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UNLAWFUL THINKING

IN every fat man there is a thin man; in every Home Minister there is a sinister Mr Hyde. Following the rampages of the Shiv Sena, Mr Chavan has recently had some downs; besides, rumours were afloat about Mrs Gandhi's alleged desire to ease him out of the Ministry of Home Affairs. But last week's elections to the Congress Parliamentary Party proved that the little local difficulties are over: the combination of the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and the gentleman who has not filed his income tax returns for ten years, but how does it matter—he may yet become the nation's President—swept almost everything before it. Mr Chavan's dog days are over.

And Mr Hyde can now once more be on the rampage. Talk of reinstating the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act to its old, pristine glory has revived: à la the progressive Nanda, Mr Chavan too would like to clamp persons into prison for thinking dangerous thoughts, and no question asked. It is a mug's game; the more Mr Jyoti Basu shouts about the Naxalites being an anti-social bunch, the more it suits Mr Chavan's convenience. Why, the innocent Mr Chavan implores, you yourselves are alleging that the Naxalites are anti-social, the existing laws do not allow us to restrain them, so please do come and let us reason together: let us pass the amendment to the UA (P) Act.

The Naxalites should take with a pinch of caution the recent spurt of reportage on their activities and pseudo-activities in the newspapers: there is always a catch attached to public relations offered freely. Even if Mr Kanu Sanyal and his friends were not there, Mr Chavan would have needed to invent them before he would have broached the matter of amending the Unlawful Activities Act to the leaders of the so-called parties of the Left. The naivete of the latter, mingled with their fear of being ideologically decimated by the votaries of the Lin Piao thesis, has rendered them peculiarly vulnerable to the Union Home Minister's enticements. As with most other entities in the Indian polity, these gentlemen with the Left too cannot see beyond their nose: their obsession with the Naxalite problem is tending to lead them towards an abdication of even elementary thinking. One has only to go through the speeches in Parliament by members of the Left parties immediately following Mr Chavan's exhortation to join him for thrashing out agreed measures

to contain the Naxalbari menace, to gauge the degree of demoralisation that has set in.

It was a close thing. With Mr Chavan oozing charm, for one agonising weekend it seemed indeed probable that history was going to repeat itself, clickety-clack, with a vengeance: just as, four years ago, Mr Dange and his friends benignly looked on while Mr Nanda merrily locked up the Left Communists, the latter would turn a blind eye as Mr Chavan now goes on the rampage against the Naxalites. There was no instantaneous rejection of the Home Minister's invitation to the leaders of the opposition groups for discussions over the CPI (M-L). It was pretty late in the day that there was a dawning of wisdom: but

the abrasive quality of the reply sent to Mr Chavan can scarcely conceal the sloppiness of thinking.

This episode brings to the fore something else. If you want to make use of the parliamentary forum, you owe it to your ideology to do so with a modicum of efficiency. Little purpose is served by sending men and women to Parliament whose performance can earn them accolade only as permanent non-spokesmen. At the other end, there are the old buffoons, who either do not bother to attend the session or, in case they do, churn out, over and over again, the speech they had made for the first time circa 1952. This version of the walking-on-two-legs thesis cannot take the Left very far—not even to 1972.

Unity Under Strain

It may be easier for West Bengal's United Front to counter propaganda campaigns from the Right, such as the one mounted over Rabindra Sarobar, or threats of excessive militancy from the extreme Left, such as are held out in sundry periodicals, assorted posters and occasional speeches, than to check the erosion of its strength through disunity among its own constituents. UF leaders in Calcutta have lately become more restrained in inter-party polemics than they were until about a month ago, but party cadres seem to consider themselves under no obligation to be tolerant. The ghastly business at Alipurduar showed the potential for violent friction even between parties which have worked in close collaboration at the State level. Over the dispute about the Chief Ministership before the formation of the Government, the RSP was clearly on the side of the CPI (M), and at least one RSP Minister has long hitched his wagon to the brightest star in the CPI (M). Yet the RSP and CPI (M) workers in Jalpaiguri district have not hesitated to fight a vicious and violent battle.

The friction between the CPI (M) and the CPI is easier to understand.

The CPI has suddenly acquired a curious kind of revolutionary ardour, perhaps only to put the CPI (M) to shame. So long as the latter is in charge of the home, labour, land and education portfolios, it is not only safe but perhaps also tactically desirable to goad sections of workers, peasants, students and teachers into greater militancy. Failure to meet demands so militantly pressed can only embarrass the CPI (M) Ministers concerned, and also their party as a whole. But it would be idle to pretend that the CPI (M) itself has become a passive target of conspiratorial attacks by other partners in the Front. Clearly it is no less anxious than the others to extend its areas of influence. The trouble at Alipurduar may not have been altogether unconnected with this anxiety; nor the friction in the Garden Reach area or in a major industrial concern in the Belgharia area. Again the clashes in Cooch Behar may have had something to do with the CPI's efforts to make a dent into a Forward Bloc stronghold. In Durgapur, the CPI is trying to make capital out of the CPI (M)'s attempts to discourage gheraos, and in the colliery areas the CPI and now the CPI (M) are both

in their rival ways contending with the SSP.

Reports about groupings are still less edifying. Some of the reports may be no more than unfounded, even malicious, rumours, but their currency is a fact to be taken into account. Are all CPI (M) trade union leaders ready to fall in line with the labour policies enunciated by the Deputy Chief Minister and the Labour Minister? Is the State party boss altogether happy about the policies or the manner in which they have been outlined? Is the senior-most CPI Minister pleased at the way in which one of his party and ministerial colleagues has been conducting party manoeuvres? Does one group of the Bangla Congress generally support the CPI and another the CPI (M)? The questions cease to be irrelevant when disputes are brought out into the open and an alignment of forces becomes discernible. The allegations against Mr Sudhin Kumar made by two MLAs of his party (at least they were until last week) have not been substantiated, but they have not been disproved either. Yet the CPI (M) seemed anxious to take him under its protective wings, while some others were evidently more than a little sceptical. A taste of ministerial authority seems powerful enough to overcome better known politicians and parties as well. It seemed that, with the stage set for the abolition of the Legislative Council, there was no alternative to quite a few Ministers losing their jobs, at least for the time being. But at the last moment it was a prominent left MP—reported by some to be Mr Bhupesh Gupta of the CPI—who found a way of delaying the disturbance. How can one think of dispensing with parliamentary democracy whose procedures can be put to so many uses?

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Malaysia

The racial violence which engulfed Malaysia in the wake of the third general elections costing more than 300 lives might have given Tunku Abdul Rahman the macabre pleasure of seeing his prophesy fulfilled. Didn't he warn during the election campaign à la de Gaulle that without his Alliance Party the country was in for chaos and racial trouble? Though not completely defeated, the Alliance Party (consisting of United Malay National Organization, the Malayan Chinese Association and the Malayan Indian Congress) lost four of the 11 mainland States, retaining a bare majority in Parliament. Yet to win the election the Tunku left no stone unturned—hundreds of people, mostly communists, were imprisoned without trial under the notorious Internal Security Act, opposition parties were called agents of a foreign country and the electorate was bullied, coaxed and bribed according to necessity. No wonder, the blow the ruling party received after all this proved too shattering for it to keep its head cool.

As to responsibility for the riots, one need not take the statements of Messrs Tunku and Tun Razak very seriously. For the riots they blamed everybody except themselves. But the statements, happily contradicting each other in the course of hours, are in themselves very interesting. At first the blame was put on the Chinese and Indians, then on the communists only to be followed by the Tunku's 'confession' that they were not much responsible. Then again Tun Razak charged that the communists planned the racial riots in order to seize power. Allegations apart, according to available reports, the riot which flared up over a Malay procession of the Alliance jeering at the Chinese was the result of tensions generated by the suspicion that the setback for the Alliance was due to a sort of 'conspiracy' by the Indians and Chinese to end Malay supremacy. An analysis of the poll results, however leaves no doubt about the baselessness of the suspicion.

True, opposition parties like the Gerakan Rakyat or Democratic Action Party with a middle-class following including Chinese, drew a large number of votes but the parties fought with a multi-social programme and the voting too was multi-racial. If there was any organized Chinese voting against the Malaysians, MCA, the Chinese partner of the Alliance, would not have been so severely mauled by the Chinese electorate. Rather, the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party, an avowedly racial and communal opposition party, made serious inroads into the rural Malayan votes, previously enjoyed by the Alliance. The poll results signify, if anything, a clear indictment of all—Malayans, Chinese and Indians—against the ruling party—its mismanagement, highhandedness, corruption and above all its failure to raise the peasants and workers from mud and alleviate the condition of the middle class. (According to official statistics 15 per cent of the Malaysian work force are unemployed.)

And it is precisely in such a situation of general stagnation, poverty and ignorance that racialism and communalism come in handy for the ruling class. If the Malayan peasant

in the field or the worker in the rubber plantation are starving, the blame could easily be laid at the door of "foreigners", the Chinese and the Indians. Since the urban population consists mainly of Chinese and Indians and since they are more educated and better off than illiterate Malay peasants, racialism can catch on. Moreover as the urban literates are generally left-wing they can readily be dubbed Peking's agents. This is the general dilemma of the left-wing Chinese all over South-East Asia.

Meanwhile the Tunku and his "strongman" Tun Razak seem to have become the biggest beneficiaries of the riots. Tun Razak, as Chairman of the Emergency National Operations Council, has clamped one-party dictatorship over the country. With the doors of Parliament sealed, the press gagged, elected opposition members, not to mention godless communists, in prison and the National Operations Council packed with people trounced in the elections, Tun Razak is supposedly making an all-out bid to resurrect democracy, which, as the Home Minister alleged, was 'killed' by the opposition parties.

Doctors' Strike

The last week started with a threat from the Indian Medical Association that its members would go on a day's mass fast and two hours' cease-work unless the West Bengal Government assured them physical safety from assault by dissatisfied patients. It was not known how the Government could possibly give such an assurance but it did. The IMA chose to be assured and called off the strike.

By the middle of the week, however, work in two big Calcutta hospitals collapsed. The doctors in the K. S. Roy T. B. Hospital alleged gherao by a group of patients and struck work. The doctors in the Medical College struck work because they alleged an assault on a doctor by a wardboy and obscene posters stuck up by, of all persons,

the menials. The wildcat strikes were called off by the end of the week after assurances that probe committees would be set up.

Meanwhile the wholesalers' strike against the medicine manufacturers is still on. The wholesalers demand a two per cent commission on the sale of medicine but the manufacturers do not agree. The big hospitals have assured that they can pull on with the existing stock but there are numerous hospitals where patients have themselves to supply the required medicines. They are already hard put to buy them from retail stores, not to speak of the stray patients.

Last week evidently was a miserable week for the patients. The misery is certain to increase if something is not done about the whole-

salers' strike. West Bengal hospitals, even at the best of times, were not places to inspire confidence. Chronic scarcity of medicines, medical instruments, beds, nurses and doctors has made them a mess. The doctors' strikes have made them messier and the precedents they made, unless good luck prevails every moment of the year, will be certainly followed by other hospitals.

The doctors of the overcrowded hospitals have a point. They have sent in deputations and memoranda on many occasions to draw the Government's attention to their problems. But the bigger problem was money and the Government still does not know how to face the other problems without it. The casualty of the hopeless situation is the patients who complain of neglect by doctors and their irritation, sometimes, as in Midnapore, finds outlet through assaults on doctors. The doctors refuse to be made scapegoats for governmental deficiencies and strike work and the Government has no means to check these occurrences.

This is what stagnation is. The hospitals in their own way epitomise the stagnation in the country. It would take a brave man to suggest a way out without overhauling the society's structure—infra, super and all—completely.

But the doctors may well ask themselves a question. No one expects them, Hippocrates or no, to serve patients selflessly. They trade in, let us be frank, human debilities and every trader abides by a code of obligations. While the doctors struck work, did they think of the patients for a moment? They were striving, they might argue, for the ultimate good of the patients by forcing the Government to shake off its lethargy. But shouldn't they have made the Government's inefficiency an issue by itself to take such a radical measure as a strike? What was the occasion of the strike in the Medical College? They allege that the ward-boys have become insufferable because of their impertinence. But was that a fit issue for a strike, to the consternation of patients who went

without food, medicine, attention, not to speak of rest? Even those who think that nothing but militancy works would not dare approve of the doctors' conduct at the Medical College. They called off the strike because they were promised a probe committee. The committee had however been promised before the strike started. The situation was made funnier because the doctors objected

to obscene posters. It is good to know that they are still sensitive about decency even these days. A visit to doctors' hostels, canteens or socials would however make it difficult to discriminate them from army barracks. But one thing, to the satisfaction of the doctors, is that the nurses are on their side; in spite of the exploitation, they prefer gentlemen to crude menials.

View from Delhi

A Famous Victory

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

WHO won the Congress Parliamentary Party executive elections is hard to tell but we have the Prime Minister's word that every one of the winners belonged to her equally. And she even expressed her surprise at the slant the newspapers had put on the results to make it appear she had won it outright. One would have believed her but what stands in the way is the unfortunate knowledge that a "palace" briefing was held to interpret the results so that the defeat could be converted into victory in the morrow's headlines.

The Prime Minister might derive some satisfaction from the defeat of some of her critics and the poor showing of some others but it was by no means her victory. The Desai-Patil axis was out to isolate Mr Chavan along with the Prime Minister but Mr Chavan countered this through a Maharashtra-Uttar Pradesh combine which secured the support of Mysore, thanks to an absurd combination of circumstances. Mr Jagjivan Ram lent selective support to candidates of this combine and in the checkmate game, the Desai-Patil move did not achieve much success. But the Prime Minister's camp cannot explain away the defeat of Mrs Lalita Rajagopalan whom it was backing against Mr S. N. Mishra for the Deputy Leadership from the Rajya Sabha or the defeat of an enthusiastic supporter

of the Prime Minister, Mr M. Thirumal Rao.

The contours of the new group alignments are not yet clear. Mr Patil's return (he beat Mr Krishna Menon to it by a day) to the Lok Sabha makes him the focus of a new regrouping but it is quiet likely that all he is aiming at is a place in the Cabinet. The moment he is inducted into the Government, he would come to terms with the Prime Minister. But at the moment, the consolidation against Mr Chavan appears strong, though the most spectacular victory at the CPP poll was that of a Chavan candidate, Mr Shivaji Rao Deshmukh for secretaryship, from the Lok Sabha. Mr Nijalingappa, Mr Morarji Desai and Mr Patil are sore that Mr Chavan has not revolted against the Prime Minister. They went about mounting pressure on him (for instance, on the privy purse issue, with some 50 MPs demanding the right to a free vote on it and Mr Desai taking the initiative for talks with the princes) only to find that the Home Minister was moving closer to the Prime Minister.

The stalemate will continue until things liven up again over the choice of the next President. Mr Jayaprakash Narayan has backed out and Mr Jagjivan Ram is a strong contender. Mr Nijalingappa tried to scuttle his chances by telling the Press that Mr

Jagjivan Ram did not appear keen on becoming the President. Meantime, Mr V. V. Giri has laid his cards on the table: if he is not made the President he might not resume as Vice-President. Anyway, the Succession Bill has been rushed through Parliament to provide for any contingency.

Mr Chavan's move for talks with the Opposition on action against the Naxalites ended on a note of disappointment. The Swatantra Party was the only one to respond, and to demand a ban on all the three communist parties. The Jana Sangh's views are well known. But Mr Chavan has reason to be happy on one account. He has forced the two communist parties to commit themselves to clear positions now. The CPI (M) had no arguments of its own. The moment the CPI rejected the invitation and took a position, the CPI (M) was forced to fall in line. But there is an essential difference and the CPI (M) cannot equivocate on this. The CPI believes in peaceful transition as a rule and everything else as something exceptional. But the CPI (M) would have to do a lot of quibbling here. Mr Basavapunniah once wrote to the then home Minister Mr Nanda, from jail that his party's attitude to violence was not basically different from that of the 'revisionist' party. This needs clearer enunciation for everybody's edification. And the two communist parties should not regret later that if their theorisation on the kind of action that should be taken against Naxalites, now committed in writing, gives the Government a political alibi at some point in the future. Any action would not be the result of Mr Chavan's decision as an individual. The Government's thinking in the collective sense will determine the nature of the action. What appears to have worried the Government is not emergence of numerous Naxalite groups but the trend towards their consolidation into one or more political parties committed to a programme of armed revolution. The two communist parties have played into Mr Chavan's hands because when they call for a political approach to the

problem, they are indirectly admitting political defeat.

Kerala

The Centre has reason to chuckle at the CPI (M)'s discomfiture in Kerala. The Politbureau had directed Mr Namboodiripad quite some time ago to announce an inquiry into the corruption charges against Mr P. K. Kunju. But Mr Sundaraiya had to go to Trivandrum and take a hand because Mr Namboodiripad was rather reluctant. What the Chief Minister did was alright but in all fairness he should have instituted inquiries against several other Ministers (including some from his own party) and the argument that there is no prima facie case against them sounds specious. In any case whether a prima facie case exists or not in relation to a set of charges is a matter of subjective judgment by the Chief Minister. What makes everything odd is that Mr Namboodiripad had himself introduced a bill in the Assembly to provide the procedure for inquiry in such circumstances. If Mr Namboodiripad was such a stickler for procedure he need not have hustled the Kunju issue through. In the alternative if he could waive all procedure and a mere prima facie case is enough (that is if it exists in his view), he should have gone beyond Mr Kunju. The Union Home Ministry knows enough about corruption in Kerala. It is amusing that the CPI is very vociferous in its demand for inquiry against some of the Ministers. Perhaps this is part of its defensive mechanism because if one goes deeper into it nobody knows how many of the Ministers in the Namboodiripad Cabinet would come out unscathed.

At any rate, the CPI (M) looks determined to ease the CPI out of the Kerala Ministry and this perhaps would make for greater stability and smoother functioning of the Ministry there. Mr M. N. Govindan Nair has taken the position that even if his party stays in the Cabinet he would quit if the interference by the Marxists with his work did not end.

It is now on record that the first

non-Congress Minister ever to quit over corruption charge belonged to a CPI (M)-led United Front, which can indeed be interpreted to prove two opposite things. Either the CPI (M) does not countenance the continuation in office of Ministers under a cloud or the first non-Congress Minister with a prima facie case against himself happened to belong to a CPI (M)-led Ministry.

And where is the need for the Centre to plan any elaborate topple strategy when the United Front is doing everything to disintegrate itself? The Sudhin Kumar episode in West Bengal has made the United Front there a laughing stock in the Centre's eyes, the Midnapore by-election and the Calcutta Corporation poll results notwithstanding.

May 18, 1969

Letter from America

Rebels With A Cause

ROBI CHAKRAVORTI

IN spring, the saying goes, young men's fancies turn to love. As the long winter ends in the northern parts of the United States, trees bloom and so do the love buds of young men on campuses. In the past, we witnessed mini-riots, such as raiding women's dormitories to collect such erotic souvenirs as panties or some such playful rampage as happened last year when students visiting Fort Lauderdale, Florida, battled with the police as rebels without a cause.

This year they are raiding the administration buildings, President's offices and research institutes. In spring, young men's fancies are turning to rebellion. Party raids are things of the past; sit-ins and forcible occupation of campus buildings seem now to be the order of the warm spring days.

The student revolt is sweeping the American campus. Big colleges and small, huge monstrous multiversities as well as ivy-covered private universities are threatened with sporadic uprisings by student militants. Harvard,

Wisconsin, Dixon College in Dallas, Texas, Queen's College in New York and of course, Berkeley in California which has simmered in youth revolt for the past four years are now enjoying a respite. It is a national phenomenon if you look at the geographical distribution of the colleges, hit by demonstrations.

What is the character of the revolt? Who are its leaders? What are their objectives? These are questions that demand answers, and answers are not easy to find in the news reports of the demonstrations and police action. American newspapers are full of reports of "incidents" on the campuses, television networks show films of student demonstrations and police action, and of course, thousands of columnists in thousands of fat newspapers across the nation offer their explanations of this strange event. The event is strange, because about ten years ago it was thought that student demonstrations were characteristics of "underdeveloped" society. These cannot happen in this affluent, "rational" society. I still remember how in 1954 the editorial writer of a midwestern daily newspaper had asked me to explain the "strange" conduct of Indian students who seemed always to be demonstrating. I was even requested to write a short feature story on the student and civilian riots in India.

Things obviously have changed here since those halcyon days. First, there were stirrings among the Negroes, and a young Minister, borrowing ideas from a naked fakir from India (remember who used the phrase?) started the Negro civil disobedience movement in the South. This was a new thing in America; the first glimmer of unrest by an organized minority. The demonstrations were called sit-ins, an American term to describe King's tactics of *satyagraha*. He organized non-violent demonstrations against places which discriminated against the blacks. There were marches to the seats of white power and oppression, and young students in their hundreds, idealistic, alienated from the business civilization that America is, somewhat confused about their ultimate goals,

responded to Martin Luther King's call.

The civil rights movement attracted national attention, several bills were passed, many federal agencies were formed, segregation of schools was attacked, but centuries of wrong were not undone. There were more talks, plans and promises than performance and achievement. The Negro ghettos remained; the Negroes continued to have difficulty in getting jobs. America was slow, painfully slow in responding to the injustices that Dr King was protesting against. Dr King, shortly before his assassination, was broadening the base of his political action; he was bringing about a loose coalition of poor people belonging to other ethnic groups. He was, however, not sure of his strategy. The article he wrote before his death and which was published in the *Look* magazine the week after he died showed his frustration about the course of his movement. Black militants, he warned the whites, are waiting in the wings, watching how the whites responded to the Negro demands voiced by non-violent moderates like him.

Militants indeed became prominent in the Negro movement as the momentum of the original civil rights movement preterred out. As its charismatic leader fell to an assassin's bullet, other leaders such as James Farmer turned to the path of slow, constitutional reform at a time when Negro aspirations had risen and the whites were forming cliques such as the notorious coalition in the Senate led by Thurmond or the political movement led by George Wallace.

I am not writing a history of the Black movement, but merely outlining the origins of the student movement in the US and placing it in a historical setting. The student radicals had their first experience of participation in social movements in the civil rights demonstrations. In a sense some white extremists are right when they criticise Dr King as a rabble rouser.

Vietnam

Then came Vietnam. It did not come out of the blue; it sort of crept on the youth who suddenly found

themselves caught in the front lines of a war the cause of which they could not understand. The Vietnam war, to be more specifically the draft call on the nation's youth, was the catalyst that set off the young people's disenchantment. The disenchantment was there, but it was dormant. The youth, who had grown up in a permissive atmosphere, thanks to Dr Benjamin Spock whose child care books sold in millions setting the pattern of child-rearing, first glimpsed poverty amidst plenty and then war amidst talk of peace. As the Vietnam war continued, they began to look deeper and seemed to find that American problems are more complex than they appear. The Vietnam war, student radicals are telling themselves and others who care to listen, is not an accident; it is a consequence of the military-industrial complex which is in collusion with the universities.

It is true that the student radicals are in a minority and often it appears that their political actions reflect Camus more than Marx. But our criticisms of the style of student militancy should not blind us to the thrusts, the targets of their movement. While black students demand greater representation on the student rolls in colleges and universities and curricula and departments devoted to ethnic studies, which traditionally have been ignored, the white students have been attacking those aspects of the American academia which are part of the military-industrial complex. They demonstrated against draft boards, army recruiting centres, companies making napalm. Students at Stanford invaded the building of the Research Institute, which thrives on funds funnelled through the Defence Department and defence industries. At Harvard, students protested against ROTC.

The data on the relationship between the American academic institutions and the defence industries in particular and the business world in general are astounding. In a best-selling indictment of the American academia's complex links with the military-industrial complex, entitled *The Closed Corporation*, James Ridgway pointed out that today more than two-

thirds of the university research funds come from the Department of Defence, the Atomic Energy Commission or the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. "Eighty percent of MIT's funds are estimated to come from the Government; Columbia and Princeton get about 50 percent of their money from Washington. In addition, there has been widespread covert funding by the CIA of university projects through front foundations."

The tie-up of the university officials and professors either with the Pentagon or the business world is manifold. The Chancellor of the Los Angeles campus of the University of California sat on the boards of six companies, including the Ford company. MIT's Center for International Studies, according to Ridgway, began as a CIA front. Michigan State's police-training programme in South Vietnam was a dodge for the CIA. Cornell's school for industrial and labour relations (writes Ridgway) which was supported by the CIA, ran a training scheme for Tibetans in Ithaca off the Cornell campus.

On the Himalayas

Scholars, hand in glove with the Government agencies, have even invaded the high Himalayas and Nagaland. Ridgway reports: "The University of California at Berkeley runs a Himalayan Border Countries Project, originally funded by the Ford Foundation. Professor Robert A. Scalapino, an advisor to the State Department and supporter of the Administration's policies in Vietnam, was instrumental in switching the Himalayan research from Ford to the Advanced Research Projects Agency of the Pentagon where it was awarded a \$282,000 contract. The Berkeley professors maintain a research station in Nepal, and they have been investigating communism in the Himalayan areas, reporting back on the defence capabilities of the State of Sikkim and the North East Frontier Agency of India. Gordon P. Means, one of the researchers, went to Nagaland. The progress report describes his mission: 'Professor Means has projected a multifaceted research program on various

aspects of political development in Nagaland, all of which may be pursued concurrently if field work in the area for an extensive period proves feasible in 1968-1969.'

A Berkeley professor, Gerald Bererman, once associated with the Himalayan research project, quit in disgust when he discovered that it was financed by the Pentagon. "These agencies," he wrote, "are not disinterested patrons of scholarship nor of furtherance of an understanding of the Himalayan peoples and nations. I can imagine only one reason for their support of this project: To provide information useful in the application of force, including violence and intrigue, to enforce, support or initiate policies in the Himalayan region which are favored by the Administration—policies such as 'containing' or pushing back China, 'freeing' Tibet, supporting insurgency in Tibet, supporting counter-insurgency in north-eastern India, supporting strongly pro-American elements throughout this region. I want no part of it. I feel a positive obligation to oppose it."

A consequence of this involvement of the academic intelligentsia with the State agencies is that the so-called ivory-type atmosphere of the universities is fouled by utilitarian considerations. A certain intellectual corruption sets in. Scholars are caught up in a race for research grants, which, in their turn, determine the course of their studies. Scholars cease to be free-floating intellectuals; they become "new Mandarins", as Noam Chomsky, the famous MIT linguist, calls them, at the service of the foreign and defence policies of the Government.

The scholars who are so involved in the military-industrial-political complex may not find anything wrong with their involvement as they talk in the language of scientism and patriotism. But the student radicals, who started out with civil rights sit-ins and later moved to anti-Vietnam war teaching, are now attacking the overall relationship of the universities with the Defence Establishment. They are in a minority, yes; but this does not mean the problems they are attacking are minor.

Adult Trouble

As Professor Wald, the 1967 winner of the Nobel prize in medicine, told a gathering at MIT on March 4, the trouble is not with the young demonstrators, but the adults. "The trouble with this country and all of us is not student trouble but adult trouble. I'm afraid we made a mess of things and we take the mess for granted. If adults exhibited a fair amount of adult unrest, students would be glad to stay in their classes to prepare for that better world we keep telling them about. Nothing worse could happen to this country than for people's minds to be taken off the ABM, armaments, the Vietnamese war and the military-industrial-labor complex in order to worry about students on campus. That's a red herring."

But red herrings make the traditional adult politics click. The student radicals are in a minority and the so-called 'silent majority' of the student population and the adult population are either apathetic or ignorant about the structure of the American establishment, to which the student radicals had been awakened by the civil rights movement and now by the Vietnam war. As usual, however, politicians have begun to behave predictably. Communist-baiting was fashionable in the fifties and the present President of the United States had fully exploited it in his tortuous rise to power. Now is the season for student-baiting.

The tactic of the politicians is to emphasize law and order, grant ethnic studies programmes in the colleges and universities and enrol more minority students, thus isolating blacks from white radicals. The issue that the militant students are raising now, namely the academia's close relationship with the military-industrial complex, will be sidetracked. Student-baiting is going to be profitable politics for a lot of people, in this country which boasts of having been born in a revolution. But that happened a long time ago, and besides, as Shakespeare said, the wench is dead.

Our agent at Varanasi
MANNALAL DAS
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The World Of Students

N. K. SINGH

THE 16th convention of the Bihar State Students Federation has made it clear that nothing is free from politics. The convention passed a number of resolutions on national and international, economic and political issues. Among the demands made were equality in education, representation of students on academic bodies, unemployment allowance, free education till matriculation and assurance against automation. The Sankaracharya of Puri was condemned for his views on untouchability, it was urged that Urdu should be given the status of the second State language of Bihar, checks on communalism were demanded and support given to the recent teachers and non-teaching staff's strike in universities. The old slogan of left students was voiced again against American influence in the universities.

But the students were not united on their stand on international events. Whereas Vietnam and Pakistan came in bold headlines, Czechoslovakia and the Sino-Soviet border dispute were ignored. The convention demanded that Lenin's *State and Revolution* and Mao's *On Contradiction* be included in the course. The plea was that

knowledge would remain incomplete without studying these books and that Calcutta University has prescribed them.

As students read and pass out, the queue of jobseekers becomes longer. There is no end to frustration and many unions are mushrooming now-a-days, directly or indirectly under the influence of some party or other. In fact, the Congress is the only party without much hold on the students, though wherever it is not in power, it is organizing student unions. For instance, Chhatra Parishad in West Bengal. The Vidyarthi Parishad, the student wing of the Jana Sangh, is busy preparing workers for the party in schools and colleges. Its influence is growing and it is trying to show that it is not involved in politics. The SSP's Samajbadi Yuvjan Sabha has achieved a name in a short time but it is inclined towards cheap popularity like the SSP. Despite its wide membership, the SYS has done nothing creative. The PSP's Samajbadi Yuvak Sabha has got a signboard bigger than its strength deserves, at least in Bihar.

Communists

Communist students are divided. The oldest and stronger section is the All India Students Federation. It was founded in 1936 and till 1962 it was the common platform for all the left students. But thanks to weak and

opportunist leadership—and in Bihar, to casteism—it is falling. Just after the separation of the Marxist Communists from the CPI, the Students Federation of India was founded. But it has not come up as an all-India organisation.

Just after its foundation, the Bihar State Students Federation (Marxist) got a big shock when Mr T. C. Josh joined the Naxalites. Not only he, with him all the leaders and militant workers walked out. After that the Federation was broken for two years. This month it has tried to re-establish itself. To give it a new life came Mr Satyapriya Roy, the Education Minister of West Bengal.

But when the present leadership tried to blame Mr Josh for everything, and to claim that the leaders themselves were without any fault, the convention split into two parts openly. This shows the influence of Josh even when he is not present.

On various issues, specially Russia, one-third of the representatives under the leadership of Chandra Sekhar Chaturvedi of Ranchi were called extremists by the rest who were Marxists. 'Revisionists' and Naxalite members were heard. There were allegations and counter-allegations. Actually the position of the Marxists is very critical at the moment. They do not want to criticise either Russia or China. During the convention the chairman once said that it was a students' organisation and that "we are not the wing of any party." (Arrangements for meals were made in the office of the Communist Party). But the 'extremist' section was not silent and said that only those were going to the executive who either flatter the Communist Party or are kith and kin of party members.

So far as Naxalite students in Bihar are concerned, three or four organisations are active. It is said that their work is confined to postering in the last hour of the night and to writing extremist slogans on walls. They have even left behind the Chinese Red Guards in this matter and are always looking for walls whitewashed recently.

But even if the allegation by Marxists that Naxalite students only do

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postering is true, that seems to be a reaction to their doing nothing. The position and programme of Naxalite students were outlined at their Bengal convention. They have declared that if any student wants to work in villages, he can go, but if they want to stay in schools and colleges, they can stay. These boys have to organise the general student mass on different economic and political issues and then they can pick up militant students during future struggles. Whether Marxist students are patriots or not is difficult to say, but they have one thing which no other student union has—militant and good workers.

When this journalist went to hostels in Patna he found photos of either Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and Atal B. Vajpayee or Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao. Amongst political magazines, either *Organiser* or *People's Democracy* and *Liberation* were available.

HEC In Trouble

Ever since its birth in 1958 the Rs 250-crore Heavy Engineering Corporation, Ranchi, a public sector undertaking, has remained in a state of never-ending crisis. In the past ten years it has seen at least three permanent chairmen and more than a dozen officiating chairmen. The post was vacant for more than three months when Mr Chalapati Rao, General Manager of Perambur Integral Coach Factory, took over. Mr K. D. Malaviya, the former chairman, left the HEC in January to contest the Phulpur by-election to the Lok Sabha which he lost. Mr Malaviya had taken over the "sick child" of the public sector when the crisis was at a new high. He did something to put the Corporation on the track and production went up. But something like the old situation is developing once again. It is feared that the HMBP's Design Bureau and its sister engineering departments will have practically no work after October because the HEC has no work except supplies for the Bokaro Steel Limited.

In the first phase the Bokaro Pro-

ject will have a capacity of 1.7 million tonnes which is to go up to 4 million tonnes in the second phase. The order for the second phase was given to the HEC after a conference in March of the three-member Soviet team of experts, HEC officials and the Secretary to the Ministry of Steel and Heavy Engineering at New Delhi.

The HEC has three plants. Two of them, the heavy machine tools plant and the foundry forge plant, were set up in collaboration with Czechoslovakia. The HMTP is one of the most modern of its kind manufacturing a variety of heavier machine tools required by large industries. The FFP, which produces castings and forgings of practically any type and composition weighing a few kilos to as much as 120 tonnes is one of the biggest of its kind in Asia. The third plant, the heavy machine building plant, is the biggest of its kind in Asia. One of the most important features of this plant is that there is a uniform movement of materials for batch production and the tracks have, therefore, been laid in and around the plant.

Mr K. C. Pant, Union Minister of State for Steel and Heavy Engineering, told newsmen at Ranchi that the HEC had shown better results and there had been a total production of about 14,000 tonnes in the HMBP excluding about 19,000 tonnes secured from outside firms. According to him, HMBP would probably reach its annual rated capacity of 80,000 tonnes by 1974-75.

So at last it is 1974-75. Thank god, it is not 2074-75. So the Government is claiming that its undertaking may be in full production after nearly 20 years of its foundation.

There are always strikes in the HEC, as in all the other public sector projects. When this correspondent visited the HEC he saw a strike by the workers of the HMTP, demanding the scrapping of the promotion procedure under which the artisans have to pass trade tests before being promo-

ted. The employees do not want to appear for the test.

The police arrested 31 persons and lathi-charged the demonstrators. In this strike all the workers' unions joined their hands except the one led by Mr Sharma. The most interesting part of the strike was the reappearance of the famous Naxalite leader, Mr Satya Narayan Singh, who is General Secretary of the Hatia Mazdoor Union. Mr Singh was reported to have gone underground after the Naxalbari movement. According to official sources, only a few workers were on strike but when this correspondent went to visit HMTP, he found that the strike was hundred per cent successful.

In the HEC the number of RSS volunteers is nearly three thousand. One can see them gathering at the HEC stadium for a common parade every Sunday. Mr Chavan told the Rajya Sabha that according to information received from the HEC authorities, the RSS 'shakhas' are held within the township of the Corporation without the permission of the authorities. Actually the development of the RSS is extraordinary. Before the communal riots of August 1967 the organisation had only a few members. During the chairmanship of Mr Malaviya the RSS was always organising strikes and agitating in the HEC.

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Naxalbari :

Between Yesterday And Tomorrow—II

SUMANTA BANERJEE

THE Naxalbari movement has also rescued from the abyss of oblivion and negligence another aspect of our socio-economic life—the fate of the tribal population—and has drawn attention to their revolutionary potentialities.

In the 1951 census the Scheduled tribal landless labourers formed 6.3% of the total landless population. The figure rose to 10.6% in 1961, indicating their growing impoverishment. The primitive custom of bonded labour is still a practice among them.

As pointed out earlier, the question of organizing the landless has been neglected so long. The tribals who form a major part of them naturally shared the same neglect.

Yet, from the political point of view, the tribals have a militant tradition. It is significant that peasant rebellions in the eastern zone of India have always been spearheaded by the tribals, right from the early days of the British rule.

The Kols rebelled in 1831-32 against the distribution of their lands among the rich Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in Chotanagpur. The famous Santhal rebellion took place in 1855. The Sardari agitation began in Ranchi against compulsory labour in 1887. Under the leadership of Birsa, the Mundas rose against the Hindu landlords and Christian missionaries of Ranchi in 1895.

Coming to recent times, during the Tebhaga movement in Bengal in the forties, the Hajangs of North Mymensingh contributed a great deal to the success of the struggle.

The analysis made by Mr Kanu Sanyal and others of Naxalbari's revolutionary potential was therefore not so wide of the mark. But then what went wrong? According to Kanu Sanyal some of the reasons for the failure of the uprising were "the want of a powerful party organization, failure to have a firm mass base

and absolute ignorance of military science." (The Report on the Peasants' Movement in Terai.)

It is clear that the rebels minimized the repressive power of the State. There was no preparation to face a ruthless military force. The Naxalbari rebels did not even have a chance of facing the army. Police action, and that too a half-hearted one, thanks to the then UF Government, was enough to make them collapse.

The same mixture of naivete and ingenuousness marked the operations in Wynad in Kerala. If they were not a calculated effort by agents-provocateurs to sow disillusionment among future revolutionaries, they betrayed a certain amount of romanticism by their dream of conquering State power by bows, arrows and spears.

The isolation from the rest of the people of the country was also another factor that hastened their defeat. As the absence of response to the Naxalite slogan of boycotting the elections was to prove later, the people are willing to support the communists with their votes, but are not yet prepared to take to arms in their defence.

But still one has to start somewhere and the leaders of the Naxalbari uprising deserve praise on that score. Their followers in Calcutta are perhaps only parodying their heroism. These splinter groups owe their popularity not to the fact that they are more consistently revolutionary, but to the fact that the situation is not. Besides, how do they explain away the fact that the Naxalites showed very little activity during the hated PDF-Congress regime or Governor's rule in West Bengal, but as soon as the UF assumed power they have come back to the arena? Why are they reluctant to launch militant actions, with the exception of Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh, in States run by Congress governments? Their slogan of boycott of elections and choice of UF-

run States for staging uprisings may be ideologically motivated, but do they not objectively help the bourgeois-landlord ruling clique at the Centre?

Catalyst

But despite all this, Naxalbari will remain an important landmark in the annals of Indian revolution which is still journeying through purgatory. For one thing, it has served as a catalytic agent by compelling the complacent communist parties, and the UF Government of West Bengal in particular, to recognize the basic conflict in the country and to shed the illusion of solving it through peaceful transition to socialism. It is yet to be seen, however, whether they have the courage to follow up this realization by action.

The two communist parties in West Bengal are in an overwhelming majority in the Government. The "red spectre" continually conjured up by the bourgeois-landlord clique has finally appeared in West Bengal. But it has appeared not in blood-tattered dress, across the barricades, but in the uniform of 'order', in spotlessly white dhoti and kurta, in the plush chamber of the Legislature. Therein lies the rub.

Will the communists in the Government continue to be reluctant to upset the Indian apple cart and prefer the comfortable parliamentary road, or will they try to accentuate the polarization?

Polarisation

The polarization has already set in. It was reflected in West Bengal in the disintegration of the PSP, elimination of Swatantra Party and the Jana Sangh and in the pattern of voting in the rural areas. It will take a sharper form in the coming inevitable clash with the Centre. The Indian army, hitherto unaffected by any internal political upsurges (whatever political alignment it may have, will be Jana Sangh oriented, because of the concentration of people from the Hindi belt in its ranks), will prove an obedient tool in the hands of the Centre to crush any movement in West Bengal.

The forces of reaction within the State also should not be minimized. A combination of the rural vested interests, industrialists and the bureaucracy, backed by the Centre, could be a formidable threat to any Leftist State Government. The Right reactionary forces are not idle and judging by the growth of the RSS, it is evident that they are thinking in terms of a future armed confrontation.

In these circumstances, the necessity of preparing the masses for direct confrontations with the vested powers needs no emphasis. In the absence of any such organized preparation, the hungry and the impatient may break into blind, incoherent revolts, bereft of conscious purpose or premature disorganized Naxalbaris crushed and exploding again—thus initiating a long drawn out process of destruction of the present social system.

The future of any communist movement in West Bengal therefore will have to be marked by a subtle combination of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary activities, of legal and underground machinery and of course, by building up mass bases in the countryside particularly.

Meanwhile, the present UF Government in West Bengal will be an exercise in futility. The reforms will touch only a fringe of the problems which, with time, will assume such distressing proportions as to be beyond the capacity of a parliamentary solution within the framework of the Constitution.

But what will succumb in the failures of the UF Government will not be communism or revolution. It will be the pre-revolutionary traditional appendage, illusions from which it can be free only by a series of failures.

(Concluded)

NOTICE

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Hunting The Left

THE most notable feature of the political scene during the post-Martial Law weeks has been the effort, through newspaper columns and magazine articles, to vilify the progressive forces in the country and to lay the blame squarely on them for the chaos in the days preceding the imposition of Martial Law. There have been sustained attempts, now turning into a full campaign, to single out left leaders and make them the targets of a hate campaign. There have also been efforts, other than in print, to put the millstone around their necks by simultaneously invoking public wrath and official condemnation against them. While these efforts have so far conspicuously failed to achieve a modicum of success, the campaign continues. The frenzied efforts to ingratiate themselves with the present regime by a section of the rightists and their flacks have also not resulted in any notable gains.

Still, the campaign to distort and misrepresent the events of those days, to bend and twist the facts of the movement, goes on. This is an alarming and intolerable state of affairs. For, in this nefarious operation to malign the left leaders, the reactionary forces are also maligning the movement. In fact, their attempts are meant to reduce the movement to a disjointed series of spasms eventually culminating in a chaotic upheaval wherein anarchy and violence ruled supreme. The facts, as known to the people and the world at large, are completely otherwise. What those fateful days witnessed was not a sporadic movement but a massive and total uprising of the people against an absolutely corrupt, absolutely rotten regime which had brought nothing but shame and disaster to the country during its years of sway. Pakistan was tottering at the edge of inferno, the people condemned to live under cruel masters who had deprived them of all their economic and political rights. At the last moment the left

came to their rescue. It was the left leaders in East and West Pakistan who took the initiative to challenge Ayub's regime and rally the people to throw off the yoke.

It was the left which saved the country time and again from plunging into bitter sectarian, regional and linguistic riots which had been engineered by the reactionaries with the blessings of the regime. Time and again, attempts were made to spark off violence along these lines; time and again the left came to the fore and prevented what might have turned into a very ugly situation indeed.

Now the cudgels have been taken up against those very forces that have done so much to guarantee the integrity and sovereignty of the country. The reactionary opportunists have once again revealed their sinister designs and are bent upon destroying all that had been achieved during the movement in terms of mass awakening and recognition of economic realities of the country.

The people, though they have displayed such remarkable patience and put up with a lot from these destructive forces, cannot be fooled with these absurd slander campaigns. These opportunists have been exposed for all times and the masses are aware of who their real leaders are. No amount of vicious propaganda is going to change things in the slightest.

(From *Holiday*, Dacca, May 11)

Interest In Tagore Revived

ANOTHER Rabindra Jayanti passed off but with a marked difference this time. People known to be vocal critics of Rabindranath had undergone a remarkable transformation. They have given people to understand that Rabindranath after all is indispensable for Bengali language and literature.

It was admitted, belatedly though, that Rabindranath had transcended all barriers of race, colour and religion and belonged to all.

None, however, pointed to the fact

that Rabindranath's works are not available in the city bookshops or for that matter anywhere in the province. This is a reality. Students are hard pressed, as Tagore is included in the Bengali syllabus beginning from the Intermediate to the M.A. class.

A number of cultural organisations including the Nazrul Academy and Tammadun Majlish held separate functions to observe the 108th birth anniversary of the poet.

These functions brought to the fore the painful dearth of talents in Rabindrasangeet. There have been a number of exponents of Rabindrasangeet. Not many could reach any significance in recent times.

Fahimida Khatun apart, the others have not been very satisfactory. Fahimida Khatun is superb and has

attained a distinctive style. She can easily be rated with Kanika Banerjee, Suchitra Mitra and Rajeshwari Dutt.

We have not been able to produce even singers of the calibre of Sanjeeda Khatun, Farida Bary Malik (now Khan) and Afsari Khanum (now Rahman) as they were in the early fifties. They are well past their prime. Sanjeeda Khatun continues to sing but she is now only a shadow of her former self.

The number of male singers is also disappointingly meagre. Once Zahedur Rahim, Choudhury Abdur Rahim and Fazle Nazami were our top ranking Rabindrasangeet singers. The last named two have gone into oblivion and the standard of Zahedur Rahim has deteriorated over the years.

(From *Holiday*, Dacca, May 11)

in the Corporation elections, they just chose to stay away or voted when hard pressed by volunteers. Otherwise the turnout should not have been so poor. In any case it works both ways; the loss must have been the greater for the Congress since the supporters of this party had long ago given up the fight and reconciled themselves to a defeat.

The lack of interest in the Corporation elections was reflected even in the reports. There were of course half-hearted celebrations, with nothing of the élan which marked the demonstrations after the UF victory in the mid-term elections. It was difficult even to get any details of the voting, apart from the votes polled by individual candidates. At least in the paper which I read regularly. I did not consider it worthwhile buying a few others for this purpose.

An afternoon's arithmetic showed that out of the 17.66 lakh voters supposed to be on the rolls, 7.17 lakhs or 40% voted. In other words only 4 out of every 10 voters considered it worthwhile to poll. The newly formed CPI (M-L) may choose to take it as vindication of their stand by the electorate. Of the votes polled 4.16 lakhs went to the UF, 2.23 lakhs to the Congress and only 0.78 lakhs to others. It was thus a straight fight between the UF and the Congress, the victors outclassing the losers by roughly 2 to 1, with others being nowhere in the running.

With parliamentary democracy being so much at a premium, much no doubt will be heard in the coming months about the UF representing the will of the people of Calcutta Corporation and other left voices jeered at as counsels of despair. Yet it may be worth pondering by those who will rule Calcutta Corporation. Between them they could muster the backing of only less than 25% or less than one in four of Calcutta's citizens entitled to show their preference. The experiment in democracy was started in Calcutta Corporation under the grand name of Local Self-Government. It has not been a very successful one. It is a sad state of affairs when people give up voluntarily the opportunity to

Calcutta Diary

GYAN KAPUR

TO comment on the affairs of Calcutta Corporation two fortnights running is not my cup of tea. But this being the age of democracy when Marxists, non-Marxists and others in between all perfervidly avow allegiance to that creed, one should not go by one's own pet foibles. Having lived all my life in this great city and that too in a very small area of it and seen it year by year reduced to a desert of filth and squalor with a few oases of clean spots, I cannot ignore the election results. These, by ending the Congress monopoly in the Corporation, have carried forward the process of political clean-up. Or at least so it seems. Time alone will show.

On the face of it the United Front has won a clean victory in the Corporation reducing the Congress to a not very important party or opposition. With a UF Government in the State and a solid UF majority in the Corporation there is no reason as such why things in the Corporation should not improve. The problems of the Corporation are not those of the State Government. In the past Councillors

of all hues have shown themselves to be inclined to hanker after bigger things than cleaning up garbage and providing adequate water and sanitation. It would be a mistake for the new majority to pass the buck to the State Government indirectly or the Centre directly for all the ills of the city. The long suffering citizens will be more willing to accept what is said when they see that within their limited sphere and means available, things have improved. And if and when that takes place the people of Calcutta will find out ways of getting the Centre to shell out a little more cash which is the city's due. But the plain truth is that the average citizen has not much hope that there will be any basic change with the changes in the governing body.

This was reflected in the general apathy of the citizens to the elections. Of course I am aware of the view that the outcome being a certain victory for the Front, voting was subdued, being in fact just 40%. There are equally good grounds to think that because the majority did not feel it a great honour to be able to vote

govern themselves, a right for which millions die. There must obviously be something false in the rights conferred by this democracy.

A poor voting response in the Corporation elections is not the same thing as in the elections for the Assembly or Parliament. For any effective work to be done by the Corporation close touch with the citizens is essential. Many of the ills of the city can be removed only with effective participation of the citizens even if the Corporation machinery can be geared up properly, which is a doubtful proposition. If so few could find half an hour to cast their vote, how many would find the courage when a trouble is involved?

On top of everything are the internal tensions of the hastily put together Front. If the election of Mr Shymal Dutt supported by the Forward Bloc against the UF candidate is a pointer, much time and energy is going to be spent in keeping up a facade of unity. But let us be hopeful. Even for marginal improvements—a little less corruption in the various departments, a little better service, stricter enforcement of various rules—the UF administrators would earn the gratitude of the people.

* * *

Constitutionalism has its own compulsions. The so-called peaceful transfer of power on the Indo-Pak continent was both preceded and followed by blood baths equalled perhaps only by the Assyrian massacres. The parliamentary revolution being apparently complete in West Bengal, its curious logic is having its own way. It is useless to apportion blame to any of the constituents of the UF but from recent trends all the venom appears to have been reserved for mutual biting while for the exploiting classes there are only assurances of help and co-operation. The disgraceful happenings of Alipur duar are only the ugly culmination of a State-wide tendency. To blame the police, as the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Mr Jatin Chakravarty, has done, does not help much. The police must be laughing up their sleeves when UF members

claim that prompt action by them could have prevented attacks by one UF constituent on another. Moreover, when the party concerned is the CPI (M) and the police are under the control of their nominee, even though it has not been openly said, the hint is obvious.

All in all it is a mess. The unseemly haste to put into the Ministry sundry people who were not members of the Assembly has created a situa-

tion which could have been avoided with a little foresight. As usual, nothing definite can come out of the charges and counter-charges which Mr Sudhin Kumar and his two MLA colleagues have hurled at each other. But the MLAs do deserve a little sympathy. Once you are committed to the parliamentary game, it is a little hard to be asked to give up your seat to keep in the Ministry some one who could not get in first time.

The Press

Forecasts On Kerala

COMMENTATOR

FOR one reason or another the United Front in Kerala has not been much in the news until recently. Newspapers have always drawn a distinction between it and the UF Government in West Bengal; they have found Mr Namboodiripad's Ministry more pragmatic and more humane—a Government with which, in the words of Mr G. D. Birla, one could do business. But the recent developments in Kerala have upset their attitude of indulgence. In the quarrels within the Front and the public bickerings they have read signs of disintegration; a fierce attack has accordingly been mounted to bring down the Ministry. Naturally, the former Finance Minister, Mr P. K. Kunju, is not without sympathisers among newspapers some of whom have found considerable force in his contention that the Chief Minister has been moved more by a spirit of vendetta than a desire to cleanse the administration and his prima facie findings were suspect. All these comments are, however, largely incidental. Their central theme is that the CPI(M)'s overbearing attitude is becoming intolerable to some of the constituents and if the Chief Minister continues to behave in this fashion the United Front may fall apart.

The Hindu thinks that the coalition is in tatters, with Ministers boycotting Cabinet meetings, one group of

Ministers accusing another group of corruption and the Chief Minister, Mr E.M.S. Namboodiripad, being accused of partisanship in dealing with such charges. Without going into the merits of the charges against Mr Kunju, the other constituent parties of Front have reasons to ask the Chief Minister why he should refer these allegations alone to a judicial inquiry and not those against his Marxist colleagues. The Chief Minister's right to decide on his own in such matters, without reference to the wishes of the party the impugned Minister represents or without the prior consent of the Co-ordination Committee is not so much a question of prerogatives as one of practical politics. A conglomerate coalition in which one group, although dominant like the Kerala Marxists with their 50 seats in the State Assembly, rides rough shod over the others cannot obviously work. That is what is happening to the Government in Kerala. The administration is at sixes and sevens. One facet of the malady stems from the perpetual struggle between the Left and the Right Communists in their bid for popular support. The Right Communists' exit from the Ministry, along with the Socialists, may even suit the Marxists. And one Marxist Minister was recently quoted as asking: "If the CPI leaves the Front where will "

go?" It is perhaps this assessment of the helplessness of the CPI, which has 19 members in the Kerala Assembly, that emboldens the Marxists to treat lightly its recent ultimatum to quit in three months if certain demands were not met. The paper wonders if Mr Kunju's resignation means that his party and the CPI do not wish to precipitate a showdown right now.

The Times of India has not found much substance in Mr Kunju's contention but it has doubts about the future of the coalition. The paper says that the case made out by Mr Namboodiripad for a judicial inquiry is quite convincing. The Coordination Committee of the United Front has given the Chief Minister the authority in cases where there were corruption charges against a Minister to find out if there was a prima facie case against him and to order a judicial probe on the basis of his own findings. It may be this authority was given to him at a time when the ISP and other Leftist constituents of the coalition did not distrust his bona fides. But that does not in any way invalidate the procedure. If any constituent party feels that the Chief Minister cannot be relied upon to hold the scales even between Ministers belonging to his own party and those owing allegiance to the other groups, it is free to bring up a vote of no-confidence in him. Mr Kunju and his supporters in the CPI are themselves to blame for their predicament. Mr Namboodiripad also appears to be on firm ground when he says that there is no prima facie case for a judicial inquiry into the charges against the KTP Minister in the Cabinet and one of his own Marxist colleagues. As it happens, it was only against Mr Kunju that specific charges were made on the floor of the Assembly. Even so, Mr Namboodiripad has said that he will be prepared to reopen the case against the two Ministers if there is more concrete evidence against them. The paper thinks that in the short run Mr Namboodiripad's decision may strengthen his image in the public eye. The CPI and other Leftist constituents may not choose to make an issue of the decision to the point of breaking up the coalition. Nor are they

likely to take it lying down. To settle scores they may perhaps try hard to find incriminating evidence of corruption against some Marxist Ministers. The air in Trivandrum is thick with charges and counter-charges against almost every Minister. It will be surprising if in the face of all this the Kerala coalition can hold together for very long.

Describing Mr Kunju's exit from the Cabinet as "involuntary" *The Statesman* says the development marks a crucial stage in the unedifying quarrels within the ruling United Front. The ISP is to meet soon to consider its attitude towards the UF in future. But even if the ISP were to go out of the UF, the Marxists are unlikely to be perturbed: with the help of dependable allies they have a working majority in the legislature, and may not mind the departure of some others besides the Socialists. The Marxist strategy might have been devised with precisely this objective in view. No one can object to charges of corruption against Ministers being inquired into and the Ministers concerned being asked to step down during the inquiry. There is, however, some sympathy for Mr Kunju's complaint that the Marxists are adopting different standards regarding the allegations against four other Ministers, three of them belonging to the CPI (M); the CPI has supported a judicial inquiry in all these cases, fearing perhaps that its turn for similar discriminatory treatment may come not long after the Socialists are forced out. This distrust explains also the CPI's notice to the Marxists that it would withdraw from the Ministry, though not from the UF, if its 13-point demands were not accepted. Whether the CPI, the ISP and other parties in the Marxist-dominated UF will want to stay on in the ruling coalition on sufferance cannot be predicted yet, but their present ambiguous attitude is unlikely to impress the public.

Patriot says that the Kunju affair and the differences between the CPI and the CPI(M) Ministers in regard to interference in each other's work would not have become explosive if, instead of attacking and criticising each

other so bitterly in public, they had been thrashed out in the Coordination Committee or informally between the leaders of the party. Unless this principle is adhered to, the United Front will find it very hard to convince the people that it can become the alternative to the Congress. In fact, what has happened in Kerala can happen in Bengal also if criticism of each other is initiated in the press rather than in the Coordination Committee. Mr Dange's criticism of the Bengal CPI(M) over its attitude to the adventurist Naxalite element was uncalled for and can be regarded as unnecessarily provocative by Mr Jyoti Basu and his party who are in a difficult position but have so far conducted themselves with commendable restraint. The people of Bengal and Kerala, the leaders of the two communist parties and others in the Front should not forget that the members of the two Governments were returned as candidates of the United Front rather than of the individual parties. The paper advises the leaders of the Left parties to accept sincerely the fact that the United Front is a category qualitatively different from a sum of the parties themselves and that to make it viable they will have to be much more non-sectarian and truly democratic than they have been hitherto.

Film on Calcutta

In *The Times of India* Dileep Padgaonkar writes from Paris that Louis Malle, one of the key figures in the "new wave" movement in French films, has produced a film on Calcutta which has been showered with rave notices. Malle's Calcutta, he says, is a bitter pill to swallow—bitter, in the first instance, for a Frenchman because Malle's sounds and images upset his *bonne conscience*. The concern for Calcutta's "famished and miserable masses" is best illustrated by Mr Jean-Louis Bory's criticism of the film. Mr Bory, writing in the *Nouvel Observateur* loudly proclaims, "We are all Indians". He is sorry, furious and shudders with impatience on seeing that "unbearable reality". He goes on to lament: "This is not possible, this is no longer

possible". One would like to cry out but one sighs. "What must one do?" What Bory does is to suggest that Malle's documentary murmurs just one thing to the ear: revolution! It is obvious that the sight of red flags, hammers and sickles, mass demonstrations, police firings, and Maoist slogans have set Mr Bory's revolutionary pipe-dreams afire. What is not equally obvious is why the same concern and fervour are clogged up when it comes to doing something about the slums of Aubervilliers and Nanterre sprawling on the periphery of affluent Paris. The film has also provoked another set of stock reactions from resident Indians. The images and sounds that disturbed the Frenchman are prone to rouse the Indian's xenophobic temper. "Here is Malle", he is apt to say, "a foreigner shooting his film not in neat, nice cities like Delhi, Chandigarh or Bangalore but in Calcutta". Malle merely parades the misery, religious fanaticism, political turmoil, death, disease and apathy in that city with an insistence at once clinical and obsessive. What is more, in the sparse commentary there is no word said about our parliamentary democracy, the efforts at national integration, democratic socialism, birth-control programmes. No account of Calcutta's contribution to art and scientific progress. Not even a casual reference to Tagore or to the city's rich intellectual traditions. Padgaonkar says Malle's intentions were simple, even modest. He dealt with Indian reality without any apparent artistic pretensions or any plan to establish a political or philosophical thesis. He sought neither to explain nor to demonstrate. His principal aim was to let the spectator share the emotions that he himself experienced as he shot his film. It would be incorrect to interpret the film as a "denunciation" of Calcutta's pathetic plight. The film is not a protest or a list of accusations. It is a *constat*—a report, a verification. His film is an interrogation on the possibilities of a combat and hence only a point of departure for reflection.

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MAY 24, 1969

Assessing A Teacher's Ability

S. M. CHANDA

IT is time for our educational planners to seriously consider the task of assessing teachers' ability if they really want to raise the standard of education. Not that it is the chief problem, but it needs as much attention as some issues currently being discussed, for instance, syllabus, mode of examination and teacher-student relationship. If you accept 'how to teach and examine students' as a problem, you need to find out, as part of this enquiry, how most effectively a teacher's performance in his class can be assessed.

That it is a difficult job admits of no doubt. For in the existing setup of an educational institution, arts, science or technological, there is hardly any scope for such a review; a teacher's day-to-day class-work, at the undergraduate or post-graduate level, is not, and cannot be, supervised. A teacher's failure to cover his course in the allotted time may draw his authorities' attention, on account of the students' angry protests against questions on the parts of the course left untouched, but in practice no notice is taken of the nature of the work done by him. Appreciation, if at all, is made of the quantity of work done, not of its quality. To neglect this—measuring a teacher's effectiveness—is to commit a grievous error of omission, for it is causing indirectly a denigration of teaching.

Here are a few observations on some proposed methods of assessment:

(a) The idea of assessment by students through answers to a questionnaire, as suggested by some foreign institutions, appears innocuous at first sight, but is likely to create at times a tension between a teacher and his students. The possibility of its misuse by students cannot be ruled out altogether. Since they are young and immature, they may use such a questionnaire as an opportunity to vent their

anger caused actually by personal or non-academic factors. A teacher enjoying popularity on the social plane is very likely to receive, under this system, favourable reports even though he may be below the mark in his work. But, in spite of its negative aspect, the usefulness of this method cannot be denied. For, when all is said and done, the fact remains that a teacher's primary task is to put his ideas across to his students and the degree of his success depends on how far the latter can appreciate him. If the students of a particular class fail completely to learn what their teacher wants them to learn, it is certainly a reflection on him.

(b) Dissertations or publications by scholars, valuable no doubt as research work, do not add to or in any way help to measure their effectiveness as teachers, for quite often they have little to do with teaching proper. It is not my point that teaching is more important than research; all that I suggest is that research and teaching are two altogether different kinds of activity, requiring different intellectual habits, and proficiency in the former does not mean any corresponding proficiency in the latter. If a man, however good at research, is interested in research only and is not student-oriented, his proper place is on the staff of a research association.

(c) The theory that students' performance in an examination is an index is not a sound proposition. Examination results are determined by several factors other than teaching. Not infrequently we come across teachers who, out of fear that examinees faring ill would pounce upon them, set extremely easy questions or dwell on certain parts of the syllabus in such a manner as to provide unmistakable hints. It is as good as giving away questions, and examination results in such cases, flatteringly high marks, are not at all dependable.

(d) The practice of getting teachers assessed in confidential reports by their departmental heads, as is done in many institutions, is unrealistic as evaluation. Seldom do we find departmental heads making their assessment of their colleagues' teaching

work after a study on the spot. Their reports are usually speculative comments unsubstantiated by facts or based on some student reactions which they happen to hear or which they collect by oblique means. Conclusions drawn from hearsay evidence are likely to be erroneous.

(e) A reasonable method of assessment to my mind will be assessment, in terms of comments, by each member of a department of all his departmental colleagues including himself, made anonymously. What I propose is an analysis to be made by a teacher

of the strengths and weaknesses of each of his departmental colleagues. Apart from providing an evaluation by the people on the job and so competent to judge, this system will encourage closer cooperation among departmental colleagues.

From a comparative study of (a) and (e), that is, students' answers to a questionnaire and evaluation by a teacher of his colleagues, it will be possible, I believe, to derive the basis of a fairly objective assessment of teachers' teaching ability.

Despite a few lapses the play held the attention of the audience right through, with some competent acting by the American soldiers. It was unfortunate that the cigarette packet used on the stage was non-American.

Asami Hajir

In the criticism of *Headline by Squad 31* which appeared in these columns it was pointed out that lampooning characters had to be done with considerable care and such roles should be handled with much skill.

In *Asami Hajir* the audience was treated to a performance that will be remembered for a long time. The "peshkar" played by Sudip Gupta was a delightful study. It was caricature because it possessed just those slight overtones which render a character comic. And it was so beautifully done that when in his last speech he gets terribly agitated and dies, the thing seemed perfectly logical.

Unfortunately the others did not rise to the occasion as a group though individually good performances were given—e.g. by the "Asami" in the dock played by Chandan Dutta Gupta whose dignified and restrained performance conveyed a sense of power.

By comparison the performance of the magistrate (Tushar De) was forced and strained and there was no necessity to make the pleader make attempts at sitting down on a chair that was not there. It spoilt an otherwise good performance—just right in its mock-seriousness.

The funniest scene was the ousting of the "people's voice" by Somit Ghosh the police and the two orderlies.

This one-act play cleverly adapted by Bimal Gupta is brilliant in its symbolism and caustic in its satire.

Once again the set was most economically made and very well arranged so that grouping on the stage provided pleasing visual effects.

"The "Internationale" and the "Marseilles" sung at the beginning of the performance by the choral squad could have used many more voices. As it was, the rendering was moving though not as vigorous as one would have expected from the "Theatre Camp."

Theatre Camp Celebrates May Day

BY OUR DRAMA CRITIC

"THEATRE Camp", as the name implies, is a militant theatre group who seem to specialise in presenting plays with plenty of social significance. The two plays they staged on Sunday, May 11, although completely dissimilar in presentation and content, established the talent of this youthful group.

The first play *Ekti Nam*, written by Chandan Palodhi, gave a sample of life in Vietnam today. The curtain rose on a sort of camp in the heart of one of the jungles. The set was very imaginatively and most economically constructed. A bamboo fence with clever lighting produced shadows which at once conveyed the eerie atmosphere of war. Stage props were just rope and frame and perhaps a packing box or two draped in old cloth to look like tables. The most expensive item must have been the steps on the left of the stage which were made of metal tubes and wood. The scene immediately conveyed austerity and mobility.

The play started by showing life in a guerilla camp. Particularly effective were the sound effects of air raids. There are constant interruptions and news of death which these freedom fighters take in their stride. Another facet of their indomitable spirit is revealed when a "group commander",

while instructing the squad on the next mission, takes time off to make them laugh: "Grimness is for those who hide things" he tells them. Unfortunately, after making everyone laugh, he became quite grim himself while giving orders and left the stage thus. This might have meant to convey that the guerillas can laugh and be serious also but it militated against the purposive provoking of laughter.

The next scene showed a group of four Americans trapped in the jungle with no food or water and just a bare contact with their main force—owing to a faulty radio set.

The effect in this scene was marred by faulty costumery. Soldiers wear helmets during engagements and not peak caps. Nor are they so "immaculately" dressed even though they be Americans. Half the horror of their predicament was thus lost.

There followed a scene when the Americans disappeared and a few of the guerillas took the stage. Then they disappeared and the Americans appeared. The scene ended with the commanding officer of the Americans shooting his three friends and then being shot himself by one of the guerillas. This might be true in life but on the stage it definitely looked contrived.

Radical...Hackneyed

Though brilliant and radical in politics, *Frontier* is very dull and hackneyed, mild and compromising in its cultural discussions. For example its comments on Satyajit Ray's *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* (May 10). An infatuated critic, after making a series of unbalanced and irresponsible utterances, ultimately concludes, "I really do not care" and further adds "I enjoyed the film tremendously and I maintain that it is an outstanding film by all standards". A certain critic enjoyed the film; hence it is outstanding! When Satyajit Ray must be debunked as an escapist and slick technician, *Frontier*, a radical political weekly, is canvassing for him.

No doubt *Goopy Gyne*—has its own charms. As a children's film it is incomparable in Bengali cinema as a visual feast it is really enjoying. The command dance of the King of Ghosts is an achievement. In fine, a highly entertaining film. But is it an outstanding film by all standards? Does it have any consistent view of life? Some anti-war gestures are shown in the film but that portion is full of confusion. To declare in 1969 that war brings hunger, that the institution of war is based on the exploitation of the people is not a great achievement.

Another example of pointless literary and cultural discussions in *Frontier* is "Poetry Across The Border" (May 10) by Rathindranath Chattopadhyay. According to him, the influence of Rabindranath rather than of Jibanananda or Bishnu Dey is perceptible in the contemporary poems of East Pakistan. But he himself says that "pessimism" is one of the main characteristics of the poems of Samsur Rahaman and Salim Hossain who are according to him, the most important poets of East Pakistan. I do not know whether there was any "pessimism" in Rabindranath. No doubt he faced crises as a poet and as a man but as a great poet he transcended it. Again, what is the meaning of "Rabindra-

nath (therefore Jibanananda)" who has influenced the Pakistani poets to a very considerable extent? Rabindranath, therefore Jibanananda! I think a poet like Syed Ali Ahsan is faithful to his environment and carrying the tradition of Rabindranath through Bishnu De. We should not also forget that a poet like Bishnu De is remarkable not only for his experimentations but also for his mature achievements.

ARJUN BANDYOPADHYAY
Naihati

"Long Day's Journey"

Apropos the letter (May 10) on this subject, has Mr Vohra ever wondered why people read books, listen to music, visit art exhibitions or sit in a darkened theatre watching people simulating life on a decorated platform? They know that the whole thing is "unreal" yet they react to it and get satisfaction out of it or else they would not do it.

If ordinary people want to identify themselves or get involved in imaginary problems, not even of their own making, it must be because of a deeper urge than mere escape from an unsatisfactory condition. This deeper urge is man's social consciousness. If an ordinary man is so motivated, how much stronger must the feeling be in creative man. Let us not forget that man's survival is the result of his successful fight against his environment. This fight has by no means ended and it is thus that the artist completely immersed in life tries to absorb it and then transform his experiences into a higher "reality". Surely Mr Vohra does not want to suggest that O'Neill's artistry consisted merely in giving an account, albeit "devastatingly honest", about himself and his family only and that he left aside the larger influence, that of American life, which must have conditioned his creative genius? All art reaches out from the individual to the social, which must be true of O'Neill's work also. He had America very much in mind.

The play was published in 1941 when the United States had re-

covered from the great depression of the thirties. The "shot in the arm" was a reference to Roosevelt's New Deal. James Tyrone is proud of his association with Edwin Booth, the man who assassinated Lincoln. And finally Mary's last "withdrawal" refers to the policy of isolation America had adopted during that period of World War II. The arts were languishing and the rest of the country completely under the thumb of big business and munitions manufacturers who were reaping huge profits though Lend-Lease. Does Mr Vohra, and the amateurs he represents, really want us to believe that at such a time O'Neill was concerned with projecting his own little family tragedy?

No Mr Vohra, no more of this please lest to those of the actor/producer are added the frustrations of a critic.

DRAMA CRITIC

Sino-Soviet Border

The Opium War of 1840, Marx pointed out in 1857 and 1858, was followed by "the successful encroachment of Russia from the north" on China and Tsarist Russia "took possession of the banks of the River Amur, the native country of the present ruling race in China". After the Sino-Russian Treaty of Aigun of May 5, 1858, was signed, Engels once commented: "When at last England resolved to carry the war to Peking, and when France joined her in the hope of picking up something to her advantage," Russia despoiled "China of a country as large as France and Germany put together, and of a river as large as the Danube". Even Lenin pointed out that the policy of Tsarist Russia was "to seize the whole of Persia and complete the partition of China". Thus on September 27, 1920, the Soviet Government under the leadership of Lenin made a solemn proclamation by which it declared null and void all the treaties concluded with China by the former government of Russia, renounced all seizures of Chinese territory and all Russian concessions in China and restored to

China, "without any compensation and for ever, all that had been predatorily seized from her by the Tsar's Government of the Russian bourgeoisie". However, owing to historical conditions prevailing at that time, this proclamation of Lenin's Government was not realised.

In assessing the Sino-Soviet conflict, the prevailing unfortunate state of Sino-Indian relationship should not be allowed to blur our sense of objectivity and national interest. China has often been accused of being obsessed with the concept of a "Sino-centric world order". This obsession, if there is any, is not the exclusive prerogative of the Chinese. The "Mediterranean" means "Bhumadhya," that is, to the centre of the world. So, the Greeks of those days could be described as thinking of a "Greeco-centric" world. What about India? Is not the Sankaracharya of Puri 'Jagadguru'? Was not our 'Dillisvara' 'Jagadishvara'? Our forefathers called India Jambudvipa which was conceived to be at the centre of their geographical scheme of Saptadvipa, each of which was supposed to be separated, in a concentric circle with Jambudvipa, by an ocean of different composition. So we could also be accused of indulging in an obsession with an "Indo-centric world order".

KALIKINKAR CHAUDHURI
New Delhi

"Truth" About Pakistan

A man can now undertake an adventurous march from here to Moscow through Pakistan — thanks to A. Filipov (May 10). One does not quite understand why you present the illogical and yet inaccessible intellect of the revisionist crowd and feel it worthy of credit to have a link with *Pravda*. Maybe you are rousing public opinion against the fountainhead of international revisionism by giving your readers a chance to read a revisionist analysis of the recent political developments in Pakistan.

A. Filipov is skilled in presenting facts chronologically. But what ruins his claim to be a research worker in

politics of any variety is his lack of analytical intellect. He discovers, out of what we do not know, that the recent demonstrations in Pakistan were not against the Government! Perhaps he tries to save the demonstrators from repression and at the same time tells the authorities concerned in Pakistan that they can go in their old orthodox way as these demonstrations were not against them.

Mr. Filipov equates the pro-Peking with the pro-American elements in Pakistan, thereby serving the interest of the Soviet Government very efficiently. Who are anti-national elements in Pakistan? The pro-Peking people—is his answer. The pro-imperialist forces are condemned because they want to throw Pakistan into the neo-colonialist camp. Filipov is very happy that these two groups do not lead the majority of the Pakistanis. The major section of the Pakistani people is supposed to understand that "the country can and must solve its own problems with its own forces". But Filipov is not surprised that "many point out the importance of co-operation with the Soviet Union". A piece of advice—a gem—presented by Filipov to the Pakistani people—Soviet co-operation does not mean exploitation and loot of the Pakistani people in the sense that the co-operation of the Chinese and the imperialists does.

Filipov throws cold water on the people's anger in Pakistan; they should nourish the hope that their vital interests will be taken into account and defended by the new military authorities. Filipovs exist everywhere to betray the people's cause, pretending to be their well-wishers. It is time to unmask them internationally. Let the people of Pakistan understand the changes brought about in the international situation by the growing might of the socialist and anti-imperialist forces. Keeping this favourable international situation in the background Pakistanis must analyse their own leaders. There are politicians who rule and there are politicians who oppose. They know the ruling politicians well enough; it is time now to understand the opposition politicians. Who is Sheikh Mujibur Rahman? Though

he had walked out of the Round Table Conference on the question of East Bengal's autonomy, representing right-wing politics as he does generally, he turned his guns not against Ayub but against Bhasani. He asked the Maulana to retire from politics. There are parties like Jammata-i-Islami unleashing religious fanatics. There are organisations which divert the wrath of the people by starting a Bengali-non-Bengali confrontation. Still more sad is the stand of the champions of the international working class movement. These, be they "social-imperialists" or "genuine Marxists", do not show any zeal and do not even give verbal support to the fighting Pakistani people. On the contrary they send arms and ammunition to the Pakistani Government to resist sometimes an assumed Indian attack and sometimes the Islamic constitution and legalized autocracy.

JYOTIRBIKAS KUNDU
Calcutta

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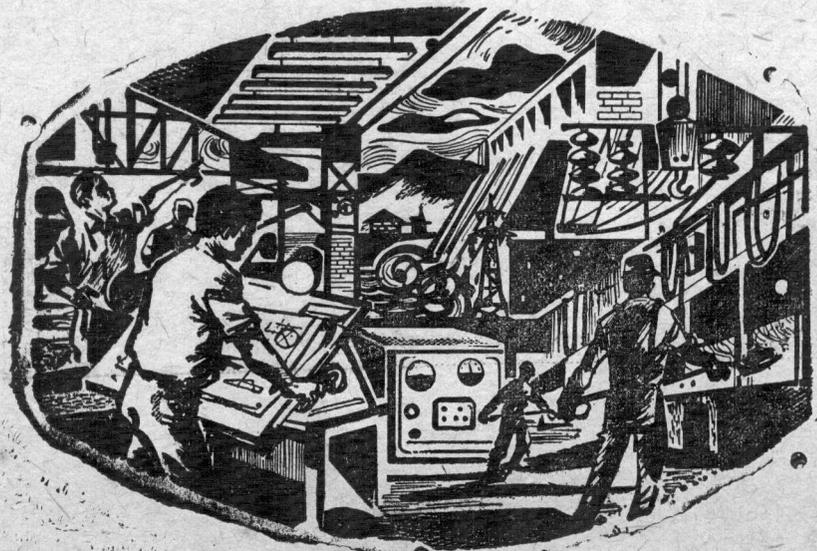


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