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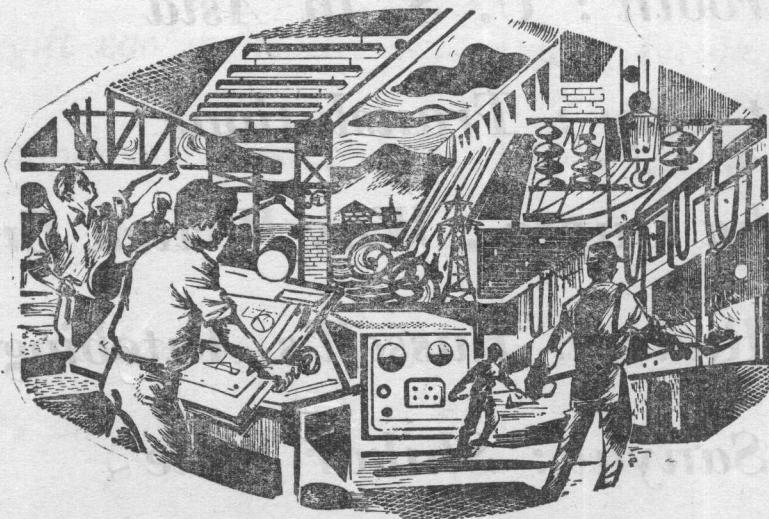


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THE TOKEN STRIKE

THE Government of India, as we noted briefly in the previous issue, set in full motion its repressive machine to thwart the one-day token strike of Central Government employees. Not satisfied with the arbitrary powers it already has under the so-called ordinary law and service rules of employees, it promulgated two ordinances on the eve of the strike whose only parallel is the infamous Defence of India Rules. Millions of employees were placed at the mercy of baton-swinging, trigger-happy policemen who were on the rampage all over the country for several days. More than seven thousand people, including the leaders of the striking employees, were arrested on one pretext or another. On the day of the strike the police fired at least in four places, killing five—eight, according to unofficial reports—and injuring fifty; lathi and tear-gas, which have become part of the non-violent outfit of the police, were resorted to on countless occasions; prohibitory orders under Section 144 Cr. P.C. were imposed indiscriminately, and the Army stood by to rush to the aid of the civil authorities at a moment's notice. The Government did not depend on violence alone to break the will of the employees. Unions run by known and crypto-Congressmen hastily dissociated themselves from the strike move, and All-India Radio set a record in purveying government propaganda by announcing daily the names of unions disfavouring the strike. Large sums were spent in advertisements in newspapers, such of them as were being published at the time, to show how unreasonable the employees were in demanding need-based wages.

Despite government provocations and police violence, the employees mostly remained peaceful. There was no picketing in any of the offices in this city, and a large number of employees kept away of their own accord ignoring the rave and bluster of the authorities. Policemen with guns on the ready had an idle time in different offices ; so had many of those who reported for duty on the day. In spite of the Government's tall claims, most of the offices appeared forlorn ; perhaps the "loyal" employees, who had been promised free meals and overtime, preferred to work behind closed doors and pulled-down shutters. But the only department with which the people come in daily contact did not function ; the postal services were practically suspended, and even official exaggerations could not take the attendance beyond a miserably low figure. The telegraph services were said to be in the opposite extreme with more than normal attendance, but the claim could not be tested as most of the important and busy channels were conveniently "down". However, in this strike the number of those who attended office is not so important as that of those who did not. The temporary employees among the numerous strikers have risked their jobs and police persecution; the permanent employees are faced with a break in service, and before joining the strike they had all to make up their minds that they would forego their jobs or seniority, and leave and pensionary benefits that had accrued to them through years of service. Such brave determination cannot be universal. There must be many who could not join the strike because the choice before them was so cruel and drastic; in different circumstances they would perhaps have opted for united action.

The Government of India prides itself in being a model employer.

But the precedent it has set for how to deal with a day's token strike will shame the private employers. The Government and the private employers have now leagued together to deny the employees their legitimate rights. Mr Hathi's elephantine handling of the strike of newspaper employees is an example; in resorting to fascist methods to break the token strike of its employees the Government has encouraged the private employers to excel themselves. To strike terror in the employees may not be the sole purpose of this countrywide show of strength. Both the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister are going to the U.S., and the show may have been organised to impress upon the American friends how firmly the Government was dealing with the Communists; it may be another way of telling the Americans that the Government is not weak so far as the Communists are concerned. Mrs Gandhi and Mr Desai are now assured of an appreciative audience in America. It is not the employees who introduced politics in what is basically an economic struggle; their misery has been politicised by the Government to suit its own ends.

The Prime Minister's broadcast on the eve of her Latin American safari and the day after many heads had been broken—some never to stir again—showed the extent of hypocrisy our rulers are capable of. There can be no need-based minimum wage at the present moment, she declared and pointed to the millions all over the country who earn much less than Central Government employees, particularly the kisans. But do the neo-Moghuls of her Government, when they draw their salaries and perquisites, ever think of the millions of starving tillers of the soil? Mrs Gandhi praised the spirit of discipline and dedication of those who did not strike, as if the extraordinary repressive measures were not responsible for preventing the spirit of discontent and defiance from expressing itself on a much wider scale than it did.

The Politics of Rice

There are occasional Soekarno-style incantations of *confrontasi*. Depending on the exigencies of the election season, the familiar polemics rend the air; the conspiracy of the Centre must be exposed, Mrs Indira Gandhi must fulfil our demands or else, our patience has been long overreached, et cetera. But nobody is fooled. Parliamentary democracy is a debilitating game; it makes gentlemen of erstwhile spitfires. One has just to watch the crop of Left politicians who adorn the Rajya and Lok Sabhas: during the day, they use up precious time in raising trivial, subjective issues. Come evening and adjournment, they are all conviviality abounding, sip drinks together with Cabinet ministers; if you look hard, you may discover one or two Swatantra and Jana Sangh MPs tucked away in the corner of the group photograph.

Nothing is any longer a matter of life and death. The magic wand of bourgeois respectability has deadened the spirit. Otherwise the parliamentarians belonging to the Left parties, particularly those from West Bengal and Kerala, would have perhaps felt constrained to concern themselves—even if symbolically—over the infamous goings-on with respect to food supplies to these States. But no, while in New Delhi, they choose to behave as the denizens of that wretched place do; their priorities shift, the trivial displaces the essential; instances of individual nepotism, in their scale of recently-acquired values, turn out to be more important than those of wholesale political nepotism.

The facts are not in dispute. The Left politicians, if only they have the desire, can have these from Mr Jagjivan Ram for the asking. Compare like with like; consider only the first seven months, January to July, of the calendar years 1966, 1967 and 1968. Over this period during 1966, total releases of foodgrains from the Union Government's stocks for West Bengal amounted to nearly 900,000 tonnes, of which rice constituted around 150,000 tonnes. Things changed in 1967, you must remember

the Congress was thrown out of power in the State toward the early part of the year. For the seven months ending in July, the supply of rice trickled down to only 97,000 tonnes, and of total foodgrains slumped to 630,000 tonnes. What about 1968? There is no United Front regime any more, for the first two months of the year the Congress was back in power; even today, Shri Dharma Vira, a Bharat incarnate, is administering the State on behalf of the Congress; besides the mid-term election has to be contested and won. The happy days, therefore, are here again. Over the seven months, January to July this year, rice supplies from the Centre have revived dramatically, reaching a figure of 1,67,000 tonnes; the supply of total foodgrains too has soared to 910,000 tonnes over the period.

Procurement of rice this year has been about the same as in 1967. Where could Mr Jagjivan Ram then discover this 70,000 tonnes of extra rice which he has been able to placate West Bengal with? There is, however, no need for Poirot to unravel the mystery. West Bengal's gain, it would seem, is Kerala's loss. Between January and July, 1967, Kerala received from the Centre 375,000 tonnes of rice; this year, over the same months, the supply was down to 321,000 tonnes. Roughly four-fifths of the additional quantity of rice with which West Bengal has been blessed can thus be linked to the highway robbery in Kerala. Food flows in wherever there are mid-term elections; food does not flow in where the Congress is not in power.

This journal is rooted in West Bengal, and, in a mood of rabid parochialism, one might argue that gift rice should be eaten, and not looked in the mouth. But there is still scope for a nagging suspicion: suppose the Congress crashes to a defeat in the November poll, will the rice continue to keep flowing?

The great Left parties could not perhaps care less. They are more interested in gauging the depths of shamelessness Mr Morarji Desai is capable of. Meanwhile, let rice turn bitter, bitterer, bitterest.

Hunger In Goalpara

ARUN KUMAR CHAKMA

WHILE the reorganisation issue absorbs the attention of the country, the Goalpara district of Assam is going through an agony almost unnoticed. Hunger stalks its southern part. In most villages of South Goalpara hundreds of people are heading for death through starvation. Some of them have started deserting their homesteads, others are still managing to live on wild roots and herbs.

Walking past dark, damp, dilapidated hutments that were still to recover from the ravages of flood, I saw children with bellies the size of watermelons, arms and legs like matchsticks, wearing a stoic look. I saw worn-out youths, with eyeballs popping out of sockets, and living skeletons of old men and women staring vacantly as though there was no telling when their tragedy would end. The women left their unclothed rickety babies in the care of the blazing sun. All of them were suffering from hunger, but nobody seemed to know about it. Or, maybe, they did not like to talk about it lest family planning angels should run in to check the population explosion.

I beckoned to one of the children, all clothed in rags, quarrelling in faint voices over a piece of boiled sweet potato. I asked his name, but he held his scrawny little hands pressed to his lips. Before I was able to draw out a single word from him, an old man—maybe, he looked much older than his age—approached me and asked me if I was a man from Shillong. As I tried to grasp the implication of his query, he murmured to himself certain words, which, put together, would mean: We need food, but these Shillong babus and sahibs need some domestic servants.

Pointing to the little boy, his grandson, who kept standing with a strange, aloof sort of dignity, the old man said he was the only one left in a family of six, all of whom had died as a result of starvation, to look after this kid. Once, after his parents had died, the

old man had sold him to a Shillong babu for ten rupees who told him that he would be paying another five rupees every month. Six months passed, but Digendra Rava, the old man, did not get a single paisa. Then one day Dimbu, the child, came back, unable to put up with the forced labour. Of course Digendra, a landless agricultural labourer, was happy that his grandson had come back but he did not know how to feed the kid—he had not seen rice or wheat during the last two months.

Kailash Marak, next-door neighbour of Digendra, along with three other members of his family, had died within the last three months, one after another. Also a landless agricultural labourer, Kailash had gone without any work for the last six months. After many days and nights of anguish, he left for the nearest town in search of a job, leaving his children and wife behind to stand the cruellest human ordeal. The search for a job drove Kailash from one place to another. There were city folk who needed a domestic servant, but none of them was ready to pay a single paisa apart from providing food. At last he got a job in a saw mill at Jorhat. But he could not continue for long. The saw-mill owner sacked him when he was down with typhoid. Broken in mind and spirit, one evening Kailash sneaked back to his village like a thief. His eldest son, 10-year-old Kripesh, had been hired out by a jotedar as a cowboy; his youngest son, 5-year-old Biresh, had died of starvation; his wife, Gangabashi, had left home with her second child in search of food and had not returned since. Kailash himself died ten days after his arrival.

Hundreds of families in South Goalpara are struggling to survive. Till August this year as many as 20 persons had died of starvation in Bogwan-Chechapani village alone while 9 others had died of diseases which result from starvation. Most of these victims were Garo refugees from East Pakistan. Two hundred and fifty tribal refugee families were settled in Bogwan-Chechapani village. Each refugee family was offered 3 bighas of uncultivable land which in

the monsoon remains under water and for the rest of the year is as sandy as a desert. The refugees, however good at cultivation, are unable to do miraculous tricks on such land and have, therefore, to depend on the cash dole of Rs 5/- per week per family, which also is not always forthcoming. Even the scope of earning as agricultural labourer is severely limited. Throughout the year they look for work, but there is none, or, if there is, the wage is 50 paise a day, i.e. one-sixth of the price of a kilogram of rice. And it is under these circumstances, that Mohan Sangma, Uday Sangma, Dingram Sangma, Braja Sangma, Jahis Richil, Yung Kock and Mawi Marak went the way the families of Kailash and Digendra had gone.

We got harrowing reports of starvation deaths from Duhnoi, Khara and Tangabari villages as early as May. The seven-year-old daughter of Girindra Chakraborty, five members of the family of Gopal Nandy, Jyotsna Bala Devi and her two-year-old son, the fifty-year-old Thakurchand Paul and 40-year-old Sanyasi Burman were not the only ones who had died of starvation. I had the veracity of these reports confirmed and also saw the faces of many men, women and children starving to death (a number of them might have died by now). Everyone I met in these villages complained of the criminal inaction of the Government which always turns a deaf ear to the SOS of the starving hundreds. The Government has been urged times without number to take deterrent measures against the machinations of foodgrain traders, but it has done nothing. Every day tonnes of foodgrains are smuggled with impunity by the agents of potedars and hoarders and sold at fantastic prices in town areas and the adjoining States. There is no fair price shop, not to speak of any arrangement for free distribution of foodgrains among the distressed people in the far-flung areas of Goalpara. The poor peasants and agricultural labourers made repeated appeals to the Government for seed and agricultural loans and exemption from pay-

ment of land revenue instalments of previous loans for this year, but to no avail.

There is not only hunger. People are suffering from virulent diseases, but no medical facilities worth the

name were there save a few family planning units operating in the vacuum. A state of pestilence seems to be imminent. The inedibles on which people are living will not be enough to ward off cholera.

or into Government service. The banality of bloody career-mindedness was given the coup de grace by the young men who started manning the barricades on College Street in 1966.

* * *

Calcutta Diary

CHARAN GUPTA

WHERE are they now, those intense young men who had set the College Street on fire two seasons ago—and were around even as late as those slightly indolent, somewhat dubious days last year? On infrequent occasions, they used to drop in: unkempt hair, exuberant growth of young beard, burningly bright eyes, dishevelled apparel, usually of frail build, but still always exploding in nervous energy. They would talk of the futility of the system, argue about historical causation, pour disdain on their convention-bound teachers, try to convince me of the inevitability of the Revolution. Contrary to what government Press notes were wont to give out, these young people were extremely polite, which however didn't mean that they would sit quietly and listen to sanctimonious crap from all and sundry. For their age, they were fantastically well read: the range of their studies in particular would arouse wonder and envy in those of us whose university days ended before the close of the Second World War. Mind you, the revolt of the Calcutta students in 1966 came much, much ahead of the student insurgencies in Europe and America: the halcyon days in France no one could even prognosticate about during those days when the Calcutta students made their own, very distinct revolution. Clearly, there was no international demonstration effect at work here. Maybe partly it was Bengal's special heritage at work here, but, all the same, there was a freshness in this stirring, a certain daring which set it apart from the student rallies and whoopies in the forties and early fifties. The professional student leaders were not

in the picture; the happenings in the Presidency College and elsewhere grew from within and the young people I have in mind did not quite belong to the set mode of Bengal's left politics. They were not jaded, they didn't talk in cliches, they were not interested in such things as youth festivals and junkets to some nondescript East European city or other in the hope of brief dalliances with buxom, wheat-complexioned girls from the countries of socialism. To graduate into the political establishment was the furthest from their intentions.

* * *

They certainly represented an altogether new phenomenon in the Bengal landscape. Maybe, in their stark otherworldliness, they resembled the terrorists of forty or fifty years ago, but I would have no knowledge of the latter—the specimens I have met are now mostly degenerate old fools. Besides, the young men who used to drop in at my room during those days in 1966 were also remarkable in another way—almost all of them had done well in the examinations. Many professors went into rhapsody over their scholastic achievements, even while disapproving of their extracurricular adventures. This—the migration of the better crop of university scholars into active—and what is more, hazardous political work—has not happened in Bengal for quite a long time. Compare their spirit with the attitude of the "good" students ten or twenty years ago: the all-absorbing thought then was concentrated on career-building—on getting a company job with the Imperial Bank of India,

I could be asked, how could I be so cocksure? Perhaps the revolutionaries of yesteryear, following the erstwhile custom, have migrated back to the classrooms and laboratories? Perhaps they are repenting at leisure? Perhaps they are now quietly sitting for their examinations and mapping out plans about how to recoup for the lost years? Maybe some of them have already joined as young executives in this or that commercial firm and engaged in sleek public relations work, learning to down scotch in the evening or the art of stealing a colleagues' wife? If any of these had happened, that would once more assert the triumph of matter over mind—or over adolescent emotions.

It doesn't seem that it has. One or two among last season's revolutionaries have of course fallen prey to family blandishments, and have quietly moved back to the secure boredom of middle-class routine. But the majority have held back. Several of them have discontinued their studies. You don't find their faces in the Coffee House; they don't pay you clandestine visits either. They have, as the idiom goes, burned their boats: they have decided to live dangerously and have slipped into the West Bengal countryside.

* * *

If so is the story, I have my share of bourgeois cowardice, and perhaps an excess of what passes for Bengali cynicism. That a bunch of *bhadralok* youth are ushering in revolution in this hopeless land of ours is a notion which I find very difficult to believe. This whole business of men stirring to "declass" themselves—and finally succeeding in doing it—is also something which passes my understanding; and of course my understanding has been conditioned by the spectacle of

the very correct, very bourgeois leaders of the Communist Party in this nook of the world. But irrespective of whether I suspend my scepticism or not, I can certainly admire where admiration is due. Some of these young men have dared; most of us haven't. We write diaries and editorial comments running them down; ensconced in our comfortable arm-chairs, we designate them adventurists. But, even when instinct might tell us they are wrong, hopelessly wrong, let us have the decency to salute their courage. And let us discard that worst of the shibboleths; these young men, whatever else they might be, are no agents provocateurs, unless they are agents provocateurs of our conscience, provided we still retain any.

* * *

This is the season when, despite the squalor of everyday existence—or sub-existence — Bengali households persuade themselves into some cheer. Of course, even in this cheer, certain elements are left out. More than a fifth of West Bengal's population are Muslims. But, except for one or two opportunists who want to cash in on their gerrymandered votes, they are the forgotten category in West Bengal's social life. Pakistan or no, these millions, who are as much Bengalis as the bigoted Hindu middle-class garbage strewn in Garpar or Hatibagan, deserve to be drawn into the social intercourse. They are not ; the present festival time largely passes them over; and when their festival time comes, the Hindu middle class retreats in horror. The left parties have scrupulously stayed away from playing even a peripheral role in the attempt to bridge these distant clusters of Bengali society.

If you have some time, spare a thought for this one-fifth of your fellow citizens during the days of the festival: they feel a particular emptiness during those days. And if you can bring yourself round to, please do spare another thought for the intense young men I was talking about. I understand many of them are being

honoured by the police; some of them are in remote villages; some are sick. They are short of food; in several areas, they are short of friends, but they are still not short of ideals and dreams. This is festival time, the

pujas will be followed by that other festival, the mid-term elections. While indulging in the festivals, please spare a thought for Bengal's brave young men. You may dislike them immensely, but they still belong to you.

View from Delhi

The Left-out Left

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

TO be sure, the cute little vodka-swilling thing in New Delhi's Left cocktail circuit who tells you "O, dear me, the communists are finished in India" belongs to the class affluenced by Soviet rupee trade or its People's Democratic variant. And she might be right in a limited sense because the moment the Establishment begins respecting a communist he ceases to be one.

Of the two communist parties, the CPI has been respectable ever since it disowned Telengana and accepted May's Parliamentary Practice as the most potent weapon of the Indian revolution. Its respectability has never been in doubt since. The CPI(M) took time becoming respectable. Participation in the United Front ministries in Kerala and West Bengal completed the process.

No wonder the political upheaval in the country, expected as a result of the Congress rout at the 1967 elections, has not come off. What appeared a political pandemonium then has gradually given place to a false stability and a new kind of status quo politics. There is a minimum consensus among the political parties—from the Swatantra Party in Orissa to the CPI(M) in Kerala—on the need to preserve the status quo. That marks the quiet emasculation of the Indian left. Even the Samyukta Socialist Party, known for its predilection for extra-parliamentary methods, has settled to more comfortable forms of struggle like flourishing photostat copies of documents in Parliament to discomfit individual Ministers of the

Congress. The communist left, of course, has always been a more respectable parliamentary lot than the Samyukta Socialists.

When the larger question of the future of the two communist parties is discussed in New Delhi, the obsession is with the developments of the immediate past. Czechoslovakia no doubt split the CPI wide open and the rally against the pro-Soviet hardliners led by Mr Dange is in fact a revolt against the old guard leadership. In a sense Moscow's hegemony over the party as a whole is no longer unchallenged. The CPI(M), of course, managed to present the image of a united party on the Czechoslovak issue. So much so, an enthusiastic Moscow-lining journalist quantified the position : three-quarters of the Indian communist movement endorsed Soviet action in Czechoslovakia. (The quarter let out obviously represents the dissenting half of the CPI which wants to condemn the Soviet action).

Arithmetic aside, the CPI(M) moved closer to Moscow on this particular issue while the CPI was divided. The CPI leadership derived vicarious pleasure at the CPI(M) split following the Burdwan plenum, and even hoped that some sections of the CPI(M) would defect to the parent party. But the CPI(M)'s stance on the Czechoslovak issue, motivated by its anxiety to prove its anti-Peking bona fides, landed it nearest to Moscow, much to the embarrassment of Mr Dange and those who support his line in the CPI.

The interests of the two communist

parties are converging because both the CPI and Moscow are now reconciled to the existence of the CPI(M). It is therefore not surprising in the least if the CPI leadership sees great chances of unity in action between the two parties. Both of them have settled for the status quo. Neither of them has any inclination towards extra-parliamentary methods which indeed are not respectable.

The most compelling factor behind the CPI(M)'s new-found predilection for the hundred per cent conformist parliamentary function and the ill-concealed disapproval of extra-parliamentary struggles is its proximity to power in Kerala and West Bengal. Mr E. M. S. Namboodiripad and Mr Jyoti Basu were the two Centrist leaders whose presence at Tenali in 1964 and the need to carry them along to the foundation Congress of the CPI(M) at Calcutta later resulted in the postponement of a discussion on the ideological issues. It is no accident that the Centrist leaders of 1964 are closest to power or are in power in 1968. The CPI(M) leadership later found it much more comfortable to accept the hegemony of the Centrist leaders so that the party can keep power in Kerala and make a bid for it in West Bengal. And any ban on the party has been effectively forestalled through timely expulsion of the "left deviationists."

'Ultras'

What is the future of the ultra groups in various States? In Andhra Pradesh, the majority of the effective CPI(M) membership has gone out of the party, according to the leadership's own admission. In other States, the CPI(M) leadership is trying to convert the political crisis into an organisational crisis through expulsions. Only when the expulsions or resignations are substantial could the problem of a parallel party or a "third party" arise. But in Andhra Pradesh, some kind of an organisation, call it a co-ordinating committee of communist revolutionaries or the third communist party, becomes necessary.

There appears to be a broad agree-

ment among the various extremist groups—from the Naxalbari group to the group in Tamilnad or Punjab—on the general line. But there has been no effort at evolving a tactical line because there is no dialogue between the groups. The biggest hurdle in the way of a third focus emerging in the Indian communist movement is the absence of an agreed tactical line.

In the absence of an agreed tactical line among the break-away communists in various States, should the Andhra Pradesh membership go without a party or an organisation? And for how long?

Theoretically, are all-India parties relevant to the politics of this sub-continent in the future? Will there be one third communist party or many of them?

All-India parties in the real sense are dying. The Congress cannot hope to regain Kerala and Madras before the party itself disintegrates. The Swatantra Party is a scattered phenomenon, in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Orissa. The Jana Sangh and the SSP are parties of the Hindi belt. The CPI, after losing in West Bengal and Kerala to the CPI(M), directed its appeal to the Hindi States and showed signs of success in its effort in the 1967 elections. Its orientation would be towards the populous Hindi-speaking belt. The CPI(M) is essentially a coastal party. No single party has an all-India future and for all purposes, every party including the Congress will be a federation of regional parties.

The extremist trend in the Andhra communist movement is a distinct regional trend. Long before a particular line came to be internationally formalised as Maoism, the communists in Andhra Pradesh were fighting a guerrilla war in Telengana, under the most reformist leadership of Mr P. C. Joshi in 1944, under the petty-bourgeois adventurism of Mr B. T. Ranadive from 1948 and under an Andhra General Secretary, Mr C. Rajeswara Rao, and even under a centrist leader like Mr Ajoy Ghosh. The CPI accepted peaceful neo-Maoism not because Peking wanted it but because it suited

Moscow's interests when the cold war replaced class struggle.

Right or wrong, the communist movement in Andhra Pradesh has an experience all its own. The expulsion of Mr Nagi Reddy and others earlier this year followed the CPI(M) leadership's failure to liquidate the State Committee whose plenum had rejected the Madurai ideological draft. The closest parallel one could think of was the attempt by the all-India leadership during the Telengana days to liquidate the whole Andhra committee for its "adventurism."

The Telengana movement was called off so that the CPI could ensure for itself the legality needed for contesting the 1952 elections and because Moscow did not want anything in the way of its attempts to stabilise Mr Nehru's non-alignment in a cold war situation.

It is generally agreed that at the Madurai Congress of the CPI in 1954, the Andhra Pradesh leadership found that its thesis, which revealed a concern for Indian realities and not for Moscow's interests, was jettisoned in effect so that the Moscow line conveyed through the late Mr Harry Pollitt could be accepted.

Colonial Legacy

In the spatial sense, the Communist Party of India was a colonial legacy. The French pockets in Pondicherry, Chandernagore, Mahe and Karaikal had their own communist party, outside the CPI. The Portuguese pocket of Goa had its Goan People's Party even after 1947. The Communist Party of Pakistan was formed after Partition.

Can there be a common tactical line for the communist movement in all the States of the Indian Union? And as a corollary, was there a need for a single communist party for the whole country? The emergence of a powerful break-away communist party in Andhra Pradesh now poses the question again. The Congress will perhaps turn out to be the first and the last all-India party in the strictest sense. Soon it will be a federation of regional Congress parties because the party's Tamiland unit has to move

along lines unacceptable to the party in the Hindi belt. One party after another will begin facing a new set of compulsions because sub-national aspirations, the level of political development in various States and the uneven growth of the communist movement in various States have not been seriously taken into account by these parties in the past.

In Andhra Pradesh, the Communis-

ts (of any shade) are farthest from political power through parliamentary means and a distinct communist tactical line for the State could emerge here. The Indian communist movement would itself become polycentric, with perhaps a number of third communist parties horizontally scattered over the sub-continent. This is something neither the CPI nor the CPI (M) would relish contemplating.

the army and the people were behind the party and fully backed the proposed changes ; lastly, Poland had no intention of getting out of the socialist orbit. Moreover, the Soviet Union had guaranteed the sanctity of its Oder-Neisse frontier. China was convinced that the reform movement would help in consolidating the socialist system in Poland.

Hungary

As regards Hungary the authoritarian character of the Communist Party had greatly contributed to widening the gulf between the party and the people. Economic and political rationalisation was the need of the hour, and the stagnant situation that was created by Rakosi, and later by Gero, had to be remedied. The army was also seething with discontent and a sizable section of it held anti-Soviet views. These were the trends that resulted in Imre Nagy's return to power. The anti-Stalinist Hungarian leaders welcomed Gomulka's success in Poland because it indicated that the Soviet Union would not be an impediment, if the liberalization programme did not undermine the unity of the bloc. The Chinese also conceded at the beginning that the Hungarian moves were genuine ones and that these could be encouraged to strengthen the socialist system. However, when the events took a different turn in Hungary, the Chinese Government urged the Soviet Union to take stern measures, and fully supported the Soviet action. The Chinese support to Soviet military intervention in Hungary was again a carefully reasoned-out position. The Chinese argued that what had begun as a reform movement quickly turned into an instrument for demolishing socialism itself. Further, there was a split in the Hungarian party and the army, and Hungary even asked for international neutrality to be guaranteed by the four Big Powers. Any failure to take action, the Chinese implied, would have jeopardised the socialist movement in Eastern Europe, particularly at that juncture when the cold warriors were on the rampage. Thus although the Chinese supported the Hungarian

The Importance Of Being Consistent

K. N. RAMACHANDRAN

IF Leon Trotsky, that unmentionable character among diehard comrades — betrayer and all that — had been alive today, he might have congratulated Chairman Mao on having stolen his thunder with characteristic Chinese aplomb. When the Chinese Government described the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia as "the most barefaced and most typical specimen of fascist power politics", Trotsky would have thought that Mao had perhaps said the last word — or the last sentence — on the bankruptcy of Soviet ideology operated by grey men who are euphemistically called "technocrats".

This directly takes us to a consideration of China's views on the Soviet Union's relations with the East European countries. It may be said at the outset that those who have reasoned that the strong Chinese criticism of Soviet action in Czechoslovakia is a propaganda stunt aimed at maligning the Soviet Union have not understood the issue at all. For, if the Chinese response had been an isolated instance, a consequence of the Sino-Soviet split, then their case is likely to be strong. On the other hand, if all the events in the Soviet Union's relations with Eastern Europe since 1956 are to be taken into consideration — as it should be — then one could discern a very consistent pattern in China's responses. Historically speaking, the major events in Eastern Europe since the Twentieth Party Congress of the CPSU are

those which happened in Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia, and now Czechoslovakia. To each of these developments, the Chinese have responded at various levels, but there has always been an underlying ideological consistency.

Let us take for instance, the Chinese Government's attitude to the events which happened in Poland in 1956 in the wake of the Twentieth Party Congress of the CPSU. In the Eighth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party in October 1956, the adherents of the Polish road to socialism headed by Gomulka won a significant victory over the Stalinists, popularly known as the 'Natolin' group, despite the uninvited presence of Khrushchev and his colleagues in Warsaw. The Soviets feared the possible consequences of the proposed reforms, particularly the chain reaction that it may set off in the entire Eastern Europe. When the Soviets politically failed to alter the course of events, they began contemplating the use of guns to settle the issue. This was evidenced by the movement of Soviet and Polish troops under Soviet command. It is well known now that China at this juncture intervened and urged the Soviets to avoid military action in Poland. The Chinese thinking was based on the following factors : First, the Polish Communist Party was in full control of the situation and the reform movement was progressing on a course carefully charted out; second,

road to socialism, they withdrew their support when they found that the road would lead to a different destination. The *Ta Kung Pao* (November 13, 1956) reflecting on both the Polish and Hungarian events, found many similarities as well as differences. It significantly noted that both movements began as mass-based ones and that the demand of the people of both countries was for the strengthening of democracy, independence, and equality, as well as for higher levels of material welfare. As the journal put it, "The demands were put forward in order, for their satisfaction would not only consolidate the people's democratic system of the two countries, but also foster unity among socialist countries". However, the two movements took dissimilar courses. The Hungarian party lost control of the leadership to a minority of reactionaries, while the Polish party was in effective control of the situation. The lesson to be drawn from these experiences, the paper asserted, is that we should carefully differentiate "the legitimate demands of the masses from the conspiratorial activities of the minority".

Moreover, Peking with a remarkable detachment did not categorize every Hungarian who was opposed to the Soviet guns and battled against them as a "counter-revolutionary". This was in clear contrast to Moscow's rather unsophisticated categorization. In a revealing statement, the *Jen-min-Jih-pao* (November 13, 1956) remarked that "those who were dissatisfied with the work of the former government were of various types and even those who participated in the rebellion were of various types. They were not all fascist elements." In short, Peking's analysis of these two situations had many underlying assumptions. Peking believed—and still does—that when a controlled revolution is set in motion fully under the guidance of the communist party, there is no need for any undue apprehension, as regards the possible course of events. Further, the masses may have genuine aspirations and they have to be met without impairing the credibility of the socialist system. Lastly, there is no justifica-

tion for violating the sovereignty of a socialist country when it is effectively controlled by the communist party. The last point was reiterated at the XXII Congress of the CPSU when Moscow attempted to impose its general line on the international communist movement. Chou En-lai, replying to Moscow's statement, said: "We hold that if, unfortunately disputes and disagreements have arisen among the fraternal parties and fraternal countries we should resolve them by following the principles of equality and achievement of unanimity through consultation." (*Peking Review*, No. 43, 1961). In short, the Chinese implied that no authoritarian and unilateral decision by Moscow or by a majority rigged up by Moscow will be accepted.

Even in the case of Yugoslavia the Chinese adopted a very moderate attitude in the beginning in the interest of what they considered to be the unity of the socialist world. However, in December 1956 in a statement endorsing the Moscow Declaration which was issued after the East European upheaval had subsided, the Chinese mildly but firmly rebuked Yugoslavia for its insistence on the absolute particularity of the Yugoslav path to socialism and for its almost total rejection of international obligations. The Chinese advice turned into a vitriolic attack only when Tito fully assumed the self-styled posture of a mediator between the two irreconcilable systems.

In the light of this record, one need have no surprise about China's responses to the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. The Chinese Government does not believe that the Czech situation warranted a military intervention. The Czech Communist Party was in full control of the situation and could control the moves of a "reactionary minority". It is true that the Czech party programme, from the Chinese point of view, had, the strong odour of revisionism, but the Chinese have not said that it is either reactionary or counter-revolutionary. Moreover, the Czechs being revisionists, should not, if rules of logic are to be accepted, be an eye-sore to the Soviets, who have

themselves trodden the primrose path to "degeneration". Thus, commenting on the intervention on August 22, the official statement pointed out that the Soviet action revealed "big nation chauvinism, national egoism and imperialist jungle law..." Premier Chou En-lai, speaking at the Rumanian Day national reception on August 23, was even more forthright: "The act of naked intervention has brought out to the full the grisly fascist features of the Soviet revisionist renegade clique and has fully revealed its extreme weakness; it has proclaimed the total bankruptcy of modern revisionism." *The People's Daily* (August 23) compared the Soviet action to Hitler's aggression in the late thirties and the present American action in Vietnam. (Hsinhua Selected News Items No. 35).

Since 1956, the Chinese line, one could perceive, had constantly emphasized the theme of the need for effecting an agreeable fusion between universal principles and national specifics. Having successfully domesticated Marxism-Leninism to requirements of China's conditions and being aware of the global dimensions of that philosophy, the Chinese advocated the application of the tested formula to the East European nations, who were striving to discover the dynamic properties that go to make a healthy mixture. They had also repeatedly warned the Soviet Union against the perilous course of ignoring the importance of national specifics. Moreover the Chinese point out that when ideology itself has been pushed down to a poor second in the Soviet hierarchy of values and consequently as a demonstration effect in Eastern Europe, the Soviets have no authority to prescribe inviolable articles of faith.

In the past, as noted earlier, Peking pulled the chestnuts out of the fire for Moscow and supported the Soviets when it was imperative to do so in the interests of the bloc. It had then the hope that the errors of the past would be rectified. The Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia has once again proved to the Chinese that the errors are being multiplied.

ary and political alliance which had been entered into by the CPF and the FGDS; it did not want to furnish the latter with any pretext for casting doubts about its respectability, its feeling for legality and order, its refusal of revolutionary method and revolution itself, its loyalty as future partners of a reformist government. Had the communists appeared as the principal force of the movement their future reformist partners might have recoiled with fear before an unequal alliance, throwing into isolation a CPF which had become disturbing because of its strength.

Thus to reassure the future partners of a bourgeois government the CPF put itself in many respects behind them and denounced and vituperated up to May 26 (the date when M. Garaudy in the name of the Politburo made a vain attempt to rectify the course) against the vanguard, intellectual or not, with a Stalinist brutality and crudity. On numerous occasions the CPF showed that it could employ Stalinist terror in the service of a conservative line and, for defending this, prevent the freedom of assembly, speech and the press, put the students at the hands of the police (at Lyon) and approve the decision (considered unwise even by the Gaullist circle) of the police disallowing, for the first time, Cohn-Bendit from entering French territory.

Thus to save the prospects of a reformist policy in future the CPF spurned the present chances of a socialist revolution.

Working according to a two-year-old analysis which foresaw parliamentary emergence of the CPF, the natural death of the Fifth Republic and orderly transition to the Sixth, and association of the communists in a government of limited and progressive reforms, the CPF refused to exploit the crisis of May. It refused to think about the possibility of this crisis (keeping a distance from the student insurrection); then, of the reality of the crisis (driving them towards negotiations with a moribund regime); and finally, of the potentiality of the crisis—that is, the

seizure of revolutionary power by the working class.

The type of party and action capable of bringing about a revolutionary crisis had been made clear by default in the course of these events.

The new type of revolutionary party may not be satisfied with being a centralised and structured organization conceived with a view to capturing the State apparatus by legal process. Similar conquest will remain, either impossible or, even if made possible by a stroke of chance, always entail risks both political (loss of allies necessary for the exercise of normal parliamentary power) and military (blackmail of civil war) which the traditional type of party will refuse to take.

The seizure of power can only result from a revolutionary process developing from the periphery towards the centre. The State cannot be conquered by confiscation, peaceful or not, of its "levers of command" which continue to be intact. Its conquest will result from its disaggregation and consequent paralysis at the emergence of self-organised popular power in the factories, administration, public services, communes, cities and regions. It is the seizure of power at the level of centres of decision and production within the reach of the regrouped workers which by draining the bourgeois State of its substance, will finally break up its resistance. The revolution today, like that of 1917, will depend for its beginning on the initiative of the people, on the exercise of "double power" by the committees of action (or soviets) of strikers, students and communes.

Thus, the action of the revolutionary party of the new type will not consist of militants disciplined and led by a central apparatus in their daily activities but of local conditions, of judgment and initiative of their own in functions in local conditions, of sustaining and animating discussion in free assemblies, of self-administration and self-determination, taking up in their own hands the conditions of collective existence.

The central apparatus of the party does not thus become superfluous but its rôle is reduced to coordinating

the activities of the local activists (thanks to the communication and information network), elaborating the general perspective and bringing about specific changes in all the institutional domains, notably in the matter of socialist economic planning; facilitating the creation of cadres capable of putting in place and running the central institutions of the revolutionary society.

The knowledge so long was that nothing was possible without the Communist Party of France and the CGT. The knowledge henceforth is that nothing is possible with the CPF and the CGT as they are. Unfortunately the first assertion remains true even when the second imposes itself. So the CPF and the CGT should be changed but they themselves will not do it. This can be brought about only by pressure from the revolutionary base and that of events.

Elections

However, the elections can also result in, if they are won against Gaullism, a resumption of the offensive. Not that there should be any illusion about the virtue of the government brought through elections won by the "left", but a return of the majority would seem to justify the policy of the Communist Party, confirm it in its desire—its dream and even practically its refusal—to decide revolution only from above. On the contrary, the arrival of a left majority in Parliament might oblige de Gaulle to combat it overtly and illegally, or to quit; it would create a situation, with the developments unforeseeable today, and might give the action of the vanguard and then the masses the opportunities that the ossified apparatus would soon make them lose.

The more so, as the French capitalist system has suffered a rupture of equilibrium which will sharpen for a long time its contradictions. It will precipitate a succession of crises and will intensify the class struggle. The wage increases which the working class is going to force out are of such amplitude that the system would not be able to absorb them on its present structure. The employers will try to

take back by any means a large part of what they are forced to concede. The economic policy of the regime has become non-viable. No government, even if it is "popular," will be able in the coming years to function in conformity with the internal logic of French capitalism which is notorious for its rigidity and narrowness of the margin of concessions.

The French working class will then be led to question more and more consciously a system which has just neutralised its limited gains, and the framework of which can neither be safeguarded nor a fortiori increased. Thousands of young and new militants, more radical than their elders, have just emerged to discover their vocation. Hundreds of thousands have been politicalised and have discovered fields of possibility whose extent was hitherto unsuspected. Jostling with their elders if required, they will continue the battle or rebegin it on the next occasion. The lost insurrection of May was a beginning.

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The Cubans

MONITOR

El deber de todo revolucionario es hacer la revolucion.

THE Cuban Revolution has had a singularly unfortunate publicity in India. Cuba's distance from India, geographically as well as culturally, has undoubtedly contributed to this. But there are deeper reasons. The Indian ruling class who owns and controls most of the publicity media does not certainly feel comfortable at the sight of a tiny island constantly defying U.S. imperialism at its very doorstep—that is defying the very power on which this class increasingly depends for its own survival. As regards the so-called "left" or even the "communists", it must be pointed out that while paying lip service to Cuba for its anti-imperialist stand—as a matter of ritual—these bureaucratic, manual-reading, parliamentary cretins—whether of the 'right' or of the 'left' variety—are almost organically incapable of understanding the significance of this Revolution.

The result of all this has been that our people are very vaguely—and distortedly—informed about this great event which, we must remember, constitutes the first serious breach on the imperialist front in Latin America and thus offers tremendous encouragement to the enslaved people of that vast continent in their fight for liberation against U.S. imperialism and its native lackeys.

We are not attempting here anything like a systematic history of the Cuban Revolution. We are rather touching upon some of its most significant aspects that might interest the readers in India.

I

What was the national setting of the Cuban Revolution? Cuba was an under-developed country with a typically semi-colonial economic and political structure, but at the same time different from other under-developed countries in some important respects. According to the 1953 census

in Cuba 57 per cent of the population were urban of whom 40 per cent lived in Havana Province alone. Forty-two per cent of the total labour force in Cuba were in agriculture, of whom 70 per cent were workers in the huge and concentrated landed estates known as *latifundia*.¹ Roughly 8 per cent of the farmers owned 71.1 per cent of the land while 39 per cent owned only 3.3 per cent of the land.² As one of the leaders of the Revolution recently pointed out,³ unlike the situation in most of the former colonial and dependent countries and also in the countries of Eastern Europe, in Cuba nearly two-thirds of the land was not tilled by traditional 'peasant' methods. The big U.S. sugar companies and their local partners squeezed out the small farmers and embarked on large-scale cane growing with hired labour at starvation wages. The social structure of the Cuban countryside was characterized by a vast mass of agricultural labourers and a relatively small number of peasants. The agrarian structure had another interesting feature. Since the agricultural labourers had only seasonal employment for a short period during the year they settled in the vicinity of urban areas in the hope of getting occasional employment. This was facilitated by the smallness of the country itself. Since they were thus concentrated in the urban areas and worked occasionally in handicrafts, services, workshops and even in factories they acquired many of the features of the industrial proletariat.

The *latifundia* not only dominated the rural society but also controlled the total economy of Cuba by the very fact that the economy of Cuba was based on the volume and value of the sugar crop. Sugar accounted for 80 to 90 per cent of all Cuba's exports and one-third of the country's national income.⁴ The extent of Cuba's dependence on foreign capital was also very

large. Foreign investments fundamentally controlled the sugar industry, the railways, the banking system, part of the wholesale commerce, some branches of the manufacturing industry and the mining industry. U.S. capital had of course the lion's share in foreign investment. Ninety per cent of the capital in the telephone and electric services, 50 per cent in railways, 40 per cent in raw sugar production were in U.S. hands. One quarter of the total bank deposits were in the Cuban branches of the U.S. banks. U.S. capital owned most of the cattle ranches, the major tourist facilities and, together with British capital, almost the entire oil business. Cuba ranked third in Latin America, after Venezuela and Brazil, in 1953, in the value of direct U.S. investments.⁵

As to the political régime—the Government of Batista—it was an incredibly corrupt dictatorship exercising unheard of terror against even the mildest opposition. [Before he was deposed Batista had murdered an estimated 20,000 Cuban citizens, according to figures published by the Revolutionary Government]. Moreover, for all practical purposes, the Batista Government was a satellite of U.S. imperialism. As one competent American reporter wrote, "History will prove that the dictator did have U.S. support ... The U.S. ambassadors were friendly to Batista and openly so. The U.S. sold Batista the arms that permitted him to stay in power".⁶

Such, then, was the setting in which the revolution broke in Cuba. Strictly speaking, it began with the assault on Moncada in 1953 and ended in complete victory six years later.

II

At the initial stage of the revolution the leaders were not very articulate about the character of the revolution. The first comprehensive political programme of the revolution was contained in the *Declaration of the Sierra Maestra* dated July 12, 1957. Two basic tasks were set forth in this programme—complete national independence and comprehensive democratic reforms through the restoration of the constitution of 1940. Thus we

can say that *in essence* the revolution had a national democratic character at the initial stage. Later, in 1960, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara declared that the revolution was following the basic Marxist-Leninist laws. The first clear statement about the socialist character of the revolution was made by Fidel Castro in his May Day speech in 1961 and later in greater detail in his December 2, 1961 speech. The latter is a remarkable document where Fidel makes a self-critical analysis and finally proclaims "I shall be a Marxist-Leninist to the end of my life". We may mention in passing that the document in question is an excellent exposition of the essentials of historical materialism.

The Test

Now, we know that the mere profession of socialism by the leaders of a country does not make the country in question socialist. This must be objectively demonstrated in practice. How does Cuba fare in this test? The answer to this question is vital specially today when a whole chorus is rising from the right as well as the so-called 'left' of the international working-class movement dubbing the Cuban leadership as petty bourgeois, adventurist and anarchist and doubting the socialist character of the Cuban régime.

According to the Marxists a society is socialist if it fulfils two essential conditions—(1) the working class through its revolutionary vanguard must hold the State power and (2) the means of production must be, at least predominantly, collectively owned.

To take the second point first, the collectivization of the means of production in Cuba practically began with the recovery of assets misappropriated by elements of the former régime and with the expropriation of the giant landholdings under the Agrarian Reform Law passed in 1959. It should be pointed out that unlike in any other existing socialist country the collectivization of land in Cuba took a predominantly State character. It follows basically from the distinct nature of Cuba's agrarian structure that we

mentioned earlier.⁷ The point is that the overwhelming majority of the agricultural workers who outnumbered the peasants in Cuba's countryside and who at the same time acquired many of the features of the industrial proletariat came to see the solution to their problems not in an agrarian reform which would give them land and make them small agricultural producers, but in a revolution which would guarantee them steady work and higher standard of living as workers. The existence of *latifundia*, moreover, operated along capitalist lines and employing hired workers, facilitated the direct transfer to the State of large tracts. The State ownership of land was effected in two stages. The first Agrarian Reform Law passed in May, 1959, set a 400-hectare limit on holdings by individuals or groups of owners. This first reform law by expropriating the sugar-cane and cattle-raising *latifundia* was the first direct blow against the interests of foreign investors and their native allies. The second Agrarian Reform Law of October, 1963, finally abolished whatever remained of big estates by fixing the landholding at 67 hectares. By this act of nationalization the second reform removed from the land the remaining 10,000 members of the rural bourgeoisie and large landowners. As a result of these reforms 70 per cent of the land became State property.

As regards the non-agrarian sector the Revolutionary Government decreed in August, 1960, the nationalization of the property and goods of natural or juridic U.S. citizens. This was in reply to the wave of constant economic aggression of U.S. imperialism which culminated in the suppression of Cuba's sugar quota. This measure transferred to the State all the huge monopolies in the fields of public services, petroleum and sugar. As a complement Cuba also nationalized all U.S. banks which, as instruments of financial penetration, were operating in the country. Revolutionary impulse did not stop there and in October of the same year, in the face of the growing belligerent attitude of the native industrial and im-

porting bourgeoisie, which took a frankly pro-imperialist and counter-revolutionary stand, the Government decreed the nationalization of the country's principal industries, the railroad companies, department stores etc. Thus the State sector controlled all the basic aspects of the economy, definitely wiping out the political and economic power of imperialism and the native exploiting classes.⁸ Cuba recently completed the cycle of nationalization by implementing the measures of nationalization outlined by Fidel in his March 13 speech of this year. Practically it means that all centres of industrial production, commerce, services, communication, education, culture and all mass media of information came under the ownership of the proletarian State. In other words, as a recent *Granma* editorial pointed out, with the exception of 30 per cent of the land all national wealth of Cuba falls under a sole form of ownership : State property. Cuba has thus become the socialist country with the highest percentage of State property.

State Character

As regards the *State character* it goes without saying that it is proletarian, as it is guided by the Communist Party on behalf of the Cuban working class. Those who accuse its leadership of being petty bourgeois forget that the Marxist, proletarian character of a leadership is not proved or disproved by reference to the class origins of the leaders but by reference to their *politics* and their *ideology*.

One important point must be emphasized. From the mere fact that the Communist Party holds political power it does not automatically follow that the working class is holding political power. The working class can be really said to hold the State power only when two basic conditions are fulfilled; first, the Party as the vanguard of the toiling masses must constantly practise the mass line—"from the masses to the masses", and, secondly, the toiling masses themselves must constantly participate—and in the most active way—in the day-to-day political and economic administration

of the country. It is notorious that in the majority of the socialist countries, in the post-Lenin era, the vanguard role of the Party as well as the working class hold on State power were interpreted much too mechanically, and the masses were not given the real power to actively participate in the affairs of the State, including the right to criticize and purge the Party functionaries — Lenin's clear directives to the contrary notwithstanding. In Cuba the leadership has taken the right direction towards implementing proletarian democracy though it will take a long time to win complete victory in the battle. To start with, there is in Cuba considerable direct democracy. Fidel and other leaders move about the island frequently and discuss important policy matters directly with the masses.⁹ Secondly, the Party and the trade unions themselves are subject to direct mass control. As regards the Party, the members are elected by the open general assemblies of workers and must explain their activities to these assemblies.¹⁰ As regards the trade unions, they are not supposed, in Cuba, to be the simple instruments of further production but they must equally express and fight for all the material and spiritual needs of the workers. After being subjected to bureaucratic practices in its leadership for a number of years the central organisation of the Cuban Trade Unions (CTC), in its Twelfth Congress in 1966, for the first time, elected the delegates without the least interference by the Party and elected the leadership that enjoys, also for the first time, complete confidence of the workers.

To defeat bureaucracy which Fidel considers to be no less pernicious than imperialism¹¹ the Cubans count primarily, on the complete elimination of the difference between manual and mental labour and on the development of political work, including political education, by mass organizations.¹² Closing the Twelfth Congress of the CTC, Fidel said that "the day will come when there will be no professional politicians, when each citizen will be a politician. We want to reach a society

where the participation of the masses will be the greatest and the most complete".

III

The Cuban Revolution like all genuine revolutions in the imperialist era has demonstrated some universal and some particular truths. The most important universal truths that it has confirmed are: (1) the revolution is led by a vanguard based on worker-peasant alliance. The vanguard at first begins as a minority movement. Later through struggle and revolutionary practice it gains the confidence and adherence of the immense majority. (2) Revolution fundamentally alters property relations. (3) The revolutionaries set up their own State after smashing the old military bureaucratic State machine. (4) Given the correct leadership the national democratic stage grows into socialist stage, thus proving the uninterrupted character of the revolution. (5) Revolution is successful only when the vanguard creatively applies revolutionary principles to the concrete conditions of the country without any preconceived notions.

Particular Truths

Its particular truths are: (1) the revolution that later took a socialist character was not led by those who were supposed to lead it, i.e. the established Communist Party whose leadership rather betrayed it. (2) Initially Marxism-Leninism was not proclaimed as the official creed and, as Fidel later pointed out, the leadership learnt Marxism-Leninism much less from books and much more from revolutionary combat. (3) The revolution proved that if the established Communist Party does not do its duty and lead the revolution there will be honest revolutionaries inside and outside the Party who will uphold the red banner and form the real communist vanguard to lead the revolution. "Who will make the revolution in Latin America ? Who?", asks Fidel, and answers, "the people, the revolutionaries with or without the Party" [i.e. the established Party]. Here the particular truth in fact merges with the universal

truth. In fact one of the important lessons of the Cuban Revolution is the objective re-affirmation of the universal truth that there is no necessary equivalence between the revolutionary vanguard and the Party simply because the latter calls itself a communist party. This equivalence has got to be established every moment through revolutionary practice.

IV

The socialist character of the Cuban regime and the Marxist-Leninist character of its leadership can further be seen in the stand the latter has taken on the fundamental questions facing the international working class movement at the present moment.

On the question of the character of transition from capitalism to socialism which ultimately boils down to the question of the seizure of State power by the working class, the Cuban leadership upholds the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism, that is, the working class can capture power only by smashing the bureaucratic military State apparatus of the bourgeoisie and the landlords, that is, by opposing counter-revolutionary violence. Answering the Yugoslav leadership, the organ of the CC of the Communist Party of Cuba wrote, "Every communist knows that violence is the midwife of history and that armed insurrection is the highest form of class struggle. One who ignores it or pretends to hide it is not a communist".¹³ Similarly Fidel, while addressing the delegates to the first OLAS conference, said, "Those who believe that they are going to win against the imperialists in elections are just plain naive, and those who believe that the day will come when they will take over through elections are even more naive... Any persons in Latin America who assert that they will come to power peacefully are deceiving the masses".¹⁴ This means that, in the context of the mighty military machine of the bourgeoisie-landlord State backed everywhere by U.S. imperialism, the people have to wage, at least in the initial stage, protracted armed guerilla warfare. It does not of course mean that guerilla

struggle is the only form of armed struggle that the Cuban leadership recognizes. "By stressing the role of the guerillas as the immediate task in all those countries where true conditions exist", says Fidel, "we do not discard other forms of revolutionary armed struggle. The revolutionary movement must be ready to take advantage of, and support, any expression of struggle that may arise, that may develop or that may strengthen the position of the revolutionaries".¹⁵ Does the Cuban leadership emphasize the purely military aspect at the expense of the political aspect of the struggle? It does not. Fidel clearly pointed out that the guerilla movement "cannot exist without political direction". "We do not deny", he added, "the role of the leading organizations, we do not deny the role of political organizations. The guerilla is organized by a political movement, by a political organization".¹⁶ What the Cuban leadership emphasizes is that political and military command must be unified and that the guerilla in the countryside must not be directed by the so-called "political" leadership from the cities. The *General Declaration* of the First OLAS conference, in the drafting of which the Cuban delegation played a key role, put the whole thing succinctly thus: "The conditions for revolution which exist in Latin America are repeated in other underdeveloped countries of Asia and Africa.. These conditions indicate that the development of revolution is possible. Within the context of the Latin American revolutionary struggle these conditions require that the task be carried out by a bold, decided and valiant revolutionary vanguard, forged in people's war and closely related to the peasant and proletarian masses, one which combining both political and military leadership can and must make itself the core of political, ideological and revolutionary action".¹⁷ The fourth article of its *Proclamation* added that "the principles of Marxism-Leninism guide the movement of Latin America".

On the question of war and peace the Cuban leadership is also equally

clear. They point out that, though since 1945 there has been no global war, local wars, inspired by the imperialists, have continued. Writing against the opportunist interpretation of the Leninist principle of 'peaceful co-existence' the organ of the CC of CP(Cuba) came out with the following in one of its editorials in May, 1966, "we do not accept peaceful co-existence as a policy applicable only to the powerful States while imperialism could arrogate to itself the right to make war whenever it wanted to make it against any small country. Even less we understand by this principle the Yugoslav practice of acting as the instrument of the policy of the U.S. imperialists".¹⁸ Raul Roa, speaking before the United Nations General Assembly on behalf of the Cuban delegation on October 18, 1966, discussed the conditions for a lasting peace in the world. "The Cuban delegation", he pointed out, "feels that a clear distinction must be made between those who wield weapons in order to attack and those who do so with the purpose of repelling aggression. Today in many places the world over men and women bear arms in order to attain independence or to defend it. In the near future their ranks will be increased by those who will be obliged to follow the same road. The Cuban people and their Revolutionary Government consider this struggle sacred and support it without reservation. The weapons fired against imperialism and its satellites are the most important contribution to the struggle to achieve true peace".¹⁹ 'Che' was still more clear. "Since imperialists", he wrote in his last testament, "blackmail humanity by threatening it with war, the wise reaction is not to fear war. The general tactics of the people should be to launch a constant and firm attack on all fronts where the confrontation is taking place".

Thirdly, we must also mention Cuba's stand on another vital question—the question of incentives in socialism. The problem of incentives in socialism is part of a much vaster problem that every revolutionary leadership faces after the seizure of poli-

tical power by the working class—how to ensure that the new, socialist regime shall not revert to capitalism but shall continue to march forward towards communism. The stiffest resistance to this onward march is offered by the ideas, habits, customs and traditions, in a word the entire world outlook that the new society inherits from the old. The point is how to make the man of tomorrow out of the man of yesterday—as ‘Che’ wonderfully put it in his now well-known pamphlet, *Socialism and Man in Cuba*. After the seizure of State power the proletariat must immediately begin to attack “the Moncada of old ideas, of old selfish sentiments, of old habits of thought and conception, of old manners of resolving problems”.²⁰ The two most important things that the Cuban leadership emphasizes in this connection are, first, the minimisation of the role of material incentives in socialism and, second, the elimination of the difference between manual and mental labour. The Cuban leader-

ship, while admitting the importance of material incentives for some time to come, considers that the act of emphasizing material incentives in socialism and the formation of the new, socialist man are incompatible, because “we do not arrive at communism by following the capitalist road”.²¹ “We do not”, wrote ‘Che’ “deny the objective necessity of material incentive but we are absolutely against its use as a fundamental lever. It is our opinion that in economics this lever quickly takes on an autonomous character and goes on to assert its power upon the relations between men. Let us not forget that it stems from capitalism and is destined to die out with socialism”.²²

Brain and Brawn.

As regards the elimination of the differences between mental and manual labour Fidel said, “we must at the same time impart theoretical and practical education. Everybody from the stage of the primary school must

familiarise himself with production and its instruments. Nobody should accomplish either a purely intellectual or a purely manual work. Labour must become a pleasure and a moral need.”²³ In this regard interesting experiments are going on in some regions of Cuba. For example, in the Isle of Pines thousands of young volunteers have gone out from Havana and are trying to transform totally what was once a desert. They devote four hours to study and six hours to manual labour everyday. The primary necessities of life—food, clothing and shelter—they get free. Their remuneration is independent of the quantity of labour they furnish and the degree of their qualification. Their remuneration is a function of their needs.²⁴ Similarly, at Pinares de Mayari thousands of young people—most of them girls—are simultaneously studying and working on a voluntary basis. Board, lodging and clothing are free for them and their wages are independent of their work.²⁵ In a more gene-

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ral way it should be pointed out that for the country as a whole and for all workers great importance is attached to the free services that are increasing in number, for the simple but profound reason that making services free for the people is much more desirable than increasing their wages; the first is the source of collective consumption while the second is the source of individual consumption. The system of socialist emulation in Cuba is summed up by one of its leaders in three points :

First, it is a collective movement so that individualism will not rear its head.

Second, the system is based on moral incentives.

Third, it seeks to improve production and at the same time to strengthen revolutionary consciousness.²⁶

"Tropical Titoism"

Finally, a great lesson of the Cuban Revolution is the lesson of proletarian internationalism. In an interview with K. S. Karol, already referred to above, Fidel pointed out that the Cubans were not trying to transform their island into a small paradise by being disinterested in the events of other countries. They would never construct some sort of a 'national communism' Fidel added that if the imperialists thought that he was going to practise 'tropical Titoism' they were gravely mistaken. It was the bounden duty of a socialist State to help actively—and not simply verbally—all revolutionary and anti-imperialist struggles anywhere in the world as it was equally a crime for it to help technically, financially or militarily a regime that was repressing popular movements. It is this intransigent internationalist spirit which prompts the Cuban leadership to hail the revolutionary heroism of Douglas Bravo (Venezuela), Cesar Montes (Guatemala) and others who by defying the petrified, bureaucratized, quotation-mongering leadership of the established communist parties are leading the Latin American people in the armed revolutionary struggle against U.S. imperialism and its henchmen. It is the same uncompromising spirit of internationalism which

prompts Fidel to condemn those socialist States that help the Latin American oligarchies technically and financially. "If internationalism exists", he said, "if solidarity is a word worthy of respect the least we can expect of any State of the socialist camp is that it refrains from giving any financial or technical aid to these regimes".²⁷ It is only a genuine sense of proletarian internationalism that can make the Cuban leadership say, "when we say 'homeland' we refer not to the Cubans' homeland, but rather to the Cuban Revolution's homeland. And when we speak of the Cuban Revolution, we are speaking of the Latin American Revolution. And when we speak of Latin American Revolution we are speaking of revolution on a worldwide scale, the revolution of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Europe".²⁸ Again, who can be a greater proletarian internationalist than 'Che' who could write in his last testament, "To die under the flag of Vietnam, of Venezuela, of Guatemala, of Laos, of Guinea, of Colombia, of Bolivia, of Brazil would be equally glorious and desirable for an American, an Asian, an African, even a European.... Each nation liberated is a phase won in the battle for the liberation of one's own country".

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U.S. Economic Policy In Eastern Asia And Oceania

DICK KROOTH

THE Far East and Oceania are composed of the land masses of Australia, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Ryukyu Islands, Singapore, Vietnam (South), Taiwan, and Thailand. Gradually, all these countries have moved into the U.S. dollar area and account for over one-fifth of total U.S. sales abroad; the sales trend has been strongly upward. U.S. exports increased by 11% in 1964 and another 7% in 1965. In 1966, these sales exceeded \$5 billion for the first time. Shipments to the area, including special military material, totalled \$5,351 million, a rise of 12% over 1965. Two-thirds of the countries in this region registered all-time highs as importers of U.S.-produced goods. The largest purchases were made by Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, South Vietnam, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Ryukyu Islands, Laos, and Cambodia. Reduced buying was evident on the part of the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand. Nevertheless, by any measure the Far East and Oceania are part of the dollar area. Not only does the U.S. rely heavily on this area to export her commodities, but 1967 exports were estimated as having expanded still further.

The United States has made substantial inroads into the Asian markets since 1957. In the eight-year period, 1958-1965, U.S. exports to Japan rose from 24% to 30% of the total imports of that country. During the same period, U.S. exports increased as a percentage of total imports of the following nations: Republic of Korea (i.e., South Korea) from 17% to 34%; Hong Kong from 12% to 28%; Taiwan from 7% to 22%; Malaysian States from 11% to 18%, and Australia from 6% to 11%. These U.S. trade inroads, capturing a larger

share of these markets, have resulted in market losses for the United Kingdom, West Germany, other Western-European countries, and Japan.

U.S. exporters lost percentage shares of some of their markets in Asia from 1958 to 1965. In spite of a decrease in the percentage control of some markets, the U.S. recorded dollar gains. Thus for example, the U.S. share of the Philippines market slipped from 56% in 1958 to 45% in 1965. Nevertheless, the dollar amount of U.S. exports to the Philippines increased from \$274.6 million to \$348.7 million during this period. The intensification of the imperial struggle for markets in Asia is clearly registered. Both West Germany and Japan have made some inroads into these U.S. markets, and other Western European countries have also exhibited a tendency to export more to these areas as their abilities to produce commodities outstrip the abilities of their people to purchase.

The U.S. also needs the raw materials and produce which the Asian countries supply. Of the total world output, Asia and Oceania supply the following percentages of irreplaceable materials and produce:

Produce	Percent of world production		Country	1958	1965
	1958	1965			
Abaca	95%	98%	Philippines	53%	35%
Copra	87	89	South Vietnam	24	45
Jute & Allied Fibres	85	86	South Korea	63	41
Rubber, natural	92	92	Pakistan	28	35
Tea	75	75*	Taiwan	38	32
Dates	51	58	Indonesia	16	33
Tin concentrates	49	57	Laos	13	29
Rice	55	55	New Zealand	7	12
Wool, greasy	59	48	Cambodia	9%	3%
Sesame seeds	43	36	Hong Kong	10	11
Peanuts	24	35	Japan	35	29
Talc	21	38	Malaysia	2	5
Titanium concentrates	26	36	Singapore	3	5
			Thailand	18	19
			Australia	13	23

Cotton	14	15
Zinc ore	16	14
Petroleum, crude	26%	30%
Hemp	27	28*
Palm oil	19	27
Pyrites	25	26
Millet & Sorghum	26	28*
Tobacco	23	27
Fuel oils	13	17*
Chromium ore	18	17
Plastics & resins	8	17*
Mica	14	19
Manmade fibres	15	18
Sugar, raw	17	17
Lead ore	18	17*
Kerosene	14	16*
Cotton seed	15	16
Tungsten concentrates	16	15

*1964.

The capitalist nations are in stiff competition to import these important materials and produce and the U.S. is the dominant importer in many cases. On the one hand, the U.S. takes a substantial percentage of the total exports from these Asian nations. On the other hand, these countries place great reliance on the U.S. to provide foreign exchange (dollars or credits) with which they can import goods from the United States. In most cases, the percentage of the total Asian exports absorbed by the U.S. between 1958 and 1965 increased as can be seen in the following chart:

U.S. ABSORPTION OF TOTAL EXPORTS FROM

But even in those cases where the percentage decreased, the dollar amount of such exports increased in most instances.

Since these countries are dependent upon the U.S. for a large part of their foreign exchange earnings, it is important to note the types of materials, produce and manufactures that are exported. By and large, in prior years any growth in export earnings came from the exportation of "traditional" commodities—raw materials and produce. But the recent trend has been a growth in export earnings from semi-manufactured and manufactured goods. This can be observed in the following index of diversification, which is computed by dividing the growth of total export earnings by the growth of export earnings from traditional commodities. Note that the figures above 100 indicate the exportation of non-traditional commodities.

INDEX OF DIVERSIFICATION OF EXPORT EARNINGS, 1964-65 (Index 1959-61 = 100)

Philippines	..	..	101
South Vietnam	..	..	112
Pakistan	..	..	111
Taiwan	..	..	156
Hong Kong	..	..	111
Thailand	..	..	111
Malaysia	..	..	108
Cambodia	..	..	95

(Source GATT, *International Trade* 1965)

The new materials and manufactured goods being exported from these countries have been made in a large part by foreign-owned facilities utilizing inexpensive non-white labour.* Manufactured or processed commodities produced in these facilities are, of course, owned by the foreign firms.

* Longshoremen in Saigon receive about 87 cents a day after the kick-back to the *cai-tacherons*, i.e. subcontractors. In the U.S., longshoremen make more than three times that much an hour! Wages in manufacturing firms in Asian countries are a fraction of those in the United States.

Thus it should surprise no one that the capitalist countries are presently advocating the elimination of their respective tariffs on the importation of manufactured goods from Asia in order to benefit from the relatively lower wages paid to Asians. A recent statement on national policy by the Committee for Economic Development lists recommendations for lowering the capitalist nations' tariffs "based on the conviction that a better distribution of world resources and a more rational utilization of labour are in the general interest." Furthermore, assures this organization, "the high-income countries should be ready to import manufactures from the low income countries, and a policy seriously designed to help the growth of these countries must create the conditions for the expansion of such imports". By no accident, most of the capitalist nations sponsored this CED opinion,

Eastern petroleum, the investment in manufacturing, trade, and other industries exhibited a steady rise. This is illustrated in the following table:

A country by-country examination of U.S. investments in Asia reveals the degree to which the American companies are dominating most of the economies in this part of the "Free World."

Let us start with Hong Kong. Although there is no available data on the total of foreign investments or U.S. investments in Hong Kong, many U.S. companies are active in manufacturing, import and distribution, banking and insurance. The Hong Kong Government welcomes all foreign investments and there is no restriction on the repatriation of profits; nor is there any other Governmental restriction on or interference with profit-taking. In all fields except heavy industry, investment prospects are pro-

U.S. DIRECT INVESTMENTS IN ASIA & OCEANIA BY MAJOR INDUSTRIES

Year	All industries	(Book values in millions of dollars)						Other Industries
		Mining & Smelting	Petro-leum	Manufacturing	Public Utilities	Trade		
1962	.. 2,500	29	1,755	354	37	170	155	
1963	.. 2,793	32	1,920	430	40	199	171	
1964	.. 3,112	34	2,054	556	55	225	187	
1965	.. 3,611	37	2,384	673	61	253	203	

and the research and policy committee drawing it up included such notables as G. Collado, the Executive Vice-President of Standard Oil Company (New Jersey) and Fred J. Borch, President of General Electric Company. Both of these companies, to say nothing of the dozens of others helping to shape the CED policy, have branches all over the Third World.

Export of U.S. Capital

The export of U.S. capital to Asia is designed to stimulate the production of manufactured and other commodities and to obtain raw materials and produce. From 1962 to 1965, U.S. direct investments in Asia increased steadily. While the greatest concentration of investment was in Middle-

ving lucrative for American ventures,

In Indonesia, recorded direct U.S. investments were \$160 million in 1962 and \$167 million in 1963. All of these funds were invested in manufacturing, trade, and other industries. In 1967, the U.S. envisioned considerable improvement in the investment climate in response to favourable investment laws, an investment guarantee agreement with the U.S., and a governmental decision to return to former owners the enterprises previously "nationalized." Major U.S. oil firms, which had attempted to continue operations during the period of Indonesian "nationalization," have thus been fully rehabilitated. Apparently, all of these new rules and Governmental policies have whetted the profit appetite of

many U.S. firms now considering investing in Indonesia.

In Malaysia, U.S. companies are in stiff competition with their British counterparts. While the U.K. is the major investor, the U.S. share is recorded as about \$60 million. This is divided into mainly the oil industry and rubber and tin production in West Malaysia, and forest products in East Malaysia. Although there is no U.S. tax incentive agreement, there is a U.S. investment guarantee agreement in effect. This has resulted in an influx of capital, especially into industries where other incentives are offered.

The Philippines has seen a meteoric rise in U.S. direct investments, which went up steadily from \$375 million in 1962 to \$529 million in 1965. Almost all of these investments were in manufacturing, other processing industries, public utilities and trade facilities. Articles VI and VII of the "Revised U.S.-Philippine Trade Agreement" (which expires in 1974) accords U.S. investors entry rights and national treatment in all areas of enterprise. The recent spark of nationalist fervour, combined with the non-existence of extensive publicized foreign incentive laws will, perhaps, slow the inflow of U.S. private capital. But, it must be noted, there is no system for the approval for the inflow of foreign capital, and this makes it even more difficult for Philippine nationalists to oppose what is not legally recorded.

In Singapore U.S. investments exceed \$50 million. Most foreign capital is placed in oil refining, flour milling, and numerous light industries. Singapore has enticed U.S. capital through a Government-maintained investment promotion centre in New York City. Also, the U.S. investment guarantee programme is applicable. Furthermore, American companies producing in Singapore for export have been given special incentives.

The U.S. investment climate in Taiwan is one of the most lucrative in the Far East. Of the total private foreign investments (including associated loans) of \$170 million, \$94 million emanates from the U.S. The U.S. investments are principally in factories

specializing in fertilizers, textiles, pharmaceuticals, petroleum products, electronics, and construction. Taiwan lures private U.S. capital through liberal tax incentives.

Cambodia and Laos

Cambodia and Laos have limited amounts of U.S. private investment. Cambodia maintains cautious diplomatic relations with the U.S. Furthermore, AID investment guarantees are not available, and U.S. investors are not venturing there. Up to 1963, foreign investments were in French-owned rubber plantations and were valued at about \$2 million. As for Laos, an AID investment guarantee agreement between the U.S. and that nation was signed in December 1964. To date, however, U.S. investments are negligible. Foreign investments are confined to banking, tin mining and export-import. Looking to the future, foreign investors are relying on the fact that there are absolutely no restrictions on the inflow of capital or the repatriation of profits.

In the Ryukyu Islands total foreign investment through June 30, 1966, was \$19.7 million, 55% of which was from the U.S. The Government actively encourages foreign investments. The major industries where foreign investments are located are food processing, tobacco, textiles and apparel, fabricated metal manufactures and ceramics.

Thailand and South Vietnam are not exceptions in the pattern of U.S. private investments in Asia. Although direct private investments are relatively small, they are increasing in response to the exploitable labour and resources in these areas.

Let us consider Thailand first. Total foreign investments (and associated loans) are estimated at close to \$300 million, with the U.S. accounting for about one-third. U.S. future investment prospects are likely: A U.S.-Thai all-risk foreign guarantee agreement is in effect. Also in the wind is the probable U.S. ratification of an "Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation," and a new "Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations."

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Vietnam

Vietnam is a special case owing to the aggressive United States war machine operating there. Foreign investments must be considered in the light of the history of that struggling nation. French investments, for example, still account for a large share of *direct* foreign private investments. This is due to the fact that the French began investing in the early colonial period. They still own 14 large rubber plantations, 7 tea and coffee plantations, 4 large electric power plants, a tyre and tube factory, a beer and soft drink firm, the largest cigarette company, a motorcycle plant, a radio and clock assembly plant, and many other enterprises. Other nationality groups with investments in South Vietnam include Italians, Japanese, British, Indians, Chinese who have adopted Vietnamese citizenship, and U.S. citizens. It is this latter group which we shall examine.

The United States Government has held out six basic incentives to private U.S. investors in South Vietnam. They can be listed as: (1) A five-year exemption from profit tax payments for industrial and commercial enterprises. (2) Duty-free importation into South Vietnam of industrial machinery and spare parts necessary for investment. (3) Non-discriminatory treatment for all American enterprises investing in South Vietnam. (4) AID investment guarantees of 100% against any loss through war, insurrection, expropriation, and currency inconvertibility. (5) An extended risk guarantee of up to 75% of the investment against all risks, including normal business risks. (6) Cooley Fund loans made from a portion of those piasters credited to the U.S. Government in payment for U.S. surplus agricultural commodities. Furthermore, present Vietnamese law does not require that foreign investments include South Vietnamese investor-participation, and the scarcity of private indigenous capital has resulted in the puppet Government encouraging as much foreign private ownership as is feasible.

These lures to private U.S. capital have not gone wanting, although the amount of such investments is shroud-

ed in secrecy. For example, the U.S. Government reports that such investments amount to approximately \$5 million and that the largest investments are: \$1 million in a paper mill, \$300,000 in dairy, \$300,000 in a textile plant, about \$2 million in oil storage facilities, and \$1.5 million in smaller investments. But the U.S. Government prefers, for obvious reasons, to ignore the operations of many important business ventures in South Vietnam. For example, the PX branches in Vietnam are doing a rousing business selling commodities produced in the U.S., Japan, and even in capitalistic-oriented enterprises in South Vietnam. As troop concentrations have been increased, PX branches in Vietnam increased their monthly sales from \$6.9 million in January 1966 to \$30 million in September 1967. While the PX is not a private investment, its retail sales outlets are comparable to such profit-making investments. *Business Week* (November 4, 1967) reports that "... the huge buildup of U.S. troops has made the Army-Air Force PX in Saigon and its hundreds of outlets throughout South Vietnam one of the world's giant retail operations." The prominent U.S. companies selling their goods through these taxpayer-financed giant retail operations are Bell and Howell, Kodak, and Polaroid in cameras, Pepsi-Cola, Coca-Cola, and Seven-up in soft drinks, Budweiser and Rheingold in beer, etc., etc. Thus private commodity producers are profitable exporting their goods to South Vietnam and marketing them through taxpayer-subsidized PX retail outlets. The taxpayers are making the "investment" which private commercial enterprises ordinarily bear.

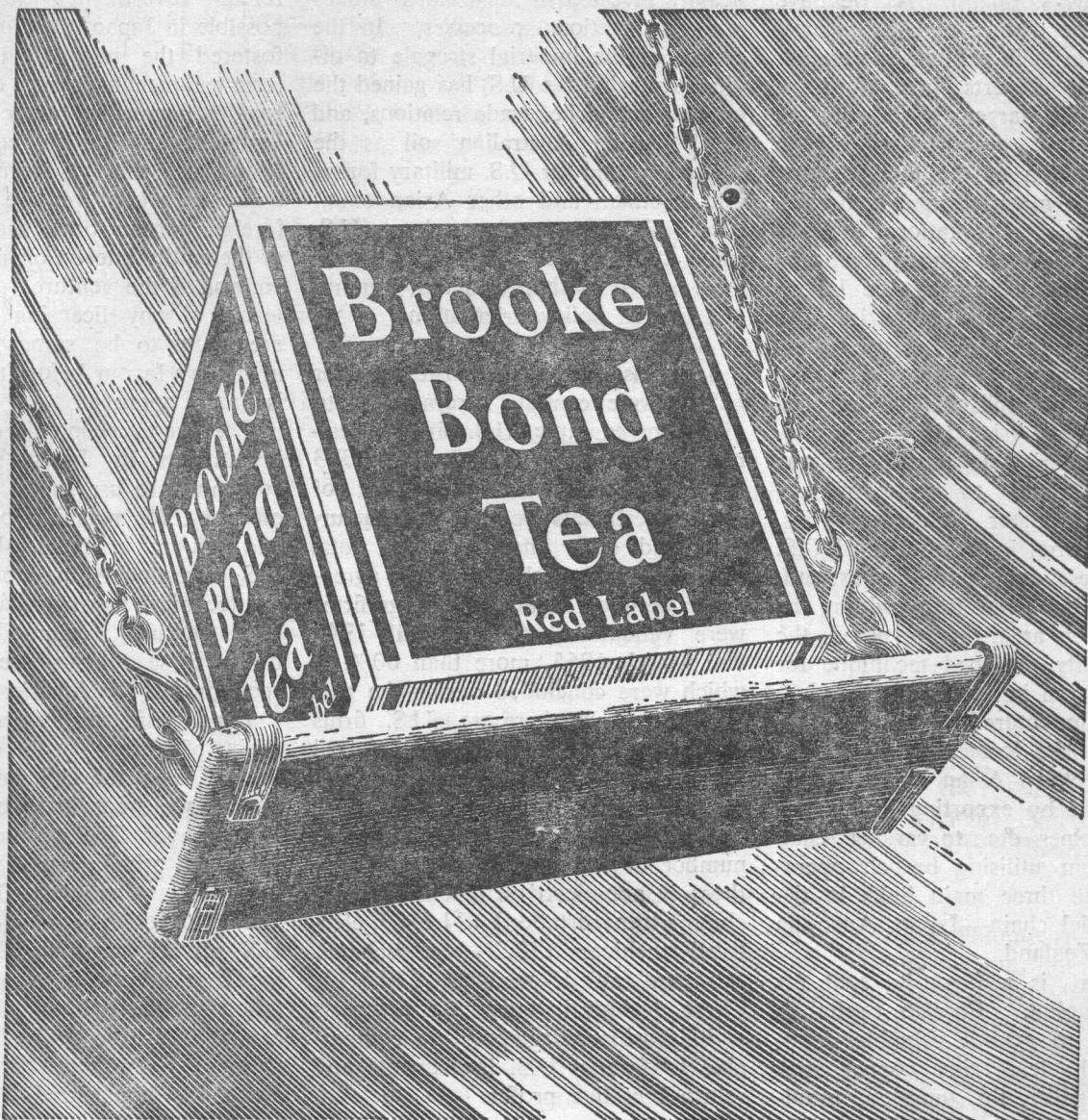
Another example of private U.S. investments in Vietnam is the banking facilities. The number of private banks in South Vietnam increased from 10 in 1959 to 21 in 1966, two of which were branches of the first and second largest U.S. banks—the Bank of America and Chase-Manhattan Bank. Both of these U.S. banks are acting as comprador-financiers, the major portion of their South Vietnam profits coming from money

lending. For example, they have an agreement with the U.S. Government whereby the latter places its Embassy, Agency for International Development, and military funds in the former. Then the two banks lend these funds to other banks at about 4% interest a year. The U.S. Government is the primary depositor in these banks: Of total deposits of nearly billion piasters (official rate 118 piasters=\$1 U.S.) in each of these two banks, about 80% are U.S. Government funds. When these funds are lent out to other banks, the borrowing banks re-lend up to 200% of their deposits to commercial clients. One-half of the total deposits in those two American banks are loaned in this fashion, and the profit thereon amounts to about \$340,000 a year (i.e., 1 billion piasters or nearly \$8.5 million loaned at 4% interest a year). This is quite a lucrative set-up: The two largest U.S. banks are using U.S. taxpayers' funds to loan to other private banks in Vietnam at a profit of \$340,000 per year! U.S. banker opinion notwithstanding, this is a form of comprador financing. Comments one banker: "It's a lot easier to lend money to other banks (in South Vietnam) at 4% interest than to investigate local businessmen for their credit rating. We are not planning on establishing anything like the comprador system." (*Business Week*, October 14, 1967, p. 94.) Although the traditional French comprador system in Vietnam relied upon a "native" with a knowledge of the local business community and who would "guarantee" the reliability of the loan client, the U.S. banking variant of this system in using the local banks as the compradors makes it no less a colonial technique.

Obviously, U.S. private investments in South Vietnam are quite substantial. These two examples could be expanded upon and other examples could be raised. But they would only corroborate the conclusion that such private investments are being undertaken to enrich corporate America.

Links in the Chain

All the Asian countries we have



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discussed are subsidiary links in an imperial chain between the U.S., Japan, Australia, and, to a limited degree, New Zealand. As we have observed, the pattern of U.S. imperial operations in Asia exhibits the expansion of U.S. exports in capturing a larger and larger share of the markets, the importation of a large proportion of the total exports of important materials and commodities of these Asian nations, and the exportation of increasing amounts of private capital to exploit the labour and resources of these countries. As we shall see, the U.S. has used Australia and Japan as her economic bulwark in accomplishing her imperial expansion in Asia. Japan not only provides materials to pursue the war in Vietnam and to set up military complexes in other Asian countries, but the imperial joint-ventures of U.S. and Japanese companies are expanding the dollar area from within the enlarging yen area. As we noted, the most recently designed technique for U.S. expansion in Asia is the production of manufactured goods in U.S.-owned factories located on Asian soil and using cheap Asian labour. This is facilitated by exporting raw materials, medicines, etc., to various Asian nations from utilising branch operations in the three main links in the U.S. imperial chain—Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

Australia is a favourite spot for imperial capital. Foreign capital is moving in to exploit valuable deposits of coal, lead, zinc, copper, iron ore, gold, silver, tin, tungsten, uranium, antimony, wolfram, bauxite, zircon, manganese, cobalt, and cadmium. Current estimates reveal that exports of minerals—particularly iron ore—will double from \$300 million in 1965 to \$600 million annually by 1970. Accordingly, private foreign investments in Australia amount to over \$6 billion, of which the U.S. share is over \$1.5 billion. Between 1962 and 1965, U.S. direct investments in Australia rose from a book value of \$1,097 million to \$1,677 million. This investment is heaviest in manufacturing (automobiles, chemicals, food processing), but

mining, oil refining, and cattle breeding are becoming increasingly important. British and Japanese capital is also heavily invested in Australia's mines and production processes. In the course of the imperial struggle to divide Australia, the U.S. has gained the upper hand in her trade relations, and is also using Australian soil as the staging ground for U.S. military forays into Vietnam and other Asian countries. To some extent at least, U.S. trade and private capital in Australia have helped to shape her anti-communist foreign policy orientation.

Japan is another favourite spot for U.S. private capital. From 1962 to 1965, for example, U.S. direct investments in Japan increased from \$373 million to \$676 million. Most of these investments were in manufacturing and other industries. A total of 3,062 technical assistance agreements between Japan and foreign firms were validated between April 1949 and March 1965, more than 60% of which were concluded during the past five years. Furthermore, U.S. firms accounted for over 60% of the total number of licensing agreements concluded during the 16-year period. The industries accounting for the largest number of licensing agreements were those in non-electrical machinery (excluding transportation) (31.6%), electrical machinery (22.2%), and chemicals and allied products (20.5%). These technical assistance contracts and licensing agreements are comparable to foreign U.S. investments and return lucrative profits.

Another indication of U.S. private investments in Japan is the joint ventures with Japanese companies. According to official Japanese statistics, there were 536 validated joint ventures with foreigners during the period from April 1950 to March 1965, valued at \$227 million. U.S. firms accounted for about 70% of the foreign capital invested in these joint ventures. These investments have been made in key industries. A relatively large proportion of them were made in petroleum, machinery, and chemicals.

Japan guards her economic "inde-

pence," however much U.S. companies would like to "go it alone" on Japanese soil. While all forms of foreign investments are theoretically possible in Japan, the Government has fostered the negotiation of limited-term technical assistance contracts with royalty payments, rather than the investment of foreign equity capital. Moreover, the Government rarely approves a joint venture in which the foreign partner owns more than half of the equity interest or has managerial control of the venture. Likewise, the terms of any licensing arrangements are likely to be somewhat rewritten in Japan's favour before the agreement is finally approved.

The overall economic effect of U.S. investments in Japan permits U.S. companies to use Japan as the jump-off point for reaching both Japanese and yen-area markets. When private U.S. investments in Japan are made via technical assistance agreements or joint ventures, commodities exports from these Japan-based industries spell profits for American firms.

Imperialism can operate between chains of nations. In the case of "Free World" Asia, the U.S. imperial operations place great stress on Japan and Australia as Trojan horses holding American private capital to pillage the other Asian nations. This is done mainly through commodity exports. U.S. private investors, with the aid of the U.S. Government, have no hesitation in directly intervening with their capital in all the Asian "Free World" nations. Even then when these investments are jeopardized, the U.S. relies upon Australia as a military staging base and on Japan as a supplier of war materials. In this way, the United States economic policy in Asia is sustained using Japan and Australia as the main links in her imperial Asian chain.

The factual economic materials for this article came, in the main, from various publications of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of International Commerce. The political implications are, of course, conclusions of the present writer.

Humanisation Of War ?

TARUN CHATTERJEE

IS everything permissible in war? In the 19th century at least it was not so. The accepted principle was that States may conduct wars against the military forces of the enemy, but not against the civilian population. This principle was first violated, if one may describe it so, when in 1866 the Prussian Army used the "Needle Gun", an atrocious weapon, to defeat Austria. In 1870-71 the French too followed suit with their 'Chassepot', though without success. But public opinion in those times was conscious enough to condemn such weapons of mass murder designed by scientists. The inherent ethical danger was recognised, leading to the Red Cross and the Geneva Conventions forbidding the use of weapons of mass murder against the civilian population.

The first violator was the army of the Kaiser. Many noted German scientists took part in innovating weapons which did not spare the civilians. The First World War began in the old fashion, with army marches and battles. But soon its character changed. The combat zones became stationary and trench warfare followed. Attempts at breakthroughs were made with concentration of artillery. The soldier became more and more a mere target of destruction by the superhuman forces of technical sciences. He was killed by weapons concentrated far away from him.

Came the Second World War, air raids on cities and towns, Nazi concentration camp mass murders, the V missiles and the atom bomb which spared nobody, men, women or children. Time has covered the concentration camps and mass burial grounds with grass and weeds but the memory of millions of victims lives on and is revived by the blood spilled in Korea, in Vietnam and other places. Nothing remains of the high ideals of "humanisation of war" though more than 20 years ago the victorious Powers approved the Nuremberg Charter against war crimes, when, pressing the

charges against the war criminals the U.S. chief prosecutor, Mr Jackson, stressed that "certain acts and violations of treaties were crimes irrespective of who committed them—Germany or the USA..."

The factor that has established itself as decisive in war is the power of industry and technical inventiveness of the scientists. And in the wake of wars of conquest by imperialist powers the civilian population always suffers, even after cessation of hostilities.

The barriers against destruction of civilians completely broke down in World War II as a result of the development of the air force. It was Germany which took the lead in air raids on cities like Warsaw, Rotterdam, Oslo, London, Coventry. The British paid them back in their own coin.

The British decision on bombing German cities had two leading advocates—Tizard and Lindemann, two talented scientists turned administrator and politician. Thanks to his prime role in developing radar which enabled the small RAF to win the Battle of Britain, Tizard was made chairman of the Committee of Defence. As regards Lindemann, no doubt an expert in technical warfare, his more valuable capital was his friendship with Churchill, who had a peership conferred on him after appointing him first scientific adviser. Thus he came to be known as Lord Cherwell.

It was Lord Cherwell who in 1942 advised the bombing of workers' residential areas in big German cities. Tizard did not agree because he believed raids on military targets would be more fruitful. Churchill sided with Cherwell. Mass raids followed. But the bombing was not militarily effective. It was found that Lord Cherwell's estimates of the damage that would be caused by such air raids were six times too high.

Evil was followed by greater evil. The Germans later used their super-

weapons, the V-bombs which were the first instance of indiscriminate killing by remote control without any personal risk or responsibility. As the bombs had no definite targets, the victims were pedestrians. (One could also cite the torpedoing of the Lusitania in the First World War as a precedent of killing non-military population). During the Second World War the Nazis beat all records of cruelty and barbarousness by their deliberate attempts to exterminate the civilian population of occupied countries and regions by killing them en masse in concentration camps. The Western Powers too, sometimes out of political motive, resorted to starvation of besieged cities and countries, even after cessation of hostilities. The only exception was the Soviet Union, which did not take to bombing of civilian population.

The Terror Bomb

The chapter of nuclear weapons opened. In this case too, Hitlerite Germany was the first to split the uranium. Under the circumstances the scientists of the Allied Powers had no alternative but to work on the Bomb. But fortunately Germany was defeated without using it. Was this new weapon necessary for defeating Japan? The Allies knew that Russia would enter the war against Japan three months after the fall of Germany. As the Red Army was about to march into Manchuria and Japan was sending peace feelers through diplomatic channels, two atom bombs were dropped, one on Hiroshima and the other on Nagasaki, two cities which were by no means military targets.

Here, too, was a second edition of the Cherwell-Tizard dispute and something more. The U.S. nuclear hawks headed by General Groves wanted to demonstrate their terrible power. Secondly, the overriding political consideration of the Truman administration was to prevent the Red Army from landing on the Japanese mainland by staging an atom-struck surrender, and thus, unlike Germany, to save the whole of Japan for the capitalist world system. Anyway General Groves did not even let the

scientists (who made the bomb) know of the decision to use the new weapon because they had accurately predicted the long-term consequences of exploding the bomb over Japan. On Groves' initiative President Truman's advisory committee of 'scientists' followed Lord Cherwell's example. So nothing remained of the Geneva Conventions on humanisation of war.

The question of course does not boil down to whether poison gas, grenades or Lazy Dogs are more humane than the atom bomb, but to permissibility of using poison, always considered an instrument of cowardly murder, as a war weapon. Chemical and gas warfare (in Abyssinia, Korea and Vietnam) was a decisive moral defeat. Today a State like the USA hardly shrinks from putting one of it to use if it should prove a military advantage.

In order to find out the result of the collapse of all human considerations in war one can consider the three big wars of this century. In World War I, of the total 10 million victims,

95% were soldiers and 5% civilians. In World War II, 50 million perished. Of them 52% were soldiers and 48% were civilians. Of the 9 million victims of the Korean war 84% were civilians and only 16% soldiers. In the present war in Vietnam civilian casualties must be more. So what remains of the traditional idea of a hero's death on the battlefield for one's motherland, for one's children and wife? Isn't it a fairy tale in the age of dying but deadly imperialism?

The question is: since it has always been like this, will it always be like this? Attempts to put nuclear technology on a peaceful international basis have so far not borne any fruit. As Professor Max Born writes, "the development of international ballistic missiles in competition between the two great Powers "is continuing, with the exploration of space programmes serving as a cover-up. Each of the Great Powers now has enough nuclear weapons to annihilate the human race many times over." Politicians know

what is at stake. This is to maintain their monopoly in the balance of terror under the camouflage of their chatter about non-proliferation, as if the danger to humanity does not come from the huge stockpiles they hold, but from new and would-be possessors of the bomb. What happened in Cuba? Who is threatening the Vietnamese with the Bomb? The point is that the balance of terror is unstable and can topple. The way out is not hypocritical talk of non-proliferation, but the overcoming of the paralysis in the struggle for peace. It is much more fruitful to fight against and assist in every possible way wars of degenerate mass murder and to pillory the murderers of the civilian population, violators of the Geneva Conventions, as the Nuremberg Charter demands. And scientists, of all persons, bear a great social responsibility in this fight because it is they who innovate the weapons of mass murder.

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LIPTON'S MEANS GOOD TEA

LGC-103

SEPTEMBER 28, 1968

Lessons Of A Strike

COMMENTATOR

TO people accustomed to regard newspapers as a public utility the prolonged strike in the industry must have been a source of annoyance. Most of the bigger papers, which command the bulk of the newspaper circulation in the country, were not available, and readers had to make do with whatever paper they could get. But newspaper habits, like many others, are difficult to change; one always pines for one's familiar fare, though there may not be much to choose between one paper and another. This known attitude of readers sustained newspaper proprietors in their long war of nerves with their employees. They knew that within days of resumption they would be able to reach their old circulation and profusion of advertisement. They also do not lack in the necessary ingenuity to make up for the huge loss they have incurred during the days their papers could not come out.

The strike was despite the journalists. The decision was not theirs, and they were, in most cases, passive supporters of the strike. The non-journalists struck; the journalists decided not to take any step to break the strike, though, apart from the impropriety of it, the journalists would not have been able to bring out the papers even if the decision had been otherwise. In their egotism journalists have always considered themselves the more important limb of a newspaper organisation, and the owners have helped to foster this illusion to perpetuate a division between their employees. The strike should have knocked out this delusion, for it has shown that newspapers are products of cooperative effort and the so-called intellectual work of journalists is only a part of a total endeavour without which no newspaper can come out.

This sounds trite no doubt, but it seems that the failure of the journa-

lists to grasp fully this simple truth made them adopt an ambivalent attitude towards the non-journalists' strike. Journalists have a separate dispute with their employers, and participation in the strike would not have resolved that dispute. There was a statutory wage board, and the dispute over its award is awaiting settlement in court. But this need not have prevented the journalists from joining the strike to express their solidarity with their colleagues in other departments, especially as they knew that with the non-journalists on strike the papers could not come out. Instead they passed a resolution which assumed that they had an option in a situation in which they had none.

An opportunity to make amends for their past folly was thus thrown away by the journalists. Ever since the Government's announcement in the first Lok Sabha of its decision to appoint a Press Commission the journalists' lobby has been active, particularly in New Delhi. Even now there are too many journalists' organisations differing from one another on vital issues; fifteen years ago they were more disunited. What then came to be known as the views of journalists was actually the opinion of some active lobbyists among New Delhi's newspaper men, most of them special correspondents. As a result the Press Commission's recommendation practically ignored the role of non-journalists in newspaper production. The action taken by the Government on these recommendations could not be otherwise. The journalists condescended to be described as workmen for job security and improved service conditions; but special laws had to be enacted setting them apart as a privileged class not governed by ordinary labour laws.

In their hour of triumph they forgot their colleagues in other departments. The recommendations of the

first wage committee for journalists added to the already existing disparity between journalists and non-journalists. The former were assured of what in those days were handsome wages while the latter continued to get a pittance. The statutory obligation to increase the wages of journalists was used by proprietors as a pretext to freeze practically the wages of non-journalists, embittering the relation between the two. The sudden affluence of journalists was largely at the cost of non-journalists, for surely no proprietor had met the higher wage bill out of his own profits.

Not many voices were raised at that time against the unfairness of this development. Even before the first wage committee's recommendations had been implemented, journalists were better paid than non-journalists, and improvement of the service conditions of the latter should have been given at least equal priority. Not only was that not done, the conditions of non-journalists were allowed to deteriorate further. The few feeble voices that were raised were silenced by militant working journalists who argued that in no industry, wide disparities between the service conditions of one group of workmen and another could continue for long and the movement of working journalists, though unconnected with the lot of other employees in newspaper establishments, was indirectly helping the struggle of non-journalists for living wages. A virtue was thus sought to be made of plain selfishness.

Anyone who was connected with newspapers in those days will remember how bitter the relation between journalists and non-journalists in every newspaper establishment was. Despairing of justice from employers and support from journalists, the non-journalists started organising themselves. The All-India Newspaper Employees Federation, the organisation of non-journalists, is of much later origin than the Federation of Working Journalists, but in its short span of about ten years it has shown much greater unity and determination than the journalists' organisation. This was necessary for

FRONTIER

the survival of the AINEF, for it knew from the beginning that it would have to follow a different path from the IFWJ. The movement of working journalists has been little else than lobbying. It is not for nothing that reporters covering legislatures and governmental activities have been given weightage in successive wage board recommendations. The hierarchical system among journalists is nowhere more pronounced and rigid than among reporters, at the apex of which are special correspondents accredited to the Government of India. It is difficult to understand how reporting a government which is incapable of either thinking or acting in a complex situation can be a more responsible job than covering, say, mass actions or natural calamities; yet on that ground special correspondents are more privileged than other categories of reporters.

The fact is that the Government has a vested interest in special correspondents. How a news is presented depends largely on them. All journalists have to work with a rigid framework of policy; establishment papers are not in the habit of criticising the Government, except when their interests are directly threatened, and such occasions are rare. Even then, correspondents enjoy a measure of freedom; they can highlight certain features of a decision, casually mention some others, and omit some altogether if they so choose; they may allow personal relations to colour their writing. A government which functions through an elaborate network of patronage knows that correspondents' discretion may be exercised in its favour if they can be kept on the right side. They have, therefore been practically suborned into an elevated status.

Despite their own caste system, journalists as a class have been able to improve their lot considerably in the last one decade or so. The non-journalists, on the other hand, had to wait all these years and suffer patiently the discrimination. A fresh injustice was done to them when a statutory wage board was set up for the journalists while the non-journalists had to be

satisfied with a non-statutory board. The attitude of employers to wage boards is not unknown to the Government: while they challenge the recommendations of statutory wage boards in a court of law, recommendations of non-statutory wage boards they simply refuse to implement.

Whether the verdict of the court goes in their favour or not, the appointment of a statutory wage board for journalists had ensured a legal remedy. Of course, the wage board itself was a quasi-judicial body presided over as it was by a high court judge and a provision for further judicial scrutiny of its recommendations may appear time-consuming, if not redundant. Yet journalists had an alternative course which was denied to non-journalists. After the strike Mr Jaisukhlal Hathi announced that the Government was examining if the recommendations of the non-journalists' wage board could be made statutory; he gave an impression that the proposal was legally feasible. The discrimination seems to have been made as a matter of policy, and employers being what they are, the primary responsibility for the strike is of the Government.

The IFWJ has helped none by its attitude towards the strike. There have been, of course, individual acts of participation; the president of the IFWJ courted arrest in Bombay in a demonstration; in Calcutta also the involvement of some of the journalists in the strike was no less than any of the non-journalists. But journalists as a whole have maintained an aloofness as if the strike was none of their business and they have been willy-nilly drawn into it. They forgot that in a trial of strength between employers and employees the collective strength of the latter is undermined if some employees stand apart; passivity in such matters indirectly helps employers.

Perhaps the IFWJ wanted to evade a firm decision on this issue. The indecision has not helped the organisation. It created a rift among journalists, some of whom thought that since they were not participants in the strike they could join during the pen-

dency of the strike. None of them could be called strike-breakers, for they were only carrying the IFWJ's argument to its logical conclusion. Even if they worked harder than ever before, the papers, with the non-journalists on strike, would not have been out. As their joining would not have altered the situation, they could not be accused of violating the IFWJ decision. On the other hand, there was a group, admittedly in a minority, who made the non-journalists' struggle their own. They have become branded and are exposed to certain obvious risks. Both these could be avoided had the IFWJ decided to participate in the strike; the unity of journalists would not have been impaired then and a healthier relationship between journalists and non-journalists would have been forged. The danger of victimisation would also have been less.

Such lapses are likely to recur as long as journalists and non-journalists have separate unions. Their identity of interest and abject dependence on each other have been established. Perhaps journalists fear that in a common union or federation they will be lost as they will always remain in a minority. This is largely a legacy of past attitudes; if other categories of newspaper employees can unite and act in the common interest, there is no reason why the interest of journalists will not be safe in a common union.

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SRC-88

Nonsense Rhymes

By Sukumar Ray

Translated by SATYAJIT RAY

Baburam the Snake-charmer

Hullo there, Baburam—what have you got in there ?
Snakes ? Aha —and do you think there's one that you could spare ?
You know, I'd love to have one, but let me tell you this—
The ones that bite are'nt right for me—nor the ones that hiss.

I'd also skip the ones that butt,
As well the ones that whistle,
Or the ones that slink about
Or show their fangs, or bristle.

As for eating habits, I think it would be nice
To go for ones that only take a meal of milk and rice.
I'm sure you know the kind of snake I want from what I've said,
Do let me have one, Baburam, so I could bash its head.

Old Tickler

Go East or West, go North or South, by land or sea or air,
But before you go, make sure old Tickler isn't there.
Tickler is a terror, and I'll tell you what he's after—
He'll have you stuffing tickle-chops until you choke with laughter.
It's hard to tell just where he lives, and harder to restrict him,
He's always just around the corner looking for a victim.
His method is quite simple: he'll grab you by your sleeve
And tell you anecdotes which he insists you must believe.
He thinks they're very funny, while others find them grim,
(They have to keep on laughing, though, so as to humour him).
One wouldn't mind the stories if they were all one had to bear,
He also uses tickle-feathers, which is most unfair,
And so he goes on cackling, 'Oh, but don't you think it's funny—
Aunt Kitty selling pigeons' eggs and figs and cloves and honey !
The eggs are long and conical, the cloves are convoluted,
The figs have arabesques on them nicely executed.
From dawn 'til dusk Aunt Kitty sings a string of motley airs,
All mews and barks and brays and neighs (Aunt Kitty calls them Prayers').
Saying so, he brings his hand behind your back to pinch you,
At which you have to laugh unless you want that he should lynch you.

Stew Much !

A duck once met a porcupine ; they formed a corporation
Which called itself a Porcuduck (a beastly conjugation !)
A stork to a turtle said, 'Let's put my head upon your torso ;
We who are so pretty now, as Stortle would be more so !'

এক্ষণ

সাহিত্য ও সংস্কৃতি বিষয়ক
দ্বিমাসিক পত্রিকা

কাল' মার্ক'স বিশেষ সংখ্যা

১৯৬৮

॥ রচনাসংচাচ ॥

কাল' হাইনরিখ মার্ক'স : মুরারি ঘোষ ॥
কাল' মার্ক'সের ধর্মচিন্তা : সোমেন্দ্র মুখো-
পাধ্যায় ॥ মার্ক'সের ইতিহাসতত্ত্ব : হীরেন্দ্র-
নাথ মুখোপাধ্যায় ॥ ভারত প্রসঙ্গে মার্ক'স :
সন্নীল সেন ॥ অপর্যাপ্ত মার্ক'স : জন
লেইস ॥ মার্ক'স ও একালের মানবতাবাদ :
অ্যাডাম শাফ ॥ মার্ক'সবাদ ও মার্ক'সবাদী :
শ্যামল চক্রবর্তী ॥ মার্ক'সবাদ ও বিজ্ঞান :
প্রতুল বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ॥ মার্ক'স ও সর্বহারা-
শ্রেণী : পল সুইজ ॥ দাস ক্যাপিট্যাল ও
আমি : ক্লিস্টেফার হিল ॥ মার্ক'স ও মানব-
সত্ত্ব : গৌতম সান্যাল ॥ কাল' মার্ক'স ও
অ্যালিয়েনেশন : সতীন্দ্রনাথ চক্রবর্তী ॥
মার্ক'সীয় জ্ঞানতত্ত্ব প্রসঙ্গে : ব্যারোজ ডান-
হ্যাম ॥ মার্ক'সবাদের সমালোচনা : দেবীপ্রসাদ
চট্টোপাধ্যায় ॥ মার্ক'সবাদ ও বিশ্বব্রহ্ম :
অর্থনৈতিক অধিকারী : অমিয় দাশগুপ্ত ॥ 'বৃজের্যা'
অর্থশাস্ত্রে মার্ক'সীয় প্রভাব : মার্টিন
ব্রনফেল্ডেনার ॥ মার্ক'সের ক্যাপিট্যাল : মারিস
ডব ॥ কাল' মার্ক'স ও নিগম্বত্তু : অমলেন্দ্-
গুহ ॥ সদ্বল ও কাল' মার্ক'স : অলোকরঞ্জন
দাশগুপ্ত ॥ কাল' মার্ক'সের কবিতা : সমর
সেন-অনুবুদ্ধিত ॥ মার্ক'সবাদ ও সার্থ শতাব্দী :
রজনী পাম দত্ত ॥ 'এশিয়াটিক ব্যবস্থা'
প্রসঙ্গে : দীপ্তেন্দ্র বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ॥ প্রাচ ও
প্রতিচ্ছে বিজ্ঞান ও সমাজ : জোসেফ
নীডহ্যাম ॥

এবং

কালানুকূলিক ঘটনাপঞ্জি ॥ মার্ক'সের রচনা-
বলী ॥ বাংলায় মার্ক'সচৰ্চা ॥

সংস্কৃত । ৪০০ পৃষ্ঠা

দাম সাড়ে তিন টাকা মাত্র

এক্ষণ কার্বলয় / ৭৩ মহাআগা গান্ধী রোড
কলকাতা ৯

The lizard with the parrot's head thought ; Taking to the chilly
After years of eating worms is absolutely silly.
A prancing goat—one wonders why—was driven by a need
To bequeath its upper portion to a crawling centipede.
The giraffe with grasshopper's limbs reflected : why should I
Go for walks in grassy fields, now that I can fly ?
The nice contented cow will doubtless get a frightful shock
On finding out its lower limbs belong to a fighting cock.
It's obvious the Whalephant is not a happy notion :
The head goes for the jungle, while the tail turns to the ocean,
The lion's lack of horns distressed him greatly, so
He teamed up with a deer—now watch his antlers grow !

What Is The Good Of Writing In English ?

ANIRUDHA GUPTA

IN his *Continent of Circe* Nirad C. Chaudhuri says that each time he wrote a book in English he sent it first to his publishers for careful editing. "All writers", he adds, "even the best, need the help of publisher's editor, and we the writers of Babu English need it most."

This comes from the pen of one whose place as a writer in English is now assured; I wonder if what we the lesser mortals write and pass off as English deserve even the trouble of editing. The fault is not ours but that of the language. "The use of preposition", says that delightful handbook, *An ABC of English Usage*, "before nouns in fixed or common phrases . . . is generally a matter of instinct with the Englishman". The average "Briton" will never know the agony we undergo in choosing correct prepositions for the construction of simple sentences.

The trouble does not lie in writing grammatically (our teacher at school taught us grammar by correcting the published speeches of the Viceroy), but in the fact that we have to formulate first our sentences so that we may project our thoughts into them. Let me make this point clear: an Englishman, like a Tamilian, or Bengali or Punjabi, would write whatever thoughts come to his mind and—un-

less he is too self-conscious—let his style of writing take care of itself. Indeed, we do so in our mother tongue every day. When I write a piece in Bengali I do not ponder what my style is going to be; but I do so, even unconsciously, as soon as I attempt writing in English. The tortuous process can only be understood by analogies: we search for words before we grasp the idea; we raise the scaffolding before the architects' plan has been delivered into our hands. The result is disastrous: the fountain of creative thinking dries up at the very source.

This aspect needs a great deal of pondering. If writing in English—even bad English—had not interfered with our process of thinking it would not have been so bad, but when this happens we cease to be thinking men. Lord knows, I do not like Malcolm Muggeridge and his jokes, but when he writes that "in expiring, the British Raj perpetuated itself in the persons of its successors" and that "Nehru was the last Viceroy", I daresay I see his point. The physical injuries of British colonial rule will heal with the passage of time, but so long as English continues to be the badge of India's elite culture, we cannot forgive the "Raj" for what it has made of us. "The captains and the kings

depart", I quote from Muggeridge again, "the M.A.s remain; the White-man's burden, when it grows too heavy and unrewarding, is easily shed, but there is Professor Ghose to pick it up again, and, what is worse, lay it back at our feet."

We the English-knowing intellectuals (the adjective is superfluous for one is not an intellectual unless one knows English) pay our humble tribute to our "makers" by trying not to act as ourselves but as "them" or, what is worse, as what we think they are. The process did not begin just yesterday: our forefathers built themselves in the image of the district collector, or the judge or the college principal, (Colonel Arbuthnot) all of whom were *pukka sahibs*; our younger generation imitates the Anglo-Saxon and American youth of the most dissolute and anarchist type to assert its elite status. A whole bastard culture—since the days of Raja Rammohan's Calcutta, in 1818, when street urchins ran after David Hare and cried "Sahib! Teach us English"—has grown up to be more imitative, more characterless and more barren. It is like what Sartre describes in his Preface to Frantz Fanon's book, *The Wretched of the Earth*:

¹The European elite undertook to manufacture a native elite. They picked out promising adolescents; they branded them, as with red hot iron, with the principles of Western culture; they stuffed their mouths full with high-sounding phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to the teeth. After a short stay in the mother country they were sent home, whitewashed. These walking lies had nothing left to say to their brothers; they only echoed. From Paris, from London, from Amsterdam we would utter the words "Parthenon! Brotherhood!" and somewhere in Africa or Asia lips would open "...thenon!...therhood!" It was the golden age.

The charm of the English language still keeps us in that bondage; we shall not leave the cage even though the door is left wide open.

Before I proceed further I must put

in a word of caution. I am not a social reformer and therefore I am not pleading here for the abolition of English or suggesting that we should—given our present deplorable resources—switch over to Hindi or any other language for a quick solution. These are matters which should be left to the politicians, not because they can solve anything but because any feeble noise which we may succeed in making will hardly become audible in this Tower of Babel. All that this article intends to do is to show how the continued use of English—especially written English—has influenced the behaviour of Indian intellectuals in the sphere of higher learning.

Banal Values

It is not that the continued use of English has stifled creative thinking, but it has brought about a set of banal values and orientations whose total impact on society has been no less than a disaster. It is perhaps the very fact that the task of writing in English has become so challenging that so many Indian scholars, writers and students devote their time and energy trying to obtain a mastery over the language. Besides the thrill of the challenge, there is the added incentive of being recognized as a VIP if one has really written something "good" in English.

The worth or popularity of a book written by an Indian on any subject does not depend so much on what it contains, but on, let us say, its "excellent English", "lucid style", "humour" etc. etc. Read the weekly reviews that appear in English language newspapers. In the case of a book written by a foreigner the reviewers take pains to inform their readers what that book contains; the same people would dismiss books on serious subjects written by Indians as "trash", or simply "unreadable". The following three excerpts taken at random may serve as good illustrations:

- (1) 'A paragraph like this for example can only be the product of an immature mind and written by one who wants to make a significant contribution to the elimination of English from this

- country.' [Times of India, Bombay, 18th February 1968].
- (2) "Dr. M's book, claimed to be a "full-fledged, scientific" study of non-alignment in India's Foreign Policy reads like....a doctoral thesis for an undemanding university". [Statesman, Calcutta, 31st March 1968].
 - (3) "English style is somewhat unfinished and needs poise and balance". [Times of India, 21st April 1968].

I do not doubt the reviewers' judgment; but I know the impact such comments would make on the author's mind. For the next five or six years he may not recover enough to give a second try to his (let us hope) budding talents.

I do not think that Indian journalists can write good English either, but their profession is their best safeguard. They can write on anything in a slapdash manner and call it "journalistic". We exclude these writers from our consideration; for different reasons not connected with the theme of this article, we also exclude those handful of Indian novelists such as Khuswant Singh, Kamala Markandaya, R. K. Narayan etc., who have made their mark by writing in English. Our main focus is those serious writers of politics, history, economics, and so on, who have perhaps spent their lifetime in producing their "magnum opus" in the English language. With a few exceptions, their products represent monuments of misdirected energy; and yet, more and more scholars come up to try their hand in English.

It is here that we find at work what sociologist M. S. Srinivas calls, in a different context, the process of "Sanskritization". It is through his knowledge of English that the Indian intellectual or scholar tries to attain a degree of respectability which no other Indian language can provide him.

The process of Sanskritization—I hope Srinivas will excuse me for misusing his concept—has brought about a curious development in Indian intellectual activities. While on one side the demand for the abolition of English has gathered momentum, on the

other scores of new journals, newspapers, weeklies and high-brow academic quarterlies in English have come out to satisfy the intellectual curiosity, the sum of adventure or misadventure of the English-knowing elite. There is literally a scramble among writers to send their contributions to these journals, even though, until very recently most of them were writing in their respective languages. As a result, the quality of Indian English has deteriorated deplorably, while a number of Indian language journals have been searching in vain for fresh and original contributions. It is a curious process of asphyxiation which many of us feel but do not know what can be done about it.

To repeat, the quality of Indian writing both in English and other languages since independence has vastly deteriorated and in this respect at least, we have to admit that our previous generations were better. I do not say this with reference to the average English-knowing "Babu" whose frustrated attempt to become Anglicized was as pathetic as the contempt shown towards him by the British was cruel. The 'Babu' was the bastard born out of fornication between Victorian England and post-Mughal India and yet no father had hated his son more than the British did the 'Babu'. Here are some typical instances of that hatred:

Lord Lytton to George Hamilton, 22nd January 1877 :

As for the Babus, I thought it necessary to tell them plainly that the encouragement of natives does not mean the supremacy of Baboodom.

In a letter Dufferin, who succeeded him as Viceroy, Lord Northbrook warned about the prevailing prejudice of Englishmen against educated Indians:

You will soon see that the Anglo-Indians have little or nothing of what is really India, and that the Civil Servants, with all their magnificent qualities, have strongly ingrained in their mind, that no one but an Englishman can do anything. So that

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....you will find a good deal of quiet opposition to any efforts you may make to employ largely educated Natives.

Despite this warning, Dufferin developed an allergy towards the educated Bengalis. He wrote :

I have already discovered that the Bengalee Baboo is a most irritating and troublesome gentleman....He has a great deal of Celtic perverseness, vivacity and cunning...."

Yet the "son" loved his "father" with the devotion of a dog. He imitated him; watched him to learn when and how he nodded his head; when he laughed; when he burst into anger and called him "a bastard", and when—which was not often—patted his back and promised him a promotion. And by imitating him he learned his English and boasted about it before his wife, among his friends and in clubs.

Even our respectable nationalist leaders suffered from the disease : here we can give only one example. (Sir) Surendra Nath Banerjea, who failed to enter the Anglo-Indian Civil Service after a brilliant academic career, chose politics as his vocation and soon became the doyen among Indian nationalists. Yet, he too could not suppress boasting about his accomplishment in imitating the "father". Here is a passage from his autobiography, *A Nation in Making* (1925)—

"An Englishman once publicly declared that I was more English than most Englishmen. I freely confess that I have a genuine admiration for those great institutions which have helped to build up English life and the fabric of British constitutional freedom".

We have digressed too far ; let us return to our main theme. We started by saying that in one respect the previous generations of writers and scholars were more constructive; while writing in English, they also took pains to contribute some of their best pieces in their own languages. It was perhaps the nationalist background which promoted the English-knowing élite of

the time to adopt this pattern of behaviour, but I do think there was a genuine effort on their part to become bilingual; to elevate their status through the English language and, at the same time, serve the people by writing some of their pieces in their respective languages.

Since independence this tradition has broken down. Few of our good English-knowing writers would condescend to write in any language other than English; those who have failed to distinguish themselves in written or spoken English, by now, through a process of psychological inversion, have come to hate it and would not care to read anything written in English. Thus, within the ranks of the elite two sub-groups have appeared: One with a highly urbanized background, polished, westernized and all that, with whom English is the status symbol; and the other, rural oriented, less westernized, with whom the *banning* of English has become a status obsession. This does not reflect a class conflict, but perhaps an inadequate understanding of the allocation of roles between the two sub-groups. The social and intellectual values of the Indian élite are still being determined by the first sub-group, whereas politics and political power have come to be dominated by the latter; and, paradoxically, there is as much intercourse as friction between the two. The Anglicised 'Babu' who finds himself helpless without his knife and fork, would have no compunction in kowtowing before the politician for a favour, and the English-hating Hindoloving politician would find no contradiction in sending his children to public schools where they would learn the latest accent in spoken English.

The present controversy between the pro-English and anti-English groups, therefore, is not a reflection of original thinking; it is a tussle for adjustment between the two groups over the demarcation of their respective roles. So long as English continues, the contradiction will continue, and so long as the contradiction remains English shall continue. We shall shout in one voice "Down with English ! Long Live English".

CHE GUEVARA

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Pornography In India

M. S. PRABHAKAR

IN this article, I shall try to discuss certain aspects of the production of pornography, its marketing, and the nature of pornographic reading among the educated section of Indian society. At the outset, I would like to make it clear that I am confining my discussion to pornographic books only, though strictly speaking, the term 'pornography' would include sound and film track, photographs &c. It is to be greatly regretted that though most of us can claim to 'know' what pornography is, we still lack a proper definition of it. The *OED* is completely unhelpful in this regard. Under the entries 'Pornograph', 'Pornographer', 'Pornography', one finds these definitions: "An obscene writing, or pictorial illustration"; "One who writes of prostitutes or obscene matters; a portrayer of obscene subjects"; "Descriptions of the life, manners etc. of prostitutes and their patrons (sic); hence, the expression or suggestion of obscene or unchaste subjects in literature or art; pornographic literature or art". Since the word 'obscene' was used frequently in these definitions, I looked up 'obscene' (in the same volume) and found it defined as "offensive to modesty or decency, expressing or suggesting unchaste or lustful ideas; impure, indecent, lewd." All these lead us nowhere since at each stage, value-judgments are involved and these are entirely personal. It is quite likely that a far larger number of people get sexually stimulated on reading *Fanny Hill*, but even if one single individual gets sexual stimulation on reading a textbook of calculus (there has been more than one such instance, by the way), it should be deemed equally guilty along with *Fanny Hill*. But still, since most of us claim to know what pornography is, most of us would have no difficulty in recognizing a piece of pornographic writing. Such different commentators as Orwell, C. H. Rolph, D. H. Lawrence and James Joyce have agreed that certain types of writing and other

forms of expression are in fact, dirty. (Lawrence and Joyce considered each other's work dirty, while for Lawrence, *Jane Eyre* was a fine example of pornographic writing. Poor Charlotte Bronte!)

Broadly speaking, one can say that pornography is 'anti-life' (whatever that might mean). It is this type of writing, difficult to define, but generally recognizable, that I shall be dealing with. I should also like to stress that I am having in mind books written in English, and not the ancient classics of pornography (or erotica) in Sanskrit and other Indian languages. Few people among the Indian intelligentsia can read and understand Sanskrit and the job of locating the spicy bits in the various Indian languages is quite difficult. It is also not perhaps worth the effort, for by and large, it does not provide the 'kicks' that modern pornography seeks to provide. Indian classical erotica is (for the modern readers) not 'hot' enough because of its avowedly having for its ultimate objective something else than mere titillation and the accompanying sensations. And it is almost as difficult as Sanskrit. Since, after all, the most sensible way of doing anything is to do it without tears, imported pornography has a fairly substantial readership in this country. But I do not want to suggest that contemporary Indian writing is completely barren. We do produce current pornography, in English as well as in a few Indian languages. But the really sophisticated people go in for the English (imported) rather than the English (desi), or the productions in Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Tamil &c. I do not know if pornography in Indian languages is produced abroad for marketing here.

Officially pornography is banned in the country. Nobody has defined what books are 'dirty' or what 'obscenity' is, but by and large, there have been few instances of the Customs or the police obstructing the entry of a book which is 'different' but not 'dirty'. (But the Penguin *Chatterley*, though easily available, is still sold only under the counter.) At the same time, girlie magazines are openly im-

ported and nudity itself is not obscene as long as the vital spot is suggestively concealed, or heavily touched up. Pubic hair, of course, would be the worst form of obscenity. All this is as it should be, and I do not think that the official policy (or whatever there is of that) is in any significant way different from the official policy of any ordinary middle-of-the-road democracy of the West. If we can't boast of a Times Square, it is not something greatly to be regretted. In certain big cities, floor-shows are permitted, which, though not considered anywhere near to those in the West, still take a certain amount of licence for granted. But the 'dirty' book business is strictly illegal, and though it is not really difficult to get one of them if one really wants it, the possession of one is an offence and might land one into trouble. There have even been occasional raids on bookshops and a few copies have been confiscated and destroyed, but such actions have had no perceptible effect upon the trade as a whole.

Seven Cities

I have handled such books in seven cities of India. In Bangalore, the books were displayed openly, though not garishly. In Bombay and Calcutta, touts approached me with books as well as pictures (along with the promises of things even more substantial). In Hyderabad, Madras and Delhi, I learnt the fascinating process of the proper opening gambit, the innocent enquiry, the wink of superior knowledge, all culminating in a lecherous leer of perfect understanding, and the book changing hands. And in the place I am staying now, a couple of leading booksellers (thoroughly respectable gentlemen) deal in dirty books as a sort of hobby-cum-side-business, neither too openly nor too surreptitiously, if you know what I mean.

The one thing that immediately strikes a prospective pornography hunter in India is the enormous expense involved. I better illustrate it with my own experience. When I first learnt that there were books whose main intention was to titillate,

I was seventeen years old. Till then, all the excitement I got was from reading a particularly ponderous sex-magazine, produced from the worthiest and dullest of motives, a sort of a Marie Stopes in Indian style. I was a newcomer in a big town, the upcountryman in the metropolis. A classmate of mine showed a book he had 'got' (he didn't tell me how) and allowed me to read parts of it. He then gave it to me for just one hour after which he would take it back. I had no choice except to cut the class, and sitting under a tree on the college lawn, with the summer midday sun fiercely brilliant, I read the book at a feverish pace, completely oblivious of the surroundings. It was the first time that I learnt the existence of the four-letter words which did not mean anything to me then. But the descriptions of the processes leading to the various encounters in the book were sufficiently exciting and I wanted to read more. After bribing my friend with a light feed in the college canteen, I got the address of the shop where one could get such books and raced there that very evening. I was rather nervous, but the whole process was ridiculously simple; only it was beyond my means. The shopkeeper (somehow even now, I can't think of him as a bookseller) allowed me to browse; they were all there, olive-green covers with frayed edges, and a few local products, much thinner, hardly eighty pages. The terms were: Twenty-five rupees down, and if the book was returned within three days, I would get back twenty rupees. For every day's delay, a fine of one rupee was levied, and if the book was not back within a week, or if it was torn or brought back in an 'unsatisfactory' state, my money would be gone. My weekly allowance in those days was about five rupees; at that moment, I had less than two rupees with me. I pleaded with the gentleman, told him that I was an honest young man from a good family who would not run away with the book, and offered to leave my fountain-pen, text-books, and the money I had as a sort of surety. I wanted to borrow a book for just two hours. He said no. So I had to

reach my goal (like many a young man before me) the hard way. I saved every bit of my allowance the next five weeks, placed my twenty-five rupees on the counter and borrowed a book. I do not remember its title now, but it was a volume of about two hundred and fifty pages. I read it sitting on a bench in a sort of a boulevard quite close to the shop. I read it twice, the second time omitting the uninteresting details—it is strange that even in such books, one can omit quite a lot of unnecessary details, though these are perhaps necessary for the first reading—and went back to the shop. My idea was to borrow another book on the same deposit. But no. The shopkeeper returned twenty rupees, and wouldn't allow me to take another book without giving him twenty-five rupees again. No amount of pleading from me—that I was a good boy &c—had any effect.

Of course, since that day, long ago, I have grown up a bit, have more or less settled down in life. Though I seldom read a 'dirty' book now (I have read most of them, that is, if you have read a couple of dozen of them, you have read them all), I am still interested in the phenomenon and more particularly the cost of reading. Later I learnt that the gentleman at Bangalore was a crook who could afford to sell them openly (and at very high prices), because he and the law had an understanding between them. But even otherwise, a foreign book, in most places, would cost you about twelve to ten rupees, and if you were a known customer, you could read it, even without any initial deposit, for about two rupees. The rates for Indian books are just about half the above. And these rates are prohibitive. What is most galling to an honest customer is the completely arbitrary way in which the price of a book is fixed by the booksellers. One's righteous indignation is roused when one sees a book clearly marked 900 francs (old francs, that is), and the bookseller demands from you fifteen rupees. Even making allowance for the risks involved, chances of copies being confiscated

and destroyed, the price differential is too much. The same exorbitant rates are the rule in other branches of the business. If you are invited for a private showing of some continental films (poor continent! what a reputation!), you are in for about a hundred rupees contribution. *Playboy*, which even before devaluation used to cost around ten rupees (actual price being seventy-five cents), now fetches anything up to twenty-five rupees. This prohibitive price of imported pornography has, to some extent, encouraged indigenous production, but I am constrained to confess that what is produced here is far inferior to what we import. Of course, it is difficult to imagine anything worse written than the commercial pornography of the West; but even that apparently impossible thing our writers have achieved.

The economics of pornography should obviously limit its readership to the middle-middle class and above. Roughly speaking, one can say that the middle-middle-class takes the indigenous stuff; the upper-middle and the upper classes take respectively the imported letter and the imported image. Those at the bottom rungs of the social lad-

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der will have perhaps to make do with 'imitations' and 'adaptations' in the Indian languages, for the simple reason that these would be the cheapest to buy. Also, it is likely that the lower one's income is, the less would one need such surrogates; and at certain levels, the substance itself would be far more easily available (and vastly to be preferred) to the printed word. The same would be true of the aristocracy too, though in a different degree; they too would flit effortlessly between the Word and the Thing, taking everything in their lordly stride. But this is only a very rough division of tastes and aptitudes. The nature of Indian society is such that it is not rigidly classified (except in terms of caste) and one has to be prepared to accept the inevitable mingling of apparently conflicting aptitudes which do not conform to the above rough classification. Thus, it is entirely possible for a middle-middle class high-school teacher, belonging to an orthodox Brahmin family of South India (and who earned less than two hundred rupees a month, including what he made out of private tuitions) to have among his prized possessions so esoteric a work as *Anna of the White Thighs* (an actual instance from among my acquaintances). On the other hand, a widely-travelled, very highly qualified, prosperous university professor could relish a book like *Vijay* (an indigenous production whose hero seduces seventy-three women in the course of sixty pages) and prefer it to such acknowledged masterpieces as *Memoirs of a Pleasure-loving Man*, *Experiences of My Early Life*, *Streets of Sin*, or even those profound books, *Lust*, and *Rape*. So, though it is true that the reading habits as well the choice of the reading material is largely determined by one's social position (as well as one's caste, an aspect of the question professional sociologists should go into), one should always be prepared for the inevitable exceptions.

What are the prospects for pornography in India? This is a question that is naturally of great concern to many in the country. Personally speaking, I should say that we have

never had it so good. I know it for a fact that more people read books, and more books are easily available. One fortunate aspect is that while living standards among the middle classes have largely risen (or at least the monthly incomes), there has not been any corresponding increase in the cost of pornographic reading. This is probably due to the fact that once a book comes in, it stays for a long time; and when once the initial cost of the book is realized, there is no temptation for the bookseller to increase the cost of reading unnecessarily (I am here only thinking of the cost of reading a pornographic book, though the same is largely true of the buying of pornography too). It pays the bookseller to keep the price constant. Another point to be noted is that quite a few books, once they enter the country, are sooner or later printed in the Indian presses, thus making them more generally available. It is, to some extent, to the credit of this branch of business that while prices have shot up all over the place, this has symbolised stability. It cost you about ten rupees in 1954; and it even now costs you about the same. Even devaluation did not significantly affect pornography. (*Playboy* and the like are more expensive, no doubt, but they are not pornography). So strictly speaking, pornography is cheaper now, though the price has more or less remained constant.

It is no good condemning pornography or thinking it does not exist, or forming committees for suppression of immoral literature. It would do no good to anybody if suppressive measures are employed to harass the tired middle-aged gentlemen who mainly operate this business. It is a part of our system, part of our intellectual inheritance, a way of seeking Truth. And fortunately enough, governments also seem to have reconciled themselves to the existing set-up. Leave it alone. The odds are in favour of the trade growing and prospering, though I would not commit myself to any opinion about the 'quality' of the production. That would be a job for a literary expert, not an amateur sociologist.

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The Complete Man

ASHOK RUDRA

It is doubtful if Russell himself would accept as meaningful the concept of "a complete man". Complete man implies a normative idea about the elements that go into the making of a man, and these elements are not objectively given but could vary or disappear according to the concept of man one has. While lacking in philosophical rigour a normative attitude towards what constitutes human essence has been a very strong current in various trends of modernism since the renaissance. And we shall permit ourselves this not strictly rigorous use of the adjective 'complete' to describe the most powerful impression that is left of the man after the reading of his still incomplete autobiography*. There have been many great philosophers and scientists during the present century; but can we think of anybody else with the vast range over which Russell commanded a knowledge equal to that of any narrow specialist in any one of its parts? Do we know of anybody else, who, alongside being the founder of one of the most difficult branches of modern knowledge, also led such an eventful public life and lived such a rich private life? Of course, we knew already about Russell. the writer of *Principia Mathematica*, being the same conscientious objector who courted imprisonment during the First World War and was chased out of Cambridge; and the same immoralist whose works were described by a prosecution lawyer in the United States as "lecherous, libidinous, lustful, venereal, erotomaniac, aphrodisiac, irreverent, narrow minded, untruthful and bereft of moral fiber". But what we did not know, at least many of us did not know, is that he has taken passionate and active interest in politics, not only during his declining years when he was no more

creative as a philosopher but ever since his early youth, and not only in abstract and large ideological issues but also in day-to-day party politics; that though an Earl, his social conscience made him give up much of his property and led him to experience frequent difficulties of a financial nature. Again, what one did not know is that he had the fine sensibilities of a poet in the matter of human relations and the deep spiritual doubts about oneself which agonise the saint. That he was a master of English prose for the communication of impeccably rational ideas is of course well known to all his readers; that he can also express himself in the vein of a romantic lyricist is a discovery one makes.

Russell's autobiography has been compared by the publishers themselves with Rousseau's *Confessions*. This does not seem to be altogether happy, as confession implies a sense of guilt or sin which is the one thing one never finds the slightest trace of even when Russell is talking about his doubts about himself. If it is the candour to which one is making reference, it is true that at times the biblical simplicity of the style of narration gives it the same character of truthfulness as that other and very different autobiography, that of Gandhi. Of course, Russell is candid about his amorous life too—incidentally, has anybody ever before printed the photographs of all his mistresses along with all his wives?—but one might find it to be much less exciting than his admissions with regard to his own mode of thinking. It is when the great exponent of rationalism writes passages as follows that one is overwhelmed by the deep humility that such candour calls for :

"In my second marriage, I had tried to preserve that respect for my wife's liberty which I thought that my creed enjoined. I found, however, that my capacity for forgiveness and what may be called Christian love was not equal to the demands I was making on it, and that persistence in a helpless endeavour would do much harm to me, while not achieving the intended good to others. Anybody else could have

told me this in advance, but I was blinded by theory".

"I have never since 1940 recovered the same degree of unity between opinion and emotion as I had possessed from 1914 to 1918. I think that, in permitting myself that unity, I had allowed myself more of a creed than scientific intelligence can justify. To follow scientific intelligence wherever it may lead me had always seemed to me the most imperative of moral precepts for me, and I have followed this precept even when it has involved a loss of what I myself had taken for deep spiritual insight."

If this is the admission of a logician with regard to mysticism which he has fought all his life, can frankness about one's motives in life go any further than this?

"I wanted to understand and make others understand; also I wished to raise a monument by which I might be remembered, and on account of which I might feel that I had not lived in vain."

"Most of my works during these years was popular, and was done in order to make money."

Doubts

Deeply disturbing are Russell's doubts about himself. The man who was not abashed to write a book carrying the title *The Conquest of Happiness* and who writes in this very autobiography,

"I think people who are unhappy are always proud of being so, and therefore do not like to be told that there is nothing grand about their unhappiness. A man who is melancholy because lack of exercise has upset his liver always believes that it is the loss of God or the menace of Bolshevism, or some such dignified cause that makes him sad",

seems to have been often on the edge of despair and for ever haunted by the thought of suicide. The man who loved and was loved by so many women seemed to be for ever suffering the pain of solitude :

"The sea, the stars, the night wind in waste places mean more to me than even the human beings I love best,

* The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell.

Volume II, 1914-1944.

George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1968.

X

and I am conscious that human affection is to me at bottom an attempt to escape from the vain search for God". The man who, now in his nineties, is still trying to do all he can to save human civilisation from self-inflicted annihilation had moments when he thought:

"There is darkness without and when I die there will be darkness within. There is no splendour, no vastness, anywhere; only triviality for a moment and then nothing. Why live in such a world. Why even die?"

And the writer of *Principia Mathematica*, the monument that would indeed make him remembered with Aristotle and Plato, had times when he could write: "When I survey my life, it seems to me to be a useless one..."

If I find the amorous part of the record relatively less exciting, that is not because of any lack of interesting happenings or any lack of complete candour, but just the contrary. Russell writes about the various comings and goings of women to and from his life, about his various profound and frivolous affairs and marriages in such a matter of fact way, in an even style of such consummate skill that one is left with the effect of being unknowingly persuaded (if not already knowingly so) about the correctness of the arguments he put forward so lucidly in his *Marriage and Morals*. He would not have been a full man if he

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lacked in this respect. In his world, sexual abstinence is a mutilation inflicted on one's personality, and complete sexual fidelity an absurdity which cannot have any place in any really civilised community of men and women. We have delicious passages like the following:

"Ottoline and Colette used to come alternately... I discovered a method of smuggling out letters by enclosing them in the uncut pages of books.. Before I invented this device I found another by which I could incorporate love-letters to Colette into letters which were read by the Governor of the prison. I professed to be reading French Revolutionary Memoirs and to have discovered letters from the Girondin Buzot to Madame Roland."

Such stark statements as

"I sought about for some other woman to relieve my unhappiness...". Such emotionally charged ones as

"We talked half the night and in the middle of talk became lovers. There are those who say that one should be prudent, but I do not agree with them. We scarcely knew each other, and yet in that moment began for both of us a relation profoundly serious and profoundly important, sometimes happy, sometimes painful, but never trivial....".

Letters

Like the first volume, the second volume also contains a good part consisting of letters; it also has got several breaks in the continuity of narration. The autobiography cannot certainly be treated as an adequate biographical documentation on the life of the author. But woe to those critics who grumble on this account. What does it matter if we are not told in detail the circumstances that led to his rupture with his second wife? And why cant if some of the letters are less interesting than others and do not contribute much to the linear chronological history that some readers expect of a life story? Any complaint about such supposed deficiencies can only reveal the critic's incapacity to appreciate how big a fare it is that is offered.

Like the first volume the second volume of the autobiography also is at the same time a brilliant portrait gallery. In this volume we get intimate glimpses of Lawrence and Wittgenstein and some references to T.S. Eliot, curious for the invariably patronising tone in which they are made. I for one took quite some time to recover from the shock of the following footnote on page 18: "I spoke this to T. S. Eliot, who put it into 'The Waste Land.'"

There must be very few among the millions of admirers of Russell's writings who can judge on their own the value of his works in the field of mathematical logic and philosophy. Their acquaintance with Russell is mainly through his other writings. It comes as a stab on the back for all such readers that Russell should himself describe these other writings as pot-boilers, written to make money.

The style of narration reflects accurately the unity that bound together the many lives of this singular man. From the dizzy heights of mathematical logic to the depths of despair at the sight of his fellow beings' propensity for hatred and blood thirst and thence to the scented fields of erotic passions, the transitions to and fro take place frequently, in the course of the same paragraph without a jarring note, with the ease of a maestro's fingers moving up and down the scales of tara, udara and mudara of the sitar, and as a constant accompanying resonance we have the dry humour born of ripe wisdom and "autumnal sadness" (a favourite phrase of Russell's) so characteristic of the man—one can almost hear the familiar cracking voice. Only now and then does the undertone of humour crystallise itself into a pearl of witticism—there are matchless gems strewn all over the place which alone would make the book excellent reading.

It would be wrong to say Russell has lived an exemplary life: few people would have the genius for lifemanship that would be called for to follow the example. What is more appropriate is to say that his life is a masterpiece of the art of living, a symphony that is finished.

No Paper Tiger

HIRAN KUMAR SANYAL

Shikar Tales by The Barrel
By JIT ROY
Pearl Books.
Price Rs. 3.00.

"TIGER hunting", says the author of this book, "has a mystique,, a thrill, of its own—a thrill that never palls". He fully succeeds in communicating the thrill to the reader not only in the case of the tiger but in the case of other animals whether hunted by the author himself or his father whom he describes as 'a great shikari' and to whom the book is dedicated. This will be a revelation to many, like the reviewer, who have come under the spell of Professor P. C. Roy without ever suspecting that this scholarly little man, radiating sweetness and light, was cast in the mould of a Nimrod. The following incidents reveal his heroic stature.

When stalked by a probable man-eating tiger on a jungle road, Professor Roy, who was put wise to the situation by the author, bundled all the members of the family into his car and drove off to safety, neither *pater familias* nor the son betraying by their manner that anything was wrong. On another occasion he was nearly got at by a tiger he had fatally wounded by a shot from a machan, only luck and cool courage saving him. That such an experienced shikari should, even for a change, so far forget himself as to poke with the barrel of his rifle a bush in which a tiger was supposed to lie is difficult to believe. But he actually did so at least once in an unaccountable fit of infantile brinkmanship.

One incident narrated in the book fully upholds the reputation of the tiger as a gentleman. In this case the tiger quenched its thirst from a trough of fresh water beside a buffalo, tied as a bait, without touching the latter. An even greater gentleman must have been the man-eating leopard that left its visiting card between two cots out in the open on which slept two shika-

ris who had gone to the place to get that particular man-eater. Such idiocy must have filled that gourmet of a leopard with nausea. But the loveliest story of all is that of a Peeping Tom of a tiger,, an exception to the general rule, who watched from a hide-out in a bush a village belle bathing in a jungle stream. As soon as the young woman (no Lady Godiva she !) caught sight of the impudent beast she threw a stone at him to teach him a lesson. The result was a brief confrontation, from the effects of which the prudish woman soon recovered. But it is not on record whether or not the tiger was blinded by wrathful heaven as a punishment for his prurience.

The author has also had thrilling encounters with the sloth bear and has shot deer and antelope and though he has never gone after gharials and muggers (both known commonly as crocodiles), he reveals considerable knowledge of their way of life. People who live near rivers should heed the author's warning that these bulky amphibians, who seem to move very clumsily on land, can run faster than the average man, their only handicap being that they cannot turn at speed.

One of the most useful chapters in the book for novices in hunting is that headed "Messages in the Dust", particularly useful being the drawings of pug-marks of tigers, wild boars and deer. But for sheer story-telling, two chapters stand out from the rest of the book, namely, "Ghoulies, Ghoslies and Greepy-Crawlies" and "Random Reminiscences".

The author pays a deserved tribute to jungle people who live very close to wild animals and regard for whom was instilled in him very early in his life by his father. He has, however, little patience with the arm-chair critics who charge with cruelty dedicated hunters, who hunt strictly according to rules, while sparing 'the poachers and the butchers' who shoot from jeeps with spotlights.

"Banditry"

The reviewer confesses that he is no more than an arm-chair reader of shikar books. But he spent the first

nine years of his life in a zoo which has been described as a place where wild animals have an opportunity to wild animal have an opportunity to study human beings without being shot. During the remaining sixty years, the reviewer has had enough experience of his own kind to become a confirmed believer in the essential non-violence of animals, contrasted with the built-in violence in man. But he is inclined to agree with the author that the controlled shooting of animals, particularly when the purpose is the extermination of pests, such as man-eaters, cattle-lifters or destroyers of crops, is a highly laudable pursuit. On this score, the recently formed "Association for Preservation of Wild Game in West Bengal", deserves wide popular support, since one of its declared aims is the shooting of the notorious man-eaters of the Sunderbans. But Mr Jit Roy also tells us that the true sportsman has another aim ; the collection of worthwhile trophies. Which proves that the bandit and the missionary are not very far apart. We should not forget however that Aristotle considered banditry as a legitimate means of acquiring wealth.

So far as our author is concerned, for all his forty years of banditry his total haul is not very impressive. Maybe he has not given us a complete inventory, having in mind a second or even a third book, following the practice of most shikar writers. In any case, he eminently succeeds in achieving what he sets out to do, as he tells us in the Author's Note, namely, 'to record interesting encounters with animals'. There is in addition a sizable amount of natural history, thrown in for good measure.

But his aesthetic susceptibility seems to have got the better of his natural history when he describes the hyena as 'the most ghoulish quadruped in the jungle'. The author's charge-sheet against this useful scavenger comprises carrion-eating, cannibalism and eating alive helpless fawns. Is he not aware that the glorious big cats are not particularly squeamish about eating the flesh of their kith and kin, that they consume their kills by instalments allowing them to turn into car-

rion, that among tigers papa is always on the lookout for a dinner off his new-born babies and that lionesses have been observed to conduct nursery class by holding down their victims so that the cubs can tear off chunks of living meat. But wild animals, with rare exceptions, kill for food and not for the collection of trophies, nor, since they have never heard about Malthus, for applying a 'positive check' on the growth of their population for the preservation of the balance of nature.

All told Mr Jit Roy has written a very readable book which deserved much better treatment at the printer's hands. To one long in city pent, like the reviewer, reading this book has been like inhaling a breath of fresh air from the wilds. It is an exhilarating, but, unfortunately, all too brief experience. Surely the author, a very competent writer, could have written a book of much greater appeal if only he had used a larger canvas, revealing wider vistas of the forests and the countryside which were the scenes of the encounters with wild animals narrated in this book and of his many long treks and lonely vigils. The reviewer looks forward to all these in Mr Jit Roy's next book.

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Bengali Cinema : Tradition And Talent

KARUNA SANKAR RAY

THE birth, growth and development of the cinema in Bengal followed patterns broadly similar to those elsewhere. At its inception here in 1898, Hiralal Sen, the dedicated pioneer in the field of film-making, purchased his photographic apparatus and was content to photograph plays at the classic theatre. While the innovation was still in its infancy in 1902 or thereabout, the indefatigable showman, J. F. Madan, regaled crowds at the Calcutta Maidan through his bioscope shows very much in the manner of presenting a circus or a pageant. The typical film showman of the time in Bengal, as elsewhere in the world, was the photographer-exhibitor. Later, when the first flush of excitement and enthusiasm over the innovation exhausted itself, here, as elsewhere, emerged one or two talented personalities who purged the new-found medium of its initial crudeness, imparted to it some sort of form as well as structure and sustained interest in the cinema by a more adult and intelligent treatment than any witnessed so far. Dhiren Ganguli, affectionately called D.G. by the grateful generations of film-goers in Bengal, was one such personality, a sort of George Melies in the Indian context plus a lot of reformative ardour, infusing in his work his sparkling wit and inventiveness, directing his uninhibited and trenchant satire at the sham, the snobbishness and the diehard conservatism endemic in the Indian society of the time. D.G.'s *England Returned* marked the beginning of a new epoch in film-making.

It has to be pointed out, however, that the Bengali Cinema of the silent era or even of the so-called New Theatre-dominated Golden Thirties never acquired a distinct and unique artistic identity like its counterpart in America where first Griffith and then Chaplin created a new vocabulary and conjured up an entirely new language

or artistic medium into existence. By the mid-twenties *The Atonement of Gösta Berlin* and *The Blue Angel* had been shot on the continent, and Eisenstein had given in his *The Battleship Potemkin* a masterly demonstration of montage, "that formal juxtaposition of image not necessarily related in object, time and space, but which, when placed in plastic symmetry together or sequentially on the screen, yields a specific idea". In Calcutta's filmland Devaki Bose was then endeavouring to simulate realism through the creation of certain sound effects in *The Flame of the Flesh*. The unfolding of a simple story interspersed with such sound effects as a crowd's hum or horses' hooves in the background by actually planting a group behind the screen is reported to have created a sensation.

The traditional Bengali cinema with its literary overtones really came into its own in the thirties when, with the emergence of sound, it became easier for the directors to exploit all the gamut of human emotions and the rich tonal quality of the language. With the tremendous, almost buccaneering drive and energy of a young producer called B. N. Sircar behind them, Devaki Bose and Pramathesh Barua, the two young stalwarts, scaled new heights. They opened up new horizons, the former, with devotional subjects like the lives of the well known poet-saints Vidya-pati and Chandidas, and the latter, the debonair actor-director, with the exploration of contemporary social themes—*Devdas*, *Adhikar*, *Mukti* etc. Both in their different ways succeeded in creating an intensity and a high-powered emotional realism. In the case of Devaki Kumar Bose it was devotional, stemming from an intense integration of drama, song and dance, those inseparable mystical entities held by Fauvion Bowers to have remained as a kind of invisible law in India since the time of Kalidasa. In the case of Barua the intensity was pathological, stemming from a morbid death-wish, a romantic nugatory love of doom. In spite of overt preoccupation with social problems, Barua's films, stylised to the core, reflected the maso-

stereotyped pattern of the social-cum-romantic themes and this pattern continued even well into the sixties. Some of the notable films of this genre in this latest phase were *Sister Nivedita* and *Raja Rammohan* of Bejoy Bose. Qualitatively these biographicals rarely achieved high distinction. Very often, intent on cashing in on songs, the producers and the directors turned the biographicals into veritable musicals, often purveying rich period-music in a more diluted manner. The super-structure of songs inevitably rested on the very solid though unattractive foundation of didacticism inlaid with rich literary overtones. However, despite the built-in limitations of the genre and tendentious direction, occasionally one or two films stood out in the old-time-manner because of the sheer magnificence of acting and the emotional involvement of the directors. Undoubtedly, *Bhagwan Srikrishna Chaitanya* of Devaki Bose, shot in the early fifties was such a film.

Boy Meets Girl

iii) Films with romantic themes : This genre is confined to patently romantic subjects and makes no attempt to maintain even a superficial resemblance to real life. The story is of secondary interest and is often used as an excuse to delineate a string of romantic situations and spin out a happy ending. And the episodes more often than not fail to pass the not-too-stringent test of credibility. The first encounter of the hero and the heroine often takes place in unexpected circumstances, often the story starts off with the protagonists swearing hostility to each other in Benedick and Beatrice fashion, but predictably there is a turn of events followed by a change of heart and before long the hero and the heroine swear vows of undying loyalty to each other. Then inevitably follow love scenes reeking with implausible and unconvincing, immature and cloyingly sentimental dialogues uttered in unreal surroundings. The chain of causation in these films is slight and the emphasis in point of script, dialogue and direction rests heavily on the hero and the heroine inevitably played by the lead-

ing stars of the day. This boy-meets-girl theme is however capable of many variations, and the latter have been very often determined by the acting mores of the leading actor and actress. If one particular combination has made the film a commercial success, it means that the same formula with the same team will be repeated in succession till the team has exhausted its box-office appeal.

Amongst the foremost films of the genre may be mentioned *Ekti Raat*, *Sabar Uparey*, *Sagarika*, *Agni-Pariksha*, *Pathey Holo Deri*, *Chalachal* and *Panchatapa* in the fifties. Made to formula and aimed exclusively at box-office success the genre was unlikely to produce any aesthetically satisfying film. Occasionally however, because of sensitive direction and extremely natural acting, a good script survived its overt romanticism and we had an end-product like *Chalachal* or *Panchatapa* of Asit Sen. In spite of the worn-out romanticism of the former and the superficial flashiness of the latter, there was much in both to commend itself and within their built-in limitations both films attained unusual technical excellence and formal sophistication. In general however this genre, viewed retrospectively, has remained important and interesting in so far as it was indicative of the psychology of the film-goers in the fifties and sixties.

iv) Musicals : In the early days of the talkies, when the cinema was regarded as a medium akin to variety entertainment, films revelled in songs, chosen to suit every mood from sadness to elation. Gradually the realisation dawned that indiscriminate songs were, cinematically viewed, a sure disadvantage, a hindrance to the gradual unfolding of action. Niren Lahiri's *Bhabikal* in this respect marked a line of departure from the conventional trend. Still later Devaki Bose's *Pathik*, in doing without songs showed the wind of change in Bengali cinema. Henceforth only certain kinds of films retained or even intensified the emphasis on songs. As public enthusiasm for the classical, pseudo-classical or period-music waxed, stories came to be adapted for the

cinema, stories sometimes woven round well-known musicians of the past like Jadu Bhatta, sometimes based on a work of fiction where the protagonist was a musician or a singer as in *Dhuli*. Unlike its counterpart in the West the Bengali musical rarely developed artistic fullness and never acquired a distinctly aesthetic character. It remained what it essentially was at the outset, a crude device, a peg to hand together a number of attractive songs. The motivation of character was inevitably shallow, the sequence of actions and events almost always defied the ordinary rules of common sense, and sentimental sloppiness typified the general order.

v) Films with comic themes : The overtly comic was started off by Barua himself when he made the then explosive *Rajat Jayanti*. Later, from the forties onward, the genre became increasingly popular with a string of competent comedians around. The story here, as in the musicals, was merely an excuse for putting together patently comic situations and much of the laughter was derived from the casting of the well-known comedians in stereotyped roles played with an exaggerated emphasis from beginning to end. Despite the flat situations the occasionally ingenious direction, as of Satyen Bose in *Bariatri* and Tapan Sinha in *Tonsil*, and competent, professional acting produced some notable successes in this field, successes more popular than artistic.

Gods and Goddesses

vi) Films with mythological themes : At the inception of the cinema in Bengal this was the most dominating genre, as familiar stories from the pages of scriptures and mythology were expected to have the widest appeal. However trick shots could only be clumsily executed in ancient Tollygunge studios, the gimmicks rarely came off and gods and goddesses as a result never really found favour amongst the paying customers. A thin line of mythologicals however survived, mainly aimed at the mofussil film-goers and the more devout Hindu ladies and that, even after

the death of its early pioneer and a later specialist, Phani Burma.

Talking about the pre-Satyajit Ray era in Bengali cinema, or for that matter about contemporary Bengali films produced and directed in the traditional manner, a point to remember is that this cinema or even the best of it never really acquired a distinct artistic identity of its own. Heavily literary as perhaps it was bound to be in a literature-conscious milieu, it became only the purveyor of Bengali fiction in a different medium. The basic incongruity of the cinema being deployed for purely literary ends escaped detection in the eyes of a people fond of their literature, and unable as a result to impose any non-literary criteria.

With Satyajit Ray's emergence with *Pather Panchali* in 1955 the cinema in Bengal became fully cinematic for the first time the nature and scope of the new art-form appeared in shining and iridescent outlines and for the first time the idea emerged of its true possibilities, of its unlimited power of exploration and the incomparably limpid beauty it could master. The

dozen or so Ray films which followed *Pather Panchali*, while not always matching the first careless rapture, showed the sureness of touch, the impeccable mastery over the medium and the consummate-craftsmanship which comes with experience. And all these films belong to different genres. *Pather Panchali* in its stark realism, in its nebulous formlessness and discursiveness, closely resembling an epic, in the evocation of the moments of idyllic beauty as well as in quiet tragic splendour was simultaneously the definitive film of a period as well as of complete timelessness. *Aparajito*, its sequel, revelled in its description of Varanasi and the caressing sensuousness of its treatment anticipated Chris Marker's *Valparaiso*, and the delicate beauty of the lonely forest scenes, the glades or the hills and the sea-shore in *Apur-Sansar* or the rising music in its last sequence, showed a masterly insight into the mystique of the "Tenth Muse". In Ray's hands a comic fantasy like *Parash Pathar*, while matching the satirical ferocity of *Tout L' or Du Monde* surpassed Clair in its evocation of pa-

thos and tragedy besetting the life of a poor white-collar worker. Then came *Jalshaghar*, and *Devi*, and this incredible director thereafter went on to produce films like *Kanchenjungha* and *Charulata*.

In the wake of Satyajit Ray others followed, Rittwick Ghatak, Mrinal Sen, Rajen Tarafdar and a host of others breaking into the exclusive world of the old-timers. The result has, however, been neither spectacular nor revolutionary despite Mr Ghatak's *Ajantrik* and *Subarnarekha*, Tapan Sinha's artistically modestly successful *Kabuliwala*, *Lauhakapat* and overtly poetic *Atithi*, but perhaps the way has been shown. Formulas are being gradually eschewed, cliches are slowly disappearing and films or at least a minority of them are becoming more and more individual and original. The historically important thing is that with Satyajit Ray's advent the first break-through has been made, the Bengali cinema has come of age and a new film-sense has grown in the more intelligent section of the filmgoers. Surely this is a healthy sign, as also a sign for the future.



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Transports Of Pain

MAHIM ROODRO

CALCUTTA buses are unique—the State buses. I have never been able to work out how it is that they were designed for a cold country. Haven't you noticed the windows? They can only be opened half. A slight oversight on the part of the designers? Perhaps. But in a hot country, and in Calcutta where the buses are always jampacked, we need as much ventilation as possible, and what sense does it make to keep the window-openings so small that one gets only the minimum of fresh air from outside? And they don't always work. Sometimes they remain closed, at other times, wouldn't close. When open, you have no choice but to get soaked when it rains.

To ride in our buses is an experience. One can only think that in our previous lives we had done such awful things that God said, for your next life you have to be born in Calcutta and ride State transport buses. It is a real punishment indeed, for any time of the day or evening, wherever you are, they are full, full, full. Thinking you'd escape it, the crowd and the rush, and the fight and the unpleasantness, you went out at an hour when there can't be an office rush. I am afraid you had made a mistake; there is no off time—it's always crowded. And what crowds, what tortures! You fight your way in, you fight for the four inches of rod space to cling onto, you fight for your existence more or less, and when you reach your destination, you fight fight fight for your way out. You become rude, you become selfish; you are not the type to wish to cause trouble to others but now you become vicious, you jab somebody in the side, you press your bottom against somebody else, and heave, heave your way through until finally you eject out of the bus. All this is inflicted on you, not because you have committed some grave crime but simply because you decide to go from spot X to spot Y, on a perfectly normal and legiti-

mate mission, and you cannot afford a taxi and you do not possess a car. If you went in freshly laundered clothes, now they are crushed, if you had started off after a good bath, now you are smelling of somebody else's sweat.

And if the agony would stop there. Often you get into a bus, crowded of course—it's always crowded—and you grope around for the rod above to hold on to, and lo! there is none just above where you are standing. Looking up in despair, you try to sort out the cause of this discrepancy. Observe, and you shall know. You see marks and holes on the ceiling, screw-holes that indicate that the rod was there. But, some day it had come off loose, and probably got bent or twisted, so they removed that part of the rod. Clean job, but no replacement. You desperately try to keep your balance. You then become aware that the driver is dancing a kind of Scottish reel with his bus, he is weaving in and out, right and left in the crowded streets as though they were open fields, desolate and pretty. He also seems to have a special liking for putting on the brake suddenly and accelerating immediately after, and likes to play special gear games. You can't keep your balance, you are falling over everywhere. And of course you are carrying a packet in your left hand (you had to buy, no choice) and an umbrella in your right hand (it was raining when you left home).

All the while, of course, the bus is belching black smoke from its behind, a gruesome contribution to the bad health of the inhabitants of the city. One doesn't have to be a doctor to tell that that smoke does not possess the qualities of mountain air.

Private Buses

When the private buses came on the road again, well, they brought some relief. One, visually. These private-bus drivers and conductors seem to have a special feeling for their vehi-

cles. They wash them, shine them, and decorate them with all kinds of flowery designs. Maybe it is not up to everybody's taste, but next to those ugly monsters that the State transport plies, these blue and green private buses looked like pretty teen-aged girls. What is it that makes the State transport employees disregard their vehicles so badly? Why do they keep them in such dirty ramshackle condition? Truly, they are junks worth throwing away on to the Dhapa fields. So, we welcomed the private buses. For apart from bringing relative relief to the eye, they took some of the load off the State buses. Unbelievable, sometimes we even got a chance to sit in them.

But what in the name of the almighty has happened now to them? They have chosen the State buses as their models. The courtesy they used to show has gone, their careful driving has disappeared and the shine is fading. They are now driving as dangerously as the State bus drivers. Often they rush along narrow crowded streets as though they were in for the Grand Prix and on wide open desolate expanses. Nobody seems to object, perhaps everybody is afraid to. The risk to the lives of the people on the street seems to be nobody's business.

Add to all this the condition of the roads. Most of them can no more be described by that name—stretches after stretches of holes, cracks, dug-ups and loose stones. When the ugly elephant of the State Transport Corporation or the green ladies of the private companies dance their way along these roads, if there was any pleasure left in journeying from one place to another, it's gone. You only know that your bones rattle and the innards of your tummy shiver and shake in bilious ominousness.

Such, alas, such is the condition of us the bus riders and pedestrians of Calcutta. You make an appointment but can I promise to keep it, can I promise to be in time? Well, don't expect such refinements, eh? You want to meet a friend, call on a relative, visit a sick person in the hospi-

tal, all in the normal pattern of things, and you are landed with the experience of this utter struggle. This is Calcutta. This is the Calcutta of the bus rider and the pedestrian. Here, to reach a friend is a struggle, to go to office a humiliating experience, to go out of the house infinite suffering, that is, if you do not have car and cannot afford the taxi. Taxis cost money—twenty times the bus fare.

And then, the trams. Nationalisation, State control, ah! Glory glory hallelujah! That will improve all things now, we thought. But alas! nothing of the sort. The trams are going the way of the buses. Every day they look older, dirtier and more ramshackle. And their efficiency is reaching new lows.

A simple thing will show the callousness and idiocy that pervades their administration nowadays. Let's take Ballygunj terminus. Office-goers, coming from outside Calcutta, and those living around get to this terminus to occupy the tram-cars. If you have got into a No. 24 tram, and been waiting a

good length of time, just at the moment of departure you will be told it's not going to be 24 but will be 25. Just like that. And vice versa. This happens every other day. And the climax was the other day, when in the same tram the first class was marked 25 and the second class 24. People in their rush did not notice the fantastic arrangement. Only when the tram was about to leave were they told that it would not go on route 25 but on 24. You can imagine the confusion and then the huge row between the tram company staff and the passengers, and then between the first-class passengers and the second-class passengers. Or, as other instances, you are sitting on a No. 25, cosy and settled; and suddenly you find that you are going on the No. 24 route. What happened? They changed the number, but, here's fun, didn't tell the passengers.

But alas, all these lines of lament and ranting, who will read them? Readers who travel by trams and buses, they know what I am talking

about. But they are powerless. Those who ride taxis or possess cars, they will never know what I am talking about, for they have no idea as to what it means actually to be inside one of these vehicles. And here lies the tragedy. Those who run our transport ride cars. Transport ministers, chief secretaries, and administrators do not know the inside of a bus. Our leaders and our rulers—communists, Congressites, progressives or reactionaries—they all ride cars. That is our trouble. Yes, that is our trouble. We are run by car-riders and airconditionwallahs. And when they foam in the mouth in the cause of the people, they do not know what they are talking about. Yes, if Mr Dharma Vira has to travel even one day in a No. 5 bus during office hours, I believe he will resign his post and go away to Punjab: And, if Mr Jyoti Basu had to swing his way to Dalhousie Square holding on to the exterior of a bus precariously, he will perhaps be ill.

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chistic sensibility of a derelict hovering on the periphery of a chaotic and rootless world.

The traditions set up by the New Theatres in the thirties continued in the forties and the middle fifties. Broadly, the films could be classified in one or other of the following genres :—

(i) Films with social themes : Against the background of crude mythologicals, the gradual switch-over to broadly social themes with a pronounced realistic bias was a welcome change. From slapstick comedy and crude gimmicks the sincere and serious preoccupation with the Bengali middle class was a far cry indeed. The screen became increasingly filled with real-life personalities, and the sordid and squalid contours of drab domesticities in middle class suburbia. The directors developed, in particular, fondness for the joint family, etching lovingly though rarely with consummate skill, its complex facade, and unfolding the difficult times, the mounting problems of adjustment, the dissonant clash and the ultimate disintegration, leaving behind deep and gaping scars which would take years to heal. The sentimental nostalgia of the directors for a fast disappearing institution plus the commercial instinct of the producers brought in its wake many stereotypes such as the generous elder brother, the selfish younger brother, the self effacing daughter-in-law and the domineering patriarch. *Bindur Chheley*, *Nishkriti*, *Bhangar gara*, amongst a host of other films made in this genre, stood out prominently. This trend amongst the socials perhaps achieved maximum popularity in the early fifties, throwing up the names of certain actors and actresses and creating in the film-goers a short-lived craze for films depicting the fast-disappearing joint family morés. Understandably, however, a surfeit of films produced within a space of 5 to 6 years exhausted the subject and the popular craze died a natural death.

Then there was the other kind of socials treating compassionately and with understanding woman's feelings, her stunted desires, her disappointment in love, its tragedy and pathos.

The first recognition of a woman's right to have feelings and emotions of her own came in the cinema of the thirties, notably in the work of Pramathesh Barua. But the trend in the cinema as well as in literature was set by Sarat Chandra Chatterjee. Barua's *Devdas*, for instance, was based on a Sarat Chandra's novel. It was a notable film of this genre—a genre which flourished later in the forties and fifties. In this context films like *Grihadaha*, *Baradidi*, *Kavi*, *Soroshi* readily come to mind.

Nationalist Ardour

Within the broad genre of "socials" may also be included films with an overt nationalist and revolutionary ardour like *Pather Dabi*, *Bhuli-Nai*, *Bhabi-Kal*, *Chattagram Astragar Lunthan*, and films dealing with the evil of class distinctions, like *Udayer Pathey* of Bimal Roy. A close scrutiny of the first category will reveal the flashy revolutionary ardour to be not so revolutionary after all and the much glorified patriotism to be of a diluted, sentimentalized and hollow kind. The frontier between sexual love and patriotism is often crossed and recrossed by the protagonists and one strongly suspects that the revolutionary heroes of the Bengali cinema were themselves delightfully confused and muddle-headed individuals, appearing in one sequence as an unperturbed, distant and inaccessible band of supermen and in another as love-lorn, as a teenaged school girl. Seeing the Bengali films based on the revolutionary saga of the anarchists, one becomes doubtful about the calibre of the anarchist movement in general. The films of both the first and second categories reveal the protagonists as being something of loud gas-bags delivering diatribes against the existing social and political order, and doing precious little besides. Despite satirical vehemence, the protagonist of *Udayer Pathey* is at bottom not any different from an inveterate romantic hero who merely scratches on the veneer of the effete bourgeois society in the name of revolution. As Sarat Chandra Chatterjee's novels formed the staple ingredients of the broad genre of 'so-

cials', their "realism" was too maudlin, cluttered with statements about patent social evils like casteism, cracking up of the joint family system, class conflict etc. The better Bengali films of the period, however, mostly belonged to this category. And what is more, an analysis of the genre reveals the fast expansion of the frontiers of the Bengali cinema. Though the achievement in concrete terms did not match all the sound and fury, a film like *Kavi*, with its intensity of doomed love and its poetry of pain, was remarkable. Incidentally, *Kavi* stands midway between the two broad genres, 'the socials' and 'the romantic films'. In preoccupation it is unashamedly romantic, focussing itself on the relationship between a strolling poet-lover and his lass. But despite the deliberately heightened emotionalism of its treatment, it has a ring of authenticity and truth, derived in the main from a note of weird, almost primitive, fatalism struck in an extremely realistic milieu of the crumbling rural society in Bengal of a particular period. Similarly, the crisp acting of the somewhat arty *Udayer Pathey* and the cut and thrust of its dialogue added a new dramatic dimension to a medium in which till then the spoken word was not much more than a neutral aid.

ii) Devotional cum biographical themes : While the old Vidyapati and Chandidas strain survived, as could be seen in the films on Kavi Joydeb or Sri Chaitanya, amongst others, an interest in outstanding Bengali personalities of the recent past appeared for the first time, with the strong tide of Indian nationalism contributing in no small measure to this development. Mention may be made in this connection of Modhu Bose who shot a stirring biographical on *Michael Madhusudan*. Thereafter, with the gradual popularisation of the biographical cult, films depicted the lives of Vidyasagar, Rama Krishna, Sri Chaitanya, Rani Rashmoni and Kavi Joydeb, amongst others. Gradually the preoccupation of the film directors with outstanding figures of the bygone epochs lessened. But an occasional biographical broke up the

Letters

Durgapur Union

I am an admirer of Mr Charan Gupta, Calcutta Diarist, for his outspokenness and rational approach to different subjects in spite of aberrations here and there. But he should be more objective before he runs down a revolutionary like Mr Subodh Banerjee. Though the charge of inconsistency levelled by Mr Banerjee against Charan Gupta is unfounded I entirely agree with Mr Banerjee that bourgeois inconsistencies are now being indulged in by the so-called intellectuals of India without the least scruple. But "proletarian inconsistencies of a strange Indian variety" are also being practised by the left aristocrats of India.

If I remember aright, Mr Banerjee earned tremendous respect at one time from the struggling people of West Bengal for his championship of "gheraos", but when the matter came under discussion in New Delhi on an all-India plane, he made a hundred and eighty degree turn and opposed

"gheraos". Heroics for the consumption of the toiling masses turned into a whimper.

Mr Banerjee also made some "uncharitable" remarks about the judiciary of India in a speech scheduled to be broadcast by AIR. But when a case was filed against him he withdrew his remarks against the "sacred" judiciary of India and tendered unqualified apology to his lordship. Who can beat that revolutionary consistency?

From Mr Banerjee's rejoinder of September 14 one thing comes but—that the "inefficiency" of the HSEU combined with the "over-efficiency" of the Labour Department under the stewardship of Mr Banerjee prevented *de jure* recognition of the HSEU once more.

OBSERVER
Calcutta

Thanks to Mr Subodh Banerjee, the ex-Labour Minister of the ex-UF Ministry in West Bengal, for his candid confession (*Frontier*, September 14). The China liners, popularly known as Naxalites, have been telling the people that even if the Commu-

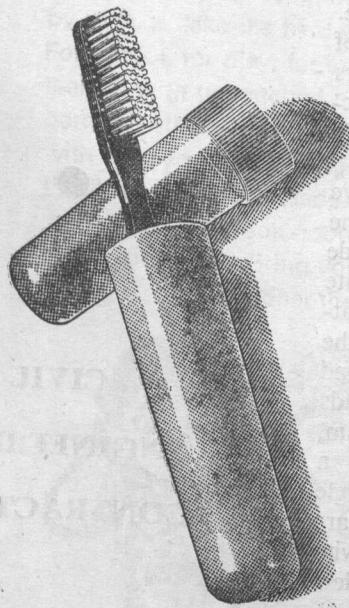
nists are elected in the coming elections they would do nothing but yield to the interests of the ruling class which are protected in the Indian Constitution. They add that the all-out advocacy of democratic elections is nothing but class collaboration.

Let us examine what Mr Banerjee, a most pronounced Marxist and the ex-Labour Minister, says. He writes, "The Labour Directorate only recommends recognition. There being no law in West Bengal to compel the management to recognise a trade union, this recommendation by the Labour Directorate is not lawfully binding on the management which is free to accept or reject it. So if the HSEU had not been recognised by the HSL management in Durgapur, it was no fault of mine as Labour Minister."

Does this leave any room to doubt that the elected legislative body, the Ministry, and the Government Departments are all academic institutions, so to say, set up only to protect the interests of the ruling class and to cover it up from the millions ruled.

KUSHAL SEN
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Dismissed

Now that Mr Ranjit Kumar Gayen (*Frontier*, September 14) has requested the West Bengal Government College Teachers' Association to "wait upon His Excellency the Governor of the State of West Bengal" and persuade His Excellency to believe that the public service commission's great discovery that Mr Gayen was not efficient (and that too after 2 years 10½ months) was nothing short of victimization, we hope that Prof S. Das Gupta (*Frontier*, August 31) and other members of the Association will take up the case. Prof. Das Gupta stated that the Association "possibly could not do much" because the physical instructor never approached the Association. We wonder, why? The Association has its representatives at

As the press will be closed during the Puja holidays the next issue of Frontier will appear in the third week of October

the Taki Government College. One of the vice-presidents of the Association belongs to that college. One Prof. S. Das Gupta, who is the Head of the Department of Economics of the college, is a member of the Executive Committee of the Association. Taki Government College is handsomely represented in the Association. Why, then, should an employee, who has to vacate his post, go to the Association in tears and relate the story of his misfortune? If Mr Gayen were the only victim of the highhandedness of the PSC we might have taken Prof. Das Gupta's arguments as valid. Unfortunately, another teacher of the same college had to lose his job immediately after the publication of Prof. Das Gupta's letter in *Frontier*. This gentleman had been serving the Education Department for more than four years in the capacity of a lecturer in biology and had once been transferred from one college to another. Prof. Das Gupta cannot possibly tell us this time that the Association had nothing to do. The Association, for example, could "wait upon his Excellency" and tell him that the activities of the PSC are highly objectionable. The PSC cannot use a man as "stop gap" for four long years. If a man is unfit, let the PSC say so within a month or two. It is the Association which can force the PSC to follow the straight path of justice. The Association should be aware of the fact that during the last ten years more than ten persons have been victimized by the PSC and some are awaiting dismissal.

If the WBGCTA, wants to achieve success, it will have to shake off the "wait upon your Excellency" attitude and demand things with the ultimate aim of getting them. It cannot flatter and condemn bureaucracy at the same time. Keeping the fact in mind that the Education Department stands for nepotism corruption and cynicism, the Association should better be a fighter, and start a long-term struggle against those who, like vampires, are sucking the very blood of those who have, for centuries, been the builders of the nation.

Calcutta
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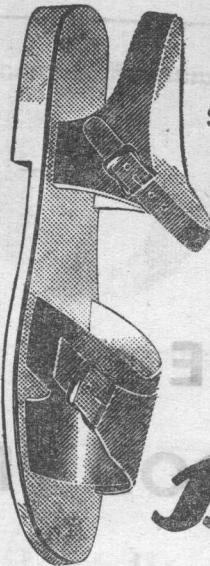
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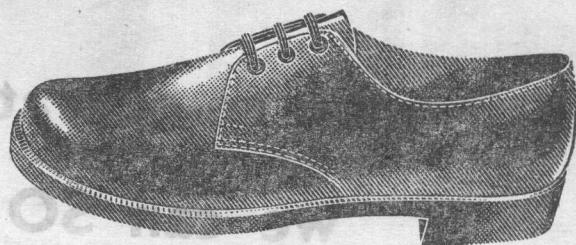
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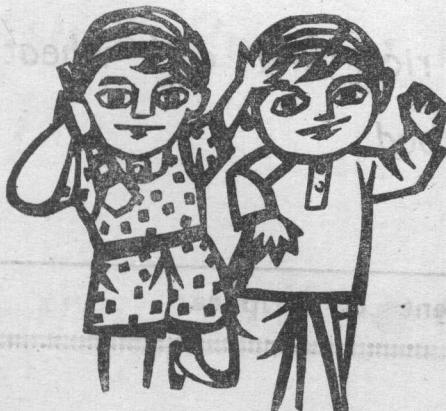
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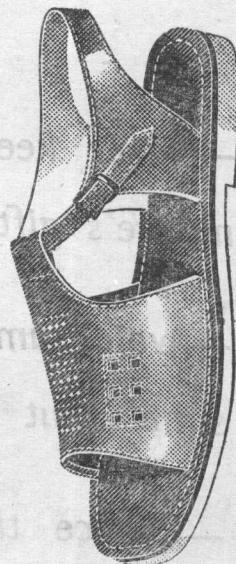
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