The reason they gave was that we would have been cross-examined on matters which were being enquired into in this case and it might have harmed our interests. The Court also says that especially in view of this fact, when the Mill-owners' Association wanted to lead evidence to show that the G.K.U. was being used by the

Communists as a cover for their activities, it was dis-
allowed by the Court as trespassing on the field of the
Meerut case. (para 6).

(Dange)

D/21.12.31

Morning 1st Part

Such a solicitude for justice being meted out to us did not however prevent the court from considering and using facts and papers that are evidence in this case - viz. "The Red Army Handbill" Exhibit P 967, and the Kranti issues in Exh: P 1744 and agreements and letters in D 432. This Court of Inquiry sat and inquired under circumstances which expose the reactionary and sabotaging nature of the Trade Disputes Act under which it was formed and the uselessness of such a courts in the workers' struggle. The Court refused to do what should have been done "reasonably" as they themselves admit, i.e. they refused to hear the Meerut prisoners on the subject matter of disputes on which they alone were competent to speak. Having disposed of matters under inquiry in the period prior to March 1929, what was done with the matters arising from the strike that was actually on? The Government appointed the Court on 6th July and on 12th July arrested two of the leaders of the G.K.U. who at that time were in a position to conduct the case of the Union before the Court, which held five sittings without their presence as representatives of the Union. Ultimately the Government sentenced them to six weeks' imprisonment on 19th July and the Court used to call them under guard from the prison to conduct the G.K.U. case. With the men connected with events prior to March 1929 in Meerut prison

and with men connected with events after March 1929 in the Bombay prison, the Court of Inquiry sat and judged the G.K.U. with what they called impartiality and fairness!

(133) Why we formed Mill Committees.

The Court quoted a statement of mine on the function of Mill Committees and lightning strikes made before the Fawcett Inquiry Committee. That statement was nothing but a description of the position of Mill Committees as conceived by the constitution of the G.K.U. The Court observed that the constitution of the Union was quite sane and did not confer on the Mill Committees or their members individually power to call a strike. According to the constitution the Committees were "purely advisory" bodies. The Court has accused us of not observing the sane rule. I do not deny that the Mill Committees did exercise powers more than what were conferred on them by the constitution of the Union and that I did not attempt to bring these Committees strictly within the limits of the rules and their literal interpretation. But this does not mean that I endorsed every action of the Mill Committees. The constitution of the G.K.U. was obviously a copy from that of the B.T.L.U. in which the Mill Committees were given only advisory powers. During the working of the Committees I found that that rule was not calculated to develop the initiative of the workers, and their capacities of study, organisation, management etc. For these they must have powers to take certain steps with

regard to their demands and grievances in individual mills as apart from the demands common to the whole industry. I also found that they were not required to be told to do this. They took initiative and powers of their own accord and it was against my principles to lessen their initiative by pointing out to the letter of the constitution. They were controlled only so far as to guide their actions in a disciplined channel conformable with the general interest of all the workers and to give them a proper perspective in matters which were immediately beyond their comprehension and in which therefore their individual actions were likely to conflict with the general line of the movement. It was therefore quite natural for the Court to find the Mill Committees not strictly in accordance with the constitution. The Court wanted us to make the Committees conform to an obviously faulty constitution. We wanted the constitution to advance according to the situation, when a particular struggle has far outgrown the limits of the constitution and not that the workers should go back within the limits of a faulty one. The bourgeois nature of that Court is seen in another remark it makes. It calls the power conferred in practice upon each officer of the Mill Committee to negotiate with the owners or declare a strike as "an act on the part of the G.K.U. which clearly disclosed a revolutionary tendency". (Page 19 of their report). It is not a fact that each individual member of the Mill Committee

had powers to or did declare a strike though he had powers to approach the Management on the question of grievances of his department. However there is no harm in permitting the Mill Committees as a whole to declare strikes under certain circumstances. It is well known that in India the employer make changes in wage rates and conditions of work and dismiss workers without any previous notice to the workers or their organisations. Naturally when the workers are suddenly refuse to work. Lightning strikes are direct effects of the highly anarchic conditions in the industry and the refusal of the bourgeoisie to recognise the workers' organisations or consult and inform them of proposed changes, a minimum right of Trade Unions recognise by the bourgeoisie in all advanced countries. Lightning strikes against such an order of things, against assaults on workers or confiscatory fines and dismissals become absolutely necessary and justified; and every Mill Committee must have powers to directly negotiate and take actions on such matters as immediately affect its workers. There is nothing revolutionary in this. And even if it is, it is bound to be acted upon by the workers in every organisation to protect their interests.

Reformist trade unions, afraid of displeasing the bourgeoisie, do not want the Mill Committees or Factory Councils to take initiative in direct action where necessary in India. They want to keep these Committees as "purely

applicant bodies," standing in all humility before the trade union bureaucracy sitting at the Head office. The reformists do not want the workers to learn all the ins and outs of the industry and be seriously capable and efficient to take over the control and management of the factories when the necessity will arise. On the contrary, we want the workers to learn the whole mechanism of production and distribution and become capable of exercising workers' control when the factories will be nationalised; and the Mill Committees are schools for such education. They are bodies through which you feel the pulse of the workers. They are advisory in the sense that they advise the Central leadership on the workers' mood, their grievances, the state of organisation and the steps that are to be taken on a scale larger than that of one individual mill or factory. In relation to the organised central leadership of the Union which is and ought to be formed from the essence of the best elements drawn from the Mill Committees, they are "advisory" before an action is determined upon and the "executive" organs when a certain action is to be carried out. In relation to the Management they represent, direct and impose the will of the workers on the Management in order to improve the working conditions or prevent their deterioration in the individual factory concerned.

It was this unprecedented rank-and-file participation

in the work of the Union which made the mill-owners feel "the effects of its policy". (The report of the Pearson Court). The mill-owners had thought of breaking down completely the resistance of the workers by attacking them immediately after the big six months' strike. But they had underestimated the capacity of the workers. When they were asked by the Court why they agreed to wage increases as shown in the agreement made by them with the G.K.U., they replied that it was done in order to purchase peace. If these gentlemen were so anxious for peace why did they resist an agreement which they ultimately made, for six months? Not for peace but because at that time stock had accumulated and they could afford to close down for a few months which would have served two purposes - one of putting down the workers and another of getting the stocks off their hand. Now they wanted to trade and therefore wanted peace. They wanted peace from the workers in the name of the Agreement but themselves continued to attack the wages of the workers. Certainly we were not those gentlemen of the Delhi Pact to give them such a kind of peace!

This Court of Inquiry was the first to be appointed under the Trade Disputes Act. The faithfulness it displayed towards its masters, the bourgeoisie and its verdict against the workers, have amply justified our criticism that the Trade Disputes Act is a Strike Breakers' Act and as such must be scrapped. If ever a disillusionment was required

by the workers about it it was provided by the results of this Inquiry Court. There are still many Yellow reformists and even some "radical" leaders who whenever the workers want to resist the terrorism and retrenchment practised by the employers (whether State or private) always send appeals to the Government to intervene and appoint a Court of Inquiry under the Trade Disputes Act. They do this not so much to stay the workers' sufferings as from their fear of the working-class revolt. The Trade Disputes Act is a Strike Breakers' Act and therefore those who ask Government to use it for preventing or settling a dispute naturally become strike breakers, deserving to be severely dealt with and brought to their senses by the organisations of the workers in which they work, in order to save them from degeneration.

21/12/31 (Morning Part II).

(134) Participation in Fawcett Committee's work -

Ex. P 967 - friction with the B.T.L.U. and

B.M.W.U.

Side by side with its organisational work the G.K.U. was conducting the workers' case before the Fawcett Committee appointed according to the October agreement. The mill-owners several times raised the question of the small sectional strikes before the Committee, which sometimes inquired about the reasons of the strikes and gave its ruling whether they amounted to a breach of the agreement or not. Our attitude to such rulings was that when we found that the matter was not strictly within the terms of the agreement and the Committee being unacquainted with the industry was incapable of really grasping the issues of the disputes, we pressed our claims with the mill-owners in spite of the Committee's views. This was quite necessary and within the terms of the agreement. It has been suggested that as soon as we agreed to call off the strike on certain conditions, we began preparations for another strike and broke the spirit and also the terms of the agreement by such preparations and therefore the 71 lightning strikes took place. (Vide Mr. James' Address). Now there is no doubt about the fact that in the Kranti of October 2 13, 1928 I wrote the article that the strike was not ended but suspended. The handbill of 12th October also

said "in order to pursue the new fight for the demands of all mills to a successful close a preparation for six months is necessary." (Ex. P 967). The Pearson Court quotes the words "six months" in italics thereby hinting that the big strike of April 1929 coming as it did exactly six months after this handbill of October 1928, was carried out according to a definitely pre-arranged plan of giving "no peace till Capitalism is overthrown". (Their Report page 10). But all these suggestions and innuendoes are baseless and fail to understand the October agreement as also our subsequent conduct in outlining the programme in the handbill. There was nothing in the October agreement to prevent us from making new demands, which were not subject matter of the inquiry before the Fawcett Committee. For example a strike that occurred in the Dawn Mills had as one of its reasons the non-fulfilment by the management of a promise they had given to the workers that they would put up a decent dining place for the workers. Such a strike was not banned by the October agreement. Then again the agreement was quite temporary. The mill-owners had agreed to maintain the wages of March 1927 and not to extend rationalisation, only until the Committee reported on the matters before them. As soon as the Report was out the mill-owners were free to do what they liked. We thought that the Committee would not take more than six months to finish its work. If the Committee were to uphold the mill-

owners' side, as they actually did, on important matters, what we were to do? The workers were not going to allow a wage cut or extension of rationalisation. Also we had agreed to the rational system in a few mills only during the truce period and were free to fight out that system after that. All this could not be done without organisation. The mill-owners were not in need of any programme like that issued by us. They had the police and military as their "volunteers", they had the banks for their "strike fund" and they had the whole bourgeois press for their "lecturers". They had everything ready to smash us, while we had yet to get together the modest forces outlined in our handbill, before the period of agreement expired. The mill-owners had already said before the Committee that they would introduce the standard and rational systems some time in October 1929. (Fawcett Committee Report, page 127). So if there was a plan of another general strike it was conditional upon the nature of the report of the Fawcett Committee and the attitude of the mill-owners. If the prospect of an attack was so clearly outlined before us by the mill-owners themselves, were we not entitled to issue the programme, as in P 967?

The mill-owners understood this very well and they to steps against the G.K.U. They issued orders to stop collection of Union dues inside the mills and to victimise the Mill Committee members. There was also another party which

would have liked the G.K.U. to go down. This was the three rival Unions in the industry - (1) the G.K.M., the rump of the old Mahamandal; (2) the B.T.L.U. of Mr. N. M. Joshi and (3) the Bombay Mill-workers' Union of Jhabwala. The tremendous growth of the G.K.U. had pushed all these three Unions into the background. Only the B.T.L.U. tried to hold some ground in the first two months but it failed. Jhabwala's Union was formed of a few hundred mechanics mainly, whose hours of work were being increased and who showed some amount of "craft-separatism". The B.T.L.U. was completely ousted from all areas except Madanpura and Kurla. It clashed with us directly on two occasions and failed. One was on behalf of two jobbers who were dismissed by the management on pressure from the workers. The B.T.L.U. asked the management for their reinstatement but it could not be done as the workers had refused to work under them. The management finding the two Unions making contradictory demands took the dispute before the Fawcett Committee. (November 27, 1928). The Committee refused to go into the matter as it had no jurisdiction. The jobbers also approached some of our principal leaders who were their old acquaintances. But that also did not help them as the rank and file were determined not to work under them in any case. The Mill-workers' Union remained a negligible force. After the agreement of October 1928, when it was found that the Sassoon workers resisted the agreement, the

leader of this Union attempted to make out before its membership that he did not advise or agree to such an agreement. This was an attempt not to face issues honestly but to throw the blame on other parties. The agreement contained only one signature that of Mr. N. M. Joshi on behalf of the Joint Strike Committee and every one could play the dirty game of saying that he for one had nothing to do with it. It was in answer to such an attempt that a specific mention of the names of all those who were present at the October conference and had agreed to the truce terms was made in the handbill issued to the Sassoon workers. (Ex. P 966). Another attempt by the same Union to secure a footing was made in December. It was after the attack of certain hirelings on the G.K.U. leaders and the consequent clash with the police on 12th December 1928. The Mill-workers' Union on the same day sent out a letter to several mills telling them that they stood for industrial peace unlike other Unions. (It was a suggestion that they did not approve of such happenings as took place on 12th December 1928). It was an attempt to build up a Union by agreement of industrial peace with the mill-owners. But all such attempts failed.

(135) The attack of 11th and firing of 12th December 1928 - the cause of handbill P 929 - the second attack which went wrong.

The G.K.M.'s attempts were not those of a Union as su

but of a blacklegging agency of gangsters. The B.T.L.U. and the B.M.W.U, had at least stood with the general strike of 1928 and though reformists they had not yet become regular gangster agencies. (It is said the B.T.L.U. degenerated into one in the strike of April 1929). The G.K.M. was nothing but a group of a few men of the underworld led by a gangster, whom we called "dada" in Bombay. This gang now wanted to break the G.K.U. and followed the well known method of gunmen. A false message was received on 11th December noon in our head office by a phone that there was trouble at the Sassoon Spinning and Weaving Mills. This mill is situated in the locality inhabited by this gangster. On receiving the message, according to our usual practice, two of our leaders with two others went in a car to the mill. It was found there from the management that there was some very unimportant complaint about a jobber, which we now think was only stage-managed. When our representatives came out and boarded their car, it was attacked by ten or fifteen men. The main attack fell on Mr. Kasle and another who were severely injured on the head. Nimbkar also got slight scratches. The assailants decamped. They were led by one K. Borker who is a notorious gangster in that locality and stood behind the G.K.M. A complaint was lodged at the Police Station. The police made it a summons case and of course failed to trace the assailants. The workers when they heard the news flocked to the Union Office

Office to find out if all were safe and in the morning the closed down about fifty mills in protest of the attack. About 10,000 of them, it appears went to the gangster's place in rage and razed it down. The gang had already fled. When the demonstration was going through Lalbag, the police tried to snatch the red flag carried by one of them. This led to a clash. The police opened fire and killed four workers and injured 18. The police report says that thirty of their forces were injured, but curiously enough fails to mention altogether the cause of the clash.

Of the four dead, three were textile workers and one was a motor mechanic. The presence of a motor mechanic amongst the dead shows the way of firing by the police force. The procession which came into clash with the police was entirely of mill-workers. There was no chance of any motor mechanic taking part in it, neither was it accompanied by any motor cars. The death of the mechanic can be explained solely by the fact that the police indulged in indiscriminate firing, a larger and more grim feature of which was later on experienced by the people of Sholapur in May 1930. Fire where you like was the rule that guided the police and naturally every passerby and inhabitant of the locality was in danger and one such passerby happened to be the mechanic.

These attacks and armed terrorism against defenceless workers was bound to excite feelings. In the morning of

12th after dispersing the workers that had gathered in front of my house just near the head office of the Union I rushed to the press and issued a handbill informing the workers of the safety of the persons who were attacked and requesting them not to close down the mills. But before the handbill could be fully distributed, the firing had taken place. Immediately we had to take steps about the funeral of the four workers. From the mortuary we took the three bodies of the textile workers, (the body of the mechanic having been taken away by his relations and friends) and carried them to the crematorium some miles away. There we got them photographed by a photographer who had his shop near the Union office and who is Prosecution witness no. 189. Armed police lorries accompanied us all along and prevented any procession or demonstration. They forced on us a hurried cremation, so that a large number of workers may not assemble at the ceremony. The photographs were taken for two reasons. It is now a general practice to take photographs of firing, demonstrations etc for their news value and as a remembrance. But there was also one more specific reason for us.

(Dange)

D/21.12.31

Evening 1st Part.

There was a negligible element of communalist opposition in the Union, helped and guided by the Non-Brahmin Party, which under the influence of Government working through one of its Ministers, who was himself a party member, was trying to create a schism in the Union on caste issues. The Bombay organisation of this Party had followed the mean tactic of inciting the communal and superstitious prejudices of the Hindu workers by telling them that we had taken no care to arrange for the observance of proper Hindu rites, in the cremation of Parsaram Jadhav who had fallen in the firing on 23rd April 1928. Their paper the Kaiwari had especially selected Nimbkar and myself for the attack, as we happened to be born by natural accident of Brahmin parents. In order to guard against such allegations we took the precaution to have the photograph and publish it in the Kranti of 13th January 1929 - Exh: P 1744. The photograph is here D 417.

After finishing with the funeral I went to the press again and issued another handbill - Exh: P 929. The Prosecution have exhibited this second handbill, but have not produced the first one of the morning of the same day. Both these handbills were primarily meant to send the workers back to the mills so that the commotion be reduced and therewith the chances of furnishing some excuse to the

mill-owners and Government to make a more determined attack on the workers and the G.K.U. But such appeals to the workers were not to be made in a demoralising or frightening tone. No doubt they had to be told that they were powerless at that moment before the organised armed forces. At the same time we could not say that they were absolutely powerless. They were told to avoid a direct clash with the Police forces not with humanitarian considerations but because in the present state of the workers' organisations the losses would have been far greater than the gains. For example the workers were right when they refused to give up the flag and resisted. They were right when they closed down the mills and rallied behind the G.K.U. That one single move consolidated the rank and file more than anything else could have done. But it would have been a mistake to continue the strike. All these considerations determined the tone and slogan of the handbill. It was a call for militant organisation as well as an exhortation to resume work. Only on such a basis could peace be restored, side by side with the full use of the tremendous response of the workers for further organisational work of the Union. Hence the handbill P 929 is, as it should have been, in conformity with Trade Union principles.

The Police who were cold and negligent about our complaint against the assaults of 11th December, were however very prompt and enthusiastic about the happenings

of the 12th. They wanted to catch some men amongst us on the allegation of having incited the workers to go and destroy the gangsters' den. One by one all the prominent workers of the G.K.U. were summoned to the Police-station and a searching cross-examination was carried out, but it failed to lead to anything.

This attack was an outcome of an organised conspiracy of the blacklegging gang of the G.K.M. whose leading spirit was Borkar, helped by the mill-owners and the Police. The swift advantage which the mill-owners tried to take of this incident lends support to this statement. On the very day the clash took place, the mill-owners held a special meeting at 3 o'clock in the noon, and discussed whether they should declare a lock-out as the workers had closed down the mills without reason of any genuine trade dispute. Some of the more shrewd amongst them saw the danger of a general mass discontent if such steps were taken in the tense atmosphere of the day and the proposal was dropped. They then decided to ask the Government to arrest the leaders of the G.K.U. and declare it an unlawful association. Accordingly a deputation waited on the Governor of Bombay in December 1928. The Governor's reply, though not encouraging at the moment, assured the mill-owners that it was behind them and would take steps to smash militant Labour. But immediately Government did not accede to the mill-owners' request as it had not yet tried

all its indirect methods of gangster attacks prompting inter-union rivalry financing anti-G.K.U. groups and in the end provoking communal pogroms. In the next three months all these were tried and on their failure, they resorted to the action of 20th March, 1929.

Emboldened by the connivance of the Police towards their murderous attack, another set of hirelings attempted to waylay me in a more daring manner than they had done on 11th December. They knew that the ruse of a telephone message and luring us in their quarters would not work this time. So this time they planned the action to take place just near our Head Office. In December, another gangster came to the Head Office at about 8 in the morning which was my usual time to come there and start going to the various mills for settlement of complaints etc. I found about 50 men standing in groups at various corners of the street. When I was going near the tram stand just near the office of the Union, a swaggering fellow smelling liquor asked me where Mr. Dange was. This question confirmed my suspicion. In December it was impossible to find any worker in the majority of mills, who did not know most of us. Moreover I knew the face and name of this gang leader, as I had information collected about almost all important gangsters in the mill area since the last attack. So I pointed him towards the office where I told him he would find the man he wanted. He and four or five

of his companions who also being non-workers but disguised as workers did not recognise me, went to the office and created a scene there but failed to get what they wanted. On my return I met a newspaper reporter who used to see us daily for news about strikes and other matters. I told him of the morning "joke". True to his bourgeois salt he perverted what I had told him and flashed the story on the wires. Having had experience of the happenings of 12th December I took precautions to write to the various centres of the Union a letter in my own hand, telling them to inform the workers that any news appearing in the press about any attack on me should not be believed and that I was quite safe. In spite of this the Mill Committees sent messengers to inquire about the truth of the news and the timely steps taken by them prevented a probable closing down of mills and a further clash.

These two successive attempts in the same month, the use made of them by the mill-owners and the indirect help of the Police convinced us that serious efforts were being made to terrorise in the first instance the leaders of the G.K.U. or in the alternative to provoke clashes and pogroms. It became therefore more necessary to strengthen the organisation and also be on guard against the incitement of communal warfare, faint signs of which were showing themselves

(136) The consolidation of the G.K.U. - the programme of funds and volunteers as worked out - the G.K.U. finances - Exhibits P 949, 959, 971 and 982.

The offensive of our opponents had an electric effect on our organisational programme. The workers became convinced of the necessity of carrying out the programme regarding the membership, funds and volunteers, which was drawn up on the assumption that within six months the Fawcett Committee would finish its work and help the employers with their verdict. During the last strike the Joint Strike Committee had found itself short of funds in spite of the receipt of over Rs.1,11,000. Moreover we did not expect the cooperation of the reformists in the next strike, if it were forced upon us. Neither did we expect Government to allow the help from the international proletariat to reach us. This was clearly demonstrated in the strike of April 1929 which took place after the publication of the Fawcett Report. However it would be wrong to suppose that we had definitely fixed upon a general textile strike in the immediate future. Even if there had been no Inquiry Committee or no prospect of an immediate conflict, the programme was necessary for the purposes of building up trade unionism. We succeeded only in fulfilling half of the programme in the three full working months of November, December and January. The month of February was darkened

by the Hindu-Muslim riots, the effects of which were felt even till the end of March. If we had been left in peace, we would have got every man and woman in the mills inside the Union. But Imperialism did not want to tolerate even simple trade unionism in India, and therefore carried out the union-smashing raids of 20th March 1929.

The Prosecution have put into exhibits certain papers and books of the G.K.U. concerning the financial side of our Union work, concerning some receipts and disbursement of moneys. Their purpose is not clear in putting in these papers and exhibits. If it is meant to show that I was handling large sums of money as a General Secretary of the Union, the exhibition of these half-complete careless jottings was superfluous. A reference to the resolutions of the Union, the bank account and the five names of the office-bearers, any three of which could jointly operate the account, would have given a more faithful picture. What has been done is put in a so-called daily cash-book which is not written by any of the office-bearers of the Union (Exh: P 959) and covers in a very incomplete manner certain days in February and then even mentions the receipts and disbursement done through the writer alone and not of the whole Union. It is in fact a note of transaction done by the head clerk of the Union and does not in any way reflect the financial condition of the G.K.U. since it scraggly mentions some items for only 32 dates out of a period of

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5 ½ months. It is not a cash-book of the Union at all. The other two exhibits are P 949, a bunch of papers and P 971, a pencil-written notebook, both mentioning certain figures of Union moneys. In the Lower Court the Prosecution had also put in P 982, a piece of paper with certain figures, probably of rupees mentioned against the names of Bradley, Usmani etc., but it was not put to any handwriting witness to show whose paper it was. The Prosecution however withdrew this exhibit in this Court. As for P 949 one paper marked no. 6 was shown to P.W. 133, Colonel Rahman but was not shown to the Handwriting Expert of the Prosecution, P.W. 277. Out of this bunch of papers P 949, though at the beginning the Prosecution wanted to use only no. 6 they later on seemed to have decided to use the whole lot, as it appears from the selected figures they have printed in detail from pages 21 to 31 of this exhibit. As for P 971, the poor thing has also suffered from negligence which it does not deserve. For if the other two contained figures by a hundred, this exhibit mentions imposing sums running into thousands. But the modest Mr. James did not like to pursue these thousands with the same zeal as he pursued his or those of the Strike Relief Fund coming from outside India. Though the Prosecution has used the commandeered services of four handwriting witnesses, they never allowed them to set their profane eyes on this exhibit. When an excellent Lieutenant-Colonel I.M.S. and a handwriting

expert attached to the highest secret service of the Government were not asked to determine the parentage of this exhibit why should a layman like myself interfere in the job?

There are very powerful reasons for this behaviour on the part of the Prosecution. Having once put the documents in exhibit they withdrew one out of 4 of this kind, and with the remaining three they never dealt properly. They were not referred to in the summing up of the case in the Lower Court either by the Prosecution or the Magistrate. Then why are they there at all? The reason is that the Prosecution have been assailed by their own contradictions.

21/12/31 (Evening Part II).

Their two fundamental theories fight against each other. One is the theory of Moscow gold, the interpretation of every act of ours being backed by Moscow gold. And the second is the theory of the use of Trade Unions to further the aims of the conspiracy. On the first theory, they say these accused had no funds to carry on their activities; they appealed to Moscow and worked with Moscow gold. Having said that they lay their hands on the G.K.U. and probably to their surprise find that there are thousands of rupees lying in its bank account paid by the textile workers and the thousands of subscription receipts and vouchers stand there in all defiance as a challenge to the ridiculous theory of Moscow financing everything. But then the Prosecution can not go back on their second theory and true to their Imperialism which is full of contradictions, they stuck to their contradiction, seized a few papers, mentioning some small sums against the names of some of the accused as having been paid by the G.K.U. in its routine work and have come forth to say, "Here is a Trade Union and there is a band of conspirators and in between we put, your Honour, some papers with sums of 10,20,100. Obviously, the most clear conclusion is that the Trade Unions financed the conspiracy or if you like the conspiracy financed the Trade Unions." They have refused

to see that if they mention this, then the necessity of Moscow gold is ruled out; and if they retain fully the Moscow gold then the Union gold is ruled out. The two are mutually exclusive for the reason that a "clever conspirator" (so clever that the Prosecution says that it took its clever police three years to unearth us; while a Bombay daily was actually using our "most secret" morning letter in its evening edition) who knows that the police are after him would not do the costly experiment of asking for Moscow gold, when he has a Union worth thousands to back him. In order to get cut of this muddle, they practised two things. They kept back all papers that would show that the Union was financially very powerful and secondly they put forth some half-complete documents and scratchy notes to show that moneys were being mysteriously handed out, in many a case appearing as large "suspense" items; and what is a suspense item, if not a suspicious conspiratorial item holding the fate of the Empire in painful suspense?

If the Prosecution had taken care to be less slipshod they would have found that while the so-called Cash Book, P 959 would mention one item as suspense, it fails to mention anything between 7th and 15th February 1929. At the same time P 949 on paper no. 27 and 28 summarises a number of vouchers for these dates and over and above leaves a large space after each date in order to mention some more that might come in. D 562 (The letter of the Joint

Treasurer of the G.K.U. Mr. B.T. Alwe dated 16th February 1929) mentions having received Rs 5680-12-0 while the so-called Cash Book has no such reference at all. Then there is one more thing about P 949. Paper no. 19 on which according to the Prosecution some figures are written in my hand, shows a total of Rs 10029-7-6 as moneys said to have been paid in the head office in February 1929 while paper no. 20 gives the total of expenditure of Rs.12675-9-3. Part of paper no. 19 is in one hand, part in another, while nothing is said as to who wrote no. 20; neither it is alleged that it is mine. If any one tries to build any conclusions from such figures he either does not understand anything of accounts or is deliberately drawing dishonest conclusions, because none of these papers is in any sense complete or written by persons responsible for the income and expenditure of the Union especially in February 1929. Then again conclusions drawn from these papers will be cut out by Ex.P 971. For example paper no. 19 in P 949 mentions a total of Rs 1700/- from Tardeo for three dates, 14th and 18th Feb; and 5th March but does not mention Rs 400/- found on 4th February P. 971 and P 959. It also mentions a few sums from Naigaon centre but does not mention an item of Rs. 3728/- found in P 971 against the same centre. Again paper no. 20 of P 949 shows Rs. 1780/- and Rs. 1510/- (total Rs. 3290/-) as being sent to the bank credit and also tallies with P 971. But the actual Imperial Bank Pass Book of the Union D 459 shows under

deposit Rs. 4500/- on 15th February besides these two items on 18th and 26th. As regards P 971 by itself, its income side totals Rs. 11623-5-0 while its expenditure column totals Rs. 18402-10-3. It is easy to see how this happened. Two items of Rs. 3510/- and Rs. 1000/- appear as safe deposits on 12th February. It appears that due to the communal riots in the city, the Imperial Bank at Byculla, where the G.K.U. had its account and which lay in the riotous zone could not be approached in those days. Hence these sums were kept with somebody as safe deposits for a few days and when the bank could be approached, were partly sent to the bank and partly expended on current expenses. Thus they appear twice. So also two sums of Rs. 1000/- and 2000/- are given on 25th and 26th February for bail deposits, the practice being that as soon as arrests of workers were reported, somebody used to be sent to the police stations, with sufficient money to bail out the men and then separate receipts for different cases were made out. Rs.2600/- in D.556 of 27th Febr. (later on realised by the G.K.U. after our arrests) is a consolidated receipt with reference to the above two items and seems to have been noted in P.971 on 1/3/29, the balance being carried into other items of bail. The same thing happened with this entry as with those of safe deposits and hence the double mention in the rough jottings. When these items which ordinarily should have been repeated on the income

side but do not appear to have been done probably in order to keep the net income figures clear of cross-entries are deducted, we get the total expenditure reduced by Rs.7710/- which would then come to Rs. 11292-10-3 against an income of Rs. 11623-5-0. This makes P. 971 by itself quite intelligible and the transactions of the person who kept it quite clear; but it also is not a completely representative account of the Union as a whole. This will show that P 949, P 959 and P 971 are incomplete notes and can give no idea and yield no complete conclusions about the transactions of the G.K.U. If the Prosecution and those who agree with them wanted to draw any fair conclusions, they should have exhibited and studied the over 2,000 vouchers found in the search of the Union - item no. 73 of the search list P 947. They should have exhibited, arranged, and summarised in an intelligent form all the Union papers they seized in the search. Even then also quite a complete picture would not have been possible. Because as the search officer himself admits (M.B. Sait P.W. 188) "he took only what he thought important and "left the rest behind". Now this "rest left behind" consisted of a number of files, receipts, vouchers, registers etc. Without them a complete picture can not be presented of the Union membership, of the income and expenditure and of its financial position in details. None can say now what has happened to this "rest left behind" because the police seized the material

by breaking the locks and forcing the doors open, when none of the officers of the Union were present, and after pillaging the whole thing left it in nobody's charge. However any false conclusions that may be drawn from the Prosecution exhibits can be set aright by reference to the Defence exhibits filed on these matters, as also a thorough digest of the papers found in item no. 73 of the search list P 947, which has not been exhibited so far. Such a digest will show, (correct within two or three hundreds, due to the incompleteness of the papers especially for the month of March 1929) that every pie collected has been spent for the work of the Union alone and will smash thoroughly any statement alleging the appropriation of the Union funds for anything but the interest of the workers. Every rupee paid by the workers is traceable and accounted for in the documents of the Union though the mill-owners left me no time to pay attention to the office work, its regular organisation, as every hour of every day from October to March, I was continually on the run due to the 71 strikes, the innumerable individual complaints from various mills, the sittings of the Fawcett Inquiry Committee and such other things. Naturally this was bound to dislocate a certain amount of office work but not to such an extent as to leave room for reckless statements. A conference of the bourgeois bodies convened in June 1929 by the Governor of Bombay made allegations of the unlawful

use and sources of the funds of the G.K.U. and subsequently the Pearson Court was asked to submit a report on this allegation after examining the papers of the Union. The report was kept confidential but the fact that Government could find nothing to take steps against the Union as is confessed by it in its note of February 1930 shows how strong and quite a regular our position has been throughout. From the materials available and put forth in the exhibits and the searches, the following abstract of the financial position of the G.K.U. can be made out.

Collections of the G.K.U. from May 1928 to March 1929.

Centre	October	November	December	January	February	March	Total							
							(By Centres)	(By Months)						
Wadi	720-12-0	2441- 0-0	2040- 0-0	5893- 4-0	4305- 8-0	2057- 8-0	17464- 0-0	Oct. 6794- 0-0						
Naigaon	353.11-0	1139- 6-0	2341-15-6	3149- 4-0	6457- 6-0	2653-12-0	16095- 6-6	Nov. 12283- 0-0						
Lalbag	503- 8-0	1595-12-0	3916- 5-0	7414- 0-0	853- 6-0	2769- 8-0	17052- 7-0	Dec. 15135- 4-6						
Ferg.Rd.	533- 4-0	4427- 0-0	1735-11-0	6506-12-0	2155- 0-0	1341-15-6	16699-11-0	Jan. 31100-12-0						
DL.Rd.	400- 4-0	2232-14-0	1434- 9-0	2518- 8-0	34- 0-0	406- 5-0	7026- 8-0	Feb. 16555-14-6						
Tardeo	.....	.....	1625- 0-0	3300- 0-0	1800- 0-0	2340-11-0	9065-11-0	Mar. 12505-15-6				
Shivdi	173- 0-0	284- 4-0	989- 4-0	1458- 0-0	950- 0-0	781- 4-0	4635-12-0							
Hd.Office	4109- 9-0	162-12-0	1046- 8-0	861- 0-0	.....	155- 0-0	6334-13-0						
							<hr/>	<hr/>						
							6494- 0-0	12283-0-0	15135- 4-6	31100-12-0	16555- 4-6	12505-15-6	94374- 4-6	94374- 4-6
							Add collections May to Oct.		88-12-0	88-12-0				
							94463- 0-6	94463- 0-6						

Total collections of the Union from May 1928
to 19th. March 1929 were :-

94463- 0-6.

For the purposes of this abstract exhibits P 949, P 959, P 971 and Defence exhibits D 441, D 442, D 443, D 444, D 446, D 447, D 448, D 449, D 450, (head office registers of receipts for moneys credited there by the centres), D 428(1), (2) & (3) D 459, D 460, D 461, D,462, D 559 and D 562 can be consulted. Collection figures are found in a more or less consolidated manner till January 1929, but those of February are scattered owing to the complete dislocation of office work and regular routine caused by the riots in February. This one factor may leave some room to make some wild statements. But they can be shown to be all baseless. From all the papers referring to this month's collections, noted above, the totals even after accepting the highest figures, where more than one reference to the same item would require such a decision, can not be pushed up by any means beyond Rs. 16555-4-6. Anybody who would maintain a higher figure can be proved to be in the wrong. Similarly in the case of March though P 959 would give a total of Rs. 12098-2-6, I would be prepared to consider Rs. 12565-15-6 more valid according to D 441 to D 450. Then the results are that limiting ourselves strictly to D 441 to D 450 for the purposes of October to January we get a total collection of Rs. 65313-0-6 and adding up February and March, a total of Rs. 94463-0-6. But if we accept the highest figures in those cases again, wherein two or more cross references they vary, the above January

end total as per D 452(1) & (2) will come to Rs.67154-1-3 which together with February (Rs.16555-4-6) and March (Rs.12505-15-6) comes to Rs.96215-5-3. Ultimately basing myself on the present material and accepting the highest figures in cases where variations within a few hundreds - quite natural in view of the incompleteness of the available exhibit material - as correct, I can say that the workers paid Rs.96,000/- in round figures to the G.K.U.

Coming to expenditure a reference to D 452(2) would show it to be Rs.14124-3-6 upto January end. There is no such consolidated sheet for the months of February and March 1929. A reference to the papers in item 73 of P 947 for February gives a total expense of Rs. 5790-4-3. Add to this references in Exs: P 959 and P 971 (of Rs.100 + 95 + 100 = 295) which are not found in item 73 papers, one pronote or rather receipt of Rs.110/- lodged with the Union in April 1929 and an item of Rs. 70/- incurred in D 562. Then deduct Rs. 400/- in P 959 which would appear once as a suspense item but is returned in expenditure which can be seen from reference to papers in item 73 of P 947. This brings the expenses by vouchers to Rs.5891-10-9. Then there are deposits of bail money for workers who were arrested in February and March in the New China Mill case and other cases, as also payments (Rs.2350/-) made by cheques directly through the bank. On the basis of all available material, the abstract for February would work

out in my terms :-

<u>Income</u>	<u>February 1929</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
By collections	Rs.16555-4-6	To expenses Rs. 8241-10-9
By cheques on Bank "	2350-0-0	To Bail
		Deposits "
Other receipts	" 559-13-9	" 3000- 0-0
	<u>Rs.19465-2-3</u>	To Bank "
		" 7790- 0-0
34-12-9		Balance with
100- 0.0		Gen.Secretary"
250- 0- 0		" 400-11-6
150- 0-0		Balance with
25- 0-0		Office "
		" 32-12-0
		<hr/>
	559-13-9 (P.959)	Rs. 19465-2- 3

(The three items of Rs. 1180-12-0 returned by Joint Treasurer in D 562 are ruled out by cross entries as between office and the treasurer). As regards the month of March, obviously nothing very definite can be said as item 73 which contained materials throwing light on February does not contain any papers of March. But that such papers there were can be seen from pages 22-25 of Ex. P 949 wherein the total of voucher expenses in March through Dange comes to Rs.1190-10-0 P 959 would show sums of Rs.1809-4-0 being handed over to me. This together with February balance of Rs.400-11-7 would make Rs.2209-15-6 against me. Of this Ex. P 949 shows expenses through me of Rs.1190-10-0 but this is only up to 11th March. There are no papers regarding the rest of the 8 days till 20th March.

(Dange) D/22.12.31

Morning 1st Part.

The balance was spent in deposits of bail money at the Police-stations which was Rs. 900 or just thereabouts. This can be partially corroborated by reference to D 563. This would leave Rs. 119-5-6 only, specifically against me in March. In D 459 (Imperial Bank Pass Book) we find two cheques of Rs. 500 each cashed on 7th and 16th March, but it is not known by whom and for what as they were issued bearer cheques for "self". Neither does Exh: P 959 mention them on those dates. It means that Rs. 1119-5-6 remain to be shown in expenses or balances. Adding up the disbursements for which record is available, there would remain to be explained a shortage of Rs. 680-7-0 to make the total disbursements square with the total receipts. This deficiency also could be corrected if the papers left behind by the Search Officer were available here. Thus a sum of Rs. 1800-12-6 only awaits a reference to further relevant records which are not brought here and certainly I cannot be held responsible for it. Still I am quite sure that it can be easily found either in balances or expenses for the unrecorded period of 8 days, during which numerous house searches and launching of cases were being carried out against the workers, demanding our constant readiness with large cash in office to release them on bail and give them other help. The abstract for the month of March

on this material would work out thus :-

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure.</u>	
<u>March 1929.</u>			
By collections	12505-15-6	To Voucher P 949 ..	1190-10-0
Balance from Gen.		" " P 959 ..	573.12-0
Secretary from Feb.	400-11-6	" " Cheque ..	650- 0-0
By cheque	1000- 0-0	Expense, record of	
By balance from Feb.	36- 4-9	which is not here .	1800-12-0
(P 959)		To Bail	2400- 0-0
By cheque on Bank ..	650- 0-0	(P 959, D563 etc.)	
		To Bank Deposits .	7960- 0-0
		Balance (P 959)	17-13-0
	<hr/>		
	14592-15-9		<hr/>
			14592-15-0

(Here cross entries of Rs.1746 as between the office and Treasurer are cut out as per references in Exhibits P 959 and D 451).

So we can now strike a consolidated balance-sheet, which would present a broad but correct outline of the state of the Unions' finances on the eve of our arrests:-

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Income January End	67,154-1-3	Expense to Jan. end	14124- 3-0
Income Feb.	16,555-4-6	Expense to Feb. end	11241-10-0
" March	12,505-15-6	" " March "	6615- 2-0
	<hr/>	Balance in Office ..	17-13-0
	96,215-5-3	" at Imperial	
		Bank	64495- 0-0
			<hr/>
			96493-14-0

In a turnover of nearly a lakh of rupees the discrepancy of less than Rs. 300 is nothing in view of the incompleteness of the material available in the records put

before the court and also in search material. Also small mistakes are likely to have occurred in the above by small suspense sums appearing over again as expenses through bills and such others (and hence the excess appears on the side of expenses temporarily). They can, I am sure, correct the above discrepancy. I can state with complete confidence before the workers without any fear of being disproved on any material item that till the day of my arrest the workers had paid into the Girni Kamgar Union in round figures Rs. 96,000 out of which Rs. 25,000 were spent on the work of the Union and Rs. 71,000 were left in the form of cash-balances with the Imperial Bank, bail deposits at the various Police-stations, and some small sums with the Joint Treasurer, Mr. B.T. Alve. I am quite prepared to prove, explain and argue on the figures I have stated and the conclusions drawn, from the documents available here and even to strengthen and illuminate them, correct to the last pie, if opportunity were given to me to procure the documents left behind after search by the Police officer, and if they are still available. This should be sufficient to explode the wild talk about the G.K.U. money and its "use".

The Girni Kamgar Union really began to function from October, after calling off of the strike. Since then the membership began to soar & up continuously till January, in which month the collection of subscription and Strike

Fund was the highest. But it cannot be said from the drop seen in the collections of February and March 1929 that we would not have been able to keep up the high membership which was well over 100,000 in January. The fall in membership in the next two months is not due to the turning away of the workers from the Union as such. February was a month of communal rioting in Bombay and the pay day of the workers, on which all the collections are made, fell in the middle of the riotous period, and thousands of workers who had not already left Bombay did so on receiving their pay straightway. In February for the same reason the mills did not work to full capacity and therefore our collections in March also were low. Had it not been for the February calamity we would have got every man and woman of the remaining 40,000 in the G.K.U. within the next three months. Every rupee of the ordinary subscription represents four members. We had also a Strike Fund of one rupee per head, payment of which was not compulsory for every member. The special collection of the Strike Fund was less than Rs. 10,000 for all the six months together. Deducting this from the total of Rs. 96,000 we get an average membership nearing 58,000 from October to March. The lowest being 28,000 in October 1928 and the highest over 100,000 in January 1929. (The Registrar of Trade Unions in Bombay disbelieved my report when I informed him in December that our membership was near 80,000 and he

persisted in announcing it as 54,000 only. Now at least from the above figures he should correct himself). When we were removed from the field, the Bombay Government in its note of 25th February 1930, while reviewing the past, observed, "The Girni Kamgar Union was the first Union to undertake an intensive propaganda and to organise a large body of workers into a trade union, with a regular organisation, collection of subscriptions and accumulation of funds. The other trade unions had only a limited membership although their organisation was on sound enough lines and they were controlled by well-known social workers." It was exactly for this reason that the G.K.U. aroused the ire of the Bombay bourgeoisie and the Government which wrote the above note. They did not want "a large body of workers into a trade union with a regular organisation." They wanted only such unions as had "a limited membership controlled by well known social workers" - well known for their being amenable to bourgeois reasonableness, their intense efforts to avoid strikes and guard the interests of both the bourgeoisie and the workers, which ultimately means predominantly to guard the interests of the bourgeoisie. If the organisers of the G.K.U. would not make way for these well known social workers then Imperialism, assisted by the Indian bourgeoisie, would step in and try to clear the way by locking their opponents in the prisons. Unfortunately, it has not helped the well known sound enough social workers in any way!

(137) The Pearl Mill ^mmurder case - (references Exhibits P 958, resolutions of the G.K.U. Managing Committee

Soon after the attack and firing of December 12th the G.K.U. was faced with the Pearl Mill murder case. This Mill had given much trouble to the workers in several ways. It was running counts 40 yarn on high draft system which very few mills in Bombay did. It had a larger number of Jacquard Looms, which had not yet appeared in the Bombay industry on a very large scale. It produced many kinds of fancy sorts with high percentage of silk work. The Bombay industry not yet being used to silk chose the wrong type of material which caused very great hardships in the weaving department, resulting in a very heavy fall in the already poor wages of the women workers in winding. On the ground that they were running 40s in spinning the mill wanted to reduce half the workers in ring spinning wherein it employed a large number of women workers on wages lower than the average for the male spinners. In Jacquards they were trying new varieties, whose rates they did not want to fix on the former scale on Jacquard weaving, which was comparatively higher than other weaving rates. The whole of the Bombay industry was uncertain about these rates and was clearly experimenting as can be seen from the fact that even in December 1929, six months after the Mill-owners' Association had worked out their scheme of standardised wages and work, the Association said that they were

experimenting with Jacquards and therefore could not place any scheme, before the Fawcett Committee, on that section of weaving. If they were experimenting they were certainly not doing it in a laboratory. They were actually altering wage rates of the existing Jacquard weavers and testing their reaction. They were experimenting in every mill that had Jacquard looms. Naturally experiments of the mill-owners on Jacquard meant experiments on the workers' earnings and his living. In such a condition was the Pearl Mill.

I.H.K.

22/12/31 (Morning Part II).

The workers in this mill had produced like other mills, their own rank and file leaders, who were actively taking part in the organisation of the G.K.U. The worker leaders in the Spinning Section were the first to come in conflict with the mill bosses, on the question of the women spinners who were being played off from day to day without any wages and also on the ground of the defectiveness in the high-draft frames. When the workers told the management to carry out the necessary alterations before they could work on the frames, the management, though they had agreed with me to set the frames aright, resented the workers' pointing them out the defects; and the Superintendent of the group of Fazalbhoy Mills wrote to me on 28th November 1928, asking me to stop the Union activities in the mills and to tell the workers "not to dictate their terms of working to the Spinning Master." Then there was trouble in the jacquards also. The leadership of expressing all these grievances was taken by the workers group in the mill, led by an intelligent jacquard weaver by name Papa Miyan. Though no Mill Committee as such was elected in this mill, this group did all the work of a Mill Committee and brought over its head the wrath of the bosses, who selected Papa Miyan as their special victim. They gave him less work on his jacquard loom, did not provide him with beams; they

set persons against him, and cut the beam threads in his absence thereby ruining his wages heavily. Still he would not give up leading the workers' grievances before the bosses and before the G.K.U. A jacquard weaver of the type of Papa Miyan usually earns about Rs.100/- or more per month, if he is supplied regularly with work. But as a leader of the workers, Papa Miyan's earnings fell and that skilled man could not even get Rs. 40/-. He had a wife and young children in his family. His wife was ill while the vengeance and hatred of the bosses towards him would not let him earn a living in spite of his great skill. There were small strikes and troubles. On 20th December he took the grievances of a few workers to the manager, who threatened him with dismissal. The mill went on strike on 22nd December, at the call of the departmental leaders. Papa Miyan had been absent for two days, and somebody gave it out that he had been dismissed. The mill struck work for him. The management maintained that the strike was caused by Papa Miyan, who was not dismissed but had resigned voluntarily his job, as he said he was disgusted with the management. In the course of the inquiry carried out by a committee of the workers themselves, it transpired that Papa Miyan had used some such words in anger but had no intention of giving up his job. However the workers decided that as there were some grounds to say that Papa Miyan had resigned and had not been dismissed, the management

should take him back. The management consented to take him back provided he undertook not to call lightning strikes. The undertaking was given by him and a few of his fellow workers, on the advice of the G.K.U. to do so and work was resumed on 26th December. On 28th December when the Superintendent of the mills visited, a few complaints were laid before him by Papa Miyan and other workers. The Superintendent, who expected the workers to have become dumb slaves by the undertaking of 26th December, flew into rage to find them telling him the defects in management and their grievances. He flew at them, kicked and abused them. Fortunately for him the workers held their patience. On the same day in the noon the Assistant Weaving Master in the mill, by name Davar, was killed in the Folding Department near the weaving shed. A police party was called in, which surrounded and took charge of the mill. Just when the police were being posted I arrived at the mill, accompanied by another officer of the G.K.U. The workers were taken out of the mill and one of the management staff pointed out to the police some 20 to 25 persons from amongst them who were put under arrest. I remained there till the workers were allowed to leave the mill except those who were arrested, for whom we then proceeded to make arrangements for bail and defence. As the police had taken special note of my arrival at the mill just after the incident, two or three days after I was summoned to the

Delisle Road Police Station and put under a long cross examination for over three hours as to my knowledge of the incident and the accused workers. They had arrested most of the prominent workers from all departments; but it was difficult to get evidence of their complicity. While in the police station, Papa Miyan was brought from a cell before me and was asked if he knew me and if I was the man who had told him to kill Davar. It was clear from the face of the man that he was being starved and persecuted for a confession. He of course knew me but denied that he had committed the crime or that I had asked him to do anything. The police examined me very critically as to how I came to the mill just when they were arriving there. They suggested that my arrival pointed to a previous knowledge on my part of the incident or the plan. They then wanted to know how Mill Committees were formed, and who the members were in this Mill's Committee. I explained the constitution of the G.K.U. on the matter. But as the Pearl Mill had had no Mill Committee officially confirmed by the G.K.U. there was no question of any names. As regards my arrival at the mill, it was on account of a previous appointment made by the management of the mill with me for settlement of certain disputes. The police were not satisfied with this. They hunted at the Centre Office at Ferguson Road for any records of the Mill Committee meetings in order to find out if the murder had been discussed and decided upon by the Committee

as a whole. But they could get none. When they got an approver from the accused, he told them that he (the approver) had phoned for me at the head office to come to the mill at 12.30. in the noon in view of the kicking incident and the consequent indignation of the workers. But the phone on his own admission was not received by me at all. On reference to the management, the police were told that the mill-management had asked me by a letter to be at their office at 4 P.M. for settlement of disputes and that happened to be the time when police arrived on the scene and saw me there. This disappointed them and they left persecuting the accused for implicating any of the Union officers or myself.

The G.K.U. engaged four counsels for the accused who were twenty in number. One of the counsels was a barrister, belonging to the Parsi community by name Mr. B. J. Wadia (who later on became a justice of the Bombay High Court). The man who was murdered was a Parsi and it may be remembered that the managerial staff of the Bombay mills is mostly composed of Anglo-Indians and Parsis. The Parsi bourgeoisie at once approached Mr. Wadia not to take up the case for us as the murdered man was a Parsi. But Mr. Wadia did not withdraw from the case. The defence of the accused was not left to the relatives who had come to Bombay on receiving the news. The G.K.U. by a resolution of the Managing Committee on 16th January 1929 (Ex. P 958) sanctioned money

for this case. Over Rs.3,000/- were paid to the counsels and Rs.500/- spent on other allied matters. The case was heard by Mr. Justice Blackwell, who from his summing upto the jury and his general behaviour throughout the case appeared to be a bit vindictive and under the influence of the newspaper propoganda against the Red Flag Union. The jury returned a divided verdict. Justice Blackwell would not have it. He sent back the jury to try and see if they could get a unanimous verdict. The jury went back, tried and saw. It returned with a unanimous verdict. All those that were selected and emphasised upon in the summing up were declared guilty and the rest not guilty. Judgment was delivered on 8 in the night in the Bombay High Court on 18th March 1929, sentencing Papa Miyan and Maruti to death, five to transportation for life, three to various terms of imprisonment and acquitting ten.

On 19th March in the night when Imperialism was distributing its armed forces in the city of Bombay to prepare for the next morning, I was writing the special issue of the Kranti on the Pearl Mill case, in which I wrote "the court of the British Government has given a decision which will satisfy the friends of Capitalism. the law throughout the world is the law of the bourgeoisie." Six hours after I wrote this for the unfortunate victims of the Pearl Mill case, I myself was in the grip of that very law. The Kranti with this article appeared on the morning of 20th

March 1929, when were being transformed from denunciators of bourgeois law into the victims of that law.

The management kept the mill closed for some days after the incident of 29th December. They were delighted to have got rid of the worker leaders of the mill in such a manner. On 5th of January 1929, the workers were paid off their wages and the mill was reopened with completely a new batch of workers and jobbers. A complaint was brought by me before the Fawcett Committee on 21st January for wrongful dismissal and victimisation. The Committee took evidence, but ultimately ruled that the dispute was not covered by the agreement of 4th October, and they were therefore unable to judge it. We deliberated over the problem in the Managing Committee (Ex. P 958 and a reference by Alwe in his statement) and it was decided not to bring out on strike the men of the Fazalbhoj group of mills, of which the Pearl Mill was one, in sympathy with the dismissed men. We had found that due to a threat of strike in the whole of the group, the management had begun to take many of our workers back and the jobbers also were persuaded by us to engage none but the old workers. A few most marked Mill Committee leaders were however victimised, who could not get in until the mill was again faced with a strike in February in the Sizing and Drawing Departments. This is sufficient to show the policy of the G.K.U. with regard to the sectional strikes and its attitude towards the help that ought to be

rendered to workers in difficulties and the way in which it was utilising the large sums of money collected from its members.

(138) The G.K.U. and the February communal riots -
Exs. P 702, P 858 and G.K.U. resolutions in
Ex. P 958.

At the beginning of the year 1928, every strike by the workers was being beaten, for want of organised leadership, though the workers were prepared to resist the onslaughts. There was no strong Trade Union based on the principle of class struggle. At the beginning of the year 1929, the position had completely changed. There was strong Trade Union, with the strength of all the textile workers solidly behind, with large funds and a paying membership of over one lakh. The workers had begun creating a strong proletarian cadre functioning through the Mill Committees, which comprised of about 5,000 selected, conscious workers from all the mills. The G.K.U. had repulsed the underhand wage cuts and dismissals carried out by the mill-owners after the general strike in violation of the October agreement. It had completely overcome the rivalry of the other unions. It had withstood numerous attacks on its office-bearers and organisers. Having failed to suppress the workers by these means, some sections of the Indian bourgeoisie and the Imperialists tried the incitement of communal war and the

Hindu-Moslem riots of February 1929, was the out-
have referred elsewhere (in para 101) to the Comm
viewpoint on the communal question. The Hindu-Mosl
problem is not a religious problem nor can its solut
be ever found by treating the two categories - Hindus
Moslems - on the basis of religious, communal or caste
adherence.

D/-22.12.31.

Morning 1st Part.

It can be solved from the class point of view by the solution of the social problem on the basis of the class struggle. This has been stated quite clearly, as for example in P 702 of the Moharram Manifesto, the Bombay W.P.P. and in P 858. The bourgeoisie and Imperialists in India are fully aware of this attitude. Yet they have purposely chosen to attribute the cause of the Bombay riots to the Communists in the Girni Kamgar Union.

Bombay had not seen communal riots since 1896. But after the failure of the Non-cooperation Movement, when the Imperialists seriously began to foment the Hindu-Muslim troubles in order to sidetrack the energies of the proletariat and peasantry into reactionary suicidal struggle, Bombay in spite of its having the most class-conscious working class was affected a little. Though there were slight skirmishes there was nothing like the mad massacres of 1926 in Calcutta. In 1929 however the Imperialists and their agents finding all their attempts frustrated against the workers decided to involve them and consequently the whole city in a furious communal rioting. After the riots were over as usual the bourgeoisie asked for a thorough inquiry into the affair. On 26th February 1929 Mr. K. M. Munshi moved in the Bombay Legislative Council an adjournment of

the House to discuss the disturbances. The motion was carried and according to the wishes of the House, the Government appointed on 22nd April 1929, a committee to inquire into the February riots. Before the Committee could meet there had occurred the General Strike of the Textile Mills on 26th April 1929 and again an attempt was made to drown the strike in a Hindu-Muslim riot, in the first week of May, The inquiry was postponed to 24th June. When the terms of reference were formulated in April, they contained no reference directly to the General Strike of 1928 or the subsequent individual mill strikes as a possible cause of the riots. Government at that time had an idea of relying either on secret instructions to the Committee or the good sense of the bourgeois in them. But the strike of 1929 affected their nerves more than they could restrain. In the second terms of reference the Government definitely mentioned the General Strike of April 1929 as a cause of the riots in May. A loyal Committee of reactionary gentlemen presided over by the Commissioner of Sind was not going to ignore the mandate of its masters.

The Committee issued a questionnaire to the press. I wrote to them for a copy of it, which they sent me in the Jail. The questionnaire contained three questions which affected us and many of the matters involved in this case. Question no. 3 was, "Were the strikes responsible for the riots? If so how far?" Question no. 8 was "Were the attacks

on the Pathans due to the fact that they were used as strike breakers or to economic reasons or to what cause?" Question no. 13 was "Were the measures taken by the Police to protect the workers in the Oil Installations adequate?" The questionnaire consisted of 26 questions. If you examine their report, you will find that all along Communism and the G.K.U. were on their brains and the major part of the report deals with the above three questions as almost the sole matter of inquiry before them. Instead of dealing with the conduct of the Police and the Government forces, about which also they had included some questions, they wrote in fact a report on the Communist influence in Bombay and how to "protect" the workers from it. I was personally present during the debate in the Bombay Council on 26th February 1929 and knew what the game was. The questionnaire of the Committee and its composition clearly showed that its report was going to be an interim condemnation of the Communists and incidentally of the Meerut accused who had belonged to the G.K.U. But in order not to allow the attempt to go uncontested as far as possible, I sent a statement on some of the questions to the Committee on 5th June 1929 which the Committee Secretariat received on 7th June. I had not with me any papers relating to the riot days for reference nor was the Police report which was published later on available to me. The Riots Inquiry Committee received 125 written replies and examined 80 witnesses

orally. During the oral examination of many prominent members of the bourgeoisie, the Committee every time asked pointedly if in the opinion of the witnesses the Communists were at the bottom of the riots. Many of them emphatically denied that the Communists had anything to do with the communal riots. A report of the evidence before the Committee appeared in the papers and from memory I can say that amongst those who refused to put the blame on the Communists were Messrs. K. F. Nariman, Lalji Narainji, Sir Purshotandas Thakurdas and some others. I have already referred to the evidence of the then Hon'ble Home Member, Sir E. Hotson, in which he said that our speeches during the strikes were not of an inflammatory character as was suggested by the Committee (Para 124). In spite of this when the Committee wrote its report, it kept completely silent about this evidence. It printed in its report extracts from the speeches which are now exhibits in this case. The Committee also kept silent over my statement. It paid no heed to the evidence of the then office-bearers of the G.K.U., Messrs. Kandalkar and Joshi, who were invited to give evidence. Without a single reference or discussion of the evidence so tendered the Committee most arbitrarily reported that the G.K.U. was the basic cause of the riots; that the speeches of the Communist leaders bred contempt of law and order; that the leaders not only preached the overthrow of the Government but drilled Red ~~xx~~ volunteers; that

they incited the workers to resist the Pathan blacklegs in the oil strike, which led to free fights and ultimately to the communal riots. The Committee representing on it the essence of the Imperialist bourgeois, assisted by one Hindu and one Mohammadan bourgeois have poured into their report their intense hatred of Communists and recommended that "Government should take drastic action against the activities of the Communists in Bombay" and secondly "during the riots immediate steps should be taken to lock up or get rid of hooligans including old offenders the hooligan menace being next in seriousness to the Communist menace." They wanted the Communists to be excluded by law from registered trade unions and dealt with severely "under the Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure." (Page 28 of their Report). Government was satisfied with this performance. Drastic action was being taken. But the Committee was very illogical in recommending the action against the hooligans. If Government were to carry out that part it would have required to lock up hundreds of the Hindu-Muslim bourgeois, who form the elite of the "hooligans and old offenders"!

But while spending their wrath against the Communists and the G.K.U., the Committee forgot to twist the facts of the riots sufficiently to suit its conclusions. The facts that it quoted in its report and also in that of the Police directly contradict the conclusions drawn therefrom. This

was quite natural. The whole of the big bourgeoisie in Bombay and the Government were deeply disappointed to find that the workers in the city refused to be drawn into the riots, that the Communists prevented the workers from being excited into a suicidal fury and that the Government were not given an opportunity of carrying out a pogrom. This was also the reason of the contradiction between the report submitted by the Government of India to the Assembly and that by the Secretary of State to the Parliament. While one wanted definitely to put the blame on us, the other was not quite so sure. While the gentlemen of the Committee were enthusiastically asking Government to suppress the Communists and the G.K.U. they absolved both the Hindu and Muslim bourgeoisie and the Government from any blame. With regard to the Government they state that it took all possible measures quite in time to suppress the riot. With regard to the Hindu-Muslim bourgeoisie they say that both were quite innocent and recommended that "Muslims should trust Hindus and Hindus should trust the Muslims." They left it implied that both should trust the British. In fact this was not a recommendation to the people but a description of the manner in which the three members of the Committee worked. The Muslim bourgeois member trusted the Hindu bourgeois member, who appropriately returned the trust; and both of them trusted the British President and all three in mutual admiration and trust condemned the workers, their class enemy.

My reply to the Committee's absurd statement and attack on us is contained in my statement sent to the Committee and completely refutes the allegations against us. The communal riots were not caused by us or the Girni Kamgar Union. They were the work of Police aided by the agent-provocateur, Mr. Shaukat Ali, who, once an anti-Imperialist, is now the active paid agent of Imperialism, planted the bourgeois national movement to disrupt it by communal dissensions. The riots were not in the beginning communal at all, nor were they due to the oil strike to which every enemy of the workers traces them. A study of the various handbills issued by the G.K.U. (Exh: P 951 and the issue of the Kranti dated 23rd February Exh P) would show this and would also show the efforts made by us and the G.K.U. as a whole to stop the riots.

There are three strikes which are alleged to show the existence of the communal conflict against the workers. It is absolutely incorrect to state that there was at any time any kind of a virile communal feeling amongst the workers. Though they nominally classify themselves by religion and caste, the Bombay workers are exceptionally free from the Hindu-Muslim feeling. The working class like that in Bombay with nearly two decades of industrial life had become class conscious and not caste conscious. The Bombay workers afford no ground for the mischief of the communal leaders. The three strikes in which attempt was made to import the

Hindu-Muslim feeling were those in the New China Mill, the Brandbury Mill and the Burma Oil Company's Installations. The trouble in the New China and the Brandbury Mills was directly due to the management and their attempts to displace the weavers and jobbers of one community by those from another. But the Riots Inquiry Committee, the Police report, and the reports and speeches of Government Ministers do not start with these attempts, nor do they mention these strikes in particular. All of them attack the strike of the workers in the Oil Company's Installations in the city. The oil strike began on 7th December 1928 as a result of the dismissals of a few workers. The company refused to negotiate with the Union of the workers and employed Pathans to break the strike. These blacklegs were paid double the wages ordinarily given to the oil workers, though they were not able to handle the work properly. The Pathans were also employed not so much for work as for attacking the workers. Meetings of the workers and the pickets were assaulted. The Pathans looted the shops in the locality and the rooms of workers in the chawls. Affidavits regarding these happenings were published and complaints filed with the Police. But the Police had been completely under the influence of the oil company. The oil interests in India and the world are so powerful that they make and unmake Governments. They are the supreme rulers in the politics of

every big State in the world. The constant recurring rate wars, which shake the whole world, between the Standard Oil and the Royal Dutch Shell of which the B.O.C. is a subsidiary company in India, the Teapot Dome scandal in America, & the revelations in the Oil Tariff Board Inquiry of the Government of India clearly show how oil Imperialism controls the Police, the press and all the State apparatus in its interests. The oil strikers had to fight against the power of such a powerful Imperialist concern with world-wide links.

The Riots Committee says that we of the G.K.U. asked the mill workers to help the oil strikers in their defence against the Pathans and therefore the anti-Pathan attack began. In fact it was not at all required to tell the mill workers to help the oil strike.

22/12/31 (Evening Part II).

In the area of the installations the oil and mill-workers stayed in the same chawls and when the Pathans entered the chawls both the mill and oil workers were attacked and therefore both joined hands in defending themselves against the attack. Moreover it is absolutely necessary for every Trade Union and class of workers to help another Trade Union and class of workers in their struggle with the employers. Moreover the clashes between the oil workers and the Pathan blacklegs took place from the beginning of January to the middle of it. The Riots Committee admit that from 18th January to the beginning of February there were no attacks of Pathans. Finding it difficult to explain this they say that we were engaged in Municipal elections and therefore had no time. They also suggest that we either started or helped to spread the rumour that the Pathans were kidnapping children. Now if we were busy with the elections, it was certainly not in our interest to start such a scare. The police report shows that the scare began as early as 24th January, before the Municipal elections and in a locality with which neither mill-workers nor we had any connections. Even the police report admits that "the police have failed to trace the origin of the rumours and it is unlikely that the origin will ever be traced." But the mediocre brains on the

Committee thought that they were more informed than the police & made false remarks against us.

The police report shows that complaints were being made to the Commissioner since 24th January 1929, that there were rumours of children being kidnapped. These complaints were mostly from the non-mill areas and from bourgeois quarters. "The first known attack" occurred on a motor driver in a non-mill area, according to the police report and the news of the scare appeared in the press for the first time on 3rd February 1929 with which our paper The Kranti had nothing to do. During the first two days, the attack was not even specifically directed against the Pathans as such. In the attacks, not the mill-workers only, but all classes and communities, Hindus, Mohammedans and Christians were found participating. The police report of 3rd February shows that a Hindu carpenter was killed in the mill area on the suspicion that he was a kidnapper. Iranis, Gurkhas, traders, a Greek engineer and all sorts of persons were attacked on this day. We had no idea that the scare was going to affect the mill-workers to such an extent that they would close down the mills next day, the 4th Feb: (Monday). But to our surprise we found that mills had begun to close one by one in the morning till by middle of the day almost all mills and even the railway workshops were closed. In spite of this the Police Commissioner said in

his evidence that there was no general panic. He says "I spent the whole morning of the 4th in the mill area and while one must admit the fact that 150,000 millhands and 30,000 railwaymen stopping work indicates a panic in itself, even in these areas, there was no panic as panic is understood amongst the general population, that is to say business was going on as usual, people were going about the streets and shops were open. Panic undoubtedly there was but not a general panic." When the mills closed down we endeavoured to collect the workers altogether and tell them to go back to work. But it had no effect. They all refused and said they must go home to protect their wives and children. On the evening of the 4th when we called the workers to the K.E.M. Maidan for a meeting as we usually did, we found to our surprise that the whole four storied building overlooking the Maidan was full of Pathan residents. We at once cancelled the meeting (Ex. P 951 D page 21) because we feared that the Pathans might think that the workers had assembled to assault them. But the handbill cancelling the meeting did not reach in time to the workers and when at 3 o'clock the workers began to go to the K.E.M. Maidan, the Pathans thought they were approaching their building for an attack and began throwing stones. The workers thought the Pathans were out to smash their meeting. The result was that thousands of workers flocked round our head office which was only 50 paces from the Pathans' building. In order

to keep order and prevent any attacks we called in our volunteers to the head office. There were armed police stationed near about. They fraternised with the Pathans and stationed themselves at a distance from the Union office. The Pathans after this fraternisation came out in a body of fifty and rushed towards the head office where most of the G.K.U. leaders had assembled to explain to the workers the necessity of resuming work and the falsehood of the rumours. When the Pathans advanced, our volunteers who were not more than thirty or forty met them and repulsed their attack with courage. The Pathans are stronger men at daggerthrust and stone throwing but do not know the lathi work while our volunteers were only lathi players. So before the Pathans could come to grips with them, the long lathis disabled them and they went back into their building. When the police found that their game was foiled they attacked our volunteers and wounded some of them. The Police Superintendent asked us to disarm the volunteers. This we refused to do. We told him that we had no intention to aggravate matters but unless our office was protected from the attacks we could not disarm or remove the volunteers. He agreed to see that the Pathans did not stir out of their building. Of course we could not trust the promise but we knew that the nervous shock received by the Pathans was sufficient to keep them quiet. Moreover in order to avoid a nonsensical fight we removed our head office to Nagu Sayaji

Wadi temporarily and took away our volunteers also. Tuesday, the 5th Feb: saw many complicated developments which are described in detail in the Kranti of February 23rd. In the morning Mr. Alwe tried with the aid of Mohammedan contractors whom he knew to disarm the suspicion of the Pathans in the Abu building opposite the head office of the G.K.U. In the attempt he was attacked by a Pathan which fact was mentioned in the report of the Home Member made to the Bombay Legislative Council on 26th February 1929. The news exasperated the workers who went to the head office. The Pathans as on the previous day tried to storm the office but they were repulsed. On Tuesday the dacoit element of the Pathans was busy and began to loot shops in the bourgeois area. A large number of Pathans marched to the office of the Commissioner of Police, attacked the police force there and injured six constables (Police report page 17). This development was absolutely unexpected and the police took drastic steps. They entered the masjid in which the Pathans had taken shelter, arrested them and removed them to a well-guarded camp. When the police force was attacked drastic action was taken by the Police, but when the Union offices were being raided, the police looked on or harassed our volunteers. The reason for this attack on the Police Commissioner's Office and the police force is not given by any body and is altogether suppressed by the Riots Inquiry Committee. But we came to know of it. In the night of Monday, a new

idea had got hold of the Pathans. Many of them discussed the reasons for the attack. Those days were the days of the ex-king Amanullah's popularity, of the solidarity that was being brought about between the Afghan and the Indian peoples by means of support to Amanullah and his progressive anti-British outlook. It was galling to the British to see this solidarity. It would mean a death knell of that constant scare of the Afghan invasion on India and the excuse for which British Imperialism maintains large military forces on the Frontier and exploits the Indian treasury. They had to destroy this solidarity and brotherly feeling. They sowed the seed whereby the general attack of Pathans began. A massacre of that type was just the thing to create permanent ill-feeling between the Pathan workmen and Indian workers. Some of the Pathans who thought of these lines started a campaign amongst their groups of which the result was the attack against the police forces on Tuesday.

When on one side developments were taking this turn there appeared on the scene the arch-villain of the piece Mr. Shaukat Ali accompanied by his brother the late Mr. Mohammad Ali. They had at last got the situation they wanted and the job they were thirsting for. On Tuesday morning they gave an interview to the Times of India. The main part of the interview was a series of incited exclamations, according to the Times report in which Mr. Mohammad Ali

twice asked "what are Nimbkar and Dange doing". The Times says "Mr. Shaukat Ali made a vehement attack on the Labour leaders, his views being endorsed by his brother." The Times of India reporter as if according to a pre-arranged plan asked, "Is it likely that situation will develop into a Hindu-Moslem conflict, seeing that most of the victims are Moslems"? And Mr. Mohammad Ali replied "of course it will" and Mr. Shaukat Ali interjected "I am going to organise the Mohammedans for purposes of self-defence." Mr. Shaukat Ali also observed that before the kidnapping scare started a group of Mohammedan mills was chosen for assaults on operatives. This interview was published in the Times of India of 6th February 1929 and is reproduced by the Inquiry Committee in their report. The Committee in its report says "Mr. Mohammed Ali has explained to us that he especially asked the reporter not to publish the interview. Moreover Mr. Shaukat Ali later on did his best to help in quelling the disturbances. The declaration of Mr. Shaukat Ali can be described at the worst as indiscreet, which indiscretion must be shared by the Times of India for publishing the alleged interview although Mr. Mohammed Ali had asked the reporter not to publish it". I thoroughly agree with the Committee that the interview was indiscreet. I also very much appreciate the foresight of Mr. Mohammad Ali in asking the reporter not to publish what was said and also the anxiety of the Committee to call it an "indiscretion"

I am also amused at the crude attempt of the Committee to throw suspicion on the authority of the interview by using the word "alleged" even when the authors themselves admitted it and tried only to explain it away. I agree that it was indiscreet because it revealed the identity of the agents, who turned the riots into a Hindu-Moslem fight. Mr. Mohammed Ali asked the reporter not to publish the interview because he was more farseeing and shrewd than his mountebank brother. The Committee felt chagrin because it exposed the hollowness of the Committee's conclusions. The Committee admits that the attacks in the north of the island on the 3rd, 4th and 5th February were not communal. It says "On the 5th however it turned into a communal riot and murders were committed in the south of the island. Attacks were made first by the Pathans on the Hindus generally and then by Moslems on Hindus and Hindus on Moslems " (page 5). The attacks of the Pathans had ceased by Tuesday night but thanks to Mr. Shaukat Ali's "self-defence" a general Hindu-Moslem fight began on Tuesday evening. According to the Committee itself "the worst days of the riots were the 8th and 9th February". But unfortunately for the Communist-phobes of the Committee the police report says that from 7th February "the mill area was comparatively calm, nearly all the outrages occurring in the area south of Byculla". In fact we had succeeded in persuading the workers to resume work from the morning of the 6th (Ex. P 951 D- p.2,3, & 4).

And as far as the riot was concerned it was over in the north of the city that is the mill area by Tuesday evening.

The G.K.U. did everything it could to stop the mad fury that had possessed the people. We issued every day one or two handbills, telling them of the great harm they were doing to their class by such action, and impressing upon them the fact that all Hindu and Moslem workers had common interest and they must stand together as a class; while their enemies were trying to divide them in order to neutralise their class strength and their militant organisation. We were constantly going round the mills, distributing personally these handbills and contradicting the rumours and assuring the workers that the G.K.U. would do everything for the protection of both Hindu and Muslim workers. We distributed at least 200,000 handbills from 4th to 14th February. We did 150 miles of rounds by car each day covering in the whole period over 1500 miles round the mills in order to stop the riots. These and other measures cost us over Rs. 4,000/- and moreover the G.K.U. suffered a loss in income of nearly Rs. 20,000/- as subscriptions to the full extent could not be recovered in February and March due to short working during the riot days.

(Dange) D/23.12.31

Morning 1st Part.

While the Communists and the G.K.U. were doing this the agents provocateurs like Mr. Shaukat Ali were holding meetings of the Muslims and fomenting the riots. In our anxiety to save the workers from the poison of communal feeling we even went so far as to offer to cooperate with Mr. Shaukat Ali. After seeing his interview in the press on 6th February, some of us went to see him. We explained to him the whole position and offered to issue a declaration jointly with him condemning the riots. That treacherous mountebank at the very outset refused and said, "You have come too late." Yes; too late because he had already released his gangs to start communal fighting, in "self-defence" as he called it. The trend of the casualties, their communal composition and locality, the places of firing resorted to by the Military and Police, the amount and locality of property looted, the composition of the arrested persons, all point to the fact that though the workers' area contains 5/6th of the population of the city it was the least affected, that the working class never resorted to incendiarism and looting, that the rioting was never serious in the workers' locality. Appendix B of the Police report shows that the highest number of casualties were on the 7th, 8th and 9th February when the workshops and mills were working according to that very report. Appendix C

shows that out of 149 fatal casualties only 36 (24 per cent) occurred anywhere near or in the workers' locality.

Appendix F shows that out of 196 riot cases registered at the 13 Police-stations in the city only 45 (23 per cent) were registered at stations in or about the mill area.

Appendix G showing the number of rounds fired by the military and police shows that out of 115 rounds fired by the military and 53 by the police, not one had to be fired in the mill area. However the Police carried out certain arrests and these were described as the arrests of mill workers in order to quell the riot. It would not have been surprising even if the majority of the arrested were to be mill workers as described by the Superintendent of the temporary Jail created at the Worli chawls, though the Superintendent in his report admits that he made no inquiries about the occupation of the arrested persons and had no details. Having failed in involving them in the riots and a pogrom, the Government was likely to have harassed the workers by arresting them under the Curfew orders and the general round up of suspected men, and they did so in some places. The action of coming out "bad localities" taken by the Government in order to restore peace was merely a blind. After Bombay had been given a taste of "Swaraj without the British Imperialists" as the Imperialists like to describe the state of communal conflicts, it was high time to call back the evil spirits that had been released. But to do it

suddenly would have revealed the villain of the piece and the well directed organisation behind it. So a smoke screen of a curfew order and combing out of "bad characters" was held before the people. The persons so combed out could not be the real aristocracy of criminals, because that would have struck at the very root of the agent provocateurs, who directed the huge crime of a communal strife. Therefore the beggars and street-dwellers were picked up, labelled as mill workers, criminals and bad characters and locked inside the prison. Having locked in such a class was not the riot bound to end? And it did end! A perfect enactment of a drama of hoodwinking the people in order to shield the Imperialist agents who were behind the scene.

Last of all I mention appendix D, showing the number of shops looted, property stolen, and their locality. The Police report shows that 61 shops were looted and the owners registered damages to the extent of Rs.4,62,931-10-8. This is certainly a high exaggerated claim and is a practice followed by the bourgeoisie in every town wherever riots have taken place. Apart from this, what is noteworthy for us is the fact that not one of the shops is shown to have been located anywhere near or inside the mill locality; and all the awards given by the Courts which decided these claims of damages in 1930 were to those in B & C wards which are purely bourgeois wards of the city and miles away from

the mill area.

All this data point to only one conclusion - that the mill workers whether Hindu or Muslim never took part in the communal riots. The assaults in mill area were due to the temporary excitement caused by the kidnapping scare, which lasted for a very short time. The workers never looted or burnt any shops, houses etc. and during the worst days of the rioting they were working in their factories. The temporary communal deviation was checked and corrected by the strong leadership of the G.K.U. and their insistence on the class outlook. And all this was possible because of the inherent superior proletarian morality of the workers. Had not the Communist leadership aided by this proletarian morality been functioning properly, Bombay would have seen unheard of massacres on a monstrous scale. It was the Communists and the G.K.U. who kept five-sixth of the population of the city in control and prevented them from falling victims to communal pogroms.

Our attitude to the Pathans is quite different from that of the petty bourgeoisie. It is a common idea with the petty bourgeoisie that the Pathan is in all cases nothing but a moneylender and a hireling ruffian always ready to be employed to commit violence on the nationalist movement as in the case of the Bardoli movement of 1928. In Bombay city in 1927 and 1928 there was a general hatred of the Pathans for this and also for the dacoities that were taking place

on a large scale. Our critics assume that our attitude towards all the Pathans is governed by such common impression. Our critics also take the aid of our programme, in which cancellation of debts is one item. And on this they build the theory that the workers attack the Pathans in order to make short work of their moneylenders. The Police report does not give any information about the occupation of the Pathans that were killed. But if it had been a general attack on moneylenders, the destruction of property and incendiarism would have occurred in the mill area and on a very large scale. It must be remembered that our programme of cancellation of debts does not lend itself to a vulgar bourgeois interpretation of repudiation by insolvency or by a simple murder of the moneylenders. The cancellation takes place through an act of the revolutionary Government of workers and peasants, and not by the isolated individual destruction of the moneylenders' books or person. It is possible that once the anti-Pathan assaults began, due to the kidnapping scare, the prevailing prejudice against the Pathans as moneylenders, dacoits and violent ruffians might have acted as an aggravating factor. But it was not one of the important motives behind the riots.

Our attitude to the Pathans is based on class outlook. Amongst the Pathans also there are worker Pathans. With the worker Pathans we pledge working-class solidarity, a bond of fraternity. For us, therefore, there is no such

thing as a general "Anti-Pathan Feeling".

In this connection may also be mentioned a very significant question raised in the Police report. It says, "A question naturally arises therefore why if the Pathans were suspected of kidnapping, the majority in the South were left unmolested while the minority in the North were subjected to attack." (Note:- The North of Bombay is generally the working-class area). Having formulated the question, the report draws the conclusion that the attack took place not because of any genuine kidnapping scare but because the Communists who were leading the strike in the North advised the attack as the Pathans were blacklegging in the oil strike. Now if that were a fact, it was sufficient to have attacked the blackleg Pathans only and a general scare in the whole city was not necessary. The real answer to the question lies elsewhere. The Inquiry Committee says, "Although there were nearly two thousand Pathans working in the docks together with the Hindu labourers, there was not the slightest fracas between the two." (Page 17 This fact cannot be used to support the answer of the Police to the question raised. This fact very pointedly supports the view of the Communists that class-solidarity is above communal prejudices and is an antidote to them. The Pathans in the north of the city did not work together with the other workers. They were not workers at all and therefore had no class solidarity with them. The workers in the North,

as a result could be easily misled into believing any nonsense about the Pathans. In the south of the city, the Pathans and the Hindu workers worked together and therefore had a sense of class solidarity. The nonsensical kidnapping scare was believed in the South by the other sections of the population but could not affect the dock workers, who knew what their comrade Pathans were. Class solidarity of the worker Pathans and the worker Hindus was superior to their communal prejudices as Pathans or Hindus. We consider the worker Pathans as our comrades and therefore a communal anti-Pathan feeling cannot be entertained by the workers.

The February riot was the last attempt of the Government and a section of the bourgeoisie to drown the militancy of the workers in blood and plant into the proletarian movement in Bombay and the seeds of its destruction, just as it has done in other parts of India. Having failed in that attempt the only thing left for it was to abandon all shams of neutrality, ^{of} /so-called sympathy with the trade union movement of the workers and hurl, in all nakedness, its immense State forces against the militant unions, which it did on 20th March, one month after the riots.

23/12/31 (Morning Part II).

(139) The false statements of Messrs Alwe, Kasle and Kishori Lal Ghosh regarding myself, the G.K.U. and the Bombay workers with their references to Exs. P 958, P 395(1), P 966, P 967 etc.

There are certain exhibits which I have been asked to explain, and about which some of my co-accused have made incorrect statements. I am referring to the statements of Messrs Alwe, Kasle and Kishori Lal Ghosh. At the outset I have to make it clear that these gentlemen have every right to choose any line of defence they like and any political stand. I am forced to refer to their statements, not because they have ceased to or did not agree with me in all my views regarding the conduct of workers' movement. I even concede to them the right (and they have already exercised it) of criticising our Communist principles; but not of misrepresenting them, which they have done. They have also attributed things to the Managing Committee of the G.K.U., which it never did. If a small misrepresentation or an incorrect statement would have helped these two men to get released I would have kept quiet, leaving to the unerring common sense of the Bombay workers to find the truth about them. But the matter is greater than the release of two individuals. It is a matter that affects all the Bombay textile workers, whom these people have misrepresented

before this Court in order to appear as "good boys", and get their release, at the cost of the reputation of 150,000 workers.

I have already stated that after the general strike of 1928 was called off and the old pre-cut wages were secured, the mill-owners thinking that the workers were exhausted began to reduce wages and men, mill by mill. This led to 71 separate small and big strikes till April 1929. While explaining to the Court why he had no time to take part in the work of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, though he was its member, Mr. Alwe says "I had got such a tremendous work of the G.K.U. that I did not get time for meals from 8 A.M. to 11 P.M. My sixteen hours were spent in dealing with the workers' complaints, in carrying on talks with the owners and in strikes caused by insignificant and minor things." (Page 974 English copy). Since he refers to the work of the G. K. Union that is in the period after May 1928, the strikes which he mentions must be the 71 strikes after October 1928. Mr. Alwe obviously describes these strikes as "caused by insignificant and minor things". I have already shown that in more than half these strikes, the G.K. Union secured increase of rates and of men. Though it is a fact that some of the strikes were not successful, in none, except perhaps one or two out of 71, was it ever proved that the strikes were "caused by insignificant and

minor things" and unnecessarily kept our truthful President hungry for sixteen hours! That these strikes were caused by "insignificant and minor things" and were not all justified is the conclusion of the Pearson Court of 1929. So, does not Mr. Alwe agree with that Court and therefore become a party to condemning the workers for causing baseless strikes?

In another place he says that he abused the Government because it would not intervene in the strike. It is not my business to see why he abused the Government but then he states the following proposition about the workers, which has a dangerous implied meaning. He says "Because when any two parties in furtherance of their particular object come to extremes intervention is needed and it is the duty of any ruling power to intervene thus and if it does not do that duty, it must be said to have swerved from its duty. And it was just in accordance with what I said that the Government in the end brought about a settlement between the two parties and the strike was ended." (Page 985). This means that Mr. Alwe considers that Government should intervene in strikes if the workers and owners do not compromise. Now that is exactly what Government does when it prohibits workers' meetings, processions, picketing etc. because they show that things have come to extremes. Similarly the Trade Disputes Act also is passed for that. So Mr. Alwe approves of that Act according to the logical deduction of

of his proposition. Not only that. By the Act Government intervenes only when asked to do so. But Mr. Alwe wants that Government must intervene as a duty. Well, Mr. Alwe can hold that view. We do not. But he goes further and says that the General strike was ended by this method. It means that according to Mr. Alwe, the workers had come to extremes and it was the Government who kindly intervened and ended the strike. But Government had intervened three times, on 27th April (the Governor's visit), on 15th May (Sir Cowasji Jehangir's visit) and on 15th August 1928 (Sir Ghulam Husain Hidayatullah's visit). But the strike was not ended. It ended at the fourth intervention. Why? Because, the workers by their resistance to wage cuts forced the owners to restore old rates and wages, which they were not in a mood to do on the previous occasions. That is why the strike ended. The Government Member was merely a tool of the owners to save their face. But Mr. Alwe agrees with the Government and says it intervened and saved the workers. We do not agree with this view.

Mr. Alwe in his statement has made eight points against Communists as such and against those Communists who were in the G.K.U. and the strike. Though Mr. Alwe calls himself, with assumed humility an illiterate and ignorant person, he seems to have sufficient literacy or at least brains to pick up the abuses hurled at us, Communists, by the Prosecution and Mr. Langford James. Because all his

eight points are exactly the points stated by them against us. Mr. Alwe says that we always want the workers to go on strike and to starve. We are opposed to compromise and we do not care what happens to the workers. We are after publicity. We blame the workers when the strikes fail and take credit to ourselves when they succeed. If you carefully read the address of the Prosecution and the Government complaint, it exactly says this and Mr. Alwe thus agrees with them. The Government of Bombay in their press note in February 1930 said that we used the strike for our own purposes and for revolutionary conspiracy. The mill-owners also say the same thing and Mr. Alwe also says the same thing! I have already shown what efforts we made to get the demands of the workers granted and to end the strikes. The October agreement itself was our compromise and nobody else's. After October we brought about 71 agreements, many of which are on record and which removed the workers' grievances. In face of such things, if Mr. Alwe and along with him Mr. Kasle say the above what is the obvious conclusion? In one place Mr. Alwe says "They, (Communists) were great experts in making false reports". (Page 984). Today, we really find that we did make a "false report" when we told the workers in 1928 that Mr. Alwe and Kasle were good worker leaders, when they were actually splitting up the Union by creating a communal fight. I promise not to make such a false report again. But Mr. Alwe in the course

of the statement has made some very truthful reports about which I should like to say a word as they concern me. Mr. Alwe after saying that we were against compromise while he wanted compromise, quotes Ex. P 958, A.B.C., Minute Book of the G.K.U. and takes credit for stopping the strikes in A - Shapurji Mills, B - Pearl Mills, and C - Jam Mills. If you refer to this Minute Book exhibit you will find that the solution and policy about strike B was suggested by me, about C by Nimbkar and about A no name is given, unless every unnamed credit is claimed by Mr. Alwe or Kasle. Who is expert in false reports?

There are two handbills of the G.K.U. (Ex.P 966 & 967) in which the Union volunteers are called "Red Army". The Prosecution have made a very frightening story out of them and both Messrs Alwe and Kasle have thrown the responsibility of the handbills on me, as I was the General Secretary of the G.K.U. Now, I am quite prepared to take the sole responsibility of the handbills, if necessary and if that can save these gentlemen. But I must show that, if at all, Communists are not the only "experts in making false reports". Speaking about these handbills, Mr. Alwe says ... "It was the Secretary of the Union who issued such handbills". (Page 989). Mr. Kasle says the same thing (page 1013). I will amend that statement and say that not the "Secretary" but the "General Secretary" that is myself used to issue the handbills. There were two secretaries besides

the General Secretary. A President and a Vice President, who claim that they negotiated with mill-owners and worked for 16 hours over 75 mill committees ought to know this simple fact. Having put the handbills on me Mr. Alwe says "But when once or twice I regarded the language used by them as strange it was necessary to bring before the Managing Committee of the Union a resolution to the effect that before issuing any handbill it should receive the sanction of the Managing Committee and it should be discussed on which subject the handbill is to be issued and what language is to be used. P 958 contains the resolution". Mr. Kasle goes further than this and says "The Managing Committee of the G.K.U. had reprimanded the Secretary for using words like "Red Army". Will this pair of truth experts show where in P 958, the Minute Book, did the Managing Committee ever pass such a resolution? Unfortunatel for them, the Managing Committee had complete faith in these "outsiders" (i.e. in us) and only directed that a handbill be issued. Even this it did only once on 16/10/28 just at the beginning and later on trusted its officers to do the right thing in such matters.

I will give one more specimen of the "truthful report" of Mr. Alwe, in contrast to the "untruthful" Communists. Mr. Alwe seems to be very much upset over the fact that he was not made by us a candidate for the Municipal Election on behalf of the W.P.P. though he was its member and though

at one time we said that he should be elected to the Municipality. Mr. Alwe charges the W.P.P. with treacherous conduct towards him in this matter. I need not go into the details of that episode but the simple fact that Alwe's name was not on the electoral roll as a rate-payer, and the fact that no man can be a candidate unless his name is there for a specified period before the elections ought to explain why Mr. Alwe could not be a candidate at all. If we spoke of him as one it must have been when it was not known that his name was not on the roll. Mr. Alwe's remarks against those who superseded him do not affect me personally, because I was not and never thought of becoming a candidate and as such I am not much aware of the details of the whole affair, though as a member of the W.P.P. I would have borne my share of Alwe's anger, had it been justified. But since Mr. Alwe charges me, as a Communist, with making untruthful reports, I will point out the two different things that Mr. Alwe says about this matter in his statement (leaving the further exposure of this question to those who actually superseded him in the elections). On page 973, he says, "Seven or eight months before the Municipal Election, that is at the time of the strike, these very gentlemen used to say that Alwe must be elected as the representative of the workers." Thus Mr. Alwe on his own admission was aware of the fact that we wanted him to stand for election and that we spoke about it to the workers seven or eight months in

advance. Then when he found that he was not made a candidate, he says "When I saw this difference in what they said and what they did, I thought there was some ground for danger". On page 976, Mr. Alwe forgot what he had said above and explaining a reference put to him, about his nomination by the W.P.P. as a candidate for the election he says, "Of course I did not know this. I was not even told (about that). I saw it when the document was cited against me after I was arrested and brought here. Then I was much surprised". So which is true? Whether he heard from us seven or eight months before the election that we wanted him to be elected or that we never told him about that? Which is the fact? - that he saw the difference and ground of danger long before or that he was surprised to see it after his arrest? Will Mr. Alwe take back the general and sweeping statement that Communists are experts in making false statements? Because if he does not, he runs the risk of being convicted as a "Communist" in this respect at least.

I am forced to deal with Mr. Alwe's statement because as a co-accused in this case his capacity to do mischief is great. Alwe in his statement all along has said that he is an ignorant worker, whom we "clever outsiders" have cheated. If he means thereby that because he is an ignorant worker, I should excuse him the attack he has made on Communists generally and on me particularly, I disagree. Alwe is not

an ignorant worker, but a clever man who had all along the idea of using us for his own ends. And a man who can spin out an intelligent yarn over sixty foolscap printed pages can not certainly take shelter behind the plea that he is ignorant. However, I must also state here that he is correct when he says that he did not work with us with any ideas of winning political independence for the country or the workers as a class. But in order to prove that, he need not have spun out falsehoods regarding the strikes, the Union and our work amongst the people.

Mr. Alwe has also stated some falsehoods about the G.K.U. help of Rs. 500/- to the Bauria strike. Mr. Kishori Lal Ghosh, another co-accused has also spent a lot of energy in explaining what he considers the mysterious way in which this help was sent and used and the terrible wrong that I did him in not sending the money to him. I will state only a few points on this question to correct the mistaken view taken by Ghosh and the deliberately wrong statement made by Alwe regarding me.

The strike of 15,000 jute workers at Bauria began in July 1928. The help of the Girni Kamgar Union was given in January 1929. We could not help the strike earlier because we ourselves were going through a strike since April 1928 and our Union had no sufficient funds to spare till December. It was in December when some of our office-bearers went to the Jharia Session of the Trade Union Congress that they

were informed of the urgency and need of help and it was promised. When they returned, the Managing Committee of the G.K.U. was informed of the state of affairs and it sanctioned Rs. 1000/- to be paid in two instalments for the Bauria strikers' relief. The resolution was originally moved by Bradley as can be seen from the Minute Book (P958) and not by Alwe. The very keen feeling for the sufferings of the Bauria workers which according to the imaginative Mr. Ghosh, led Alwe to move for this help seems to have come to him at a very late stage, if at all, according to the Minute Book of the Managing Committee which Mr. Ghosh has not failed to read minutely, as can be seen from his statement (pages 1094-1095). That finally the resolution was moved by Alwe is due to the fact that generally resolutions, on which a great unanimity exists and has to be expressed particularly, are put from the chair without being debated upon. As the General Secretary of the G.K.U. authorised to remit the money I did it. I sent the money to Muzaffar Ahmed. Mr. Alwe in his statement says, "We did not know who conducted the Bauria Mill Strike or who was the President or Secretary of the Union. It was therefore decided at that time that the amount be sent by the Secretary of the G.K.U. to the address of the Secretary of the Bauria Union and that inquiry should be made as to who the Secretary was Why this first instalment of Rs. 500/- was sent to the name of Muzaffar Ahmed can be explained only by him who

sent it to his name. Because from what I have heard here R. R. Mitra was the Secretary of the Union and Kishori Lal Ghosh its President: what can the object be then in sending the money to the name of Muzaffar"? (Page 978). Alwe's reference to the decision, if it is to be taken as found in the Minute Book of the G.K.U. on 16th January 1929, says nothing about the inquiry regarding the Secretary of the Bauria Union or the person to whom the money is to be sent. The resolution in the Minute Book, (Ex. P 958) simply contains the sanction of the help. On the contrary I can say that we did mention the fact that the money would be sent to Muzaffar Ahmed whose name was not unknown to Alwe. An active President, who says that he supervised the work of all of us and "an ignorant worker" who states that he conducted the work of 75 Mill Committees, and negotiations of 71 strikes and signed all correspondence, (see his statement page 984) must have seen the reference to Muzaffar Ahmed in Ex. P 954 on date 4/1/29 and his interest in Trade Union matters as also his work amongst the Calcutta workers from the references in Kranti to the Scavengers' strike. Mr. Ghosh suggested that the money was sent to Muzaffar's address in accordance with the decisions of the Party (page 1095). Now Mr. Ghosh as well as anybody else had the Minute Book of the W.P.P. when he wrote the statement. Will he show any decision therein as regards the G.K.U. help to the Bauria strike? Mr. Ghosh says that the G.K.U. resolution

does not suggest that the money be sent to Muzaffar Ahmed. True; but it also does not suggest that it should be sent to Mr. Ghosh. In criticising my conduct in this matter Mr. Ghosh does not forget to bring in constitutional considerations and says that I violated all trade union constitutional practice and was guided by purely Party considerations, which he says, "weigh with Communists so much". (Page 1095). Mr. Ghosh says that I was the Assistant Secretary of the A.I.T.U.C., as also the General Secretary of the G.K.U. and I should have sent the money either through the treasurer of the A.I.T.U.C. or to the Secretary of the Provincial Committee of the T.U.C. that is to himself. If constitutional considerations are to weigh more than Party considerations, why was the circular asking for help to the Bauria strike issued over the name of Mr. R. R. Bakhale, Assist: Secretary of the A.I.T.U.C. and not over my name or jointly with me, though I also was a Joint Asstt. Secretary of the A.I.T.U.C.? Was it not Party consideration that influenced Mr. N.M. Joshi in asking Bakhale and not me to issue that? Then why was not the help directed by the appeal to the Treasurer of the B.T.U.F. or the Treasurer of the Bauria Jute Workers' Union directly? The struggle was being conducted by the Union there and help should have gone to the General Secretary of the Union who was R. R. Mitra. Instead of that why does Mr. Bakhale in his appeal write that he would send the contributions to "Mr. K. Ghosh who

is conducting the struggle through the Bengal Provincial Committee?" In fact Mr. Ghosh and Mr. Joshi wanted their Party to keep control. So he once trotted himself out as Secretary of the Bengal Trade Union Federation if you insisted on sending things to a "secretary" and once as President of the B.J.W. Union, if you insisted on doing things through a "president". While the president of the former and the secretary of the latter were never mentioned in the correspondence or appeals. So what wrong was there if I sent the money to Muzaffar Ahmed, who also, if you so much insist on constitutional grounds, was a vice-president of the B.T.U.F. and whom I knew better than anybody else? On page 1094 of his statement Mr. Ghosh makes a suggestion, which is aimed at me and Bradley, that "the information about the G.K.U. money being sent to Muzaffar Ahmed was given to me not by Bradley or Dange but by Mr. Bakhale. I doubt whether I should have heard of the money at all, till perhaps considerably later". Mr. Ghosh is not straight enough to say plainly what he really means to say. If as he insinuates I had not wanted him or the public to know that the G.K.U. had sent the sum to Muzaffar, the letter from me to Muzaffar of which Mr. Ghosh quotes only a fraction on page 1095 would have been differently worded or not sent at all. It is expressly stated therein, (P 395(1)) "You will also kindly acknowledge this help in the Calcutta papers, whose copies should be sent for our record". If

only Party considerations had weighed with me more than the consideration of the workers' struggle, I should not have written in the same letter the following:- "If there is a Union leading the strike and commanding allegiance, so much the better." The Party that is leading the strike correctly is asked to administer the money only in case there is no such union. Mr. Ghosh is wrong when he says that capital P of Party in the letter means the W.P.P. If it was so, it was unnecessary to add the qualifying clause to the word Party. What I had in mind was the experience of Bombay. I wanted to avoid the money being used by a union that might manage to take the lead somehow but may not command allegiance of the workers or a party or group of persons, who might plant themselves on the strikers but may be giving them a wrong lead; and I can not help it if any of these descriptions applied to Mr. Ghosh and led to the present tragedy! Mr. Ghosh reads a specially communistic meaning in my behaviour. But what has he got to say when I point out to him the fact that Mr. Tom Shaw when he sent £ 600/- from the International Textile Workers for the relief of the Bombay strikers, sent them to Mr. N. M. Joshi, not as the General Secretary of the A.I.T.U.C. or as the President of the B.T.L.U. but to him personally with directions to use the money in the manner he would like. Was there any communistic in him also? The fact is that every person, who knows something of party working in modern life, is

guided by party considerations; and I am not at all ashamed of the fact that this consideration did weigh with me when I sent the money; but it was not the sole consideration. However the main point of Mr. Ghosh's contention is to prove that he had nothing in common with the Communists and the W.P.P. and I readily grant that hoping it may give peace and safety to his absolutely constitutional, independent and non-party soul.

The third gentleman who has tried to qualify himself for release by abusing the Communists is Mr. Kasle. Mr. Kasle's denunciation is more crude and he has directly told the Government and the Court that we made secret plots. He says "Uptil now I spent the days of my life in solving the question of livelihood but when these five or six persons from Bombay joined the strike, (there came in) somewhere secret conspiracy I had no connection with such secret plots of these persons" (page 1017). Is this not a pure confession and an attempt to give evidence against us? - that we were making secret plots but Mr. Kasle had nothing to do with them? Now there was no necessity to tell the Court that we made secret plots. He could have said, if he was honest, that he for himself had nothing to do with our principles or politics, whatever it was. But perhaps Mr. Kasle wants our conviction more than his release?

In one place Mr. Kasle has constructed a more ingenious falsehood than his brother could. He divides the thirty

members of the Joint Strike Committee amongst three unions, ten for the B.T.L.U. (Mr. Joshi's section) and fifteen for the G.K.M. (our or his section) and five for the Millworkers Union (Jhabwalla's section). Mr. Kasle seems to have learnt from some half-baked lawyer that the essence of defence against conspiracy charge lies in breaking all connections and links of agreement with the accused. So, the poor fello worked hard to show that we five "outsiders" on the Joint Strike Committee were not from that Union to which he belonged. So he says that we five that is Jhabwalla, Dange, Nimbkar, Mirajkar and Bradley were nominated on behalf of Jhabwalla's Union, while the G.K.M. nominated all fifteen workers. Now all this part of Mr. Kasle's statement regarding the Joint Strike Committee is a tissue of palpable lies. In the first place, the B.T.L.U. had not ten but fifteen out of thirty seats on the Joint Strike Committee. The compromise leading to the Joint Strike Committee was based on this very understanding - that Mr. Joshi's section will have half the seats on the Committee and our section the remaining half. (Vide the Fawcett Report and the evidence of the P.W. 245, whom Mr. Kasle himself refers to in his statement). Secondly we were not at any time members of Jhabwala's union. On the contrary we and Jhabwala were on the G.K.M. as can be seen from the statement of Alwe and the Minute Book of the G.K.M. (Exh: D.420). Thirdly the fifteen names of the representatives of the G.K.M. on the

Jt. Strike Committee as given by Kasle are wrong. The fifteen members from our section, at the time of forming the Committee were as follows:- 1. S.A. Dange, 2. R. S. Nimbkar, 3. B. F. Bradley, 4. S.S.Mirajkar, 5. S.H.Jhabwala, 6. Baburao, 7. Trimbakrao, 8. A.A.Alwe, 9. Tamhanekar, 10. Kadam. 11. Pednekar. 12. Gadkari. 13. Avsekar. 14. K. Desai. 15. Kasle. From time to time if any member went out of Bombay or was absent he was substituted by others. What Mr. Kasle has done is to omit the first seven names altogether and put seven other names in their places, of those persons, who later on were substituted for absentees. Mr. Kasle says he is an ignorant worker, put into trouble by clever outsiders. But ignorant workers do not construct such falsehoods.

Both Alwe and Kasle have declaimed against persons whom they call "outsiders" - that is those organisers of trade unions and participants in the working-class struggle, who are not actually workers. This "outsiders' controversy" is as old as the beginning of the first strike in India. The employers and Government have broken many strikes and unions simply because there were a few educated persons in them, whose services were put at the disposal of the workers. The workers broke down the opposition of the Government and the employers in the matter by insisting on their right to use the services of whomsoever they liked for their interests. When on one side the workers overcome the

opposition of Government and capitalists, men like Alwe and Kasle are springing up to erect new barriers in the way of the workers taking the help of educated persons, who have a revolutionary desire and capacity to serve the working class and lead it to victory. I can understand the opposition of Government and capitalists to "outsiders" coming in the workers' movement; because the "outsiders" help the workers in getting a broader outlook at the beginning of the movement and with their education, of which the workers are deprived by the Government and the bourgeoisie, they can understand and expose capitalism intellectually in a better manner. But why should Alwe and Kasle take up the position of Government and capitalists and be even more reactionary than they and oppose all "outsiders" as such?

It is a fact that the workers' movement is used by many of the petty-bourgeois educated persons for making a career for themselves. But at the same time have there not been young educated persons, who have suffered for the sake of the workers and peasants, without any other motive except that of emancipating them from Imperialism and capitalism? But Alwe and Kasle object now to all educated persons coming into the workers' movement and when you consider along with this the fact that they do not want the workers to take to the movement of political independence, their obvious motive becomes clearer. The effect of such a policy can be only to isolate the workers from all movement of emancipation,

enlightenment and joining hands with those sections of the middle-class youths, who are fighting for national freedom. Thus they indirectly surrender the workers into the hands of Imperialism.

The most powerful reason which has prompted these gentlemen against "educated men" and "outsiders" is not that some of these men have spoiled the workers' movement. The reason seems to be personal. Mr. Alwe scented the "danger from outsiders" (page 973 of his statement) when he found that after seven months of expectation and dreams of becoming a municipal councillor, he could not become one. But like a shrewd man that he is, Alwe is cautious, while Kasle has spoken the truth more plainly. He is against "outsiders" because he thinks that we "outsiders" brought him into the jail. He says, (page 1017), "By coming into the strike of us workers, these persons did, on the contrary only one thing. The securing of all the demands remained aside but a poor worker like myself had to come to the Meerut Jail and to suffer and groan for two and a half years." That is the real cause of their wrath against us. They want leadership, but they do not want the sufferings that follow it. They want the workers' movement, but they do not want it to take the road of political freedom, for a simple look in that direction has led them to the Meerut Jail. Mr. Kasle says, "I finish my statement with the humble request that none of my co-workers should let themselves be

influenced by such persons." But the worker-brothers, who in every strike are victims of firing and death, who in 1907 at the time of the arrest of Lok. Tilak (who was, by the bye, a complete "outsider" and "educated person") demonstrated and struck work for political freedom and suffered death by firing, who in 1921 days shook Imperialism, though the movement was led by another "outsider" and who since 1928 have suffered still more sacrifices, know very well whether to trust the revolutionary leaders, no matter whether outsiders or insiders, who work for their class-good or those like these two excellent gentlemen who begin "to groan complain and betray those with whom they worked as soon as they see the Meerut Prison. My friend Kasle, in whose very presence British law convicted the Pearl Mill workers to death in Bombay in 1929, and who has seen how British Courts have convicted thousands of workers and peasants to life transportation, as in the China Mill Case in Bombay and the Chirner, Sholapur, and Satara Cases in connection with the national movement of political and economic freedom, has developed so much faith in British Law and Justice that when he was asked if he wanted to give any defence witnesses he trusted that "the Court can decide justice or injustice without the help of witnesses" (Page 1018). And above all, he exhibits this trust, when already this Court in its bail order of 7th May 1931 on their application has exhibited its class prejudice against all workers as such when it

said, "As both are labourers the danger of their absconding cannot be neglected" (Page 18 of Order), which means that workers as a class have no credit or social status in the country, which they can offer as security for their bail.

Mr. Kasle is so much in a hurry to get himself dissociated from us that in his attempt he has betrayed his friend Alwe also, who on the last page of his statement has trusted him to do many good things for him (Page 992). His first argument is that all the bad deeds against the Government were done by us and he had no hand in them. Then if the Government blames him for remaining with people like us in the Union he throws the whole blame of bringing us in the Union on Mr. Alwe's shoulder. He says that he personally was opposed to our entering the G.K.M. "But Mr. Alwe brought these persons in" and a few lines above "If Mr. Alwe had not given an assurance about them they would not have got an entrance at least into our workers' movement". (Page 1016). So, according to Mr. Kasle, if there was a crime in bringing us to the G.K.M. it was done by Alwe. Hang everyone if you want but not me is the purport of Mr. Kasle's prayer.

However both Alwe and Kasle have spoken the truth when they say that they had nothing to do with politics that they held no opinions advocating political freedom for the workers from Imperialism. I can certify the fact that they

knew very little of my politics. If not then, at least their present statements are sufficient to show that they have no desire for the complete emancipation of the working class from capitalism and Imperialism. Mr. Kasle is also partially right when he says, "Mr. Dange was making a conspiracy against me in order to get me out of the Union." (Page 1014) I say partially because I was not making a conspiracy, but openly writing in the Kranti against the mischief of Kasle in inciting communal quarrels in the Union on the Brahmin and non-Brahmin question. There was no need for conspiracy because the workers at Shivdi and Morbag were openly denouncing him in a handbill in March 1929.

In summing up my reply to the statements made by both these co-accused of mine against me, I can say with regard to Mr. Alwe that it is ridiculous to charge him with revolutionary conspiracy to establish a workers' Raj, when he himself in his statement says, ".... the speeches that were being made to the effect that the workers' Raj must be established were regarded by me only as empty talk". (pages 985-86). You cannot take emptiness seriously! As regards Mr. Kasle, he says about himself this, "As I am ill, my head is not steady ...". (Page 1016). In fact Mr. Kasle's unsteadiness began long ago and increased rapidly since 20th March 1929. Since his head is not steady the less said of him the better!

I.H.K.

4/1/1932.

(140) The Tramwaymen's Union

The second union in the list of my "trade union crimes", is the organisation of the Bombay Tramwaymen's Union (Address of Mr. James). The Prosecution alleges that this Union was also organised in accordance with our plan to get a stranglehold on every important industry and as transport is very important, we began to build up a union of tramway workers and to work up the aims of the conspiracy through it. It is a fact that when I was arrested I was the General Secretary of the Tramwaymen's Union as also of the Girni Kamgar Union.

The Bombay Electric Supply and Tramway Company Ltd. (BEST) is one of the biggest and most profitable companies in Bombay. The position of this company is more peculiar than that of the railways and stronger also, if you consider it even from the ordinary capitalist point of view. The railway companies that were originally floated to build up railways in India had to import heavy capital into India, and do all the initial work of survey, engineering, cutting of ways through mountains and over rivers etc. The traffic also was not assured to them. The case of the B.E.S.T. is different. The railways built up their traffic while in Bombay the traffic created the tramways and the B.E.S.T. now has a strangle hold on the vast mass of the Bombay middle

class and workers. The B.E.S.T. got the roads ready from the Municipality of the city. The cotton mills created the city and the city then asked for the tramways. The result is that a few capitalists floated a company; the Municipality gave them the roads, the monopoly of transport and later on the monopoly of electric supply. A group of capitalists began to fatten on the life of the whole city.

The railways when they pass through a new country, bring the markets within reach of the peasant, aid the movement of commodities and discharge a very important function in social economy. The Bombay tramways compared to this stand on a lower level of an organised fulfillment of a social function. Their customers are assured to them. The needs of the city life compel thousands of men to put into their hands an anna each per day. The B.E.S.T. is a monopoly giant fed by the city, living on the license of the citizens municipality and yet it defies the city, the citizens Municipality.

The B.E.S.T. makes every year a net profit of nearly fifty lacs. During 1931 the year of severest depression, it declared a dividend of 14% because the B.E.S.T. is a monopoly giant and the citizens, the middle class and worker must use its trams to earn their daily bread.

The B.E.S.T. is a company whose President, at the time when we formed a Union of its workers, was Sir Purshotamdas

Thakurdas and there is scarcely a rich man in Bombay who has not a scrip of the B.E.S.T. Stocks. This patriotic gentry, however, always called managers from America to organise its business and the principle of Indianisation was reserved in the book of resolutions that came out every year from patriotic bodies. What was the attitude of this Company, owned by Indians, managed by foreigners and licensed and given monopoly by the Municipality of "citizens" toward its workers?

The formation of a Union of the tramway workers was not a new thing that I did. The tramway workers had a Union of theirs in 1922, led by Messrs. Chaman Lal and Pawar. The Union had at that time had a larger membership than in 1928. In 1922, the men on the traffic lines, the conductors, ticket collectors etc were in the Union, while in 1928, the Union was limited only to the workshop men at the Kingsway workshops at Dadar, Bombay. The Company had refused to recognise the Union, even when it was under the leadership of Chaman Lal and Pawar, and though it commanded a large membership. When the company refused to recognise the Union and speak with its representatives, Messrs. Chaman Lal and Pawar, the workers struck work on 17th September 1922. The Company sustained some loss as the traffic workers stopped all work on the lines. But the strike was broken with the help of imported labour and police aid. This Company of the Indian bourgeoisie was so much mindful of the welfare of its

worker-countrymen and their right to form their own organisation that according to the Labour Gazette of November 1922 "about 1300 members of the Union were dismissed from the Company's service". The Company did not stop at that. It considered all the old workers as dismissed from service and reengaged the new and old workers on a fresh contract of service, which so far as the Company's obligations went was on a daily basis. All the workers were considered as "daily wage-earners" and musters and records were maintained on this basis. But actually payment of wages was made monthly, the bonus and provident fund calculations were all done on monthly service basis. The new classification was introduced to facilitate immediate dismissal of any worker, without liability to pay him notice period wages. This was the immediate cause of my being called upon to engage in the work of the Tramway Union, in 1928.

The strike of 1922 had killed the Union and there was no Union till 1927 April, when a new Union was formed by Jhabwala. In the first month it had, I think, about 50 members and all of them were from the Dadar workshop of the Company. The Union after the first month sank into inactivity. In March 1928, the Company gave notices to 200 workers out of the 800 in the workshop that they would be dismissed as the Company had no work for them. Such a heavy retrenchment in spite of the profits of half a crore, caused grave discontent and the Union sprang into life again. Meetings

were held and resolutions passed protesting against the action of the Company and the indifference of the Municipality which gave license to such a Company to exploit the city. But there was no proposal of a strike. Our simple demand at the time was that retrenchment must be stopped. A report of the meetings and resolutions was sent to the Company by the Union but the Company refused to recognise the Union or speak with its representatives. They insisted that the Company would recognise the Union on condition that its constitution was approved by the Board of Directors and that it did not admit as its office-bearers or members any one who was not an employee of the Company. The reply meant a direction to the Union to become a Company Union, acting according to the advice of the Company, who did not want the Union to take the help of any independent organisers or advisers in its work. (Ex. P 1744 Kranti, dated 8th July 1928). The reply to the Company's conditions was that a trade union had every right to engage anybody's services in its work; and it would send a copy of its constitution for information to the Board but not for its approval or disapproval. After this the Company ceased to correspond with the Union. But the attitude of the workers had the desired effect. We succeeded in putting the whole matter before the President of the Board of Directors, who at that time was Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas. Three amendments were made, as a result, by the Company in its retrenchment policy. They

reduced the number to be retrenched, which was originally fixed at 200. They had first given 24 hours' notice. But now they agreed to pay one month's notice pay to those who were retrenched. The Company usually pays at the end of each year, a bonus to its employees, which the retrenched workers would have received if they had been in service a month or so more. The Company agreed to pay the bonus in advance to the retrenched men. Amongst the retrenched were some very long standing service who, if they had been in service for a year or so, would have, according to the contract of their service, received a higher gratuity from the Company. This fact also was forced on their consideration. This small success of the Union gave confidence to the men and almost all the men in the workshop became members of the Union. The membership according to the annual report of the Union was 881 during 1928-29.

The management had promised to the deputations that had been sent to them by the workers before this Union was formed that they would revise the rates of pay in the workshop. The basis of this promise was that the nature of work done in the workshops had considerably changed since the rates of wages were fixed. The original rates were based on the railway coach building workshops, while the work in the tramway workshop was of a superior kind since the company improved its designs of coach building and had also introduced a new pattern bus-service. In order to get

the promise fulfilled, we formulated a new set of wage-rates and promotions and submitted it to the Company, which as usual refused to discuss it with the Union as such. The proposals were published in the Kranti dated 12th and 19th July 1928 (P 1744). In spite of all our efforts, nothing was done by the management in the matter. It still maintains its insolent attitude of not recognising the Union, though lately the Company has been forced by the workers to negotiate with the Union representatives (two of whom were "outsiders") on the question of partial closing of the workshop (Agreement dated 19th October 1931). That is the attitude of the Indian bourgeoisie, an Indian Company. Even when the Government of India, the Government of foreign bourgeoisie, has no objection to negotiate with the Railway Federation and the "outsiders" in it.

The Prosecution have not put into exhibit my activities in connection with the Tramwaymen's Union. The Crown Counsel mentioned it in his address but could find nothing to put before this Court, though as can be seen from the Kranti and the A.I.T.U.C. Bulletin (D 390), meetings of tramway workers were held, attended and addressed by some of us. What is the reason of the silence of the Prosecution over this branch of my Trade Union work? According to them, we conspire through every available Union, every available meeting of the workers. Why not the Tramway Union then, a key in the life of Bombay? The reason is plain enough. The

fact is we "conspire" through no Union. Our attitude and principles are everywhere the same. The Prosecution want to smash the militant trade unions and such as immediately threaten the profits of the bourgeoisie and the Government on a large scale by means of strikes and refusal to accept wage-reductions. The Tramway Union was not a big Union; it threatened no strike. Our speeches only discussed the question of retrenchment and the problem of recognition of the Union. We were powerless to bring about any strike on the lines. Since the Union was not strong, the "conspiracy" was not deep enough for the Prosecution to seize, search and bring the records of that Union in this case. This would show that it is not revolutionary conspiracy that you are trying but the big and militant trade unions that you are trying to smash. Since the Tramway Union was a small one limited to one workshop only, it escaped the mutilation by searches and arrests and the coils of this case in March 1929, but the workers could not escape an attack on their earnings and as soon as they resisted they were faced with the police force and lathies of the Government and the management in October 1931.

(141) The All-India Trade Union Congress - its formation and the attitude of the National Congress towards it.

The working class in its struggle against Capitalism is obliged to unite industrially, nationally and internation-

In their direct struggle with the employers, each section of the workers forms trade unions but just as the employers form national federations of their own to protect their economic class interests, the workers have to unite their unions on an all-national basis. The All India Trade Union Congress represents the national unity of the trade unions of the Indian workers.

But the present All-India Trade Union Congress did not come into existence for this specific purpose, and it is one of the accusations against us in this case, that we imported class-struggle, political struggle, a revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle into a Trade Union Congress, which was meant to further the economic interests of the workers by legitimate and peaceful methods. The A.I.T.U.C. was founded in 1920, and its first Congress was held in Bombay in October 1920 under the presidentship of the nationalist bourgeois leader Lala Lajpat Rai, who by his stay in America had come to possess a reputation of being a "socialist", which ultimately turned to be unfounded. The immediate incentive to the formation of the Congress was not the developing revolutionary struggle in the country, nor was it due to any all-national emergency affecting the trade union struggle of the workers as such. The Imperialist powers deliberating over the Versailles Treaty were threatened with the revolutionary movement of the workers in their countries and in order to coordinate their national-

imperialist policy towards the workers on an internationally agreed imperialist basis, they had decided to institute a powerful watch-dog institution. The outcome was the Washington Conference and the International Labour Office of Geneva. The Conference had recommended that each nation should send representatives of its trade unions, through its Government and the Government of India, accepting this, announced that they would send Indian representatives on the recommendation of trade unions here. In India there was no body that could make any recommendation on behalf of all trade unions or workers; so a body had to be founded. All the fashionable trade unionists who were tempted by the prospect of free trips and an international status united to form an All-India Trade Union Congress. There were also many real trade union workers who seeing the necessity of an all-India unity of trade unions, joined hands with the fashionable group, since there was very little of trade union activity to warrant separate organisations or non-cooperation with the pseudo-labour leaders. The All-India Trade Union Congress was founded and its first Congress was held in the most fashionable bourgeois quarters of Bombay. Not the needs of the working-class struggle, but the prizes offered by Imperialism was the immediate incentive of the A.I.T.U.C.

The main purpose of founding the T.U.C. was served and Government accepted its recommendations of Indian delegates

to the International Labour Conference at Geneva. The second Congress was held at Jharia in 1921 under the presidency of Mr. Baptista and the third session at Lahore in 1923, where Mr. C. R. Dass presided. This period of 1920-23 was one in which the Indian workers, peasants and middle classes rose in revolt and offered battle to Imperialism. It was a period when the European proletariat was bidding for class-power. Did all this affect the T.U.C. the so-called organisation of the Indian workers in any way? Not one union did represent the militant workers who presented Bombay in complete darkness to the Prince of Wales when he landed there in 1921. The workers who were spontaneously taking part in the nationalist movement for political freedom were not in the Trade Union Congress at all. And the representatives, who went to Europe, came back to India, without understanding a bit of the mighty proletarian movement there.

The founding of the T.U.C. as a separate national organisation of the workers as a class, however, roused the jealousy of some of the bourgeois nationalist leaders and the danger it presented to their organisation, if the T.U.C. were to become a really active body functioning on class lines was apparent. Mr. C.R. Dass in his Presidential Address to the Gaya Session (December 1922) of the Indian National Congress advised the nationalists to organise the workers and espouse their cause and he gave this reason for his advice; "If the Congress fails to do its duty, we may

expect to find organisations set up in the country, by labourers and peasants detached from you, disassociated from the cause of Swaraj which will inevitably bring into the arena of the peaceful revolution, class struggles and the war of special interests. If the object of the Congress be to avoid this disgraceful issue, let us take labour and peasantry in hand". When thousands of workers and peasants were falling victims of imperialist firing aided by zemindars and the bourgeoisie, Mr. Dass was calling their struggle "a disgraceful issue", and asking the middle-class petty bourgeois, whom he was addressing, to take labour and peasantry in hand, (let us take them in hand). In order to protect the bourgeoisie from being attacked by the class-war of the workers and also in order to forge some weapon exclusively in his hands to aid him in his fight against the orthodox non-cooperators, Mr. Dass tried to infuse political ideals into the Trade Union Congress by presiding successively over its two sessions at Lahore (1923) and Calcutta (1924). But as soon as the political ferment around cooled down and his political programme of Council Entry was secured, he became indifferent. From 1920 to 1924 the Trade Union Congress had as its president the biggest leader of the nationalist bourgeois movement, which was aimed against British Imperialism. But not one of these presidents had advised the T.U.C. to refuse to associate with the thoroughly imperialist I.L.O. at Geneva. They were non-

cooperating with Imperialism, but they were willing to let the working-class organisations remain under Imperialist and capitalist influence of the I.L.O. Because both they and the imperialists had the same attitude towards the workers.

The organisation of the Trade Union Congress was not welcomed in any better spirit by the National Congress. As soon as the T.U.C. Session was held at Bombay in October 1920 the National Congress in December 1920 at Nagpur, awakened to the necessity of organising the workers and passed the resolution: "This Congress is of opinion that Indian Labour should be organised with a view to improve and promote their well-being and secure to them their just rights and to prevent the exploitation (1) of Indian Labour (2) of Indian resources by foreign agencies" (Volume I page 35 of Congress Resolutions published by the A.I.C.C.). The resolution is directed against the exploitation of Indian labour by foreign agencies, but is silent about exploitation by Indian agencies, when at this very time the Bombay Textile workers, were striking against their Indian masters for increase in wages to compensate a rise in the cost of living. In the true capitalist language it talked of "their just rights", as if there are "unjust rights" also. With a flourish the A.I.C.C. appointed a sub committee of eleven to carry out labour organisation work (1st January 1921) (Volume I page 59). The eleven ladies and gentlemen did

nothing. So the working Committee at Calcutta on 2nd February 1921 asked Mr. C. R. Das to give effect to the resolution of Nagpur (Vol. I page 86). When four months later, one member of the Committee asked for Rs. 1500/- to carry out the work, the Working Committee of the Congress at its Bezwada Meeting shelved the proposal to the Sub Committee for report (April 1921) (Vol. I page 91). However the workers themselves never waited for the patriotic angels to come to them to show them the path of their salvation. They took to their own line of demonstrations and support to the national movement of freedom, in spite of the distrust and the cold attitude towards them manifested by the Congress leaders who addressed the workers of Bombay as "hooligans", on their demonstrations at the Prince of Wales' landing. For more than a year after this the Congress forgot its resolution on Labour. The political movement was betrayed, the petty bourgeois leadership collapsed. When everything was lost, in its leisure hours, the Congress again turned to Labour and the Working Committee at Calcutta in November 1922 gave its "opinion" that the resolution passed at Nagpur "should be carried out without further delay" (Vol. I page 223). Next month at the Gaya Session December 1922 the Congress gave up the former resolution welcomed the A.I.T.U.C. and appointed a Sub Committee this time "to assist the Executive Council of the A.I.T.U.C. for the organisation of Indian labour, both agricultural and

industrial". The new Committee consisted of six members, of whom one was M. Sringaravelu Chettiar, who later on was one of the accused in the Cawnpore Communist Conspiracy Case of 1924. It is noteworthy that none of the old heroic Committee of eleven was found on this Committee (Vol. I page 236).

The nationalist bourgeoisie as the candidate for the next Government of the country learns the lessons of Govt: at the hands of Imperialism and practises them on its rival, the workers and peasants. One lesson is to hoodwink the people by commissions and committees and to avoid to do a work by pleading want of funds. The Working Committee remembered that the Gaya Congress in December 1922 had appointed a labour organisation committee, in February 1923 when it met in Bombay and appointed Dr. Sathaye as convener for it and sanctioned Rs. 200/- for initial expenses and asked for "a plan of work, if any". (Vol. I page 254). The Committee seems to have thought or slept furiously over "the plan of work, if any", and the convener submitted proposals in July which were graciously considered by the Working Committee in August 1923. In the true fashion of a body that aspires to take the place of the Government of India it "resolved that Dr. Sathaye be informed that the scheme will be considered in detail after circulation among the members of the Working Committee and that meanwhile Dr. Sathaye be informed that considering its present financial

condition, the Working Committee does not hope to be in a position to adopt the scheme this year or to give effect to it. Under these circumstances, Dr. Sathaye is requested to reconsider his application and make fresh proposals, if any. The Committee has no funds; even if it has, it does not hope to give effect to the scheme. It asks for fresh proposals and still says that the scheme will be considered in detail after circulation. Can any Home Member of the Government of India even beat this piece of hypocrisy?

The matter was again pressed before the A.I.C.C. by Dr. Mukerjee at Coconada on 1st January 1924 (Vol.II page 2) and it was sent up to the Working Committee, who at the Bombay meeting (Vol.II page 12) on 1st February 1924 postponed the consideration "in view of the present financial condition". All these resolutions were being passed when the "just rights" to live of the workers in Ahmedabad and Bombay were being attacked by a wage cut of 15 % in the former and stoppage of bonus in the latter. In the Bombay strike when assistance for relief work was asked the Working Committee in its meeting of 23rd April 1924 (Vol.II page 19) pleaded the same excuse. The Nagpur Congress of 1920 noted the existence of workers in India and the necessity of organising and protecting them; the Gaya Congress, two years later appointed a Committee to cooperate with the Trade Union Congress in their work and then every body decided not to do anything in the matter. The Coconada Congress of 1923 and

of Belgaun in 1924, refused even the philanthropic reference to the programme of labour organisation. This omission of hypocrisy was corrected at the Cawnpore and Gauhati Congress in 1925 and 1926 which reinserted the clauses on "the organisation of labour, both industrial and agricultural, the adjustment of relations between employers and workmen and between landlords and tenants". (Vol. III page 25 and Vol. IV page 61).

In this long period of six years there were big strikes in the industrial centres, accompanied by firing by Government forces, called in by the Indian and European employers. But in the Annual Reports of the General Secretary of the Congress, none of them are even mentioned. When such was the attitude of the central organisation, the Provincial Committees followed the same line and every subordinate committee imitated the central in appointing labour sub-committees and ultimately doing nothing or openly siding with the employers against the workers in Bombay. The Congress deliberately and systematically followed the policy of keeping the working class away from political consciousness and organisation or drawing it actively into the struggle for national freedom or espousing its economic struggle, whether against Indian or foreign employers.

When the tide of active politics went down, the nationalist bourgeois leaders were not to be found in the ranks of

the Trade Union Congress. After the Calcutta Session of 1924, the Presidentship of the Congress was conferred on men, who though not workers, were interested in trade unionism. Their ideal, of course, was in no way better than that of the nationalist bourgeoisie. Politically they were even backward and reactionary. But they had one virtue. From whatever motives, they stuck to organising trade unions and though they desired to use them for keeping the workers away from class-struggle and within the fold of Geneva Imperialism, the objective effect of their work was a more or less stable growth of trade unions among sections of workers.

Section 4

(142) The T.U.C. and its early political ideals - the Second International's efforts to capture the T.U.C. and the Cawnpore Session of 1927 - Exts. P 545(8), P 545(6) - P.Ws. 111 & 119.

The existence of the Trade Union Congress as a separate organisation of the working-class was justified and necessary. It was moreover increasingly becoming clear that the worker had to find the expression of their political emancipation not through the National Congress, but through the T.U.C. as a political party of their own.

The Trade Union Congress, even before the advent of the Communists was expressing itself on political questions

But the political ideals so expressed were not anti-imperialist or anti-capitalist. The lead that the working class was being given can be best found in the Presidential Addresses of the Congresses. After the non-cooperation days when the bourgeoisie embarked on the career of cooperating with the British Dictatorship, the talk of leading the workers into a fight for Swaraj (Dass' Address of 1922) vanished. The President of the 1925 Bombay Session, Mr. Thengdi in his address said, "The work of the Indian National Congress is mainly political while ours is mainly economic" (Ex. D 145(18)). And further on, "to get things done through the Government and by law is a sure, though slow remedy for all your ills." The lead given by the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Mr. Bole was thoroughly reactionary. He called the Versailles Treaty, "A Magna Charta of the labouring classes all over the world". However the Trade Union Congress had begun developing international contracts it was affiliated to the Workers' Welfare League in August 1924. It had established an office and started the Trade Union Bulletin in July 1924. For the first time, the Presidential Address of 1925, in spite of its extra-loyal attitude spoke in terms of class and conceived the workers as an independent social category producing social wealth on which capitalism thrived.

The sixth session of the T.U.C. at Madras on 10th January 1926 was presided over by Mr. V. V. Giri. It was

attended by Mr. Graham Pole. The President in his address pointed out that Mahatma Gandhi was against the formation of the Trade Union Congress and four years back Mr. C. F. Andrews, the elected President of the year had agreed with him but later on came to recognise that "international co-ordination on labour problems was necessary. But the idea of coordination of the workers of all countries on a class basis fighting against capitalism was far from their mind. The Congress by its resolutions asked for the formation of a political Party of the workers "on the lines of the Labour Party of England". It also opined that "a measure framed by Indians conferring on India Swaraj or Self Government based on adult suffrage be passed into law, without delay" But like its petty lawyer leadership the Congress while demanding Swaraj was asking for seats on the Legislature in terms of the recommendations of the Muddiman Report!

However, the T.U.C. was not quite that innocent body of workers, whom capitalism would like to confine to purely welfare schemes and wages questions, to the purely economic demands. It was already asking for political freedom, for which the rank and file had fought alongside the nationalist movement in the days of direct action. But the political demands were to be realised through the Imperialist State and were consistent with the existence of foreign dictatorship. It is alleged against us in this case that we worked our revolutionary conspiracy through the T.U.C. in as much

as those harmless ideals of the T.U.C. were changed into those asking for a Soviet Republican Model and urging the workers to revolutionary action. The evidence here regarding our T.U.C. work begins with the Delhi Session of March 1927. A reference to the report shows that the Congress was attended by Saklatwala and was held at Delhi at his request. The call for general strike found in some of our Trade Union resolutions is said to be a special Communist tactic. But the report submitted there by the General Secretary, Mr. Ginwalla shows that the Trade Union Congress had actively helped the General Strike in England of May 1926 and had sent Rs. 8306/- to the British T.U.C. for helping the General Strike. Out of the 47 resolutions passed none touched the fundamental aims and objects of the T.U.C. and on the question of international affiliation, the Congress approved the efforts at that time made by the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee for unity between the I.F.T.U. the yellow organisation and the R.I.L.U. supporting affiliation to which is considered to be one of the ingredients of our "crime". Saklatwala came and went. The Delhi Session congratulated him, elected S. V. Ghate as Assistant Secretary and D. R. Thengdi as Administrative Secretary, and thereby shook British Imperialism so violently that all the three incidents have been brought into this case as evidence. But these three incidents did not shake the T.U.C. from its old constitutional politics!

The large mass of evidence brought here regarding the Trade Union Congress relates to the Cawnpore and Jharia Sessions of 1927 November and 1928 December, and the E. C. Meeting of February 1928 at Delhi. The evidence against me individually relates only to the Cawnpore Session and the Delhi Meeting of the E.C. of T.U.C. The reason for concentrating on these particular years and Sessions lies in the fact that with the year 1927 began a period of industrial and political upheaval, which during the next four years continued to gather in volume and intensity. British Imperialism had decided on an iron hand policy and kicked at the Indian bourgeoisie through the Simon Commission. The Labour Party and the Second International gang had also a hand in it. When the offensive on the political front began, the labour imperialists naturally feared that the Indian working class as in 1921-22 would join with and strengthen the hands of the nationalist bourgeoisie, if it decided to give battle. Therefore the workers' organisations had to be won over the influence of the policy of Geneva, the British Labour Party, British T.U.C., the I.F.T.U., the Second International, all which have one and the same policy towards India - that it must remain a slave of Imperialism. Though the I.F.T.U. was outwardly carrying on talks of unity with the R.I.L.U., it had no intentions of bringing it about. Therefore at its Puri Congress it decided to make efforts to secure affiliation of the colonias

workers' organisations. A big bunch of labour imperialists, trade unionists and socialists of all kinds suddenly took fancy to study the Indian condition and came to India. Amongst them were Messrs. Purcell and Hallsworth. The Cawnpore Session of the T.U.C. and the Delhi Meeting of the E.C. of T.U.C. was one continuous attempt of these men to get the A.I.T.U.C. affiliated to the I.F.T.U. and to tone down or sabotage the workers' taking part in the anti-imperialist front that was developing on the Simon Commission Boycott. The Cawnpore Session and the Delhi Meeting, contrary to the allegations of the Prosecution do not record a single attempt to bid for power by the Communist and Left Wing trade unionists, but was an organised offensive of the Second International, the British labour imperialists and the I.F.T.U. to prevent the working class in India, not from joining the R.I.L.U. or the Comintern only but from joining the movement of political emancipation, and taking the leadership of the anti-imperialist front. My article published in the "Herald" of Bombay entitled "The Conspiracy of Imperialism in the All-India Trade Union Congress" of which (Ex. P 545(8)) seems to be a copy) explained this very point of view. But that article did not suggest or propose affiliation to the R.I.L.U. or any other body. At the Cawnpore Session a number of leaflets were distributed on this very subject and the Prosecution have exhibited some copies of them which the police got hold of there (Exs.

P 545(6)). These leaflets also warned the Congress against the attempts being made by the yellow internationalists, but did not propose any affiliation. They again insisted on the unity between the two Trade Union Internationals, that is reiterated the resolution of the Delhi Congress on the subject. The Congress in spite of the attempts of Purcell reaffirmed its Delhi resolution on the subject of international affiliation, and also decided upon the boycott of the Simon Commission.

Prosecution witnesses no. 111 and 119 have been brought to prove that I was present at the Cawnpore Session. I certainly do not deny the fact that I was there and that I was elected one of the Secretaries for the ensuing year; but I am not in a position to corroborate their other statements as to what I spoke on which resolution. P.W. 119 says that I moved the resolution congratulating the U.S.S.R. on its Tenth Anniversary. There were world wide demonstrations and congratulations from all proletarian quarters on the 10th Anniversary celebration and the Trade Union Congress of the Indian workers certainly could not have kept itself from congratulating the workers' republic and neither can a real trade unionist be expected not to move or support such a resolution. I can not however vouchsafe for the correctness of the P.W.'s report.

Ex. P 1878C dated _____ is said to be a report sent by me to all those comrades in the "conspiracy" who had

agreed upon a revolutionary policy to be followed at Cawnpore in the T.U.C. The body of the report itself does not warrant any such conclusion. It is addressed to the members of the "T.U.C. Left", that is those, who did not agree with the policy of the Geneva School and had expressed a desire in the Congress to follow a more radical policy. The report itself says that those who agreed on this point decided to form "a cohesive group and a plan for future work in order to foster real trade union activity amongst the workers". To attack the members of the "Left" with the charge of "conspiracy" is to attack the aim of real trade union activity and nothing else.

The nationalist bourgeoisie unable to agree upon the constitution that it should have but intent upon hiding its internal contradictions behind the mask of an All-Parties Unity in the face of imperialist attack, was trying all sorts of antics of "producing a constitution" of free India, before it had even fired a single shot for freedom. There was a veritable epidemic of constitutions and endless waste of paper over the phrases about the advantages of a federal state or a unitary state, about defence and debts and so on, The bourgeoisie is going through these travails for the last four years and nothing is yet born. They smack their lips over the ingenious copies they make of this or that country's constitution "with improvements to suit the genius of India" and like the idiotic merchant, who copied the

ledger of his rich rival and imagined that being in possession of this copy he had also come into possession of the coveted wealth, they begin to assume the airs of "free men" and the manners of "ambassadors". While in fact for their pocket expense of 25 shillings a day at the "ambassadorial" Round Table Conference, they have to run to the steward of the St. James'. This mediocre bourgeoisie wanted to engage the T.U.C. also in this foolery. The T.U.C. leadership dominated as it was by the kindred spirits of the bourgeoisie agreed to join in and appointed a sub-committee to draft a "labour constitution for the future Government of India". The Committee consisted of Messrs. Chaman Lal (President of the Congress), N. M. Joshi (General Secretary), M. Daud, G. Sethi, K. Ghosh, D. R. Thengdi, Jhabwalla, Dange and Spratt. Out of these nine, the last five are accused in this case. Spratt was appointed convener. But the Committee never met nor did it frame any constitution.

(143) The Delhi E.C. T.U.C. Meeting - Jharia Congress
- the T.U.C. must not cooperate with the
surrenders of the I.N.C.

Though the game of the Second Internationalists was foiled in Cawnpore, they did not give it up. An official invitation was procured in the meanwhile from the I.F.T.U. to the T.U.C. for affiliation to it. A meeting of the Executive Committee was arranged at Delhi in February 1928, and contrary to all constitutional procedure, though the

full session of the Congress had not decided on this vital matter without any consultation with the affiliated unions. The Genevites in power knew full well that they would have a majority at the E.C. meeting. When the meeting was held in one of the Committee Rooms of the Assembly Chamber, Messrs. Furcell and Hallsworth recommended affiliation to the I.F.T.U. A proposal was also brought forward to break off connections with the Workers' Welfare League, which was the representative in England of the T.U.C. since 1924. What does this show? It means that it was the yellow internationalists who were taking the offensive. It was they who were committing the Congress to international affiliation and that with the I.F.T.U. They were moving for disaffiliation from W.W.L. Our reply to this was naturally to prevent it, since the I.F.T.U. was only an agent of Imperialism, inside the working class movement, an agency that was dominated by the British Unions and the politics of the Labour Party. In spite of this there was no proposal at this E.C. meeting from us for affiliation with the R.I.L.U. and as regards the W.W.L. we were merely asking for status quo. The W.P.P. circular to trade unions issued on this matter (Ex. P 545(7)) does not positively demand affiliation but says, "if any affiliation is considered it should be in favour of the R.I.L.U." The result was that there was no affiliation to any international, though the official bureaucracy succeeded in disaffiliating the T.U.C. from the

W.W.L. and appointing the British T.U.C. as the agent of the Indian T.U.C.

Thus whether at Delhi, March 1927, at Cawnpore November 1927 or at Delhi 1928 February, there were no proposals from the Left section of the T.U.C. or the Communist trade unionists, fundamentally altering either the aims and objects or the trade union activities, undertaken by the Congress. All the proposals were preventives keeping the T.U.C. from going under the domination of the International of Labour Imperialists. And though a few officials of the T.U.C. were from the Left Group, the majority control remained in the hands of the Geneva School.

The year 1928 was a year of the offensive of imperialism against the nationalist bourgeois movement which was gathering volume on the Simon Commission question and also a year of the offensive of the Indian bourgeoisie against the Indian workers. The longest and biggest strikes took place in this year and naturally shook the ideology of the workers. But the Trade Union Congress as such gave little lead, because it was still in that stage in which the National Congress was before the war period. The political atmosphere was in a ferment when the T.U.C. met at Jharia in December 1928 under the Presidentship of M. Daud. As the report shows (D 145(34)), the Presidential Address (D 305) gave no lead to the workers to meet the situation confronting them

and the country as a whole, and the Chairman of the Reception Committee was thankful to the workers and employers for working "in a spirit of amity and good feeling". The President M. Daud expressed himself against Complete Independence and wanted Dominion Status with "safeguards for labour". In spite of such a reactionary lead, which relegated the toilers, the majority of the nation, to a secondary place in the affairs of the country and patronised them with "safeguards", the Government attacked the Trade Union Congress by arresting Johnstone in the midst of the Congress, because he represented the League Against Imperialism and deported him. This one offensive act of the Imperialist Dictatorship undermined the strength of its support from the Geneva School. The T.U.C. was affiliated for a period of one year to the League Against Imperialism as a protest against Johnstone's arrest. But from this it would be erroneous to conclude that the Left Trade Unionists dominated the Congress. The Jharia Session, as can be seen from the resolutions represents a peculiar balancing of the Right and Left. There was no change in the fundamental aims and objects of the T.U.C. But the Congress formulated "a basis for the future constitution of India to be placed before the All Parties Convention" that was held at Calcutta on 22nd December 1928. The Congress unequivocally declared for the "(1) Socialistic Republican Government of the working classes, (2) Abolition of the Indian States and Socialistic

Republican Government in those places, (3) Nationalisation of Industries and Land." This basis was to be presented to the Convention by a Committee and Mr. R. R. Bakhale, the Deputy Leader of the Right Group. The Congress affiliated to the League Against Imperialism that stands for complete independence for the colonies, but did not refuse to send representatives to Geneva, which is opposed to such independence. The Congress rescinded the resolution of the Delhi E.C. Meeting and withdrew its representation given to the British T.U.C. but did not restore its agency of the Worker Welfare League. It decided not to have any agent at all. Thus after eight years of existence the Congress had defined the political form of the State it would like to have in India. But it was not adopted as its ideal but as a proposal to be put before the All Parties Convention, a tool invented by the Indian bourgeoisie to sabotage the Simon boycott by the diplomatic back-door.

This delicate balancing of the Right and Left thorough went in favour of the Left at Nagpur in 1929. And the gentlemen of the Right instead of taking the defeat in a democratic spirit seceded from the Congress and formed a separate organisation, which was nothing but a well-dressed carcass put in a glass-case and labelled "Geneva Dolls on Annual show", roaming in the labour-imperialist markets of Europe at Government expense.

When the Trade Union Congress in response to the grow

political tension around was thus advancing in its political ideals, the National Congress did not revise its attitude towards the organisation of workers. After Gauhati, took place the Madras and Calcutta Congresses of 1927 and 1928. The A.I.C.C. and All Parties Convention had asked the T.U.C. to take part in the show of framing the constitution. But there was no attempt made to dig the forgotten resolution of 1924-25 to undertake organisation of workers. Till 1929 even the advanced petty bourgeois sections did not approach the T.U.C. until Pt. Jawahar Lal's socialist shadow brought him to the Presidentship, followed by the nationalist fascist shadow of Subhash Bose, who, quite in exact imitation of his master, C. R. Dass, came to the T.U.C. only in order to procure some sort of stick to win his losing position in the nationalist Congress Circle. Once in a while the Working Committee was asked to help the Golmuri Tin Plate Workers' Strike and it left the matter to its Secretary. The G.I.P. Railway workers struck on 3rd February 1930, just when the National Congress was preparing its ultimatum of non-cooperation with the British Dictatorship after its conciliation offer to the Viceroy, before the Lahore Congress was rejected. But the Working Committee in its meeting in the second week of February, when the Government forces were beating down the workers with armed force, which soon was to be employed against the Congress also, recommended to the workers' cooperation with the same Dictatorship and said, "The Committee trusts that a Conciliation Board will be

appointed” Except for this little piece of remembrance (which was occasioned by the fact that the strike thrust itself upon their attention as the railways affected the movements of their leaders) the Congress remained oblivious of the workers' organisations.

It has always happened in history that when the petty bourgeois is beaten, he runs to the workers for aid, it happened in India after the defeat of 1921-22. It was bound to repeat and did repeat in 1931. The Congress signed the Delhi Pact but was not sure that it would be observed by the Dictatorship. The upper section petty bourgeoisie was becoming lukewarm and the Congress wanted some pawn to move. It also was afraid that the workers and peasants would march over the heads of the Congress and take to direct action to protect their interests. So it again remembered the existence of workers and indulged in the inexpensive pleasure of passing a resolution on Fundamental Rights at Karachi. Das remembered the workers at Gaya after the debacle of Bardoli, Jawahar Lal & Co. remembered the workers at Karachi after the debacle of Delhi. It is always after and never before. Because if they call in the workers and the poor peasants in the real thick of the fight, they are afraid of the revolutionary national and class struggle that might ensue from their participation. It is done after, because then they are wanted either as a pawn to threaten imperialism, or to placate and quieten the rising forces into the

ignominious compromises that are made. One leader while speaking on the resolution of Fundamental Rights in the A.I.C.C. said in plain terms, "if as some of them apprehend the negotiations with the present British Government failed the masses would have to come once again to their rescue and fight the battle. It was therefore necessary that the masses should know exactly what was meant by Swaraj of which the Congress spoke." This is plain enough to show that the workers' unions and organisations have no reason to be jubilant over the Fundamental Rights Resolution. The Trade Union Congress need not flirt with the National Congress with proposals of conferring this right and that right upon the workers. It is the business of the Trade Union Congress to take leadership in the workers' struggle and not to beg of the bourgeoisie, however, radical it may be, for a place in the constitution. Democracy for the workers is not conferred, it has to be won. The Nationalist bourgeoisie has for the last eleven years systematically ignored, neglected despised or sabotaged the workers' organisation - the Trade Union Congress. Why should we go and seek co-operation with it and that in its surrenders, when we have the capacity and forces to win freedom ourselves?

The Court has asked me to explain a reference regarding Jharia Congress by P.W. no. 123. I was not present at the Jharia Session of the T.U.C. neither does the Prosecution say that I was. I can not explain the reference. But it is

a fact that I was elected one of the Secretaries of the T.U.C. and was so till my arrest. I was informed of my election by the General Secretary, Mr. N.M. Joshi.

From the evidence presented here about the development in the Trade Union Congress since 1926, only one conclusion can be drawn that the political ideals and demands of the working class were becoming clearer and finding their expression in the resolutions of the Congress and the growth of the influence of Geneva and the Second International attended by cooperation with Imperialism and Capitalism was being prevented. The Congress was far from attempts, whether by Left or any other group, at forcing it into revolutionary action to overthrow the Government. The charges in this case can not be substantiated by the evidence.

(144) The W.P.P. and C.P.I. Exhibits.

However well-organised and well-directed the Trade Union Congress may be, it can not take the place of a political party for the working class. All the workers in an industry or a majority of them can join the trade unions and take part in their work. But every class in the growth of its movement has to produce an advanced section, a rank and file leadership that has to cultivate a broader outlook a larger perspective beyond the industrial class struggle in which the unions are generally engaged. This essence of the broad masses has to be organised into a political Party because ultimately the working class and peasantry have to

establish their own class-state. The workers in India have to take the leadership in the national struggle and for that they must have an independent political class party of their own. The Workers' and Peasants' Party was organised with this view, and during its two years work, it tried by propaganda only to give the correct class ideology to the workers and clarify their political and economic needs and aims. The W.P.P. did not go beyond this as can be seen from the evidence tendered here.

I began to take part in the activities of the W.P.P. from March 1928, when the Party threw itself whole-heartedly in the struggle of the Bombay workers against the offensive of capitalism. The Textile Strike of the Bombay workers required a newspaper. Mainly with this view was the *Kranti* started from 30th June 1928. by the Party and as a member of the W.P.P. I edited and managed the paper till my arrest. During this period the paper was more than self-supporting and if I am allowed to bring evidence, I can show from the accounts that the theory of the Prosecution that the *Kranti* was financed by grants from outside is completely baseless.

A number of exhibits referring to the W.P.P. Conference in December 1928, in Calcutta, have been put to me. P.W. no. 254 R. B. Trivedi who deposes about the Conference proceedings does not mention my presence there and I think the Prosecution also do not maintain that I was at Calcutta. I did not attend the Calcutta Conference and am not in a position to

say anything about it.

There are some exhibits put to me and classified as C.P.I. documents. I have already stated my views on the C.P.I. question. Now as for the documents.

Ex. 1207(1) Printed Report of C.P.I. Conference of 31st May 1927. I was not present at this Conference. I can prove that I was not in Bombay at this time (31st May 1927).

Ex. P 1285: Letter accepting membership of the Presidium of the C.P.I. dated 18th December 1927. This is put in to make the reference in P 1207(1) consistent with the Madras Papers that follow this. But the Prosecution in trying to make it consistent forgot to do the essential thing. Somehow they put to me references of a place or proceedings where I was not present. The same thing has happened with the Madras Meeting of the E.C. of C.P.I. The Prosecution say that there was such a meeting and that I presided over it. (Exs. P 1287(2)(3) etc etc.). They had sent their clever men P.W. no. 244 Rao S. Patwardhan to see what "the Bombay people did at Madras. But he nowhere mentions my presence in Madras. The fact is that I had not been to Madras at all. Similar is the case with what are called the Calcutta Meeting references. (Ex. P 1295). I had not gone to Calcut and can not say what happened there. The same can be said about P 1296 and P 1297, about Bombay Meetings of 17th and 19th March 1929. I am said to have been Chairman on the 17th but not present on 19th. In the "Madras Papers" care

has been taken to put down the initials of the Chairman on the proceedings. But here everything is omitted. And if you read these papers with the previous reference the conclusions will be a bit funny. There is a conference in Bombay in May 1927, one in Madras in December 1927, a meeting of the E.C. in Calcutta in December 1928 - a blank of full one year in between. There is a constitution and rules which the Prosecution have not failed to print as many times as possible (Ex. P) and still you find only two months after Calcutta, the Prosecution unearthing a paper which starts over again framing the rules and discussing the organisation of a C.P.I. A very crudely arranged business - this evidence collection or creation, whichever you may like to call it.

(145) - Exhibit Letters.Letters - Group I - From one party to another.

In the exhibits put to me there are a large number of letters, which are not written by me nor sent to me. Many of them are photographs or copies purporting to be taken from the originals. Some of them are deposed by the police witnesses to have been intercepted by them in the post office. These are as follows :-

Letters

Third Party Letters. (that is letters neither addressed to nor sent by me.) Exts. P.

- 76 - S. N. Tagore, Berlin, to K. Ghosh.
- 526(2) - Bradley to Potter Wilson 14.1.29
- 526(6) - P. C. Joshi to Spratt.
- 526(24) - Majid to Spratt.
- 835 - Mirajkar to Thengdi 29.1.28.
- 840 - Joglekar to Thengdi.
- 983 - Ghosh to Bradley (Rejected by Prosecution)
- 1009 - Code Letter 4.9.27
- 1140 - Muzaffar Ahmad to Joglekar
- 1141 - " " " "
- 1323 - Muzaffar to Ghatge 2.8.28
- 1348(22) - Muzaffar to Ghatge 20.5.28
- 1348(34) - C.P. Dutt to Ghatge 28.6.28
- 1348(35) - Muzaffar to Ghatge 30.11.28

- 1373(5) - Muzaffar to Ghate.
 1633 - V. Chattopadhyya to Jhabwala 16.5.28
 1636 - P.P. T.U.S. to Jhabwala.
 1654 P - Muzaffar to Ghate.
 1848 C - Muzaffar to Ghate.
 1869 C - Arthur Field to Joglekar 27.11.24
 1968 - Spratt to Robin 21.7.27.
 2038 P - S.N. Tagore to Muzaffar 21.11.28
 2051 C - Sohan Singh to Muzaffar.
 2055 C - Spratt to Muzaffar.
 2057 - to W.P.P. Bengal.
 2065(1) - Spratt to Muzaffar.
 20671P - Spratt to Joglekar.
 2211 - V. Chattopadhyya to Jhabwala.
 2328P2 - Des to Douglas 14.6.27.
 2408P - Ghate to Dutt.
 2409P - P.C. Joshi to R.P. Dutt. 5.11.28
 2412P - B.F. Bradley to Potter Wilson 27.11.28
 2413P2 - " " " " "
 2419 - Spratt to Robin.

Total 34.

As these letters were not written by me nor were they within my knowledge, I cannot say anything about them.

Letters Group II - From some party to me but not allowed to reach me.

Another class of letters is of those that seem to have been addressed to me. The Prosecution say that they were

intercepted by the police in the post-office. Some of these were altogether withheld by them. Some were photographed or copied by hand and typewriter. The exhibits here are these "originals," or copies.

Exh: P 1602(P) from S. V. Ghatge 20.8.28

" P 1605(C) from C. P. Dutt undated.

" P 1607(C) from " "

" P 1608(C) from S. S. Josh 14.7.28.

" P 1609(O) from Bob Lovell 2.8.28.

" P 1610(P) from Chatto 18.9.28

" P 1611(P) from Muzaffar Ahmad 5.11.28

" P 1612(P) from " " 1.3.29

" P 1613(C) from " " 16.1.28

" P 1614(C) from " " 11.2.28

" P 1615(C) from " " 2.3.28

" P 1617(C) from " " 7.8.28

P 1619(P) From F. C. Joshi

P 1621(P) " " " 6.3.28

P 1624(C) From Usmani 2.4.28.

P 1625(C) " " 29.11.28

P 1626(C) From Majid 22.7.28.

P 1628(P) From Ghosh 3.1.29

P 1637(O) From S.S. Josh 13.3.28

P 1639(O) " " " 4.7.28

P 1641(C) " " " 18.8.28

P 1665(O) " " " 14.2.28

P 1797(P) From Goswami 17.11.28

P 1807(1)(O) From Glyn Evans 13.12.28
 P 1819(O) From ? Packet of newspapers.
 P 1835(P) From J ? 26.11
 P 1845(O) From Dutt 29.3.28
 P 1863(P) From Spratt 18.12.27
 P 1864(C) From Spratt

Letters Group III - Police copies from "my" letters.

In the same category fall the copies which the Police say they took in the Post Office from my letters. These are two such - P 1878(C) and 2141(C).

Group II and III were born, bred and developed between the Post and Police. The Prosecution have two expert witnesses P.W. No. from Calcutta and P.W. photographer from London who are prepared to own any copy or photograph as their own, no matter, where they have originated. So the Post, Police and Prosecution are at liberty to do anything with these papers. I have nothing to do with them.

Letters Group IV - From some party to me, found in searches in "originals"

P 819 from Thengdi (In Thengdi's office)
 P 955 from Muzaffar Ahmad (In G.K.U. office)
 P 957 from Usmani (" " ")
 P 973 from Alve (In Dange's office)
 P 995 From Usmani (In Dange's Office)

P 996 From (In Dange's Office)
 P 1967 From Spratt (In Spratt's office)

The persons from whom they purport to come should be referred to.

Letters Group V - From "me" to some party in "original

P 395(1)(2) To Muzaffar
 P 396 To " Telegram
 P 997 Postal receipts of book parcels.
 P 1299 To Ghate 8.4.28
 P 1965 To Spratt 5.7.27
 P 1966 " " 8.7.27
 P 1972 " " 20.5.27
 P 1973 " " 24.6.27

As regards this group of letters it may be said by the Prosecution that a man can recognise his own handwriting and say whether he wrote the particular letters or not, (though such a point cannot be urged in the case of very clever forgeries of signatures or identical handwritings of two different persons.) But in my reply in relation to such items, I have to point my previous experience and the way in which the Courts use the law against the accused. In the Cawnpore Case, in which I was an accused I was asked similar questions about letters sent to me and by me. Not having had any previous experience of bourgeois law, I straightway acknowledged those which I had received or written and denied those that I had not. The Prosecution seized that

statement and argued that I had proved the handwriting of those whose letters, I acknowledged to have received and admitted my offence regarding my own letters. And so for those that I had really not received at all, they said that I was not telling the truth. The Court agreed, and said that I told the "truth" where I admitted the letters and told a "falsehood" where I denied them. The Assessors in the case, who were common citizens, not knowing this bourgeois law, accepted my plea and declared me not guilty. The Court disagreed with them and brushed their opinion aside and held me guilty. Hence I consider that it is unfair and illogical to ask an accused person to give evidence against himself and eminent jurists agree with this view. When such is the vice in which the liberty and principles of a person and Party are held, it is useless to answer the question.

(146) Refusal of the Court here and at Cawnpore, and the District Magistrate to permit me to obtain information on the "Foreign exhibits" when I was taken as a Defence witness in the Roy Case.

There are some documents in this case which are alleged to have originated from a "Foreign Bureau" on the Continent of Europe, which, the Magistrate says, was acting under instructions of the Comintern. The Bureau had three members of whom M. N. Roy was one, and the Prosecution have put down Roy in their list of "63 co-conspirators". There are also

about 40 exhibits which are claimed by the Prosecution to be in the handwriting of Roy. When the Prosecution arrange to bring witnesses from England, some of the accused apply to this Court as well as to Government to summon some of those in the co-conspirators' list and give those who were under ban, a guarantee of safe ingress and egress. The Government refused saying that we could ourselves call anyone we liked but the Government would not grant them immunity from arrest. Now one of the "co-conspirators" in this case Roy was found in India, arrested (21.7.31) and brought to trial as an accused in the old Cawnpore Conspiracy Case of 1924, in which three of us here were tried. In the Cawnpore Case I was the only one, who made a statement before the Magistrate, in which I stated that I was a Socialist and as the editor of the "Socialist", (my weekly newspaper 1922-1924,) I had to keep correspondence with many persons and amongst them with Roy. The Court used this statement, which I now know, was not as it should have been certain parts for a Socialist-Communist, against me and Roy. In order to explain what I meant by this statement, I was particularly required by the defence in the present Roy prosecution, to appear as a witness. I was summoned by the Addl: Sessions Judge Cawnpore through this Court to appear on the 10th December 1931. As soon as I received the summons I put in two applications before this court, one on 7th and another on 8th December. In one application, I requested for

permission to see, two persons in Cawnpore (Messrs G. G. Jog and H. Shastri) whom I wanted to summon as defence witnesses, with reference to Exts: P 1381, P 10, P 243, P 1965, P 1966 etc. A copy of the application was sent to the District Magistrate here. The D.M. asked me to apply to the D.M. at Cawnpore, who was not expected to know wheth really there were any such exhibits here or not. So I aske this Court to give me a certificate saying that the two persons could give some relevant evidence, as stated in my petition. The certificate was given. But almost a similar request on the most important exhibits was refused. The second application asked for permission to interview Roy in order to secure information from him especially with regard to the famous "Assembly Letter" published by Government on the eve of the Public Safety Bill and which is an exhibit here (Exh P 377(1) and which, Roy had announced in the pres was a forgery. I requested the court to send in in charge of its officer some of the exhibits in this case ascribed to Roy. The Court refused to do it saying that it had no power to send the exhibits or to grant me permission to interview Roy on the matter. My application was referred t the District Magistrate here, who passed an order on the 10th December that he was not prepared to send the exhibits "except on the order of a court".

As regards consultation, the Magistrate said, "I agree with the learned Sessions Judge (i.e. this Court.) that thi

is a matter for the orders by the Sessions Judge of Cawnpore. This Court referred me to the D.M. who referred me to the Judge at Cawnpore. Well, when I was taken there under police guard, I applied to the Judge mentioning these above two references. The most learned Judge referred me to the jail authorities! And the Jail Authorities refused saying they had no powers! Thus all judicial learning combined to frustrate my attempts to get correct information on the exhibits in the "foreign section" from available sources. Yet this Court, the D.M. here and the Sessions Judge at Cawnpore observed a very obliging brotherhood towards each when the prosecution at Cawnpore wanted certain documents from the records of this Court. This Court and the D.M., both of whom refused me the defence facility, readily sent Exhibits P 2477 and P 2478 in this case. with Mr. Gaya Prasad, who is appointed in charge of the exhibits by this Court and who is at the same time prosecution witness number He deposed there (in the Roy Case) "The writings and circles in blue pencils in P 2477 and 2478 were written by S. A. Dange, an accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case. They were written in my presence. Dange has been previously convicted in 1924. He is the same Dange. These exhibits form part of the Meerut Case and I want to get them back and leave a copy." In cross-examination he stated, "I had the photographs made at Cawnpore. I was asked to produce them to the C.I.D. photographer, who photographed them." Thus the records in charge of this Court have been

travelling from C.I.D. to C.I.D. but when I asked for a few exhibits being taken to Cawnpore, everybody pointed to somebody else and nobody said he had power to permit it.

After returning from Cawnpore, I applied through this Court for a copy of Roy's statement before the Addl: Sessions Judge Cawnpore, on 12th December 1931, thinking that it might contain a cross-reference to exts. in this case. The copy was refused by the Judge in his order of date 21.12.31 delivered to me by this Court. The order again reveals the profound learning of the learned Judge at Cawnpore, Mr. A. Hamilton and shows the way his victim will be treated. He says, "The charge in the case before me referred to the years 1921 to 1924 and the applicant was tried and convicted for conspiracy in those years, so only what refers to subsequent years can help him and nothing was said about subsequent years. I reject the application. The learned Judge is so profoundly immersed in his learning that he forgot that the case before him may refer to the years 1921 to 1924 but only three weeks before he wrote the above order, he himself had admitted evidence referring to the year 1930 and supplied by this court from this case. Now I can grant that two learned Judges sitting five hundred miles apart can know what evidence is required to help each other, so that their preys may not escape, but I did not think that Mr. Hamilton at Cawnpore would claim to possess an intensive knowledge of the exhibits in this case, and

give his opinion as to what would be useful to me here and whether it must necessarily refer to the "subsequent years" as he says. Because, the case here as in Cawnpore begins - if it can be said to have a beginning at all - with the Russian Revolution and the Comintern. Here are exhibits exactly referring to the period and incidents that have reference in the Cawnpore Case evidence also. Only to take the instance of evidence individually referring to me, there is the mention of my book, "Gandhi Vs. Lenin" Exh: P 507 here and referred to in the deposition of Col. C. Kaye in the Cawnpore Case and Mr. Hamilton could have seen it at page 25 of the proceedings of the case printed for the High Court. Similarly here are in exhibits the two books of Roy "India in Transition" and "India's Problem and its Solution" Exh No. P 759 and P 296 here and Ex.B and C in the Cawnpore Case. (Page 22 Printed proceedings). Is not the learned Mr. Hamilton, a bit too much learned when he tells me what is and is not in this case or the one he is trying? It is no wonder that with such learning, he condemned the Kakori accused seven years back and has oppressed and gagged Roy from saying anything in his defence and did not allow me to see him, in spite of the fact that such an interview would not have resulted in another "World wide conspiracy" as I do not agree with Roy in his differer with the Comintern.

(147) Exhs: P 507 "Gandhi Vs. Lenin" - four meetings

Ex. P 2512

Gandhi Vs. Lenin Exh: P 507, a book "Gandhi vs. Lenin" has been put to my account. This book was written by me in March 1921, when in obedience to the call of the Indian National Congress I left my college and joined the students' non-cooperation movement. Though I joined non-cooperation, I was not in thorough agreement with the Gandhian programme. In this book I have compared Gandhism and Leninism and have shown programme in favour of latter. In spite of this I have to say that the book is not a Leninist work at all. No Marxist literature was available at that time. In the book I have confounded the viewpoint of ordinary economic determinism with the Historical Materialism of Marx, and have in many places even shown leanings towards Idealist philosophy, which has no place in Marxist Materialism. I would not subscribe to that book today and it is of no use now in the service of Communism, though in those days, I think, it was the first of its kind to appear in India, and break through the web of lies that were being circulated about the Russian Revolution and Lenin, by the Imperialist bourgeois press.

Exh: P 1684, put to me is a report by P.W. 262 of a meeting held on 14th September 1927 to welcome Usmani on his release from Jail. Usmani was my co-accused in the Cawnpore Case. As such and as a man, who had come out of the tortur

jail life unbroken in our common principles, I was bound to welcome him. But the report of the speech made by the P.W. is incorrect. The report says that I spoke about refusal of passport to me to go out of India. Nowhere, throughout the evidence is it alleged that I ever applied for passport and that it was refused. The report is obviously a fabrication. P 1685 Report of a meeting by P.W. 262 held to celebrate the Anniversary of the Russian Revolution on 7th November 1927 in Bombay. Those who wish for freedom whether from Imperialism or capitalism are bound to rejoice at the growth of the Soviet Republic and so did we. I cannot say that the report of the speech is correct.

Exh: P 2311 - meeting held to protest against the judicial murder of Sacco-Vanzetti by American Imperialism. The oppressed classes in every country must show international solidarity with the victims of capitalist Imperialism. If the Indian workers and peasants want freedom, and help from all the countries in their struggle, they cannot get it by sending appeals to the "World Powers" of Imperialism but by themselves rendering help to the workers and peasants of other countries. In 1927, we simply protested against Sacco-Vanzetti's fate. They were seven years in prison, undergoing the farce of a trial, under American Imperialism. We, who protested against this, shall be soon doing four years under British Imperialism, undergoing a similar farce. The whole world protested for Sacco and Vanzetti and I am

glad that we could join our small frail voice in that night protest.

The report of my speech is incorrect.

Exh: P 2512. This exhibit has a history and has caused a lot of trouble. It is alleged that this bunch of papers is in my hand, that it was written somewhere in January 1930, either in jail or police custody and that it was found in the personal search of one V. H. Joshi near the docks in Bombay. It is inferred that it is repetition of offence on my part and it has been used as a ground for refusal of bail to me.

In reply, I have to repeat what I said before this Court, when I argued my bail application on April 1931. I said that if I am to lead evidence to show where how and who composed or produced this exhibit, I must be released on bail; since this evidence particularly cannot be led unless I am freed on bail from that jail and police custody where the exhibit is alleged to have originated. But the Court refused to take note of this and grant me bail. This document has been given unnecessary weight, only to hit at me in any way possible. It looks like a few jottings or notes made by a person, who has watched the movement in the country, has followed the evidence and proceedings of this case, is interested in it and has made some remarks about the whole thing. Even a stray note on any incident in the

evidence by your Honour can be procured and put into exhibit as a "document shedding light on the conspiracy"; but that would not mean that it corroborates the evidence in any way. This document in no way strengthens or weakens the Prosecution Case than what it already is by the evidence or the statements made on the evidence. To call such scraps of papers which, from their very form, purport to be stray notes or observations on economics, politics, "the Meerut Case" etc., a corroborative piece of evidence, and to believe it to be so is utterly wrong. For the Prosecution with 3000 documents and the backing of their own law, to do such a thing is clumsy, unwarranted and unnecessary. And for any other person who has not come to the level of the police prosecution, to believe it or use it against me or anyone else would be called a piece of political knavery or foolery or personal vendetta. That is all. The document is not mine.

Exh: P 1690 - Report of the Lenin Day meeting, held in Bombay on 21st January 1929, by P.W. 180 (Kankar). I have already stated that the working class in order to free themselves from slavery and to evolve a higher culture must give up attachment to the bourgeois and feudal heroes who in their own time have done some good to the cause of the people, but the perpetuation of whose outlook is now no longer good for them. The workers and peasants must now create new heroes and a new type of "Days" and demonstrati

in their honour. Such an evolution will free them from those degenerating communal clashes and wanton murder in which the people in India are involved by Imperialist agents. One of such Days, is the Lenin Day.

The Prosecution as well as the Committing Magistrate have relied very much on my speech at this meeting, and wanted to illustrate my views on the question of violence and non violence by reference to this speech. Because, altogether in the whole evidence, they could put seven meetings and speeches against me. Of them, I have shown how three, the strike speeches, are utterly unreliable. Of the remaining four, there is no report of any shorthand reporter with regard to three speeches. They are summary notes of the impressions of a C.I.D. Inspector. The only speech for which the police made arrangements to procure a report from a good shorthand reporter is this Lenin Day speech. Mr. Mankar is a well-known shorthand reporter in Bombay whom the Police engaged this time. Now from the reputation of the witness the police were entitled to believe that they would get a correct report. But they misjudged on the essential point. It is not sufficient to know shorthand reporting and the English language only to be a good reporter. The reporter must be able to follow the subject. I think this is recognised on all hands. Now Mr. Mankar may have been a good reporter for nationalist speeches. But he had no practice with Communist speeches, which are very diffic

to follow, especially when you deal with theory, for a reporter, who has not had practice with the subject. That one factor rendered Mr. Mankar incapable of following correctly my speech. Hence you will find his report disjointed, sometimes even unintelligible. What a mess a reporter makes when he does not know the subject can be seen from one very clear reply of Mankar in cross-examination. He has ascribed a statement to Nimbkar in his speech at this meeting, which even an ordinary man, let alone a communist, knowing something about Lenin, will never say. He says, "So far as I know the sentence 'Lenin lived and died for the bourgeoisie and the proletariat' is correctly reported." Who can believe in face of this, that Mankar's reporting on vital points in the speeches is correct? Later on Mr. Mankar himself admits, "In case the hall is badly lighted there is some difficulty in taking notes. ... The position in which the reporters are sitting also affects the efficiency of reporting. The Peoples Jinnah Hall (i.e. where this meeting took place -) is a worthless hall for reporters." Though in P 1690 he has made no note, in P 1691 he says, "I made a note that bad sitting and bad lighting made efficiency and accuracy difficult". I do maintain that the report of my speech on the Lenin Day, P 1690, is very incorrect and materially wrong.

(148) One year and 13 days' "delaying tactics" of the Prosecution - 471 useless exhibits - 49 unnecessary witnesses - 880 pages wastefully pri

During the course of delivering the statements, the prosecution have several times raised the objection that what we said was unnecessary, that it was waste of time, paper and money. In one case they suggested to this Court not to print at all a certain portion of the particular statement which they considered superfluous. That the agents of a government which cannot balance its budgets and has to issue an ordinance every morning, should be so mindful of expenses is very creditable, but only it should have been done in time and in the proper place. Their objection to and complaint against money being spent on the statements is an attempt to make their side of the case available to the judges in a de luxe edition while our answers to their de luxe falsehoods, they want to suppress in uncouth wormeaten files. The charge of wasting public money on nonsensical printing of records can be proved against the prosecution with reference to a few facts, which can testify to either corruption or mismanagement in their ranks. As soon as evidence began to be put before the Lower Court, we objected to several documents, books etc. going in as they were irrelevant or unnecessary but exhibited by the prosecution simply to deprive us of valuable books or prolong the proceedings of the case. Our objections were all overruled. What do we now find in the Session Court? The prosecution have withdrawn as a result of some sense dawning on them or rejection by this court, 471

exhibits from the huge rubbish they have put in. In the Lower Court, they poured in train-loads of witnesses 320 in number. The necessity and relevance of all this waste of time and money began to vanish with the change in the outside atmosphere and the prosecution could manage in this court without the service of 49 of these 320. Yet they called our list of 136 witnesses for defence, a vexatious list and advised the Magistrate to reject it. Who is then following a vexatious and wasteful policy? The prosecution who put in 49 unnecessary witnesses or the defence who called for only 136 witnesses for thirtyone accused? The Prosecution object because 24 accused have taken 1400 pages for their necessary statements. But how many pages have they wasted in printing unnecessary and useless exhibits? The 471 exhibits which have been withdrawn or rejected cover nearly 570 printed pages. Who is responsible for wasting money over these pages? It may be said that it could not be foreseen that these exhibits were useless or that the counsel in the Lower Court, Mr. James thought them relevant but the counsel who succeeded him, Mr. Kemp, considered them useless. But the story of waste does not end there. The Prosecution have printed many exhibit booklets and papers, though several copies of them were available in the searches and it was unnecessary to print them at all. Not only have they printed them but done it more than once. For example exhibit P 523 "Call to Act:

and the theses contained in it have been printed twice, each time 50 foolscap printed pages; while more than one hundred copies of it were seized in the searches and were in the possession of the Prosecution (and some of which from the unexhibited searches were later on returned). The W.P.P. resolutions, constitutions rules etc. also have been printed several times, though a large number of copies of them were available for reference or distribution, as copies of exhibits. It is needless to quote all the number of such exhibits. For example see, Exh: P 51 which is same as P 111, P 137, P 235, P 306; Exh P 52 same as P 129, 218; Exh 56 same as P 136, 162, 234, 307; Exh. P 138 same as P 161, 309; Exh: P 217 same as 219, 517; Exh P 514 same as 549(9) of which the prosecution themselves note on the heading of 514 that they found 150 copies of it. A whole company of Bengali, Hindi, Urdu translators were engaged to translate vernacular documents, which have been later on withdrawn. Who wasted money and time on these translators? In one place the prosecution have put into exhibit six identical telegram forms, with nothing written on them. They printed the forms six times in the exhibits and ultimately cancelled them. (Exh: P 98). Probably because it appeared too ridiculous for an already ridiculous prosecution to print six blank telegram forms, to prove a conspiracy when millions of these forms are turned out every year by the telegraph department and are given free at any post

office window. There is still one more method of wasting pages well known in the printing trade. In the case of several exhibits they have printed only one line and left the whole foolscap page blank, which ordinarily prints 46 lines. (For example see Exhs. P 618, 619, 631, 635, 647 etc. etc.) Is this done by mistake? No There are 43 cancelled exhibits of which they have printed only the number and description making 57 lines altogether and they have spent full 40 foolscap pages for these 57 lines which at the most would have taken two pages. This type of waste does not include those exhibits which have been retained on record and are not cancelled. I have roughly calculated the total number of printed pages of such exhibits as have been withdrawn altogether and of those exhibit booklets and pamphlets, hundreds of copies of which are available in the searches and yet they have been printed, not only once or twice but even six times. The number of wasted pages comes to no less than 880 and a more thorough examination, for which I have had no time, would increase the number to over one thousand at least. Are we responsible for this waste or the Prosecution and the Court, who instructed, supervised and carried out this vast bungle? While on the one hand they have printed blank rejected telegram forms extending over several pages, they and this Court refused to print when we petitioned for it, the only copy available in India or England, of the Theses of the Second World

Congress of the Communist International, Exh P 2395, consisting of only 83 pages. The sense of economy and propriety has dawned suddenly in the case of our statements only and those exhibits, which we need to be printed for defence, when all along the Prosecution have wasted public money over one thousand useless pages, 49 useless witnesses and several other things whose list is not small. That is the sample of Government's economy and fairness and "facilities" for defence.

Another point of attack of the Prosecution on our statement is the time taken for their delivery. Opposing our bail applications before the Hon'ble High Court, on 25th May 1931, when the eleventh accused was delivering his statement, Mr. Kemp accused us of wasting time and said "If they (the accused) behaved reasonably, they can not take more than two or three months". Now the time taken by the Court for recording our statements does not lie in our hands at all. The arrangements made by this court for the recording of statements are wholly responsible for "the inordinately long time" taken by the statements. The speed of recording is not limited by the speed of our delivery but by the speed of the stenographers, who are employed to do the recording. If our individual speeds were responsible the number of pages done by each of us on a normal working day would have varied greatly. But we find on the contrary that the number of pages per day per accused are more or less uniform. This is due to the fact that we have timed our speed to that of the stenographers. The Prosecution witnesses who have reported our vernacular or English speeches have deposed to the fact that we spoke more than a hundred words per minute. (P.W. Nos. 180 & 276). The recording of statements here is being done at the rate of 30 words per minute on an average. I have conclusively shown this in my application filed in this Court on 5th Jun 1931 as soon as I knew of the baseless allegation made by

Mr. Kemp before the High Court. By my comments on the speed of the stenographers, I do not want to be an instrument of blaming them. They are delivering the goods for what they are paid. But I can not help using the fact for defending my position, if you assail me. If the Court had engaged men with higher practice and speed, with better pay, we would have finished the statements in one third the time that has been taken. Today, 4th January 1932 is the 189th working day, (since 18th March 1931) of our statement. If the court of the Government were so very anxious to speed up matters, I would have been finishing my portion on 24th June 1931. A single factor of the speed of recording is responsible for this delay of more than seven long months. What will probably have taken one full year would have been done in four months, if those who are responsible for this arrangement had themselves been "reasonable" or had not conspired to deliberately cause delay, prolong our imprisonment, and then turn round and accuse us of having wasted time. With facts and figures, I assert, Sir, that it is the Government, the Prosecution and the Court, who are responsible for wasting nearly thirteen months of our life, in a prison, while bourgeois law hypocritically hold us "innocent till proven guilty", in the following manner:

- (1) Remand period between arrest on 20th March 1929
and commencement of Magisterial Inquiry on 12th
June 1929 Two months & 23 days.

- (2) Period between Magistrate's semi-Judgement Order on 11th January 1930 and commencement of Session Trial on 31st January 20 days.
- (3) Loss of time in statements due to the slow speed of recording by the Court through its stenographers or by its own hand Seven months
- (4) Loss of time in Lower Court over 49 witnesses found unnecessary in the Session; on an average Two months.
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Total One year & 13 days.

This is exclusive of the holidays, which will total more than five months during the three years of our untried period.

With such crying facts the Government impudently states in the House of Commons that we have followed delaying tactics and this court also threatened to note several times, the minutes and seconds taken by some accused to put a question to a witness, simply because not knowing bourgeois law, he took time to frame it in a suitable manner to satisfy legal technicality. This is only one of the samples of justice meted out to us.

Your Honour has several times in your orders noted that you are trying to keep on strictly judicial grounds and to give judicial and impartial opinion. But the very bourgeois law which you are trying to operate is basically

against human considerations being applied to those whom it attacks and as such your judicial and impartial decisions are bound to result against every human demand of ours. For instance whenever any one of us (including myself) applied for bail on grounds of the sickness of our families, who have none to help them your Honour, in your orders "sympathised" with us but refused bail on "judicial grounds" "as the law does not permit". So even when the human consideration in an I.C.S. Judge allows him to "sympathise" with us, the "law does not permit the human sympathy, to be brought into actual practice: it prevents it from bearing fruit. It means that bourgeois imperialist law is incompatible with the exercise of sympathy and human considerations; that means it gives no quarter to its class-opponent on any ground. In our system we do not hold the human to be above the supposedly abstract nature of law. Hence on your own observations, our system would be superior, therefore, deserving to take the place of bourgeois-imperialist "law". It also proves, Sir, that you may be "judicial", but you will not be human!

(Dange) D/5.1.32

Para 149 - Misinterpretation of our attitude on the question of violence and non-violence - Are our statements Defence or Defiance - It is defence of the right of every Indian to be a Communist and to belong to a Communist Party.

I have stated so far the principles that I hold and the activities that I engaged myself in. In the first part of statement from Para 1 to 72, I have described the phenomenon of Social Growth that generates the class-struggle and the course it has followed in the foreign countries from which communist theory is derived. This is done in order to refute the false statements made by the Prosecution regarding the origin and growth of Communism. The second part from Para 73 to 105, deals with the Social Basis of the Class-struggle in India, in order to refute the allegation that we create artificially a class-struggle where there is none and that we import ideas and methods at the behest of the Communist International, where there is no basis for them. The third part from para 106 to 147 deals with the Trade Union Struggle in which we took part and especially the Bombay Textile Strike, about which so much evidence is led. It also deals with the smaller and detailed items of exhibits which may have been left in the first two parts. All the three parts are necessary in order to understand the case. They will, show that what

we have done is to subscribe to the principles of Marxism-Leninism and to tell them to the people. To hold certain views, to propagate them and to form parties for that purpose is our inalienable right, which exists in most bourgeois countries. We claim to exercise that right in India and it does not amount to a "conspiracy to wage war". The Prosecution have tried to make out that the trade union work that we did, the big strikes in which we took part, were a step leading to a violent upheaval and armed insurrection. But if they were honest and if they had read properly the very literature they have put in evidence they would have found that the strikes and demonstrations that we led were not of that type that were calculated to lead to an armed insurrection. Armed insurrection and revolt is not a joke nor a piece of romanticism for a few youths to indulge in. They require a deep economic crisis affecting not only the oppressed but the oppressors also. But that alone is not sufficient. They require a strong working-class Party. But that also is not sufficient. They require intense work in the army, in the navy, in all classes of the population, intense technical preparation. Now in all the evidence that has been put down here, is there a single scrap of paper, a single word to show that we were preparing for or had even the intention of preparing for such an insurrection? There is none. There is no doubt that as Communists we pointed out the historical

course that the Indian working class and the peasantry will take in its class struggle against capitalism whether foreign or Indian. But "bourgeois democracy" in the heart of the British Empire, near the very threshold of His Majesty's Palace in London permits its citizens the right of telling this. We are certainly not Utopians nor dreamers to think that Imperialism and the bourgeoisie will allow any party to actually prepare for and embark upon insurrection. But we do claim the right to hold the principles of Leninism and propagate them.

In their affidavit filed before the Hon. High Court on 18.6.31 the Prosecution admit in the first para "That there is no evidence on record showing that any of the accused herein committed any overt act of violence." The Crown Counsel in his argument before the High Court, in April 1931 had gone even further (from which position he retreated later on) and said that there was "no overt act alleged against the accused." The question of violent overt act was raised after this. Paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 in the affidavit filed in June make the unwarranted statement that in consistency with the principles of Leninism to which we owe allegiance we "clearly contemplated and made preparation for the commission of acts of violence." Now the only evidence on record on this question of violence and non-violence are the speeches delivered by some of us and the Leninist works dealing with the Marxian theory on

the overthrow of the State, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and the historical aspect of the revolutionary struggles. The question of violence and non-violence is so much emphasised, not because we were contemplating "act of violence" but because in the present atmosphere of India all political activity is incessantly cut across by insistence on non-violence as a principle. Attempts are made by Gandhism to distort History and the people are told that the development of India in the past has been based on the strict adherence to non-violence and that the future also must be so, if we are to achieve freedom. It is to explode this false claim, which is encouraged by Imperialism, because it is to its advantage, that correct historical data have to be put before the people. If this is not done, the weapon whether non-violence or violence in the given situation becomes a fetish and social progress is hampered. But just as an ordinary citizen carrying a revolver in England and not pledged to non-violence can not be said to be preparing for commission of acts of violence, so a Communist carrying Lenin's Books, "On the Road to Insurrection" or "The State and Revolution" cannot be charged with contemplating "commission of acts of violence against the state."

The committing Magistrate in his Order while dealing with this question has distinguished our outlook from that of the Terrorists or Anarchists and said, "In justice to

Communism, however, it must be emphasised that this violence is in no way allied to anarchism or terrorism. It cannot be denied that communism is, when once its premises have been granted, ruthlessly logical." (Page 38). The Magistrate recognised this but he put his own premises behind our conclusions, without which he could not have kept us here, if he had followed our premises and ruthless and correct logic. The Prosecution did the same, with the result that our premises about insurrection and commencement of the revolution, are taken away and our outline of principles and their preaching is twisted by their own bourgeois premise into "conspiracy to wage war" and intention to commit acts of violence" and we are put in prison. They take our logic but insert their own premise and illogically convict us.

I have, however, to say one thing with regard to this reference to our differences with anarchism or terrorism. There is no doubt we do not agree with their principles or methods. But our disagreement is not of the treacherous type as is exhibited by the nationalist bourgeois Congress. I have in my statement criticised the leadership and also other parties with whom I disagree. The Congress also disagrees and denounces the terrorists and communists. But it does not rest with mere denunciation; it does something more. We disagree with the Congress leadership; but we are not prepared to cooperate with the

British Government in putting it down. We disagree with terrorists, but we are not prepared to assist the armed terrorism of the British Dictatorship in sending them to the gallows. While the Congress leadership (the first amongst them being Mahatma Gandhi himself) in their official statement say, "As to Bengal, the Congress is at one with Government in condemning assassinations and should heartily cooperate with Government in the measures that may be found necessary. ...". (Their latest statement dated 31st December 1931) which means the Congress is will to be the hangman on behalf of Imperialism. The Congress President, Mr. Patel, while condemning the Comilla young girls made the idiotic statement that "It does not become our women to wield lathal weapons of death and destruction. It is given to a woman to create and sustain life and not to kill". This ignoramus forgot the history of India, of his own province, where women have led armies and fought battles. But a reactionary as he is, unable to wield any weapon and given to "sustaining only himself and creating life", he wants to condemn Indian womenhood to cooking and rearing children; and yet he is not ashamed to hypocritically call upon women to work in the national movement, at the same time intending all along, as is revealed above, to keep them slaves of the kitchen and the cradle in future India. We are not prepared to subscribe to treachery and condemnation, which can be indulged in by a bourgeois president, because he is protected by his nationalist newspapers, who print his interviews but are afraid to say

what the defenceless women themselves have to say in defence. Our attitude is of disagreement with both the Congress and the anarchists; but we believe in winning over to our side by argument and reason, by our work and by the indication of the correctness of our principles by History, those youths, workers and peasants who follow the wrong lead to these two organisations. But we do not betray them, we do not become their hangmen "at one with Imperialism". We recognise that the Congress as well other parties have hundreds of self-sacrificing men willing to give up their lives for national freedom. We disagree with the views and methods of the Congress Leadership when they tell the working class and peasantry to cooperate with Capitalism, their class-enemy; but that does not mean that we will join hands with foreign Imperialism in massacring them. We must in special circumstances, even defend them, not by joining their organisations but under our own banner, when they are attacked by Imperialism. While at the same time we will tell the workers and peasants and youths under their influence that the methods preached by them will not lead India to freedom; temporarily, however, revolutionary their actions might look; that not "mock-battles by permission" nor midnight armed coups can achieve freedom but only the historical road of Leninism can do it.

A question has been sometimes put whether what we say is defence or defiance. I have to state, Sir, that we are

putting up a defence, if such a thing is allowed under bourgeois law. But if defence means desertion of principles we can not put up with it. It is not defiance, because thereby I do not gain my objective. It is defence and not defiance, in deadly earnest. Only it is not defence so much of an individual, as of the right to propagate the principles for which that individual stood and stands.

I do not defy; but defend and urge that this Court do recognise the right of every Indian to hold communist principles, to belong to a Communist Party, to be one with the International of the World Proletariat, to carry on trade union and literary activity, while subscribing to Leninism - a right which exists in all the advanced bourgeois democracies and in England itself, on the basic principles of whose judicial system and political liberties this country is said to be governed.