

frontier

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CALLING THE BLUFF

LAST month the Americans were claiming that the war in South Vietnam was going fine, though the news from Cambodia and Laos continued to worry them. On April 1 they were fooled. Communist forces struck in the northernmost province and within seven days, they have almost overrun it. Quang Tri, the provincial capital, is in a state of siege and the fire bases Fuller Charlie 2, Anne and a dozen others, fell to the attacking troops like nine pins. These craggy hilltop bases were handed over to ARVN, the South-Vietnamese army, by the Americans as a token of their much-touted attempt to Vietnamise the war. Now it lies in a shambles. The new attack began with a punch at the north and subsequently spread all over the country. At the time of writing fighting is going on on three fronts: in the North, in the Central highlands and in the Mekong delta area in the South. And American intelligence is still groping for the next place where the communists would hit out.

Apparently, the interdicting missions of the American Air Forces last spring were a flop. Events have shown that those bombing runs and the frequent man-hunt by the U.S.-advised South Vietnamese army have been unable to prevent the communists from building up all along the DMZ and the Ho Chi Minh trail and re-setting their supply network. Perhaps in further disdain of their adversaries they this time are using an unusually large number of heavy armour including the fearsome 152 mm. howitzer. And, for the first time in the history of the Indochina war, they have used MIGs to blast the enemy position, at least on one occasion. In the face of the communist thrust the Saigon army has not shown enough mettle to justify its master's description of it as a tough fighting force. Deprived of the American crutch the ARVN fled the base like rabble after an initial show of resistance.

Nixon has been put on a hot tin roof by the communist offensive. It came at a time when the American armed presence in the peninsula is at its lowest—it has been reduced from 5,55,000 men to 96,000 of whom only 6,000 are capable of taking up a combat role. Though reports of a Marine landing in the Da Nang area have come in, it is unlikely to stem the high-tide of the communist offensive unless Nixon decides to intervene in big way. But any such drastic revision of former pledges will anger his war-weary voters and spoil his chances of another term

Way To The Summit

in the White House. It is only on the Air Force that the President pins his hope of staying in the war. And he is out to use it to the full. The Americans have brought two more carriers in Vietnamese waters and beefed up their Air Force in Thailand and other bases by adding to the existing strength. The Americans are resorting to weapons of destruction never before used. But then the Vietcong have borne their fire power before and have held on. Further, they have this time bolstered up their air defences by inducting large numbers of ack-ack guns and ground-to-air missiles. Battle scores and reports of the returning pilots have borne out this fact adequately.

Nixon has few options. If his allies fail to win the war militarily, he will fail to win it politically. Such a reverse will reinforce the doubt among his Asian allies about the ailing giant's capabilities. At home it may lead to further depression regarding the Administration's handling of the Vietnam war. On the other hand, he cannot re-intervene and go back on all his solemn pledges, particularly when elections are round the corner. Hanoi and NLF know this and have chosen the hour to strike. They want to destroy the Vietnamisation programme. They also want to gain a foothold in the northern districts for use it in subsequent staging areas. They have long shown that they are capable of doing what they like and licking their enemies when and where they please. They have followed up their military gains by offering to resume the stalled Paris talks. Both in war and peace the Vietnamese are consummate dialecticians.

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2

Those who suspect Soviet hand behind India's sudden renewal of the offer of direct talks with Pakistan are not exactly on unstable ground. The Prime Minister's letter to Mr Bhutto last week was a slide-back on New Delhi's declared stance that no cognizance of the Pakistan President's overtures will be taken till he has formally acquiesced in the Indian proposal for talks without pre-conditions. How and when this proposal was made are not known; Mr Bhutto has denied having received it. In any event, the deadlock over the phantom proposal was very real. The Prime Minister's letter, which is designed to break the deadlock, was sent at about the same time when she despatched her Foreign Minister to Moscow. What preceded what can be a matter for conjecture only, for New Delhi is more than usually tight-lipped over the episode. But the letter was received in Islamabad a day after the arrival of Mr Swaran Singh in Moscow which may suggest that in exercise of her freedom of action India has yielded to Soviet pressure.

The Prime Minister has suggested a meeting of emissaries to pave the way for a summit. This gradual ascent was peddled by the Soviet leaders during Mr Bhutto's last visit to Moscow. The Pakistan President was shrewd enough to surmise that the proposal was India's and the Soviet leaders were merely chanting it. Whether he was sold on the idea or not, he had to agree for he is practically without options. What the Soviet Union seems to have done is to persuade the Prime Minister to place the proposal formally before Pakistan. This gesture is not in accord with the hyper-chauvinism from which India has been suffering since the December war; hence the official hush. This cannot augur well for purposeful negotiations. If India goes to the conference table with the determination to speak from a position of strength and without the magnanimity that be-

fits the victor, the talks will not succeed. For, there is a limit to which Pakistan can be bent; if attempts are made to force it to cross this limit it may renounce the path of negotiations, however futile and disastrous the alternative may be.

Mr Bhutto has explained in some detail why he was not enthusiastic over a meeting except at the summit. His lack of confidence in opinionated, bungling bureaucrats is widely shared on both sides of the border; and the fear of everything going awry will persist as long as the summit meeting is not actually held. None of the problems inhibiting normalisation of relations between the two countries is such as can be resolved at officials' levels, and the exercise will be a waste of time. This would not have mattered overmuch had there not been the concurrent risk of the officials—and this applies especially to those on our side—throwing their weight about and creating a deadlock which would stall the summit. The morons and the schemers both may do it, though for different reasons. Not that the weather at the summit may not be foul either. Mr Bhutto has been frank enough to admit that he wants a quid for every quo, but at the summit the bargaining may be for as many quide as possible for every single quo. The only safeguard against sabotage at the officials' level and breakdown at the summit appears to be that the Big Brother will be watching. The Soviet Union will remote-control not so much because of its concern for peace and stability in the Hindosthan peninsula as because of its keenness to wean yet another country in this region from the pernicious influence of China. Mr Bhutto has said Pakistan is not ungrateful and will not forget China; but he is in too weak a position to resist being sucked into the vortex of the cold war that has started raging in this part of the world.

APRIL 15, 1972

A Toast To Free And Fair Life

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The West Bengal Assembly is these days definitely not the pandemonium it used to be. No table thumping, no shouts and shrieks, no hurling of shoes, no exchange of blows, no scampering towards the Speaker, no nothing. It has become a sort of pantheon, where gods speak. And they speak sweetly. To take stock of what they spoke, unanimously, in the Assembly last week—or why should we confine ourselves to the Assembly—let us listen to the gods at large: no Minister will recommend any application for any job or licence or permit and even for admission to a college; people will be given jobs through the Employment Exchange; no photograph of any Minister is to be published in Government publications unless direly needed; the power crisis in Calcutta and industrial suburbs will be resolved within a week; 10,000 village tubewells which are defunct for lack of repairs are to be made serviceable within, this too, a week; distribution of relief to flood-stricken people, of agricultural, and cattle purchase and house-building loans will be free and fair; time-bound schemes will be introduced to provide employment to the educated unemployed; travelling by train at night will be safe; medical officers will be sent to health centres in villages; no Minister will accept any private invitation from monopoly industrial houses; extremists will be released from prison if they eschew violence; employers who are at default in making payments and contributions as required under the ESI Act or Employees Provident Fund Scheme will be detained; people retaining land in excess of the ceiling according to the relevant Act will also be prevented by detention; workers should not be called 'coolie' which is derogatory to workers in a free country; bona fide hawkers will be rehabilitated but no encroachment on pavements will be tolerated; test relief to 900,000 distressed villagers will be abandoned but they will be gainfully

employed; government officials will attend office punctually and in no case after fifteen minutes of the start of office hours; strictly free and fair examinations will be held; ghosh employees of Calcutta Corporation will be sorted out; pornography and smuggled goods will not be sold on pavements.

The list is, we confess, not exhaustive. If we had more time to read newspapers we could have offered a more lengthy and ennobling charter of supplies. The gist is however simple: life in West Bengal, or Bangla if you like, will be no more rigged; it will be free and fair.

Those bright-eyed people in this State who set store by these gods are entitled to go back to their angel-infancy. We had listened to such skylarks in 1947. In Pakistan they also listened to such songs in 1958 too when President Ayub proclaimed Martial Law; people there were afraid then of even dirtying the road. If the Congressmen here have the honesty and the capability to redeem their pledges, they have all the time, five years in the least, to do so. If the 16-point programme helps revive industry, which it is doing, they say, having already attracted offers of Rs 108.64 crores to be invested in the State, in the last three months, there will be none, except the suicide maniacs, not to rejoice. If the 800,000 people get back their jobs once again, what can be better news?

Mr Siddhartha Sankar Ray has disowned the doings of the 20-year rule of the erstwhile Congress and of course of the UF interregnum. He wants to start with a clean slate. Let us withhold our a priori apprehensions and judgments. Let us listen to the music of the Ektara of the new Bauls. We can do little else anyway.

Our agent at Varanasi

MANNALAL DAS

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Waiting For Bhutto

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE stalemate over a dialogue with Pakistan has given the Moscow lobby a much-needed opening to push the plan for an Indo-Japanese treaty as part of the collective security plan for Asia. If what one hears is right, a Soviet-Japanese treaty might be signed first. Last year's Indo-Soviet treaty (of which even the Hindi translation was provided by Moscow!) has become the prototype of the new series of treaties to come. India is being prevailed upon to sign a similar treaty with Afghanistan, which means India is to be the pivot of the collective security system in Asia and the day Pakistan is psyched into signing one with India one stage of the Soviet operation would have been completed. After a three-year silence, the Soviet leadership has revived the talk about the security plan though Mr Swaran Singh feigns total ignorance of its details forgetting that as late as February 8 he blurted out in his interview with Tass that India had always welcomed the Soviet collective security proposals for Europe and Asia.

Mrs Indira Gandhi's letter to President Bhutto was kept a close secret from the Indian Press and ironically the first confirmation of it came from Radio Pakistan. By all accounts, the Soviet leadership had assured India of a favourable Pakistani response to Mrs Gandhi's gesture before she wrote the letter. But the reply from Bhutto had not been coming as expected, giving room for speculation that Mr Bhutto might set some pre-conditions for talks. The Soviet leadership has decided on the ouster of Mr Bhutto and his replacement by Wali Khan and this has much to do with the reluctance in some quarters to put off a dialogue with Pakistan until after the National Assembly has met on April 14. Mrs Gandhi's

gesture came too close to April 14. Much depends on Mr Wali Khan's chances of ousting Mr Bhutto.

Continued Indian pressure on Mr Bhutto over the dialogue issue without getting down to the brass tacks has enhanced Mr Wali Khan's chances and perhaps Mr Bhutto has a point when he wailed that someone was out to topple him. The shift in Mrs Indira Gandhi's attitude has been gradual and at one point she just wanted proof of Mr Bhutto's bona fides as the precondition for talks. Secondly, India had in the past favoured an issue-by-issue solution to Indo-Pakistan problems while Mr Bhutto had favoured a package deal. India is no longer keen on delinking the Kashmir issue from other issues.

The prisoners of war issue would prove the most complex one among the immediate issues. It suits Mr Bhutto to inspire stories of his army strengthening itself and create the impression that Pakistan can still fight. But without the return of the 93,000 prisoners Pakistan cannot really raise the new divisions even if the stories of massive deliveries of hardware by other powers to Pakistan are true.

* * *

The major excitement of the week was over dialogue with Pakistan and Mr Jyoti Basu did not get the Press he expected for his case about poll-rigging in West Bengal. His case indeed was convincing to the large turn-out of Indian and foreign correspondents but Mr Basu seemed to be more anxious to impress his audience that his party has not opted out of the parliamentary system and did not mean to do that. The next day, he spoke at length to a student audience at the Jawaharlal Nehru University and formulated the thesis that the Government at the Centre was not fascist yet but someone was trying to

condemn his party to an extra-parliamentary path. From his weird arithmetic, it transpired that the poll was rigged in 201 constituencies which should have normally voted for his party and its allies.

In Baranagore, had his party attempted to counter terror by terror it would have been a civil war, which presumably his party does not countenance. On the whole, one could not help the impression from his 90-minute speech that the party's immediate objective was limited to restoring bourgeois norms of a fair election. Mr Jaya Prakash Narain feels greatly concerned by the rigging in West Bengal and Mr Basu met the ailing Sarvodaya leader to brief him on what happened.

The Centre would like to keep the CPI-M within the parliamentary system and the bourgeois liberals, if the Jyoti Basus in the party would achieve that. But Mr Siddhartha Sankar Ray is carrying his goodwill for Mr Basu to the point of embarrassment. The CRP protection to his residence is being deliberately escalated to demonstrate that the Chief Minister means well by even the man who called the West Bengal Assembly a house "full of swindlers" (some extra-parliamentarism that). Meantime Calcutta reports speak of CPI-M overtures to Naxalite remnants which means the party would like the Naxalites to function as their auxiliary to keep them within the parliamentary system. The Politbureau seems divided on the poll outcome and one section refuses to believe that rigging could explain everything. Mr Namboodiripad's premium is on anti-Congressism of the kind promoted by Dr Lohia in 1967 when one-party dominance already seemed to be declining. But such a line lacks credibility when the Congress dominance has been restored in the country. Perhaps Mr Namboodiripad apprehends a snap poll in Kerala and wants to survive the onslaught the Congress is planning.

April 9, 1972

APRIL 15, 1972

Mizoram : The Struggle Continues

BHASKAR BARMAN

NEWS from Mizoram is always scarce. All we have have hearing about this new Union territory is governmental reports of how 'law and order' has been finally restored, of the grand work of the Indian Army and of the break-up of the rebel movement. But till now very little has been heard from the Mizo people themselves. This may be due to a variety of reasons ranging from the inability or lack of desire of Indian newsmen to visit Mizoram and see things for themselves, governmental restrictions and censorship as well as the weak propaganda machinery of the Mizo underground. In any case, the fact stands out that even Mizoram's nearest neighbours, let alone the rest of the country, know very little about the happenings in this region. As such, 'Letter from Mizoram' in the March 18 issue of *Frontier* was interesting reading. Brief though it is, it gives the reader some hints about the hidden land which over the past few years has suffered immensely and almost alone and without friends, at least in India.

Till the outbreak of the revolt in 1966, the people of Assam knew practically nothing about the Mizo Hills (as it was then known). After 1966 when the Mizos hit the headlines, all that the rest of the country was given to understand was that "a section of the Mizos" had risen in arms against the Indian Government and were being aided and inspired in their 'treacherous moves' by Pakistan and China. And now we are being told that the rebel Mizos are returning to the parliamentary fold, that the underground movement has been practically crushed with the surrender of most of its leaders. Every move of the Mizo rebels has always been meticulously reported in the Indian bourgeois Press, every blow to the movement has been a much publicised event. But this

same Press has never tried to go into the reasons behind the revolt or the nature of the movement. Condemnation of the rebels and support for the Government in its successful 'tackling of the problem' have been the consistent role of the Press regarding Mizoram. The bourgeois Press in India is marked for its loyalty to the government and those who waver are speedily beaten into submission.

The latest that we hear about the Mizo rebels is that they have been creating terror in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and that the Indian Army is 'helping' the Bangladesh forces in mopping up operations. So, two armies are combing to fight a group of rebels who are already said to be in retreat!

The history of Mizoram since 1947 has been one of utter neglect and total disregard of the wishes and aspirations of the Mizo people. The revolt of 1966 was the natural outcome of years of such neglect and suppression. It is significant that both the Nagas and the Mizos have attracted attention through armed uprisings, and these hill districts were two of the most backward ones in Assam. Till 1966 the Mizo voice was never heard. Practically nothing had been done to improve the lot of the people and this region was such a dark corner that when the uprising occurred the Government was taken completely by surprise. After the initial successes of the Mizos were halted by the superior might of the Indian Army, the Government embarked on a two-fold programme of suppression of the hostiles and development of the region, thereby trying to win over the population by show of force as well through baits. Development plans were speedily drawn up and roads were constructed, if not for the people, for the army to move effectively. Side by side with this, outright sup-

pression of the rebels continued. It would perhaps be difficult for a people who have not experienced such army operations to even imagine their proper nature. Indian journalists did not or were not allowed to visit the area and the country was kept utterly ignorant regarding the ruthless suppression. Hundreds of villages are reported to have been burnt down, populated areas strafed and innocent civilians rounded up and tortured on the slightest suspicion. The Government will instantly deny all this, saying that there is no authenticity whatsoever in these reports. But those who happened to bear the brunt of the oppression would testify to their validity. The happenings in Mizo Hills apparently did not concern the average educated Indian. It was only when the Mizos 'threatened' the territorial integrity of the country did the Press and the conscious sections of the population rise to the occasion. But reports of the atrocities committed on the Mizo people did not seem to prick the public conscience. The village regrouping scheme (on the Vietnam pattern) was unheard of in this part of the world and was planned to break the national consciousness of the Mizo people. Since almost every household contained at least one rebel, the population in the villages had to be reshuffled and the villagers kept in new enclosed areas or settlements after the villages were razed to the ground. This was meant to save the rest of the people from being "contaminated" by the rebels! Several My Lais are reported to have been committed but there was no one to report them to the outside world. Everything went according to plan and the army and the bureaucrats, armed with immense powers of life and death over the people, brought the 'situation under control'. But at what cost? The village regroupings, the concentration camps, the burnt-down villages, the mass arrests and summary trials and executions and the show of strength on the slightest pretext, were all meant to

terrorize a brave people into submission. Till 1966 they were a 'loyal' people; but when they wielded their guns to make their voice felt, it was answered by government guns with terrible vengeance. The Mizos will never forget those nightmarish days.

Despite heavy odds, the struggle is still on. The efforts of the Government to win over the population have apparently failed, because the Mizo rebels were never cut off from their people. As such the Mizo revolt cannot die off as quietly as the Indian Government would have us believe. It has all the signs of a people's liberation movement and, therefore, cannot be suppressed as long as the people of Mizoram are with it. In this it will naturally need the support of the people from the plains as well. It is time progressive forces in the country demanded the release of the numerous Mizo young men rotting in jails, the restoration of normality in the area, the cutting down to size of the power-crazy bureaucrats and army officers and an end to the shameful re-grouping scheme. World conscience was pricked by the happenings in Bangladesh. Those in Mizoram, though on a lesser scale, went unrecorded.

The Mizos are reported to be lying low for the time being and proving to be 'loyal' to the Indian Government. If all trouble is in the process of being quelled, as the Government would have the people believe, why is it still panicky? For whom is meant the latest Armed Forces Special Powers Amendment Bill which empowers the Centre to declare any area in the north-eastern region as 'disturbed' so that the armed forces could exercise special powers?

NOTICE

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Manipur

Indira Waived Out

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

GOA in the west and Manipur in the east have refused to be swamped by the Indira wave. Regionalism, or local stresses, proved too strong for the Bangladeshi excitement to make any meaningful dent in the bias against the Congress(R). Not so much ideology as personalities were involved. Had there been an hoc Congress(R) for the State just on the eve of the election, dispensing with the old guard, the Congress(R) would not have a mere 17 seats in the Assembly with Mrs Gandhi descending here for electioneering and Sheelbnadra Yaji in charge of the poll campaign and organisation.

In a house of 60 the Manipur Peoples' Party romped home with 15, and, after the initial hesitancy and uncertainty it formed the ministry, Naga Integration Council, Socialist Party and Independents lending it the requisite majority. Now the United Legislature Party has 40 MLAs on its side. The threat to its security is gone for the moment. But adjourning the Assembly without debating the Governor's address marks the uneasiness still haunting the ULP, though its nominee for Speakership having been elected with a thumping majority against the Congress-R nominee should have clinched the issue.

The MPP and some of the Independents were, until 1969, in the Congress. But a clash of personalities between M. Koireng Singh and this group resulted in a parting of ways. The Chief Minister, Mr Mohd. Alimuddin, is a force to reckon with. Not that the Congress(R) did not make a try with inducing rattings. But it did not come off. The new C.M. is a shrewd political operator, popular, responsive to people's urges and an effective administrator. The bureaucrats who had

their heyday during President's Rule are in dither.

That the Congress(R) was out of touch with the people, busy utmost with distributing Mrs G's photographs and only flaunting a fleet of jeeps, is now dawning on the rank and file. The clamour for a refurbished Congress in the State with generous infusion of the youth is becoming strident. The old stalwart, M. Koireng Singh, and long the C.M., is finding himself isolated and perhaps getting reconciled to an eventual fading out from effective politicking. The Congress under him did not earn people's goodwill. In their eyes corruption and highhandedness became its synonyms.

The new Chief Minister has changed the office hours, cutting down the truancy called lunch. He would review the membership of the N.E. Council de novo and would not feel compelled to abide by the decree of the Lt. Governor who ruled here under President's Rule. He has stayed collection of raised stall-rent from the women shopkeepers. These steps have earned him populist approval. The Congress(R) is in the wilderness for the moment. So the toppling game would remain for some time in suspended animation.

In any configuration of power pattern here Mr Mohd. Alimuddin is inevitable, whether or not finally his MPP and the Congress(R) come to terms or he joins the Congress(R) on his own terms. He has a competent band of colleagues and devoted friends and followers in the organization and the Government. The Congress can at best spend some time in humble self-scrutiny and in functioning as a responsible opposition in the Assembly. Meanwhile let it repair its bridges with the people. They are not particularly fond of either the Congress(R) or President's Rule and appear to be in no hurry to invite them to the levers of power. They have just now a respite from bureaucratic tyranny. This they would not jettison. And this would ensure the continuity of the Alimuddin Ministry.

APRIL 15, 1972

For A Common Front

ASHOK RUDRA

WHAT will the CPM do now? What path of action will it follow? With what promises of what future election, will it maintain discipline among its restive cadres?

The elections have reduced, in the parliamentary arena, the parliamentary communists—we mean the CPM and other units of the Left Front, for the CPI can hardly be called a left party any more, let alone a communist party—to the position that they had in the forties. To judge by the criterion of strength in the Assembly, the communists are back to where they were 25 years ago. After this resounding achievement of left parliamentarians, one may hope that sense will dawn on the CPM cadres, if not the leadership, about the total futility of the parliamentary path. The CPM leaders are whimpering that the elections were rigged, that Congress goondas prevented CPM volunteers doing electioneering work, that the cadres and leaders cannot enter their erstwhile strongholds. All that is substantially true, but how can CPM leaders face their supporters with such lamentations? Why are they so unprepared? Has anything unexpected happened? Is resort to fascist methods by the ruling class, challenged by revolutionary forces, not the rule rather than the exception? Can a responsible Communist Party talk of revolution and resort to sporadic violence and not expect the ruling class to try to crush it by whatever means are found necessary? If the elections were rigged, what sort of Marxism-Leninism was it that said that the Indian State would permit the CPM to get stronger through fair elections? If Congress goondas have been terrorising CPM supporters, cadres and leaders, what revolutionary text-books have told them that it would not be so? All these are expected. What is not expected is that a militant Communist Party that

provokes the implacable hostility of the bourgeoisie should remain completely unprepared for self-defence when the fascist onslaught is unleashed. A party like the CPM should have long back made for itself an underground organisation. It should have had the capacity to fight back the violent attacks on its cadres with its own strength. It is not that the CPM did not have its own armed men. But they must have been of such poor political material that they abandoned the party and joined the fascist gangs of the ruling class as soon as it was opportune to do so.

While not having its own underground organisation the CPM did everything in its power to bring about the destruction of the only powerful underground organisation that there was, namely that of the CP(ML). However, the fault did not lie with the CPM alone. The blame has to be evenly shared by the CPM and the ML. Both the parties have been guilty of regarding the other as enemy agents. This helped above all the ruling party. It had to do only a small part of the job of liquidating the cadres of these two parties. The major part of the work was voluntarily done by the two parties themselves. Over a period of more than one year CPM and Naxal boys indulged in a murderous sport that resulted in a steady average of about half-a-dozen killings per day among the ranks of the two parties. The CPM and the Naxals had between them the cream of the politically committed and idealistic youth of the region and a large part of this human material got decimated by this mutual slaughtering. Of course there was plentiful and wanton killing by the police, sometimes covertly and sometimes openly; but the police took maximum advantage of the blind, suicidal obsession of the two parties.

It is time the two parties realised that far from being non-antagonistic,

the paths pursued by the two parties were not even contradictory, but had possibilities of becoming complementary to each other.

We have criticised the CPM for not having made preparations for armed resistance. Having done that, fairness demands that it be conceded that it is not an easy task to combine mass front activities with guerilla-type activities. The latter call for an underground organisation whereas organisational work among industrial workers and the peasantry calls for precisely the type of surface organisation as the CPM has. The CPM failed in this difficult task and chose to do only mass organisation work to the total neglect of preparations for armed resistance. The very inability to open the front of guerilla warfare could not but get it bogged down in the morass of economism. They could not so direct the mass organisation work as to lead the working class struggle beyond economic demands and towards the capture of State power.

The ML on its side erred by neglecting, even in theory, mass organisation work. Its cadres kept away from all such organisations. As a result they operated among masses who had not been ideologically prepared to support their guerilla activities. It is of course not true that wherever the masses gave shelter and protection to the Naxals, that was done out of fear of intimidation. The very fact that there were hundreds of Naxal boys living in peasant families in hundreds of villages—and there still are, notwithstanding the complacency of the ruling class that it has successfully liquidated the movement—is an indication that they had won their way into the confidence of the rural masses. All the same the villagers who gave them food and shelter and hid them from the police, were not sufficiently indoctrinated, so that when the fascist counter-offensive was launched they could not offer much help to the Naxals and prevent the almost total collapse of their underground organisation. That neglect of mass organisation work was a serious lacuna in the party line of the ML is

now being recognised in the auto-critical discussions that are taking place among the ranks of the disorganised party. What, however, is still not being understood with clarity is that mass organisation work cannot be done by guerillas or even by political workers in contact with guerillas; just as the work of armed resistance can hardly be done by people who engage themselves in the surface task of mass organisation work.

Just as the CPM got bogged down in economism, the ML also became victim of some of its own cults. The annihilation programme had a core of revolutionary sense but it degenerated in practice and got perverted in theory. Whereas death sentence passed on a village tyrant by a people's court and carried out in whatever manner people saw fit makes sense and whereas individual assassinations also make sense in so far as they are carefully planned to bring about a situation where people's courts would take over from the leaders of armed squads, many of the murders carried out by the Naxals, especially in the city areas, were just reckless manslaughter with no class-war significance. If this was the degeneration in practice, the perversion in theory consisted in making a virtue of blood-

lust, encouraging sheer bestiality as revolutionary class hatred.

With reservations about these cults, it may be said that the ML has done a signal service to the revolutionary movement of the country by providing brilliant examples of how to organise an underground party and how to train cadres so as to make them suitable for guerilla warfare. Likewise, with reservations about its exclusive preoccupation with economism, the CPM can be said to have acquired lessons most valuable for tasks of mass organisation. The lessons learnt by the CPM and those learned by the ML are both necessary for any future revolutionary advancement—none can be done without. This calls for a rapprochement between cadres of these two organisations. That however does not mean that cadres with the two kinds of experience would do best to join together in a single party. A single party will not be able to combine the activities of the two fronts—namely the guerilla front and the mass organisation front. It is absolutely essential that the two parties remain organisationally separate and independent, one to remain on the surface and do mass organisation work and the other to remain underground and prepare for guerilla

activities. However, instead of regarding each other as antagonists, the two parties should act with a close understanding. If the surface party ever comes to participate in government through electioneering its main task ought to be to shelter the underground party from the full blast of attacks by the State power.

In this connection it has to be realised as a lesson of current events that no underground party can succeed in going from the stage of sporadic guerilla activities to the stage of insurrection without the active support of a surface party working on the mass organisation front. Reference may be made to the criticism made within the ranks of the ML of the leadership of Charu Mazumdar for his alleged neglect of the formation of base areas and his encouragement of the formation of squads of guerillas rather than a liberation army. The danger in this line of thought lies in the facile assumption that the failure of the ML line has been due to any departures it has made from the strict Chinese line and that what is necessary is to find an area which would correspond to the Ching Kang Hills. It is important to understand that if it has not been possible to have base areas, if a liberation army has not marched down the plains of Bengal, that is due to objective circumstances and hardly due to any failure of leadership. Given the geographical terrain of the region, the efficient network of transport and communication, the as yet solid state of the armed forces and the ramified, pervasive bureaucracy, there was no objective possibility of there being any base area—to try to do so was to expose the revolutionary forces in concentration to rapid elimination by the enemy. As to a liberation army, it could hardly be formed by recruiting soldiers openly as the State does. Guerilla soldiers have to be mounted one by one, batch by batch, and they have to operate secretively and this process cannot but be exactly what the ML practised—to start with the formation of squads rather than battalions who will operate without the shelter of any base area, in the style of fish in water, among the masses.

১লা বৈশাখ প্রকাশিত হচ্ছে ।

বাংলাদেশ তথা তদানীন্তন পূর্ববাংলা সম্পর্কে নানা অপ্রকাশিত
চাঞ্চল্যকর তত্ত্ব ও তথ্যের একমাত্র রাজনৈতিক দলিল ।

বাংলাদেশ তথ্য ও তত্ত্ব

অদীম মুখোপাধ্যায়

বর্তমান সময়ের গবেষক, সাংবাদিক এবং অনুসন্ধিৎসু

পাঠকের অবশ্য সংগ্রহনীয় ।

মূল্য : ৮ টাকা

প্রকাশনা

৬১ নং মট লেন

কলিকাতা-১৩

প্রাপ্তিস্থান :—

দে বুক স্টোর, কথা ও বাহিনী

নাথ সাদাস, রুণু পুস্তকালয়

ও অনুল্পূর্ণা বুক স্টল ।

On Fascism—I

S. Roy

THE word 'fascism' is being bandied about. It is necessary to form a clear idea of the various facets of fascism. Also, to note the various stages of fascism so as to distinguish between: ordinary dictatorship of the capitalist class, fascist dictatorship, fascist movement before it assumes State Power, and fascist movements which have yet to be welded into one single definite whole i.e. fascist tendencies. To mix up one with the other would weaken the struggle against fascism.

To help this process of identification some notes prepared from various writings on fascism are being offered. The notes from Dimitrov's classic have been deliberately left out since it should be read fully and also since it is far too well known.

What is offered here is essentially derived from European experience. Brief comments have, therefore been added within brackets, to link the symptom of fascism with the concrete conditions prevailing in India and West Bengal. All this is offered more as a witness to my concern than as a display of scholarship.

Characteristics of modern capitalism as well as fascism, are:

1. Both attempt to maintain capitalism in the face of revolution which is generated by the advance of production technique and class struggles.
[In India: the Green Revolution, heavy industries, electricity, communications as well as widespread poverty, foreign exploitation and domination of feudal oppression. Running parallel to this is the liberation struggles in 34 countries of the world, democratic mass movements in America, Europe and Australia, the leadership of the CPC which is stronger and more revolutionary after the Cultural Revolution, and, of course, Naxalbari and the armed struggles of the CPI(ML) as

well as the increasing incidence of "illegality" in the course of the economic struggles of the working class and peasantry. In short, the intensification of the trend towards democracy and socialism in India.]

2. Consequently both modern capitalism and fascism attempt to intensify and fascism attempt to intensify in India: the right to strike is being eroded, wage slavery is being superimposed upon a semi-feudal countryside; democratic—albeit bourgeois—rights are being destroyed by the application of both terror and dishonesty. Foreign capital (both private and Government) exploitation is being increased and given greater rights of exploitation. The various treaties of political, military and economic co-operation being forged so as to aid and abet and intensification of imperialist exploitation and oppression.]
3. Both attack and repress the movements of the working class and attempt to build up a system of organised class co-operation [In India: aggressive economic struggles of the working class are being forcibly put down, emergency and other extra-constitutional laws are used to hamstring the working class movements while at the same time working class organisations like INTUC, AITUC, CITU are being used to subvert class battles and build up class cooperation].
4. There is increased subversion of bourgeois parliamentary democracy [In India: the dismissal of anti-Congress governments and the attempt to subvert the Tamil Nadu, Orissa governments those that are not amenable to dismissal. Also the increased use of rigged polls and terror techniques for elections]
5. Both extend State monopoly in industry and finance [In India: the public sectorisation of—chronologically—the infrastructure indus-

tries, like roads, transport, railways, post and telegraph, heavy industries, State trade in grains and foreign trade, licence controls, mining industries, banks and insurance plus credit organisations].

6. Both concentrate economic and political function into single all-powerful blocks. [In India: the proposal for holding companies of the Government is an instance. Also economic activities are increasingly being linked to the various ministries.]
7. Both advance to war as the necessary condition for increasing imperialist crises. [In India: the 1962 China war, the 1965 Pakistan war, the 1971 Pakistan war. The subversion in Tibet. 1971—Indo-Soviet Treaty. 1972, possibly Kashmir and Nepal. The situation is further complicated by the fact that India is a semi-colonial country. The Indo-Soviet treaty demonstrates how India's ruling classes must operate within the periphery allowed them by their imperialist masters. The Indo-Bangladesh treaty demonstrates how the Indian State and economy is to be made to bear the burden of the Asian encirclement of China].

Fascism and modern capitalism, therefore, share common aims and inclinations. The specific character of complete fascism lies in the means adopted towards the realisation of this policy and in the new social and political mechanisms built up for their realisation.

In the case of fascist movements—terrorism, extra-legal armed fighting formations (YC, CP, DYF, SF) anti-parliamentarianism (rigged and terror polls) national and social demagoguery (Crush Pakistan, "Great Indian Empire" dream, Bharatmata ("Kalobazari" Hatao, Garibi Hatao etc.).

In the case of fascist governments—suppression of all other parties, violent suppression of all working

class organisations, reign of terror, single-party totalitarian state.

Fascism has no doctrine. It develops as a movement in practice under conditions of threatening proletarian revolution as a counter-revolutionary mass movement supported by the bourgeoisie, employing weapons of social demagoguery and terrorism to defeat the revolution and build up a strengthened capitalist state dictatorship. The theory evolves to rationalise this practice.

Specific Character

In order to identify the specific character of fascism one must reveal its class basis and the system of class relations within which it develops and functions and also the role it performs.

1. In the early stages, fascism makes fake anti-capitalist propaganda to attract mass support. [We remember the anti-capitalist slogans of both the CPM and Congress, with particular reference to the eye-catching but shallow steps against the blackmarket taken by the Youth Congress]. In fact, however, fascism from the very outset is fostered, nourished, maintained, protected and subsidised by the ruling classes. [One need only remember the backing given in 1969 to the CPM and later, (after the Congress had been unanimously accepted as the sole agent by the ruling classes) the support given to the Congress].
2. Fascism is allowed to grow, is saved from being wiped out in the early stages by the working class movement, only through the direct protection of the reactionary state machinery. It is able to count on the assistance of the greater part of the repressive force: The higher army staff, police authorities and the law courts who exert all their efforts to crush the working class opposition while treating fascist illegality with open connivance [One remembers all the occasions where the police stood aside while the legal parties fought against each other and also when they liquidated the cadres, supporters,

even relatives of the CPI(ML). One remembers the court judgments against gherao and land grab. One remembers with special nausea the confabulation with and the dependence upon higher army staff and police chiefs that characterised both UF and Congress rule].

3. Fascism never conquers power but is always placed in power from above by the ruling classes. The process is merely the passing of power from the velvet glove of many-party rule to the mailed fist of single-party dictatorship, and this change is classed as "revolution": [Elections—rigged, terroristic, bullying bourgeois elections are surely "placing in power from above". The CPI(ML) which tried to destroy the "above" was nearly eliminated by terror and denied even the right to offer the people a

choice]

4. After being established in power fascism makes a few show gestures of assistance to small capital [State Bank loans to small industries and agriculturists—talked about, but never fulfilled] but in reality fascism initiates a policy of the most brutal and ruthless exploitation by monopoly and imperialist capital and turn mercilessly against those of its former supporters who had been innocent enough to expect some anti-capitalist action in India [the CPI, Bangla Congress and such others].

Fascism, in short is a movement of mixed elements, dominantly petit-bourgeois, including also the slum proletarians and demoralised working class, financed and directed by the ruling class in order to defeat the revolution and the organisations of the working class.

II

Role Of Revisionism

Where the majority of the working class has followed the line of revisionism, there, at a certain stage, fascism inevitably grows and seizes power. The stage comes when the breakdown of old capitalist institutions and the advance of the working class must advance to the conquest of political power, that is armed struggle, but it is held back by revisionist leadership. (1969-1971). When that happens, i.e. when the working class fails to give decisive leadership, the discredited old ruling classes are able to draw the support of all discontented strata through false revolutionary slogans and instead of the crisis situation giving allies to the revolution, the ruling class builds up its forces in the form of fascism. The continued hesitation and retreat of the revisionist leadership of the working class, at each point, encourages the growth of fascism. Therefore, fascism steps in and seizes power, not on its own strength but because of the failure of work-

ing class leadership. The collapse of bourgeois democracy is succeeded not by proletarian democracy but by fascist dictatorship.

The world has changed since fascism first bared its fangs in the 1920s. After World War II, a large number of countries took the path of socialism. Revolution in China was followed soon after by the revolution and wars of liberation in Korea, Malaya, the Philippines and Vietnam. The world of imperialism seemed to be going up in flames. Battles went on increasingly. It was at this juncture that revisionism which had always been present in the ranks of the working class, launched itself as an ideology and as a system of politics, economics and government; the 20th Congress of the CPSU. Discovering a world headquarters, revisionists of all countries united around it and went down their wretched path with greater brazenness.

Thus revisionism, whose ideological basis is selfishness and keeping alive

and regenerating capitalist exploitation, took upon itself the task of fighting world revolution. It is true that because of its very ideological basis as well as because of differences on the tactics to be pursued in fighting revolution, there is contradiction between revisionism and imperialism, just as the CPI or CPM have contradictions with the Congress. But the basic fact is that they are all counter-revolutionary.

Faced with the crises of imperialism and the rising tide of peoples' revolutionary consciousness, imperialism and its hangers-on as well as revisionism had to opt for fascism, more so where their chains were the weakest.

In India, therefore, revisionism had not only held back the working class. This was not its only method to help fascism capture power. In India revisionism :

1. Used fascist techniques and thereby enriched the armoury of fascism.

2. Sowed disillusionment and pessimism amongst the people.

3. Prettified fascism by discovering "democratic", "progressive", "patriotic features" in the Government and party of Indira Gandhi. It clamoured about the "anti-U.S. imperialist" stand of Indira Gandhi. In spite of the vote being totally under the control of the armed forces, bureaucracy and the gangsters of the Government they held out elections as a method for the people to salvage themselves. They found friends of "Liberation" in Mrs Gandhi's Congress. They discovered socialism in Russian imperialism. By waving the red flag, using the legal latitudes allowed by the ruling class, Indian revisionists betrayed the Indian peoples, particularly the people of West Bengal, into the cruel hands of fascism.

4. By failing to see and combat Indian feudalism, they have betrayed the peasantry, advanced communalism and given fascism its hold on the countryside. By refusing to accept that our country is really a massive neo-colony under the economic, political and military exploitation of im-

perialism, they have betrayed our country. By refusing to accept and prepare for armed revolution they have betrayed Marxism-Leninism. By their purrid calumny of MTTT, CPC and Socialist China, they have sunk deep the roots of revisionism and counter-revolution in a large number of youths of West Bengal, Kerala and Andhra.

5. Indian revisionism has trained, indoctrinated and provided the private armies which now fulfil the aggressive designs of the Indian fascists. They supported the wars, wars without which fascists would not have obtained the mass support which it so desperately needs. They glorified the exploits of the Indian Army which suppressed a series of revolutionary movements within the country—Naga, Mizo, Kashmiri, Naxalbari, Srikakulam, Mushahari Birbhumi.

6. The social-imperialists have strengthened the Indian fascists. The Indo-Soviet treaty, arms supply, attacks and encirclement of China etc. They have advanced the cause of Indian fascists by using them to interfere and exploit other South Asian countries—Ceylon, East Pakistan, Indo-Bangladesh treaty etc. They have used Indian fascists to herald "a new form of advancement" for the exploited world".

Without such aid and abetment from the revisionists, fascism would not have found a foothold in India. The mass support and the activation of a section of the people which fascism must have, would not have been forthcoming.

Thus the economic crises of semi-colonial India (1950 to 1952, 1958-1962) erupted into political crises and the semi-colonial had to give way to the neo-colonial state. It was on the cards then for India to fall apart. The 1967 elections were, comparatively, the most free elections held in India. The ruling classes were panic-stricken, unable to decide upon one single party to carry out their will. Between 1967-1970 the ruling classes experimented with various forms of united front government by which different parties could be made to

work for the ruling classes in different areas in India. But the problem of nationalities which is very near the surface in India showed signs of explosion. The imperialists want One India, not separate States which would hamper the sale of goods, the exploitation of resources and manpower. In order to do this, the Congress was the only alternative. No other party, (J.S., Swatantra or SSP which were supported by them or the CPI or CPM which went over to them) filled the bill, only the Congress had all the qualities :

1. Total loyalty to the imperialist, comprador and bureaucratic bourgeoisie and the feudals. Proof of which it had provided over a long period of time.

2. Capacity for total ruthlessness in the liquidation of revolution and support for suppression of wars of liberation.

3. An India-wide organisation.

4. Loyalty of the large section of the army, police, bureaucracy and law courts.

5. Ability to use "left" slogans in order to attract a section of the masses.

6. A totally opportunist leader who could at the same time be ruthless with the left and with other parties who might shy away from single-party dictatorship, and be capable of mouthing sincere "left" slogans like 'Garibi Hatao' under the cloak of which she could concentrate Central power, both economic and political, and be tough with those sections of the ruling classes who would not or could not appreciate the necessity for centralised, one-party, fascist dictatorship.

Therefore, the Congress in 1972. Therefore the electoral wiping out of all other parties in 1972. Fascism is in the second stage of its development. From a movement in the streets it has burgeoned into a movement which has been "democratically" installed in state power. The third stage is about to begin.

(To be concluded)

From Book Fair To Bookish Fair

SANGH SEN SINGH

UNESCO has decided to celebrate 1972 as International Book Year, "to foster and strengthen links of understanding among the nations of the world". In that connection, a World Book Fair was held in Windsor Place, New Delhi, by the National Book Trust of India, in collaboration with the Federation of Publishers and Booksellers Association under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare.

Almost all State governments, the Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, the University Grants Commission and others joined in a big way. Besides, an International Seminar on "Books for Millions", a National Writers' Camp, an annual conference of the Library Association of India, a convention and two training courses organised by the Federation of Publishers and Booksellers Association of India, a seminar on popularising Hindi abroad by the Akhil Bharatiya Hindi Prakashak Sangh were some of the highlights of the fair. Looking into all these and some more items synchronising with this event, one wondered whether the declared objective of UNESCO was uppermost in the minds of the organisers or whether they were guided purely by commercial considerations. A large number of Western publishers are seriously exploring the possibilities of getting their books printed in India on a regular basis. This will prove to be a boon for the Indian publisher who wants to attract considerable business from the more advanced countries where labour and other charges are excessive. This basic fact behind this whole *tamasha* also explains other factors which prompted the organisers to hold the fair in Delhi, a city of babus, sahibs, workers and a handful of intellectuals, rather than in Calcutta, Varanasi, Allahabad, Poona or Madras which are

known for their intellectual superiority (as compared to Delhi). If they say that it was meant not only for the intellectuals, but also for the public at large, then why was it held in the ivory tower of New Delhi? Besides, what was there to attract the common man? Was the huge amount of money being spent there for the benefit of the common man? The so-called learned people have always been pampered by the State at the cost of the common man. Poets, philosophers and thinkers served their masters and many were sent to different lands to pave the way for their rulers to expand their area of influence. The great centres of learning like Nalanda and Odantapuri in Magadha were run on the annual income of two hundred villages each. Is it an indication of the likely role of a "Greater India" now that the ruling classes have been reassured by the capture of Tamralipti (the area in and around Dacca, as described by the Chinese monk-scholar, Yuan Chwang)?

In the past we had a well-developed manuscript writing industry. The developing 'publishing industry' in India may in the long run successfully play that role.

The President inaugurated another international fair in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, in March. It was, not a book fair, but a bookish fair. Distinguished Sanskrit scholars of the world met there to discuss how to dig out India's 'bright past' from the old worm-eaten manuscripts. Some may even venture to prepare a talisman, in conformity with the age-old practice, (one such talisman was prepared for King Laksman Sen of Bengal who fled to Nadia before Bakhtiar) which may be used by the Government of India for the preservation of its stability. The present rulers are shrewd enough to make full use of this class of people in society, who have always been at their beck and call in the past.

A study of the motives of Sanskrit pandits of all ages make this even clearer. When Bana Bhatta, a very staunch orthodox Brahmin, and a known anti-Buddhist, showered praises on Harsha Vardhana, the ruler of Kanauj, he knew that he was writing in praise of a Buddhist king (not born in the family of the traditional ruling classes i.e. Brahmins and Ksatriyas), who had taken a vow to wipe out the Brahmanic kingdom of Sasanka, the ruler of Bengal. Panditaraj Jagannatha, the famous author of *Rasagangadhara*, lived in the court of Emperor Shahjahan and served the Mughal empire. When the British settled in Bengal and needed the services of Indians to run the administration the Sanskrit pundits did not lag behind in their zeal for service. When Macaulay decided to change the educational policy in the Indian territory, the Sanskrit pundits made such a fuss that the British rulers had to provide safeguards for the traditional Sanskrit studies. The Sanskrit College, Calcutta, produced a chain of loyal and faithful servants of the British empire. After the 1857 Mutiny, when the majority of Indian subjects were angry with the British, the Sanskrit pundits were the first to attend the durbars of English officials in each district. Since 1947, they have been invariably with the ruling Congress. During this period a large number of Raghavans and Dandekars have made a number of trips round the world to deliver lectures on the merits of Sanskrit studies.

When To Change

The traditional Sanskrit pundit of India sometimes baffles even a very keen observer. Seeing him in the age-old dress one feels that he never changes. But, he does. While retaining his age-old outward appearance his change has always been within limits and only for the purpose of his own benefit and convenience. For instance, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar wore the traditional dress of a pundit, but was keen to impart the knowledge of Western philosophies to Indian students. There was a time when he

would not teach the Vedas and Upanishads to a Shudra. In course of time even the teaching of Sanskrit itself to a non-Brahmin was taboo. The story of William Jones, the first European Sanskritist, who learnt Sanskrit in Calcutta with great difficulty, will remain a classic instance. Even in the early years of this century a non-Brahmin could not dream of learning Sanskrit. Many episodes are even now related by old non-Brahmin Sanskrit scholars about their adventures in learning Sanskrit from a Brahmin teacher by hiding their own caste and projecting themselves as Brahmins. But now the position is totally changed. The Sanskrit pundits are keen to impart Sanskrit education to as many students as possible. In fact there is a demand for compulsory Sanskrit education. In some States Sanskrit has been made compulsory along with Hindi. Where has gone that sacred injunction of Manu—"If a Shudra happens to hear Vedic mantras, hot lead be poured into his ears"?

A peculiar situation develops when the interests of this section clash with the declared policy of the State. How they react then, provides a very interesting study. One of their methods is to circumvent the law. For instance, the Constitution does not permit any community to demand special privileges on the basis of his birth (the case of Scheduled Castes and Tribes is different). To meet this situation, they demand special provisions for the preservation of traditional Sanskrit teaching (pathshala paddhati), compulsory teaching of Sanskrit up to Higher Secondary, imparting of compulsory religious education in schools and colleges, upgradation of Ayurveda to the level of Allopathy, so on and so forth. The governments at the Centre and in the States are keen to meet their demands. In fact, they have already conceded many of them. The Centre has established Rastriya Sanskrit Sansthan which runs five Sanskrit institutes at Delhi, Jammu, Allahabad, Puri and Poona. The governments of U.P. and Bihar have already established

Sanskrit universities. The Sanskrit pundits of Sanskrit College, Calcutta, missed their goal during the U.F. regimes. They may attain it now. The governments of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh are likely to grant it within a few years. The Muslim League Education Minister of Kerala has gone much ahead in this direction, allegedly to create a congenial atmosphere for the establishment of an Arabic university. Ayurvedic colleges on the lines of medical colleges are being run by many State governments. There is a demand for Ayurvedic universities in each State.

In demanding the retention of age-old privileges, they advance very funny arguments. They say that in the past there used to be kings and emperors who would go all the way to patronise them and feed them as much as they could. But today the rulers are being replaced by the Government, hence the Government should see to it that they are not short of funds. The Government is keen to let them retain their parasitic role, in order to make an utmost use of this vocal section of society and retain its anti-people rule. Otherwise what is the fun in setting up new colleges, institutes and universities when established universities have already provided for traditional and modern methods of Sanskrit education? In other words both feudalists and the bourgeoisie use this tactic. The Government has no programme to make use of the talents of those who still are in the fields of modern science and the humanities. Only a socialist government can do it.

One more fact merits mention here. Though the State as a whole patronizes this section of the people, they, on their part, do not fail to pick up their special patrons in the Government. The late Dr Rajendra Prasad, Dr Radhakrishnan, K. N. Katju, G. B. Pant, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Sampurnanand, A. N. Jha etc. were more than ready to shower on them as many benefits as possible. Today they have a huge team of benefactors.

The President, Mr Giri, the Vice-President Mr Pathak, Mrs Indira Gandhi, Dr Karan Singh, Mr K. C. Pant etc. are some of them. Dr Karan Singh even wants Sanskrit to be the official language of the Union. He has formed a Parliamentary Sanskrit Forum in Parliament. It is an inter-party organisation where a Communist rubs shoulders with a Jana Sanghi for the fulfilment of the cause of Sanskrit.

The inaugural ceremony of the International Sanskrit Conference provided some additional facts which are of utmost interest to all Communists worth the name. The proceedings of the Conference were conducted in English. It means that even the fanatic Hindiwallahs among the participants (their number was quite large) had conceded this privilege to English. The leaders of the Russian and East German delegations delivered their written statements in English (Stalin's thesis on language is completely buried). Both these delegates showered praises on the contributions of ancient Sanskrit scholars in the same spirit as an orthodox pundit does at such gatherings. One significant point in the Soviet delegate's speech spoke volumes about Russian foreign policy. He said that the Mahabharata, the immortal epic, has taught us unique methods of establishing peace. His obvious reference was to the present peace in the Indian subcontinent after the emergence of Bangladesh as a State. Does it mean that the Russians on their part successfully played the role of Lord Krishna? What is the role of China in this new Mahabharata? That of Jarasandha or Shishupal? The East German delegate adored Saraswati, the presiding deity of knowledge of the orthodox Hindus. The way the gathering gave an ovation to these guest delegates (only these two delegates spoke at the function and were seated in the front row on the dais) shows the level to which the Russians and East Germans have gone in seeking approval from the most obscurantist, self-seeking and reactionary section of the Indian community.

Biological And Chemical Warfare

N. SINGH

BESIDES napalm and other incendiaries used for direct destruction of life and property, various anti-crop and herbicidal agents and defoliants have been used by the Americans in the countryside of Vietnam, justifying their use in the name of tactical weapons to pacify the consciences of mercenaries (soldiers and scientists) and the public at large. Use of these BC weapons in Vietnam has caused vast destruction of food crops, given rise to still-children as a consequence of teratogenic effects, and led to incidence of endemic diseases like plague etc. by ecological disturbance.

BC weapons form the potential armoury of foreign aggressors and of unpopular regimes supported by foreign reactionary powers, for use against patriotic forces and against guerrillas and popular insurgents in the revolutionary struggles, more particularly in the agriculture-based societies in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Vietnam has been the testing ground and a philosophy of 'limited wars' has gained ground among the forces of reaction and aggression, based on the simple principle of 'feasibility' of use of weapons in the efforts to defeat the 'total enemy comprising the combatants as well as the common people supporting them.

BC weapons are most effective in agricultural societies, most of which are semi-feudal and semi-colonial and therefore, seething with revolutionary struggle. These societies constitute the Third World, in which the present agricultural research and development is largely under the guidance of foreign experts with the latter having access to all intelligence concerned with ecological considerations of vital importance for effective use of BC weapons. In its CBW programme, the U.S. has given priority to intelligence on agriculture in enemy countries, not economic but ecological in nature, and sup-

ported research and development with that information in view (see Carc Lappe in *The Social Responsibility of the Scientists*, Ed. by M. Brown, Macmillan Ltd. 1970, pp. 96-118). The implications of the research, development and extension programmes of agriculture in the Third World countries under the guidance of foreign experts and under assistance from foreign vested interests, in a state of 'limited' or 'counter-insurgency' war or even otherwise, obviously go against the interest of the revolutionary movements in these areas.

In case of movements against BC weapons, public complaisance, apathy and lack of concern are less easy to overcome, public conscience less easy to prick, and public opinion and pressure less easy to be aroused and built up, more so when all mass media are directly or indirectly in the hands of vested interests, because of the following situations:

BC weapons cannot be shown, in their immediate and killing effects, as directly anti-human so as to rouse the public conscience and opinion against them, since they are essentially aimed at systematic destruction of populations indirectly through starvation, diseases and teratogenic effects.

It is easy to numb public opinion by creating confusion with respect to the effects of BC weapons, since the backward agriculturist societies have been constantly shown as suffering from recurring famines, epidemics and other natural disasters and adverse living conditions.

The seeds of discrimination, based on colour/race/religion/ideology regional relations, have not so far been destroyed. Instead, they continue to be nurtured by mass publicity through TV and other media in the form of regular drone and hysteria, particularly against communism and for the superiority of advanced people

of the industrialised societies and inferiority of the backward populations of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The openly racist white regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia thrive on slogans of anti-communism and the superiority of whites over the black and brown races. Only such feelings of superiority could make the Americans commit the crimes of massacre of children, women and old men in rural Vietnam. This attitude cannot be whitewashed by calling it 'deranged', as some of the 'experts' would like us to believe. These are open expressions of feelings of superiority and hostility. Further, the massacres were not earlier given credence just because they were reported by the Vietnamese or other non-acceptable sources. This fact and the mass-viewing and acceptance by these 'advanced' people of such incidents and of natural or other disasters in the Third World, despite inadvertent signs of pity and benevolence for the poor and the miserable, cannot be called anything but feelings of superiority.

The attitude of the great majority of scientists continues to be irresponsible and dangerous because of their unconcern with the direct or indirect implications of their activities, or because of active efforts to sustain their mandarin status of being 'experts and specialists'. This they do by issuing judgments in the name of scientific 'objectivity', 'impartiality', 'lack of evidence', etc., and also in the name of 'national defence'.

A review of the scientists' opinion on use of defoliants and herbicides in Vietnam and elsewhere, particularly in the American press, is very revealing. Read the latest debate and arguments of a group of scientists and consumer representatives (see *Science*, Vol. 173, p. 312, 1971).

However, no movements of scientists alone, and led by scientists alone, can be built up for any successful struggle, including that against development and use of BC weapons. Mobilisation and involvement of the common people is essential for in-

creasing the public concern and pressure on the governments and ruling forces everywhere, and scientists must become a part, an intimate part of the growing struggles. However, they have a special role in increasing the public awareness of the danger, because of their present specialised knowledge and training. The emphasis in publicity should be on the reality of present dangers, and not of dangers for the future generations. The stress on future dangers may be ineffective in arousing public opinion and may also make the public indifferent to the present reality. All platforms and mass media must be utilised for this purpose, but whether this facility would be allowed by the ruling interests in the real sense is not certain.

For the scientists in industrialised countries, it should be a major problem to determine their role. They have to look anew at their socio-economic and political structures which breed the situations erupting in the present world, and then start thinking of solutions.

However, the scientists in the Third World countries have very special responsibilities in this direction as part of the people's struggles for rapid economic, social and cultural development. They have to expose the implications of investment in programmes of research, development and extension in agricultural and biological fields with foreign experts and they have to dissociate themselves from such programmes, and be alert. They must engage in research on protective measures against the harmful effects of chemical and biological weapons. They have also to engage in research and production programmes for self-reliance in diverse fields and fight for adoption and implementation of such policies and programmes. Of vital importance is, of course, their active and conscious participation in the political struggles of the common people for liberation from the clutches of semi-feudal and semi-colonial forces subserving the foreign vested interests.

Book Review

THE ENEMY

By Felix Greene

Jonathan Cape 48s Net. 341 pages.

“MASTERS of arts, on whose side are you?” Few writers of the capitalist world have given any categorical answer to Gorky's question. Most of them have avoided the answer and indulged in a kind of self-delusion. Felix Greene, along with Snow, Hinton or Burchett, is a notable exception. His illusions are few and his commitment is clear. Any book written by him, on however trivial a theme, is therefore worth reading. This book is doubly so because it is about the most important aspect of the present-day world, imperialism and revolution, and, finally, because it is the outcome of a long process of self-realisation on the part of a committed author.

He thought previously that he knew much about imperialism. But as soon as he became engaged in detailed research for this book, he realised that his previous notion of imperialism was only a minimum assessment of its actual dread and horror. “It means far more than exploitation of poor countries by the rich. It enslaves a whole social system based on exploitation and violence, a whole way of thinking about other people.” (P 11) The book is an exposure of that system, particularly American, and is also a suggestion for its destruction.

The book has been divided into several well-defined sections, each consisting of few chapters and each dealing with a definitive aspect of imperialism, again particularly American. In the first section ((The Face of Capitalism)) the author tries to prick a few bubbles—myths about American Society—and thus has been able to focus on various outward manifestations of the inner rot in capitalism on its home front. Deforestation and pollution, corruption in high places, crime and violence, the poor housing system, excessive addiction to drugs

among the younger generation, lurid advertisements—all these vices of an extremely possessive society have been categorised and tabulated with statistics from various newspapers and official reports. The new piece of startling information is about the Mexican-American labourers in the fruit orchards of California who are nothing but slave-labourers and whose standard of living falls far below that of the poorest Negro worker. Greene has also something to say about their fight under Cesar Chaves.

The development of American imperialism is the subject-matter of the second section. The author here describes the contribution of various factors to the rise of American imperialism, such as the growth of the philosophy of possessive individualism and the working of the state apparatus for its implementation, huge natural resources, the use of the Negroes and the Red Indians as cheap labour, the bank rackets, the growth of finance capital, the crisis of the old capitalist countries after the Second World War and the consequent inheritance of their mantle by the USA as a form of neo-colonialism.

The third section is confined to the role of imperialism in the vast area of Latin America and occasionally of Asia and Africa. In the author's opinion, foreign aid is the chief weapon for the exploitation of the underdeveloped countries. Its main aim is not to improve the economies but to make them an eternal victim of American imperialism. Foreign aid serves it in various ways: as a means for the postponement of depression by seeking new foreign markets; as a concealed subsidy for the U.S. foreign exporting corporations, as a stranglehold of debts on indigenous competitive manufacturers who can compete with American industries; as a political and economic blackmail over those countries; as a method of transforming them into the dumping ground of American surplus products in times of crisis; and finally as a weapon for military penetration against a communist outbreak. For illustration, the private companies of

the USA, from Latin America derived \$17.8 billion investment in the form of remitted profits at a rate of 46% within 13 years. As soon as its economic interest is about to be threatened, all talk of liberalism evaporates and with all its fangs and claws open, imperialism resorts to military action, alien to all human values. Guatemala has been cited as an example. Despite the talk about liberalism and disguised exploitation through economic forms, recent events in various countries show how fascist repression with the enthusiastic support of the USA, which has 3,401 military bases in the world, is gradually emerging as a recurrent feature in the so-called "free world". Other old highly industrialised countries have not escaped from the tentacles of this huge octopus. The crisis of the British manufacturers in the automation, cosmetics and toilet industries is a relevant illustration of this point.

Sections four and five deal with the role of imperialism, both materially and psychologically, on the internal front. To Greene both wealth and poverty are twin brothers within a capitalist system. Their interrelation is due to the very structure of the system. On the one hand 0.5% of the population own 25% of all privately held wealth in the United States; the top 20% get 45.8 per cent of the national income and the top 10% of income-earners command 72% of all

savings while at the lower scale only 50% of the adult population own only 8.3% of the national wealth, the lowest 20% get only 3.7% of all personal incomes and the lower 50% of all income-receivers in 1950 had a net savings deficit of 18.5 per cent. By various artifices like dividend credits, depletion allowances, tax-exempt bonds, expense accounts, the rich in this highly privileged society pay only 14% of the national income under so-called "Progressive rates of taxation" whereas 86% of the national revenue comes from the lower income groups. It is a society where, due to an inner logic of the system, the rich become richer and the poor becomes poorer.

Liberal Illusions

Again the author castigates various illusions of bourgeois liberals—their pacifist attitude, their clamour for democracy and their world outlook whose essential characteristic is, in the language of the author, "a me-first" attitude. He takes great pains to prove the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary character of violence and the control of the state power by an essentially narrow monopolist bourgeois class. A list showing the various relations of the various personnel in the American state apparatus with specific monopolist industrialists well serves the last point.

Section Six discusses the chief antidote to the system—revolution. The main theme is the nature and method of revolution in an industrialised society and the role of the author himself in it. He, following classical Marxist arguments, points out that due to the inner contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production the system has outlived its right to exist and a better world is long overdue. The power of the ruling elite of America to give concessions to workers would gradually diminish with the rising economic growth rate of new capitalist countries like Japan and the growth of several self-sufficient economies through revolution. The failure of the American capitalist to give new

jobs to the unskilled labourers, along with the revolutionary struggles of Asia, Africa and Latin America marks the beginning of the end.

Greene is in favour of treating racial discrimination not as an isolated Negro problem but as a part of the general problem of exploitation of American masses irrespective of race and colour. Incidentally, Greene includes all professional job-holders within the proletariat because they are also subject to the same law of alienation. He criticises the new militants of America for having their innate motive in an appeal to the liberal conscience of the nation and having no correct analysis of the political situation, no programme of action and, above all, no revolutionary theory and political party. He attributes this anarchic nature to the petty-bourgeois distrust for discipline, to a distorted notion of freedom, to essential capitalistic "me-first mentality". Putting emphasis on sustained political work, Greene considers the fight against this mentality as the most important requisite for the coming revolution, "Change yourselves, change this world"—this is his ultimate slogan. This continuous change of "self" in the process of revolutionary work is the goal which he himself would strive for.

This admirable study has, however, many sins of omission, if not of commission. The author's analysis is weak so far as the working of imperialism abroad is concerned. He has not mentioned the cultural penetration of neo-imperialism in underdeveloped countries—through its educational system, films, various cultural programmes and through a large-scale CIA network. The expectation of this kind of analysis is justified because Greene seems much bothered about the vicious hold of capitalist mentality over the human mind. Secondly, he has only casually pointed out the link between the indigenous elite and imperialism, (P 164) but he has never tried to analyse the complex relations between the comprador bourgeoisie, feudalism and imperialism. As a result his description of

পূর্বরঙ্গ প্রযোজিত

কীডরিশ ভোলফ্ রচিত

উৎপল দত্ত অনুদিত

ফ্যাসিবাদ-বিরোধী নাটক

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(শো-এর দিন হলে টিকিট)

the role of imperialism in the underdeveloped countries fails to give a complete picture of a total system of which he has spoken so much in the preface. In fact his arguments are much more effective in the analysis of imperialism at home rather than abroad.

Greene does not say anything about Soviet social-imperialism though he reminds us of the "Not so junior partners of American imperialism"—France, Britain and Germany."

Job-holders

Some objections may also be raised on certain theoretical points. For example, the inclusion of all the professional employees within the rank of the proletariat in the sense that they have nothing but their labour to sell. For the term proletariat has much more than a mere economic connotation. It is a distinct economic class with a particular world outlook. With the growing economic crisis, the job-holding middle class having no direct part in the production process may be involved in the vicious circle of poverty and economic degradation and therefore may be the ally of the revolution. But they are the very people who are more susceptible, due to their class origin, to the bourgeois mentality and at any moment can desert the cause of the revolution. Thus to consider the official job-holder as part of the proletariat may lead to a mixing up of the allies with the vanguard and obstruct working-class leadership.

Secondly, to the author the motive force behind the revolution in America would be a clamour for "psychological starvation" lack of "adequate emotional satisfaction" because the people of the USA eat more in a day than those in poorer countries eat in a week (P. 305). However, this logic, in the Marxist sense, is erroneous. The author himself shows a growing anomaly between the relations of production and the productive forces in a capitalist society and this alone is enough cause for a revolution. Again, to compare the poor countries with capitalist countries is irrelevant

because the author has pointed out the growing destitution of the American people in the context of their "traditional standard of life". Here Marx's criteria of historical tradition and social habitude in the determination of the value of labour in a particular country should not be forgotten (*Value, Price and Profit*). Psychological starvation has a definitive economic role and it is more or less universal in both underdeveloped and capitalist societies in varied forms. Thus it is primarily economic factors which will be the driving force of revolution in the capitalist societies also.

The book with all its blemishes and without any significant contribution to the theoretical analysis of imperialism, is very informative. The author has told the story in a lucid style and said many simple things in a simple way. The chief merit of the book is that the author is intensely sincere and honest and admits his confusion. This book may well serve as a pointer to those Indian "scholar despots" who are so confused that they don't know their confusion; and it may also appear helpful to many middle-class intellectuals and students to whom heaven is almost synonymous with the USA.

G. BHADRA

Letters

Elections And CPM

Apropos the letter (April 8) of Mr Bijan Chatterjee, he should know that when the people become helpless they may give us a lesson by their spontaneous action—that action may be negative or positive. In 1966, the spontaneous action of the West Bengal people, particularly during March, clearly indicated that the masses were ready for armed struggle but the so-called communist leaders were lagging behind and there was no real communist party in India. Similarly, by totally rejecting the CPI(M) at the polls, the people have asserted that opportunism will not do. They have also confirmed the path of armed struggle to be a correct one. Gen-

uine communists must strive to realise the essence of a thing, the kernel of a thing or action—not the outer shell. We must try to understand the mood of the people. The fact is that they have become anti-CPI(M), but they are not pro-Congress to the degree they are anti-CPI(M). But finding no alternative (armed revolutionary struggle) they have rejected the CPI(M) and thus sharply pointed out the path of armed struggle to be adopted. Besides, it is the people who have been able to expose the political bankruptcy of the CPI(M) which is still demanding fresh elections while vociferously protesting against the rigged election.

Mr Bijan Chatterjee distorts me by saying that I have asserted 'that all, or almost all, general elections under a bourgeois parliamentary set-up are rigged'. What I said was quite clear: "The ruling classes have done it in the past and will do so in future whenever they deem necessary to safeguard their class-interests". (Emphasis now) I still believe that barring some constituencies in Calcutta, Howrah, 24-Parganas and Burdwan districts, the elections were nowhere rigged. Even Mr Namboodiripad said that the polling was rigged in 51 constituencies (*Statesman*, April 9).

Mr Editor, sir, by onesidely raising the question of rigging the election, you are trying to console the frustrated, bewildered and non-political cadres of the CPI(M) (the vast majority are this type) and thus unwittingly helping the consolidation of the shattered house of the CPI(M) which should be brought down in the interest of the armed revolution of the Indian people, because this social democratic party in the garb of Marxism was, and is, a great hindrance to armed struggle and people's democratic, that is, agrarian revolution in India. In this connection, I request you, Mr Editor, to do justice to me by publishing the concluding lines which you did not publish on March 25. "Again, the communist revolutionaries should also learn from people's verdict. The people will not tolerate the opportunists. They have confirmed the path of armed revolution by re-

jecting the CPI(M) at the polls. Communist revolutionaries go ahead. Go deep into the villages and build up base areas and people's army. This is the only path for the emancipation of the Indian people."

As for the main class enemy, Mr Chatterjee should know that Lenin's "direct and main class enemy, the bourgeoisie" is not the main enemy in semi-colonial and semi-feudal India. Our chief enemies are imperialism and feudalism and the latter is the main enemy. And the character of the Indian bourgeoisie is not the same as that of the Western bourgeoisie. So, there is a difference between the character of the petty-bourgeois social-democratic parties of semi-colonial and semi-feudal India and those of the western countries. I like to remind Mr Chatterjee that those musing dogs of imperialism are not the same petty-bourgeois democratic parties which Lenin had in mind. The day is not very far when the united gang of Congress, CPI and CPI(M) will form a "genuinely progressive" government in Delhi

with the open support and direct help of the Soviet social-imperialists, to suppress the national liberation movement of the Indian people.

I cannot understand why the communist revolutionaries should be sorry for the defeat of the CPI(M). Was the CPI(M) less fascistic to them than the Congressites? Didn't Mr Promode Das Gupta shamelessly comment, 'Are the bullets of the police covered with 'Nirodh' so as not to kill the Naxalites?' Didn't they declare that they would finish the Naxalites within a week if they came to power? I would like to inform Mr Chatterjee that the CPI(M) had prepared a list to annihilate the rest of the communist revolutionaries had they won the election. This information was disclosed by the cadres of the CPI(M) who contacted us after the rejection of the CPI(M) at the polls.

The CPI(M)'s defeat is a gain for revolution. The reactionary character of the Congress does not change whether it is defeated or wins. The strength of the Congress is a passing phase and it will crumble very soon. Its charac-

ter is already exposed. Hence it will be easier to fight the Congress alone, instead of fighting on two fronts.

A SUPPORTER OF MCC
Calcutta

Bangkok Visit

Mr Giri's visit to Thailand has aroused suspicion among some people. The Defence Minister goes on talking about India's military supremacy in the sub-continent. And there is talk of taking the South-East Asian "friends" more seriously. Obviously these friends are not Communists; more or less all of them are under American military and economic domination. Russia may use India in the Third World countries. Surely, Mr Giri was bent on something more than 'trading'. Is it that Russia has a secret honeymoon with her friend-cum-enemy, the USA, in one of the most sensitive strategic points in South-East Asia?

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