

frontier

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ROUGH CLIMB TO SUMMIT

IN the jungle of conflicting statements and forecasts about the Simla summit anyone is apt to lose his way. The views expressed by the Prime Minister during her European tour are of no help; on the contrary, they add to the confusion. Mr Bhutto is known for his flair for blowing hot and cold at the same time, and not long ago our Prime Minister had an occasion to reprimand him for his apparent inconsistencies. Even if the Pakistan President were a different person, he would perhaps have spoken in more voices than one because of the force of circumstances. He has to hold together a country which is perilously on the point of disintegration, and he cannot fill the bill without being a bit of everything to everybody. But our Prime Minister is under no such compulsion. She is the repository of all power in this country; as the title of a collection of her speeches, brought out by the Government, would suggest it is India that speaks when Indira speaks. In present-day India the semantic similarity and easy interchangeability of the two names is almost symbolic—much to the convenience of artless flatterers.

During her tour abroad, she has done quite a bit of public relations for her Government. Which is understandable. Maybe what she has said, including her profession of sympathy and support for the liberation struggles in different parts of the world, has gone down well with her listeners; maybe they have come to acknowledge her right to speak in that vein because of the Indian collaboration in the armed struggle in Bangladesh. All this may be part of the residuary job of a prime minister on tour of countries with which there are no serious matters to discuss. But was it necessary for her to offer comments on the Simla summit whose upshot is a general impression that she does not set much store by the proposed meeting of the heads of the two Governments which it has taken two wars and twelve years to bring about? On her return to New Delhi she has denied having said anything to justify this impression. But her New Delhi statement itself can be cited as a corroboration. She certainly did not question India's peaceability when she said that the desire for peace should be "a two-sided affair". Whatever be the public statements of Mr Bhutto, correctly reported or not, is not his decision to come to Simla in search of peace and friendship with his much bigger and stronger neighbour a token of his earnestness? If he is really under

pressure from some big powers—the Prime Minister has not named the USA and China—does he not deserve a more sympathetic and understanding approach? New Delhi's duty in the circumstances would seem to be to help him to withstand such pressures while taking good care that it itself does not fall a prey to them or their likes.

It seems something has happened in the South Block since Mr D. P. Dhar's scientillating talk at Murree. The Government has quietly devalued his optimistic assessment. Taking advantage of the cynicism at the highest level the small fry are throwing their petty spanners into the works; they are much exercised over protocol, over who should receive Mr Bhutto, head of a country with which India is still at war. It will not affect Mr Bhutto's standing if he is received by none of his status under the fig-leaf of a diplomatic

quibbling of doubtful validity. But it will certainly be a blot on the traditional Indian courtesy and may vitiating the climate for a purposeful discussion. The Prime Minister has said that India will not go to the conference table as a victor, but the minions of her Government have the temerity to behave like great little victors. It is clear that the summit is not being held under the best of auspices. Unless we do our bit to clear the air this summit may not lead to another, far less resolve the problem of peace in the subcontinent. The Prime Minister gave a clear indication of protracted negotiations when she said that it had taken two to three years to repatriate the prisoners of the Second World War. But some progress has to be recorded at Simla to keep the dialogue going. New Delhi can be of help only if it constantly reminds itself of the fearful alternative.

seeds of revanchism and the fear psychosis of a defeated nation, turned into a psychosis of hate through perennial encirclement. What vicarious pleasure of doubtful value will there be in the fanfare over the trial of a few war criminals if the ground is laid for repetitions of the savagery on a limited or a bigger scale in this region? Will the USSR gain any permanent leverage in Rawalpindi, or Teheran, or Ankara, thereby? These are crucial and sensitive peripheral areas and cannot be discounted in the strategy of the USSR. Would Bangladesh find any recompense for the non-return of Bengali soldiers, officers and others from Pakistan? Is India really that sure of preventing Pakistan's military recovery through infliction of terms that would for ever rankle in the Pakistani people's memory and lend them the moral *raison d'être* for future countervailing moves? Will not the Indo-Russian concept of collective security become more suspect in the eyes of many an Asian country, from Malaysia to Iraq? Will inter-state relationship and the present pattern of military-political situation remain unaltered and serve Russian interests *ad infinitum*?

Diplomatic War

A correspondent writes:

Whose victory would it be if, in spite of the changed realities of the South Asian region, the other party at the summit conference at Simla cannot be made to look at all inter-state problems the way India wants it to, and if no package solution of all outstanding issues emerges? In the diplomatic war that started after the war in December 1971 forces have been reared up and marshalled by both the sides to buttress the ends of the propaganda war.

The diplomatic war, pushed up to unprecedented heights with foreign tours by Mrs Gandhi and Mr Bhutto, has prepared the ground for clever scoring of debating points, but not for an honest search for the much publicised "durable peace". Yet, the fact remains that most Indians and Pakistanis want peace, a quiet unostentatious peace that can be achieved through a painstaking and slow process, step by step. The common man in India and Pakistan

will fail to be swayed by the package concept of Mrs Gandhi if the partial elimination of tension is left unutilised just because the other side has failed to accept the consequences of defeat in war. For instance, the return of prisoners of war is an issue which can be resolved with reference to international mores, usage and law; or it may be bloated into a difficult and insoluble problem. It might be looked at from the point of view of a soldier's honour, and civilization's code of conduct and made the starting point of an all-round reduction of the arms race, of tension, of the burden that an uneasy peace will impose on the financial resources of India and Pakistan, provided, of course, the temptation to use human misery and detained soldiers as a bargaining plank is got over, and the issue de-linked from super-nationalist fads. The risks of failure are well known. But few have pondered over the risks of an imposed peace settlement:

The two super-powers which have agreed upon some fundamentals for dividing the world into respective spheres of power, are keen on ordering international politics in their shared image. But the inexorable trend of people's revolutions does not equate with their objectives and purposes any more. The Third World is fast coming into its own. Vietnam has pioneered the way. The ruling circles of India may pretend to themselves as did the Clemenceaus and Lloyd Georges, and take the people of Pakistan for granted. For a cease-fire line can be foisted upon an un-emancipated people as "international boundary", or the waters of Sind or of Ganges monopolised in the name of equitable distribution, but the sense of injustice can seldom be retrieved or erased.

Antics Around College Square

Calcutta University, it can be truly said, has, like a modern novelist, destroyed Time. If one sees examinees hurrying through college gates to sit for an examination in 1972, one would not know for certain whether they are appearing for 1970, 1971 or 1972 examinations. When results come out, these might be for any year of the last five years. Examinations are taken and cancelled. Students are ordered to sit for one final one day and within one fortnight, for the next final, though the intervening period was originally stipulated to be one full year. Students appear for the same examination twice or thrice because the University after one year of the examination suspects that the students might have played false.

Nobody these days suspects Calcutta University to be a centre of learning, its emblems and monograms notwithstanding. But the University had a reputation of being an efficient organiser of examinations and publication of their results. This reputation has been destroyed, well and good.

The Vice-Chancellor has come out with an epoch-making statement the gist of which is that Calcutta University is tumbling because it has no means of stopping the habit of mass copying. He blames it totally on the invigilators who do not do their duties. In the course of blaming, he has neatly forgotten that he has not been able to cooperate with the invigilators, the conscientious among whom demanded that their physical security be guaranteed during, after and before invigilation. Neither the University nor the State police, whose protection it sought, could induce the honest invigilators to accept the job. The work is done today by non-educational men, who dare it not because of their brain but for their brawn. The Vice-Chancellor should know it well who the present invigilators are; most of them earn money, not for invigilation duties alone. But then one must say that the

V.C. was honest enough to equate the invigilators with the anti-socials. And since Calcutta University thrives on examination-taking, the future historians may well conclude that the University was once associated with anti-socials. He has furnished an additional corroborative evidence by saying that the Controller's Office has turned into a den of corruption.

The recent imbroglio in the University has been squared out by the Chief Minister's intervention. It was a good PR job for the CM. He was out of the town and the new Caliphs of the University—the Chhatra Parishad leaders—so arranged it that they could demonstrate that nothing but a CM's personality was capable of solving a uni-

versity problem. The CM came back, saw the case and solved it within a couple of hours. Reason dawned and the gates of the University were again open. It should be described as a glorious bloodless revolution. The French students in 1968 had to shake up the whole fabric of their society to prove that the universities were nothing but the extension of the State power and it was a myth of liberal humanism. The faculty of the universities is impotent, true power lies with the police. Examination halls in West Bengal with trucks of policemen around have showed the way to all universities in India, proving the validity of the legendary certificate of Gokhale. Henceforth the Chancellorship should go to the Chief Ministers, the heads of policemen.

Student Unrest In S. Africa

South Africa's baton-wielding policemen have set off the tinder of dissatisfaction drying long on the campuses and outside. It began in the all-black university of the north at Turfloop when a student leader was expelled for a critical graduation day speech. The black students all over the country protested against the expulsion; they squatted on the campuses and held demonstrations. Soon their struggle was joined by the coloured Afrikaaners, white students, churchmen and even the fence-sitting liberals. Violence, police excesses and torture are not new to the South African political scene. But so far the blacks only have opposed the regime and suffered. The current crisis, however, has broken the colour barrier and affected the other classes too. Though there is not yet any common front among the protesters, their differences are fast disappearing, thanks to the savagery of the regime, and a united opposition is in the offing.

The recent violence indicates the dissatisfactions that have appeared in all sections of South African society. The immediate demand of the pro-

testing students is the removal of economic inequality and the cleansing of the education system that nurses it. Nowhere in the racist society is the skin colour so honoured as in schools and colleges. Under the present schooling system in South Africa £129 is spent for a white child as against £32 on a coloured one and £9 on a black. The blacks, despite official claims to the contrary, have increasingly found it unnecessary to send their wards to these segregated institutions or even to the few mixed institutions. Discrimination is more rigid and cruel in the economic sphere. Now it seems that even the whites and the coloureds have become sore about this sickening policy of isolation and racialism and are demanding an end to it.

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Vorster is, however, is hell-bent to clamp down on the unrest to avoid the possibility of further trouble in the future. He thinks that the present crisis is the doing of the insidious communists who want to subvert his government and establish a communist regime. But despite the discovery of this red menace and his attempt to implicate some outside powers, he cannot negate his own contribution to it. After independence, Bantustans, reminiscent of Nazi-type labour camps, have mushroomed in the country. The Pass Act and other

draconian laws have restricted the rights of the blacks. But this has not enabled Vorster to establish his dreamland. Rather it has increased the black dissent. And now this discontent has contaminated Vorster's own kinsmen too. The fast industrial growth in South Africa in recent times and the opulence of a section of the society have inevitably created an underprivileged section among the non-whites. They are finding their allies, not in their affluent kinsmen, but among the oppressed blacks. This has added to the unrest.

thanks to the socialistic policies of the Government, the cake of national wealth is so systematically distributed as to leave out the silently suffering poor from its share. According to a recent Planning Commission study, 220 million people live below the poverty line. And a rising population, as every non-socialist developing country is only too painfully aware, means only a swelling of the ranks of the millions who gave the nation little and get from it even less. Are we to concede that all that lies ahead of them is only a form of Malthusian retribution through famine and pestilence?

Over To Malthus ?

The final figures of the 1971 census, which were released last week, cannot but make quite a few people rather unhappy. The obvious ones will of course be the family planning administrators. All the stories of stupendous success they have been spreading around in the past seem to have been knocked off by the census findings. The budget for the programme is steadily going up, but it is possible that the campaign has already reached a stage of diminishing returns. The growth rate of 24.8% for the 1961-71 period was appreciably higher than the previous decade's figure and ranks as one of the highest in the 100-year history of Indian census. It has been suggested in some quarters that a fall in the death rate, induced by an improvement in health services, has more than neutralised the decline in the birth rate. But this does not lead to anywhere. Another argument in de-

fence has been that but for the campaign, the rise would have been steeper. According to an expert committee's projection, the 1971 population should have been around 561 million; if the actual is about 13 million less, it is because of the family planning programme. But there need not be anything sacrosanct about the experts' view nor about an argument developed on its basis. A clearer picture would emerge after detailed studies have been made on the age distribution of the population, but prima facie there is a good case to hold the view that the family planning drive has for all practical purposes failed to make much of an impact.

But this is not a comforting thought. Jawaharlal Nehru's cryptic remark that India has as many problems as there are Indians seems to have a sinister truth about it. To take care of 547.9 million people is plainly beyond the means of the present administrative outfit. Of course, a staggering population has been, and will continue to be, a handy excuse for many of the avoidable economic lapses. More people means more consumption units and since we have not yet been able to provide worthwhile employment to all those seeking jobs, most of them are hardly in a position to make any contribution to the nation's production pool. And

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No Convergence

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

GOING by the inspired build-up on the eve of the Simla talks, it looks as though India has more stakes than Pakistan in its outcome. Mrs Gandhi was supposed to be against any speculation in the Press about the summit and All India Radio has been clearly told not to encourage such speculation. But her aides have been busy propagating the usual cloak-and-dagger stories of a sinister Sino-U.S. plot to scuttle the summit. (Incidentally, the same source and the same hacks were behind all the hair-raising fantasia about an imminent Chinese-backed Pakistani war against India this summer which is nearly over.) All this when Mrs Gandhi herself was playing down the utility of the summit. The Podgorny-Fomin mission in Calcutta and the dash of a Pakistani diplomat to Moscow last week suggests high Soviet stakes in the summit. The Soviet leadership is expected to attempt another hard-sell of the Asian security pact in the wake of the summit.

A changed Soviet attitude to the Kashmir issue will condition India's approach to it. The Soviets are not prepared to exercise the veto on Kashmir in India's favour any more if it were to be raised by China in the UN Security Council. To save themselves the embarrassment the Soviet leadership would rather forestall Kashmir coming up in the Council. The removal of the externment order on Sheikh Abdullah has to be seen in this context. The Moscow lobby has had a role in it. And now the lobby is building the Sheikh as the saviour of Kashmir who could be counted upon to isolate the secessionists. The Sheikh is quoted as saying at a Srinagar valley meeting about Mr D. P. Dhar, "I don't care what others say. I feel proud when I find a Kashmiri star shining over New

Delhi". Well, there are many Kashmiri stars in the firmament already and yet one more will emerge when Mr T. N. Kaul retires from Government service. The grapevine has it that Mr Dhar will be the next foreign minister and Mr P. N. Haksar will be the foreign policy planning chief to complete the Kashmir menagerie in New Delhi.

To India, the Simla summit is the opportunity to secure a Kashmir settlement on the basis of the existing reality with a few rational adjustments on the border. So the least that is expected of Mr Bhutto is to agree to renounce use of force to solve any India-Pakistani issue. Even an agreement on principle, without a public declaration, would suffice, for that would freeze the Kashmir issue.

Indian calculations that Mr Bhutto would not last have been belied. The new theory now peddled is that Mr Bhutto would not last long after the summit and Mr Bhutto or General Tikka Khan would make no difference in the long run. Thus there is a schizophrenic approach to the summit on the Indian side, from an "all or nothing" approach to saying that nothing spectacular should be expected out of it.

The absence of convergence of Indian and Pakistan approaches is striking. It is not only with regard to modalities (India insisting on a package deal and Pakistan set on a step-by-step approach) but on the issues themselves. Mr Bhutto's concern is with secondary issues thrown up by the war: release of prisoners of war, recovery of territory in Indian occupation as a result of the war; prevention of the war crimes trial by Bangladesh.

It is assumed in India that Mr Bhutto is coming for the summit under domestic pressures. But the pres-

ures on the prisoners of war issue seems to have eased. Mr Bhutto has gained a grip on the domestic situation and Pakistan has not disintegrated in the last six months to oblige the jingoist flag-wavers in New Delhi. None of these secondary issues will be clinched at Simla. What then is the purpose of the exercise?

The Soviet leadership has been pushing the no-war declaration idea with Pakistan but is Mr Bhutto in a position to make the commitment? It is alright for New Delhi columnists to parrot the line that India does not want to impose peace on a defeated Pakistan. But Mr Bhutto has his own limitations. For instance, on the prisoners of war issue, he might be satisfied with a private assurance at Simla that the war prisoners would be released shortly after Pakistan recognises Bangladesh. The recognition is coming any way. But he will find it hard to make a declaration renouncing the use of force on Kashmir. This is where Soviet diplomacy seems to be coming into play, pressuring Pakistan into making at least a private commitment.

In sum, it would look like that India stands in relation to Pakistan what China was in relation to India in 1962, with one difference. The Chinese declared a unilateral ceasefire like India, but did not make an issue of the prisoners of war. The Indian prisoners were released unilaterally and India had no Chinese prisoner. China did not lay any precondition for withdrawing from the areas they had occupied as a result of the war. Whether this analogy holds good or not, the facts merit recording in the context of the Simla summit. Piecemeal approaches to the Indo-Pakistani problems have been of no avail in the past and this is the argument advanced in favour of a

package deal. Pakistan has been in occupation of 31,000 square miles of Indian territory on which it has no claim. But China was in occupation of 12,000 square miles before 1962, according to the government and another 2,500 square miles as a result of the war. How many rounds of talks have been held with Pakistan at various levels since 1947? As for China,

"vacation of aggression" was always made the precondition for talks and here is a dispute which was never really negotiated. The priority continues to be this: the Kashmir issue has to be settled so that the border dispute with China can be allowed to continue as long as the Indo-Soviet treaty is in force!

June 26, 1972

tations etc. Contrary to expectations, *Alai Osai* was able to resume after a lapse of three days thanks to the co-operation of another Tamil daily and workers. Apart from the attack on *Alai Osai*, the DMK hirelings caused physical injuries to important group leaders of the CPM and pro-Kuchelar elements in the city even though they were unconnected with the Simpson Company. As Mr Kuchelar's life is still in danger, he has stopped appearing publicly.

Madras

Double Edged Violence

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

A wrong turn of violence by the DMK has embittered the political atmosphere of Tamil Nadu, exposing the fascist policies of the State Government in dealing with the various agitations and demonstrations by farm labourers, elementary school teachers, workers and agriculturists in the State. Minority group leaders of the Congress(O) and the DMK in Ashoke Leyland Company (which is still in trouble) were hired by the owners to prevent the workers from fighting in line with Mr Kuchelar. In spite of the false propaganda in the press Mr Kuchelar is still the undisputed leader in Leyland.

Coming to the Simpson company, a minority group of the DMK under Mr Pratap Chandran, a man of the management, rapped the Simpson workers for taking part in the agitation of Leyland, organised by Mr Kuchelar. It may be recalled that Mr Pratap Chandran, a key man of the DMK, was responsible for all the trouble at the Simpson plant at Sembiam starting from last October, including several murders. The rival group of the DMK and Kuchelar got involved in a melee which ended with two murders and indefinite closure of all the Simpson units in Madras, once again. Among the victims was Mr Kannan Iyengar, the timekeeper of Simpson and a supporter of Kuchelar. No sympathy for him

has been expressed by the press or any responsible leader of the ruling party. But all the local dailies except one and most of the English dailies in India grieve over the murder of Mr Pratap Chandran. None of the dailies went into the facts and causes of the two murders on June 15.

Mr Chandran's murder was followed by a brutal attack on the office of a local Tamil evening daily *Alai Osai* by rowdies of the DMK. Though *Alai Osai* is not exactly pro-Kuchelar, it is the only daily where his statements used to be published as well as statements made by other leaders, including those of the DMK. The DMK mob, hired from ex-convicts and hooligans, attempted to suppress the news about the actual happenings in Simpson by ransacking the daily. The director of the daily was badly hit by a stone and was hospitalised with severe head injuries. A car belonging to the director, a delivery van and many cycles were smashed. Types from the composing sections were stolen. The damage to *Alai Osai* amounts to roughly about Rs 1.5 lakh which is too high for a small daily with limited circulation but sincere, at least, in publishing factual news about various trade union activities, workers' and peasants' agi-

According to the press, 63 persons were arrested in the Simpson melee and 4 persons in connection with Mr Chandran's murder. None were arrested for the murder of Mr Kannan Iyengar belonging to the Kuchelar group. None were arrested for causing severe injuries to about 100 workers of the CPM and pro-Kuchelar groups. The police subjected some of the arrested pro-Kuchelar elements to physical torture.

DMK leaders used to tell the public, in ornate compounds, that they are the saviours of workers and peasants, while identifying themselves with the monopoly industrialists and other compradors. The DMK is mercilessly using the police machinery to suppress the just demands of the people in the same way that the Congress(R) does in other States. The DMK in Madras is in an advantageous position. The Congress(R) has no roots in the politics of Tamil Nadu, following its failure to forge an alliance with Mr Kamaraj, the Congress(O) leader who has some hold on the masses. As such, the liquidation of the DMK ministry is still a matter of conjecture. The labour policy of the DMK is more arrogant and double-edged than that of the Congress(R) in the other southern States. The DMK is creating violence in the wrong direction, with one edge by using the police machinery in support of the compradors, and with the other by raising ex-convicts, hooligans etc. to cadre level in order to suppress the spread of communism.

Exile And The Kingdom

HITEN GHOSH

AT times one has the fanciful notion that the Communists in West Bengal are perhaps in the same position as the Chinese Party after the 1925-27 uprising. The difference is great and important though. Both the uprising and the massacre that followed were on a heroic scale, and for the Chinese Communists the events had been a moment of truth. The impact was traumatic and must have wrought a profound change in their ways.

But, alas, the calamity in West Bengal is a mere travesty of that other drama of grim resistance and defeat with its terrible aftermath. The subsequent course of revolution in China, was a direct outcome of this fateful experience of the twenties. But here in West Bengal, both the challenge and the way it has been met, have nothing heroic about them; they are more in the nature of a racket marked by large-scale bullying and cowardice. In all this the Communists, no less than their adversaries, have been true to the traditional behaviour pattern of the Indian upper class. In the *Mahabharata*, for example, not a single great issue between the Kauravas and the Pandavas is decided in a free and fair manner: trickery and prevarication are often the essence of their mutual dealings in peace and war. And both sides indulge in abuse and recrimination when overreached in the game.

And yet there is something identical in the circumstances leading to the catastrophe. Indeed the tragedy of China 1927 bears some resemblance to the farcical melodrama of West Bengal 1972. In China, as in India, Marxism was sprung full-grown from the brains of intellectuals like Athena off the head of Zeus. And this was a serious flaw and a fatal limitation ultimately responsible for the disaster that overtook it. As everybody knows by

now, the early Chinese Communists believed that the development of capitalism was an inescapable prerequisite for socialist revolution in China. This is the old exploded theory of revolution by stages to which the Soviet revisionists still cling to cover up their betrayal and opportunism. There was, however, a difference in the Chinese and similar stands in the twenties. It was not denied that the Communists in China could and should attempt a proletarian revolution in alliance with other exploited classes even before capitalism had run its course, should the national and international situation so demand. In short, the Communists should work within the nationalist movement to rise to its leadership and then turn it to their own revolutionary ends. But at any rate, the whole approach sounds too neatly logical and betrays a total ignorance of some basic realities of the situation.

For in China of the twenties, following the dissolution of the old order, new problems were presenting themselves. Both from economic and political exigencies, a new basis of national and social cohesion had to be found in the first place. Quite obviously, capitalism could not develop in China in a liberal-democratic setting, what with the crisis of the system in the world at large and the ever-present threat of revolution at home. Besides, under conditions of direct and indirect exploitation by advanced countries, rapid economic growth in a backward region torn by strife and unrest or continually threatened with them, would seem to demand some manner of regimentation or other. A strong authoritarian government could alone make for industrial progress so necessary for national survival. More likely than not, such governments would have to take on some features of socialism to pro-

mote economic growth in a planned way under conditions of gross inequality, with a measure of popular acquiescence. This has been very widely the case with newly independent countries of the East after the Second World War.

Where such regimes do not lean exclusively on naked power, some additional, if secondary, sanction is also necessary. Even downright military dictatorships cannot do without such sanction in our day. Thus apart from the armed forces, the basis of national and social cohesion under all such systems is twofold: namely, chauvinistic nationalism and a hierarchical order of power and privilege. Under the new hierarchy, too, all effective power vests in the top echelons. In China, this would have been, more or less, a replica of the old Confucian order with a different emphasis. The new mandarins would be bureaucrats and business magnates with their managerial personnel, scientists and top technicians, some classes of intellectuals and professional people, artists and men of letters who would praise and prop up the system, supplying its ideological justification, and, above all, the new type of shamans or witch-doctors—namely, the politicians. Even in those Western countries where liberal-democratic values still mean something, the exigencies of economic development and organization, on the old exploitative basis, seem to have called for a reorientation on similar lines, more particularly in view of the mounting tide of revolutionary struggle in both East and West. In openly fascist countries, or wherever a bureaucratic and statist socialism holds, the process is already completed and naked in all its manifestations.

Growing Corpse

There is no doubt that the main object of all such organizational innovation is to shore up an unjust social order under which the great majority live in comparative or absolute poverty and ignorance, while a small governing elite is replete

with senseless luxuries and corruption made possible by exploitation of the masses. The system makes a tremendous misuse of human labour, skill and invention in the sheer business of propagating and perpetuating itself. Somehow it resembles the preposterous corpse in Ionesco's *Amédée*, which grows and grows and grows until it devours all space and drives away the living people round it. Even the masses themselves are corrupted by the corrupting body of the dead monster. The lure of shoddy affluence or goulash communism tends to swerve them away. Thus it is that modern industrial society, whether capitalistic or 'socialistic' in faith and form, tends under conditions of inequality and oppression towards the same consummation. A new totalitarian set-up with unequal power and privilege takes the place of the old feudal autocracy after a brief interlude of liberal or proletarian euphoria. And nationalism, more or less of a chauvinistic character, is the mainspring of such social organization, for nationalism not only gives power to the ruling class but salves the injured dignity of the masses by pandering to their instinct for self-glorification. The masses, in their daily humiliation and despair, clutch at these false values.

Now China during the turmoil in the twenties was in search of a political identity not unlike the one adumbrated above. The quest was thwarted by national and international developments, slightly distorting the trend perhaps, but there can be little doubt that the Chinese society, left to itself, would evolve in a similar direction. Nor does one see how the Communists, if they come to power after their coup in the late twenties, would have been able to resist, let alone reverse, the trend altogether. For them the die was cast from the kind of 'Marxism' they had imbibed from the West. For a similar tragedy, though with a different plot and set of characters, was already taking place in Russia after the revolution. There

starry-eyed Bolsheviks were giving in to a hard-headed pragmatism in both national and international spheres. They had pinned their hopes on a European revolution, but balked in this, were soon thrown back on their own ingenuity to build socialism in one country as best they could. The masses were backward and sometimes resistant to change or intractable, and so there seemed nothing for it but to dragoon them. By and by industrial development and national and social integration were being achieved on the basis of old individualistic values and moves under conditions of inequality and discrimination. The pursuit of self-aggrandizement as the motive of human action was rehabilitated. It was a reversion to the past aiming at a kind of hedonistic socialism based on acquisitive ethos so contrary to the spirit of the few glimpses we have of Marx and Engels' vision of the new civilization (e.f. *Critique of Gotha Programme, Anti-Duhring*). And all this was apparently justified by such logic of social organization as has been heard since Plato, but demolished by Lenin's *State and Revolution*.

Thus, it seemed, the whole course of the industrial society of the West was tending in the direction of a repressive, totalitarian order based on inequality of income, privilege and power. Socialism in organization of production was no guarantee, it would seem, for equality and freedom. In the world today, the socialism of the Soviet Union and its satellites tends to coalesce with the capitalism of the West, for both subsist on and uphold the same moves and values and betray the same cultural bankruptcy in their masses and bosses.

The whole point of this digression is that in the twenties the Chinese Communists could not provide the moral basis of the emerging order without falling back on the traditional ethos of class society as obtained in China. To create genuine socialist values, they would have to

have a different kind of experience and make a different kind of revolution such as the Party under Mao Tse-tung was to have and make later on. In theory, of course, the kind of revolution they were attempting in the twenties would have nothing to do with the traditional basis of national and social cohesion. They would make short work of the whole thing if they could. But what would they substitute in its place? No, they hadn't a clue. For that again, they would have to go among the people, as they finally did after the disaster. Meanwhile, such proletarian values as they had accepted as the basis of their struggles, seemed too vague and irrelevant to the agony of China and the urges of her people at large. And so the whole episode had a tragic denouement.

Now for the circumstances that led to the debacle of the Communists in India which bears some resemblance to the Chinese situation. They too have been unable to reach the grass-roots and merely sought to impose their shallow and airy ideals borrowed from abroad on a reality that seemed intransigent to them. But the parallel holds no further than this. The Communists in India have always wavered between their shallow idealism and a hard native streak of belief in hierarchy and upper-class chauvinism. Loyalty to genuine communist ideals has been with them a thin veneer beneath which has lurked the darker strain of traditional upper-class mentality. Both chauvinism and caste hierarchy, in a new form, being the basis of our present-day Indian polity, the Communists have one and all surrendered to these atavistic drives. Even when they occasionally pretend to lead the revolt of the masses against the iniquity of the system, the idea is always to save the system for their own benefit and have a share in its spoils, leaving the masses to their fate as before. Thus while the early Chinese Communists paid for their quixotry with blood and the Russian Communists made a genuine

revolution and laid the basis of socialist economy for all their sins of omission and commission, their Indian counterparts have succeeded in ushering in a fascist régime.

Grass-roots

And so the sequel cannot help being different either. The Chinese Communist Party under Mao Tse-tung went into exile in the wilderness to find its way back to a New Jerusalem as it were. By their early disaster the Chinese Communists were prevented from looking at social revolution from the traditional point of view. They had to search for new ways and objectives of revolution. Under Mao Tse-tung the

quest began for revolution at grass-roots. The revolutionaries — the *avant garde*, were required to take a fresh bearing and to this end, the trek back to the country had to begin. Herein lies the true significance of Mao's agrarian revolution: seizure of power at the capital even by the most dedicated of the revolutionaries could not keep the new power from corrupting them if the masses who, in China, mostly lived in the country, were not also directly involved in the struggle. If the emerging order were not to enshrine inequality of power and privilege with its attendant moral evils, if the new civilization were to rise on the ruins of the old embodying the best but

rejecting the worst of the previous ones, if the people were to achieve a free, equal and sane social order and reach new heights of cultural achievements, the Communists must know the people, their basic human urges, their cultural heritage and then imbue them with the vision of the brave new world of the future. The years in village soviets, of the Long March and revolutionary civil war prepared this true revolution of the people.

In India there is no sign yet of our city-bred revolutionaries undertaking this journey. But how long will they remain stuck in their narrow grooves and dream of revolution by passing acts in Parliament?

North Vietnam And China : Reflections On A Visit—II

MARTIN BERNAL

FOR the Vietnamese, unlike the Chinese, their culture and even their language have always been in danger. This sense of cultural precariousness was particularly intense during the last century. The ruthlessness of French attacks on Vietnamese culture and the thoroughness of French education very nearly succeeded in divorcing the Vietnamese elite from their culture. Some became completely deracinated, and even for the majority, who remained Vietnamese, the possibility of deracination existed. A well-known poet seemed to indicate this when he compared the Vietnamese situation with that of the Algerians. He told me: "We were not like them. We always spoke our own language among ourselves."

Language has been a crucial issue. The Chinese have made great efforts to unify their language and to create a written style that really corresponds to speech. Even so the existence of the Chinese language is taken for granted. Vietnamese intellectuals on the other hand are acutely self-conscious about their language. They constantly tell you how rich and beautiful it is. They are extremely proud

that they have been able to create technical vocabularies that allow study and research to be carried on in Vietnamese. This achievement should not be underrated. In spite of the devastation and almost continuous fighting since 1945, Vietnam is, so far as I know, the only ex-colonial country that has been able to do without the language of the colonial country in higher education. As in other cultural matters, the South has lagged behind in this.

Paradoxically the approach to the Vietnamese language in the north has been very French. Scholars set about purifying it and hundreds of French and Chinese words have been replaced by forms constructed from Vietnamese roots. The progress made in this can be measured by comparing the official language in the North with that in the South which still retains a far higher proportion of Chinese words and expressions.

This conscious delight and pride of Vietnamese intellectuals in their language extends to all other aspects of their culture. Nearly all visitors to Hanoi remark on the amount of traditional activity going on. While I

was there there were performances of five types of traditional opera. There are galleries largely devoted to traditional and folk art, and the bookshops were full of Vietnamese literature of all periods. All this during a full-scale war. Clearly the Vietnamese leaders believe in channeling scarce resources to national culture for its intrinsic value because they care deeply about it. The investment also brings in significant political dividends. It gives reinforcement to the already strong conviction among Vietnamese in the North and South that, like it or not, the regime in Hanoi is the only true representative of Vietnamese spirit and that therefore the war is essentially one between the National Resistance on the one hand and the foreigners and their collaborators on the other.

Right-wing intellectuals in Saigon and Hue inveigh against the decadence of literature, music and all the other arts in the south, often pointing out that these things are done better in the North. Some of this feeling of cultural inferiority is traditional, the North being the original home of the Vietnamese, while in the South there

are considerable Chinese, Cham (Malay), and Cambodian admixtures. But far more important is the continuity of the present government in Hanoi with the anti-French resistance which was considered legitimate by the whole population. Many people in the South still refer to the NLF as the Viet Minh. The participants are essentially the same, even though many of them have been killed. Those who fought with the French fight with the Americans. Those who fought against the foreigners remain patriots. Unlike Saigon, Hanoi has no foreign taint. As one conservative in Hue sadly put it, "Unlike us they have no foreign troops fighting with them; they do appear to be more Vietnamese than us."

Not knowing that I had already been to Hanoi, the most bitterly anti-communist scholars in the South excused their own lack of activity in archaeology, transcription of texts, research in history and other fields, saying that much more was going on in the North. Indeed there was. During my stay in Hanoi I was the guest of the Vietnamese Society of Historical Sciences. I was much impressed by the intense activity in archaeology and history, remembering that all museums in London had been closed during World War II. In Hanoi I was astonished to see the excellent National Museum open with several special exhibitions going on. I was told that before 1954 the museum had been simply a French collection of orientalia. I later gained a sense of what must have been its original state when I visited the National Museum in Saigon, which has been untouched since the French left.

In Hanoi nearly all the original objects had been evacuated to avoid

bombing but good reproductions had been put in their places. When I expressed surprise that precious resources should have been spent on this I was told that archaeology had always been considered a national priority and that the Archaeological Service had been established as early as November, 1945. It is considered of vital national importance to establish the length and richness of the Vietnamese past, so that people can make sense of their own roles in a continuing history.

Digging

The archaeologists are pleased that they can confirm Ho Chi Minh's description of the war as a struggle between barbarism and 4,000 years of civilization. They have recently established a stratigraphy that links the clearly Vietnamese Bronze Age cultures to the late Neolithic. They are full of jokes about Curtis Le May's "bombing the Vietnamese back to the Stone Age." I asked whether bombing had revealed anything of importance and was told that it had not, but that the digging of air raid shelters had yielded fascinating results, and that the population, being enthusiastic about archaeology, cooperated in reporting finds. There are also many professional excavations taking place, one of which, at the ancient capital of Co Loa, I was able to visit.

Vietnamese history is considered important for the same reasons and a considerable amount of research on it is being carried out. Here the emphasis is on the many wars of independence, especially those of the Tran family against the Mongols, and of the Tayson brothers who, in their struggle against the Manchu Dynasty in the eighteenth century, combined a war of national independence with social radicalism. Parallels between these wars and the present struggle are always drawn. The present is seen as deeply influenced by the past. For example, one researcher argued that the Tayson Revolt created a tradition linking national independence to social revolution, which had a pro-

found effect on the twentieth century.

Nevertheless, historians insisted that, because of the differences between socialism and imperialism, the present conflict is qualitatively different from previous wars of independence. They also tended to reject my attempts to establish specific parallels. In 1789 the national hero (Tayson) Nguyen Hue launched a devastating attack on the Chinese garrison in Hanoi during Tet. I tried to link this to the attack of Tet, 1968—which according to the Sino-Vietnamese sixty-year cycle is only one year away from 1789. However it was pointed out that as the Chinese "feudalists" in the eighteenth century were much weaker than the American imperialists in the twentieth it was possible to drive out the former in one sweep whereas this was out of the question with the Americans.

I had the impression that much of the excitement of the Vietnamese scholars I met comes from the newness of their enterprise in carrying on such research. They are discovering a rich and heroic past, which is part of them and yet they were only half-conscious of it. By placing the Vietnamese elite at some distance from tradition, the cultural trauma of French rule has given them some perspective on it. The iconoclasm of the Chinese Cultural Revolutionaries may indicate their fear of being overwhelmed by traditional culture. For the Vietnamese leaders this danger is negligible. It is natural that for the time being national culture should be considered "positive" because it helps to unite patriots against the foreigners and their uncultured collaborators. However their confidence in it extends to the future. They appear to be convinced that after the achievement of independence and a fundamental change in "relations of production", a new socialist culture will emerge naturally from tradition, enlarged by influences from abroad.

Mao is concerned with the dangers of tolerating traditional culture because it helps bourgeois counter-revolutionaries "to seize the cultural heights" from which to launch

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their attacks on socialist society. The Vietnamese like the Soviets follow Lenin in recognizing the importance of culture. Nevertheless they closely follow Marx and Engels in maintaining that the key to any situation is the economic base and the relations of production in particular.

The Vietnamese also stay close to Marx on the issue of internationalism. One of the amazing things about the Vietnamese people is that in the midst of a war of national liberation they remain profoundly internationalist both politically and personally. In the South there is of course considerable anti-Americanism, but friendliness to and respect for the opinions of foreigners is evident throughout the country. In the North I was constantly embarrassed by being thanked for the "achievements" of the peace movement in Britain, by the Vietnamese gratitude for the pathetically little help peace movements have been able to give them. They are also the last believers in "proletarian internationalism" and in the unity of the socialist camp. Their desire for the Russians and Chinese to heal their differences does not come solely from the immediate dangers the split brings to them. They see and hate it as un-Marxist, unhistorical, and wrong.

For Vietnamese theoreticians "proletarian internationalism" is not a mere cliché. They have the Marxist conviction that the proletariat is by its essence the most internationalist class. In recent years the Chinese have used the word "proletarian" so widely that it has almost come to mean simply good and unselfish. With the Vietnamese—and the Soviets—the original sense is much stronger. By "proletariat" they really do mean the urban working class. Furthermore they firmly maintain that their revolution has been, and must always be, led by this class. It is no accident that the Vietnamese party is called the Dang Lao Dong, the Workers Party—the word Lao Dong has unambiguously urban connotations. Two of the chief reasons I was given why the working class alone was

qualified to lead the revolution were that it had experience of modern modes of production and that it was accessible to new and foreign ideas. In this way leadership by workers and "proletarianized" intellectuals is integrally connected to the concept of bringing world culture to the peasants.

The Paradoxes

Thus in Vietnam there are two large paradoxes. The first is that the Vietnamese Communists, who have fused their movement with patriotism more effectively than any other party so far has, should remain the most internationalist of all Marxist-Leninists. The second is that they who have created the most successful and tenacious peasant revolutionary movement in world history should remain so firmly wedded to the concept of the leadership of the urban working class, which made up less than 3 per cent of the population in 1945.¹

In China, because of its size, cultural pride, and Mao's firm roots in his own culture, there has been a major attempt to "interpret creatively"—or to revise—Soviet Marxism-Leninism to fit local conditions. Thus ideology and actual politics are within sight of each other and there are constant attempts to bring the two together, the Cultural Revolution being only the most obvious example.

In Vietnam the leaders are unwilling to give up the Western part of their heritage, and ideology and politics are much further apart. The Marxist-Leninist ideology is seen as absolutely necessary to provide general directions in North Vietnam

¹ It is, however, interesting to speculate whether this stress on the working class will help future governments in the South to tackle the enormous problems that await them in the grotesquely swollen cities there, even though nearly all the new population can only be considered as elements declasses or Lumpen-proletarians.

and to sustain a long and bitterly hard struggle. However it does not impede the political flexibility needed to deal with tactical problems. This is true both for practical decisions and for theoretical analysis. Among intellectuals the fruitfulness of this gap or contradiction between ideology and concrete situation is especially evident now when the patriotic revolution creates a solidarity in which everybody can be relied upon. There is remarkable freedom in the serious discussions and arguments that appear to take place virtually everywhere. I had the good luck to attend several meetings of social scientists in which I saw them using Marxist concepts in a remarkably flexible and creative way.

In neither China nor Vietnam is there any official discussion of these and other differences between them. They merely say that the two countries have different situations and are at different stages in their revolutions. When I told a Vietnamese friend how struck I had been by the differences between China and Vietnam he replied, "Of course, we are different nations." Indeed why should we expect to find great similarities between, say, England and France, which are in fact far closer to each other than China and Vietnam: both were parts of the Roman Empire, share the Western Christian tradition, have a close linguistic relationship, and are capitalist bourgeois democracies. To that extent it is unhelpful to pose the question discussed here. China and Vietnam have been and will be different. However, both are tackling in a heroic way huge problems, most of which have been created by the West, and in this process they have much to teach us.

(Concluded)

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After The Release

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

ANGELA Davis, the philosophy professor, the avowed communist, the black, fiery woman is now free. She has been acquitted of all the charges that many agreed had been an exercise in farce. After having spent 22 months of her life in suspense, without any indication of what was to come in the future, she is now free to work for her goals, for her people's goals, free to live proudly as a black woman.

The story behind her is long though not very old. Born of middle-class parents—her father was a teacher—educated at Sorbonne and Brandeis, she made her mark as the leader of the successful struggle to establish a college at the University of California at San Diego, devoted exclusively to the study of the Third World. This happened in 1969 when she was studying for her doctorate under Herbert Marcuse.

Later that year she was appointed Assistant Professor at the University of California at Los Angeles, but was fired for being a communist, thanks to some archaic laws dating back to the stone age of American

politics when McCarthyism was in mode. She fought and was eventually reinstated but the struggle did no stop there.

On August 7, 1970, the 17-year-old Jonathan Jackson, with the help of four other convicts on trial, seized a judge, three women jurors and the assistant prosecutor as hostages for the freedom of the Soledad brothers, the black prisoners in Soledad prison. A gun battle followed and three of the abductors with the judge and the prosecutor were killed.

The weapons used in the shoot-out had been bought by Angela. She, as the prosecution later claimed, was passionately in love with George Jackson, one of the Soledad brothers and the elder brother of Jonathan Jackson, and hence was charged with conspiracy to commit murder and kidnapping, arising out of the suspicion that she had willfully provided the weapons.

She fled, not because she was guilty, as she later said but because she feared "police violence" and as a communist and a black militant doubted whether she would get a fair trial. She was arrested in New York in December 1970 and the 16-month-long battle for justice started.

Angela's life has been a long courtroom battle. At every stage, the first question she—for that purpose anybody sympathetic to the black people—has asked—can she get a fair trial? There is a long history of injustice done to the black people. The judicial system has been consistently unkind to blacks. The prisons are full of blacks. The trials go against them not only because of the colour of their skin but also because they are poor. George Jackson spent nine years in prison for robbing a petrol pump of 17 dollars. This was a typical case.

What does Angela's freedom mean to her own people? It still does not give the not-guilty verdict to the American judicial system. In the eyes of many it has been more a trial of that system than of Angela. Angela could afford a defence, a typical black normally cannot. Angela was

lucky with her jury, a point emphasised by the prosecution after the trial when they said that the "white guilt" was a major cause of her acquittal. In fact there were two reasons. First, there was a thorough screening of the jurors before the trial started, again something a typical black cannot afford. Second, she had the privilege of being a well-known person and therefore received worldwide press coverage. There were rallies and demonstrations in a large number of European cities. They may in fact have been mere sabre-rattling demonstrations of the strength of the communist parties, as was said to be the case in Paris where 50,000 gathered at Place de La Bastille to hear Angela's sister Fanya, but a group of 25 was thrown out of the march for raising wrong slogans (they were shouting for the release of all political prisoners), but it did give her worldwide sympathy, again something that a typical black charged with the theft of 17 dollars and sent to the prison for nine years does not get.

But still Angela is free and that is important. She is passionately involved with the affairs of her own people. She has the ability to organise the black community against any injustice that they face or may have to face in future. She has the respect, love and affection of her own people, which is crucial at a time when their once vanguard, the Black Panther party, is torn by inner division. The more militant leader of the party, Eldridge Cleaver is in exile in Algeria, while the moderate elements, presently in control, are not inclined to do anything more radical than electoral politics. It is hoped that Angela will be able to fill the gap and provide the black community with a meaningful leadership.

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Book Review

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917:

Contemporary Accounts
Edited by Dimitri Von
Mohrenschildt
Oxford University Press.
Price • \$ 3.50

READERS who have got surfeited with the flat history churned out by the Soviet Press of the Russian Revolution of 1917 will find this book a departure. Lenin in the Soviet Press is always correct. Everybody stands in desperate need of Lenin's analysis and directives. Lenin eschews the very thought of compromise. Lenin thinks right. Lenin writes right. Lenin talks right. Lenin plans and there is no power on earth that can prevent Lenin from executing it. When Lenin is in Switzerland, nothing happens in Russia; all revolutionary processes mature around Lenin, the emigre. When Lenin is in Russia, revolution matures; nothing happens in the outside world. Everybody else is misleading the peasants and workers except Lenin. Even slanders about Lenin get watered down. Lenin emerges from all this more than a god, omniscient and omnipotent. To get a sample of Lenin as God, readers may be prescribed *Lenin and the Revolution* by Viktor Mushukov and Vadim Kruchina-Bogdanov from the Novosti Press.

As a contrast Lenin, that baldish Bolshevik, appears more on the human scale in the book under review. The Russian Revolution is not Lenin and Lenin alone. There were others too. There was Viktor Chernov, the Lenin of the SR party, the intellectual who was beset by the unattainable, false, contradictory task of impregnating the muzhik Russian soil with the most scientific international socialism. There was Julius Martov, a political thinker and analyst with exceptional talent, a most amazing orator and a most ineffectual worker, the Hamlet of the Russian Revolution. There was Alexander Kerensky, a man of extraordinary energy,

speaking everywhere, in the trenches, on ships, at parades, at meetings, at the front, at social gatherings, in theatres, at townhalls, at Soviets. There was Irakli Tseretelli, a Menshevik leader, the sober member of the Ex Com, the humane Minister. These were some of the outstanding figures on the Russian scene during those turbulent days and few could anticipate that they would be eventually eclipsed by a more outstanding man, that bald Bolshevik. The greatness of Lenin leaps to the eye, not when one reads the official Soviet history that flattens the rest of the outstanding figures, but when one gets lost in the swelter of events and opinions, analyses and harangues that flooded the country where socialism was first born.

Of course the editor of this compilation had no intention to show Lenin in the limelight. In fact he had tried his best to reduce the colossal figure to as dwarfish as he could. In the accounts of 314 pages, Lenin gets just 7 pages. But that does not matter at all. Even when N. Valentinov writes about his encounters with Lenin, who it appears unjustly forced this early member out of the Bolshevik faction of the Social Democratic Labour Party, Lenin emerges the brighter in spite of the writer's intentions. Perhaps the most interesting part of this compilation is the quarrel that took place in 1904. To acquaint the readers with the flavour of these contemporary accounts, there is nothing better than quoting from the chapter at length. Here are some extracts:

Valentinov: Plekhanov once wrote that Marxism was the absolute truth forever immune to change. What do you think of such a formula? How does it accord with Marxism?

Lenin: I am in complete agreement with Plekhanov. Marx and Engels have outlined and said all that was to be said. If Marxism needs further development, it will have to be in the direction pointed out by its founders. Nothing in Marxism is subject to revision. There is only one answer to revisionism—

a slap in the face! Neither the Marxist philosophy is subject to revision, nor the materialist conception of history, nor the idea of the inevitability of the social revolution, nor the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat—not a single one of the basic tenets of Marxism!

Lenin accused Valentinov of hobnobbing with the Mensheviks in order to wrangle a passport and funds to return to Russia. Valentinov did nothing of the kind but in a rage referred to another member who had been provided by the Bolsheviks for return to Russia and who never reached Russia, squandering the money in a brothel.

Valentinov: And what was your attitude then? You declared, I heard you myself, that since you were not a priest, preaching sermons was not your business and you were inclined to wink at the whole matter. With such a moral sense, or rather lack of it, what right have you to lecture me about my shameful, unworthy conduct? Your sermonizing is all the more outrageous because it is based on trumped-up charges.

Lenin: You want to know what

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right I have? This is not a question of right as understood by popish morality but a political right, a right derived from class and party. I'll try to explain to you what is at issue. You, very probably, would never have gone to that brothel and certainly you would never spend party money to drink. But you are apt to do things that are much worse. You are capable of intriguing with Martynov, an inveterate enemy of our orthodox revolutionary old *Iskra*. You are capable of approving the reactionary bourgeois theory of Mach, a foe of materialism. You are capable of admiring the alleged quest for truth of Bulgakov. All this adds up to a brothel many times worse than the whorehouse with the naked tarts. Your brothel poisons and obscures the class consciousness of the workers...

V: It follows from your words that no infamy is to be condemned if it is committed by a man useful to the party. From this, it is one step to Raskolnikov's 'all is allowed.'

L: What Raskolnikov?

V: The hero of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*.

Lenin (stopped short, pushed his thumbs behind the lapels of his waistcoat and gave me a look of undisguised contempt): "All is allowed! The mawkish sentiments and pet formulas of flabby intellectuals, ever ready to drown the issues of party and revolution in sanctimonious vomit. Well, which Raskolnikov do you have in mind, the one who butchered the vile old pawnbroker hag or the one who later banged his head against the ground in a fit of penitential hysteria? Maybe you, as one who attended Bulgakov's seminar, have a preference for the latter?"

Valentinov grew angry with the abusive snickering words of Lenin and Lenin replied: "So you find it sickening that the tone within the party is less refined than that of young ladies' finishing school? That's an

old song, dear to those who would like to turn revolutionary fighters into milksops... Well, if we Social Democrats were to use only toothless inoffensive words in our politics, propaganda, agitation, polemics, we should be no better than those dreary pastors who preach futile sermons every Sunday."

The contemporary accounts have been rounded off the reminiscences of R. V. Ivanov-Razumnik who writes of his unwarranted arrests and imprisonments under the Soviet regime. This chapter is intended to be a thorough indictment of the Bolsheviks, who harassed and tortured millions of people not falling in line with their system. True, the words of this intellectual populist, more often in jail than out of it, are disturbing and one wishes that the Bolsheviks were endowed with some *uncanny* sense to know who the real enemies of the system were. Thousands of Russian

writers and thinkers endured harassment and torture for their supposed deviations, many of them very probably unjustly. But one's understanding of the dictatorship of the proletariat does not necessarily get torpedoed because of these tales of horror, if one remember the intrigues and conspiracies the whole world over to overthrow the Revolution. The sufferings of the harassed were sad but a much bigger thing was at stake, the fate of socialism. This is not a question of formal democracy and liberal humanism but socialist democracy and socialist humanism. Millions of people over ages died of unjust wars, wrought-up famines, invisible tortures made by the oppressors of the proletariat without furthering the cause of humanity a bit. Death *per se* is not at issue; the issue is the survival of socialism, the survival of the humanity of the millions and not of the few privileged.

N.G.

A Letter from Sweden

Below The Belt

MOHIM ROODRA

A rather strange habit has developed in me since I arrived in this country, a habit of studying the genital areas of the young people. I do it carefully, I think so at least, so that I am not noticed. But it has a very important and practical reason for that's usually the way I can make out between a boy and girl. It has happened innumerable times that I have come right in front of a group of teenagers and I still couldn't make out the sexes. Not long ago, I was sharing a stall at a fair with another person, and even at such close proximity I wasn't quite sure if it was a he or a she until he spoke to me and the male voice gave away. I couldn't study his crotch because he was wearing one of those long many-coloured shirts imported from

India. You see, long hair has been in vogue for quite a bit of time now. When I arrived first, I found it very strange to see men having long flowing hair, even amongst the soldiers and king's guards. I remember exclaiming with admiration. "Look, there's a woman guard at the gate to the king's palace," but my Swedish escort hushed me down and said in a low voice that it wasn't a woman but a man. I ambled gradually as close as I could get to the guard and then on sharp observation, I could see that indeed it was a man.

Even if you could in general know who is a man and not a woman on straight confrontation, a trap nevertheless is laid for you if you were to try to judge from behind. Only the other day, as I was going down to

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the shops I woke up from my reverie, as is my habit to be in when I am walking, by the sight of two young women walking a little ahead of me. They were in some kind of uniform and I started to guess what sort of organisation or unit they might belong to, for I hadn't seen such uniforms in this village before. However I did take note with displeasure that their walk wasn't as graceful as I wish women would have. Could they then be not women? Well, I had to solve this excruciating mystery. I noticed they were heading for a car, so I speeded up my steps. Alas, it was true. As they turned round to get into the car I saw that they were men! As it is, there are so few attractive women to give pleasure to the eye, it becomes genuinely frustrating when after a trail you are given such a treat.

However, those who are a little above the beard and moustache growing years lead you into uncertainty only from their backs. But, the real difficulty is with the teenagers of the pre-beard-moustache age. There lies the real trouble. Long hair both the boys and the girls have. Clothes most of them wear practically the same kind. Too often they wear a loose fitting top garment, that does not always at a passing glance reveal the mammary glands of the young girls. But, they wear almost always practically the same kind of trousers, very tight at the crotches, flaring out at the heels. There, there you have a chance of ascertaining if it's a boy or girl, as the bulge in the boy identifies him.

Talking about clothes of the youngsters, it is sad indeed that these are overwhelmingly so ugly. In their rebellion against everything that connects with the establishment, they have chosen to wear all kinds of rough and wild costumes which while in fact differentiating them from the ordinary run of the older-than-their-age world have added no charm, no beauty, no grace. Leaving these kids aside, the general trend of fashion in clothes is graceless, and what makes it more unbearable is that as a result of the

fashion propaganda it has been spread that it doesn't matter if you are fifty and shapeless, you wear just what pleases you. Unfortunately what these innumerable shapeless women think to be pleasing is what the fashion magazines have told them. All kinds of sausage-shaped women wearing all kinds of fitting trousers make one realise how miraculously we in India have been saved from such visual tortures because of the saree. The saree is one of the greatest aesthetic inventions of mankind. While it has all the properties to enhance the charm of the lithe and the young, thank God it does so deliciously hide all those belts and tyres and hangings that so many women develop after they have crossed their youth.

The Good Life

I live in a village. Therefore my impressions of Sweden are from that point of view. But prosperity is spread out just as well here as anywhere else in the country. Nearly everybody owns a car, everybody lives well, by which I mean they have good places to live in, good furniture, good food, good clothes. Life is shiny. But a very dull dreadful and lonely one. People will never visit each other unless it is planned and formal. Nobody ever drops in, one only visits on invitation. Invitations are very rare, because custom and habit say that everything must be absolutely so, so, and so. As a result, to invite somebody is a burden on the side that invites. People are very lonely, but they know no better. They realise that they are lonely when they drink and when they drink, brother, they drink. That's when you suddenly hear laughter, talk and noise, singing and joviality. That's when they forget their iron formalities, that's when they talk. The younger generation is aware of this to an extent. They say they are not like that. But as they do not know how it is when people are not bound by forms and rules, in spite of their professions, their freedom extends only within their own group or gang. For an Asian like me, in whose

blood gregariousness is so integrally mixed, all this looks terrible. We are used to talking to people easily, taking them to our houses and one of the richest treasures of our way of life is the friendship that grows without barriers of forms and formalities. The young ones here, whilst feeling the discomfort of the rigid rules of social intercourse, and whilst declaring they follow another way, do not know how it is like in our countries, and therefore to us even their effort to be free and easy looks miles away from even our formal encounters.

Even visits between relatives or parents and grown-up children are rare, and nearly always pre-arranged. I remember, nearly twenty years ago when I was in England, a girl told me that the accepted wisdom was to avoid relatives. If you need to have human company, friends and acquaintances were safer! That British wisdom seems to be followed here equally if not more carefully. I know what I am saying is pretty much applicable to all north European and north American cultures but it is more honest to stick to direct experiences. My experience of the West is England and now Sweden. In my travels, I have felt different attitudes that prevail in the different parts of southern Europe. They are very much different. They are friendly and welcoming, they are noisy, and of course equally problematic. The common saying is that it is due to the sun! Perhaps there is something to it, but then one hears so much of the warmth of the ordinary Russian folks. They are certainly not from sun-warmed lands?

Sweden, to my mind, gives a very spectacular example of prosperity minus inner change. When there is hardship and nearly all your time and energy is exhausted in the fight for existence, there is too often no time to introspect or see what lies beyond economic solution. But when you have solved the basic bread and butter issues, and then gone ahead to the car and high standard of living, then is the time for something else

to be revealed. The youth in this country confront a spiritual emptiness, a void caused by lack of purpose and alienation. In my recent visit to Stockholm, I experienced something that had a traumatic effect upon me for a long time. I saw, everyday, in the evenings, hordes of boys and girls, mainly teenagers, gushing in and out of the underground trains, shouting, noisy, and drunk. Their eyes had wildness or blankness, their gestures and movements had defiance as often as crudity, and they filled the underground trains, the platforms, and their direction was to the centre of the city, a gathering point of all of them. This is not an isolated one or two evening affair, but it happens every day. If you happen to be travelling during the early part of the evening, you will meet these boys and girls loudly entering the compartments at each station. At that time they are not drunk, excepting perhaps an odd few. If you happen to travel a little later in the evening, you will find them drinking from their cans, or drunk. If you travel even later, then you will find them being sick here and there, sitting on the floor all over the place on the platforms, some dopy and dozing, and some tending to be quarrelsome and violent. About ten or eleven at night the enormous area of the main underground station in the centre of the city is crawling with drunk and drinking boys and girls. When I was one night returning from an invitation at two in the morning, such boys and girls were still around, on their way home mostly. Next morning at ten I came up the escalator at that same station in the city, and the first person to encounter was a young fellow who asked me if I couldn't give him my ticket (a ticket is valid for an hour for several trips between the stations for which it is valid) and he was drunk.

Much as I was dizzied by this sight of mobs of drunken teenage boys and girls, I hesitate to lay blame or begin any judgment. It is easy to condemn, but it is far more important to try and look for the cause for it. To

me it is a symptom of a serious disease. In spite of all the affluence, what is it that they are lacking that has removed all traces of idealism or purpose from these youth's lives?

The village that I live in does not throw up any such staggering spectacles. It's just not big enough for such scales. However, for an Indian who has but only the other day come from a land where shortage of money is the biggest bugbear in everybody's lives, it is indeed too cruel to confront a youth of seventeen, whose face has hardly sprouted a fine shadow of moustache and beard, earning what is equivalent of Rs 2,300 a month by doing some very ordinary work in the factory nearby. A group of youngsters I got to know have a music group. They moved into a small house, part of which I was using as my studio. Their average age is seventeen or eighteen. Their interest is pop music, and they play electric guitars, drums and what not, with electronic instruments to enhance or vary the sounds to all kinds of levels. It is not their profession, it is their hobby. Some are students and some have begun to work. The equipment that came with them was worth Rs 45,000. Practically simultaneously another slightly senior group moved in to the upstairs, sharing it with me for a while. They brought in musical equipment costing Rs 60,000. When I winced at the figures, they only shrugged their shoulders. "Yeah, it's a lot of money, yeah...but..." they just smiled. It isn't that much for them, therefore.

However, it simply would not be fair to end at this. There are some very serious young people. I have also met them, but they are, it looks, so scarce to encounter. But there are the FNL workers who are doing propaganda against the Vietnam war, and credit be given to them, they with others did bring out a massive demonstration on May Day in Stockholm, condemning the USA for its atrocities in Indochina and demanding the withdrawal of the U.S. from that part of the world. There were fifty

thousand marchers on that day, and that's big number here.

Rs: the problem of differentiating sexes. I began writing this dispatch when still it was cold and people needed clothes. But suddenly, right in the middle of writing, the sun shone out, and the temperature jumped up to 20° or more and lo. the clothes began to fall off. Now there is no problem to make out, it's rather simple.

Establishment Films

BY A FILM CRITIC

IT is no small mercy that the Films Division of the Government of India sometimes wakes up from its slumber to show its films for the benefit of film critics and others in Calcutta—a city given a low priority by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Only recently Bombay got its second auditorium from this Ministry. Delhi has got it already. No crumbs are likely to be thrown to this hapless place. The proposed TV station is nowhere in sight, Srinagar being given the dubious distinction of an internationally important city probably because it earns more foreign exchange from tourists. So a TV station and an international airport are earmarked for it. So we have to settle for a dingy little place where the Films Division could whet our appetite with things it has made or commissioned, the latter gradually becoming a rarity thanks to the rigid bureaucratic approach of the bosses in Bombay.

The only important film shown was *Khillonewalla* by Sukdev. The other shorts are usual FD fare, like the one on Himachal Pradesh with its heavy commentary. Sukdev's film proves once again that he is our foremost documentary maker. The film, in colour, has a provocative theme, that of communalism which comes in after a good part of has been devoted to a doll-seller's dream of a doll-maker girl and his stint with the

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lovely children. A sonorous song links up the pieces. The demonic adults bring a jerky note and probably the theme becomes a little obtrusive by the repetitive appearance of people belonging to different religions and regions. Khaja Ahmed Abbas's obsession gets the better of Sukdev here but his command over the medium saves the day for him.

The Film And Television Institute boys' diploma films reveal a wider range than hitherto but even then one has a lurking feeling that the young trainees are more concerned with themes which are rather remote from the reality of their immediate environs. This Institute was set up to impart technical training so that our budding film-makers can attain technical excellence at par with the film-makers of advanced countries. Much of this objective has been achieved in a narrow sense. The TV section will start training for the TV stations but if attention is confined merely to technical aspects much of the purpose is going to be lost. If the TV executives like their film counterparts concern themselves with exotic essence, it would hardly be of import to the larger public.

The films shown have strange resemblance to typical Bombay products and an unseemly bid to outdo the Bombay film can hardly escape attention. It seems that the products of the Institute are either engaged in esoteric exercise or in trying to ape Bombay extravaganza. Why the trainees are not given proper understanding of the existing situation remains a mystery. Or is it a deliberate policy to train up people who will cater to the Establishment in the image of Establishment itself?

Vilaap is filmed with a delicate sensitivity. A tree is being felled in a forest which is shown in its splendour. At other places within the forest a rabbit is shot and a girl is violated. All these are woven into a pattern but at the end other aspects besides the felling of the tree are emphasised a little too much. *Jeevan* is excellent material for a short film but is occasionally marred by the

acting, particularly of the big man who behaves like a Bombay film villain. But where the young chaps outstrip the Bombaywallahs is in *Vaatsalya*, where Rehana Sultan as the young stepmother seduces the stepson inside a train compartment and to make the situation absolutely clear to the audience even audibly whispers into her prey's ear that his father is too old. *Pariksha*, made by one of the instructors, is not so much an examination of the examination system as a mystery thriller after an invigilator gets killed in a hall. Nothing is sought to be resolved and it ends in more mystery than it started with. Where instructors are so foggy the pupils are understandably redutant or unable to comprehend the process they are living through.

Letters

The Dialectics Of War

Sometimes your editorial comments are confusing and even misleading in matters of philosophy, international communist movement and present-day leadership. Since your journal is widely read among left circles, this could have an adverse effect on the Revolution.

You uphold the philosophy of dialectical and historical materialism, but at times you oppose the same. Unlike an opportunist, a Marxist is consistent, frank and clear. For example, "Calling the Bluff", (April 15th, 1972,) reads, "Both in war and peace, the Vietnamese are consummate dialecticians". Are war and peace two separate phenomena? From the Marxist point of view they are two aspects of a single phenomenon and are not separate but inter-related. United yet contradictory. If there is nothing like war, there can be nothing like peace. Offering to resume the Paris talks is not apart from the total war strategy, and the settlement of peace is decisively on the battlefield itself. And both the imperialists and the Vietnamese went to the Paris talks to achieve their war

goals. In this respect the Paris peace talks are in fact war talks.

The people of Indochina, i.e. Vietnamese, Cambodians and Laotians took up guns to oppose guns, waging war to eliminate war and thereby bring peace to Indochina. But since the Indochinese Revolution is a part of the world revolution, since world revolution in turn brings perpetual peace, the Indochinese peoples are working for world peace also. Hence, we have to say that the Vietnamese are consummate dialecticians on the question of 'war and peace.' If you say "both in war and peace," it creates confusion and is misleading, as if there can be consummate dialecticians in peace, who remain metaphysical on the question of war and vice versa.

"Machines and Morale" of April 22 reads, "Many people feel that it is time the human cost was shared by other friendly and fraternal powers who have had enough respite after World War II. But this, perhaps, is being sentimental. In a ruthless world of triangular power diplomacy anything goes." Firstly, genuine fraternal parties know when to share and how to share the 'human cost.' A genuine Marxist should not suspect a genuine fraternal party. Secondly, you say 'anything goes'. For opportunists 'anything goes' but for a Marxist things go only with principles. China is in adherence with Marxist principles. Equating China with the other two monstrous powers is un-Marxist.

"The Bull Fight," May 20, reads. "But whatever the course of events in the next few weeks there is another fact that cries out, thousands of extraordinary people who could contribute to the building of a brave new Indochina, will continue to perish. Unlike guns, planes, parks and buildings they cannot be replaced." Here precisely is where you stooped from revolutionary dialectics to reactionary metaphysics. If according to you guns, planes, parks and buildings are replacable while the people are not, then is it the "replacable" guns, planes, parks and buildings that

have been decisively conducting the peoples' war in Vietnam, for more than two decades ?

Secondly, how can "a brave new Indochina" be built without liberation ? Can there be liberation without sacrifice ? It is like wanting to raise a nice crop without sowing seeds. A good idea indeed ! Labour saving ! No waste of seeds ! But is it feasible ? You need not sacrifice your "extraordinary" ink and paper with this sort of 'Tughlak ideas'.

There are revisionist renegades in Moscow who deliberately said "Violence in the form of armed uprising and civil war inevitably involves terrible bloodshed and death on a mass scale, and the widespread destruction of things of material and spiritual value. This is, in itself, incompatible with our great ideals, which are the most humane in the history of mankind". "War has become not only monstrously destructive but completely pointless : For who wants to take possession of a devastated land of dead men?" (The Basic Principles of Dialectical and Historical Materialism. A. Spirkin. O. Yakhot).

It was revolutionary sacrifice that gave birth to the sacred Red Flag with the hammer and sickle. The long path of the international communist movement is crimson with blood. For every comrade that falls, thousands rise to carry the chariot of revolution forward still more diligently and persistently. Recall the patriotic forces of Indochina more than 20 years back, and look at them now. They have grown from a small force to a big one. They are growing from a big force to a bigger one ; soon they will be the biggest force. History shows that the "extraordinary" people are being replaced tenfold.

All this development is in accordance with the logic of dialectical and historical materialism and the Laws of Revolution.

MARXISTS-LENINISTS
Bombay

Role Of Workers

I was all along a sympathiser of the CPI(ML) in all respects, but its policy towards the working class is

puzzling me. While admitting that it is necessary to abolish the predominantly feudal social structure by waging protracted armed struggle in the countryside, I do not understand the CPI(ML)'s conclusion about the role of the working class in the Indian revolution.

While the revisionist leadership of the CPI(M) corrupts the working class by encouraging economism and class-compromise, the CPI(ML), through its negative policies, allowed the working class to cling to the revisionist leadership for its survival against the fascist onslaught of the state machinery.

Of course, I am not aware of the policy decisions taken by the CPI(ML) recently. Will any of your readers enlighten me through this column, about the CPI(ML)'s policy towards the working class? Does the CPI(ML) think that participation in trade-union activities is tantamount to betrayal of revolution ?

K. S. SUNDARAM
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