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On Other Pages

COMMENTS	2
<i>View From Delhi</i>	
KERALA HUSTINGS	
FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT	4
THE PUBLICITY HUNTERS	
A. P. M.	6
THE PALESTINE LIBERATION STRUGGLE—II	
A. K. ESSACK	7
WHO SHALL OVERCOME? WHEN?	
M. S. PRABHAKAR	11
<i>London</i>	
DIVIDE ET	
ANAND KUMAR	13
CALCUTTA DIARY	
GYAN KAPUR	14
THREE AUGUST SITTINGS	
BY A MUSIC CRITIC	15
COLOSSAL WASTE	
MRIGANKA SEKHA RAY	15
CLIPPINGS	16
LETTERS	17

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STORM OVER DURGAPUR

IF official accounts of the CPM-sponsored indefinite strike in the industrial complex in Durgapur and the one-day bandh are to be believed, both have been total flops. The ebullient Chief Secretary of the State Government gave a version of the bandh which was contradicted by newspaper correspondents on the spot. He said traffic was normal and shops and markets were open; though, in fact, normal life had come to a standstill. It seems the Chief Secretary can claim to be a peer in this matter of Mr P. C. Sen, who, as Chief Minister, used to volunteer "facts and figures" to reporters to show how all left-sponsored strikes and demonstrations in his regime failed. The figures given out daily by the Chief Secretary of attendance at the different industrial units in Durgapur may be equally phoney, though the success of the continuous strike may not be as resounding as is claimed by the CPM. This is understandable for other left parties and the Congress are actively opposing the strike. It is for these parties to consider whether it is not against the basic code of trade unionism that workers should be asked to act as strike-breakers. A union may not approve of a particular strike, but it is not expected to go over to the management to break the strike. Old norms are being given mass burials these days and no party seems to consider a tactic too low if it can discomfit a rival. The CPM has alleged that the CPI workers are moving about in police vehicles aiding the police in arresting CPM workers. This will no doubt be denied by the CPI, but the party's glee over the "failure" of the Durgapur strike is unconcealed.

Not that the CPM is conducting itself ideally. The CPI (ML) has charged it with conniving with the police exactly in the same manner as the CPI is alleged to be doing in Durgapur. It would seem that under President's rule the left parties are assiduously cultivating a hobby of hunting with the police political opponents, though each has its own separate grievance over police repression and excesses. The Government knows that their criticism of the police is not without reservation and can, therefore, be overlooked. The Government has accordingly drawn up its own priorities for going at the political parties, knowing that each action will have its share of support from the left. It is this awareness which emboldened the Government to refuse to relax the ban on meetings in Durgapur to enable Mr Jyoti Basu to address a meeting there.

It would not have set a precedent if it had agreed, for such gestures had been made often in the past. Over Durgapur the Government could be stubborn, for some other parties had provided it with an alibi. It is said the CPI and the Congress (R) had sought permission to hold similar meetings in Durgapur, though orally and presumably after Mr Basu had obtained the permission through the Governor's intervention. They provided the Government with a pretext to withdraw its consent. Mr Basu could, of course, defy the ban and hold a meeting—a course that was expected of him. In fact, the Governor had agreed to waive the ban lest Mr Basu defy it and create a situation; and he retraced only when he was assured that Mr Basu was unlikely to go to that length. On this occasion at least, it has been proved that the Governor's advisers correctly measured up Mr Basu which is complimentary to neither Mr Basu nor his party.

There is truth in the CPM allegation that the Government and some left parties have conspired to cut the CPM down to size in Durgapur. The collaborators are known, and no one exonerates them. But the CPM should also do some heart-searching and find out if it is not collaborating with the Government against some other parties. Its charges will have some validity with the people only if it rids itself of the crimes of which it is accusing others. In no case, however, its opponents are going to mend their ways or shed their hostility. They are bent on forcing a showdown. In Durgapur they have already assumed the role of strike-breakers; in other places they are preparing for it. The CPM is in a jam, though it is beyond doubt that the majority of the workers in the Durgapur area are with the party. The party's decision to call a Bengal bandh presumably to bend the Government by a show of strength may not achieve its objective. The Government and its associate parties will oppose the bandh, and in the trial of strength blood may flow as on March 17. Violence is already in the air of Durgapur, and it seems that it will spread if a lock-out is de-

clared. But Mr Jyoti Basu has seen the Governor, two of his advisers and the IG. They may find a way out.

A correspondent adds:

There is a feeling among the leftists, not necessarily all anti-Marxists, that the Durgapur strike has been called to further sectarian interests of the Marxists. Right Communists are, however, working openly to frustrate the strike. On August 4, when the Durgapur bandh was observed as a protest against the posting of Central Industrial Security Force, they collaborated with the Marxists to make the bandh successful. But although the present strike has been professedly called against the posting of the CISF and the Central Reserve Police as well as against the surprise arrest of some Marxist leaders on a murder charge, the Right Communists have no sympathy for the strike, because, according to them, the principal reason behind the strike call was the arrest of the union leaders. Since these leaders are arrested on the suspicion that they are responsible for the murder of four workers,

on an organised and political level, the Right Communists and some leftists too do not feel any particular compunction for the arrested or the strike.

This is of course a dangerous precedent. The union leaders have been arrested merely on suspicion and there is no reason to believe that they were not arrested to frustrate the Marxist dominance in Durgapur. Doubts being even, the Right Communists cannot claim that they were working with their hands clean. If the police are given a free hand, any political leader may be arrested on framed-up cases, without bail, to break the workers' morale.

However, the Marxists are losing sympathy, except among their diehard supporters, because of the way they are fighting gangster wars against all political opponents. Their perverse crusade against the Naxalites is particularly infuriating. But that is no reason why Durgapur workers should forfeit sympathy; more so when they have staked their wages and security in their fight against naked police repression.

Polls Deferred

Nature has interfered with the Pakistan elections scheduled for October. They will now be held in December, god willing. The disruption caused by floods to communication and dislocation of the economy in East Pakistan cannot be denied. But whether December too is a propitious month is open to doubt—West Bengal prefers February-March. However, the less propitious the time, the better it may be for the authorities; a heavy turn-out favours popular parties.

Much of what is happening in Pakistan is shrouded in obscurity. Though very near physically we are very far so far as contacts are concerned. It is almost impossible to get East Pakistan newspapers and journals and so one misses the flavour—or stink—of the politics there. Reports sent out by news agencies are bone-dry, scarce, and often tutored. The stories brought out by the refugees

are in most cases unreliable, they have their own axes to grind. But so far as the present influx goes, even refugees have not circulated hair-raising stories of torture, rape and molestation, the stuff that appeals most. The reason for restraint perhaps lies in the class character of the present refugees—they do not belong to the middle class, but are hardworking people deprived of their means of livelihood by circumstances which are beyond the control of the masses in East Pakistan. The authorities, it is said, want as many anti-voters as possible to leave, for the minorities in East Pakistan will back parties with a mass following for security, as their counterparts in India seem to have learnt to do. The late Trailokya Chakraborti, whose instant popularity in India was perhaps due to the admiration the people feel for an unselfish and dedicated type—as rare a species in this country as

the rhino—spoke of this while he was alive.

However scanty the sources of information, it is clear that the demand for autonomy—both political and cultural—is the most dominant in election politics. After the break-up of West Pakistan into familiar units, this demand is seeking fulfilment in various ways, including a heightened pride in regional languages. But so far as East Pakistan is concerned, her demand for full autonomy, after years of existence as a colony, may meet with resistance before and after the elections, as it threatens the hegemony of the west, particularly of Punjab. There is every likelihood of a deadlock in constitution-making, though Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is a moderating factor, and hence preferred to the leaders of the National Awami Party. The NAP, no longer under the complete charismatic spell of the octogenarian Maulana Bhasani, is divided at the moment. The religion-mongers are a force not to be ignored in the west, and even in East Pakistan they are asserting themselves. Whether swearing by Islamic Democracy will help the Maulana to contain them is not known, particularly when a break-away group of the NAP wants to have no truck with parliamentary politics. The Maulana himself is not always a committed lover of elections. Thus the extra two months gained for electioneering will further clarify—or confuse—the issues. However, the chances are that 120 days after the elections, Pakistani politicians will be back in square one, not face to face with the supreme arbiter, President Yahya Khan, but snarling at one another.

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West Bengal

AUGUST 22, 1970

Castro's Self-Criticism

The seventeenth anniversary of the attack on the Moncada barracks was made an occasion for unambiguous self-criticism by Fidel Castro; in actuality, however, the situation in Cuba today is not as critical as the leadership considers it to be. Then why did Castro offer to resign if the people so desired? His resignation would not have solved any of the problems. The target harvest of 10 million tons of sugar had put the whole economic effort in errancy. It could not be otherwise when one particular sector claims all human energy and capital resources at the cost of other economic activities. Nevertheless, the 8.5 million ton harvest is a record figure and does not fall much short of the projection. This has been achieved in a period of erratic rainfall and inadequate supply of inputs. Moreover, attempts at sabotage were always there. There will be no difficulty in fulfilling sugar quotas in Europe and supplying 5 million tons to Russia. The more relevant point is at what unit cost sugar had been produced. An effort involving the labour of some 400,000 people and investment of \$800 million will not be duly rewarded by the international price of 3.2 cents a pound. Dislocation and stagnation in other industries that have accompanied the *zafra* (sugar harvest) would have more serious economic consequences than are visible at present, if the leadership fails to balance the claims of different sectors. Power supply can be cited as an instance to show the interrelation of different industries. Cement production declined by 23 per cent for, among other things, power shortage. How to construct then one million new homes, which according to Castro, are urgently needed?

If the people are somewhat disenchanted with Castro's speech which gave a call for a new effort, the blame mostly lies with the leadership. A hope was raised that once the longest harvest was over, there would be more time to relax, fewer restrictions and more amenities. Castro

has always tried to spur the Cubans into action with moral incentive—as it should be in a socialist country—but the men around him have failed to inculcate a sense of revolutionary idealism and national purpose among the people. Two Cabinet Ministers have been fired and Castro has hinted at reshaping the administration by dropping “those who have spent themselves”. There could well be a sense of alienation among the workers, for there are no institutions through which they can express themselves. Castro detests the idea of imposing institutions from above; rather there should be a continuous dialogue with the rank and file. “A transitional leap forward to a new society in which there would be no money, no selfishness, no unhealthy competition”, Castro told K. S. Karol, would result from a socialist awareness—an outcome of the great economic battle. It is not on record that Castro has ever been engaged in any serious economic or political debate by his comrades. Not that he has any intention to become so powerful; the situation in Cuba developed in such a way that he is rather being compelled to supervise everything. This has led to the inevitable; output falling short of effort.

Castro had a few words to say about the Cuban revolution, almost nothing about the armed struggle in Latin America. This indifference to revolutionary movements and concentration of all energy on the economic development of Cuba has become a phenomenon following Che Guevara's death. Many guerilla leaders, including Senor Douglas Bravo, have criticised Castro for abandoning help to Latin American revolution.

Vietnamisation

Early this month the new American negotiator, Mr David Bruce, arrived in Paris to resume Vietnam peace talks. The very fact that Nixon decided to change horses in midstream and the notion that Bruce is a bit dovish raised speculation about a

change in the American position. But from what Bruce has said in Paris it seems he has nothing new to offer apart from his "note of great courtesy". There has been no indication that the Americans are a little more inclined to face the prospect of defeat in Vietnam. Instead they are sticking to terms which only a victor on the battlefield can impose. One may conclude that perhaps the Americans now hope to achieve with a note of courtesy what they could not with thousands of tons of bombs. But this is an optical illusion. They have kicked up the dust of peace talks to cover their stubborn design to cling to a "Vietnamised" Vietnam—an American neo-colony.

But history is inexorable. The trick of "Vietnamisation" which was attempted by the French in 1951-52 under a different label, *jaunissement* (yellowing) and by the Eisenhower Administration led in the former case to heavy induction of French colonial troops and Dien Bien Phu and in the latter to the landing of Marines and their defeat in a score of mini Dien Bien Phus. And now Nixon's desperate bid to win the war by the worn-out trick has run into trouble.

"Pacification" and strengthening of the South Vietnamese army—the two arms of "Vietnamisation"—have miserably failed. "Pacification" which means that the Vietnamese peasants should switch their loyalty from the NLF to the Saigon puppets has of course been an absurd goal after a decade of people's war waged by the NLF. Weary American officials in Saigon admit that the goal of pacifying the countryside remains as remote as ever. Areas claimed to be pacified are the ones where the puppet troops maintain a trembling existence behind sandbagged outposts. Equally disappointed has been Nixon's hope of turning the puppet troops into a first class fighting force. Reports, of course, were not lacking about a new morale and elan of the puppet troops and successful operation of the Vietnamisation programme. Even Robert Thompson,

Nixon's new-found mentor in counter-insurgency warfare, spoke about the "great psychological lift that the South Vietnamese have obtained from their surprising military showing in Cambodia" which he hoped would "prove very beneficial to the Vietnamisation programme". But barely two months later, in late July American officials in Saigon admitted that in the previous two months desertions from the South Vietnamese army had increased at a rate of almost 50 per cent. And the rate shows the inclination of going up in direct proportion with the home-bound Yankee troops.

On the economic front Vietnamisation spells only disaster for the Thieu-Ky regime. They are now being called upon to run the million-man war machine the Americans built for them. The massive flow of dollars which has so long ensured its existence will of course continue but a little less generously. Moreover the foreign exchange funds which Washington had been pouring into South Vietnam to pay for its troops have dropped sharply as the withdrawal of troops goes on. Vietnamisation is slowly exposing the country's economy to the full effects of war. With the country's foreign trade and exchange reserve at rock bottom President Thieu feels helpless before the galloping inflation. As the cost of living continues to rise at the rate of 10 per cent a month tightening the noose around the neck of fixed-income groups—civil servants and soldiers—the very pacific and loyal citizens of Saigon show signs of restlessness. Even those who pinned their hopes on the Americans now accuse them of dragging Vietnam into an unwinnable war and deserting her at the brink of defeat. "The mood of the Vietnamese in Saigon", as the *New York Times* gloomily reports, has been increasingly ugly since last May. There are fewer Americans in Vietnam—in Saigon, too—but those that are here are hated more. And that is a telling commentary on the success of the Vietnamisation Nixon has based his hopes on.

View from Delhi

Kerala Hustings

FROM A POLITICAL
CORRESPONDENT

NEXT month's elections in Kerala are going to be a surrealistic affair. On the morrow of the notification on the elections, none of the parties knows for certain who its allies are and how many seats it would be contesting. And to go by the CPI-M, none of them know who the voters are because the rolls are bizarre. With every passing day the CPI's desperation is growing. The long interval between the dissolution of the Assembly and the decision to hold the polls have given other parties some leverage. The initiative on the anti-Marxist side has passed on to the Congress-R. Mr Achutha Menon sought dissolution of the Assembly to forestall a Marxist move to topple his Ministry through defections and the CPI admits this. He wanted to bargain for seats as the leader of the "Chief Minister's party" before resigning but the Indian Socialist Party's threat to walk out of the mini-front and its walk-out later scotched the plan.

The Congress Parliamentary Board was sharply divided on the Kerala strategy. It involved a basic choice which would have a bearing on all electoral alliances to come. The hardliners wanted to put the CPI, a miserable fifth party in the State trying to rehabilitate itself at the cost of the Congress-R, in its proper place by staking the claim for the majority of seats. Mr Jagjivan Ram, Mr Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and Mr Chavan were against an adjustment with the mini-front. But Mrs Indira Gandhi prevailed over all. The alliance with the Muslim League, indirect though, is going to cost the party much in the Hindi belt and this was what the other leaders feared most. The Muslim League has been branded a communal party by ministerial and party spokesmen and

yet the decision was rationalised on the score that the Marxists had to be fought at any cost.

The fight really is between the Marxist-led alliance and the Congress-R and the CPI is not the major factor in the battle. This has deflated the CPI leadership considerably. Mr Jagjivan Ram has succeeded in keeping all the options with his party. The Congress-R will not allow the "mini-front" to contest a majority of the seats. Nor does it mean the Congress-R would contest a majority of the seats. Which means parties which have walked out of the mini-front can bargain directly with the Congress-R for adjustments.

It is a big gamble for Mrs Gandhi.

If fighting on an anti-Marxist plank she leads her party to defeat, there would be nothing worse than that. Both the Congress-R and the CPI would come home croppers. Her adjustment with the mini-front is limited in objective to defeating the Marxists in Kerala and perhaps in other States it would be limited to meeting, say, the Jana Sangh or the Congress-O. But the Congress-R ceases to be a credible entity the moment it refuses to contest all the seats in any State. In the past the Congress party's claim to indispensability lay in its ability to have a countrywide front against other parties, contesting almost every Lok Sabha and Assembly seat. After the 1960 "triple alliance" with the League and the PSP, this is the first time the Congress has come to a seat adjustment with anybody. It did not happen even at the 1969 mini-term elections. By adopting an anti-Marxist platform in Kerala, the Congress-R is surreptitiously committing the CPI to an anti-Marxist position so

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Business Manager
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AUGUST 22, 1970

that the two communist parties can never get together anywhere. It also means that Mrs Gandhi has written off the Marxists as her allies in Parliament for ever and is out to isolate them.

None of Mrs Gandhi's problems have been solved through her politicking. In Uttar Pradesh, the Congress-R is on the run and the BKD is going strong. The Muslim League which has been her ally in the South is expanding its organisation to the Northern States much to the embarrassment of the Prime Minister. She wanted an alliance with Muslim communalism outside the Hindi belt but wanted to keep the Muslims at an arm's length in the Hindi belt. But the essentially South Indian leadership of the League (it is from Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Mysore) wants to build a massive vote bank of 50 to 60 million Muslims and bargain for seats in constituencies with Muslim concentration in return for support to Mrs Gandhi where they have smaller vote banks. This decision of the Muslim League to go North will strengthen the Jana Sangh. For once Mrs Gandhi's advisers realise that her anti-Jana Sangh gimmicks have been overdone and she has been pampering Muslim communalism without an awareness of its dangerous consequences. The Allahabad Corporation elections are a pointer. The Hindu communalists and the Mushawarat between them trounced the Congress-R while the SSP retained its base. This is the dangerous polarisation Mrs Gandhi will have to face in the Hindi belt and the Muslim majority will not go to her party automatically.

It would be in Mrs Gandhi's interest to drive deeper the wedge between the North Indian leadership of the Majlis-e-Mushawarat which claims to be a socio-economic organisation of the Muslims but is communal nonetheless and the patently communal Muslim League, led by South Indians. Yet, the Muslim League as a political organisation seems to have a better image and a

better appeal for the Muslims of the North and West Bengal. The League is sending out well-trained cadre for organisational work. For instance the organiser for West Bengal has been sent from Kerala and has been able to make a dent in the area of his operation.

The Muslim League will be able to rally the majority communal vote on a large scale and this is what the Jana Sangh would welcome at this juncture. The Sangh has reason to be happy that the Congress-R has struck a deal with the mini-front which includes the League. In fact, when the High Command was divided in its strategy, a Muslim League deputation met Mr Jagjivan Ram to pressure him into giving up his party's claim for 69 out of 133 Kerala Assembly seats and to settle for a reasonable number. The CPI used the League as a pawn in the game. The DMK also came in handy. By admitting the DMK in the "mini-front", the CPI made sure that the party would put pressure on the High Command in New Delhi to agree to an adjustment with the mini-front.

Judging from the mood of the CPI camp, it is far from happy with the developments. Its plan in Kerala is already foundering on the quicksands while the Marxists seem to be confident of emerging as the first party and being able to knock together a viable front. Whatever the outcome, the mini-front will not be able to form a ministry except with the Congress-R support but the Marxists would have nothing to lose in that case.

August 16, 1970

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The Publicity Hunters

A. P. M.

A PART from the self-congratulating bureaucrats in New Delhi and Calcutta, there is another set of people who are awfully busy in rescuing the much-publicised sick economy of West Bengal. The leaders of this group of local businessmen are the presidents of the chambers of commerce in the city. The more enthusiastic of the six presidents are, of course, those who head the two affluent chambers of commerce. What is interesting—sometimes bordering on outright absurdity—is the competition being waged by these people to outdo each other. The purpose is to get as much free publicity as possible during the one-year tenure of their presidentship.

The first person to present himself as an uninvited saviour of this State was the first Indian president of one of the chambers of commerce. It occurred to him that Rs 500 crores was what West Bengal needed, and he said so at a press conference. Where on earth was the money to come from? The suave-looking technocrat was firm in his opinion. From New Delhi, he said. What he said that evening could be hurriedly gathered from newspaper clippings; his blue-print for economic recovery was prepared by his public relations officer, and after the conference had been duly reported in the Press the following day, he is now little concerned about the declining economy and is busy setting up a factory in Mysore.

"Pooh, Rs 500 crores!" With a lot of scorn in his slightly cadaverous face, Mrs Gandhi's confidence-boy and president of another chamber of commerce which represents chiefly deshi big business in the city, proceeded to lay bare his own variety of what to do in respect of the wayward West Bengal. This gentleman, a figurehead in his group of companies because of more assertive brothers, however, beats his competitors in that he takes nobody's counsel in what he does, distrusts his

own cronies, does everything in his own name and approaches the Prime Minister often personally—all this to keep his prominence intact before the Press. Sitting in his plush chamber presided over by a jet black stone Kali and an ivory Vishnu looking like a Clive Street baron, the gentleman, with a fresh vermilion tilak on his forehead and clad in a well-cut business suit, informed this author in unashamedly inadequate English some time back that he was particularly worried about the plight of the daily rail passengers. His plan for West Bengal was so comprehensive that if it was implemented, it would enable the hapless commuters to go back home every evening at 6 o'clock. Then there would be less agitation, communism would die a sure death, and well, once again people would say what West Bengal thinks today...

As a matter of fact, the insincerity of these people is apparent the moment one goes deeper into their schemes for nursing the economy back to health. Except a bare outline containing sentences like 'the Centre should start developmental projects', 'the financial institutions should advance credit more liberally' and 'a great deal depends on successful exploitation of Haldia', they have no definite ideas on how to set right the economy. A simple evidence of their disinterestedness is that not a single development project has even reached the blue-print stage since President's Rule began, which also roughly marks the sudden outbreak of an alleged social consciousness among local business.

All this and more are represented in the idea of the Development Bank for Eastern India, the brain-child of a man who owes his affluence to the one-time one-man Tammany Hall of this State. For, one thing should be made clear. The worries about West Bengal are not all that innocent. The

joint meeting of the chambers of commerce at which the idea of a development bank was introduced was marked by the apparent indifference of the two leading chambers of commerce. The reason was simple. Big brothers disliked the prospect of a comparatively junior chamber of commerce stealing the show, for this was the most eye-catching idea put forth so far. They were, therefore, discouragingly cool towards it. Immediately afterward, however, the chamber of commerce on India Exchange Place got busy, sent out a number of press releases, met the bureaucrats in New Delhi and Calcutta, and thus skilfully appropriated the role of the dedicated chamber. It may be added that the gentleman with the tilak heads this chamber of commerce.

Though the details are still being worked out, it has been decided right from the beginning that the Development Bank would start with the compensation for take-over to be granted to the three nationalised banks with head offices in Calcutta. The Bank has two aims, to initiate new industry and to help sick industry. Since it will be set up in the name of eastern India and all the States in this region are undeveloped except West Bengal, one would expect the Bank to cater mainly to the needs of these States. Not so, say the promoters. We are not that much philanthropic, they explain. And this is where lies the rub. The Bank will be a means to get hold of money which may not be so easily forthcoming from the nationalised banks, in case New Delhi grows serious about developing small industry and agriculture. It should be remembered that the people who are enthusiastic about the Bank are all from the large-scale sector. They want to be assured that they can fall back upon a bank of their own in times of need. The Development Bank will in all probability be for development of their own business, outside Government's financial control.

The kind of muddled thinking the

AUGUST 22, 1970

business community is doing in the mad rush for churning out plans for poor, dear West Bengal was rather melodramatically evident in a recent meet-the-Press ballyhoo hosted by the chairman of an engineering association. In his enthusiasm, he failed to distinguish between block and working capital. When some senior journalists present insisted on a clear answer from him, he gave up the attempt altogether.

In all this jockeying to appear as ultimate begetters of right ideas for the problem State, there has recently been an interesting development. The bureaucrats in New Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta are growing suspicious of the enthusiasm of the businessmen. The resurrected bureaucrats in Writers' Buildings are determined that it is they and they alone who will spend the crores of rupees New Delhi has promised for development of Calcutta. The officers in New Delhi are equally anxious not to let the Calcutta men get prominence over them. And the financial people in Bombay and New Delhi are convinced that since they are going to permit the administrators to spend whatever money West Bengal finally gets, they should have the final say in everything concerning the matter. The Calcutta businessmen, despite all their press briefings and weekly air dashes to New Delhi and Bombay, are obviously odd men out in this uneasy gathering of jealous, hostile and powerful bureaucrats.

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The Palestine Liberation Struggle—II

A. K. ESSACK

WITH the years, it is the people's army that is growing stronger and it is the Israeli forces which are becoming weaker. Israel's defence budget has soared from £1,800 million in 1968-69 to £3,100 million in the 1970-71 period. Her national debt has grown to an astounding £1,000 million. It is becoming increasingly difficult for world Zionism and U.S. imperialism to keep her afloat.

Although Israel was the creation of joint U.S.-USSR collaboration it is America which gripped her economy and directed her foreign policy. With massive doses of capital, from U.S. imperialism and the World Zionist movement, Israel was transformed into an industrialised State, and a leading one at that in the Middle East. Imperialism, like the whites in South Africa, allotted it the role of a guardian to protect its interests in the Middle East. In addition, to give her the much needed umbrella, there was stationed the Sixth Fleet as well as the giant Wheelus base in Libya. All these were aimed to guard the vital supply of oil. It is estimated that the Middle East has 62% of the world total oil reserve and 70% of the Western oil supply comes from the Mediterranean region. Annually Europe consumes 560 million tons. Statistics show that Arab countries lead in the production of oil:

	Million barrels per day
Saudi Arabia :	3.67
Iran :	3.47
Libya :	3.37

In other words all these three have reached an annual output of 100 million tons. Venezuela has now been outstripped as the world's leading producer.

With increased consciousness amongst the Arab masses, who are now able to see the force behind Is-

rael, sections of the Arab governments have begun to deal with imperialism in their own way. For instance Algeria has nationalised the four major oil companies, and with the ouster of the puppet monarch Idris, Libya has begun to put pressure on her oil companies.

To emphasise the link between American ownership of oil in the Middle East and certain Arab countries, the Palestinian commando group, the People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) blew up the Trans-American pipeline operating from Saudi Arabia. King Feisal believed that by pouring a few million pounds in the coffers of certain commando groups, he would be immune from attacks. He was mistaken. This year again the pipeline was bulldozed and the Syrian government was in no hurry to repair it. Meanwhile Iraq has already canvassed among leading oil producers that there should be a common approach towards the oil companies, so that apart from nationalisation, the Arab countries could sell directly to the nations concerned. It was then that the farsighted section of the imperialists saw the writing on the wall.

The continuation of the conflict would mean that the American oil interests would be attacked. The Israeli aggression had now turned into its opposite. Far from protecting the imperialists' interests, it threatened to undermine them. Said Mr Levy, regarded as the dean of the American oil economists, "These are terrible, dangerous and difficult times. I certainly regard the Middle East as one area of the world in which the potential danger of the ultimate confrontation between the two powers is greater than anywhere else, even Vietnam." He appealed for moderation on both sides and to work for a peaceful solution.

The anxiety expressed by Mr Levy is shared by the big oil monopolies. If nationalisation gains momentum and if the Arab countries sell directly to the consumers, then besides the loss of profits, the Middle East countries would sell oil at a price that would suit their national interests. It is this that has pushed Nixon to work behind the scenes and initiate peace moves, and to make Israel less hawkish. Nixon is also aware of the fact that there are certain sections amongst the Arab countries like the feudal landowners and those propertied classes whose interests are tied to it and who fear any independent action of the submerged masses who would also welcome these moves. The prolongation of the struggle could further awaken the masses and thus endanger their own positions.

The Propertied Classes

Like other countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America the Arab countries are divided into classes, the most numerous and exploited being the peasants and workers. The minority which hold political power are the landlords and the bourgeoisie. The latter have further divisions like the national, comprador, and bureaucratic. Vacillation is their characteristic feature and this has been adequately illustrated in the Palestinian struggle.

As stated earlier on, the Arab countries rejected the partition of Palestine and at a certain stage formed the Arab League so as to coordinate their policies and evolve a common strategy against Israel. The world saw the ignominious defeat of the Arab League, whose resources and manpower appeared greater than those of Israel. However, what was not revealed is that by 1967 imperialism had penetrated the Arab League and the result was an endless clash between the "progressives and the moderates" in the League. Talking replaced any attempt at action. Neither the Arab masses, the peasants and workers, nor the commandos had a voice in these proceedings. The first blow

at this "talking shop" was delivered when Syria refused to attend. The Arab League slowly was replaced by another form of organisation known as the confrontation States consisting of the UAR, Jordan, Syria, Libya, and Iraq. Although the commandos were doing the bulk of the fighting and were in reality the only group which involved the masses and drew their strength from the masses they were not represented. In the polemic that is now raging between Iraq and Egypt, Nasser has been accused openly of refusing to mobilise the masses in the vital Canal Zone.

The growth of the Palestinian struggle for liberation has acted as a catalyst in bringing about a polarisation and each Arab government has been forced to take position concretely, instead of paying just lip service. Before 1967 the Palestinians were used as mere pawns in the game played by various Arab governments. The same could be said of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the Palestine Liberation Army formed in 1964. The 1967 war also exposed the weakness of the PLO. The Arab commandos who are now doing the actual fighting grew outside and sometimes against opposition from the Arab States. For instance the Libya of King Idris imprisoned the commandos of the PFLP while Nasser does not allow them to operate freely in his country. In the recent storm over Nasser's acceptance of the Rogers plan, the UAR closed the radio stations of Al Assifa, the military wing of Al Fatah, for daring to criticise the UAR President.

By 1968 it was clear to everybody that the Jordanian army was doing very little to fight the Israelis. In fact it was the commando groups that bore the brunt of the Israeli attack at Karameh. What Hussein's army did do was to attack the commandos, who fought back, at the same time gaining immense sympathy from the Arab masses. The Americans and their puppets realised that with the growth of a people's liberation army as represented by the

commando groups, dual power was being set up. A truce was patched up, and Hussein waited for another opportunity to strike, the most recent being the attempt in June 1970. Al Fatah had made it clear that as a commando group it was not interested in fighting the Arab governments, but only Israel. Here the Marxist-Leninist orientated PFLP differed, for it believed that an all-out struggle should be waged against imperialism as well as the reactionary Arab governments. Said Dr George Habbash on this score, "Striking at Imperialist and Zionist interests inside and outside the Arab world is the basic point of our strategy from which we cannot diverge".

Having failed in Jordan the imperialists worked through the Helou-Bustany regime in Lebanon. Without warning, the troops of Bustany struck at the fedayeen in October last year. Their troops surrounded the guerilla camps and subjected them to heavy and sustained bombardment both from the ground and from the air. And to show that they were in deadly earnest they laid a seige to starve the guerillas into submission. The leader of Al Fatah characterised this attack as an attempt to liquidate the Palestinian revolution. Arafat called on his commandos, "not to surrender, not to negotiate, but to fight to the last bullet." The commandos quickly forged a unified command. They occupied and took over a number of refugee camps and told the Lebanese security force to keep out, attacked three posts in northern Lebanon and captured 24 customs men and police, armed the civilian population and took over the town of Tripoli, the second largest, and drove out the security forces. From Syria a mechanised column of commandos occupied Yannta and the surrounding hills. This was a strategic position guarding the vital Syrian-Libyan highway. In short they took power in a part of the country. The most important feature here was that the Arab masses sided with the commandos, not only by demonstrations, but also fighting shoulder to shoulder with

them to drive out the forces of Helou-Bustany. The writing was on the wall for the reactionary forces in the Middle East. A truce was patched up and the fedayeen won the right to operate within Lebanon against Israel.

Hussein made one more attempt this year, only to meet a more crushing defeat. He found the whole population against him and his troops just wilted against the concerted attacks of the unified Arab commandos. The commandos were in a position to take over Jordan but spared Hussein on condition that he sacked the pro-imperialist elements from the Cabinet and substitute those who had the cause of the Palestinians at heart. Hussein also agreed to withdraw his troops from Amman. If at Karameh it was Al Fatah which emerged in a blaze of glory, now in June 1970 it was the PFLP which was the dominant force in the commando struggle. Just as the feudal and reactionary forces proved ineffective against Israel, so too before a conscious people with their own army, they also crumbled and collapsed.

Nasser's Role

Nasser, the spokesman of another section of the propertied classes, is a different matter. He took part in ousting the degenerate King Farouk and later took the bold and decisive step of striking at imperialism by nationalisation of the Suez Canal. In that he expressed the aspirations of the Arab masses and he became their idol. In the sixties, the basic industries were nationalised, but the State remained the same, for it still excluded the masses from effective participation in industry as well as in the affairs of the State. And this contradiction was thoroughly exposed in the June war which showed up how many of Egypt's military hierarchy and propertied classes had ties with imperialism.

Observers have been struck by Nasser's ambiguity, especially as regards the Palestinian struggle for liberation. He agreed with Russia and

the USA in working for a political solution although before the masses he spoke of armed struggle. He used Hussein to fly kites about a settlement with Israel to test Arab reaction. Yet before his ruling Socialist Union party last year he said, "Arabs would not consent to a Middle East settlement; we shall not give one inch of our land and there should be no bargaining of Palestinian land." And to reiterate the same stand, in another speech he said, "The Arab nation has no alternative but to fight. The Arab realises that he has the means to liberate his territories. He has no other paths."

One of the most trenchant criticisms of Nasser's acceptance of the Plan is that he has done this act unilaterally. While the Arabs, including the commandos, are fighting Israel, he intends to bind all of them on the grounds that the UAR has been doing most of the fighting. This was not done by mistake, for last year he rejected an Iraqi-Libyan suggestion that there be a unified approach to the problems confronting the Arab people.

Algeria's Revolutionary Council, opposing any attempt to liquidate the Palestinian revolution, reiterated its stand when it commented on Nasser's acceptance of the Rogers plan: "The pursuit of the armed struggle remains the only way of reaching a solution which conforms to the aspirations of the Arab masses. Each Arab country has the right to decide in full sovereignty its own destiny, but the Palestinian cause is a just and sacred cause. It is for the Palestinian people to decide their own fate."

The Palestinian commandos who were expecting this blow for some time acted with speed. Firstly, they closed their ranks. Al Fatah, the PLP and the PDF the leading groups in the Unified Command, rejected Nasser. The latter groups staged a massive demonstration in Amman and according to the London *Financial Times* 15,000 armed guerillas para-

ded the streets of the Jordanian capital. Later the Unified Command also held another massive demonstration where Arafat addressed them. In Iraq there were massive rallies by the commando groups denouncing the defeatist line of the UAR President.

Nasser, and Numeiri of Sudan, in closing the broadcasting stations of the fedayeen for daring to put their point of view to the Arab masses, show that they cannot go forward any more in the struggle. They are following the same road as Hussein and Helou-Bustany in attempting to liquidate the Palestinian revolution. In this respect then a section of the Egyptian bourgeoisie has now cast its lot with the feudalists against the Arab masses in curbing any further leftward swing. Nasser's moves, will meet the same fate as did the earlier attempts of Hussein and Helou-Bustany. It is not possible in the present political climate for even a Nasser to liquidate the Palestinian struggle which has become the spearhead also of the Arab revolution.

The Russians

Lenin formulated the tasks of the Communist International in respect of the colonies and nationally oppressed groups quite explicitly when he said that it was the task of the Communist parties to support actively all revolutionary national movements fighting against imperialism. It was expected that the Russians, who have brought out millions of copies of Lenin's works, would render all support to the armed struggle of the Palestinians, as China has done since the formation of the PLO. But this is not so. Apart from other considerations, it flows from Russia's basic position which is the recognition of the State of Israel. Hence they cannot accept the position that the Palestinian people have a right to liberate the conquered area or to destroy the State of Israel, which is dominated by Zionism. It is here then that there is a fundamental difference between the Russians and the commandos, for the latter want to end the state of Israel

as presently constituted and replace it with a secular democratic State, where Jews, Christians and Arabs will be able to live on the basis of equality. Already commando groups have formed links with Jews who have rejected Zionism. This difference also shows itself on the broad strategic plane; while the Russians want a political solution, the commandos stand for a military one. At one stage Soviet papers characterised the commandos as hotheads who were wrecking the U.S.-USSR detente in the Middle East.

However, the spectacular rise of the commandos both as a political and a military force brought about a change. Hitherto the Russians had plumped for building up the UAR and a great deal of its aid was concentrated on building it up. The Soviet rulers believed that it would be possible to influence the commandos as they did Nasser and thus they invited Arafat of Al Fatah to Moscow. The papers now also sang a different tune. Thus one of its journals said, "The Palestinian liberation is freeing itself of adventurist slogans. It is defining its goals more precisely; liberation of territories occupied by Israel, and the recognition of the right of Palestinian Arabs to live on the land" (*International Affairs*, Vol 1 1970). The Soviet Union in the 1967 Security Council resolution had ignored the rights of the Palestinians. Later it shifted its position and recognised the "legitimate rights" of the Palestinians. After Arafat's visit it made a further shift and talked of their "national" rights. Arafat listened but was not persuaded, for the Arab commandos, though nationalistic, draw their support and inspira-

tion from the Arab masses. It is this that sets them apart from most of the Arab governments. They represent the modern and revolutionary force in the Middle East and the one hope of pushing the Arab people out of the milieu of feudal backwardness into the 20th century. And to show that there was no departure as a result of Arafat's visit, Assifa (Hurricane), the military wing of Al Fatah, stated that it was opposed to any political solution whether it came from Israel, America or Russia. It must be galling to the commandos as well to the conscious Arab masses that Nasser's acceptance came after his three-week visit to Moscow.

A crisis like this brings to the fore the various groups in society and forces them to take up positions for all to see. Nasser's position is now clear. It exposes the role of the propertied classes who paid lip-service to the revolution, but who also have battened on the Arab masses, keeping them on a low level culturally, politically and educationally. The propertied classes have one thing in common with imperialism; they fear the independent activity of the masses. And the Palestinian revolutionary movement represents just this independent activity. The Arab guerilla movement is from the masses and is rapidly developing an ideology which corresponds to their true interests. This phenomenon has not been known in the Arab world. Having caught the imagination of the Arab masses, they are emitting sparks which could well enflame the whole of the Arab world. It is this which the propertied classes fear.

The Arab masses desire change. Poverty, unemployment, land hunger, have imbued them with the desire for a better and a newer life. It is because of this that they have reached for the commandos and have embraced them as their true sons and daughters. In them they see "the storms that are opening the doors of history".

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Who Shall Overcome? When?

M. S. PRABHAKAR

IT seems almost another age; but it was less than seven years ago that Pete Seeger, the American singer, led a multi-racial group of singers on the stage of Carnegie Hall at New York City at a famous concert of 'Freedom Sons'; the proceeds of that concert went to Students' Non-violent Co-ordination Committee, Georgia, better known as SNCC, an organization now almost universally condemned by the White establishment in the U.S. as practising 'Black racism'. Pete Seeger, of course, is white, and there was no self-consciousness either in the concert, or in the songs sung, or in the gesture. Those were the days; the jolly nice white kid, clean and middle class and liberal, going down South to confront the wicked, brutal cops, the crowds of the whites shouting obscenities from the sidelines as the cops turned the dogs and the water-hoses upon the demonstrators. These encounters were well publicized, and aroused the 'conscience' of a nation. The fire-bombings in isolated backward communities did not receive as much publicity as the attacks on civil rights workers from the North, especially when these happened to be white. The songs were determined songs:

We shall not be moved! We shall not be moved!

Just like the three standing by the water, we shall not be moved!

We are black and white together, we shall not be moved!

We will walk hand in hand together, we shall not be moved!

The most popular lapel button in those days was the one put out by SNCC, representing two hands, black and white, firmly clasping each other. Even the black people sang with great feeling, and seemed to believe in the sentiments expressed in such songs as these:

I'm so glad I'm fighting for my rights!

Singing Glory Hallelujah!

They also sang that they were so glad they were fighting to be free, that they knew that God was on their side, and they continuously sang 'Glory Hallelujah!', because that was the way to secure their rights, their freedom.

Now that horror stories are being spread about the violence of "extremist" black activist groups, it is useful to remember that for decades, the dominant current in the black peoples' movement in the United States was one of non-violence. One trusted, despite all evidence to the contrary, in the innate goodness, the essential reasonableness of the white majority. The famous Freedom songs, the joint marches, the acquiescence in a white leadership of a movement composed of black masses—all these now seem, with the advantage of hindsight, as signs of a remarkable naivete; perhaps these were a sign of just plain trust, a deep and abiding commitment to the 'American Dream'. Sooner or later, like other minority groups like the Italians, the East Europeans etc, the Africans too hoped to be accepted, absorbed. But even in those days of euphoria, there were voices which saw a certain incongruity, even a certain grim irony in the racial situation. This is what Bob Parris had to say about the killing of the three civil rights workers from the North in Alabama (Schwerner, Goodman, Cheney), and the killing of the Rev. Reeb:

A month ago people marched out of the North down to Selma. The incident which triggered them off was the killing of the Reverend Reeb. Before Reverend Reeb was killed, a Negro was killed, Jimmy Jackson. His death and his killing didn't trigger anything off, except confusion as to how exactly he was killed. Now we've watched that phenomenon time and again in the South. Before the summer

project last year we watched five Negroes murdered in two counties in Mississippi with no reaction in the country. We couldn't get the news out. Then we saw that when the three civil rights workers were killed, and two of them were white, the whole country reacted, went into motion. There's a deep problem behind that, and I think that if you can begin to understand what that problem is, why you don't move when a Negro is killed the same way you move when a white person is killed—then maybe you can begin to understand this country in relation to Vietnam and the third world, the Congo and Santo Domingo.

Speech on 'Vietnam Day' 21-22 May 1965, Berkeley, California

The Black Panthers and other black activist groups in the United States have now begun to understand this relationship. Sometimes, the positions adopted by these groups and their actions might seem rather hysterical, particularly to middle class groups glowing in comfortable liberal platitudes; but behind the rhetorical gestures, there is real persecution which causes the adoption of 'extreme ideological positions'; behind the hysteria is an almost intolerable awareness, bordering on physical pain, of the real position of the black people in the United States. Ten years ago, Vietnam was still some far off place; Lumumba was not even a name. But what America did to Lumumba, and what it is doing to Vietnam have caused a real ideological shift in the position of black activists in the U.S. Even Martin Luther King had to take a position of total opposition to the Vietnam war.

We Shall Overcome

'We shall overcome!', the black and white people sang, holding hands, black and white conspicuously alternating. 'Deep in my heart I do believe we shall overcome, Someday!' Very good, the establishment agreed; like Nerciat in Sartre's farce, they too were all for the Revolution, some

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day! And when the murderer Johnson had the gall to join singing, We shall Overcome, the innocuousness of the approach was proved to the hilt. 'The Truth shall make us free'. But the Truth, even as represented by such an accommodating member of the movement like Martin Luther King, had to be murdered. 'We will walk hand in hand'. The gesture was often no more than a gesture. Stokely Carmichael recounts an incident: he, a nice, clean middle-class boy even if he happened to be black, was visiting a friend, equally clean and nice and middle class, white. Just as he was leaving, he overheard the lady of the house observe to another visitor: 'Yes, we always let our boy play around with Negroes'. Thus, the black boy friend almost became a status symbol, particularly to nice white girls from clean and liberal backgrounds. Another murderer of Vietnam did not even turn a hair when that awful question was put to him: Would you allow your daughter to marry a Negro? Dean Rusk was heroic, even if people back in Georgia decided to cut him.

Is it any wonder that the dominant mood in the black movement in the U.S. is one of total rejection of white values? Perhaps I exaggerate; it is really difficult to judge. Perhaps, the black activists want to preserve both their blackness (not merely of colour, but an identification which is social and economic) and their Americanness. After all, it was James Meredith, a well-known symbol of black resistance to white attacks, who said in a television interview following the attack on him as he marched alone into Mississippi, that he considered the Vietnam war as one of the best things that could have happened to the black people in the United States. Whitney Young has made frequent trips to Vietnam on behalf of Johnson, and he too has seen the Vietnam war as an instrument to bring equality and greater opportunities for the black people in the United States. But against people like James Meredith and the people of the Urban League

there are hopeful signs as those represented by Bob Parris, Dick Gregory and Eldridge Cleaver. It is these latter groups that recognize, often instinctively but more rarely ideologically, the common enemy in the very structure of American society, its historical origins as well as the historical experience it has gone through. The other day, when Nixon tried to justify his invasion of Cambodia on the ground that he would not like to be the first President of the United States who lost a war, he was not merely echoing Lyndon Johnson, he was also giving proof of the national megalomania which has been an inseparable part of the American experience. To accept the black citizens of the United States as equal partners would be in effect to repudiate this dream, for it would mean the acceptance of the right to independence of the people of countries whose past, whose historical experience are similar to those of the black people of the U.S. A real challenge to the American establishment has been slow in emerging, but the present black activists provide some hopes of being that challenge from within; those groups give one hope that Vietnam has not merely friends in the U.S. (one can oppose the war on eminently conservative grounds), but allies and comrades as well.

We shall overcome; but not someday, not in the remote future, but today. We are not 'so glad' fighting for our rights; on the contrary, we are mad as hell, possessed by some genuine, purifying hatred for the enemy. And we do not fight for our rights, 'singing Glory Hallelujah!'; almost the contrary would be the correct method. Weapons, and not merely songs are the order of the day. Nixon and Johnson would have loved the people of Vietnam if only they had confined themselves to singing 'Glory Hallelujah!'

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Divide Et...

ANAND KUMAR

AN uneasiness reigns over Ireland. The Orange parades went off without incident (as if the army action of the preceding weeks had nothing to do with it). In the short-lived euphoria that followed the July 13 marches, the Cabinet crisis in the South and the serious charges against high-ranking Cabinet Ministers were forgotten, as was the presence of 11,000 of Britain's best troops in the North, trying unsuccessfully to stem the sullen rumblings of a civil war that is making itself felt in the form of bomb-attacks.

In a sense, there is an element of poetic justice in the situation. While the mythology of the Orange Order goes back to the contest between the son of James II and his son-in-law, William of Orange, the Lodges came into being in 1795 as a loyalist organisation against the United Irishmen, whose leaders, Wolf Tone and Henry Joy McCracken, were a Protestant and a Presbyterian respectively. The present character of the Lodges as an alliance of the rulers and a privileged section of the ruled, is even newer.

The credit for turning them into an institution instrumental in uniting the Protestant upper class and working class, to the detriment of a meaningful working class movement in the area, goes to Lord Randolph Churchill, then the leader of the Tories and father of Winston, a fact which must not please the Heath Government too much as they might come unstuck over the Irish Question.

"I had decided," Randolph wrote, "that if the GOM (Gladstone) went for Home Rule, the Orange card would be the one to play. Pray God it may turn out to be the ace of trumps and not the two."

"Ulster will fight: Ulster will be right" was the slogan he contributed to the Irish tragedy in 1886. Since then the Unionist Party with its

pro-British bias has controlled the North. One hundred and twenty-two delegates of the Unionist Council (the governing body of the party) are nominees of the Country Grand Lodges of the Order. Most of the other delegates, too, are members. It is evident, therefore, that the Order dispenses considerable patronage which effectively divides Protestant and Catholic workers.

Even today, only three members of the Stormont Cabinet are not members of the Order as well. One was expelled when he refused to explain his presence at a Catholic ceremony, another resigned when his daughter married a Catholic, and a third, the Minister for Community Relations, because he could not expect to make much headway with Catholics as the member of an exclusively Protestant organisation. And it was only the seriousness of the situation that prevented the Premier of Northern Ireland from taking part in the parades.

It would seem that the device of partition to turn a minority communal organisation into majority nationalism has backfired on its originators. The cheap political ploy of Winston Churchill's father had been the cause of bloodshed and barbarism, culminating once more in army rule and possibly civil war—one which would radically alter the political situation in Britain and Ireland.

The ruling classes are united. Lynch, the Prime Minister of the South, not only handed over arms to the British Navy a couple of months back, in accordance with a secret arms agreement between the rulers of the Republic and those of Britain, he also did not shrink from seriously endangering the stability of his country by spying on fellow-ministers.

The situation is out of hand. What started as a political tool for the ruling class has backfired on them. The election of Ian Paisley from Lord O'Neill's old constituency, in spite of the repeated pleas from the Order for his rejection, shows this clearly.

But in a last-ditch effort the Tories are plunging on from one irrationality to the next. They arrested Devlin, a legally-elected Member of Parliament, in a most undiplomatic manner, after she had promised to give herself up that evening. Then they persisted in not banning the offensive Orange parades. Finally, the use of Scottish soldiers, the traditional enemies of the Irish, to police the troubled areas could hardly have helped. In fact, the present flare-up can justly be blamed on the cynicism of a government intent on exploiting the most irrational expression of human emotions.

The situation continues to deteriorate. This is amply clear from the mounting number of bomb-explosions, including the CS attack on Westminster, and incessant riots. But the Tories are no fools. While avoiding the 'Green' sections of the IRA (believing that Lynch can deal with his people better), they have systematically attacked and attempted to destroy the 'Red' section, which sees the struggle in class rather than in religious terms. Either way, more bloodshed is inevitable and the Tories are to blame for it.

Two facts emerge from this: first, governments bent on irrationality, like the Tories, are willing to risk even their long-term interests for short-term gains out of the prevailing anarchy; and secondly, any exploitation of the irrationalities inherent in society will necessarily endanger the status quo and push the masses of the people to the violent resolution of conflicts originally sown to deflect their attention from the real problems they face. Ultimately, the perpetrators of such conflicts (like the Tories) will be exposed in their unravelling; but the process is too wasteful of life and liberty to be of use to anyone and must be resisted at all costs. The interests behind such 'popular' move-

ments must be exposed and destroyed.

These two lessons must not escape us in Asia and Africa, especially as events in Ireland have shown us that the present British Government, with a history of being the midwife to such conflicts behind it, has learnt nothing from them, and is perfectly willing to use its armed strength against what is fast becoming a liberation struggle, however irrational such armed intervention may prove in the end.

* *

Calcutta Diary

GYAN KAPUR

CALCUTTA is very much a city of posters, which term can be stretched to include the slogans written on walls. At one end of the scale are the slick mass produced cinema posters hung up on lamp-posts and at the other the hastily scrawled slogans on walls of houses or public buildings. In between come various categories of posters. There are the ones advertising some quick remedy. These for some curious reason are pasted on the name plates of suburban railway stations making it difficult for all except the regular passengers to find out which stations are going by. There are, of course, the posters of the fifties and sixties, handwritten on old newspapers by the cadre of the left parties. But a change is in the air in the world of posters. These handwritten posters are now not so numerous as in their heyday when young men and women vied with one another for the honour of being allowed to write them. Political virtue brings its own rewards. For many it is simply easier to get them printed as, of course, those whom they opposed used to do.

Two new elements have very recently entered the game or war, as you like to call it, of posters. The West Bengal Government of Shri Dhavan and his advisers has entered the fray determined to fight violence

The Confederation of British Industry whose erstwhile chief, Mr Davies, has now been appointed the new Minister for Technology, a unique promotion in the Conservative Party's recent history for a backbencher who made his maiden speech only recently, was referred to as the Council for British Industry on account of a typing error in my last despatch. Also, since I last wrote, the sale of an Air Defence System to protect South Africa from the North has been confirmed.

simultaneously on two fronts as it were, the moral and the physical. While local thanas, on the one hand, will now be having under their direct command sections of the Calcutta Armed Police ready to go into action any time, on the other, sayings from great Bengalis with their pictures will be everywhere we look.

Two of the posters have already made their appearance, both finely produced. One depicts Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and the other Swami Vivekananda. While Netaji proclaims that nothing great can be achieved by goondaism, Swami Vivekananda tells those who might care to look that 'No nation can hate others and live.' The slogans are in Bengali.

The posters appear to have gone practically unnoticed. At least nobody I know seems to have noticed them and I have not heard any passing mention of the posters anywhere. Which is a thing which might depress others than the bureaucrats who conceived and executed the project. For these posters now adorn the places usually occupied by pictures of ravishing beauties of the Bombay screen, sometimes alone but more often in the act of being lovingly crushed by the heroes. What the admen might worry about is that if the change in style and content is

going so much unnoticed, how many people after all did look at their own productions?

The failure of the slick posters may explain why the hastily drawn scrawls succeed in getting more attention. Perhaps it is because they are made by dedicated young men that they succeed whereas the others being made and pasted by mercenaries do not. But here also something new has developed. It was a perpetual grievance of house-owners that freshly painted walls were being disfigured by slogan writing. As a matter of fact many of them have tried various things to stop this. Some have made the surface rough, Others have painted the walls dark grey. Still others have just left the walls to their own fate, so that they should be tempting enough to the would-be slogan writers.

Now the house-owners cannot complain. The slogan writers have changed their way of operations. No matter if the house-owner has neglected to paint the walls. They correct the lapse themselves. A pail of whitening is now standard equipment for slogan writing along with one of tar or black paint. Before commencing their work, the surface is given a coating of white and on it goes what is to be written. It must be admitted that the effect is almost irresistible for anyone passing by. Beauty no doubt compels attention. But perhaps, ugliness does more so.

* *

The West Bengal Government has announced certain incentives for establishing new industries in the State. While these incentives have to be spelled out in greater detail, at a first glance they do not appear likely to make any basic change in the pattern of industrial development. Many other States offer facilities similar or better still. In part the difficulties are psychological. The industrialist in West Bengal has so long been used to exploiting on a scale not existing anywhere in India that he cannot get used to any curtailment of what he considers his divine and fundamental right. He likes to toy with the idea that if he is to make lesser profits, he

would much better do it elsewhere. But he will learn to swallow his pride and make do with what he can get here. If things were so fine elsewhere, he would have gone there in the first place.

The incentives will also cover industries closed for financial reasons mainly as on August 1 for six months. Anything which helps to reopen closed industries, from whatever source it comes, is welcome. But one of the proposals is clearly aimed at helping the new and old industries at the cost of the consumers. Provided the sales tax is Rs 25,000 or more in a year according to the scheme of incentives, the amount of sales tax will be paid to the industry as interest-free loan to be repaid after 15 years in five instalments. Taking six per cent as the rate of interest, the industry would have saved by way of interest payable more than the amount. Actually, therefore, it is just like making a free gift of the amount and it is wrong to call it a loan.

Sales Tax, as we all know, is really a purchase tax. It is always paid by the purchaser and not by the seller. So, the amount of sales tax in the case of these industries will be paid by the consumers and has only to be handed over by them to the Government. It should not be any hardship to them to pay the amounts collected by them for this specific purpose and there is no reason why any scheme for helping them should be linked up with this. The sales tax on raw materials, of course, is quite another thing.

If the industry is to be helped it should not be at the cost of the consumer. Since in effect the Government is willing to make a gift of the sales tax, why cannot the products of these industries be exempt from sales tax? If this is done, they would have an advantage over older and well-established competitors in the market. The consumer will also gain by having to pay less. For the Government it is the same in either case.

Three August Sittings

By A MUSIC CRITIC

IT was reassuring to hear Mr Aminuddin, the leading exponent of the Dagar House, sing *Alap* and *Dhrupad* in raga *Mian-ki-Todi* at Jain Bhavan in South Calcutta on August 15 under the auspices of the Ustad Moinuddin Dagar Memorial Committee, an organisation of the Rajasthani trading community of the city. Assisted by his worthy uncle, Mr Fahimuddin Dagar, in the *Jugalbandh*, he established with effortless felicity the salient features of the raga with special emphasis on its dominant notes. The full-throated case that he demonstrated in the downward glides (*meend*) from the natural seventh negotiating the upper tonic was as masterly as it was passionate. Is the natural seventh of *Todi* a tonic-mixed (*sa-kari*) one? At least Mr Dagar sought to leave such an idea. His upward glides to the upper tonic from notes of the lower tetrachord were really as marvellous, enjoyable and exemplary to singers of raga music as they were reflective of his artistry.

Earlier the students of the Dagar Sangeet Shiksha Mandir treated the audience with a *choral Dhrupad* in raga *Vrindabani*.

Mr Gangadas Jhawar's (President) interlude on the nature and functions of music was unhistorical, unscientific and unaesthetic. In fact, music being a social product is valuable to us as long as it serves our social and psychological needs—whether emotional or aesthetic.

A notable characteristic of the business community in question is that it scarcely invites an artist of another school, especially a local one, to sing in their esoteric company.

The Alauddin Sangeet Samaj presented Sm Aparna Chakraborty, a disciple of the late Ustad Bashir Khan of the Agra school, at their monthly session on August 14 in Siaram Ghosh Street. Sm Chakraborty chose raga *Shyam-Kalyan* in *Dhima* and *Duni Ektal* followed by a *Kheyal*

in *Natmalla* in *Trital Madhya Laya* and *Duni*. Her voice commands masculine virility coupled with melody. She was easier in the song portions and her *laykari* was commendable. The *Kajari* and *Thumri* were highly appreciated. She was ably supported on the *tabla* by Mr Anil Bhattacharya.

Mr Nirmal Chandra Chakraborty gave a soothing interpretation of raga *Purvi-Dhanyashri* on the evening of August at the residence of Mr Sudhir Ganguly at Pandiyya Rd. Mr Chakraborty's *Alap* reflected his unostentatious and amiable nature. His *Masidkhani gat* in slow *Trital* was polished and evocative. Later he treated the audience with *Reja khani Gat* in raga *Jog*.

Mr Phanibhushan Bhattacharya, another disciple of the late Ustad Bashir Khan, dominated raga *Darbari Kanada* with melody and emotion. But his sudden *Tarkip* in the upper octave missed the point, slipped the ladder and was out of tune. Otherwise he sang rather well.

Mr Bijoy Chakraborty, the doyen of the team, gave a short but able recital of *kheyal* in raga *Maru-Behag* in slow *Ektal*. His Bengali *kheyal* in *Malkosh Trital* was appreciated in general. His mode of singing is moody and resembles all the prerequisites of a maestro. Although his voice was not in an ideal state that evening, he may be said to have done fairly well in his performance.

The songs could have been better sung if Mr Mahadeva Chakraborty had been a little more steady in keeping the times. But he tried his best.

Colossal Waste

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

DUTI Mon, like many other films of its kind, tries to cash in on the star-image of Uttamkumar, who, of course, looks pathetic in his frantic attempts to pull himself through a welter of undiluted nonsense. His is a double role and the story is just a

silly rehash of the twin-formula, the conventional good-brother-bad-brother yarn. The bad brother is a business tycoon bubbling with an unhealthy thirst for money and the good brother is a complacent musician completely oblivious of mundane needs. They meet at the end and a much too predictable courtroom climax settles the score between them. The film is another unsuccessful tinkering with the "high-society" theme made with the stupid idea that only the jingle of wine-glasses, some pale tango-numbers and the sprinkling of a few Anglo-Indian slang words, are the ingredients of the modern industrial complex. Basically, the same old tradition works at the root, a kind of half-baked urbanisation the bitter hang-over from the Bengali cinema of the thirties.

Talash

A mystifying Sharmila, an over-righteous Rajendrakumar and a benevolent Balraj Sahni, everybody almost too good to be true, are the principal characters of *Talash*, the one-crore-rupee super-film by O. P. Ralhan. Together they create a world for themselves, a world in which no creature of flesh and blood can enter. And as a bonus one has the Helen-Ralhan comic duo, a dash of violence and rough play and the usual song and dance routine. Ultimately, everybody in the film finds the object of his "talash", but some too inquisitive members of the audience come back home with the unanswered question, where has all the money gone?

Clippings

Electronic War

AN unbelievable transformation in ground warfare—in tactics, techniques and technology—has quietly taken place in Viet Nam.

...Central to this new strategy is the extensive use of electronic surveillance... The enemy can now be located, tracked and targeted almost instantaneously through the use of data

links, computer-assisted intelligence evaluation and automated fire control, thus reducing the need for the immediate physical presence of large combat forces... "With co-operative effort", said General Westmoreland, "no more than ten years should separate us from the automated battlefield"...

Even a casual survey of what has been achieved is revealing. So far the equipment perfected includes: manned and unmanned airplanes and "drone" aircraft to locate, shoot and bomb enemy forces day and night; highly-amplified "image generators" to give day-light-clear television, infra-red and radar pictures of the enemy at night and in bad weather; whole families of acoustic, seismic and magnetic devices to detect voices, footfalls (even if they be of stray cattle and dogs), guns and trucks of enemy troops, airborne and ground-based radar capable of detecting moving targets in thick jungle, rain or fog; high-powered lasers to illuminate targets with visible and invisible energy (Electro-Optical Systems Co is already delivering to the Air Force kits that will convert conventional bombs into laser-guided weapons); and to guide bombs, rockets and anti-tank weapons; night telescopes, gun-sights, binoculars and gobbles for individual soldiers that amplify starlight and moonlight up to 40,000 times; tiny "button bomblets" that give a sonic or radio signal to remote receivers pinpointing the position of a soldier or animal who steps on them; and elaborate electronic command and control displays that pull together all data gathered by the electronic network and automatically show troop movements on vast areas of terrain...

According to a report in *Product Engineering*, the bible of the electronic industry, the Air Force will acquire the capability this year to sow land-mines and rugged tiny seismographs across vast stretches of land, mountain passes and all suspect Viet Cong assembly points to monitor their activity, literally round the clock.

...In an angry debate in the Senate, Senator William Proxmire poin-

ted out that the biggest problem facing the electronic battlefield concept was that it may be "an indiscriminate weapon". "The sensors", said Senator Proxmire, "cannot tell the difference between soldiers and women and children".

...This of course, is only one small segment of the U.S. armoury. A wide variety of new concepts of ammunition perfected by companies like General Dynamics, Raytheon and Sylvania (which, incidentally, also makes TV sets!) are to be used in Viet Nam this year. These include a special bomb packed with "hundreds of deadly nail-like steel darts" guaranteed to produce a painful and tortuous death to anyone hit.

...All this may provide one answer as to why the generals are not so eager to wind up the Viet Nam war. Where else will they get the opportunity to master the art of sophisticated, long distance, impersonal and computerised mass-killing? Where else indeed can TACFIRE (a computerised tactical fire control system developed in the last three years by German engineers in West Germany) be worked out in actual battle conditions but in poor, unhappy Viet Nam? (M. V. Kamath in *The Times of India News Service*).

A Modest Proposal

In response to President Nixon's informal request on how to best celebrate the anniversary of man's landing on the moon, we modestly propose that the Administration demonstrate once and for all to all mankind the wonders of U.S. technology and and the superiority of the U.S. political system by rocketing the present Administration to a lunar landing on the Sea of Tranquility. (Letters, *Newsweek*)

Castro's Image

"As you yankees would express it," a young Chilean Marxist said, "Fidel Castro has turned pink."

The speaker echoed a view that is gaining force among youthful revolutionaries throughout Latin America. There is a growing feeling that the Premier of Cuba has abandoned

the barricades of armed revolution in favour of compromise and political manoeuvre...

Castro himself has discouraged many of the militants who would follow the Cuban example.

Last April 23, in a speech honouring the 100th anniversary of Lenin's birth, he stunned many of his followers in Latin America as he said sarcastically :

"Today, as we know, there are theoretical super-revolutionaries, super-leftists, true 'supermen,' if one wishes to use such a term, capable of smashing imperialism with their tongues. There are many super-revolutionaries without the slightest notion of reality or of the problems and difficulties of a revolution."

The Premier went on to praise the communism of the Soviet Union with which his Government has close ties.

To insure that the point is made, Castroite periodicals in Latin America have published and annotated the speech, denouncing Trotsky, Mao Tse-tung, Jean-Paul Sartre and Herbert Marcuse as agents of division whose positions really serve what is termed as U.S. imperialism.

But if Castro's tactical stance has changed, there seems little reason to suppose that his overall objectives have changed. And while he has probably lost potential guerilla recruits, he has gained the cautious interest of many Latin American political leaders, most of whom were badly frightened by the Premier's militancy in the 1960's.

Even today, few Latin American governments feel entirely secure from the threat of a guerilla campaign responsive to Havana, (M. W. Browne, *Times of India News Service*).

In the Countryside

The peasants in West Bengal have been able to defend their gains against the offensive of the jotdars and the police launched after the fall of the U.F. Government in March last.

...The rural poor found new forms of movement to meet the offensive of jotdars and police. The jotdars who reconciled themselves to the taking away of benami lands

were left in peace. But those who wanted to grab the land again had to be tackled. When negotiations failed, mass demonstrations in front of jotdars' houses, gheraos, and boycotts proved effective.

The jotdars have guns and hired men with various weapons. But more often, they realised that using these would be suicidal against massive gatherings.

Boycotts meant complete stoppage of work in fields as well as in houses by the hired poor. Reports from different districts showed lands remained unworked, cattle remained unattended and family members of the jotdars were compelled to do the chores, and various odd jobs in and around the house were not done because even the maidservants would not come to work. The impact was so over-powering that many jotdars were worn out. They conceded the demands.

...In a village in Burdwan district, the court did not permit the withdrawal of a case nor was bail given to the accused, but the jotdar who earlier filed the case had to concede the demands that all expenses for defending the case and also the maintenance expenses of the families of the accused peasants would be borne by him. In another instance in Murshidabad district, the jotdar agreed to bear expenses of an appeal case now pending with a higher court.

Such organised mass pressures compelled jotdars to settle disputes on land, stop eviction of crop-sharers and to restore or raise wage-rates of agricultural workers. The police could not intervene.

Some jotdars who invited the police to set up camps in the compounds of their houses, had to agree to rescind their requests to the police. They agreed to give loans at reasonable rates of interest. There were even some cases where they agreed to give paddy loans to the poor for maintenance during the lean months free of interest.

It was not, however, smooth sailing everywhere. Bitter struggles started. There were casualties in

skirmishes and even a few deaths occurred. (*People's Democracy*)

Challenges

...The CPI(M) State Secretary, Mr Promode Dasgupta said the current development in Durgapur pointed to a 'heinous conspiracy' between the ruling class and the so-called Left parties and represented a challenge which his party could not "take lying low". He alleged that the CPI was acting as the "agent of the police in Duragpur, its cadre moving in police vehicles to identify CPI(M) activists.

...The Calcutta District Committee of the CPI(M) has directed the party cadres to resist Naxalite violence. In its official bulletin, the Committee alleged that the Naxalites were killing and injuring CPI(M) members and supporters and "we have to meet this challenge in the interest of furthering mass movements". (*The Statesman*, August 17.)

Letters

Random Firing

The law justifies homicide only when there is a threat to life, one's own or another's. The question always looms, was it unavoidable?

One is told that firing at a riotous mob goes through various stages—blank fire, firing in the air, firing below knee level [stages interspersed with abundant warning] and, only as a desperate resort, chest level firing in self-defence. This should never be in the general direction of a mob. In case of a fleeing criminal every effort should be made to nab him alive and only under exceptional circumstances does one shoot to kill.

In the U.K. (that our own elite talk so much about), by and large there is scrupulous regard for these norms.

I am giving below a gleaning from the press covering a few days in Calcutta :

The police fired one round... picket attacked with bombs...near Beliaghata.

P.S. [No casualty]—August 8. Patrika.

Police fire on Naxals (when attacked with bombs). None hurt.—August 9. Patrika.

Police said... two-pronged attack by violent crowd using petrol bombs and stones. Tear Gas. Lathi. they fired 16 rounds [No casualty]—August 10, Patrika.

Naxal hit by police bullet, arrested—August 11, Patrika.

Hard core Naxal Shot Dead—headline—August 12, Patrika.

Surely, there is a lot of firing going on. The lack of casualties may be due to lack of training—we all know the dummy rifles of NCC training—and not of intent). I am not making any charge. I only wonder what norms the police are observing these days.

And surely, there is a lot of firing going on.

T. R. RAMALINGAM
Calcutta

The Unfolding Plan

Your comments "The Unfolding Plan" (August 8) dismissing the dissolution of the West Bengal Assembly as an event of minor significance and disputing the CPM's contention that the dissolution has been victory for the will of the people, suffer from lack of objective assessment. It is indeed too premature to conclude that the Indira Government has got round the CPM-led SPC. That it has completely outwitted the EPC admits of no doubt.

In this connection it may be pertinent to recall that when the CPM was ploughing a lonely furrow with its demand for Assembly dissolution and fresh poll, the EPC, along with the Bangla Congress and the Congress(R), was engaged in a crusade to isolate the Marxists. They also resisted the demand for dissolution and fresh poll on the law and order

CORRECTION

Sudeb ("The Naxalite who Died", *Frontier*, August 15) had honours in history, not English. He called his mother 'Bouma', not Boudidi.

pretext, for they had set their hearts on the the formation of a non-Marxist Ministry with the blessings of their bosses at the Centre. How far they succeeded in their venture—or misadventure of alienating the people from the CPM will be proved beyond doubt at the next elections. What is however significant is that these parties which had undertaken the sacred task of freeing the people from the harmful effects of Marxist hegemony were clamouring for deferment of the elections indefinitely. What is no less revealing is the change of front of the EPC which has been forced not only to abandon its efforts of blackmailing the CPM and thereby in hoodwinking the people but also to make a show of competitive radicalism with the much maligned Marxists.

It is difficult to agree that the EPC's nervousness about forming a ministry with the support of the Congress(R) exhausted the patience of the Prime Minister and led to the dissolution. What is more probable is that when she was convinced that the game of containing the CPM was over and that no non-Marxist ministry ever with the support of her own party was feasible she turned the table on the waverers and unbelievers by dissolving the Assembly. How such scuttling of the Prime Minister's master plan can be called her victory is incomprehensible. Fortunately the CPM has so far managed to keep itself clear of the pseudo-leftist parties comprising the EPC and is following its own line of action in collaboration with like-minded groups.

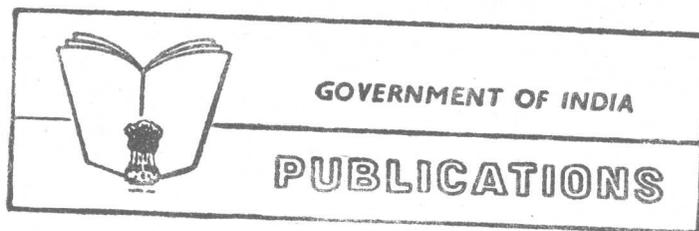
SOMNATH BHATTACHARYA
Santragachi, Howrah

Indian Maoism

Mr Morris Roy in his letter (August 1) replying to Mallikarjuna Rao's article on Indian Maoism, deals with a military subject, namely, war of annihilation. In his enthusiasm to uphold Charu Mazumdar, he straightaway gives a meaning to this type of war which Mao never dreamt

of. Mr Roy says: "Such (Party) units will propagate Mao's thoughts, intensify class struggle and as guerilla units strike and annihilate class enemies." Mark the word class. What Mao had to say about war of annihilation was: "For the Red Army, which gets almost all its supplies from the enemy, war of annihilation is the basic policy. Only by annihilating the enemy's effective strength can we smash his 'encirclement and suppression' campaigns and expand our revolutionary base areas" (December, 1939). Here Mao is specifically writing about annihilating—not killing—the enemy, and not any particular class enemy. In military terminology the word enemy can only mean enemy forces; or to be more precise, the enemy's armed forces. Nowhere while dealing with the subject does Mao talk about annihilation of class enemies. From this little twist given to Mao's scientific teaching to Mr Roy's "line of annihilating the class enemy" is one straight plunge into a disastrous 'Left' deviation. Mr Roy may advocate in his revolutionary zeal annihilation of jotedars and so on without any discrimination whatsoever. But he may do well to remember Mao's words that "Our task is to abolish the feudal system, to wipe out the landlords as a class, not as individuals" (January 18, 1948). While advocating and actually victoriously waging a war of annihilation against the Kuomintang armies, it was Mao who always advocated 'fewer killings, the better' and strictly forbade 'beating and killing without discrimination' of landlords and local tyrants, because, according to him, "to advocate killing more or killing without discrimination is entirely wrong; this would only cause our Party to forfeit sympathy, become alienated from the masses and fall into isolation." (January 18, 1948). In a war of annihilation the straight issue is one of political power and without the masses—not the peasants alone—you can neither snatch it from the enemy nor retain it for long.

KUNNIKKAL NARAYANAN
Calicut



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NO NATION**

***CAN HATE OTHERS
AND LIVE”***

Swami Vivekananda

