

frontier

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WAITING FOR THE RAINS

EVERY time a nor'wester sweeps in here, the hope spreads that it is also sweeping over East Bengal, accompanied by thunder, lightning and heavy rain. For the general belief is that an early monsoon will stall the army and enable the disorganised Mukti Fouz to co-ordinate and consolidate—and harass the army if it can mobilise people in the countryside. The fact that the middle-class front has so far been spearheaded by the East Pakistan Rifles and the Bengal Regiment explains the almost suicidal obsession with positional warfare in cities and towns and the insistence, from the outset, on sophisticated weapons. What the terrorising Pakistani army has all along been aiming at is to set up control in the major cities and towns, seal the porous borders and supply routes and concentrate on psychological and economic warfare in the wet months. 'Akhand Pakistan' will be used as a rallying point as the spectre of starvation, disease and famine begins to stalk the land. The time is near when the Mukti Fouz will be forced to put total reliance on local resources and initiative and not feed on excessive hopes of continuing assistance on a biggish scale from India. Such assistance contains the seeds of a wider conflict and might strain our resources—for, along with Pakistan, we had to go to the aid of Ceylon and may have to go elsewhere on similar rescue missions.

Politics is bound to come to the fore in East Bengal as the monsoon looms nearer. It will be the time to rethink, regroup and broaden the front. Just as one swallow does not make a summer, so one party does not make a national liberation front. Too many Awami League legislators and leaders have been away from their homes, confabulating with wretched politicians and administrators here, for the truth to get across that a 'liberation front' cannot be set up nor a 'liberation war' waged on the basis of one-party dominance and exclusiveness, and, what is much more important, in the absence of a radical, rallying programme for the peasants and workers. It is in the self-interest of the Indian Government and politicians to harp on the overriding supremacy of the moderate, pro-India Awami League. But the farsighted in East Bengal should realise that the Awami League bonhomie with Indian officials cannot be the road to liberation. At best it can be a temporary alliance of convenience.

Many of those here who listen to All India Radio and read the dailies feel that the tragedy across the border has already been turned into a farce.

here by the majority community. Sentimentalism or buffoonery on the part of some of our politicians and intellectuals, however, serves the purpose of diverting people's attention from the urgent tasks that await to be fought for this side of the border. There is no

better means than near-war hysteria to deflect and defeat mass movements. What is seething here is an amalgam of the sentiments of 1962 and 1965. The present vicarious heroism of the rulers and the suspecting or unsuspecting public is a dangerous portent.

What A Joint Front !

Hypocrisy, practised by the ruling classes all over, has perhaps been taken to heights of perfection on this subcontinent. Ngyuen Cao Ky is frank enough to say that Hitler is his ideal. Nor does Praphas Charusathien of Thailand deny his mission of stamping out the 'red virus' by any means. But not so the fledgeling 'socialist' premiers of this subcontinent. Mrs Gandhi would invite Madame Binh to India, feel 'concerned' at the escalation of the Indochina war, boycott the Djakarta conference on Cambodia and then let loose her forces against the youth of the country. Ceylon's socialist angel, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, would court only the friendship of the socialist world and with much fanfare invite the North Koreans to set up embassy in Colombo, but she would not hesitate to use the severest methods to exterminate those whom she considers "misguided" and throw out the North Koreans when it is necessary to please Washington.

While her radio appeal "as woman and mother" to the parents to dissuade their children from joining the rebels was still on the air, she didn't mind the strafing and bombing of populated areas to kill her 'children'. And to accomplish this mission she wouldn't allow orthodox socialist morality to

stand in her way. Socialism, in fact, is best preserved with Pentagon hardware. Ten months ago when she came to power the air was agog with all kinds of accusations against her opponent, Dudley Senanayike, who had sold out the country to the Americans. But now Sirimavo has come to realise how wrong she was in thinking ill of Washington. Within hours of her request American arms were pouring into Ceylon. The much maligned former imperial masters, the British, rushed in with arms and men to save socialist Ceylon. Part of her task accomplished with the help of her numerous friends Mrs Bandaranaike went to pray in a Buddhist temple on her fifty-fifth birthday. Moscow has not yet come out openly for Colombo but its man in the Sirimavo's Cabinet, Mr Keuneman (of the pro-Soviet Communist Party), has prepared the ground by calling the rebels "fascist terrorists". And fight against fascism is always sacred.

The most outstanding has been, of course, the performance of India.

On The Home Front

There has not actually been a sea-change in Mrs Indira Gandhi's attitude to industry and trade during the last five months or so. Only her pronouncements on different occasions about the economic situation and the role of the private sector have confounded the people. At the last annual palaver of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, Mrs Gandhi was "provoked" into lashing out at the business community for being more 'private' than "enterprising" and for living more like "rentiers than as en-

trepreneurs" in the sheltered domestic market. She also talked about large profits made by many industries to drive home the point that small increases in production costs should be absorbed by them rather than making

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the consumer pay. Mind it, all these were said a few weeks before the fourth Lok Sabha was dissolved. Her concept of socialism does not militate against the existence of a private sector and its continued growth. Soon after the decision to seek a fresh "mandate" from the people, she accused some industrialists of being "very deliberately" on a "capital strike". In the same month, however, she made a retreat from progressiveness when in one of her intimate moments with some industrialists she denied that she was very "radical" and asserted her abiding faith in the concept of a mixed economy. Mrs Gandhi has an infinite capacity for springing surprises which leave everyone guessing. Many an industrialist who thought only the other day that they were calumniated by the Prime Minister for winning cheap popularity, now realise that she is no "communist" and her leftist posturing is a compulsion of the situation. Her canniness made it possible to pick up all sorts of elements in the bandwagon.

At the recent annual session of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Mrs Gandhi initiated a very cordial dialogue with businessmen by conspicuously avoiding the unpleasant issues and when she made any criticism it was kept in a low key. For instance, she did not like the cost plus principle of price fixation but refrained from saying that industry must absorb a portion of increases in input costs. She wanted industry to consider the Government to be not an "adversary" but a "friend". Sympathy and support

were promised if the accent was on growth. Most significant was the demarcation of areas between the private and public sectors, with the former given 85 per cent of the economy. This exercise was intended to remove the notion, if there was any, that the Government was contemplating to encroach upon the sphere of the private sector. At another meeting the present president of the FICCI, Mr S. S. Kanoria, described the present investment climate as "favourable" as Mrs Gandhi's Government does not favour "extremist philosophies and policies". Mr Sanjoy Sen has said at the annual meeting of the Indian Engineering Association that the time for controversy between the two sectors is "long past" and he advised trade and industry to "discontinue public attacks and criticism and concentrate on quiet representations." The Industries Minister has already promised to liberalise the licensing policy and facilitate the inflow of foreign capital so that industrialists will have little to complain about in the future. It seems Mrs Gandhi has accorded top priority to improving relations with the business community.

Can anybody expect that there will be a change in the style of the Government to implement the labour-intensive programmes that a new Planning Commission is likely to formulate? Certainly there is a new awareness of the intensity of poverty and unemployment but it is more likely that the realisation, instead of leading to the emancipation of the people, will result in some short-sighted policies. Where is the will to formulate an effective rural development plan for the whole country? The co-operative movement would not have been in such a sorry mess if there was a sound conception and some pilot schemes were tried. The Indian planning machinery has always lacked a coherent policy frame; which is why often one policy objective has been in conflict with another. Whether this will be provided by the new Commission is anybody's guess.

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APRIL 24, 1971

Apartheid :

Mr Vorster's announcement that his government would welcome the visiting President of Malawi, Dr Banda, and argue with him on apartheid is not to be construed as a departure from Pretoria's policy of separate growth for whites and non-whites, though this expansive gesture does hint at a change in its dealings with the blacks.

Despite the embargo, South Africa succeeded in getting round her initial difficulties thanks to the rigid application of apartheid as also the huge placements by private business interests from the western countries. Of late, however, a severe imbalance in the form of crisis of skilled hands is plaguing her economy and has threatened to undo her past achievements. Even the hardened racists of Vorster's National Party had muttered in their last election-eve harangues that apartheid would affect the whites also, that the effects would not continue to be one-sided, meaning, by implication, that the crisis would pervade the whole economy. Placed in this predicament, Mr Vorster has had to loosen the noose of apartheid from business concerns and accept non-whites in sectors kept out for whites only. Even the Malawi plebs are reportedly being inducted at the moment into South Africa to work in mines and on shop floors.

The heart-burning at home has coincided with Pretoria's flirtation beyond the borders and the involvement abroad has gone up significantly in recent times. Ever since sanctions were clamped down on Rhodesia, the rulers in Pretoria have flown aid in volume to spruce the stricken economy and to curb the 'black' insurgents there. Further, South Africa has pinned down large interests in Cabo Bassa in Mozambique and had to mount guard to ward the FRELIMO 'saboteurs'. Her 'advisers' are reportedly active in South West Africa, and the blue-eyed South Africans are said to be flying copters

on rescue and interdiction missions in faraway Guinea-Bissau to back up the Portuguese colonies in that part of Africa. Official sources in Pretoria have of course contested the veracity of some of these charges but Mr Vorster's hyperbole that his "government is ready to fight terrorism not only in our country but, in other countries of Africa where the government requests us" is an index of the 'co-operation' of the expansionist white minority rulers in South Africa.

Political observers think that the black African leaders cannot woo Pretoria overtly without impairing their own position and their offer is to be limited to talks across the negotia-

Academicians

At long last the spade has been called a spade. The Administrative Staff College sponsored, jointly with Osmania University, a seminar last week on college administration and concluded that college and university chiefs must undergo management training. Dr C. D. Deshmukh, Chairman, Court of Governors, Administrative Staff College, said management training was essential, even if academic institutions need not be equated with manufacturing industries for the purpose of applying management methods. Mr N. P. Sen, Principal of the same college, did not however mince words. He said he approached the problem more directly; educational administration was akin to industrial management problems. Education, he firmly held, was the largest industry in India involving 70 million 'clients' alias students. Dr R. Satyanarayana, Vice-Chancellor, Osmania University, gave a polish to the whole idea by quoting a socialist precedent; he said that college teachers and even vice-chancellors in the German Democratic Republic are required to undergo management training.

So, from now on, we can hold the view with proper authority, that education is not for education's sake.

tion table. Yet the cue is there. A couple of months back Mr Vorster responded with alacrity to the idea of dialogue mooted by the President of the Ivory Coast and later on visited Malawi—another backer of the idea—in a bid to establish a link with that country. The South African colonists seem to have grasped the utility of public relations in politics; and they have begun to commiserate with their fellow-travellers even if they are black; though black their interests converge. Mr Vorster has revealed their eagerness to follow up the goodwill mission with material aid if need be. Meanwhile they are carving out patches of homelands for 'blacks' in white South Africa, declaring the blacks 'alien' in their ancestral home.

As Managers

Education is directly related to the productive system of society; it is for priming up the future learned people of the country for the industrial base and superstructure. Marx said the same thing, analysing the character of bourgeois education; but Marx was a foreigner whom we do not and need not know. We have now our own men, very learned men, to help us know ourselves. Let not, then, teachers delude themselves that they are members of a noble, self-effacing, country's-backbone-building race. They are very much a part of the conveyor system that takes in young souls and turns out diehard automatons to keep the production machine in full gear.

The newspaper report on the seminar having been somewhat scanty, we do not know whether the seminarists recommended military training as well for the principals and vice-chancellors—arent members of the Indian Administrative Service given a military orientation? The newspaper reporter however states that the seminarists were fully seized of the problem of copying by students. Copying in examinations had become a way of life in India, they said and added that police guard for exa-

mination halls was also a necessity to keep the problem within decent bounds. It follows naturally that academicians should be given a para-military training, so that they are kept conversant with police psychology and run the administration in smooth conjunction.

Our bureaucrats are taken to task these days because they take a sectoral view of the various chapters and disciplines of science; they have been accused of having compartmentalised the technical people and scientists of the country; because of them, job mobility has been restricted and skilled people are kept in narrow grooves and as a result the gap between science and technology is widening. Academicians therefore urge a rapid interflow between institutions and industry. Keeping in mind the deliberations of the Hyderabad seminar, we can also hope that some time a brigadier would take charge of Presidency College in Calcutta or Banaras Hindu University, which are more often kept closed than open because of the lack of requisite management knowhow.

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FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

WHAT obtains in tiny Ceylon is not the scenario of a classical Asian civil war. It looks as though there can never be a civil war in the strictest sense in Asia any more. Somebody's arms will intervene to save a government in power. The Ceylon situation is a bizarre permutation: a "left-oriented" government, befriended by all communist powers, and all establishment communist parties in the neighbourhood, comprising pro-Moscow communists and deviationist Trotskyites among others, trying to put down insurgency from the ultra left with the help of arms from imperialist powers and "friendly" neighbours. It looks as though there is nothing disreputable about a former colony looking to their former masters and the masters' masters for arms to contain an internal revolt. Nigeria did that in Biafra. Short of getting the U.S. marines to make a beach-landing or of the Soviet Indian Ocean fleet to intervene, what Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike government achieved was the best in the circumstance. And India has emerged in a policing role. There could be sophisticated justification of this kind of intervention. After all Ceylon comes within India's security periphery, one presumes. The super-powers can now count upon India to do a bit of policing for them within a certain radius.

In New Delhi, the whisky-loving corps of diplomatic correspondents did not want to ask awkward questions of the government about its role in Ceylon and the government would not venture any information on its own until it knew that there was no angry public reaction to the new role India has taken on. New Delhi went overboard, inspiring all kinds of exaggerated accounts about Bangla Desh but went out of the way to conceal its own role in Ceylon. To date, there is no protest from any political party or any section of pub-

lic opinion (barring an odd editorial or two) to the new style intervention that is being patented. There are interchangeable dumps of Soviet arms now, from Teheran to Djakarta, and the arms systems are the same and the specifications are the same. In future, it is reasonable to assume that any civil war or revolution in Asia will be suppressed through this least common multiple.

The identity of the "Che Guevarist" movement in Ceylon is uncertain yet. Mr N. Sanmugathasan, a regular visitor to Peking and the ideologue of the Communist Party of Ceylon (Marxist-Leninist), had denounced it as a front of the revisionist CPC. But as the insurgency developed, Mr Sanmugathasan found himself isolated and denounced by his own party colleagues who declared support to the movement. Ceylon got a second shade of Maoism. A section of Ceylon Maoists are now with the Che Guevarists, impervious to what Peking has to say about the movement. The closest parallel in the immediate situation one can think of is in East Bengal, where the Maoists led by Toaha are in the struggle despite Peking's dubious stance. Maoism sans classic loyalty to the Communist Party of China might be a new Asian development that needs more scientific analysis.

Now that the Ceylon government has expelled the North Korean mission (and North Korea had extended a massive credit to Ceylon recently!) and interned the Maoist leader, Mr Sanmugathasan, could it be that it sees Chinese complicity but is trying to pick on North Korea as a kind of a surrogate?

Assuming that North Koreans had a role in it, it certainly could not have been at the Soviet instance, considering the known Soviet attitude to the Ceylon government. Yet the Soviet Union takes over the diplomatic functions of the North Koreans when the mission shuts shop and

packs off to Moscow. Or could it be that the North Koreans aided the movement before the present "left-oriented" wonder assumed office?

North Korea's ideologically tight-rope walking between Moscow and Peking, with both the ideological centres wooing Pyongyang, puts the whole controversy in a curious perspective. In India, the CPI(M) had developed particularly close relations with the North Korean party in its effort to build a bridge with the international communist movement. The North Korean mission in New Delhi has launched an ideological offensive of its own, trying to build the image of Kim Il-seung as the greatest revolutionary leader of the twentieth century. The advertisement campaign appears to be financed by some other country as part of its own anti-Mao drive in this part of the world. The CPI can denounce the Che Guevarist movement because its counterpart in Ceylon is part of the government there. The CPI(M) will find it hard to support the Sirimavo government after the expulsion of the North Koreans. It is certain that the rightist parties will shout in chorus for a probe into the source of funds for the Kim Il-seung campaign in India and the findings of such a probe might not be very complimentary to a particular party.

Meanwhile, there is the Bangla Desh problem to keep the government busy. As was to be expected, India is not in the list of four countries the Bangla Desh radio claims will recognise the new government there. It comprises both the super powers, Yugoslavia and the United Arab Republic. It is possible India might recognise it much later but it is certain it will not be the first country to extend recognition. New Delhi is feigning innocence about the reported arrival of a Bangla Desh delegation in town. There are all kinds of rumours about its whereabouts. One of the requests of the liberation movement is for a radio transmitter on Indian soil. The request is certain to be rejected but it is possible that one of the AIR stations in the eastern region would relay the Bangla Desh radio broadcasts originating from East Bengal.

Trends In East Bengal

SUMANTA BANERJEE

IN the welter of romantic reports about Bangla Desh in our Bengali newspapers, the political significance of the happenings in East Bengal is lost.

The heroic resistance against the Pakistan army is spearheaded by young members of the East Pakistan Rifles, East Bengal Regiment, Mujahids, Ansars and students. The leaders of the Awami League, elected by the people to the National and Provincial Assemblies, are nowhere to be seen near the battlefronts. They are in Calcutta, Delhi, Agartala or Bongaon—busy setting up committees or forming a government.

Although All India Radio and Government statements are determined to describe the liberation forces as Mujib's army, the fighters whom I saw in Jessor, Khulna and other areas could not care less about who was their leader. For them it was a battle of resistance to one of the most ruthless forces in the modern world. With Second World War .303 rifles and a few light machine-guns, they are fighting against tanks, heavy mortars and often air raids.

A couple of EPR boys whom I met in a deserted village near Jessor town regretted that the leaders had failed to arm the villagers, who otherwise might have stayed on in the villages and helped the liberation forces.

When I came back from the front to the headquarters of the Awami League at a safer place near the Indian border and asked the local lea-

der why the peasants were not armed, he said they could not be as otherwise they would indulge in looting and fighting among themselves.

The middle-class distrust of the peasantry has kept the majority of the rural poor at a distance. They seemed to be uninvolved in the war, evident from their immediate decision to evacuate villages whenever the Pakistan forces were sighted near by.

A liberation war cannot be fought only by a few EPR boys and student volunteers, however heroic they might be. The bulk of the people—the peasantry—will have to be drawn into it.

While the Awami League leaders still believe in keeping the masses at a distance, and winning the war in the conventional way by defeating the army on the battlefield, those who are fighting the war—the EPR and the volunteers—are fast realising the need for guerilla warfare. This explains the sharp differences in the behaviour of the leaders and the fighters.

Almost every Awami League leader with whom I talked expected help from India in the shape of heavy artillery, tanks and other modern weapons to match the strength of the Pakistan army. They are approaching the Government for such help. Standing in sharp contrast with this behaviour was the attitude of a young mechanic—hardly 25—who had crossed over from Dinajpur to spend a day in India and collect explosives necessary to blow up a bridge. More practical and pragmatic than the leaders, he described how the fighters are learning from their past mistakes and shifting to guerilla tactics, like laying booby traps to ambush tanks.

Politics

Apart from the differences over fighting tactics, political differences

are developing. Resentment against the Awami League MPAs and MNAs, particularly among the rural poor, is growing. They feel that they have been deserted. Among the fighting forces also there is a feeling of being let down. They think that they were not asked well in advance to be prepared for a war. The way the senior officers of the EPR and EBR were allowed to be eliminated by the Pakistan army, even when the negotiations were on between Mujibur Rahman and Yahya Khan, indicates that the Awami League leaders were not seriously thinking in terms of a military war.

From all indications it appears that the Awami League leadership has exhausted its capabilities. It reached its zenith with the success of the non-violent non-cooperation movement. In mobilising the masses behind the call for non-cooperation, it demonstrated its mettle and proved to be superior even to Gandhi. In our non-cooperation movement during the anti-imperialist struggle, there was hardly any case of defiance like the instance of judges refusing to swear in a Governor imposed by an alien power. The sense of nationalism was complete.

The Awami leaders succeeded in mobilising the masses behind the slogan of non-violent non-cooperation, but were not expected to rally them for armed resistance. Their middle-class temperament stood in the way of arming the people. They depended instead on the remnants of the ready-made machinery of the State—the EPR and the EBR. Trained in conventional warfare and direct confrontation, but deprived of the necessary command and equipment, the EPR and EBR could hardly resist the superior Pakistan army.

Thus with the end of the non-cooperation movement and the invasion of the Pakistan army, a new phase started in East Bengal politics—the phase of armed resistance—which the Awami League leaders failed to lead properly.

In spite of our Government's wishful thinking and publicity for Sheikh Mujib's Government-in-exile, the lea-

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dership of the new stage of movement in Bangla Desh is fast changing. Sincere elements in the Awami League are getting disillusioned about the leaders. A prominent leader of the Jessore area, whom I met in Calcutta a week ago, told me how he had waited for days for the top leaders to come to a decision and for the West Bengal Government to help his boys fighting in Jessore, in vain, and had finally decided to contact "other sources" in Calcutta before leaving for Jessore.

What are the other political forces in Bangla Desh? Despite the subtle propaganda in our newspapers that Maulana Bhasani's National Awami Party is not participating in the war, NAP is very much on the scene. I met a prominent leader of the party and ordinary members who are fighting in Dinajpur.

It should be remembered that long before Mujibur, Bhasani had given the call for Independent Bangla Desh. NAP claims that although the electorate voted for Mujibur Rahman, they were taken a step ahead from the demand for autonomy to the demand for full independence by NAP. The rallies they held during the negotiations exerted pressure on Mujibur and prevented a compromise, NAP leaders claim.

But NAP admits that it was also caught unawares by the Pakistan army. It should share with the Awami League the blame for keeping the masses unprepared for a war.

Co-ordination

NAP has decided to set up a co-ordination committee of other left forces and keep in touch with Mujib's Government-in-exile and prepare for a long-drawn war. It describes the present struggle as a national liberation war and seeks to draw all the classes into it. Instead of depending on conventional warfare like the Awami League, NAP is preparing for guerilla war. The NAP leader whom I met was the only political leader from East Bengal to tell me point-blank: "We do not expect any help from you. It is our war and we

will fight it. For heaven's sake, ask your political parties to keep away from our politics."

NAP, it appears, has succeeded in getting cooperation from three Naxalite groups of East Bengal. The Toha group, which heads the official Communist party of East Pakistan (Marxist-Leninist) is still out of the co-ordination committee.

The CP(ML) in East Bengal is thinking on different lines, although it is participating in the liberation war. It describes the war as a "false nationalistic war in collaboration with imperialists." The definition is probably directed against the Awami League leadership. The party emphasises class struggle—annihilation of landlords and sharpening of the conflict between the jotedars and the rural poor. It seeks to expose Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League leadership.

In this connexion, NAP differs from the CP(ML). While NAP feels that the main contradiction is between the Bengalis as a nation and the invading Pakistan army, the CP(ML) stresses the contradiction between the feudal structure in the villages and the toiling masses. They feel that with the desertion of the rural poor by the Awami leaders, it would be easier for them to expose the Awami League and politically educate the peasantry.

According to the CP(ML), the fight against the Pakistan army and the local feudal landlords would continue simultaneously. They hope that the peasants who are fleeing villages today will return tomorrow and take up arms, snatch them if necessary, to defend themselves. Political power will be set up in these centres of armed struggle.

It is difficult to predict at this stage what exactly would be the course of future events in Bangla Desh, or which party would be in the leadership. But it is clear that parties of the petit bourgeoisie will gradually lose their hold and give way to other forces, depending on the initiative of the more militant groups. With the onset of the monsoons, there might be some lull on the battlefronts. Dur-

ing this period, NAP and other forces might try to co-ordinate their activities and set up resistance groups and prepare for guerilla warfare. In course of such resistance, the class conflicts being visualized by the CP(ML) will sharpen.

Meanwhile, our newspapers would be deprived of the chance of dishing up sensational stories. There will be no more spectacular victories. The fight will go on beyond the sight of visiting newsmen. The freedom fighters will be spared the dangers thrust upon them by irresponsible reporting by our journalists, and the local population will be cured of the euphoria created by false news of victories in our newspapers.

April 17, 1971

Facts, Hopes And Doubts

ASHIM MUKHOPADHYAY

THE rough, rugged wavy path disappears behind the jungle and again unrolls itself under a big banyan tree drowsy with sleep in the simmering heat of mid-April. I stopped and leaned against the trunk of a young eucalyptus. It was half-past twelve. The sun was in the middle of the sky but all around the serene nature still held on to the morning hours. I closed my eyes.

A roaring sound woke me up. It was coming from the other side of the path. A Pakistani bomber? Unnerved by sudden fear I started crawling until I could hide in a bush. But there was nothing in the sky except the sun and a few vultures diving aimlessly in the infinity. The sound, however continued to move steadily in my direction. A heavy vehicle. Was it a military truck or lorry? If so, how can I escape death! But what soon appeared amidst the green vegetation was neither a truck nor a lorry. It was a big tractor, with the flag of Bangla Desh flying atop its bonnet. There were about 14 boys. I came out of the bush.

After some exchange of pleasantries over my panic and after thoroughly examining my credentials one of the boys, a tall, bulky chap (he might be the leader of the group) said that they had gone to the Gede border to collect relief "from our Indian brothers." But, he stressed, they did not want to be a liability to their neighbours. They would like to exchange their produce. This war might be a longdrawn one. So, as an independent nation they must be self-sufficient. They planned to exchange jute and raw hides for medicine, petrol, kerosene, salt and sugar. Also clothes. The sympathy and sincerity which the Government of India had so far shown towards Bangla Desh led them to believe that very soon it would recognize the government. If so, there would be no bar to open trade. As for arms and ammunition, they would import them from outside as soon as recognition came.

I told him that all this would take some time. In the meantime the West Pakistan army would get sufficient reinforcements.

"Yes, yes, we know," he said. "Until we get enough equipment, we must fight against them with their arms. We must follow the principle of guerilla warfare".

Preconditions

His answers were so simple and straightforward that I could not argue about the preconditions of guerilla warfare and the complexities arising out of it. Therefore I asked them other questions.

Was it not a fact that cultivation had ceased in many districts? If so, how could they exchange jute for our produce? Kamal agreed that cultivation had been greatly hampered by the war, but in some places it was going on. And as a large number of jute mills had been destroyed, their quota would now go to mills abroad, including those in India. As for rice, they would have to face a scarcity. Last year's cyclone and this war have created many problems. The south-

ern districts have been flooded by saline water. For the next few years production would be very much down. Again, the people are so busy with the war that they cannot give their time and energy fully to cultivation. "But we have got rid of one thing. Henceforth there will be no artificial scarcity. The hoarders and blackmarketeers will not be spared. They know the fate of the Khans".

We arrived at Darshana and I was taken by others to the relief camp. It was a small pandal under a big pipal tree. All sides were open. In one corner I saw many tin boxes, packets full of medicine and food-stuff donated by the people of West Bengal. There were also some large-size drums full of petrol and kerosene. In another corner some volunteers were drawing up a list of articles received so far.

It was about 5 p.m. when I reached Chuadanga in a jeep bringing relief to the EPR camp there. The driver took me to the house of Dr Ashabul Huq, the local MPA and an adviser to the Commander of the south-western sector of the Mukti Fouz.

The small drawing-room of Dr Huq was packed with people. All for a press conference. Facing Dr Huq were two Japanese and a few non-Bengali reporters. Some were jotting down the points, others were taking snaps.

Dr Huq deserves description. He combines in his ways and manners a Texan hero, an arrogant military officer, a seasoned orator and something more. He was clad in a short bush shirt, drain-pipe trousers and pointed shoes. There were two revolvers tied round his waist by a belt. Equally interesting were his gestures: sometimes he jumped up, sometimes he raised his fists in the air and sometimes he remained silent. The people inside the room were watching all this seriously. They appeared to be very much proud of their leader. I placed my press credentials before Dr Huq; he stared at me and asked me to sit down. He was

explaining the Six Points to a foreigner. After some time he turned his face to me and said: "Yes, what is your question?"

I asked him what would be the fate of the other political parties now fighting together after the end of the war, which I hoped would end happily. Would they have any say in the constitution-making of Bangla Desh? Would the League share power with them?

"There is no party in Bangla Desh now", answered the Doctor. "We are all included in the Liberation Army. The constitution will be definitely on the basis of the Six Points".

"But the Six Points are the programme of only the League."

"Yes, that we know, but since people voted for it, it has ceased to be a programme of the League alone. It is now everybody's programme: "If so, then why the Awami Leaguers alone are to form the provisional government? If other political parties including the two wings of the NAP, PDP and NPL accept the Points as their own, then they may claim to have some voice in the administration. Do you disagree?" "Certainly not", answered Dr Huq. "But in no way can we go against the will of the people. They have given their verdict and we are bound to act accordingly to it."

"Who do you think of China? I asked him.

"Well, we have captured many arms and ammunition; surprisingly enough, a large number of these were Chinese-made. This has created enough tension in the minds of the people. They now blame China as they blame Russia or America. The people of Bangla Desh would have been happy if China could condemn Yahya's actions. China says, it is an internal affair, so she will not interfere. But we call it genocide. We may die, but we cannot stay any longer with West Pakistan."

Does he think that the war would be long and protracted?

The Doctor shook his head : "You see, it is a very difficult question to answer. Everything depends on circumstances. If we get help from outside, we will surely win this war".

He then gave a description of some encounters at Rajshahi and Kushtia.

The press conference ended at 6 p.m. I returned to Darshana in the same jeep and then started walking towards Gede along the railway track. Night had already set in, a gibbous moon was looking palely down on the dark dumb earth. The silence around me was so deep that I could hear my own breathing.

Suddenly somebody called me by name. When he came nearer, I recognised him. He was one of the boys who had escorted me to Darshana. He said they were keeping watch on the relief camp.

Were they all volunteers of the Student League? No, some of them were members of the East Pakistan Chhatra Union (Marxist-Leninist), others belonged to the Gram Bangla Chhatra Union. There are two more Chhatra Unions (Rashed Menon Group) and Chhatra Union (Marxist). But those boys were not there.

In the dim moonlight I tried to identify them, but failed. It seemed that all of them were below 25 and most probably everybody had a rifle with him.

"Did you agree with Kamal or his party men wholeheartedly?" The boy asked. I told him that I was an outsider and that even if I differed from them, they need not bother about it.

The boy said men like Kamal always have some illusions. They talk of guerilla warfare, they talk of trade and import of arms and ammunition. But they seem to have taken these things very lightly and therefore may soon get frustrated.

Why? Another boy said : "What have we to trade on? The enemy has been following a policy of scorched earth. Wherever they go, they destroy everything. They have been sufficiently reinforced. So we fear even more devastation. Men like

Kamal talk of international recognition. But you see, things are not so easy. Russia or America cannot support our cause wholeheartedly, because that may help China to increase her influence over West Pakistan. The situation affects us in two ways: the enemy has been encouraged to destroy whatever else we still possess. He will hamper agricultural production and thereby also frustrate the plan of trade. If we fail to get recognition how can we trade freely and import war equipment through our foreign exchange earnings?"

Another defect, the boy went on, of Awami Leaguers like Kamal was that they confuse guerilla warfare with the old technique of advance and retreat. Things are not so simple. The idea of guerilla warfare should be blended with a philosophy of life, and that will bring real success. "You see, they still talk of the Six Points, they still boast of everything as being their achievement. But that is not the truth, that is not the way. It is the people who are fighting. It is neither India's Pakistan war, as the Khans say, nor is it a war for the Six Points. It is the liberation war of the people of Bengal. So what is needed at this moment is flexibility of mind, and full-fledged faith in the people".

"Haven't the leaders faith in popular resistance?" I asked. "They have, but it is only partial faith. Otherwise to get rid of an imperialist they would not have begged aid from other imperialists. We believe this is the reason for which China has remained silent."

What will happen next? "Well, even if we win the war, we don't expect much at this stage. The League and the likeminded parties are following the same rigid politics. Yet for the time being we'll accept them because victory against the Khans is definitely one step forward towards our goal."

After this nobody uttered any word. Only in the darkness stone chips of the railway track were heard cracking under our feet.

April 12, 1971

More From

Bangla Desh

K. SEN

THE Army moved in at Dacca on the night of March 25. President Yahya had left the East Bengal capital for Islamabad after having completed all preparations for the crackdown; his sinister designs, however, had not become immediately clear. Speculations were rife as to what the Martial Law authorities would do next. The Awami League instructed people to be on the alert. The situation seemed extremely uncertain.

What the authorities were up to became clear around 11 p.m. An eyewitness account says that a convoy of military trucks and armoured cars drove to the Rajarbagh police barracks, men in uniform jumped down, took positions and some one spoke over a microphone asking policemen to fall in. The Army had struck. The policemen, all Bengalis, knew that if they obeyed the instruction they would be promptly disarmed and then shot. They had already heard of such tactics having been adopted by the Army elsewhere while the talks at Dacca were in progress.

The police were not slow in making their decision. They replied to the Army's order with a volley of bullets. These were returned and in no time the battle which was to engulf entire East Bengal, since then Bangla Desh, started. The policemen were not alone. A number of students of Dacca University were also there.

But it was an unequal fight. At least militarily the Army with its heavy fire-power enjoyed an edge over its opponents. It was the latter's determination and morale that kept the troops at bay for well over two hours. Not being trained for a fight of this nature, certain mistakes were also committed; for one thing a fairly large stock of grenades was rather indiscriminately used. Ultimately, after having put up a heroic resistance, the policemen and others realised that it

would be suicidal to hold on any longer. They left with their arms and the empty barracks fell to the Army's hands.

Next to be attacked was the East Pakistan Rifles camp at Pilkhana. Here also it was a repetition of the same pattern, with the difference that the battle continued for three days. On the third day the EPR men also realised that a frontal battle would only bring disaster. Quietly they slipped out and are at present engaged in activities on the outskirts of Dacca town.

Meanwhile, those of the troops who were not engaged in these operations were busy carrying out their task of murder, rape, loot and arson. The Army's action is understandable. The academic world of Dacca had, since the language movement of 1952, led the struggle against the West Pakistani military rulers. "Kill the student bastards", was the cry that repeatedly rent the air as Punjabi troops stormed into the Jagannath and Iqbal Halls. A large number of troops also went for the Rokeya Hall—where the inmates were all women—and till April 6 no accurate information could be had as to what exactly had happened there.

Most of the students had, however, left much earlier. This added to the Army's anger who set about to destroy the buildings. At Jagannath Hall they came across 100 students who had stayed behind. All of them were killed; before the shooting one of the students had been forced to dig the grave where he was to lie with his friends.

Incidentally, an intriguing point that seems to emerge from the information now available is that large sections of the people had guessed, or even known, that all the time Yahya was talking to Sheikh Mujibur he was actually marking time, waiting for the troops to arrive. At various places in Bangla Desh this correspondent came across men of the EPR, police and others who said they knew this would happen. Why then this lack of preparation? Did the Sheikh and his colleagues in the Awami League fail to realise the

President's real intentions? Or had they realised it too late? These are questions, answers to which can be had only from them. At this stage one can only make guesses.

Dacca today is a dead city. People, the few that have not fled and have escaped murder, rarely come out of their homes. Armoured cars move about in the streets, loudspeakers fitted to them blaring propaganda in broken Bengali about how bad the Awami League is. Entire areas like Jinjira, Sankhari Bazar, Sadar Bazar have been razed to the ground and the civilian population massacred. The Kamalapur Station also bears testimony to their brutalities. Residents are forced to fly the Pakistani flag, to have pictures of Jinnah in their homes and to have their car number plates rewritten in Urdu; these had so long been in Bengali.

The Army's Allies

The Army also has its allies in Bangla Desh. The Muslim League,

for one, has been very active in South Bangla Desh spying for the troops. Though its influence among the people is slight—the December election was proof of this—the League with its sniping activities is causing considerable worry to the Mukti Fouz at Khulna and elsewhere. Freshly painted slogans can also be seen on roadside walls saying: "No compromise on the question of Islamic Democracy" and "All attempts to divide Pakistan should be resisted". The League has also revived its "hate India" campaign. The support extended by the Indian people to the Bangla Desh movement is sought to be explained as a Hindu conspiracy against Muslim unity. Counteracting such propaganda is another battle which the Mukti Fouz has to fight, apart from the actual war. Then there are those non-Bengali Muslims who also make no secret of their anti-Mujibur and pro-West Pakistan stand. These elements also have to be tackled.

Kerala

The Bubble Bursts

RAMJI

ONE of the most trusted senior IAS officers, deputed to enquire into the acquisition of land for the proposed Agricultural University, has come out with a report which, without pulling punches, has indicted the Chief Minister and his party of gross irregularities and abuse of governmental power to amass wealth to the tune of Rs. 25 lakhs for the CPI.

The report pinpoints the fact that a stooge official of the party went out of his way to select a thousand-acre rubber estate for the campus and after having fixed an abnormally bloated price for this unsuitable site, went to the extent of getting the papers processed at different levels at double quick speed. The enquiry officer in his report also reveals that he was offered the Vice-Chancellorship of the Agricultural University by

the Chief Secretary, in return obviously for a report favourable to the Government. The CPI stands out as the promoter and beneficiary of corruption and abuse of power. The other partners of the ruling front who are secretly happy over this disclosure are looking out for further developments. The CPI Chief Minister has made a valiant and questionable effort to cover up the indictment. For the first time in Kerala's history, anyway, the Chief Minister has moved for a judicial enquiry into an enquiry report by a senior IAS officer who had received good chits from the Chief Minister and his party in the past for his honest, incontrovertible enquiry reports. The officer is now suspect, and action has been started to degrade and humiliate him. The CPI daily *Janayugom*

has mounted a character assassination of the officer. There is a precedent for this. Nearly a year back, when the first member of the Board of Revenue refused to act irregularly to favour certain toddy shop contractors, favourites of the CPI, the CPI Revenue Minister overnight disbanded the Revenue Board and shoved the officer off to an obscure, sinecure post. And the CPI tom-tommed the fact that it had created history in administrative reform by the abolition of the Revenue Board. But more than eight months after this so-called abolition, in answer to a query on the floor of the Assembly, the Chief Minister had to admit that the Revenue Board was still alive and kicking and that the question of its abolition was being examined! So much for the paper propaganda reforms of the CPI.

The enquiry report about the land acquisition for the Agricultural University has coincided with another report on the alleged favouritism and nepotism shown in the appointment of relatives of the Chief Minister, the Fisheries Minister and relatives of CPI leaders, in the State-owned Travancore Cochin Chemicals. This report also points out that gross irregularities were committed and the relatives of the CPI worthies were smuggled in through the backdoor, because of pressure tactics of CPI ministers and bosses. But, characteristically enough, the Government made a scapegoat of the Managing Director of the unit. He has been transferred.

No newspaper, not even the ardent supporters of the CPI, could black out the corruption charges against the CPI. There are other allegations. During the recent parliamentary elections the toddy shop contractors, PWD contractors and sea-food exporters were compelled to 'donate' large sums to the RSP and the CPI for election expenditure. In return, the toddy shop auctions in the High ranges and along the Aleppy coastal belt and Trichur have been given at cut rates to favourites of the CPI.

The lengthening list of charges

of corruption and favouritism against the CPI is preventing the Congress(R) from joining the Ministry. It is in the interests of the Congress(R) to see that the fire is concentrated solely on the CPI so that, after it is properly disgraced, it could be ditched. More or less, this is the attitude of other partners of the ruling front who have been restive under the overweeningly arrogant attitude of the CPI on nothing better than borrowed strength to sustain its image as a political party in Kerala.

Blackmail

The Kerala Congress is playing a game of blackmail. This party which joined the ruling anti-Marxist front overnight, prior to the parliamentary elections, and secured three seats in the bargain, has started behaving unpredictably. It even voted against the Government during the current session and once stayed out altogether while a motion was being put to vote. The party is cut up over the

fact that it has not been invited to join the Ministry although its leader, more than once, stated openly that it is willing to do so. Then, the proposed tax on plantations has come as an attack on the foundations of this party which is purely a representative of plantation and other vested interests. The party overnight became 'progressive' according to the CPI secretary, Mr M. N. Govindan Nair, when it joined the Congress(R)-minifront combine, prior to the elections. Evidently, it has relapsed into its original nature when it came to the issue of taxing plantations. The next best thing was for the progressive CPI to become like-minded with the Kerala Congress. It has proceeded to do so. Mr Achutha Menon has assured the party that the proposal to levy this tax could be watered down. Any concession for the sacred cause of 'left unity' to further extreme right interests is part of the new-look ideology of the CPI.

Groves Of Academe

N. A. I.

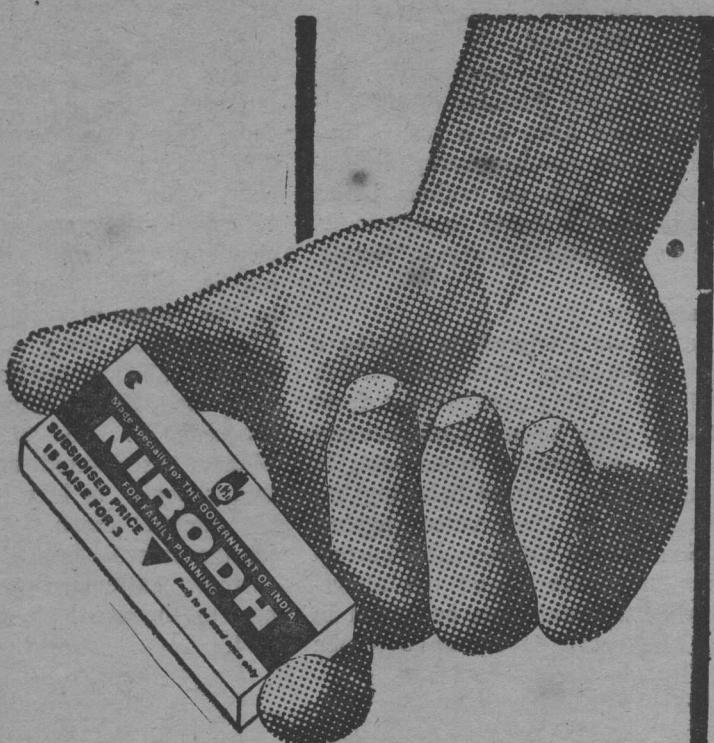
THE Vice-Chancellor of Punjab University is so far the only Vice-Chancellor to have got the Padma Bhushan award for his "distinguished service" to higher education. At a function held to felicitate him, he said there was no unrest on the campus because the teachers, students, and administrators were not a frustrated lot but a single, contented family.

Let us briefly review the events which have taken place on the campus during the past three months. In the first week of February the University authorities wanted the employees i.e. teachers and the administrative staff, to sign a pledge that each one would make sure that his name and names of his family members are on the electoral rolls ; he would recognise the value of his vote ; and exercise his right to vote freely and fearlessly.

Some members did not return the pledge forms to the authorities.

A few weeks later a clerk known for his radical views was arrested during office hours on the campus. The university authorities refused to take notice of it. With the help of a few friends, the clerk was released after a couple of days. A week later a few plainclothes policemen forcibly took a student known for his unconventional manners and radical views from the campus in a scooter (three-wheeler) to the police station. He was released after several hours, thanks to the intervention of his friends. The University authorities took no interest in the matter except to suppress the news.

On March 15, the President of the Punjab University Teachers Association called an extraordinary meeting of the general body and informed the



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members of a certain "confidential" report consisting of provisions to amend the existing conduct rules and service conditions of the university employees which the university wanted to adopt at its Syndicate meeting on March 17. These rules would empower the university to have control over the radio talks, publications and speeches of the employees, and their work for political parties.

The reaction of the members of the Teachers Association was pathetic. Almost all the members including the CPI supporters argued that the word employee should be redefined as *administrative staff only* so that the proposed conduct rules may not be applicable to the teachers. It would be useful to note a few things at this point. First, teachers of the university on the whole do not bother if the proposed stringent rules are enforced on the administrative staff as long as their skin is saved. In 1968 after a strike by Class III and IV employees of the University, several clerks were suspended/dismissed, and the duly recognised Punjab University Employees Association was derecognised unilaterally by the Syndicate (still not ratified by the Senate). Even today there is no association of the employees to protect their rights. They are under the grip of such fear that they are afraid even to express their desire to reconstitute the Association.

According to a "Left Intellectual" here, no one has the right to call himself a communist except the supporters and the members of the CPI since they *alone* take the "objective situation" in India into consideration in formulating their strategy and tactics. In his view the Naxalites and the CPM have no politics except the "politics of murder". Perhaps in the view of this CPI "theoretician", the "objective situation" does not include the employees since they are only workers; the objective situation does not include the employees since they are only workers; the objective situation includes only the petty bourgeois faculty. Perhaps this is the latest CPI world view! However, when teachers raised the point that the

Teachers Association should not take a narrow view of the situation but consider the interest of the employees also, it was a broadly progressive and vaguely liberal intellectual and not any "left intellectual" who agreed that the teachers could not shed off their responsibility towards the non-teaching staff. The general body decided to request the Vice-Chancellor to postpone discussing the "Report".

The Syndicate at its meeting on March 17 passed the rules for the employees clarifying that these would not be applicable to the teachers.

Thus the "single family" of teachers, administrators, and students live without any "unrest" in a "peaceful atmosphere" maintained by the Award Winners, the "left intellectuals", the "patriotic administrators", and the duty-bound police -

Letter From America

Karl Or Groucho?

ROBI CHAKRAVORTI

SAN FRANCISCO : I read with interest the articles on Jerry Rubin, published in one of the recent issues of *Frontier*. The articles, though interesting, failed to emphasise two important features of the so-called revolution which is supposed to be sweeping over the USA.

Revolution, it must be pointed out, has been one of the most abused terms in this country. People on the left and on the right, up front and in the rear, thunder about revolution. As hemline rises or falls, there is a talk of revolution. President Nixon talks about a revolution through revenue-sharing. There is, of course, the Black revolution, and in good measure, the youth revolution. There is a green revolution in Asia, as we learn from newspaper reports, and now, a Yale professor predicts a "greening" of America—a revolution in consciousness among the new generation of Americans. With green revolution in poor countries and "greening" in the richest country of the world, stop worrying; pour a drop of mustard oil in your nostrils, as the Bengali saying goes, and take a snooze.

The Jerry Rubins and their like call themselves revolutionaries. They talk in terms of overthrowing the system, while others, such as the Weathermen, are a faction of the SDS, involved in acts of terrorism. Then, you have the third type of revolution-

aries, *ganja-smoking*, long-haired drop-outs, who look like big actors in Bengali *jatra*-parties, but talk like lead characters.

In the American context, the thinking and tactics of these three different groups of revolutionaries differ; but there is a strong point of similarity. Members of these disparate groups tend to have a theatrical view of revolution. They imagine themselves playing a piece of high drama with a liberal connivance of American mass media which look for the dramatic, the sensational and the ephemeral.

In an interesting article published in the recent issue of the *Monthly Review*, a Marxist magazine, Charles Derber gives a theoretical explanation of the theatrics that is so much a part of the posture and behaviour of radicals and revolutionaries in this country. His article raises issues of a general nature with special application to the American society; it has, however, some relevance to patterns of terroristic acts undertaken by revolutionaries elsewhere. The reader may draw his own conclusions.

Terrorism, Derber wrote, "is a pre-emptive form of politics which tends to crowd out all other kinds of left politics... Terrorist actions are dramatic and definitive, and render other tactics pale in comparison. They build a myth of movement heroics

which delegitimizes and demoralizes other styles of left politics."

"For these reasons, the spread of terrorism can easily create what might be called a movement of *spectator politics*. Only tiny numbers of people will ever be actively involved in terrorism, even if all other forms of left politics collapse. A terrorist movement cannot be a mass participatory movement; as terrorism undermines other forms of left politics, it transforms most people from participants to spectators."

Derber emphasises the role of American mass media in transforming acts of terrorism into spectator politics. Terroristic actions, by their very nature, are sensational and invite infinite speculation and gossip. "The preoccupation of the mass media with violence," wrote Derber, "is well known. A glance at almost any newspaper attests to the fanatic interest of the media in political violence, specially leftist terrorism such as bombings or killings of police. Every terrorist action is assured massive media coverage."

Alienation, Hallucination

Media coverage, Derber argues, projects their own definition of the Left to the public and in its turn, affects the Left's definition of itself. "Whatever distortion occurs in the movement's self-image, however, is minor compared to the distortions in the image of the Left which is projected to the general public." The latter helps in alienating the public from terrorism, while the former may create hallucinations of achievements among terrorists.

In the American context, the special role of mass media must be grasped before analysing American revolutionaries' penchant for theatrics. In a sense, Vice-President Agnew was right in criticising mass media, particularly television networks, for dramatising the unusual and the extraordinary, the dramatic minority of events rather than the dull majority of them. But, then, Agnew himself profited from the internal dynamics of American mass media; he did, in effect, slap the hand that fed him. A nonentity before and during the Pre-

sidential elections, he became a national figure mainly through his criticisms of mass media which, in their turn, converted them into spectator politics.

The Jerry Rubins and their like are, likewise, profiting from the sensation-and-profit-seeking industry of the printed word and the television tube. It is a strange symbiotic relationship whereby both feed on each other.

Look, for instance, at the enormous sale of Jerry Rubin's book, *Do It*. As a political tract, it is empty; but as a money-making gambit, it fills Rubin's bank-account. The book has sold over 175,000 copies. He earned at least \$45,000 from the sale of the paperback edition of the book.

If Jerry Rubin's book appears amusing as political literature—no matter which side of the political fence you are, there is a consensus about the quality of writing and argument—Abbie Hoffman is equally so. He is one up over Rubin; his book, *Revolution for the Hell Of It*, a best-seller, was bought by the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Hoffman's share in the complicated deal is at least \$25,000, with another instalment still pending.

The content of the book is amazingly puerile. Here, for instance, is a sample of Hoffman's "revolutionary" writing:

Revolution is in my head. I am
the Revolution.

Do your thing
Do your thing

Practice. Rehearsals come after
the act. Act. Act. One practices by acting. Billy the Kid
strides with 6 guns blazing, receding into his inner space.
What does he find? Another
Billy the Kid striding with 6
guns blazing, receding into his
inner space.

The excerpt shows another feature of the radical-revolutionary movement in the U.S. Leaders of the movement tend to be self-centred and irresponsible. Weathermen and Black Panthers are different from the Jerry

Rubins and Abbie Hoffmans, but they are no less free from self-centred theatrics. Huey Newton of the Black Panthers is writing a book too and while it is unfair to anticipate the quality of it, it is worth noting that the rent of his expensive penthouse apartment in Oakland is being paid from the fat advance money he received from the publishers. Strategies may differ as do the rhetorics and personal styles of behaviour, but not the symbiotic relationship with mass media which cannot fail to cast its shadow on their self-image.

The Abbie Hoffmans and Jerry Rubins represent a pure form of this relationship, marked by commercialism and irresponsibility. The latter is expressed not only in their dress and personal conduct, but also in their explicit philosophy of life. The cover of the *Revolution For the Hell Of It* shows a picture of Hoffman jumping in the air, a gun held in the right hand, hair blown in the wind, the word Free written on his forehead. The gun-toting revolution is shown baring his teeth in a big smile, as if posing for a television commercial for a brand-name tooth paste.

Inside, Hoffman philosophises on revolution in the format of a question-answer interview. "I don't like the concept of a movement," Hoffman pontificates, "built on sacrifice, dedication, responsibility, anger, frustration and guilt. All those down things. I would say, Look, you want to have more fun, you want to get laid more, you want to turn on with friends, you want an outlet for your creativity, then get out of school, quit your job... Stop trying to organise everybody but yourself. Begin to live your vision... The point is, nobody listens to politically relevant statements. In Chicago we'll have a huge free music festival. Everyone already knows our feelings on the issues because we are there. It will have a tremendous impact if we are having all the fun too. When I say fun, I mean an experience so intense that you actualize your full potential. You become LIFE. LIFE IS FUN. Political irrelevance is more effective than political relevance." (Capitalisation and punctuation marks are as in the original.)

The important point is not that this kind of "revolutionary" writing is published, but that they are sold in millions. As a news feature on Hoffman and Rubin has rightly pointed out, the literary success of Hoffman and Rubin mixes both Marxes, Karl and Groucho, with a lot of show biz. Revolution can indeed be good business, in star-spangled American style.

Counterfeit Realism

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

CHETNA is the story of a call-girl's conscience working overtime. Seema, a model by profession, sells her body for, as an off-screen drawl suggests, her ailing father. In course of this sordid routine she has become somewhat of a man-hater. Now the demi-monde meets a demigod, Anil, who is bent upon outdoing all the legendary lovers in his output of noble sacrifices, which in plain and simple words, means that he is a square fool. Initially, Seema repulses him, but the events predictably enough take a dramatic turn. Anil's debonair friend Ramesh, in a moment of whisky-soaked benevolence, resolves to make a man of his friend. The high priest of this ceremony of initiating Anil into the pleasures of flesh turns out to be none other than Seema. Stupefaction, anger, agony, confusion follows each other in quick succession and after the wabble of emotion is over, the final decision, the pledge of marriage, is taken. As the wedding-bells start ringing, all the rebuffs and repugnance on the part of Seema vanish into thin air, as does her ailing father. An ideal husband that he is, Anil even procures the booze and fag for his wayward wife. But the happiness is only ephemeral and very soon Seema finds herself

pregnant before the marriage is consummated. It is nemesis, a tragic hangover from her tortuous past. Naturally the only solution is the poison bottle and the final fadeout as Seema dies a truly fillum death, with the soundtrack filled with woeful crooning. Advertised and described in many quarters as a Hindi film with a difference, *Chetna* is nothing but a sentimentalised version of *Yama The Pit* and all the situations and characterisation follow the beaten track of a conventional film drama. The structural construction lacks cohesion and the reasoning is all along childish. The hero is almost sub-human in his super-human qualities and the heroine seems to have stepped out of *La Dolce Vita* minus the conviction of the original. The songs are few in number, but these are placed in a pure Bombay manner and there is also a bit of horsey clowning. The air of false superiority in the critics who call it an unusual Hindi film is really appalling. True, there are no cabaret numbers and no duel with the villain. But these are all negative qualities which hardly qualify *Chetna* as an above-average film. If the film has been able to do away with all these Bombay vices, it has become a victim of equally bad blemishes—the sloppy sob-stuff that is being churned out of the local studios in Calcutta. Furthermore, for a really sensible critic, there is no such thing as a bad Hindi film and a good Hindi film, or a bad Bengali film and a good Bengali film. For him, there are only two categories, a good film and a bad film, whatever the language might be.

Calcutta Painters

BY AN ART CRITIC

RECENTLY at the Information Centre, Calcutta twelve members of 'Calcutta Painters' exhibited their drawings, etchings, collages and paintings.

This group of talented artists are known for their bold and vigorous work in contemporary idioms. In

their previous exhibition at the Birla Academy they impressed the viewers with multi-coloured powerful executions in oil. At the recent exhibition they displayed their dexterity mostly in monochrome sketches.

Subha Prasanna Bhattacharya, the youngest of the group, convincingly established that 'ugliness is not negation of art'. Through some grotesque figures he expressed his compassion for the distressed. Dilip Kundu chose the bird as symbol to depict the oppression of the powerful on the weak. Through nervous, thick, coherent black lines he very successfully expressed what he wanted to convey. Amal Chakladar, an exponent of Indian-cum-modernistic art, is preoccupied with spiritual subject matter. This extremely sensitive artist hung a few really interesting water colour drawings. Tapan Ghose's etchings were worthwhile experiments.

Jogen Chowdhury and Amitabha Sengupta failed to come up to their reputations. Nikhilesh Das and Amita Roychowdhury were not impressive. The four veteran members of the group, Prokash Karmakar, Rabin Mandal, Gopal Sanyal and Isha Mohammad, fascinated the viewers with their usual individual style and temperament.

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SANYAL BROS.

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APRIL 24, 1971

Eight Questions

On the recent developments in East Bengal I have got the following questions :

(1) Was the plane hijacking incident really inspired by Pakistan ? If so, what was her interest ? Subsequent developments proved it to be disastrous to her.

(2) What is the class character of Sheikh Mujib ? Does the charter of demands of the Awami League contain any promise for the benefit and emancipation of the working class and peasants ?

(3) What is the immediate benefit to workers and peasants of 'Bangla Desh' created by the "National Liberation Movement ?"

(4) Is it possible for any genuine anti-imperialist national liberation struggle to get the fullest moral, if not material, support from practically all the imperialist powers ? Does imperialism propose to commit suicide ?

(5) Why do we find Pakistan gradually drifting from the imperialist military alliances or, in other words, more and more disfavoured by the imperialists ? So many important bases of U.S. imperialism have already been wound up.

(6) Is India actually interfering in East Bengal or not ? Is much of the arms supply being done through India or not ? Why are different political parties unanimous on this issue ? Why are all the trouble spots located all along the boundary with India ? Why are such heroic battles between the Pak army and the 'Mukti Fouz' absent in the central part ?

(7) Can the free 'Bangla Desh' as proposed by the Awami League, really exist without being a colony of India ?

(8) Can we conclude that the social-imperialists who brought the Indian continent under their influence no longer find the necessity of the division between India and Pakistan to be in their own interest ? With Bangla Desh, considerable economic

relaxation may be given to a certain strata of people in the eastern region. The growing peasants' revolution in this region must be sabotaged.

VIVEK RAKSHIT
Kharagpur, Midnapore

"Conspiracy"

Within 7 months of the natural calamity, the people of East Pakistan have the misfortune of falling victims to another calamity. This time it is political. Indeed, the great trial the people of East Pakistan are facing now cannot but concern gravely the revolutionary Marxist-Leninists.

What is the nature of the struggle the people of East Pakistan have been dragged into ? A little effort to look into the essence of things would reveal that the socio-economic condition of Pakistan and the revolutionary mood of the people there are being exploited by imperialism, social imperialism and their lap dogs for their own purpose. This they are doing by importing revolutionary phrases like "liberation struggle", "liberation army", "guerilla war", etc. It seems that the imperialists have become revolutionary Marxist-Leninists overnight and are applying Marxism-Leninism. They are already expressing their jubilation over their imaginary success in cornering China. They are saying, "See, how China is in a dilemma. She can neither support nor oppose the liberation struggle of the people of East Pakistan."

But all the efforts of the imperialists and their lap dogs to hoodwink the revolutionary peoples of the world will fail miserably. The fighting anti-imperialist forces of the world cannot be fooled. They know what is what. The great people of Pakistan will also discover in no time the conspiracy in which they are being used as pawns. They will certainly join hands with the other Asian, African and Latin American countries to wage a relentless battle against imperialism and social imperialism.

MONI GUPTA
Calcutta

China And Pakistan

However much you may try to gloss it over you cannot now deny the fact that China has taken sides with the ruling coterie of Islamabad and not with the 75 million people of Bangla Desh. What an irony of history !

China has expressed her solidarity with the rulers of Islamabad in no uncertain terms and sharply rebuked India for her 'flagrant intervention' in the internal affairs of Pakistan. China's antipathy to India (which no doubt can be attributed to some irresponsible utterances and doings of the reactionary ruling leaders of India) has jaundiced her vision. Should a revolutionary power like China which has espoused the cause of emancipation of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples of the world stand by a fascist military junta who are committing the most heinous crimes including genocide against a section of humanity by employing sophisticated arms of modern warfare received from different countries including China herself and dismiss the entire issue in a cavalier manner as the 'internal affair' of Pakistan ?

MADHAVI SEN
Asansol

The Task

The liberaion movement led by the national bourgeoisie in Bangla Desh is only to end the military regime and to achive certain demands, to establish parliamentary democracy to safeguard their interests. The toiling masses of that land, after defeating the military, should occupy land, industries, mines and ports, and hold on to their weapons to establish and safeguard people's democracy. The revolutionary masses should be mobilised on a socialistic programme to fulfill this task. If they let go the present opportunities, they will have to make sacrifices once again to fight against the national bourgeoisie.

ABDUL REHMAN
Visakhapatnam (A.P.)

APRIL 24, 1971

Plan To Kill

After the meeting of the CPI(M) Central Committee a statement was issued alleging that a plan was afoot to liquidate CPI(M) members and supporters (*The Statesman*, 13-4-71). There were warnings. Harping on the theme Mr S. Roy in his moving letter 'Challenge & Response' (*Frontier*, 28-11-71) said 'a bloodthirsty police suffering from delusions of grandeur is about to pounce upon you, my soft friends. Are you prepared for it? Are you prepared to be the sacrifice on the alter of the New Law?'

No words can express the lamentable lack of foresight or any sense of anticipation of the CPI(M) leadership. Totting up of the number of seats gained or statistical analysis of the percentage of votes polled in elections would not stop a mass massacre at the hands of fascists. The writing on the wall is too obvious to miss.

SUMITA SINHA (Sm)
Dhanbad

Two Deaths

Mr S. Roy takes a rebirth in his second letter (17th April). Because his first letter was—on his own admission—"too angry" for recounting the deeds of the two individuals—Comrades Sushital and Ashu. Nevertheless he did not abuse Naxalite youths by calling them 'almost fanatic', 'unquestioning'—'petty bourgeois youths' who bear a 'feudal colonial past and culture' and who have "bitterness and frustration feeding their faith'.

It is no *illogic* on his part when he writing about the heroism in the two individuals' death, does actually recount the deeds of particularly Ashu and draws a picture of Ashu of fanatic obedience. It is no *illogic* on his part to succumb to IB reports from Lalbazar that Ashu died in a particular 'action' engineered by the local party unit. That Ashu was hounded, arrested and then murdered by the police for no particular 'action' as such but for his CPI(ML) identity

APRIL 24, 1971

AIR LEXICON

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was cleverly sidetracked by Mr Roy. As if our police forces would have been revolutionary enough not to touch Ashu—had he been in Debra-Gopiballavpur. Mr Roy connected Ashu's death with the 'wrong' line of CPI(ML) city actions and used it as a cudgel to attack the official line. Yes, Mr Roy was calculating, never emotional like me.

In his second letter he claims that his first letter was written, "not to condemn the CPI(ML) programme, but to defend it." I have already quoted extracts from his first letter full of epithets about the CPI(ML) activists, particularly the younger ones. One more extract would, I believe, be adequate to expose his novel technique of "defence" of the CPI(ML) programme.

"...where is the working class who will lead our revolution? Where is the aroused peasantry? Where is the people's army so flauntingly announced in 1970? Why did so many vote so overwhelmingly in spite of all the threats, the bombs, the pipegune? Shall we be blind to all this?...The CPI(ML) leadership have only one answer, annihilation, squeezed simplistically to mean only one thing—slitting an individual's throat."

A novel way of defence indeed! Such defence constitutes his central point and I called this 'a stupid vulgarisation' of faith. To call this vulgar one does not need to be a brother of Ashu. As his brother I was concerned only with Mr Roy's bad taste in depicting Ashu as a fanatical activist of his party. Ashu knew that there are some armchair revolutionaries believing in the omnipotence of Aladin's candle and expecting everything in the chartered path of revolution to emerge overnight. They have read enough Mao and Lenin just to be more stupid while confronting unknown reality; they groan over the deaths of their imaginary schemes of revolution, they always compare Russia or China with India, Li-Li-San with Ranadive or Charu Majumdar. In one word, their impatient heads are packed up with some a priori schemes of revolution. Ashu read Le-

nin and Mao not to quote, but to use them—I knew him.

People belonging to Mr Roy's clan may have an honest desire for revolution, just like a big police officer who incidentally told me: "no use—such deaths...Ashu was a bright nice boy,...secretly I respected him...you see. Their slitting-the-throat business is awfully bad...Ashu should have opposed the party. Had there been real revolution, no election, real Red Army, real revolution in the countryside, we all police officers would have surrendered. We respect Naxals but for their individual annihilations!"

In his second letter one can apparently feel that Mr Roy speaks something sensible: that a section of the Party cadre has deviated from the Party programme, that the Party leaned heavily on the spontaneity of class-hatred and the information that "the wrong line the CPI(ML) is in the process of demolition and a correct line is emerging."

Frankly speaking, I doubt the proper working of Mr Roy's thought process. My question is: who is responsible for 'a correct line emerging' and as a Marxist-Leninist how does he understand the correctness of an emerging line? On what criteria when the emerging line has not yet been translated into revolutionary action? How the correct line emerges when for the last one and a half year the Party was allegedly devoted to 'slitting an individual's throat'?

Mr Roy knows very well that a revolutionary party working under utmost secrecy ('conspiracy' is not the word) cannot reply through bourgeois media to all the opposite viewpoints raised through inner-party controversy. The party's whole operation being secret, its activists have to discuss the controversies in a secret manner; such secrecy is essential for avoiding confusion among people not directly connected with the actual operation of the party line. Nevertheless, people may discuss, criticise or condemn the line of action of such a party but that is to be done in an *honest* way—the way of

condemning or supporting a particular slogan in wall posters or all slogans. The *dishonest* way is to quote publicly a secret document or its numbers while the person doing this knows it well that these documents are not readily available to the public for verification purposes. What credentials Mr Roy has to prove that he is not involved in forgery and that he is not misguiding the people?

We all know that no revolutionary party can grow without controversy which in fact contributes to the vitality of that party. Criticism therefore has to have a very important place in the total interwoven process of learning by doing, doing by learning—indeed a dialectical process so vital for a party dedicated to the cause of revolution. But such criticism should be different from petty-bourgeois howling fed by vindictiveness, frustration and anger.

The purpose of revolutionary criticism must be to enhance the cause of revolution and I would not have written a single line had Mr Roy not called the CPI(ML) as a party of revolutionary potential, or comrades Sushital or Ashu as revolutionaries of high calibre. All the allegations he has made against the party may be right or wrong but a public debate in *Frontier* cannot put the CPI(ML) house in order, cannot correct mistakes—if there are any—of a party like the CPI(ML), and cannot spare him from my criticism or 'abuse'.

I request Mr P. K. Paul to read this letter.

✓ ARUN MAJUMDER
Santiniketan

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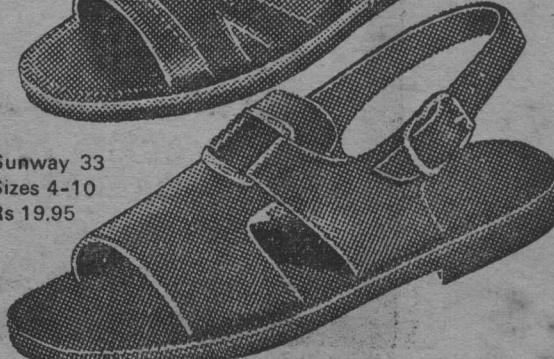
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