

# frontier

Vol. 1: No. 22

SEPTEMBER 7, 1968

PRICE 35 PAISE

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PRINTED AT MODERN INDIA PRESS,  
7, RAJA SUBODH MULLICK SQUARE,  
CALCUTTA-13 AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY  
BY SAMAR SEN FROM 61, MOTT LANE,  
CALCUTTA-13

## PRAGUEMATIC

CZECHOSLOVAKIA is returning to business as usual, but as a Russian colony. Though a streaming banner proclaimed the other day, "We shall never forget", everybody knows that public memory is short, and the brevity of the reaction to the ignominy the Czechs are going through will be aided by a generous Russian loan. Before the invasion the Czech leaders were lackadaisical about foreign spies and influences, and from the very onset of the occupation their over-riding concern has been to preserve the order that suits their interests, despite national humiliation, and return to the seats of power though the cushions have been removed from them. The severest action they were able to contemplate and recommend to an angry populace was a one-hour general strike! They have now agreed to a Russian-sponsored reorganisation of the organs of State power. This shows the stuff liberals are made of. No doubt the mood of the intelligentsia will be sullen for some time to come and the longing will be there for closer contacts with the West, but the bravado is gone, and the "friendly" octopus that is Russia today will see to it that the Czechs do not slip out. The Czech President might now ruminate on the irony of his name, which means freedom. Will he still cling to the honour of being a Hero of the Soviet Union?

As for the Russians, they have been able to get away with it, as the Americans have been on many an infamous occasion. The Russo-Americans know that a little world unpopularity is not a dangerous thing for super-Powers. They have taken upon themselves the burden of maintaining the status quo which means, among other things, containment of revolutionary forces. And in non-revolutionary Eastern Europe, after the application of the mailed fist, the Rumanians and the Yugoslavs will be more than wary. It seems that people living in close contact with the Russians lose their guts, become gentlemen and develop gout. They know that they have lost their passion, but sometimes they are tempted to adulterate it and go in only for mock-heroics.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that the Russo-American detente will be resumed with greater warmth, after a brief interval. The Kosygin-Johnson meeting had to be deferred, but the hot line must be very active for shortening the period of deferment. What, one wonders, was the

urgency for the proposed meeting? Why is Kosygin so keen to meet the world's Killer No. 1? The practitioner of genocide in Vietnam has not shown any restraint there to encourage the Kremlin. Whatever be the motive, there are reasons to fear that, in return for the American reasonableness over Czechoslovakia, the Russians will increase their pressure on Hanoi to offer more concessions to Johnson. Perhaps it is because of the Russians that Hanoi cannot break off

the futile Paris talks, overshadowed first by the French upheaval and now by the occupation of Czechoslovakia. The latter has already encouraged the Americans to take a tougher line. The Paris talks have been used by Johnson to blunt the edge of opposition attacks and the nomination of Humphrey, who has declared that he will continue to toe Johnson's line has behind whatever hopes McCarthy and the Paris talks were able to rouse among the optimists.

down opposition; it is wearing out the patience of the hill people instead. To pacify recalcitrants in its own party it is risking intransigence on the other side. No question of reorganisation of Assam would have arisen if the Government was not convinced that the hill people had a case. Having conceded that the Government cannot dither, for any delay at this stage amounts to denial of justice. The hill people cannot be blamed if they suspect that the belated anxiety to secure the approval of Mr Chaliha and his colleagues to the reorganisation plan forms part of a grand design to deprive them of the fruits of their agitation. It should have been known that Mr Chaliha and the Assam Congress would regard any plan to grant autonomy to the hill areas as a loss to what they think is their private empire. The Centre's duty is to discipline and not appease them; but it is cowering, for it wants to avoid a decision. A similar attitude stands in the way of resumption of negotiations with the hostile Nagas. The truce period is half over, yet the Government has not responded to the open overtures of the hostiles. Not all hostile Nagas may have given up the demand for sovereignty, but a powerful section has, as is evident from the recent statement of the former President of the so-called Federal Government of Nagaland. By its inaction the Government is weakening the moderates and helping in the ascendance of the "extremists" in Assam as well as in Nagaland. Experience should have taught it that a solution acceptable today may not be so tomorrow. Adherence to status quo does not always make for peace and order, certainly not for all time to come. It may exact a far heavier price than does timely action.

## Deferred Again

In New Delhi where astrologers rule September 12 is perhaps a date with a mystique. Otherwise why should the Union Home Minister tell the Lok Sabha that the Government's decision on the reorganisation of Assam would be announced by that date? He could well have been less specific, especially as it was the last day of the monsoon session. This is not the first time that Mr Chavan has set a time-limit for the Government's indecision over Assam; nor may this be the last. Two successive sessions of Parliament have passed by with the Government unable to make up its mind, though in both it was equally glib with promises of an early decision. It seems someone is always around to help the Government out by throwing a spanner in the works. In the budget session the policy-makers themselves were reported to be at loggerheads, and keeping peace in the Union Cabinet became more urgent than preventing disintegration of Assam. Reports of sharp differences between the Prime Minister and her Deputy and the possibility of certain resignations turned out to be little else than hot air; but the simulated crisis was sufficient plea for the Government to defer a decision.

The contact-men and the image-makers have been granted a respite this time, for the clash is now not between personalities but between governments. The Assam Chief Minister, Mr B. P. Chaliha, has threatened to resign if the Centre's decision on reorganisation of Assam is "imposed"

on the State despite the rejection of the plan by the legislative and organisational wings of the State Congress. It is precisely this attitude which alienates the hill people; they know that in the existing order their aspirations will never be fulfilled unless they are approved by the Congress which is dominated by people from the plains. Mr Chaliha has talked also of a resistance movement in the State in a letter to the Prime Minister. Such attitude in a non-Congress Chief Minister would have been construed at once as a threat to the Constitution and national integrity. No such charge can be laid at Mr Chaliha, for he is a Congressman. He has been allowed to win the first round, and the Government has felt no qualms in going back on its promise in Parliament. Obviously, Mr Chaliha has to be appeased, and any plan that the Government may announce must have his blessing. The Assam Chief Minister is not alone, however. He has patrons in the highest echelons of the Congress, especially in the Syndicate which delights in having a finger in every pie. The Congress Working Committee is scheduled to meet on September 11 to consider the reorganisation plan; its decision may well depend on who, at the moment, is standing a kind of Kafkaesque trial before the Syndicate. In the resultant attempt to cut down one another to size, further postponement of a decision is quite on the cards.

Perhaps the Government thinks that by delaying a decision it is wearing

## Planning For Food

Suddenly, the official optimism about agriculture and food production has run into heavy weather. The south-west monsoon has failed in nineteen out of the twenty districts in Andhra Pradesh; parts of Madras and

Mysore too have been affected by the drought. In Andhra Pradesh, the first crop of paddy, which provides almost two-thirds of the total rice produced in the State, is in danger of being a total loss. Some rains during the rest of the season may still help marginally, but the setbacks to sowings and transplantation are much too severe to be made up now.

The need for planning for the nation's food in the coming year would thus emerge in a new, grimmer light. Traditionally, Andhra Pradesh is surplus in rice; this year, she supplied to the other States more than 300,000 tonnes of the grain. During the next season, there can be no question of a similar quantity being offered by her for the deficit States. Perhaps the Government of Andhra Pradesh itself would now ask for—and obtain—supplies from the Union Government; while the bulk of these releases would consist of wheat and milo, there might also be some drawal of rice, mostly from out of purchases in Punjab and Haryana. Whatever Andhra Pradesh fails to give is of course that much less for the deficit States; but whatever extra ration she draws in is also that much less for the deficit States.

Chronically deficit States like West Bengal and Kerala must therefore start worrying straightaway. The drought in Andhra Pradesh tolls as much for Andhra Pradesh as it does for them. Up to a point, larger procurement in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh during the ensuing kharif season could soften the loss of Andhra Pradesh rice. But judging by past experience—and considering also the political turmoil these States are passing through—nothing very concrete can really be expected.

Kerala and West Bengal will therefore have to be severely on their own. There is no getting away from self-reliance. Constant lobbying with the Centre might prevent an abrupt cessation of rice supplies, but the total quantum of releases from Central stocks is likely to be cut drastically in 1969. Moreover, given the current interregnum of President's Rule, even if a responsible Government is re-installed in November, there may be

a time-lag in organising appropriate pressures on behalf of West Bengal. The political complexion of the new Government will also be relevant, as it is and will continue to be in the case of Kerala too. The two States will therefore have to fall back on larger internal procurement of food-grains. Under no circumstances is procurement a lovable phenomenon. In deficit States, its popularity is even less. But, for their own survival, the two States have no alternative but to procure. The machinery for procurement should be put into gear right now. Success in procurement will be largely a function of enforcing an effective producer levy. Arranging for the levy will imply a tightening of rural administration and laying out in advance, a detailed plan of operations. These are chores which

need to be attended to. The Left-oriented Ministry in Kerala should be able to push all such and similar measures through with relative ease, provided it can resolve some of its internal contradictions. In West Bengal, the politicians who hope to assume the responsibility for enforcing the levy in the post-harvest season commencing in November are still outside the orbit of power. Nonetheless, they owe it to the people to draw up in advance a good budget for the State—a budget which they will enforce on assumption of office; they should insist on being taken into confidence in all matters concerning the planning of food. If things turn awry next year, it will be they—not Mr Jagjivan Ram with his happy-go-lucky mien—who will be put on the docks.

## Views And Postures

*A correspondent writes :*

Reactions to the developments in and over Czechoslovakia have, on the whole, followed predictable lines. The relative mildness of the official U.S. reaction probably surprised some people and disappointed the freedom-fighters in other lands; by now all such people may have learnt a little more about the areas of Big Power understanding. If President Johnson reacted more sharply to reported Russian designs against Rumania, the explanation again must be sought in the extent beyond which accommodation threatens to disturb these areas. If China, on the other hand, denounced the "rape of Czechoslovakia" in such outspoken terms as it did, the hostility generated by the Sino-Soviet rift might have had a great deal to do with the indignation shown. The pro-Soviet communist parties of Europe refused to endorse the Russian line; to some extent, perhaps, this showed a measure of genuine independence, but it will not do to forget that the new Czechoslovak way to socialism is likely to be particularly attractive to affluent communists in Western Eu-

rope. North Vietnam chose to accept the Russian version of the case, but Cuba was characteristically different in recognizing in the Soviet action a violation of another country's sovereignty while finding the intervention politically necessary—which might remind one of Mr Subodh Banerjee's celebrated distinction between legal and legitimate.

If Washington was somewhat restrained in its reaction, its unofficial spokesmen elsewhere, including India, have exhausted the vocabulary of sanctimonious hypocrisy in condemning the latest attack on freedom, democracy and national sovereignty. The Swatantra Party and the Jana Sangh lost no time in assuming leadership of the crusade in this country, but the socialists, both of the Samyukta and the Praja variety, did not lag far behind. The Swatantra and the Jana Sangh reaction was neither unpredictable nor inconsistent with avowed policies, but our socialists, who have expressed little concern over Vietnam or American interventions in Latin America, showed remarkable alacrity in joining the anti-communist crusade. As for the communist par-

ties, the CPI is obviously in the throes of understandable agony. It has made no authoritative statement, but must have watched with dismay the wave of condemnation by other parties in the Russian flock, the doubts within its own ranks, and the open rejection of the Russian line by some of its followers and sympathizers. (In a letter published in a Calcutta newspaper, some of the young faithfuls have declared themselves against "regimented communism" and affirmed, in almost Radical Humanist terms, their faith in Man who is "an end in itself (sic) and not a means".) The CPI(M), on the other hand, stated its position probably before it could summon sufficient logic to its aid. It denounced the Russian revisionists for "emasculating and paralysing the militant forces of socialism but at the same time conceded the same Russians—revisionists and all—the right to intervene in defence of socialism and what not. It seems that according to the milk-white ethics of the CPI(M), a demi-monde has every right to preach virtue and force it on her tenants of the same breed. Whatever else the Russians may or may not achieve, they have already succeeded in creating unprecedented confusion.

*View from Delhi*

## The Coupists And Mrs Gandhi

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

SURELY the Syndicate bosses who are alleged to have attempted a party coup against Mrs Indira Gandhi last week should be credited with some intelligence. For instance, they could not have under-rated the Prime Minister's own capacity for machination and intrigue or her equation with Washington and Moscow—both of them vital factors for her political survival. Then who got the better of whom last week? Was it a coup that failed? Or a checkmate coup within a coup? Or, after the Soviet missile fashion, an anti-coup-coup by the Prime Minister? New Delhi, mercifully, has only two of its six English daily newspapers coming these days. But this is a deceitful benediction because one is something of a *Pravda* and another an *Izvestia* in relation to the ruling party and the Government and the poor reader hardly gets an idea of what really is happening. We waited for the Wednesday morning (August 28) newspaper sensation and were even happy that it was not a dry day under the Jana Sanghi dispensation, but nothing much happened.

The shrill propaganda of a sinister conspiracy against the Prime Minister appears to have been contrived to confer a halo of martyrdom around her and to build the image of a steel-hardened Prime Minister determined to stick to a "principled" stand on Czechoslovakia. Where was the threat to her leadership last week? The whole effort by the crypto-communists appears to have been aimed at impressing Moscow that in spite of a hostile reaction in the Congress Parliamentary Party, the Prime Minister has refused to condemn the Soviet aggression on Czechoslovakia. If that means more economic aid and more arms to contain the Chinese, it is good indeed for those who traffic in public credulity.

After a sustained lobby campaign, enough signatures were collected by Mr M. P. Bhargava to requisition a special meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party. The Prime Minister opposed the move for such a meeting and ultimately agreed to it. The meeting was fixed for Tuesday evening (August 27). A meeting of the party's executive was to take place earlier on the same day. Everybody was saying that the Prime Minister was going to be ambushed on the Czechoslovakia issue on Tuesday. But as it turned out, the general body meeting fixed for Tuesday evening was put off at the last minute. At the meeting of the executive in the morning, far from anyone mounting an attack on the Government or the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister's coterie began an attack on Mrs Sucheta Kripalani and others who voted for Mrs Kripalani's amendment to the motion on Czechoslovakia in the Lok Sabha. The attack on the Prime Minister was thus forestalled and the issue acquired a new complexion.

To this date, the Prime Minister has had no party mandate on Czechoslovakia. But Mr Atulya Ghosh has written to Mr Nijalingappa seeking a meeting of the Congress Working Committee to discuss the issue. The meeting is fixed for September 8. Mr Atulya Ghosh's contention is that Mrs Gandhi's stand on Czechoslovakia does not have the Cabinet's approval. To queer the pitch for Mrs Gandhi, Mr C. B. Gupta, who cannot be accused of having taken any interest in matters other than party politicking and fund-raising, found himself disagreeing with the Government's foreign policy.

The Syndicate and its new-found allies were not for any coup last week but the Prime Minister's supporters began crying "wolf", unable to conceal their panic at the projected move. In any case, the attempt would not be

*Puja Release*

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দ্বিধাভরে তুমি এসোনা  
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before the winter session or even before the mid-term elections are over in the Indo-Gangetic plain.

The chances of Mrs Gandhi being toppled are very remote but it is by no means because she is politically strong or her faction is strong. In fact, there is no faction in the real sense in the Congress Parliamentary Party. If a party coup is what the Syndicate bosses are attempting, they might be in for another disappointment. The Syndicate bosses are just political adventurers out to establish a measure of party control over the Prime Minister who has been treating them with contempt. Mrs Gandhi has relied not so much on the State satraps as before in recent months but on her extra-party acceptability. If there is an attempt to topple her, she can always lead a mass defection and head a coalition government, theoretically that is.

#### Expansion Rumours

But there are expedients less extreme than that. Since there are no well-defined factions and the storm-troopers now supporting the Syndicate bosses are just frustrated politicians aspiring for office, Mrs Gandhi has already set afloat rumours of an expansion of the Council of Ministers. With three places vacant in the Cabinet after the registration of Mr Chagla, Dr Chenna Reddy and Mr Asoka Mehta, there are many aspirants for the posts of Ministers of State which are likely to be created. For the moment this could neutralise the more belligerent among the storm-troopers and soften them a great deal. A leader in office is hard to topple at the Centre because unlike in the States, the factional lines are not clearly etched at the Centre. A vertical interlocking of the factions at the State level makes for the majority group at the Centre at any given movement. But the balance can easily be altered through deft manipulation by the leader who has managed to become the Prime Minister.

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**MANNALAL DAS**

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SEPTEMBER 7, 1968

Secondly, Mrs Gandhi has another trump card up her sleeve. Last year, when Mr Chavan was still close to her, the Union Home Ministry rigged up the constitutional alibi for a Prime Minister to seek dissolution of the Lok Sabha and a mid-term poll even when she has a House majority. If the Prime Minister apprehends a threat to her majority through impending defections, she could tender such advice and it would be obligatory for the President to act on such advice. The same Home Ministry note, marked confidential and circulated to the Cabinet, also held that the relationship between the Prime Minister and the President was the same as between the British Prime Minister and the Throne. But the Chief Ministers were not in the same position vis-a-vis the Governor which meant that the Chief Minister's advice to the Governor to dissolve the Assembly and hold a mid-term poll need not be accepted. A threat of a mid-term poll is enough deterrent to any Congress MP. Or, for that matter, to MPs of any party. When the threat of a censure move in the Congress Parliamentary Party materialises, Mrs Gandhi can always hold out the threat of a mid-term election. Censuring her involves a process and a few formalities while she can advise the President to dissolve the Lok Sabha without any party mandate. The Syndicate therefore is content to lie low.

#### Teen Murti

India's foreign policy is cramped because the Prime Minister, who is in charge of external affairs, has not found a big enough house yet to live in, it would seem. The number one national problem in her view is the house befitting her status, just as the Samyukta Socialist Party's number one revolutionary task today is to prevent her from occupying the Teen Murti house.

The Teen Murti house where the late Mr Nehru lived should as a matter of course become the official residence of successive Prime Ministers of the country. For the country can ill afford to convert every house lived in by a Prime Minister into a

museum or a historical monument.

The Teen Murti building now houses the Nehru Museum which owes its origin, not to the late Mr Nehru's will but to the superstition of his successor's wife. Mrs Lalita Shastri was against moving out of Number 1 Janpath to Teen Murti house when her husband became the Prime Minister.

Mr Nehru had clearly willed that his papers should go to the National Library or the National Archives and he had not asked a museum to be created for him. Where was Mr Nehru's sanction for the creation of a museum?

Since Mrs Gandhi became the Prime Minister, she has been a martyr living in No. 1 Safdarjang Road in a house which, status-wise, is not different from the houses allotted to other Cabinet Ministers. Her housing problem has been with the nation, like the biblical poor. Many palatial buildings were proposed and duly considered. One in Tees January Marg, very close to Birla House and the swimming pool of a posh hotel was seriously considered. (It now houses the Defence Academy). Security people made a depth study of the logistical problems of protecting the Prime Minister in this age of agitations and mass discontent. Measurements for curtains and carpets were taken and new furniture designs got ready. But Mrs Gandhi vetoed it.

The Teen Murti house does not need any additional spending from the point of view of security and the Prime Minister would do well to move in there without any fuss despite the SSP's anger. The Nehru papers could go to the National Library or National Archives as per his will and other relics to the National Museum.

But somebody has got cold feet over the SSP threat and the Nehru Museum body has promptly passed a resolution against moving the museum out to Travancore House. It looks as though this resolution would be used as an excuse for the Prime Minister not moving into Teen Murti but thinking of a bigger house like, say Hyderabad House!

September 1, 1968

# Cold War Again

ANIRUDHA GUPTA

**D**EFENDING his country's action in Czechoslovakia, the Soviet delegate in the UN, Mr. Jacob Malik, made a sarcastic remark that today's imperialists were showing too much concern to save communists from their communist brothers! He did not know how near the truth he was: by its dramatic feat of armed occupation of a friendly socialist country, Russia has shown what it takes to keep communist brothers together. If on the other hand, the world's quick reaction to the events in Czechoslovakia can be interpreted as "imperialist-instigated", then it would mean that Russia either does not care about world opinion or that, contrary to its strenuous propaganda, it ascribes too much power to imperialist forces. As a matter of fact, the reaction of the US Government—the arch-imperialist—has been remarkably mild; but for making noises in the UN and President Johnson's lame offer to go anywhere to solve the crisis, it has done nothing so far to embarrass the Russians. Perhaps, the Americans will exploit the situation in another way; perhaps they will try to prove that compared to Russia's aggression on Czechoslovakia, American bombing of Vietnam is almost humane!

It is unnecessary to adopt a high moral posture to condemn the Soviet action in Czechoslovakia. It is equally futile to try to explain it in terms of communist thinking. The Russians themselves have over-burdened their case with contradictions. Thus, at the end of the Bratislava talks, they expressed complete satisfaction with Dubcek's regime and its policies. What happened in about a few weeks time to order military occupation of Czechoslovakia, storm Prague and bundle off all important leaders to unknown destinations? The image of an unseen imperialist hand behind the Czech leaders is unworthy of even post-Stalinist Russian imagination. Then came the assertion that some leaders in Prague had asked for Rus-

sian help. If so, who were those leaders? Those the Russians named denied even the knowledge of it. Besides, even if such a call for help came, how could the Russians take cognizance of it over the heads of a legally constituted government, and the Czech Parliament and the Communist Party? If the invading army entered Czechoslovakia to save the alleged rights of the people, why did the Czechs hurl themselves in front of Russian tanks instead of garlanding them? It is a waste of time to find excuse—even a communist one—to justify an action which is reminiscent of Hitler's march into Czechoslovakia in 1938.

One should try to understand the Russian action in the light of some recent happenings. The insistence of the Soviet Union on co-existence and its anxiety to avoid local wars which might lead to a global one created a favourable climate for Russia and America to come closer. This trend, called the U.S.-Soviet detente, bore fruit in the sense that the U.S. and Russia could agree on various matters, including the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. But this policy had its disadvantages also, for it increasingly deprived Russia of its real, or imaginary, revolutionary role and made it look more and more a conservative status-quo power. This loss of an ideological role was, however, compensated by the recognition that Russia too, like the U.S., was a super-power. This trend towards stressing the technological and military advance of Russia was encouraged by internal developments, mainly by the emergence of an affluent and non-revolutionary generation.

What was curious in the whole thing was that Russian leaders genuinely believed that America too shared their aspirations and that together it would be possible for them to fix the future order of things in world affairs. This belief was as naive as it was childish; it began cracking with the Arab-Israeli war in June 1967. Not only did the Arabs lose the war, they became so bitterly anti-Russian that at one time it was feared that the Arabs would turn en bloc to the West for help. The war taught the Russians

two important lessons: first, when ideological solidarity loosens it is only physical might that weaker nations respect, and, second, U.S. conduct in the war showed that, though it recognised Soviet power, it was not willing to enter into a partnership to divide spheres of influence on an equal basis.

## First Reverse

This was the first reverse that the Russians suffered as a global power; the second came with the new wave of liberalist reforms in most States of Eastern Europe. It seems that the demand for democratization and liberalization in Eastern Europe grew in proportion, first, to the increasing disintegration of Nato in Western Europe and, second, to the advance of liberal reforms in the Soviet Union itself. In a sense, what Europe is witnessing today is the total break-up of the postwar pattern. But, whereas it is possible for America to watch with comparative ease de Gaulle's growing anti-Americanism, it is not possible for Russia to do so in regard to Eastern Europe. When ideological links weaken there is nothing but force to keep the socialist States together. The history of the communist movement since the death of Stalin proves that.

The loss of ideological appeal has thus made Soviet Russia more dependent on military-technological power which, in turn, has encouraged national chauvinism in its policies. Today, as one sees it, the Russians are determined to make their presence felt as a super-power, if not as a rallying force of international communist movements. This they want to achieve through three categories of goals in foreign policy. First, the liberalising trend in Eastern Europe should be controlled, if not actually reversed, by Moscow. This would mean a further strengthening of the Warsaw Pact even if it means dragging the allies into military operations which they detest. On the other hand, Moscow would allow progressive democratisation in Eastern Europe but only when it is done under a leadership which is unquestionably loyal to it. The second

category includes the Arab States of West Asia and the Magreb where Soviet presence could be consolidated by massive economic and military assistance. These States would constitute an outer buffer for Russia's European policy.

Of late, there is also a trend in Soviet policy to win over Muslim countries from Morocco to Indonesia as a further expansion of this second category. It is from this viewpoint that one can understand the Soviet supply of arms to Pakistan on the one hand and, on the other, military assistance to the Muslim-dominated Federal Government of Nigeria. Is Russia anxious about its Muslim population in Central Asia? The Chinese tried to exploit at one time, Muslim sentiments to spread disaffection in Soviet Central Asia; the latter's attempt to search for friends in the Muslim world may denote a counter-offensive. In the third category fall the nations of Africa and Asia, specially South Asia, where Soviet influence must be expanded through economic ties and, sometimes, through military assistance. The increasing activity of the Russian navy in the Indian Ocean can be explained thus.

Moscow is unwilling today to accept a detente with America wherein the spheres of influence would be dictated by the latter; and if one super-power can resort to violence, why not another? Added to this there is a growing fear that any day there could be a reconciliation between China and America, which would leave the Soviet Union hopelessly isolated. This fear is not baseless; Peking has become the direct heir of Stalin's foreign policy. It encourages revolutionary war in the far-off countries of Africa and Latin America, patronises some reactionary regimes along China's borders and is reportedly carrying on "secret talks" with U.S. officials. Meanwhile, it can reap the harvest by accusing Russia of big-power chauvinism and, at the same time, by championing the cause of the world's oppressed people.

Thus, to sum up, Soviet Russia faces today a dilemma; as a State which must

either accept the role of a regional power, or else compete with the U.S. for increasing share in world affairs. The first alternative is dangerous, for, in the absence of ideology, there must be something to sustain the loyalty of the Soviet people. This something

can be great-nation chauvinism even if it means keeping smaller nationalities under its boots. To the rest of the world, Czechoslovakia's humiliation means only one thing: the beginning of another cold war. Only this time it would be more pitiless.

## "Communists" And The Third World

SUMANTA BANERJEE

**S**PEAKING in 1947, Jean-Paul Sartre listed some features of a typical piece of Communist writing—"persuasion by repetition, by intimidation, by veiled threats, by forceful and scornful assertion, by cryptic allusions to demonstrations that are not forthcoming, by exhibiting so complete and superb a conviction that, from the very start, it places itself above all debates... the opponent is never answered; he is discredited; belongs to the police, to the Intelligence Services; he is a fascist." (*What is Literature?*)

It was expected that after the revelations of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, communist intellectuals would do a bit of heart searching, would dare to express doubts about the shibboleths of "Marxist-Leninist strategies" and shed that insufferable cocksure pose.

But skimming through communist writings in journals on recent events, one finds that Sartre's words are still valid. The latest target of some communists here is the Latin American armed struggle. One CPI leader in an article recently accused Regis Debray of "idealizing the activities of a group of adventurers in the Latin American countries," (probably a reference to Che Guevara and his followers in Bolivia) and of revoking the ghost of terrorism and Blanquism against the holy tenets of Marxism-Leninism. (Bhowani Sen in *Mains-tream*, July 20, 1968).

The attitude of communist critics of pro-Chinese variety is no better.

Anna Louise Strong's latest diatribe against the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam is an example. Alarmed at the NLF's support for liberty of thought and demonstration, in its political programme, she repeats the argument learnt by rote by all communists that if such liberties were allowed, "only the bourgeoisie and other anti-people elements would benefit. The result would be a chaotic retrogression to outmoded reactionary social forms." (Published in a supplement to *Letter from China*, No 57, March 30, 1968).

With due respect to Anna Louise Strong's integrity and courage (she underwent the rigours of the Stalinist regime in Russia and yet preserved a dispassionate mind to give us perhaps the most objective analysis of the excesses of the 'Stalin era') we must say that her assessment of the NLF programme is biased by the inability of an older generation to appreciate the new emerging forces in the communist world—the forces of democracy and individual liberty represented by the younger people.

Both the varieties of communist criticisms, clothed in worn-out jargon, betray a tragic bankruptcy in the thinking process of the orthodox communist leadership. Some of the jargon being resurrected from the old works of Marx, Engels and Lenin are the words "adventurism," "left-wing communism," and "Blanquism." They are being indiscriminately used to describe any manifestation of militancy, whether in Latin America or in

France or in the black ghettos of America.

But when quoting from Lenin to support their positions, these communist critics conveniently overlook a comment by Lenin made in his *Left-wing Communism—an Infantile Disorder*—the book which is so popular nowadays with the darlings of the Left Establishment. Speaking of Russian conditions before the Revolution, he said: "Anarchism was often a sort of punishment for the opportunist sins of the working class movement." Even if the militants in the Third World or the students in France betray some anarchist leanings, communists must ask themselves how far the opportunism of the communist parties there is responsible for such trends.

An analysis of the situation in countries where the younger generation is outstripping the communist parties in their militancy would reveal that, although progressive and revolutionary in their doctrines and avowed ends, communist parties have become conservative in their means. In most of these countries the communist parties have been following a policy of reassuring the bourgeoisie without losing the confidence of the masses, of permitting it to govern while appearing to keep the offensive and to occupy positions of command without letting themselves be compromised.

#### France

A typical instance is the latest development in France. When the students took to the barricades for a change in the educational system, the French workers sensed an opportunity to turn the disorder to their own economic advantage. As is well known now, the Communist Party opposed the students' action at the initial stage, only later sensing their isolation from the workers who had meanwhile joined the movement, they jumped on the bandwagon. It was a case of underestimation of the potentialities of a movement sparked off by the students. Had the majority of workers been politically educated by the Communist Party all these years, it would have been possible to forge joint actions by students and workers for a

basic change in the system. In the absence of any such efforts, once the strikes made Pompidou come down to his heels to increase the wages, the bulk of the workers, contented with the economic concession, listened to the communist advice to prepare for the elections and went back to work. The election results prove that the French working class was not prepared for any fundamental revolution.

As for the glorification of the French events as a "revolution" both by the Western Press and the communists, one should be wary of such an assessment. We in India who are used to the ruthlessness of a police force are tempted to regard the action of the riot police in Paris as a child's game compared to what usually happens in the streets of Calcutta or Bombay. The repressive machinery of the French State was hardly conspicuous during the days of the trouble. One would like to know how long the unarmed students or the workers would have been able to sustain the "revolution" in the face of determined police repression.

This brings us to the situation in India. Thanks to a misconceived notion of Indian tradition, we have been apt to regard any act of violence as a manifestation of a return to barbarism. The Communist Party also seems to have fallen a victim to this trend of thinking. But it is about time one asked how far Gandhian tactics are effective in a country where the ruling class is lacking in sensitivity to moral pressure.

One can only remember Gandhiji's own words in this connection. Prior to the call for "Quit India" in 1942, he said in an interview: "I waited and waited until the country should develop the non-violent strength necessary to throw off the foreign yoke. But my attitude has now undergone a change. I feel that I cannot afford to wait. If I continue to wait I might have to wait till doomsday. For the preparation that I have prayed for and worked for may never come, and in the meantime I may be enveloped and overwhelmed by the flames that threaten all of us. That is why I have decided that even at certain risks

that are obviously involved I must ask the people to resist slavery. . . . . To be passive witness of the terrible violence that is going on. . . is a thing I cannot stand. It is a thing that would make me ashamed of my ahimsa." (*Harijan*, Volume IX, 184).

Regarding the possibility of anarchy following British withdrawal from India, Gandhiji said; "anarchy may lead to internecine warfare for a time or to unrestrained dacoities." But, he hoped that "from these a true India will arise in place of the false one we see." (*Harijan*, vol. IX, 166).

Thus, violence at times can be an expression of a lively sentiment of justice and a means of supplying the deficiencies or correcting the action of a too halting justice. Before condemning the young Negroes of America for taking to arms or the handful of guerillas in Latin America for trying to create objective conditions for a future revolution among an apathetic and depressed population, the orthodox communist parties should pause to understand the situation. Perhaps they have become so immune and sceptical to possibilities of any change, that they scorn and smirk at serious, even if erroneous attempts, to bring it about.

#### Blanquism

As for the Marxists' quarrel with "Blanquism", there is an element of irony in the history of the socialist movement. Marx praised the role of Blanqui's followers in the Paris Commune. They were in a majority in the Commune, and Marx's followers were hardly represented there. Free from partisan prejudices, Marx had the courage to admire the heroism of the Blanquists.

Twenty years after the publication of Marx's *Civil War in France*, Engels writing the introduction to an edition of the book in 1891, described it as an "irony of history" that after capturing power the Blanquists did the "opposite of what the doctrines of their school prescribed." The Blanquist theory of seizing the helm of State and maintain power by "display of great ruthless energy" by

a "relatively small number of resolute, well-organized men" should have resulted in "the strictest dictatorial centralization of all power in the hands of the new revolutionary government." Yet, Engels admitted with approval, "the majority of these same Blanquists", after the setting up of the Commune, appealed to the French in the provinces to form "free federation of all French communes with Paris, a national organization which for the first time was really to be created by the nation itself."

Had Engels lived 16 years longer he would have had to witness another "irony of history"—the dictatorial centralization of all power in the hands of the Bolsheviks by the very followers of Marx in opposition to what the latter prescribed when forming the Communist League or later the International Workingmen's Association.

Referring to Lenin's plan to form a centralized party, Rosa Luxemburg sounded the warning as far back as 1905. Describing Lenin's centralism as a "mechanical transposition of the organizational principles of Blanquism into the mass movement of the socialist working class," she expressed the fear, "Nothing will more surely enslave a young labour movement to an intellectual elite, hungry for power than this bureaucratic straitjacket which will immobilize the movement and turn it into an automation manipulated by a Central Committee." (*Leninism or Marxism*). Her fears came true, as proved by the revelations of the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU. Thus, history has its unpredictable twists. No party can claim to have the monopoly of revolutions. As for a communist party, mere membership of it does not make one foolproof revolutionary just as marriage does not necessarily make a woman chaste.

In the Third World particularly, the liberation of the people can never be the work of one single group or one single political party. The formation of the NLF in South Vietnam as a platform of different groups and parties—Anna Louise Strong attacks the NLF on this score—is an indication. The failure of the orthodox commu-

nist parties in Latin America stands out in sharp contrast with this. According to Inti Peredo, the Bolivian guerilla leader, who had succeeded Che Guevara, "they (the communists) want the guerilla method to be scrapped after the first attempt results in failure, and they insist on the feasibility of the democratic or reformist approach in spite of the permanent failure of the latter method." (His latest statement published in *Tricontinental*).

As to the criticism that the Latin American guerillas are opposed to reforms, Inti Peredo's words refute the slander. "We are not against the people's struggles for the sake of obtaining reforms and other gains. But we feel sure these struggles will be much more fruitful and effective when they are waged against a government frightened and weakened by the ac-

tions of a guerilla centre."

In view of the objective conditions in the Third World, it is necessary for communists of all shades to give up theoretical polemics and unite on the basis of a practical programme. By slightly twisting Blanqui's famous epigram, we can say that all these communists are "standing by a river bank quarrelling whether the field on the other side is maize or wheat. Let us cross and see."

Mistakes and failures are bound to happen whenever one plunges into action. But apprehensions of failures based on theoretical studies are no excuses for refraining from action. "Historically, the errors committed by a revolutionary movement are infinitely more fruitful than the infallibility of the cleverest Central Committee." (Rosa Luxemburg: *Marxism or Leninism*.)

## Calcutta Diary

GYAN KAPUR

**PUBLIC** memory is proverbially short; but still there must be many in West Bengal who have not forgotten the UF's promise to agitate for removal of Governor Shri Dharma Vira. It is not likely, therefore, to enhance the prestige of the United Front when their leaders, including the convenor, Mr Sudhin Kumar, feel it necessary to lead a deputation to the Governor for, of all things, improving civic amenities in Calcutta. Apparently it was an unscheduled visit. The Governor was not at home and the stalwarts of the United Front were left with no alternative but to leave their memorandum with the Governor's Secretary who in due course may pass it on to his master for disposal.

If this gimmick was meant to pin down the responsibility for the current mess in Calcutta Corporation affairs on the Congress, one fails to understand what purpose it has served that a statement could not. Surely, the UF does not believe the Governor can clean up the Corporation, a task at

which the Front Government itself was not much of a success?

With elections barely two months away, instead of generalities the UF could at least announce its stand on the Corporation. Should they come into power, will they supersede the present incompetent administration or not? And what concrete steps will they take to improve matters in Calcutta? Such an announcement would have a far greater impact on the election prospects, than, memoranda to the Governor submitted in his absence to his Secretary.

It is a truism in sporting circles to say that records are meant to be broken. The Corporation Deputy Mayor is living up to it. Maybe he has bought shirts at a cheap price in the pre-puja sales. Maybe he is going prepared to the meetings, as Hindus do on the day of Holi, wearing clothes which have seen better days. Probably the latter, otherwise it is difficult to understand the ease with which Mr Khanna's shirts are torn. To have his clothes torn by councillors must

be a record of which Mr Khanna as Deputy Mayor is the only holder. But to have them torn twice must be an all-time record, the dubious honour of which now rests on Mr Khanna. The tactics adopted by the Congress at the last meeting were obnoxious in the extreme, reducing the whole affair to a mockery. The only purpose, one might be excused for saying, was to enable councillors to record their attendance and draw their allowances. In spite of provocation, it must be said, the progressive councillors would do well in not allowing themselves to be led into aping Congress manners. That will only serve to blur the sharp distinctions.

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The academic world in West Bengal is in a mess and different universities are suffering from different and apparently incurable maladies. The latest in the news is Burdwan University, the truth about which came out in the Rajya Sabha before an embarrassed Dr Triguna Sen. The Vice-Chancellor has apparently taken the University to be his private domain, his reward for serving the State. And well he might. The authorities who appointed him could not have been all that ignorant about him. If officials who have spent a lifetime making notes on files in the Education Department could head universities, at least one problem about education

in our country would have been solved. But it is not that simple.

In spite of Comrade Bhupesh Gupta's fireworks, there was neither from him nor anyone else any suggestion to change the present system of administration of universities which has become archaic and outmoded, to say the least. The chief job of vice-chancellors should be to look after education and not disbursing money, whether justified or not. And it should not be difficult to devise a system by which it is possible to prevent such incidents as have been attributed to Dr D. M. Sen. Most big commercial houses do not find much difficulty in plugging such loopholes. There is no reason why universities and such like institutions cannot do so.

That is one thing. For another, why must the vice-chancellors be always foisted upon the universities from outside? When there were only a handful of universities in India, the choice of vice-chancellor for a particular one was often obvious. With the mushrooming of universities, it is neither possible nor desirable for an outside agency to make the choice. It is again the age-old theory in another form according to which the chosen rulers can take up any job and do justice to it. Each university is supposed to have its own separate entity and as such its own peculiar problems. Logically, therefore, only those who have been intimately connected with education in the area of the university can be expected to do justice to the job. What is the harm if the vice-chancellor is elected by the teachers, and graduates of the colleges under the university from among the principals and senior teachers themselves? But that is an extension of democracy which our rulers would find not exactly to their taste.

\* \*

This is not going to be pleasant, either for the reader or for the writer. Self-criticism never is. But sometimes it does become necessary to take a look at things as they really are. Unemployment for instance.

Much has been made of the fact that for 50 posts of assistants in a bank over 22,000 applied. Not all,

of course, were unemployed. Many were just trying to 'better their prospects' as the middle class boys are perpetually trying to do, even those who have apparently dedicated themselves to the cause of the workers, peasants, employees or revolution. Young men with all sorts of qualifications, engineers and others, applied, hoping to get in.

All this of course shows just how bad the employment position is in West Bengal. It also shows a few other things which we who swear by the class struggle would do well to remember.

Foremost is the failure in planning as a result of which such large numbers of so-called qualified young men are left without any work. But it should not be forgotten that few of these young men really want any change in the system and only want to step into the shoes of their elders. Secondly, the entire bias in the technical education is urban middle class which is leading to many avoidable problems. True there are more opportunities for meritorious students, but these practically all go to the urban middle class. Desiccated intelligence is not all and should not be a criterion for which the common people should pay by way of scholarships to get nothing in return.

Recruitment on merit alone has led to a curious situation—while medical graduates are increasing in number, the villages are unable to get enough doctors, private or government. Agricultural and veterinary graduates are no exception. They would sooner take a government job in the city or at least district headquarters than go and do a little work on the spot.

If any benefits are to come to the general run of people most of whom live in the villages, a different system of selecting candidates has to be found in which those who will go back to serve, are able to get the training they need. Otherwise we are only producing a class of qualified spongers who demand everything of the society they live in, forgetting the people to whom they owe their opportunity for an education whose cost their families would have been unable to afford.

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## Rethinking On The Brink ?

COMMENTATOR

IT is not the Government of India alone which has discovered (Will "invented" be more appropriate?) a virtue in dithering. The newspaper proprietors, who claim to be acting in unison, also appear to be in a fix about the next step they should take in the six-week-old dispute with their employees. Some of them have declared a lock-out in their establishments, while others are still vacillating. There is a lock-out in the Delhi office of *The Statesman* but uncertainty hangs over the Calcutta office. The authorities of the paper have secured an injunction from the Calcutta High Court restraining more than one thousand of their employees from demonstrating near their office in Chowringhee Square. The news along with the names of the employees restrained was promptly published as advertisement in two of the Calcutta papers, which must have cost several thousand rupees.

What purpose the advertisements were designed to serve it is difficult to say. But two days later some employees of the paper with the editor at their head tried to enter the office. They could not, for there were people around to take care of them. There was a repeat performance of this low comedy the next day with no better result; then it ceased abruptly. It would not have mattered much if the editor were able to lead these people into the office; for if the editorial and the administrative staff could bring out a paper, the proprietors would have dispensed with the services of others long ago. Nor does it seem that such infiltration in the rear would have undermined the determination of the striking employees.

There is no doubt that many of those who turned up at the appointed hour near their office on these two days are in full sympathy with the strikers. But they had to make a

show of contrariness under the editor's advice. Even in these days of fast eclipse of editors most journalists cannot believe in the total identification of the editor with the proprietors. They know that editors have to act frequently under duress and are no longer free agents; yet a belief persists that on occasion editors can, and do, take a stand. But for this lingering faith in the independence of the editor there would have been fewer employees at the *Statesman* gate on those two days.

The mock-heroic in Chowringhee Square has rudely shaken this belief. Many things which could not be imagined of *The Statesman* have happened in recent times. Even then nobody could fancy the editor of the paper, followed by a band of supposed faithfuls, trying to enter the office when a strike in which the vast majority of the employees are participating is on. It is beneath the dignity of the editor of any paper, far more of *The Statesman* which has a tradition of editorial independence. Whether he acted in his independence or at somebody's command is of no relevance; reports that he is in difficulty cannot also be extenuating. An editor cannot be—let a stronger term be avoided—a strike-breaker; his eminence precludes such a role. There is no parallel of such leadership in the history of the Press in this country.

Simultaneously with the court injunction, the management of the paper started flooding the West Bengal Government with complaints of intimidation and assault of "loyal" employees by the strikers. Statements were also issued to the Press. But, curiously, oral requests were made to the Government that the police should take no action on these complaints. The Government was obliging for a day; it was, however, unable to ignore written complaints for an indefinite

period, and the police were asked to take action. Several arrests were made immediately; a senior reporter of the paper who had gone to the police station to inquire about the arrested persons was promptly served with a warrant of arrest for rioting. The incident has revived the speculation that a "purge" list has been drawn up and the authorities are determined to get rid of certain "undesirables" in the organisation.

Maybe, the speculation goes beyond the intent of the authorities of the paper. The court injunction and subsequent developments may be all of a piece; they will form the ground for a lock-out in the Calcutta office. But few will be readily convinced that such elaborate preparations are essential for a lock-out. Some other papers have met the requirements of the law without bringing in the police. Perhaps they want a foolproof case. What they are not taking into account is the bitterness that is being generated not merely among the employees but also among a section of its readers.

Many of the deplorable developments in the organisation would have been avoided if the new owners of the paper had not taken its readers for granted. The Delhi edition of the paper is not profit-earning; it has never been. After all, no competition-walla pays more than eighteen paise for his copy of *The Statesman*, however indispensable it may be to keep himself in the swim. And they are so few in number that a paper with its circulation more or less confined to them cannot hope to thrive unless it has some other source to draw upon. The Delhi edition shines in the reflected glory of the paper in Calcutta which enjoys a mass circulation.

### Sea-Change

It is not without reason that the British ownership of the paper did not come in the way of its roaring prosperity in the post-independence years. Other foreign-owned papers changed hands immediately after independence; the few that did not, languished. *The Statesman* was the last to be acquired by Indian interests, but by then it had

weathered the partly anti-British and partly chauvinistic storm that swept over the country in the wake of independence. For this it had to transform itself totally and turn many somersaults; almost overnight Mr Gandhi became Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian Quisling of not long ago, Mr Subhas Chandra Bose, became Netaji; its interest extended to problems of areas beyond the environs of the Maidan and gradually encompassed the whole of West Bengal; the Pujas ceased to be an occasion for native abandon, and idolatrous celebrations became worth reporting; in short, the Non-U of over a century suddenly became U, and to establish a rapport with the people on whose patronage it would have to depend, the paper deliberately developed a Bengali middle-class outlook.

The enormous success of the paper in the post-independence years is proof that the sponsors of this change were able to gain their objective. The gloomy prophecies about the future of the paper have all been belied; instead it has achieved a popularity denied to other papers. The average educated Bengali regards the paper as his own for it has become his mirror; as unpredictable, as wayward, as fickle in its loyalties as he is. The reported developments in *The Statesman* threaten this relationship. Attempts to put it in a strait jacket, of the Swatantra or any other brand, and give it a character will destroy all that is adored in it by its innumerable readers. It is essentially a non-party paper, though that does not mean that it serves no class interest. To make it a party paper will be to rob it of its distinction.

This is not the first time since the Indian take-over that some Swatantra stalwarts are trying to make the paper their party's mouthpiece. Exasperated by an avalanche of complaints, a former editor of the paper had offered to resign. This stopped the sniping temporarily, but they have resumed their activities with determination. They want to use the paper for achieving what they themselves have failed to do in West Bengal—create a base for the Swatantra party. Perhaps

they believe that the Indian editor of the paper will not be able, like his British predecessor, to stand up to this challenge to his independence. What they do not realise is that by their attempt they are only alienating the paper from its readers; if they persist, a parting will be unavoidable, though sad. The paper will once again be an alien, a symbol of an imposition; it will no longer remain an institution which, for all its shortcomings, Bengalis will regard as their own.

The latest developments indicate that those who have the ultimate control of the levers of authority are not yet fully impervious to the public criticism of what they were about to do with their paper. There are people who would not like a paper to flourish unless it is controlled by them. The news about the changes in the paper was broken by a provincial paper owned by a top industrialist who had made an unsuccessful bid to gain control of *The Statesman* also. The publication may not have been entirely disinterested and the presentation of the news not wholly objective. But there is no doubt that a plan of sorts was formulated, a part of which has already been implemented.

The disclosure has served a purpose. The owners of the paper perhaps had no idea of how many people were how deeply interested in what they proposed to make of their paper. This realisation is reported to have induced second thoughts in the owners who may have decided to go slow on whatever plan they have for the paper. The appointment of a new chairman of the board of directors, Mr S. R. Das, former Chief Justice of India, who carries no party label and should, by training and vocation, be apt to take a balanced view of things, is a straw in the wind. This does not mean that all the reports that circulated in the last few weeks are wrong; some of them may yet come true, and not the comparatively innocuous ones alone. The reported rethinking on the part of the owners may boil down to feeling cautiously their way to the transformation they have in view. The hustlers are in temporary retreat;

but they will be again on the rampage. The affirmation by the enlarged board of directors that *The Statesman* will continue to remain an "independent, impartial, and non-party" newspaper is good as far as it goes. But this in itself cannot allay the misgivings of its readers. The declaration of intent must be reflected in action, which, in the present circumstances, means inaction in certain directions. The coming months will be a testing time for the owners of the paper.

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SEPTEMBER 7, 1968

# 'Pluralistic Communism'

BIBEK ROY

**M**ARXISM in the Modern World\* is claimed to be a collection of essays that seek to "analyse dispassionately the variety of Marxist movements that have so profoundly affected the destiny of mankind during the last century." In a previous issue (August 3) we took up one of these by Draper while this week we shall devote ourselves mainly to Lowenthal, after making a few remarks about the remainder.

The volume opens with Raymond Aron's "The Impact of Marxism in the Twentieth Century." It is rather chaotic in its organization, jumping merrily back and forth between the plane of theory and the realm of practice. Any number of names, concepts and events are thrown in along with Mr Aron's cryptic comments on them.

No one can doubt his erudition or his intimate knowledge of the works of his own contemporary Marxist or neo-Marxist philosophers like Lukacs, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty et al. Yet there is no mention of Antonio Gramsci or of George Plekhanov. He also tries to show off as an expert economist, by proving the Marxian lineage of Keynes' and Alvin Hansen's (has he heard of Steindler?) doctrine on the 'maturity of capitalism': All in all, the essay is full of very clever and at-times pithy assertions, occasional insights but there is no serious attempt anywhere to prove systematically any of his obiter dicta. His final conclusion is that everything that is of any merit in Marxism has long been absorbed in Western (pace bourgeois-liberal) thought and practice. The present-day Marxists "try to change the world without knowing it." To put it differently, if one is smart enough to agree with this great Sorbonne professor, one should never be so foolish as to try and change this world.

\* Edited by M. M. Drachkovitch and published from California.

Next follows the essay on Leninism by Bertram D. Wolfe. It trots out the now familiar line of Leonard Schapiro, namely, that Lenin was an autocrat right from the beginning and that Stalinism is merely a continuation of Leninism. There is a good deal of words devoted to 'Leninism' as a variety of Marxism—but these pages on 'theory' lead to the illumination of neither 'ism'. Invectives and summary assessment are carried to their logical extremes by Boris Souvariev to whom Stalinism is essentially Hitlerism.

Two other essays on Khrushchevism and Titoism are, for obvious reasons, less warped; indeed, Merle Fainsod is almost apologetic about Khrushchev and his failures. In any case, these essays amount to no more than factual reporting (with, of course, the 'usual' twists); what is lacking is an attempt to delineate the underlying social forces that gave rise to Khrushchevism or were unleashed by Titoism.

## Sino-Soviet Split

By contrast, Richard Lowenthal's "Prospects for Pluralistic Communism" is a much more serious and useful piece of writing. It is pretty accurate as a record of the events leading up to the Sino-Soviet rupture. Some of his main conclusions seem quite valid and deserve to be quoted:

(1) "The Sino-Soviet schism is not a mere phenomenon of power conflicts within a basically unchanged Communist world; it both reflects and promotes divergent trends of development in the Soviet Union and China, and those have already led to essential changes of policy and doctrine on both sides" (p. 268).

(2) Regarding the new international alignment resulting from the schism, "the trend is not toward a single split into two clear-cut and stable Internationals." (p. 268).

(3) "...in this world of uncertainty and flux, the comparatively

more stable inter-Communist relations will be those within the immediate power sphere of each of the protagonists...." (p. 269).

(4) "...The Chinese are likely to have more attraction for totalitarian revolutionary movements still fighting for power, but the Soviets may have an advantage with ruling revolutionary parties because they can offer them more and demand fewer risks." (Ibid).

Of these the first three conclusions could be reached by any honest student; the second and the third were simply projections of the initial situation. The third one needs to be revised since North Korea (described by the author on p. 225 as a country "controlled" to a greater extent than North Vietnam, by China) "cooled off" vis-a-vis China, and the Czechs have founded themselves in a mess, trying to establish for themselves more elbow-room vis-a-vis the USSR.

It is, however, the fourth conclusion that really establishes Lowenthal's expertise; for it was not quite obvious in mid-1964 when the article was written. The proof of this proposition may be simplified as follows: i) The USSR has been going revisionist all along the line. In its view, the main contradiction of the epoch, the struggle between the socialist and imperialist camps led respectively by the USSR and the USA, will be resolved peacefully (and in a business-like way?) through economic competition;\* as the socialist world becomes richer it can buy off more and more countries in the Third World to become "non-capitalist allies" of the USSR, while the workers in the West will be increasingly attracted by the

\* An economist cannot fail to notice here the analogy with the theory of perfect competition. But as Marx noted over a century ago, such a competition must lead after a while to a monopoly or a monopolistic combination among the erstwhile competitors. Hence, there is always a possibility, at least in theory, of an eventual collusion between the USA and the USSR.

Soviet magnet. A world war will imperil the existence of entire mankind; local wars may either lead to world war or at least upset the smooth transition of capitalist and "non-capitalist" States to the Soviet orbit. Hence militant armed action is to be avoided at all costs. ii) The Chinese believe in implacable hostility to imperialism; they reject economism, both at home and on the international scene; in any case, given China's economic potential in the foreseeable future, 'economism' is not a viable ideology for China. The material gap has to be filled in by 'moral' and 'ideological' offensive both at home and abroad. Hence China must of necessity sympathize with revolutionaries throughout the world who reject economism or gradualism.

This, we hope, is a fair summary of Lowenthal who illustrates his points with a host of examples. But the key element is missing from the picture. To write about Sino-Soviet dissensions without bringing in the question of U.S. imperialism is like showing *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark. This lacuna is, however, understandable, for the essay was produced at a seminar where such phrases as imperialism were taboo.

#### Mao's Departure

Quite apart from this central limitation, there is a number of doctrinal interpretations that are at least questionable. Mao's emphasis on national liberation movements is supposed to underestimate the role of the industrial proletariat and hence is non-Marxist and non-Leninist (Pp. 242-3). This is a perfect *non sequitur*: Mao and the Maoists see the best prospects of revolution in the Third

World (which was, partly, the view of Lenin too), and this Maoist departure from orthodox Marxism is no greater than Lenin's theory of the 'weakest link in the chain.' Again, Chinese emphasis on moral incentives and the 'consequent neglect' (?) of material productivity will, according to the author, hamper economic development and are in any case anti-Marxist (pp. 247-48). No evidence is given for either of these propositions; the first one can neither be proved nor disproved, but the second one is definitely wrong. For Marx never made a fetish of material productivity nor did he say anything categorical about the incentives in a socialist State. Both the Chinese model as well as the Soviet one (ignoring for a while the cancerous growth of the privileged stratum) are equally compatible with Marxist orthodoxy. Elsewhere, the author reads too much of a similarity between Mao's theory of guerilla warfare and that of the Cubans and thus makes the erroneous prediction that the Maoist and Castroite movements would tend to merge in Latin America (p. 244). On the tactical plane, the Soviets, according to the author, prefer a loose kind of international organization than the Chinese (p. 250). In fact, however, the USSR has never had qualms about dictating policy to "fraternal" parties whether in Asia or in Europe, in Africa or in Latin America. It has meddled as unashamedly in the internal affairs of socialist movements outside as China; if China has consistently encouraged its followers to take to arms, the USSR has much more successfully "restrained" its allies from "adventurism", even if it amounted to simple capitulation.

A very interesting section of the essay is devoted to the Italian and the French Communist Party. The author's assessment of these two parties is quite perceptive; if anything, he underestimates the extent to which these parties have turned reformist. How else can one explain the common programme drawn up by the French CP and the Left Federation at the beginning of this year? Lowenthal, it may be noted, ruled out the possibility of such a common platform between the CP and Social Democrats (p. 265). The essay also contains quite a few errors and distortions: i) The famous Soviet professor Liberman is consistently misspelt with a double 'n' at the end (pp. 250, 259, 292). ii) The pro-Chinese journal *Revolution* was not quite started in 1963 (p. 239). It used to come out earlier as *Revolution Africaine* from Algiers, and took up the new name after its editor was expelled by Ben Bella. iii) The discrimination against Russian Jews in the last days of Stalin was not a vestige of Nazism (p. 104); a mild form of anti-Semitism has existed from much earlier days. In any case, there is no proof whatsoever that Stalin was a partisan, as alleged by Lowenthal, of a Nazi-type "final solution" of the Jewish population; more than 25 years of unfettered rule was long enough to carry it out, had Stalin been at all serious about it. iv) The brutal mass slaughter of the Indonesian Communists had nothing to do with the CP's bid for power (p. 272). As many impartial observers have pointed out, the Party never called for the rising, nor did it later do anything to support the adventure.

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# Some Thoughts On Modern Art

MAHIM ROODRO

IT is not very frequently that artists have actually spoken or written much about art, and when they have done so, they have hardly been very clear. So, as a practising artist, it is a risky business for me to write on art. Readers of this journal are mostly people whose emphasis is on immaculate logic and perfect presentation. But I cannot pretend to present a neat, organised little package of a thesis on art here. My thinking about art has mainly been carried out at the tip of the brush or in the innermost of my being where feelings are non-verbal. Problems have arisen, and problems had to be tackled, on the canvas and in my mind. Here I shall put down some of my thoughts.

The most important thing that strikes one in modern art is that it is fundamentally individualistic. And that it is developing into an essentially universal form. Modern art emphasizes the individuality of the individual, it emphasizes and respects the separateness of individuals. No two artists are expected to look at the same thing the same way, express the same way, paint the same way. Each individual artist is keen to find truly what *he* sees, and express what *he* feels. A plate of fruits may be put on a table, and three artists can be asked to study it. If these three artists have sufficiently matured to be able to look at things their own ways, then it is likely that one will notice primarily the exquisite colour relationships of the fruits and the plate and the table and the background; another the lines, the lines of the fruits relating to each other, the lines of the fruits and the plate, of the table, of the table cloth, of the wall behind, the interaction and the pattern of the lines; the third may be engrossed in the solidity of the objects, the roundness, the cubeness, the weight, the meeting of the forms, the juxtaposition of the forms. This is seeing. But there is the inner world of feeling. A woman sitting, a man working, or a

landscape, will evoke responses different in each case according to the individual's understanding, associations, ideas, ideals, attitudes. Inevitably, if he is a truthful artist, he will combine his inner response with the outer visual experience, and the sum total will be *his* very own seeing, *his* very own feeling, *his* very own painting.

This recognition of the individuality, of the separate identities, this acceptance of the variation of experiences is a fundamental aspect of modern art. The communists jump at this conception of art and the artist is labelled as dangerous, reactionary, anti-society, decadent. The art that has developed in the Soviet Union and the socialist section of Europe shows the terrible fate that awaits art when it is dictated. They have produced in the name of painting, gigantic posters, but very little art. Very little that moves, very little that has any perennial quality. A lot of what is happening in the name of modern art, truly, is inhuman, degenerate, rotten, dehumanised. But it is totally wrong to label the whole lot as decaying, dying and dead. For, there is in it much that is deep and life giving. Modern art is nothing but the modern way of seeing. If your surroundings are rotting, you find that modern artists, unknown to themselves, are reflecting the rot, the disintegration. It is a pity that they are surrounded by such a valueless, atmosphere that they find themselves producing art that reflects the putrefaction and contains the stench.

## Exhibitions

I remember when I had the opportunity to see the enormous exhibition of American art of the last two decades, my thoughts were such. I stood in front of those huge canvases, and stunned, moved from one to the other, to realize that here were artists of giant calibre, truly powerful, but alas! lost, desperate, and not knowing what to paint, just spending their enormous

energies on nothings. Most of the paintings were the anguished cries of giants, giants of energy, giants of talent but blind. At the same time, when I visited the large exhibition of Soviet paintings in London, when I saw their huge canvases in exhibitions in different Eastern European countries, I noticed how again great talents were being wasted on futile propaganda art, how there, too, were giants, and how rigid rules had smothered them, how their art had failed to give meaning, spirit, or inspiration to life. There they had much greater possibilities, for if one were to accept their leaders' claims, their parties' claims, people are marching on to higher and better and greater life, towards progress, humanity, equality, and love. Such an environment should have automatically infused the artist with its healthy spirit. A truly modern artist will, known or unknown to himself, be reflecting the society around him, its values, its optimism, its hopes, its dreams, its robust health. But obviously the leaders and the parties do not believe that their country is actually moving in the positive way, they do not believe what they speak, or else, there simply is no reason why they cannot trust their artists. If the modern artists of decadent societies reflect decadence, the modern artist of progressive lands would have held the mirror to the new life in their societies. Instead of trusting their artists, the communist leaders of communist lands tell the artists what to paint and how to paint. The result—dead art, deadly art.

Nevertheless, I believe in the creative spirit of the artist. No matter how frustrated and directionless the artists of America may feel today, there will be amongst them some who will create the song of life. No matter how deadening the party commands are in socialist lands, there will be some who, in spite of everything, will wave the banner of life.

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# Anamika's Suturmurg

RUDRAPRASAD SEN GUPTA

SINCE its birth in 1955, Anamika has been a source of delight for its enviable competence, seriousness of purpose and a tendency to improve and explore continually. A group working with such integrity and earnestness cannot remain neglected for long; deservedly it has been conceded a place of esteem for its *Asarh Ka Ek Din* and *Laharenke Rajhans* (two Rakash-plays) and Vinode Rastogi's *Naye Hath* which came to be adjudged the best drama of 1959 by the Sangeet Natak Akademi. With its latest production *Suturmurg*, Anamika has further consolidated its position.

*Suturmurg* (written by Gyan Dev Agnihotri) purports to be a political satire in the garb of an allegory. Though not a profound drama, it is that kind of a political play which would hardly become dated; what is more important about the drama is the writer's capability of realizing a self-sufficient world, a world that is valid, even when torn out of the context of political contemporaneity, on its own grounds. Shyamanand Jalan, the director, has done a wonderful job out of the play by a certain stylization which informs all the aspects of the production. In the organisation of the grouping, choreography and pace of the play, he often mixes operatic and ballet-like elements with the conventional and intensifies his effect. Vocal acting, too, is often made to assume a kind of ritualistic and incantatory rhythm so as to bring out the perpetual out of the ephemeral. The players are often made to behave, in their movements and gestures, like puppets and marionettes to remind us of the allegorical nature of the characters.

In such a play as *Suturmurg*, a drama of design rather than detail, it is nearly impossible for any of the elements to shine attractively in isolation. Yet Khaled Chowdhury with his impressionistic decor and costume does deserve special notice. With a careful choice of colours and cones and angles and a deliberate defiance of

naturalism, he creates a sort of no-man's-land wherein the events acquire a kind of force sufficient to break through the frontiers of language, time and geography. With the costumes, too, Mr Chowdhury aims at and achieves the same kind of effect. And Shyamanand Jalan, apart from his directional success, deserves special credit for a very able portrayal of the king.

Because of its medium (Hindi) Anamika has so far failed to woo the larger contemporary audience of Calcutta which has willy-nilly, of late, started to play the guardian angel of the Bengali *avant-garde* theatre. Had *Anamika* been just one of the mushroom troupes, we could not care less. Just because the troupe is so very energetic, enterprising and, above all, so competent, the task of solving this problem cannot be simply avoided. And unless this breakthrough can be achieved, a sort of insularity will set in and reduce *Anamika* to the status of a minority theatre in every sense of the term.

## Letters

### Prague, Moscow

I should like to put some questions to readers of *Frontier* about the recent armed intervention in Czechoslovakia by the USSR and other Warsaw Pact countries headed by the Red Army.

Is self-determination of the people of a small country which is in close proximity to a powerful and great country possible? The people of Czechoslovakia themselves should have been allowed to kick out "the anti-people counter-revolutionaries," from their Government and the Party and that would have been the right socialist way. Or, does one fear that this sort of action of the people against the reactionary leadership might turn into what the Asian communists call a Cultural Revolution?

The CPSU thinks that China is deviating from Marxism, weakening the international solidarity of the working class, and helping the imperialists. Will Mr Kosygin dare to in-

tervene in China should any of the Chinese communists call the Red Army in the name of socialism?

Did not Russia hail the 'Panchshil' wherein is a clause that no country should interfere in the internal affairs of other countries? Should I believe that the architect of the Tashkent Pact could not find any mutual way to solve the dispute, whatever it was, and had to intervene with arms?

If this act of aggression is a revolutionary one, then should not one think that the clandestine supply of arms by China to Nagas and Mizos is also right? And will one be mistaken if one supports the Government of India's military intervention against Nagas and Mizos to suppress their right of self-determination and to protect the integrity of our land?

To protect socialism Kosygin had the "courage" to intervene in Czechoslovakia, but in Indonesia he extended his hand for co-operation to those whose hands were still stained with the blood of the communists. Is it not a glorious example of Marxian contradiction?

GOUR MITRA  
Calcutta

Once again we gain an objective historical lesson that armed imperialist invasion is not always necessary for restoration of capitalism in a socialist country. This may be achieved through the degradation of the leading group in that country. "The easiest way to capture a fortress is from within." In Czechoslovakia things have taken their own shape and the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries went into action to uphold international socialist gains. But is the Soviet Union a competent authority? Czechoslovakia is accused of liquidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, of making the party acceptable to all sections of the people and of opening the doors of the party to anarchism and disintegration. But the present Soviet leaders themselves have propounded the theory of the 'State of the whole people' and 'Party of the whole people'. They have undermined the importance of the dictatorship of the

proletariat in socialist construction. The Declarations of 1957 and of 1960 refute Tito's brand of socialism. Yet the present leaders of the CPSU are clinging to the advocacy of Tito's socialism in their internal and foreign policies. Czechoslovakia is only a late starter in this unholy race. Economically, politically, militarily and ideologically, late-starting countries enjoy some special advantage. This has possibly enraged Soviet revisionists. Hence this intervention.

JYOTIRBIKAS KUNDU  
Nabadwip

My goodness! When I wrote that letter (August 17) I could not even dream, nor could you, that Soviet Russia, which celebrated the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution only last year, would bungle with the Czech situation in such an idiotic manner. Things in this small communist State started going the American way years ago. Many of us who have seen Czech films produced during the last decade or so (of course, with the exception of *Diamonds of the Night*, *Romeo, Juliet and Darkness* etc.) have found in them a sickening overtone of sex and juvenile delinquency. The recent escape of Sejna, his son and a beautiful young lady (whom Sejna claim to be his son's fiancée, while Ceteka labels her as Sejna's mistress), was also an ominous signal. When we could smell the rat from *here*, Soviet Russia kept on pampering the Czech "freedom lovers". It is time the Kremlin rulers tried to find out why, after two decades of socialism, they had to overrun another communist State so near to them. Will that not be one of the biggest discoveries of the 'sixties?

ABHEEK DASGUPTA  
Jadavpore

### Kashmir Memories

My recent visit to Kashmir has left bitter memories in my mind for the rest of my life. I have been visiting Kashmir almost every year since 1955 and I have observed the marked deterioration in the behaviour of the Kashmiri people with tourists, special-

ly the Indian tourists. Whereas the Kashmir Government greets you with welcome banners and posters the local population welcomes you with abuses and blackmail. After crossing Jammu, every educated Indian feels he has come to an enemy country.

I remember once Sheikh Abdullah told a journalist in my presence that the moment you enter the State of Jammu and Kashmir from the Lakhanpur barrier, you leave two things behind you: India and law and order. From Lakhanpur start two things, Kashmir and jungle law.

*Frontier* readers know about my sympathy for the minority communities, specially the Muslims. I have always said that the Jana Sangh and the RSS are instrumental in killing poor, unarmed Muslims. I have always stood for the Muslims of India. But after my recent trip to Kashmir, I have at least changed my views about the Muslims of Kashmir. If an average Jana Sanghi is a symbol of Hindu communalism, I can say with full sense of responsibility that an average Kashmiri is a symbol of Muslim communalism.

My personal experience confirms that most Kashmiri Muslims are staunch communalists and staunchly anti-Indian. Only a few Kashmiris who are being benefited by the Indian Government are pro-India, and that too, only hypocritically.

The Union Government provides them with subsidised rice at the rate of about 30 paise per kilo and free education to their children even up to the post-graduate level. While Rice is sold by the same Union Government for over Re 1 a kilo in Calcutta. Still the Kashmiris shout pro-Pakistan slogans.

A Kashmiri youth is either a journalist (of course self-styled) or a student leader (again self-styled). He blackmails the politicians and mints money. I personally know at least six Kashmiri young boys who live like princes in Delhi without doing any work. They call themselves journalists or student leaders from Kashmir and are seen moving under suspicious circumstances from one embassy to the other and from one news-

paper office to the other. What do they do? They just give and receive information.

After discussing the Kashmiri Muslims, we must touch the Kashmiri Pandits also. They are the most shrewd and money-minded people. In my curiosity to find out the truth about the Parameshwari Handoo case, I talked to a considerable number of Kashmiri Pandits. While the elderly people said that, being in majority, the Muslims forced some beautiful Kashmiri Pandit girls to marry them and embrace Islam, the younger generation told me that the parents of the Pandit girls were forced to give thousands of rupees in dowry and to save their parents from embarrassment, most of the girls married Muslim youths who didn't demand any money. The Jana Sangh is making political capital out of it.

I am not speaking in favour of anyone or against anyone. I am just placing the facts before the readers of *Frontier*.

I request Mr I. Akhtar and Khwaja Ahmed Abbas to go to Kashmir, pose as Hindus and deal with the Kashmiri Muslims. Only then will they come to know the truth about the vicious circle of communalism in India.

I shall go to the extent of suggesting that Jammu and Kashmir be offered to Pakistan on a platter, only for some days. This suggestion sounds anti-national, but let the Kashmiris have a taste of the behaviour of the Pakistan Government, only then they will come to realise who are "dogs".

This mess has been created by the foxy Union Government. We don't have a strong or clear policy about Kashmir. Why is Kashmir permitted to hoist two flags on the building of the Secretariat? One is the National Flag and the second one is the flag of Kashmir.

We must take a decisive stand on Kashmir. Either hold a plebiscite in Kashmir or abolish Article 370 of the Constitution. And let there be only one united country and not India and Kashmir.

J. S. CHOPRA  
New Delhi

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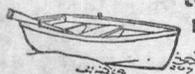
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