

# frontier

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## CENTRE COMES TO STAY

THE rickety coalition Ministry of West Bengal has come to a whimpering end before it could complete three months in office. Even the infamous Congress-PDF coalition, led by Dr P. C. Ghosh, had a longer tenure. In neither case the Ministry was prepared to resign, but they had to do it under Central orders. Mr Ajoy Mukherjee feels uncomfortable only when he heads a leftist ministry; he can then cast away chief ministership as easily as he does a pair of torn slippers. But there was no reason for him to get disgusted with a Congress-dominated coalition the sole purpose of whose existence was to keep the CPI(M) out of power. He was as much of a figurehead in the just-dead Ministry as he was in the other coalition he had headed earlier. His advice and recommendation to the Governor to dissolve the Assembly and subsequent decision to resign were not his own. They were foisted on him, and he had to submit for, as leader of a miniscule group in the Assembly, he had no option.

What made the Centre suddenly decide to ask the Democratic Coalition to vacate office is not clear. Of course, the coalition was under a severe strain, especially after the split in the Bangla Congress. But the leaders of the coalition must have foreseen it. They knew that in all such cases the infallible recipe is Cabinet expansion, for there are few people and fewer parties in the State that can resist the offer of a place in the Ministry. If the Coalition leaders allowed themselves to be inhibited by the limitless greed for office of the constituents of the heterogeneous coalition, they would not have formed the Ministry at all. The reasons cited by Mr Mukherjee in his letter to the Governor on June 25 are not tenable either. The Ministry did not commit *suttee*, however grief-stricken the Chief Minister and his Cabinet colleagues might have been over the murder of a Youth Congress leader in east Calcutta. They have become equally insensitive to murders of their own men and those of other parties. Nor is it possible that the Ministry resigned because administration was crumbling under the weight of the influx of evacuees from Bangladesh. With the resignation of the Ministry the bulk of the evacuees are not going to be shifted to other States. They will remain here to be looked after by the local administration; all that the Centre may do is to send a few officers to supervise.

the work. In the past, such arrangements have not made for efficiency, and there is no reason why it should now.

The dissolution of the Assembly is perhaps a pointer. There was no immediate threat to the Ministry, and even if a threat was developed, it could be warded off by putting a few Opposition members in prison. Three are already under arrest, and another three would not have made much of a difference to the democracy in practice in West Bengal. But the continuance of the Assembly would have obstructed Central presence in a big way in West Bengal. If the composition of the Assembly was different and the Congress(R) had a comfortable majority, no occasion for dissolution of the House would have arisen. The Ministry would have been the Centre's unfailing instrument. The coalition Ministry had to depend for survival on some left

parties whose disenchantment with the Prime Minister's radicalism is growing. The Assembly had to go so that the Centre may come in for a protracted stay. The revolt of the young in the Congress(R) might have been staged to give the takeover a look of unavoidability. For the Centre to take such pains to deliver the people of West Bengal from their woes, academic, political and others, seems unlikely. It may be an aftermath of the abject failure of the Prime Minister's emissaries to enlist the support of the world powers for Bangladesh and persuade them to withhold assistance from the military regime in Pakistan. Whether the Central presence in West Bengal is just a posture or a prelude to a more serious involvement can be, at this stage, a matter of guess only. It seems certain, however, that the Centre intends to remain in West Bengal as long as the Bangladesh problem persists.

## The Story Of Yahya Khan

Once upon a time there lived a shepherd in East Bengal. He had a number of sheep, which he kept in a fold close to his house. One day he went to market, leaving the door of his house open. On the ground there was a large pot with a little corn in the bottom. One of the sheep went into the house and found the pot. She put her head in to it, to try to get the corn, and her head stuck. She could not get it out again.

When the shepherd came back, he was surprised to find the sheep standing in the house with her head in the pot. He tried hard to pull it out, but could not do so. Other shepherds came and tried, but they too failed.

At last a man came riding past on a camel. He seemed wise and important and the shepherd was glad to ask his help. The man on the camel said, "it is quite easy to get the sheep's head out of the pot. I will

show you. But I must be able to get into your house. The door is too low, and the camel is too tall. You will have to make the doorway bigger."

The shepherd and his friends set to work and battered down part of the wall of the house, and the man on the camel rode in. Then he got down and looked at the sheep. "We shall have to cut her head off," he said and drew his sword and did so.

"But the head is still inside the pot," said the shepherd. "Yes", said the man. "But we can easily put that right. Bring me a large stone." The shepherd gave the man a stone, and he took it and struck the pot with it, so that the pot broke in pieces. The sheep's head then fell on the ground. The man got on his camel and rode away.

Then the other shepherds said: "This man who rides on a camel is indeed wise. He has done what none of the rest of us could do. It is

true he battered down the wall of the shepherd's house and killed the sheep by cutting off her head, and broke the corn pot in pieces. But he did get the sheep's head out of the pot."

## The U.S. And US

There have been demonstrations before the U.S. Embassy in Delhi over the shipment of "spares" for vehicles and aircraft to Pakistan even after March 25. The refugees in border districts of West Bengal gheraoed a high U.S. official. MPs have made noises and dock workers are threatening to boycott U.S. ships. For the exposure of the arms shipment credit goes again to the *New York Times*. The reason for public annoyance, both here and in the USA, is valid: if a power comes out in open support of the cause for which Islamabad is fighting—murdering and uprooting people from their homes—and continues to give arms aid, the action may stink, but it is overt. In the case of the USA, covert arms supply goes ill with the loud professions of sympathy for the suffering people of East Bengal and the bustling planeloads of relief material. The two faces of Janus are not pleasant.

It is said that the exposure would have had a much greater impact had it not been for the tremendous stir caused by the publication of the classified "McNamara papers" on Vietnam.

Both the exposures have been accepted as facts by those sections of the Indian bourgeoisie and the middle classes who are interested in these matters and angry editorials have been written. What would be their reaction to the *Los Angeles Times* report that personnel of the Defence Communication Agency of the Pentagon have been manning a radar system in Northern India to monitor China's nuclear and missile activities? Pakistan had such a U.S. base in Peshawar and it was the disclosure that the notorious U2 plane had

flown from this base and Mr Khrushchev's famous threat that such bases would fall within range of Soviet retaliation that induced hard second thoughts among the Pakistani rulers and led, ultimately, to its dismantling.

Delhi has denied the *Los Angeles Times* report, though, at the time of writing, the State Department and the Pentagon are rather bashful. Delhi says that the radar system, installed after the conflict with China in 1962, is manned by Indians and no information is given to other powers. The latter part of the denial is even harder to believe in view of the chickenhearted flurry in which Nehru and his Government entered into all sorts of understanding with the Western world during and after the debacle in 1962. There was provision, if we remember right, for exchange of information about the Chinese. Some of these provisions Mr Nehru denied, such as his earnest appeal for U.S. air support, but these

denials were far from convincing. The radar system in northern India may not be all that innocuous. But it will have the patronage of the two super-powers; and the disclosure will not perturb the Prime Minister who knows, more than her father ever did, what she wants, what Moscow and Washington want, and what should be done to achieve it. Non-alignment, non-intervention? They can be quoted for sentimental, old fools. As for denials, Indian officials stated with vehemence a number of times that no overflights by Pakistani military aircraft to East Bengal had taken place during the upheaval of 1968-69 when peasants were said to be marching towards Dacca in a wave of anarchy. The denials amused Dum Dum airport officials. With her massive mandate from a gullible people, Mrs Gandhi can play for massive stakes, ignoring the occasional, weak whimpers from the Left as the violent shadows of state repression further darken West Bengal.

## The Old Game

West Asia has returned to a war of words. The Americans are a bit quiet, after the abortive Rogers mission. It had raised high hopes, in view of the drama over Aly Sabry and his fellow-travellers. It almost looked as if Sadat was fed up with the Kremlin and had decided to flirt with Washington. But then came the Podgorny visit and the 15-year treaty of friendship with Moscow. President Sadat, after the arrest of the 'conspirators' and the famous treaty, is riding high.

But no Egyptian leader, however mighty, can afford to coo for long, however war-weary the people are supposed to be. The Arabs have a thing called pride and the leaders have to rattle their Russian sabres now and again. The gesture is reciprocated by the Israelis. The Defence Minister, General Dyan, thinks that the situation is getting nasty

again. With his Chief of Staff, he saw a demonstration of Israeli might on occupied Syrian territory. The Syrians took it easy. Iraq is sullen and feels isolated.

Trouble, however, continues to plague Jordan. The Palestinian guerillas are having a tough time. Ever since the semi-massacre of last September, they have been given little breathing space by the Jordanian army and King Hussein is on record as threatening to render the guerillas impotent at any cost. He means business and the rest of the Arab world has little time now to protest. The resistance movement itself is divided—somebody made some mistake last year.

A war in West Asia is unlikely, however loud and recurrent the threats. In the long run, it is a question of Big Power interests at stake, and a Russo-American confrontation

may never be recorded in history. The status quo, with minor shake-ups, is what suits all the parties, President Sadat not excluded.

The Palestinian refugees will continue to be restless—and liquidated. Does time cure everything? It does seem to dim memory: the Israelis who terrorised hundreds of thousands of Palestinians out of their homeland to set up a Jewish state are now shedding tears over the millions of refugees driven out by the armed forces—and their jackals—of an Islamic State. For that matter, the unanimous concern shown by America and other capitalist powers for East Bengal, powers whose hands are dipped in the blood of millions, has been surprising.

## Striking In Towns

An important thing in the socio-economic life of Latin America is the movement of rural people to cities. The mobility is directly proportionate to the growth of urbanisation. This has largely conditioned the attitude of the urban guerillas of Latin America who have left their rural areas and taken to the cities that have mushroomed these days. Operating through the maze of unpolicable alleys of the city ghettos and often successfully identifying themselves with the people, the guerillas have repeatedly struck at the government and also nabbed foreign diplomats to use them as pawns in political haggings.

Such acts of assassination and kidnapping for political reasons are nothing new. But this has an added proportion in that it is being used as a weapon by urban guerillas of different countries as a method of armed insurrection of the dispossessed against those who have dispossessed them. Last month Ulster's terrorists who are said to be facing a colonial-type situation cut down a British soldier and injured several people in a bomb run on a local police bureau. At

about the same time Turkey's PLA shot dead the abducted Israeli Ambassador in their bid to force Istanbul to stand by the Arabs against the Jews. More impressive, however, is the record of the Brazilian urban guerillas. They showed their prowess when they forced authority to barter 15 comrades for a U.S. ambassador and then another 70 of their people for a Swiss ambassador. This art has reached perfection in the hands of the Uruguayan guerillas who have come to be known as Tupamaros.

Despite their show the Brazilians despise any idea of mass contact. The Tupamaros, however, stress publicity, 'revolutionary justice' and efficient intelligence. Last year they sacked a tobacco magnate's home and got away with evidence of tax evasion and as a show of justice forced the authority to impose a record fine on him. On another occasion they took the city of Pando by surprise and held it as long as they willed. The Tupamaros have also shown their hand in infiltrating the administration and the army when they captured an army barracks in Montevideo in 1969 with the help of their men within it and then engineered a mini-revolt by granting amnesty to those who agreed to give up the fight.

Though their six-point programme has scrupulously avoided any theoretical debate, the Tupamaros have never been found wanting in the art of public relations. Unlike Mari ghella, the dead Brazilian guerilla leader who thought that "the urban guerilla's basic reason for existence... is to shoot" and who organised "firing groups" of four or five men, the Tupamaros work for organisation, mass support and marksmanship. Small wonder, therefore, that they have come to stay and the Uruguayans have seen that "the guerilla is a possibility". President Pacheco's democratic veil has blown over and the news of clashes between police and guerillas now fill the newspapers.

## View from Delhi

# Emergency Exit

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

IT has never been difficult, even on that side of the Naxalbari uprising, to conjure up visions of a threat to eastern India's security. A plan for placing the entire region under a military governor has been gathering dust in the Home Ministry's archives since circa 1962 and the authorship is credited to the late Mr Lal Bahadur Shastri. Mrs Indira Gandhi is supposed to do better than her father and Mr Shastri taken together.

New Delhi has heard, during the last two weeks, the case for emergency in the eastern region surreptitiously canvassed in some quarters. Access to the Government's intelligence reports is supposed to vest in one a degree of authenticity that is beyond question. Knowledge of alleged Naxalbari plots and the like is supposed to be the moral justification for selling the case for an emergency and the less informed are not expected to ask awkward questions. So the case has to be made out surreptitiously which means no motives behind the Maintenance of Internal Security Act and measures more socialistic than that are beyond analysis and judgment. Bangladesh provides the political and moral alibi where things are really hard to explain to the bourgeois liberal who has funny notions of civil liberties. One is not supposed to remind the powers that be that the Preventive Detention Act had to die some 17 months ago because the ruling party had no majority in the Lok Sabha. Now it has majority on a massive scale and the new legislation has to be proportionately more socialistic in its provisions. Confiscation of the property of those eluding arrest is a new dimension to preventive detention legislation. Every generation is supposed to improve upon the previous. What the Nehru

era failed to provide has to come from the Indira Gandhi era. Any way, those who evade arrest warrants are not expected to believe in the right to property, (fundamental or peripheral).

All that stands in the way of declaring an emergency in the eastern region is the reactionary Constitution. In 1966-67, when there was a demand in Parliament for scrapping the National Emergency, the Centre's ready answer was that the threat to national security was indivisible and the emergency cannot be limited to any particular part of the country (like the sensitive border areas). If the Government wanted it could have secured the necessary amendment to the Constitution because the Opposition would have co-operated with the process. Now the Centre proclaims undue solicitude for people in the rest of the country and does not want to bring the whole country under an emergency. (The Maintenance of Internal Security Act can take care of the rest of the country). It wants to limit the emergency to the eastern region. So an elaborate exercise is on.

It is becoming a government by lawyers. The troika of new-found socialists (a former judge who resigned because Rs 3,500 is inadequate salary), a political dilettante who discovered himself as the champion of Marwari business interests in Calcutta and a former CPI leader whose battle against the Madras State over his preventive detention over 20 years ago is part of legal history, constitute the troika of lawyers who can sort Mrs Gandhi's problems through their instant approach to issues.

Meantime the agony of Bangladesh continues. The hawks still want military action. The military leadership would like an emergency

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situation but no military engagement. It is being realised at last that the Bangladesh issue is incapable of settlement independent of the Kashmir issue. In fact, it may be revealed now, Mujibur Rahman's break with Gen. Yahya Khan came when Bhutto vetoed the proposal for shelving Kashmir. This was one of Mujib's two demands—the other being trade with India, more specifically between the two Bengals. Bhutto had no objection to the second one but Kashmir was everything.

It would be well to remember that in the Punjabi-dominated army leadership here, Kashmir is everything and East Bengal nothing. It has not been any different with the Nehru family which was prepared to make the nation pay any price for retaining Kashmir in India. Government's hatchmen in the press corps have been writing about an Azad East Bengal where the refugees would be resettled, on the lines of what is euphemistically described as Pak-occupied Kashmir.

Mr Swaran Singh's mission has been more than a failure. President Nixon is supposed to have assured him personally that no arms would go to Pakistan. But three ships are known to have left the United States.

One does not know how many Soviet ships are on way to Pakistan because there is no equivalent of a *New York Times* in Moscow to bare the truth.

The Soviet lobby in New Delhi is busy whitewashing the activities of the pro-Pakistani Arab lobby. In fact the two lobbies overlap. It is now confirmed that the envoy of the Arab League has been recalled. This obviously is the consequence of New Delhi's displeasure over his activities. Another Arab envoy is going strong. The establishment left that has been doing the public relations for the Arab lobby is embarrassed that Israel has seized the opportunity to project a pro-India image of itself. The Arab Dawnists have to work overtime to counter this.

It is now clear that there is a slide-back in India's attitude to the Bangladesh issue. It no longer insists on an independent Bangladesh. It would settle for a deal between the National Awami League and the military regime if that would only help send the refugees swarms back. The super-power plan to prevent the break-up of Pakistan is acceptable to India. Mr Swaran Singh's statement about his visit abroad makes this amply clear. The Indian ruling classes are not for a change in the

power balance on the sub-continent and it is no accident that the super-powers do not want any change either.

So everyone is happy to forget Mujibnagar. By the way how many care to know, for instance, that the Mukti Fauz units have been stripped of heavy equipment? The reasons for this could be two-fold: fear that the equipment might eventually go to political extremist groups in India or the indiscreet use of the heavy equipment might escalate the clashes with the Pakistani army in the border areas. There might appear to be a compulsive drift towards a military conflict. But one can sit back and relax because the situation has its own checks and balances. Conflict in the eastern wing would mean a conflict on the Kashmir front. The super-powers would not let such a situation last long. Shipment of U.S. arms to Pakistan is supposed to imply a warning that any Indian attempt to act on the borders would not be approved of. The Soviet attitude is not very different here. There are many levers the super-powers can operate effectively.

June 27, 1971

## Our Attitude To Bangladesh : An Anatomy Of Indian Reaction—II

S. R.

WHILE these facts are concealed the regionalists are given a free play in the Indian press. In the first place an extensive campaign is on in favour of the Bengali nationalism for which Sheikh Mujib and his Awami League fought. India has reasons to champion this nationalism if she welcomes the disintegration of Pakistan. But the dynamics of nationalism must react on the Indian body politic where all sorts of centrifugal forces are operating. No

one will deny that in the modern Indian context nationalism has always been identified with regional aspirations manifested in the separatist tendencies in the peripheral States. The foreign Press, acting in unison, has successfully revived the concept of Bengali nationalism and the Indian hawks have followed suit. A balkanized India will produce dividends to world imperialism and their running dogs in the country. A massive campaign, has therefore, been un-

leashed through the capitalist press to rejuvenate those tendencies which will reduce India to what Pakistan is today.

The politics of disintegration and separatism have been in play since the turn of the century. Deriving incentive from the imperialist policy of divide and rule, it has corroded the fundamental oneness of the exploited who lived in the area between the Hindukush and Chittagong and between the Himalayas and the seas.

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Recently regional chauvinism has been added to religion, i.e., to what was the original basis of all the politics of disintegration. This is bound to be. The class of people who have monopolized state power for the last two and a half decades have perpetrated their exploitation through the unscrupulous exercise of all ancient techniques, suitable to the Indian milieu of semi-colonialism and semi-feudalism. In spite of their contradictions the feudal landowners and the comprador bourgeoisie have gone hand in hand to fan regionalism (on the basis of narrow ethnical differences) and linguism (there are 25 major languages, each claiming over about 500,000 speakers and 47 other Indian and tribal languages and dialects claiming over 100,000 speakers). As a result India at present has the largest number of political parties in the world. In the last election at least 75 regional and sub-regional parties registered with the Election Commission. Only eight of these 75 parties have a sizable following in more than one State. Again, of these 75, the majority of the big parties are champions of regional chauvinism, ethnical separatism and religious communalism. Political parties like the Jana Sangh, Hindu Mahasabha, Akali Dal, Shiv Sena, Muslim League, Jamaat-e-Islami, Muslim Majlis, Majlis-e-Mushawarat etc. are obscurantist and revivalist parties which owe their existence to religious and regional fanatics. A reactionary ideology of separatism has become an operative political principle for these parties.

How do these parties react to Bengali nationalism? Squarely, there is a split among them. Hindu religious and regional chauvinists who often raise artificial discord over language and other issues to take the people away from the political orbit of revolution have united to uphold Bengali nationalism. Almost all the papers of north and south have urged the Government to recognize Bangla Desh. Recognition of the regional and nationalist aspirations of the Bengalis would give them a handle

to advance their own cause of regional separatism. Even Mr E.M.S. Namboodiripad has equated conditions in West Bengal with those in East Bengal. His statements were given an extensive and favourable coverage in some northern papers like *The Organiser* and *The Motherland*. The Akali Dal General Secretary, Mr Jagjit Singh has warned the Centre that if it does not reverse its policy of discrimination against Punjab and give greater autonomy to the States, India could also face a situation similar to East Bengal. He demanded a 'loose federation' in the country and suggested that the Centre should have control of only defence, foreign affairs, communications and currency (reminiscent of the demands of the Awami League in East Bengal and of the DMK in Tamil Nadu). The DMK, despite its alliance with the new Congress at the Centre, has been pressing for a similar plan. The Chief Minister, Mr Karunanidhi, has warned that 'separation' would become unavoidable if the demand for state autonomy continued to be neglected for long. It is interesting that *Qaumi Dard*, the official organ of the ruling Sant Akali Dal, has backed the DMK demand for financial autonomy of the States.

An antithesis to this stand is presented by the reactionary organs of the minority community. *Radiance*, published by Jamaat-e-Islami, has condemned Bengali nationalism in all its issues since the outbreak of the war in Pakistan. True to its past behaviour it has taken a religious stand. In its April 18 issue it wrote: "It should not be overlooked that India was a party to the agreement of partition. Recognition of Bangla Desh would mean repudiation of that agreement which is the very basis of present international borders in the Indo-Pak sub-continent". *Current* (May 1, 1971) points out that Moulvi Farooq, Chief of the pro-Pakistan Awami Action Committee, has openly supported the genocide in East Bengal. Mr Shamim Ahmad who defeated Bakshi Ghulam

Mohammad at the Srinagar Constituency in the last Lok Sabha election has advised the government to negotiate with General Yahya Khan. The upcountry Muslims have associated the Kashmir problem with that of East Bengal and demanded that Sheikh Abdullah must be given a chance to participate in elections. The Muslims feel strongly outraged over the "immorality of denying the very democratic freedoms at home whose champions we happen to be abroad."

### Nationalism

Two questions emerge: What is the nature of Bengali nationalism? Can this nationalist uprising be the precursor of a bigger revolution?

National movement, Stalin says, "is a struggle of the bourgeois classes among themselves. Sometimes the bourgeoisie succeeds in drawing the proletariat into the national movement, and then the national struggle externally assumes a 'nationwide' character. But this is so externally. In its essence it is always a bourgeois struggle, one that is to the advantage and profit mainly of the bourgeoisie" (Stalin: Works, Vol. II, page 319, Moscow).

"The bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation, repressed on every hand is naturally stirred into movement. It appeals to its 'native folk' and begins to shout about the 'fatherland', claiming that its own cause is the cause of the nation as a whole. It recruits itself an army from among its 'countrymen' in the interests of...the 'fatherland'. Nor do the 'folk' always remain unresponsive to its appeals; they rally around its banner: the repression from above affects them too and provokes their discontent" (Ibid. P. 317).

Thus begins a national movement. The current wave of Bengali nationalism in India is nothing different from it. The Indian Bengalis have caught this contagion from that ancient part of their country which has been separated from it by artificial barriers imposed by imperialists. It is inhabited by people who speak the same language

as the Indian Bengalis and share with it all its glories and ignominies. Recently the Industry and Commerce Number (1971 special) of the *Organiser* wrote: "The emergence of Bangla Deśh is one of the more significant political developments of the twentieth century. It is the triumph of cultural nationalism over religious nationalism." The same issue says: "The emergence of Bangla Deśh re-establishes the historic fact that from Attock to Cuttack, and from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari, India is one country and one nation...".

The two Bengals as parts of the whole of the Indo-Pak sub-continent have witnessed during the last two and a half decades a struggle of feudalism and colonialism on their last legs. Those who monopolized the power of the State and blocked the avenues to the full development of capitalism were bastards of feudalism and colonialism. In the semi-feudal and semi-colonial milieu this comprador class has remained, as Mao Tse-tung tells us, "wholly appendages of the international bourgeoisie, depending upon imperialism for their survival and growth" (Mao Tse-tung: Selected Works, Vol. I P. 13, Peking, 1967). So far as India is concerned this class standing vis-a-vis the working people has represented the most backward and reactionary relations of production. In the agrarian sector agriculture suffered badly, irrigation facilities were not improved and the ancient scourge of fragmentation and rural indebtedness continued; big landlords, jotedars owned more and more land; primitive methods of cultivation persisted; peasants remained exposed to the vagaries of nature; lashed by usurers, unacquainted with modern machines, having no dwelling in his own place of work and no credit with which to await the harvest, a poor peasant remained perpetually sunk beneath the level of subsistence.

In the non-agrarian urban sector the bourgeoisie and their external superiors exploited the industrial proletariat. A superficial attempt was made to launch India on the

road to industrialisation. But this was a hoax, a window dressing performed by the Indian managers of the international bourgeoisie. A parasitic industrialism grew which had no capacity to meet the basic needs of the country. To run our industry Indian managers took mandate from the White House, Whitehall and Kremlin. There is no national industry aimed at producing agricultural appliances and no attempt was made, except in some states, to keep the rural sector equipped with electrical energy. All productive forces were bottled up and the massive unemployment explosion, the most fearsome development of modern India, followed. A recent Reserve Bank Survey tells that 13 million people at present are fully unemployed. By the end of the Fourth Plan period 28 million fresh hands will enter the labour market. The 1970 registers of exchanges all over the country show that by April 30, 1970, 3.46 million job-seekers stood in the queue. West Bengal tops the list with 5.173 lakhs. In Delhi and places around it the total figure of unemployment stood at 1,39,456. Out of them 85,602 were educated and 5,018 were post-graduates. *Blitz* (December 5, 1970) computed that there are 3,000,000 educated unemployed, 17 million matriculates, 2.1 million graduates in arts and humanities and about a million scientific and technical personnel. "The figure (of unemployment) was 1,63,000 in 1953. By 1965, it jumped to 9,17,000! From 10.9 lakhs at the end of 1968 it grew to 13.1 lakhs last year and took a leap to 17.6 lakhs by April this year (i.e. 1970 April)". The Central Employment Directorate has warned that by 1978, there will be 60 million fully unemployed and 100 million under-employed people.

This projection gives us the sinking feeling of a sinking society. The leadership of the bourgeoisie has definitely failed to bring about radical changes in society. The working people, confronted with destruction, have brought forward the question of ownership of the means of produc-

tion. Pressed on every hand the bourgeoisie "is naturally stirred into movement". The civil war in Pakistan has given it a massive opportunity to divert the people's attention from the commotion at home to developments abroad. But the bourgeoisie cannot act independently because it is an appendage of the foreign bourgeoisie (Mao Tse-tung, Works, Vol I, P. 13). The bourgeoisie "of the dominant nation intervenes in the struggle with its own methods of 'arresting and preventing'." The bourgeoisie—whether big or small—of the dominant nation is able to deal more 'swiftly' and 'decisively' with its competitor" (Stalin: Works, Vol II, P. 316). Thus in all its attitude the Indian bourgeoisie must follow its external superiors.

### Precursor?

The foreign and Indian press has raised the spectre that the war in Pakistan has come as a windfall to the revolutionaries on the Indo-Pak sub-continent. From this one can conclude that the current nationalist rising, upheld so much by the Indian bourgeoisie, will lead to a bigger and all-embracing proletarian revolution.

According to Stalin, "the strength of the national movement is determined by the degree to which the wide strata of the nation, the proletariat and the peasantry, participate in it." "Whether the proletariat rallies to the banner of bourgeois nationalism depends on the degree of development of class antagonisms, on the class consciousness and degree of organisation of the proletariat. The class-conscious proletariat has its own tried banner, and has no need to rally to the banner of the bourgeoisie".

"As far as the peasants are concerned, their participation in the national movement depends primarily on the character of the repressions. If the repressions affect the 'land', as was the case in Ireland, then the mass of the peasants immediately rally to the banner of the national movement" (Stalin: Works, Vol. II, P. 317).

"Depending on these factors, the

national movement either assumes a mass character and steadily grows (in Ireland and Galicia), or is converted into a series of petty collusions, degenerating into squabbles, 'fights' over signboards (as in some of the small towns of Bohemia)" (Ibid. P. 318).

"The content of the national movement, of course, cannot everywhere be the same: it is wholly determined by the diverse demands made by the movement." (Ibid).

The Indian proletariat is sufficiently class conscious, because of the tyranny perpetrated on it during the last quarter of a century. The workers have their own 'tried banner' and they have no need to rally round the bourgeois call. The recent issue of the journal of the Indian revolutionaries wrote: "The revolutionary armed peasant struggle that has developed in several districts of East Bengal under the leadership of the Communist Party of East Pakistan (Marxist-Leninist) struck fear into the hearts of the imperialists and the Pakistani landlords and comprador bourgeoisie. If the armed agrarian revolution spread, this age-old paradise for plunderers would be lost to them: their dreams of turning East Bengal into one more link in the ring of imperialism's bases encircling Socialist China and launching a new world war would be reduced to ashes. The Indian reactionaries too were afraid, for in no distant time the peasants' armed struggle in East Bengal would forge close links with the peasants' armed struggle raging in West Bengal and the two would become one vast, irresistible tide that would sweep imperialism, social imperialism and the reactionaries of the two countries into their graves."

However powerful the national movement might be, the proletariat cannot for a long time rally on the call of nationalism. Their class interest and class consciousness will go against it. The bourgeois call for rallying national forces "diverts the attention of large strata from social questions, questions of the class struggle, to national questions, questions 'com-

mon' to the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. And this creates a favourable soil for lying propaganda about 'harmony of interests', for glossing over the class interests of the proletariat and for the intellectual enslavement of the workers." (Stalin: Works, Vol. II, P. 319.) When the proletariat realizes through its sufferings and sacrifice that class collaboration cannot resolve its economic hardships and social limitations, it ceases to line up behind bourgeois leadership. Impatient and restive as the workers are because of the centuries-old oppression, they sink regional and religious differences and unite to forge a bigger movement against the bourgeoisie. Stalin wrote: "But the workers are interested in the complete amalgamation of all their workers into a single international army, in their speedy and final emancipation from intellectual bondage to the bourgeoisie, and in the full and free development of the intellectual forces of their brothers, whatever nation they may belong to" (Ibid. P. 320). "The workers therefore combat and will continue to combat the policy of national oppression in all its forms, from the most subtle to the most crude, as well as the policy of inciting nations against each other in all its forms". (Ibid. Pp. 320-321).

It is not perhaps unnatural that the war in Pakistan would come as a windfall to the revolutionaries of the Indo-Pak sub-continent. Trailing in economic development and suffering two concurrent explosions of population and unemployment, the Indian sub-continent provides the most effective field for revolution. With all that had gone by this was bound to be. Lenin could foresee this many years ago:

"In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China etc., account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And it is precisely this majority that, during the past few years, has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation with extraordinary ra-

pidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest shadow of doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be."

The present developments on the Indian sub-continent show how correct Lenin was. A massive stock of hungry population in villages sunk beneath the level of subsistence have been united with an equally hungry mass in the towns and cities who have no means to employ their labour in the total production of the country. The time may come when they would refuse to accept poverty and destitution as their ultimate fate and their energy would be let loose in a joint stream of action. With this possibility lurking in the background India surely stands on the threshold of change.

(Concluded)

## The Guerillas Of Latin America— I

LAJPAT RAI

WHAT has become of the guerilla movements that flourished in half a dozen countries of Latin America in the wake of the Cuban revolution? What course they took; what difficulties they passed through; what lessons they offer to the liberation struggles in the Third World; and finally what is the future of armed struggle on that continent—these are some of the questions which are being posed and answered by the revolutionaries of Latin America after the death of Che Guevara.

The last question has been answered by a British expert on Latin America at the end of his detailed study of some of the guerilla movements. He writes:

"It is easy to conclude that with the death of Che Guevara and the annihilation of the Bolivian guerillas the strategy of armed struggle in Latin America is over. The guerilla movements are in a state of retreat. In Peru they have been wiped out. In

Venezuela, Colombia and Guatemala they are on the defensive. . . And yet in spite of these discouragements many people remain to support the armed struggle. For such people the death of Guevara will be an inspiration and a challenge, rather than the proof that the strategy is wrong."<sup>1</sup>

What Richard Gott says is corroborated by facts. The guerilla movement in Latin America has retreated in one sense and advanced in another. While the movement has been wiped out in Peru and is on the defensive in Venezuela, Colombia and Guatemala, it has advanced in different forms, sometimes in the form of urban guerillas in Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina. While the Tupamaros of Uruguay have made headlines in the world press, in Argentina a section of the Peronista movement\* has taken to arms and set up armed guerilla bands in the countryside. Similarly Paraguay has seen its first armed bands walking the *Sierras* of the country with the message of liberty for the people groaning under a vicious dictatorship. But for the sake of drawing lessons, and examining the strategy of armed struggle in the Latin American context, we have to content ourselves with the older movements which have now a history of over a decade. And the first on the list is Guatemala as it has the longest history of armed struggle on the continent.

Guatemala is a poor country. Of the 70,000 a year who die in Guatemala, 30,000 are children, the child mortality being 40 times that of the United States. Two per cent of the people belonging to the Guatemalan oligarchy possess 80% of the land and the resultant power. Guatemala is also a Red Indian country; over 50% of its population comes from the old Red Indian stock—95% illiterate, 85% diseased, 80% alcoholic, 70% outside the money economy.

Guatemala seethes with violence—

<sup>1</sup> Richard Gott, *Guerilla Movements in Latin America*, 1970, p. 355

Followers of Dictator Peron now in exile in Spain.

the violence of the Right—blind bloody, indiscriminate violence in cities and villages organised by two para-military organisations, MANO (organized nationalist anti-Communist movement) and NOA (New Anti-Communist Organisation), both financed by the military and the oligarchy. According to Father Melville, an American priest expelled from Guatemala, "During the past 18 months three (right-wing terrorist) groups have assassinated more than 2,800 intellectuals, students, labour leaders and peasants who have in any way tried to organise and combat the ills of Guatemalan society."<sup>2</sup>

Guatemala is an occupied country, economically squeezed by the United Fruit Company, militarily dominated by the Pentagon, her officers trained in American military schools, especially in the Counter-Insurgency School at Panama, where the main subjects taught are murder and torture. It is a country swarming with Peace Corps and Green Berets.

The President of Guatemala, Julio César Méndez Montenegro, is a civilian puppet in the hands of the army top brass. He came to be elected by a popular vote but the army refused to put him in power till he reached understanding with it. The army is the master of the situation and the 'Constitutional' President washes his hands of it.

Such are the objective conditions in Guatemala where the first bands of guerillas began to operate in 1955 after the overthrow of the Arbenz Government elected by a popular vote on a limited progressive platform. Arbenz, a bourgeois liberal, initiated a not-so-thorough going land reform, but dared to expropriate vast and idle lands of the United Fruit Company. His government was thrown out by a CIA inspired and financed coup led by the reactionary Colonel Castillo Armas, whose first act on assuming power was to reverse the limited land reform by handing

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Eduardo Galeano, *Guatemala—un Paes Ocupado*, 1969, p. 13.

over 105 million acres of expropriated land back to UFC and the landlords. This created the first condition in which the guerillas were to rise and flourish. The second condition was the violence of the Right. According to Eduardo Galeano: "Guerilla violence is the reply to the system's violence. The double violence of the system: indirect violence, expressed in Latin America by the simple but terrible fact that each year as many children die of hunger or disease as the toll of three Hiroshima type atom bombs and direct violence by military and police."<sup>3</sup>

The Cuban revolution of 1959 was the third factor which acted as a catalyst and provided a sharp political content to the armed guerilla movements in Guatemala.

### Army Officers

The first Guatemalan guerilla leaders were the army officers. Since the beginning of 1960 135 army officers were planning a coup d'état as members of a secret group. Their leader was Rafael S. Periera and the immediate reason was the lending of sites to the CIA by the Government for training Cuban exiles to invade Cuba. The revolt proved a failure as on the appointed day, November 13, only 45 officers took part in the operation. Faced with defeat and the prospect of execution if captured, the rebel officers retired to the mountains and then went into exile. This group of fugitive army men had two young lieutenants, Augusto Turcios Lima and Marco Antonio Yon Sosa—the future leaders of two guerilla movements of Guatemala, the FAR and MR 13. The former was to work in cooperation with the Communist Party (PGT) and the latter to collaborate for a short time with the Guatemalan Trotskyites, coming together to form a united front.

Yon Sosá's, MR 13 was based entirely on the peasantry. It spoke of "awakening the spontaneity of peasants and workers," of establishing a single "United Confederation of Wor-

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 132.

kers and Peasants", warned against "Stalinist bureaucracies" and emphasized the technique of "Armed Propaganda"\* i.e. to enter a village with gun in hand, to explain to the population the motives of guerilla struggle and set up secret committees of action to carry on work after the guerillas depart. Sosa believed that in Guatemala, the revolution was to be a socialist revolution and an armed revolution. He openly sided with the Chinese Communist Party as against the Soviet policy of peaceful coexistence and believed, unlike the Cubans who wanted to be away from the Sino-Soviet ideological dispute, that the Chinese line of opposition to peaceful coexistence and peaceful transition served to activate the revolution and provided a basis for regrouping of all revolutionary forces on the "path of armed struggle against capitalism and imperialism".

Turcios Lima, the leader of the FAR, had doubts about MR13's policy of socialist revolution. He, however, had his differences with the leadership of the PGT and wanted to develop an independent movement. "I am not a communist", he told an interviewer, "though I accept Marxism-Leninism". He declared that he wanted to keep the movement independent of the world communist currents. "FAR is a nationalist movement," he said, "supported neither by Moscow, nor Peking, nor Havana."

Turcios Lima died in a jeep accident at the age of twenty-five.

His successor was César Montes, a member of the Central Committee of the PGT—a young communist militant on whose shoulders fell the task of leading the guerilla movement out of the "sinister influence" of the PGT. His letter of resignation from the 'revisionist party' became a document of primary importance for cadres of the guerilla movement of the MR13 and the FAR.

In 1965, the guerillas had some

\* Regis Debray criticises the technique of Yon Sosa in his *Revolution in the Revolution?*

reverses which were caused both by tactical mistakes of leaders as well as by defections. Another reason was the attitude of the PGT leadership which was largely influenced by the Right-wing terror and jailing of communist leaders.

#### Major Reappraisal

Faced with the situation, the guerillas began a major reappraisal of their position. This involved the FAR's relationship both with the PGT and with Yon Sosa and the MR13. Since Fidel Castro's attack on Yon Sosa\* at the Tricontinental Conference, relations between the two movements had been cool, but during 1966 Yon Sosa had divested himself of his Trotskyist support. Hence in theory, there was little that divided the two groups, and during the course of 1967 after prolonged discussions Yon Sosa joined the FAR as its leader and César Montes as his second in command.

The PGT had supported the guerilla movement, but always with reservations. The leading Guatemalan Communist, J. M. Fortuny, after a visit to Moscow in 1966, declared that armed struggle in Guatemala was only "a question of tactics and not that of strategy". He talked of combining peaceful with non-peaceful methods of struggle.

In an article in the *World Marxist Review*<sup>4</sup> Fortuny stressed the need for "reappraisal" of the guerilla movement and "adjusting it to the changing Guatemalan scene."

Another issue on which differences erupted in 1967 was that of leadership and control of the guerilla movement. The PGT leadership wanted the guerillas to accept its control on the plea that "politics must control the arms" or the primacy of political over the military.

The united FAR refused to accept these conditions. Cesar Montes was

\* While criticising Yon Sosa Fidel never questioned his honesty and integrity.

<sup>4</sup> J. M. Fortuny, *World Marxist Review*, February 1967.

censored and called to the city to explain his conduct before the central committee. Instead he sent in his resignation and attacked the PGT leadership for "playing with the armed guerilla movement," for "side-tracking it into its incorrect, opportunist general line of surrender before the enemy".

In his public statement Montes accused the leadership of the PGT for never having taken any genuine interest in the guerilla movement:

"It is known that no—not a single—military operation in our armed struggle to date has been inspired, guided or led—directly or indirectly—by the leading clique of the PGT, which calls itself a party. Its leaders never bothered to study the problems of war or its laws and never made an attempt to analyse the experiences of the combats of the people."

The bitterness of the FAR guerillas against the orthodox communists is best shown in the following words of Montes:

"After four years of fighting this is the balance sheet: 300 revolutionaries fallen in combat, 3,000 people murdered by the Juleo César Mendez Montenegro regime. *The PGT (its ruling clique) supplied the ideas, the FAR the dead*"\*

Explaining FAR's political differences with the PGT leadership Montes said:

"We reject the pseudo-revolutionary ideas (of the PGT party clique) which does not believe in the people's ability to take power into their own hands, which has confidence in the ability of the bourgeoisie to direct a democratic regime of state capitalism progressing peacefully, evolving tranquilly towards socialism... *It is a submissive opportunist, fainthearted, outmoded, passive vision*."

Referring to his and FAR's breaking of "all organic and ideological" connections with the PGT, Montes asserted:

"This break fully corresponds to a historic law which has been applied,

\* Full Text, Tricontinental Bulletin Year III No. 20. May 1968 Havana.

at opportune moments by all revolutionaries, beginning with Marx and Lenin, who did not hesitate to break with the opportunists..."

He ended his statement by saying that though he had resigned from the membership of the PGT he will never resign his position as a communist "which is earned not through a membership card but through struggle, through combat, through acting ideologically, in harmony with the proletariat..."

Faced with the withdrawal of the bulk of the guerillas from the PGT, the Guatemalan communists hastily had to concoct a scheme which would allow them to continue paying lip-service to the idea of guerilla warfare without doing much about it. They hit on the idea of forming their own FAR and in order to avoid confusion—or perhaps to create it—they called it "*Fuerza Armadas Revolucionarias* (Hitherto FAR stood for *Fuerza Armadas Rebeldes*). They made a public statement saying that the split was an internal division in the FAR "between an adventurist minority and a majority with a unitary attitude". But the people of Guatemala know the real character of the PGT FAR. They call it the "peaceful guerilla movement," guided by old friends staying in the Kremlin."

According to the united FAR leadership, "the struggle between the healthy (represented by the armed guerilla movement of FAR) and the malignant (represented by the PGT) will continue and will strengthen the movement while shall go on till the victory of the people is achieved".

(To be continued).

<sup>5</sup> Declaration of the Executive Command of the FAR Tricontinental Bulletin Year IV No 27, July 17, 1970.

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JULY 3, 1971

## Honourable Big Biz

A.P.M.

NEW Delhi has formalised what big business has been doing surreptitiously for quite some time. From now on larger business houses will be allowed to enter those specific areas reserved so long for the small-scale sector if they agree to export at least 75% of their expansion. The Government, however, warns that expansion of big business in this manner will not be allowed to hamper growth of small units. The only dignified remark possible under the provocation is that this is all balls.

It was at a seminar organized early last year in Calcutta that a few spirited small-scale industrialists exposed the nefarious manner in which big business had penetrated deep into the areas of operation then strictly prohibited for it. They cited cases in which ancillary units, required to supply components to a big unit, had been set up by the owners of the big unit itself. It is all strictly proper on paper. The ancillary units thus set up behave like genuine small units and enjoy the sundry privileges that manufacturing units in the small-scale sector enjoy. Only, the so-called independent small-scale entrepreneur is actually a paid employee of the big firm.

The advantages of this system are many. Getting supply of raw materials is a sufficiently trying problem for industry. Small units, however, enjoy a limited privilege in this respect because they get their supplies, especially of imported materials, from the State small-scale industries directorates. There are also certain tax concessions. The labour welfare requirements are more easily dispensable in a small unit. Since the usual difficulties a small unit faces in carrying on its business in respect of finance, technology, personnel and market are totally non-existent in such clandestine units, big business has over the last few years penetrated the small-scale sector. The genuine

small-scale industrialists who revealed quite a good deal in that seminar were angry and outspoken because this practice is cutting at the root of their prosperity and they are unable to fight back.

Meanwhile, New Delhi's formalisation of the existence of big business in the small sector is the latest sop administered to moneyed power. Indeed, the uniqueness of Indian socialistic planning lies in the fact that it has been consistently helping concentration of economic power in the hands of the exalted few. Normally, the Dutt Committee report and the resultant hullabaloo should have occurred at the beginning of planning. They occurred almost twenty years later. New Delhi maintained its unfamiliar radical stance till 1969 and then capitulated. Since last year, open calls have gone out to big busi-

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ness to lead the economy back to a renewal of the supremacy of the private sector.

Twenty licences were issued to 11 larger industrial houses (as defined by the Dutt Committee report) in 1970. There were 6 licences for the Tatas, 3 for the Birlas, 2 to Andrew Yule, 1 to the Goenkas, 2 to the Thapars, 1 each to the Sri Ram group, Mafatlal, Sarabhai, Surajmal Nagarmull, J. K. Singhania and Walchand. Year before last 38 licences were issued to 14 large houses. The Birlas bagged 9, the Tatas, Bird Heilgers and Sarabhai got 5 each, Surajmal Nagarmull 3, the Goenkas, Mafatlal and J. K. Singhania 2 each and 1 each to the Bangurs, Sri Ram, Thapar, Andrew Yule and Tulsidas Kilachand. The industries covered were: metallurgical industries, boilers and steel generating plant, electrical equipment, transportation, industrial machinery, machine tools, earth-moving machinery, miscellaneous mechanical and engineering industries, fertilisers, chemicals, drugs and pharmaceuticals, textiles, sugar and good processing industries.

While on licences, the Dutt Committee report can be quoted with profit: "The Birla house has also succeeded in obtaining a very large proportion of the licensed capacity in certain key products and its attempt has been to put in as many applications as possible, obtain as many licences as possible and thus pre-empt capacity." New Delhi has evidently decided that this remark is out of tune with today's realities.

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## Vidyasagar : Fate Of A Liberal

BENOY GHOSE

SINCE it is not possible in a short article to cover the manysided activities of Vidyasagar and bring his image adequately into the historical focus of the second half of the 19th century, when he acted predominantly his individual role in society, I have chosen to speak about his educational activities only and that also I shall touch upon, without going into detail.

The growth of an educated Bengali middle class is perhaps the most important consequence of the social changes induced by urbanisation, commercialisation and the new service-oriented education under British rule in the 19th century. This class was broadly divided into two groups, English-educated, and Sanskrit-educated. We may call the former the 'Westernised' stratum, and the latter the 'traditional' stratum of the new educated elite. There was difference in the social composition of the two strata. The Westernised stratum mainly comprised recruits from the new urban and rural aristocracy and the upper middle class; the traditional stratum consisted of recruits mainly from the middle and the lower middle class. Both the strata were predominantly Hindu. The Muslim representation among the educated Bengali elite was not more than one per cent till the last quarter of the 19th century, and even in that quarter, say, when Vidyasagar died in 1891, it did not rise much above five per cent. There was some inter-caste mobility in the Westernised elite stratum—'some', not much—because the social mobility in question was largely spurious in the British period, generated as it was by diverse secondary causes, and not by any fundamental change in the economic and institutional structures of our society. There was practically no intercaste mobility in the traditional elite stratum, which was almost wholly composed of upper-caste Brahmins. Vidyasagar, a Brahmin by caste, and

educated in Sanskrit College, belonged to this traditional stratum of educated elite. And his major achievement in the educational field was the dent he could partially make in the irrational orthodoxy of the traditional elite group, to which he himself belonged.

He had to do this against many odds, and against bitter opposition of a section of the traditional intelligentsia. He was made the first Principal of the Sanskrit College in 1851, and he resigned in 1858. These seven years, when he was in his thirties, make up the peak period of his active life, both in the social and educational fields. He modernised the Sanskrit College as an educational institution by introducing modern teaching methods, class and examination system, regulated holidays and a sense of discipline both among the teachers and the students, which was hardly found in the days when the institution was run on the model of a traditional *tol*. He was condemned by many pandits when he wanted to remove the restriction of admission to students on the basis of caste. The rule, which was absolute, was partially relaxed, in favour of Kayastha boys only, but could not be wholly abolished. In fact, he himself did not want it to be wholly abolished in favour of all castes, but only in favour of non-Brahmin upper castes.

Before accepting the post of Principal, Vidyasagar submitted a report to the Council of Education in 1850, suggesting ways and means for the improvement of the standard of education in the Sanskrit College. He put the entire traditional curriculum of the College under heavy artillery fire and proposed better texts and a modern approach to teaching. For instance, in regard to the *Smriti* or Law class, he proposed that Raghunandan's 28 *Tattvas* should be discontinued, as they were 'of use to the Brahmins as a class of priests' and not

to students. Criticising the texts and the authors of the *Nyaya* philosophy he was bold enough to point out that most parts of the Hindu systems of philosophy 'do not tally with the advanced ideas of modern times', and it was therefore desirable that the students before coming up to the philosophy class, should acquire sufficient knowledge of English, the study of which also should be made compulsory in the College, so that they may be able to read and understand the modern philosophy of Europe. Young men thus educated would be able to judge for themselves the errors and fallacies, the merits and demerits of the prevalent systems of Indian and Western philosophy. There was no need to stuff the heads of young men, he argued, with metaphysical and idealistic subtleties as propounded by mythical sages, passing for a true philosophy of life. He was in favour of introducing Western methods in mathematical studies, discarding classical Sanskrit textbooks like *Lilavati* and suggested compilation and adaptation of complete treatises on Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry, even Astronomy, preferably in Bengali. Vidyasagar's proposals were not all accepted by the Council of Education, but he was given almost a free hand in the reorganisation of the College.

After three years, in 1853, the Council of Education invited Dr Ballantyne, the British Orientalist Principal of the Benaras Sanskrit College, to visit Calcutta, and submit a critical review of the progress of education made under Vidyasagar in the Sanskrit College. Ballantyne made some curious observations on the need to reconcile the views of the traditional learned of India and the modern learned of Europe. Vidyasagar strongly criticised Ballantyne's observations in a letter to the Council, in which he said:

"It is not possible in all cases I fear that we shall be able to point out agreement between the two. It appears to me to be a hopeless task to conciliate the learned of India to the acceptance of the advancing science of Europe. They are a body of men

whose long standing prejudices are unshakeable... To characterize them as a class, I can do no better than quote the words of Omar. When Amru, the Arab General, the Conquerer of Alexandria, wrote to Omar about the disposal of the Alexandrian Library, the Caliph replied: 'The contents of those books are in conformity with the Koran or they are not. If they are, the Koran is sufficient without them; if they are not, they are pernicious. Let them therefore be destroyed'. The bigotry of the learned of India, I am ashamed to state, is not in the least inferior to that of the Arab. They believe that their Shastras have all emanated from Omniscient Rishis and therefore, they cannot but be infallible. When in the way of discussion or in the course of conversation any new truth advanced by European Science is presented before them, they laugh and ridicule... Lately a feeling is manifesting among the learned of this part of India, especially in Calcutta and its neighbourhood, that when they hear of a scientific truth, the germs of which may be traced out in their Shastras, instead of shewing any regard for that truth, they triumph and the superstitious regard for their own Shastras is redoubled. From these considerations, I regret to say that I cannot persuade myself to believe that there is any hope of reconciling the learned of India to the reception of new scientific truths. Dr Ballantyne's views may be successfully carried out in the North-West Provinces where his experience has made him arrive at his conclusions with regard to the learned of India".

#### "False Systems"

In the same letter he made the most courageous statement, not till today repeated by many learned pandits of India, that the Vedanta and the Sankhya are 'false systems of philosophy', and he therefore suggested that 'whilst teaching these in the Sanskrit course, we should oppose them by sound philosophy in the English course to counteract their influence'. We have already noticed his remarks on the *Nyaya* philosophy

in his Report. What he really meant by 'sound philosophy in the English course' can be guessed from his comment on Ballantyne's proposal for introducing the English idealist philosopher Bishop Berkeley's *Inquiry* as a textbook. Vidyasagar rejected the proposal with the remark that "the introducing of it as a class book would beget more mischief than advantage", because Berkeley's *Inquiry* "has arrived at similar or identical conclusions with the Vedanta and Sankhya".

There is nothing vague in about Vidyasagar's philosophical bias for materialism, as against idealism of any brand, Indian or European. With this materialistic and scientific outlook, he set out his plan for educational reform, in an institution established for traditional learning. Surely it was a very ambitious plan in the social context of the mid-19th century. He set forth his views with clearness and force in his reports and letters to the Council of Education, but the Council prevailed upon him to accept some minor reforms only, without any major change either in the curriculum or in the system of education.

Vidyasagar's zeal for women's education and for the development of the Bengali language as a suitable medium of higher education, in arts and science, is well known. If we consider these efforts and activities of Vidyasagar in the historical background of 19th century Bengal, we should regard him as one of the foremost liberal and progressive educationists of his time. We should also pay due respect to him, as far as he had been able to transcend his own caste and class barriers and limitations, in carrying out his reforms, leaving aside his other virtues, like charity, benevolence, kindness and blind devotion to parents, which are usually emphasised by his biographers and admirers, and by which his human greatness is measured. But Vidyasagar will not be considered great by future historians for having some of the best medieval virtues. He will be measured, like any other person we call 'great', by the indivi-

dual role he had decided to play historically, in the social environment of his time. The point is, how far he had been able to respond adequately to the total social reality, and to the total social demand of his time. We should admit, if we are true to history, that he could scratch only the surface of the social reality of his time, in spite of his courageous fight for widow remarriage, against polygamy, and in favour of some modern educational ideas and reforms.

### Evasions

The problems he picked up for his reformist movements were actually caste and class problems, that is, of Hindu upper caste and upper and middle class—but not of the common people. Truly speaking, when the common people were confronted by many difficult economic, social and political problems, especially in the second half of the 19th century, the religious and social reform movements inspired by Vidyasagarites and the new Brahma Keshubites, proved nothing but diversionary—a kind of evasion, and not confrontation, of social reality. Vidyasagar was conspicuously not interested in economic and political problems, and the interest he had shown in social and educational reforms was also not related to the prevailing socio-economic reality. He did not realise that social customs cannot be changed overnight by State legislation, without the basic transformation of the institutional structure of society, of which the economic structure is the most important. It is for this reason that his desire for widow remarriage did not become a social reality even after State legislation. This is also the reason why most of his liberal ideas of reform rebounded from the rock of hard social reality upon him and forced him to turn back, to some extent, towards the traditional Hindu way of thinking.

Vidyasagar movingly appealed to his countrymen to shake off the bondage of religious custom and usage and to rally round him in support of widow remarriage. He declared in a letter to his brother that he was

not a slave to religious usage and he would never be one if it went against social progress. But when Mary Carpenter proposed to start a Normal School for training of women teachers for women and his opinion was sought by the authorities, he opposed the scheme and wrote to the Lieutenant-Governor in 1867: "...I cannot conscientiously advise the Government to take the direct responsibility of setting in motion a project, which, in the present state of the native society and native feeling, I feel satisfied will be attended with failure...if the social prejudice of my countrymen did not offer an insuperable bar I would have been the first to second the proposition..." This 'if' does not justify his own widow-remarriage movement in 1856-57, just ten years before he discovered the truth that the social prejudice of his countrymen may be an 'insuperable bar' to progress. A few months before his death in July 1891, he criticised the major provisions of the Age of Consent Bill as these went against the religious usage of the Hindus, and wrote to the Government that he was very much willing to give adequate protection to Hindu child wives, 'provided it did not conflict with any religious usage'.

I shall mention two more instances of his limitations as a liberal thinker and educationist. The Council of Education accepted the proposal of Vidyasagar (his letter dated 23rd November, 1854) for opening the Sanskrit College to all "respectable classes of Hindus" (letter dated 13th December, 1854). But he, as Principal, refused admission to a student of Suvarna Banik caste in 1855 and offered the following explanation to the D.P.I. (letter dated 21st Nov., 1855) in support of his decision:

"It is true that some families of Sonar Baniya of Calcutta are popular men, but in the scale of castes the class stands very low. Admission from that class will, I am sure, not only shock the prejudice of the orthodox Pundits of the Institution, but materially injure its popularity *as well as respectability*" (italics mine).

Vidyasagar was in favour of edu-

cation of the 'higher classes,' and was neither a supporter nor a promoter of any policy oriented to the education of the masses. When his opinion, among others, was sought regarding "the practicability of promoting really cheap schools for the masses in Bengal", he wrote to the Government of Bengal (letter dated 29th September, 1859):

"An impression appears to have gained ground, both here and in England, that enough has been done for the education of the higher classes and that attention should now be directed towards the education of the masses...An enquiry into the matter will however show a very different state of things. As the best, if not the only practicable means of promoting education in Bengal, the Government should, in my humble opinion, confine itself to the education of the higher classes on a comprehensive scale...To educate a whole people is certainly desirable but this is a task which it is doubtful, whether any government can undertake or fulfil."

This shows that not only was Vidyasagar unwilling to go against the 'religious usage' of the Hindus in matters of social reform, he also failed miserably in implementing any educational policy in favour of the common people. He could not move much beyond his caste-and-class barrier, in spite of his pious wishes and declarations.

This was the end of a man who made a startling beginning as a reformer, within limits, with the bold declaration that he would never be a slave to any religious usage which was a bar to social progress and social good.

Why did it happen? Why did his liberal ideas of reform, rebounding from the rock of reality upon him, push him back on the rail of traditionalism, against which he fumed furiously in his youth? It happened because the traditional institutional power-structures in a country under colonial rule are strengthened, and not weakened, under the impact of Westernisation, urbanisation and superstructural changes, as the colonial rulers get increasingly entrenched.

ed in these in their own economic and political interest. In our country, these traditional institutional power-structures are the caste system, racial and religious chasms, exploitation of the impoverished rural regions by rich cities, the feudal and semi-feudal order and values, and the dependence of the peasants on the landlord, the merchant and the moneylender. As the 19th century advanced toward its last quarter in Bengal, these institutional power-structures, with their ideological superstructures, were revitalised. From this process of revitalisation of the old order and old values, the Hindu revivalist movement drew its strength and stimulus, and the surging wave of neo-Hinduism swept away the 19th century English-educated Bengali liberals and their liberalism, including firebrands like the ex-Derozian Rev. Krishnamohan Banerji, the Hindu Collegian Brahmo leader Rajnarayan Bose and Keshub Chunder Sen. Vidyasagar could not hold high his banner of progress and liberalism in this critical social situation, nor could he comprehend the depth and dimension of the social reality of his time. He had to retreat, therefore, step by step, from the position he had gained in his youth as a semi-Westernised traditional intellectual and reformer, till he died in July 1891. This is the fate which overtakes all middle-class liberal intellectuals and their flabby liberalism in all capitalist countries, and more tragically in colonial countries like ours. To say this is not to belittle Vidyasagar or his real contribution to social progress and modern education, but to place and judge him in the proper historical perspective of his time.

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JULY 3, 1971

## Book Review

### GROWTH OF INDUSTRIES IN INDIA

By S. Upadhyay  
National Publishers, Calcutta, 1970  
Rs 20-00

A concise history of modern industries in India was very much needed. The book under review meets that need.

There was a time when Indian manufactures, products of her domestic industries, were known far and wide. In fact it was this excellence of the manufactures and other commodities which attracted the European merchants to this country. But it was British conquest of India that entailed the ruin of her famous home industries. India became a colonial country and was forced to live almost entirely on agriculture. In this historical process the rich, prosperous and independent Indian merchant class was completely ruined and its place was taken by the compradors (banians, mutsuddis etc), i.e. a class of agents of foreign commercial establishments. As agents and middlemen these compradors made huge fortunes. They thrived mainly in Calcutta and Bombay—the two main foreign trading centres—both of which were created by the British.

The new-rich Calcutta compradors invested their wealth in land and they became land-minded. The Permanent Settlement of 1793 enacted by Cornwallis gave them a chance to become zamindars with full proprietary right on land which was entirely a new feature in the history of India. Thus the major portion of Bengali capital, instead of being invested in industry, went into land. This must be one of the main factors why there are so few industrial capitalists among the rich Bengalis.

Bombay had a ryotwari settlement and land there did not offer any field of lucrative investment. The Bombay compradors therefore turned to industry—and gradually became industrial capitalists.

From the beginning of the 19th

century factories began to spring up around Calcutta, but the entrepreneurs were mostly British who as Company servants made fortunes by extortion and bribery. They invested part of their fortune in industry and when later British capital from England began to flow into India they were already in control of the major industries, namely tea, jute and coal.

Taking advantage of the cotton boom during the American Civil War the Indian merchants of the Western Coast, particularly the parsis and Gujaratis, earned crores of rupees and they began to invest their money in the modern cotton textile industry. The industry made some progress, but British imperialist interests represented by the Manchester textile magnates set up all sorts of difficulties against their Indian competitors. However, the Swadeshi movement gave an impetus to them and other indigenous industries.

### National Movement

With the support of the Indian nationalist movement Indian capitalists made some progress in other industries too, such as sugar, cement, iron and steel. Naturally the people wanted full development of their natural resources and backed the Indian capitalists whenever they fought against the British imperialists. That part of Indian history is more or less known, but how many people know that the Indian industries are a tale of crude exploitation, low wages and slavery at the same time?

Take the cotton industry. "The first mills in Bombay paid no dividends during the first two years but then paid back half the capital in one year." (p. 101) For 12 years preceding the first World War the dividends, besides managing agents' commissions and depreciation, averaged 12 per cent on the investment.

The capitalists were earning fabulous profits, but what about the workers? At the beginning girls and boys, women and men started work at 5 in the morning and continued up to 8 or 9 p.m. with short breaks for meals. That is, they used to

work 12 to 14 hours a day and for that they got from 3 annas to 8 annas per day. According to the Indian Factories Committee of 1890 workers' earnings per month in Bombay mills were—Girls : Rs 5, Boys: Rs 6 to 7, Women: Rs 6 to 10, Men (not weavers): Rs 10 to 12, Men (weavers): Rs 12 to 15.

During the war prices shot up, but wages moved at snail's pace. The millowners made tremendous profits. "Towards the middle of 1920 total profits of the Empress Mills had reached the stupendous figure of Rs 7½ crores, nearly fifty times the original capital and for that year the dividend was 160 per cent. By the middle of 1926 the total profits of the Empress Mills aggregated Rs 9 crores. During the above period a sum of Rs 594 lakhs had been paid in dividend and it worked out to 80 per cent of the capital." (p. 101-2) It may be mentioned that the Empress Mills were founded by J.N. Tata at Nagpur in 1874 with a capital of only Rs 15 lakhs. As opposed to such huge profits, the wages of the boys and girls rose to only Rs 8 to 11 and for women and men to only Rs 11 to 20 per month.

During the Second World War, again, the Indian cotton mills made super-profits. In 1942, for instance, 75 mills made a net profit of Rs 11,10 crores, and in 1943 66 mills made Rs 12,50 crores. During this period when prices kept shooting up and when there was no check on war profiteering, the wages of the workers hardly increased. It is interesting to remember that in those days the leaders of the Communist Party induced the workers to agree to a wage-freeze but they forgot to do anything about the galloping prices and profiteering. In 1946 there took place a large number of strikes. The Industrial Court appointed in the same year fixed the minimum wages for the cotton mill workers in Bombay at Rs 30 per month. Moreover, a dearness allowance was linked with the cost of living in all textile centres except Bengal where a bewildering variety of rates were in force. In

1946 this dearness allowance was Rs 36-10-0 in Bombay. (p. 99)

Take iron and steel. After the first World War the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee calculated the average monthly wages of a worker of the Tata Iron and Steel Company at Rs 34. Of 28,674 workers employed by the company 7,365 earned less than Rs 15 a month and another 5000 earned between Rs 20 and 30. That is, 40% of these workers earned less than living wages. In 1944, when the Jamshedpur index of the cost of living rose to 316 from 105 in 1939 the average earnings of the above categories of workers registered such a small rise that it did not bear any relation to the rise in the cost of living. (p. 122)

On such inhuman exploitation the owners were making huge profits year after year. During 1928-38 profit earned by two major iron and steel companies totalled Rs 21 crores, 46 lakhs. During 1944-46 five iron and steel companies earned profits of Rs 17 crores 9 lakhs. In 1964-65 the two companies distributed a sum of Rs 7 crores, 54 lakhs as dividends and retained Rs 7 crores, 91 lakhs. In the same year the paid up capital of two iron and steel companies stood at Rs 54.17 lakhs. That means at this rate the two companies would pay back their capital in 4 years. (p. 128).

In most of the books on industrial development in India profits and wages of the individual industries are not available. Upadhyay not only gives a history of the modern cotton, jute, iron and steel, tea and coal industries but also an account of profits and wages. And this makes the book most essential to all trade unionists, politicians, economists and journalists. The omission of sugar, cement and paper industries leaves a gap in the book.

#### State Sector

Part Two of the book deals with the state sector industries. Towards the end of the Second World War many Indian capitalists and also Congress leaders expressed their intention of

changing the structure of the colonial economy by eliminating foreign capital from the economy. As M.A. Master, President of the Indian Merchants' Chamber, emphatically expressed it: "India would prefer to go without industrial development rather than allow the creation of new East India Companies in this country, which would not only militate against her economic independence but would also effectively prevent her from acquiring her political freedom." (*Economic Times*, May 18, 1945).

But this was only a passing desire. Soon the hearts of our leaders were softened. Already by the middle of 1945 the Congress Advisory Planning Board abandoned the general principle of nationalisation of industries and sanctioned participation of foreign capital. Some time later Nehru declared: "We shall welcome foreign capital; we like foreign capital to come to terms favourable to us." (*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, December 16, 1947). Some of the basic industries were preserved for the State sector, but this principle also was discarded very soon. Due to the same process of compromise the Congress principle of socialism was also thrown overboard. In order to hoodwink the people the word socialism is still used in Congress resolutions, but what the Congress leaders actually meant by it was made clear by H. V. R. Iyenger, Governor of the Reserve Bank, at an international conference of industrialists at California. "The Socialism", said Iyenger, "contemplated in India does not, by any stretch of imagination, mean communism, it does not mean state capitalism.... It is a system under which private competitive enterprise has and will continue to have a vital role to play: it is a system which respects private property and provides for private prosperity.... I submit there is nothing in the system which should be repugnant to the social conscience of the USA." (Quoted, p. 172).

Part Two: State Sector which includes two chapters—Evolution of the concept of State sector and Five Year Plans—is an excellent exposition of

the state sector industries during the three Plan projects. To understand the sorry plight of the present state of planning and the shape of things to come during the Fourth Five Year Plan it is necessary to go through this chapter.

Finally, Part Three contains Monopoly in India which gives a short account of the rapid growth of Indian monopoly capitalism which has thrived on collaboration with foreign imperialist monopoly capital. This chapter will immensely help the reader to understand how foreign collaboration has intensified the exploitation of the Indian people, how it fattens the imperialists and their Indian junior partners and how it has transformed India from a colonial to a neo-colonial country.

P.S.

### Clippings

#### Yank Among Refugees

IT's strange to find a former White House Chief of Protocol tramping through the slush of a refugee camp. It's stranger still if he happens also to be the former U.S. Ambassa-

dor to Spain, Central America and Denmark. But for Augier Biddle Duke, the lean, hawkfaced head of the International Refugee Commission's Special Mission now in Calcutta, it has become quite usual, for he has worked for refugees in Hungary, Laos and Palestine. The IRC is the largest non-sectarian refugee agency in the USA.

Mr Duke's mission is not the usual one of putting up tents and doling out food, for the IRC is concerned with the rehabilitation of the refugee community's intelligentsia, an aspect of the refugee problem as important as the provision of food and shelter  
(*The Statesman*)

#### Disarmed

In an apparent effort to prevent Bengal from developing into another Vietnam, the Indian Government has confiscated large quantities of captured arms from Bangladesh freedom fighters operating from bases to the west of the East Bengal frontier... thousands of rifles, mortars, machine-guns, anti-tank guns, ammunition and other heavy weapons captured from the Pakistan Army in the civil war

had been taken over by the Indian Border Security Force.

The liberation army has, however, been allowed to retain ancient .303 rifles.

The disappointed freedom fighters were told that the weapons were not being "confiscated" as such but were being controlled by the Indian authorities for the time being because of security reasons.

This disarm policy is, I understand, only being applied to the border area adjoining West Bengal, stronghold of the radical Marxist Communist Party and the more extreme Maoists. Significantly, unsubstantiated reports indicate that members of the East Bengal Rifles and the Liberation Front operating from the borders of Tripura and Assam—anti Communist areas—have been allowed to retain their heavy weapons.

(Peter Hazelhurst in *The Times*).

#### What An Encounter

Date : 25 May, 1971

Place : New Bus Stand, Ludhiana.

Time : 4 in the evening.

Incident : About a dozen people pounced upon a young man. Threw

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him down on the ground and pressed his neck with heavy boots. Tore off his clothes. The young man was Tarsem Lal, a Naxalite. No weapons with him. There was a traffic jam, with about 500 to 600 people watching the whole drama, dumb-founded. Within minutes the young man was carried away in a jeep...

Date : 26 May, 1971.

Place : Ludhiana courts.

Time : 10 in the morning.

Incident : Talk among, lawyers. One voice: "Tarsem was killed last night". Then many voices: "It can never happen. It is no fascist state. He was arrested alive in the presence of about 500 people."

Date : May 27, 1971.

Place : *Ajit*, Punjabi newspaper.

News : A Naxalite, Tarsem Lal,

killed in police encounter. Two escaped. A bomb and a pistol recovered.

(From *Hem Jeoti*, a Punjabi monthly).

## Letters

### Stop Murders

Frustration breeds fascist and terrorist tendencies and there is no doubt that the present situation is the outcome of the accumulated frustration of the people of West Bengal. The process started with the famine of 1943-44 when lakhs of people died of hunger, without protest, without violence. Then came the communal killings engineered by the administration in order to achieve its political goal. Then came partition leading to an influx of refugees. The way the refugee problem was handled could only lead to frustration amongst the lakhs of homeless people. The inhuman working conditions in the mills and factories in West Bengal coupled with the planned shifting of industrial capital out of West Bengal resulting in acute unemployment of the educated aggravated the situation. On the top of this is the step-motherly treatment of the Central Government and the bankruptcy and corruption of the State Government. The only redeeming feature was the strong progressive leftist movement. But here too there is great confusion. Communism has lost its old charm and appeal—thanks to the 20th Congress of the CPSU and the bitter controversy between the USSR and China. The communist movement is disunited and the various factions are calling one another all sorts of names. The old values are gone but there is no substitute to hold on to. The people feel frustrated and succumb to fascist and terrorist tendencies. This helps only the reactionary vested interests. These forces are very subtly and intelligently utilising one communist group against the other and we find the spectacle of a communist killing another communist. It is high time they tried to see

a little beyond their nose. The present situation is only the beginning of the rise of fascist forces. None of the communist parties are going to be spared.

People want individual murders to end but the Government will not try to stop them. The initiative has to be taken by the leftist parties. The communist parties should sink their differences and unite at least on a limited basis to prevent individual murders. The CPM, CP (ML) and CPI must decide not to indulge in violence against each other. They must jointly prevent any onslaught on the poor peasants and workers by the reactionary vested interests. People's resistance movements must be organised unitedly against provocations from the reactionary class.

S. N. Roy  
Dum Dum

### What To Do ?

Here are a few relevant or irrelevant questions about Mr C. C. Rao's "What to do" (June 12).

What does he mean by "neutralisation of landlords and other exploiting classes and rendering them ineffective"? He says "attacks from Government armed police would start" when the communist revolutionaries "prepare...to occupy the lands". This, in spite of neutralisation of landlords whose interests the "Government police" have to serve when the landlords are neutralised and presumably have no initiative? Other than landlords, who else and on whose complaint did the police act? The landlords were 'neutralised' as early as 1969. The State Government served eviction notices on them in 1970. And still the "neutralised" and "ineffective" landlords could get stay orders on eviction notices on the advice of the Police Minister.

I for one fail to understand why and how the stay orders (on eviction notices to landlords) passed by the courts could come in the way of "communist revolutionaries" pledged to the path of people's war.

A. R. Row  
Visakhapatnam

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