

frontier

Vol. 3: No. 19

AUGUST 1, 1970

PRICE: 35 PAISE

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PRINTED AT MODERN INDIA PRESS,
7, RAJA SUBODH MULICK SQUARE,
CALCUTTA-13 AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY
FOR GERMINAL PUBLICATIONS (P) LTD.
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POLICE ON THE CAMPUS

IN the eyes of the present regime in West Bengal all policemen are equal, though not all men. This is at least the opinion of Mr K. Sen, one of the five wise men who are advising Governor Dhavan on how to administer the State. As the adviser on education, Mr Sen is following in the footsteps of Dr P. C. Ghosh, who, in his brief black reign of three months two years ago, had propounded that the students were not neo-Brahmins and threatened that he would let loose the police on educational institutions if the students did not behave. The result was the police rampage in Uttarpara College. Mr Sen has gone further; he has stationed police pickets in schools, colleges, and universities with ostensible intent to help them function normally. That the two companies of policemen posted on the campus of Jadavpur University happened to belong to the notorious Central Reserve Police is said to be accidental; the State Government had to fall back upon the Central force as its own police force is not adequate for current demands. But the savage attack by the CRP personnel on the staff and students of the university has shown that Government's egalitarian approach was misplaced. The CRP's itch for a confrontation is more severe than that of the State police. For obvious reasons, though. The CRP are answerable to none in this State; the Centre can be relied upon to take steps in good time to move them out of the State; they are here to help only the Centre's own or its puppet regime.

The Jadavpur incident has knocked out the facile theory that educational institutions will run smoothly if they are placed under the protective wings of the police—a theory blessed by the Prime Minister during her recent visit to Calcutta. It is as misconceived as the belief that the ferment in West Bengal is due to acute unemployment and the State will fall in step with the rest of the country if a few thousand new jobs are created. The presence of the police in educational institutions is creating more problems than it is solving. Mr Sen has realised belatedly that while it is "impossible" to run some institutions without the police, it is "difficult" to run them with the police. He has made a semantic differentiation to justify the Government's decision to set the police on the students. Recent happenings, not merely in Jadavpur University, have shown that police pickets in educational

institutions are estranging more students. In the normal course Jadavpur University would have opened on August 1, but it has closed now for an indefinite period; the attempt to hold the pre-medical examination of Calcutta University under police vigilance prompted the majority of the students to boycott the examination. Not that examinations are of much worth; on the admission of some Syndics, the Calcutta University examinations have become a farce because of large-scale copying by examinees in which the invigilators readily collaborate for a paltry consideration. It is not necessary to belong to the CPI (ML) to dismiss the examination system as a huge hoax. But even those who are prepared to go through the process are having second thoughts; in a number of Calcutta colleges the students have refused to sit for examinations till the police have been removed from the institutions.

The State Government has thought up several devices to wriggle out of its predicament in Jadavpur. It has decided to post a mixed contingent of CRP and State police under the overall supervision of a West Bengal officer in the university. Whenever the CRP are deployed, they are supposed to act under orders of a State police officer; the two CRP companies in Jadavpur University were not their own masters; but they ran amuck in the temporary absence of the officer of the West Bengal Police. Nor can it be expected that if in the proposed mixed contingent any difference arises between the CRP and the State police over whether to fire or not to fire, they will fight it out between themselves and students will be spared. The holy horror of the authorities of the university at the 'uncalled-for unprovoked' CRP action is not without design either. It is they who had asked for the police and insisted that the force must remain inside the campus. They are embarrassed because the CRP beat up the wrong persons, persons for whom they were not invited in. The Government and the university authorities are trying to wash their hands of the incident and fix the blame wholly on the two CRP companies.

Even the question of instituting an inquiry is being considered. But it is they who prepared the ground for police action; after all, the police cannot be blamed if they presume that they are being posted on college campuses not for picnicking. The only convincing token of disapproval

of the Jadavpur incident can be withdrawal of the police from all educational institutions. That will make no difference to the dear cause of education, for Mr Sen himself has admitted that with or without the police the Government is unable to run the institutions.

Pre-Medical Students

The pre-medical students of Calcutta who hit newspaper headlines by busting the statue of Shri Ashutosh Mukherjee and largely boycotting University examinations could not get even a line of news throughout the last three or four years when they made a wholly rational protest against the syllabus. If one goes by the judgment of medical professors, the syllabus, even by Calcutta University standards, is extraordinarily foolish. The pre-medical students are given just four months to study, even though they pay for a full season, and this short span, unless made shorter by unexpected centenaries, deaths of ministers, honourable bandhs and so forth, is wasted on a syllabus most of which they have covered in their higher secondary course or which has no relevance to medical science. So long as medical studies were a matter of heredity, when only rich children were allowed, by devious means, admission to medical colleges, no one particularly minded the wastage of time and money. But the democratisation in admission threw the gates of the colleges to students strictly on their merit, and the incongruity, because of its financial implications, was bound to be laid bare. The poorer section of the medical students made a strong case for syllabus reforms with substantial support from professors. But the wise men of the University, under the umbrage of "Sir" Asutosh, hereditary, spiritual or symbolic, could not care less. The seething discontent crystallised this year, significantly through the leadership of Naxalite students. The Satyen Sen-Ranjit Gupta combine which had thrown an open challenge to the pre-medical students by sticking to

the decision to hold the examinations has been thwarted. Only 70 students, mostly girls, out of 750 appeared for the examinations.

It will be interesting to see how these seventy and odd students carry on their studies. They deserted their fellow-students and sat for examinations under the protection of the CRP, but who would they count on if in the next session they are teased by the senior students, all sympathetic to the boycotters, out of their obedient studentship? And would the medical colleges, among which they will be split up for the full medical course, be able to run a full class with less than a dozen students each?

And how would the University treat the seven hundred students who boycotted the examinations? Unless it is considering some absurd measures like rustivating them, it is bound to allow them to join the new batch which will come up this year for the pre-medical course. Already, at their present strength, all the colleges teaching the medical course are running short of lecturers, laboratory space and equipment. Even a posh college like Medical College cannot hold all the prescribed classes owing to shortage of staff, and students are hustled out of their classes and laboratories to make these manageable. It will be complete chaos when the new batch joins the old and the number of students almost doubles. And the mess will be entirely the responsibility of the Vice-Chancellor who chose the Police Commissioner as his only mentor.

There is even now a way out. The boycotting students can be admitted

in the M.B.B.S. course and if the University still persists in doubting the merit of the students it can ask them to clear the subjects gradually in the course of the next session, just as senior medical students are

allowed to clear subjects by what is commonly known as the back system. But probably it is too much to expect from a Vice-Chancellor who has made his office a notified area and lives with sandbags around him.

The Spectrum

A correspondent writes :

Those who study what is called the political spectrum will be excited by the Congress (O) support to one of the CPM adjournment motions in the Lok Sabha, the one condemning the continuation of the Achutha Menon Ministry in Kerala (Mr Menon will now step down) after the dissolution of the Assembly and alleged unfair practices in the preparation of electoral rolls. The development was not altogether unexpected. The CPM Central Committee had been very critical of the role of Mrs Gandhi and it was later stated that if the Congress(O), the Swatantra and the Jana Sangh—an awful combination without doubt—backed some of the CPM moves, the party could not help it. The Congress(O) leaders too have been making a distinction between communists who swear by Moscow and Peking and communists who profess no allegiance to any foreign power. The comedy of the situation is that the three patriotic parties look up to Washington for inspiration—and things more mundane—though refraining from a public statement that President Nixon is their president. The way the followers of these parties behaved in regard to Madame Binh once more made it clear where their hearts lie. Heart is too polite a word, however.

Indications are that there may be more temporary adjustments between the CPM and Congress(O) here and there. If one goes the whole hog in the Indian parliamentary morass, one has to opt for such combinations. What does stink a bit is that CPM leaders should have planned the move in consultation with Mr Ram Subhag Singh, leader of the Congress(O) in the Lok Sabha, an act which would

be decried by those who raised a conscientious outcry when Mr Nijalingappa met Swatantra and Jana Sangh leaders before the presidential election. The CPM's relief over Mr Giri's return which was a victory for Mrs Gandhi has proved rather short-lived. West Bengal however is grateful for the holiday it enjoyed.

That the CPM is being forced to a line advocated by the SSP—or one section of it—is another indication that it is unable to find its own way out of the muddle it has brought about by its lack of a long-term policy.

Moscow may continue to supply the Indonesian army with spare parts and may be enthusiastic about the anti-imperialist role of General Suharto but it is not entirely happy with the state of things in Indonesia. Some reactionary generals, *New Times* recently grumbled, are putting pressure on General Suharto. However, the general who conducted the massacre of more than half a million communist sympathisers undeterred by any pressure, is not the person to give in before the reactionaries. Built as it is on the solid foundation of American, Japanese and West German aid and investment, his government is powerful enough to resist any reactionary pressure. In a report published early in the year the World Bank made quite plain its contribution to, and satisfaction at, the success of the "Indonesian adventure". The message was plain. Anybody attempting to subvert this 'success story'

Both in Kerala and West Bengal where it was outwitted it was unable to prepare alternative courses of action when the ministries dominated by them fell. The new device in Parliament will not strengthen class struggle; it may not even help the CPM when the elections come, for the Congress(O), as recent by-elections have shown, is a dying whore. The argument that the CPM cannot help it if the Congress(O) votes alongside with it would have been legitimate had the CPM leaders not discussed the matter with the latter. But the fraternity of MPs is proverbial. Besides, the CPM may claim to have dented the grand alliance of right reaction.

The West Bengal motion would expose the Eight Party Combination over the question of an immediate election, but is further exposure needed? We are all naked and exposed. But we have to do something to keep off the flies.

Suharto's World

would have to face the forces of the 'Free World.'

But the reactionaries, as we know, are tireless. Immediately following the death of Soekarno they started pouring tribute to the father of modern Indonesia, with the mischievous purpose of subtly denouncing General Suharto and his fellow progressives. In some newspapers they engaged in a reevaluation of Soekarno's contribution to Indonesia which in fact amounted to reflections on the generals who delivered Indonesia from the hands of Bung Karno. It was soon obvious that some of the political parties opposed to army rule were trying to shine in the reflected glory of Soekarno with an eye to the coming general election in 1971. But President Suharto is no man to brook any nonsense. Visits to the grave of Soekarno for paying homage have been restricted (anybody daring to brave

the restrictions would be given appropriate treatment) and a stern warning has been issued to those who planned to use Soekarno's name for election purposes.

Lest the reactionaries and enemies of democracy find an excuse to brand him a dictator President Suharto has agreed to hold general elections for the People's Consultative Assembly and House of Representatives. But like any other profession newly elected democrats need a period of apprenticeship and Suharto has kindly consented to adorn the presidential chair for a few more years to supervise the working of the new-born democracy. Electoral laws have been framed in such a way as not to allow the communists and other undemocratic elements to contest or to vote. While about a third of the Assembly and the House will be packed by solid nominated members of the armed forces the representatives of the army would also contest for the rest of the seats. Measures will be taken to make sure that they win.

General Suharto nevertheless faces an uphill task. Crypto-communists are trying to discredit his government by raising the bogey of corruption. In reality, if some of his lieutenants have really piled up a fortune it only shows how prosperous the country has grown since 1965. Nevertheless, to take the wind out of their sails he agreed last week to hold every Saturday a sort of *aam durbar* to hear complaints about corruption. Although 116,000 communists and sympathisers have been herded into what the reactionaries call 'concentration camps' they still seem to be lurking behind every bush. Almost daily communists are flushed out of villages and, worse, of the ranks of the army. The reorganised PKI is still trying to develop guerilla units in Central Java and Bali and giving a hard time in North Kalimantan. Neither can the Indonesian Government overlook the dangers of communist fraternisation with the Malaysian communists along the border. So Foreign Minister Adam Malik has warned that if

the communists move beyond Cambodia to threaten Thailand and Malaysia "We would have to protect ourselves. We cannot wait in our own houses for the enemy." Moscow does not mind. The only other com-

plaint of the *New Times* is that when President Suharto called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Cambodia he did not care to mention who is "mainly responsible" for the trouble in Indo-China.

View from Delhi

Monsoon Cacophony

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE shrill cackle of the CPI is part of the monsoon cacophony. The party is conjuring up visions of a rightist coup in New Delhi, so that it can sell itself dear and become the most vital component of the paper combination of mythical forces, namely the National Democratic Front. It might be part of the strategy for a left-of-centre coalition of Moscow's dreams to be headed by Mrs Indira Gandhi but judging from the tense start to the monsoon session of Parliament, politics continues to be bankrupt and the issues are far from clear. The move for a joint bloc of the rightist parties is a virtual non-starter and there cannot be greater co-ordination among the three parties than witnessed during the budget session. The voting patterns were broadly predictable in the past and they are all the more predictable in the future. But the most significant development the monsoon session would witness is the belligerent stance of the CPI (M) towards the minority government it had so enthusiastically propped in the past.

Even as the CPI was offering Mrs Gandhi a joint front inside Parliament and outside to thwart the "rightist challenge", the CPI (M) seems to have discovered that the challenge to Mrs Gandhi has receded and she is now turning on political innocents like itself. But, to go by what the CPI says, the CPI (M) had no inhibitions about its attempts to bargain with Mrs Gandhi in the past, demanding a free hand for itself in Kerala and West Bengal as the price of support to her Govern-

ment in Parliament. Looking back, it is all too clear that the moment Mrs Gandhi was in a position to write off the 19-member CPI (M) block in the Lok Sabha she went about her plan to subvert the United Front Ministry in West Bengal. Last week, when Mr A. K. Gopalan and Mr P. Ramamurthy met here, she said that the law and order situation in West Bengal was pretty bad and therefore there was no question of any elections there until 1972. But pray, what if the law and order situation worsens not only in West Bengal but all over the country by 1972? Mr Gopalan seems to have posed this question to the Prime Minister, in his characteristically uninhibited way but got no credible answer. The CPI (M) might be right when it charges Mrs Gandhi with trying to build a countrywide front against the Marxists with the help of the CPI. The CPI, on its part, cannot swallow the thesis that the rightist threat to Mrs Gandhi has receded and she is turning more and more reactionary. All because the CPI is convinced that a left-of-centre condition is a must but that cannot come about except as the result of a rightist threat, real or imaginary. So it certainly adds to the CPI's joy to think that the rightist threat is growing even as the Moscow-lining scribes do not tire or writing about the disintegration of the Syndicate and the growing isolation of the rightist forces. Why, even the CPI's hotch-potch resolution over the weekend spoke of a sharp political polarisation in the country, in which the balance is sup-

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posed to be in favour of the left.

If the CPI(M) really means fighting the "reactionary" government at the Centre, one is justified in expecting more tangible proof of its bonafides than a mere censure motion or even a couple of them, knowing that such moves cannot defeat the Government. Elections in West Bengal are unlikely to be held immediately but they are imminent in Kerala.

The CPI thinks that longer the time gap its own manoeuvrability vis-a-vis its mini-front partners and the Congress-R would diminish proportionately. The State unit of the Congress-R favours delayed elections so that it can bargain hard for seats. It is more or less certain that the Marxists would be isolated and the mini-front-Congress-R compact will hold the whip hand. The dog-fight is over the allocation of seats. The CPI, in terms of votes, is not even the third party in Kerala but wants to be assured of Chief Ministership in advance. As for seats, if the 1965 voting pattern is taken as the basis of allocation, the Kerala Congress would be entitled to some 25 of them (against its present strength of 5) while the Congress-R will have to get every seat it won or where it stood second in 1965. The CPI has suggested a formula—let the mini-front parties divide all the 133 seats among themselves and let these parties, individually, come to terms with the Congress-R. But this might not work. There might be an accord on the number of seats the Congress-R should get but which of the seats it should get as its share would be the real problem. Most of the seats likely to be offered to the Congress-R would be Marxist strongholds and that complicates the deal.

The CPI has been taking advantage of a constitutional loophole to keep itself and its ministry in office. A Chief Minister advising the dissolution of the legislature has no precedent and the Governor did not secure the resignation of the Chief Minister before dissolving the House. Then the Chief Minister wanted to stay out until elections were called. But if the Assembly does not meet by September 24, there would be a constitutional breakdown and Mr

Achutha Menon and his Ministry may go without any ceremony. Once the State comes under President's rule, Mrs Gandhi is not obliged to hold early elections in Kerala.

Madame Binh

By now the country more or less knows that New Delhi cold-shouldered Madame Binh and Mrs Indira Gandhi seemed most embarrassed about it. She did not even want a photographic or filmic record of her meeting with the visitor and the cameramen were brusquely ordered out of the place when the meeting took place. The suave Mr Dinesh Singh committed the folly of extending her the invitation when he visited Hanoi for President Ho Chi Minh's funeral. New Delhi tried to prevent the visit but when it failed, got reconciled to it. The present Foreign Minister, Mr Swaran Singh, was advised to keep off the airport when the VIP arrived. There are many other minor details which add up to this: Madame Binh was the most unwelcome visitor to the Government, so much so, the CPI's front organisations which were in charge of her non-official programme were rather embarrassed. Even the professional Scotch-swigging solidaritywallahs were a little standoffish this time compared to their enthusiasm when the NLF delegation came last year.

The story current here is that in reply to a routine message of greetings from the U.S. State Department, Mr Swaran Singh has prepared an elaborate reply recanting some of India's past mistakes over Vietnam. It would be well to recall that much as New Delhi realises that North Vietnam is *the* factor to reckon with and ambassador-level relations with Hanoi are long overdue, it has been using this issue as a lever for more aid from the United States. Whenever there is talk in the U.S. Senate or Congress about an aid-cut, feeler stories are put out by New Delhi. Mr Dinesh Singh's invitation to Madame Binh might safely be attributed to his own 'indiscretion' or to New Delhi's penchant for gimmickry.

When Madame Binh pleaded for recognition of her country and suggested, as an interim measure, per-

mission to set up a liaison office of the PRG in New Delhi, the Indian side was cold during the talks. The suggestion was promptly turned down and there was no indication if New Delhi had any intention of recognising the PRG. Informed diplomatic observers think that a new U.S. offensive in Indo-China will take this form: the U.S. would insist on a Vietcong pull-out of Cambodia and Laos now that the U.S. itself has pulled out of Cambodia. If this is not done, the U.S. would blockade the North Vietnamese ports, induct irregulars into North Vietnam and bomb the demilitarised zone. All this figured briefly during Madame Binh's talks with New Delhi's dignitaries.

July 26, 1970

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How Heath Will Foot The Bill

ANAND KUMAR

MR Heath and his party have promised the British people the earth, and we are getting a taste of how they intend to deliver the goods. In Ireland, so long the victim of British brutality, a full-scale revolt is in progress—and the Tories are using tanks, helicopters, and CS gas. The number of shot dead is already well above that of the Czech casualties during the well-publicised crisis. And this is only the beginning.

On the student front, Cambridge demonstrators, first offenders, have been given unheard of sentences ranging from nine to eighteen months. Two of them, a Brazilian and a South African, are under threat of deportation to countries whose politics are well known for their barbarism all over the world. Another trial, this time that of London students protesting against institutional links with the racist University College of Rhodesia, is now in progress. And we cannot be too hopeful of the result.

It is clear that the lower taxes and full employment promised by the Tories is going to mean greater oppression abroad and direct or indirect armed intervention, especially in Africa, South East Asia and the Middle East.

Already, as regards the sale of arms to South Africa (which has just warned African liberation movements that it is going to react in the Israeli manner by grabbing territory) the people are being told by the press that "there is no harm, occasionally, in making the world face up to the cruder realities of international relations."

However, it is worth one's while to look a bit more closely at these crude realities. Britain has £1,500 million invested in South Africa, by far the largest stake any foreign country has in apartheid.

The Tories are notorious for their

support of South Africa, led by Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the Foreign Secretary. Mr Reginald Maudling, the Home Secretary, has a directorship in the city bankers Kleinwort Benson, with considerable South African interests. Anthony Barber, Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer and Selwyn Lloyd too, among a host of other Tory MPs, have similar business connections which will no doubt influence their policies.

It is worth considering too, that nearly one half of the declared contributions by companies to Conservative Party funds in 1968 was made by companies having subsidiaries or associates in South Africa.

Sinister Links

Lately, sinister links have been revealed between the United-Kingdom South-Africa Trade Association (UKSATA), a political body created to get support for South Africa, and government sponsored bodies like the British National Export Council and the Council for British Industry. In addition, the presence of Mr William Wilson (Head of the Southern Africa Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Mr T. H. Sinclair (Assistant Secretary, Commercial Relations and Exports Department, Board of Trade) on the committee of UKSATA, should make one extremely wary of the recent visit of the South African Foreign Minister to London, so soon after Vorster's visit to Malawi.

Also the recent disclosure that Britain will get its uranium requirements almost exclusively from South-West Africa, in spite of the dubious legality of South Africa's oppressive rule there, on the strength of a contract with Rio Tinto Zinc, a South African company with important mining rights in New Guinea as well, should be a cause for concern.

This is no new turn of affairs,

Britain's role in providing arms and men under slim disguise to Middle Eastern and African battlefields is already notorious, especially in the case of the Gulf Sheikhs and both sides in the Nigerian war. Perhaps the most disgraceful of all is the role Britain plays in the Vietnam war. Companies like Dow Chemicals (napalm), Elliot-Automation (precision detection and accuracy research), and Rolls-Royce (aircraft engines) have brought home hundreds of millions of dollars out of the carnage in South-East Asia.

The brazenness of the Plowden report with regard to the production of murderous weapons is worth a look: "We recommend that the British Government should suggest to the US Administration that it should remove all forms of discrimination against defence products manufactured abroad, and encourage US prime contractors to invite European industry to bid in fair competition with American firms on sub-systems and components."

This was in a time of moderation. Now the stops have been pulled out. Britain clearly intends to use any forms of exploitation and military adventure to cover up its internal economic decay and disintegration. For this they need the new 'British Nationalism' which Enoch Powell has so obligingly provided.

Not unconnected with this role is the Australian offer of citizenship to Kenya Asians who have been denied their right of entry into Britain. We should not overlook the fact that Australia persists in being involved in the war in Indo-China in spite of mounting pressure against the war at home. Surely the possibility of confronting Asians with Asians must have been appealing to Nixon's allies as another form of 'Vietnamising' America's war, apart from being a convenient method of getting rid of a major embarrassment to a British Government intent on enforcing the racist Immigration Acts.

People in Asia and Africa must not be caught unawares by a decaying nation so dependent on the sale of death for its existence.

Western Strategy In Southern And Central Africa

A. K. ESSACK

UNTIL recently South Africa was regarded by Britain and the United States as a valuable asset where their investment of £1,200 million continued to yield rich returns. But now in addition to this they see its strategic role. Its military importance has been highlighted by American generals, British politicians and French military experts. General Marshall in his studies quoting approvingly from Mr Vipstia, a NATO expert, said: "From an overall view, the strategic position of South Africa is next in importance to that of Western Europe and North America combined. Not only does it stand as a bulwark against the conquest of the whole of Africa, but it occupies a most important central position in the southern hemisphere at the junction of Indian and South Atlantic oceans". General Beufre, now head of the Institute of Strategic Studies in Paris, said: "At one time one wondered whether the wave of decolonisation sweeping Asia would soon reach Africa. These unfavourable prospects did not materialise... a vast block in southern Africa is taking place in which South African enterprise and capital is likely to produce there a degree of prosperity which the rest of Africa could not attain".

The Western strategists appreciated the significance of the Cape route after the closure of the Suez Canal. It became the main artery to the Western world. Apart from its geographic importance it is one of the few regions in this hemisphere that has dock facilities to repair cruisers and accommodate tankers as large as 100,000 tons.

Southern and Central Africa has been regarded hitherto as the British sphere of influence.. Most of the now independent States in this region were former British colonies and in South Africa, Rhodesia and Kenya a sizable section of the English settlers

was planted. Both the British Conservative and Labour parties have declared in international forums that they abhor apartheid, but that did not prevent Britain and South Africa from entering into a military pact known as the Simonstown Agreement. Signed in 1955 this stipulated (1) Defence of the South Atlantic and the African mainland; (2) Regional defence against external aggression; and (3) Defence of sea routes round South Africa. The pact further specified that the potential enemy was to be kept away from the borders of South Africa and the Middle East gateways to Africa.

One of the tangible results of this agreement was that Britain helped South Africa to build a formidable machine of war for aggression. The South African armed forces were expanded, the nucleus of the army was laid and the fledgling air force was modernised. Because of Wilson's ban on the sale of arms which did not include the sale of Buccaneer aircraft, spares for Centurion tanks, chassis for armoured vehicles, 4.5 inch naval shells and later radar equipment, South Africa began a temporary flirtation with France. De Gaulle supplied her with Mirage supersonic jets, super-Frelon helicopters and Daphne Class submarines. But when the Conservative Party came into power, Muller, South Africa's Foreign Minister, lost no time to remind Alec Douglas Home, the new British Foreign Secretary, of the statement he had made while in South Africa that "Your Ministers would like to buy British, we certainly would like to sell British". Reports indicated that South Africa had a shopping list worth £300 million for the purchase of "jet bombers, maritime planes, anti-submarine equipment, anti-aircraft missiles, frigates and radar equipment. It is emphasised by Britain that this is for "external use only".

Problems

The main problem facing Imperialism in Africa as well as in Asia, Latin America as well as other parts of the world is how to contain the upsurge amongst the peasants and workers who are increasingly beginning to realise that their political freedom has not brought about a new and a better life and that the old colonial exploitation is still very much with them. It is they who are pushing their governments to wage a real fight against these former rulers and present exploiters. It is against this background that we have to see the problems of Imperialism and its puppets in Southern and Central Africa. These are twofold: the growth of the national liberation movements and the rise of the peoples' armies, and the presence of China in Zambia and Tanzania.

Brigadier Kotze, writing in the *Commando*, organ of the South African defence force, stated: The so-called national liberation movements were South Africa's biggest immediate enemies. Their methods led to direct military actions against the country. Tanzania should be regarded as a bridgehead of terrorist activity. Nyerere encourages terrorist activity against the whites of South Africa. Zambia has important passage camps and Kaunda gives moral support to terrorist organisations using the country. The different terrorist organisations have lower headquarters at different places in Zambia." (The *Star* February 8, 1969). This military man's hatred for Kaunda and Nyerere is understandable. It is they who have given the blacks military training from which has emerged the nucleus of future black armies. In South Africa military training for whites is compulsory while it is forbidden to the blacks.

In Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau, the peoples' armies have

grown over the years. They have been able to pin down the Portuguese force of 200,000, equipped with the latest weapons, from NATO powers. The people are drawn from the ranks of the workers and peasants and are linked with them. And they have become steeled in battle, thanks to the launching of peoples' war, and the application of military strategy of guerilla warfare. Against this the West, despite its superior fire-power, has no defence. The more protracted the war, the greater becomes the consciousness of the people and that of the armed forces. In Angola the armed phase of the struggle has reached its 10th year, while in the other Portuguese-held territories it has passed its five-year mark. Slowly but surely, amidst incredible hardships, but showing inspiring valour and heroism the people have driven the colonialists from large parts of the territory. Thus two-thirds of the territory has been liberated in Guinea Bissau, one-third of Angola and one-fifth of Mozambique freed. In all these countries the guerilla armies have grown to over 10,000 troops. The leadership which has emerged in the armies received its "stripes" not in the barracks, but on the battlefields, in forests and mountains, and attacking enemy posts and fortresses. In short they are armies with battle experience. They thus are not only larger than the armies of many African governments, they have also experience in combat.

These armies know from hard and bitter experience that in fighting the Portuguese, they are also fighting Imperialism, for the arms have been supplied to their enemies by the NATO powers. And it is these Western guns, Western planes that have killed, wounded and maimed their men and razed their villages to the ground. And in the grim process of the struggle they have found that as the war became protracted, many of the African States have become lukewarm if not hostile. They found true and reliable allies amongst the genuine socialist States. The armed struggle had brought about a division between the enemy and the people,

but the protractedness of the struggle has made them distinguish between true friends and false friends. And it is from the socialist countries that they have received financial as well as military assistance. The most important of all, their contacts with these States have made the most advanced cadres in their ranks realise that the ideology of scientific socialism correctly applied to the concrete realities of the situation, was bound to bring victory to them in the end if they persevered long enough.

The Second Danger

The entry of China into Zambia and Tanzania is seen by Imperialism as the second danger. Before the TANZAM project, Chinese efforts in Africa were in the form of medical teams, rice-growing ventures, construction of textile mills. The West did not regard these as significant compared to their own "aid" projects. But the TANZAM project was a different matter. Such was its size, involving £100 million in one scheme without any interest, that it made all the Western projects, and even the Russian construction of the Aswan Dam, appear rather puny. The Chinese would be in Zambia and Tanzania at least till 1974. Dr Banda could not hide his tremors when he said, "I fear the Chenghis Khans and Kublai Khans of Peking". But the *East African Standard*, organ of the multi-national corporation, Lenhro, made a significant comment: "Whether the Peking agreement will really have far-reaching political implications in East and Central Africa must await events. It is possible that Western reluctance to undertake the project may prove a parallel with the refusal to finance the Aswan dam, which brought the Russians into the Middle East and drastically altered the balance of power in that region".

Chinese Impact

Slowly but surely China was making impact on the African continent. One of the strongest defences which Imperialism had created before its departure was to saturate the top

layers of the bureaucracy, army and even the national movements with belief that the communists were a dangerous people. They were presented as monsters and dragons who were out to create chaos and confusion. But the African people's contact with the Chinese was just the opposite. Here they saw young, dedicated people, serious and hard-working, who were willing to help without any reward. The longer the contact the greater and stronger became the bond. For instance the Chinese doctors who were with the TANZAM railway team set up a medical unit where they gave free attention to the people. What impressed them most was the humble attitude of the doctors to their patients who made no distinction between rich and poor. It was reported in the *Zambia Mail* that peasants came from as far as 50 miles for treatment.

A Yugoslav journalist, Zarcio Milosavic, noted this very feature when writing in *International Affairs*. He stated: "The Chinese working in Africa consistently made deep impression on the local population because of their modest way of life and their direct approach—they are more close to the African people than the experts from the West who gave the impression of being bored and stayed in the best hotels."

The West knows that in China they have met their match. The Chinese are not easily bluffed about loans and "aid" from bodies like the IMF or the various collaboration projects between African governments and multi-national corporations. All these have one aim and that is to entrench Imperialism. Knowing full well that most of the national movements were ideologically weak, their anti-imperia-

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list tradition never really consolidated, the imperialists, by such aid, aim at creating a further group, this time operating in the commanding heights of the economy, who would protect their interests. They would bolster up the top echelons in the civil service, army and the party who are pro-West.

However, the biggest danger the West sees is the strengthening of alliance between the Chinese and the national liberation movements in Southern Africa, all of which are committed to armed struggle. Thus in Mozambique there is the Frelimo and Coremo; in Angola MPLA and Unita, in Namibia, SWAPO and SWANU, in Rhodesia ZAPU and ZANU, while in South Africa there is the Unity Movement, PAC and the ANC. In Angola there is the GRAE but this has been heavily infiltrated by CIA agents and as a result even the OAU has withdrawn recognition from it. While South Africa spends £175 million on defence, and Portugal over half its budget, the 41 States in the OAU have allocated a pittance of £ $\frac{3}{4}$ million of which a considerable amount goes for administrative expenses. Mr Magombe, Secretary of the Liberation Committee, gets more than President Nyerere. The result is that the movements have gravitated towards countries like China. China's contribution was recognised by none other than Dr Mondlane at the second Party Congress held in Mozambique, where the Frelimo President singled out Peking amongst the socialist countries for her contribution to the Mozambiquan struggle.

It is this growing revolutionary alliance between China and the national liberation movements engaged in armed struggle that poses a

real threat to Imperialism and which will really alter the balance of power in that region. It is easy to run over many African governments for the armies do not really belong to them—they are officered by those trained by Imperialism. But it will be different in the countries where armed struggle is taking place for the armies grow out of the people. The more protracted the armed struggle the more will these armies turn into real revolutionary base areas which could threaten not only imperialism but also the puppet African States. And in such a situation the non-aligned African States, sandwiched between two powerful forces, will have their sovereignty trampled, as it happened in Cambodia. And it is to meet this growing situation that Imperialism has evolved its counter-strategy.

Strategy of the West

The strategy of the West is aimed at consolidating its own forces, isolating the two African governments from China and rendering impotent the national liberation movements. The victory of the Conservative party means reactivation of the military pact. This means accelerating the process of policing the Western portion of the Indian Ocean and the Cape. Although South Africa and Britain would be the principal powers, others will be brought in. This was the view of Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the present Foreign Secretary and spokesman for the British monopolists. In February 1969 he said during his visit to South Africa: "The Cape route is the main artery to the Western world and must be kept secure. *Nato should concern herself with helping South Africa to defend the sea route*" (our emphasis).

However one event which has hindered the consolidation of Right reaction and the evolution of a common strategy was Smith's declaration of UDI. The illegal seizure of power by Smith when he had de facto power put Britain in the embarrassing position of being in a camp opposed to South Africa and Portugal who had to support Smith. To preserve the

"balance of power" in the region, that is to intensify aggression, it becomes imperative that Britain, Rhodesia, Portugal and South Africa act in concert against the "common enemy from the north."

South Africa's Muller shows obvious impatience when he said, "South Africa cannot wait forever while communist pressures increase in Africa". That is why South Africa wants an immediate settlement of this issue so that friends could be on the right side of the fence. Once a compromise is reached the friends could get together to begin a concerted attack on the "enemies". Once the Rhodesian Government is recognised by Britain and the Western countries, pressure would be put on OAU States to do likewise. Then the liberation organisations of ZANU (Zimbabwe National Union) and ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union) will be "persuaded" by "friendly African countries" to abandon armed struggle and work for changes along peaceful and constitutional means. And as a gesture the Smith Government could well release Joshua Nkomo and the Rev. Sitholo provided they give an undertaking renouncing armed struggle. This then would be the first stage in the castration of the national liberation movement.

This attempt to make the leaders renounce armed struggle is part of a wider aim to put pressure on all the liberation movements to lay down their arms and work through constitutional means. And Nixon the warmonger who recently committed aggression in Cambodia gave this advice to African States in his message to Congress on February 19, 1970: "Though we abhor racial policies of the white regimes, we cannot agree that progressive change in southern Africa is furthered by force. The history of the area shows all too starkly that violence and the counter-violence it inevitably provokes will only make more difficult the task. The U.S. warmly welcomes the recent Lusaka Manifesto, a declaration by Africa. The statesmanlike document combines the commitment to human dignity with the perceptive

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AUGUST 1, 1970

understanding of the depth and complexity of the racial problem—A combination which we hope will guide the policies of Africa and her friends as they seek practical policies to deal with anguishing questions” (our emphasis).

This might appear to be double talk after his aggression in Indo-China. This is not so. There is one set of rules for Imperialism and another for the rest of the world. In its call for a peaceful settlement Imperialism will use the puppet States to hamper and eventually try to liquidate the armed phase of the struggle. Various methods will be used. For instance Congo Kinshasha, whose record has been to bolster the CIA infiltrated GARE against MPLA and Units whose police have imprisoned and killed MPLA militants, has been one of the countries to be put in charge of the liberation movements. The puppet states know only too well that the annihilation of Imperialism will also mean their own annihilation. Therefore they will be only too eager to help in this task.

The puppet state of Malawi has been earmarked to play an ignominious role. With the establishment of diplomatic relations with South Africa, Dr Banda flung his doors wide open to Vorster's agents operating as tourists, experts and advisers. Malawi has allowed South Africa to post a military attache at the embassy and it was after that Dr Banda, who did not have a battalion, made an aggressive speech laying claim to the whole of Lake Malawi, Eastern Zambia, and part of the Isoka region. The Isoka region which has common borders with Malawi and Tanzania is a vital Zambian piece of territory for the oil pipeline, the road and the TANZAM which is to be built will pass through this region. In a war of nerves, Dr Banda closed the pedicle which the people had used from time immemorial, making it difficult for Zambians to pass from Eastern Zambia to the Isoka region. And in December 1969 a petrol pumping station was blown up in this area causing damage estimated at £100,000. Now it has been revealed by Vorster's own

Cabinet Minister that there is a secret clause in the Malawi-South African Loan Agreement that the new airport at Lilongwe will allow South Africa to use it for military purposes. In this way preparations are well advanced to strike at the TANZAM railway line.

Pressures

Imperialism knows that by engineering a coup in either Zambia or Tanzania it could wreck the TANZAM railway. Thus, when the regime of Modeibo Keita was overthrown, the railway project to link Mali with Guinea had to be given up by China, because the new government did not want it. At present Imperialism is subjecting both Tanzania and Zambia to intense diplomatic and political pressure not to go ahead with the TANZAM railway. And as the preliminary surveys are completed, and as their intelligence reports lorries and trucks loaded with material making for the building sites, their pressure has doubled. When it became clear that China at the height of the Cultural Revolution still wanted to go ahead with the scheme, Imperialism offered Zambia three alternative schemes, in order to induce her to renounce the TANZAM project. These routes were through Angola, Congo Kinshasha, and Malawi. Journalists came and then reported about Chinese subversion, aimed at turning these two African countries into satellites. We give you one of the latest in the long line of diatribes.

“Tanzania's President Nyerere may find himself in the same situation vis-a-vis China's plans for Africa as Egyptian President Nasser is in relation to Soviet plans in the Middle East.” Writing in the *International Herald Tribune*, Maisleri states, “the growing Chinese presence in money, aid, and even in the military as trainer of Tanzania's forces and the increasing presence of Chinese military advisers give a disquieting note... President Nyerere is a Western trained intellectual with a brilliant mind and a forceful personality, but if the guerrilla activity escalates a problem similar to the Middle East will begin...

Years ago outsiders were talking about the independence of President Nasser, much as the talk about the independence of President Nyerere”. (*Times of India*, Evening edition, June 22, 1970).

Side by side with such “friendly” warnings there has also been pressure by other African States. And if that was not enough, Zambian villages have been bombed, their bridges blown up and railway lines sabotaged. Secessionist movements have been encouraged, to impress on Dr Kaunda his own vulnerability.

Mr Selwyn Lloyd, author of the Simonstown Agreement has emphasised the strategic importance of South Africa. We quote him to underscore the point that the West is looking at South Africa from a new angle. He said, “It is important to preserve the Western world and to do this we must preserve certain strategic areas. These are Western Europe, North America, Australia and Southern Africa. These must be firmly held” (*Johannesburg Sunday Times*, February 1, 1969). South Africa then is being groomed to play the role of a major regional power in this area. Its task then would be to commit aggression on independent African States, particularly Zambia and Tanzania, to suppress the national movement, and to check the spread of communism.

Needless to say, these are schemes and they cannot succeed. There has been a growing consciousness amongst the people. Imperialism has been dealt heavy blows and its puppet regimes have been ousted in Sudan and Libya. The CIA countercoups have been foiled and both Britain and America have had to evacuate their military bases from Libya. The tide today is even more favourable to the submerged masses of Africa. Hetered by the events in Indo-China, the heroic resistance of the Palestinian people, and the liberation struggles in Southern Africa, they are beginning to rise and to deal further heavy blows against Imperialism and its agents in Africa.

Frankly Speaking

SANJOY

WHAT does the CPM want? The other day I went through the latest resolution of the Central Committee on the Political Situation in the Country and at the end felt confused. What I could make out was that the Congress of Mrs Indira Gandhi is bad, but the Syndicate is worse. It is ganging up with the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra, with the most reactionary elements in the country to win power at the Centre. It wants an outright ban on the CPM, which is the vanguard of the democratic movement and the CPM has to checkmate it. Fight the greater evil (though not always in Parliament).

The resolution went on to attack the Congress(R) which wears a more tolerable face, but is out to isolate the CPM, the vanguard of the democratic movement, in Kerala and West Bengal as well as elsewhere. As Mrs Gandhi becomes hensure of her position in Parliament, she is going all out to curb the political influence of the CPM in collaboration with the revisionist CPI and her policies are becoming more brazen and reactionary. Towards the end of the resolution one almost feels that the CPM says 'a plague on both the Congresses'. But the Indian tightrope is very tight indeed and one does not know what the CPM wants to do with the Congress(R) in view of the greater danger from the Congress(O).

The CPM has a paragraph about police brutalities against the Naxalites in Andhra Pradesh. It does not make a distinction between the Andhra police and the Central forces. Even those lefties who fawn on or fraternise with Mrs Gandhi should

have no doubt on this score after her fulsome praise, at the conference of inspectors-general of police, of the way the Andhra police are tackling the Naxalites—i.e. annihilating them, though Mrs Gandhi is too suave to mention the dirty fact. But the CPM, after a few paragraphs, criticises the Naxalites for disrupting the democratic movement headed by the CPM.

All this is very confusing, though it is not so to the followers of the CPM. It emerges that the CPM will not topple the government of Indira Gandhi lest that leads to the capture of power by the axis of Congress(O), Jana Sangh and Swatantra which will ban the CPM after access to power. But how will the CPM fight the wily lady? The leftists have been unable to wither her infinite variety. She is not in favour of an outright ban on the CPM. Therefore she is somewhat preferable. And, if one is not dogmatic, one has to admit that masses of people prefer her to the rotten old guard. But how does the CPM propose to fight her when she is conspiring to destroy the democratic movement? Through elections? Through a pre-election movement to force elections?

Where is the democratic movement? If a movement was on, the politbureau or central committee of the CPM would not talk so much every month about launching one. The general strike of July 14 cannot pass off as the peak of a movement. The government is unaffected by the significance of a general strike these days. The CPM threat of a movement is connected with the question of dissolution of the Assembly and fresh elections. The other demands are ancillary. Think of the distress of the peasants, of the fantastic rise in prices. Think of the ferocious repression almost all over West Bengal. Think of the torture of the arrested. Of the numerous occasions on which the

police are firing on agitators. Of the fascistic attack on Jadavpur University students and staff on July 24 and the unwarranted attack on a small meeting on Vietnam Day. Of scouring raids in which the principal sufferers are the CPM and the Naxalites. Of the plainclothes men prying even in the National Library. But there are only scattered protests and actions, local anger and initiative. One begins to think that since February 1967 the people of West Bengal have become so disunited that they cannot put up a common front against repression. They are concerned with the fate of their respective parties. The rest can go to hell.

How long will the CPM go on talking about a movement? A process of erosion of the rank and file has set in and it cannot be stopped by attacks on the waverers, in collusion with, if necessary, the police. Throughout the summer vacation in schools and colleges, rumours and reports of such attacks came in. The Naxalites, when one deplors their murderousness, say that unless they fight back, they will either be killed or have to vacate particular areas. The police no doubt have arrested a large number of CPM workers and sympathisers on other charges but in CPM-Naxalite clashes their sympathies are with the CPM. They know that the CPM which held the Home portfolio may again hold it. And the links, at the social level, between some of the CPM leaders and the top brass of the police are well known. Not that the Naxalites are angels in distress. They are noted for their arrogance, intolerance and sometimes sheer immaturity. But since they are paying a heavy price, and since most of whatever is happening is ascribed to them, one can understand their impatience. They are forcing the issues.

Perhaps the CPM does not really want a movement. Maybe it is afraid that it will go out of control. Even if it does not, too many arrests of cadres will weaken the party when the elections come. The government may ban it. But what to think of a party which is so afraid of a ban, and

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so reluctant to be without election workers?

And, the dialectics of it all, a movement for elections, by creating opportunities for tension and clashes, would come in the way of elections. Aren't the Centre and the Naxalites, according to Mr Harekrishna Konar, involved in a deep conspiracy to shelve any elections? The CPM has to be wary on all fronts—too many fronts—to protect the forthcoming baby of another election.

Besides, there may be uneasiness about the response to a call for a mass movement. Government employees, people working in commercial firms, factory workers and peasants—the mass base is still striking—will they risk their jobs or work for a sustained movement? What if the police do not release them after a ride, as in 1967 after the fall of the first UF? Is this lurking fear of a paltry response which impels most left parties to full back on hartals or mass casual leave or some such device?

A friend points out that an alienation has set in between the employed and the unemployed, even in individual families. Prospects of alternative employment are so stark in this State these days that few of the employed would take the plunge and burn their fingers, unless it be to enhance wages which do not provide any sustenance—the bargemen at Calcutta Port, for instance. Who knows how they managed to survive after over 60 days of strike? But would they have volunteered to go on strike for political demands? Trade unionists have not made them realise the importance of the question of power. Who will sustain a mass movement these days though the masses are ready?

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The unemployed, among whom one may count students also, are bound to start the sparks in the cities. They have little to lose. Their sense of mission explains the ferment in the so-called seats of learning, the increasing clashes with the police. In the countryside the landless labourers and poor peasants are a political force. The need is to bring larger masses of people into a movement, which of course cannot be a movement for elections. It would not do to belittle the role of students and the tactics of the various parties in trying to win them over.

Luck

The CP(ML) which, according to the CPM, is disrupting the democratic movement, is going through a spell of ill luck so far as the organisation is concerned. Some of the best cadres in Srikakulam have been killed in the last few months, including Satyanarayana and Kailasam on the night of July 10-11. On July 24, the two other Andhra Pradesh members of the Central Committee were arrested in Calcutta. The police are croaking—the situation, Mrs Gandhi will be told, is excellent. As is inevitable, the police are trying to round up as many Naxalites as possible, under any pretext. On July 20, the Vietnam Day meeting at Azad Hind Park was encircled by the police, though it was not an unlawful assembly. A few bombs were thrown and the rest followed. After the haul, the new Police Commissioner said he had definite information of a plan to attack the USIS, the Russian and U.S. Consulates and cinema houses showing foreign films. The next day, while producing the arrested in the court, the police said they had tried to disturb an examination being held in Bethune College! It also turned out that the arrested belonged to those Naxalite groups who do not believe in CP(ML) tactics. But the police story which the newspapers headlined is what people will remember, particularly when the Commissioner is so chummy with the Tata newspaper in the city—the Sooterkin Street string of newspapers fell

foul of him after he had played down, perhaps correctly, to Jyoti Basu, the then Home Minister, an attack on their offices. According to the police, Mr Charu Mazumdar had a narrow escape on July 24.

It should now be pretty obvious that the police have succeeded in infiltration part of the CP(ML) communication system. Otherwise so many people would not have been caught unawares and killed in Srikakulam and others arrested there and in West Bengal. The fact of police infiltration does not necessarily mean that this or that party is wrong, but it indicates a lack of vigilance. This is all the more surprising in the case of the CP(ML) which believes in secret organisation.

By the way, deploring the attacks on statues of men like Vivekananda and Ashutosh Mukherjee (he is referred to reverentially as "Sir" Ashutosh), a columnist of weekly *Basumati* says he has spent hours with Charu Babu, at his Siliguri residence, before he went underground. In his all-purpose room, the columnist says, there were two pictures, of Rabindranath and Mao Tse-tung. His children are very studious, particularly the oldest daughter, who is exceptionally good and comes out first in the class exams. The columnist is pained and is not prepared to believe that Charu Babu supports all that is happening in Calcutta.

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The Red Herring

M. R.

THE drive against extremism was expected. At the ruling party's AICC, the cynical climax to the two ostensibly delinked exercises—on communalism and the political situation (which for all purposes meant the challenge from the extreme left)—was Mrs Indira Gandhi's sophistry. She went into tantrums branding communalism fascist, and equating communalism with adventurism. QED, Communalism and left adventurism (a clumsy phrase, possibly lent by some obliging Bhupesh Gupta) were declared identical quantities, qualitatively no different and therefore to be fought on the same plane.

The leadership's thinking was never in doubt. Mr Y. B. Chavan set the fashion for theorisation of this kind at the Bombay plenary session when he equated, by implication, communal conflict with class struggle. Mrs Gandhi's letter to the Chief Ministers a few weeks ago leaves one in no doubt about her pernicious philosophy. Yet, the leadership knew that it cannot convince its middle rung following (which constitutes the AICC membership) that both are of the same order. So two elaborate exercises were contrived. The resolution and the debate on the political situation was to be separated from the resolution and the debate on the communal situation. An extension of this sophistry was that the Shiv Sena problem was not part of the communal situation and was reserved for the resolution on the political situation. Nevertheless it turned out that the two debates largely overlapped. Members attacked the Shiv Sena while discussing the communal problem and again and again the focus was on the communal problem when the political situation was discussed.

The Chavan-Mrs Gandhi power struggle seems to have much to do with the pattern of the two debates. It was not in the interest of Mrs

Gandhi's supporters to allow a full-scale debate on economic policy, for that would lead to a severe criticism of the party's failure on the programme front. It was their strategy to divert all attention to communalism and the so-called left adventurism. Communalism was no doubt a serious problem but left adventurism was a red herring deliberately drawn across the trail.

In the Working Committee, the differences between Mr Chavan and Mrs Gandhi on the question of banning the RSS and other communal bodies surfaced. Mr Chavan has all along maintained that a mere ban on an organisation (be it the Shiv Sena or the CPI-ML) was no answer to a political challenge. Mrs Gandhi had endorsed this view in the past. But power politics now demanded that Mr Chavan should be forced into a tight corner. The differences persisted. So much so, the draft as first approved would not so much as mention the RSS by name. The battle continued behind the scenes. Mrs Gandhi gave her game away when she told Mr Ram Saheb Pandey, one of the advocates of a ban, that mentally she was prepared for a ban but not administratively. Mr Chavan contended that the whole issue needed examination administratively. The compromise was arrived at: the AICC would not demand an outright ban but ask Government to examine whether organisations like the RSS and the Jamaat-i-Islami should be allowed to function any longer.

The demand for banning the RSS was well articulated but, as was to be expected again, except for the West Bengal delegates barring one, speakers generally soft-pedalled "left adventurism". The problem was there more in the minds of the leaders but to the delegates it was little more than a bogey. For instance, a Kerala delegate assailed the leadership for playing up a small problem. While the political resolution was re-

luctant to name the parties of right reaction, it had no inhibition about mentioning the Naxalites twice. But then there is politics to this. At the Working Committee stage, Mr Chavan argued that there was nothing wrong in mentioning the Naxalites but his friend from Maharashtra, Mr V. P. Naik, fought an unsuccessful holding operation against mentioning the Shiv Sena as a divisive force.

On the whole the neo-Young Turk Chandrajit Yadav, formerly of the CPI, prevailed over Mr Chavan. Symbolically, Mrs Gandhi had won over Mr Chavan. The Home Minister, who played the key role at the Bombay AICC on every major resolution, was sidelined this time. He did not initiate discussion on either of the two subjects directly relevant to the Home Ministry. Nor did he participate in them. One does not know his latest views on communalism and left adventurism. But he was pitchforked into initiating the debate on economic programme implementation, obviously to blunt the imminent Young Turk attack. Up to this boycott the non-CPI Young Turks had kept out of the AICC proceedings. None of them had spoken on communalism or left adventurism. On economic programme implementation, a damning indictment of the leadership came from Mr Mohan Dharia who asked a pertinent question. All that the Government now claimed to have done since Bombay could have been done by the pre-split Congress party. Was this all the split was meant to achieve? His broadsides on the High Command's toppling game and defection game possibly had Mr Chavan's endorsement but the leadership certainly would not have relished it.

So wait with bated breath for the new Congress task forces to storm the bastions of communalism and join the battle against left adventurism, vested interests and the monopoly press. All of them are supposed to have stood in the way of the party fulfilling its solemn promises made at Azad Maidan. At least theoretically, Mr C. Subramaniam displayed some sense when

he said the only answer to the challenge from the extreme left was to contain the rightist challenge. Perhaps he meant a class polarisation could be prevented if his party could psyche the people into believing that centrism that goes by the name of democratic socialism would solve their problems. But not Mrs Gandhi. The attack will begin, on the extreme left and there are numerous Tarun Kanti Ghoshes who think the attack should extend in concentric circles to the CPI(M) and perhaps finally to the CPI unless it decides on some honest business and merges with the ruling Congress. Every dictatorship began with an attack on the left.

Book Review

Marxist Aesthetics

MARXISM AND AESTHETICS :
A Selective Annotated Bibliography.
Compiled by Lee Baxandall.
Humanities Press Incorporated.

THOSE interested in aesthetics from the Marxist standpoint will find the book under review a very useful compilation.

Under the listings for the United States and the Soviet Union, writings have been subdivided under Architecture, Art and Sculpture, Cinema and Dance, Literature and General, Music and Theatre. No attempt has been made by Baxandall to decide what writers were Marxists in the 'true sense'. Those who considered themselves Marxists at some point in their career have been included by him in his work, as well as those who "employ an analysis which, internal evidence indicates, depends in a fundamental way upon Marxist thought."

The book has also a section on "views of their role in society by artists and writers who are non-Marxists" and material representing "socially involved but non-Marxist approaches, some of which anticipate Marxism, some of which are eclectic or anarchist, and some of which are academic-sociological."

For citation and annotation the material chosen is either articles or essays which provide an intrinsic contribution to the theory and understanding of Marxist aesthetics in general or a particular writer, artist, movement or genre; or articles or essays possessing historical prominence in the Marxist aesthetic debates or development of cultural organisations.

As a result of the second criterion, a considerable number of items that are but mere political hatchet job and hackwork have been included. Much of the work in this field is of a low level.

The book is easy to use. It has been organised with sense, and the summaries and comments by Baxandall are very helpful. Baxandall is following up this pioneer work by co-editing a collection of basic texts on Marxist aesthetics from 1339 to 1945, most of which are not available in English. This would be accompanied by extensive critical and historical commentary.

PARTHA BHATTACHARYA

AGRICULTURE, EAST AND WEST

By M. D. Desai
Rs 3.

THE distinctive feature of an underdeveloped country dominated by the peasantry is an agricultural structure with a dubious tenure system that denies the farmer his title to the land and sustains a rentier class out of his produce. The problem of development of these economies is to correct this man-land relation so that the farmer can own his land. Any treatise on agricultural problems that confuses or avoids this essential aspect is bound to be a futile effort, to say the least. Mr M.D. Desai's *Agriculture, East and West* is one such essay.

He has chosen ten countries from Europe, America and Asia—Japan, Mexico, Malaysia, the Philippines, the UAR, the USA, the U.K. and India—each in different stages of economic development but each having an identical social system. He assu-

mes a "free" and "progressive" social system and discusses the agrarian situation in these countries in considerable detail, with the help of statistical information. He discusses what he calls the "collectivist" economics in the sixth chapter though, by his own admission, this is beyond the scope of his book and he disowns these systems. Obviously his emphasis all through the discussion is on the technical problems of agriculture; he studies and compares land acreage per tiller, nature of land uses, percentages of capital inputs, water management and similar other concepts, to distinguish a developed economy from an undeveloped one. Even when he discusses land reforms and the tenure system of different countries, his emphasis is on farm size primarily. Occasionally he even turns out to be an apologist for non-intervention by States. No wonder, therefore, that like an obtuse official spokesman, he finds in the population pressure or rather in the growth of it, a made-to-order scapegoat for all the woes of the peasantry of backward nations. Even an unswerving antagonist of Malthus will not deny that population growth does help or hinder the agricultural development of a country; its role, however, is purely contributory. The decisive factor is whether the farmer possesses the land that he cultivates i.e. the social structure and production relation. But this means acceptance of a set of value judgments which this agronomist of Gandhian variety has scoffed at in his book.

HIRANMAY DHAR

VIETNAM: DEAD END OF AMERICAN BRINKMANSHIP
Published by Solidarity of Vietnam Committee. Rs 3.

THE brochure on Vietnam published by the Solidarity of Vietnam Committee from Bombay is, in effect, an assortment—a loose one at that—of excerpts on that country published earlier by various foreign sources. After an introductory note on the historical background of the

Vietnam war, it presents, in some detail, the findings of the Russell International War Crimes Tribunal and also describes briefly the struggle of the Vietnamese people which has already become a legend. Apparently the purpose of this hand-out is to educate the Indian people, particularly its non-political section, about the significance of the Vietnam war. Another objective is to counter the pro-imperialist propaganda to present the Vietnam liberation movement as a primary concern of the Chinese. It also comments "...a united action of the socialist camp would have been the greatest deterrent to the U.S. aggression...". Though the booklet has no claim to originality and is amateurish in its presentation, it can be useful if it can touch the section of the people it intends to.

HIRANMAY DHAR

Wanted Audacity

By A FILM CRITIC

INDOR Sen's first film *Pratham Kadam Phool*, an essay on the marital maladjustment of a modern young couple, comes as a breath of fresh air into the run-of-the-mill scene of commercial Bengali cinema and in parts, it is a highly original, intelligent and sensitive piece of film-making. The post-graduate love-affair between Sukanta and Kakali matures into marriage but the bliss is soon spoiled by a brush with the harsh, daily realities of urban life. Kakali seeks out a job and her taste of independence becomes too much for Sukanta and inevitably both head for a final showdown. Up to this the film's progress is quite smooth despite some minor blemishes like a lurid picnic sequence with Samit Bhanja vulgarly aping his Bombay comrades, lousy background music, a couple of equally banal songs and some bits of forced and corny comedy. But the film-maker's real forte is in probing the household realities. His camera explores the middle-class milieu in scrupulous detail and all the petty jealousies and tensions of the cash-

nexus relationship and also the sudden flashes of tenderness and affection have come alive on the screen. The director has also handled the characters with a rare competence and while the minor artistes have realised the director's intentions superbly well, the major leads, the two main stars, Soumitra and Tanuja, have let him down. For one thing, Soumitra can no longer pass as a young collegian and gradually, he is becoming incapable of registering any emotional depth. Tanuja's bearing, her diction and her accent are all unfit for serious roles. But with all these drawbacks, the first half is quite fascinating and there are moments of real cinematic brilliance like the integration of the dream world into real life and the Othello-Desdemona fantasy is also very well conceived. Unfortunately, the director has failed to manage his grip during the last

half when the cruel hands of drama intervene with a thud and what began with a genuine charm ends up in a bundle of clumsy incredulities.

Let this film be a lesson to those young film-makers who intend to weed their way through the rat-race world of commercial film-making. Apparently, this film-maker has started with the notion of making compromises from the very outset so that he can stick to this profession and one can well visualise him writhing in agony when some crude things are rammed down his throat. But once a compromise, always a compromise, and ultimately Sen would find it difficult to get out of this rut. He must learn to resist the pressures of the Dharamtalla Street sharks and to flout conventions. Sen has got definite talent, what he requires is courage and audacity, audacity and more audacity.

Clippings

All This And Heaven Too

It is like a massive festival in the rural areas. Thousands and thousands of people—landless, land-poor, middle peasants—come together. They carry red flags. Hundreds of red-capped volunteers carry indigenous arms: spears, lathis, bows and arrows. They are there to protect the peasants in the event of attack by jotedars and their hirelings. There are leaders of the CPI, the Kisan Sabha, the Adivasi Mahasabha and the Agricultural Labourers' Union.

Conch-shells are sounded by the womenfolk. A procession of pairs of bullocks follows: The yokes are decorated with red flags. Hundreds of ploughs. The movement begins. Waste lands and new surplus lands are occupied.

This happened in 1,200 places in West Bengal on a single day. Landless and land-poor peasants occupy lands which have been under illegal occupation by jotedars. They plough up acres of Government vested lands which are yet to be distributed,

At a certain place there are, say, 30 acres to be occupied. Four thousand people are assembled. They know only 30 persons will get land. The rest help their brothers in their mission. The land-poor and the landless do not have implements: no bullocks, no ploughs. Their middle peasant brothers come along. "Take our things on a loan basis. Do your job, then return them."

Unity among the land-poor, the landless and the middle peasants is total. This is unprecedented, even in West Bengal.

Except in four places there has been no resistance from the jotedars. The massive unity of the rural poor compels them to surrender. The hostile become neutral. The neutral become friendly. The friendly become allies. A major upheaval, essentially peaceful, transforms rural West Bengal. (Link)

GOI Film

The Films Division of the Govern-

ment of India has included a sequence on the CPI's land grab movement in the current week's release. ...The West Bengal Government, which has been treating the agitation as illegal and contravening the rule of law, has taken a serious view of the Films Division...The Governor's Adviser, Mr K. K. Sen, who is in charge of Land and Land Revenue thinks that an illegal act should not be given so much publicity in a powerful government media.

Meanwhile, a State Government spokesman explains (July 20) that as far as West Bengal is concerned the CPI's land grab movement has been treated as closed since July 6. While he does not explain the significance of the date, the spokesman says that a combination of certain factors like stern Government measures to deal with the movement and a reassessment by its sponsors might explain the tapering off of the agitation. (*The Statesman*)

Murder in the Temple

...The man was a crafty devil of that area. He owned 40-50 bighas of land. A debauch of the first order, he used to cast covetous eyes on the daughters and wives of landless peasants. He had mistresses too. He had appropriated the paddy and potatoes which were legitimately due to sharecroppers...In the last anti-Congress movement he had helped the police to arrest poor peasants. Recently, he was involved in the conspiracy of getting our comrades arrested. In this area preparations to annihilate the class enemy had been under way for several long months. The heroic guerillas, armed with the Thought of the Chairman, were waiting. They had learnt through their various and repeated mistakes. They had followed to the letter the instructions of the revered leader Charu Mazumdar about 'guerilla action'... After protracted, unflagging efforts, the auspicious hour arrived on May 28. At 8 p.m. that *saitan*, Paresh Bannerjee came to the temple of Visalakshmi to pray. The guerilla commander had already done his investigation. The squad of three was

ready. The enemy entered the temple, the commander said—"Forward". Two advanced, their hearts burning with class hatred. One of them opened the door of the temple and lighted his torch. The other caught hold of the man. The *tangi* (sharp weapon) of the commander flashed in an instant. The commander struck repeated blows. The other guerillas too struck his different limbs with their choppers. The *saitan* was finished within 7-8 minutes. Soundlessly the guerillas left the temple. At present the guerillas are being given shelter by the people. The class enemies in the area are panicky. There is unbounded jubilation among the landless peasants. (*Deshabradi*)

Little Surplus Land

Though the land reform measures were introduced in almost all the States in 1950s, little headway was made in the distribution of surplus land. According to statistics published in *Socialist India*, the weekly organ of the ruling Congress, over 2.41 million acres of land have been declared surplus following the imposition of ceiling on land holdings. Of these, only 878,000 acres have so far been distributed. Surplus land shown in the statistics does not include benami land held in violation of the land reform acts.

...As many as nine States have not distributed any surplus land so far. They are Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Mysore, Orissa, Rajasthan, Delhi, Manipur, Tripura and Mahe. There was no surplus land, according to statistics, in Haryana, Mysore, Rajasthan, Manipur and Tripura.

...Land declared surplus was the highest in West Bengal, the figure being 794,000 acres. But the figure of distribution in the State was not available.

Land ceiling also differed from State to State and varied between 12 acres and 336 acres. In ten States, the holdings are on the basis of a family while in others it is on individual basis. Only Assam, Kerala, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu have taken measures to lower the existing ceiling on land holdings, as decided

at a recent meeting of the Chief Ministers. (*Hindusthan Standard*)

"Parallel Power"

In the rural areas of West Bengal today certain political parties run "a parallel land administration" and collect an annual revenue of over Rs 2 crores at a rough and private estimate made by Government officials... This land revenue is known as contribution to party funds. These political parties organise forcible seizure of vested, surplus and benami lands, distribute them to landless people among their supporters and, after the harvest, take a lion's share of the produce or its money value at the current market price. It is stated that at least 100,000 acres of agricultural land are in the possession of these parties. (*The Statesman*)

COP's Truth

An attempt by extremist elements to blow up some diplomatic missions and cinema halls in Calcutta was foiled by the police on Monday afternoon. The police arrested 125 persons mostly in their teens in this connection following a brief encounter at Azad Hind Bagh.

...Giving details of the incidents, the Commissioner of Calcutta Police, Mr. Ranjit Gupta, told newsmen that...the Naxalites had planned to attack the USIS, the US and the Soviet diplomatic missions in the city and some posh cinema halls in the Esplanade area showing foreign films exclusively...

Asked one reporter: "How could you be so sure of the plot and that the plot was actually engineered by the Naxalites?"

The Police Commissioner replied: "Well, I am convinced. My convictions have been reinforced further by the documents which we have found in possession of the arrested persons". (*Hindusthan Standard*, July 21).

Centre-Naxalite Collusion

The CPI(M) leader, Mr Harekrishna Konar, told newsmen in Calcutta on Friday (July 22) that Mrs Gandhi had now only two alternatives before her: to face a fresh elec-

tion or to intensify repression in West Bengal...

...The only way left before the Congress (R) was to have an understanding "quite planfully" with the Naxalites and create troubles in different places in order to prove that there was no law and order in West Bengal. "The Naxalites are the agents of the ruling Congress and the administrative high-ups. Naxalism is no more a political mistake, but it is the degenerating reactionary gangsterism," Mr Konar said.

Mr Konar asserted that the Naxalites would not be able to foil election anywhere in the State; but the Central Government was trying to avert the election on the 'Naxalite' plea." (*Hindusthan Standard*).

Altogether 113 people, alleged to be Naxalites who were arrested by the Police on Monday at Azad Hind Bag, in North Calcutta... were produced in custody, on Tuesday, before Mr H. S. Barari, Additional Chief Presidency Magistrate, Calcutta.

...The police alleged that the accused, on Monday, formed an assembly at Azad Hind Bag, being armed with deadly weapons and extremist leaflets and banners, shouted objectionable slogans and attempted to enter Bethune College where the pre-medical examination was going on. (*The Statesman*, July 22).

Noisy Neighbour

A colleague swears that he will never again live near a police station if he can help it...two things, which never struck him before, have...to be taken in his stride as a penalty for being next door to cops. The first is the hooting of the air raid practice siren at nine every morning...But even more painful are the groans and wails of those who are taken to the thana. At times, these are so harrowing and intense that our colleague takes his children away from the windows lest they get scared and develop a psychosis. Sometimes he has to manufacture a pack of lies to explain away what is going on, such as "Oh! some people must be fighting". These sometimes sound thin. (*The Statesman*)

Centre's Debt

The Central Government is up to its neck in debt. By March 30, 1971, it will be owing other countries and people and institutions in the country as much as Rs 14,420 crores—a six-fold rise in the public debt in the last two decades.

The proportion of external debt to the total outstanding public debt, which had risen from a little over 1% in 1950-51 to 16.1% in 1960-61, will go up further to as much as 46.2% by the end of 1970-71... In its bid to raise resources, it is officially estimated that the Centre's internal debt will rise by Rs 527 crores in 1970-71, raising its total to Rs 7,761 crores by the end of March, 1971...

The position is worse if the Centre's other obligations and liabilities—such as small savings, other debt and reserve funds—are taken into account. The figure by the end of March 1970, amounted to Rs 17,845 crores. This is estimated to rise by Rs 1,310 crores to Rs 19,155 crores at the end of March 1971. (*The Statesman*)

Letter

Indian Maoism

Mr Mallikarjuna Rao in his "Indian Maoism—Two Shades" (July 4) has described certain difference between the CPI(ML) and the Revolutionary Communist Committee of Andhra Pradesh.

The first point of difference is, according to him, the manner in which the CPI(ML) was formed has not met with approval of many of the Maoist groups. He alleges that the CPI(ML) was formed from above. In this connection it is necessary to point out that Mr Charu Mazumdar in 1968 said that "the primary condition for building up a revolutionary party is to organise armed struggle in the countryside. Even in 1968, armed guerilla struggle was started in Srikakulam and other parts of Andhra Pradesh. But Nagi Reddy and his groups, the prin-

cipal initiators of the Revolutionary Communist Committee of Andhra Pradesh, refused to join this struggle and in every possible way discouraged it. As the political and organisational needs of a fast developing struggle could no longer be met by a Co-ordination Committee, the party was formed at the initiative of the struggling comrades. As Nagi Reddy and his group did not join this struggle and in fact opposed it, they were naturally excluded from the party.

Secondly, Mr Rao has described the CPI(ML)'s stand about the principal contradiction in India as between feudalism and the masses of peasantry and the immediate task as people's democratic revolution, the main component of which is agrarian revolution to end feudalism. But the Immediate Programme of the RCC of Andhra, as described by Mr Rao, fails to present any concrete analysis of the principal contradiction in India.

As regarding the building of a "revolutionary front of all revolutionary classes", the CPI(ML) has made it clear that only in the course of struggle can such a revolutionary front be achieved.

Further, Mr Rao said that contrary to the thesis of the CPI(ML) that guerilla warfare waged by the peasantry against the landlords as the only form of struggle in the present stage of revolution, the Andhra RCC's emphasis is not on armed clashes with the landlord and the state authority through a handful of revolutionaries but on mass armed struggles. But the problem, which I presume, the Andhra RCC has forgotten, is to establish red political power and base areas in the countryside. About this particular matter, the CPI(ML) said that armed guerilla struggle and annihilation of feudal lords and their henchmen is the only way.

Is the accusation of the Andhra RCC that clashes with the landlords and the state authority are indulged in, by a 'handful' of revolutionaries true? Take the case of armed guerilla struggle in Srikakulam, Mushahari, Lakhimpur-

Kheri and Debra-Gopiballavpur which are going on under the leadership of the CPI(ML). The participation by hundreds of people in giving shelter and food, in collecting intelligence and information about the enemy's position, guarantee of passage for retreat and advance of the guerillas and the participation of the people in the attack and celebration of victories after a successful attack, the functioning of the krishak samitis and people's courts—are all these manifestations of isolated action, by a handful of revolutionaries, virtual withdrawal from mass organisations? The establishment of red political power in these areas is a clear indication of the fact that the CPI(ML) has done intensive political propaganda and mass work before any action.

The Andhra RCC said that "only through mass revolutionary rallies, revolutionary organisation and mass armed struggle that we can dissolve the present big landlord, big bourgeois imperialist system." But how will this mass armed struggle against the landlord-bourgeois-imperialist system be effected? The Andhra RCC lacks any cohesive analysis on this point. Do they mean that a revolutionary mass upsurge with spontaneity will be directed against the landlords? But then the open nature of this struggle would expose the party apparatus and defeat the purpose of secret political propaganda by the party units. The Andhra RCC should learn the lessons of the Naxalbari upsurge which was something of a mass upsurge in which spontaneity and mass initiative far outweighed the planning and discipline of a revolutionary move-

ment. Without proper politicalisation, military experience and discipline, the movement suffered setbacks in the face of police repression. The very open nature of the preparation for armed struggle must also have exposed the party apparatus. Kanu Sanyal, drawing the necessary lesson, suggested that in the next phase of struggle the revolutionaries will set up party units which will not only be armed but will also be "trained to maintain secrecy." Such units will propagate Mao's thoughts, intensify class struggle and as guerilla units strike and annihilate class enemies. They will follow the basic tactics of guerilla-warfare as enunciated by Mao. Significantly enough, in the statement of the Andhra RCC, detailed by Mr Rao, there is no mention of the annihilation of class enemies. Mao laid it down that the fundamental guiding principle of all military operations should be "war of annihilation".

The CPI(ML) never disregarded any mass organisations or economic movements. As Mr Charu Mazumdar has pointed out... "We do not say that we shall never wage struggles for economic demands. What we say is that political propaganda and building party organisations are the foremost and main task before us." (Fight against Revisionism, Liberation 11, Vol-2, September 1969). Read also his "Our Party's Tasks Among the Workers". Regarding the work in the urban areas, the CPI(ML) has clearly given directions to launch democratic movements in support of armed agrarian revolution in the countryside. Contrary to the allegation that the CPI(ML) is minimising or even ignoring the role of the working class, its Political Resolution said that... "It is the responsibility of the working class as the leader and vanguard of the revolution to unite with the principal force of revolution i.e., the peasantry and to seize power by way of armed struggle." Mr Charu Mazumdar, in his article 'To the Working Class', (Liberation, No. 5, Vol. 3, March 1970) said, "Today, the masses of workers

should think of the hundreds of millions of poor and landless peasants who have been exploited and oppressed for centuries and who now find their conditions unendurable. The working class can earn for itself a status of dignity in society, a status which it is entitled to as the producer of wealth, only by overthrowing the crushing burden of exploitation... Once the workers and the peasants, the producers of wealth, are united, a tremendous force will be generated which will make it possible to accomplish the People's Democratic Revolution, and then to establish the socialist system in India by destroying the exploiters and the system of exploitation. It is the working class that must shoulder the responsibility of realising this possibility and must assume the leadership".

How can political consciousness be instilled among the working class who are infatuated with economism? This will not happen automatically. This can be effected only by intensifying the armed struggle in the rural sector, by which the capitalist-agent nature of the CPM and the CPI will be exposed before the urban workers. Reference may be made to the penetration of the CPI(ML) among the working class of Jamshedpur, which has become possible only because of its armed guerilla struggle in the rural areas of Bihar.

MORRIS ROY
Calcutta

(The article by Mallikarajan Rao was received in September 1969 and used much later. That Mr Rao could not bring his article up to date was our fault—Editor).

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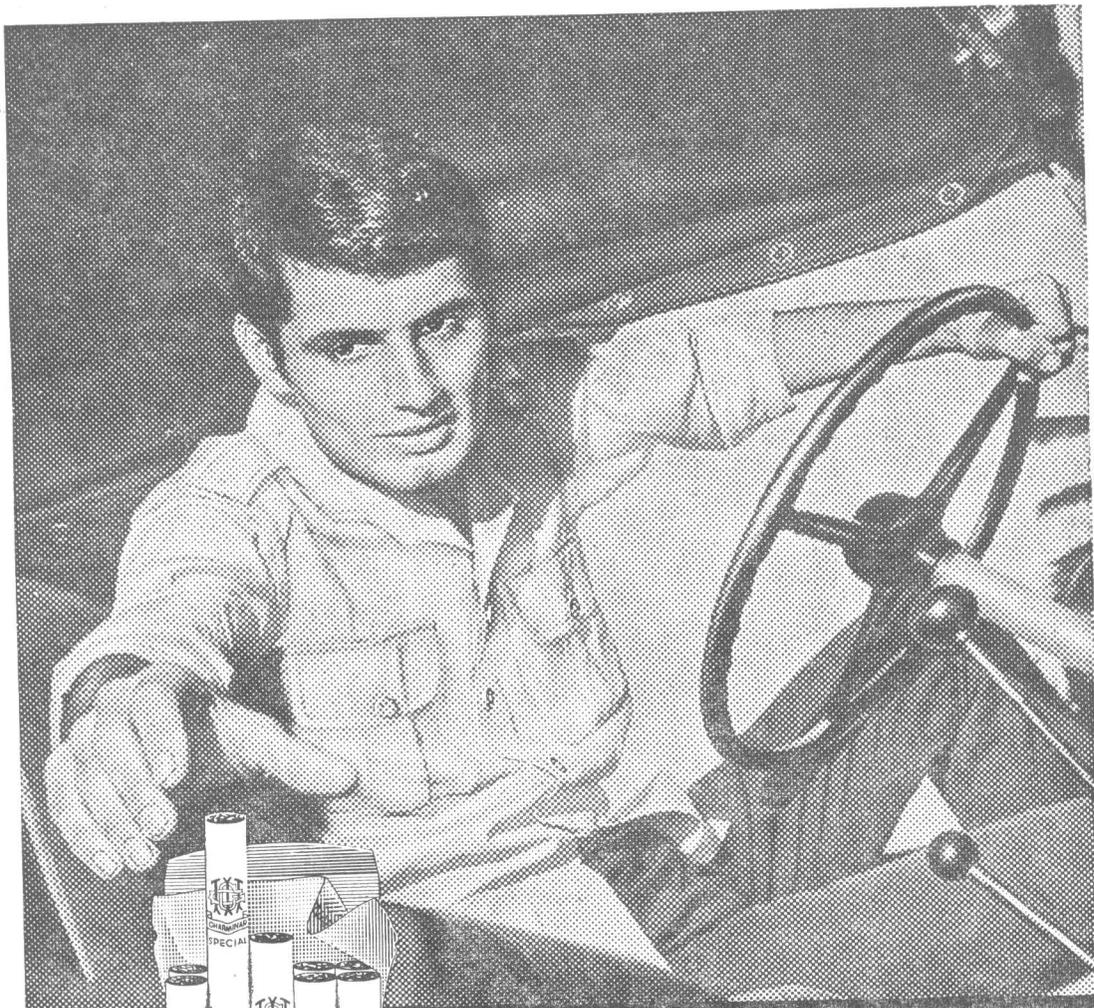
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