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THE BUDGET

AFTER a lot of suspense which gave rise to fears in some quarters and hopes in others of socialism coming to our doorsteps, the Finance Minister has produced a little mouse, a stagflationary budget in current jargon, that will neither lift the economy from its current semi-stagnant state nor put a curb on the continuing inflation. True to the time-honoured pattern of the Congress regime, unproductive administrative and defence expenditures has largely eaten up the Rs 286 crore rise in tax receipts. Against the usual 6 to 7 p.c. increases in the past, the former have now gone up by over 13 p.c. It means less money being available for the execution of the Fourth Plan. The government may claim that it is stepping up its own investment outlays by more than 12 p.c. this year, which is quite impressive at first sight. Assuming that it will be carried out (one can't be too sure about it), even then with three years of the Plan gone only about half the total will have been spent; taking into account the diminishing purchasing power of the rupee the achievement is less. In fact, Central investments as a proportion of the national income are still way below the peaks attained in the mid-sixties. Thus the budget has basically failed to inject any dynamism into the economy that might ease off the increasingly intolerable burden of unemployment. And let us not talk about the much vaunted Rural Works Schemes—the earlier provision of a bare Rs 50 crores has been mercilessly pruned by one-half!

If the outlook on the growth front is rather bleak, industrialists, traders and speculators are bound to have a good time in view of the new inflationary pressures unleashed by the budget. The heavy dose of additional taxation, probably the very highest in the entire post-Independence era, is unlikely to make the rich any poorer. Immediate reaction from a large cross-section of manufacturers, traders and transport operators clearly indicated the nature of things to come. Only in rare cases will the price increase, as the naive may tend to think, be limited to the exact amount of fresh tax. If past experience is any guide, the actual rise will be more as this is also the most convenient time to push up the profit margins. Not that non-inflationary alternatives were absent. It is well known that for a number of items like steel, tractors, etc there is a flourishing black market; an exercise to close the gap

between free market and controlled prices could have yielded a substantial amount. Some of the so-called priority sectors might get slightly hurt as a result but isn't the list of such sectors getting shorter? The real reason may lie elsewhere, namely, the Government's unwillingness to dispense with such obvious means of distributing favours.

Unreformed Rightists and our socialistic Finance Minister alike are vying with one another in emphasizing the 'progressive' measures. A stiffening of the wealth tax for the Rs 15 lakh plus group, somewhat higher income and capital gains taxes for the rich, the Rs 6000 'ceiling' on remuneration for Company employees, a higher surcharge on profits exceeding 15% of capital—all these are acclaimed by Mr Chavan who promises further steps to impose a meaningful tax on the rural rich who are to, this day going scotfree and to restrict the virtually free circulation of black money. Intentions apart, in terms of hard cash, none of the new impositions is going to yield more than a few crores each. All direct taxes taken together will bring to the exchequer an extra Rs 27 crores or just under 10% of the overall tax rise. Then again a 93% tax on incomes above Rs 10 lakhs is usually presented as confiscatory. All except the very gullible know of the existence of the tax avoidance industry which ensures that not even our supermonopolists have to declare personal incomes exceeding 3 or 4 lakhs of rupees. Granted all these, some people ask, don't the rich save a great deal? Doesn't a poor country like ours need more savings than consumption? Arguing for this fanciful theory, dear alike to capitalists and bourgeois economists all over the world, misses a crucial element of our society—the rich men's hankering after the "foreign", their constant endeavour to buy up the latest gadgetry imported or copied from the West. Indeed, as incomes in India get more unequal savings as a ratio of personal incomes have actually declined while the sale of luxury goods goes ahead at a galloping pace.

If the hackneyed slogans of the Swatantra are thoroughly exposed by now, the subtle political arithmetic of our Lady needs a more careful study. Although the budget is fairly conservative a few crumbs have been thrown at the middle class. Extra conveyance for the salaried people and a moderate tax remission for small savers putting their money in approved institutions like LIC will surely bring some relief. More significantly the non-urban cooperative sector receives a not-too-feeble shot in the arm. Higher exemptions with respect to wealth and income tax will

encourage the more affluent to join the co-operative movement in a much bigger way. The Maharashtra model whereby sugar co-operatives run by the rural rich dominate the countryside and constitute the main pillar of the Congress party, will not only flourish but is also expected to have a spread effect in other parts of the country.

All told this Indicate budget differs very little from Morarji's essays earlier. Big business is quite happy while even CPI-type reformists are obliged to protest against this shameful parody in the name of "socialistic pattern" and "Garibi Hatao".

Army As The Peace-Maker

Mr Harekrishna Konar has been reported to be wondering why the Army is not being deployed to control gangsterism in Calcutta. Since Mr Konar has not protested, to date, against what appears to be rather a bourgeoisification of the speech he made at a women's gathering at the Maidan last week, one may take it that he stands by what is reported to be his speech. One does not have to stretch one's credulity much though, since one of his partymates had brought the EFR and CRP to control 'gangsterism' in Gopiballavpur and Debra. There is however a small difference, speaking strictly in terms of CPM parlance. When Mr Jyoti Basu invoked the EFR and CRP in Gopiballavpur-Debra, it was his party that was supposed to have given from the leadership to the UF Government. The deployment therefore could have been taken to have served the interest of the toiling people. Now that the State power is being wielded by what the CPM calls anti-people forces, what guarantee can Mr Konar have against improper use of the Army?

Such casuistry however has ceased to have any relevance for those who have been refusing to take a private speeches and public postures of the CPM leaders at their face value long

before these leaders had actually played into the hands of the bourgeoisie. The engagement of the armed forces to crush the militant peasant movement in Naxalbari, Gopiballavpur and elsewhere was to them an expression of the latent bourgeoisification of the CPM leadership. Mr Konar at the latest Maidan rally cannot therefore be accused of a grave deviation.

The call for Tuesday's strike shows the contradiction the CPM had fallen into. It was the CPM that called the para-military forces in Midnapore. It was this party that collaborated with the State in holding elections with the help of the Army. It was this party that encouraged the Army to help the police in rounding

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JUNE 5, 1971

up the Naxalites in Calcutta. If now the armed forces of the State have nakedly penetrated into factory premises—the latest CPM-bashing occurred at Ichapore and Baranagar—and campuses where school examinations are being held with heavy police guards, can the CPM plead innocence and martyrdom? And can it avoid being called sectarian because it did not protest against massacres of young men and boys suspected to be Naxalites and now protests too much because the police net is being

widened to catch the CPM cadres too?

In a way, things in West Bengal are turning quite up to the predictions of the Naxalites. West Bengal is becoming one of the focal points where imperialism is showing its hands quite nakedly. The State has been given over to the military without applying martial law. Even policemen have had to be disarmed or guarded at Burdwan by the Eastern Frontier Rifles.

Straws In The Wind

After the first phase of the two-part conference with the labour leaders, the Government at Delhi sat down with the employers for the next round. The rising tide of industrial unrest at a time when the economy is apparently poised for a major breakthrough spearheaded by magnificent achievements on the food and foreign trade fronts is naturally disturbing. So a new wave of rethinking becomes imperative as was indeed evident at the meeting presided over by our Labour Minister reputed to be a progressive.

Since the Indian masses have reaffirmed their faith in the Nehru-type socialistic pattern, even the most blue-blooded of employers have undergone a genuine conversion, perhaps after an agonizing heart-searching. The humble Mr Tata pleaded with the Government not to proceed too arbitrarily. Socialism is meaningful, he said, only if there is wealth. Excessive concession to labour would dry up the very well which can generate prosperity for all. Indeed, he is not afraid of labour participation in management; but then workers should confine themselves to matters which really pertain to them without trying to usurp the employers' prerogative to fix wages. A lesser fry than Mr Tata was all for emulating Japan where wages go up without productivity lagging behind. But India, he bewailed, is a country where produc-

tivity is at its lowest. He was quite truthful as far as he went; that the average industrial worker today produces at least 70% more than he did twenty years ago without being able to eat an extra ounce of cereals is just one of those awkward statistical facts which do not easily get through the sound barrier of the airconditioner in the board rooms. On a more humdrum plane suggestions came for centralising the various health and insurance services, removing supply bottlenecks, etc.

The Labour Minister, however, began with a bang. Reflecting the conscience as well as the consensus of the nation, he roundly chastised those errant industrialists who close their establishments without sufficient rhyme or reason. He was indeed convinced that the trade unions had good cause to be worried about unemployment, prices and wages; he even blessed the latter's professed goal to maximize the workers' share of output. Yet the nation is a much bigger entity than the working class. Economic growth and broad consumer interests should have a higher priority for patriotic unions than a narrow self-centred concern for the living standard of their own members. They have no better way of proving it than by accepting a 'five-year truce' in industrial relations presided over by a government committed to 'garibi

hatao'. The unanimously enthusiastic response from the employers makes further commentary redundant. It is now for the government to follow it up—maybe with a 'No Strike Bill'?

The Fate Of The OAU

At the moment one thing that seems to be absent in the African political scene is a consensus among Africa's independent States on issues of common concern like apartheid or the status of Uganda's new regime. Till recently the tying bond of the black African had been their enmity towards South Africa and its policy of separate development of races. But, as recent events have shown, new battle lines are being drawn here. And again the initiative has come from the Ivory Coast's President Houphouet-Boigny who had, in principle, accepted Mr Vorster's invitation for talks only if they are held "on a footing of equality".

Naturally President Kaunda of Zambia, the arch opposer of dialogue, has turned down any such overture for talks unless equality is extended also to blacks in South Africa itself. And he has sniffed in Vorster's invitation an attempt to undo black Africa's unity and split the OAU. Unfortunately, however, Mr Boigny's stock is not that low as the opposers of 'talks' might have come to think. For instance, Ghana and Malawi have been found to be ready to fawn on the racists. Certain other smaller States—like Gabon, Rwanda, Dahomy, Madagascar and the Central African Republic are not unwilling to fall in, given the lead. Obviously, the lure of the gain, namely, economic aid has done the trick and the fabric of unity, so assiduously built around apartheid has begun to wear away under the heat of Africa's tropical summer. This is bound to show up in the OAU meeting next week in Addis Ababa.

An equally thorny question has been Uganda's status on which the African leaders are grossly divided into rival camps. Last week General

Idi Amin, Uganda's new chief, accused Tanzania of inciting guerilla attacks across Uganda's border. Though most of his charges were subsequently found to be imaginary, they led to considerable ill-feeling between the two States. And Nyerere, who has openly embraced Obote, has made no bones of his opposition towards Amin. He has steadfastly opposed any move to seat Amin in the coming OAU conference and has in fact abruptly announced a change of venue in his attempt to stall Amin's entry. Amin, however, has his friends among the African leaders. Kenya, which has so far been neutral

between the warring camps, has quietly moved towards Amin. And hard on the heels have come the military rulers of Nigeria and Congo. Despite this, however, the radical groups led by Nyerere are not likely to relent without a stiff fight, as they are convinced that their reverses are the result of a deep-laid imperialist plot, and the overthrow of Obote has brought the threat to their doorstep.

All in all the basic premises on which the OAU is based have been jeopardised by these new forces and the OAU may split right down the middle.

The Refugees

ASHIM MUKHOPADHYAY

ALTHOUGH in Calcutta a large number of merry going people are chanting "Jai Bangla", "Jai Mujib", in the districts bordering on East Bengal millions of villagers are talking in a different tone and in a different mood. These poor people cannot be blamed. They are stumbling from one crisis to another. The heavy influx of refugees has added to their misery and in the border districts the economy has been stretched to a breaking point. In Nadia and 24 Parganas there is already widespread discontent and ill-feeling towards the migrants. It may be shocking but it is a fact. So far as the local daily labourers are concerned, they have openly expressed their displeasure.

Actually in Nadia and the Parganas this summer should have been a brisk season for the local peasantry.

The harvesting of IR-81 paddy has started and cultivation of aman is expected to begin. The poor day labourer, who virtually remains unemployed for more than six months, eagerly looks forward to this period when his income may reach its farthest limit, that is Rs 4.50 for an adult and Rs 2 for a boy. However, this temporary employment is no help to him. For, a major portion of his earnings goes to the moneylender and with the remainder he cannot arrange even one full meal for his family. The tables will explain things more clearly.

Table I shows the average income and number of the members in such a family.

Table III (next page) shows the per head consumption of food in such a family and the average prices of the edibles.

It shows the quantity and price of food required for one meal only, that is, the daytime meal. The cost of the evening meal is not included, because even during these "happiest days the poor day labourers have to remain half-starved.

Secondly, the tables show that if the average daily income of a labourer is Rs 6.50 and if he spends Rs 6.87 for one meal for himself and his family then the deficit in his budget increases by 37 paise per day.

Again, even out of this meagre daily income of Rs 6.50, at least one-fourth (Rs 1.63) goes to the moneylender as interest on loans taken in the previous years.

The reality is more than tragedy, and the crude reality in the life of a day labourer is that his debts are handed down from generation to generation. If one-fourth of his income is paid as interest on loans and yet he expects to have a full meal at least at daytime, his debt increases by Rs 2 (Rs 1.63 plus .37 paise) per day, per month it increases by Rs 60 and at the end of the year his debt will be Rs 720.

Against this background should be discussed the impact of the migration from East Bengal on the economy and everyday life of the poor peasantry in border areas.

During the past few weeks more than four million refugees are estimated to have crossed the border and at least five lakhs have entered the Parganas and Nadia. Most of them are either sharecroppers or day labourers. These people who fled their homes and lost all their belongings except the yoke and plough, are now scattered all the two districts in search of jobs. This has created many problems. The East Bengalis are selling their labour at a rate much cheaper than that of their West Bengali counterparts. As already stated, a local adult labourer earns Rs 4.50 a day and a boy earns Rs 2. But the East Bengali labourers who have been struggling hard for their very existence, do not demand more than Rs 2.50 for an adult and Re 1 for a boy. Thus their daily wage is just half that of local labourers. The

Members of the family	Wage earners	Maximum income
Father	Father	Rs 4.50 (per day)
Mother	First son	Rs 2.00 "
First son		
Second son		
First daughter		
Second daughter		
Total 6	Total 2	Total Rs 6.50

TABLE II

Members of the family	Edibles		Per head consumption		Price	
	Rice	Pulse				
Father	"	"	500 grms.	300 grms.	Rs 1.05	Rs. 0.42
Mother	"	"	400 "	300 "	" 0.84	" 0.42
First son	"	"	400 "	300 "	" 0.84	" 0.42
Second son	"	"	250 "	200 "	" 0.53	" 0.28
First daughter	"	"	400 "	300 "	" 0.84	" 0.42
Second daughter	"	"	250 "	200 "	" 0.53	" 0.28
Total	6		2.200 "	1.600 "	" 4.63	" 2.24
				3.800 "		" 6.87

jotedars and middle peasants, in short the local landowning people, have been exploiting this situation. Most of them have employed the newcomers. Besides the monetary factor, there are other reasons to explain their conduct. Firstly, these East Bengalis have a reputation as skilled jute and paddy growers, and it is a fact that in the Basirhat Subdivision (the Parganas) where jute is the principal cash crop, the local jotedars have employed a large number of East Bengali jute growers. Secondly, these migrants being newcomers are expected to remain humble and docile. This is an encouraging factor for the landowners who want to get rid of the local peasantry for their increasing political consciousness.

As a result of these peculiar circumstances most of the local labourers have been forced to lower the rate of their daily wage to that of the East Bengali labourer. His misery is thus increasing rapidly. As his income has been reduced to Rs 3.50 from Rs 6.50, he has to borrow Rs 3.37 per day if he wants to pay both for the meal and the interest on the previous loans. Thus, at the end of the month the amount of fresh debt may be Rs 101.10 and by the end of the year Rs 1213.20, provided he does not decide to starve with his family. This is causing ill-feeling towards the migrants to grow among the local peasantry, and the situation is already ripe for a flare up. The talks this correspondent has had with some peasants in the border areas confirm the apprehension.

Mir Kasim Molla (50), village Madhabpasha, District Jessore, last

seen by this correspondent in a school building on the Baduria-Basirhat bus-route on 14-5-71, said that he and four other labourers from the same district were working in the farm of a local jotedar for Rs 2 per day. According to him, the local peasants, who had so long served the Baboo but had now been sacked, have threatened them. As he complained to his master about it the former said: "You see this year we have won the elections and the State Government is our government. If anybody dares to beat you, his hand will be chopped off and nobody will inquire."

Baku Sardar (45), village Rudrapur, Basirhat Sub-division, District 24-Parganas, is the father of seven children and by profession a day labourer. He is in a very critical condition. Only a few weeks ago, his oldest son was involved in an accident and became invalid. This has deprived Baku of a principal source of income and placed the entire burden on his shoulder. The poor peasant almost broke into tears as he described his woes. He said that as the refugee influx had swelled the number of labourers he was forced to accept only Rs 2.25 per day as his wage. But since rice is sold for Rs 2.10 or 2.15 per kg in local markets, even if he buys one kg it hardly meets the requirements of the family. Again, if he buys one kg how will he pay the interest on his loans? Baku said that "Jai Bangla" had become a liability to them as it had deprived them of their bread.

Amrita Lal Bairagi (45), village Rangpur, District Khulna, last seen by this correspondent at Maitra Bagan

*Camp, Basirhat, on 14-5-71, said that local peasants had become hostile to them—they called them "sons-in-law of the Indian Government (Bharat Sarkarer Jamai) although the treatment that Amritalal and other refugees received at the camps "is unthinkable even for the servant of a son-in-law".

East Bengal And Assam

MSP

WHATEVER might have been the euphoria in other parts of the country about the developments in Bangladesh, one can safely say that here, in Assam at least, we have never let ourselves go. The enthusiasm has from the beginning been tempered with a sense of caution; one might say, even apprehension the shape of things to come. The slight tension that prevailed over certain parts of the State towards the end of April and in early May (the 'provocation' was the alleged assault and ill-treatment of some railway passengers by a group of people who claimed to be 'volunteers' for Bangladesh has eased off, though not without stirring up past memories of strife among Bengalis and Assamese in Assam. But with hundreds and thousands of evacuees pouring in and upsetting the already tottering economy of the State—not to speak of further pressure upon land, if a large number of the evacuees manage to lose themselves in the countryside—it does not need a prophet to foresee a period of continuing tension and potential racial violence in Assam.

Immigrants, refugees, 'infiltrants', and now evacuees; in one form or other, movement of people from Bengal into Assam has been going for decades, sometimes in an organized manner under the aegis of the ruling powers, and often due to sheer economic compulsions. Each of these movements into Assam has created problems of a different kind. The early immigrants who came before '47 have contributed a great deal to

the economy of the State (mainly by cultivating jute), and are now more or less considered assimilated. Forming as they do a solid chunk of the Congress vote, they command acceptance, more so since these immigrants now loyally declare their language to be Assamese. The colonization of vast areas of the State by these immigrants who came here under the aegis of the Muslim League ministry is quite a fascinating story that is yet to be narrated in full. These immigrants, mostly belonging to the landless and poor peasant stock, have been among the most productive of cultivators in the State, so much so, that local feudal gentry often prefer to have an immigrant cultivate their lands, even though local agricultural labour is not in short supply. Thus, while the immigrant who has made a rich contribution to the economy of the State and who continues to engage himself in productive and very hard work, is now accepted, the same thing cannot be said of the other arrivals. Of these, the problems created by the influx of the refugees is too well known to need any mention here; as for the 'infiltrants', they are in a different category, being mostly early immigrants who came here before 1947, but who went back to Bengal in the mood of euphoria generated in the early years of the creation of Pakistan, and who returned after realizing that things were worse there than here. Their problem has been now made political, and at least a major part of the reason for this "politicisation" of this problem has to be seen in the 'internal contradictions' and power rivalries within the ruling party in the State. The people who have arrived here since 1947, that is, the Hindu refugees and the Muslim poor, are now considered to pose a serious threat to the 'identity' of Assam. It is these submerged fears that have once again surfaced during the past few weeks, with the incident at Lumding Railway Station acting as a catalytic agent.

'Threat'

What kind of a 'threat' is posed to

the identity of Assam by the influx of the new evacuees? Obviously, land which once upon a time was considered to be in abundant supply, is now scarce, particularly cultivable land. As it is, agrarian unrest is a reality in the countryside, and this will certainly be aggravated if the newcomers too start cultivating land. Substantial amount of rice and jute cultivation goes on land where cultivation rights are only a matter of long practice and traditional sanction. Thus the prospect of claims and counterclaims, attempts at forcible cultivation and resistance, all the familiar features of agrarian clash, in fact, is bright. There is also the prospect of rivalry and clashes in the field of petty trading, particularly in small towns and villages. Even if all the evacuees are strictly confined to border camps—something that just doesn't seem to be possible—the burden of maintaining them would cause sufficient strains on the economy of the State. Thus, even if the sheer economic dislocation that will continue to intensify is staggering enough, its impact is going to be felt at other levels too. The potential for lingual and communal violence is there in plenty. There is also another kind of apprehension about the shape of things to come, a fear not usually voiced. It is the spectre of Bang-e-Islam. In public, fears are openly expressed about Bengali expansionism, the dream of the Bengalis about Brihattar Bangla &c. But the real fear is of a Greater Muslim Bengal. With the political compulsion of having to work with and live with (and get votes from) about 30% or more of Muslim population, such 'fears' can't even be voiced openly, for it would be embarrassing.

Whoever wins in East Bengal, Assam seems to be in for a bit of hard times. If the uprising is completely crushed, the evacuees are going to be a permanent burden, with all the consequent problems. If Bangladesh becomes a reality, then too, there will be problems, though some people fondly hope that even the early immigrants might perhaps be persuaded to

NOTICE

'On The Paris Commune'
will be resumed next week.

get back to the country which they left decades ago. Whatever way the events may shape, there seems to be every prospect of increasing dislocation of normal life in Assam in the days to come. Are we sitting on a powder keg? Well, the metaphor hardly conveys the kind of tensions that are building up in Assam. A minor fracas on a railway platform had to lead to arson and curfew, special appeals over the radio from the Chief Minister, fasts and peace committees. Agents provocateurs no doubt are there in plenty, agents at the service of the interests in Delhi, Islamabad and Washington; but what is more important is that the situation is ripe for the operation of such agents. The Lumding incident was immediately rationalised as the doing of some such agent. By and large, the period of innocence still prevails here, and it is this seeming innocence about the real state of things that depresses any objective observer. By and large, except for a strange combination of an excess of zeal for the Fighting People of Bangladesh, and simultaneously, a vague resentment against the evacuees who have created problems, people are concerned about the events across the border only as a good subject for an hour's adda. That the war there is a war which has to be fought even here, that indeed, as the character of the war changes day by day, it is increasingly becoming our war, only being fought by other people before we too are going to be involved in it—this is hardly recognized. Very hard times are ahead; but there hardly seems to be any real political preparation to confront the coming restive days. Perhaps, we too have to pass through an ordeal of having an army let loose upon us before arriving at any ideological clarity.

Gentlemen Of Sympathy

BIZETH BANERJEE

...Seven more died this morning.
A ninety-year-old man had his leg shot through
as he clambered to hoist 'their' flag.
Seventy five youngsters were injured
in the afternoon shooting.

Gentlemen, we are in the midst of a crisis.
Let us rise like one man to face the challenge.
Let us now draft a resolution
in support of the liberation struggle of the exploited.
You object to the word exploited?
Maybe we could substitute it by suppressed?
Exploited or suppressed?
When we have taken a decision on this issue
we shall go on to express our solidarity
with the millions homeless. And pledge our support.
Should we say material?
I again throw it open to the honoured gentlemen
to decide whether this material assistance
will take the form of leaflets (well-printed
and thoughtfully written. We must be careful
about our choice of words). Or whether a delegation
should be sent abroad to plead their cause?

...An enterprising journalist described
the carnage in three villages. He even photographed
a woman with an army boot inside her womb...

Friends, over Scotch and soda
let us unite in sympathy with the brave
and courageous fighters.
Let us propose a toast to
Jai Bangla.

A Letter From Kuala Lumpur

The Regional Dream

M. R.

Kuala Lumpur: In the context of the big Malaysia-China trade deal, Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak's vague but oft-repeated plan for a "permanent guarantee" for the neutralisation of the South-east Asian region gains a new dimension. As Tun Razak said, the success of the "neutralisation" strategy requires that all the countries in the region "must be prepared and willing to cease taking sides in the cold war

conflict." The super powers are to guarantee the neutralisation and by implication China is one of the super powers in the Malaysian view.

The big trade deal (China agreeing to lift the entire Malaysian rubber stock at world market prices and the numerous small agreements signed in Peking) can at best pave the way for normal diplomatic relations between the two countries. Though Mr Chou En-lai is claimed to have responded favourably to the neutralisation plan there is little in the situation to make the prospect of neutralisation any more tangible than it is today. Malaysia does not expect quick results and some countries in the region remain to be convinced and converted to this concept. The big powers also remain to be convinced of the need to recognise the conflict of interests in the area.

The "neutralisation" plan carries with it the implication that Malaysia considers China a super power and there can be no peace and stability in the South-east Asian region unless China is brought into friendly relations with countries therein. It is realised here that China's reflexes are conditioned by the extent to which its economic and political interests will be served by neutralisation, relative to the prospects indicated by the prevailing status quo. If the odds are in favour of neutralisation it is because of the American disengagement from Vietnam does not spell the relinquishment by the United States of its treaty obligations in the region and because of the nuclear deterrent, the reality of five (Commonwealth) power defence, and not in the least the penetration of the South-east Asian region by Soviet Union.

China seems determined to establish the counter-balance to Soviet penetration, through its trade and diplomatic initiatives. China has succeeded in forcing the United States to disengage from South-East Asia and does not want to watch the Soviet penetration idly. China's plan to buy Malaysian rubber, Australian

pig iron and other Australian products means it is employing radically new policies in asserting itself as a world power.

Mr Chou En-lai went out of the way to assure a visiting Malaysian trade team that it was not China's policy to interfere in the affairs of small nations and that it would respect the sovereignty of countries. But in practical application, the regimes in Kuala Lumpur, Thailand and Manila would expect China to soft-pedal support to communist insurgency movements in the region. Support to "wars of national liberation" and kindred insurgency movements would seem alien to China's professed policy by these regions.

Though Malaysia and Singapore enjoy better relations than any two neighbours in Asia, the sense of interdependence between them seems to be diminishing and the distance between them growing. The Malaysian initiative over China, for instance, has left Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew behind. Neither Singapore nor Malaysia fears aggression from any quarter. The Malaysian plan for neutralisation (while maintaining studied silence on Vietnam) is motivated by factors not very altruistic. What Malaysia fears most is a further upsurge of racial violence making for foreign interference. As one commentator put it, "Singapore's nightmare is a tacit alliance between Malaysia and Indonesia to take advantage of the 'neutralised' South-east Asia no longer patrolled by British or American—or even Japanese or Chinese—warships or aircraft, in order to put the 'squeeze' on the heart of the hated Overseas Chinese commercial power in the region."

It is not difficult to anticipate the Soviet reaction to the neutralisation plan. Anything that forecloses Soviet penetration in the region should be most unwelcome to the policy makers in Moscow. What the region will witness will be a fierce Sino-Soviet conflict alongside a Sino-Japanese conflict. This is exactly what the United States has been anticipating.

Perspectives

On Economic Transition

RANJAN SENGUPTA

THE process of disintegration of feudalism and transition to capitalism in Western Europe was marked by the following feature: a capitalist class—half-manufacturer and half-merchant, to begin with—rose from the ranks of petty producers themselves. Unlike under feudalism the petty producer would no longer sell his product to some particular individual merchant; but now he would produce for the world of trade in general. He is a producer and at the same time a merchant for his own product. This way of development resulted in the dissolution of the pre-capitalist socio-economic forms and mercantile-financial control; and the establishment of the dominance of the capitalist mode of production based on exploitation of free wage-labour by industrial capital. This is known as the Path I of transition from feudalism to capitalism. Marx calls it "the really revolutionary path".

The other path of transition is in a way opposite to Path I. If Path I is characterised by the transformation of the producer into a merchant and capitalist, Path II is distinguished by the conversion of the merchant into a producer and capitalist. On this path, the merchant establishes direct sway over production; petty producers are subordinated to merchant capital. The merchant becomes the actual capitalist who pockets the lion's share of the surplus value.

This is a very complex path of transition. However much the transformation of the merchant into a capitalist serves historically as a stepping stone, it cannot by itself contribute to the overthrow of the old mode of production, but tends rather to preserve and retain it as its precondition. It only worsens the condition of direct producers, turns them into mere wage-workers and proletarians under conditions worse than those under the im-

mediate control of capital. In effect, this system presents everywhere an obstacle to the real capitalist mode of production.

Accordingly, Path II of capitalist development involves a combination and fusion of several modes of exploitation. First, the feudal mode: absolute ground rent is extracted by landlords through extra-economic coercion or socio-political compulsion. Secondly, the mercantile-financial mode: surplus value is appropriated by usurers' and merchants' capital. And finally the capitalist mode: free wage-labour is exploited by industrial capital.

In Germany, Russia, Italy and Japan, the development of capitalism took place essentially along Path II. India today is also set on this path.

Semi-feudal Neo-colony

India is a semi-feudal neo-colony. In spite of, or because of, the half-hearted measures of agrarian reform, land tenancy of various shades is not only widespread, but in fact is rising. Besides, village moneylenders and grain merchants continue their ruthless exploitation of poor peasants and agricultural labourers. The scale of community production is relatively low; only a small fraction of agricultural output passes through the market exchange. The capitalist sector in Indian agriculture is still negligible; as little as 16 per cent of the total cultivated area is worked by farmers mainly employing wage-labour.

In quantitative terms foreign capital is probably less than one per cent of the total capital in India. All the same its hold is very firm precisely in big industry, mining, plantations, banking, and big business where foreign capital is nearly on a fifty-fifty basis with domestic capital. Its influence is particularly strong in the principal *foreign-currency earning in-*

dustries (tea, jute, cotton) and in those which are the main source of modern power in India (petroleum, coal, electricity). What is more, foreign capital has been invited for production of even such goods which do not require any sophisticated technology; for example, biscuits, ink, pen, toothpaste and brush, toilets and cosmetics. Many of the recent agreements of foreign collaboration contain provision to import spares, components and raw materials from the countries of foreign investors alone. Hence the pressure on the balance of payments mounts.

A handful of business houses—in fact the top 75—own the overwhelming amount of capital, and account for a sizable share in industrial production. By all indications, the concentration of capital is being increasingly fortified. These giant business houses traditionally have easy access to cheap finance through their link-up with commercial banks. Being in a near monopolist position, they squeeze the smaller companies in various ways with devious means; restrict industrial production in order to reap high profits in a protected market; and refuse to undertake industrial diversification.

In a country with soaring prices the capitalists find quick and high profits in commercial transactions rather than in industrial production. So, capital is kept in a very liquid form which is unfavourable to productive accumulation that calls for long-term tying up of capital.

The urban capital is intimately connected with the rural lending capital. And thus the vicious circle is complete. Foreign capital and Indian monopoly capital, urban as well as rural, are well inter-linked.

Crisis

The present crisis in India can be traced directly to the semi-feudal neo-colonial nature of the economy. With pre-capitalist relations in agriculture, the rural caucus of landlords, usurers and merchants stands in the way of expansion and thus leads to stagnation. Evidently time and again the

imperialists have provided palliatives, for instance, in the form of PL-480 food supply, and coercion in one way or another so as to maintain and strengthen the status quo in agrarian relations. The marginal changes introduced here and there are more in the nature of tactical concessions rather than any reflection of a basic shift in outlook.

The pattern of industrial development is oriented towards the production of luxury and semi-luxury commodities for the bourgeoisie and the upper stratum of petty bourgeoisie. In the absence of balanced growth, the industrial structure is so lopsided that the economy has to depend increasingly on imported machines and materials, and thus inevitably it falls in the trap of foreign capital.

Under such circumstances, the development of national capitalism in India is impossible.

Even before it traversed the path of unfettered, pre-monopoly, competitive capitalism, the Indian economy had fallen in the constrictive grip of monopoly capital, domestic and foreign. And it is highly unlikely that foreign capital would now let loose its hold; nor it is to the vested interests of the domestic monopoly capital to demand such a step either. On the contrary a section of the Indian bourgeoisie would rather welcome the continuation of the dominance of foreign capital in India, even though there may be a few minor clashes of sectional interests in some isolated cases.

There is hardly any strong sign of the disintegration of the semi-feudal order in the vast agricultural sector of India. The small and middle peasants are, no doubt, increasingly impoverished and pauperised through the structure of rent, interest and prices. But this has not resulted in their conversion into agricultural labourers or rural proletariat having no connection with land and ownership of other instruments of production. When peasants are forced to sell or mortgage their land, or are evicted, they are not completely disconnected from land; but are tied to land even more

excruciatingly as sharecroppers who still own some of the instruments of production such as plough and share partly the cost of production. This is a feature characteristic of the pre-capitalist property relations. In short, the exploitation of the poor and middle peasants has not led to the elimination of petty producers; it has only strengthened the semi-feudal landlords and pauperised the peasantry.

Thus what India has today is neither completely feudalism, nor fully capitalism, but a queer mixture of the two, on top of which imperialism has been superimposed. And the way out of this trimurthi—feudalism, capitalism and imperialism—is not possible through the capitalist path. The road blocked. Path II of transition to capitalism has turned out to be a blind alley to India: and Path I is no more feasible either.

“Non-Capitalist Path”

Recently some of our learned pundits* have concocted a peculiar “non-capitalist path” for India to follow in order to get out of the present impasse. The catalytic agent of the “non-capitalist transformation” along this path is a broad alliance of national bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, workers and peasants. This alliance would strive for “the use and allocation of resources...to be governed by the requirements of expansion of agricultural and industrial production and not by private considerations” so as to complete the task of *unfinished industrialization* in India.

In this scheme, state capitalism is

* For example, R. Das Gupta, *Problems of Economic Transition: Indian Case Study* (1970); and A. Sen, *Marxism and the Petty-Bourgeois Default*, in P. C. Joshi (ed.), *Homage to Karl Marx* (1969). See also B. Chattopadhyay, “Marx and India’s Crisis”, *ibid.* Academician Ulyanovsky recommends this path for the entire Third World; see his “Some Problems of Non-Capitalist Development” *Kommunist* (No. 4, 1971), reproduced in the *Mainstream* (April 17, 1971).

assigned a vital role to play. The public sector should enter the areas of production which are crucial for industrialisation such as power, transport and irrigation.

Secondly, it should prevent the concentration of capital and economic power in a few hands, and also it should curb the dominance of foreign monopoly capital in strategic areas of the economy. Furthermore, it should provide the means with the help of which the small and middle bourgeoisie can remove the constraints placed upon them by big business, and can make advance. And so on and so forth.

But what is the record of actual performance of state capitalism in India so far? The benefits of massive investment in public sector projects have accrued mostly to the affluent bourgeoisie, urban and rural. The public sector is notorious for buying high and selling low in its dealings with big business. It is by and large a handmaid of monopoly capitalism. It has singularly failed to effectively help the small and medium producers in terms of providing the means of expansion like credit, scarce raw materials etc. Again state capitalism has not at all succeeded in turning the tide against concentration of capital and production; nor has it been able to stem the inflow of foreign monopoly capital. However, this is not at all surprising. The character of the state sector, of course, can never be independent of the class character of the state itself.

Nonetheless, at least one of these pundits (Das Gupta) claims that 'in the specific socio-economic situation of India characterized by the domination of intermingling socio-economic formations and its growth-inhibiting impact, and in comparison to other processes of transition from economic backwardness to a state of vigorous economic advance along a broad front, State capitalism may signify and, in practice, has signified, to an extent, a step forward. In a certain measure in India it has helped to weaken the sway of the alliance of unproductive interests and privileges.'

But the data presented by him in no way confirm this formulation.

Now we turn to the "national democratic alliance" of the national bourgeoisie, petty bourgeois, workers and peasants. The national bourgeoisie, to begin with, is a vacillating class, torn between the temptations of joining the comprador bourgeoisie on the one hand and the revolutionary fervour for standing by the side of the exploited masses on the other. What is the criterion of distinguishing and identifying the national bourgeoisie? It is the so-called "production principle", according to which the acid test of the national bourgeoisie lies in their industrial enterprises that are free from monopolistic influence and power. The hallmark of the production principle consists in direct investment in the means of production rather than in commerce. The small, medium and a section of large capitalists are claimed to belong to this category.

The dual character of the petty bourgeoisie is no less well known; it is a class that oscillates between progress and reaction. Numerically, of course, its size is massive in India. It is believed that like the national bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie too should be, and can be, brought into alliance with workers and peasants.

There is a basic limitation in this concept of "national democratic alliance"; it is with regard to the question of *leadership*. In any alliance correct leadership is indeed a matter of paramount importance. The leading class and the leading party must fulfil *two* conditions in order to exercise the leadership of the classes, strata, political parties and people's organizations which are being led:

- (a) Lead those who are led (allies) to wage resolute struggles against the common enemy and achieve victories;
- (b) Bring material benefits to those who are led or at least do not damage their interests and at the same time give them political education.

Without both these conditions, or

with only one, effective leadership cannot be realised. Evidently the bourgeois leadership—national or petty—is inherently incapable of satisfying these fundamental conditions. Only the workers and peasants can, and should, lead the alliance successfully to wage resolute struggle against the common enemy, and to preserve and promote the material interests of the national democratic classes in the transitional phase. Hence the supreme task of the hour is first to strengthen the revolutionary movement of workers and peasants. Then and only then would arise the question of alliance with others. Alliance at any stage and at any cost to the workers and peasants just for the holy cause of 'industrialisation' is a retrograde step.

It should be borne in mind that the completion of the unfinished industrialisation is not the absolute, immediate and final task. It is foolish to be obsessed with the so-called production principle and with the "broadest unity of all the Left, democratic and patriotic forces." It is not industrialisation as such but socialism which is the fundamental, penultimate objective. The bourgeois leadership—national or petty—under the conditions of India or for that matter anywhere else in the world cannot effect the transition to socialism even if it can help achieve the "expansion of agricultural and industrial production" which one author succinctly calls "production explosion".

The path to "production explosion" should not be confused with the path to socialism.

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Transition From Feudalism To Capitalism

P. S.

BOTH from theoretical and practical standpoints the problems of transition from feudalism to capitalism are a very important subject for India. It is encouraging that Indian economists have started discussing it. As we all know and the author too knows, these questions are not merely economic, but also current political issues. Feudalism and capitalism are stages of the socio-economic structure and the issues are clearly related to bourgeois democratic revolution.

It was Marx who had pointed out two paths of capitalist development, i.e. two paths of transition from feudalism to capitalism. Marx said: "The transition from the feudal mode of production is twofold. The producer becomes merchant and capitalist... This is the really revolutionary path. Or else, the merchant establishes direct sway over production... This system presents everywhere an obstacle to the real capitalist mode of production" (*Capital*, III, p. 329).

For Marxists this is a guiding principle and a key to the understanding of the development of capitalism in any country. Prof Das Gupta, who declares himself a Marxist-Leninist, applies this teaching of Marx to the specific conditions of India and discusses from various angles all the problems and difficulties of her transition.*

It should be pointed out that Marx's observation referred to really, and not formally, *independent* European countries which had gone through democratic revolution clearing the path of industrial revolution,

**Problems of Economic Transition—Indian case study.*

By Prof Ranajit Das Gupta. National Publishers, Calcutta, 1970, pp. 416, Rs 25.00.

and not to colonial and semi-colonial countries. The first path of transition was followed by Holland, England, France, Belgium etc. and the second by Germany, Italy and Russia. In Asia Japan was the only country, which, after her Meiji Revolution, followed the second path of capitalist development. When other countries were going through their industrial revolution, India lost her independence and became a colony of British imperialism. Only since 1947 when state power was transferred to Indian hands, the question of which of the two paths India would follow became vital.

The Indian National Congress was divided into Right and Left and the ideas of these two sections, the author tells us, "were reflected in the two alternative programmes for capitalist development in India corresponding to the 'two paths'" (p. 49)—the Left representing the first path and the Right the second. "The programme formulated by the Indian tycoons [Tata-Birla Bombay Plan] had close resemblance with the pattern of capitalist development in Japan" (p. 54).

Gandhi's Disciples

These are all acceptable propositions, but when Prof Das Gupta comes to assess the roles of the leaders of the Right and Left, he is open to challenge. Who represented the Right leadership? Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Rajagopalachari who "paraded them selves as the true disciples of Gandhiji?" What was the role of Gandhi himself? Was he not the supreme leader of the Right and were not the other Rightist leaders his own creations? No, Gandhi was above the battle, but unfortunately he was exploited by the Right, though

"Gandhiji himself often gave both spiritual and organizational protection to the Right" (p. 47). One little point is worth mentioning, for it reveals the strange psychology of the author: everyone is mentioned just by their name as Marx, Lenin, Nehru, Subhas Bose, etc. etc., but in case of Gandhi, it is always Gandhiji! Another remark of the author—"Gandhian dream had an anti-feudal and anti-capitalist content" (p. 47). One may as well ask didn't the Hitlerian dream also contain an anti-capitalist and socialist content?

Prof Das Gupta asserts that in 1947 India "attained political independence" which established the "right of the Indian people" and "had the

Jerome Ch'en

MAO PAPERS

Anthology and Bibliography

This collection brings together a number of unpublished writings of Mao Tse-tung, throwing new light on Mao as a writer, and as a leader, and demonstrates his constant concern with the structure and social behaviour of the Chinese Communist Party.

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character of a political revolution" (p. 54). But only a few pages earlier we were told that the Indian bourgeoisie had been "combining struggle for independence with compromise with imperialism" (p. 49). What then did we get in 1947—was it independence or compromise with imperialism? should not social scientists insist on the precise definition of the words they use?

The Karachi Congress in 1931 resolved as its aim that "the State shall own or control industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport." Again at the Faizpur Congress in 1936 Nehru in his presidential address emphasised that India was fighting for the "Removal of British imperialist exploitation and a radical change in the antiquated and repressive land and revenue system." Had these goals been achieved in 1947, one could say that India had attained independence. But the Congress leaders did not take that revolutionary path; they compromised with imperialism, criminally partitioned the country on a religious basis and what was produced as a result of this compromise was not independence but rather an abortion of independence.

What actually happened in 1947 was that India (as well as Pakistan) was transformed from a colonial to a semi-colonial country—the British imperialists transferred "state power" to the Indian big bourgeoisie and feudal interests, while imperialist investments—the main cause of exploitation and slavery of the Indian people—remained intact. And soon afterwards the Indian Constitution made these imperialist property inviolable.

The author then goes on to say that after attaining independence what remained for India was "an imperative necessity to liberate the productive forces... conducive towards national advance" (p. 56). The question is: after the Constitution had sanctified and guaranteed all kinds of private property—imperialist property and the property of the Indian big bourgeoisie and landlords, was it at all possible for the Government "to

liberate the productive forces"?

There cannot be any dillydallying with the truth that without a popular democratic revolution—revolution in the sense of a crucial shift of class-power and in the nature of state power—the productive forces of a backward country cannot be liberated. The state form and the economic system are closely interlinked. Politics is the concentrated expression of economics. India is the only major country which never had a real revolution bringing about a fundamental change in her class relations. Only such a revolution could have cleared the ground for a real transition from feudalism to capitalism (or to socialism). Lenin always emphasized that a democratic revolution was the pre-condition for transition, "for a wide and rapid European, not Asiatic, development of capitalism."

The Indian bourgeoisie betrayed the revolution and took the path of compromise and collaboration with imperialism—and this path means delay, procrastination, corruption, the painfully slow decomposition of the putrid parts of the national organism. And it is the general mass of the people, peasants, workers, lower middle class—that suffer first of all and most of all from this putrefaction.

Surgeon's Knife

The revolutionary path, on the other hand, is one of rapid amputation which is the least painful to the people, the path of the immediate removal of what is putrescent, the path of least compliance with the abominable, vile, rotten, noxious institutions that go with the present semi-colonial system. The Indian economy is heavily fettered by imperialist and feudal property. Without mercilessly eradicating all these oppressive and paralyzing features of Asiatic bondage, no transition at all is possible, neither along the first path nor along the second. Prof Das Gupta's analysis of the industrial and agricultural conditions of "independent India amply proves this truth.

As we have pointed out, development of capitalism, whether in Eng-

land and France or in Germany and Japan, was on independent lines, that is to say, it was not dependent on foreign patronage. But that is not the case with India, she relies heavily on foreign investment. Unless substantial foreign "aid" comes in, our industries refuse to advance and our Planners take a holiday! Orientation towards foreign capital, including its predominance in the export sector, gives rise to the problem of flow of profits obtained from foreign investments. In postwar years the U.S. monopolies have extracted from Latin America in profits and interests far more than they have invested there. It will not take long before India too reaches that stage.

Prof Das Gupta shows (p. 253) how India's non-banking foreign business investments have increased fourfold since she became "independent". From Rs 255.9 crore in 1948 they shot up to Rs 935.8 crores in 1965. By now they must have exceeded the figure five or six times. Reserve Bank studies show that return on foreign investments in India have been consistently much higher than in the USA and UK. The finance Minister stated in the Rajya Sabha on August 21, 1968 that between 1956-57 and 1967-68 the Indian subsidiaries of foreign companies remitted a total of Rs 388.2 crores abroad by way of current profits, accumulated profits and dividends and another sum of Rs 189.2 crores on account of royalties and fees of technicians, technical know-how and professional services.

Still more crippling and nefarious are the foreign loans incurred by the Government of India. During the First Plan these amounted to Rs 328 crores, Second Plan Rs 2531 crores, Third Plan Rs 2963 crores. For these loans India paid between 1961-62 and 1967-68 in interest alone \$1,338 million.

This path of transition—the collaborationist path—does hardly lead to an industrial revolution or development of the national economy. The last 20 years' experience shows that, in spite of a few showpieces of big

projects, this path is incapable of radically changing the dominant pre-capitalist production relationship and the archaic economic structure of India. That is why all our planning and development with foreign aid has produce a strange phenomenon—*growth without development*, without transition. This path has not been able to solve a single major problem that has faced India since “independence”.

After analysing the subject from all angles, Prof Das Gupta comes to the conclusion that the Indian economy has failed, and “The Congress policy of capitalist development along the second path has created the danger of triumph of fascism, or, in the specific Indian context, the establishment of an extremely reactionary, authoritarian, neo-colonialist regime...” (p. 366).

The author then comes out with “another possibility” of national, democratic regeneration and advance—“a national democratic programme of *non-capitalist* path of transition. The essential positive aspects of the first path of capitalist development, the aspects of sweeping anti-feudal, anti-imperialist, democratic advance, converge with the neo-colonialist mode of transformation, the latter in its part creating prerequisites for transition to socialism” (p. 367).

Modern revisionism cannot but lead to such confounded profundity. Non-capitalist path was a short period of transition to socialism in very backward Asian countries of the Soviet Union where revolution had destroyed the power of the exploiting classes. In India where the capitalist class is entrenched in power how will this non-capitalist path be introduced without a revolution? And if there is a revolution in India, where is the necessity for a non-capitalist path? Moreover what is the non-capitalist path after all?

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The Teaching And Catering Of Music

H. CHAKRABORTY

AS long as music remains a communal activity it does not need a sponsor or an organiser because it is then an inseparable part of communal life. Communal music does not have to look either for a performer or for an audience because the whole community is both the performer and the audience. Communal music does not face the problem of auditorium: the spacious field in front of the banyan tree at the end of the village has well served that purpose since the prehistoric days.

But new necessities arise with changes and complications in social structure which mould and remould music as society evolves from primitive communism to republican feudalism and thence to kingly feudalism which again emerges as absolute monarchy. With complicated social stratification music also is stratified into primitive, folk, religious and aristocratic music. Feudal societies provided for the cultivation, propagation and maintenance of their music and musicians. Feudal temples, royal courts and aristocratic salons have served the purpose of auditoria till the advent of European capitalism in India. The open hall or the *Natyamandir* attached to the Hindu temples served as local theatres where not only religious music but also operas used to be enacted until very recent times. British usurpation of political power in India not only disturbed the already moribund cultural set-up but pushed it almost out of gear. Literacy fell to an alarming figure and the culture-pattern based on a self-sufficient village economy was rudely shattered without having any suitable substitute. The established academies and circles of music began to wither for lack of proper sustenance. The maestros and the virtuosos began to transgress the

age-revered injunctions of leaving ones own village in search of food, clothing and shelter. Thus the various schools of Indian classical music popularly known as *gharana* came into being. Owing to total official neglect the musicians turned to the newly-risen *bania* and *mutsuddi* classes for support and encouragement. This gave rise to the *Akhdai* or the *Kalwadi* form of the 19th century Bengali music.

The benign dispensations of Cornwallis could stem the dissatisfaction of neither the dispossessed feudal nor the rising comprador bourgeoisie which found its expression in the terrific explosion of the Sepoy Mutiny. Since that historic event intellectual movement in India except in Bengal Presidency began to assume a more and more revivalist character. As in many other branches of intellectual activity Rammohan was the pioneer in employing music in expressing the newly evolved ethos of the 19th century. This new awareness of the utility of music found its highest expression in the music of Tagore, the grandson of Prince Dwarkanath, the financial patron of Rammohan.

Whatever progress was made in the field of composition of Bengali music in the latter and first halves of the 19th and the 20th centuries, arrangement for its popular teaching and catering was hardly at par with the same. Rammohan did not hesitate to imitate the Western Church in employing choir-masters and choral singers in his newly founded Brahma Sabha. He hired the services of an eminent Muslim maestro to get acquainted with the technical intricacies of musical composition. But the founding of a proper public Academy of Indian music in Bengal waited for its pioneer, Jyotirindranath who, in 1892 founded the *Bharatiya Sangit Samaj*, of which he was the first Secre-

tary and afterwards the President. But unluckily the organisation was shortlived because of his self-imposed banishment in Ranchi, where he lived in seclusion till his death.

The *Gayan Samaj* of Poona established in 1874 inspired Pandit V. N. Bhatkhande who formalised his researches into the scriptures and collections of the compositions of classical music of North India and published a rational interpretation, albeit incomplete in some respects, of his new *Thata* system embodied in his *Hindusthani Sangit Paddhati* published in 1916. To muster approval to the same he organised the first all-India representative seminar in Baroda in the same year and repeated it in subsequent years in the big cities of North India which were attended by the eminent musicologists of those times. Thus the long persisting controversies of North Indian classical music found a sort of resolution and a cheap opportunity for learning the art on a modern academic basis was created in the Maurice College established by him at Lucknow.

Although the Maurice College first recognised the necessity of public teaching in North Indian classical music arrangements for public catering of the same was never fully made. Music conference in the truest sense of the term was organised by Bhatkhandeji and the biennial conferences known as the Banaras, the Allahabad conference etc. which lasted till the death of the Pandit in 1936 gave scope to the veterans as well as the aspirants to sing in all-India gatherings of representative character.

The first conference of all-India stature in Bengal was organised by the late Bhupendrakrishna Ghosh and was named the All Bengal Music Conference. It was inaugurated by Tagore in the now-demolished Senate House of Calcutta University in December, 1934. Although not so much of a conference as conducted by Bhatkhandeji the All Bengal Conference of Bhupen Babu and Damodardas Khanna presented unforget-

table programmes and artistes. The organisation split into the All India Conference of Damodardas Khanna and the All Bengal Conference of Manmatha Babu towards 1950. At the close of the decade both were defunct and were never replaced by a similar organisation. Thus ended the glorious period in publicizing classical Indian music in this city.

Whatever success was registered in the matter of rationalising the problems of music through the annual discussions and demonstrations of eminent musicians, the problem of regular catering of music, especially in the metropolitan cities, was never taken very seriously. The public theatre in Calcutta was founded in 1872 but the question of founding a music hall was never given any thought. With the advent of the cinema, particularly the talkies, building of public halls increased by leaps and bounds but the music hall remained where it was. The Mahajati Sadan was originally conceived as a conference auditorium with theatrical facilities attached. The Rabindrasadan and the Kalamandir were not designed to be exclusively music halls such as in London and Vienna.

The name of a Sangit Natak Akadami is sometimes published in the press but apart from selection of recipients of Padmabhushans and Government scholarships its activities are not well known to the public. During its long life of 24 years it has not been able to found a single music or opera house in the capital. The musicians are obliged to hire either the Sapru House or the Vijnan Bhavan. The achievements of the West Bengal branch of the Sangit Natak Akadami are even more wonderful. It wakes up from its slumber once a year to send a hand-out of its activities to the press and then resumes its sleep. None of these organisations has so far been able to sponsor a single conference similar to that organised by Bhatkhandeji, or facilities of catering classical music in popular music houses at popular rates. As a result music

sponsors are obliged to hire theatrical and conference halls at fancy rents.

How strange that an Akadami like the one at Delhi has not thought it worthwhile during the last quarter century to convene an annual conference to resolve the problems confronting Indian classical music since the days of Bhatkhandeji and make arrangements for the popular teaching and catering of music.

The cumulative effect of this situation has been the shrinkage of public interest in, and lack of proper medium of expression for, anything other than pop and sexy music.

The HMV

The biggest medium of the musical arts of modern times is the gramophone disc business. Here it has been monopolised by a foreign company which enjoys the privilege of monopoly licence. Believe it or not, in the so-called socialist republic of India the British monopoly concern, His Master's Voice (what a prophetic name!) enjoyed until yesterday the monopoly right of producing and importing material for discs and the right to record and print music. No other company past, present or future, has the same rights. Every company has to get their records printed by the HMV.

Naturally this company has considered maximum profit to be its sole pursuit. Propagation and preservation of musical culture is none of its business. But it is a tragedy that our socialist politicians have not felt ashamed of keeping our musical culture in the hands of a foreign monopoly concern for the past 24 years even to the detriment of Indian music.

European folk or classical music also is not receiving any better treatment at their hands. Since vulgarisation of music brings much more profit to their coffers all vulgar music in the name of pop, Jazz etc. are being hysterically recommended through widely circulated advertisement media. The irony of fate is that the pop music dished out by this company and lustily cheered by the

lumpen petit bourgeois is not, strictly speaking, popular music—it is music composed by and for the sophisticated townspeople; its main burden is the unhealthy expressions of sexiness; being decadent it is completely oblivious of the present social reality. Old folk songs were never so divorced from human reality as our present day *pop* music. The entire concept of pop music is as chaotic as its bourgeois social environment. True it is a revolt of the youth of the bourgeois world but this revolt does not spring from social consciousness—rather it makes bourgeois confusion worse confounded. The HMV has been trying hard for the last two decades to create a pop tradition in our country and has succeeded in degrading Hindi and Bengali lyrical songs to utter vulgarisation. Bengali cultural leaders and workers are in general disdainful of the stuff catered by the company in the name of modern Bengali songs. Although euphemistically called *modern*, it never betrays any trace of modern consciousness which one finds in the compositions of Rangalal, Tagore or Nazrul. The oozy sexiness of the so-called modern songs catered by the paid composers (who are no composers at all) and singers of the company nauseates the sedate listener. But his opinion does not matter because as in similar matters of economic activity, support given by the local government (representing big business) and the press facilitates the company's trade in musical vulgarity.

Success after success emboldens a business speculator. Since Tagore's songs have become very popular over the preceding decades the company has contrived a process by which they can squeeze sterling out of the musical creations of Tagore to which I will come in the next instalment.

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Lessons With The Camera

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

THE Film Institute at Poona (lately renamed Film and Television Institute of India) is now nine years' old. Nine years are, of course, nothing in the life of an institution and in fact, the gestation troubles are not yet over. But some of the Poona alumni have been able to make quite a dent in the film industry and their "invasion" has introduced a kind of freshness and vigour into the stale set-up of our commercial film-making. The Institute offers its trainees an atmosphere of constantly exciting creativity. The students breathe, smell and even dream cinema. The maladies of over-exposure are, indeed, there, but it is much better than being groomed in the claustrophobic confines of the film studios shut out from any sort of intelligent thinking. Also the boys in the Institute get a fair chance of self-expression in making their own films and this practical exercise always stands them in good stead when they venture into their independent profession.

Recently, a two-day session of such student films was organised in Calcutta, featuring the diploma films made in 1970. The films shown are of a varied nature, ranging from allegoric tales to documentary portrayal of contemporary reality. *Suman* and *Chetana* deal with the awakening of sex-consciousness among the teenagers. Jaya Bhaduri acts in both the films. While her coyish charm is always in evidence, in moments of emotional upheaval, she always draws a blank. The film-makers also have failed to express anything serious in their works and the films have turned out to be mere childish romps with the camera. *Mahadeep*, *Satyanash* and *The Rabbit* depict various problems of married life. But, in all these films, the camera is concerned only with the externals of the situations, without ever caring to go into the intricacies of the menal turmoil. The performances also lack depth and

understanding and there is also an irritating tendency to imitate the conventional acting style. *Ma Nishad* and *Angry Young Man* are films of protest against social injustice, which never succeed in putting across their message. *Ma Nishad* is a pale adaptation of O. Henry's *Cop And The Anthem*, the story of a penitent crook. *Angry Young Man* starts off well along the track of *That Man From Rio* (De Broca's magnificent fantasy-reality mixture) but bungles half-way through. Of this otherwise innocuous film is the excellent photography by Kamal Nayak (the best camera work of the year, although the examiners do not seem to think so) with some really expert hand-held bits. *In Panchgani* and *A Boy And A Girl* harp on the tender, intimate and difficult relationships of the adolescent but the directors seem to have bitten off more than they can chew. *Lottery* is built around a well-worn comic situation, people in search of a missing lottery-ticket which has won the prize, obviously inspired by Rena Clari's *Le Million*. A mildly entertaining film, often spoiled by some ill-timed and stereotyped gags. *Black And White* recounts the predicament of man in a fable-like manner, touching on almost everything under the sun. Here the directors grasp over the medium does not match up to the subject he tackles and the result is high-sounding nonsense. *Whom To Blame*, the best of the lot, is a piece of honest documentary on the destruction of railway property. Although marred a little by slack editing, it is an impressive study of the interesting types that daily frequent the railway compartments.

On the whole, however, the latest crop of the Institute, is slightly disappointing. The zeal for experiments is on the way out. During previous year, there were some real stints of creative, formal exercises which, despite their pretentious eccentricities,

were, far more desirable than the present drift into the rut. The touch of fine madness is gone, and a pattern of conformism has set in, with an unhealthy swing back to the conventional film-world. The reasons for this artistic degeneration deserve a close and careful probe.

Clippings

CPM On Jail-Killings

...Fourteen killed, 85 injured in Dum Dum jail firing—a headline in the newspapers of May 16.

...Everytime it is the same story—prisoners trying to escape or clash in jail, the authorities were forced to open fire. How many times have we heard it, how many times have we known it to be a lie?

Nobody tried to escape from Salem jail on February 11, 1950, when 22 Communist prisoners were shot and killed behind the bars in the most brutal massacre.

Has it not happened, again and again, that prisoners were told they had been given bail, and when they came out of the jail gates, they were shot dead and the story put out that they were trying to escape.

Has it not happened, again and again, in Calcutta, in the rest of West Bengal, in Sriakulam, in Punjab, that people were taken into custody

shot in police van or tortured and murdered in lock-ups and the story put out that they were killed in encounters?

Weren't young men—48 of them to be precise—lined up against the wall and shot dead in the presence of their parents and friends—in Barat, Beliaghata, Salt Lake area, Diamond Harbour... Wasn't the same story put out, they were trying to resist arrest, snatching arms from the police?

And in the jails of West Bengal?

—Eight under-trial prisoners killed a few months ago in Midnapore jail;

—Seven prisoners killed in Berhampore jail in January;

—Five injured in Howrah jail on May 14;

—At least thirty shot dead or beaten to death while in custody in the last eight months.

...In the coming days more intense attacks are going to be made on the democratic movement. The Ordinance on Internal Security is not meant to be a joke. Large-scale arrests and detentions of leaders of the democratic movement, of the trade unions, Kisan Sabhas, students, youth and women's organisations, and particularly of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) are what is being planned by this Government. And they can be shot any day in jail—once jail murders are made a routine and it is being made a routine.

Even prisoners taken by the enemy in a war have certain rights, they can claim certain protection. But the prisoners of the class war in Indian jails are not covered by Geneva Conventions. Their lives are cheap, their blood can be easily shed.

But this blood cries out for vengeance. By such butcheries, by the perfidy they practise the ruling classes can perhaps postpone the day of reckoning, but they cannot avoid it, it will come as sure as the sun rises in the east. And on that day every drop of this blood will be avenged. That is the promise of the living who will make the revolution to the dead who died for it. (*People's Democracy*, organ of the CPI(M).

In Another Vein

The West Bengal Government has described as absolutely baseless an allegation made by a CPI(M) member of Parliament that certain elements in the Government were deliberately releasing anti-social elements, now held under the provisions of the Prevention of Violent Activities Act to create difficulties for the CPI(M) in view of the coming by-elections.

...Referring to recent jail-breaks in West Beigal, the MP said in spite of timely warnings given by the jail staff the authorities had not taken any preventive measures thus "betraying their real intentions."—*The Statesman*.

Letter

Bangladesh

I have been reading letters in *Frontier* condemning the Bangladesh freedom movement. It is better to let your readers know at the very beginning that I do not have the slightest intention of criticizing those who possess definite political ideologies. But when people betray utter lack of knowledge of the history of their own country and try to preach erroneously the teachings of leaders like Mao Tse-tung, it is only proper that somebody should come forward and contradict them. To understand the present freedom movement in Bangladesh, one has to think of the history of the Indian freedom movement and critically analyse the days before partition. It is not known to many that immediately after the failure of Lord Curzon to divide Bengal and put a check to the growing nationalism of the area, the British politicians under the leadership of Lord Minto thought of a novel plan. Let me quote from Lady Minto's journal dated 1st October, 1906:—"This has been a very eventful day: as some one said to me 'An epoch in Indian history'... This evening I have received the following letter from an official: 'I must send Your Excel-

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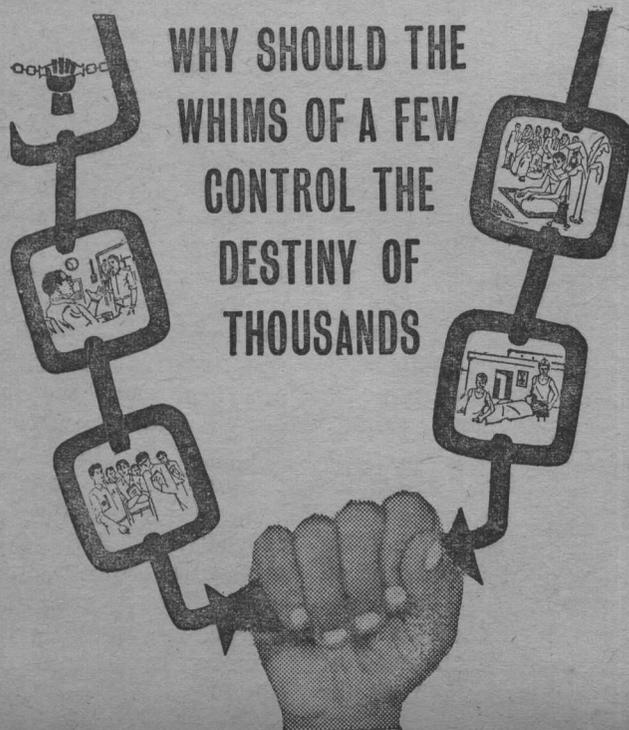
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lency a line to say that a very very big thing happened today. A work of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than the pulling back of 62 millions of people from joining the ranks of seditious opposition." She, obviously, referred to the birth of communal electorates. The scheme came out of the fertile brain of a man called Mr Archbold who was, then, the Principal of the Aligarh College. He was admittedly helped and supported by Lord Minto. In 1927, some prominent Muslim leaders formulated the famous Muslim Proposals. There were four points:—Separate Sindh province, reforms in NWFP and Baluchistan, proportionate representation in Punjab and Bengal and one-third seats in the Central Assembly. At the Third Round Table Conference in 1932, J. Coatman, CIE, wrote:—'The creation of a strong, united India, including the whole of British India and the Indian States and the borders in the North-West, whose inclusion in India was one of the first and most fundamental conditions of her nationhood is, day by day, being made impossible, and in its place it seems that there may be brought into being a powerful Mohammedan State

in the north and north-west, with its eyes definitely turned away from India, towards the rest of the Moslem World of which it forms a fringe, whilst away to the south and east there will be what?" One should take note of the fact that Bengal was never one of the places regarded as a predominantly Muslim area. In 1933, the Punjabi student of Cambridge, Chaudhuri Rahmat Ali, gave the separatist movement a shape and a name. He propounded the idea that the Punjab, NWFP (Afghan Province), Kashmir, Sind, and Baluchistan should be formed into a separate Muslim State called Pakistan." Chaudhuri Rahmat Ali was a creation of the Churchill-Lloyd group of the Conservative Party. It is obvious that even a politician like Churchill could not dream of calling Bengal a predominantly Muslim State. Even in 1946, the Cabinet Mission stated:—"The setting up of a separate sovereign state of Pakistan on the lines claimed by the Muslim League would not solve the communal minority problem; nor can we see any justification for including within a sovereign Pakistan those districts of the Punjab and Bengal and Assam in which the population is predominantly non-Muslim." It should be

remembered that Bengal had Muslim League Governments before 1946. But that did not persuade the Cabinet Mission to believe that Bengal should be divided. And yet, Bengal was divided. How? And who was responsible for this? To find out, we have to go back to 1940 when Mr Rajagopalachari started to play his game. Allow me to quote from Pattabhi Sitaramayya: "He has been differing, in fact from Gandhi for some time earlier. He was mainly, yea, wholly responsible for the Resolution of the AICC passed at Poona in July, 1940, a meeting not attended by Gandhi. Poona was later undone at Bombay (August 1940) which paved the way to Individual Civil Disobedience Movement in October 1940. C.R. did not choose to tread the beaten path by writing to Government the slogan about war which Gandhi and the Working Committee had adopted and recommended to Congressmen... He was largely instrumental in persuading Gandhi to suspend the IDM in November, 1941 and the Bardoli Resolution was the result." To C.R., the key to the situation lay in a friendly attitude towards the Pakistan idea. The idea was not authoritatively clothed and put into shape by Mr



WHY SHOULD THE WHIMS OF A FEW CONTROL THE DESTINY OF THOUSANDS

A delayed train may mean the loss of a day's wage to the bread-winner because of his late attendance or the waste of a whole year to a student who cannot get to the examination centre in time, or the cancellation of a marriage due to the non-arrival of the bride within the auspicious period, or even the death of a patient for want of timely medical aid.

All this can happen if the alarm chain is thoughtlessly misused. This device is provided on trains to be used only in extreme emergency, but indiscriminate pulling of alarm chains by a few anti-social elements is causing inconvenience to all the others on the train. Why should the whims of a few control the destiny of thousands?

Stop misuse of the alarm chains in the trains. Hand over the culprits to the authorities. Help the Railways to serve you better.

EASTERN RAILWAY

Jinnah but C.R. had formed certain ideas about it. At the base of it lay the two-nation theory which he had accepted." C.R. himself stated:—"I stand for Pakistan because I do not want that state where we Hindus and Muslims are both not honoured. Let Muslims have Pakistan...I stand for Pakistan but I do not think the Congress will agree to this." There is no doubt that C.R. was instrumental for including Bengal in the list of provinces that were to be awarded to Mr Jinnah. On 8th April, 1944, C.R. had made his "constructive proposals" to Mr Jinnah. C.R.'s formula was endorsed by Gandhiji. The formula was:—"After the termination of the war a commission shall be appointed for demarcating contiguous districts in the north-west and east of India, wherein the Muslim population is in absolute majority...If the majority decide in favour of forming a sovereign state separate from Hindustan, such decision shall be given effect to.

Thus, the history of the Indian freedom movement tells us that more than 10 crores of Bengalis were betrayed by people who never liked them for their nationalism. For the immediate results of partition, I request your readers to go through Dr R. C. Mazumder's *History of the Indian Freedom Movement* (Vol III).

Now, we have to take note of two very important things. One was the list of names that was sent from the President of the Muslim League to Lord Pethick-Lawrence, the head of the Cabinet Mission, on 29th April, 1946. The names were those of the representatives of the Muslim League:—

(1) M. A. Jinnah (2) Nawab M. I. Khan (3) Nawabjada Liaquat Ali Khan and (4) Sardar A. R. Nishtar. Out of the four representatives, two were feudal rulers and the other two represented the upper middle class. Pakistani rulers have always been the representatives of the feudal landlord class. Yahya Khan and Z. A. Bhutto are no exceptions. And what about East Bengal? Barring a few landlords, the whole area belongs to lower middle class people and peasants, subjected to all sorts of torture.

The second item of interest was made clear by the Cabinet Mission. Paragraph 10 of the Statement by the Cabinet Delegation and His Excellency the Viceroy, New Delhi dated 16th May, 1946, reads as follows:—"Finally, there is the geographical fact that the two halves of the proposed Pakistan state are separated by some seven hundred miles and the communications between them both in war and peace would be dependent on the goodwill of Hindustan." Also, in Para 7, we get the following lines:—"We ourselves are also convinced that any solution which involves a radical partition of the Punjab and Bengal, as this world do, would be contrary to the wishes and interests of a very large proportion of the inhabitants of these provinces. *Bengal and the Punjab each has its own common language and a long history and tradition*". What the foreigners could realise was not understood by men like Jinnah and Rajagopalachari! Or, did they deliberately choose to be ignorant? Whatever be the reasons, Bengal was divided much against the will of 10 crores of Bengalis. A quarrel between the two parts of Pakistan was inevitable. I am surprised to find that the quarrel has taken concrete shape after 23 years.

So before we start judging the class character of Sheikh Mujib, we have to judge the same of the rulers of Pakistan. They are the sons of big landlords and zamindars. Any quarrel with them is a quarrel with feudalism, superstition and blind religion. They do not deserve the support of any civilised human being. Nor, as a matter of fact, are they getting any. They have been admirably isolated. If China, the most civilized country in the ancient world, extends her helping hand towards Pakistan, the reasons must be other than political. Moreover, China cannot allow Mujib to achieve victory in Pakistan. That would hamper her prestige as the leader of all the liberation forces in the world. Will Mr Charu Majumdar be able to tolerate say, Jaiprakash Naraiyan or Charu Chandra Bhandari if all the

peasants in India revolt under their leadership?

Now we have to think of the second big problem, the problem of a proper reading of Chinese history and the works of the leader of the Chinese revolution. The question that we have to answer now is—did Mao Tse-tung take the help of the bourgeoisie in his bid to free the country from foreign yoke? The answer is, yes, he did. He took the help of all the nationalist parties at the time of driving the Japanese out of China. His greatest friend and ally at that time was Chiang Kai-shek. He was all the time conscious that Chiang was a potential enemy. He was getting ready for any eventuality. But he did not kick Chiang out of China when his country was engaged in a bitter fight against the Japanese aggressors. For a clean understanding of Mao's political outlook of the time, I request all your readers to go through Chen Po-ta's great work on Mao Tse-tung and the history of China.

Mao Tse-tung realised that without the help of the bourgeoisie he would never be able to defeat the powerful Japanese aggressors. In our country, however, we have been witnessing a typical hate-campaign against the bourgeoisie. At this initial stage of the movement, this sort of perverted application of Mao's Thought may prove disastrous.

Even if we take it for granted that the present freedom movement in Bangladesh is nothing more than a bourgeois uprising, we should support it for three reasons:—(i) Bangladesh was made a colony of West Pakistan much against the will of the people living there; (ii) Pakistani rulers are invariably the inheritors of medieval feudalism and (iii) Bangladesh has always been very close to our hearts. Ordinary people have always known, what the Cabinet Mission accepted as the truth, that socially, culturally, historically and geographically, Bangladesh has always been 700 miles away from West Pakistan but only a few paces away from our Bengal.

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