

frontier

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THE DIALOGUE

THE Prime Minister has asked newspapers not to fly too many kites over the Indo-Pakistan dialogue as the situation is very delicate. But she herself has created ample scope for speculation by her remark that the success of the negotiations will depend on tactical dealings. The former Indian Ambassador in Moscow who has recently been inducted into the charmed circle of policy-makers in New Delhi has already indicated what India has decided to pursue at Murree. As Mr Dhar has been named Indian emissary at the talks he must have announced the official stance when he said that India would settle for nothing less than "deoccupation" of Jammu and Kashmir. He has added a new word to the vast vocabulary India has compiled to describe her stance over Kashmir, and what the coinage exactly means will not be clear till Mr Dhar or someone in equal confidence of the Prime Minister has explained it.

To the layman, however, it would seem that the chief of the Policy Planning Division of the External Affairs Ministry has pegged India's demand higher than ever before. India's reluctance to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir is no secret. But Indian spokesmen at international forums have always been at pains to cite a plausible excuse for India's inability to act up to the plighted word. Mr Krishna Menon had succinctly put the Indian case by demanding vacation of aggression by Pakistan. Others have demanded the same thing in different ways as a necessary precondition for a plebiscite. Mr Dhar has discarded even this figleaf. He has demanded Pakistani withdrawal from Kashmir without the matching promise of a plebiscite. Along with the promise is muted all talk of converting the old or new ceasefire line with slight modifications into an international boundary. Few could hope that after the decisive victory in the war India would be magnanimous to Pakistan, but in its hour of triumph the Government seems to be overlooking that its changed stance does not square with its professed desire for a durable peace in the subcontinent or the declaration that India has no territorial ambition.

What Mr Dhar has said is a reversal of the policy India has pursued for nearly two decades to secure Pakistan's consent to partition of Kashmir more or less along the cease-fire line. The suggestion was first made by Nehru in the fifties; it was pursued vigorously by defeated India in 1963. Opinions vary on what exactly was the Indian offer. According to some,

India had agreed to part with a large portion of the territory on this side of the border. A former functionary of the External Affairs Ministry who was in the Indian delegation has disclosed that an offer was made to convert the then cease-fire line with modifications advantageous to Pakistan into an international boundary, but it was rejected by Mr Bhutto as leader of the Pakistani delegation. The official, who recalls that Mr Bhutto had sneered at India as a defeated country, advises India to bear in mind during the proposed dialogue that this time it is Pakistan that has come to the conference table as a vanquished nation. He need not have taken the trouble, for this awareness has informed India's actions in the last four months.

The Prime Minister's announcement that a certain number of Pakistani prisoners of war will be tried by the Bangladesh Government is another straw in the wind. There

is no doubt that India's attitude has noticeably stiffened in the last few weeks. Immediately after his return from Moscow, President Bhutto had declared at a public meeting in Lahore that Pakistan was not ungrateful and would never forget China. This was obviously a public affirmation of what he had told the Soviet Union in private. Can it be that India is trying to do a good turn to her treaty friend by hiking her demands to the point of impossibility? Maybe the stiffening of the Indian attitude after Mr Swaran Singh's visit to Moscow is designed to convey to Mr Bhutto that he cannot expect his prisoners back or a productive dialogue with India unless he tilts towards the Soviet Union. The options before him have been made clearer by the Government's announcement in the Lok Sabha that the state of Emergency would continue indefinitely in view of the situation on the western front.

The Good Americans

Mr Robert McNamara as the President of the World Bank and Mr Robert McNamara at the UNCTAD III should provide some food for thought to the Communist Party of India. Under his presidency, the World Bank overruled the U.S. Government's objection to the Bank's loan of \$83 million to help the Shipping Corporation of India buy six tankers from Japan and Yugoslavia to bring crude oil from the Persian Gulf to refineries in this country. UNCTAD encouraged national fleets so that the developing nations might enjoy lower freight costs and save foreign exchange. In spite of the fact that the U.S. was the largest contributor to the World Bank, bearing 40 per cent of its finances, the World Bank refused to go by the U.S. objection. If eventually India does not get the loan—she can't unless the U.S. replenishes the IDA—the fact remains that the World Bank did try

to help India. This makes Mr McNamara a strong candidate for being considered by the CPI as a progressive American. Mr McNamara has made his case stronger for such consideration by his impassioned call at UNCTAD at Santiago to developed nations to help the developing countries. His concern for 'degrading poverty', his concern for the underfed millions of the Third World, his appeal to the U.S. not to deprive the developing countries of foreign aid, his requests to the rich countries to lift trade barriers for the poor ones, do make him a good American. There were other Americans at the Santiago meeting. There were those who threatened developing countries of dire consequences if the latter contemplate expropriation of American investments on the soil without compensation. (Chile has expropriated American copper investment without compensation). There were

those Americans at the meeting who would not implement the principle of a generalised scheme of preferences for imports from the developing countries, a principle that was recommended by the 1964 and the 1968 UNCTAD. The lesser countries, the European Economic Community or Japan for instance, had granted some sort of preferential treatment for exports from the developing countries. There were again those Americans in the 1972 UNCTAD who would not honour the previous commitment to contribute 0.7 per cent of their Gross National Product as aid to the poor countries; they would not even contribute 0.31 per cent as they are doing now; they may offer just 0.24 per cent—at a time when some other countries less rich have fully honoured their commitments. But Mr McNamara has dissociated himself from these bad Americans. He is ashamed that the rich countries do not share their riches with the famished people of the world, that the developed countries are more generous with exports from fellow developed countries but not to the struggling group of 77. Mr McNamara does indeed seem to be a rocket, which has acquired a motion and a soul, beyond the control of the rocket throwers at Cape Kennedy. There must be some 'inexorable forces of history' that have turned this war monster into a good Samaritan. When such people exist within the American Establishment, shouldn't the CPI go over to the USA and try to obtain a breach in the American Government and divide it into some sort of American (R) and American (O)? If this is a tall order, the CPI should not lose heart; it is performing as tall a task right in this country.

Phase Two ?

The rolling of war drums in South Vietnam has distracted public attention from a quieter and equally fearsome battle that is going on in Cambodia. Here the main battle is for

the Parrot's Beak region. After weeklong fighting, the communist forces have gained control of the entire area which covers the south-eastern provinces of Pray Vang and Svay Rieng and cut off Highway One, the vital road link between Phnom Penh and Saigon. At the writing Svay Rieng, the provincial capital on Highway One, has been seized.

General Giap and his comrades, past masters in fighting a superior enemy, intend, it seems, to inflict a shock defeat on the ARVN in chosen places and then to use the military gains to press home their political demand. Against the better equipped French, the strategy paid. Against the infinitely more savage Americans, they are using the same plan. They began with a mainforce attack across the DMZ, the aim being to earn a beachhead for further attacks and to lure the puppet army into unfavourable terrain in order to annihilate them. The attack on the Central Highlands and mushrooming of fronts in different parts of the country mark the second stage of the offensive. It seems that the Vietcong intend to force Thieu to overstretch his forces and then to stage a showcase assault on Saigon. When and if the militarily innocuous but politically important attack on Saigon comes off, it may start the third and the critical stage of the present offensive. Parrot's Beak occupies a central position in this communist strategy as this cone-shaped region provides an ideal jumping-off ground for the battle for Saigon.

So far the U.S. air force has failed to prevent the Vietcong from achieving any one of their objectives, though their campaign has taken a heavy toll of communist forces. But Nixon has few options. He has further strengthened his naval and air forces. Washington has now more than 33,000 naval personnel and the biggest concentration of its air power in the area. Talk of further augmentation of the existing forces is in the air. The air war over North Vietnam may be intensified; the

port of Haiphong may be mined. Though the professed purpose of all this is to protect the U.S. soldiers in South Vietnam and to nurse the Thieu regime to manhood, its real aim is to fight out the communists by proxy. But as some of Nixon's own men have said, the bombing of North Vietnam is unlikely to stop the communists. The communists have their own contingency plan. By taking over Parrot's Beak they have given an inkling of how they intend to carry it out.

After Karume

The death of Sheikh Abeid Karume does not necessarily mean the end of despotism in Zanzibar which along with Tanganyika forms the United Republic of Tanzania. But the Sheikh's departure from the bizarre political scene on the clove-scented isles at least provides an opportunity to President Nyerere to make life less miserable there and the union more rewarding. One should, however, keep one's fingers crossed since the ruling elite that Karume built up with men of unquestionable loyalty to him survives. According to some reports, this elite is determined to pick up right where Karume left off. Some important members of the Revolutionary Council are also said to be entertaining the idea that since with its burgeoning clove exports Zanzibar can go it alone it should make a unilateral declaration of independence—a term which has earned much notoriety in recent years. The union formed three months after the deposition of the Arab Sultan who ruled Zanzibar remained good only on paper; the islands have their own army, own foreign exchange accounts and care a little what experiments are made on the mainland. Although the union was a source of much embarrassment to President Nyerere, he thought that by merely keeping it alive Zanzibar could be made a place to live in. So long as the eccentricity of Karume decided

the course of events in Zanzibar, relations with the mainland could not but suffer. In his last days, these relations reached an all-time low, almost to the point of no return. Zanzibar's assertion of political and economic independence amounted to an affront to the mainland but the President showed an uncommon restraint. Perhaps Karume suffered from a complex because his capricious administration stood in so sharp contrast with Nyerere's attempt to create a new social order—or recreate the tribal past. Many of Nyerere's friends want him to take some firm measures to break the ruling clique on the islands, but the President does not want to precipitate things. The funeral of Karume gave Nyerere an opportunity to see things for himself. Aboud Jumbe, the former Minister of State, has been made the new Vice-President. It now remains to be seen how the President is going to employ the available tools to bring about an enlightened regime in Zanzibar.

View from Delhi

Home Truths

FROM A POLITICAL
CORRESPONDENT

MR K. C. Pant was surely overrating the CPI(M)'s capabilities when he insinuated that the party might now be thinking of giving up violence and turning to subversion. The insinuation was distilled from two facts: when the party was engaged in violence it alleged police terror; when it is turning its attacks on the intelligence agencies it must be planning subversion.

The CPI(M)'s 22,500-word treatise on the latest situation should set the Government at rest that it wants to emerge as the best defender of bourgeois democracy and has no intention of quitting the parliamentary system. The boycott of the West Bengal Assembly will continue, but it

would be perfectly Marxist to participate in other legislatures and Parliament.

Mr Jyotirmoy Bosu's vitriolic take-off on the Home Minister provoked Mr Pant to make the insinuation. Mr Bosu's attack was on the new outfit in the Prime Minister's Secretariat called the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). From Mr Bosu's description of the activities of this nobly-christened intelligence agency, it is obvious that it has an operational role like the CIA and the operations include planning and execution of political murders (like that of Mr Hemanta Kumar Basu on the eve of the 1971 Lok Sabha poll) and outright rigging of elections. It is common knowledge that the police-guerilla, organised in small squads and equipped with small arms and walkie-talkie, was inducted into Calcutta's slum-jungles to draw out and engage the Naxalite squads. These operations could well have belonged to the RAW, set up in 1970.

Mr Bosu should have no reason to complain because the Government's intelligence operations cover even the ruling party. He was right when he said even the Central Hall of Parliament was not spared by the intelligence men. But it should be of some consolation to him to know that the Congress party's disciplinary action against some Andhra Pradesh Congress luminaries for alleged anti-party work at the recent Rajya Sabha poll was based on intelligence findings. The telephones of these worthies were tapped in New Delhi and the instructions they sent out to their cronies about how they should vote at the Rajya Sabha poll became known to the Congress High Command. The telephones of even ruling party MPs are tapped religiously (the recording tapes are changed between 7 and 8 a.m. and again between 10 and 11 p.m. and many of the MPs know about it). Dossiers are prepared against Ministers on instructions from the top and the latest one is about a Minister of State whose property-acquisition spree has attracted wide attention.

Surely, Mr Bosu could not object to the Government's setting up yet another intelligence agency and calling it the Research and Analysis Wing and enrolling even leftist journalists to keep a tab on unfriendly journalists. But what one expected of Mr K. C. Pant was to come out clean and admit that the RAW had an operational role like the CIA. Mr Pant was content to assert that every government needed intelligence and would not go beyond that. To other sections of the Lok Sabha the fact that the charge against the RAW came from a party licked at the polls seemed to blunt the credibility of the charge itself. Journalists in the USA who exposed the ramifications of the CIA would have been hailed, as Jack Anderson was, by the Indian Government (which anonymously printed up the Anderson papers for large-scale distribution) but an Indian journalist daring to write about the RAW's activities would attract action under the DIR.

External Affairs

The annual reports of the External Affairs Ministry are always self-righteous in their tone. This year's report is even more so, perpetuating the myth that China had always provoked India and patronisingly declaring "We do not still wish to provoke China unnecessarily and are willing to normalise relations with her on the basis of equality, mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs". Its account of the India-China developments last year makes interesting reading.

July 1971: Mrs Gandhi wrote to Mr Chou En-lai on Bangladesh problem and India-China relations.

September 13: The police posse outside the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi was withdrawn.

October: India's Foreign Secretary attended the Chinese Embassy National Day reception, indicating a higher level of representation.

October: India welcomed China's entry into U.N.

October 19 and November 9: Mrs Gandhi mentioned in New Delhi

and Paris the possibilities of exchange of ambassadors without discussing substantive issues like the border question.

November 13: Mr Chou En-lai thanked Mrs Gandhi for her greetings on China's entry into U.N.

November 25: Mr Swaran Singh declared in Parliament that the likelihood of India unilaterally sending an Ambassador to China was not excluded. About this time, Indian Ambassadors in various capitals also conveyed to the Chinese India's desire for normalisation of relations.

From this account it appears, India was keen on normal diplomatic relations with China only after it had signed the treaty with the Soviet Union and expected China to respond to its new "position of strength". A little known fact in this connection is the student demonstration in Peking in early November 1971 when Mr Bhutto's delegation was there. The demonstration was against repression in East Bengal. By all accounts, the Chinese were on the point of supporting the Bangladesh struggle when in their view, it took the form of an Indo-Pakistan issue with troops taking position all along the borders.

The report claims that India abstained from anti-Chinese propaganda despite vituperative Chinese attacks on India during the Bangladesh developments and the December war. It is true that the Government did not want to harp on its familiar theme of Sino-Pak joint threat on the border. When inspired questions about Chinese troop movements were asked, a spokesman quipped, "Well both the sides (India and China) were praying for show" (to block the passes). The fact is India proceeded on the assumption that China would not intervene in the war and seemed to have received an assurance to this effect.

But let it not be forgotten that earlier this year there was a systematic campaign in the pro-Moscow papers about the imminence of a joint Pak-Chinese attack this summer. It is not difficult to guess who inspired

it. But for the last four or five weeks these scribes are silent and the "official circles" which inspired the stories are suddenly silent and do not want to talk about China. The threat from China has been off and on, depending on the political compulsions the leadership in New Delhi had to face.

April 23, 1972

Bihar

VC in Trouble

N. K. SINGH

THE reported decision of the Patna University Vice-Chancellor, Mr Mahendra Pratap, to quit his post and the consequent withdrawal of agitation by the Student Union leaders on the one hand, and the calling off of the strike by the non-teaching staff of the University following an agreement between their union and the University authorities on the other, seemed to pave the way for things to return to normal on the campus after a lapse of ten days. Classes suspended on March 27 on account of grave student trouble plus the strike of non-teaching employees, have been resumed.

The Government has now taken over the management of the university.

The story, bearing all the characteristics of a stunt picture, started in the afternoon of March 25 when the Vice-Chancellor was assaulted—for the second time since he assumed office 16 months ago—by a group of student demonstrators following a heated argument. Some students, it is said, were slapped by the VC and then a pitched battle followed. The students alleged that a loudspeaker was given to the VC so that he could address the students but he broke it to pieces and hurled them at the students, shouting filthy abuses. According to eye-witnesses, the demonstrators surrounded the

VC and beat him up so much that he fell down and threw his legs about, hitting some of them. He was further assaulted before he could get up with a torn *kurta*.

The demonstration, of about 1,000 students—the total number of students in the University is estimated at about 12,000—had been organised by the newly formed Patna University Students' Action Committee in support of certain demands: (a) completion of the B.A. and B.Sc. examinations which began in November 1971 but are yet to be completed; (b) announcement of the dates of examination in those papers from which the students had staged a walk-out; (c) scrapping of the commission instituted to inquire into the walk-out; (d) examination of theory papers should be completed before practical examinations are held; (e) abolition of compulsory attendance at the post-graduate classes; (f) no telegrams to be sent to the guardians of those students who indulge in union activities; (g) extension of scholarship to those students who have suffered on account of the delayed examination and (h) regularisation of the academic session.

The ugly incident of March 25 took an uglier turn when both the sides went to the police to lodge complaints. In his FIR, the VC alleged that attempts were made to assault him and he received injuries in his little finger. The police registered a case under Sections 147, 323 and 47 of the Cr. P. C. The FIR lodged by Mr R. J. Sinha, President of the PU Students' Union, said that though he had no intention of filing any case, the case instituted by the VC had compelled him to do so. Mr Sinha alleged that the VC assaulted about 8/10 students, causing injuries to one of them. It was also alleged that the VC snatched their mike, battery and loudspeaker and smashed them. The police registered a case under Sections 147, 323 and 379 of the Cr. P. C.

A stranger drama developed when

the VC went on a three-day hunger-strike "to arouse the conscience of the students" and the students in turn opted for the same course to arouse the former's conscience to resign.

The irony of the situation was that Mr Mahendra Pratap, when he was the principal of Patna College, had himself led a students' demonstration before the then VC accusing him of "inactivity and partisan attitude".

In due course, the Patna University Students' Action Committee intensified its agitation and raised some new demands, the main being the removal of the VC. Other demands were—(a) no victimisation of the students and withdrawal of the police from the campus and of police cases against the students.

In the days that followed, the agitation became more extensive with more and more student organisations, having affiliations with different political parties, joining in. The CPI-controlled Students' Federation, the Jana Sangh-controlled Vidyarthi Parishad, the Socialist Party-controlled Samajbadi Yubjan Sabha—all came out to support the struggle. The Vidyarthi Parishad organised a demonstration before the Bihar Legislative Assembly and eleven students were arrested. A heavy police force equipped with wireless vans was posted around the campus.

In the meantime the authorities conceded most of the demands of the students and it looked as if the university would return to normal. However, there was a setback when the VC sacked the Registrar for alleged "negligence of some clear instructions to take precautions in the background of the threatened demonstration of the students". On the other hand a pro-VC group of students, led by the General Secretary of the Students' Union, emerged from nowhere and tension mounted between the pro and anti VC groups. The police had to intervene once.

On March 30, there was a heated debate in the Bihar Legislative Assembly on the episode. Most of the

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members thought that the VC should be recalled to restore normality on the campus. The Chief Minister, sensing the mood of the House, said he would try to find some solution.

While the assault on Mr Mahendra Pratap was universally condemned, it was also widely held that Mr Pratap was himself to blame for such developments. Though an educationist of repute, and an honest man at that—a very rare quality these days indeed—administrative ability or balanced judgment had never been his forte. He talks more than he listens and, as the memorandum submitted to the Chancellor by the Patna University Teachers' Association says, he has "unlimited capacity to raise irrelevant issues".

Virtually half of the total number of seats in the University Senate have been left vacant and the Academic Council has been running for the last three years without elected representatives of teachers. Examinations have been delayed for months resulting in delay in academic sessions by as much as 14 months. Teachers hardly teach and most of them indulge in petty caste politics or groupism. One of the heads of the University departments has not cared to even visit the campus for the last two years. His only concern with the University is to draw his fat salary. No wonder only the other day reports came in that several foreign universities have refused to recognise the medical degrees conferred by the Patna University.

Files have piled up in the VC's office, even routine applications are delayed for months, Senate and Syndicate meetings are not able to complete their business, there is blatant favouritism in some appointments, teachers and senators are badly treated. That way the "indecisive" Vice-Chancellor is responsible for upsetting the academic activities of the University.

VC's Version

However, there is yet another side of the story—stranger than fiction—which cannot be brushed aside

easily. During the last University examination leakage of questions in certain subjects was reported. The authorities took prompt action by replacing the questions at the eleventh hour. This had an adverse effect and a group of students—apparently having a vested interest in the old, leaked-out questions—walked out and forced other examinees to follow suit. The Students' Union demanded an inquiry into the entire episode so that action could be taken against the persons guilty for the leakage of questions. The VC liked the idea and set up an inquiry commission.

According to pro-VC sources, this caused grave concern among some top-ranking University professors

who are said to have a vested interest in the question-leakage episode. A coup d'état was organised. The Students' Action Committee was formed and it demanded scrapping of the inquiry commission. To make this demand respectable certain popular and justified demands were added.

The basic question is not whether the present VC should remain or quit. The removal of an individual, no matter however important he is can hardly bring any change in the system, which is the root-cause of nepotism, favouritism, casteism, groupism and, above all, misappropriation prevalent in the campus life.

Ceylon Today—I

FROM A COLOMBO CORRESPONDENT

BOURGEOIS intellectuals lead the traditional Marxist parties in Ceylon. They have a near-monopoly of the urban trade union movement, and they have provided the theory that has guided the Marxist movement over the last thirty-five years.

Since about five years ago Marxist ideology spread in the rural areas among the educated youth. They developed independent theoretical analyses with which they managed to organise powerful revolutionary movements independent of the urban working class movement.

This article is an attempt to understand the reasons for their separate development with a view to arriving at a common understanding.

For most bourgeois intellectuals who grew up in Ceylon the politics of the last 35 years has been fairly straightforward. The issues looked clear and simple, and there seemed always at hand a plausible "Marxist" explanation for most attitudes that were taken.

1947. Independence. It seemed such an obvious sham, even at that

time. Unlike in India there was not even a struggle. Nobody went to jail. We were told that the British had decided to hand over power to us, or rather to those who had worked it all out in conferences in Whitehall. A Constitution was worked out with special safeguards for minorities and other interests. They must have done a good job of it, because when the people came to vote, the results turned out the way they had planned it. A group of well-trained natives, who had been to good schools, and played cricket and all that, just moved into the places occupied by the Englishmen and started behaving even more like Englishmen.

The theoretical explanation coincided with one's instinctive reactions. We were a colonial country—by this was meant that our economy had been shaped through 450 years of political domination to serve the interests of the colonisers. We had become producers of primary agricultural raw materials for the colonisers and served as a dumping market for the finished goods.

Our bourgeoisie was 'comprador'

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in character. They were merely go-betweens, intermediaries, for their colonial master. They did not perform the two essential functions of the bourgeoisie in capitalist societies, extracting surplus and capitalizing it.

At a certain stage this comprador bourgeoisie got strong enough, and their economic interests began to clash with those of the imperialists; so they started the agitation for political independence.

The imperialists were weak, after World War II; so the bourgeoisie were able to wrest certain advantages from them and the compromise was the independence given to Ceylon.

In the light of this what the Marxists had to do was clear: join the anti-imperialist struggle and fight on for a proper economic and political independence and denounce all compromise solutions that permitted the imperialists to maintain their domination over our economy. The fight for socialism was such a distant prospect that one did not even bother to think of what it was going to be like.

Rural Youth

1956. Another upheaval. Here too the issues on the surface seemed obvious.

The brown Englishmen had been running the show for almost 10 years now in the same way their masters did. The language of administration was English. Naturally business and government jobs tended to be concentrated in the hands of this same group of English-educated natives.

At the same time the Sinhalese-speaking country cousins were getting prosperous too. They were being educated, if only in Sinhalese, through the new universal compulsory free education system. By 1956 they wanted political power; so they just voted themselves into power and set about making the changes in the government and administration to suit their needs and in keeping with their aspirations. This has been described as a Sinhalese nationalist phase.

The usual theoretical explanation

for this goes like this: With the development of the productive forces a native bourgeoisie grows up in colonial countries to challenge the power of the comprador bourgeoisie. Not being tied to imperialism, it is progressive in character, and is capable of freeing the country from its economic dependence on the imperialist—an essential step to socialism. Comparison is made with Marx's characterisation of the bourgeoisie in the early stage of capitalism where they destroy the old feudal institutions that act as a fetter on the development of the productive forces and introduce new ideas and forms to give expression to the new relations of capitalism. The struggle of the native bourgeoisie against the comprador bourgeoisie is considered a necessary phase of the movement towards socialism because when you eliminate them you also eliminate their master, the imperialists. Two enemies less to fight. (The task is actually very simple—change the trading partners from West to East, non-communist to communist, the terms, being governed by international market prices, remaining the same. The very fact of trading with socialist countries is considered more socialist.)

It is 15 years now that the progressive native bourgeoisie has been in power, moving from crisis to crisis until it has reached a point where there is really no solution. There is a huge foreign debt. There is no money to pay for the import of essential items. No organisation to create the jobs for the thousands who are entering the labour market every year.

The crisis is called an economic crisis. In fact the accent is all on economics. Our resources are not being utilised to capacity, we are not saving adequately to generate the capital necessary to provide employment. There seems to be no way out of the present crisis.

The usual theoretical explanation for this is to say that the crisis is typical of the crises inevitable in capitalism.

The argument on the level of strategy goes like this:

The struggle against individual capitalists becomes the crucial aspect of the struggle for socialism. This is the first phase of the struggle. We have to a large extent curb the powers of imperialists and the comprador bourgeoisie, their allies—only a weak native bourgeoisie remains.

Parliamentary democracy has given the opportunity for socialists to get control of the State machinery through the ballot box. Let us make whatever alliances that may be necessary to do this and use the State machinery to gradually destroy the remainder of the bourgeoisie.

This can be done by expanding the functions of the State to take over the functions performed by the bourgeoisie.

Since the bourgeoisie is doing it so incompetently it would not be a difficult task. Let the State organise the economic life on the basis of a planned rational use of our resources and once the individual capitalist has been eliminated there is nothing to stop us from achieving socialism.

The overall impression that one gets from this kind of analysis is that our society is moving 'forward' from an era of poverty, ignorance and injustice to one of wealth, knowledge and justice. One can actually point out the milestones. 1931: universal suffrage. 1947: independence. 1955: administration in Sinhalese. 1957: nationalisation of transport, port. 1960: extension of banking to rural areas, abolition of feudal forms of exploitation in paddy cultivation. 1970: nationalisation of import and export trade.

We seem to be going 'towards' "socialism" automatically; or, not quite, because each of these battles is dramatised as being fought between the reactionaries and the progressives among the bourgeoisie. And Marxists of course help the 'progressives'. All we have to do seems to be to wait for the next few battles, just throw in our weight with the progressives and socialism will fall into our lap. What fol-

lows from this analysis is that it is not necessary to organise the exploited classes and lead them to destroy the capitalist State machine and replace it by true democratic forms corresponding to socialist relations.

It is this kind of analysis that led the traditional Marxist parties to collaborate as junior partners in a coalition with the bourgeoisie in the hope of achieving socialism through peaceful means.

It can be stated quite categorically that if by socialism is meant the social ownership of the means of production, we are today no closer to it than we were 25 years ago.

Far from developing towards socialism, all indications are that we are heading towards the highest form of capitalism—State capitalism, a bureaucratic State machine extracting and capitalising the surplus.

This illusion of the forward movement of our society that is painted is nothing but the development of the capitalist system itself, seen from the point of view of the bourgeoisie.

As capitalism develops it encroaches on the more primitive forms of feudal exploitation. Sharecropping is turned into wage labour, artisanal production into small industrial production. At every crisis the individual capitalist is replaced by the bureaucratic state machine that takes over and performs his functions of extracting and capitalising the surplus more efficiently.

As capitalist relations spread in Ceylon into the rural area, institutional changes in the superstructure accompanied it, like the extension of bourgeois democratic forms,—parliamentary democracy, the availability of basic institutions of capitalist exploitation like banking and insurance, the development of its substructure, transport, communication, services and education.

Each of these so-called milestones are nothing but changes in the superstructure that accompanied the specific extension of capitalist exploitative forms replacing feudal and

semi-feudal forms.

As far as nationalization of sectors of the economy is concerned, Marx himself commented that if that were a criterion of socialism, Bismark would be the greatest socialist of all times. In Ceylon, the nationalisation of the inefficiently run ports and transport and now the import trade merely serves to strengthen the capitalist processes of exploitation in other sectors, especially the rural.

As for the extension of such blessings as banking to the rural sector, rural savings will be utilized to place in the hands of the successful, more ruthless, and ambitious peasant's exploitative power in the shape of capital with which he could expand his holdings, and reduce his fellow peasants to wage labourers.

What is hailed as the era of the common man is nothing more than the bringing in of the broad rural masses within the orbit of general capitalist exploitation, first through commodity production and exchange, then wage labour.

From the perspective of a party that wants to establish socialism, crises and changes in the capitalist system are significant only inasmuch as they offer opportunities for its destruction. There cannot be anything progressive about any of its solutions, or institutional adjustments.

Marx ascribed to the industrial working class the role of ushering in the new society because it was the working class which by virtue of the socialised nature of the production process, is capable of understanding the new concept of socialism, the social ownership and control of the means of production and because it was at the centre of the principal contradiction of the advanced industrial societies of his time—the contradiction between the individual nature of appropriation and the collective nature of production.

One must emphasise here that it was not by virtue of the fact that it was exploited that Marx talked of the working class as the class that was going to bring in socialism, be-

cause the peasantry is often more exploited, but the material conditions of his work, his social practice, are individualistic in nature and the family is his unit of production and such concepts as the social ownership of the means of production are outside his framework of experience and it could never consider itself as a class the way the industrial working class could be made to see itself.

As far as the working class was concerned too, he was careful to note that the idea of socialism does not come to it naturally. Left to itself, it will develop the limited forms of collective action, the trade union, to bargain better within the capitalist framework of the competitive market.

Scientific socialism is an ideology brought from outside, by those who apply scientific methods of analysis to the workings of human societies. Marx himself is such an example.

The numerical strength of the major exploited classes in Ceylon are:

Plantation workers	1,100,000
Indians	650,000
Ceylonese	450,000
Peasantry owning or working less than 5 acres	5,000,000
Industrial workers—urban	575,000
Private	350,000
State & State Corporations	225,000

The plantation worker: He was brought by the British over the last 100 years. Labour contractors called Kanganys, brought them from South Indian villages in family units. They were responsible to the employer for their behaviour and exercised wide powers over them. They form the largest homogeneous block of workers. They have absolutely no access to the means of production and are the most exploited class in Ceylon.

The family is still the basic unit of work, and it is normal to find 3 or 4 members of the family working, including children. They are housed on the plantations and there is very

little mobility because housing goes with the job. A cartel of plantation owners have fixed the wages. A large majority are born and die in the same plantation.

They have a history of strong, militant, political trade union activity, until about the middle of the fifties. The main reason for its decline was that the villages surrounding the plantations face acute problems of land and employment. With the spread of rural capitalism, in the fifties the problem was aggravated by the purchase of land by the new bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie successfully turned the peasants' resentment against the plantation worker, he was disenfranchised and began to limit his struggles to purely economic issues.

The non-communal nature of the new revolutionary struggle has however gone a long way to convince the plantation worker that his role is as a part of Ceylon's working class.

The Peasantry: There is no large group of landless peasantry as agricultural proletariat who could be organised as a revolutionary class.

The peasant is generally not separated from his means of production. The unit of production is the family and comparatively little wage labour is used except seasonally, to augment his own labour.

Each family has at least one of two members who have done 8 to 10 years of schooling. This group, the children of peasants, have a powerful influence on the political behaviour of their parents.

The bourgeois child is brought up to be an image of himself, whereas the peasant treats his child as a means of getting out of the narrow circle that forms his own social life. Apart from the practical uses of a child who has been to school (e.g. dealing with government servants) it is through him that he learns about the world and society at large. The politics of the peasant is largely influenced by the younger generation.

While it is not possible for the youth to radicalise and make a revolutionary out of his parent, he could

certainly ensure for himself the support that is necessary for his own revolutionary activity. In the recent revolution, the villagers supported the revolutionaries, even though passively.

The Urban Working Class: This class is practically all in Colombo. It still has close connections with the peasantry, and many belong to family groups that supplement their wages with other incomes from land and rent. They are the least exploited of the classes considered and have strong trade union organisations.

Their trade unions were under Marxist leadership and were overtly political until the early fifties. The great general strike of 1947 and hartal of 1952 marked the high point in the evolution of their revolutionary consciousness.

Since the mid-fifties there has been a noticeable ebb in this consciousness and the trade unions have turned more and more towards economic demands, and restricted the political demands to those of nationalisation.

Until 1950, capitalism in Ceylon was a stunted phenomenon; semi-feudal and colonial institutions had stunted its growth. The bourgeois state at the time really meant Colombo. The absence of capitalist relations in the countryside meant that the bourgeois democratic institutions existed only in name. The working class and its leadership were confident, aggressive, and consciously revolutionary. They felt that the struggles against the bourgeoisie, carried out in Colombo, could successfully bring down the bourgeois State because outside Colombo there was no bourgeois power, only decaying feudal remnants. They later could get the peasantry to vote for them but were in no position to rouse them to save the bourgeois State. The class struggle seemed clear and unequivocal: as has been said before, the high points of the revolutionary activity were the general strike of 1947 and the 1952 hartal.

With the spread of capitalist relations in the countryside, there not only grew a rural bourgeoisie but there was a spread of general bour-

geois ideology. The masses began to actually participate in the bourgeois political processes actively. Colombo no longer seemed to be the centre of political power. The bourgeois State seemed a powerful instrument drawing its strength and sustenance from every village.

This marked the beginning of the loss of self-confidence of the urban working class leadership; and the class itself began to lose its revolutionary character and started using its weight to wrest advantages for itself by joining the battles among the bourgeoisie.

The revolutionary youth movement has shown that the bourgeois state has lost its rural base. Ironically, the state was saved by the urban working class who were deceived into believing that it was fascist in character.

The urban working class is drawn from the peasantry and has intimate connections with it and the stories of police atrocities committed on their very children, started to sink in only later.

More than anything else, the whole rural mass, that had for the last 15 years been considered a hostile, backward, dead weight that could have crushed any revolution, has suddenly woken up. The fact that its most articulate section has actually led a revolutionary struggle brings tears to the eyes of old militants. It will not be long before we see again the radical revolutionary struggles that characterised the Ceylon working class of the thirties and forties.

Rural Youth: In capitalist society, a class in the Marxist sense has to be defined in terms of its relations to the means of production.

In the rural areas there are approximately 2 million youths below the age of thirty, who have been through a minimum of 8-10 years of schooling and who do not have any regular form of employment in the sense of being wage labourers. If asked for instance what such a person does, one would get the reply that they do

not work. If you ask them how they manage to live, they would say that they help out their parents with their work on the land.

In so far as they work in a situation as members of the family unit, who are not separated from their means of production, they would be categorised as peasants but the fact that they have spent 10 years separated from the social practice of their parents, and had another kind of social relation, obviously warrants their being placed in a category apart.

We shall try to develop the argument that the compulsory universal free education system has actually trained this group in a wage labour relationship and hence they cannot be counted as peasants. That, whatever their actual means of livelihood, and relation to the means of production, the only meaningful social relation of production they could enter into is one of wage labour.

We shall also try to develop the argument that although they do not constitute an actual proletariat, they possess the characteristics of a revolutionary class in the Marxist sense, and that it is wrong to characterise them as petit-bourgeois in the sense of those who aspire to become members of the bourgeoisie by virtue of their education.

In going to school the child of a peasant family is separated from the social practice of his parents by his enjoying a period of 10-15 years of non-productive existence as a student.

The intimate network of family relationships, the closed circle of the family as the unit of production, is replaced by an allegiance to abstract codes of conduct, such as honour, loyalty, justice, which he owes to a generalised society, the wider circle of socialised production.

Preparation is made for his role as a seller of alienated labour power by making him conscious from the earliest stages of the kind of roles available, in society, from doctors to waiters depending on how clever and hardworking one is.

At the end of the schooling he has learned to identify himself with his

labour power, and measure it in terms of commodities. In short, he becomes incapable of entering into any other relation except that of wage labour.

Thus it happens that even where circumstances force him to join the family unit of production, which owns the means of production, he would not consider it a meaningful social relation.

The most successful 10% of the school system aspire to become bourgeois; a third of this may possibly get employment that they consider commensurate to their training. But we are more concerned about the re-

jects of the system, the 95% whose aspirations do not go beyond that of a wage labourer.

Compulsory free education started in earnest around 1948 and by 1956 the first members had appeared in the rural areas.

Every year from about 1955, nearly 150,000 of them are being turned out by the educational system; a fraction of them are registered in the employment exchanges, the majority are absorbed into the general category called "underemployed". Today the number totals over 2,000,000.

(To be concluded)

Leavis And Marxism

HIREN GOHAIN

LEAVIS has suffered to an extraordinary degree the peculiar liability of genius—a devoted and mediocre following. The writings of most Leavisites, especially in India, cultivate all the well-known prejudices of the master, sedulously imitate all the turns and tricks of phrase, all the pieties and the feuds. Yet they uniformly fail to stimulate and inspire. The urgency is factitious and the vision dim. Their observations and conclusions seem excessively predictable, and finally reduce one to a state of dull anger. His critics on the other hand have mostly been lacking in percipience. They can neither understand his sense of mission (or destiny, if one wanted to be unkind) nor match his combination of insight and dedication, close textual study and constant awareness of larger perspectives that mark Leavis's writings off from even the corpus of distinguished critics to whom Leavis himself owes no mean debt.

Critics inclined to socialism seem to have made some of the telling points against him—Irving Howe, Raymond Williams, and Perry Anderson. It is hardly an accident. For people who are unduly impressed by Leavis's claim to adhere to the

text closely and rigorously fail to see that the 'local' analysis depends on a series of assumptions, assumptions that go against some of the basic premises of socialism. But, of that, later. The general, secular (as against short-term) crisis of world imperialism has by no means prevented the expression of activity and energy in odd pockets within its sphere of influence, especially in the arts. World imperialism is moribund, but it does not anticipate instantaneous natural death. Nor do we. Meanwhile some latent contradictions have matured and surfaced in unexpected forms. The conquest of Africa led to the re-discovery of elemental (=communal) perceptions and perspectives, welcomed passionately by artists suffocated by decadent individualism. The numerous splintered sects who had revolted against industrial capitalism's erosion of traditional human values—variously placed by Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* with compassion or contempt, and having their obvious counterparts in Britain—beat a retreat before the advance of scientific socialism, but, with the remission of the severe crisis of the thirties, had a new lease of life in the background of the magnificent lite-

rary criticism of the journal *Scrutiny*. (1932-1953)

One thing often forgotten is that *Scrutiny* was born in the early thirties, during a crisis which rocked world-imperialism to the roots. The first number carried an editorial that clearly conceived its origin and function in a response to the crisis in bourgeois culture at that time. Only—and interestingly—the crisis is linked to the crisis in literary education and discrimination. The failures and stupidities of reputed scholars and reviewers are repeatedly cited in the first few numbers as signs of the decay of general intelligence in society. It is even implied that an improvement in the standards of criticism will tell on the movement of society, and recovery and renewal will follow. Renewal of the life of society is a constant theme and concern. But it is supposed to be a matter primarily of the spirit, the 'objective mind' to use an expressive phrase after Wilhelm Dilthey. The interest in social reconstruction remains vague though initially sympathetic. Leavis opts in 1932 for 'some form of communism', though in the characteristic manner of utopian politics remains silent on the details, as though the improvement and enrichment of intelligence will go a long way towards solving the urgent practical problems of social reconstruction. By the 1940s rejection of Marxism is definite and complete, and it even turns into a kind of crusade on behalf of the 'autonomy' and 'freedom' of 'the human spirit' within historic socio-economic limits. Sardonic observations on the unfortunate playboy Marxism of the Auden-Spender group (already brushed aside by Caudwell) pepper the reviewing pages. By 1960s Leavis had overcome his aversion to American culture sufficiently enough to declare that he was thankful that America had been 'at least as powerful as Russia', sending a chill down the spine of many an Asian with a closer acquaintance with the brutal realities of that power. A book published in 1969 (*English Literature in*

our time and the University) recounts a brief excursion into politics when he sponsored with others a Liberal candidate—to withdraw in anger at the candidate's failure to denounce comprehensive schools! In practice Leavis's disdain for the dirty world of stupid politicians has been indistinguishable from tacit support to their blind and dirty machinations. It is no comfort to us that we are offered salvation if, instead of following the politicians blindly, we pinned our faith on literary education as a 'central discipline'. A recipe that is pathetically innocent of the subtle and far-reaching network of political and social power.

Very early Leavis had identified America with the underworld of modern bourgeois civilization, to the comic chagrin of many an American savant. He seems to have got his cue from the popular writings of Stuart Chase (who later significantly declared his faith in the therapy of General Semantics as a cure-all for the world's ills) and Robert Lynd, both writing passionately and acutely at that time under the shadow of the crisis of the thirties. Their writings recorded vividly the degradation of man in American society, the callousness to social ends, the decay in human relations, the commercial and mechanical character of work and leisure, the seediness and loss of nerve. But Leavis fights shy of the term 'capitalism', the term used is 'industrial civilization' or 'mass civilization', and there is splendid quixotic hope that this diabolic civilization will one day be tamed and curbed by 'spiritual' forces, enshrined for example in living language, that is, literature. Leavis has little to do with a retreat to religion, the solution chosen by Eliot. And there is great courage in his faith in man's spiritual resources. It reminds one of Lawrence's rhetoric in *St Mawr*, a story Leavis admires:

"And every civilization, when it loses its inward vision and its cleaner energy, falls into a new sort of sor-

didness, more vast and more sumptuous than the old savage sort. An Augean stable of metallic filth.

And all the time, man has to rouse himself afresh, to cleanse the new accumulation of refuse. To win from the crude wild nature the victory and the power to make another start."

But this passage expresses a cyclic view of history, and makes not even a formal bow to progress. To speak in terms of analogy it is not a picture of the process of healthy growth, but of the self-purifying ritual of neurotic personalities. No doubt the 'purification' is necessary, no doubt for a time it brings a fresh access of energy and hope. But it is only an illusion of creative growth. Leavis lacks the rich tragic vision of Marx who wrote his paean to capitalism while laying bare its coldness and cruelty. To him the advent of 'industrial civilization' had been a breaking-up of an idyllically well-adjusted organic society, 'a vast and terrifying disintegration' (*Mass Civilization and Minority Culture*). This sort of nostalgia is fair game for Raymond Williams who shows that the organic society has never been there, however far back into the past we stray! The fixation on an idealized past, to borrow again from psycho-analytical jargon, betrays serious maladjustment with the present.

Leavis shows no awareness that the cursed American civilization is after all the realization of the liberal dream, for which he evinces a qualified approval. The divorce in his thought between cultural ideals and social forms is remarkable, in spite of his percipient remarks on this very problem (*Mill on Bentham and Coleridge*; Preface). He has no trace of a notion that vast and ever-expanding forces of production have outrun obsolete social relations ('spirit'). He has no inkling that the healthy change in human society will be brought about by a new class of men who, as Marx says, are not only formed by the new industrial environment, but who also form themselves in their struggle to wrest control of

this environment from the capitalist owners.

Against Student Radicalism

The aridity and academicism of his views in the present social situation became shockingly clear to this author when in 1968 and 1969, he found Leavis inveighing against student radicalism in vituperative language. Student radicalism has its excesses and self-indulgence. But to dismiss those waves of protest and demonstration—registering new tensions and stress of crisis and creation—as a problem of indiscipline is to reveal sheer reactionary blindness. The 'reverent openness to life' (*The Great Tradition*) seems to have disabling limitations outside the class-room. Tradition, however rich and delicate and subtle, here appears a deadly bludgeon to smother with its blows a new birth. And it is here that Leavis fails. Not, as Raymond Williams suggests, because he concentrates on literature and ignores other forms and media of culture and expression than literature. The literary elitism is merely a symptom of a conservative social ideology. The guardians of language—of values—will see to the annihilation of disturbing new forms of life.

Yet there is no getting around Leavis. His formidable critical achievement cannot be laughed away. He has pursued his goals with such ferocious single-mindedness that it has purged him of much pettiness and deceit, heaps of clichés and frauds that trail most other people. The strength of character and energy of creation have made the most of a reactionary social ideal to bequeath to us a memorable effort at understanding bourgeois literature. As Perry Anderson points out in his article (*New Left Review*, C. Spring 1968), the largeness of Leavis's world is due to his transcendence of narrow liberal horizons. For him the individual is real, something that Eliot's totalitarian churchliness precludes. Yet he concedes, as in the case of Blake, the individual author's affinity to "something stirring at large among his con-

temporaries". (*Revaluation*). Wordsworth's strength is traced to an impersonality inculcated by a particular way of life whereas Shelley's disastrous narcissism is accounted for in terms of the lack of such an upbringing. (*Revaluation*). His definition of tradition is refreshingly clear and sharp, though it suffers from lack of dialectic: "He (the critic) endeavours to see the poetry of the present as continuation and development; that is, as the decisive, the most significant, contemporary life of tradition. He endeavours, where the poetry of the past is concerned, to realize to the full the implications of the truism that its life is in the present or nowhere; it is alive in so far as it is alive for us." (*Revaluation*). Actually the germ of this idea lies in Eliot's phrase 'contemporary sensibility', but the eloquence it achieves here comes from profound commitment to it. On the other hand Leavis does not see that the study of the past changes the present, and preparing for the future is as much a concern of real, social man as preserving the past. Marx had written in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*: "The social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future. It cannot begin with itself before it has stripped off all superstition in regard to the past. The context, to be sure, is different. But it at least warns us that the past could be a fetter, a superstition in circumstances that Leavis cannot envisage. Though he disagrees violently with Eliot in theory on this point, Leavis's transcendence of liberalism also leads him towards explicit social reaction. Marxism is inconceivable as an alternative.

Eliot's mystical notion of a social organism living its life in time is rejected by Leavis who has a more definite notion of man's role in shaping his own destiny. But the literary elitism which he offers makes a false synthesis of real social action, which can only mean class-struggle, and the mystical notion of 'continuity of life' in language and tradition, Eliot's

individual talent submits to tradition and order and suppresses its distinctness. Leavis's individual talent is nourished by tradition, and it develops tradition in the real sense. The mysticism clinging to 'life' and 'time' is dispelled only in the Marxist notion of historical action, concrete, class-based, and capable of bringing about qualitatively new elements.

It once appeared to many of us who read Leavis with vibrant admiration that his reply to Rene Wellek was decisive, unanswerable. (*Scrutiny*, Vol. VI, No. 1). Leavis has affirmed there the need to 'vindicate literary criticism as a separate and distinct discipline'. He had declined in the face of urgent demand to make explicit his assumptions in a general form, with the plea that the precision and richness of concrete critical commentary will be lost thereby. The discipline used a method very different from application of categories from outside. Where then was the guarantee that Leavis's readings would not be private and subjective? In reply Leavis had assumed elsewhere the presence of an elite reading-public, to whom the literary fact (which is at the same time value) is at once objectively present. The famous appeal

'That is so. Is not it?'

thus becomes reduced to a coterie-appeal straining at universality. As with Matthew Arnold who had been a fore-runner with his stress on the 'thereness' of the poetry, Leavis's tradition seems now to me very much a sectarian tradition. But the point is that this sectarian tradition is strong, useful, valuable—something that hostile critics do not associate with sectarianism.

A Marxist perspective will probably be different from that of Raymond Williams who in his pioneering and still useful critique in *Culture and Society* tried to rescue the critical acumen from the ideological stupidity. Leavis's refusal to generalise about his primary assumptions notwithstanding, he has repeatedly made remarks of a general nature on the character of contemporary society, on mass and

industrial civilization as its essence, and on the life of organic society persisting through literature as the only hope for the human spirit today. Williams makes urbane fun of such assumptions but fails to make due allowance for the percipience inextricably mixed with such prejudices, the vision behind the nightmare. To start with, one might point to the fear of general theory. Perry Anderson does so, but does not proceed any further. Leavis has again and again argued that it is not timidity but fineness of perception that has made him wary of general theory. He wants the readers to see the general perspective in his concrete analysis and discussion.

We have no intuitive certainty about the infallibility of Leavis's general ideas. Hence it is necessary for us to have a general formulation of these assumptions, even if we agreed that that was not strictly necessary in concrete critical performance. When Leavis declines to do that on the ground that he did not want to confuse criticism with philosophy he actually offers a too narrow definition of philosophy. As a formulation of general perspectives, *everything* has a philosophy, including Leavis's criticism. Perry Anderson traces Leavis's anti-philosophical attitude to British empiricism. It seems to me much more a direct class-based phenomenon. Karl Mannheim studied in detail the views of reactionary German thinkers who had made a strong plea on behalf of the 'concrete', not in the sense of discrete data but in the sense of historically formed and given institutions, customs, habits and objects. Any appeal to a general framework was derided by those thinkers as an arrogant and useless exercise of free reason. Leavis's idea is not very different, and not less obscurantist. A large dose of free reason, of which the Marxist can see the limits more clearly the more he grows away from the liberal heritage seems at times the only retort to this attitude.

Leavis lacks the tools for analysing and understanding modern society.

He has a penetrating awareness of the degradation that capitalism has imposed on the captive masses, and he senses the decadence of the liberal tradition (the values of capitalist society) with compelling power. But his criteria belong tragically to the past. At rare moments today, as when he condemns the dead-end despair of Beckett one feels some affinity to him. But there is little hope of getting out of him a realistic guide to action. His 'mass society' cannot really be understood apart from the Marxian diagnosis of the split between the town and the country, manual and intellectual labour, private ownership and social production. The Marxist is in a position to see—without fetishizing it into bogeys—the consequences of capitalist control over the state and over educational institutions (through social goals) and media. The Marxist has no need to worship Benthamism (Marx had already dismissed him as an unima-

ginative dry-as-dust), but he has no fear of technology as such, nor any objection to rational social control over the various processes of social action. It is a pity that for Leavis the affluence of the capitalist west is a fact needing no explanation, the problem of hunger has been solved. The gruesome poverty of the formerly colonial areas must be yet another ruse of the spirit. The false notion of reality perpetuated by the imperialist ruling clique is embraced unquestioningly. He does not see that the affluence of the West and the signs of decay that he deplures are linked up with the corruption by the bourgeoisie of the working-class struggle, on a scale that would make posterity squirm, and with the brutal exploitation of human life in underdeveloped areas. These are hard, crude facts. Their reality heavily qualifies our admiration today of one of the outstanding critical achievements in our time.

John P. Haithcox

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Book Review

COMMUNISM AND NATIONALISM IN INDIA : M. N. Roy and Comintern Policy 1920-1939

By J. P. Haithcox

Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1971 ; pp. xiv+389. Rs. 85.00

M. N. Roy, whose role even as the founder of the Communist Party in India is not without controversy, generally evokes the most extreme and contradictory kind of responses. While his admirers extol him as the only Indian who has made a positive contribution to 'International Communist Theory' (whatever that might mean), his political enemies denounce him as an opportunistic charlatan, one who was never to be trusted where money and women were concerned, and who, just due to a strange combination of circumstances, succeeded in worming his way into the Indian and international communist movement ; it can even be argued that the ills the Indian communist movement has been suffering from are all due to the pernicious influences left on the movement in its infant stage by Roy.

The difficulties in arriving at any objective assessment of Roy are immense, though lack of material is not one of them. In fact, it is the very richness of material that seems to be a stumbling block. Literature by Roy, and about Roy is immense, and only those who are committed one way or the other about Roy can be expected to be familiar with all the primary and secondary source materials. The present reviewer certainly does not belong to that category. The book under review claims to have added something substantially original to an interpretation of Roy's role in the Indian and international communist movement. It is for the experts to say whether Haithcox's book really provides any new interpretation of Roy's role, or is merely an apology for Roy.

As claimed by Haithcox, his account of Roy's career differs from previous accounts on the following

counts : (1) The Roy-Lenin debate on colonial policy at the Second Congress of the Comintern ; (2) The role of Roy in the Indian communist movement (a role which is almost tailor-made for a variety of interpretations) ; (3) Roy's mission to China ; and (4) Roy's final expulsion from the Comintern. It is rather difficult to support the claim made by Haithcox with regard to at least two of the four counts viz., the Roy-Lenin debate and Roy's expulsion from the Comintern. Other accounts, including Roy's own highly partisan one, seem to have covered more or less the same ground as the one covered by Haithcox. Haithcox sees the Roy-Lenin debate as essentially a continuing debate in the international communist movement and considers it as a variant forerunner, of other even more important controversies of the international communist movement like 'the 1927 dispute between Stalin and Trotsky, and between Roy and Borodin over the China policy'. Haithcox even sees a continuation of the Roy-Lenin debate in the more recent splits in the Indian communist movement, a point of view which seems difficult to support. Surely the more recent controversies of the Indian communist movement have something more to them than differences of opinion over the role of the national bourgeoisie in our country, and in our national democratic revolution in its various phases. Rather, the splits have been over the question, not so much about the role as over the very character of the national bourgeoisie, a distinction that seems to me to be of vital importance.

The claim made by Haithcox (about his original interpretation of the events leading to Roy's final expulsion from the Comintern is also difficult to justify, considering the very nature of the evidence available. But serious irregularities about Roy's handling of Comintern funds was at least as important a charge against Roy as the charges of ideological lapses, and all accounts of Roy's career (except of course Roy's own)

provide ample evidence on this count.

Apart from tracing out in detail the career of Roy in the Indian and international communist movement, Haithcox's book provides ample evidence as to the almost total incorrectness of Roy's views on most of the issues wherein he differed from his colleagues. The correctness of Lenin's stand, even as summed up by so sympathetic (to Roy) a narrator as Haithcox (pp. 14 ff.) is self-evident. The continuous bickerings and mutual backbiting that characterised the attitudes of early Indian revolutionary expatriates are also vividly brought out in the author's account in Chapter Two of the book. Ramcharan Lal Sharma ('a former gun-runner and printer for the *Jugantar* press') who later turned out to be a swindler was more often than not the archetype of many of the revolutionary exiles. The controversies connected with the founding of the Indian Communist Party (and the controversies over its precise nomenclature, whether it was to be ICP or the CPI, as it came to be known later) are recounted in detail by Haithcox. But repeatedly, it is the constant money troubles and the presence of cool confidence men operating as revolutionaries that strikes one at this distance. Also striking is the way the British intelligence kept such close tabs on the doings of the revolutionaries, and one is filled with a degree of admiration for the intrepid spirits that carried on despite constant money troubles, spies everywhere, including among the highest echelons of the party itself. One is also struck at the extraordinary mobility of the early revolutionaries ; the British were certainly more generous in providing travel facilities—or at least in not unduly obstructing travel—than the leaders of independent India. Roy's own peripatations are a microcosm of wide global trotting, covering the old world and the new. The movement was certainly 'international' in its inspiration as well as in its execution, and it was but appropriate that Roy should have played a pro-

minent role 'from China to Peru' (figuratively speaking), in the international communist movement. The fact that he made a mess of his role in China, that his prominent role in the founding of the Mexican Communist Party was more due to the accident of his being there than due to any assigning of such a role to him is also significant in that it gives credence to the views held by critics hostile to Roy—that he was more the opportunist than the ideologue.

Royism in India

The most interesting section of the book is the one that deals with Royism in India. It might seem a little unfair to damn a prophet by citing his disciples, but the temptation cannot be resisted, for it is difficult to find a more committed set of right-wing social democrats than the Royists in India. Professional anti-communist researchers and apologists for the American barbarities in Vietnam are also among the staunchest Royists in India, and it is certainly not accidental that Roy, the father of the Indian communist movement, should have served as godfather to the organizers of 'Democratic Research Service', the Congress for Cultural Freedom et al.

It would be fairer to Roy to consider him as a representative of early Indian nationalists, who due to a strange combination of circumstances, came under the influence of international communism. He reached an important position in the international communist movement very early in his life, and his career (till his break with the Comintern, seems to present an effort on his part to sustain and advance this position. But there was a strong streak of opportunism in Roy, and this, coupled with his erroneous understanding of the needs of the communist movement in India, caused his expulsion. Haithcox of course supports Roy's assertion that his (Roy's) chief offence had been his 'claim to the right of independent thinking'. But that this was the only offence of Roy is not borne out even by Haithcox's own narra-

tive. The latter from Louise Chesler, approvingly quoted by Haithcox, is revealing. 'He (Roy) was till his sad end an idealist for the cause of humanity'. A strange way to describe one who considered himself an uncompromising materialist!

There is no doubt that Roy's was a very powerful personality, which inspired strong loyalties and equally strong antipathies. While the present reviewer is hardly qualified to speak of Roy's 'creative contribution to Marxist theory', it is undoubtedly true that occasionally, we have in Roy's writing sudden flashes of acute insight into certain aspects of Indian political culture. Roy was always uncompromising in his hostility towards the bourgeois nationalist leaders, though he continued to try to work with them. He was, in this as well as in many other things, a bundle of contradictions. As a cosmopolitan, he despised Gandhi; Nehru, with his borrowed talk of socialism, evoked even greater contempt. But he also realized that they had a mass following while he was alone, and so he compromised his principles by working with the Congress leaders. He was unsparing in his attacks on the obscurantist aspects of Hinduism, but while his analysis of Hindu society was acute ('drive pampered, idle, gossiping, but outrageous maltreated women out in the streets to work down their fat or cure their anaemia and to free themselves from the malignant curse of suppressed passion'), the solution he had to offer was that 'this country needs a Kemal Pasha', a role which he no doubt fancied for him. And even Roy, with all his freedom from the prejudices characteristic of the Hindu mind, could not but see the past of India as 'political slavery for nearly a thousand years' (emphasis added), a point of view which seems strange, emanating from a man like Roy, who prided himself of his sympathetic understanding of Islam.

I have probably been unfair both to Roy, and this account of his career. But one cannot but feel exasperated when one reflects over the career of

a man like Roy; undoubtedly gifted, very hard-working, and for a while occupying an enviably influential position in the international communist movement, but becoming completely negative when once he found himself thrust off the stage, as it were, and confined to the sidelines. Whether the expulsion of Roy was due to his opportunism and his Menshevik ideas, or whether he was a victim of 'Stalinism', we are too close to the events to be able to be objective about. Even Trotsky, a far greater and more authentically tragic figure than Roy, is yet to be properly assessed. But whatever appeal the figure of Roy might have, just a mere casual acquaintance with the 'Royists' is enough to put off anyone from considering Roy and 'Royism' seriously. Even Haithcox's work provides enough material to make one reject Royism. The pure, liberal gooey with which the book ends

Man, the creator of machines, is greater than the means of production. Man did not emerge from

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the process of evolution with a hammer in his hand, but with a distinctive brain. The human brain, itself a kind of "means of production", is more powerful than the most powerful machine.

is enough to convince that while Roy no doubt was a remarkable figure in the early stages of the international communist movement, the legacy he has left behind is almost totally sterile.

M. S. PRABHAKAR

Professor Mamlock

BY A DRAMA CRITIC

FRIEDRICH Wolf's *Professor Mamlock* has been made into film at least twice. Once in the Soviet Union and later in the early sixties by the dramatist's son, Konrad Wolf, which was released in Calcutta during the Festival in 1961. Utpal Dutt's translation for the stage was produced by himself. Another group, Parba Ranga, staged it in Mukta Angan recently.

The play is frankly purposive. And its presentation at the moment is entirely appropriate for, albeit portraying the Germany of the early thirties, it is very much contemporary in essence. The whipping of anti-Jewish sentiment, the bland acceptance by the middle class of the situation created by Hitler's men who propagate socialism of a national variety, the initial disbelief of the prosperous and respectable Jew that he and his family are about to be engulfed, the ideological stance of his son, have all have a ring of truth in the current situation. Despite the slight sentimentality in scenes concerning the daughter who walks up to her moment of truth and the tragic end of the Professor who takes his own life for his indecision, the play does, to an extent, depict the era.

Ranjan Ghosh as director is very much helped by the strong material but the first-night performance was

marked by a slight uneasiness on the part of his troupe in their movements on stage. Perhaps the gaudy furniture (period?) left little room and erratic light created confusion. But they uttered their lines well and a little drilling will enable them to improve. And one hopes they would present it many more times to drive home the basic truth contained in it which has great relevance for our times and in our State.

Film File

BY A FILM CRITIC

OVER the past few years the short Film Festival at Oberhausen in West Germany has attracted talents from many lands including nonconformists, particularly from Latin America whose protest against injustice and hunger is reflected in their efforts. The recent screening at Max Muller Bhavan showed *Caracass*, an Argentine short which brings out the agony of hunger and deprivation through a startling array of faces ranging from spoonfed babes to the lined emaciated faces of old men and women, as the national anthem is played as background music with its protestation of prosperity for the people. Images of faces avid for the soup that is being distributed are juxtaposed with that of the new born desperately sucking milk from its mother's breast. For the growing and the adult however Mother Earth has nearly been denuded of elements that can give succour.

In *The Punitive Expedition*, made by a Hungarian film student, the protagonist symbolises both Christ and Che Guevara. Their suffering binds them, and in fact all who revolt against injustice and oppression and the mercenaries can hardly be the answer to their courage and dedication. In the first half we see an army column advancing to quell protesting people in the Austro-

Hungarian Empire just before World War I. Cleverly interspersed are the contemporary events of the revolt of students in Paris. Conflagration envelops as it reaches a maddening crescendo. The face of the protagonist, spear in hand, looms brighter. Christ and Che roll into one symbolising the eternal urge of man to remain unvanquished in the face of forces of evil.

The Kenneth Anger piece is a riotous explosion of colour and his sense of texture, composition and lighting is exquisitely manifest. The sports films in session were a little too many but were thoroughly enjoyable.

The USIS sponsored screening *The Medium is the Massage* bears out that McLuhan may be true in one respect and that is the overwhelming superiority of the visual media over cold print. For if one was a little flummoxed by the formidable Professor's book, his own exposition helps bring out the ideas so assiduously asserted by him. McLuhan is nothing if not witty and his breathtaking blandness is generalising his well-known observations shows him as a good performer. The applicability of his 'massage treatment' as far as the less fortunately placed in the poor world is, however, another matter. When he propounds his theory of global village, three-fourths of humanity remain within the orbit of tribal village leaving the uncomfortable feeling that he may well be the jesting Professor after all. For him, however, it should provide the 'rear glass view' and the reality reflected in the mirror might goad the Professor to speed away to his eerie world.

The USIS presentation of the package of experimental films is less exciting than the one brought along by Donald Richie. But it is rewarding nevertheless. It starts with *Ragas*, in which the accompanying sitar recital opens myriad colours in an endless exposition of the raga. Oskar Fischinger's *Radio Dynamics* (1942) is an exposition of his con-

cept of third eye in the yoga system. It is not intended to be easy on the eye as layer after layer of rectangular shapes constantly surge forward to break the resistance of the human perception to "new vision". The two eyes keep opening all the time and the third keeps coming forward in its trust to the eye.

Jordan Bellson's *Allures* is also highly abstract. Here space is explored to reach a level in a rapid succession of images which the maker seems to consider high to the known areas of exploration.

Cheng's *Ethero* is full of magical images of ritualistic observance right from the birth of a baby. Karen Johnson's *Orange* is erotic in essence and William Moritz who brought the package shows his penchant for the abstract in *Jude*.

Experiments with the medium have led several film makers in America to the region of highly individualistic form of the abstract. The main thing with them is personal expression without any commercial consideration. It also provides sychelic experience with its rich sense of colour where sense fulfilment is the final word. But its intense subjective framework might as well leave the maker in the dead end of merely esoteric pleasure.

Documents

Vietnam

THE Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in a statement issued on April 19 declared:

To conceal their criminal acts of war escalation, the U.S. ruling circles have put forward deceitful contentions, calling black white.

They have rehashed shop-worn contentions about "North Vietnam aggression in South Vietnam", "North Vietnam violating the 1954 Geneva Agreements", etc. Public opinion is well aware of the fact that the 1954

Geneva Agreements on Vietnam have recognized the fundamental national rights of the Vietnamese people, viz., independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. Vietnam belongs to the Vietnamese, Vietnam does not belong to the United States. The U.S. imperialists should not encroach on any inch of Vietnamese territory. But they have systematically sabotaged the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam, have conducted the most cruel colonial war in history in an attempt to turn South Vietnam into a new type colony and military base of the United States, and to perpetuate the partition of Vietnam. The so-called "Tonkin Gulf incident" and the "secret papers" of the U.S. defence department have laid bare the odious U.S. distortions, and revealed part of the truth about the U.S. imperialists' crude intervention and aggression in Vietnam. Wherever there are U.S. aggressors on Vietnamese territory, all Vietnamese have the right and the duty to fight against them to defend the independence and freedom of their fatherland. This is the sacred and inalienable right to self-defence of the Vietnamese people just as of all peoples on earth.

The U.S. ruling circles have also fabricated the myth of the so-called "understanding" between the United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The U.S. imperialists have invented the story of "North Vietnam violating the understanding" to have a pretext for pursuing and stepping up the war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in defiance of the October 1968 commitment of the United States to stop completely and without condition the bombing of North Vietnam.

The U.S. ruling circles have also claimed that they are bombing the North "to protect the lives of the American soldiers in South Vietnam". The only way to protect the lives of the American soldiers is for the Nixon administration to put an immediate end to the war of aggression, and rapidly bring home all American troops. Had the Nixon administration seriously responded to the

reasonable and logical seven-point solution presented on July 1, 1971, by the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam, all U.S. troops, including the captured U.S. servicemen, would have had the possibility of going home in 1971. The fact is that the Nixon administration is more interested in the consolidation of the Saigon puppet administration as an instrument of U.S. neo-colonialism in South Vietnam than in the fate of the U.S. troops. That is the reason why it has caused and will cause an increasing number of young Americans to die a useless death, and the list of captured U.S. servicemen to lengthen day by day.

By undertaking a new military adventure against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Nixon administration is attempting to save the "Vietnamization" plan which is being seriously threatened with collapse. This is further evidence of the fact that "Vietnamization" is not designed to end the war of aggression, but only to prolong, intensify and expand it. "Vietnamization" is not designed to "end the U.S. involvement in Vietnam" but will only make the United States sink ever deeper in the bog in Vietnam, Indochina and South-east Asia.

However, the U.S. bombs have failed, and will never be able to subdue the heroic Vietnamese people. The Nixon administration should remember that in the past the U.S. imperialists mobilized very big air, naval and ground forces to conduct a local war in the South and a war of destruction in the North, yet they sustained a humiliating defeat. Now the more hysterical and truculent the Nixon administration, the heavier its defeats, and the more it unmasks its aggressive, obdurate and bellicose features. The Vietnamese people are firmly resolved to fight and to win, and they are sure to completely defeat all new military adventures of the United States, and the "Vietnamization" policy.

PLAF Orders

The command of the South Vietnam People's Liberation Armed Forces has issued an order asking all the officers and combatants of the Liberation Army, regional forces and guerrillas on all battlefronts:

1—To uphold the determination to fight and to win, to bring into full play the combined strength of the three kinds of armed forces, and the combat power of the regular troops, regional forces and guerrillas, to closely coordinate the infantry with other arms and services and between all battlefields, to strike hard, record big victories, wipe out large portions of enemy live forces and war means, capture more enemy troops, seize more weapons, smash the enemy defensive lines on all battlefronts and seize the opportunity to develop our offensive victoriously;

2—To effectively help our people in the areas still under the enemy control to attack and rise up simultaneously, step up the people's war, break the enemy coercive machine, seize the control, liberate their native lands, frustrate the enemy "rural pacification" programme, vigorously push ahead the revolutionary struggle in the urban centres, and consolidate and promote our position of offensive in the three strategic areas: the mountains, the plains and urban centres;

3—To strictly carry out the ten-point policy of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam, closely combine the political agitation among the enemy troops with military attack, step up the work of persuading puppet officers and men to rise up, revolt, insurrect, leave the enemy ranks and cross over to the people and to the Liberation Forces, to call on "popular defence" members to coordinate with the people to liberate their villages and hamlets, and to persuade the families whose husbands and sons are in enemy ranks to call on them to return to the revolution.

Letters

Machines And Morale

The leader "Machines and Morale", (May 22) perhaps for the first time strikes us with the feeling that how much the "Progressives" may be applauding the heroic feats of the Vietnamese people from a distance of hundreds of miles, this unbelievable fight and the infinite pain it accompanies, should have raised the world people's conscience long before to such an extent that the war could have been stopped for good.

So far the editor has broadly divided the socialists into two parts "social-imperialists" and "purists". But here he raises his accusing finger towards the rest of the world, Red China not being excluded.

By this leader he has purified himself from the sin he committed a few weeks ago by accusing Hanoi of partisanship.

The "purists" will no doubt dismiss the editorial as an exercise in petit-bourgeois sentimentalism, but at least I am with him.

TUSHAR KANTI SINHA
Calcutta-13

Name Of A Party

Your paper has published a "document" "Mohammad Toaha, chairman of the Bangla Desh Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist)" which has been cited as author of the document.

The very name "Bangla Desh Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist)" is vague and self contradictory. To name East Pakistan as "Bangla Desh", is simply to justify the plot of U.S. imperialism and Social-imperialism to divide Pakistan. Certainly, Marxism-Leninism is not a weapon to justify imperialist occupation.

These are some people who are advocating recognition of "Bangladesh" on the plea that it has become an "objective reality". People raising the slogan of "objective reality"

are forgetting history, even most recent history. Taiwan, an occupant of a permanent seat in the Security Council for long 22 years, could not become an "objective reality". The Lon Nol clique of Cambodia is certainly not an "Objective reality", even though it is recognised by Soviet social-imperialists.

Neither bayonets, bullets and guns of Kosygin, Indira and others nor any "Marxist-Leninist" document can turn "Bangla Desh" into an "unchangeable reality". Already the reality is being attacked at Rongpur, Dacca, Jessore, Chittagong, Khulna and other places.

A CITIZEN OF E. PAKISTAN
(Mr Toaha does not call his party "Bangladesh Communist Party [Marxist]". The error was ours.—
Editor.

Joint Petitions

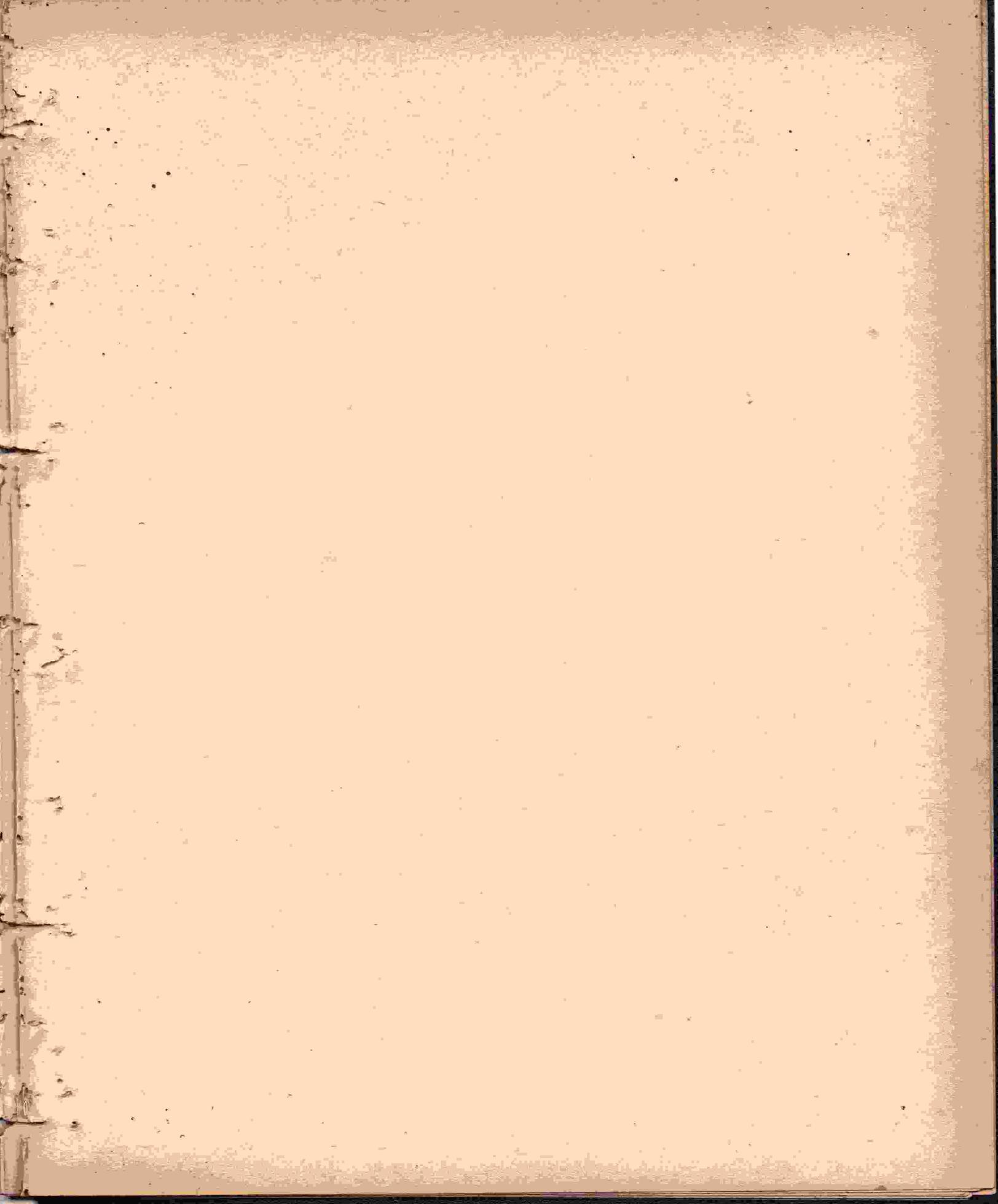
The Congress has unleashed an aggression on the political rights of the people of Bengal. The CPI, whether in operational-collaboration or not, unhesitatingly upholds the election 'verdict' ridiculing the 'rigging' charges of the Left Front. As stooges go, their cries are louder than those of the Congress. The CPI has to be guilty of being partners in this rape of democracy. So, is it not odd that the CPM was a joint signatory with the CPI to a petition on Vietnam and a petition relating to Syed Badruddoja's detention? How can the concept of Left unity, in itself which is very correct, be stretched to fraternising with the leaders of groups indulging in anti-people activities and pursuing counter-revolutionary policies? One is tempted to think that these capitulationists are only shamming.

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