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LOVE THY LABOUR

IT was a bad public relations job, this idea of a dialogue with trade union leaders. At a time when Mrs Gandhi was releasing one socialist pigeon after another from her magic bag, it was a senseless act to convene the meeting in New Delhi and evolve a new industrial relations policy which was a euphemism for a policy to ensure strife-free economic growth which was again, as revealed in the declared agenda of the meeting, a euphemism for strike-free economic production. If the ecstatic advisers of Mrs Gandhi thought that she and her charisma would carry anything she wanted, they were sorely disappointed. Mrs Gandhi had to take some tumbling right at the beginning when the trade union leaders refused to accept the Government agenda which included such preposterous subjects as banning of strikes, linking wages with productivity, constituting an Industrial Relations Commission to replace the present machinery for conciliation, adjudication and arbitration. The union leaders produced their ideas of an agenda which included things like wages policy, unemployment, rising prices, closures. That sufficiently sabotaged the meeting before it met. The music coming out of these points and counterpoints could be hardly sweet to the Prime Minister. There was not a single point which could take a concrete shape in the meeting and Mr Khadilkar's announcement that there was a breakthrough in industrial relations was greeted as something between a lie and a joke.

Even the issue, on which there was a semblance of consensus, could be hardly described as resolved: the issue of the bargaining agent to negotiate between employers and workers. The suggestion that the bargaining agent would have to take into confidence all the minority sections is a lofty one. West Bengal, where rival political parties would not hesitate to sacrifice the interests of the workers for the furtherance of the cause of the party (and instances could be cited ad nauseam), would alone show that such consensus is a myth. All the trade union organisations might have given a rare show of unity in refusing to take the Government agenda; but that unity is bound to collapse over the bargaining agent—that is to say, if they do not undergo a revolutionary transformation of their hitherto displayed character. Wisely therefore Mr Khadilkar said that the suggestion deserved further consideration!

It is not however the result of the meeting that is astounding but, the

attitude of Mrs Gandhi who presided over the meeting. Her remark that industrial relations were too important and serious a matter to be left solely to workers and employers amply shows that she takes it for granted that her Government, which she wants to intervene in industrial disputes, would be accepted as representing the workers. In case she wants to prove such bona fides, why doesn't she start a few things? Let us say, why doesn't she do something about a ceiling on management remuneration in a company? Delhi High Court has struck down the provisions in the Companies Act for imposing such ceilings.

The West Bengal Government too has been showing a great concern for arbitrary closures of factories in the State. It is thinking of a bill to ensure that the management gives sufficient time to the Government to judge whether the closures are just. A gesture, indeed. But will the workers ever believe that the Government would take their side in a dispute? Can the Government make the workers believe that when a factory management threatens the security of workers by temporarily closing down the workshops, it does not do so without taking the Government in the closest confidence, that no management would dare to close down without getting the green signal from the labour executives of the labour-loving Government?

Waiting For Something

When there is incessant rainfall few people now think of the likely-to-be-marooned West Pakistan army in East Bengal. They think instead of the rain-swept refugees living in the border States without hope, in privation and disease. It now appears that the Pakistan army will be able to look after itself during the monsoon, while leaving part of the task of 'pacification' of the countryside to those who swear by Islamic solidarity—the Biharis, the Muslim

League, the Jamaat-e-Islami and the rest. Contrary to assessments, the monsoon may be a greater curse to the populace and the fighters than to the army. This army, to date, has been savage and efficient: it has succeeded because it has been ruthless.

If the monsoon does not curb Yahya Khan, what will? There is a lot of talk about an imminent economic crisis in West Pakistan. The war against East Bengal no doubt has imposed the severest strain on the economy but no country in recent times is known to have folded up because of bankruptcy. There are aid-givers to pull Pakistan out of the mess, and so it would not do to bank too much on this factor. Popular discontent in the wake of the economic strain is unlikely to break out in an upheaval, because most people in the west have been led to believe that the crisis in East Pakistan is the result of an Indian conspiracy to break up the country and that, in suppressing the secessionists, at heavy financial cost, the army is defending the unity and integrity of Pakistan. Quite a large number of countries believe, at least, the second part. Besides, very few people in West Pakistan know about the massacre in the east.

But things can't go on like this for months. The struggle in East Bengal, now scattered and perhaps without centralised leadership, will acquire a bigger dimension in course of time. This neither the Awami League leadership nor New Delhi nor even Islamabad will like and there must be some planning under way—or wishful thinking—for a political settlement before the Awami League loses hold. Whatever it is, some hope must be held out. Thus we hear cryptic remarks about something happening within six months or even earlier. Something is in the air: the aid-givers are perhaps insisting on certain conditions. But a political settlement after the massacre will conclude only Act I. It is not going to be a one-act play, though the interval before Act II may be longish. Meanwhile, New Delhi, groaning with

the stupendous problem of refugees, will blow hot and cold—talk about 'other means' to solve the problem and then insist that it believes in persuasion; Mr Bhutto will whisper to his friends that by November he will either be in power or in jail while knowledgeable Awami Leaguers will talk of a settlement by September. Others would like to know more about the nature and extent of the fighting in East Bengal.

Palliatives Of Planning

If one takes the original time-table the Fourth Plan in West Bengal is in the third year of its execution. And yet scarcely any change has occurred to prevent the worsening of the general plight. The economic situation has actually become bleaker. The number of closures has gone up; the owners are firing the workers or forcing them to do shorter work hours on one pretext or other. (About 200 units have closed shop throwing more than 80,000 hands out). Prices are upward and, with that, the living has grown costlier. What in fact has suffered a notable change is the past zeal of the newspapers to report these facts.

From occasional briefings one can make out that a restructuring of the State's Fourth Plan is in the offing to fit it into the exigencies of the times. The latest hint came from the discussions between State Ministers and the Planning Minister in the Capital last week. Obviously the emphasis in the re-formulation is on the rural unemployed whose allegiance is vital to the sustenance of a political party in the state. During the talks the Ministers are reported to have proposed a rehauling of the crash programme for rural employment and pleaded that blocks, not districts, be made the unit of the plan. Development of North Bengal including an extra railway line and additional funds for NBDA, also figured in the talks. The expressed purpose of these schemes is to ensure regional

balance. But, of course, the use of the lure of this plan and of the improved roads that it entails to control the intransigent people in this sensitive zone cannot wholly be ruled out. Calcutta projects have also been given a priority with a view to solving the city's twin problems—improvement of civic amenities and job creation for the educated youth.

Evidently the assumption of the recast Plan is to contain the immediate sources of trouble; shorter gains rather than substantive changes in the economies of the state are its objective. But even this calls for liberal aid from the Centre. The State Government, it is reported, has asked for Rs 5 crores more. Surprisingly, however, New Delhi has not been found to be unyielding to the demands though in the past similar demands for extra funds for more, or at least equally, pressing needs had gone unheeded on grounds of lack of funds. It is said to have agreed to give the State as much resources as it can spend on Calcutta projects with a ceiling of Rs 100 crores, which implies doubling of its present budget. After its unexpected success in the last poll, the Congress(R) will wield all the resources at its command to outdo its parliamentary opposition and to rehabilitate itself in this troubled State. Mao or no Mao, politics seems to be in perfect command of the situation.

A Queer Dove

The Vietnam war protesters in Washington early this month found themselves in strange company. Their chorus of protest was joined by an unfamiliar voice from embattled Vietnam—the voice of Vice-President Nguyen Cao Ky. The Air Vice-Marshal who was threatening to follow up the Laos invasion with a ground invasion of North Vietnam—the source of all trouble—appears to have emerged as a 'new man' after the ordeal in Laos. After his brave boys fled Laos Ky realised, like

Asoka after the battle of Kalinga, the utter futility of war. "The first thing we should try to achieve", he told an astounded press conference, "is to find ways to stop the fighting." More than a mere war protester, Nguyen Cao Ky proved to be the latest convert to the New Left. He warned the Americans not to consider him as their "flunkey". At best he is their "ally". And that, too, of a dissenting variety. He charged the Americans with having supplied "obsolete equipment" to South Vietnam and warned them to keep their "hands off" the coming presidential election.

Last week the Air Vice-Marshal renewed his message of 'peace'—that dirty word the utterance of which could land anybody in jail in South Vietnam. "We want to live in peace", he said, "but this does not mean an invasion of the north to destroy a regime with which we disagree". The North Vietnamese might be communists, but above all they were Vietnamese. The pacifist Buddhist leader, Thich Tri Quang, and the peace candidate General Duong Van Minh must be gasping at this performance of the hawk-turned-dove. This change, they know, has more to do with the coming elections than anything else. But what is really puzzling them is Cao Ky's real intentions. Does he really hope to replace Nguyen Van Thieu in the Presidential chair? Or is it an American-sponsored move to take the wind out of the sails of Big Minh to facilitate Thieu? Cao Ky's differences with Thieu are too well known to support the theory of a secret tie-up between the two. But then how to believe the other theory that makes Ky a serious contender against an American-backed Thieu? Nobody should know better than Cao Ky, the mechanics of elections in South Vietnam where votes polled often turn out to be greater in number than listed voters. In South Vietnam the electors (if there can be any such quantity under American bayonets) propose and the Pentagon disposes. If the Americans have already decided

on retaining Thieu in the Doc Lap (Independence Palace) as Cao Ky alleges, he had better mind his own business of embellishing his villas on the Riviera and adding to his accounts in a Swiss bank. Or, have the Americans got fed up with Thieu and want to change horses in the midstream of "Vietnamization"? President Thieu, incidentally, has been opposed to this unfortunate word that gives the impression that the war prior to it was an all-American effort. And if the success of Vietnamization is made into a precondition of Thieu's tenure in office the Laos debacle bodes ill for him. American ground troops have to be withdrawn if Nixon wants to win a second term and left to themselves Thieu's crack units will melt like snow flakes in summer. Thus to save American face it might well be convenient for Washington to put up a candidate who can come to terms with reality without raising a cry of sell-out.

Whatever might be Nixon's calculation the Americans know that elections are too important a subject to be left to the "gooks" even if they are in supposedly government-controlled villages. Even an arch liberal American writing for the *New York Times* regards a free election in South Vietnam and "direct United States responsibility for the fairness of the electoral process, could prove to be the most dangerous of all for American disengagement". So for the sake of "disengagement" and not imperialistic control the Americans will have to choose the winner in the "election". And as informed sources indicate, Nixon has already made his choice. The lovers of democracy might be looking forward to the day when in October the South Vietnamese electorate would make their holy trek to the polling booth. Meanwhile the NLF continues to hammer Nixon and the Thieu boys.

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U.S. And East Bengal

ROBI CHAKRAVORTI

RECENTLY, I received a letter from a friend of mine in Calcutta asking me why America is silent over the massacre in East Bengal. At about the same time, I came across an article published in *The Statesman* which claimed that the average American was "deeply moved" by the army action against unarmed freedom fighters in East Bengal.

Both reactions are typical of the confusion that, I assume, prevails in West Bengal regarding the U.S. posture on East Bengal. The confusion, I suppose, has been made worse by the action of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee calling for suspension of all military aid and military sales licences to Pakistan until the conflict in East Bengal is resolved.

The confusion stems from our muddled thinking on some simple facts of life about the United States, its political process and its foreign policy assumption. When we criticise, support, oppose or adore the "United States", we do not know what we are talking about. Are we referring to the Foreign Policy executed by the Administration, or to newspaper editorials in a handful of great newspapers or magazines? Are we thinking of some Congressmen and public opinion leaders assuming that their views can influence Congressional deliberations and, eventually, the White House?

To avoid confusion, it is necessary to make a separation between three factors relevant to the making of U.S. foreign policy. First, there is the executive branch of the United States Government. Second, there is Congress. Third, there is the vague thing called public opinion which is supposed to be reflected in or moulded by the mass media. When we discuss the United States' silence on the atrocities in East Bengal, we must

remember to make a clear distinction between these three factors.

Let me take the third factor first. *The Statesman* article is very much on my mind, and I would like to use it as an illustration of how journalists often mislead people in their ignorance combined with a lofty opinion of their own vocation. *The Statesman's* reporter—K. K. Katyal is his name—wrote, "A recent visit to the USA and Britain revealed surprising gaps between official postures and popular sentiments. In both countries, there was no mistaking the non-official mood—expressions of horror at the genocide in East Bengal were forthright and sincere. The Government, however, dithered—or so it seemed" In another part of the article, Katyal talked glibly of the "average" American, and sermonised, "Whatever the Government or politicians may or may not do, the average American, it was clear, was deeply moved by the army action against unarmed freedom fighters."

Katyal seems to have accepted the people he must have met during his short visits to big cities as representative of the "average" American. He must have, also, read editorials and newspaper reports in great "national" newspapers and magazines and quickly concluded that they reflect the views of the "average" American. It is not that simple; if it were, the Vietnam war would have been over by now and the Negroes in this country would have had real, substantive equality in all walks of life, not merely in the small area of schooling. In fact, Nixon and his political strategists are making the point that the mass media do not accurately reflect the views of the "middle America", the "average" American, if you please, and they

are not all that wrong in their estimate.

Newspapermen from India and other "underdeveloped" countries, visiting this country on Government or Foundation auspices, often make the easy mistake of equating the views of great newspapers as representative of the "average" American. They forget that these great newspapers are few in number, straddling a country geographically much larger than India and population-wise about two-fifth of India's size.

Average American

The "average" American, if there is one, reads his hometown newspaper, which is fatter than Indian newspapers and frequently, leaner in coverage of foreign news. He works from eight to five, and if you take into account the time for commuting, his household worries, his down-payment problems etc., he is a pretty harassed fellow who does not only lack time for absorbing foreign news carefully, but often also, intellectual capacity, interest or motivation to do so. Whatever the "average" American may do or think, he certainly does not sit behind a typewriter in the office of the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*.

American public opinion, thus, cannot be judged from opinions and news reports published in a few newspapers and magazines, such the *New York Times* or *Newsweek*. Secondly, even if these handful of publications did reflect the opinion of the "average" American, we have to recognize the fact that public opinion is a vague, elusive thing, and that unless it is aroused on an issue that affects the interest of the country directly, it is unlikely to have any influence on the machinery of policy-making. The "average" American has only peripheral interest in East Bengal; he will have a great deal of difficulty even in locating the country on the map. East Bengal is not an issue which falls in the area of the "average" American's interests,—cultural, political or economic. The situation would perhaps have been

different if there were large pockets of American residents of East Bengal ancestry who could have campaigned for public interest or put pressure on Congressmen.

Public opinion in this country may have taken into cognizance the events in East Bengal with a mixture of curiosity, puzzlement and some compassion. On some sensitive minds, the reports and pictures from East Bengal may have left scratches. But it would be outright folly to claim, as the writer in *The Statesman* has done, that the "average" American has been "deeply moved" by the events in East Bengal.

The elites are, however, another matter. They consist of intellectuals, writers, journalists, old India hands, such as former Ambassadors or Fulbright scholars and Congressmen. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee's action on the military aid to Pakistan was taken, independent of any pressure from the "deeply moved" average American. The Senators on the Committee were moved, not their constituents. Likewise, Chester Bowles exposed the folly of the U.S. arms aid to Pakistan. Peggy Durbin wrote an excellent article in the *New York Magazine*. The AP correspondent, one of the six foreign newsmen to visit East Bengal under army escort, described the horrors of carnage there. Popular magazines like *Newsweek* and *Time* published reports which can be interpreted as critical of the Yahya regime. Left-wing journals such as the *New Republic* and *I.E. Stone's Bi-weekly* have called for suspension of aid to Pakistan.

It is one thing, however, to claim that these opinions exist; it is another to argue that they reflect a deep concern on the part of the average American, and that, consequently, the U.S. policy towards Pakistan is likely to change. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has spoken as did a number of newspapers and magazines; but there is little indication that policymakers in Washington are going to change their thinking towards Pakistan.

At the moment of writing, the U.S. Government—different from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and some newspapers and magazines—seems to be unflinching in its military and economic support of the Yahya government. The State Department's answer to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's vote against continuance of military aid to Pakistan is evidence of the U.S. Administration's official attitude to the problem. The suspension of aid, the State Department argued, "would not significantly affect the military situation in East Pakistan and could have a strongly adverse political impact on our relations with Pakistan." If the logic appears Machiavellian, it is so only in the eyes of those who are emotionally involved in the struggle for Bangladesh. To policy-makers in Washington, it is realism.

The parameter of U.S. "realism" in foreign policy is, of course, a balance of power that favours its interests and endangers Communists. It is not that intellectuals in the State Department and the White House and strategists in the Pentagon do not have emotions and sentiments; they do not take them into account in making decisions. The killings in East Bengal are not likely, therefore, to weigh as much in the thinking of the U.S. policymakers as they do on the minds of Bengalis. If a Bengali reader is shocked by this statement and angrily point out the U.S. contradiction in harping on the theme of "bloodbath" in Vietnam and official ignorance of the same in East Bengal, he is confusing the rhetoric of foreign policy with its reality, superficiality with substance. The United States is a Big Power and like all Big Powers, it controls its tear ducts like a ham actor and tells fairy tales like a governess. As Richard Barnet, author of *Intervention and Revolution*, pointed out, the U.S. policymakers are highly selective in the violence they notice and inconsistent in the moral judgments they make about them.

"On November 23, 1946, for example," Barnet wrote, "at the very

moment when the State Department was preparing a major U.S. intervention against Greek 'terrorists', a French naval squadron turned its guns on the civilian population of Haiphong and killed more than six thousand in an afternoon. The United States did not protest, much less intervene. Violence in behalf of the established order is judged by one set of criteria, insurgent violence by another. When established institutions kill through their police or their armies, it is regrettable but, by hypothesis, necessary. When the weak rise up and kill, their violence threatens order everywhere. Sympathetic as U.S. bureaucrats were with the objectives of the Hungarian freedom fighters in 1956, they breathed a sigh of relief when they were disarmed."

The State Department's position on the military aid to Pakistan shows once more what Barnet has so forcefully pointed and what any dispassionate observer of the U.S. foreign policy must have known. Bengalis are not however, dispassionate on the issue of East Bengal and continue to equate righteousness with the impulse for success. What they forget is that violence can be successful when used by the unscrupulous. Hitler had succeeded with his reign of terror in Europe and although the movies and magazines later made folklores out of the partisan struggle in Europe, the fact remains that the underground movement by itself could not topple Hitler. A massive invasion army organized from abroad defeated him.

The U.S. Government which has used violence throughout history may have overestimated its value in Vietnam; but certainly it knows its use better than the greenhorn fighters for Bangladesh who died heroically but uselessly. The latter's fault was underestimating the power of organized violence and terrorism.

The State Department's position on the military aid to Pakistan reveals its philosophy of realpolitik. It shows that the U.S. policy is not going to change simply because thousands of people were killed in East Bengal.

In his recently published book, *Promises to Keep* Chester Bowles has confessed that after eight years of effort as Ambassador to India he has encountered no success in persuading the State Department to revise the U.S. policy in South Asia. Yahya and the ruling clique in Pakistan know this; the freedom fighters for Bangladesh do not. That is why Pakistan has always gotten away with murder—in its conflicts with India and now, in its geno-

cidal policy in East Bengal.

It appears that Pakistan may pull it off again—over the dead bodies of thousands in East Bengal and aided by the opportunistic policies of Big Powers, including the United States which may deplore the use of violence privately but knows its efficacy in international affairs. After all, as I.F. Stone pointed out, the methods West Pakistan are using in East Bengal are “fully as cruel as those we have been using in Vietnam.”

Spartacus In Ceylon

ASHOK RUDRA

IT is now possible to piece together fragments of facts received from various Ceylonese sources and get a somewhat coherent view of what has happened in Ceylon. It would appear that the revolutionary uprising was indeed an authentically indigenous one engineered by an organisation composed largely of young people. It may thus be not so fruitful to chase the hypothesis of an international conspiracy and better to view the phenomenon as a part of the world wide phenomenon of youth taking leadership of the most radical political movements. The uprising in Ceylon was organised by the JVP—Janata Vimukta Peramuna—a radical youth organisation established in 1965 most members of which, including its leader, Rohana Wijeweera, had earlier belonged to the Peking-oriented Communist Party. The group drew into its folds many of the more radical cadres of the various extreme left groups that were born out of splits in the Moscovite, Pekingese and Trotskyite parties.

Despite its militancy the JVP is not easily classified in Marxist categories. Its ideology has had some narrow extreme nationalistic overtones. Of course it declared the peasantry to be the main basis of the revolution and called for total break with imperialism. But expressing all

the nationalistic aspirations of the radical Sinhalese petit-bourgeoisie, these people glorified the island's past and spoke strongly of the cultural invasion by the West. In their early period they also took the position that the estate workers of Indian origin were not only not capable of playing any revolutionary role but were in fact positively counter-revolutionary, acting as a fifth column within Ceylon for “Indian expansionists”. They called for a self-sufficient national economy (an end to the plantation economy), and measures to restore the ancient irrigation systems in the dry zone of the country, thus ending the sufferings of the peasantry in those areas where the main problem was that of water. The way to achieve these aims, according to them, lay through an armed anti-imperialist struggle which would unite all sections of the people on the basis of patriotism. A short-term island-wide insurrection was the perspective which was put forward, though the concrete details, of course, were not publicised. A great deal of attention was paid to the military-technical preparations for the uprising.

The official “Left” leadership was largely unaware that the youth were being weaned away from them by this movement. But in 1969 the CP (Moscow) sponsored daily paper

Aththa drew attention to the existence of a clandestine organisation which was training for guerilla warfare, attacking the Left leadership and taking the youth away from the “Left” coalition. They charged that this was a movement financed and organized by the CIA. The CP (Peking) began to carry articles in 1970 in their journals criticising the theories of Che Guevara and Regis Debray. In both these parties, the youth movements had been penetrated deeply by the JVP, despite the fact that the organization operated in a clandestine manner. The influence that the JVP gained within the Trotskyist LSSP did not reach the same extent, though they did manage to win away substantial sections of LSSP youths in the rural areas.

Witch-hunt

The witch-hunt and repression that the UNP government launched in the beginning of 1970 against what is termed the “subversive” Leftist organisations brought the existence of this new movement to the notice of the broad public. Though the repression was aimed at all new organizations which claimed to be revolutionary, the JVP was made the main target of attack. The Press tried to whip up hysteria among the public so as to justify the repression. The UNP government arrested Wijeweera in April 1970, while the campaign for the election of May 1970 was well under way. Immediately afterwards the whole country was flooded with posters and leaflets calling for his release. This campaign had no parallel in Ceylon in its history of political agitations around such an issue. Because of all these factors, in a very short period of time the JVP had emerged as a movement which attracted the attention of the entire public and which appealed to the revolutionary and militant feelings of large sections of the youth.

The JVP was not from the beginning committed firmly to an anti-parliamentary line; as a matter of fact they supported the United Front of Mrs Bandaranaike's Freedom

Party, the LSSP and CP UF in the elections that were held in May 1970. Their members were very active everywhere in the election campaign. Though the movement did not then have an official mouthpiece it mobilised its forces in support of the candidates of the UF in a most energetic manner. In this period the JVP was caught up not only by the anti-UNP feeling that was sweeping the whole country but also by the illusion that the UF would, if elected, follow a radical course but thought that the UNP and imperialist forces would not allow the UF to come to power, even though its victory in the elections was practically certain. Hence the perspective was one of preparing for an armed uprising, if the ruling class refused to accept the verdict of the elections. This, they thought, would create a situation in which the broad masses would rally round them because of their violently anti-UNP feeling reaching the point of explosion.

After the UF government came to power the JVP agitated for the release of Wijeweera and other patriots. After Wijeweera was released the JVP began to hold a series of public meetings in the important cities. Large crowds flocked to see and hear the youthful leaders. The JVP called upon the government to go forward to socialism and promised its full support if such steps were taken. This was the theme of the articles in their newspapers which first began to appear during this period. The masses who placed their confidence in this government, and who now hoped that the government would take very radical measures, found the JVP expressing and articulating their own disappointments and aspirations.

The political situation began to change very rapidly after the United Front came to power. Within a very short period of time it became clear that the government, instead of moving to the left, was on the contrary swinging to the Right. Except for a change of emphasis in foreign policy (e.g. recognition of North Korea and the South Vietnam Provisional Revo-

lutionary Government, breaking off relations with Israel and expulsion of the Asia Foundation and Peace Corps) the actual nature of government policies was clearly capitalistic. The first flush of enthusiasm disappeared, disillusionment grew, helped by the raging inflation. Workers were also becoming restive. The case of the spontaneous strike of the CTB employees over a cut in their bonus was a very important sign of this situation. The relationship between the government and mass movement and between the Left leaders and their rank and file followers was fast changing.

The youth in particular started en masse to turn away very sharply from the government. Illusions of large sections of them disappeared in a very short period of time. More and more of them looked for quick and radical changes and were very receptive to the idea of an immediate armed revolution.

Hold on Workers

The JVP until this point did not have much hold amongst organised workers. As a matter of fact they seemed to have left more or less alone the plantation workers. In the situation developing after the elections there were signs that the organisation was considering getting more involved in mass action. Thus the mass rally it organised in Colombo on February 27 was at least partly in support of economic demands of the working class. On the other hand it was also making massive preparations for an armed struggle. But it was not given enough time. An accidental explosion of a bomb in March in the University area led to the discovery by the police of large quantities of arms. The government moved rapidly. It imposed an emergency, arrested the leaders of the JVP and started a regular campaign to destroy it. The abortive and premature insurrection was thus imposed upon the JVP by the severe repression resorted to by the forces of the State.

Repression continues and has by now become generalised; which fact

has been systematically underplayed or totally suppressed in the Indian Press; for good reasons; for the most important imperialist help the Sirimavo government has received in drowning the rebellion in blood has gone from India. It is thus not well known to us that the army and police have virtually taken over the island; the civilian authorities have very little say. No MP or Minister can go to a police station or to a jail to inquire about the prisoners' plight. The army is brutally massacring youth, even by dragging them out of their homes. Everyone between 16 and 25 is potentially suspect, as in some districts of West Bengal. Eyewitness stories of police atrocities, army killing of civilians, public executions and savage conduct by the police and army remind one of Bangladesh. The rivers are full of corpses and crowds stand at the bridges watching for bodies of young persons shot and thrown into the rivers by the army and police. Deaths are estimated at 20,000.

Arrests have been so numerous that the jails are full and the Vidya-daya University has been turned into a detention camp with electrified barbed wire round it. The leaders of the JVP as also the leader of the Peeking wing C.P. (N. Sanmugathanan) have been arrested. Other anti-Coalition left persons have been arrested including Premal Kumarasiri, former MP, and several directors of the Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation. Even members of the Left (Coalition) parties have not been spared. The LSSP Youth Movement leader (Vasudeva Nanayakkara, MP) is under arrest; and the editor of the LSSP daily *Janadina*, Mr Nimal Horana, was arrested though later released.

A witch-hunt against intellectuals and leftists is beginning. The blame for the radicalisation of the youth is being shifted to teachers and university lecturers. The military are waiting for an opportunity to take full control and decimate the entire Left including the revisionist CP and the ex-Trotskyist LSSP leaders.

Ceylon is at the most critical juncture of its modern history. Illusions of left parliamentary democracy are destroyed for ever. The island is poised between two drastic alternatives: the suppressed insurrection being born in a generalised working class revolt; or the present left facade government ceding place to a military regime supported by the U.S. and Indian imperialists. The

blood of Ceylonese youth has loosened a mask which the blood of men, women and children of Bangladesh had helped Indira Gandhi to put on. She has, through her very prompt rushing of military aid to Ceylon, announced a new doctrine, the doctrine of India's military presence in all neighbouring countries menaced by communist guerillas.

ment', but this is important—it does not dismiss whatever defiant gestures it has perceived as worthless. Little drops, Peking seems to think, do make an ocean.

There was also the vigorous reassertion that the Chinese Revolution is a part of the world revolution. This is certainly a crucial point that the editorial was emphasizing. That is, China will not remain contented with the autonomous and insulated development of the revolutionary processes at home and that the consolidation of China is only part of an effort to strengthen a worldwide movement. China, the editorial emphasized, is only a terminal in the path of world revolution and not a dead end. And hence, as a logical corollary, the editorial asserted that "with the motherland at heart and the world in mind the Chinese people who have won liberation will never forget all the people of the world who are struggling to win their liberation and to defend their independence and freedom. To forget them means betrayal." One gets the feeling that it is with the recent developments in Bangladesh and Ceylon in mind that the editorial had been written. Peking's earlier ambivalent attitude to these issues seems to be changing. At least, one cannot rule out this possibility.

On the much-talked-about question of China's gestures to the United States the consistent Chinese tactics of tit-for-tat struggle could explain its action of inviting the American ping-pong team to visit China. Further, the Chinese have never taken the dogmatic stance that they will not strive to normalise relations, if possible, with the United States. It is the United States that has all along been—and to a large extent still is—a stumbling block. However, to sell the line, as the world press has deliberately done, that China has come round to accepting America's imperial role in the world is a bit too much for the Chinese to swallow. The fantastic dimensions to which the so-called "thaw" has

May Day Is A Plea Day

N. R. KALPATHI

THE joint editorials in the Chinese Party press on important occasions such as May Day are significant, for these are the occasions when the Chinese leadership either puts forward a new line or gives ample proof of the continuance of an old one. But most of these editorials have something new to say and they show the current thinking of the Chinese leadership. The New Year day editorial (January 1970), for instance, said that China had no intention whatsoever to become a super-power. It also carefully noted the "irreversible trend" among the small and medium powers to oppose the super-powers. The May day editorial this year was equally important because it came at a time of momentous changes in Asia and the world.

In the course of the four months since the beginning of 1971 much water has flowed down the Ganges, the Meghna, the Mahaveli, and the Mississippi. The low-level stability of South Asian politics has been undone by internal forces. The green-coloured ping-pong table came into sharp focus, and for a few days, even the amber-flamed battlefields of Indochina receded to the background. China's reactions to these events have become a subject of controversy. China seems to realise it too. If one were to see the May Day joint editorial in this light, it would appear as a skilful exercise in explaining and

clarifying the Chinese position on these issues. One also gets the impression that Peking is making a fervent plea, particularly to the third world, that it should not be viewed as a conservative revolutionary power with concomitant interest in the preservation of the status quo. One could even say that this appeared to be the underlying but cardinal theme of the editorial.

It has become almost customary these days in Peking to begin an important editorial with a quotation from Mao. This editorial was no exception. We are told in the beginning itself that the danger of a new world war still exists. Imperialism may be a paper tiger in the long run but in the short run—in its "death struggle" as Peking would put it—it is a ferocious one equipped with iron teeth, nuclear health and what have you. It has not resigned itself to defeat. It may be compelled to do so in the future, but in a desperate effort to save itself it may even launch a major war. Peking is not discounting this possibility.

The resentment among the medium and small powers against the super-powers—imperialist and social-imperialist—again received fond notice in this editorial. The editorial said that they have "daringly stood up" against the managers of the international system. Peking certainly is not over-optimistic about this 'resent-

been blown up can be seen from the fact that American travel agencies since the ping-pong episode have been painting rosy pictures of flocks of gum-chewing Yankee tourists marching into the Middle Kingdom in the near future. One of the obvious political motives behind this propaganda build-up in the West is to confound the confused Soviet Union. But the Chinese are well aware of the adverse effect it might have on

others' perception of their policies and programmes. Hence the redoubled effort by Peking to state its views more strongly than ever before. This is perhaps the reason why among the bunch of exclamatory sentences at the end of the editorial, the call, "People of the world unite and defeat U.S. aggressors and all their running dogs" was assigned the pride of place. In short, the Chinese are telling the world in simple terms:

"For heaven's sake please don't think that we are collaborating with the United States and letting down revolutionary struggles". It is an understandable concern—at least from Peking's point of view. It appears that the complex and fast-developing events are causing a bit of strain even to the cool and clear-headed decision-makers in Peking. Could that be the reason why May Day this time was made a plea day?

On Paris Commune—I

PARESH CHATTOPADHYAY

The working class did not expect miracles from the Commune. They have no ready made utopias to introduce par decret du peuple. They know that in order to work out their own emancipation...they will have to pass through long struggle, through a series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men. They have no ideals to realize, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant. In the full

consciousness of their historic mission, and the heroic resolve to act up to it, the working class can afford to smile at the coarse invective of the gentlemen's gentlemen with the pen and inkhorn, and at the didactic patronage of well-wishing bourgeois doctrinaires, pouring forth their ignorant platitudes and sectarian crochets in the oracular tone of scientific infallibility"—Marx—The Civil War in France 1871, sec. III.

fight for five days in the streets of Paris, were defeated in a bloodbath. The bourgeoisie, at least its upper strata, got scared of the revolution and was not prepared to defend the Republic. This bourgeoisie together with the remnants of the feudal aristocracy supported Louis Napoleon Bonaparte—Napoleon III—in his coup d'état against the Republic on December 2, 1851. The Second Empire was born.

THIS year is the centenary of the Paris Commune of 1871 (March 18—May 28). In what follows an attempt has been made to analyse that great event and to draw certain lessons therefrom. The first section gives the background to the event, the second discusses the event itself while the third deals with its lessons together with some of its wider implications. The study is based on the well-known classics of Marxism.

I

Engels, while introducing Marx's classic work on the Commune pointed that ever since the bourgeois revolution of 1789 the economic and political development of France placed Paris in such a position that no revolution could break out there without the proletariat advancing its own class demands after victory. Such

demands, however incoherently put forward, ultimately amounted to the demand for the abolition of class antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and thus constituted a direct threat to the existing social order. The workers who advanced such demands being still armed, the disarming of the workers was the first thing the bourgeoisie wanted after every revolution.

The reign of Louis Philippe (1830-1848) was already rich with the struggles of the working class, more and more inspired by socialist aspirations—culminating in the insurrections at Lyons in 1831 and in Paris in 1839 and 1840. Much more important was the revolution of 1848 when the liberal bourgeoisie in France in its struggle against Louis Philippe for a Republic had workers on their side but later turned on these same workers who, after a heroic

It was under Napoleon III that France experienced a rapid growth of industry and commerce and the enrichment of its bourgeoisie to an extent hitherto unknown. Speculation and corruption also flourished to an unprecedented degree. At the same time, even after the bloody repression of June, 1848, the proletariat could not be silenced. It was already fighting against its stagnant wage level in the face of the rising cost of housing and food. In spite of all the law courts, all the police, and the entire repressive machinery of the state, workers' strikes were spreading all over France. In 1864 the authorities were compelled to abolish the civil code article which had, during the previous years, upheld the legal superiority of the employers over the workers. Organizationally also the proletariat was advancing. In 1868 trade union chambers were formed. The influence of the International Workingmen's Association—the First

International—formed in London in 1864 under the direct guidance of Marx, also began to be felt in France.

The Second Empire was an appeal to French chauvinism; to the demand of France's ruling classes to restore the frontiers of the first Empire (under Napoleon I). It amounted to a demand for the German left bank of the Rhine. The pretext used by the French ruling classes was the presentation by the Prussian prince of his candidature for the Spanish throne. The French Parliament opposed it on the ground that it would alter the balance of power in Europe. France declared war on Prussia on July 19, 1870.

Four days later, in the 'First Address of the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association', Marx reminded the members of the internationalist duty of the proletariat in the face of the wars resorted to by the ruling classes as he himself had laid down in the Inaugural Address of the Association six years ago: to master the mysteries of international politics; to watch the diplomatic acts of respective governments; to counteract them if necessary by all means; when unable to prevent, combine in simultaneous denunciations and "to vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern the relations of private individuals as the rules paramount of the intercourse of nations."

"Brothers of Germany"

In fact, even before Marx wrote the First Address the workers of France and Germany had already acted according to his advice. Thus six days before the war began the Paris section of the International wrote, "Brothers of Germany! our division would only result in the complete triumph of *despotism* on both sides of the Rhine...workingmen of all countries! we, the members of the International Workingmen's Association, who know of no politics, we send you as a pledge of indissoluble solidarity the good wishes

and salutations of the working men of France". On the otherside of the Rhine the German workers asserted that the "workmen of all countries are our *friend*, (italics in the original) and the despots of all countries are our *enemies*", (italics in the original) and the Berlin section of the International, in reply to the Paris manifesto, added, "solemnly we promise that neither the sound of the trumpet, nor the roar of the cannon, neither victory nor defeat shall divide us from our common work for the union of the children of toil of all countries".

The war, which the working classes could not stop breaking out, was a disaster for France. Her army capitulated on September 2 of the same year and Napoleon III was taken prisoner by the Prussians. The Second Empire collapsed and the workers of Paris proclaimed the Republic on September 4. A 'Government of National Defence' was instituted. It consisted of the former deputies of Paris, partly notorious monarchists, partly middle class Republicans with the monarchists holding the army and the police portfolios. With the Prussians marching upon Paris and its own leaders shut up in Bonapartist prisons the working class of Paris bore with the assumption of office by these men with the express condition that the government was to be wielded with the sole purpose of defending the nation.

As far as the Germans were concerned, the war was no longer a defensive war, as had been declared by the King of Prussia. It became an offensive war after Sedan as Bismarck continued it for the conquest of Alsace and Lorraine. The German workers opposed this war of conquest and the central committee of the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Germany in its manifesto of September 5, 1870 said, "We protest against the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine...we shall faithfully stand by our fellow-workmen in all countries for the common international cause of the proletariat". The German authorities replied by massive

repression of the working class leaders. The day the members of the German Social Democratic Workers' Party were arrested the General Council of the International came forward with an Address—the Second Address—drawn up by Marx.

After denouncing the war of conquest and the Bismarckian hypocrisy in presenting it as the expression of the "unanimous will of the German people", the Address turned to the French workers. It hailed the Republic but pointed out that the latter had not subverted the throne, but had merely taken the empty seat. It had been proclaimed not as a social conquest but as a national measure of defence and was headed by the known reactionaries. Thus "the French working class moves under circumstances of extreme difficulty". While acknowledging the reactionary character of the government the working class must remember that "any attempt at upsetting the new government in the present crisis, when the enemy is almost knocking at the doors of Paris, would be a desperate folly". At the same time the working class must not be deluded by the *national* remembrances of the past as the slogan "*Patrie en danger*" (Motherland in danger), reminiscent of 1792 put out by Blanqui and his followers—having considerable hold on the French workers—tended to show. Instead the workers should, the Address pointed out, calmly and resolutely improve the opportunities of the Republican liberty; for the work of their own *class* organization" (our emphasis).

Meanwhile, for the purpose of defending Paris, all Parisians capable of bearing arms had been armed and had constituted the National Guard where the workers were in the majority. The so-called government of National Defence got scared because they knew that a victory of the French working class over the Prussian aggressors would mean a victory of the French working class over the French propertied classes and "in this conflict between national duty and class interest, the government of

National Defence did not hesitate one moment to turn into a government of National Defection".¹ In fact as the documents later revealed, this government, almost from the moment of the proclamation of the Republic, were plotting the capitulation of Paris. On the other hand the co-existence between this bourgeois government and the armed proletariat was possible only because the proletariat did not want a civil war inside a city besieged by a foreign military power. At last Paris capitulated on January 28, 1871. In terms of the armistice, France was to elect a National Assembly within eight days for the sole purpose of deciding on peace or war and, eventually, to conclude a treaty of peace. With one-third of the territory in enemy hands, Paris cut off from the provinces and all communication disorganized it was impossible to elect—and that too within eight days—an assembly that would really represent the French people. The result was that the National Assembly had a vast majority of royalists (450 out of 750 deputies)—representing the landlords and the reactionary elements of town and country. L. A. Thiers, long known as a lying bourgeois historian and a murderer of republicans and workers under previous régimes became the President of the Republic.

Disarming Workers

The first task that Thiers set himself after assuming office was to disarm the workers. For a pretext he claimed that the artillery of the Paris National Guard was state property and as the war was over it must return to the state. It was of course a blatant lie. The artillery was furnished by the subscription of the National Guard and as such had been recognised officially as private property in the capitulation of the 28th January and on that very title, exempted from the general surrender into the hands of the conqueror of arms belonging to the Government. Nevertheless,

¹Karl Marx, *The Civil War In France* (1871), Section I.

Thiers opened the civil war by sending on March 18, 1871 one of his generals at the head of the troops of the line to seize the artillery of the National Guard. This attempt, however, broke down before the resistance of the National Guard and the fraternization of the soldiers with the

people. Thiers and his cohorts hastily fled Paris and retreated to Versailles. The proletarian revolution of the 18th March took undisputed sway over Paris and the Central Committee of the National Guard became the provisional Government.

(To be continued)

Andhra Pradesh

Chief Minister On Strike

NARAYANA MURTHY

THE Chief Minister, Mr K. Brahmananda Reddi, has gone on an indefinite strike in Andhra Pradesh since April 12. Really speaking, he has no demands to make; he has only a stand to take. This stand, in short, is that he won't implement his assurances to NGOs made in April last year when the latter withdrew their 17-day-old strike. He won't pay the interim relief which the Central Government and many other State governments have paid to their employees.

Andhra NGOs, in the first instance, did not ask for interim relief at all. They only asked the Chief Minister to put into practice what he had promised. The CM did not reply. He sat for one year over the files sent by the Finance Secretary, containing concrete proposals regarding the assurances made by the CM. It was only later that they tagged on their interim relief demand when their colleagues in other States got similar relief. NGOs pressed their demand for both, particularly insisted on the interim relief demand, but later, that is, within a week after April 12, agreed to discuss "unconditionally" their demands with the Chief Minister. They exhibited some flexibility, but the Chief Minister would not reciprocate—he is on strike.

Today the NGOs want to negotiate and settle. But the CM says he won't negotiate and he won't settle.

Who is on strike? Is it the NGOs or the Chief Minister?

The Gazetted Officers Association wanted the NGOs to be called for talks and a settlement. But the CM says he won't invite them.

Several leaders of political parties except of course the Indira Congress offered to use their good offices to end the stalemate. The CM was not prepared to end it and wants it to continue.

Some of his ministerial colleagues, privately of course, sympathised with the NGOs. CM has asked them to shut up. He has taken a stand and he won't budge, come what may. They cannot let him down like this when he is on strike. Some other Chief Ministers were fools to submit to this mob pressure, but he would not. Had he not put down the most violent Telengana agitation and shot them down by the dozen? Was he not the Chief Minister who showed West Bengal the way to put down the Naxalite movement? Be-

For Frontier contact

People's Book House

Meher House,

Cowasji Patel Street,

Fort, Bombay

sides, what is the strength of the NGOs? He can put them down and their struggle in a ziffy. He would not give way. Yes, he is on strike against the 4.5 lakh government employees, quasi-government employees, work-charged staff from village upwards to the State secretariat.

He got on to the roof top and shouted to the people to oppose these NGOs and asked them not to believe what this middle class lot said. He tried to follow his predecessors' divide and rule policy by telling them that these NGOs have been swallowing all the revenues by way of wages, leaving practically nothing for taking up development activities intended to benefit the poor people. But this idiotic lot of poor people won't react at all. And when they reacted, they did so with a state-wide hartal, never heard of in the 15-year-old history of Andhra Pradesh! All the traders normally used to down their shutters only after someone started throwing stones whenever there was a hartal; but this time they did not open their shutters at all.

The CM told everyone through the columns of the too obliging newspapers that the State has no resources and hence he cannot oblige them. To make his statement appear very real, he quoted the Rs 75 crore overdraft on the Reserve Bank. But the NGOs, who are the real people who handle all these statistics, asked a few questions: Did he not advance the same argument of lack of resources whenever they went on strike earlier but conceded the demands later? Was it not his officers who said that overdrafts were something not to worry about, since there might be overdrafts in the morning, but by noon, they are cleared? Was it not a fact that the Centre, with a Rs 240 crore deficit budget, paid interim relief? Then why can't a State Government which produced a Rs 9-crore surplus budget, find resources? It was he that scrapped prohibition to get more resources, besides those provided by the latest Finance Commission. Why is he keeping silent

over the accumulating tax arrears of Rs 50 crores (Government admitted it was Rs 30 crores) and the mounting outstanding arrears of loan repayments to the tune of Rs 240 crores?

This was too much for a Chief

Minister to swallow. His police shot down two employees at Tirupati. He expected that this would drive some sense into the heads of the NGOs. But this misguided lot said it would give him a week's notice.

A Forged Letter

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

THE Revolutionary Communist leaders, Mr Tarimela Nagi Reddy and Mr Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao, now facing trial on conspiracy charges to overthrow the lawfully established government through violent means, obtained the Hyderabad Court's permission and addressed a press conference to denounce "as out and out forged" a letter alleged to have been written by Mr Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao to one Padmanabha Reddy of Anantapur District and a 'close relative' of Mr Nagi Reddy. The letter requested him to receive Rs 35 lakhs through VPP from a book publisher in Bombay at the instance of the north Korean Consulate in Bombay.

In a prepared statement, Mr Venkateswara Rao said: "The revolutionary movements in Asia, especially in India are advancing. The government of India is not only suppressing the movement with its armed forces, it is also working to discredit the revolutionary movement by slandering it as foreign inspired. No revolutionary movement in any part of the world at any time ever succeeded on the basis of foreign help. In India too, we believe that the revolutionary movement will succeed only on the basis of its internal strength."

Mr Rao alleged that the letter was the work of the CIA in collaboration with the CBI who want to "implicate me, Comrade Nagi Reddy and our Party in one more conspiracy case." The statement further alleged that the Government of India was acting

according to the dictates of American imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism to discredit not only the Indian revolutionary movement but also the friendly States of the People's Republic of China and the Democratic Republic of Korea.

When a reporter asked the two leaders why they were anxious to contradict when the contents of the letter had not so far come out, Mr Nagi Reddy said a big conspiracy was going on against them and their movement. In the context of the atmosphere now being created, for example, in Ceylon and East Bengal, through the press "we thought it was of utmost importance to contradict this fantasy".

Earlier when the two leaders sought the permission of the Court to allow them to meet the Press to contradict the letter the Judge, Mr K. Venkataramana, in his order said the contents of the inland letter had nothing to do with the charges, the accused were facing in the trial. They need not obtain the permission of the court to put forward their views before the public. They could do so on their own responsibility and without the permission of the court. "However", the Judge added in his order, "as the petitioner is in judicial custody and as he has no access to the public or the press, permission is granted to the petitioner to interview the press..."

The following is the text of the letter:

Confidential

Devulapalli. Venkateswararao, MA,
BL. Camp: Musheerabad Central
Jail, Hyderabad.

"Chairman Mao Zindabad

Comrade Nagireddy Zindabad.

Dear Shri Padmanabha Reddy,

You may wonder to receive this letter from an unknown hand. I am writing this letter under instructions from my comrade Shri Tarimala Nagireddy, who is now in Musheerabad Central Jail. I am his close friend and associate. We are hoping that we will be released from the prison within a few months to again wage armed struggle against this bourgeois and reactionary government to establish a peoples communist government in India, in the foot prints of People's Republic of China. As chairman Mao said "Political power or Revolution comes only through the barrel of the gun. But as you know its very difficult to dethrone this popular government without the financial support of some friendly countries like People's China and North Korea. We, the Revolutionary Communist must acquire arms i.e., rifles, machine guns, hand-grenades, Crude bombs etc., from some agencies within India secretly, to train thousands of our comrades who are in Srikakulam and Adilabad tribal areas, in waging guerrilla type of armed struggle against the government. So Chairman Mao instructed the Chinese printing presses which are at Shanghai and Canton cities of China to print one crore counterfeit. Indian currency notes of Rs 100 denomination (i.e. 100,00,000,00 Rs). So we will get 100 crore rupees of counterfeit notes from Peoples China which is to be distributed to the Naxalites and Revolutionary Communists throughout the country by the North Korean consulate in Bombay. For our (A.P Revolutionary Communists) share, we get 35 Lakh rupees. But the problem is with whom this huge sum of money should be kept (as all of us are in prison) until we are released from the prison. We discussed this problem for 3 days and finally Comrade Nagireddy suggested your name and he said he trusted you because you

are his close relative besides nobody will doubt you as you are a landlord. So we asked the Korean embassy to despatch the money to your address by VPP under the name New India Publishing House, Bombay. On the next day I wrote a letter to you informing you about this but I found no way to post the letter as on the same day I was moved to Vijayawada under strong police escort to appear before the sessions judge. In the meanwhile the Korean Consulate, Bombay, as told by us sent currency notes worth 35 lakh rupees to you by VPP under the name New India Publishing House, Bombay. But you promptly rejected the V.P. Parcel because you did not received my letter and you never imagined that ordinary V.P. Parcel contains Rs 35 lakhs. So its our fault and we again wrote to the Korean consulate to despatch the money to your address. So you please accept the V.P. Parcel which comes to you with in a couple of days this time under the name Super Book House, Bombay. Please keep this money in some secret place. We promise you to pay 10 lakhs out of this 35 lakhs if you satisfactorily keep this amount until we are released. Don't disclose this even to your wife in the contrary it will be very dangerous to both you and us. Please burn this letter immediately after receiving you will receive the parcel within 15 to 20 days. Trust you will help yourself by helping us.

With regards

faithfully yours

D. V. Rao

P.S. I am sending this letter with one of Comrades to post it at Anantapur because the C.I.D.'s are censoring our letters at Hyderabad.

Warning: If this agreement is not favourable to you please reject the V.P. Parcel, but don't try to fool us after receiving the money. If you are honest we will pay you as promised.

The inland letter was addressed to Shri P. Padmanabha Reddy, Ramasagaram, Krishnapuram (P.O.), Penu-gon Taluq, Anantapur (Dt) A.P.

Incantation For The Budget

MANIK DATTA

DEAR Mrs G— I hope you do not mind my calling you that because I am a humble admirer. Moreover, I don't know if you know that is how the committed elite in Delhi address you. I am not trying to be familiar but merely emulating the example of my betters, because I have also been blessed with the privilege of an anglicised education. I also voted for you in the last elections. I voted for you because of your 'Garibi Hatao' slogan. Not that I am poor, not by our Indian standards, but you know Mrs G., life is getting very difficult. I am quite prepared to wait for the price of rice to come down by a few paise. Those of us who live in this wretched ecological mess called Calcutta are hardy durable types. Defying all objective laws we manage to survive and even multiply—so, I am not speaking out of any immediate tension, although a fortnight ago my sister's family arrived from Jessore, adding ten more mouths to those we already feed. After all, as, one of our famous writers said, "we, Bengalis, did not die even of famines". Not quite true, one would say—there has been the Bengal famine and now the terrible massacre across the border. But you know how durable myths are—we still believe in our immortality and fight adversity with the flourish

For FRONTIER readers in

West India can contact

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MAY 29, 1971

of words. However, let this digression be. The main point is: as a species or rather, sub-species, we have devised ways of survival where the price of rice does not matter so much. Nor, for that matter, killings, now and then, however brutal. Permit me another digression—for we are the Sanjays seeking your ear. You take the efficient way in which the CRP, police and the army have cleaned up the city. Why, last Saturday, I could not get a ticket to the night show of a cinema. There are still a few murders every day but that is only in the disturbed areas. Now that your Government in W. Bengal has taken resolute action in reshuffling the pack—transfer of top officials including the Police Commissioner, popularly claimed to be the most cultured policeman in the world—we have no doubt that the situation will improve. It seems some of the top officials have gone on petulant leave—have you ever heard of jokers deciding to choose their own dimensions? But your Government in West Bengal, headed by the most decisive political leader of the century, perhaps does not realise, that what you do with such firm finesse cannot be matched by others. And troubled areas? They have hardly any relevance to the city's life. They are all sorts of refugee colonies—not evacuees from Bangla Desh but full of maladjusted types who had steadily rejected rehabilitation from 1947. So, what do you expect, now that the second generation is on the rampage? Give us rice, give us jobs, give, give, give...how can a democracy function under such unreasonable pressure? A couple of thousand misguided lads thought they

would change everything by taking on the guardians of democracy—where are they now? At least, their families now know better. That is why, at the very beginning, I had said I am prepared to wait for the rice-price to come down. Let me now say—indeinitely. Because I know how many difficult problems you have to solve. Mrs G, now that I have demonstrated my sense of commitment and loyalty, may I offer one hesitant suggestion? *Give us some hope.* If you don't like the word 'give', you can change it to 'offer'. Please offer us some hope. In the last two months, very little in the nature of hope seems to have come our way. That thing about general insurance failed to click. What I mean is, something which will keep us going. Like the privy purse issue, bank nationalisation. These gave us a lot of hope, although it didn't really affect our lives. Or for that matter, the lives of those millions of landless in the countryside who all voted for you. But bank nationalisation gave a lot of hope to the middle class in the villages and you saw the result. Similarly, your Steel Minister's recent speeches have given us quite a bit of hope. At least, for one year, we can live on that. What happens after a year is irrelevant. What we now know is that the minister has made it clear, in no uncertain terms, that **MORE STEEL MUST BE PRODUCED.** So there is hope.

But your ministers have only marginal value as pedlars of hope. They are not really credible. Maybe they need a lot of hope themselves. That is why, it is necessary to get the message from you. When you say something, we believe and we hope. And that sustains us. Self-appointed VIPs in the capital have given us to understand that the coming budget will be a miraculous bundle of hopes. You know what your officials are! So, please find the time to include a hope or two in the budget by your personal intervention—otherwise, in this infernal heat, out of sheer irritation, they may just paint a black picture. One or two hopes and we promise not to bother you for some time.

Present Indefinite

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

AS the blurb declares, Tapan Sinha's latest film *Ekhon* purports to be a tract of the times, portraying the angst, confusion and the mental void of the young generation. But unfortunately in this complex and difficult task the director is in a hopeless mess. His protagonists, a lighthearted bunch of not-too-ruffian skirt-chasers, never seem to have any serious problem on their minds. Their only aim in life is to make a pass at the nearest girl. Naturally, the mawkish and artificial dialogues about loneliness and spiritual conflicts put into their mouths sound absolutely silly. The different independent stories hinge round different characters, each hankering after a room at the top and their more or less affluent surroundings and the mode of their carefree lives with all the familiar singing and swinging of the film-people make their tall talk of suffering and frustration utter nonsense. Tapan Sinha's craze for contemporaneity has also led him to dabble in current political issues and the result is a debacle. As always, the director's politics is totally uncertain, in fact, dubious. An example will help to illustrate the points. Towards the end of the film when these young folks are on the brink of exhausting their patience in the tiring routine of job-hunting, suddenly a messiah appears to initiate one of them into political education and this boy is whisked away into a village. But as the camera follows the leader and the disciple into the rural panorama, the nature of their journey is nowhere clear. We are not sure whe-

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ther they will join the village guerilla or become gramsevak in the community development projects or are just there for a spot of countryside picnic. To cap all this, there are some highly ridiculous stray oracle-like comments on the current socio-political scene thrown arbitrarily on the screen and a stint of vulgar lampooning of avant-garde cinema and modern poetry by introducing the character of a modish poet with hippie bearing (incidentally, Chinmoy Roy, despite this thoroughly unconvincing role, is the only artist in the film who is able to create some impression). Tapan Sinha's understanding of the urban milieu is, as usual, puerile, superficial and crude.

Clippings

West And East

It is naive to expect that the exploited sections of West Pakistani society will rise in revolt against the atrocities of the military regime in East Bengal. The point that has been made by Hobson, Lenin and many others is quite pertinent in this context. Even the exploited classes of the "metropolitan country," especially its industrial labour, come to have a vested interest in keeping its colonies intact, for it is the colonies which provide these sections a higher standard of living than they would have otherwise achieved. This is as true of West Pakistan as it was of Britain in the nineteenth century.

It is not an accident that the two most highly industrialised areas of West Pakistan—Karachi and the eastern districts of West Punjab—are also the most chauvinistic. Karachi is dominated by the Urdu-speaking refugee population whose whole sense of national identity will be lost if East Bengal breaks away. For them nothing is so important as the psychological satisfaction of seeing the two-nation theory vindicated. Even the trade unions in Karachi are do-

minated by the fundamentalist Jamaat-i-Islami. His camera is never trained to probe the inner emotions; it has failed to capture even the outward reality with any measure of authenticity, although there is no dearth of Calcutta locations in the film. But Tapan Sinha's Calcutta is a dumb entity. It never speaks, never whispers, never explodes, nor does it breathe a little. The ultimate banality of the director's conception and his literary approach to cinema is summed up in the concluding image of the film, when the camera cranes up to show the characters adrift on Calcutta streets an off-screen drawal churns out some highfalutin existentialist jabber about the futility of human condition. Pity poor Satre!

minated by the fundamentalist Jamaat-i-Islami.

The eastern districts of West Punjab, with their bitter experience of partition and the influx of the refugees from Indian Punjab, also bore the brunt of the Indo-Pakistani conflict. Their commitment to an anti-Indian Pakistani national identity can, therefore, be taken for granted. That was why Mr Bhutto could sweep the polls in the eastern districts of Punjab.

This is an unfortunate state of affairs since it has prevented genuinely liberal and progressive ideas from taking firm roots in their real home grounds, the relatively more industrialised and urbanised areas of West Pakistan. Such ideas, now extremely weak, would have provided East Bengal with its natural allies in its fight for liberation. (Mohammed Ayoob in *The Times of India*).

While it is true that the autonomy movement in East Bengal had the sympathies of various autonomist groups in West Pakistan, this was true only as long as the movement

remained one of autonomy and had not turned into a war of national independence. East Bengal's secession is found to weaken the hands of the autonomists in the smaller provinces of West Pakistan. As it is, they fared very badly in the elections in Sind and even their performance in the NWFP was much below expectations.

The smaller provinces would prefer a disgruntled East Bengal within Pakistan to an independent one since the former alternative would increase their bargaining power vis-a-vis Punjab. As they are unable and unlikely to opt out of the Pakistani system they cannot be expected to be all that sympathetic to the independence of Bangla Desh. (Mohammed Ayoob in *The Time of India*.)

"Poor" Policemen

Lahori Gate : Rs 30,000 ;
Kotwali : Rs 25,000 to Rs 30,000 ;
Sadar Bazar : Rs 20,000 to Rs 25,000 ;
Subzi Mandi : Rs 15,000 to Rs 20,000 ;
Karolbagh : Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000...so the list tapers off until it becomes insignificant for Tughlak Road and other parts of New Delhi where the burra sahebs live. These are the "auction prices" ...many an inspector of police is ready to pay in cash for transfer to the desired (police) station (in Delhi).

...Transfers from one police station to another more lucrative one are priced at Rs 2,000 to Rs 3,000 for a sub-inspector and Rs 1,000 for a head constable. At least in two crowded shopping centre beats in Old Delhi which have a high percentage of illegal hawkers, the constables on duty collectively paid Rs 4,000 for the privilege of patrolling the area and hand over a guaranteed Rs 1,000 a month to the officer in charge.

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... Corruption reaps rich dividends. Two thanas collect from shops and hawkers alone an estimated Rs 10,000 a week at the rate of four annas a day for the footpath vendor, eight annas from the rehri vendor, Re 1 from the small cigarette seller and Rs 5 to Rs 10 from the bigger shops.

Every Sunday in one locality in

Old Delhi a team of policemen go round with a bag and a notebook to make their collections from the vendors. On Saturdays the collection is made from the shopkeepers. After distribution and payments, an average corrupt SHO in one of the more profitable thanas makes a net profit of Rs 15,000 a month and the not so profitable ones Rs 5,000. (Chand Joshi in *Hindustan Times*).

Letters

Bangladesh And China

Some people have a habit of blindly supporting each and every action/posture of China. Shri Soumen Banerjee in his letter in *Frontier* (8.5.1971) tries to support the Chinese stand on the movement for Bangladesh—that the present crisis is Bangladesh, i.e. the present crisis is only an internal affair of Pakistan. The imperialist intervention in any case has not been prevented; the West Pakistani authorities have not been denied help by their friends abroad. Only the people of Bangladesh, unarmed and helpless, are forced to face the bombs and machine-guns of the bloodthirsty military regime. It is really unfortunate that China has failed to realise the essence of the movement maybe because of the show of sympathy of and the close proximity of Bangladesh with India. The sympathy shown in India has possibly been misconstrued as an expansionist design. But China should have realised that what was essentially a non-violent movement in the beginning to snatch some concessions without impairing the class character of the State has undergone a radical transformation during the course of the movement and has turned into an armed uprising of the people that is completely different in character and content. It is really unfortunate that China's anti-India stand has coloured her views on such a vital issue. A disturbing feature is that democratic movements in countries

in this part of the world are being suppressed by the ruling classes with modern weapons drawn from various countries, both capitalist and socialist. Ideological considerations have vanished. It is no longer possible to organise an international brigade as was done for the Spanish movement. The recent happenings in Bangladesh and Ceylon point in this direction. No country to look forward to for any help in support of liberation movements! Rather a gloomy prospect.

S. N. Roy
Dum Dum

Peking's Contradiction

Please take note of some of the contradictions of Chinese policy and practice which baffle all logical analysis:

China's support to the separatist movement of Biafra against the Nigerian central government, to the Nagas and Mizos against the federal power of India while she feels inhibited to support the freedom struggle of Bangladesh on the specious argument of upholding the territorial 'integrity' of Pakistan. She even invokes the famous 'Panchsil' in this connection.

Her characterisation of the anti-cowslaughter demonstration by a section of the sadhus of India as a

'mass upsurge' on the one hand and on the other her indifference to the 75 million people of Bangladesh who are engaged in a grim battle for their very existence. Is it not a 'mass upsurge' in the real sense of the term, a mass upsurge of far greater dimension?

World opinion has strongly condemned Pakistani atrocities in Bangladesh but Peking Radio has read into the happenings in Bangladesh nothing but the machinations of the Indian expansionists to make Bangladesh a colony. Any one listening to Peking Radio programmes regularly must have heard the Hindi commentary a few days back 'What do the Indian expansionists want?').

ARUN SEN GUPTA
Ranaghat (Nadia)

If The East Is Red ?

The war in Bangladesh has taken a new, but unexpected, turns. The centres of real fighting have shifted from the towns to the villages. The people of Bangladesh have experienced it the hard way how an army which has not been stripped of its colonial character and mercenary bent of mind can act. The British used the 'Indian' army to crush the freedom movement in India, and part of that very army forms the Pakistani army of today. Against such a ruthless army is now pitted the guerilla squads and it is a matter of time only when all the heavy armour being used by the Pak army will cease to have even scrap value in Bangladesh. A new army is emerging and that is the army of the people, an army that is being built on the belief that men and ideas are always more powerful than weapons. The middle bourgeoisie can never constitute the leader-

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ship in such a struggle and only a real people's party can face the tasks. And such a party must be one of the peasants and workers of Bangladesh. The class structure of the Awami League reveals that it is a party almost wholly dominated by the middle bourgeoisie, students and intellectuals who in their struggle for freedom from Pakistani colonialism have not as yet given the necessary attention to the peasant in the hundreds of villages that dot East Bengal. But the present nature of the struggle makes it inevitable that before long, if Bangladesh is to survive, the Bengali peasant must be armed, for he alone can preserve the country's new-found freedom and consolidate it. The final defeat of the Pakistani colonialists will be in the hands of this hard, sinewy, half-starved, sun-baked peasant.

And how will India react to all this? Will the Government be willing to accept a really radical government so close to the borders of one of our most troubled States? Its attitude is bound to change and such signs are already visible. New Delhi, which has been seriously upset over the happenings in Bangladesh, overnight found herself bracketed with the USA-USSR-UK as one of the "saviours" of the Bandaranaike Government. It might be terribly flattered by the praise it has got from Ceylon and the rather rare opportunity it got to rub shoulders with the super-powers. But the people of India see little reason in this mad rush for help when their own house is in a terrible mess. As the monsoons set in and the struggle gets more intense, it is natural that a political force will emerge in Bangladesh which will not please the Government of India as well as the reactionary Right and "progressive" Left supporters of the Awami League in this country. The final destiny of Bangladesh will be moulded by the people of that country, with or without help from India, and the new Bangladesh will have little in common with the present set-up in our country. History always has surprises in store, especially

when it is not truly seen. And the greatest surprise in store for the Government of India will be a revolutionary people's government in neighbouring Bangladesh. Will Mrs Gandhi then send aid for the suppression and subversion of such a set-up, as she has done in the case of Ceylon?

U. M.
Dibrugarh, Assam

Lock-Up To Morgue

Shibshankar Das (31), an employee of the State Food Department at Uluberia, was arrested on April 6 at about 11 p.m. in front of the Paramount Cinema near Sealdah Railway Station. He was doing propaganda work for the CPI(ML). In the Lalbazar lock-up he was severely tortured. The protectors of law and order did their job so neatly that at about 11 p.m. on April 17 he died. Earlier that day he had been transferred to Alipore jail custody and when some members of his family had the rare privilege of seeing him he was completely unable to move and even breathe. The news of his death was brought by the Shibpur police station the next day at 3 p.m. The body was handed over on the 19th from the Mominpur morgue.

The annihilation goes on and on; political parties of all hues remain silent when the killed are not their cadre or supporters; the intellectuals forget even to write letters to the editors; the people in general grow callous.

LISTENER
Calcutta

Delhi University

A reactionary group in Delhi University last year prevented any student from Calcutta University from getting admission into the M.Sc course on the pretence that the results of the B.Sc. Part II of Calcutta University had not been announced at the time of admission (June-July, 1970). In previous years provisional admission was permissible.

This year again, this group is trying to practically block the admission of students from West Bengal in a novel way. They are going to be asked to compete with the students of other universities on the basis of marks obtained at the B.Sc. only. But to talk of comparing marks obtained at the B.Sc. examinations of different universities is nonsense, because the standards of marking of papers vary widely. It is well known that the highest percentage of marks in honours subjects like Physics, Chemistry usually range from 65 to 70% in Calcutta University, whereas in most universities it is as high as 80-85%. So how can a student, even if he is a first class graduate of Calcutta University compete with others from other universities on the basis of marks alone?

Why not hold an admission test?

I hope the students and authority of Delhi University will cooperate in ending the shameful discrepancy in admissions.

R. Roy
Calcutta

'Honest' Pathans

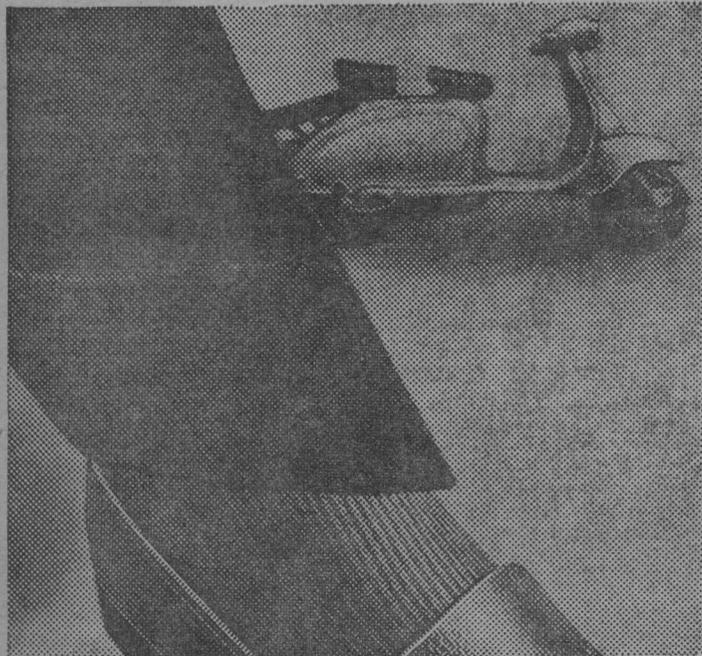
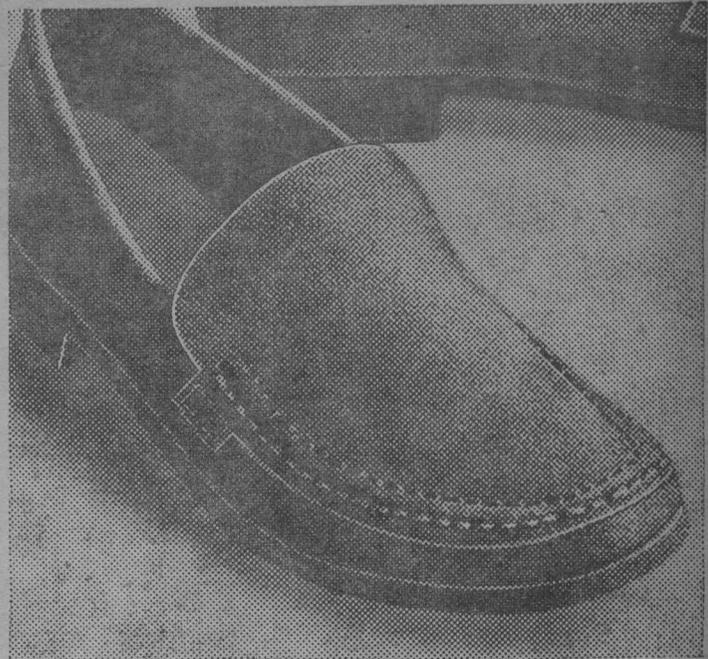
Prof Hiren Mukherjee, MP, in his 'Jai Hoke', printed in an April issue of *Betar Jagat* Calcutta called the movement in East Bengal a liberation movement in its true sense, and spoke ill of the Punjabis but well of the Pathans. Prof Mukherjee remarked that a Pathan could not help being honest, and true to his word. Does he want to generalise that virtues like honesty, truthfulness, trustworthiness etc. belong exclusively to a particular race or region?

I, however, just to avoid being called a revisionist, have come to believe that higher castes like Brahmins stand for better human qualities, while the lower ones like mine stand for baser qualities, ever since this revolutionary reason was invented—rather discovered—by a devout communist and transmitted through AIR by our secular and socialist government.

NIRMAL SAHA
Calcutta

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