

Straight Talk: KASHMIR - ANOTHER COLD WAR VICTIM

10

MIRROR, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1963

STRAIGHT TALK

KASHMIR

ANOTHER COLD WAR VICTIM

India and Pakistan are today almost at war. This is a great tragedy for the Indian and Pakistani people. It poses a grave danger also to world peace.

All this has come about because of imperialist chicanery and intrigues over a considerable period of time.

The creation of India and Pakistan was the beginning of the trouble. It was the culmination of the 'divide-and-rule' policy of the British colonialists.

After the conquest of India, the British Raj created a social base for its rule. Having conquered the Mongols it quelled them by creating in Princely India hinder puppets, princes and maharajahs and in British India, zamindars and talukdars.

Subsequently it played up to the Muslims as a minority group to forestall the united independence movement led by Gandhi and Nehru. To the demand of Roosevelt that India must be freed so that she could take her place in

the war on the side of the allies, Churchill callously declared that he was not appointed the First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire.

PARTITION

After the war, when the Labour Party assumed the

reins of government, the British granted India freedom when she was, according to one Member of the House of Lords, like a ship on fire with ammunition in its hold. But in granting freedom it adopted the formula of partition. India and Pakistan were born and the problem of Kashmir was created.

Kashmir became a problem because of religion, ideology and the Cold War. It was pro-India in sentiment. Sheik Abdulla, the leader of the Kashmiris who was dubbed the Frontier Gandhi, was a

strong supporter of the Congress Party. But the majority of the population was Muslim. It thus soon became entangled in the gyrations of the cold war.

In keeping with the cordon sanitaire — the containment of communism — policy of

Chidli Jagan



the West, Pakistan was armed to the teeth. She became a pivot of the string of military bases and military alliances — NATO, SEATO, and Baghdad Pact — which were meant to provide an iron ring around the world to contain the spread of communism. Pakistan became the connecting link between the Baghdad Pact — the Middle tier of countries and SEATO which embraced some of the South East Asian countries.

India stayed clear of these alliances because of her policy of non-alignment. But the rearming of Pakistan caused her to divert a vast amount of her revenues to defence, which would otherwise have gone to development. This was one of the contributing causes for the pauperization of the Indian masses.

With the cordon sanitaire policy in shambles by the penetration of the Russians in Africa and the Middle East after the Anglo-French fiasco in Egypt in 1956 with China becoming a great military and economic power in the Far East, India became increasingly important in the balance of power between East and West, between capitalism and socialism. With her 600 million people, she could play a decisive role in swinging the balance one way or the other.

COMMUNIST BOGEY

At first, the Americans were opposed to India because of her policy of non-alignment, which was formulated by Nehru. They were also unhappy about the socialist orientation of her economic policy. As a result, the World Bank withdrew offers of aid after the draft second 5-year plan was published.

But US policy was forced to undergo a change. By 1960, the world balance of forces had materially changed in favour of socialism and communism.

For the West it was necessary not only to contain

communist China but also to prove to underdeveloped countries that central economic planning and development under democratic socialism as in India was more successful than under communism in China.

After all China was making more rapid economic strides and nothing succeeds more than success.

In this new situation, particularly after the China-India border conflict, the US rushed to the aid of India with arms, equipment and food. Economic aid denied before was also now granted. As India began to receive military and economic aid, Pakistan, the former recipient began looking more and more to China.

The resultant tragedy is that having thus been caught in the cold war, these two countries have to spend vast amounts of their annual revenues, equivalent to over 50 per cent for defence. And now they are facing each other with the most lethal weapons of mass destruction.

The consequences of this struggle are clear. Only the poor, poverty-ridden millions will suffer. The old reactionary cliques, the landlords and capitalists, who were being undermined by social unrest will now strengthen their position with emotional hysteria and national jingoism.

This has been the experience in Latin America where the West has used the bogey of communism to give arms and ammunition to the ruling clique — the triarchy of imperialists, landlords and upper clergy — to maintain itself in power, to establish dictatorships and preserve the status quo by destroying constitutional democracy.

The tragedy of the present battle between Pakistan and India must be noted by all the Guyanese people. The same fate must not befall Guyana. Those who advocate partition, please note. Partition has only aggravated the problems on the Indian sub-continent. And it will be no solution to the problems of the Guyanese people.

The solution is national unity and racial harmony. This must be forged by a united working class struggle.

If the PNC leadership continues to refuse to work out a political settlement with the PPP for the good of the people and the country, then it is the duty of the PNC

followers to join with the PPP rank-and-file to fight against the imperialists, their Water Street puppets and landlords. The opportunist politicians must be exposed for selling out the country and acting as the front-men of the foreign exploiters.

Pakistan has demonstrated that tutelage does not pay in the long run. To avoid pitfalls, an end must be put to BG playing the imperialist game. The imperialist must also be told that if they sow the wind, they will reap the whirlwind, that they must stop playing the dirty game of force and fraud, and divide-and-rule.

Let's all hope that a speedy settlement will be achieved to stop this internecine undeclared war. The United Nations and the Afro-Asian non-aligned group of countries are the best vehicles to work out such a settlement. Both India and Pakistan would do well to free themselves from the Cold Warriors.