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ARMS IN THE EMBASSY

A hostile Baghdad is no longer the headquarters of CENTO, of which Pakistan continues to be a member, though not very active. Pakistan cultivates the Shan of Iran, but who doesn't these days? The Iranian-Iraqi tension does not involve Pakistan—as yet. So the discovery of quite a number of Russian-made machine-guns, sub-machine guns, incendiary grenades, ammunition and a few long-range radio receivers and transmission sets in the office and rooms of officers of the Iraqi Embassy at Islamabad must have come as a big surprise to the Pakistan Government and the public at large. Perhaps to the Iraqi Ambassador too. It has also created uneasiness in parts of the Arab world. As one Arab diplomat commented, there is no reason whatsoever for Iraq to meddle in the internal affairs of Pakistan.

These internal matters at the moment are intricate and a source of headache to the Bhutto Government. All sorts of influences, over and covert, are at work in Pakistan, after the breakaway of East Pakistan. There has been and there still is acute tension and trouble in the Frontier Province and Baluchistan where quite a few tribes are restless. Though the Frontier Gandhi, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, says that there is no need to press for an independent Pakhtoonistan after the recent tumultuous events and the new set-up that operates in Pakistan, old motives and ambitions do not die so fast. His son, Mr Wali Khan (pro-Moscow NAP), has other ideas. There is great resentment against Punjabi domination, and all the accumulated garbage of the forced one-unit—West Pakistan—that was in existence until the other day, has continued to stink. Mr Bhutto started his career as President with a bang, but not much has happened to pacify the unrest, political, civil or industrial. The moth-eaten kingdom that he has inherited lies bare to strong foreign influences. There are many, both at home and abroad, who would like to see a further disintegration of Pakistan so that they can have a more effective domination. The method preferred is not external intervention—one Bangladesh is enough for a time—but an internal uprising in the restive provinces. And there are factors enough for unrest.

The internal uprisings would not aim at the capture of power for revolutionary ideals. A revolutionary party and programme is still absent. It would be capture of power by other representatives of the exploiters.

Look at Bangladesh and the pattern would be clear. The main reason why outsiders are interested should be sought in the foreign policy of the Bhutto Government, its ties with Peking. Certain forces have decided that for "peace and stability" to reign uninterrupted on the sub-continent, the Chinese influence, whatever it is, must be curbed. Pakistan should have a government or *governments* friendly to India, Bangladesh and the Soviet Union. Iraq is not directly and immediately involved in these foreign policy aims. She is perhaps being used as a channel.

How Mr Bhutto uses the sensational cache remains to be seen. He has his axes to grind at home, though

he will be wise enough not to annoy any big power.

Meanwhile, the diplomatic bag will not be so immune now. So long as these were used for carrying luxury items or scotch that could be sold at high rates, it was all right. But arms and ammunition—not for random sale but for selective distribution among secessionists—are another matter. Another thing that will cause a great deal of legitimate worry is the role of countries linked to a super-power by friendship treaties. Hasn't Iraq one such treaty? And didn't Egypt allow most of the Soviet military aid to India during the Bangladesh crisis to pass through her territory?

Ready For A Sell-Out

The recent confabulations between the American President and the King of Jordan have, as was expected, resulted in further U.S. commitment of money and arms to Jordan. But one does not know whether any progress was made to realise "peace" with Israel; President Nixon has more than once promised King Hussein to help achieve this by the end of this year. The King is reported to have told members of the U.S. Congress that he is willing to start direct negotiations with Israel if an acceptable agenda could be worked out in advance. He has not mentioned the question of withdrawal of Israeli forces from Arab territories in the context of an agenda. It has also been attributed to him that he would not mind "minor changes" in the pre-1967 war borders. There are strong indications that Jordan is inching forward, in spite of feeble denials, towards signing a separate peace agreement with Israel. In this the King has the blessings of the U.S. President. In his willingness not to displease the Israelis, the Hashemite monarch has also taken a sufficiently flexible view of the Security Council resolution which directs

Israel to vacate occupied lands. While even a man like Hussein, who could not care less about the fate of the Palestinians, has to reject the Allon plan, he concedes the Israeli demand that there could be no total return to the pre-1967 war borders. It is known that Jordan will not any longer insist on the return of the whole of Jerusalem but will be content with the recovery of the Moslem and Christian sectors. But Hussein may ultimately give up his claim to the Christian sector. As for the Israeli para-military agricultural settlements, the King would not mind these to continue for a time to be determined by an agreed schedule.

In an attempt to justify the concessions he has up his sleeve as also the separate peace agreement, King Hussein has recently told an American correspondent that if a way out is found of the Jordan-Israel conflict then the whole Arab-Israel crisis would become easier to resolve. He considers Jordan to be the focus of the West Asian imbroglio as the Palestinians live there and as religious and other sentiments are associated with Jerusalem. What surprises one is how King Hussein, who was so long politically isolated in the

Arab world, could make a diplomatic breakthrough. During his visit to the USA, he was conferring with President Nixon as a spokesman for Egypt and Syria. Perhaps Sadat and Asad think that Hussein is in a position to persuade Nixon to exert pressure on the Israelis. There is however, no reason to think that pressure will be exerted soon. Mrs Golda Meir has said that she would not be taking any new ideas with her when she goes to Washington next month. She does not think that there is anything wrong with "our old ideas". In spite of the West's growing reliance on the Middle East for oil, President Nixon is unlikely to do anything which may displease Israel since it is doing excellently well in checking the spread of Russian influence in the region. As for oil, Saudi Arabia and Iran are always there to oblige the Western countries. The Arab world is divided over King Hussein's role in Washington; Yasser Arafat has pulled up those Arab "defeatists" who "granted a fresh pardon to King Hussein". The fighting Palestinians will never allow the defeatists to decide the course of events in West Asia.

A Sham Solution

In spite of all the assurances given by New Delhi, no bookie would give the newly constituted Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) a good chance of being a success. The holding company with eight subsidiaries commanding an investment of about Rs. 2,500 crores represents a desperate attempt to improve the performance of public sector plants in steel and associated industries. Instead of looking deep into the root of the problem, what the Government has now done, is to go off tangentially to a kind of sham solution. Efficiency cannot be ensured by size alone; indeed there is every possibility that SAIL would become a prisoner of its own bigness. It is more than twice the size of Hindus-

tan Steel and the way things have run—or not run—in the HSL is far from commendable. SAIL is expected to enjoy a greater degree of autonomy, but then the constituent units could have been given greater operational freedom without their being pooled together to form a colossus which calls for very high standards of managerial expertise. Besides autonomy is not a guarantee for efficient working. It can fire the engines of soaring success, but more often it tends to backfire. And the country has now committed itself to a very big stake in SAIL.

In drawing up the guidelines for public sector units, New Delhi has tried to punch in all sorts of economics and, unfortunately, non-economics. Every failure of these plants has been sought to be excused in terms of high falutin ideas of social welfare, infrastructural investment, community improvement and the like. The result has been that the public sector has been left virtually without a policy. Profit has become a dirty word for it, and the bureau-

crats who man the public sector—who are fast forming into a class that does not even have the virtues of the capitalists but have their vices—cannot have anything better. It is not clear how such sprawling holding companies—they are being proposed for industries other than steel—will improve matters. Mr Mohan Kumaramangalam, the Steel and Mines Minister, who has fathered the idea, has inducted a professional manager, Mr M. A. Wadud Khan, to head the organisation and has uttered a lot of high sounding phrases about "industrial culture" replacing "civil service culture" and about result-oriented policies and so on. But he has thrown very little light on where exactly SAIL would reorient the existing policies (or whatever went in their name) or what special feature it would have to make it a success where others have failed. Or will SAIL too go the way of other public sector ventures? The benefit of the doubt does not seem to go to it.

advanced capitalist society, as Marx said, there are two clearly counterpoised classes and since Mr Ray was no proletarian, he has to be a bourgeois. Mrs Mitra should now stand enlightened; by corollary, India is an advanced capitalist society.

But what is then a progressive bourgeois? Marx had of course described some people as feudalistic socialists, bourgeois socialists, petty-bourgeois socialists, Christian socialists, etc., who were all pseudo-socialists. But it is a great contribution of the Indian communists to discover another sect which they call progressive bourgeois and believe them to be more socialists than bourgeois. On the same token, they should now call the Jana Sangh progressive feudals, after the socialist economic resolution the latter took in Kanpur last week. But if we are to take people by what they swear, we will be hard put to find any single body in this country which does not swear by the common man. Marx had indeed vainly attempted to distinguish communists from the pseudos. We take people by what they say but not by what they do. The Danges however deliberately prefer not to see what is done; for example to allow the Government which is bourgeois, concessional rates at the AITUC session and permit monopoly houses to advertise their wares in their souvenirs, magazines and newspapers. They welcome the new industrial policy of the Government by which the monopoly houses are given a much wider field to operate—a fact which has taken even the monopoly houses by surprise.

Swearing By The Class

Mr Siddhartha Sankar Ray took great offence when he was called an unalloyed bourgeois leader by Mr S. A. Dange. He referred it for clarification to Mrs Ila Mitra, who was none too sure about the credentials of the head of the Government whom she and her party were supporting to the best of their capabilities. She was hoping that her party would ride over the avoidable controversy by passing the buck to the uneducated reporters. But Mr Dange was firm in his opinion, he confirmed what Mr Ray apprehended—Mr Ray was really called a bourgeois! Mr Ray remains offended.

It may be imagined that Mr Ray and his friends consider the word 'bourgeois' insulting. What they would prefer to be called is 'socialist', because Mrs Gandhi had crowned herself with the same description.

They all swear by the common people, by the working class. This should be treated as a big victory for the working class!

It may be an object of speculation whether Mr Ray would have taken offence were he called a progressive bourgeois and not an unalloyed bourgeois. The Government he heads, however, is a progressive bourgeois one, an anomaly which must be due to our non-understanding of dialectical materialism.

Mrs Mitra was fuddled. She need not be too much ashamed of that. The fault was not hers but Marx's who did not give a precise definition of 'class'. A CPI spokesman had behaved ideally though; he had no confusion. He jeered at the idea that Mr Ray was presuming himself to be a proletarian leader. In an

A New Game

A correspondent writes:

The fact that the Indian Press is not free, and is, in fact, securely tied with strong chains, seems to have dawned on Mrs Indira Gandhi with the force of a sudden revelation. The very impression one gets from her admission at the recently

held One Asia Assembly in New Delhi is that the Press in India is dominated by foreign powers with their worldwide news agency machinery and controlled by a handful of Indian capitalists, but it is free from Government intervention.

Mrs Gandhi's statement claiming that her Government does not try to restrict the freedom of the Press, and that in fact it is determined to preserve this freedom, will hardly stand up to even the most cursory scrutiny. Her attempt to impose selective curbs on sections of the Press by restricting the number of pages they might publish, was certainly not in consonance with the present loud protestations of a firm belief in the right of freedom of expression. This is the opinion, not of some group with a political axe to grind, nor of some cranks with impossible and impractical ideas of unfettered licence, but of the highest judicial authority of the land. Mrs Gandhi's jibe at the One Asia Assembly to the effect that the "Indian Press is not only alive but kicking" is all of a piece with the recent unreasonable phobia she has shown against certain sections of the Press, and significantly, against that section which has not invariably sung her praises.

Nor is the spacious argument that it is not the Government but the large monopoly houses which are trying to restrict the freedom of the Press, likely to be believed by any but the most blindly committed. Is the Government headed by Mrs Gandhi different from these monopoly houses and capitalists? If it is, then it will have to explain away the inconvenient fact that not only are men qualifying to be capitalists under the most conservative definition of the term, holding important ministerial offices in the present Congress governments at the Centre and in the States, but many Ministers, including the Prime Minister herself, have controlling interests in newspapers, having been owners of some big papers. The present Government itself, and the whole appa-

ratus of elections, is heavily weighted in favour of those normally termed capitalists. A man without the large sums required to stand for political office in India would just be squeezed out of existence by the leviathan of the party machinery. The Congress is never known to be particularly reluctant to receive donations from people like Tata, Birla and Goenka. Indeed, the charge that just before the last elections the Congress accepted a large donation, which can never be unconditional, from a source widely known to be the very citadel of capitalists, to print posters, has not been credibly denied by the Prime Minister.

Indeed, perhaps the greatest irony is that the very Assembly where the Prime Minister was delivering herself of the diatribe against foreign domination in and control of Indian newspapers by the Indian compradors, was organised by the International Press Institute, and it can

Delhi

Age Of Reason

N. K. SINGH

A public meeting was convened by the Committee for Defence and Release of Naxalite Prisoners on January 23 in Delhi.

The Committee is the brain-child of Mr R. K. Garg, a lawyer by profession and a Dangeite by passion, who wants to "win back" the faith of the Naxalites "in the democratic way of life" and to "reinforce democracy".

It was a well-attended meeting. There were some three hundred of them—politicians, authors, journalists, intellectuals, teachers, students, law-years etc. The political participants included the CPI, which seemed to be running the entire show, the SP, the SSP, the RSP and last but not the least, some CPI-oriented Congressmen. The CPM abstained from the meeting—

hardly be a secret from her that this organisation is under tight American tutelage. The organisers of the One Asia Assembly who have suddenly become very anxious to free the Indian Press from foreign domination are doubtful characters. So is the founding of the Asian News Service. Heavily financed by the Americans, the ANS, set up in the name of Asianisation of the Indian Press, is nothing but a sister organisation of the Associated Press and UPI of America. All these facts are surely known to Mrs Gandhi, and she cannot escape from the charge that she is also a party to the new game, under a camouflage, that is being played in a more organised but subtle manner throughout this part of the world. In the name of One Asia Assembly, the organisers of the game have cleverly managed to hold their conference openly in the very capital of India under her warm patronage.

though a few of its sympathisers could be seen 'spying', from the gallery. In a nutshell, it was a mixed gathering of revolutionaries, not-so-revolutionaries, lesser revolutionaries and those who claimed to be once-upon-a-time-revolutionaries. It was perhaps for the last time that convener R. K. Garg wrote in his invitation: "you will appreciate that all of us at one time or the other challenged the established order in our own way". Most of the speakers, especially the Dangeites, recalled how once, upon a time they too had "taken to arms against the establishment".

Though the meeting was called for the "defence and release of Naxalite prisoners" and it was emphasised time and again that "this is neither the time nor the place to discuss ideolo-

gical questions", almost all the speakers, barring an exceptional few, utilised the opportunity to criticise what they thought was 'ultra-leftism'. The Marxist gentlemen particularly seemed to be in a fit of philanthropy in guiding these "misguided" young men and women.

All the Dangeites—ranging from P. C. Joshi to Bhupesh Gupta—muttered that they too could bring armed revolution, but were only waiting for the right time. CPI theoretician Mohit Sen went one step ahead by branding Naxalites "brother revolutionaries" and disclosed that the differences between the two boiled down to a question of the timing of insurrectionary methods and *not* to one of methods as such.

It was very ironical indeed hearing those Congress MPs on how the Government—or its law and order wing—was committing inhuman atrocities, violating even the law of the land, on the communist revolutionaries. Someone was heard commenting: it can be a matter of dispute whether the leopard can change its spots or not but a Congressman certainly can.

Was it really a change of heart, or behaviour for that matter? No, declared the old-time fellow-traveller, Mr Amrit Nahata. Was not the great Indian National Congress on friendly terms with terrorist fighters for independence? After all their paths might be different but the goal was the same. Had not Gandhi demanded the reprieve of Bhagat Singh? (At this point there was a great uproar in the hall, people calling it a travesty of truth, Mr Nahata had to stop his speech several times and the organisers threatened to adjourn the meeting if others' views were not heard. So the Naxalite prisoners should be released on humanitarian, national and *political* grounds, (emphasis mine.) We shall convey your message to Mrs G.

Perhaps such double-talk provoked the Hindi writer, Mr Mudrarakshas—an uninvited speaker—to comment: "I wonder whether there is any conspiracy behind the entire game when

those who have snatched justice talk in terms of 'a fair deal'.

There were some political simpletons too. The SSP's S. D. Gupta revealed that "even we political workers were not aware of the fact that 30-32 thousand people are rotting in jails".

Enough of this cynicism. There were some good people too. And let us take these 'humanistic' gentlemen and women at their face value. All of them admitted: Naxalites are honest to their cause, theirs is a political case and the Government is denying them a fair deal—even in utter violation of the law of the land. Reinforce *at least* the constitutional safeguards for political agitators, this was the general consensus.

The meeting resolved to hold an all-India convention in defence of Naxalite prisoners in March and to build an all-India movement demanding their release as well as rehabilitation. A preparatory committee was set up in this connection and the following were chosen its members: Amrit Nahata and D. P. Singh of the Congress, Bhupesh Gupta, P. C. Joshi and Mohit Sen of the CPI, Sunil Bhattacharya (RSP), R. K. Jain (SP), S. Das Gupta (SSP), Ramsvee Verma (Revolutionary Youth Front), O. P. Sangal (Editor, *New Wave*), Bodhayan Chatterjee (Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University), S. C. Agrawal and R. K. Garg (Advocates, Supreme Court) and Mudrarakshas (Writer).

In a resolution, unanimously passed, the Committee said that there was "no justification" for continuing the long detention of Naxalites on one pretext or the other and "their liberty must be restored to them forthwith." In the cases the Government finds it "impossible" to order their immediate release, trials must commence immediately.

The Committee expressed its "deep concern" over the treatment meted out to the Naxalite prisoners in various jails in the country, their detention for unusually long periods, as well as attempts at further delaying their

trials on flimsy excuses in "denial of basic human rights and civil liberties."

It said thousands of political prisoners are rotting in jails. In the recent past many have been killed by police lathis and bullets in jails. Many more have been murdered even before they were taken into custody. Many are tortured in police custody and detained without trial, including those who simply protested against the violence of the police. Even some of those who appeared for the defence of the Naxalites have been harmed in various ways and even involved in rigged cases. The Naxalites have been categorised as dangerous criminals, they have been put in fetters. In jails there are no adequate arrangements for the supply of provisions, medicines, clothes, newspapers, and other basic necessities of life to them. Many of them have become seriously ill, some even mentally deranged as a result of the unhealthy atmosphere and inhuman treatment.

Was the meeting of any use? Yes, said a spokesman of the Revolutionary Youth Front. "A few months ago our comrade, Charan Shandilya, was arrested at Meerut only because he had taken out a procession demanding the release of Naxalite prisoners. Can they do anything of this sort now?"

In his enthusiasm to support the Naxalites one of the distinguished speakers, who cannot be termed a Naxalite even by Swatantra standards, said: "the Government should accept all the demands of the Naxalites."

‘अनुष्ठुप’

‘तितुमीर’ क्रोडपत्र सङ्गलित ‘अनुष्ठुप’
शीत सङ्ख्या स्तले এখনও পাওয়া যাচ্ছে।
পাঠকেরা সংগ্রহ করে মতামত পাঠান।

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Some Light On Preventive Detention

BY AN ADVOCATE

EVEN before 1950 several States in India had enacted statutes which gave to the executive the power to keep a person in detention without trial. In 1950 the Constitution came into force and it also made a special provision whereby an Act for preventive detention could be passed by Parliament provided certain technical requirements of Article 22 of the Constitution were complied with. The Preventive Detention Act was passed in 1950 for one year and extended from year to year and was allowed to lapse only in 1969. Thereafter, till 1971, there was no Central statute providing for detention of a person without trial. In West Bengal, however, in 1970 an Act called the Prevention of Violent Activities Act was brought into force as a President's Act which provided for detention without trial. In 1971 a new Central act providing for preventive detention under the new name of the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) was passed.

The original MISA closely and almost verbatim followed its predecessor, the Preventive Detention Act. It empowered the Government, as in the case of the PDA, to keep a person in detention for any of the following purposes:

- (a) Maintenance of public order;
- (b) Maintenance of supplies and services essential to the community;
- (c) Maintenance of security of the States or the relations of India with any foreign State.

To keep a person in detention all that has to be done is to pass an order reciting that the officer concerned (usually a District Magistrate or a Commissioner of Police) is satisfied that it is necessary to keep that person in detention for any one of the above purposes. Thereafter grounds of detention have to be served on the person detained within five days of his arrest giving particulars of the acts which he is alleged to have

committed and on the basis of which the detaining authority has been satisfied that it is necessary to keep him in detention. The High Court or the Supreme Court on a habeas corpus petition shall not scrutinise the materials forming the allegations against the detenu. If these allegations are not well drafted so that there is an absence of reasonable nexus between the allegations and the object of detention or if the allegations do not give sufficient particulars, the detenu can obtain relief from the High Court. But if the allegations are well drafted and the draftsman is aware of the latest decisions of the court then it is not possible to have any remedy against an order of detention. The Government has no obligation to prove its allegations before the court or any other forum.

The Act, like its predecessors, provides for an Advisory Board to go into the factual existence of the allegations but that is really a farce. It has been judicially held that the Advisory Board is not even a quasi-judicial body. The proceedings before it are not public and the materials considered by it for making its recommendation to the Government are not known either by the detenu or by any other person on his behalf nor are these materials scrutinised by the court. The detenu has no right to be represented by a lawyer or for that matter by anybody before the Advisory Board although the allegations against the detenu and the documents or evidence (if any are ever produced) before the Advisory Board are of a highly technical nature which only a lawyer can cope with. Significantly the members of the Advisory Board are selected from retired High Court Judges or persons serving as judges in a superior court of law.

In the Preventive Detention Act as well as in the Maintenance of Internal Security Act as originally enacted it was incumbent on the Government to

refer a case to the Advisory Board within 30 days of detention and the detention could not continue beyond 10 weeks unless in the meantime the approval of the Advisory Board was obtained. Even with such approval detention could be continued only up to a total period of one year. Since December 4, 1971 the power of the Government has been drastically increased by an amendment of the MISA. It has now been provided by a new section, viz., Sec. 17A, that as long as the Proclamation of Emergency made on December 3, 1971 remains operative, detention can be continued by the Government without the approval of the Advisory Board for a period of 21 months from the date of detention. If within the period of 21 months the Advisory Board reports that there is sufficient ground for continued detention of the detenu then the Government can detain that person for a total period of 3 years.

It must be understood that the operation of this Act and therefore also the relief, if any, which can be granted by the High Courts or the Supreme Court (other courts have nothing to do with an order of detention), is also of a highly technical nature. For instance, as has already been pointed out, an order which has not been skillfully drafted is liable to be quashed by the High Court. Again, if the reference to the Advisory Board is not made with the least possible delay, of which the records of the Government are the only evidence, or if the approval of the Advisory Board is not obtained within the requisite period, the order of detention is also liable to be set aside. It has been recently held by two division benches of Calcutta High Court that if the Advisory Board only states that there is "sufficient reason for detention" and not as required by the new Section 17A that there is "sufficient reason for continued detention" the requirement of the Act has not been complied with and the order of confirmation passed by the Government in such cases is liable to be set aside

and has in fact been set aside in those two cases.

The State Government has gone up to the Supreme Court in appeal against the two orders and judgments of Calcutta High Court but the Supreme Court has not granted any stay order in respect of the judgments appealed from. The current position in law, therefore, is that in all cases in which the Advisory Board has passed such orders continued detention has become invalid and such detenus must be set free. At least as soon as the habeas corpus petitions filed in respect of such detenus come

before the High Court they would have to be set free.

But a strange thing has happened. Although the Division Bench orders mentioned above were passed as early as June last year since then no other case has been heard by Calcutta High Court in which the order of detention is liable to be set aside on the ground that the Advisory Board has not recommended "continued detention" of the detenu. The State Government has represented to the High Court Benches which have the jurisdiction to hear such petitions that cases on this point are pending in the

Supreme Court and as long as they are not disposed of by the Supreme Court the matter should not be heard.

A litigant before a court of law who has filed an appeal but has failed to obtain a stay order has no *locus standi* to make such representation as the West Bengal Government has done. But not only has such representation been made, it has also been heeded by the court and as a result thousands of detenus who should have been released by this time are still rotting in jail under orders of detention which according to High Court's own view have become bad.

Character Of The Soviet Economy Today—II

MONI GUHA

WHAT were the major changes in the Soviet economy by which the present leaders consciously and deliberately extended the spheres of commodity-money market and made the capitalist law of value virtually the regulator of production and thus reverted to capitalism?

(a) *The kitchen garden plots*: The Soviet peasants, irrespective of State farm and collective farm peasants, own a private plot of land for family use, where they raise various sorts of vegetables and even food grains. This is called kitchen garden plot. Besides this plot, they are allowed to rear a definite number of livestock for domestic use. The Soviet peasants used to sell the "surplus product" of the kitchen garden as well as eggs, milk, meat etc. on the "free market". Immediately after the termination of the Second World War these free and private markets grew in dangerous proportion throughout the Soviet Union. The free commodity market and the private property instincts of the peasants began to exert a tremendous baneful influence on Soviet society, both politically and economically. On the one hand, the anarchic capitalist law of value began to assert its law of dislocation on socialist plan-

ning and price policy and on the other private property instincts began to damage the idea of socialist man. The Soviet Government under Stalin imposed an extra tax on the marketable "surplus" of the peasants, cut down the size of the kitchen garden plots and number of livestock. By another decree the Soviet Government introduced payment in kind on team work unit basis in order to curb the commodity market and develop the collective sense of the collective farmers. But after Stalin, Khrushchev "won" the peasants by playing on their private property instincts with his measures and "reform" to stimulate development of capitalism in the countryside: abolition of the extra tax, enlargement of the size of the private plots, abolition of restrictions whatever on livestock; abolition of work-units and system of payment in kind and introduction of individual hours of work and payment in cash; exemption of more farm products from price control and allowing the farmers to sell on private markets; introduction of about 3500 free markets replacing the State stores etc.

Together with these measures, the nationalised lands were distributed to the highest bidder's team who

gave assurances of fulfilling a fixed quota of production. The State Bank gave them long-term loans to promote increase of production and number of livestock. As a result 55 per cent of the national income began to come from private plots and only 45 per cent from the collective and State farms. In other words, more than half of the Soviet Union's total income was being derived from agriculture *capitalistically*. The theory of "Enrich yourself and thereby enrich the country" of Bukharin was resurrected. Why were these measures taken? In order "to achieve a steep rise in production" was the reply. The same question had been posed during the introduction of the First Five Year Plan by the Right deviationist Bukharinite group. Stalin, in reply had said, "Is it true that the central idea of the five-year plan in the Soviet country is to increase the productivity of labour? No, it is not true. It is not just any kind of increase in the productivity of the labour of the people that we need. What we need is specific increase in the productivity of the labour of the people, namely, an increase that will guarantee the systematic supremacy of the socialist sectors of the national eco-

nomy over the capitalist sector. A five-year plan which overlooks this central idea is not a five-year plan, but a five year rubbish." (Stalin, Vol. 10). This is what is called class outlook, this is what is called politics in command.

By introducing the new measures the present Soviet leaders have added grist to the private property instincts. This has gone on uninterruptedly with the increasing extension of the commodity market. The capitalist law of value has become almost supreme in the countryside, in agriculture and in the exchange of agricultural products through markets.

(b) *Sale of Machine Tractor Stations (MTS)*(--Formerly in the Soviet Union, the instruments of production were not commodities and these could not and did not come under the sphere of operation of the law of value. Means of production are the most vital thing in society, since through their private ownership exploitation has so long taken place. The socialist revolution made the means of production socialised property and thus laid down the basis of the end of exploitation. Hence the means of production were neither sold to the individual enterprises nor to the collective farms. As agents of the Soviet Socialist State the directors of the State enterprises received the machines for use in factories and the Machine Tractor Stations (MTS) were simply transferred to the collective farms, retaining the State ownership. The products of the collective farms were procured in exchange for service rendered by the MTS to the collective farms. Hence these did not and could not become capitalist commodities. But in 1953, immediately after Stalin's death, together with the changes enumerated above, the Soviet Government sold the entire MTS to the collective farms and made them the owners of the means of production in one of the vital sectors of the national economy, departing from the very principle and practice of socialised ownership of the means of production. It may be noted here

that all the collective farms could not afford to buy the MTS as their financial resources were not adequate. So these were sold only to those collective farms which were in a position to pay the price, thereby leaving the poorer farms under the mercy of the richer farms. This measure laid the material basis of class differentiation of rich and poor peasants and exploitation of the poorer by the rich along capitalist lines, with a capitalist market and speculation etc. The consequence can easily be conceived. Since then, as and when these tractors, combines, harvesters etc. are required, the richer collective farms purchase them outright and become owners and the poorer farms hire them from the owners. The Soviet factories also produce these machines with a view to selling them on the internal market, which means that the factories are also more or less guided by the market law. The Soviet Government did not and could not stop there, as the very logic of the sale of MTS to the "effective buyers" forced it to introduce other concomitant measures. It also permitted some of the "financially sound" big collective farms to build up factories for production and sale of accessories, spare parts and other small agricultural tools, thus widening the class differentiation in the countryside. The poorer collective farms were not only forced to hire tractors, combines etc. from the big collective farms but also to "adjust" the price of their produce as per their dictates.

Arguments

The present Soviet leaders, in defence of these measures, say that since collective farms are collective property, not private property, and since the land, an important means of production, cannot be sold or bought at all, it is no longer a commodity. They further say, "Socialist commodity production is a commodity production without private ownership, without capitalists and without small commodity producers." (*Fundamen-*

tals of Marxism-Leninism). Of course, it can be shown that now-a-days capitalist commodity production is also commodity production without private ownership without capitalists and without small commodity producers. But that is not the point of discussion here. The revisionists, surprisingly enough, baptised the commodity as "socialist commodity"! Apart from that, they speak *only* of land which is nationalised, but not of other means of production in large-scale mechanised agriculture, that is the machines. In mechanised large-scale agriculture land is but only *one* of the means of production. What about the other? Can it be bought or sold? The same arguments are advanced by the capitalists by saying that co-operatives are not privately owned. But the question is: Are the collective farms socialised property? The answer is no. Is then collective farm property private property? Again, the answer is no. The collective farms under the political and economic management and control of a capitalist state is a *specific type* of economy which comes under the capitalist sector and can be called capitalist economy. Again, the collective farms under the political and economic management and control of the dictatorship of the proletariat are a *special type* of economy, *on the basis of a special alliance with the peasantry*, which can be called one of the *rudimentary forms of socialist economy* of the socialist sector. Lenin in his pamphlet *On Co-operation* long ago said, "under our present system, co-operative enterprises differ from private capitalist enterprises because they are collective enterprises, but they do not differ from socialist enterprises if the land on which they are situated and the means of production belong to the State, that is to the working class." A considerable portion of the nationalised land has already been distributed to the highest bidders' team and the means of production no longer "belong to the State", working class or otherwise. As such, collective farms can no longer be consi-

dered a form of socialist economy, rudimentary or developed.

Bhowani Sen, the late revisionist leader, coming back from a Moscow tour at the time when MTS were being sold to the collective farms, wrote in *Swadhinata* that this selling was an act of "silent revolution". Indeed, it was a silent revolution in the double sense. It was 'silent' because its far-fetched economic, social and political significance was not immediately perceptible to the Soviet and world working class. It was a 'revolution' because it brought about qualitative structural changes in the socialist system, though in a reverse process.

What was the effect of these measures? The collective farms became the owners of the means of agricultural production like in all other capitalist countries, as well as owners of products. The mutual help in supplying the MTS and in procuring the products did no longer work. It has now become a question of pure selling and buying between two independent owners, in a purely capitalist method through the commodity-money market. The initiative of bargaining and manipulation of price mechanism are transferred to the hands of powerful collective farms from the hands of the State. *The special form of alliance* between the peasantry and the working class no longer exists. The poorer farms have become the victims of the State and big collective farm speculators. The Soviet theoreticians now say that "one of the chief measures introduced in the Soviet Union during the last few years in order to achieve steep rise in agriculture, was the change over from State procurement of collective farm produce to purchase at prices permitting collective farms to replace their outlay incurred in the production of agricultural produce as fully as possible and also to build up the necessary reserve." (*Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*). This is purely a capitalist solution for the agrarian problem notwithstanding their chatter about socialism. "The building up of necessary reserve" by

the big collective-farm speculators could not prevent the Soviet society from near-famine conditions as the reserves are being used by the collective farms for speculative prices. As a result, the Soviet State has been compelled to take the capitalist measure of curbing the price of food grains and guaranteeing the supply by building up its own reserve stock through imports from America avoiding the road of direct procurement from the peasants which may antagonise them.

(c) *Liberianism and its effects*:— The logic of market economy cannot stop half-way. The introduction of group ownership of property in agriculture led the Soviet society to introduce group ownership in industrial enterprises also. Besides the sale of MTS to the collective farms, all the means of production in Soviet society have become, for all practical purposes, of saleable commodities with the introduction of new economic reforms in 1965. Formerly, machines were simply delivered to different enterprises and no charges were made for using the machines. Only a system of book-keeping was maintained to know whether the enterprises were running at a loss or were paying with a view to subsidising the "losing concerns" from the State budget and replenishing the amount of subsidy from the paying concerns" exactly like that of a family. The enterprises were collective, socialised property and hence collective, socialised tasks were given to each enterprise, irrespective of "loss" or "profit" according to the priority of importance in the national economy as a whole. This is what was rightly called socialist principles of planning. But after the introduction of new economic reforms the means of production are no longer simply delivered, but sold at their price to the directors of the enterprises. The Soviet theoreticians say, "Unlike enterprises subsidised by the State budget those run on cost accounting lines conduct independently their economic operations. They have the

necessary material and financial resources at their disposal and in applying them, they can use their own initiative to a large extent. Cost accounting means that the expenditure incurred by each enterprise, by each economic organisation has to be replaced by its own income, and that moreover, the enterprise must show a profit. Part of the profit is allocated to the enterprise's fund and used to satisfy the needs of its employees. Cost accounting is an inducement to strive for profitability and this is only possible if the outlay of labour, material and money is kept as low as possible.

"The operation of the law of value makes it possible to compare and correctly appraise the results of economic activity of separate enterprises and it supplies economic incentives both to the enterprises as a whole and to workers to achieve high results." (*Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*).

Economic Man Again

This means firstly, the abandonment of the very principle of socialist planning based on socialised appropriation, leaving the initiative to each enterprise to accrue profit and income individually and separately. Secondly, it means that the re-introduction of the principle and practice of "Economic Man" of bourgeois society and enterprise as the basic unit pushing society as a whole to the background. Thirdly, it means the re-introduction of money as an independent variable, whereas in Stalin's time money was treated as a mere counter. These are all capitalist measures.

"Expenditure incurred by each enterprise... has to be replaced by its own income." This may have utilitarian value but not an iota of socialist value will be found in it. How is the expenditure to be replaced by its own income? "This is only possible if the outlay of labour, material and money is kept as low as possible." Directors are not in a position to lower the cost or price of raw materials as they can

only keep the outlay of money as low as possible if they are allowed to lower the purchase price of labour power i.e., if fixation of wages is kept outside the domain of central planning, if directors are allowed to bid up wages freely. Secondly, if the directors are allowed to choose freely the commodity to be produced and if this too is kept outside the domain of Central control and planning, one logically leads to the other. If you are asked to lower the cost of production and forbidden to choose your path of lowering the cost of production, you can at best forego your wages. But foregoing of wages is an "ascetic self-denial" to the present Soviet Society. So there is no alternative but to allow the directors to freely bid up wages and select the commodity of production. But if the enterprises are free to bid up wages and manipulate the market price by independent choice of production of diverse commodities, what remains of the authority which the central planners must have in a socialist society? In capitalist countries also economic programming is a must, which they call planning. This economic programming does not and cannot interfere with the independent choice of production or free bidding up of wages as each and every capitalist is an emperor in his factory. The capitalist State makes a blueprint of general directives of production, general directives of minimum wages etc. etc. and they call this planning. The new economic reform in the Soviet Union also could not stop half-way only by asking the directors of enterprises to keep as low as possible the outlay of labour, material and money. It had to give the directors capitalist rights and freedom, i.e. free bidding up of wages and freedom to choose the commodity of production. In explaining the economic reforms B. Rakitsky says that the plenary meeting (September 1965) in its application of economic reform, has decided to abandon the system of central directives towards wage fixation in the enterprises. "The Soviet econo-

mists believe that an important subject like the total payroll could be kept outside the central planning in future. They also believe that the production of diverse commodities could be brought outside the central planning in course of time." (*Soviet Economic Reform*).

As is known, it is not possible to calculate hours of work in each case representing the same quantity of "abstract" or socially necessary labour and thus, the wage, accordingly cannot be calculated on the basis of number of hours worked alone. So wages are determined, even in capitalist society, by average subsistence level. In a socialist country and for that, in the Soviet Union, formerly, wages were not considered as the purchase price of labour power, the value of which is equivalent to subsistence cost. *Wages, there, represented a conscious allocation of total social production and had no relation to value or subsistence.* Why was this so? Because "within the co-operative society", said Marx, "based on the common ownership of the means of production the producers do not exchange their products, just as little of the products appear here at the value of these products, as a material quality possessed by them, since now, in contrast to capitalist society, individual labour no longer exists in an indirect fashion, but directly as a component part of the total labour." (*Capital*, Vol. II). The Soviet society consciously used to raise the wages of workers in those factories which were, in fact, below the subsistence level, despite "loss" incurred there, as loss or profit were then considered social loss or profit and not loss or profit of a particular enterprise. Allocation of wages was thus related to the production of total social product.

The principle of allocation of wages i.e., the socialist principle of the total social product, has now been thrown overboard. The Russians have "discovered" the long neglected law in political economy (quoted earlier) in order to justify enterprise-wise labour. Now labour

is seen neither as a direct component part of the total social labour nor the product as the component part of the total social produce. The producers in Soviet society, now as individual workers, sell their labour power and the directors of the enterprises purchase it. The chief factor in the determination of the skill of workers and directors, therefore, is the total volume of income of a particular enterprise. The socialist principle of socialised appropriation has been replaced by the capitalist principle of enterprise-wise appropriation. In capitalist society labour power is a commodity sold by its owners for money-wage equivalent to its value, that is labour embodied in the goods needed for its existence. Each individual owner of factory tries to keep the wages below the subsistence level to reduce the cost of production in order to compete on the market. The Soviet enterprises now also try to keep the wages below the subsistence level to reduce the cost of production in order to compete on the market exactly like those of capitalist countries. Liberman, the father theoretician of economic reform, says, "We must see to it that enterprises themselves strive to get orders because the best utilisation of productive assets will become fully advantageous for each enterprise. It may be reasonably assumed that competition between enterprises will arise in getting orders, based on a comparison of quality guarantees offered, as well as delivery dates and prices of goods under the new orders." (*Soviet Economic Reform*). It means each enterprise will bargain and settle prices separately and independently on the competitive market and in order to secure orders, apart from corruption, the directors will strive to lower the cost of production, ultimately by lowering the wage of the workers, while ensuring the quality. It means lowering of wages as well as intensification of labour. It is a double exploitation.

In capitalist countries trade union actions and struggle of the workers

may force the capitalist to raise the wage above the subsistence level where the trade union is powerful or the wages may be forced below the subsistence level where the trade union movement is weak. But, in the Soviet Union, in the name of socialism, the new Tsars have forbidden all independent trade union actions. As such, the directors in their ugly bid for economising the cost of production force the workers below the subsistence level.

All this is being done by investing power to a very powerful managing agency of intermediaries who are neither direct producers, nor entrepreneurs. This agency is called *Khozraschot*. This *Khozraschot* is one of the forms of subordinating the Soviet economy to a particular group of people. As in India or elsewhere a person or a group of persons can declare in a memorandum and articles of association before setting up a proprietary, private limited or public limited company, before the Registrar of the Government and these companies are protected juridically, the economic reform in 1965, in the Soviet Union has introduced a similar law. Article 7 of the Statute of the Socialist enterprise (approved by the USSR Council of Ministers on October 4, 1965) says, "The enterprise shall have a charter approved by the body that has passed the decision of setting up the enterprise. . . . The charter of the enterprise shall contain :

"the name (or number) of enterprise and its location (postal addresses) ;

the name of the body to which the enterprise is directly subordinated (the superior body) ;

object and purpose of the enterprise ;

stipulation to the effect that the enterprise has a charter fund ;

stipulation to the effect that the enterprise operates on the basis of the present Statute and is a juridical person ;

status of the official placed at the head of the enterprise (directors, managers, chief' and more.

Why is this charter invited and from whom? As shown earlier, the nationalised lands were given to the highest bidder teams who gave guarantee of the highest production. The socialised enterprises have also been given to a group of persons who give a guarantee and assurance of the highest production with the lowest cost. The above charter is meant for them and this group of people are the managing agency who are called *Khozraschot*. *Khozraschot* or the intermediary managing agency enjoys in fact the exclusive right of purchasing plant equipment, works as intermediaries to obtain credit from the State bank, have the right of purchase of raw materials, the authority to determine the wages of the employees and the price of commodities, authority to plan for internal production and external sale etc. etc. In one word, *Khozraschot* is now the all-in-all in the Soviet economy. "In their work the ministries depend on *Khozraschot* amalgamations, to which they have relegated many operative functions. Along with the enterprises the intermediate managing body plays an important part in managing the entire production. . . . The development of economic methods of management and extensive introduction of the *Khozraschot* principle in industry have necessitated the establishment of mutual rights and obligations." as the modern Soviet economists say *Khozraschot* will gradually extend its sphere of control by forming big trusts and amalgamations of all enterprises. Kosygin in explaining the task of *Khozraschot* said, "The ministries that are being organized now will work in entirely different conditions, the function and administrative management of industry being combined with greatly enhanced methods of *Khozraschot* and economic stimuli, and the economic rights and incentive of enterprises broadened. . . . Emphasis will be laid on economic levers on aiding enterprises and firms in improving their work and gradually introducing the principle of complete *Khozraschot*."

(The above quotations are from *Economy, Management, Planning* by Anatoli Yefimov and Alexander An-chishken, published from Moscow).

With the completion of *Khozraschot* in all the enterprises, amalgamating them under one management with money playing the role of an independent variable, capitalism in the Soviet Union will blossom. That a factory-wise appropriation by a new exploiting group has arisen in Soviet society through capitalist accumulation in the process of extended reproduction through the group ownership of the means of production and using money as independent variable will be discussed now.

Means of Production

"When Marxists speak of production of means of production, what they have primarily in mind, is the production of implements of production. What Marx calls the instrument of labour, those of mechanical nature which taken as a whole we may call the bone and muscle of production which constitute 'characteristic of a given epoch of production'. To equate a part of the means of production, including the implements of production, is to sin against Marxism, because Marxism considers that the *implements of production play a decisive role* compared with all other means of production." (Stalin, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*).

In capitalist society means of production are commodities, they have value and they are bought and sold for money. That is why capital is also value which brings more value by exploiting wage labour. In socialist society means of production are not commodities and they have no value and they are not bought or sold for money nor is interest charged for their use. That is why they are not capital and do not bring more value through the exploitation of wage-labour.

The means of production themselves do not create any value. The value created by labour remains congealed in the machine and it is

realised *all at once* either through its outright sale or reappears in the value of the product in the process of production only to the extent of its wear and tear and the same amount of value is realised in the process of circulation of the commodity produced by the machines. Here lies one of the principal differences between the capitalist and socialist systems. In the capitalist system the means of production function as circulating capital and fixed capital, whereas in the socialist system the means of production function as neither but only as instruments of labour. In capitalist society, because of the compartmentalisation of society in different groups and sections even within a class and because the working class is treated as property in a particular enterprise, some people are machine producers and sellers while others are machine buyers and factory owners. The machine seller realises the value and surplus value as soon as he sells the machine to the machine buyer. Here the machine functions as commodity capital for their producers and does not constitute an element of his fixed capital. (Marx, *Capital*, Vol. II; unless otherwise mentioned, henceforth all the quotations from Marx are from *Capital*, Vol. II). But the machine buyer cannot realise the value unless the machines "have undergone a preliminary transformation into capital, into the means of exploiting human labour power." (Engels, *Socialism—scientific and utopian*). As the machines do not create any value and as the machine-buyer realises the value in the process of circulation of the commodity produced by those machines bit by bit, only to the extent of wear and tear of the machine, the greater part of the capital invested in machine remains unrealised is called the fixed capital.

In socialist society this part of labour embodied in the machines is not the labour of a compartmentalised society, as "in contrast to capitalist society, individual labour no longer exists in an indirect fashion,

but directly as component part of the total labour", said Marx. In capitalist society, as has been shown, machines undergo a preliminary transformation of capital which is characteristic of capitalism, whereas in socialist society machines function *only* as instrument of labour. Marx said, "they are fixed capital only if they transfer this value to the product in a particular way. If not, they remain instruments of labour without being fixed capital. It is not a question here of definitions, which things must be made to fit. We are dealing here with definite functions, which must be expressed in definite categories."

What definite functions do the means of production play in the Soviet Union today? They function as capital, fixed and commodity capital.

It is necessary to investigate and find out how the machines "have undergone a preliminary transformation into capital since the new economic reform in 1965 and how the transfer of value of the machine to the product is made in that "particular way" which is "characteristic of capitalism".

Marx, in his *Critique of Gotha Programme* said there should be deduction from the *total social product* of the cooperative proceeds of labour for covering the replacement of the means of production used up and an additional portion for expansion of production. But the Soviet Union in Article 9 of the *Statute of the Socialist Enterprise* enacts "The State shall not be responsible for meeting the commitments of the enterprise, nor shall the enterprise be responsible for the commitments of the State". It means, so far as the use of the means of production is concerned, "cover for replacement of the means of production used up and additional portion for expansion of production are no longer the task of the State of the dictatorship of the proletariat but are the task of the enterprises individually and separately as in capitalist countries. It also means

that the product of labour is no longer considered as a component of total social product of co-operative labour. Labour and its product are compartmentalised. That is why Article 13 of the same Statute enacts, "The enterprise shall earmark depreciation allowances for overhauls and for complete renewal of fixed assets. . . . Depreciation allowances for the complete renewal of fixed assets shall be fixed to finance capital investment in conformity with the law."

If the responsibility of replacement of machine used up and extended reproductions does not rest with the State and if the product is not considered as the co-operative proceeds of the total social product then the State cannot be considered as socialist State as the very principle of socialised appropriation has been abandoned. As the means of production are treated as the *first stage* as commodity capital, as ownership of the means of production is no longer social ownership, but group ownership, the capital invested in buying machines needs realisation of full value for the *second time*, in spite of the realisation of full value at the *first stage*, as ownership changes with the sale. Hence the transfer of value of the machine to the product is done in the process of production and it cannot be done otherwise except in that "particular way" which is "characteristic of capitalism" where the means of production are treated as commodity capital. As such, the group who bought the machines cannot realise the capital invested unless the machines have undergone a preliminary transformation into capital". So instead of treating the machines as instruments of labour, the directors of the Soviet enterprises treat these as *fixed capital*. For this violation of socialist principles and treating the means of production as commodity, the Soviet authorities are gradually losing the grip over society, and private industries with private ownership are daily growing in contravention of the Soviet laws of group

ownership. The Soviet press has told the world that several "underground" and private factories have been unearthed in the country. How and why has this been possible? It is the logical consequence of the new economic reform. Article 21 of *Statutes* enacts, "Surplus equipments, transport facilities, instruments, tools, stock, raw and other materials, fuels, draught animals and productive live stock may be sold by the enterprise to other enterprises and organisations. . . . Material, tools and other assets acquired by enterprise as part of local procurements may be sold by it without permission of the higher body."

Labour-power is now a commodity in the Soviet Union and sold by its owner for money wages equivalent to its value, that is, to the amount of labour embodied in the goods needed for existence since (a) labour is not considered components of total social labour; (b) products are not considered total social product and (c) each of enterprise directors are free to bid up wages.

The Soviet society is a commodity-producing society since "socialist enterprises enjoy a certain margin of economic independence and freedom of business activity. Everything they produce they sell either to enterprises or to the population", and elsewhere, "greater use is made of the possibilities of commodity-money, relations." (V. Dyachenko, *Econometry, the Market and Planning*, a Moscow publication): and since the means of production function both as commodity and fixed capital.

Money in the Soviet Union is no longer treated as a means of more or less exact measurement and supervision by society. It is treated as capital. The Soviet Union does not follow the principle of socialist accumulation based on socialised appropriation and socialised covering up of replacement of machines used up and an added portion for extended reproduction. On the contrary, it follows the principle of capitalist accumulation based on en-

terprise-wise appropriation. Money serves as capital through the replacement of fixed capital into money and through its circulation.

VI. Conclusion

Engels said in his *Socialism—Utopian and Scientific*, "But the transformation, either into joint stock companies and trusts, or into State ownership, does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces. In the joint stock companies and trusts this is obvious. And the modern state, again, is the only organization that bourgeois society takes on in order to support the external condition of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments as well of the workers as of individual capitalists. The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage-workers—proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head. But, brought to head, it topples over. State ownership of the productive forces is not the solution of the conflict, but concealed within it are the technical conditions that form the elements of solution." In criticising the draft of the Erfurt programme, Engels wrote to Kautsky referring to the word "planlessness" of capitalism used in the draft programme, "when we pass from joint-stock companies to trusts which assumes control over, and monopolize, whole industries, it is not only private production that ceases, but also planlessness." This is most revealing.

It is clear from the above two quotations that even the capitalists fight against the individual capitalist and 'nationalise' all private capitalist enterprises and transform them into state ownership. It also means, that in capitalist society even, pri-

vate production may cease together with the cessation of planlessness. So neither the State ownership and cessation of private production, nor the planned economy are a special feature of the socialist society in these days. Capitalists today, in order to cope with the basic contradiction of socialised labour and individual appropriation introduce a kind of spurious socialism and socialised appropriation which is, in reality, an appropriation by a particular group for which planning and State ownership are unavoidable. Lenin in his *State and Revolution* said, "But however much they do plan, however much the capitalist magnates calculate in advance the volume of production on a national and even on an international scale, and however much they systematically regulate it, we still remain under capitalism—at its new stage, it is true, but still capitalism without doubt. The "proximity" of such capitalism to socialism should serve genuine representatives of the proletariat as an argument proving proximity, facility, feasibility and urgency of the socialist revolution, and not at all as an argument for tolerating the repudiation of such revolution and the efforts to make capitalism look more attractive, something which all reformists are trying to do."

As such, neither the absence of private production, nor the presence of State ownership nor the planned economy should be the criteria of judging the Soviet society. The objective of the capitalist planning is to 'control' as far as practicable the anarchy of the blind operation of the law of value by "adjusting" the

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basic contradiction between socialised production and individual appropriation, whereas the objective of the socialist planning is the gradual eventual invalidation of the operation of the law of value altogether from the social life and transform the society from "the Govern-

ment of persons" into "the administration of things". The objective of the present Soviet leaders is *not the invalidation but the 'control' of the law of value*. That is why the Soviet society can no longer be called a socialist society.

(Concluded)

What British Workers Face

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

LONDON: Following its 90-day wage freeze, the British Tory Government has announced its plans for a three-year incomes policy. This will go much further than even the incomes policy of the last Labour Government to cut the standard of living of British workers.

There have been howls of protest from the Tory right, which is dedicated to the creed of free enterprise, but the success of the plan is assured, because it has the support of the Labour Party leaders and they will not oppose the new Bill in Parliament.

When the Tories came to office in 1970 they dismantled the Labour apparatus for price and incomes control; now they are rebuilding it. The Labour leaders openly recognise that Prime Minister Heath's new measures are an extension of their own previous policies, and are congratulating themselves on this instead of trying to defend the workers they claim to represent.

The Tory policy has not basically changed: Heath has always had an incomes policy, starting with the notorious 'norf minus one per cent' tactic, in which each group of workers in the public sector was to be forced to accept a wage settlement lower than the last group.

And despite his shiny new Statutory Instruments, Heath is still angling for a 'voluntary' policy with the co-operation of the trade union leaders. The Industrial Relations Act has failed to beat the mass of workers into submission, but it has partly succee-

ded in getting the TUC leaders grovelling at Heath's feet on every possible occasion.

The reason the TUC leaders broke off negotiations with the Prime Minister in the autumn was not the meanness of Heath's offer but the fact that he would not give guarantees that prices would not rise by above 5% in the coming year. They are very anxious to get back to the negotiating table.

Where the Tory policy really hits hard is in the price rises it tries to conceal. The new Prices Commission will have as little effect as the previous freeze on the prices that really matter to the working class, while their wages are held down.

The freeze left so many loopholes for rising prices that the Department of Trade and Industry explained: 'Most of the people who telephone us are retailers and manufacturers, and many of them find on ringing us that the price increase they have in mind falls within the exceptions outlined in the Counter-Inflation Bill.' The price rise in December, the first month of the freeze, came to an annual rate of 9%.

It is not just a matter of 'exceptions', though these now include all imported foodstuffs and industrial components—and most of British industry depends on one of these. Rents are also excepted, as the government has no intention of abandoning its 'economic rents' policy to force rents up to a level set by property speculators and moneylenders.

But Tory policies are explicitly

designed to raise the price of food and other basic necessities. Common Market-style Value Added Tax—a very complicated system, and the rate hasn't even been announced yet—is due to start on April 1. Despite widespread confusion, one thing is certain: food prices will go up.

The last year has seen the most spectacular rise of all—some 35%—in the price of meat. The traditional Sunday meal of roast meat is now outside the reach of most working-class families. A government enquiry came up with the advice: 'If you can't afford it try to eat something else.' Of course, British workers do enjoy a higher standard of living than the majority of the world's population, but more and more they are being forced—especially the low paid—to rely on a diet of cheap and inferior food which is actually deficient by nutritional standards, recalling even the days of the Depression in the 1930s.

The Tories have been beating their breasts noisily over the plight of the lower paid in the last few months. They try constantly to convince better paid workers that it is they who are making the poor suffer. But the very first groups of organised workers to be hit by the present freeze were farm labourers, hospital manual workers and shop assistants—all among the most miserably paid of British workers.

The whole of the Tory Government's policy is in fact designed to redistribute income in favour of the rich—taxation policy has put millions of pounds into the hands of those with income over £5000 a year, and welfare policy takes away benefits from the very poor as soon as they succeed in getting even a minor pay rise.

Already during the 90 days freeze teachers, hospital workers and shop assistants hit back with short strikes, but the gas-workers, also hit by the freeze, gave up their struggle when their leaders promised all would be well when Heath's new plans were revealed.

Now British workers know what lies ahead of them—three years of hard struggle if they are even to retain the standards they now have.

Clippings

Witch-Hunt In Israel

Witch-hunt is an understatement to describe the hysterical and McCarthyist campaign being conducted these days in the Israeli Press after the discovery of what is called the "Jewish-Arab Spy and Terror Network". For the first time since statehood, sensationalistic arguments fill the newspaper columns claiming the active participation of Israeli Jews in the Palestine national liberation struggle.

The crucial question is: Should the struggle against Zionism be solely an Arab struggle?

The whole existence of the Zionist regime is based upon national discrimination. After establishing the Israeli State on expropriated land, transforming the Palestinians into a landless people, residents of wretched refugee camps—Israel continues to exercise a regime whose basic principle was, and still is, national discrimination between Jews and Arabs. The Israeli Arabs are victims of systematic oppression; expulsion, expropriation, administrative arrests, confinements, discrimination in all spheres of life, explicit and implicit racism—are just a few aspects of national oppression suffered by Palestinians under Israeli rule. According to the racist logic of the Zionist State, the simple fact that you are a Jew grants you a certain immunity even if you are a member of a revolutionary organisation. Arab and Jewish members of the *same organisation* are treated differently by the government. The first is confined, arrested. The second—free. Up to a point, it is permissible for a Jew to be against the Zionist Regime, and only after that is brutal repression used. But this is nothing compared to the brutal oppression that comes down upon

Arabs who participate in political struggle against the regime. It is enough to recall the example of the 800 Arab Rakah (New Communist List) activists who were detained prior to the 1969 elections and the fact that the majority of Arab members of anti-zionist organisations are detained and administratively confined to realise the extent of discrimination and political oppression.

It is "natural" that Palestinians who have been expropriated and oppressed under Israeli rule will fight against Zionism and for national liberation. But, when Jews who were born and raised in the country, who have been forcedfed the Zionist poison and then have vomited it up, rise up and declare: We are fed up with Zionist Israel! We are tired of oppression! It is up to us to abolish the Zionist regime that oppresses and expropriates the Palestinian Arab

Nation and leads the Israeli Jews into a death-trap of eternal war against the Arab masses—this, the racist logic of the government and the Zionist establishment is incapable of grasping. The mere idea that a common struggle of Jews and Arabs against the conquering and oppressive Zionism is possible—even on the basis of a mistaken political line—makes them shudder.

The violence of the oppressed against the oppressor is just and therefore, we support it; the struggle against the oppressive and expropriative Zionism is just and therefore, we support it without reservation. However, every justified way is not necessarily an effective way. We have repeated time and time again that the victory in the anti-zionist struggle will only be achieved through the path of revolutionary struggle, i.e. the *conscious* struggle of Jews and Arabs for a Socialist Arab East.

THE REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY OF INDIA

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THE AGONY OF WEST BENGAL

By Ranajit Roy Rs. 10/- & Rs. 19.50

"If Mr Roy is to be believed, West Bengal has been treated by the Government of India much the same way as Karachi and Islamabad once treated East Pakistan.... The book is loaded with official statements and statistics and until these are authoritatively repudiated the author's charge will stand. Mrs Gandhi's Government owes itself to answer the charge; or the verdict will be 'Guilty'." *The Sunday Statesman*, 15th October, 1972.

CASH AND VIOLENCE IN LAOS

By Anna Louise Strong Rs. 5/-

History of that old story—how with the power of cash Washington moved into Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam with "military aid" to the new governments to break their pledges of neutrality and bent them into a military base against China and North Vietnam.

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Today, the Arab masses, and even more so, the Israeli Jewish masses, are far from realising this. Facing the arrogant, seemingly victorious Zionism, occupying the conquered territories and enjoying the support of the most powerful imperialist force in history, facing the decline in the revolutionary consciousness of the masses of the region, there is no doubt that there are naive youths—that are fed up with the horrors, the “deviance”, the oppression and expropriation—who are looking for a “short-cut”. They are looking for a way to exchange conscious actions of the masses for actions of isolated individuals. But, every “short cut” hinders and obstructs the advancement of the real anti-zionist struggle. Against the violence of isolated individuals, the Zionist regime will always come up on top. Not only is the regime capable of defeating easily such actions, but they also use them for their own interests, by instigating the public against all the anti-zionist left and strengthening the “national unity” consciousness.

But, against the revolutionary violence of the masses rising up against their aggressors and exploiters, the situation is completely different. Against this, even the strongest, the most predatory regime with the most sophisticated means of oppression cannot stand. The revolutionary objective is the building of the only tool capable of realising the revolutionary potential contained within the Arab and Jewish masses of the region. On the agenda stands the task of building the All Regional Leninist Party that is the indispensable tool for a victorious struggle against imperialism, zionism, and the Arab reaction.

From Matzpen, newspaper of the Israeli Socialist Organisation (Marxist) Abridged.

M. VEERAMALLIAH,

Station Road,

Warangal-2,

Andhra Pradesh.

Letters

More Of Triumph

Your editorial, “End of a Chapter” (February 3) was most disappointing. It strikes a note of confusion and hopelessness at a moment when the socialist cause has won its most glorious triumph. You seem to have missed the significance of the whole process and its momentous culmination—which is indeed strange! You express doubt and defeatism at a moment of supreme assurance for world revolution. You find it pertinent at this hour to describe “us all” as “impotent.. in the face of the American monster” when the great Vietnamese people supported by the revolutionary peoples of the world have just forced this monster to beat a retreat, licking its shattered claws. You stretch minor points, forgetting major ones. The only thing you think worth mentioning about China’s attitude towards Vietnam is the fact of a team of Chinese acrobats’ people-to-people goodwill mission having tea with Nixon. You forget that China’s all-out aid to Vietnam over two decades and the wisdom of Chinese anti-imperialist diplomacy urging the Vietnamese to go on negotiating on just grounds while carrying on the fighting with unremitting zeal are the two major external factors responsible for the grievous loss of armament and prestige and the grave economic complications that have forced the USA to retreat. You find it important to mourn the loss of a few more lives at the last moment without saying a word about the glorious new chapter opening up in the life of the whole Vietnamese nation. You unconsciously insult the revolutionary spirit of exploited mankind when you express the fear that “the World will forget the My Lais” and that “the gruesome past will tend to be buried”. You apprehend that because of the “tremendous tasks of reconstruction ahead” Hanoi will not be able to take sides in the Sino-Soviet dispute, forgetting that true

socialist construction, unlike the illusory development of neo-colonies, takes place chiefly as a result of the tremendous release of the pent-up inner productive forces, and not as a result of external help.

Perfectly aware of your good will towards the progressive cause, we, however, cannot help regretting this confused defeatist note in your writing when we are expecting from you a heartening analysis of the further revolutionary prospects opened up by the great victory in Vietnam.

R. SANYAL
S. SAHA
Calcutta

Cabinet Expansion

Smt Indira Gandhi has taken a big jump. She has expanded the size of her Ministry from 54 to 60, throwing overboard all the recommendations (the Administrative Reforms Commission had said that the size of the Ministry should in no circumstances exceed 10% of the total legislators’ strength) and other promises in this regard. In 1947 there was a total of 14 Ministers. The author of *The Politics of Defection—a Study of Politics in India*, had pointed out that the proliferation of Ministers at the Centre has continued at such a speed today that almost every fifth Congress legislator is a Minister and it might largely be the political wisdom of compromise and accommodation that has prevented the virus of political defections spreading to the Lok Sabha.

This gives a clear picture of Smt Gandhi, her party and her politics.

People’s money is wasted in maintaining flocks of Ministers. After taking the oath they get around Rs. 35,000 for purchase of furniture, carpets and curtains. After a careful examination I have found that a Central Minister costs anything between Rs. 30,000 and Rs. 50,000 a month. They have palatial bungalows, most lavishly and luxuriously furnished, with sprawling compounds.

FEBRUARY 17, 1973

Also they are provided with the money for electrical appliances, personal staff, imported cars and travelling. In reply to a question it was revealed that in 1967-68 the total expenditure incurred in connection with furnishing Central Ministers' bungalows amounted to about Rs. 28 lakhs, whilst the per capita income in India is one of the lowest in the world—about 73 dollars per annum (Rs. 500). Of course this is also not the correct picture. Some of the promoted Central Ministers have been involved in corrupt practices. The rags scandal is well known. Now the Railways will be an added super hunting ground for party funds.

Smt Gandhi has handed over her portfolio. No doubt she wants somebody else to do the job of absolving Shri Bansilal, the Haryana Chief Minister, the benefactor of her son, against whom serious charges of corruption and malpractices have been brought. At the same time we see how skilfully she is curtailing parliamentary democracy through extensive rigging of elections, engineering defections and political pressure tactics, by reducing the number of sitting days of Parliament, and by violating agreements with the Opposition on the matter of the Consultative Committee meetings of various Ministries.

The reader of this statement will be surprised to know that even within the Lok Sabha government's police ghost dominate. The number of plain-clothes police security men, who sit mixed up with the people, had only till recently been a little over 50. Already increased to 80. I am told, this number would again be raised very soon. The total number of ordinary visitors' seats in the Lok Sabha is over 350. There was a government proposal that the entire visitors' gallery should be covered with bulletproof glass, but we vehemently protested and the government had to withdraw their idea. Many visitors are subjected to humiliating searches, particularly people

from certain areas; West Bengal of course tops the list.

This is how Smt Gandhi is running the government and serving the people.

JYOTIRMOY BOSU, MP

The Document

Mr Sarad Senapati ('A Document in Perspective', January 20) quotes from Mao in defence of the line of annihilation of class enemies, but does not elaborate in what context Mao had outlined the programme.

The annihilation programme was adopted to provide the necessary spark in a surcharged class-ridden society so that people join the revolutionary struggle. The objective was not achieved because the line of annihilation can be effective only when class contradiction becomes pronounced and acute and the level of class consciousness among broad sections of the people is sufficiently matured. The maturity of class consciousness is not an automatic process. It requires prolonged and systematic work among the predominantly uneducated people. There is no short cut to it and no made-easy to success. It should be kept in mind that there has been very little work among the peasantry so far to raise the level of their class consciousness. Moreover, in an Indian village even a jotedar is not always recognised as a class enemy. In many cases the jotedar is in the forefront of all religious and other activities. Naturally therefore in many cases the idea of the class enemy in a village gets blurred. It therefore requires prolonged propagation of the Marxist ideology with reference to practical life in the villages to identify the class enemy.

What we saw in West Bengal was rather a vulgar implementation of the annihilation programme, particularly Calcutta and other cities. The whole thing degenerated into mutual killing of CPI(M) and CPI(ML) cadres. Even without going into the question of who attacked first the fact re-

mains that the movement was deflected from its declared objective and those who could be comrades-in-arms in the battle against the real class enemies actually became first enemies. Obviously the class enemies were the main beneficiaries. There was unconcealed glee among the reactionary ruling class at the peculiar turn of the annihilation programme.

One of the essential organs of a communist party wedded to revolution is a secret revolutionary organisation. How far was this achieved in the cities? At the peak of the movement there was widespread infiltration into the cadres by the urban lumpen and the agents of the administration. In fact the infiltrators far outnumbered the genuine cadres. The leadership completely failed to control the infiltration and build up a secret organisation. The entire organisation was completely exposed to the Government and when the time came the administration acted with unprecedented ferocity and smashed up the movement.

In the villages however, as the reports indicate, the organisation was kept more or less intact. But there too the annihilation programme failed to click. The people who in the initial stages showed interest gradually became indifferent and in the end completely aloof. There was no reinforcement of the cadres from among the rural peasantry. In many cases the annihilation was effected in a way that bordered on unnecessary cruelty. Also no distinction was made on the basis of the social reputation of the enemy selected for annihilation. The people's democratic revolution envisages collaboration with a section of the national bourgeoisie and rich peasantry. A distinction has to be made and only the marked and notorious class enemies should have been annihilated. Wanton killing only pushed the probable allies from among the rich peasantry away from the movement and also made the general people hostile. This not only resulted in a setback for the movement but actually strengthened the hands of the administration. The

thoughtless killing of many young people provided a good alibi for the administration to perpetrate savage brutality.

What is needed now is a thorough re-appraisal of policies based on the past experience and take correct lessons so that the party can play its due role in the struggle for the emancipation of the toiling people.

S. N. Roy
Calcutta-28

Periar

Apropos Mr S. S. Singh's letter (27-1-73), when E.V.R. started the Self-respect Movement, he had not the vision of Lenin about the "unification of nationalities for equality". He particularly opposed the Tanjore and Tirunelveli Brahmins who held nearly 80% of clerical and administrative posts in British India. True the Saiva Mudaliars dominated in the State Government. I do accept that Iyers and Iyengars hold top posts in the Central Government, are managers and chartered accountants and serve the Tatas and Birlas, but they have little role to play in Tamil Nadu politics as compared to the Mudaliars, E.V.R. is now shouting, along with Karunanidhi, for more power to States, not for unification of nationalities for their equality but for further exploitation. In this respect, the CPM demand for State autonomy is intelligible. E.M.S. is definitely a better choice than Karunanidhi, as the latter has not the guts to break his relations with the Central Government over the same issue.

According to the late historian, Mr P. T. S. Iyengar, in *Pre Aryan Tamil*

Culture, the scheme of four varnas necessary to a people, every detail of whose daily life from urination to cremation was influenced by the fire rites, could not spread well among Tamils, whose life for many generations was mainly secular and based on social democracy. The Arya rites lost their vitality before the Brahmins migrated to Southern India. Brahmanism only led to the confusion of caste and the prevalence of social jealousies that have characterised the life of South India for over 1500 years. Coming to the Tamil Nadu Bhakti movement, Vellala bards like Appar, Sambandhar, Sundarar etc preached God to the masses during the 7th and 8th centuries. These bards and pandarams inspired the people to sing and forget hunger. The very same community has turned into Dharmakathas, trustees, zamindars and rich pandas. A section of Brahmins acted only as Poojaris for their livelihood and have no stake in the exploitation. They in fact are exploited by non-Brahmin trustees in the various Devasthanams. They have to work more than 10 hours a day in dark temples, performing pooja, carrying camphor and ash plates, bathing and dressing the idols for paltry sums offered by the trustees. This section is different from those Brahmins who have profound knowledge of science, art and culture and shake hands with ministers and VIPs of Chambers of Commerce.

I have no personal reservations for Brahmins. But accusing them alone can lead to justifying exploitation by other caste Hindu kulaks. This was my point of view.

For the information of Mr S. S. Singh, Mr Karunanidhi is not the son of a barber. He belongs to the Isaivellala or Kalaignar caste of Tanjore. They do not know how to hold a knife. The caste had close relationship with the concubine communities during the medieval period of the glorious temple age of Tamils. The caste structure in Tamil Nadu is complicated and equal justice cannot be achieved without revolution.

The aim of the DMK is not to achieve a breakthrough from caste consciousness to class consciousness to suit the present age. But the DK/DMK is aiming at a caste circle which is their source of success. By using caste circle politics, intelligent lower-caste DMK men came to power with a deep sense of personal property rights. This does not imply that all lower-grade caste groups were liberated from caste hierarchy. DK/DMK men fell a prey to dynamic Brahmin and dynamic caste Hindu nets. They consoled themselves with the memories of the glorious empires of the past and ignored the interests of their own people.

For argument's sake, I can also say that Rajaji, though a Brahmin leader, recruited a large number of Harijans to government services, even though he was a reactionary leader. There were instances of Mudhukulathus and Venmani massacres in Tamil history of the 20th century and strangely the perpetrators of this sub-human treatment are the Naidus and Thevars!

I never meant that all non-Brahmins are fools. If it hurts the feelings of my comrades, I offer my apology. In fact I had in mind the caste Hindu kulaks on whom the British Government conferred titles like Rao Bahadur, Diwan Bahadur etc.

A CORRESPONDENT,
Tamil Nadu

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