

frontier

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TIKKA KHAN AGAIN

MR Bhutto announced some important land reforms last week and ordained a day of rejoicing; he had, he said, done his duty to God and man. While the implications of the measures were being studied, the military command was reshuffled in a sudden move, to "thwart Bonapartism". The two most important men to go, Gul Hasan and Rahim Khan, must be wondering why the President had not continued to be generous to them. The man now made the Army Chief, General Tikka Khan, needs no introduction. Millions of people all over the world, in Bangladesh in particular, know of his bloodmindedness.

The first reaction to his appointment was that he was being kept ready to do another Bangladesh in the two troubled provinces of West Pakistan—North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan—where demands for autonomy are growing stronger and where people take to arms as fish to water. With the demoralised army facing a vast, confident Indian army, an upheaval in the two provinces would be pretty hard to tackle. Some Powers, one big and the others small, are interested in an independent Pathanland. Is this the reason why China, in the Sino-American communique, once again declared her support for the independence and sovereignty of Pakistan?

However, Tikka Khan may have been pushed up for reasons connected with the power struggle in the army which is still a force to reckon with. Besides, Mr Bhutto has just had a round of serious and frank talks with the leaders of the NAP and Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam, the two parties which together command a majority in the NWFP and Baluchistan assemblies. A bloody confrontation over the two provinces has been avoided by the agreement reached over the convening of the National and provincial assemblies in April, formation of provincial governments on the basis of parliamentary majority, presentation of a permanent constitution and abrogation of Martial Law in August. But cynics will recollect that this time last year Yahya Khan too had opted for negotiations while preparing for another course and that his man was Tikka Khan.

The shock of a major defeat may help a State to keep together in view of the external danger, the more so when the State calls itself Islamic. But a big defeat even in a hidebound State, it now appears, can also have a contrary effect, particularly if it has been forcibly kept as one unit for a

length of time. Mr Wali Khan, leader of the pro-Moscow NAP, and some Baluchi leaders seemed to believe in turning the lost war into a civil war, for autonomy. But they are no Lenins.

What perhaps is affecting the minds and fortunes of the army and their kith and kin after the defeat and producing a near-turmoil is the fate of the 100,000 or so Pakistani prisoners of war in India, the majority of them Pathans. This is a trump card which India holds and is bound to play as it suits her, not Mr Bhutto. Mr Bhutto must be regretting now that he let off Sheikh Mujib instead of using him as part of a bargain.

Meanwhile, New Delhi, even after the spectacular victory, is suspicious that something is cooking against her, that there might be another conflict engineered by China and the USA. She gets all the arms from the Russians but wants no arms aid resumed to Pakistan. The logic, if one sees it through different eyes, is queer. If even her victory, the massive arms supplies from Russia and the umbrella of the Indo-Soviet treaty, she can afford to feel uncertain about the future, a truncated and defeated Pakis-

tan has much greater reason for concern about her existence. Whatever be the volume of fresh arms supplies and the structure and morale of the fighting machine Mr Bhutto wants to build up, Pakistan will have to adopt a defensive attitude towards India, who is now more of a giant in relation to her. The Indo-Soviet treaty, by hamstringing Peking, has given New Delhi any number of options, covert as well as overt, against Pakistan, while Pakistan knows she cannot look to Peking or Washington for more than arms. Her economic position is bleak and the political situation a daily headache. So all the talk of the uncertainties facing India is rather unreal and should be treated as electioneering, unless of course New Delhi thinks that disruptive forces in the country itself will create a situation encouraging a small neighbour to take another plunge. It goes without saying that if the Left Front wins even after the severe beating it is getting and stays in power for a while in West Bengal, there will be a ceaseless campaign to the effect that conditions in the subcontinent being unsettled, the Centre should take over again.

have hardly secured food sufficiency for the State. The Haldia port will be commissioned in the near future. Rs. 5.66 crores have been sanctioned to uplift Calcutta port. A decision has been taken to expand Durgapur. The supply of power will be up by 120 Mw with completion of the Santaldih plant in 1973. The Centre promises to get up another 2000 Mw thermal power station in North Bengal. Mr A. L. Dias talked of four growth centres in the State; evidently he was trying to be modest!

The industrial scene is reportedly heartening. Gheraos dwindled to 20 in 1971 from 517 in 1969. Work stoppages occurred only 340 times against 894 in 1969. So much so, that Mr Dias ventured to say that the labour in the State was never as bad as it was made out to be. On the contrary he accused the industrialists of unnecessary panic. Applications for industrial licences are on the increase. In the small sector 791 of the projected crash programme of 1,000 have already started with an employment potential of 7,274 persons.

After all this, what? For those who want a sense of clear focus, like to know left from right and up from not-so-up, a macro-view is in order.

Mr Kumaramangalam who perhaps believes that offence is the best defence let it out that he was surprised that West Bengal, industrially the most advanced country, had the lowest percentage of village electrification. Hot on the heels of this statement, Mrs Gandhi has promised village electrification in the Sunderbans. It would have been nice if she could provide a remedy for every evil. For example, Calcutta port: while 10.1 million tonnes were hauled in 66-67, the tonnage has been steadily decreasing every year, with 6.9 million hauled in 1969-70. The State needs 530 Mw extra power in the next five years; the Santaldih plant will provide only 120 Mw, belying the tall talk of North Bengal. There has been talk of an employment potential explosion. The Bhagwati Committee on rural unem-

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Mr A. L. Dias has found that West Bengal is on the verge of an economic breakthrough. Mrs Gandhi has promised peace and prosperity in the State, if people here vote Congress. Mr S. S. Ray has noticed the perfect law and order situation prevailing in the State under the Governor's administration. Mr Indrajit Gupta said that a Congress Government could work wonders in the State. In short, West Bengal had had it never so good and it will be better if a stable Government, that is Congress rule, is restored.

Nothing is unfair in election and war and Mr Norman Mailer should thank himself that he has so many devotees here of his Advertisements For Myself. Till the other day, the

people in this State thought that they were living in a state of horror, of stagnant economy, unsafe life, paralysed education. Now, suddenly, they hear that it is all bright as bright could be. How come, this metamorphosis? To be fair, let us listen to what these honest brokers say.

Calcutta is having a face-lift, under the able charge of CMDA which is out, dedicatedly, working round the clock, to remove slums, improve roads, provide sewerage, supply water. Work for the second Hooghly bridge may start any day, which will give employment to 8,000 people and solve the traffic congestion in Calcutta. The fertiliser project, a Rs. 88-crore plant, will open up new horizons for the farmers here who

ployment in the State has calculated that the State would need at least Rs. 2,000 crores in the next two years to cover 4 million of rural unemployment. Is it for this reason that Mrs Gandhi, the pragmatic leader, has changed the slogan from Garibi Hatao to Anyaya Hatao, a more innocuous and vague one? Or knowing fully well the hollowness of their promises, all the stalwarts are teasing a comedy of pain out of the voters in search of a stable Government?

China Trade

America's China trade policy has come full circle. It is part of Washington's recognition that it cannot influence history in the Far East. If the U.S. Administration has come to accept the Chinese like any other people and not as villainous communists, it is because of the realisation that its deadend policies on Asia can be lived down only by accepting the reality. The paradox is that the break has come under the Presidency of Mr Nixon. One may well wonder why the Chinese held talks with one who was not very long ago a rabid anti-communist and a perfect cold warrior. But does it really matter for the Chinese whose hand is on the imperialist tiller? To come to trade relations, the Chou-Nixon communiqué has noted that both sides view bilateral trade as an area from which mutual benefits can be derived. They have agreed that economic relations based on equality and mutual benefit are in the interest of the two peoples. The progressive development of trade between the two countries is to be facilitated. There has been no compromise on China's position of "no trade before Taiwan"; only a few months ago a Chinese official was quoted as saying that trade relations with America must be preceded by U.S. recognition that Tiwan was a part of China. The U.S. side has put it down in the communique that there is only one China and stated that its ultimate

objective is the withdrawal of all forces and military installations from Taiwan.

"Wherever there is business to do, we shall do it", said Mao Tse-tung before the communists came to power. The American embargo was imposed as the Korean War broke out. All the moves that China made to revive trade with the USA were spurned. Those were the years when China, short of capital resources, was faced with the problem of rebuilding her economy from the ruins of the civil war and foreign aggression. Then came the Russian withdrawal of all technicians and aid in violation of contracts. All this forced the Chinese leaders to look within and concentrate on economic development with the available indigenous resources. China did not err like other developing countries. Instead of relying on costly imported technology, the Chinese accent was on the development of agriculture and small and medium-scale industries. Where foreign machinery was employed, it was modified to suit local conditions. China's self-reliance has reached a level where it depends on imports for only about 5 per cent

of her total domestic spending. The Chinese will not allow the total of foreign trade to become a significant factor in the country's national income. Foreign trade of \$4.5 billion in 1970 was about 4 per cent of the Chinese gross national product. The stagflation, rising unemployment, declining share in world export trade and growing competition from the ECM countries and Japan have all forced America to look for new markets. A market of 750 million people is apparently of great promise, but China's requirements are not like those of other countries. China has already been able to replace foreign production techniques in sophisticated industries like steel and petrochemical. There is criticism of those who are so enamoured of foreign technology that they want to introduce it without making any change in it. Still the Chinese may be interested to buy from America advanced technology which is considered absolutely essential at competitive rates—the queue of countries willing to widen trade relations with China is pretty long. But China will hardly forsake her policy of solving Chinese problems by Chinese means.

Zambia : Trouble Ahead

Last month President Kaunda of Zambia pushed his country to the brink of anarchy when he put in detention Mr Kepwepwe, his boyhood friend, along with 120 of his United Progressive Party men for improper relations with unfriendly neighbours. For months the relation between the two leaders had been bitter and in August last year Kepwepwe broke away from Kaunda to form his own party. Since then the impetuous followers of the two men have been opposing each other and clashes often occurred. Despite this, the showdown was rather unexpected, particularly because there were signs of relaxation in the political field. Kaunda had agreed to punish the men who manhandled Kepwepwe in

Lusaka last December. Although it is hard to verify the charges that stung Kaunda to act in such a precipitate manner, it is evident that the President was perturbed over the mischief-making capacity of Kepwepwe and his men and decided to down his chief adversary at one fell swoop.

Sticklers of law might question the justification of the measures taken to quell an opposition but the real issue is whether such steps will help Kaunda to solve the present problem in Zambian politics—the increasing hiatus between the ruling party and the people. Nothing is really wrong with Kaunda himself. Though his opponents have tried to malign him, the President has remained largely

unscathed; he won the people's confidence in the last election by a comfortable majority. But this is not so with his party—the Unip—whose worth has been diminishing in the people's estimation mainly because of its highhanded manner of dealing with them. It has harassed the people for not taking the party membership and has often forced them to buy membership cards. Such a tactic might have enlarged the membership but it has failed to earn any popular backing. Evidently Kepwepwe and his men sought to cash in on their opponents' weakness. But unfortunately Kepwepwe had hardly anything new to offer and toed a similar line of coercion to win over the people.

To get around this political chaos Kaunda suggests a one-party system. But such a system depends for effective working on a close correspondence between the party and the people. Tanzania has demonstrated it with some measure of success. But the vitiated atmosphere in Zambia hardly offers any scope for the experiment. Unlike Nyerere who banked on the political flexibility of his opposition to forge a united front, Kaunda has adopted a questionable method to mute the differing voices. But his real danger lies in his untidy handling of the country's economic affairs. The economy has been badly hit by the sinking copper price in the world market and the trade embargo with South Africa. Although Kaunda has tended to compromise on the trade restrictions with South Africa under pressure of the situation, he has little or no control over the other factor. Besides, he has failed to give his country a clear administration by weeding out the undesirable clogs. This might prove to be the main road block. He is, all in all, facing a situation which in other African countries has led to upheavals against the regime or, perhaps worse, its overthrow by a coup.

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View from Delhi

Chinese Checkers

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE bogey of a Pakistani-Chinese twin threat is the last reserve in Mrs Indira Gandhi's election armoury. The garibi hatao slogan has taken the back seat and the stability call does not wash with the electorate. Her shrill response to the Shanghai communique had to wait the obiter dicta by Mr D. P. Dhar, India's super Kissinger, from Cairo. Until the Soviets began arming Pakistan in mid-1968 (they have been the biggest arms suppliers to Pakistan since), it was an annual gimmick with the Establishment journalists to predict a joint Pakistani-Chinese thrust every summer, and postpone it to winter. It stopped the moment Mrs Gandhi talked of flexibility in relations with China and hinted at a dialogue without preconditions. Right during the Bangladesh crisis, New Delhi was assuring itself that China would not intervene in the event of an Indo-Pakistani war. Well, right in the midst of the war itself, an official spokesman, asked about any Chinese troop movements on the border, deadpanned, "Both the sides are praying for snow". Had India secured some kind of assurance from China through third parties that it would not intervene in the event of a conflict? At her New Year-eve press conference Mrs Gandhi went on record as saying the Chinese response to the whole situation was neither more nor less than she had expected.

All the same, it suits the leadership to revive the old bogey. A militarily truncated Pakistan should mean a cut-back in defence spending. But according to the latest budget exercises, the Defence Ministry might demand Rs. 250 crores more. There is talk of India entering a deal with the British for the delivery and ultimate manufacture of the Jaguars, as the aircraft of the 1980s,

for India's air arm. The old threat has to be conjured up for domestic consumption even as concessions are made on a largescale to private capital. The British seem to have made the best of the Bangladesh problem. Not only there is no talk of nationalising the plantations any more but entire British junk plants are to be shifted to India on British terms. That is quiet diplomacy, British style, under the cover of playing the honest broker between India and Pakistan. Sir Alec Douglas Home repeatedly asked Mrs Gandhi if the British could mediate to bring about normal Indo-Pakistani relations.

Mrs Gandhi's anger at the reference to the cease-fire line in Kashmir was, in the least, amusing. Until November end, India was lodging one protest against another with the United Nations Military Observers group about Pakistani violations of the cease-fire line. It was only during the war that an official spokesman said the cease-fire line did not exist any more as far as India was concerned. The implication was that whatever positions India had occupied when there was a cease-fire would constitute the new cease-fire line. Then came the feeler trick, shortly after the war. The CPI wanted the 1948 cease-fire line with a few minor modifications made the international boundary in Kashmir. It amounted to writing off the entire Azad Kashmir area (now under Pakistani occupation). This was the Soviet plan immediately after Tashkent. Either the Soviets or the Government leadership was trying to test the public reaction to formalising the existing situation in Kashmir with a few changes to make the boundary rational, by eliminating the bulges and securing vital posts for

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India, etc. And in any case, a UN Military Observers Group in India and Pakistan continues to have its liaison office at Faridkot House, New Delhi-1. If India does not recognise the cease-fire line any more, the Military Observers group is redundant. (It would interest many to know that after the Sino-Indian war in 1962, a United States Military Aid Mission was set up in New Delhi and had its offices in the same building, Faridkot House, whatever its significance).

While official New Delhi has been withholding comment on Nixon's proposals for a dialogue and the Shanghai communique, Mrs Gandhi has expressed what perhaps might later be explained away as a few stray thoughts. However, on the eve of the communique there were orchestrated reports in the pro-Moscow journals quoting official circles

to say that Pakistan will embark on an adventure this summer, in collusion with the Chinese to grab Kashmir and a war is imminent. The next phase in the campaign was the wild stories about the Chinese intensifying patrolling while waiting for the snows to melt. If both India and China were praying for the passes to be covered with snow in December, it would seem both the sides are praying for the snows to melt now.

To sum up, all the euphoria in New Delhi about a dialogue with China, of the Chinese, cowed down by the Indo-Soviet treaty, coming to New Delhi, sack-cloth and ashes, has evaporated. The Indo-Soviet treaty means in effect banging the door on normal relations with China or a discussion on the border dispute. The Indian elite now talks of power status and power role for India because the 14-

day war has given India hegemony over South Asia. But Bangladesh is not only part of South Asia, it also belongs to South-East Asia and already the ASEAN is trying to draw it into its vortex. The Soviets have been playing it clever, taking care to emphasise that they do not want a treaty with Bangladesh on the lines of the Indo-Soviet treaty. India is going to sign one when Mrs Gandhi goes to Dacca on March 17, and that is adequate. Again, the one to be signed in Dacca will emphasise non-alignment and commonality of the foreign policy goals of the two countries but would not provide for the equivalent of Article 9 of the Indo-Soviet treaty, which Mr Swaran Singh once inadvertently described as the "security clause". It provides for mutual consultation in the event of aggression or threat of aggression.

March 5, 1972

The Indian Bourgeoisie—II

ONCE we agree about the character of the Indian bourgeoisie and the nature of the transfer of power in 1947 we may proceed to the discussion of the post-independence State and its development. A broad section of Marxist theoreticians agree that in 1947 a bourgeois State emerged out of the transfer of political power; but when they proceeded to the discussion of the possible course of development of the bourgeois State their views differ widely. In this section we shall try to analyse the State character of the post-independence days.

It has already been stated that the Indian bourgeoisie emerged mainly as finance capitalists. From the very beginning they were having a monopolistic position and at present, about thirty big groups control nearly 50% of all private assets in the country. At least before the so-called nationalizations, these houses owned banks, insurance companies and investment trusts. Even export

of capital is there.¹⁹ All these data are used by groups of theoreticians to establish the imperialist nature of the State.

But there are other conditions requiring proper attention. Apart from the minor amount of capital export²⁰ we see that imperialism developed in a lopsided way under colonial rule. There is still the huge semi-feudal colonial rule with little change. Foreign controls were not completely eliminated, nor was the nation cut off completely from the imperialists. Lastly, the antagonism among the national bourgeoisie, so severe as to make two independent States—India and Pakistan—weakens it further. These considerations will make 'crippled imperialism' the proper terminology if the country is at all to be called imperialist.

What is the future of such a country?

Lacking a sound base it cannot emerge as a strong imperialist power and therefore it will be a hinterland

to the strong imperialist powers of the world. Mao gave a fine corollary. Citing the success of the bourgeois Kemalist revolution in Turkey and the emergence of the country as a weak bourgeois State from the old colonial rule, he pointed out, "even the Kemalist Turkey eventually had to throw herself into the hands of Anglo-French imperialism, becoming more and more a semi-colony and part of the reactionary imperialist world."²¹ This is the future of a weak bourgeois State in the present-day world. The case of Kemalist Turkey is being repeated in India and many other countries. The history of the last two decades has proved that Indian 'imperialism' has no hope of emerging as a powerful imperialist power; it is losing more and more to the strong imperialist powers of the world, becoming more and more a semi-colony.

By its very size capitalism has turned into a social phenomenon, and it is precisely at this moment that capi-

talistic enterprises fall like a dead-weight into the arms of the State,—thus started Mussolini to analyse fascism.²² Essentially this is a Marxian viewpoint except that the fascists conceive that the ultimate solution of the crisis of capitalism lies not in the dictatorship of the proletariat but in the establishment of a strong state machinery. The fascists put the State—a totalitarian State at the centre of everything. They bring all economic activities under the control of the State, negate the primacy of politicians over technical experts, crush every internal resistance, not merely of the proletariat but even of the liberals, and ultimately develop into a desperate attempt of bourgeois society to restore itself.

It may be of relevance to inquire at some length whether India will turn into a fascist society or will take some other form.

Two factors are necessary for the development of fascism to occur:

Weakness of the party and ideology of the proletariat.

Existence of a strong nationalist spirit in the ruling bourgeoisie.

The Italian fascist party began with a strong socialist inspiration and finally became a great defender of capitalist society. The weakness of the party of the proletariat and its ideology leaves room for such absurd philosophy as, an extra-powerful State may save the society from the crisis of capitalism.²³ Such a philosophy may click only when the consciousness of the proletariat is not high enough to challenge it; and that is how the Italian fascist party deviated from its original socialist orientation and was swamped by the middle class.

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S. P. CHATTERJEE

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Durgapur-4

On the other hand, instead of bursting into sharp antagonism with the strong imperialist powers and pursuing an imperialist policy of military aggression like the fascists, a bourgeois State may instead prefer to 'co-exist' with the imperialist powers of the world and, as a result, become more and more a semi-colony. Thus, it is nationalism, or more correctly bourgeois nationalism, which determines which of the two alternatives—fascism and collaborationism, will win, whether there will be sharp antagonism with the strong imperialist powers or collaboration with them. The answer lies in the inherent nature of the bourgeoisie. The degree of bourgeois nationalism one finds in Europe and America does not mark the Indian bourgeoisie which developed in an unhealthy colonial atmosphere and is 'flabby'.²⁴ The Indian bourgeoisie will prefer to collaborate with the imperialists as long as possible rather than implement a strong imperialist policy of opposing the great powers of the present-day world. And therefore, instead of developing into an imperialist-fascist State, the country, under the rule of the flabby bourgeoisie, is turning more and more into a semi-colony.

Till 1947, the Indian bourgeoisie, petty-bourgeoisie, proletariat and peasantry were united in a nationalist front led by the bourgeoisie and conducted the nationalist struggle against the British. During the same time a similar united front, but led by the communists, conducted the nationalist struggle in China. As a result of the leadership, in China there emerged the rule of a new democratic type in which all the revolutionary anti-imperialist classes, groups and parties, had their share. On the other hand, in India the bourgeoisie deprived all other revolutionary classes, captured the power alone, and formed an old democratic type of rule. Mao, in his article "On New Democracy", has shown that such an old democratic type of rule cannot continue long in the present world situation. And the development in India is what he indicated as sure to occur under

the old democratic types of rule today.

Mao's article reminds one of the old proverb—unity is strength. He indicated that the strength acquired by the unity of all the anti-imperialist revolutionary classes may overpower the imperialists in a colony or semi-colony at a time; but in order to make the independence permanent the united front should be maintained by forming a new democratic type of rule where all the revolutionary classes share the power. The bourgeoisie invariably attempts to form an old democratic type of rule of the bourgeoisie alone depriving other revolutionary classes. They thereby break the unity of all revolutionary anti-imperialist classes in the newly freed country, make the nation once again weak; and the strong imperialist powers take the opportunity to re-enter, utilising this weakness. This is exactly what happened in India. Till 1947 the anti-imperialist united front of revolutionary classes was intact. But after 1947, the bourgeoisie in India betrayed the revolution by establishing the rule of only one class, thus letting the imperialists get an overhand once again. As a result, after the temporary success in 1947, imperialist penetrations increased, turning the country more and more into a semi-colony. Not merely in India. The same is the situation in all the countries which emerged politically independent from colonial or semi-colonial bondages in the past two decades and where the rule of the bourgeoisie was established. Only in a few countries like China or Vietnam, where the anti-imperialist united front was maintained by the formation of new democratic governments, were the imperialists successfully obstructed. All these countries and their developments confirm Mao Tse-tung's thesis. The independence struggles of India, as well as of many other countries, are comparable to the revolution of Sun Yat-sen in China in that the bourgeoisie captured power in all these countries only to lose it again to the imperialists. The undivided CPI, just after independ-

ence, declared that the transfer of political power was a trick by the imperialists to renew the attack on the country. Such an analysis is more correct than any other alternative view.

Foreign Capital

The economic facts in the post-independence era will support the view that the ultimate course of development in the newly independent country was set for a semi-colonial one. Some key statistics will show that in 1947 India won independence only to lose it to the imperialists, and that the present situation, with the degree of imperialist penetration, is little better than that under the rule of the British.

In the earlier part of the article, in section 1.2, we have cited that the majority of foreign capital was repatriated between 1942 and independence, with only about Rs 419 crores remaining in 1948. But while the capital repatriated was worth about Rs 1,350 crores, about Rs 1,000 crores came back as business investments between July, 1948 and March, 1970.²⁵ Apart from business investments, foreign capital intruding as foreign aid during the same period is a colossal sum, some seven or eight times the total value of foreign business investment.

At present every Indian is under per capita foreign loans worth above Rs 120. Foreign aid is almost invariably in the form of loans, and, till March, 1970 about Rs 1,000 crores have come as such loans. Every year about Rs 500 crores go out as repayment for these loans. The risk of defaulting on repayments hangs like a nightmare over the country, preventing the rulers from doing anything that may cause dissatisfaction to the imperialists. Thus the country has been reduced to debt-slavery; the imperialists may carry out what they like by exerting pressure through this channel. Devaluation of the rupee in 1966 is an example of how the Indian rulers bowed to the pressure of U.S. imperialists.

How dependence on foreign capital

increased gradually in the post-independence years is brought out clearly in the following table²⁶ which shows the percentage of total investment accounted for by external assistance:

period	p.c. of investment financed by external sources
First Plan	6
Second Plan	21
Third Plan	28

The Fourth Plan has not been launched because of foreign exchange crisis. Which means that if a plan is to be launched today it should be one capable of attracting enough foreign aid for its financing; in other words it should be one satisfactory to the imperialists. This is the development of all these years of independence—economic plans have to be made by the ruling bourgeoisie in accordance with the imperialist interests.

These indications are in the context of the whole economy. Taking the individual capitalist we see the same picture. In the five big undertakings of the Birlas, against each rupee invested by the Birlas one finds foreign investments of the order of Rs 2.3 to 13.6.²⁷

Who then really controls the economy? More surprising, the Birlas took an active interest in the nationalist movement led by the Congress, and entered their major collaboration only in 1958. What an astonishing development in the last 14 years!

The same is the condition of all the big houses. In British India, the British agency houses helped the business of British capital exports. In independent India, the same service is rendered to the foreign imperialists by Indian houses. All these houses were more or less Indian in their capital compositions till yesterday.

What part of economic control is in the hands of imperialists? It was estimated by Kidron²⁸ as early as 1961 that foreign-controlled assets formed nearly two-fifths of the total

assets in the large-scale private sector. Today it must be much higher.

(To be continued)

²⁵ "Projects Set Up Abroad With Indian Collaboration", *Eastern Economist* December 26, pp. 1359.

²⁶ "The export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance".—Lenin, *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Chapter VII. Theoreticians of the SUC party tacitly overlook the emphasis given by Lenin on the degree of such export capital.

²⁷ "On New Democracy", section VII.

²⁸ "Four Speeches On The Corporate State", B. Mussolini, pp. 16.

Notably, the Indian Communist parties' full support for the nationalization of books and insurance companies arises from the poor philosophy that full-fledged State control is a solution, no matter if it is a bourgeois State.

²⁹ We shall discuss this characteristic of the bourgeoisie later.

³⁰ Based on articles in *Mainstream*, 9 and 16 January, 1971 and Reserve Bank of India, Survey of India's Foreign Liabilities and Assets, 1949. The estimate is crude.

³¹ "External Assistance, 1967-68", Dept. of Economic Affairs, pp. 1.

³² "Comprador and His Capital", Nishad, *Frontier*, December 29, 1968.

³³ *Foreign Investments In India*, pp. 186.

Just Arrived

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On The Present Situation

MAHAMMED TOAHA

This statement was released by Mr M. Toaha, Chairman of the Bangladesh Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) at a secret press conference in Dacca on February 18. It has been very slightly abridged.

TWENTY-FIVE years ago in the post-world war revolutionary situation, the then British imperialist rulers and their native collaborators—the feudal aristocracy and the comprador bourgeoisie—conspired against the rising tide of the peoples' revolt against the British rule and partitioned the country on religious-communal basis. It was a cunning counter-offensive against the impending people's revolution to perpetuate their vested interests in non-colonial form. Pakistan was thus created as a neo-colonial dependency of the imperialist powers.

The Left progressives, however, were clear about this cunning counter-offensive of imperialism in league with their collaborators and predicted the inevitable collapse of the artificial state structure of Pakistan. They also had visualised the inevitable emergence of East Bengal as a Peoples' Democracy and had been working on that line since 1951.

Two decades of neo-colonial subjugation of our country, frequent conspiratorial changes of government in the interest of imperialism and ruthless exploitation of the people by imperialism, feudalism and big comprador-bureaucratic capital gradually helped disillusionment of the people about the nature of independence achieved in the shape of Pakistan.

In this changing favourable political climate of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) in the month of October 1967, adopted a full-fledged programme for the establishment of

the Peoples' Democratic Republic of East Bengal (at present Bangladesh) and started organising an agrarian revolution to achieve that object.

In the wake of mass discontent the Central Committee of our Party decided to launch a movement. Accordingly, the great people's upsurge known as anti-Ayub movement of 1968-69 was launched in alliance with other political parties and democratic mass organisations. The movement shook the anti-people regime to its very foundations. The ruling classes, therefore, felt the urgent need of resolving their internal differences and setting their house in order, with a view to facing—to quote the then president Ayub—"the communist menace". So under the direct guidance and help of their imperialist mentor the anti-people ruling class planned another new cunning counter-offensive to stem the tide of the revolution by crushing the revolutionary forces of the country. Accordingly, the round table conference March 10 to March 13, 1969, was held. All the political parties excepting the National Awami Party (Bhashani) which was largely influenced by the left-progressives, attended the conference. Restoration of so-called parliamentary democracy, which the ruling circles had discarded a decade ago, was considered to be the most suitable method for diverting the revolutionary mood of the people on to the path of reformism. The general election of 1971, the only election ever held on all-Pakistan basis, was arranged as a part of that counter-revolutionary plan.

The extreme right-religious parties—the Jamiat-e-Islami, the Nezam-e-Islam, the Muslim Leagues, the Pakistan Democratic Party (an offshoot of the Muslim League) and the petty-bourgeois nationalists of the

Awami League found it necessary to make a common cause against the impending revolution of the people. Both the extremes quite comfortably co-operated in the execution of the master plan and participated in the election on the basis of the so-called philosophy of "Glory of Islam and integrity of Pakistan" as laid down by the then President General A. M. Yahya Khan in his so-called Legal Framework Order.

The Marxist-Leninist Party, however, gave the timely warning to all the fighting democrats about the deep-rooted conspiracy and declared in clear language that the proposed election was not going to solve the problems the country was faced with. The predictions of the Party proved completely true by the subsequent post-election events and developments.

The election, however, undoubtedly reflected the people's urge for emancipation from the decades of ruthless exploitation by the ruling classes backed by imperialism. The results of the election also at the same time helped expose the inner contradictions among the various sections of the ruling classes, particularly between that of East Bengal and West Pakistan. Contrary to their expectation, the spectacular victory of the Awami League upset the whole plan of the ruling junta by sharpening the contradictions between the power-hungry Awami League leadership of the East and the central ruling clique of Pakistan.

Armed Conflict

The ruling military junta and their imperialist mentors miscalculated. Scared by the revolutionary mood of the people they simultaneously attacked both the Awami League and the people as well, with a view to compelling the former to accept a compromise on their own terms and subdue the latter. Thus the contradictions were transformed into armed conflict.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, as usual, went to jail and the rest of the Awami League leadership fled to India leav-

ing the people to their fate. The barbarous attack of the Pak Army however, met with the resistance of the people. At places under the leadership of our Party and at other places under the leadership of spontaneously organised sporadic groups of patriotic fighters, the revolutionary people started resisting the onslaught of the Pak Army. Gradually these sporadic battles were being polarised and transformed into a national revolutionary war under the leadership of our Party. This scared the counter-revolutionary forces both inside and outside the country. The Awami League leadership, which had taken refuge in India, could think of no alternative but to fall a willing victim to the counter-revolutionary machinations of the imperialist powers and the Indian expansionists.

The two super-powers, the U.S. imperialists and the Soviet social-imperialists, in their respective interest to check the revolution in our country and also with a view to fitting our country in their global war strategy against the Peoples' Republic of China and the national liberation struggles of South-East Asia, escalated this conflict to a full-scale war with the help of the Indian expansionists who had always cherished a design on our country.

The loss of lives and properties due to this war is incalculable. The world outside does not know what great genocide and hundreds of tragic 'My Lai' were committed on the unfortunate soil of East Bengal only to serve the counter-revolutionary plan of imperialism.

Today the people of our country are given to understand that the Governments of the Soviet Union and India have helped our national liberation; our country is declared to be an independent sovereign State. But the reality of the situation proves this claim to be illusive in the gradually awakening eyes of our people. In their race for establishing their respective neo-colonial suzerainty over our country both the super-powers competed with each other. The Soviet social-imperialists, hav-

ing reciprocal closeness of interests with India, joined hands and got the upper hand on the U.S. imperialists. The Indian expansionists with the active support and material help of the Soviet Union launched aggression against our country and have occupied it. Today East Bengal renamed Bangladesh has become a protectorate of India. Thus the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh owes its origin and existence to the armed intervention of the Indian expansionists with the active support and material help of the Soviet social-imperialists and also a section of the U.S. ruling classes. In short, our country has come under the collective neo-colonial subjugation of the imperialist powers. And the only visible change that has taken place is that the number of foreign exploiters has increased.

The penetration of Indian capital is having its impact on our economy resulting in adverse balance in our import and export trade.

The Bahinis

The internal socio-economic set-up of the age-old semi-feudal and semi-colonial economy is maintained as it had been, with the added strength of the feudal exploiters in the rural areas having the support of private armed bands such as the Mujib Bahini and the armed forces of the Bangladesh Government. In some places the Razakars (Pak Army auxiliaries) have also been integrated with the Mujib Bahini. The consequence of this added strength of the feudal exploiters, particularly the evil gentry in the rural area, has been simply bewildering and is contrary to the expectation of the people. For example: in the course of the struggle the revolutionary peasants under the leadership of our Party liberated certain areas in several districts, recovered the land of the poor peasants forcibly grabbed by the jotedars and restored those to their rightful owners. In those areas progressive land reforms were also introduced by the peasants' committees. But after the takeover by the Bangla-

desh Government the land grabbers recaptured those lands, looted the paddy of the poor peasants and forcibly collected huge sums of money (at the rate of Rs 50 per acre or 5 maunds of paddy per *Kani*) with the help of the armed forces at their disposal. At almost every place the collaborators of the Pak Army have turned into local patrons and guides of the Mukti Bahini. On the one hand a section of the Mukti Bahini killed hundreds of genuine Freedom Fighters who had fought against the Pak Army and the agent/collaborators of the Pak Government, while on the other, the Mukti Bahini people including some of the commanders in some cases fell victim to the attacks conspiratorially engineered by the influential jotedars. Honest Freedom Fighters belonging to the Awami League also shared the same fate. This annihilation campaign continues under the very nose of the Bangladesh Government.

Danger of War

The establishment of Bangladesh now under the control of India has given complete shape to the anti-China bulwark which the super-powers have long since been trying to build up. Along with it the presence of the super-powers on our soil has exposed our country to the danger of risky involvements in big-power conflicts that may engulf the Peoples' Republic Of China and the whole of South-East Asia.

From the foregoing analysis it is clear that the growing, indomitable urge of our people to achieve their emancipation that had characterised two decades prior to March 25, 1971 the whole political development over and after, has been awfully betrayed; and the Peoples' Democratic Revolution has suffered a temporary setback.

The task before our Party and the people, therefore, is to transform our country into a real Peoples' Democratic Republic, completely free from foreign domination and exploitation politically, economically and militarily. For achieving these objectives our Party will make all efforts

to unite all anti-imperialist and anti-feudal forces from all walks of life—the peasants and the workers, the youths and students, the patriotic intellectuals and also the patriotic national bourgeoisie—on a broad programme for peace, freedom, democracy and self-sustaining peoples' economy with the ultimate objective of achieving socialism in our country, as charted by the great teachers and

leaders of socialism—Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung.

Lastly, our Party takes note of the existence of a large number of patriots outside our Party who honestly believe that socialism is the only answer to our mounting problems, but are confused about the correct path. We invite them to join hands with us and fight for the emancipation of our people.

any price to enter into conflict with the people (communist revolutionaries) who will have made the highest contribution to the preservation of Cambodian independence in the face of imperialism." He, however, explains that if he had so long ruled Cambodia in rather an authoritarian manner that is because the class which produced politicians and bureaucrats in Cambodia were "greedy about jobs but not responsibility, more ready to enrich themselves than serve the State." So after a few years one could see that "they had the fortune and the power."

Those not satisfied with this explanation could perhaps notice in Sihanouk's early youth the deeper reasons for his authoritarianism. Ever since the French Governor General of Indochina, Admiral Decoux, put the seventeen-year-old Sihanouk on the throne he has not ceased to resent the insulting hollowness of this honour. They made him, as Sihanouk bitterly recalls, "a signing machine" and a "playboy" king. And when after twelve years of impotent kingship under French tutelage Sihanouk had the reins in his hand he would not only sign but decide—and that too everything.

With remarkable candour Sihanouk confesses his inabilities, his failures. In the 1950's he could not see the nationalist aspect of the Cambodian Communist Party *Pracheachon* and held them to be only Vietminh agents and his enemy. "I admit that probably there were more virtue and devotion among our adversaries (than in his own political grouping *Sangkum*): it is not an accident that they have allied with me in an hour of peril when there is no profit to be drawn from me, but many ordeals to face." In retrospect the Prince regrets that the anti-imperialist front they have now formed was not created in those days. In the given circumstances of Cambodia he did try to solve the problem of economic development with his "Buddhist socialism" but "I could not give Buddhist socialism

Book Review

The Prince And The Guerilla

C. PRASAD

IT is a strange world—Indochina. The world of princes and guerillas. Drive a few miles from capitals like Phnom Penh or Vientiane, you are in guerilla country where, as the saying goes, not even a tree is neutral. Back in the capital in an air-conditioned salon or by a dimly lit swimming pool, talk to politicians and tycoons. Every third one would turn out to be a prince of royal blood. *Son Altesse!* They are where money is—from keeping brothels to running opium. Some others have taken to dangerous but more lucrative dollar-earning propositions—fighting communists for the CIA. But there are aberrations too—and that exactly is what makes Indochina look more strange. In a cave in Sam Neua (Laos) where B-52s rain bombs day and night is Prince Souphanouvong, leading one of Asia's oldest guerilla armies. And from the old French Legation building in Peking speaks Prince Sihanouk, over the waves of Radio Peking, to his "dear compatriots" in the jungles of Cambodia, who have accepted him as their chief. The story of these prince-turned-guerilla chieftains provides material for a full-length novel. Wilfred Burchett in his *Mekong Upstream* provided the first and a fascinating glimpse into the life of Prince Souphanouvong. The story of Prince

Sihanouk yet remains to be written. But meanwhile Jean Lacouture, the old Indochina hand, has done a remarkable job by making the Prince himself tell his story*. It, of course, is not an autobiography and is lacking in detail and personal touch. Nevertheless, replying to Lacouture's questions Sihanouk does provide an account which should turn out to be important raw material for history.

How a successor of the Jayavarmans, the heavenly rulers on earth, and one who himself has ruled Cambodia in no less absolute a manner, could finally end as a leader of a guerilla movement? Is it sheer opportunism, as some would have us believe? Or is it the culmination of the contradictions within his character accentuated by the march of events? It is perhaps too early to provide definitive answers to these questions but the explanation of his conduct given by the Prince himself would help clarify the puzzle.

"I am endowed with rather an authoritarian and explosive temperament," the Prince admits and that is why once Cambodia is liberated he would prefer to withdraw from the administration. "I don't want at

* L'Indochine vue de Peking—Noro-dom Sihanouk. Seuil, Paris. 1972.

the militants it required. I could not infuse either Buddhist virtue, or national devotion, or socialist faith, or even professional conscience." The result has been a Cambodia, corrupt to the bone, where a noble, anti-imperialist cause like helping the Vietcong was made into a scandalous racket.

Arms Racket

The prince reveals that two-thirds of the arms China delivered at Sihanoukville port were meant for the NLF. The Cambodian army headed by Lon Nol was in charge of this shipment and made a fortune out of it. After surveying the results of his experiment with "Buddhist socialism", Sihanouk concludes that "only a 'stout' scientific socialism inspired by Marxism-Leninism seems to be able to fulfil the three missions of the Khmer government of a liberated Cambodia: 'the preservation of national independence, fight against corruption, construction.'"

Is he then a changed man—a repenting prince whose love of the people has brought about a new realisation, a new commitment? The answer, at least from what one reads in this book, would be a qualified 'yes'. Sihanouk indeed has learnt a bitter lesson and many of his fond notions have been destroyed under the relentless wheels of history. But he has not turned into a full-blooded Marxist revolutionary either. That transformation would perhaps require a closer touch with the people, more direct participation in the struggle. His genuine anti-imperialism and deep love for the people notwithstanding, the stronger reason why instead of "joining Bao Dai on the Cote d'Azur" he opted for resistance is perhaps his wounded vanity and self-respect. "A restoration of my honour before history, before the Khmer people—such is my objective." "Rather than Chiang Kai-

shek I prefer to be Sun Yat-sen, the father of the revolution whose pictures would be carried on big occasions along with those of our benevolent kings. President Ho and Mao."

Those who hope to find in Sihanouk a Marxist prince would be disappointed by his Gaullist fervour and other lingering traits of enlightened noblesse. "After Buddha", he says, "de Gaulle, that is the man I would venerate most". Or for example his avowed faith in astrology. At the time of his birth astrologers predicted that Sihanouk would have lots of enemies and in order to avoid premature death he would have to keep away from his mother. Hasn't this become brutally true? wonders Sihanouk. With all his shortcomings, his failures, Sihanouk nevertheless emerges from this book immensely humane—a prince charming.

One incidental information one learns from the book is worth recounting. Before Prince Sihanouk left Moscow for Peking on the morrow of the coup d'etat on March 18, 1970 Kosygin warned him: "The Chinese had been favourable to you so long you were in power. But now that you are overthrown you'll see what will be their attitude." A few days later when Prince Sihanouk asked the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in Peking about the recognition of his recently formed Government the answer was "We are waiting for the Chinese". After Chou-En-lai announced the recognition of Sihanouk's government while on a tour to Pyongyang the Soviet diplomat explained that as it was made outside China it had no value. Replied the Prince, "Make your declaration in Warsaw, I'll be happy." But in no time Moscow discovered some extraordinary reason for maintaining its embassy in Lon Nol's Phnom Penh. As the Soviet Ambassador to Hanoi explained in a letter to the Prince, apart from being an observation post the Soviet presence is "an encouragement to patriotic forces fighting against the reactionary forces and imperialist interventionists"!

Film Trade

BY A CORRESPONDENT

OVER the past two decades the sad state of West Bengal's film industry has been attributed to the loss of the vast East Bengal market leading to the ills, and now when independent Bangladesh is poised for a cultural resurgence, denizens of Tollygunge and Dharamtolla suddenly sit up to contribute their mite by offering to export films and earning a spot of cash in the process. Producers who have shouted from their housetops to denounce the steady inroads by Hindi films in West Bengal which have caused a further shrinking of the market and who have so far been unable to achieve anything except a spate of reports underscoring their plight, suddenly feel that their products should have an assured place in the burgeoning Bangladesh market. Exhibitors here who have cast their lot with Hindi films by ensuring them a protected market and by persistently refusing to accommodate Bengali films have already started a whispering campaign that the showhouses here can hardly show films from Bangladesh because already 18 censored films do not find an outlet and therefore the "superior" quality local films should find a readily available market in Bangladesh. These "superior" products are of course not good enough for their theatres. Their condescending attitude towards the products of Dacca studios is explicit in their suggestion that the producers who make a bee-line for their products, released here may try their luck across the border because the Dacca producers are in no position to compete with them. They won't reduce the screening time of Hindi films but their counterparts in Bangladesh are supposed to be of the same feather in so far as they are reportedly reluctant to spurn local products in favour of Tollygunge.

There is agreement on one basic point which will govern the film trade

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MARCH 11, 1972

between the two countries, namely that it should be on a government-to-government basis. It seems unexceptionable in the circumstances because the new nation is understandably touchy on many points and the proclivities of the greedy Indian merchants are rather well known. Already a representative of the Bangladesh film producers has aired his view that indiscriminate imports of Calcutta films reportedly should not be allowed because it would jeopardise their local market. They want Bengali films to be imported on a selective basis and that such imports should be more in the interest of art and culture than merely commercial considerations. The proposals may leave the over-eager local producers cold but their own plight should at least make them realise that the preferences of their counterparts could hardly have been otherwise.

Meanwhile disturbing reports are coming from Bombay where the Bangladesh mission chief in Delhi made a sudden sojourn to select films from the dish offered by Mr Tariq of the Indian Motion Picture Export Corporation of the Union Government. Preliminary reports indicate that Mr Choudhury carried a list of 26 films. But only 8 films are named in the report appearing in a Bombay paper, of which as many as six are Hindi and the majority financed by the Film Finance Corporation. The Bangladesh film people have asked for Bengali films and it may be reasonably thought that their Government endorses this, but the Delhi bureaucrats of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry and the Bombay manipulators apparently have something else up their sleeves. To them Bangladesh may just as well be another area on their export map like Fiji, Kuwait, Bahrein or Singapore where Hindi glossies have been promoted by the IMPEC. It is quite on the cards that this outfit, presided over by an irrepressible former Congress Minister from Kashmir and overwhelmingly dominated by Bombay producers, will chew out trashy stuff and its slanted promotional en-

deavour will have all the blessings of the Centre because it earns foreign exchange. As far as films from other centres are concerned IMPEC has yet to establish its bona fides. In Calcutta it has a ready ally in the Eastern India Motion Picture Association, the platform of exhibitors who monopolise filmdom here. As it is Bombay-based, like other outfits of the IB Ministry, it hardly concerns itself with other areas of the country and the chairman's frequent swanning trips abroad in the interest of Hindi films earned him the friendship of the movie moguls of Bombay.

Film export and import to and from Bangladesh should be in accord with a more prudent policy and the institutional structure dealing with it should be Calcutta-based both because of proximity and because the delicate subject is much too important to be left to be handled by a favourite bureaucrat and his accomplices. Decisions need to be taken openly and after consultation with eminent film makers and other leaders of the cultural scene of both Bangladesh and West Bengal rather than by banias and bureaucrats of both countries. And the State Government should also be brought in, since it is in a better position to judge things locally.

The Government of India should resist the temptation of ramming down the reluctant throat of the Bangladesh Government and film industry objects which are not palatable to them. Of course the sensitiveness and pride of the new nation are likely to be a bulwark against philistine inroads into their cultural areas.

Whether the basis of film production and distribution between Dacca and Calcutta should be on the basis of joint ventures is a matter to be explored without however hurrying things. Over here some producers welcome the idea of such ventures on the plea that it will cut down costs, ensure an enlarged market and help pooling of talent and resources. Industry representatives from Dacca have welcomed the reported desire of

Satyajit Ray to make a film in Bangladesh.

Letters

The Agony Of W. Bengal

I am thankful to you for the notice you have taken of my small book *The Agony of West Bengal* and the importance you have given to it in your learned Book Review column. I have no quarrel with the reviewer, Mr Kalyan Chaudhuri. It is his duty to write what he feels ought to be written. I would, however, like to say I do not understand why what I have written in the book should "create misunderstanding among those who do not like provincialism to grow". I am honestly convinced that what I have said in the book will lessen provincialism if the Government of India takes notice of it and undertakes a review of its policies on issues I have mentioned.

I may tell you that soon after I came to Delhi in 1961 I came to realise that the problems of West Bengal caused no concern to the Centre. I had lived my life in that State and had some knowledge of how grave her problems were. As early as 1962 I wrote an article for *The Statesman*, the paper I was then working for, citing chapter and verse to show how crudely the Bengali refugees had been discriminated against compared to their counterparts from West Pakistan. Would you believe that the only comment that Mr Mehr Chand Khanna, then Union Rehabilitation Minister, made was: "How could Ranajit get these facts?" Nothing moved in Delhi.

During the past five or six years I have written off and on, on West Bengal's problems, thinking that the Centre's attention would be drawn and something would be done to stem the fast spreading rot. Nothing moved in Delhi. Delhi woke up only when the Congress was ousted from power in 1967. But it did not wake up to the realisation that West

Bengal's economic problems should be deeply investigated. Deep investigations were indeed made, but only from the point of view of law and order. I went from Minister to Minister, from Secretary to Secretary trying to find out if a serious analysis had been made of the economic and social maladies of West Bengal. I then tried to persuade the Prime Minister's Secretariat and the Home Ministry to undertake a study. In September 1970, Mr K. C. Pant asked his Ministry to see if any such study was there and advised it to undertake one, if it was not there. In two weeks' time I came to know that no such study would be made by the Ministry because, I was told by an official, the Ministry was not equipped for it. The book itself mentions how I felt frustrated everywhere.

I do not know if Mr Chaudhuri lived in Delhi during the years 1967 to 1970. He would have then known what calumny was being spread against the Bengalis, who were totally misunderstood. Unfortunately, some Bengali MPs also played a part in it. In 1969, after the Rabindra Sarobar incident, the vilification of the Bengalis reached its peak. A group of non-Bengalis from Calcutta made a representation to the Prime Minister that Bengali youths had selected non-Bengali women for molestation. I knew that the Centre know from the very first day—its intelligence ramifications are varied and wide—that the allegations were false. The Centre made no move to stop this vilification by telling the truth. The expectation was that this would weaken the CPI(M) for, with Mr Jyoti Basu as West Bengal's Home Minister, he would be held responsible by the people of the State for what was alleged to have happened. I am no admirer of Mr Basu or of the CPI(M). They have their share of the blame for many things that happened in the State in the recent past. But you can find out from the Delhi Bengalis how humiliated they felt during the period.

All these years I pleaded privately with Central Ministers and officials

to look deeply into the problem, and also discussed with them the matters of economic policy I had come to know. Nothing moved. After the articles appeared in *Hindusthan Standard*, I made clippings and sent them to the Prime Minister's Secretary. After the book came out, I sent copies to many Secretaries and Ministers. In a forwarding letter to the Prime Minister's Secretary, I wrote: "You will remember that on several occasions in the past I mentioned to you what my findings were. I met many other officials also to find out if I was wrong in my assessments and what the Government had to say on the points I raised. I am sorry to say I found no satisfactory answer to my points from any one. If I have gone wrong anywhere I would be glad if I am told where and in what way. If I get facts which disprove any of the points I have made I shall readily make amends."

I had a talk also with the Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister. Forwarding the book, I said: "You told me when I met you that I had got a partial picture. I agree. But I could not help it because it appeared to me that no one in the Government was in a position to give me the point of view of the Government."

I gave a copy of the book and wrote a letter to Mr Siddhartha Ray. I said: "It may be you will not agree with the conclusions I have arrived at. But I would request you, as Union Minister for West Bengal, to ask different Union Ministries whether the facts I have mentioned in the book are not true and whether the conclusions I have drawn are unwarranted. After you have got the points of view of different Ministers, you would do me a great favour if you communicate them to me." I have got no reply from Mr Ray.

I should say the one official who has shown interest in what I have been saying is the present Home Secretary, who tells me he has caused an investigation to be started.

There are more than one official

who have told me that the articles I have written would aggravate provincial feelings "which already exist." My answer was simple: Provincialism was already there. I could not be accused of inflaming it. It was for the Centre to look into its policies and change them so that West Bengal might have no cause for grievance. As I understand it, you cannot prevent provincialism from growing by hiding ugly facts. You can evolve policies to combat provincialism only if you know where things have gone wrong and rectify them. All my endeavour has been to bring out the ugly facts of our economy affecting differently the fortunes of different States.

The book is certainly not a Marxist study. I have absolutely no knowledge of Marxian dialectics or Marxian economics. I have tried to follow the methodology of Mr Romesh Dutt, Mr Dadabhai Naoroji, Mr Lajpat Rai and others. Only that while they were concerned with the economic relations between India and Britain, I am concerned with the relations between the Centre and the States. Since I have been able to collect some facts about West Bengal, I centred the book on that State. That is its greatest limitation. But when one puts blame entirely on the bureaucratic machinery, one should also ask, how is it that, despite the same bureaucratic machine, some States have prospered and some States have declined and why West Bengal has declined most of all?

RANAJIT ROY
New Delhi

Election And Principles

Last year the Congress fostered and upheld its alliance with the Muslim League in West Bengal but this year it has denounced the League. The Congress and the Forward Bloc were in alliance and are still today in Calcutta Corporation, but in the election campaign they are denouncing each other. Last year the CPM and other left parties like the SUC and

the Forward Bloc were calling one another 'class collaborationists' but today they are in one electoral front against the Congress and are no longer 'class collaborationists'.

In 1969 the CPM voted for Mrs Gandhi's Presidential candidate, Mr Gini, who imposed President's rule in West Bengal twice; the CPM protested vigorously but without confessing before the people that their policy was mistaken. The CPM has been supporting Mrs Gandhi in Parliament, at the same time being critical about her while addressing rallies and party cadres. The ruling class is not so foolish as not to understand which policy serves what. That is why it is attacking sincere base cadres but not the CPM leaders round the clock.

The CPM, CPI, Congress, Jana Sangh and all were one in applauding Mujib's secessionist movement which was directed against the 'colonial rule of West Pakistan', not against 'Western colonial rulers', India's military adventure for defence of the East Bengal people was backed and hailed by all parties. Like the Jana Sangh, the CPM greeted the Indian Army of the present establishment for its performance in 'liberating' East Pakistan. Are we to presume that the Indian Army is a neutral force? If Indira Gandhi is expected as urged by her own party units of all states as well as left parties including the CPM, to stand for and fight for the East Bengal people against West Pakistan's colonial rule and oppression, then how can the Indira-led Central Government be accused of behaving like Islamabad in respect of West Bengal?

I had the opportunity to discuss the issues with a lot of cadres and 3rd/4th grade leaders of the CPM and the SUC. They are very critical of Mujib and even raise the question of class character of his party but on further arguments about the 'liberation movement', they did not proceed further. The SUC friends are, however, more consistent and logical in their approach.

If the CPM leaders can shed tears and cry for Mujib, why are they silent on the military action of the Indian Government fighting the Naga-Mizo tribes, Kashmiris and peasants in Birbhum and Chhotanagpur? The use of the EFR in Debra-Gopiballabpur (in whose interest—law and order and/or Jotedar!) by the ex-Home Minister, Mr Jyoti Basu, was a landmark in the United Front rule. When Naxalites are killed inside and outside jails all over India, when the head of a Socialist Party MP was cracked by the police in front of Parliament, the CPM kept mum. Mr Basu calls the Naxalites anti-social and this justifies the police torture and outright killing of Naxalites. The CPM itself, as is known, was involved in the mass killing of Naxalites as well as the cruel killing of five youngmen in Sree Colony in the Jadavpur area last year. Even CPM women cadres participated in this killing. The CPM helped the police in tracing and hunting Naxalites in the name of fighting anti-socials. But, now at election time, the killing of jail prisoners is highlighted to catch votes. The CPM leaders are, however, silent about the release of Naxalites from jails.

The high-sounding slogans of the white-collar babus of the Dalhousie area are pleasant to hear but these people are afraid of entering the Section 144 area, a Section which was broken even by the Congress during the British rule. They do not want the people to face the police. Some cadres who, out of their own bitter experience, are fighting the Congress volunteers and not the police, as taught by their leaders, are being tortured. And to keep the cadres under their spell, the leaders decry Mrs Gandhi as 'half-fascist', without making the cadres understand the fascist character of the Government and training them to fight fascism. Another half of Indira Gandhi is democratic and that is why she is supported for her 'progressive' policies.

EX-CPM MEMBER
Calcutta

About WBCUTA.

The assault on the lecturers in Kamarpukur College, intimidation of a lecturer in Vidyasagar College, assault on a lecturer in Prafulla Chandra College, accidental, or deliberate, during the students' union elections—all these are part of a highly organised and pre-planned attack of the neo-fascists on the progressive intellectuals of West Bengal. The ruling class is following the classic pattern set by the past masters of fascism.

The incidents referred to primarily concern college teachers. It was only reasonable of us to expect WBCUTA, the much vaunted protector of our rights, to carry on a campaign against these atrocities. But WBCUTA has not done so. The revisionists at its helm quite naturally want to steer clear of all confrontations with the rulers. As a matter of fact, the leadership of the WBCUTA has shown a remarkable acumen in conformism and compromise during the past struggles of the lecturers and professors by frustrating their militancy. So, it can be concluded logically that the WBCUTA leadership will not lift a finger to help the formation of an anti-fascist front. Therefore, the responsibility lies on the rank and file members of the WBCUTA. We shall have to unite firmly irrespective of our political affiliations and resist the onslaught everywhere, in every possible form. In doing this we shall have to unite with the non-teaching staff in colleges, the teachers in schools and the students. We must cease to cherish the illusion of academic isolation and unite with the broad masses of the people. Only then will it be possible to initiate mass resistance against the fascists.

WBCUTA is our organisation. It is our duty and responsibility to see that it does not degenerate into an instrument in the hands of the rulers. We must give it back the true qualities of a mass organisation.

A SECTION OF THE WBCUTA
Calcutta

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