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AFTER THE EUPHORIA

TROUBLE is endemic in the Assam region—a somewhat different kind of trouble than what is prevalent in West Bengal. With the heavy influx of evacuees a new point of friction has developed there, especially in the hill areas. At the root of the perpetual unrest in Assam lies the mutual distrust of the hills and the plains people. The fear of the hill people that they may lose their distinctive personality if they are not vigilant is based on history. The reaction of the plains people has not allayed this fear but added to it. With streams of plains people from East Bengal pouring into the hill areas for the last two months, the local people are afraid that they may be outnumbered soon. This fear has found expression through stray attacks on evacuees and acts of intimidation ; they want the evacuees to be penned up in relief camps, and it is reported that in some areas they are hunting out evacuees putting up with their relatives and friends. Resentment is naturally more acute in Meghalaya, and Shillong has witnessed a bandh called by tribal youths on this issue.

During her recent visit to Assam and Meghalaya the Prime Minister sought to explain this hostility of the hill people to the evacuees as an unavoidable consequence of poverty. Official spokesmen in New Delhi have, however, thought up the easiest way out ; they have stoutly denied the existence of any hostility. Neither the Prime Minister's explanation nor the official denial will enable the Government to dodge the problem. In coming months, not only will the problem be more acute in Assam, but it may rear its head, maybe in a somewhat different form, in other States also. The people of West Bengal need have no fear that they will be outnumbered by the evacuees ; yet they may not put up for long with the mounting pressure of the influx on the State's economy. The Centre's promise to bear all expenditure on evacuee relief relieves the State Government alone ; it does not take off the common man's back the additional load cast on him by the inevitable rise in prices as a result of the sudden bulge in population. In West Bengal also, there have been some "incidents", though, mercifully, not on the same scale as in Meghalaya. There is no doubt that the situation will boil over if pressure of the influx on the local economy persists. Any smugness over the limited nature of the "incidents" is premature.

Few people in this country share the Prime Minister's hope that a

situation will be created soon in East Bengal which will enable the evacuees to return to their homeland within six months. It is difficult to disentangle the fact of the situation from the maze of propaganda and exaggerations over East Bengal, indulged obviously by both sides. It is clear, however, that the military administration has been able to tighten its stranglehold and is not in a predicament which makes an early settlement of the issue imperative. India is pinning its hope on international pressure, on the annoyance of the aid-givers over the wastage of aid on purposes for which it was not meant. If international pressure is at all brought to bear on Pakistan, it is unlikely to be exerted at India's convenience. The aid-givers will take their own time. In the mean time, many of the evacuees will opt for settlement in India; a few lakhs may go back, but the bulk of them will be here. This is the reason why other States are refusing to accommodate these "temporary" guests. The States bordering on East Bengal have no choice in the matter, but the people are restive over the prospect of further impoverishment.

No Clear Skies

Newspaper headlines and stories since March in this country have been interesting, if not profitable, reading. The papers, as was natural, were full of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his famous civil disobedience movement and, after the March 25 military crackdown, of successful battles and the imminent victory of the Mukti Fouz. When the victory did not come off, details began to appear of the atrocities of the Pakistan army. When the Government of India did not recognise the Bangladesh Government, our attention was diverted to the wrangling over the diplomatic missions in Calcutta and Dacca. Then came the refugees. For a while there were also reports of Pakistani intrusions into Indian territory, of vicious border clashes in which both combatants

and non-combatants were killed. All of a sudden, however, these stories almost vanished from the papers. A public outcry for hot pursuit of the intruders would have been very embarrassing for the Government, for the Government knows what is actually happening on and across the borders. Newspapers now are therefore concerned with international and local relief, of the endless stream of refugees, of cholera deaths in camps and on the roadside, of supplies piling up at airports and other places while people are dying. In this temporary transition from warlike militancy to humanitarianism, very little space is given to the Mukti Fouz these days.

Though it is not being aired openly, the feeling is growing that a settlement of the East Bengal tragedy would not come by force of arms in the hands of the freedom fighters, i.e., the Frontier Rifles and elements of the Bengal Regiment backed by screened volunteers. It is clear that there was very little politicisation of the vast masses by the Awami League or, for that matter, any other party. The intense Bengali nationalism of the people carried within itself seeds of discord—for example, the hostility towards non-Bengalis. And now, in conditions of near-famine and anarchy, some people other than the Army or their camp followers, are also turning on more hapless people and forcing them to leave in a bid for living space. Many factors are getting mixed up in East Bengal.

It is no wonder, therefore, that politicians and newspapers would speculate more about international pressure on Islamabad than on armed action by indigenous elements. Meanwhile, the guns at times boom so loud and clear on the borders that it is not possible not to wake up. Villagers vacate their homes. On top of all the misfortune, there are floods impending. The ideological situation is also confusing. A debate is going on about the implications of East Bengal. The Chinese stand has clouded the skies that were clear in March.

Prices And Growth

Prices, like snowball, go out of control once they start going up: so goes the bromide. A mild dose of price rise is not harmful; in fact it is conducive to growth. But the trouble is that it often assumes runaway proportions and threatens to undermine the growth effect. The state of affairs in our economy largely confirms this warning by economic seers. Though there was a marginal drop in year-to-year differential in the last year, the price rise, over the year as a whole, averages about 5.6 per cent. Then again any readings in prices must be taken in the long and here the situation is all the bleaker as certain dark forces are visible in the crucial sectors which, after a certain period, are bound to have their impact felt.

No doubt food production has gone up substantially and has definitely made the Government's distributive task a good deal lighter. But thanks to the entrenched interests within the economy, it could hardly relieve pressures on prices and its wholesome effect has remained confined to a few kulaks and influential clans who used the situation to fatten their wallet. (Food prices have gone down a trifle, but its offsetting effect on the general price index has been negligible). The real danger for the future lies in the fall in the production of cotton, coal and steel. All the ballyhooing about the 'green revolution' and the technical breakthrough that it is supposed to bring in, has failed to affect cotton production which still depends on such providential forces as rain for its growth. And owing to the failure of timely rain the crop prospect this year is said to be much lower, which has posed a serious threat to the textile industry. On the other hand steel production has been the victim of poor planning and inept organisation. These failures, whether heavenly or man-made, will definitely show up on the price front through their impact on the cost and prices of the

products which use them as raw materials.

Failure to keep prices within bounds can undo much of the feat of Indian exports and sap even the never failing zest of Mr L. N. Mishra, the voluble chief of Foreign Trade. Ominous signs are already there and control has given vent to liberal permits to import certain categories of steel and cotton. These, together with capital imports for the plan, may add up to a sizable import bill. On the other hand, exports will suffer partly because of their reduced cost competitiveness in the inflationary situation and partly because of the consumption of exportables by our highpriced home market.

Not that the Government is not aware of the potential dangers. But so far all its antidotes have come to naught. In fact, the price rise has blurred the real situation; it has rendered control ineffective and has fostered organisational inefficiency. And certain groups and individuals who could muster resources have indulged in sharp practices and enhanced their earnings while the rest are left out in the cold. Such built-in forces have made the task of control further difficult particularly in a divided society like ours where class forces operate at cross-purposes and breed social tensions. Admission of these dangers abounds in official studies and speeches. Despite this bit of self-criticism, however, there is no positive effort to set forth a programme to get around the problem. But unless this is done even the attainment of the targeted investment growth of 15 per cent in national income will be unable to do much good. Or perhaps the truth lies elsewhere: the authorities are incapable of doing it.

NOTICE

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Business Manager
Frontier

JUNE 19, 1971

A Pitiless Pattern

KAJAL SEN

THE Bangladesh episode seems to be following the usual pattern. As in Biafra and elsewhere the uprising has been put down, even if temporarily. Thousands have been killed in the process and millions made homeless. But unlike as in Biafra these had to leave their homeland and seek shelter under a foreign sky. The border districts of West Bengal are once again in the grip of stupendous problems created by the refugees, problems to which no solution is as yet in sight.

Over five million have crossed over into Indian territory so far. Less than 50% have found camp accommodation. The others are left to live, and die, on their own. Salt Lake, Bongaon, Basirhat, Karimpur, Shikarpur, Kalyani—wherever one goes one is greeted with the cries of hungry children. And ailing millions. The dead lie scattered all over the place like nobody's business. Only the canine population of Nadia and 24-Parganas is happy. It is not everyday that dogs can feast on human flesh. Some, who have been doing so for over a fortnight now, have a wild look in their eyes. Human blood, even if it be of timid Bengalis, can transform dogs into hyenas or wilder beasts.

The camp inmates are in no better condition. Even if a meagre portion of what passes for food is ensured, there is no shelter overhead though the cruel monsoon beats down incessantly. Press reports say that the cholera epidemic has been checked. Little solace for Ajizul Biswas of Faridpur whose entire family has died of the disease. And people still continue to die. Perhaps the death rate has been lower; only portly bureaucrats can derive comfort from that.

There is much sympathy all around. There always has been, since the beginning of the freedom

struggle across the border. Sympathy in the capital and other States, sympathy expressed by fashionable women at their coffee meets and khadi-clad gentlemen in the South Block. And there the matter ends. The States which have flatly refused to share the refugee burden must have echoed their people's attitude when they did so.

The Prime Minister has come and gone. Twice. The purpose of her visits is not clear. If it had been to know for herself the exact position she could have done so, sitting in Delhi, from the reports which the State Government must be sending her and also from her own agencies. If she thought she would do something on her return, she hasn't done anything so far. Except of course sending emissaries abroad.

It is a strange situation. What sympathy and support do Messrs Swaran Singh and Siddhartha Ray hope to gain from distant Moscow and Canberra when at home people are turning a deaf ear? Why weren't these worthies sent to Orissa or Andhra Pradesh or Tamil Nadu to force the Governments there to share the burden? Did realpolitik stand in the way? And what is the meaning of that now almost hackneyed phrase that "conditions must be created to enable the Bangladesh evacuees to return to their homeland"? What are precisely the conditions referred to and who will create them? Is it within the jurisdiction of the Union Government to create such "suitable conditions" in East Bengal?

"Bhasani on Leash"

The Centre is of course not sitting idle. It continues to play at the political game. For instance it is now widely known that Maulana Bhasani was for all practical purposes kept interned in Calcutta in the custody of the Border Security Force. Accord-

ing to well-informed sources, a BSF official even used to take him out for evening walks on the Maidan—like a dog on a leash. Press interviews were arranged where the aged Maulana had little option but to say what he had been told to say. A dig at China through him served the Indian Government's purpose. He is now believed to be in Agartala. Presumably the Government does not like him to be on the other side of the border at this stage of the movement. His influence among large sections of the peasantry was never liked by the Awami League. And if the League has failed to deliver the goods in Bangladesh others, particularly those with known leftist views, can have no business trying to do so.

Bihar

Defectors' Paradise

N. K. SINGH

"An honest politician is one who, when he is bought, will stay bought"
—Simon Cameron.

UNFORTUNATELY there seems to be a dearth of "honest politicians" in Bihar; in their absence the ministerial kaleidoscope has changed once again. On June 2, 1971, the Congress-led Progressive Vidhayak Dal comprising the CPI, the PSP, the Forward Bloc and a faction of the Jharkhand, the Hul Jharkhand, the Hindustani Shoshit Dal, the Shoshit Dal and some Independents plus a number of defectors replaced the 162-day-old Samyukta Vidhayak Dal Ministry comprising the Congress(O), the SSP, the Jana Sangh, the Swatantra, the Janta party, the BKD, the Hul Jharkhand and the Shoshit Dal.

The downfall of the SSP-led SVD Ministry did not come all of a sudden. It was a certainty ever since December 22, 1970. When Mr Karpoori Thakur was sworn in as the Chief Minister of this ill-fated State which

has been in the cesspool of instability since the fourth general election in 1967.

Even the 162-day tenure—from December 22, 1970 to June 1, 1971—was rather a long term for the Karpoori Ministry which was expected to collapse during the budget session of the Assembly meeting in the wake of the mid-term parliamentary poll in which the constituents of the ruling SVD suffered a debacle. This numerical setback had a psychological effect as well. However, the Government managed to survive, thanks to the premature and unbusinesslike toppling bid of their political opponents and the gimmicks of the 'Socialist' Chief Minister who felt an urgent need for expanding his Cabinet just before the opening of the session.

The Ministry has been facing a serious crisis since the special convention of the Samyukta Socialist Party, the leading partner in the ruling SVD, held in April, in whose wake the party's 52-member front in the Vidhan Sabha was faced with dissension and desertions. A series of defections of legislators, mostly from the Congress(O) and the SSP, and the resignation of as many as nine Ministers were followed by the revival of the 'mini-front'—a loose alliance of groups of the BKD, Jharkhand, Hul Jharkhand, Shoshit Dal and some independents which had been instrumental for the fall of many ministries in the past. Some gentlemen changed their loyalties thrice within a week. Mr Jagdeo Prasad of the Hindustani Shoshit Dal, who was a staunch supporter of the 'Progressives', discovered one fine Sunday morning that his erstwhile colleagues were heading towards dissolution of the Vidhan Sabha. He decided to support the Samyukta. But on Monday he found out his earlier formulation to be baseless and the SVD to be "reactionary". Hence he rejoined the Indicate bandwagon.

In the face of the imminent fall, the Chief Minister, Mr Karpoori Thakur, who had declared only two days earlier, "I am not a coward to resign without facing the Assembly",

had to bow down without a fight. He had to submit the resignation of his Ministry only two hours before the Assembly was due to meet to discuss a no-confidence motion against it.

The defections which caused the Samyukta's downfall, had obviously been engineered by the 'Progressives': Mr Karpoori Thakur and other SSP leaders made a scathing attack on the Ruling Congress leaders, particularly the Prime Minister. In a press statement Mr Thakur made a specific reference to the activities of Mr Yaspal Kapur, the "Prime Minister's emissary", as being "responsible for engineering defections from the SVD." He alleged that Mr Kapur had offered various inducements and made promises to probable defectors.

Post-mortem

However, no tears will be shed over Karpoori's defeat. It is the price the SSP has had to pay for making opportunism its creed and power its main aim. The Ministry, like all the coalition ministries in the past, had made itself a laughing stock by indulging in mere gimmicks. Corruption in high places had become the talk of the town and casteism was practised in its most naked form. In postings and transfers of Government officials a lot of favouritism was indulged in, further breaking the backbone of the already battered administration.

Almost every policy decision of the SVD Government bore the imprint of the thinking of its reactionary alliance—the Jana Sangh, the Swatantra, the Syndicate and the Janta Party. Mr Thakur's ties with the Syndicate were no secret. It is said that even transfers and postings of officers were decided in the drawing room of the State Syndicate boss, Mr S. N. Sinha, who was considered the political 'guru' of Mr Thakur. Besides campaigning in the last election to the Lok Sabha for three of the Congress(O) leaders indicted by the Aiyer Commission of Inquiry, Mr Thakur appointed an 'Aiyerite'

the chairman of the State Finance Corporation.

But these things were no hurdle in the way of the Karpoori Thakur Ministry which somehow managed to pull on, thanks to the unending expansion of the Cabinet, which reached a record strength of 53 in six expansions during five months.

The PVD Government led by Mr Bhola Paswan Shastri is the ninth to assume office since the last general election and the fifth since the mid-term poll to the Vidhan Sabha in 1969. A mathematical calculation reveals that with the two spells of presidential rule extending up to 15 months, the average life of a ministry in the State comes to a bare four months.

Permanent Ministers

It is the peculiar phenomenon of 'permanent' ministers which is primarily responsible for the political instability in Bihar. Because of the composition of the State Legislative Assembly in which no party commands an overall majority, independents, defectors and mini-parties find an excellent opportunity to fish in troubled waters. Unprincipled elements and power seekers have found an excellent opportunity more than once to sell

their legislature membership to the highest bidder. As soon as some legislators find that the ministry they are supporting is on the way out, they quickly jump the fence and get on the bandwagon of a probable winner.

Although party leaders are never tired of tall talk about the need to put down defections, defectors are always welcome and generally offered very tempting terms.

Thus a political situation is developing in Bihar in which some people have come to occupy the position of 'permanent' ministers. No matter which ministry is formed, they will become ministers because of their extraordinary ability to defect and re-defect.

Such 'permanent' ministers want the fullest facility and freedom to misuse their power and create havoc in the administration. If any Chief Minister tries to exercise his supervisory powers, the stability of his ministry is immediately threatened. And when one set of ministers are left free to do what they like, naturally the other ministers cannot be controlled. The net result has been a virtual competition in the misuse of power, especially in the matter of transfers, postings and promotions of officers and grant of licences and

permits.

The new PVD Government, described as "Defectors Goverment" by Mr Suraj Narayan Singh, floor leader of the Indian Socialist Party and the CPM's joint front in the Assembly, claims the support of 177 members in the House, which has an effective strength of 312. The Congress(R), the largest constituent of the alliance, claims to have increased its strength to 112 following the inclusion of about 30 defectors.

Two different views are being expressed about the stability of the new Government. According to some political 'pundits', Mr Bhola Paswan Shastri can look forward to a longer spell as Chief Minister this time. (He is heading a Government in Bihar for the third time). The present coalition is stronger than any he led before because of the participation of the ruling Congress. However, another section of 'pundits' different that the Ministry, which is no exception from its predecessors in the matter of patronage of habitual defectors, cannot last long.

So far the people of Bihar are concerned the change in the ministerial kaleidoscope will hardly make any difference because of the phenomenon of 'permanent ministers'.

On The Paris Commune—III

PARESH CHATTOPADHYAY

MARXISTS, beginning with Marx himself, have stressed the tremendous significance of the Commune. We saw earlier how Marx in his *Second Address*, six months before the civil war started, had warned the French workers *against* resorting to insurrection. Almost at the same time Engels had written of the necessity of preventing a rising of the French workers in the given circumstances.¹⁰ But when the civil war was imposed on the workers by the bourgeoisie and the act of "desperate

folly" by the workers began to take shape Marx, instead of condemning it, in a letter to Kugelmann on 12.4.1871, "this historic initiative", this "Heaven storming" event by the working class, adding that "history has no like example of such greatness". Kugelmann, in his reply, behaving like a good 'Marxist' showed his disagreement because the workers had not followed the "logical" order of things—first political education, then organisation and at last action. "The defeat", he wrote to Marx, "will deprive the workers of their leader for

a fairly long time...The proletariat requires, for the moment, education much more than armed struggle". Marx wrote back to Kugelmann on 17.4.1871 an indignant letter in reply to the latter's mechanical and thorough-going reformist estimate of the event. Marx wrote that history would be very easy to make if every struggle were taken up "under the condition of infallibly favourable chances". When the workers took the "historic initiative," in spite of his warning against a premature uprising, Marx, instead of bureaucratically admonishing them, stressed that there

¹⁰Letter to Marx, 12-9-1870.

are moments in history when the masses *must* take up arms, even with the prospect of certain defeat, rather than capitulate without a fight because "in the latter case the demoralisation of the working class would have been a far greater misfortune than the fall of any number of leaders".

As was pointed out earlier, the leadership of the movement in Paris was not in the hands of the Marxists but in the hands of those—Blanquists and Proudhonists—whose ideology was different from and, to a certain extent, *opposed* to Marxism. But, far from being sectarian on this issue, Marx and his followers gave the movement their enthusiastic support. Thus the organ of the International, published from New York, in its issue of 18.7.1874 wrote, "The International did not make the Commune and was not identical with it, but the members of the International made the programme of the Commune their own in order to extend it beyond itself, and they were at the same time the most zealous and faithful defenders of the Commune, because they had realised its importance for the working class."¹¹ Similarly the Manifesto of the Paris section of the International had earlier declared, "*wherever and in whatever form the class struggle is waged the members of our association must be in its front ranks.*"¹²

In one of his letters to Kugelmann, referred to earlier, Marx characterized the Commune "as the new point of departure of world-historic importance". The reason was that the Commune was the first workers' State in history—however short-lived—established through the proletarian revolution. The workers' State, however, had to be created, as their leaders understood, only through the *destruction* of the old state machine—through the destruction, that is, of

¹¹Cited by Lenin in his *Paris Commune and the Tasks of the Democratic Dictatorship* (1905).

¹²Cited by Lenin—ditto; emphasis added.

the police, the standing army and the bureaucracy—because the old state machine was an instrument of oppression by the exploiting classes over the exploited—the toiling masses. We have already summarized above the steps the Commune adopted in this regard. This lesson of the Commune was considered by Marx and Engels as being of such importance that they regarded as no longer sufficient what they had written in the famous second section of the *Communist Manifesto*—a quarter of a century earlier—concerning the working class revolution. Accordingly, in their last joint preface to the *Manifesto* (1872) they added, quoting Marx from the *Civil War*, "one thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz. that 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes'."

The destruction of the bourgeois state—in the sense given above—and the creation of the proletarian state, secondly, is impossible without the proletariat using *violence* against the bourgeoisie in course of the revolution. This for two reasons. First, the bourgeoisie will not *peacefully* surrender its power which it exercises with ruthless violence over the working class through its military, police and bureaucracy, and secondly, even when defeated, for the time being, by the proletariat it will make every attempt to restore its lost power by violence. This dual role of the proletariat is the very essence of the *dictatorship of the proletariat* and the Paris Commune first embodied this, as Engels pointed out in his historic *Introduction* to Marx's work on the Commune. The necessity and the significance of the dictatorship of the proletariat have been, as is well known, emphasized by all the great teachers of Marxism from Marx to Mao Tse-tung in their struggle against the right-wing opportunists of the international working class movement.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is the state power of the working class and, by the very definition of state, it is a *repressive* machine, but this time on behalf of the immense major-

rity over the minority, contrary to the state power in any earlier society. At the same time, however, it is a *transitional* state power, in the sense of state power preparing the way for the elimination of *all* state power and, thereby, of *all* oppressive machinery in future when there will be no class to oppress another class.

The process of "withering away" of the state begins almost at the start of the proletarian dictatorship; from that moment on the proletariat no longer requires any *special* organ of government like the standing army, the police or the bureaucracy separate from and opposed to the people. Otherwise the proletarian revolution would merely result in the *transfer* of the state machinery from the one hand to the other and would not *qualitatively* differ from the bourgeois revolution. On the contrary, the proletariat, once it captures power must *arm*, as the Commune showed, *all* the exploited sections of the people, starting with itself, so that the masses themselves take the organs of state power *directly* in their own hands.¹³ Compared to any other earlier state the proletarian state would require violence only to the extent of suppressing a small *minority* (the former exploiters)—which of course must be ruthlessly suppressed. Within the ranks of the immense *majority*, almost by definition, violence will have become totally unnecessary and thus the proletarian regime will have started on the road to the "withering away of the state". At last society as a whole begins to take back the power that was so long usurped by the state, arising out of society, as its "parasitic excrescence". This is how Marx saw it, as the following extracts from his *First Draft of the Civil War in France* (untranslated into English) shows: "The Commune is the retaking (*Rücknahme*) of the power of the state by society as its own power in place of the power which oppresses society and to which it submits itself [*sich unterordnet*], this is

¹³See Lenin, *Letters From Afar*: Third letter, 11-3-1917.

the retaking of the power of state by the masses of the people themselves, who in place of the organized violence of oppression, create their own violence ; this is the political form of their social emancipation in place of the artificial violence of society... the Commune does not put aside the class struggle through which the working class wants to arrive at the abolition of all classes and consequently, all class domination but it creates the rational intermediate stage within which the class struggle can go through its various phases in the most rational and human way [*auf rationelleste und humanste Weise durchlaufen kann*].¹⁴

By the same process the Commune also showed, for the first time in world history, how masses through their own representatives take the affairs of the state in their own hands and manage them in the interest of themselves. By its own example it proved the sham character of bourgeois parliamentarism which decides "once in three or six years which member of the ruling classes was to misrepresent the people in parliament".¹⁵ The parliament in a bourgeois state is never the real centre of power. Real power is held behind the scenes by the army, the police, and the bureaucracy, while the parliament continues to create the illusion of peoples' representativity (so that the capture of parliamentary majority even by the working class party in a bourgeois regime does not at all change the *class nature* of the regime). But the Commune elected by universal suffrage by the masses was no longer a "talking shop" as a bourgeois parliament is. It was to be a "working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time."¹⁶ Thus the Commune showed that the way out of parliamentarism is not the abolition of

elections and representative institutions but the *real participation* of the masses in the elections and the "conversion of the representative institution from *talking shops* into *working bodies*".¹⁷

The path of the Commune has been the path of the world revolution. The whole experience of the Commune can be summed up in the two central tasks placed before the proletariat : (a) the destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus through armed revolution and, by the same process, creation and consolidation of the proletarian state—the *dictatorship of the proletariat* and (b) preparation of the "withering away" of the state as a *special repressive machinery*. For the last one hundred years a fierce battle has been raging in the international working class movement around these two tasks of the proletariat—the Marxists accepting and implementing them and the revisionists, the anarchists and the opportunists of all hues rejecting them.

The most important lessons, concerning the first task, that all revolutionaries have drawn from the Commune are : (1) it is the masses who make the revolution ; (2) the exploited must obtain arms and never surrender them, as they can seize power only by arms ; (3) the revolution must be led by a Marxist-Leninist Party ; (4) the workers must closely ally themselves with the peasants—mainly the poor peasants—and isolate the bourgeoisie and its allies ; (5) the revolutionaries must not show any mercy to the class enemies ; (6) the revolutionaries must be prepared against intervention by international class enemies.

These lessons have been brilliantly vindicated, after the Commune, by all revolutions leading to the dictatorship of the proletariat—the foremost being the October Revolution and the Chinese Revolution.

As regards the second task of the proletariat referred to above, that is,

¹⁷Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, 1917. Chapter III, Section 3 (emphasis added).

initiating the process of "withering away" of the state by the dissolution of the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy and having, in their place, direct participation by the masses in arms in the affairs of the state, history has shown advances as well as retreats:

On the eve of the creation of the second proletarian state—the Soviet Union—Lenin's programme envisaged a state *essentially* similar to the Commune that is, where the working class had destroyed the old state apparatus and in its place had armed the masses of the people, including itself, without creating a bureaucracy and a standing army of its own.¹⁸ But for various reasons, as Lenin himself later explained, the old state apparatus could not be fully smashed and many of its elements the workers' state simply took over.¹⁹ Lenin, of course, sufficiently warned his comrades against the damage involved in such a situation and broadly suggested some steps towards eliminating it.²⁰ He, however, lived for too short a period to act on these steps. After his death the "special repressive machine" of the state was more and more "perfected" not simply to use against the enemies of the working class but very often against its allies as well till a time was reached when, after the complete triumph of revisionism, the standing army and the bureaucracy have been alienated from and opposed to the people at home and, under the pernicious slogan of "limited sovereignty", (that is, *unlimited* sovereignty for the Soviet Union) are being used to suppress peoples' rights abroad.

There is, however, no negative without the positive. At a time when the socialist system has been tho-

¹⁸cf. Lenin—*Letters from Afar: Fifth Letter*, 26-3-1917.

¹⁹in *Five Years of the Russian Revolution and the Prospects of the World Revolution* (1922).

²⁰e.g. in *Purging the Party* (1921); *Political Report of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party* (1922).

roughly subverted in the land of the second proletarian state it is the Chinese working class under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung, in close alliance with revolutionary forces the world over, that is upholding the red banner of the Commune. It is indeed in China, more than anywhere else, that the bureaucracy and the

standing army are being undermined and, in their place, the masses are directly taking in their own hands the affairs of the state. This is of course a protracted war against the old society and only the first step has been taken in the "ten thousand li march".

(Concluded)

Book Review

Spotlight On Pakistan

N. K. CHANDRA

PAKISTAN : MILITARY RULE OR PEOPLE'S POWER ?

By Tariq Ali

Jonathan Cape, London. Price: £2.75

THIS book by one of the most well-known and self-advertising among the fairly recent crop of student revolutionaries was assured of a sizable sale from the start. If one can overlook his Trotskyite affiliations which surface only occasionally towards the very end one will enjoy this fairly interesting, though not quite penetrating, critique of Pakistan's socio-political developments from its inception to the fall of President Ayub. As a participant in many militant protest marches in London and an observer of the revolutionary scene in France of May 1968, Tariq Ali is at his best when he describes the various anti-government movements in Pakistan, especially the widespread disturbances of 1968-69 that take up two long chapters. Wit and irony, a flair for the polemic and a healthy spirit of irreverence towards the venerable and the mighty—all these are adroitly used to banish boredom from the pages.

The book naturally begins with an explanation of how "the Muslim landlords (came to) have a country". The collaboration of the Muslim League with the British is duly emphasized as is the greed of the Muslim "lumpen-bourgeoisie". i.e., the traders from Bombay, Gufrat, etc., who could not successfully compete against their Hindu rivals.

He also points out, and this is relatively less known, how a significant section, if not a majority, of religious Muslim leaders were against the creation of Pakistan. But what about the Hindu leaders from the Mahasabha through the Congress? Were they entirely blameless? Perhaps Tariq Ali deliberately avoided these issues in order to sharpen his attack on the "feudal and capitalist class of Pakistan which has been ruling the country since 1947 in varying guises". (p. 13).

The author then goes on to unfold the story of Pakistan as it went through the various stages, emphasizing at every opportunity the darker sides of the reality usually swept under the carpet in "scholarly" writings both in Pakistan and in friendly countries abroad. To Indian readers, however, most of it is well known thanks to our newspapers which, with rare exceptions, have never relented in their undeclared *Jehad* against the Pakistani State from its very inception. Less well known to us are the trials and tribulations of opposition parties and groups, specially of the Left. It is to these that we may now turn.

The root of the problem goes back to the attitude of the Indian Communists early in the 1940s. Their collaboration with the British Empire.

during the war, their confusion of religion with nationality and the resulting support for Pakistan, their inability to play an independent role that led to the call for Congress-Muslim League Unity—all these culminated in "the grotesque decision ...to send its Muslim members to enter the ranks of the Muslim League ...in order to strengthen the bourgeois faction in the League against the feudal landlords..." (p. 32-3). When finally, the CP of Pakistan (de facto confined to the west) was set up in 1948 by a decision of the CPI, it had barely 200 cadres. Even this skeletal party was liquidated in the wake of an unsuccessful putsch in conjunction with some "progressive" Army leaders. To this day no communist party, either legal or underground, exists in West Pakistan.

As for the non-communist Left they too never amounted to very much. A number of workers' strikes and student demonstrations took place intermittently against the reactionary policies of the government but there was never any concerted attempt to challenge the rulers. In the early fifties Mian Iftikharuddin broke away from the Muslim League to set up the Azad Pakistan Party which demanded basic land reforms and other radical measures; but his main contribution was through the *Pakistan Times* and other newspapers—the only organs that highlighted the plight of the poor and exposed the crimes and corruption of the government. Towards the mid-fifties his party along with Bhasani and others from the east wing formed the National Awami Party whose main virtue was its refusal to succumb to the lure of office. It lacked ideological cohesion. Its strongest unit in West Pakistan was in the Frontier Province where the pro-Moscow Wali Khan was leading it and was mainly interested in breaking up the One Unit; to this end he made no compromises with Ayub. Left-wing pro-Peking elements also worked inside the NAP and exerted some influence over a small number of trade unions. Unfortunately, they equated Ayub's pro-China policy

with anti-imperialism and thus forfeited a good deal of potential support among the rising numbers of peasants, workers, students and other middle-class people who were disillusioned with the Ayub regime. The sacking of Bhutto on American pressure brought into the scene a brilliant organiser who soon turned to be the most effective leader of the opposition; a spell in Ayub's prisons greatly enhanced his stature and helped people to forget his eight years of service to the military junta. One of the best things he did was to expose the servility towards the Americans of the Ayub government which "had instructed the press not to write a single word that might offend the aggressors in Vietnam... Our press has been directed not to publish photographs of war released by international agencies and published all over the world including the United States and Western Europe." Mr Kasuri of the Bertrand Russell Tribunal fame joined Bhutto who also managed to draw in a number of young socialists with his promise to nationalise the key sectors of industry although he himself believed in the "socialism that existed in Britain and in Scandinavia", in "the kind of mixed economy" ensuring "conditions proper to free enterprise, namely those of competition..." (pp. 147-8). Anyway, "the most influential section of the party consisted of opportunists who had deserted the Convention Muslim League of President Ayub and joined Bhutto in the hope that he would soon gain power". (pp. 190-1). Later events have fully justified Mr Ali's highly sceptical assessment of Bhutto and his party.

Peasant Struggles

In East Pakistan the underground CP launched armed peasant struggles in several districts late in 1948 in response to the Ranadive thesis. As it failed some 3,000 political prisoners were locked up till about 1954. In tune with the new soft line promulgated by the Cominform in 1951 the Communists began to work through the Awami Muslim

League and a few with the liberal Ganatantri Dal, but the party was by no means wound up. In the early 'fifties it had a modicum of success. Allying itself with the nationalist elements who were agitating for a rightful place for the Bengali language in the Pakistani State, the CP along with the Youth League gave the first call for an anti-Muslim League front in September 1952. The United Front actually materialized and virtually routed the ruling party in the 1954 elections when the CP, including its known supporters inside other parties, won as many as 26 seats. However, Central interference, combined with a growing scramble for power among the politicians, disrupted the United Front and a succession of governments followed while Pakistan on the international plane was gradually veering towards arms pacts with Western imperialists. Eventually, as everyone knows, Martial Law was promulgated, a large number of Leftists were thrown in to prison and hardly any political activity was allowed till 1963.

In the mid-sixties the Leftists found themselves in a quandary. The Communists faced a multiple split. There were the Khrushchevites led by Professor Mozaffar Ahmed who was firmly convinced "that the objective conditions are ripe... not for socialism, but for bourgeois democracy... The political consciousness in Pakistan is not a socialist consciousness and therefore the revolution must come in stages. Of course, we need a revolutionary party, but that is the next stage". Undoubtedly, "this was", as Tariq Ali continues, "revisionism gone mad". (P. 193). The pro-Peking Communists and Bhasani's followers in the National Awami Party had a very ambiguous stand right up to 1969. Straight from the prison Bhasani joined a government delegation to Peking in 1963 where "he was advised by Mao and Chou-En-lai" to proceed slowly and carefully" in the struggle against the Ayub regime. (p. 140). Moreover, even among the pro-China groups their programme of militant action on

the peasant question failed to spearhead the fight against Ayub and thus enabled the East Bengali petty bourgeois nationalists led by Mujibar Rahman to emerge as the dominant element in political life.

Foreign Influences

Despite great differences in their socio-economic perspectives the Left both in East as well as in West Pakistan came up against two major hurdles: the repressive policy of the government and the friendship between Ayub and the Chinese government. Mr Tariq Ali does not object to the maintenance of good neighbourly relations between a reactionary Pakistan and a revolutionary China. But he criticises Chinese leaders and delegates who went out of their way to extol the positive achievements of the Ayub regime. On this he marshals some facts most of which, unfortunately, are taken not from the Chinese but from the official Pakistan Press. The gist of the conversation in 1963 between Mao and Chou En-lai on the one hand and Bhasani on the other has already been quoted. Then in 1964 "after Ayub's fake election victory (over Miss Jinnah, the Presidential candidate of the Combined Opposition Parties) he had received a congratulatory message from the Chinese Prime Minister claiming that his success showed quite clearly that Ayub had the support of the people. Again, when Marshal Chen Yi visited Lahore after the war in 1965 (with India) he stated that basic democracies had something in common with people's communes". As a result in Pakistan "the pro-Chinese groups waxed lyrical in their support for Ayub. They had earlier proclaimed the Indo-Pak war as a 'people's war'! They used Ayub's foreign policy to argue against any opposition to him..." (p. 134). Some more quotations are given to show that even after the Cultural Revolution Chinese support for Ayub was not confined to diplomatic niceties alone.

On occasion Tariq Ali tends to be carried away by his own prejudices

and reads too much into Chinese statements. If Chen Yi in early 1966 congratulated the Pakistani government and people for having "triumphed over the enemy and finally repulsed the aggressor..." there was nothing unusual about it given the Chinese (and many other countries') stand on Kashmir. Tariq Ali's comment that "Marshal Chen Yi did not elaborate on whether the poverty-stricken Indian peasant was the enemy of his Pakistani counterpart, or whether it was the Indian and Pakistani ruling classes who were united in opposition to the peasants and workers in both countries" is a piece of logical *non sequitur* that often passes off as a fine debating gesture.

Ali is back to *'terra firma* when he points out how all this time the Ayub regime was totally dependent on the U.S. imperialists and had also developed specially close ties with Iran and Turkey, two of the most trusted lackeys of imperialism in West Asia. Evidence piled up includes the presence of U.S. military advisers in Islamabad, the daily pleading of Ayub with the U.S. Ambassador to help end the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965, his visit to Washington at the end of the hostilities to explain his conduct in order that U.S. aid would be resumed, etc. However, there is no systematic presentation of the extent of U.S. penetration which would convince someone for whom Pakistani membership of CENTO and SEATO is not quite conclusive; after all, had not Pakistan declared from the beginning that her sole enemy was India and that she did not feel threatened either by China or by the USSR?

Over-attention to China and the USA has led Tariq Ali to neglect the recently developing Pak-Soviet friendship which received a shot in the arm after the Tashkent meeting. Military supplies started coming in, Soviet aid became more plentiful while the volume of trade went up several times compared to the early sixties. It was particularly vital for the West Pakistani capitalists since they got not only an alternative source of capital goods

but also a foreign market for their manufactured and semi-manufactured wares at a time when industries were running considerably below capacity. All this, however, would not weaken Tariq Ali's basic contention regarding Pakistan's primary dependence on the USA; for, didn't the USA bless the Soviet initiative at Tashkent?

East Pakistan

Just as Pakistan as a whole remained a US neo-colony, the Eastern Province "gradually became a complete colony; its raw materials, which brought in badly needed foreign exchange was used to develop Karachi and the Punjab. The reverse of the coin was that East Pakistan also became a market for industrial commodities produced in the industrial centres of the Punjab" (pp. 60-61). That the Central Government secretariat is primarily, if not exclusively, staffed at the highest levels, by non-Bengali civil servants and that the Army is similarly led by men from the same wing is duly underlined. Equally mercilessly he exposes the "racial myths...effectively propagated throughout West Pakistan: the Bengalis were short and ugly; they were not fighting people; they were cowards; and many other crude and fascist generalizations". With a wry humour he continues, "The Bengalis with whom I discussed the matter were not amused. They pointed out that their physical characteristics differed from the Vietnamese only in that the average Vietnamese was shorter than the average Bengali" (.. 32).

Yet there are only stray references to the mechanics of colonial exploitation. The siphoning off of the east's jute export earnings to the west wing industries and the transference of East Pakistan's industrial profits to the West by the non-Bengali owners are the only ones mentioned, but the total is much larger. The stagnant, if not falling prices of eastern exports vis-a-vis artificially higher prices of manufactures imported from the West, the small share of development expenditure in the east, preponderance of West Pakistani commercial groups

in the country's foreign trade, the absorption of the lion's share of foreign 'aid' in the Western province—these and many other facts of the mode of exploitation should have been at least indicated if not discussed at length.

Finally, the author true to his Marxist conviction tries to show that the West Pakistani proletariat gained little out of this loot. Their real wages hardly rose over the two decades and their monetary earnings were about the same as in the east. However, that is not the entire story. Prices of both industrial and agricultural goods are generally much higher in the latter province with the result that the actual purchasing power of money is significantly higher in the west than in the east. Moreover, the proletariat in West Pakistan may have been better off in yet other ways; the types of industries that grew up in these parts had a larger component of skilled labour than in the other wing, creating more avenues of self-improvement. More importantly, the much faster expansion of industry in the west increased correspondingly the employment potential so that the pressure of the unemployed and the under-employed was considerably reduced. To put it in other words, the poor in West Pakistan would have been worse off had accumulation taken place at a slower pace. Apart from the proletariat many other sections of the middle classes must have been beneficiaries, too, either directly or indirectly. Could it be one of the factors that explains the almost complete silence in the west wing when East Bengali nationalists were crying themselves hoarse against the drain right from the mid-fifties?

A Class Analysis

On the class character of Pakistani society Tariq Ali gives an unambiguous verdict: it is a country ruled by the landlords of West Pakistan in collaboration with the Army, Civil Service and the big urban bourgeoisie of a comprador nature. Of the total privately cultivated area of

around 46 million acres in West Pakistan some 6,000 big landlords or 0.12 per cent of all landowners possess about 5 million acres, i.e., an average of over 800 acres per landlord. The next group of 57,000 landlords own 10 million acres or an average of just under 200 acres each. Put together the top one-a-quarter per cent of the landowners have one-third of the total land. The West Pakistan Land Reforms Act of 1962 was a sham, hurting nobody as it allowed holdings of up to 500 acres of irrigated or 1,000 acres of non-irrigated land *per individual*; the amount of land actually redistributed as a consequence accounted to no more than 7 lakh acres.

The rich peasants/kulaks are defined as those owning between 25 and 100 acres. Numbering 286,470 or about 6 per cent of all landowners they own 10.6 million acres or 22 per cent of the total land. The next group owning between 5 and 25 acres are called the middle peasants constituting 29% of the total owners and owning 32% of all land.

Poor peasants, i.e., those with less than 5 acres, number over 3 million or 65% of all owners who own only 7.4 million acres or 15% of the whole. They are, using Maoist terminology, the semi-proletarians of the countryside. Then there are over 2 million landless peasants who are tenant sharecroppers. They cultivate more than half of the cultivated land in the province. With no security against eviction the best part of their produce is appropriated by the landlords, while the remainder is sold at an artificially low price in the local markets which are again controlled by the landlords. (p. 229). The plight of the *hars* of Sind who belong to this category has justly been highlighted in lengthy quotations from the minority report by Masud who disagreed with the majority on the official *Hari* Committee. It emerges that the *hars* "drudge like common beasts of burden", "are no better than serfs", "have only one interest in life—food—to keep body and soul together", and "share huts with cat-

tle." The *hari* is always in "fear of imprisonment, fear of losing his land, wife or life...His cattle might also be snatched away and he might be beaten out of the village. The *zaminder* might at any time send for the *hari* for purposes of forced labour...He dare not refuse." At the time of election the *zaminder* calls "the *hari* and tells him to vote for the candidate of the *zaminder's* choice...If the rival candidate wins there are fresh miseries in store". (pp. 98-9).

The bottom of the pyramid consists of seven lakh families of rural proletarians, the landless labourers whose existence is little better than that of a slave. Even after 112 hours a week of work he is hardly able to feed his family.

The urban population in West Pakistan expanded at a very fast pace from 6 to 9 million during the 1950s and accounted for a quarter of the total provincial population in 1961. The rate of industrial development has been very rapid but economic inequalities were also growing at a fast pace. Thus in 1968 Dr M. Hauq, the Chief Economist of the Pakistan Planning Commission, disclosed that 20 families held in their hands two-thirds of industrial capital, over four-fifths of banking and over two-thirds of the insurance sector. Ayub's family was one of these while the others like Dawood, Adamjee, Latif, Saigal, Mian Bashir, etc. were mostly traders emigrating from India. Foreign capital as such controlled one-sixth of industry but the native bourgeoisie "are tied financially to American finance capital, and should therefore be categorized as the Pakistani section of international capitalism. Near-monopoly in the domestic market enabled the robber barons to earn 80-100 per cent profits; their limited success would be inconceivable without large-scale foreign aid which financed 32 per cent of all development expenditure and allowed capital goods imports to double between 1955 and 1961. The foreign aid could be "used only in consultation with American economic advisers supplied by the Develop-

ment Advisory Service based at Harvard University. (P. 224-5).

Another urban class distinguished by the author is the upper petit bourgeoisie comprising businessmen ruined by inflation or loss of foreign trade licences, large shopkeepers, contractors, lawyers, technocrats and even some school teachers in the higher wage brackets. The lower petit bourgeoisie, "the left wing majority of the petit bourgeois class", consists of "sections of students, office peons, shop-assistants and small handicraftsmen". (P. 226).

The urban proletariat is concentrated in manufacturing, mining, communications and transport; they are mostly in and around Karachi, Lahore and Lyallpur. Despite the harsh labour laws and the legally institutionalized wage freeze, the lack of an organization on a provincial level, they used their own imagination and initiative to win a number of important victories. Their living conditions have barely managed to keep pace with inflation so that the per capita income of a working class family amounted to a mere Rs 17.4 per month in the late 1960s.

Sketchy

A somewhat sketchier division of classes is attempted for East Pakistan. The province was mercifully denuded of landlords after the Act of 1950 which also put a ceiling of 33 acres and abolished all intermediaries. "Feudalism therefore does not exist", (P. 234). The rich peasant is mentioned without being defined. The term middle peasant simply does not appear. Poor peasants are said to be holders of land under 5 acres and own over 9 million acres or over 40 per cent of the total. Their share in the total rural population is not made explicit. Next, tenant sharecroppers numbered 100,000. "Landless labourers account for 1.4 million peasants and their families in addition to 3.2 million peasants who are forced to do similar work on a less regular basis. Thus we see that the number of landless labourers and those owning a small area of land is roughly equal".

This last deduction is by no means obvious. Even more confusing is the author's statement later on the same page that "landless labourers are 26 p.c. of the cultivators..." (p. 234). Are landless labourers and very small peasants lumped together? In any case, the author's sweeping prognosis that the proportion of the former will have gone up by another 10 p.c. in the 1960s seems incredible unless agricultural capitalism in East Pakistan has made tremendous headway; all available evidence points to the contrary. For the urban classes the author merely notes the absence of Bengali Muslim entrepreneurs. The existence of a petit bourgeoisie is just acknowledged and the Awami League is said to represent its upper sections. The proletariat has increased much more slowly than in the west while the wage rate stood at about the same level, to be precise, Rs 17 per head per month for a working class family.

Army and Civic Service

In the context of Pakistan the top echelons of the Army and the Civil Service constitute more important components of the ruling classes than in many other countries. In each case there are strong links between these strata on the one hand and the urban bourgeoisie and the rural landlords of West Pakistan on the other hand. The chronic instability in Pakistan's parliamentary politics after the death of Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan threw power increasingly into the hands of the Civil Service which managed to win over industrialists through the grant of industrial and foreign trade licences; favourite landlords were rewarded through appointments as *lambardars* or local revenue collectors with enormous powers over the peasants. At the same time since "patriotism in Pakistan has taken an essentially negative form which uses the Indian conflict as a foil", and since the Army (many of its officers came from India leaving behind big properties and large numbers of relatives killed or maimed during the communal flare-up) was

generally regarded as the potential liberator of Kashmir, it acquired a special place in the political set-up of the country. Through the years the two services—civil and military—were able to present a highly cohesive and well-disciplined front. Their paramountcy was finally established when first Iskander Mirza and then Ayub became dictators. The bureaucratic and the military hierarchy jointly furthered the interests of the robber barons and the feudal lords. In the process many erstwhile civil servants and army officers themselves became capitalists and landlords.

Mr Ali's conclusions could be further strengthened had he provided more information on the social background of the Civil Service and Army leaders. Further, he should have given more attention to the very crucial system of Basic Democracy designed to weld together the rural and urban upper classes with the Administration at all levels.

At first sight the author's attempt to portray the various classes appears to be along classical Marxist lines. However, analytically, there are many serious flaws. Firstly, feudalism is equated with the existence of legalized landlordism. The more important is the question of feudal relations of production; share-cropping, distress sales by peasants, big gaps between the price received by peasants and the free market price, large-scale indebtedness on the part of peasants resulting in usury and various other extortions, the system of attached labour against "free" or casual labour in agriculture, wage-levels below the subsistence minimum leading to perpetual indebtedness on the part of the casual labourers—these are characteristic of the agrarian scene as much of India as of West and East Pakistan. It cannot be gainsaid that these are essentially feudal or pre-capitalist in nature. The author, however chooses to apply mechanically criteria borrowed from West European history. The second major defect lies in distinguishing between landlords and kulaks solely according to the quantum of land owned; over

or under 100 acres. Once again underlying relations of production are lost sight of. A landlord is one who lives parasitically from rents received without taking any part whatsoever in the process of cultivation; *per contra* the kulak is actively engaged in supplying farm implements, seeds, manures, etc. as well as in supervising over the field workers. Thus a widow living entirely off rents received from a 10-acre plot would be a landlord, albeit puny, whereas some of Tariq Ali's 'landlords' may in fact be capitalist farmers using tractors, deep tubewells and scores of farm labourers. The reason for harping on these seemingly semantic issues is not entirely frivolous. It is possible that West Pakistan has been going through a certain transformation not dissimilar to that of Prussia in the nineteenth century. The American-sponsored Green Revolution achieved though tubewells and pumps, miracle seeds and fertilisers may have encouraged many erstwhile landlords to imitate their Junker predecessors from Prussia; this class along with a highly dynamic urban entrepreneurial class backed by a strong Army thoroughly impregnated with martial traditions is capable of reproducing a social situation not unlike that of pre-World War I Germany. It would be entirely wrong, however, to push the parallel to its logical conclusion as Indian chauvinists would like to. For, given Pakistan's relative position either in Asia or in the world at large, she can never become anything more than a junior partner of imperialism.

It is also worth noting at this stage that Tariq Ali has underplayed the achievements of Pakistan's rulers in the field of industrial and agricultural development after the mid-fifties. West Pakistan's progress was more spectacular than that of India and many other countries in Asia. It is to their credit that a sizable part of the foreign largesse was turned into productive capital and not frittered away merely in ostentatious consumption for the privileged few. Indeed, the very success of the regime in these

spheres may partly explain the lack of an effective left-wing opposition in the province.

Coming back to our main problem, the author's classification of the peasantry into poor, middle or rich is rather mechanical, based on the magic of numbers : under 5, between 5 and 25, and between 25 and 100 acres. Why not, say, under 10, between 10 and 40, and between 40 and 200 acres ? The author has not so much as given a thought to the intricacies of the problem. Further, in a situation where sharecropping is widespread the data on landownership alone are not adequate. Thus assuming a fifty-fifty division a share tenant cultivating 20 acres but with no land of his own would be like a middle peasant ; on the other hand, the owner of 8 acres who does not cultivate himself would obtain the gross income of a poor peasant.

Fourthly, there is no mention of the rural craftsman. Are they so insignificant today ? According to the 1951 census, 5 to 7 million people, excluding their families, are employed partly or wholly in small-scale and cottage industries ; this figure included 1.7 million agriculturists for whom it was a subsidiary source of income. (*Pakistan Yearbook 1969*). Surely such an important part of the population cannot be just ignored.

Business Ties

Coming to the urban bourgeoisie and its links with international capitalism the author fails to disclose any significant business ties between the two whether in the form of capital participation or of technical know-how imports or use of brand names, and other marketing arrangements, etc. In the absence of such specific relationships of dependence the indigenous business groups can throw off the foreign yoke once they are able to stand firmly on their own feet. It is not suggested that Pakistani monopoly capital has no direct business links with foreigners, but the author by merely highlighting Pakistan's overall dependence on foreign aid has

failed to prove his point in a conclusive manner.

Sixthly, within the Pakistani ruling classes the contradictions between the feudal elements and the big bourgeoisie have been totally side-tracked. In the 1950s the price of manufactured goods rose sharply vis-a-vis agricultural ones leading to a considerable drain of resources from agriculture into industry. Were the feudal interests who supplied a large part of the cash crops and food for the urban industries and population unaware of it ? If not, why did they not protest since they hold the lever of power ? Again the 1960's saw somewhat of a reversal of this process i why was there not an opposite reaction from the manufacturing community ?

Similarly commonsense teaches us that there should be contradictions between the big bourgeoisie and the middle or petit bourgeoisie. The author also admits it without probing any further into either the mechanics or the manifestation of such conflicts. Indeed, for the latter two groups the discussion is much too vague without even an indication of their numerical significance.

In summing up one feels that the author, although he may eventually prove to be right insofar as the rough orders of magnitude of different classes are concerned, has resorted more to his intuitive judgments and journalistic impression than to a cold analysis of underlying facts in order to produce a series of classes that accord well with Maoist prescription. To add to the confusion the chapter begins with brief reminders of revolutions in different countries from Russia through Vietnam to France (May 1968), which is perhaps the main justification for the chapter heading, "Pakistan and the Permanent Revolution". And it ends again in a typically Trotskyite note with a bill of demands leading to the establishment of People's Power. Even if some people understand the exact meaning of it, no living political forces in Pakistan ever echoed this or, indeed, are likely to do so in the near future.

H. CHAKRABORTY

LIKE the cinema, the music record business in this country also had a very early beginning. Early cylindrical records were made by various foreign and indigenous companies of which one was German. Mr H. K. Bose of *Kuntalini* fame persuaded Tagore when he was in his fifties to record a few songs for private circulation. In this venture about 12 songs were sung by Tagore recorded cylindrically of which all but one containing the *Bandemataram* are untraceable now. The Bose House was subjected to police search and Lalbazar people are said to have taken away the waxen moulds which presumably perished in the godowns of Lalbazar.

Tagore was not satisfied with this mechanical device of music catering. Even long after the appearance of the flat disc he did not heed the requests of various companies to record his own voice. At last in about 1931 he recorded a few songs in the 10" discs of the Hindusthan and HMV.

But the first Tagore song recorded by HMV was not by any one from Santiniketan or the Tagore house. The company noticed the commercial potential of this sophisticated product and began to have these songs sung by various popular artistes of those times such as Manadasundari Dasi, Krishnabhamini, Radhikaprosad Goswami, K. Mullick, K. C. Dey etc. Needless to say, no necessity was felt by the artistes or the company to strictly adhere to the tunes set by the composer. Glaring examples of distortion in tune and style of singing are the records of Manadasundari Dasi (*majhe majhe taba dekha pai*, Kafi, ektal) and Radhikaprosad Goswami (*Swapana yadi bhangile*, Ramkeli, ektal). Particularly in the latter record the romantic lyric of Tagore was turned by Goswami into a full-fledged classical *khyal* for which he was not to blame personal-

ly. The practice of those times required sophisticated music of any sort to be dressed up in classical garb in spite of the difference in mood and tone. Purely romantic lyrics of the English type were just a newcomer to this country, so much so that even the sahib-log of HMV could not recognise them at first sight.

Music recording in this country, as we have said, had a rather early start and various foreign and indigenous companies entered into competition towards the close of the last century. But the affair had a qualitative change when British finance capital joined the fray of exploiting the musical potentials of India through the British Talking Machine company. Technical superiority and political patronage (needless to say, also economic protection) helped the company immensely. In this way the company was able in no time to either drive the competitors out of the market or bring them under its heels. By the first decade of this century the company was the master of all it surveyed.

An exclusive licence gave the company the monopoly right and privilege of importing the printing machinery and necessary materials from England. During the last hundred years no arrangement was made to manufacture these things locally although the necessary raw material (viz. lac) has always been available here in abundance. Since the introduction of plastic in producing gramophone discs, the business has been tagged to the capitalist economy of Great Britain. Musical records cannot be supplied for lack of timely import of raw plastic although the demand for records has multiplied. It is nothing but the same old story of perpetuating the industrial backwardness of this country and the constant dependence of its economy on foreign imperialist powers.

Very recently a Bombay company has been able to snatch a licence from the unwilling hands of the Government of India. Yet it will be a long time before this company is able to

manufacture the necessary raw materials locally and thereby be independent of foreign supply. It takes a long time for a new industry to efficiently acquire the technical know-how of sophisticated industrial production and be equal to other competitors from the developed countries.

The national aspect of the matter apart, HMV did much interesting work in the initial years of its business. It even recorded the *sitar* of Muhammad Ali Khan, the last living descendant of Mia Tan Sen on the son's side. The stalwarts of the last century had with very few exceptions recorded their music on discs of the British Talking Machine company which turned later into the Gramophone Company which again assumed the world-renowned emblem of His Master's Voice. May their line multiply by the good grace of their Lord! By 1930 the company was able to acquire the music sung or played by such eminent maestros of the last century as Md. Ali Khan, Alladia Khan, Imdad Khan, Abdul Karim Khan, Fayaz Khan, Aghore Chakraborty, Viswanath Rao, Lachand Boral, Gahar Jan Jaddan Bai, Laxmi Bai, Malka Jan Agrewali etc. etc. But where are those records now? Cancelled by the company and not available in the market because the company squeezed whatever profit there was in them and threw away the moulds into the godown. What happened to them afterwards nobody knows. It is rumoured that all the moulds of the records of the old masters perished in the gutters of the company. It is not unusual that a foreign commercial interest is least interested in the musical heritage of India, but it is regrettable that our intellectual leaders have remained callous to the fate of our precious musical documents ever since.

Why is the company so neglectful of its old records? The secret is that new recording yields its highest return in course of five years. After that there is not much business in it. Then it is better to circulate a new record of the same song.

This explains the company's po-

licy with regard to records of Tagore songs.

The earliest records of Tagore songs are not traceable now. Testimony shows that the song *kena jami na jeta jagale na* by Dwijendranath Bagchi (P105) is the earliest extant record of a Tagore song.. Then come *Ami nishi nishi kata* by Purnakumari (N482) and *Tomari rajani jibanakunje* by Balaidas Sheal (P-802). They were followed by Miss Amala Das, Krishnabhamini and Brajen Ganguli.

Bagchi and Amala Das (sister of Deshabandhu Das) were close associates of Tagore which leads me to the presumption that these two singers in particular were trained by him. Many actresses also were trained by Tagore and some of them recorded his songs taking some liberty here and there which was the musical practice of those times. But Manadasundari Dasi was definitely not trained by Tagore. *Majhe majhe taba dekha pai* (p 3489) is bewildering listening. It is not a Tagore song in the strict sense of the term ; it is rather a Bengali *kheyal* using the Tagore composition as *sthayi* and *antara*. The same can be said of the record of Radhikaprosad Goswami from whom Tagore collected many Hindusthani compositions. *Bimala anande jago re* (P2173) sung by him is a full-fledged *kheyal* using the Tagore composition as classical *kheyal*.

It was recorded most probably between 1910 and 1920 ; there might have been one by Viswanath Rao. Tagore's reactions to these records are worth recalling. In some of his essays and letters collected in *Sangitchinta* (Thoughts on Music) he is extremely bitter in respect of the then virtuosos. He said that the term *ustad* (virtuoso) is indicative of mediocrity and he compared them with wrestlers. He considered his songs self-sufficient, never requiring any embellishment of any sort (dialogue with Mr Dilipkumar Roy).

Tagore's modesty and civility were boundless. But he was so angry

with the ustad community that in July 1917 he wrote a long polemic which he delivered before a full house of ticket holders in accompaniment of his own illustrations in the Rammo-han Library. After this vehement protest and condemnation, addition of classical improvisations and embellishments to Tagore songs decreased, but not entirely. The record of Manadasumdari Dasi came out between 1917 and 1926. She was an exquisite singer but she did not (as none of her sort could at that time) realise that unlike semi-classical Bengali songs a lyrical song was, as in the West, complete in the hands of its creator, particularly when the composer was himself the tuner. It was an error of artistic judgment which persisted till the forties. Later we will discuss it at length.

(The previous instalment appeared in the issue of June 5).

Hearts And Flowers

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

TARUN Majumder's occasional jaunts into period material never really dig the times. He has no desire to interpret the past with modern attitudes. His characters are just there, acting out their destinies, almost burlesqueing their emotions and values. And while in his portrayal of pastoral Bengal, there is no dearth of the age-old silhouettes and filter-drenched clouds, his protagonists stand apart from their environment, and the landscape serves only as a lifeless backdrop. *Nimantran* is set some time in the twenties. Hiru, a town-bred young man, comes for holidaying in a village with his aunt and he is enthralled by the "lyric beauty" of rural Bengal. But there is more than inanimate nature; he meets Kumudini and falls headlong for her. She acts as a charming guide to Hiru and after the dekko is over, the director summons the cruel

force of drama to intercede. Hiru's proposal for marrying Kumudini is stalled by her uncle and Hiru leaves the village with a broken heart. The story could have well ended here, but the demands of commerce would decree otherwise. Hiru seeks out a job, marries an unwilling woman and works like a dog to get at the top of the social ladder. His whole life becomes one of tragic maladjustment and Kumudini remains the dim memory of a sweet dream. This loosely-constructed film is laced with sloppy sentiment; the Kumudini-Hiru relationship, the keynote of the film, is a namby-pamby thing and this flimsy affair, which would at best have been the subject of a fifteen-minute-long film has been stretched beyond limits of endurance and the latter part in which Hiru undergoes a grilling in his frantic attempts to fit himself into the haut monde life, is hopelessly laboured. Sandhya Roy as Kumudini has apparently misunderstood Lucy Gray as a scatter-brained chatterbox and it is sad to find Anup Kumar's talents as a comedian wasted in his miscast role of a romantic lover-boy. The only reward for getting through this grinding film is the superb performance of Ram Chowdhury as a clan-conscious village priest with all his pride and prejudices.

Ajay Kar in *Malyadan* emphasises all the structural weaknesses of the Tagore story, but completely divests the film of the delicacy and tenderness of the original. Here also a city doctor comes to a village and a silent communication grows between him and Kurani, a foundling. Both are unconscious of their mutual feelings and the hour of realisation comes too late when Kurani is on her death-bed. But these subtle and subdued emotions have proved too much for the director who seems completely out of his depth with the tricky material. Without going deeply into the psychological complexes of the characters, the director has resorted to the device of conventional story telling when there is very little to tell and the result is a piling of episodes without logic and pace.

JUNE 19, 1971

Clipping

The Tortured

The following is the testimony of an Argentine woman now in jail.

...When the police commission arrests you for the first time, you still don't understand precisely, in all its magnitude, what type of monsters you are going to face. You are not fully aware what road you have begun to travel... There are quiet questions, then beatings; they are the first, don't worry, they go on mounting in quality, insult, and the person confronting you will begin to lose his biped state and become something of a machine, capable of destroying men.

Sometimes he's successful. A human form with strength and brutality that takes pleasure in killing and torturing, will face you moment to moment. He won't let you think or eat, with words and blows he will try to make you a traitor. First betray yourself! and then turn in your comrades. He's just like all the others, you wouldn't notice him in a crowd or in the streets; he will attack; he will attack your body, destroy your genital organs, choke you with a cry, and you will end up with the strength of thousands of tortured, thousands of dead over the whole of history, you will come out unconquered and bruised... What occurs will not be new, it has been repeated over a long period; but for you it will be your torture, your sorrow, your desperation and your integrity. What happened to me, then, is what has happened to many; they blindfolded me and I had internal images I hoped would go away and be forgotten. Before my eyes, now clouded by terror, I saw the faces of friends, the smiles of those who fight. Then silence... The quiet sleep.

I wanted to get an idea of dimensions, of the types that were around me; there wasn't time; there wasn't time for anything. They stripped me, tied me across, covered me with a wet cloth (nothing new, as you see) and went over me with the tre-

mendous electric rod. I couldn't imagine the faces of these beasts (seven? eight?) I listened to them, they questioned me. I made an effort so that my brain which they couldn't touch, my ideas (which they can't appreciate, what strength they give you) would become detached from the rest of my body and function apart, quiet and serene. That my brain not give data, not recognize the pain it received!

When they let me rest from the convulsions produced by the electric shock, when my nipples, my hands were numb from pain, even worse threats were repeated (sometimes death, how desirable), and the questions, the questions... Everything begins all over again, on the genitals, fingers, neck, they smother me with a pillow so that my scream (are all the former screams summed up?), wouldn't be heard beyond this room.

And it all ends. They promise to throw me into the river...

After my turn is over my comrades follow. My terror, my impotence makes it worse now to listen to their pain... I remain always with the bandage over my eyes, seated and handcuffed to the chair. All around me silence. Will I be alone? My comrades, my brothers, will they live? Little by little I have an idea of the dimension of the cell. I hear the breathing of the police and I begin to differentiate it from ours. We are all together. I don't know why I was sleepy. And just like that, handcuffed and blindfolded, I sleep in the chair. Every once in a while they wake me up and give me a pill.

I am sure the hands of the clock are turning; it seems to me that time has come to a stop now. Each new noisy footstep, each crack of the fingers so accelerates my heart that I am almost unable to breathe (they are afraid to speak, they don't want us to recognize them, they are afraid of us!).

My thinking is confused, I go back over my past, the torture and the continuous terror here. When will they begin again? Where do they want to take me? Eighteen or 20 hours pass this way, without water,

without food, without being able to urinate. When they took off the blindfold, I saw the faces of my brothers, dirty, sweaty, very bruised, but the eyes were not two eyes but thousands. (Will I have that strength?)

Our quarters are changed, they put us in small individual cells. Ten days without seeing each other, without speaking to each other. Taking advantage of encounters in the corridors, the visit of the prison doctors (who of course find no aftermath from the electrode) to give ourselves hope.

Ten days of waiting, second by second, for torture. My mind doesn't belong to me; it is blocked. Little by little, day by day, memories come back, I look at my body and I exist, I speak and can go on living, continue waiting with the same fear but now I think. About what? About my life. The life of those who, in cells beside me, are being tortured over and over again.

I go over my new situation and believe that fortitude, strength can win out over physical pain. That the ideals, the struggle for the revolution leave suffering behind and that another quality surges through the same combatant.

It is not worth going on, the tale would be monotonous, just like thousands that have already taken place, just like others to come... Part of this history ends when the solidary confinement is lifted and you can touch and see your comrades. You can see with sadness, with a new pain added to all those past, with a higher pain mixed with hatred and sorrow, the eyes of one who submitted. The eyes of one who didn't know how to value himself and thought that giving information would save him. What an illusion! For just one word you give, the beatings, the electric shocks are doubled and tripled so that you tell more and more. So that what you utter binds another man, another woman; and starts things all over again.

The traitor! His skin is more valuable than that of others and so he sells his comrades. His fear is

that of all, but his brain functions exclusively for himself, to save himself. He hasn't had a heart for a long time.

Yes, that's how it is; however tremendous torture seems, one takes it standing up. The actions of my brothers, who sealed their lips with screams, told me this. I myself said it. I who did not allow a name or a single fact to come out of my mouth.

I say it now that I have to write about my own torture. To be a militant is to have integrity. Heart and head. Clarity in the liberation struggle and love for the militants. Love and respect for those who, along with you, struggle every day to make the revolution. (*From Tricontinental*).

Letters

Naxal Land

An employee of the Central Government, I am not connected with any political party. But through my connections and conversations with my colleagues, who number nearly 200, I have come across some facts which force us to have second thoughts on the 'anti-social' Naxals. My colleagues, almost all of whom are residents of Calcutta and its suburbs and have different political views, assert that they have not exaggerated the facts. Some of them are:

There are Naxalite zones in Calcutta and its suburbs where the administration has almost collapsed. But the alert guidance of the CP (ML), with the active co-operation of the local people, has made it possible to control things in general. In these areas, the punishment for serious anti-people and other reactionaries is death. As a result, most of the police and spies had to leave; those who are still there are totally inactive.

There is almost total absence in these localities of pickpockets, snatchers, drunken disorderliness, obscene gestures to school and college girls and other women usually indulged in by bastans.

The common people are gradually

accepting this parallel administration in their own interests. And why not? Even at dead of night, there is no fear of being accosted by snatchers. Women can move freely. The most remarkable thing is that if you are absent from home at night, thieves and burglars will not dare enter your house. In fact, residents elsewhere are thinking of settling down in these localities.

There is one big disadvantage—the sudden attacks by the police and CRP. But this has become a regular feature and the police are unable to enter these areas without sten guns, recoilless rifles, light machine-guns, wireless vans etc, and that too in the company of at least 40 or 50 army men and CRP.

I don't know what is actually meant by 'liberated areas'. But from a commonsense point of view, these areas seem to have become liberated. And if this is the situation in the capital of the state, where the state power is most strong and concentrated, it is not difficult to imagine the situation in those village areas where the Naxalites are in a dominant position. But the question is, if these observations are true, what do they signify? In which direction is the situation developing?

SANTOSH KR. RAY
Calcutta

Noapara

I express my profound shock and indignation at the brutal murder of nine young men in Noapara. It seems that some parties are in collusion with the Establishment to help crush the revolutionary movement in West Bengal. We know that as the revolutionary struggle advances, events like Barasat or Noapara may occur again. But we do also know that ruthless suppression will not be able to smash the movement. White terror will be met by Red terror and the days of white terror are becoming numbered. The pseudo-evolutionaries will have to pay a price for their hypocrisy.

ANURADHA NANDY
New Delhi

Ekhoney

I feel constrained to protest against the review of director Tapan Sinha's film *Ekhoney* (June 5). The reviewer has of course the right to his own views and judgment. But *Ekhoney* is certainly not the kind of film that can be dismissed with just a string of abuses. It is an unfair review. It does not give any idea whatsoever to the reader as to what it is all about. The reviewer starts with the prejudice—so Tapan Sinha wants to have a go at serious movie making! The assumption is that serious film making is the prerogative of a single film maker; those who are very liberal will, controversially, allow just one more or at most two more persons to have the right of being taken seriously as serious film makers. The rest must not even try. This is a brand of snobism in our world of smart film goers. Even if one liked Tapan Sinha's film he would not dare say so, for fear of being laughed at.

Your reviewer fails to notice a single thing to praise in the film. I found quite a few. As a matter of fact I came back refreshingly entertained and with the impression of having seen a very convincing portrayal of some aspects of life in contemporary West Bengal. There have been recently other films dealing with the young unemployed boy going from one interview to another, with flames of extremist violence flashing on the horizon. *Ekhoney* has the same theme, and only prejudice and snobbery can dismiss it as a total failure. In fact in some aspects it succeeds better. The fact of having not just a single unemployed young man but a whole crowd of students going through the mockery that is the examination system and from one day to the other finding themselves torn away from the irresponsible gay student days and confronted with the grim reality of the unemployed man's world conveys somewhat the generality of the problem. The film also succeeds in being communicative by its very lack of sophistication which

often expressed itself not in any depth of ideas but various tricks and gimmicks with the camera. Not that there are no camera angles to mention in this film; I appreciated the shots from above of main roads with pedestrians approaching the camera in twos and threes catching snatches of conversation—something the reviewer finds fit to drown in a roar of contemptuous laughter.

The reviewer dismisses the crowd of students as a skirtchasing lot. Well, it can't be helped—students do indulge in quite a bit of skirt chasing and do not dwell upon the profundities of life and society. I found the portrayal of the group very convincing; many of the scenes inside the students' canteen are very realistic; much of the dialogue is delightfully racy, as is the dialogue of wayside Romeos of any Calcutta street.

All in all Tapan Sinha's *Ekhoney* is one of the best Bengali films of recent times, with a serious attempt to deal with a section of contemporary life; and few conscious and deliberate concessions to the box office. It is not a great film but there have not been many great films recently. Of course it has faults that I have not talked about, but I am not trying to write a balanced review but to defend it against unfair injuries.

ASHOK RUDRA
Santiniketan

East Bengal

In his long letter (June 5) about the genesis of the Bangladesh freedom movement which is interspersed with convenient quotations, Mr Rathindranath Chattopadhyaya has perhaps unwittingly distorted history while seeking to enlighten the ignorant. Let us face facts which are more reliable and more eloquent than quotations which often cut both ways. The writer has spoken of Lord Curzon's failure to divide Bengal and of his crusade against the "growing nationalism of the area" but among whom? Who does not know that the nationalist movement which succeeded in unset-

tling the settled fact was confined overwhelmingly to those Bengalis who became the worst victims of the divide and rule policy of Curzon and that the partition of Bengal was most enthusiastically welcomed by the vast majority of the other community for obvious reasons? Sir Bamfylde Fuller's comparison of the two communities with "suo-rani" and "duo-rani," has passed into a proverb. The seeds of division and disruption which were then sown in the congenial soil of East Bengal sprouted into a mighty tree to pave the way for the completion of the process which was set into motion four decades ago by Curzon who was not really an idle visionary.

It is wrong to blame CR for his constructive proposals to Jinnah. In fact he was more honest and straightforward than many of our nationalist leaders who opposed tooth and nail the creation of Pakistan, to swallow it later unabashedly. CR had the clarity of vision and the courage of convictions to give concrete shape to it unlike his colleagues in the Congress who played into the hands of those who were bent upon the division of the country as a condition precedent to the transfer of power. The writer has quoted extracts from the Cabinet Mission's proposals to show that radical partition of Punjab and Bengal was no solution as it was contrary to the wishes and interests of a very large proportion of the inhabitants of these provinces. But with the partition of the entire country accepted in principle in the teeth of strong opposition from the vast majority of the total population, exclusion of Punjab and West Bengal from its operation provided no effective solution to the problem. Subsequently events proved also that a large proportion of the inhabitants of these two provinces opted for Pakistan through their elected representatives with no regret or remorse and under no duress.

It is not also correct to say that the history of the Indian freedom movement tells us that more than 10 crores of Bengalis—they were then

termed Muslims and non-Muslims—were betrayed by people who never liked them for their nationalism. In fact not all were betrayed. It was the nationalist leaders who betrayed their adoring followers and thereby helped those who raised the war cry of Lorke Lenge Pakistan to be richly rewarded and not betrayed. The writer is surprised to find that the inevitable quarrel between the two parts of Pakistan has taken 23 years to take concrete shape. The reason is that the valiant fighters for freedom of Bangladesh were so long preoccupied with the more important task of purging their homeland of the erstwhile nationalists and their progeny termed refugees. History has its own logic and this explains why the refugees and the evacuees have now become strange bedfellows.

SOMNATH BHATTACHARYA
Santragachi, Howrah

Some people are very anxious to teach the Maoist revolutionaries correct application of Mao Tse-tung's Thought. The contention of Mr Rahtindranath Chattopadhyay in his letter (June 5) is that Bangladesh being a colony of West Pakistan "the bourgeois uprising" there should be supported by those who claim to be revolutionaries. He has referred to Chinese history and the works of Mao and pointed out that Mao Tse-tung "took the help of all the nationalist parties at the 'time of driving the Japanese out of China.'

Mr Chattopadhyay has declared that "Pakistani rulers are invariably the inheritors of medieval feudalism." But colonisation is a historical process which takes place when capitalism grows into its highest stage i.e. imperialism. Imperialism is in need of new markets. This is an economic law which operates under an advanced capitalist economy. But Mr Chattopadhyay does not contend that West Pakistani rulers are capitalists who have turned into imperialists. Hence the question of forming a united front of the revolutionaries with the bourgeoisie does not arise.

It is true that Mao Tse-tung advocated a united front with the national bourgeoisie in China against the Japanese imperialists and their ally the big bourgeoisie of a comprador character,. Mao states, "The big bourgeoisie of a comprador character is a class that directly serves the capitalists of the imperialist countries and is fed by them." He further writes, "Since Japan's armed invasion of China, the principal enemies of the Chinese revolution have been Japanese imperialism and all the collaborators and reactionaries who are in collusion with it, who have either openly capitulated or are prepared to capitulate." (*The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party*).

In the same article Mao writes : "Owing to the War of Resistance to Japan it (the national bourgeoisie) distinguishes itself not only from the capitulators of the big landlord class and the big bourgeoisie but also from big bourgeoisie diehards and, up to now remains a comparatively good ally of ours."

It is clear from these quotations that Mao makes a differentiation between the big bourgeoisie of a comprador character and the national bourgeoisie. Mao never advocated having the bourgeoisie as a whole as an ally of the revolutionaries as suggested by Mr Chattopadhyay in his letter. Even if we accept that the uprising in Bangladesh is a national liberation struggle, the question arises who are the national bourgeoisie ? But before describing the upsurge in East Bengal as a "bourgeois uprising" Mr Chattpadhyay has to answer the following questions : how could the bourgeoisie in East Bengal grow into, a political force to challenge the West Pakistani feudal class under the very rule of that class ? What is the class character of the Awami League? If it was possible for the bourgeoisie to emerge as a political force in the eastern wing of Pakistan, why then did the same historical event not take place in the western wing ?

HITENDRA MITRA
Calcutta



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