

*The House reassembled at Five of the  
Clock.*

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

DISCUSSION ON CALLING OF  
TROOPS IN CALCUTTA.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Mr. A. K. Gopalan will raise the discussion now. The discussion will close at 6-30. There are a number of members who are anxious to speak here. They have given me notice and so 10 minutes will be the maximum for a speech. If they cut it down to less than 10 minutes it is all the better so that all the people can take part. I will call the hon. Minister at 6-15.

**Shri A. K. Gopalan (Cannanore):** I first of all thank you for the kind opportunity that you have given to the Members of this House for discussing a very important issue that has happened during the last month. After the last session of the Parliament from Calcutta to Tuticorin several things have happened, which require the serious consideration of the Government and the Members of this House. The lives of people, I do not know how many, have been lost and if we shut our eyes to the serious situation on technical grounds I am sure that we will be doing injustice to the country and to the people. The agitation in Calcutta began in the first week of July. It was against the enhancement of the tramway fares. It was a struggle for one pice but really the people were not able to pay even that one pice and that was the reason why the agitation rallied round itself all the sections in Calcutta and also the whole masses. All sections of people in Calcutta rallied round this agitation. That shows that it was really because the condition of the country was such that the people were not even able to pay one pice more. The first agitation started with the people who refused to pay the enhanced rate and

then there was firing, there was lathi charge and then it went to the extent of calling military aid. The *Hindustan Times* of 17th July, 1953 in its editorial had said: "Troops had been called out at Calcutta at last in dealing with the situation created by the Tramway Enhancement Resistance Committee." What was the justification for the calling of the troops, firing and other things. To put it in the words of Dr. B. C. Roy, the economic situation of the country was largely responsible for the agitation against the Government and the situation was further aggravated by the ever increasing unemployment. He also stated that unless the menace of economic distress is fought, there was no solution for it. I will not go into the details about it. I have only read the report in papers. I leave it to the hon. Members of this House who had been there in Bengal and who know the situation better. The agitation was against British capital and its exploitation. The report says that according to the Company's accounts for 51 there was a net earning of Rs. 10 lakhs after allocating funds to the new accounts. A dividend of 6 per cent. was declared. So what has happened within the last so many months to justify the enhancement of fares? It would be difficult to say. It would be difficult for me to cite another instance where a British capitalist business is nursed so well and made remunerative. Tram cars certainly are essentially a poor man's means of conveyance and even the slightest enhancement of the fare is bound to cause undue hardship to the poorer classes.

It is unfortunate that even the slightest trouble anywhere in the country develops and catches like wild fire. The reason is obvious. We read in the papers every day that industries are closing and unemployment is increasing. For the last three days the House has been discussing the silk industry and the coir industry and in the course of their speeches hon. Members have pointed out how the small industries like, silk, coir and handloom are closing

down one after the other. On account of this situation and the growing unemployment, people are frustrated, and their discontent gives rise to unrest in the country. I ask the Government when there is discontent in the country, instead of dealing with the situation tactfully and patiently, is it proper to call the aid of the military?

Another important matter which I wish to bring to the notice of the House is that the Security Control Police, which, I understand, is directly under the control of the Central Government, were used to deal with the disturbances. I have got photographs with me showing the Security Control Police going into the crowd and attacking people. The other day Mr. N. C. Ghosh of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* when he came to Delhi gave a talk to the Delhi Journalists' Association in the course of which he said that for the attack on the pressmen in Calcutta it was the Security Control Police that was primarily responsible. The attack on the pressmen is not only a challenge to the Press.....

**Shri M. Khuda Baksh** (Murshidabad): On a point of order, Sir, the subject before the House, is the calling of troops in Calcutta. The matter that is now being referred to—the alleged assault on the pressmen—happened subsequently. Is it in order for the hon. Member to discuss what happened subsequently? I may also point out that the alleged assault on the pressmen is *sub-judice*.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** The hon. Member will kindly confine himself to the subject before the House.

**Shri A. K. Gopalan:** The Security Control Police, who are directly under the control of the Central Government, were mainly responsible for the attack on the pressmen, and in my opinion responsibility for this naturally devolves on the Central Government.

As I was pointing out the attack on the pressmen is not only a challenge to the press, but also a challenge to democracy. It is a

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challenge to civilisation; it is a challenge to justice and fairplay. I have heard ever so many things; but I do not wish to go into details, nor do I wish to sit in judgment over them. But I would like to say this much that the attack by the police on the pressmen has brought discredit on the Government, not only inside our country, but even outside. It has been said that such a thing has never happened in the history of the press in any democratic country in the world. Even our Prime Minister had said that he was sorry about it. Everyone felt sorry about the attack on pressmen. There was not an instance where they were not sorry about the attack on pressmen, because it was certainly unwarranted. And see the way in which it was done. It was reported in the papers that the Security Police understood that they were pressmen and after understanding that they were pressmen attacked them. So it was a deliberate pre-planned attack on them. That is why I have brought up this matter. It is a very serious matter. The Prime Minister has said he was sorry about it. Everyone would be sorry because pressmen are there to report what is happening; they are there to make people understand what is happening. Certain things are happening, it may be on the part of the Government, it may be on the part of the people, what the Government is doing, what the people are doing it is the pressman who has to report. And any attack on pressmen made by those who are responsible under the Central Government is a thing which must be looked into. This is a very serious matter which has provoked all sections of people in this country and about which the Prime Minister as well as the Chief Minister there have said they were sorry. Who was responsible for this action? I request that those who were responsible for this may be punished so that such things may not happen again.

I conclude by saying that things like this will happen in the future

[Shri A. K. Gopalan]

also unless matters are set right. The economic situation is such that any day, anywhere such things may happen. I would request the Central Government to take serious steps and advise the State Governments that whenever a small situation, just like the tramfare agitation in Calcutta, arises they may deal with the situation tactfully so that extreme steps like firing, lathi-charges and calling out military may not be taken and so that things may not happen about which Government themselves may have to protest afterwards. Under the present economic policy of protecting and patronising British capital the economic condition in our country will remain as it is. And if the economic condition of our country remains as it is, certainly there will be discontent and unrest among the people and that may lead to all these things. So I give a warning to the Government that it is high time that the Government changed the economic and repressive policy it follows at present so that 'Calcuttas' may not be repeated. Let them also learn a lesson from what has happened in Calcutta so that those who had been responsible for bringing discredit to the Government may be punished and the officials who had been responsible for it dismissed.

**Shri N. C. Chatterjee** (Hooghly): I was in Calcutta when the troops were called out, and it will not be true to say that the military were not really called out. You know, Sir, there is a paper called *Statesman* which is generally a champion of law and order and it, is usually critical of the Opposition parties. That paper said on the 17th July, that the troops were called at the request of the West Bengal Government, and that the military afforded limited aid to the police in Calcutta on Thursday in the maintenance of law and order. It goes on:

"This help took the shape of route marches by troops, fully equipped for internal security patrol, through several main

thoroughfares in the northern and southern parts of the city in morning and afternoon. The marching columns were accompanied by police officers and wireless vans".

But one thing is very important. That responsible paper which maintains certain standards in Indian journalism said that their press correspondent had gone to see some of the Ministers after the West Bengal Cabinet meeting; and this is the report: After the meeting of the West Bengal Cabinet, a Minister told the press correspondents "This Government is determined to meet force with force". The military was brought out and everything about it was wrong.

**An Hon. Member:** What is wrong?

**Shri N. C. Chatterjee:** The declaration was taken to mean that the troops were being brought out to terrorise the people. There was no mass uprising up to that point in the city. As a matter of fact all that happened was that there were sporadic acts of violence.

**Shri G. H. Deshpande** (Nasik—Central): Did the Communists deprecate that?

**Shri N. C. Chatterjee:** You know that I am not speaking for the Communists. You are a better friend of the Communists than myself.

**Shri Syed Ahmed** (Hoshangabad): Did you deprecate it?

**Shri N. C. Chatterjee:** I did issue a statement.

**Shri Syed Ahmed:** But how many days later?

**Shri N. C. Chatterjee:** Immediately. What I wanted to say is this that there was some staging of frightfulness by the Government which did not do any good at all to the city. (*Interruptions*).

**Shri V. G. Deshpande** (Guna): There should not be any interruptions.

**Shri N. C. Chatterjee:** I wish that there would be no interruption. I refuse to yield.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** There should not be any interruptions.

**Shri N. C. Chatterjee:** I know that the hon. Member who had never been to Calcutta during this critical period wants to contradict me. I know my city; I know my province better and the ex-Governor of the West Bengal, who happens to be the Home Minister, knew something of Calcutta some years back. I want to tell my hon. friend here that there was a very bombastic declaration by the Congress Chief on the eve of the *hartal* that the Congress is going to break the general strike and that unfortunate declaration led to a good deal of calamity. As a matter of fact the leftists have told me that they are thankful to the Bengal Congress Chief for that kind of declaration which led to the success of the *hartal*. Possibly the *hartal* would not have been half successful but for this declaration. After that they brought out 500 men for the purpose of breaking the strike and that led to a bitter situation.

My hon. friend Mr. Gopalan has read a portion of the editorial from the *Hindustan Standard* of the 17th July. It is said in that Editorial that the success of this *hartal* and the general strike was a slap on the face of the Congress and the Congress Government. May I know whether the troops were called out and the military were ordered to parade the streets of Calcutta because of this feeling that both the Congress and the Congress Government had sustained a defeat and a miserable discomfiture by the success of this unique *hartal*?

My hon. friend has referred to the very ugly incident which took place in my city on the 22nd July for which all sections in the country are sorry, namely the attack on the press men. But I would like to take the House into confidence and tell my hon. friends that, it seems to me that there

was something little more deep and sinister than it strikes one *prima facie*.

What happened? Dr. Radha Banerjee Pal, a former Judge of the Calcutta High Court was the Chairman of the Citizens' Committee. He along with other members of the Citizens' Committee appealed to the Resistance Committee: "For Heaven's sake, in the interests of millions of citizens and to redress the sufferings of the poorer people, do help us in restoring normal conditions and allow the resumption of the transport services". After talking to them we found that the Resistance Committee was not unwilling to have a joint conference with the Government. Dr. Paul, myself, Mr. Mrinal Kanti Bose, Mr. Hemendra Prasad Ghosh and Mr. Santosh Kumar Bose saw the Acting Chief Minister Mr. Sen as well as the Home Minister and appealed to them "For Heaven's sake, let us have a joint conference on the 22nd and finish the whole thing". We found that there was a possibility of settlement provided prestige was not thought of. We appealed to them: do not think of prestige; have a joint conference; our services are at your disposal. After half an hour's talk and appeal, the Acting Chief Minister and the Home Minister accepted the suggestion of a joint conference. I was sure that if that joint conference had taken place with the Acting Chief Minister, Home Minister and other Ministers, the whole thing would have been settled. I should say Mr. Sen and the Home Minister ultimately agreed to our suggestion. Dr. Paul and I appealed; not for our sake, but for the sake of millions of suffering people that the tension should ease and something should be done to restore normal conditions in my city. Then, Mr. Sen said, 'what about our position and prestige; kindly write a letter to us saying that it is at your request that I am calling for the representatives of the Resistance Committee.' To ease the situation, we immediately wrote out the letter.

**Shri Joachim Alva (Kanara):** May I know if this was an off the record chat and whether the hon. Member could come to this House and mention this portion of it?

**Shri N. C. Chatterjee:** This is on the record of the Government of Bengal. The Government of Bengal will never deny that. I publicly issued a statement. There has been no denial of that. It has been commented upon in the Press. It was arranged that at 6 o'clock representatives of the Resistance Committee, the leftist groups who were in charge of this strike business, should meet the representatives of the Government and we offered our services to mediate. We found that they were so near and with a little beating down of prestige and notions, and, what should I say, misplaced importance, things would have improved. Mr. Sen also asked Mr. Basu, the convener of the Committee and also Mr. Mrinal Kanti Bose to inform the Resistance Committee, and specially requested us to be free that night. A couple of hours later, a telephone came to Dr. Paul from the Acting Chief Minister or the Presiding Minister saying, 'we call off this conference.' I do not know what happened within the two hours. Something had been done. If there had been a conference as arranged at 6 o'clock, there would have been no violation of section 144 because the Resistance Committee Members had to go to the Writers' Building and there would have been no trouble. Somebody had decided in the mean time that the Press should be taught a lesson, and that the Press was behaving badly. The meeting was therefore called off. Slowly and steadily, the public feeling was rallying in favour of the Government after the announcement of a Tribunal to enquire into the increase of Tramfare. It is this unprovoked and cowardly attack on the Press, which we all deplore, which has led to greater cleavage, greater misunderstanding and accentuated the situation. I am sorry that Dr. Roy had to go away.

If he had been there, possibly things would have been better. But, the men who were in charge were not equal to the occasion, were not big enough to face the situation with courage and with vision and with statesmanship.

I want to know from the hon. Minister why was the requisition for the military made. Who made the requisition? What were the grounds? Did they ever say that the civil authorities had completely failed to keep law and order in the city of Calcutta? Did the Congress Government say that they wanted to create some impression on the people because the strike had been a success in spite of the bloated declaration of the President and Chief of the Bengal Congress? What had happened? Was the situation so bad? I am sorry to say that there has been firing. We all deplore the acts of violence committed on either side. But, what is more regrettable is that for days and for nights, the refugee colonies were being rounded up by the agents of law and order. Men were beaten. There was firing in the refugee colonies. That is not good. Our Government are spending lakhs and lakhs of rupees for the purpose of so-called rehabilitation. Mrs. Leela Roy one of the prominent social workers in the city of Calcutta, told me and the other Members of the Citizens committee that for hours and hours, day in and day out, for 10 or 12 hours, searches were made and men and women were being assaulted and tortured and molested. This kind of thing is most regrettable, and I wish the hon. Minister will do something. If the Government of India could possibly have intervened at an earlier stage, possibly some of these disagreeable episodes would not have happened.

**The Minister of Defence Organization (Shri Tyagi):** As two hon. Members have mixed up the incidents of Calcutta with the coming out of the Army and shooting and doing

Injury to women and refugees etc., I want to make it quite clear that the Army only had a route march, morning and evening.

**Shri S. S. More (Sholapur):** What is the time for that?

**Shri Tyagi:** I want to make it quite plain that in this shooting, if at all it had taken place in any corner of Calcutta, it was not the Army which shot. The Army did not fire even one cartridge. There was no occasion for the Army to shoot. If there was any shooting resorted to, it must have been from some other quarters, not from the Army. I want to make this clear.

The position of the Army is difficult in such circumstances. It is likely that my friend knows it, but for the benefit of the House, I will read Section 130 of the Criminal Procedure Code which says:

“(1) When a Magistrate determines to disperse any such assembly by military force, he may require any commissioned or non-commissioned officer in command of any soldiers in the Army or of any volunteers enrolled under the Indian Volunteers Act, 1869, to disperse such an assembly by military force, and to arrest and confine such persons forming part of it as the Magistrate may direct, or as it may be necessary to arrest and confine in order to disperse the assembly or to have them punished according to law.”

“(2) Every such officer shall obey such requisition in such manner as he thinks fit, but in so doing he shall use as little force, and do as little injury to person and property, as may be consistent with dispersing the assembly and arresting and detaining such persons.”

Section 131 says:

“When the public security is manifestly endangered by any such assembly, and when no

Magistrate can be communicated with, any commissioned officer of the Army may disperse such assembly by military force, and may arrest and confine any persons forming part of it, in order to disperse such Assembly or that they may be punished according to law; but if, while he is acting under this section, it becomes practicable for him to communicate with a Magistrate, he shall do so, and shall thenceforward obey the instructions of the Magistrate as to whether he shall or shall not continue such action.”

These are the two Sections of the Indian Criminal Procedure Code. Here, the question is whosoever the officer available of the Army, any Magistrate can, according to law, summon him and his force for his help; and that officer has no other go except to obey the Magistrate. This is the position of the Army.

In the present case, the Army was called for not to disperse the crowds. They just called for the Army for their help. The situation was not really so bad as my friend says. The whole of Calcutta was not in such a commotion as to create any violent situation. It must have been only a few who were committing any violence, if there was any violence. I have not seen things, and I have no personal knowledge. The source of my knowledge is the same as that of many of the friends who have read reports in the press. I am sure the whole of the population was not violent. Naturally, quite a large number must be peace-abiding people. Those people were also alarmed because if they find everywhere that a tram is in danger, their going out is in danger, naturally they deserve to get some sort of protection from the State. And the Army only just had a smooth flag march round the streets of Calcutta. I am sure that that brought some confidence in the minds of the law-abiding people.

**Shri N. C. Chatterjee:** Just the reverse!

**Shri Tyagi:** There should have been no cause for alarm, and these persons simply wanted peace. They wanted peace not for one day, two days, for some time; they were just starving to have peace, and those people were only given the guarantee, the security. So, it was only with a view to restore confidence among the law-abiding people that Army had a smooth flag march. They were never asked to take any action. If the army had taken even the slightest action by using force in any manner, then I could see why I, on behalf of the army, could perhaps be asked by this House to explain as to why force was used, what amount of force was used etc. Since the army only had a march, and did not take to any action, I do not think the army or the Minister in charge of the army has anything to explain to the House. If there were any excesses committed by any other force, either local or otherwise, I wish that at least the army should not be attributed these faults. The army did nothing except marching, and I can assure the House the army's march was enjoyed by the people who saw it.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Shri Ashim Dutt.

**Shri Meghnad Saha** (Calcutta—North-West): Sir, may I request you to call Shri Atulya Ghosh, the heroic leader of the Bengal Congress volunteers, to address this House?

**Dr. M. M. Das** (Burdwan—Reservcd—Sch. Castes): I protest against the insinuatary remarks of the hon. Member, namely 'heroic leader'.

**Shri A. Ghosh** (Burdwan): Sir, I would not be able to satisfy anybody excepting the Deputy-Speaker, but yet I can try, if he could very kindly permit me.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I am really surprised at the manner in which hon. Members take it into their own hands to regulate the business, in this House. It is very wrong to do

so. If any hon. Member wanted that he should contribute to the debate, then he must have sent me a note in advance. All these suggestions embarrass me. Shall I call this side of the House and then go on asking Members from the other side to speak one after the other? It would be better if suggestions of this nature are not made.

**Shri A. K. Dutt** (Calcutta South-West): I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak a few words on the subject that is under consideration now. Our hon. friend Shri Gopalan has given a description of the situation in Calcutta. But as is usual with his party he has spoken some untruths and half-truths, and distorted the real facts. He has exaggerated the number of people who were injured, and he has also exaggerated the atrocities of the police lathi-charges etc. But he has not stated the real situation. The fact was that there was an organised violence on Government property. A number of buses were destroyed, numbering about 62. Tram-cars and railway coaches were attacked, and some of them burnt. A lady teacher, whose only fault was that she wanted to go to her school, and tried to go by a second class tram car was attacked with acid bombs, and was severely injured and she is now in a serious condition.

Almost all the passengers who tried to travel by second class were seriously injured, terrorised and brick-bats and acid bulbs were thrown at them. I am coming from a constituency which comprises a part of Calcutta and some of the suburbs, and I was present at the time when these things were happening.

Before I say anything about the calling of the troops, I want to give some background as to why the troops were called. There was for days together a serious agitation in Calcutta on account of the death of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee. It was rumoured that he had died under

mysterious circumstances and the people were very much agitated on that point. Then there was acute unemployment in Calcutta. Lots of educated middle class people were going about for service, but without getting services they gradually became frustrated and, naturally, they thought that the cause of all their trouble was the Government in power, and they became anti-Government.

**Shri S. S. More:** It is a fact.

**Shri Syed Ahmed:** It has nothing to do with the subject.

**Shri A. K. Dutt:** Then there were the Bengali vernacular papers which started an anti-Government agitation. Their editorial staff were infiltrated with Communist and persons in league with anti-Congress parties.

**Shri N. C. Chatterjee:** They are mostly Congress.

**Shri A. K. Dutt:** They terrorised their proprietors and from day to day started publishing various false rumours. They said that the Government was tottering and the Government had lost all control over the police. That way they created panic in Calcutta. All true facts have been distorted by these papers. The authorities at first thought that the movement would die off naturally because their information was that the opposite groups were short of funds. But the leaders of the resistance movement, with a view to bring the matter to a head, thought of starting some action on the model of the 'Direct Action' of August 16, 1946. With that aim they held a meeting near the Ochterloney monument, and after the meeting was over, as we saw in 1946, they attempted to loot the shops and commit arson. But the police took vigilant and prompt action and saved the shops from being looted. This infuriated some of those people and they attacked Dr. B. C. Roy's house and caused serious damage, though he was away from Calcutta. Being unable due to police action to loot and commit

arson, they thought of taking other steps and at night time they started cutting and removing the tramway lines, damaging the street lamps and putting barricades on the streets. This way they created a rather complicated situation. At this stage the Government had only two options left—either to order the police to take strong steps or to bring confidence in the minds of the people. They thought the second course would be safer and better. There was route march of military in the city of Calcutta to impress people that Government has sufficient strength even if police fails and as a result of this action confidence came back and almost every citizen of Calcutta thought that it was a very good step that was taken by the Government. They congratulated the Government for taking that step and I hope the House will join with them.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee** (Calcutta North-East): Speaking today particularly as a representative of the city of Calcutta, a city whose traditions it is not for me to enlarge upon, a city perhaps as volatile, if not more volatile than the Prime Minister and great-hearted in spite of its faults, I beg of you and of the House, Sir, to take a very serious note of the gravity of the situation which arose in Calcutta last month, to shed to all ideas of rigid adherence to dead technicalities which were in the beginning of this meeting sought to be raised and to take a human and understanding view of the crisis which showed its face to the people of Calcutta, and to the people of India with such stupendous force during the events of last month. I beg of you to remember that it was the very great gravity of the situation in Calcutta and the most unashamedly inept handling of the situation by the West Bengal Government which led me to send a cable to the Prime Minister asking, him in all decency to intervene in the situation and to retrieve if he possibly could an impossible situation. I do not make a grievance of the fact, Sir, that I

[Shri H. N. Mukerjee.]

did not have the privilege of a reply. But it was not me alone who tried to ask the Central Government to take a serious note of what was happening in Calcutta. Apart from myself, there were many other persons, many other hon. Members of this House as well as others and later on, the representatives of all journalists' associations in Calcutta who told our Prime Minister that an impossible situation had arisen in Calcutta on account of the callous handling of a very popular demand by the State Government in power. What happened in Calcutta was, therefore not a small local incident. It has a significance about which this House, and our Government at the Centre—if it is to be worth its salt—must take note and cannot take shelter behind technicalities and ignore the happenings in my city.

Purely technically, law and order is a State subject but the calling out of troops in aid of the civil power is directly within the ambit of the Centre. I have heard my hon. friend Mr. Tyagi trying to distinguish between the manoeuvrings and deployment of the military force for purposes of shooting down people and for the purpose of merely parading through the streets. But what was the impression that we in Calcutta who were there on the spot at the time got when the military was called out? That impression is brought forth by the banner headlines which you can see in a non-communist Bengali paper under the Caption. 'The Military summoned in Calcutta'. The kind of headlines which were put up showed how the people were concerned by the way in which the Government was behaving. What was the Government doing at that time? The demand that the tram fare should not be increased without a reference to a Tribunal, without a further judicial adjudication of the matter, was so popular that ultimately the Government has had to come down. Ultimately the whole matter has had to be referred for judicial determination

and yet because the Government of West Bengal wanted to boost the interests of a British Company which has been fattening on our soil for so many years,.....

**Dr. M. M. Das:** On a point of order, Sir.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** ...because this Government is trying to shelter all those who have been fattening on our soil and sucking the life-blood of our men.....

**Dr. M. M. Das:** On a point of order, Sir.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** What is the point of order?

**Dr. M. M. Das:** Sir, my point of order is this. My hon. friend from North-East Calcutta under the garb of discussing the calling of troops in Calcutta is discussing the action that has been taken or that has not been taken by the West Bengal Government and he is entering into the details of the case, which is outside the jurisdiction of this House. As he himself mentioned it, it is a State subject.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I admitted this motion merely on the ground that troops were called in. To that extent it is central; though in a way the troops belong to the Centre, the calling of the troops is a State subject. I however allowed it so that hon. Members may have a frank talk about this matter. The hon. Member will therefore kindly come back to the point that is on the Order Paper.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** I submit it is quite relevant for us to refer to the situation which led to the calling in of the troops. Under the Constitution the State list excludes very definitely the calling of armed forces in aid of the civil power. Rightly or wrongly, the aid of the armed forces was evoked.....

**Some Hon. Members:** No, no.

**Some Hon. Members:** Yes, yes.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** The Constitution, besides, makes very ample provision for the Central Government directly to ensure that under the cloak of the autonomous powers of the States the condition of the people as a whole is not permitted to be in jeopardy, and the Union has an inescapable responsibility laid on it. I refer the House to Articles 256, 257 and 356 of the Constitution, where the President acts on information received from the Governor or the Rajpramukh, or from anybody, including the Members of this House. I, therefore, submit that it is certainly within the ambit of the jurisdiction of the Centre and what happened in Calcutta can be discussed with validity in this House.

I shall not go into the details of the July incidents, because certain of the essential points have already been referred to. But I would like to point out that the whole thing hangs together. The calling out of the military who paraded the streets of Calcutta on the 16th and 17th of last month was merely a symbolic demonstration of all that was happening in Calcutta throughout the month of July. That is why you have already permitted Members of this House to refer to what happened after the 17th when members of the Press were beaten and manhandled in such a fashion as is without parallel in the history of democracy.

**Shri Tyagi:** Not by the Army, I believe.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** Not by the army. But I do say that the Central Government has a responsibility for the manner in which law and order is enforced in the States, if the manner in which law and order is enforced goes against the very foundations of democratic Government.

**Shri G. H. Deshpande:** I want to raise an important point of order. On matters which are under judicial enquiry judgments after judgments are being passed by individual

Members on that side. Is it desirable?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** This matter has not been brought to my notice. What is the judicial enquiry?

**Shri G. H. Deshpande:** The question whether there was an attack on the pressmen or not is a matter under enquiry and judgments are being passed here that they were beaten very severely. It is not known at all whether they were at all beaten or not and it is the subject of an enquiry. Even such an eminent lawyer as my hon. friend Mr. Chatterjee, has passed a judgment on a matter which is the subject of a judicial enquiry.

**Shri N. C. Chatterjee:** It was never denied that there was an assault for which both the Government as well as the Prime Minister apologised. The only question was who was responsible for the beating—that is the subject matter of the enquiry.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** The enquiry has been ordered on publication in the press of photographs which I am prepared to place on the Table of the House. I have also got with me photographs of some wounded journalists taken of them in hospital. It was because of the publication of these things that investigation has been ordered.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Inasmuch as the point raised about the beating of the journalists is the subject matter of a judicial enquiry I would ask hon. Members not to refer to that matter.

**Shri S. S. More:** On a point of information. Does the enquiry ordered become a judicial enquiry, simply because of the fact that a judge happens to be in charge of it?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** What exactly is the position: has any case been launched in any court of law?

**Shri M. Khuda Baksh** (Murshidabad): If I may be permitted to inform the House, the matter has been referred to the Chief Presidency Magistrate and he has ordered a

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judicial enquiry into the whole thing.

Some Hon. Members: No, no.

**Shri T. K. Chaudhuri** (Berhampore): My hon. friend on the other side is confusing two issues. The matter which has been referred to the Chief Presidency Magistrate is the assault on the Council of State Member, Shri Satyapriya Bannerjee. There is a judicial enquiry on that matter. So far as the assault on pressmen is concerned, there is no judicial enquiry; no complaint has been lodged. Government has appointed a one man committee. Mr. Ghosh had been appointed; now in his place Mr. Justice Mukerjee has been appointed. That is not a court.

**Shri Syed Ahmed:** Are these matters related to the calling of the army?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I am afraid we are straying from the original motion. So far as this matter of alleged assault on the journalists is concerned, it seems to have happened sometime after the military was called. Therefore let us confine ourselves to that and not go beyond, because hon. Members on any side must have notice of what the motion is. This refers to the calling in of troops.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** I shall not take much more of the time of the House, but this refers to the attack on the press representatives because it was only part of....

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** This refers only to the calling in of troops. Including there what happened after that will not be relevant.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** As has already been propounded by previous speakers, the whole thing is hanging together, and it is difficult for us to express ourselves and ask Government's views on the matter unless we can at least generally refer to these things.

Therefore I submit that the press came in for so much trouble because it tried to represent the true facts of the situation.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** That incident must stand by itself. I am sorry, it cannot arise out of this. Let the hon. Member confine himself to anything that happened before and during the calling in of troops.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** Before and during the calling in of the armed forces the Government was as good as abdicating from the scene in favour of police rowdiness and we find that the behaviour of the Government was such that all sections of the press were driven to register their protest in such a fashion that for one day they stopped publication altogether.

There is one other point which has been raised in the course of the discussion, and Government may give an answer to this. (*Interruption*). The point raised was in reference to violence. An hon. Member on the other side said that it was the Communists who have been practising violence. I would say here and now that as far as violence was concerned, look up the records of what happened. Violence was on the side of the Government of the State. Find out the casualties. (*Interruption*). I ask the Home Minister. Three men killed—it is not a large number perhaps in a country like ours—but three men killed in the course of the disturbances and many seriously injured. How many were killed and seriously injured on the Government side? Not one man killed on the Government side, not one man seriously injured, nor of the military.

Things happened in Calcutta on such a scale and in such a fashion that even the press had to say that it was a slap in the face of the Government, that Government had proved itself entirely inept and inadequate to deal with the situation. We in Calcutta were reminded of what Euripides had said two thousand years ago: "Those whom the Gods want to

destroy, they first make mad". That is why the President of the West Bengal Congress had the gumption to issue a challenging statement opposing the strike which was to be held on the 15th July, a statement which was interpreted by papers friendly to the Congress, like the *Jugantar* of Calcutta, as provoking a civil war. Violence was practised on the Congress side, by the West Bengal Government, and the answer of the people was a widespread popular movement, so popular that every single paper in Calcutta had to register its support for the demands of the popular movement.

These are the points to which I wanted to draw the attention of the Government.

**Shri A. Ghosh:** With your kind permission, I want to offer my thanks to some of the Members on the Opposite side for very kindly mentioning my name. My statement has been referred to several times. So I think it proper to place it before you. In my statement, I said that the people of Calcutta should resist all violence. I never asked anybody to work against *hartal*. I only appealed to the people. I shall read some portions of my statement. I said:

"For the last 12 days, Calcutta is passing through disturbance which has jeopardised the life and peace of the common men of Calcutta. Some anti-social elements have started violent *goondaism* under the garb of so-called resistance movement against increase of tramway fare.

I urge all Congress workers and public in general to organise themselves to resist all kinds of anti-social activities. The Congress workers of Calcutta, 24-Parganas, and Howrah have decided to maintain peace and order in the city of Calcutta and to resist all kinds of violent activities and for that procession and group meetings are being organised.

I am sure that the citizens of Calcutta along with Congress wor-

kers will rise to the occasion and give a befitting reply to the miscreants who are trying to paralyse the peaceful life of the great city of Calcutta.

Public and trades people are to be assured that they will get all kinds of protection from *goondaism* if they are forced to make *hartal*."

I am very much pained to hear from a learned lawyer and my great friend Mr. N. C. Chatterjee what he said referring to my name. I also feel honoured at that. So far as I remember, we discussed with some of our friends, some of whom are present today in this great Parliament, and we condemned hooliganism. We condemned that portion of the work of the Resistance Committee which was related to violence. I have been ridiculed. The Press has condemned me. I have been condemned on the public platform. But I stated and I insist on stating that so long as I am a Member of Parliament, so long as I am a free citizen of free India, I will go on insisting that violence has to be checked, violence has to be opposed in the interests of this big nation.

You will find from the Calcutta newspapers *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, *Ananda Bazaar Patrika*, *Jugantar*, *Hindustan Standard* of the 15th, 16th and 17th July statements to the effect that one square mile was in the hands of a Government which had nothing to do with civil administration. You will find that some portions of Northern Calcutta were in complete darkness. Laxmi Bhandar, a prominent shop in Calcutta was to be looted. You will find that streets were barricaded as they were barricaded at the time of the Paris Revolution. The same things as were done in the French Revolution were tried to be staged. You will find from reports of the Calcutta papers and from *Swadhinata* an organ of the communist party that in some portions of Calcutta, on the night of the 17th and on the 18th, and also on the 15th and 16th, all traffic was blocked by barri-

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cading, by bringing dust bins and other things and by spreading the refuse in the streets.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** What were the casualties? How many were killed?

**Shri A. Ghosh:** You will find from the newspapers that lights were broken and a portion of the City of Calcutta was in complete darkness. You will find from the newspaper reports that cars were not allowed to go through these areas. People were asked not to come to that area and if they did come, they came at the risk of their life. You will get all these details from the papers.

**The Deputy Minister of Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur):** Did the Press condemn all this action?

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**Shri A. Ghosh:** I am not here to say what the Government did, whether they were right or wrong, whether the Resistance Committee was right or wrong. As a free citizen of Calcutta and as a free citizen of free India. I want to impress upon the House that on the nights of the 15th, 16th and 17th, some portions of Calcutta were completely in the hands of persons who resorted to violence. I do not know whether the Regulations permitted the calling of troops. But, according to our common sense, we apprehended a breach of the peace and we apprehended serious conditions in this great city of Calcutta. It reminded us of the 1946 Direct Action Day. It reminded us of other revolutionary days which we have read in some of the books. It reminded us of our friends; some of the political parties, taking advantage of the call of the Resistance Committee, were trying to paralyse the life of the great city of Calcutta. Shall I congratulate the Government of India, if they permitted this patrolling by military, for their action? As a citizen of Calcutta, I think that the Government did its best to stand by the side of the peace-loving citizens. We met some Members of this distinguish-

ed House, and they were of the opinion that Government should be far more strong and firm to check hooliganism. I am only quoting from a newspaper. The newspaper has supported this Resistance movement, written against the announcement of enhanced tramway fare; supported, I think, for all practical purposes, the lawful and constitutional agitation against the enhancement of tramway fares. I am not here to blame anybody. I am only here to explain our stand to which several of the Members have referred. Our stand was to resist violence; our stand is to resist violence; and our stand will always be to resist violence.

I request the Members sitting in the opposite side to go through *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, *Hindustan Standard*, *Jugantar*, *Ananda Bazaar* and other papers, and see how many persons were wounded, how a child of ten months was wounded while travelling in second class tram how Mrs. Uma Roy, a leading Professor of Braborne College, was hit hard by an acid bulb and bomb; how trains were stopped and even children were not given the milk and were not taken care of. In our lives, we have also conducted *hartals*. But we also tried to make arrangements for sick people, for children, for distressed people and we wanted to give them comfort, but this time without such arrangements we found that trains were banned. I do not know what relation the trains have with the enhancement of the tramway fare. I do not know why 92 State buses were gutted. What relation the State-run buses had with the enhancement of tramway fare, I do not know but I know that 92 State buses were set on fire. At the junction of Rasa and Hazara roads, where the house of the late Dr. Syama Prasad Mukerjee is situated, you will find.....

**Shri Sarangadhar Das (Dhen Kanal-West Cuttack):** Sir, on a point of order..... (*Interruptions*).

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Order, order. A point of order was raised. All that

let to the calling in of troops. That is how it arose. The hon. Member may kindly refer to *Yugantar*, before that.

**Shri Sarangadhar Das:** I have got with me a copy of the *Yugantar*, which I will present to the hon. Member. (*Interruptions*).

**Shri A. K. Gopalan:** I would request the hon. Member to look at this picture, which shows how a pressman was attacked.

**Shri A. Ghosh:** The role of the newspaper is one of strict impartiality. I think the newspapers, *Yugantar*, or *Amrit Bazar*, or *Hindustan Standard* were all supporting this side as well as that side. As Members of the Opposition have the privilege and right to cite newspapers, I have also the privilege to quote these newspapers. You will find a statement in the *Yugantar*, showing how buildings in Hazara and Rasa roads were completely in darkness. The streets of the great city of Calcutta remained in forcible darkness for two, three, and five hours at a stretch. Whether that is a reason to call the military or not, this great House has to discuss and decide. I place all these facts before you for your very kind consideration.

**Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani** (New Delhi): Quite a lot has been said on this subject. So I would not like to take much time of the House. But I am anxious to say a few words, because as it happened, I was in Calcutta for quite a few days during July, and what I saw in Calcutta and the way the Government were carrying on their work there made my heart very heavy, and made me feel that if this is the way we are going to conduct our affairs in any part of India. I do not know how long we shall be in a position to carry on the administration of this country. This is not a matter of any levity; it is a very serious matter.

What I saw in Calcutta disturbed me very greatly. We are here discussing the calling in of the troops. I know that the scope of discussion is limited and it is difficult to confine my-

self strictly within those limits. But let us take a wider view of the subject. Let us understand what the situation is. The tramway fares were raised by one pice. Over the issue of the raising of the tram-fares, there was a tremendous agitation in Calcutta. Why was there such a tremendous agitation? It arose, because there was tremendous discontent in the whole of the city of Calcutta. The people were dissatisfied, as they had innumerable grievances against the Government. This long standing resentment found an opportunity to express itself. Some hon. Member on the other side said that the newspapers were all managed by the Communists and others of similar view. I am really very surprised to hear that. As far as I know, most of the newspapers are supported by the capitalists, and they in their turn are supporters of the Government. How is that most of the newspapers then supported this agitation? The papers have on the whole given us the true and correct facts. If there was violence on the part of the people, that was reported, and if there was violence on the part of the Government, that too was reported. What is the over all impression you get from the study of these facts. If you go through the editorials, you will see that the average assessment was that there was greater violence on the part of the Government. I could quote to you from innumerable newspapers, but I shall not take up the time of the House by doing so; I would just quote you a few lines from one newspaper, namely the *Amrit Bazar*. Why? Because, the son of the proprietor of this newspaper is a Deputy Minister in the Bengal Cabinet.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi** (Pratapgarh Distt.—West-cum-Rae Bareli Distt.—East): It is very unjust.

**Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani:** This paper says:

"It is inconceivable that the police, particularly in the Congress regime, can run amuck and behave in the manner they have done during the last twenty-two days and specially yesterday even-

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ing. Is it to be concluded that the Congress Ministry has given its imprimatur to such high-handedness? Or is it to be surmised that all these have been done by the police in total defiance of the wishes and definite orders of the Ministry, particularly the Home Minister?"

**The Minister of Home Affairs and States (Dr. Katju):** What is the date?

**Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani:** 23rd July. Then there is a similar quotation dated 17th July:

"What however would be surprising is the seeming self-complacency of the Congress and the Congress Government and the evident mentality on their part to turn a blind eye to their own weak spots and persuade the public to orderly behaviour by emphasising the destructive tactics of the Leftist groups".

I would under no circumstances support violence on the part of the people. I know responsible members of the Resistance Committee again and again issued statements asking the people not to resort to violence. I have seen reports in the papers where again and again they have said that those who were resorting to violence did not belong to any organised political party. Therefore it would not be correct to say that this political party or that political party sponsored violence. We all know that in Calcutta there is a tradition for this kind of throwing acid bombs etc. etc. Who sponsored it and who built up this tradition is a long history and is very well known to Mr. Atulya Ghosh and other people.

**Shri G. H. Deshpande:** Don't you know the Communists?

**Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani:** Whatever it is. What I would say is that the violence on the part of the Government provoked the people into indulging in violence and ultimately the position was such that you had to call in troops.

Now, it is very interesting that our Minister of Defence, Mr. Tyagi, made one statement which is quite contradictory to the statement made by the President of the Congress in Bengal. Tyagiji said that there was a little violence, a little disturbance, a very moderate disturbance, and the troops were sent out to help the peace-loving people.

**Shri Tyagi:** On a point of explanation, Sir, I said that generally the masses would not be violent. That was my expectation. The violence, if at all, was committed not by many; the majority must be peaceful, and it was for the purpose of bringing confidence to those people who were afraid of their shops being looted or violence being committed that troops were called in. I did not say that there was no violence.

**Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani:** I did not say that you said there was no violence. All I said was that you gave an impression that there was very little violence. The troops came out to support peace-loving people. And what is the size of the troops? One thousand troops in full military kit with radio equipment with the map of the City of Calcutta marching up and down!

**Shri M. L. Dwivedi (Hamirpur Distt):** The hon. Member may be requested to address the Chair.

**Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani:** Why did you do it? To my mind, it was done to intimidate the people.

**Shri Tyagi:** To intimidate the rowdy elements.

**Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani:** This is what we object to. You should be able to carry on the administration without bringing in the troops every now and then. You demoralise the troops when you bring them in for civilian purposes. Our objection is to that. The Bengal Government should know how to carry on its business.

Then there was this Press affair which was referred to. How was it done? The most atrocious part of it

was that lathi-charge, was done by police who were not in their uniform. Let the police at least go about their business in their uniform. Here if I wanted I myself could have joined in and wreaked my private vengeance against anybody in the crowd. Who was there to prevent it? It is wrong on principle to have lathis charges conducted by people in plain clothes.

Papers reported that Government had hired goondas for the purpose. These goondas had the sign of Ashoka Chakra stamped on their hands for identification. We should be ashamed and hang our heads in shame. They had the symbol of the Ashoka Chakra in their hands! What does the Ashoka Chakra stand for? It stands for the law of piety that Ashoka started in this country. With the stamp of Ashoka Chakra what did these people do? They beat up the people. This is the administration. The administration in Bengal did not know their mind; they did not know how to carry on the Government. They could not arrive at any decision and win if they did they did not abide by them. It was due to there *bungling* that a serious situation was created which culminated in the calling of troops. We lent our troops for a purpose for which they are not meant. That is why we want to register our protest on this occasion.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Hon. Minister will now reply.

**Shri T. K. Chaudhuri:** Sir, there are only two or three questions.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I have heard sufficient on this subject. I have called upon the hon. Minister. I cannot allow. I have allowed as many as seven people. They took seventy minutes. The questions will take time. There are other hon. Members who have also given notice of questions. Shri Joachim Alva has given notice of 10 questions. There is Dr. Krishnaswami who has also got some questions. I cannot allow this.

**Dr. Katju:** I naturally agree with the last speaker that we should not

deal with the question that we are discussing this afternoon in a spirit of levity. I naturally agree that it is a very important matter. So far as Calcutta is concerned, it was undoubtedly a situation of great gravity, it was a crisis and that was the phrase used by my hon. friend Prof. Hiren Mukerjee. That was the telegram he said he had sent to the Prime Minister asking him to come and intervene because the situation was getting out of hand. I wish also to draw attention to a sentence or two which were uttered—and which I consider to be extremely significant—by my hon. friend who has initiated this debate. He said that what happened in Calcutta was a challenge to democracy. He further said that he is anxious because if the matters are not set right in the way in which he wants them to be set right, this thing will occur again and again. Now, I wish the House to ponder over the significance of these words. Because, as my hon. friend, Mr. N. C. Chatterjee said, I have some experience of Bengal, I have some experience as to what happened in 1950 in the streets of Bengal. Acid bulbs, bombs, crackers and other things were thrown, setting fire to trams, police vans and public property; all that happened, it went on and on, day after day. Today, of course I blame no political party or political group—the matter is much too serious for it—but the situation is that there are groups in this House—not in this House—I withdraw that—let me say outside this House—there are groups, political groups, who are anxious—I use these word deliberately—to exploit every opportunity to incite people to violence and to invite them to murder, to loot, to cut throats and to do all sorts of pranks and then shed crocodile tears in eloquent language; that is the misfortune of it. They are all eloquent people.

**Shri T. K. Chaudhuri:** May I ask, Sir, whether these parties were responsible for the assault on press men.

**Dr. Katju:** I have got experience of this matter in Telangana, in Calcutta,

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in Sunderbans and other areas and this is an example.

**Shri A. K. Gopalan:** Will you give us your experience in Calcutta?

**Dr. Katju:** Mr. Gopalan knows the facts. What is the good of asking me? Go back to Travancore-Cochin, go back to PEPSU, go back anywhere. I am only speaking the truth.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** The hon. Minister will kindly stretch his hands towards me.

**Dr. Katju:** I know my fault, Sir, but they are so attractive. Now picture to yourself what happened. I do not want to go into the merits of this one pice controversy. There is a good deal to be said. I quite realise it. People are poor; there is unemployment. I agree that naturally an increase of a quarter anna means half an anna a day and it means twelve annas a month and for a family of four or five that may increase to two or three rupees.

**Shri Meghnad Saha:** But it means 60 lakhs of rupees to the British Company.

**Dr. Katju:** I would ask through you, Sir, my friend Dr. Meghnad Saha to better confine himself to the Physics Laboratory.

**Shri V. G. Deshpande:** On a point of order, Sir....

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Let there be some order. There is too much of noise in the House.

**Shri V. G. Deshpande:** My point of order is whether it is parliamentary to call upon any Member of this House to restrict himself only to physics and not to politics and law and order?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I am afraid even physics involves handling of acid bulbs. Either way it may be dangerous.

**Dr. Katju:** I do not want to go into the merits of that. There will be an investigation into the pros and cons

of the enhancement of fares and the misdeeds of that British company. The increase was sanctioned by a great patriot like Dr. B. C. Roy. But what happened? Please remember there is a Civil Resistance Committee consisting of many many hon. people, very many friends of mine. What did they do? There were two days of ticketless ride—free completely; anybody could go from anywhere to anywhere. That is of course breeding.....

**Shri A. K. Gopalan:** It was non-violent.

**An Hon. Member:** Of communist type.

**Dr. Katju:**..... inculcating disrespect for law and order. On the third day, when the company said, let us have tickets, there were enormous number of volunteers ready to pull people out from the second class compartment and asking people not to travel. The situation was—that was what Mr. Mukerjee said to the Premier—deteriorating. The day was day, but literally—it may not be all over Calcutta, but in certain quarters of Calcutta—night became nightmare, bulbs, acid bulbs, bombs, crackers, looting, burning, burning of tram cars, burning of stage coaches. Nobody could travel.

**Shri A. K. Gopalan:** Please give us instances.

**Dr. Katju:** You will not make me sit down in this fashion.

**Shri A. K. Gopalan rose—**

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** The hon. Minister did not interrupt the hon. Member when he was speaking.

**Shri A. K. Gopalan:** If the hon. Minister can give us instances, it will be useful; mere generalisation is not going to help us.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** All hon. Members must be allowed to have their say. There was an accusation from

this side; there is defence from the other side. Let us hear both.

**Dr. Katju:** As I said this is very curious logic. The police commit excesses in the day; the crowds commit excesses in the night—very funny. I can understand—if a policeman commits excesses, beats or manhandles anyone, tear him to pieces: take off his helmet, beat him, manhandle him, embrace him, kiss him, do what you like with him. But let him go. But in the night what do you do—barricading public streets. The House may take it from me that for three or four nights, in different parts of Calcutta there was no order at all.

**Babu Ramnarayan Singh** (Hazari-bagh West): Very good!

**Dr. Katju:** I am astonished that an ex-Judge of the Calcutta High Court is laughing!

**Shri N. C. Chatterjee:** I am laughing not at your remarks. I am laughing at the interjection of Babu Ramnarayan Singh.

**Dr. Katju:** These are the facts with which we are familiar. Let me tell you what happened on the 15th, the day before the troops were called. According to the reports barricades were erected in many places on Lower Circular Road, College Street, Wellington Street, Dharamtalla Street, Wellesley Street and other places. Attempts were made after midnight, that is in the early hours of the morning on the 16th July, to dig up tram lines at various places. This is only on one day. This has been going on at many places.

**Shri Meghnad Saha** rose—

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Order, order. No interruption please. Nobody says the hon. Member is responsible for it. The other person does not give way. Let us hear him. Nothing is going to happen. Are we going to have Calcutta incidents here?

**Dr. Katju:** Miscreants collected pieces of wood and other inflammable things  
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and set fire to them in a number of places, specially in Central Calcutta. Electric lights of streets were put out by breaking switches and removing fuses, and parts of Central Calcutta were plunged into darkness. The worst affected areas were College Street market, Amherst Street, Bow Bazar Street, Harrison Road, Circular Road, Mirzapur Street and Shashibhushan Dey Street. A big crowd collected and set fire to the Sealdah tram goomty. The hon. lady is laughing. With great difficulty heavy reinforcements were brought and the fire was put out by the fire brigade. A large crowd assembled at Muchipara police outpost on Harrison Road and Circular Road crossing, but was cleared away by the timely arrival of the police. A crowd broke open a shop at Harrison Road and College Street crossing and attempted to loot it. All that was going on.

I submit that the Government—it has nothing to do with the Central Government—the State Government would have been guilty—I repeat deliberately—would have been guilty of a gross dereliction of duty if they had not taken proper steps. Please remember that the Calcutta police—they may be the villains of the piece—but they have been continuously on duty for 14 days, 20 hours a day. And this thing was going on. This city, glorious city with glorious traditions, was entirely passing into the hands of hooligans. And what did the State Government do? The State Government wrote to Fort William Brigade area: please keep yourselves in readiness, we may have to call you in for maintaining law and order. As a matter of show they just asked them to pass on the streets. The street is an open fare, anybody can go. The Army did not handle even a stick; they just marched on. And it brought some sanity.

The House would recollect that again and again all my hon. friends, finding the ground very delicate for them, gradually jump on to the 22nd, namely the very touchy subject of press gal-

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lery, pressmen, reporters—they are all very good—and therefore it was tackled on. What has it got to do with this? And if you talk about press—I do not want to throw any blame on anybody—take the editorials of the Calcutta newspapers. There are great newspapers there with large circulations, the *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, *Jugantar*, the *Hindustan Standard* with a lakh and half in circulation, the great *Patrika*, and goodness knows how many. They were all out for sales because it is business. They want advertisement. Otherwise, what is the good of editing and publishing a newspaper if it does not attract readers? No income. I say this. Let the hon. Members of this House collect together the editorial articles, short comments, from these Calcutta papers, let us say, up to the 17th July, because 22nd is far off, 5 days ahead. I cannot really understand why my hon. friend Mr. N. C. Chatterjee gave all this description of the very confidential conversation which he had with the Minister on the 22nd. I say let them collect these things together up to the 18th or 19th and let the Calcutta Press itself sit down and decide for itself whether they were doing justice with the public. The two questions are entirely different. One question is, was the Government right or wrong in increasing the fare? The other question, a bigger question of tremendous importance, going to the very root of our democratic structure is whether the crowds were justified in taking the law into their own hands, breaking trams, killing, shooting, throwing bombs.....

**Some Hon. Members:** No killing.

**Dr. Katju:**.....—all right, no killing—throwing bombs, crackers, dragging women from tram cars—were they justified in doing this? Was it not the duty, I say, of the Calcutta Press, the Press of entire India to say that this was a damned thing and should never be done? We are in a democratic Government. In a democratic

Government the law must be kept. If the Government goes wrong, there are methods. You may agitate; you may hold meetings.

**An Hon. Member:** Appeal.

**Dr. Katju:** As an hon. Member says, you may appeal. If this House were sitting, you may bring up the subject and do anything you like. My hon. friends are laughing. I can understand laughter on this side because that is what they hope for—I am referring to my left—namely chaos, chaotic conditions (*Interruption*).

**Shri Punnoose (Alleppey):** On a point of order, Sir, is the hon. Minister entitled to say referring to a certain section of the House that they are looking forward for chaos? Is he right in doing that?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I think all that was meant was with respect to this kind of laughter. Nothing more. I hope the hon. Minister did not mean that our Members have come here to create chaos.

**Dr. Katju:** Nothing of the kind. With your permission, I should say one thing. My friends opposite are in the habit of.....

**Shri Joachim Alva:** May I ask one question, Sir? May I know whether the Government of Bengal called upon the Calcutta Papers and demanded their assistance in restoring law and order? Whatever the Home Minister may say, the attack on the Calcutta journalists was unwarranted and abominable.

**Dr. Katju:** I am glad to be corrected by a journalist. Of course he has his own standards. I do not know what his standards are.

Coming to my hon. friends, they ought to know the rule of the game. My friends hit very hard. If anybody even rises on a point of order, there is great indignation. But, they are not accustomed to take it back.

I want to draw this debate to a close. It is already half past six. I want to close it upon a serious note. Now the country is situated in a very difficult position. There are all sorts of problems in different parts of the country. My hon. friend Mr. Gopalan referred to the challenge to democracy. I take it that democracy means the rule of the majority, so long as that majority is not overturned by the electorate at the general elections.

**Shri Gadgil** (Poona Central): That is not the Communist thesis!

**Dr. Katju:** It does not mean that if you are not satisfied with a particular measure of Government, or a particular law enacted by Government, you go and break the law, and commit violence, and ask people to follow, not to obey the law, and do everything that you like.

That is all that I wish to say. I do not want to detain the House any more.

*The House then adjourned till a Quarter Past Eight of the Clock on Monday the 10th August, 1953.*

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