

frontier

Vol. 5: No. 32

NOVEMBER 18, 1972

PRICE: 40 PAISE

On Other Pages

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| COMMENT .. | 2 |
| <i>View From Dethi</i> | |
| HIGH AND DRY | |
| FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT .. | 4 |
| INDIA'S SARKARI INDUSTRIALISTS | |
| A. P. M. .. | 5 |
| TWO HORNS OF THE HARIJAN DILEMMA | |
| SUGAT SINGH .. | 8 |
| THE CHINA NIXON DIDN'T SEE—II | |
| NEVILLE MAXWELL .. | 10 |
| BRECHT BY THEATRE UNIT | |
| HITEN GHOSH .. | 14 |
| LOVE, SWEET AND SOUR | |
| MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY .. | 15 |
| LETTERS .. | 15 |

Editor : Samar Sen

PRINTED AT MODERN INDIA PRESS,
7, RAJA SUBODH MULLICK SQUARE,
CALCUTTA-13 AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY
FOR GERMINAL PUBLICATIONS (P) LTD,
BY SAMAR SEN FROM 61, MOTT LANE,
CALCUTTA-13
TELEPHONE: 243202

THE TOLD STORY

THE ruling party in West Bengal is now busy giving itself a face-lift for the costly fair proposed to be held on the Salt Lake. Lakhs are being spent to build a mini-palace for the Prime Minister and provide humbler accommodation to the other party dignitaries who will descend on this city to work out the strategy and tactics of the promised war on poverty and pat themselves on the back on the performance so far. Why the Prime Minister should not stay at Raj Bhavan is a question that prudent people will not ask. Maybe the Government did not know that the Congress session would be held in Calcutta when it claimed that the law and order situation had returned to normal, and the police are now in jitters, especially after the Darjeeling experience, at the thought of the Prime Minister shuttling between Raj Bhavan and the Salt Lake. A Raj Bhavan of a sort in the Salt Lake is probably their answer to the problem of security. The Congress session at Durgapur where a temporary railway station was set up for the convenience of the delegates was the last big show of the forgotten Mr Atulya Ghosh. The Salt Lake will be whose ?

The State Congress would like the people to believe that it will be of none. Perturbed by persistent reports of ceaseless in-fighting within the party, acts of gross indiscipline, and open clashes, New Delhi has directed that the differences must be composed at once. The job to ensure this has been entrusted to the Chief Minister, and the unflinching handy-man that he is, Mr Ray has set himself to this task without demur. He has converted the Secretariat into his party headquarters and is constantly in conference not with officials but with party colleagues, not over matters of administration but over affairs of the party. The officials are happy as a lark at the prospect of a season of idleness lasting through the year. Government work stands still; it will not resume till the new year. Probably Mr Ray reasons that he has still four years to prove himself as Chief Minister but only a few weeks to prove himself as the undisputed leader of the party in the State, and this settles his priorities.

The party claims that Mr Ray's endeavours have not been unproductive. Most of the disputes over bogus membership and factional claims have been settled, and the party elections on all levels are likely to be unanimous; the undesirable elements have been weeded out, and only the

Simon-pure Congressmen have been retained. This is not the first time that observers from the party headquarters in New Delhi have watched over organizational elections; nor is this the first time that the elections will be unanimous. Groups at daggers drawn have thrived in the party in the past; they are doing so even now. The faction leaders are not unknown; not one of them is out, not one seems to have diminished, despite the proclaimed unanimity. If there is really a respite, it will be short; perhaps it will be a temporary truce till Christmas with a tacit understanding over resumption of hostilities after the session. Mr Atulya Ghosh was a master in the art of bringing about unanimous organizational elections; but the party could not be saved. The current elections are a dreary and, perhaps, inept repetition of the told story.

Experts All

They were all experts. In 1952 the expert body of the Secondary Education Commission, appointed by the Government of India, came to the conclusion that the traditional pattern of education, which was put into vogue by the British in India, was no good and the pattern was changed to eight years of elementary education followed by three or four years of secondary education. For twenty years, since then, experts had been urging the recalcitrant States to adopt the new pattern and it was expected that by the end of the Fourth-Plan period, the change-over would be complete. Suddenly, experts changed their ideas. Now they tell us that specialisation should not start earlier than at the eleventh stage of the educational pyramid and that specialisation should be for a period of two years prior to the graduation course. The West Bengal experts have gone one step further. At the fag end of the academic year, they have decided that with the beginning of the new year

West Bengal higher secondary schools should revert to the old 10-year pattern. Nobody has any idea, though, how the experts plan to set the syllabus and put into market text-books within just one month. But we need not despair—aren't they all experts, they must have some lightning campaign plan hidden in their files.

Like the Publishers' and Booksellers' Association of Bengal, we too should refrain from entering into any controversy on the merits and demerits of either pattern, for we are no experts. But the said Association has been stung cruelly by the experts in the Education Department of West Bengal, under whose favour the affiliated publishers of the Association have been so long minting money. There will be few people outside the charmed circle of these publishers to feel sorry that the Association will be losing about one crore of rupees because of this reversal without prior warning—they have already printed text-books, note-books, digests, suggested questions and answers for the next three years. One racket has clashed with another, for reasons unknown to us. But teachers in the existing secondary schools are losing their night's sleep worrying over their job security—assurance of suitable adjustments and placements notwithstanding.

Over these twenty years the West Bengal Government has failed to produce trained teachers to teach in higher secondary education schools and to equip schools with laboratories, not to speak of reforming the nature of education imparted. This failure is considered the reason for the latest reversion. No doubt the Kothari Commission expressed its disappointment over the state of secondary education today and suggested four changes: that the standard of teaching be improved, education be rationalised and occupationally oriented, educational opportunities be made available to the maximum number of students and the structure of the education system be reorganized. It added that the last suggestion was

the least important. The West Bengal Government has taken up the last suggestion for execution. Something is better than nothing!

So in this battle of the Universities and the Board of Higher Secondary Education, the latter has lost and control of teaching has been partially recovered by the universities. However, neither the Universities nor the Board knew that such a battle was being fought. Nice opera stuff. Students for whose benefit all this is being done will, however, face the same old future of unemployment, family frustrations and poverty before being thrust into social ostracisation. Ours is indeed a country of high thinking and lumpen living.

When Sugar Is Bitter

The sugar muddle—it is more of a riddle now—gets curiouser and curiouser. Last week New Delhi announced a further bonus for the mighty sugar lobby. Ex-factory price of sugar has been raised by 20 paise a kilogram for the 1972-73 season which began in October. This is bound to increase sugar prices—both of the levy and free sale varieties—which have already gone beyond the means of the common man. Government spokesmen will justify the move on account of a mark up in the minimum prices of sugarcane and also as an incentive to the industry to raise production. But their pleas are unlikely to convince many. The sharp rise in sugar prices—by anything like Rs 1.50 a kilogram in the course of less than a year—has fattened the purses of the sugar kings by several hundred crores of rupees, and any further sop to this powerful group cannot have any prima facie logic. Critics, including those among the ruling Congress party itself, have been pressing for nationalisation of the industry if only to put a stop to the reckless profiteering by the sugar merchants. But New Delhi, which has shown so much alacrity in taking over industries on

various pretexts, has been sitting over the matter. No decision is likely to be taken till at least the next year. But the events so far have conclusively proved that the Government has sided with an unscrupulous industry and trade, rather than with the public which has been left in the lurch.

It is hardly a matter of solace to the men in the street that production in October has set a new high with 104,000 tonnes compared with 41,000 tonnes in the same month last year and 28,000 tonnes in September 1972. In spite of the vastly inflated margin enjoyed by the industry during the last season, total production for 1971-72 did not exceed 3.11 million tonnes against 3.74

million tonnes in the previous year. Apparently production does not react to prices, as New Delhi would like us to believe; if anything, the producers are out to create a situation of artificial scarcity by keeping down output—and it pays. So long as they can raise a larger profit from a smaller turnover by charging exorbitant prices, there is no reason for them to change their policy. And if the public is denied in the process an essential item of consumption, it should have the grace to bear it sportingly. In all this, New Delhi's role is hardly more than that of an accomplice. Like a man under the spell of a corrupting spirit, it seems to have forfeited all its powers to be- have otherwise.

for longer years to reduce the tension.

So far their appeal has drawn only scant response from the aid-givers. For whatever may be their appreciation, the loans are meant to promote the donors' interest in the client States and to maintain their hold upon the latter. Surely these rights will not be surrendered, though friendly gestures may be made to assuage the current anti-aid sentiment. They were not given up easily in Cuba or in Chile or in China; there is no reason that it will be done now. The socialist aid, though couched in sweeter words, is no good either. Though still small in volume, it has gone into more vital sectors and its pinch could be more painful. Not that there is no way out of this debased existence; one of our neighbours has, in fact, already shown the way. But New Delhi has neither the intention nor the will to tread that difficult path. Amid the infantile raving and strutting at the Colombo Plan meeting, Mrs Gandhi perhaps struck a more pragmatic note. Shorn of verbiage, her speech implores the Western Big Brothers to review their attitude towards the downtrodden and relax their grip a bit. To her self-reliance means greater co-operation and not rebellion, as some of her more militant lieutenants tried to mean.

A Sigh Of Relief

Washington's decision to grant debt relief to India would warm up the Western aid lobbyists in New Delhi who are going through a period of relative aid drought. Earlier the members of the Aid India Consortium, in their bid to relieve India, had worked out a formula for a \$200 million debt relief a year, which is to remain valid for three years. But the U.S. foot-dragging negated their effort and the whole question of debt relief remained uncertain as the American share is the highest in the formulated amount. The new announcement will end the impasse. More important, however, is the fact that it will be a shot in the arm of those radicals in the South Block who are trying to make out a case for debt relief in the Colombo Plan Consultative Committee.

Among the policy planners in the capital two oft-repeated words at the moment are debt relief and self-reliance. The two are being uttered in a manner to give the impression that they go together. The burden of their argument is that the repayment obligation of the recipient countries must be relieved; otherwise

it may provoke rebellion. For example, India is using up about 30 per cent of her hard-earned foreign money to meet her debts or, in another measure, she is frittering away more than \$625 million out of the new loans contracted each year, to this end. Unless she is allowed a respite by rescheduling of debts and postponement or remission of interest, she may not be able to honour her obligations. Furthermore, the postponement should be

The Party Is Over

The campaign for the recent parliamentary elections in Canada was lacklustre with Trudeau having made it a point to give an air of confidence. The electorate, however, found this to be an unpardonable indifference to the country's burning problems. The Progressive Conservative leader, Robert Lorne Stanfield, is not an effective speaker; he is a sort of politician who at times can kill the enthusiasm of his followers by his typically slow process of speaking. The campaign might have

failed to arouse public enthusiasm but the counting of votes did not; it was a story of fluctuating fortune which at the end turned out to be a dead heat. In a house of 264 seats the Liberals and the Progressive Conservative Party have each won 109 seats with the New Democratic Party holding the balance with a tally of 30 seats. The stalemate that the Canadians have voted themselves into could well last 12 months till a new election is held. Trudeau, however, remains the Prime Minister

will he resigns or his government is defeated on the floor of the house. In any case, the Progressive Conservatives do not stand a better chance to form a strong government. Minority government is not an unfamiliar phenomenon in Canada's parliamentary history; since 1957 there had been no less than five minority governments. But will Trudeau with his habit of looking down at problems from Olympian heights be able to adjust himself to the present uncomfortable situation? There has been always the possibility of his quitting politics; it is rather surprising to find an arrogant man like Trudeau having a fling at minority administration. In defeat the Prime Minister has become more responsive to "public wishes". Will he now

drop some French Canadian Ministers to assuage the feelings of the English-speaking people? There has definitely been an English backlash against the Liberal Government's effort to unite Canada into one nation. Rene Levesque, leader of Quebec separatism, is no doubt very happy with the election results. In a polarised country, the Liberals have a decisive majority in Quebec but they have been badly rejected in English-speaking areas. It must be said to the credit of Stanfield that he did not exploit the issue of increased use of the French language in the administration and greater representation of Quebecois in the government in order to beat Trudeau, but the same cannot be said about his other colleagues. The Liberals are

also vulnerable on many other grounds like an alarming rise in the number of unemployed (7 per cent), a continuing inflation, liberal immigration laws when many Canadians are finding it difficult to get jobs and the continuance of Canada as an economic province of America. The corporate welfare bums which according to the New Democrats had not created new jobs in spite of their enjoying tax benefits and credit grants became a major election issue to the discomfort of the Liberals. Trudeau has now promised many new measures with the ostensible purpose of buying opposition support. But the New Democrats may demand a higher price than the promised reforms.

View from Delhi

High And Dry

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Foreign Office in New Delhi must be exasperated over Mr Bhutto's quick decisions—to recognise North Vietnam, to formally serve notice to SEATO about his country's decision to quit, and recognition of North Korea, in that order. What should add to others' exasperation is the knowledge that Hanoi addressed a letter to Dacca about recognition and the Sheikh Mujibar Government coldshouldered Hanoi. And the knowledge that China's offer to buy Bangladesh jute at attractive prices found acceptance in Dacca but the deal was scuttled by a third power.

Mr Bhutto's decisions suggest a diplomatic offensive of some kind. Pakistan's exit from SEATO should cause little surprise. Even before the Simla agreement, Mr Bhutto said in a TV interview to an Australian correspondent that his country was through as far as SEATO was concerned. SEATO was created to

contain "Chinese expansionism". But every country seems to have expanded as a result, except China, Mr Bhutto said wryly. Ask Mujib, because SEATO was created for his region and now he might like to belong to SEATO as well as the Asian collective security pact, the Pakistan President chuckled cynically in the TV interview shown to private audiences in New Delhi.

Mr Y. B. Chavan's recent mission to Tokyo should have brought New Delhi an idea of what Japan thinks about the Asian collective security pact. And earlier, Mr T. N. Kaul's visit. The Japanese are just not interested in it but told the visiting Indians that they would be happy to be kept posted about whatever develops on this issue. India has taken upon itself the task of peddling the collective security plan mooted by Mr Brezhnev in mid-1969 and revived only in March 1972. The Soviet press has begun attacking China for scut-

tling the plan when so many Asian countries desperately need the collective security system. Mr Tanaka has not accepted India's invitation yet and this has puzzled New Delhi beyond measure. Even the redoubtable Mr Masani should be puzzled now because in the past right reaction had pleaded for an alliance with Japan as a checkmate on China. Mr Tanaka's visit to China would result in a landslide of recognitions of China by South-East Asian and Australasian countries and India's isolation will be complete before long.

The International Control Commission on Vietnam is being wound up soon, to be replaced by an enlarged body in which India will have no place. The countries mentioned in New Delhi's diplomatic circles are: Indonesia, Hungary, and France. As early as 1969-70 the United States is known to have sounded Adam Malik about a role for Indonesia in a possible Vietnam settlement. Malik is

reported to have said they would decide when the expected situation came about. A East European country like Hungary should not be controversial as a replacement for Poland. France would be more acceptable than any other West European power to China but since the conflict in the supervisory body is more likely to be between the Soviet Union and China rather than between the United States and China, France might have some reservations about accepting the role. Two more countries might find place in the commission and Canada could be one of them.

That will mark the end of India's role in South-East Asian affairs and Indian dipomacy would have gone hurtling down a long way from the days of the Korean armistice negotiations and the Geneva conferences on Indochina.

Parliament

The Opposition finds its morale restored on the eve of the winter session of Parliament if only because the ruling party lost a couple of by-elections and is likely to lose a few more of the 8 Lok Sabha by-elections and 14 Assembly by-elections pending at the moment. But the Opposition has no direction and no clear objective.

To forestall Mrs Nandi Satpathy's rout at Cuttack, the State Assembly might be dissolved and the State brought under President's Rule but even that would amount to a serious debacle for the Congress which once went about toppling non-Congress ministries with the enthusiasm of a demolition squad.

As was to be expected the Congress could not take advantage of the split in the DMK and the matinee idol-politician, chaperoned in New Delhi and in Madras by the CPI's commissars. The Congress High Command is not in a mood to gamble anywhere because the internal situation will worsen in no time. The food stocks are running low and both the Soviet Union (from United States) and China (from Canada and Australia) are piling up stocks

because the poor crop year in the world as a whole might extent for another year or two. That is perhaps the reason why both the Soviet Union and China have contracted three-year deals. Even the United States will not be able to help India if the food gap widens this year.

Mrs Gandhi's message to Mr Nixon was more than formal and indicated an anxiety to normalise relations as early as possible. But India-United States relations are likely to continue at the present pitch for some time to come. After all New Delhi has had no reservations about accepting the World Bank's debt relief made possible by United States munificence.

The campaign against the CIA might have had some credibility with the Indian people if the debt relief offer had been turned down and Mrs Gandhi's message of greetings to Mr Nixon had been couched in terms less warm.

The anxiety to normalise relations with the United States and an effort to impress on Sheikh Mujib through All India Radio the need to take a more realistic view on the war crimes trial might suggest a measure of uneasiness and despair in New Delhi. One does not hear that tough talk any more, even for consumption by the gullible public.

November 11, 1972

India's Sarkari Industrialists

A. P. M.

THE turbaned industrialist, a rag-to-riches man, was telling a joke to the gathering, bemused at this twentieth hour of the day with the help of passable drinks and assembled at the sensibly furnished banquet hall of a Calcutta hotel. The joke was about Mr Birla. After his lamented death, the angels were escorting him, to hell. When he arrived there, he objected fiercely and demanded to know why they had brought him to the unwanted place. To this, the angels replied that they were merely executing the orders of the gods. Mr Birla threatened that unless he were immediately taken to heaven, he would obtain an injunction from the Calcutta High Court which would stop the angels from taking him to hell.

The angels then suggested that he place his objection with the gods. When he was brought to the gods, Mr Birla voiced his displeasure and pleaded that he be sent to heaven. The gods wanted to know why he should not be sent to hell. 'But I've built so many temples', protested Mr Birla. 'Yes', the gods replied, 'but aren't they all known as Birla temples? They are not known after us.'

'I've built so many schools, colleges and universities. Don't I merit being sent to heaven?' Mr Birla pleaded. 'Again', the gods replied, 'aren't they known as Birla schools, colleges and universities?' To this, Mr Birla replied, 'But what about the last thing I did on earth?' 'What did you do?' the gods wanted to know. 'I've built a car', Mr Birla replied, 'in which whenever people ride, they pray, "Oh God! Oh God!"'

The joke evoked much mirth. The industrialist looked around approvingly. He had every reason to feel satisfied. For, he is financing the first 'people's car' in the country, the Maruti. This car, accommodating five passengers and possessing four doors, will cost on the road Rs 11,800. When it comes out next year, the production will be 5,000 cars. In 1974, the total production will be 10,000 units. And thus the ultimate target of 50,000 cars a year would be gradually reached. The significance of this figure will be appreciated when it is remembered that the largest car manufacturers at present, Hindustan Motors, produce around 34,000 cars a year.

The Maruti, as may be remembered, is Mr Sanjay Gandhi's car. The design is his, the manufacturing licence is in his name and he is for all intents and purposes the man behind the project. But the money is not his; the principal amount has come from the gentleman who told the unkind joke about Mr Birla. If he had not stood behind Mr Gandhi, the Maruti would never roll on Indian streets. As he happens to be a friend of Mrs Gandhi, he came to the rescue. But, as his cronies made it clear the other day to Calcutta pressmen, the gentleman has no intention of playing the role of a good Samaritan. Mrs Gandhi will not last in power indefinitely; as soon as her star starts to set, the benign gentleman will usurp the control of the project. By rough reckoning, by that time the plant will also have grown into the largest car manufacturing plant in the country. It is obvious, as rumours of a possible government takeover of the Birla factory persist, why the gentleman took such apparent pleasure in telling the little joke about Mr Birla.

The turbaned industrialist belongs to a new breed of capitalists in the country. In inadequate English, they are known as public sector industrialists. While they remain entrepreneurs, they are in close touch with the Government. They are members of various government committees, sit in official enquiries into the working of public sector undertakings, have influenced New Delhi in the idea and practice of reviving sick units and have, in the process, managed to appropriate power, prestige and pelf which should have normally belonged to ministers and officials. In this basically contradictory situation, these gentlemen are often forced to be flexible in the attitude they adopt toward various matters and issues they are required to deal with. They are playing an increasingly effective role in confusing government policies since they can influence government committees, not to speak of individuals

in the Central and State governments.

The main characteristic common to these 'government' industrialists is that all of them are doing extremely well. Not merely power, prestige, influence and pelf-wise, but as pure, simple private businessmen as well. The gentleman who told the joke at the beginning of this article provides a typical example. His origin is as plebian as imaginable. He came to Delhi as a refugee after partition. His first business venture was as a dealer in steel tubes. Today, he is a multi-millionaire. His rise in business has coincided with a careful nurturing of the relations with politicians and government officials, not necessarily of the ruling party. He had been one of the early backers of Mrs Gandhi, at a time when her fall was predicted daily and no industrialist worth his black money would have taken the risk of supporting her. Today, he is reaping justifiable dividends.

Two Roles

It may not be too naive to point out that this group of industrialists has developed a philosophy of its own. Its members support anti-business actions by the Government without batting a single eyelid. This is done while participating on government platforms. While they play the other role, i.e., that of the private enterprisewallah, they again succeed in attacking government policies without batting an eyelid. They are able to pull off this seemingly impressive mix of conflicting actions with ease. In the process, their credibility has suffered somewhat in the eyes of those businessmen who tend to regard government policies and actions with old-fashioned suspicion. One outcome of this distrust has been the formation of several independent groups of youngish businessmen who endeavour to present a more responsible and less equivocal public image. However, their efforts at sounding different have suffered setbacks. Their principal demi-god, Mr J. R. D. Tata,

who had repeatedly spoken harshly to Mrs Gandhi's Government on economic matters till bank nationalisation, has now publicly joined the exalted ranks of 'government' industrialists. His celebrated memorandum on the joint sector is the most significant private sector move till date to influence a confused Government to plunge into an arrangement expected to facilitate private profit generation on more secure terms than otherwise possible now. The government propagators of the joint sector philosophy are elated, however, at this definite indication, on the part of the important sections of deshi industrialists, to cohabit with anti-private business policies. With the Tata memorandum has seemingly died the last surviving wish of private businessmen to oppose Mrs Gandhi's economic radicalism.

While the capitulation of private enterprise of the deshi variety is thus complete, the capitalists' camp is by no means shrouded in gloom. This contradictory situation explains why 'government' industrialists are flourishing despite being an apparent anachronism. By talking to Indian businessmen, it is easy to discern that they are not at all feeling downcast even as the Government takes over one business after another every day. The reason for this is that even when a particular business is taken over, the previous businessmen do not always go out of business. It was revealed during the recent woollen rags import controversy that though the STC is the only importer of rags, the actual trade is still being carried on by the previous rag importers. As a matter of fact, the STC and MMTC are finding it increasingly difficult to participate effectively in the numerous trades they are being asked to take over from private traders. The only way to wriggle out of the situation created by the Government's slightly breathless nationalisation programme is to ask private traders to stay on in exchange of a cut in their profit. This is being gladly

accepted by the businessmen. Thus, while they continue to do as good a business as they were doing prior to nationalisation, the blame for mishandling of imports is quietly passed on to the STC and MMTC. The latter seldom open their mouths, for they are not supposed to give the Government's game away. But when cornered, like the STC is now in the rags case, they spill the beans out.

Sick Units

Another major source of satisfaction for businessmen is the benefits accruing to them from the sick unit take-over game. The chief propagator of the philosophy that the State should take over sick units is a youngish Bengali industrialist. This gentleman is in the front ranks of 'government' industrialists. His chief distinction is that he participates in all kinds of government meetings. His inherited business, a large cycle manufacturing company, has been taken over by the Government. This has brought him a booty of Rs 70 lakhs or so. Since the company is now a joint sector unit, the management has remained in the hands of his big brothers, who participate more effectively in running it. Meanwhile, our subject is doing extremely well in his chosen field of being a 'government' industrialist. The difference in the treatment meted out to him and to Sir Biren Mookerjee exemplifies the benefits an industrialist can expect if he supports the Government in its economic policies. The State Government played an important part in the IISCO take-over because Sir Biren and his aristocratic board of directors constantly refused to bow to its pressure tactics. On the other hand, our youngish industrialist appeared singularly high-spirited when the conversion of his company into a joint sector one was announced. In fact, a few days before the announcement came, he cheerfully informed a group of local reporters that he must skip lunch because he had an appointment with the Governor during

which the agreement would be finalised.

The recent controversy over the printing of election posters for the party brought into focus one of the important 'government' industrialists. This gentleman, whose ancestors came to Calcutta in 1834 and grew into a big business house in the wake of the departure of British capital, claims publicly to be a confidante of Mrs Gandhi. That this claim was not an idle one was proved by the manner in which the Government dealt with the controversy in Parliament. It was steadfastly denied that the posters had been printed gratis. Some time later, the gentleman caused another controversy in Parliament. One of his companies had been purchased by the Government. It was alleged that the price paid for equity shares was substantially higher than the market price ruling at the time. This charge was equally vehemently denied. But the eagerness of the Government to defend an action which manifestly benefited a private individual was all too apparent. This gentleman was also elated rather than crestfallen when his company was bought by a government undertaking. He could not have been otherwise, because no private purchaser would have paid more than what the lowest market price of equity shares warranted.

The Indian press is daily learning of this equivocal existence of Indian capitalists. Most public controversies which occur between the Government and deshi business confirm the impression that they are often stage-managed. It would be interesting to inquire why the coal trade and industry always sound unenthusiastic in charging the Railway administration with corruption, despite the fact that it is they who suffer most from the present state of affairs. Similarly, it is never explained why the Government does not investigate allegations that the cement companies cover up sales by proclaiming them as stock transfers and thus deprive the Government

lakhs of rupees every year. In similar vein, businessmen seek to befriend the very Government which threatens to drive them away from their businesses. They do so only because they are assured of continued business activities even in cases of nationalisation. The relationship between business and government is thus essentially one of accommodation in which sarkari industrialists flourish, confounding the age-old theory which seeks to establish that capitalism and socialism cannot co-exist.

PLACE A REGULAR ORDER

FOR YOUR

FRONTIER

Subscription Rates

INLAND

| | | |
|-------------|----|------------|
| Six Months | .. | Rs. 9.00 |
| One year | .. | Rs. 18.00 |
| Five Years | .. | Rs. 75.00 |
| Seven years | .. | Rs. 100.00 |

Foreign AIR MAIL Rates (One Year)

| | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Europe : | Rs 98 or 13 dollars |
| Asia : | Rs. 88 or 11 dollars |
| America : | Rs 116 or 16 dollars |
| By Surface Mail | |
| All countries : | Rs. 40 or 5 dollars |

Back numbers of *Frontier*, more than two months' old, cost Re 1 each if they are available.

Frontier will no longer be sent by VPP

Long-term Subscriptions will help the weekly

Two Horns Of The Harijan Dilemma

SUGAT SINGH

ON October 4, 1972, at the meeting of the Congress Working Committee in New Delhi, Mr Jagjivan Ram flared up and the discussion was disturbed by angry exchanges between him (on the one hand and Messrs P. C. Sethi, K. D. Malaviya and U. S. Dixit on the other. The immediate provocation was the reference to "weaker sections" in respect of grain distribution. Mr Ram's insistence was on the use of the word "vulnerable sections" instead of "weaker sections", which were more hard hit and subject to discriminatory treatment. He felt that they were being ignored and overridden by all others.

But has Mr Jagjivan Ram himself ever convincingly put up any suggestion which could be instrumental in solving the problems of the Harijans? He has been a Minister in the Central Cabinet since 1948, that is, he had been a part of the state machinery which was entrusted with the task of implementing all the welfare schemes. Why was untouchability and the wretched condition of Harijans not removed in spite of his participation in the Government? If he could not overcome the deep-rooted prejudice in the minds of the powers-that-be against the Harijans, why did he not leave the Government in order to work more vigorously for the removal of this evil? The fact is that both the Malaviyas, Dixits and the like and Mr Ram are responsible. The vestiges of the feudal age cannot be wished away by men like Mr Ram. Bitter and angry utterances here and there depict his selfishness and opportunism. His hot words create only ripples on the surface. A correspondent in one of the premier dailies of Delhi (*The Statesman*, 9-10-72) relates some stories about his mental disposition; the title is "Blow hot, Blow cold". His whole career as Minister is an example of this attitude. When he was Kama-

rajad from Mr Nehru's Cabinet, he was reported to have thundered that he would cause a bloody revolution in the countryside. Later when he was accommodated, he forgot it. He was angry with Mr Shastri in the manner in which he was hoodwinked by him in the fight for Prime Ministership. Later his anger evaporated when he was rehabilitated. As Congress President after the split, he once proclaimed that he was not a "sleeping, President". But when Mrs Gandhi asked him to choose any of the two (Presidentship or Ministership), he meekly opted for Ministership. The poor Mr Jagjivan Ram feels that he can better the condition of the depressed people only by becoming a Minister and by offering a handful of jobs to men belonging to the Scheduled Castes. It is commonly felt in knowledgeable sections that his preference for job-oriented ministries, his practice of shifting from one Ministry to the other have something to do with this consideration. His utterances on October 4 against Mr Sethi should be viewed in this context (it is reported that no Harijan has been included in the Madhya Pradesh Government, in spite of Mr Ram's recommendation). But at the same time, his bitter expressions against Mr Malaviya and Mr Dixit and for that matter against the general trend in the Congress, speak volumes about the problem. He is fully right that the Congress continues to exploit the untouchables. The glaring evidence is that in spite of constitutional safeguards and various other enactments, the Harijans are still being hunted down like beasts of prey. It is also true that notwithstanding their so-called radical image, the K. D. Malaviyas in the party and the Government function as the most true champions of their own castemen. The Nehrus, the Katjus, the Pants, the Indiras, more or less fall

in the same category. Chou En-lai is the first communist outside India to notice this caste-orientation in the structure of the Indian Government and frankly calls them to be the masters of the "Brahminical idea of Indian imperialism". The late Dr B. R. Ambedkar called the Indian Government a government of Brahmins and Baniyas. Mr Bhutto has echoed the same view a number of times. Now a member of the same Government, Mr Ram, repeats the same thing when he says, "when a Baniya becomes Chief Minister, at least four others belonging to his community must join his Government".

Should we dismiss all these expressions? While defining the character of the Indian Government, we call it semi-feudal and semi-colonial. Hence the caste system which happens to be the product of the feudal age, must continue to be one of its ingredients. Mr Chou's statement should be viewed in the context of our long history, where Brahmin rulers had fought long battles for the establishment of big empires. Vassakara (Prime Minister of Ajatashatru), Chanakya (friend, philosopher and guide of Chandragupta Maurya), Pusyamitra Sunga, the Sens of Bengal and Bihar, etc. are examples.

Apart from the theories regarding the origin and growth of the caste system, the revolts and reforms put forward by various philosophers and saints like Buddha, Mahaveera, Upanisadic seers, (the majority of them happened to be Kshatriya), Nanak, Kabir, Dadu and the consequent development of various sects in Indian society, the question which at the moment agitates our mind is the sad plight of the Harijans all over the country. The influence of revivalist religious and social organisations like Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj etc. is fast fading out and the

untouchables (some of them have got English education and thus are acquainted with Western ideas and thought) are becoming impatient with Hindu society. In the mid-thirties of the present century, leaders like Ambedkar publicly declared that they would renounce the Hindu fold. This was sufficient for Hindu orthodoxy to get nervous. Their fear was that if the untouchables renounced Hinduism and embraced Islam or Christianity, the picture of India would be different and Hindu orthodoxy would lose its ground permanently. But at the same time, they were not prepared to give the untouchables their rightful place in their society. This proved a grave dilemma for them. The Madan Mohan Malaviyas and the Gandhis solved it for the time being with their persuasive power and deceptive moves. Gandhi started calling the untouchables Harijans (men of God). This was a clever move to contain them. But that magic has become totally inoperative now. The word Harijan has become a synonym for untouchables. The Harijan youth is fast realizing that mere change of religion will not lessen their suffering. The oppression and exploitation cannot be undone by becoming Rashid, Peter, Buddha Dutt or Kharak Singh.

The fact is that violence against the Harijans is fast increasing. One reads the report on village Machharia (U.P.) and the like where a number of huts belonging to the Harijans were burnt along with some of the inmates. If one analyses such cases, one finds the following four factors: the general economic crisis, the fast-growing awareness of the Harijans of their rights, a corresponding increase in the degree of intolerance and prejudice among the caste Hindus and the restlessness of the Harijan youth. The economic crisis hits the most the weakest sections of society. The Harijans, barring one or two per cent of their population, fall in this category. The economic crisis is further aggravating the age-old exploitation of Harijans by the dominant sec-

tions of the society. The spread of education among some of them has raised their consciousness on the one hand and created hatred, intolerance and prejudice among high caste Hindus on the other. And lastly, unlike their forefathers, the Harijan youths are fast catching up with the spirit of the times. They are not prepared to see their brethren treated even worse than animals. They are getting turbulent. They are restless. Many among them are even ready to lay down their lives for the achievement of a rightful place in society.

It is a known fact that the Harijans are discriminated against in services, schools, colleges, universities, notwithstanding the so-called reservations. They are not allowed to have any real say in administration. In government they are a non-entity. Those who try to assert are elbowed out sooner or later or, if retained, are made ineffective with the help of various intrigues. The upper caste leadership in almost all political parties makes a thorough scrutiny at the time of selection for party tickets. Assertive and talented aspirants are weeded out at the outset. Those who cross that barrier are squeezed out at different stages. The scholarships, stipends and other educational aids meant for Harijans are unscrupulously grabbed by men of the managements themselves or are offered to wards of upper caste Hindus. Sometimes payments are deliberately delayed so that they find it impossible to continue their education. In services the full quota fixed for Harijans is never filled.

Apart from the practice of untouchability, belief in the system of untouchability is a common thing. Of course this is not professed in practice, particularly in the presence of Harijans and from public platforms. The majority of political leaders, whether convinced or not, deliberately avoid saying anything which offends the sentiments of the Harijans. But it does not mean that they are committed to abolition of the system. The fact is that the majority of upper caste Hindus continue to

accept untouchability as a component part of their religion. They follow their scriptures. The Shankaracharya of Puri expressed this view at a public meeting in Delhi. Mr Golwalkar, the Indian Goldwater, is a staunch supporter of his view. Swami Karapatri Ji, the leader of Ram Raj Parishad (now defunct), established a new Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi when Harijans forced their entry into the old Vishwanath Temple with the help of some political parties, particularly the Socialist Party. A Minister in Andhra Pradesh said at a public meeting that Harijans should be kicked publicly. All these are happening under the Congress governments at the Centre and in the States. The Congress which represents landlords, kulaks, temple-priests, traders, capitalists, retains this practice for its own benefit, the set-up being semi-feudal.

Thus it is clear that capitalism has not yet completely taken over from feudalism. The economic structure of feudal society had given rise to a corresponding superstructure of views and institutions. This superstructure is bound to exist as long as it is needed to serve the basis. But with the change in 'the mode of production of material life', the social, political and intellectual life process in general is bound to change. Production relations are changing in our society. As a result, a new consciousness is developing among the caste Hindus as well as the untouchables. The Harijans are no more in a mood to tolerate everything like dumb cattle. Two recent occurrences can be cited. One in a village near Pratapgarh in U.P., where the Chamars refused to do 'begar' (forced labour) and resisted the attacks by the Brahmin landlords and kulaks; and the second in Bapanagar, New Delhi, where Chamars, Raigars and Valmiki's fought back the repressive measures of the Government which refused to take action against the woman principal of a residential school over the mysterious death of a Harijan girl student. All this happened spontaneously. There was

no effort to guide, organise and direct these outbursts into a conscious movement. The fault lies with the communist leadership of the country. Prisoners of their own subjective

ideas and working under the influence of feudal views and institutions, they never tried to understand this peculiar and unique Indian institution. They never thought that in

case of an unwilling capitalism—as in our case—the responsibility to combat it is that of the socialists themselves.

The China Nixon Didn't See—II

NEVILLE MAXWELL

THE cultural revolution was concerned above all with attitudes. The old hierarchical society and all its institutions had been swept away, but, like roots beneath a hastily weeded field, the attitudes that reflected and upheld the old society persisted in the new, and by the mid-1960s were confidently sprouting. The cultural revolution, in all its far-ranging turmoil, harrowed and weeded the social ground again. It was a second revolution, as momentous as the first although it took place primarily in the dimensions of thought and attitudes rather than of institutions. And the cultural revolution—which the Chinese see as a continuing process—has its own special institutions—the May 7th cadre schools (named after the day in 1966 on which Mao Tse-tung pointed to the need for them).

If the people's commune is the key instrument for the transformation of both the outer and inner worlds of Chinese people, the cadre school is the society's fundamental fail-safe device. It is the institution designed to prevent the re-separation of government and governed that would undo the revolution—to prevent the bureaucracy from becoming, as it has in Russia, a new ruling class.

In a cadre school, manual labour is the headmaster and the pupils are officials and brainworkers. The principle is that all those whose occupations or positions of leadership tend to separate them from the masses should return regularly to field or factory work. All cadres except those who are old, weak, ill or disabled, should get down to manual labour again, Mao suggested, and a

network of cadre schools was accordingly set up. Every ministry in Peking has its cadre school somewhere in the countryside, and so do departments of provincial governments and city administrations.

There are no teachers at the cadre schools, no staff. Field work, and work in the workshops and small factories that the schools have set up, is one source of teaching. Then, "There are teachers everywhere in the countryside around us," one of the elected leaders of my cadre school pointed out. He meant the local peasants, especially those who had been among the great mass at the bottom of the social pile before liberation. "They have good moral attitudes, they have know-how, and they work hard," he said. "Our cadres compare themselves very badly with the peasants, but they learn from them." But it is by no means all manual work and no study at the cadre schools. Regular sessions of several hours a day are spent on the group or private study of the Marxist classics.

At a May 7th cadre school I visited they force-feed ducks for the favourite dish of the people of Peking. They also rear pigs, grow peanuts, provide for themselves all of their meat, cooking oil and vegetables; and, on the fields they have created out of sand dunes, they grow more than half the rice that their one-thousand-odd intellectuals, appetites sharpened by manual labour, can eat in a year. But recently the leadership invited criticism and was inundated, the main complaint from the members being that the school was stressing production instead of

ideological education that should be its main function.

When the system shakes down, every official (which means women as well as men) will spend regular periods at a cadre school, a sort of sabbatical—but more frequently than one in seven years. At present the cadre schools are not functioning really as intended. They are serving also as catchment centres for those whose jobs or institutions were done away with during the cultural revolution, and as a result too many of the people I met had been at the school too long. For example, one young woman, a teacher at a "spare-time school" (for adults) before the cultural revolution, had been at the cadre school two years. She had had a baby in this period, but was still separated from her husband and other child who lived in Peking. She spent at least one weekend a month at home, but plainly her family was one, perhaps one of many, still caught up destructively in the turbulence of the cultural revolution.

It is not only at the cadre schools that manual labour is central to education; since the cultural revolution it has been programmed intensively into every stage, beginning in kindergarten (if training the children to keep their rooms tidy and clean counts). Primary school children can be seen gardening in the vegetable plots that supply their own meals, or carrying sand for the foundations of an extension; at the secondary level, the children leave school for a fortnight or even a month and take their places doing light work in factories. In the universities the principle goes as

far as half study, half work; students run their own workshops, maintain their own arms, and spend a month or so each year back in the communes or factories—"back," because now there is no other way to the university except from the field or workbench.

"We found the old way, the 'life of three doorways', had come back," said a professor at Peking University, meaning the doors to the school, the university and then to an office career. He was recalling what the university had become before it was caught up in—indeed became a seedbed for—the cultural revolution. Cork-like, irrepressible, the bourgeoisie had reasserted itself. Bookish, attuned to examinations, ready to serve the people still perhaps, but only if that could be done, with clean hands, students from middle-class backgrounds were found to be almost dominating in the universities. This reflected too the bourgeois attitudes toward the university—and therefore toward society itself—which had continued strongly entrenched in the faculties.

It is here, perhaps, in the universities or other academic institutions, that the middle-class foreigner is most likely to find himself trying to empathize with the few, the elite deprived of status, the elite *manqué*. In China now these people could feel themselves among the deprived. But what they miss, the vast mass of their compatriots never had, and what the great mass of the Chinese now have, those who were bourgeois have too—material sufficiency and a conscious and creative role to play in the consolidation and development of the new society.

From the fields, back to the fields. In every commune I visited I met educated youngsters from the cities, often university graduates, some of whom expected to stay in the commune, others who would eventually move on to other work. These young people bring mechanical skills and often scientific techniques to the rural areas, and are among the key agents in the effort to close the

manifold gaps between urban and rural ways of life and thought—to erase the distinction between worker and peasant.

Again projecting one's own attitudes, one looks for signs that these educated youngsters may be unwilling exiles in the rural back-of-beyond, putting up with the cold comforts of farm life because they have to. There must be some like that, but those I met seemed wholly at one with their adopted environment. Many were doing those jobs in the communes for which their training made them especially fitted. Often they were "barefoot doctors," the paramedical, volunteer—and unpaid—health workers who underpin the commune clinic services; or they were working in the small factories and workshops that are pushing the communes and regions toward self-sufficiency. But even so, they are no different from, certainly no more important than, other commune members.

Take a group of girls, all about twenty, with whom I spent an hour at the "Valley of Stones" brigade in Hopei province, one in particularly hard land, within steep hills closely pocked with rocks. I met them first as they walked back for the lunch break from their work in a "shock team," or work commando. They were tunneling into the next valley so that their brigade could use tractor and trailer to bring in soil for the fields it was terracing out of the hills, rather than having to carry it in basket loads on shoulder poles. I called on them at home in the evening—they shared a two-room house—and asked them how they had adapted to the ways of the countryside and the country people. They laughed at the memory of what they had been when, only two years before, they came to the brigade: "We couldn't even carry one bucket without splashing the water." How had the villagers treated them? (I was thinking in terms of distrust, even animosity, imagining perhaps what it would be like for young city girls transplanted to an Indian vil-

lage.) "They worried about us at first, we had to learn so much, but they helped us." The girls saw their families in the cities only once a year, for a couple of weeks, but plainly they felt their lives to be in the village now—where, they explained with giggles, they all expected to marry in due course.

Marriage

My question about marriage may have been out of place. The emphasis in China is now strongly on late marriages. A twenty-eight-year-old chemist, back in Shanghai from a purchase mission for his factory, invited me in for a talk and tea. Making my way down a lane in Shanghai (not easy passage because of the earth piled over the long air raid shelter that ran down the middle), I had greeted him in his doorway. He had stayed overnight at his parents' house. His father, now retired, was responsible for recording all the electricity consumption in the locality and was out on his rounds noting the meter readings. (There always seems to be occupation and relevance for the aged, in helping to provide the close network of communal services that in China does so much of the work that the state or municipality is responsible for here.) When I asked the young man why, at twenty-eight, he had not married, he put it in terms of late marriages being "better". Who said they were better? Well, population could be a problem, and late marriages were part of the answer. He was a member of the Communist party. Had he met anyone he wanted to marry? Yes, and luckily, he said smiling, she thought they should wait another year or so too.

There are air raid shelters everywhere in China, and while I was there it seemed that there was a sudden intensification of shelter construction; fresh piles of earth appeared on Peking's streets, and in Shanghai whole neighbourhoods seemed to be tunneling under city blocks. Working at night by floodlight, every factory was extending or strengthen-

ing its shelter. This activity appeared to reflect a sudden tightening in the Sino-Soviet deadlock, with China's rejection of a Russian proposal for another summit meeting to discuss the boundary question. My visit had started in Peking with a purposeful foreign policy orientation on my side, and the officials responsible for my programme advised me to talk about foreign affairs in the communes and factories too. I found there an interest and familiarity with such subjects that was often astonishing. This familiarity derived, I found, from the regular read-and-discuss sessions over the newspapers and a journal, restricted in circulation until recently to cadres and party members (and secret so far as foreigners were concerned), which runs long extracts from foreign newspapers, books and agency reports.

Everywhere I talked about China's position in the world I found a predominant concern with the danger of attack from the "social imperialists" (the Russians), a conscious focusing on Mao's warning, "Be prepared for war, be prepared for natural calamities", on the northern and western frontiers. Everyone seemed aware of the Soviet troop and missile concentrations along the borders and in Mongolia, and the people as a whole seemed braced, although stoically rather than tensely, for war. But Mao's linkage of war with "natural calamities" is apposite in many senses: stockpiles and regional and local self-sufficiency would serve both contingencies; and besides, the Chinese do look on war as an event as much beyond their control as an earthquake, to be met and dealt with as it comes. The conceived context is always that of attack on China, probably invasion, and the Chinese know how it will have to be met if it comes—by people's war.

Nixon's Visit

This concern with what is felt as the threat from Russia relegates to second place any interest in the United States, even, when I was there (through October and November, 1971), in President Nixon's coming

visit. I usually had to bring it up, but when I did, the impression was strong that although a consensus had been reached, it reflected vigorous initial disagreement, even contention, about the proposed visit. The consensus expressed was that China's agreement to allow Nixon's visit was wholly consistent with her past policies (it was always emphasized that it was he who had asked to come, and it was pointed out that the Chinese had agreed, not invited in the initiative sense). The proposed talks were put in the context not only of the sixteen years of the Warsaw exchanges with the Americans ("If we talk at lower levels it would be irrational to refuse to talk at the level where decisions are taken"), but also of the negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek into which Mao and his colleagues entered at the beginning of the civil war. And all this comment was informed by a sense of vindication—which became triumph with the admission of Peking to the United Nations—in the perception that Nixon's coming was admission of the failure of America's twenty-year siege of China. It was seen, then, as a journey to Canossa. But the Chinese would not make Nixon stand in the snow, for that is not their style; they would politely bring him indoors, and listen to what he had to say.

Confidence, then, was the overwhelming keynote of all the impressions of China. Confidence in the resilience of the state to meet and survive attack. Confidence in the capacities of liberated man, the almost Promethean will expressed in the lines from Mao I saw set in a soaring aqueduct of the Red Flag canal system, among the most dramatic demonstrations of local initiative in China:

Bitter sacrifice strengthens bold resolve,

Which dares to make the sun and moon shine in new skies.

To be seen straight, China must be viewed through the past. The Chinese themselves insist on this, and reminders and recollections of the

time before liberation are deliberate and sustained. Some communes, even brigades, have little exhibition halls. Sketches and models, usually made by the teachers and children, illustrate the tyranny of the landlords, their unbridled power and the cruelty with which they exercised it. A series of drawings tells the history of one of the village families before liberation, and through this, of the village itself. "It was work for the landlords, no bed at night, sell your daughters, live as beggars". A glass case contains a beggar's bowl, a landlord's false-bottomed measuring baskets, the wooden pillow one family used for eighty years—and, prominently, a homemade rifle, memento and symbol of the day when the villagers, responding to the first Red guerrillas, began their long struggle to what they call, and intensely feel as, liberation. More commonly than such exhibitions, recollection sessions are used to evoke the bitter past. Village elders recount to the young their life under the old regime, with the moral expressed: But for the Communist party, but for Chairman Mao, so it would be still.

But "village elders" misleads—it is all so close in time, although so far removed from the actuality of the present. "I was a slave until liberation": and that not from a graybeard, but from Pilichau, a Mongol of thirty-seven, whom I spoke to among the crew of an open-hearth furnace in the Paotow steel mill, and later visited at home. Born, the third generation, into slavery, he had served one of the cattle lords of the grasslands until he was fifteen. Then, freed when the Red Army came to Inner Mongolia, he had joined up, and after seven years was discharged to become a steelworker. With spells at a technical institute and another steelworks behind him, he lives with his family (wife, mother and four children) in a little three-room house for which he pays two per cent of the family's income as rent. His wife, also Mongol, is a pneumatic driller in the plant. Plainly, he feels his house a palace.

For the traveller, then, who sees China against the backdrop of her recent past, or against his own knowledge of what other parts of Asia are today, the impact is powerful. (Until I saw Shanghai, teeming but brisk, clean and humanly purposeful, I had imagined the pullulating miseries of Calcutta to be beyond remedy). The Chinese confidence that they are on the right path, that their achievements are only a beginning, and will one day be seen as relevant for all mankind, is telling.

But as the Westerner articulates such reactions, he hears his own echoes of the past—the voices of those who went to the Soviet Union and proclaimed a vision of a brave new world. The liberal political imagination was deeply bruised, perhaps maimed, by the discovery, often self-delusively late, of the failure of the Soviet revolution, and there is a consequent tendency to see the phenomena of the new China through

the distorting lens of Russian developments. But because revolution has failed once—or indeed a thousand times—does not mean that it must always fail. As the Chinese see it, they have fought and won the first great battle against the seed of betrayal with which every revolution is pregnant at birth. They ascribe to that victory the dynamism and sense of direction that is palpable in their society—and to me it does appear that all of this is generated from within, not imparted from the top—that China is driving, not driven, orchestrated, not regimented.

As a human experiment, China is not new. Conscious attempts to plan and establish a just and equal society are as old as civilization. But there has never been anything on a scale so vast. And never could such an attempt be more widely relevant than now, when the very questions about man's nature and social destiny that China is confidently answering are

being so sharply posed in the West.

In the Chinese countryside the confidence is wholly contagious. But to return to Peking is to begin to doubt. The style of mystery, of indirectness and opacity that the government affects is wholly at odds with the openness of the society. The emergence of profound policy differences even at the very summit of leadership would not in itself be disturbing—but the hugger-mugger of transparent secrecy about it is. So Lin Piao and the Chairman have disagreed: Why must photographs be withdrawn, books recast, slogans reordered? Why must Lin, yesterday's heroic "close comrade at arms", be today's nonperson? It seems to express fear of disunity, and that is ominous for the continuity of will and leadership after Mao. But beyond even that, it is petty, an affront to the common sense of the Chinese people, and discordant with the grandeur of the venture on which they are embarked.

THE COMMUNIST STATES IN DISARRAY 1965-1971

edited by Adam Bromke and
Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone

presents a revealing picture of the changing communist world through a survey and analysis of developments in the communist states and their relations with one another and with other nations.

(Minnesota) \$4.95

MAKERS OF MODERN STRATEGY

Military Thought from
Machiavelli to Hitler

edited by Edward Mead Earle

'... a valuable study of the science of war as well as a book of great practical usefulness...'

The New Republic

'It is seldom that any book can lay claim to being unique, yet *Makers of Modern Strategy* has that distinction.'

The Nation

(Princeton) \$3.95

Eric R. Wolf

PEASANT WARS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Professor Wolf presents six cases of rebellion and revolution in our time in which peasants have taken the lead. His aim is to point to recurrent features and to account for the strategic differences.

(Faber) £3.00

Se-Jin Kim

THE POLITICS OF MILITARY REVOLUTION IN KOREA

In this factually sound study Dr Kim, a Korean by birth, examines the task of nation-building in Korea under an ineffectual 13-year civil rule followed by a modern military establishment. The baffling ambivalence of the military in politics is given serious study in this book.

(North Carolina) \$9.25

Malcolm H. Kerr

THE ARAB COLD WAR

Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir
and his Rivals
1958-1970

'... admirably successful in unravelling some of the complicated strands of the political scene in the Arab East, particularly the Egypt-Syria-Iraq triangle...'

Afro-Asian and World Affairs

\$1.95

REVOLUTIONARY LEADERS OF MODERN CHINA

edited by Chun-tu Hsueh

\$4.95



OXFORD
University Press

Delhi Bombay Calcutta Madras

Brecht By Theatre Unit

HITEN GHOSH

ON April 29, 1941, a few weeks before he left Finland for the USA, Brecht completed *Arturo Ui*, a "gangster" play, with Hitler as "hero", written in the grand manner. It is set in Chicago 1938-39. Arturo Ui, a petty gangster leader, succeeds through terror in making himself the "protector" of the cauliflower trust of Chicago. He manages to undo and displace the corrupted Mayor, Dogsborough and, with his lieutenants, Giri and Givola, exterminates his other henchman Roma. He eliminates the head of the neighbouring vegetable trust, Dullfeet of Cicero and wins the latter's widow. In the end he obtains the overwhelming vote of approval of both Chicago and Cicero. The Reichstag fire incident and its trial are parodied in a similar vein.

Now if Theatre Unit's rendering of the play at Rabindra Sadan was not quite a success, the blame may not be entirely due to the production, but should perhaps be shared to an extent by the playwright as well. For the *Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, as the play is called in English, is not one of Brecht's best and its intended effects of both parody and horror are scarcely fully achieved. Besides, the play contains elements of literary allusions and parallels whose significance no Bengali translation can preserve. But the pity is that the translator-director shows no awareness of the difficulty in creating the Brechtian synthesis of effects and conveying the message and meaning of the original play.

Just Arrived :

RED STAR OVER CHINA

Edgar Snow

(Enlarged & revised edn. paperback)
Rs. 20.00

NEW BOOK CENTRE

14, Ramanath Majumdar St.
CALCUTTA-9

Such an awareness might have prevented him from giving so lifeless a version as this.

Brecht intended his play as a parable, written in the grand manner, with the aim of destroying the usual respect we feel for the great murderers in history. Parody, an elevated and mock-heroic verse, reminiscences of Goethe's *Faust* and Shakespeare's *Richard III* are used to expose the hollowness and moral and spiritual mediocrity of a "gangster-hero"—Hitler—to denude him of that aura of heroism and greatness which attach in the popular imagination to murderers and criminals. In one of his notes, Brecht says that 'the great political criminals must be exposed—and particularly exposed to laughter. For they are by no means great political criminals, but the perpetrators of great political crimes'. And here he warns that the play must avoid the spirit of travesty, and even in the grotesqueness of its many scenes, the element of horror must never be forgotten. The important thing is to effect a total dissolution of 'respect for killers'. Hence he ruled that, in order that the play may retain all its significance, it must be produced on the grand scale and preferably with obvious hark-backs to the Elizabethan theatre. Even the comic element must to some extent be revolting. Now neither Sekhar Chattopadhyaya's translation nor his total interpretation of the play seeks to bring out this inner significance of Brecht's parody.

It is doubtful, however, if the play, even in its original form, could ever achieve its anticipated terrifying impact with an audience dominated by memories of Nazi horror. Not even such exciting performances as those of the Berliner Ensemble could make the play entirely convincing. But this does not absolve its Bengali producer from the charge of making

it far more unconvincing than it really is in the original. The present production wholly misses the double estrangement effect Brecht aimed at in the play—through the use of gangster theme and the elevated poetical style. This has some serious practical consequences in character conception and setting of the atmosphere. The character of the villainous hero, for example, is modelled on Richard III so that the murder of Roma (Roehm) echoes the downfall of Buckingham and the Hitler-character woos the widow of his victim. And Brecht's supreme skill as a parodist is evident in such scenes as that between Ui, Dullfeet, Givola, Betty Dullfeet—which of course immediately brings to mind the garden scene of Goethe's *Faust*, where Mephistopheles softens up Martha, while Faust is preparing ground for Gretchen's ruin. The scene takes place in Givola's flower-shop and the couples of Givola and Dullfeet and Betty and Ui, appear alternately as their prototypes do in Goethe's tragedy. The interchanges between Betty Dullfeet and Ui, and the gangster flower-merchant Givola and Dullfeet are full of significant echoes and overtones. In Theatre Unit's rendering of these scenes and characterization all these subtle nuances are left out, thereby robbing the play of its deeper layers of meaning.

Broad Comedy

In the performance under review, a number of burlesque effects which attain a horrifying grimness are cut out. Like Shakespeare's *Richard III*, Arturo Ui woos and wins the widow of the man he has murdered; and like his British prototype, he has a nightmare vision in which he sees another recent victim, Roma. But as in the original play, so in the Bengali production, the broad comedy scenes are the most successful—

Our agent at Varanasi
MANNALAL DAS
D-35/321A Jangambari

Ui takes lessons from an actor. He studies walking, standing, reciting and the Actor instructs him in Shakespeare (the whole of "Friends, Romans, Countrymen" is inserted here). It is here that Sekhar Chattopadhyaya comes into his own and shows himself the powerful actor he is. And it is here, too, that Brecht, as an artist, has his greatest vengeance on the Great Dictator who appeared so invincible at the time he wrote his play. When every country, organization, ideology seemed to be giving way before the power of this monstrous mediocrity, Bertolt Brecht was determined to laugh at the pretender. At the end of the play he warns us not to exult too soon for it is a fertile womb from which the monster once crawled out.

If the play somehow fails to strike a reminiscent echo in many hearts in this far country and so different a period, it is because Brecht's play is an obvious commentary on a set of historical events long past. Incriptions or projections on the screen underlining the connexion between the story and actual historical events somehow condition our responses and limit them to a narrow context. One does not understand why more recent happenings in other lands, preferably nearer home, are not treated in this way with echoes and allusions from native literary sources and employment of indigenous theatrical techniques. With Tagore's unique and original dramaturgy rooted in local folk tradition such as *yatra*, and a rich heritage of classical, romantic and popular literature, we in Bengal should have been able to produce our own Brecht by now.

It would be grossly unfair, however, to conclude this review without mentioning that apart from the Actor scene, the two parts of the frame or outer play—epilogue and prologue—are presented with telling effect and help to set the perspective for the main story. The group can develop a real talent for producing Brecht only if it pays more attention to the text.

Love, Sweet And Sour

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

CHETAN Anand has the pretentious habit of taking up beautiful traditional themes for his films, which he makes a complete hash of and the whole thing becomes the grist in the mill of Hindi cinema. In *Anjali* he has spoiled the Buddhist legend of Prakriti-Ananda (on which Tagore based his *Chandalika*) and now he has dug his butcher's blade into Heer-Raanjha, the famous folklore of the Punjab, immortalising the love-affair of Heer, an aristocratic girl, with Raanjha, a young man of peasant stock, a kind of roving minstrel. In the film version, however, all the tender poetry and delicate beauty of the original folk-theme disappear under the crushing weight of Bombay banalities. Result, the usual clichés, the much-familiar horseplay, the machinations of the villain and the lovers' romp round the trees under the electric moon shining on the studio backdrop. The film plays havoc with the period and the locale is largely ambiguous. In this otherwise unpoetic atmosphere the dialogues in verse sound absolutely ridiculous. Raaj Kumar as Raanjha with his simian antics looks like a baboon in heat and Priya with her wrinkles and bulging middle has completely tarnished the image of Heer as an eternal nymph.

If love is all sweetness (although of Bombay fillum brand) in *Heer*

Raanjha, it turns sour in *Diary of a Mad Housewife* (directed by Frank Perry) when the wife goes into tantrums in adjusting with her over-ambitious husband of Maddison Avenue type. He wants her to be up and coming, to "circulate", to become his partner in social life. But she hates the hectic parties and prefers some quiet companionship. This she finds in another young man, an alienated intellectual and half of the film is composed of their bed-hopping shenigans and love-hate quarrel. The director who has earlier given us a penetrating portrayal of teenage neurosis in *David and Lisa* has also successfully probed the confusion and disintegration which often stalk the lives of the American couples of today. Some moments are really unforgettable, specially the scenes where the wife makes a final attempt to find out some new meaning for her existence in the passionate embrace of her newly-found lover and the touching sequence where the husband who has lost in the rat race wakes up in the middle of the night to have a cocktail of milk and honey, remembering his mother who used to give it to him during his childhood as an antidote for bad dreams. In a few moments of wordless agony, Frank Perry sums up all the curses of an affluent society.

Letters

Peking And CP(ML)

The publication (November 4) of the document 'Peking And CP(ML)' could not have been more timely. Now that this party has suffered a setback—temporary, let's believe—most of its sympathizers who have been groping in the dark as to the

position of the party in relation to Peking will now have a clear understanding. At least they can start understanding.

The document shows that after all the numerous sympathizers who have been repeatedly pointing out the

fallacies in the programme of the CP (ML) have not been altogether wrong. And it is somewhat depressing to note that over almost all the points that were once believed to be the special contribution of Charu Mazumdar to the cause of Indian Revolution, the Chinese Communist Party differed; for example, the slogan 'China's Chairman is our Chairman'; the branding of trade union activity as an altogether reactionary affair; the theory of Annihilation (which was the typical brain child of Charu Mazumdar, who said it was the only way in which the people could put up a fight, could organise, could revolutionize—in short, a talisman!); the characterisation of the struggle of Naxalbari as a struggle only for the seizure of State power.

Last but not the least, the significant suggestion that the prestige and authority of a leader cannot be created, but grows and develops. All these errors boil down to a single flaw: a mechanistic and not a dialectical understanding of problems, an 'Either—or' type of argument, not thinking of 'things in their motion, in their interconnections'. CPM leaders would not take to the armed path, and so they are our enemies, there is no reason to differentiate them from the Congress. Trade unions are exploited by the reactionaries, and so they have to be boycotted. So for every other question.

Charu Mazumdar's devotion to the revolutionary cause, his sacrifice are all beyond doubt. But with all these qualities, one does not become a communist. In a country where sentiment and not logic reigns, an honest revolutionary like him could sweep over the middle class youth a little too easily. Even now the fag end of his 'thought' remains among some of his followers. Nevertheless, the process of self-criticism that is evident from the present document, is an exhilarating feature.

SYMPATHIZER
Calcutta

China And Ceylon

The editorial comment, 'China-Japan' (14-10-72), with its subdued praise for Lin Piao, a sarcastic remark on the Indian communist revolutionaries, and veiled criticism of the CPC leadership headed by Chairman Mao, is a clear manifestation of a petty bourgeois intellectual's helplessness to understand Mao Tse-tung thought whose thorough elaboration of 'contradiction', the kernel of dialectics, constitutes the theoretical foundation of every communist revolutionary.

Assuming that the letter dated 26-4-71 by Chou En-lai to the Prime Minister of Ceylon was genuine, its contents point out in para 2 three characteristics of that rebellion: (1) it was ultra-leftist, (2) it was Guevarist and (3) it suffered from infiltrations by foreign spies. In the third para the sneaking of foreign spies has been equated with the intervention of foreign reactionaries.

Ultra-leftism causes serious damage to a revolutionary movement. You may not agree with it, but Chinese leaders, having practical and devastating experience of such deviations, cannot help drawing such lessons. And this ultra-leftist line undergoes a qualitative change, becomes reactionary, when foreign spies sneak in. The history of the Chinese revolution abounds in such experience also, when protagonists of an ultra-leftist line in the pay of Japanese aggressors, after their defeat, exposure and isolation in the CPC, became open Japanese agents and assumed seats of power in the Japanese occupied territories. Our experience of simple trade union struggles substantiates this formulation. Many a time apparently the most militant and fiery worker is the first to betray the struggle, join the employer's gang, proving to be, finally, one of the reasons for launching immature strike struggles.

Thus Com. Chou's letter in its totality, and read in the context of the practice of the Chinese revolution, characterises the Ceylonese re-

volution as first, ultra-leftist and then having become reactionary with the sneaking into it of foreign spies. It thus has been called *conditionally reactionary*. If you place reliance on that letter, then please rely on the knowledge of the author of that letter that according to his information foreign reactionaries had infiltrated into the camp of that abortive rebellion. This is the correct and unprejudiced evaluation of that letter.

But from your comments on that letter it appears that you suffer from certain prejudices, the most important being the Guevarist prejudice. Although you appear to be conceding that the Ceylonese rebellion was ultra-leftist for the reason that 'the masses of the workers and peasants were not mobilised', in the same vein you charge the people with passivity and subservience to a pseudo-left Government! Their so-called literacy you seem to equate with 'resolute revolutionary consciousness'. Does it not manifest your obvious lack of knowledge of revolutionary preparedness? Thus Guevarism persists in you despite your readiness to criticise the Guevarists of Ceylon.

Before drawing far-fetched and illogical conclusions in your leader you should have first disputed the comments of Com. Chou that in the rebellion there had been no infiltration of foreign spies and local reactionaries and it was well planned. Regarding the proper planning you concede in the negative. You do not dispute the infiltration of reactionaries and spies. By your silence you are deemed to have conceded this factor also. Without disputing the factual situation you draw conclusions as if the factual situation did not exist: hence illogical logic, a true specimen of subjective approach, far divorced from objective reality.

If the insurrection had been merely ultra-leftist or full of other innocent deviations the Chinese leadership naturally should have adopted the same attitude as in the case of Indonesia. It is only when infiltration of foreign spies and reactionaries and

that too of a decisive nature and with an ulterior motive, is detected in a so-called insurrection that the latter becomes reactionary. Even without that, mere ultra-leftism is sufficient ground to condemn it as a serious and damaging blunder, deviation or mistake. The Chinese leadership's consistency in this regard is seen in the matter of the Indo-Pak conflict in connection with the Bangladesh issue which they called not self-determination of Bangladesh but Indian determination of that region because the so-called insurrection in Bangladesh suffered from infiltration of Indian reactionaries in league with the local ones.

No sensible communist, and much less the Chinese leadership, is expected to call a government progressive solely because it was faced with a reactionary insurrection, much less the aid-givers to such a government. Progressiveness of a government is decided by its own policy and programme and its practical implementation. Otherwise the CPC leadership could have showered praises on Pakistan and the USA both, because one had been aggressed in a situation of reactionary insurrection and the other had sent, by way of help, its awe-inspiring 'Enterprise'. But the Chinese leadership embellished none with virtue and progressiveness. In the past also they had not praised the USA although the latter was helping the Kuomintang during the anti-Japanese war and China was faced with reactionary insurrection or aggression.

Coming to the main topic—Sino-Japanese relationship today—you display the height of blindness to the prevailing reality. Having tagged that with Nixon's Peking visit you have made a mockery of your even empirical political understanding. What are the developments since then?

China has been admitted to the UN. The greatest traitor of China, Chiang Kai-shek, stands completely outcast and isolated. Japan tenders a public apology. Vietnam peace talks are nearing completion, Right-

ists in Laos and Lon in Cambodia are counting their last days. Other countries in the region are disarrayed and vying with one another to mend their fences with the PRC. Do these developments not fit in with the CPC's firm stand pronounced last year that 'the more the USA advances in that region the stronger resistance lies in store for it: the more it retreats from there the closer it comes to the PRC on the basis of the Panch-sheel'?

The visit to Peking, after frank talks followed by an unparalleled communique, as subsequent developments reveal, persuaded Nixon to stage a retreat from Indochina, and by so doing if some respectability is foisted on him by somebody, it is no use objecting to it. It is true that Nixon has acquired a free hand in Vietnam after his Peking visit; but what is that free hand doing? His actions indicate that his hands are freeing him from any further involvement in the region. But this reality, too, is not visible to you.

The truth is that the proposed terms of settlement between North Vietnam and the USA fully meet the original demands of the former in the background of the earlier Geneva Conference in this regard. Such a grand victory, almost 100%, following the Nixon-Tanaka visits to Peking, is again not visible to you.

However we thank you for your vigilance, however misplaced and misconceived. It is better than nothing. It is true that some such visits have brought serious calamities to some erstwhile communist countries. There is a profound relationship between Khrushchev's visit to Washington and the Hungarian uprising. That event has presumably made you over-cautious. If so, and if revisionist visits and counter-visits are fraught with such disastrous consequences, you should please be cautious about the homeland of Guevara on account of the very close flirtations these days between the leaders of Cuba and those from the citadel of revisionism, Moscow. Indications are that Latin America, the guerilla-in-

fested land, is sought to be divided between the Moscow and Washington ruling cliques, much in the same way as the Middle East.

In foreign policy matters, the PRC, having achieved internal consolidation cemented by the proletarian cultural revolution, has to keep a strict watch on a global scale on the co-relations of imperialist forces, their hegemonic designs, the appearance and essence of their collisions and collusions, and in their midst so manoeuvre as to make their somersaults, as far as possible and practicable, advantageous to proletarian internationalism. In this connection it is pertinent to bear in mind that it cannot be ruled out that sometimes inter-imperialist contradictions, changing into inter-imperialist wars under the compulsion of their economic necessity, may better serve the interests of proletarian internationalism than an anti-imperialist national liberation of a certain semi-colonial country in so many ways, such as by the general weakening of imperialism, the lessening of the stranglehold of the contending imperialist powers over the struggling semi-colonial country and the too obvious unmasking of the professions and performances of certain imperialist powers. So foreign policy matters involve various complex considerations apt to cause confusion in a layman.

D. D. SINGH
New Delhi

"...the main rhythm of Chinese policies, both at home and abroad, is never broken and the revolution continues". (14. 10. 72).

With your correct understanding of Chinese policies, one wonders at your jibes at Chou En-lai in your editorial. First of all it was not necessary because it is in an inopportune time. Then the question of principle comes:

What is the principle involved in this? Is it that the whole of South Asia should be liberated? Is it wrong to consider India the main land and

Pakistan, Burma, Bangladesh and Ceylon as just insignificant neighbours of India? Is it wrong to consider India the main enemy of revolution in South Asia? If in that calculation Ceylon and Bangladesh and Pakistan can be forgotten temporarily is it a great crime? Suppose Ceylon revolutionaries had won would China have been in a position to guarantee their existence in view of the intimidation of the Russians, Indians and Americans? That these three countries will never tolerate a Chinese backed revolutionary Ceylon is a fact. Then what is the next best available choice? Exploit the contradiction of the enemy camp and try to weaken the main enemy as far as possible. This is only what the Chinese have done in Ceylon and Bangladesh. I think your late lamentation over Ceylon and Bangladesh was unwarranted, in the light of the cold military power politics. I think your emotional morality got the upper hand over the language of steel.

M. N. D. NAIR
Trivandrum

Mrs Bandaranaike is still carrying on ruthlessly to suppress the revolutionary upsurge of the Ceylonese people. She has her allies—the Russians, the Americans and the Indian reactionaries. What are the other forces doing? They seem busy dissecting the character of the Ceylonese revolution. Their lofty theories have blurred their vision. They are maligning the insurrection, for they have discovered the hands of the CIA and of Che Guevara there.

These opportunists may castigate the revolutionaries, and justify the actions of Sirimavo Bandaranaike but they should know that her success in Ceylon is another step forward towards the Asian Security Pact proposed by Brezhnev which would endanger any armed struggle in Asia in the years to come.

MONOTOSH DAS GUPTA
Barrackpore

Gurus On Warpath

I am very grateful to Mr D. R. Choudhary for his letter (September 23) in connection with my dispatch, 'Gurus on Warpath.' The write-up was certainly poor in the respect that no attempt was made to make a political analysis of the issue.

But I still contend that the points covered in the dispatch were correct so far as the factual part of it was concerned. As for my sources, a journalist does not live in vacuum, he gathers his writing material from his contacts, and newspapers are certainly one of them. No wonder, I told the tale of the conflict "by freely using sentences and phrases from numerous documents brought out by the Teachers Association". In fact in one of my dispatches on Delhi University Stir, published in a Bombay weekly, I borrowed a few phrases written by Mr Choudhary in *The Times of India*. This point is certainly irrelevant as to where the information appeared first; I was certainly not doing a scoop.

I am also unable to understand the logic that if a man happens (or claims) to be a Marxist, all the irregularities committed by him and a 'little' favour done to him by the Establishment are fair. The fact is this: One teacher in the department of political science was rejected twice for readership. He left the University to join the nearby super-intellectuals' university. Within a few months, however, he was again back in Delhi University—this time promoted as a professor. Another teacher, a Teachers Association office-bearer, was promoted to the same post, though she too had been rejected earlier for readership. The honeymoon between the DUTA and the Vice-Chancellor is no secret. And certainly the VC—who said the other day that the basic evil of education in India was that university education was meant for all—is no progressive. If he does somebody a favour there must be some reason behind it besides the academic qualification of the person in question.

Corruption, whether indulged in

by 'Marxists' or by 'reactionaries, will remain corruption. There is nothing like 'progressive corruption' in the Marxist dictionary.

N. K. SINGH
New Delhi

'Love The British'

Recently, a 'leading Indian film star on a televised tour of an Ugandan-Asian refugee camp was heard exhorting a bewildered group of refugees to love the British people 'as they have loved you', referring to the British Government's decision to allow them to enter their legal habitat. If our none-too-enlightened, self-styled diplomat had the slightest knowledge of public opinion in this country he would have thought otherwise.

The, unavoidable, decision to issue entry certificates to the expelled Asians holding British passports resulted in an uproar which almost split the Conservative party, unthinkable in the context of traditional Conservative party loyalty. As for the general public: the indignation which greeted the announcement of Government policy regarding the refugees was evidenced in the demonstrations. Even the ostensibly socialist Labour Party had second thoughts about issuing, of its own accord, any statement condoning Government action.

On the same subject of wisdom and natural human pride, *The Times* newspaper reported the 'Indian people's hurt pride' at the absence of British representation at the Asian Fair in Delhi. May I suggest that rather than being a question of hurt pride, our refusal to understand the British people's and British Government's utter unconcern about our affairs is really the result of a contemptible complex which necessitates British approval before we are able to progress with confidence.

GAUTAM SEN
London

NOVEMBER 18, 1972

স্টলে খোঁজ করুন

সীমানা

ফ্রন্টিয়ার-এ প্রকাশিত প্রবন্ধের

অনুবাদ সংকলন

বিনয় ঘোষ : বাঙ্গালী বুদ্ধিজীবী

রফিকুল হাসান : বাংলাদেশ

রণজিৎ গুহ : নিপীড়ন ও সংস্কৃতি

হীরেন্দ্র চক্রবর্তী : ভারতীয় সংগীত ও
সমকাল

এম. এস. প্রভাকর : দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকায়
গান্ধী

সিংহল, এপ্রিল ১৯৭১

ইত্যাদি

দাম : দুই টাকা

ফ্রন্টিয়ার : ৬১, মট লেন, কলিকাতা-১৩