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AFTER THE MISSION

EXCEPT for some ostriches in the Government and elsewhere, none could have had any doubt about the outcome of General Yahya Khan's mission to Moscow. That the Government of India woke up to the reality only after Mr Dinesh Singh had reported to the Prime Minister the imminence of an arms deal between the Soviet Union and Pakistan is proof of the Government's incorrigible fondness for a world of make-believe. Even now the Government seems to nurse a hope that the settled fact can be unsettled by appeals and remonstrations—protest is perhaps too strong a word, to be used in the context of Indo-Soviet relations. But it should have realised that the Soviet Union would remain impervious to India's pleadings, even if they went from the President or the Prime Minister. By its short-sighted policy of appeasing chauvinist critics of various hues at home the Government has reduced itself to the pathetic status of a hanger-on in international affairs. It has mortgaged its capacity for independent action, and the Soviet Union knows that for all official demurs and peeved outbursts of super-nationalists, India cannot alter her posture of supplication towards the Soviet Union as she cannot towards the USA.

The Soviet Premier has not cared to inform Mrs Gandhi whether an arms deal has been struck, far less the type and quantum of military hardware that the Soviet Union has agreed to give Pakistan. Yet Mr Kosygin's letter was supposed to be a reply to Mrs Gandhi's anxious inquiry about the reported aid agreement and her fear of its likely repercussions on Indo-Soviet relations. On the other hand, the Soviet Premier has referred to the latest Indo-Pakistan dispute over Ganga waters and commended Pakistan's suggestion that the dispute should be referred to the World Bank. The Government of India is said to be surprised at this irrelevance. Had it had a modicum of shrewdness, it would have realised that silence is Mr Kosygin's way of saying that it is none of India's business if the Soviet Union decides to sell or gift arms to Pakistan. The digression over Ganga waters may be aimed at putting India on notice that it can no longer take Soviet support for granted in its disputes with Pakistan. Whether this means that the Soviet veto will not be available to India should Pakistan raise the Kashmir question again in the Security Council is a matter for the Government to ponder over seriously. It appears that New Delhi has not yet realised that it has many more things to do than strike alternatively

attitudes of injured innocence and surprise which now constitute practically its entire range of activities in international relations.

Moves are already afoot by interest groups to exploit the Government's predicament and bully and bluster it into positions of their choice. Russophiles are clinging desperately to Mr Kosygin's "assurance" that nothing would be done by the Soviet Union to undermine its friendship with India. They forget that Mr Kosygin may not agree with them that supply of Russian arms to Pakistan can strain Indo-Soviet relations. They are also at considerable pains to convince everyone that Soviet arms to Pakistan will be of defensive nature only. Their authority is not known; but assuming that it is true, it is something not to be passed over lightly. Pakistan has never sought to conceal the reason for its massive defence build-up. By supplying "defensive" weapons to Pakistan the Soviet Union would subscribe to the Pakistani view that India has aggressive designs on her neighbour. Russophiles have not seen this side of their advocacy; naturally, for love is blind. At the other extreme are people and parties trying to push the Government into American arms. For the sake of security and independence they would like the Government to give up even the pretence of independence and accept American suzerainty. The parallels meet curiously at the point that neither wants India to choose a course which will eliminate her dependence on arms aid either from Soviet friends or from American brothers. There is no indication also that the Government's thoughts have turned in that direction. The emergency is over and the pernicious Defence of India Rules lapsed a few days ago. The relaxations will be meaningless if sanity is not allowed to prevail and efforts are not made to come to terms with both China and Pakistan. The quest for peace can carry no humiliation, the years of locust of the early sixties notwithstanding. Strength through borrowed arsenal is, on the other hand, a vain pursuit, fraught with endless frustration and barren anger at the caprices of the two principal arms-merchants of the world.

Study And Delay

Assam's hill people, now waiting for a final decision on their demands during the coming session of Parliament, may be disappointed again. According to one report, New Delhi proposes to undertake a detailed study of the political, economic, administrative and security problems of the eastern region as a whole. A decision on Assam's reorganization may well be deferred until the study is complete. If so, it would not be the first time that this would have happened, nor perhaps the last. Let us not go too far back into murky history. The hill people were given to understand that a decision would be announced before Parliament adjourned on May 11. When it was not, they were led to believe that the announcement would certainly be made before the Prime Minister left on her South-East Asian tour, but a decision was deferred again and the uncertainty increased after reports that the Central leaders themselves were divided on what should be done. A reference to the Congress Parliamentary Party did nothing to remove the differences, and the Central Government decided only to reconsider its latest plan. More remarkable was the excuse that the factual position about the operation of the law and order position in the hill areas was proposed to be examined after so many years of elaborate investigation and planning. Mrs Gandhi told the hill leaders last month that in a democratic set-up consultations took time; this was too funny for words.

Later in the month, however, there were reports (possibly inspired) that the Government, sincerely anxious to settle the problem as soon as possible, would introduce a Bill on Assam's reorganization during the next session of Parliament and that the legislation would be complete before the session was over. But later reports indicated that the matter, after all, might not be pursued with such urgency, that the Government would probably do no more than make a declaration of intent towards the end of the Parliament session. Now comes the reported proposal for a wider study on the problems of "Purbachal." What has the

Government been doing all these months and years if the problems of the eastern region still call for detailed investigation? Perhaps another protracted exercise in examination, consultation and consideration will give New Delhi further excuse for deferring a decision on the reorganization issue. Perhaps New Delhi calculates that it can take the risk, after the restraint shown by the hill leaders at the recent conference at Tura. It could be grievously wrong; it is such complacent calculations, to say nothing of the persistent dishonesty, that has so complicated the problems of the Nagas and Mizos.

The "Revolution"

A special postage stamp has been issued this week to commemorate the "Wheat Revolution" which has allegedly taken place in the country. During the same year, six-and-a-half million tonnes of the grain are being imported from the United States. Also, only last month an announcement was made that the issue price of wheat sold by the fair price shops and ration shops was being raised across-the-board by 20 paise per kilogram or even more. But these are inconsequential matters. A revolution is a phenomenon of the mind. If New Delhi is pleased to ordain that a "revolution" has indeed happened, it has then to be assumed that it has happened, and, please, no questions.

It is the Indian predilection for melodrama which is at work. Two "objective" factors are offered as evidence to clinch the claim of the wheat revolution: first, the production of the grain is some 4 million tonnes higher than what it was last year; second, procurement of wheat is likely to be as much as 2 million tonnes, in contrast to hardly 700,000 tonnes last year. But one good harvest hardly connotes a revolution. We have come across several such production peaks in the past, none of which has really endured. The peak attained this year is of course considerably higher than the past peaks, Yet nothing is lost by not rushing to judgment: there have been so many disappointments over the years that a tempering of exuber-

ance would have been both appropriate and seemly.

Besides, larger wheat procurement this year is neither here nor there. With 4 million tonnes of extra output, it would have been altogether odd if procurement had stayed put at last year's level. A still more relevant question to ask is the price at which the procurement has been undertaken. In Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh—the three States where procurement figures have soared—procurement has been at prices way above the ruling market prices. It is being freely admitted that big farmers and traders have bought wheat at Rs. 50-55 per quintal from the small peasants, and have unloaded the grain to the Food Corporation of India at prices ranging between Rs. 76 and Rs. 81. Under these circumstances, it would have been idiotic not to sell to the Government.

The impact of these high prices paid out is being directly felt now, with the rise in the issue prices of wheat. If the imported wheat were not there, the issue prices would have been still higher. This is the most bizarre quality of the so-called wheat revolution. Following the "revolution", the domestic price of wheat has further moved upwards and it costs easily 50 per cent more to produce wheat in the country than to import it.

Even given our aesthetic standards, the vulgarity in issuing a stamp to celebrate this *non sequitur* of a revolution has reached a new depth. Despite the revolution, even this year, at least four-fifths of the wheat that will be released through the public distributive agencies will consist of imports. Despite the revolution, the prices will go up. Despite the issue of the stamp, there will be famine and starvation deaths over large parts of the country. But there you are; a Government which has so little to show in the way of achievement will make a mountain of each little molehill. It can only survive by gimmickry. It is as if a bunch of public relations officers have taken over the task of administering and developing this vast, complex country. A revolution a day can keep reality away, but for how long?

Strikes

In several States Government employees are on the warpath, demanding dearness allowance at Central Government rates, while Central Government employees themselves are demanding a need-based wage. The strike of non-gazetted staff in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh has spread, and in Bihar teachers are restless. U.P. may follow suit. West Bengal State Electricity Board workers threaten action. The argument that there is little money in the kitty does not go home when there is conspicuous spending and when no attempt is made to equalise disparities. The recent ostentation at Chandrapura during a brief visit by the Prime Minister—the DVC, in bad straits most of the time, is reported to have spent at least Rs. 5 lakhs for the occasion—will not boost the morale of the Biharis.

Among the many hazards strikers have to face is propaganda. It is a pity that the plight of patients in Patna hospitals has helped to create the impression that the strikers are callous. But if the hospital story were not there, saboteurs out to disrupt essential supplies would have been invented overnight. Railway firemen have been accused of holding up rice supplies to poor Kerala. The Centre's solicitude for Kerala and some other UF Governments which were ditched is famous, but a Keralan on very short and expensive rations at the moment may have a short memory and blame the firemen for his hardship. All this points to the need for continuous political education.

It is too early to tell whether the Central Government employees will strike. Trade union leaders in Delhi have been known to funk at the last moment. But the Government may leave the employees with no other option. Taking advantage of the disillusionment consequent on the UF Governments' failure to deliver the goods in many States, it has itself helped to raise the prices of many essential commodities with impunity, and its spell of cocksureness is still not over, as politicking parties, too busy with the coming mid-term elections, have not tried to organise any

movement against specific rises.

Industrial labour is looking on, angry and timid. In the present situation some factory owners are waiting for a chance to declare a lock-out to cut their losses, and the workers, after their experience in the past few months, know that any precipitate action, without intense preparation, will be playing into their hands. Talking tough is not enough.

Government employees have a seeming advantage over industrial workers. The Government—what a pity!—cannot lock itself out. Action by large numbers of its employees has a direct impact on public attention and utilities, while a strike in a large textile factory, for example, can be insulated from the general public for quite a time. But the extent of economic deprivation is becoming so wide that a point is being approached where both industrial workers and white-collar employees may be forced to co-ordinate their action. Co-ordination with the peasant movements that are breaking out here and there still seems a tall order.

Liberated Areas

As the Paris talks drag on, reports of massive "infiltration" by North Vietnamese regulars into the South multiply and this is made to justify heavy raids by B-52 bombers. The fact is that the Vietcong, after the Tet and subsequent offensives, have been able to liberate innumerable "strategic" hamlets and villages, ensuring themselves a steady supply of workers, fighters and produce. The people in many liberated areas have elected people's liberation committees at village and hamlet level. Such elections have been completed in the liberated areas in Chau Thauhn, Gia Rai, Cai Nuoc, Nam Can, Thai Binh, Song Doc and Dam Doi districts. Since the beginning of this year, thousands of young people in the provinces of the Mekong delta have joined the People's Liberation Armed Forces and gone to the front line. In three months, more than 4,500 young people joined the PLAF in Ben Tre province. Three hundred teachers and students in the cities of Ben Tre, My Tho and Cao Lanh went over to the liberated areas

and joined the army there. There were many cases of father and son joining up at the same time. Those remaining in the villages or hamlets are now in the guerilla forces which have been grown considerably.

Broad sections of the young have joined young shock brigades. In February and March, more than 4,000 young people in Chau Thanh, Long My and Phong Hiep districts of Can Tho province took part in the work of supporting the front. More than 500 young men and women of Binh Phuoc district, Long An province, joined the civilian work corps for long-term service in support of the front. Their motto is, "everything for the front, everything for the defeat of the enemy".

Peasants in the liberated areas of My Tho province have started an emulation campaign in public grain delivery for 1968. Many peasant households have delivered their quota of public grain for even 1969. In their efforts to develop production the peasants in the liberated areas in Long An province have dug a total of about one hundred small dams against sea water this year and transformed 8,000 hectares of single-crop fields into double-crop fields.

It is in view of these impressive developments in South Vietnam that the Hanoi daily *Nhan Dan* said that the Saigon puppet administration is like an empty gunny bag which the U.S. has tried in vain to make stand on its own. The destruction of "strategic hamlets" and the crushing of the puppet machine of control at the grassroots level has broken the backbone of the puppet administration. Its political failure is also seen in its utter isolation, and the growing prestige of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation and the emergence of the Vietnam Alliance of National Democratic and Peace Forces, ten of whose leaders have been sentenced to death in absentia.

NOTICE

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Business Manager
Frontier

De Gaulle's Decision

Less than six weeks before M. Couve de Murville replaced M. Pompidou as Prime Minister of France, General de Gaulle had declared that he would not change the Prime Minister "whose value, solidity, capacity deserves the homage of everyone". What the General refused to do at the height of the French crisis was evidently found desirable after order had been restored. The change is particularly intriguing in the context of M. Pompidou's handling of the crisis and the impressive vote of confidence that he, no less than the General, received in the elections. The Prime Minister had faithfully carried out the President's policies and held the country together when much of it rebelled against these policies. Yet the General apparently believes that he now needs a different Prime Minister to give effect to new policies. The social and economic reforms that the General wishes to introduce are by no means unacceptable to M. Pompidou, but the latter perhaps would have preferred methods different from those the President intends to adopt.

It is difficult to see M. Couve de Murville as the man most perfectly attuned to the tasks prescribed by the General. The cool, reserved and polished diplomat, with his upper-class Protestant background, does not seem the kind of man who would respond with warmth and energy to the General's programme of reforms or slogan of "participation". But the General probably counts upon one negative virtue of the man; the former Foreign Minister and lately Finance Minister will not show his personal feelings even when he disagrees or strongly disapproves; he will be an instrument totally at the General's disposal. M. Pompidou has been and will surely remain perfectly loyal, but he is not quite so good at effacing his own personality; in fact, his loyalty, it appears, has not prevented him from expressing occasional doubt and disagreement.

This does not mean that General de Gaulle has lost faith in the man who has served him so well. M. Pompidou remains his chosen successor; indeed, there is no other possible successor.

Unless the General himself decides to stay on, no other candidate can beat M. Pompidou in a Presidential election. But, before any such election, the master probably hopes to convince his doubting follower that the doubts have been unwarranted; M. Pompidou would then come to recognize that the General had been right all along and would thus be better able to carry on the grand tradition. Or perhaps the General is simply guarding against possible failure of his immediate programme; he cannot be unaware that few but the more fanatical Gaullists support the "participation" plan in its entirety. If the scheme fails, there would be another crisis, perhaps graver than the last. At that moment, the General could turn to M. Pompidou, who would be unscathed, as the last hope both for Gaullism and for France of the Gaullist vision.

Sabah

The issue over which the Philippines broke off diplomatic relations with Malaysia in 1963 has been revived. Obviously restoration of diplomatic relations in 1966 could not remove the bone of contention—Sabah.

In March this year a mutiny in Corregidor, a little island at the mouth of the Manila Bay, got headlines in the world Press. For, a survivor of the mutiny "revealed" that there the Philippine authorities were training soldiers for the purpose of invading Sabah, now part of the Malaysian Federation. President Marcos promptly explained that the commandos were being trained not for invasion or infiltration but for counter-insurgency in case foreign Communists attacked the Philippines. But the "revelation" was enough to spark off a hyper-nationalist campaign in the Malaysian Press. In Kuala Lumpur these days one hears the solemn pledge of fighting to the last drop of blood against a foreign invader. And strangely enough Manila, which denied that the mutiny in Corregidor had anything to do with the "liberation" of Sabah, has since stepped up the campaign for taking the Sabah issue to the World Court or the UN. One wonders if the leak about

the Corregidor training camp was not inspired.

The disputed territory is the 30,000 square-mile north-eastern tip of Borneo and the present dispute can be traced back to early 18th century when the Sultan of Sulu claimed to have received that territory from its owner, the Sultan of Brunei, though there exists no document to that effect. Then in 1877 Baron Gustav Von Overbeck purchased on behalf of the British North Borneo Company the territory from the Sultan of Brunei. To make their title undisputed Von Overbeck also secured from the Sultan of Sulu, on the payment of a sum, a document granting the territory in perpetuity. Now Manila, which claims to inherit the rights of the Sultan of Sulu (descended from the Spanish and American colonial rules), says that the grant was only a temporary lease. So sovereignty over the territory, they claim, cannot belong to Malaysia, the successor of the British North Borneo Company, it rests with the Philippines.

Malaysia points to the lack of documentary evidence to support the claim that the Sultan of Sulu ever received the cession of Sabah from the Sultan of Brunei. Moreover the Spanish colonial masters of the Philippines who annexed the territories of the Sultan of Sulu, surrendered their claim to North Borneo by the Madrid Protocol signed with the British in 1885. The American rulers of the Philippines also agreed in 1931 to a line of demarcation drawn by a joint Anglo-American team. In 1963, when the Federation of Malaysia was formed, a national referendum in Sabah resulted in a vote in Malaysia's favour. So if one is to go by 'international law' and UN-operated referendum, Malaysia's claim to Sabah is sounder than that of the Philippines. But colonial claims and counter-claims apart, the people of Sabah do not seem to have had any emotional or historical tie whatsoever with any of the present claimants. The fact that Sabah, with its rubber plantations, forests and coconut groves, has a rich export potential, however, counts much more than any yellow parchment handed over by some sultan to some white adventurers centuries ago.

Another potential of Sabah has lately been discovered. Dispute over Sabah might indeed offer rich political dividends. President Macapagal of the Philippines had revived the Filipino claim to Sabah as an election strategy. And the trick paid off. Now with the Filipino Presidential election a few months away the Sabah issue has again been dragged from the cold storage. At a time when Huk insurgents control central Luzon, when poverty, corruption and widespread crime are driving larger and larger numbers of people against the Government, jingoistic frenzy over Sabah may serve a useful purpose. Moreover, since Suharto's Indonesia has veered round to back the Malaysian claim, Filipino super-patriots can also raise the bogey of Muslim encirclement of the Philippines.

Malaysian rulers are no innocent kids either. Tunku Abdul Rahman is a past master in inventing foreign peril at the time of elections. And election time is again drawing near. When General Suharto moved into the Presidential chair, the bogey of Indonesian aggression had to be buried. Stories of Chinese subversion also are not likely to wash. In such a bleak situation "news" of Filipino subversion in Sabah comes in very handy. However strange it may seem, the Philippine-Malaysian dispute over Sabah serves no one's purpose better than those of Messers Tunku and Marcos.

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Price Of Dual Satellitism

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW Delhi's reaction to the Soviet decision on arms for Pakistan was like that of a jilted spinster wallowing in sloppy sentimentalism and self-pity. The story was planted on three hand-picked correspondents to build up public opinion against the deal and it was meticulously timed for President Zakir Husain's take-off for Moscow. Thereafter, as usual, the official spokesman maintained that he knew nothing about the Soviet decision.

There was something unedifying and clumsy about New Delhi's attempt to build up opinion against the deal. As clumsy as its attempts to keep back from the country the fact that the Soviet Union has been helping it to build up a terrific arsenal—Sukhai-7 fighter-bombers, sophisticated tanks, missiles and guns, submarines, all in addition to what was already coming and the MIGs. Soviet requests for submarine bases in the Indian Ocean were being heard with great sympathy in New Delhi once.

At the time of writing this despatch, the only "official" reaction to the development was the Prime Minister's statement. Everything else has to await the President's return and the Parliament session on July 22.

Non-official reactions have been weird. The Moscow-lining Press seems to have gone beyond its brief. The decision is only in principle, the supplies would only be token and it would largely be defensive equipment like ground-to-air missiles! Its reason for anger: the "pro-U.S. lobby" is utilising the occasion to rally forces against Mrs Gandhi. The Right Communist reaction is little different from that of the Jana Sanghi jingoists. The CPI's exception to Soviet arms supply to Pakistan would have made sense if it had condemned outright the Soviet game of setting off India and Pakistan on an arms race. Soviet mediation at Tashkent was followed by stepped up military aid to India and if Mr Kosy-

gin meant peace on the sub-continent, it could only be construed that he also wants a permanent Asian confrontation between India and China.

When Moscow jettisoned class struggle to replace it by cold war, non-alignment ceased to be a charlatan doctrine and was respectable enough in the eyes of every Soviet Prime Minister after Stalin. India had a leverage over the two Super-Powers, almost to the point of blackmailing them to part with all the aid she needed. But with the Super-Power interests converging on India, non-alignment has degenerated into dual satellitism.

The tension in West Asia is easing and the Soviet Union would like the tension to ease in South Asia. Very soon there will be Soviet arms dumps in West Asia and South Asia and all of them interchangeable like the CENTO arms. A Pakistani military delegation is reported to be visiting Iran to study the Soviet equipment supplied to Iran, for a let-in the projected deliveries to Pakistan. U.S. arms came to Pakistan once via Iran. Now Soviet arms would come via Turkey or Iran even if the Soviets back out, on a formal deal one of these days.

Soviet calculations in South Asia need not prove wholly correct but there appears to be a logic to the new policy. Stability on the Indian sub-continent demands an early settlement of the Kashmir dispute. If India has to be kept in a permanent state of confrontation with China, it should be relieved of the problems arising out of a permanent threat from Pakistan. But even if the two governments on the sub-continent want a solution of the Kashmir dispute public opinion in both these countries is belligerent. The Soviet Union might think that supplying arms to Pakistan might have the effect of pressuring India into a more reasonable attitude on Kashmir. But this is where the Soviet Union is likely to prove wrong.

"Balance"

The compulsions of Soviet foreign policy are clear. India has to be armed against China. But since an immediate Kashmir settlement is not likely, Pakistan would also have to be armed to keep the balance between the two countries. (The old American game?). The Soviet Union has started the arms race on the sub-continent and the new policy was a long time coming. If New Delhi had dragged the country into believing that the Soviet Union was all for India and against Pakistan, it would have to thank itself for the muddle it is in. The Soviet stand on the Kashmir issue, once one of unqualified support to India, has gradually changed into one of strict "equidistance." There is no point in New Delhi getting sentimental about it. A clear indication of the shift in the Soviet stand was available when Mr Kosygin visited New Delhi last, in April, and told Mrs Gandhi in so many words that President Ayub Khan was her best bet and if they missed the bus now, the Kashmir issue can never be solved.

By dumping arms on both India and Pakistan, the Soviet Union has ensured its "Asian presence". If Asians fight Asians, you can always stage a Tashkent. If India and Pakistan come to a settlement, India would be stronger and can confront China for ever. But once India makes up with China, Soviet leverage over India would be lost. Instead its own confrontation with China would be nearer.

Mr Kosygin's platitudinous letter to Mrs Gandhi skirts the basic issues raised by her. It might be unconvincing but then New Delhi cannot take a long-term view of things. A short-term preparation to meet the Chinese threat (an invasion is forecast for every October but it never comes off) is understandable. But to be preparing for ever, assuming a state of permanent conflict with China, is not. New Delhi's rigidity on the border dispute with China has not paid off, and once again demands for a meaningful dialogue with Peking are heard among responsible people.

How would New Delhi go about it now? If Moscow thinks its action would lead to softening on Kashmir, it would be mistaken. The Prime Minister can

The Yahoos In Vietnam

CHARAN GUPTA

always look to the Jana Sangh's help to whip up a frenzied campaign against any settlement of the issue. In fact, the Sangh's call for a march on Parliament on July 22 has the clandestine blessings of the Congress and might get the usual support from the SSP. Mrs Gandhi, preoccupied with problems of her own survival in office, cannot afford a major political crisis now. Not until the country has had at least three more bumper harvests in succession (which is nearly impossible). Any chance of resuming a dialogue with Pakistan has been snuffed by the Soviet decision. The timing of it might have been determined by many factors relevant from the Soviet point of view. But it is difficult for others to understand.

If one remembers that the direct result of massive Soviet arms aid to India was a certain belligerency over Kashmir in New Delhi, it would not be difficult to foresee the developments. It is clear by now that the Soviet Union was not very particular that India should sign the non-proliferation treaty. It wanted India to go for a massive defence budget covering conventional weapons which could be bought from the Soviet Union. Now India has one more reason to refuse to sign the treaty. India's defence budget is most likely to go up, with the arms race joined by Pakistan. And the extra arms India would need from time to time to keep the balance would in all likelihood come from the Soviet Union again.

A top American mission which was to visit India in June had to put off its visit, perhaps anticipating the latest development in Moscow. The visit would be put off further until after New Delhi has assessed the situation anew and is in a mood to look to the United States for arms once again because a Chinese threat can always be conjured up. If you can't be non-aligned, you have to be aligned to both the Super-Powers. Mrs Gandhi's dash to Moscow to participate in the 50th anniversary celebrations last November was a command performance. Now, if her Latin American safari is re-arranged to include a brief but purposeful visit to Washington, it would hardly be surprising.

July 14, 1968.

DR. BENJAMIN Spock and four others have each been sentenced by a Boston judge to a prison term of two years and a fine of \$5000 for inciting American young men to evade the draft. In the eye of U.S. law, draft-dodging is criminal offence; Dr Spock, with all his eminence as the foremost child specialist in the country, is therefore guilty of aiding and abetting a criminal offence. He is a criminal, and has to be locked up.

From all present indications, the citizens of the United States, in the elections next November, are likely to supplant Lyndon Johnson by Richard Nixon. Much worse things may happen then. True, there are any number of brave Americans, conscientious Americans, Americans like Dr Spock, who are trying desperately to prevent the calamity of Nixon as the next President, but, after all, they are in a minority. The judgment of the Boston court is not all that irrelevant: Despite the "Hell, No! We Won't Go" slogan reverberating among college boys and girls, the bulk of the American people would seem to frown upon those who would prefer to leave Vietnam to the Vietnamese—or Asia to the Asians. A considerable number among them may be weary of the war, but they would not still consider that the war is unjust, or that the Americans had no business to go out to Vietnam in the first place. If they thought so, it would then be Eugene McCarthy—and not Nixon or Hubert Humphrey—who would have been the leading Presidential candidate during this summer.

The dilemma faced by men like Dr Spock is not altogether unique. There have been similar instances in the past when individuals have arraigned themselves against the rulers of society and have suffered in the process. The history of human efforts would be altogether arid if individuals were lacking in the courage to protest against evils sanctified by social convention. The thing that has still to be stressed

here is that neither American society—nor the rest of the world—is perhaps quite aware how much of an evil the war in Vietnam is. Those amongst us who line up for a U.S. grant, or our Government when it puts in a plea for the flow of a couple of billion dollars annually from the U.S. administration, can be only vaguely cognizant of the enormity of the horror which Vietnam is. A compartmentalization of morality usually takes place: Vietnam, the argument runs, is not our concern, why should we therefore worry about it; if an official American grant advances my own educational or professional career, let me thank the U.S. officials and accept it; similarly, if funds funnelled from the U.S. Government budget would ease our own budgetary problems—for example, help finance the Fourth Plan—why, let us be properly grateful, and ask no questions about Vietnam. If our little favours are granted, we shall keep quiet over Vietnam, we shall not even bother to have the intellectual or emotional curiosity to enquire about the facts in Vietnam. It will not be convenient for us to learn that what the Americans are perpetrating in Vietnam exceeds the bestialities of Hitler, or that the strategy of "search and destroy" has amounted to an orgy of deliberate mass murder and to a systematic extermination of villages and people.

I have before me the issues dated March 9 and 16 of the *New Yorker* magazine. An American journalist named Jonathan Schell spent several weeks during the summer of last year with the U.S. forces in Vietnam, and has presented a clinical account of what he saw and heard. Let me quote him.

What I saw and heard had to do mostly with the destruction that was going on in South Vietnam, but at the same time I found that the peculiar character of the war tended to be defined for me by how the men in our armed forces reacted to the

various special conditions of the war: the immense disparity in size and power between the two adversaries, the fact that Americans are fighting ten thousand miles from home, the fact that the Vietnamese are an Asian and non-industrialised people, the fact that we are bombing North Vietnam but the North Vietnamese are incapable of bombing the United States, the fact that our bombing in South Vietnam can be met by only small-arms fire, the fact that it is often impossible for our men to distinguish between the enemy and friends or neutral civilians, the anomalousness and the corruption of the Saigon Government, the secondary role played by the South Vietnamese Army we are supposedly assisting, the fact that the enemy is fighting a guerilla war while we are fighting a mechanised war and finally the overriding fantastic fact that we are destroying, seemingly by advertence, the very country we are supposedly protecting.

Schell describes, in great detail, the "search and destroy" missions in the provinces of Quang Ngai and Quang Tin; he saw the results of the American bombing, shelling and ground activities, in the course of which seventy per cent of all the villages were destroyed; he also could observe at first hand the process of destruction as it unfolded by flying in Forward Air Control (FAC) planes which are used to find targets for bombing and also to guide Air Force planes to targets. From what Schell writes with such painstaking detail, it becomes obvious that the American policy is one of wholesale genocide. For morale, American troops are taught to sing such soul-raising devotionals:

Strafe the town and kill the people,
Drop napalm in the square,
Get out early every Sunday,
And catch them at their morning prayer.

Lest it is thought that this song is mere hyperbole, Schell mentions the point-count system the FAC pilots maintain for K.B.A.s ("Killed by Air"). The Americans are out there to kill, and individual pilots are credited with points in accordance with the killings they are able to achieve

through their bombing. The points are awarded as follows:

Men	Women
Old 3	Old 3
Crippled 3	Crippled 3
Children 3	Children 3
Military age 1	Military age 1 pregnant 5

A neat note at the bottom adds: "Combination of two or more may also be counted".

The horrendous implication of this note sinks in only with a time-lag. It simply means that if a pilot can bomb and kill a pregnant woman, he is entitled to the highest point-count award—five plus one, six. The explanation could lie in psycho-somatic perversity, but maybe there is a more pragmatic reason for placing such a high premium on the murder of a pregnant woman, which an Air Force Lieutenant candidly provides: "When we kill a pregnant woman, we count it as two V.C.—one soldier and one cadet".

Such ratings can scarcely be considered as examples of bizarre humour, for, as Schell narrates, pregnant women are getting killed, every day and hour, by the indiscriminate bombing. Schell offers a minute description of a particular incident in the course of one bombing mission. Areas to be bombed are predetermined by "coordinates". Within the coordinates marked out for this bombing raid, two church steeples could be noticed. ("The churches were surrounded by twenty or thirty houses. About half of these had stone walls and thatched roofs. One thatch-roofed building was perhaps fifty feet long and thirty feet wide, and appeared to be some sort of gathering place. Flower gardens were in bloom in front of both churches. Behind both, plots of vegetable stretched back through glades of palm trees to rice fields".) The following piece of radio conversation ensued between the pilot in charge and the ground commander:

"Two of those structures seem to be structures of worship. Do you want them taken out?"

"Roger", the ground commander replied. "There seems to be a white flag out front there", Major Billings said.

"Yeah, Beats me what it means," the ground commander replied.

What then follows can only be described as pure poetry, the poetry of destruction. I hope the Editor will allow me to quote in full the description of how the great American nation won the battle of two little churches by bombing and strafing from above:

"O.K., here goes", said the Major. Then, addressing the F-4 pilots, he said, "Make your passes from south to north. I'll circle over here to the west".

The Major brought the 0-1 into a dive, aiming its nose at the village, and fired a phosphorous rocket. Its white smoke rose from a patch of trees fifty yards to the south of one church. "Do you see my smoke?" he asked the flight commander.

"Yeah, I got you", the flight commander said. "I'll make a dry run and then come in with the seven-hundred-and-fifty-pounders."

A minute later, an F-4 appeared from the south, diving low over the churches in a practice run. As it pulled out of its dive, it cut eastward and began to circle back for the next pass. A second F-4 made its dive in the same way, and released its bombs. A tall crowd of brown smoke rolled up from the vegetable garden in back of one of the churches.

"That's about a hundred metres off," Major Billings said. "See if you can move it forward."

"O.K. Sorry," the flight commander said.

The third plane also sent its bombs into the vegetable garden. The first plane, on its second pass, sent its bombs into rice fields about sixty yards to one side of the churches. Three pillars of brown smoke now rose several hundred feet in the air, dwarfing the churches and the houses. On the second plane's second pass, a bomb hit the back of one church directly—the church with the white flag on the pole in front.

"Oh, that's nice, baby, real nice", Major Billings said. "You're layin' those goodies right in there!"

When the smoke cleared, the

church was gone except for its facade, which stood by itself, with its cross on top. The white flag still flew from its pole. The third plane sent its bombs into the rice fields to the side. The first plane fired rockets on its third pass, and they landed in the vegetable garden behind the destroyed church, leaving its smoke with dozens of small brown puffs. Several of the rockets from the next volley hit the other church, obliterating its back half and leaving two holes the size of doors in the roofs of the front half. Four or five of the houses around the church burst into flame.

"That's real fine!" said Major Billings.

"When do you want the twenty mike-mike?" asked the flight commander ("Twenty mike-mike" is military slang for 20-mm-cannon strafing fire, which fires a hundred explosive shells per second.)

"Lay it right down that line you've been hitting", Major Billings said. "Put it right down across those hootches, and we'll see if you can start a few fires." (Strafing rounds often set a house on fire, whereas bombs rarely do.)

As one of the F-4s made the first strafing-run, the path of fire cut directly through the group of houses around the churches, sparkling for a fraction of a second with hundreds of brilliant flashes.

"Goody, goody! That's right down the line!" exclaimed Major Billings. "Why don't you just get those hootches by the other church, across the road, now?"

"Roger", answered the flight commander.

On the second strafing pass, the flashing path of shells cut across the group of houses on the other side of the road.

"Real fine!" Major Billings said. "Now how about getting that hootch down the road a bit?" He was referring to a tile-roofed house that stood in a field about a hundred yards to the west of one church. The path of fire from the third strafing pass—the final pass of the strike—cut directly across the house, opening several large holes in its roof.

"Right down the line!" Major Billings said. "Thanks, boys. You did a real fine job. I'm going to give you ninety-per-cent Target Courage."

The Major was as good as his word. His Bomb Damage Assessment Report read as follows: "Two Permanent Military Structures Destroyed, ten Military Structures Destroyed, and five Damaged". When Schell queried whether the houses and the churches could be considered as military structures, the Major simply shrugged, "Oh, that's just what we call them. Search and destroy".

Search and destroy, clear and hold. Burn and strafe. Kill and maim. Listen to this bit of conversation, depicting how the great U.S. army, the bearers of the burden of civilisation and democracy, heroically fighting it out with totalitarian Communism, spot and kill the Vietcong:

"We killed four V.C. this morning, sir. We turned around and saw that these guys were following us. They saw that we had spotted them, and we fired, and they took evasive action. We got all four of them, though. They didn't have weapons, but they were wearing the short V.C.-type black pajama uniforms, and they were definitely of military age. No question about that, sir."

No question about that, sir. All you have to do is be a Vietnamese of the right age and wear your national apparel, and you will be shot dead in your own country by the invading marauders. This is the only way the war can be won for democracy. Jonathan Schell describes, more in sorrow than in anger, the toll in terms of moral feeling this type of policy of insensate killing has taken: the American pilots are obsessed by the idea of unloading their bombs and opening up their guns. So much so that, on a particular mission, thirty or forty water buffaloes grazing in a rice field became the all-absorbing target, and salvo after salvo pound out explosive shells. No doubt, at the end of the day, when the points chalked up were being counted, thirty-odd buffaloes helped swell the credit of the commanding pilot: each of them was a suspected V.C. And so much the better for the point-count system if

some of the she-buffaloes were pregnant.

Dr. Spock has to be put away in prison. He is a criminal. He wanted to prevent young American men from going to Vietnam and be a part of such civilising, democracy-saving missions as described above.

But look at the other side of all this. Dr Spock is an American citizen himself, and has the nobility to bestir himself against the indescribably shameful things American soldiers and airmen and marines are perpetrating in Vietnam. Jonathan Schell is an American journalist, yet he dares to defy the security embargo and write about the terror of the "search and destroy" missions. What about us? Our Government continues to be the Chairman of the Neutral Nations' Supervisory Team in Vietnam. Not a squeak of protest has been allowed to emit from our representative on this team: we see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil. For dear life we stay neutral between humanity and bestiality. One day in the future, the Americans will perhaps travel through hell, but finally emerge, on paying the fullest price for all their sins, sombre in the after-glow of the catharsis; but there will be no expiation of the guilt of India, allegedly the land of the Buddha.

KING HENRY
ইলাসটিক
জ্যাকিয়া
বিদেশী ভাবধারায়
তৈরি
মূল্য - ৪.৫০

Theory And Practice Of Revolution

H. GAMBERG

THE question of revolutionary tactics necessary for the seizure of power must be subject to continuous reevaluation in the face of changing historical and social conditions. Revolutionary theory and its theorists have not always been free from the tendency toward the ossification of ideas that have had relevance for some time and some place, but whose application to new situations may be disastrous. Our century has seen much revolutionary practice, yet the analysis to be learned from this practice has been spotty and far from systematic. It is time to make an attempt at discovering some general inferences from revolutionary experience, to get some sense of the way that revolutionary power is built and maintained.

The basic features of Marxist analysis remain relevant for the modern world, especially as witnessed by the startling successes of the older and newer socialist countries compared with the stagnation, waste and militarism of the "advanced" capitalist regimes. These basic features involve the conception of society in class terms, the inevitability of crisis in the capitalist world, and the essentially progressive nature of the oppressed people as the only instruments of their own liberation. These theoretical constructs are the stock-in-trade of the active Marxist but they do not map out the concrete tactics which he faces in highly diversified contexts, since for Marxism, what is true in theory must be true in practice, the working revolutionary is faced with very pressing political problems of doing the right thing at the right moment—to take power when it is possible and when it is most salutary for the broad masses of people.

In tactical terms, much of nineteenth century working-class political activity is controlled by the idea that the evolution of capitalism will slowly but inexorably lead to increasing proletarianization of society, increasing

struggle between the owning class and the oppressed class, and a growing consciousness in the working masses of their future role as masters of a new society. The culmination of this process would be the overthrow by the workers of the capitalist system. Marxism supported the growth and strengthening of bourgeois systems on the assumption that capitalism serves the "progressive" role of ushering in the class which bears the seeds of its own destruction. Working class strategy involved trade union organization, mass education in Marxist principles, and support for strikes as instruments of immediate economic demand and long-range political education of the masses. There is a strong tendency in nineteenth century Marxism of what Lenin was later to brand as "spontaneity" in his own times. The proletarian insurrection to take power was considered inevitable, not immediately planned for, and the result of a series of small steps leading to the promised land. Any demand for immediate steps to take power would be castigated at this time as anarchism or worse. The Paris Commune, the only proletarian accession to power in the century, although strongly supported by Marx, came as a surprise to almost everyone.

Compared to the present century, earlier Marxism in its tactical concepts appears calm, serene and millennial. There is even a highly benevolent attitude toward other working class parties which were considered to ultimately merge into the relentless tide of proletarian history. The major tactical goal of this era was to heighten the awareness of the working class helped along by the objective contradictions in the capitalist system. The bourgeoisie itself is seen in less malevolent terms as a class which would fall like an overripe and rotten fruit from the tree of history.

Revolutionary theory is caught on the horns of a dilemma both sides of

which are both true and false depending upon particular circumstances. Practice demands highly generalized theory which can guide it through the unexpected vagaries of experience. This is implicit in Lenin's claim that there is no revolution without revolutionary theory. On the other hand, events always outstrip theory which demands a strong predisposition toward flexibility in tactical detail. With all due respect to Lenin's dictum, his own experience is a clear example of stops and starts in the face of changed circumstances, of a brilliant ability never to be too imprisoned by procrustean principles. Lenin's success in taking power appears more a result of a lucid demand for power, even when events "disobeyed" theory, and a strong dose of pragmatic reaction to concrete detail. Lenin himself was too much the orthodox Marxist theoretically to recognize the ways in which his own practice countermanded much of the revolutionary tradition before him. For example, in *What Is To Be Done* he defended the organization of a highly disciplined and clandestine party of professional revolutionaries by reference to the special circumstances of Czarist Russia—its highly repressive character which demanded an accent on illegal work. He refused to make this into a principle of revolutionary theory and still accepted the general contours of practice in the European labour movement on the grounds that revolution could be successful only in advanced countries. One can even say that the opportunity to take power in 1917 was a surprise to the Bolsheviks and was taken advantage of only because of Lenin's ability to act in spite of theory. Before Lenin arrived in the Russia of the February Revolution, the Bolshevik Central Committee was quite ensconced in a policy by which the party would become an opposition party within a "bourgeois democracy".

Waited in Vain

To the end of his life Lenin waited in vain for the European revolution and never drew any general inferences from his own experience. In his pamphlet on left-wing infantilism written in 1920, we find Lenin still exhorting tactical flexibility and situational relativity (to be legal, or not, to partake in bourgeois parliaments, or not, etc.) to his European comrades. Although Lenin was quite aware of the revisionist disasters rampant in the European labour movement and although his work on imperialism broke out of the mould of revolution being localized in developed countries, he again did not draw general inferences from these circumstances. Later experience allows us to conclude that practices traditional to the European labour movement do not lead to revolutionary transformation of capitalist society. Therefore either the proletarian class in highly industrialized States is not revolutionary, or new, perhaps more dramatic, methods must be tried. Finally the locus of revolution has shifted to the underdeveloped world in its quest for liberation from colonialism and imperialism. The class in revolt includes much that was traditionally considered peasant rather than industrial proletariat and it puts emphasis upon armed struggle as its primary revolutionary strategy. It appears that many well-established Marxist parties in the world have still learned none of these lessons.

The political relevance of military engagement, as early and as intensively as possible, with the exploitative regime has not been fully appreciated in revolutionary theory (at least up to Mao). Armed struggle has two major salutary consequences for the taking of proletarian power. It turns the real but often covert oppressiveness of the ruling powers into overt and stark repression. This polarizes the existing social forces and shows the people the enemy as he really is—brutal, torturing, deceitful, and racist. The other consequence of armed struggle is that it forces the people into a position of total commitment to the revolution. To take up arms is to burn all one's bridges behind one. There is no choice but liberty or death. No other tactical weapon compares to the

drama and significance with which armed struggle demands total commitment. There is some sense in asking a revolutionary to define himself by putting his life on the line. Debray's recent work appears to understand this when he rejects the bourgeoisification of the military inactive urban communist parties. But in overstressing the mobile guerilla band which keeps clear of the people because contact with the guerillas will bring repression upon the people (as well as the potential betrayal of the guerillas) Debray demonstrates that he has not fully understood the importance of commitment of the people to what is, after all, *their* revolution.

One other issue demonstrates the centrality of armed struggle. Since oppression rests on violence, it is only through violence that the people can be protected while the constructive aspects of socialism can bear immediate and fruitful results. The concrete benefits of agrarian expropriation, communal labour, in field hospitals, munitions factories, and textile production, and the attack on illiteracy in the rebel army can come about only because an armed force has arisen to defend the people as it reconstructs itself. Debray underplays these tremendous advantages by downgrading the importance of base areas as a revolutionary strategy. Military strategy bears fruit, if, and only if, it brings about the embryo of a new social existence. (In this sense, one should not overestimate the generalizability of the Cuban experience where the mobile band took power because imperialism was caught off guard and where socialist reconstruction had to take place after the taking of power. Indeed some of the problems intrinsic to the present Cuban situation may be rooted in the somewhat special way in which the revolutionary government came to power). The revolutionary experience gained by the masses in attacking the regime that exploits them and in transforming the world before their own eyes may be worth far more than painstaking education through abstract socialist treatises and through strikes that lead nowhere (except to the buying off of the people).

The conclusions of this reappraisal of revolutionary history are important

for successful revolutionary practice in our own times. The first conclusion is one not commonly stated, perhaps because it is so obvious. The long-range viability of revolutionary values, that is the success of the post-insurrectionary phase of the revolution, is dependent on the way the revolution came to power in the first place. The present revisionism of the Soviet Union, although probably not explicable in these terms alone, is rooted in the tactics and organization of the original Bolshevik party of 1917. The reliance upon a professional body of revolutionaries as the vanguard of proletarian power is the single great Leninist contribution to the contemporary storehouse of revolutionary principles. In other respects, too strict adherence to Leninist experience has major pitfalls for the post-insurrectionary stage of development. Moreover, the separation of the Bolshevik party from the masses, its growing commandism and privilege-seeking, is connected to the fact that power fell into the hands of a people not crystallized and galvanized by the chastening and self-sacrificing experience of long-term revolutionary war. Strangely enough, the long Civil War after the taking of power intensified this malintegration between the party and the people by strengthening rather than weakening the initial shortcomings of party organization. An adequate analysis of the reasons for the political weariness of the Soviet people after the Civil War has yet to be done, but the explanation in terms of the organization and tactics of the Bolshevik party would certainly be a relevant place to start.

Revolutionary agitation without direct military involvement of the people undercuts the tremendous educational benefits of armed struggle and subjects the masses to the deteriorating effects of practices which lead to parliamentarianism and bourgeoisification. The whole history of the European labour movement bears adequate testimony to this danger. Therefore all those tactical positions which demand the slow training of the masses for their future revolutionary tasks whether on the grounds that "this is what Marx or Lenin did" or that "the proletarian party must support the

bourgeois democratic revolution before even conceiving of an armed uprising" are based on outmoded concepts which become counter-revolutionary in consequence if not in intent.

Vanguard ?

Is it undue pessimism or is it clear-sighted realism to say that, at the present time, the bulk of the organized working class in advanced capitalist countries is more than minimally integrated into bourgeois national culture, and as such, has become a class of little or no revolutionary potential? The progressive forces in the United States, those most actively rejecting American imperialism and accepting revolutionary solutions to the world's problems, include some students, some intellectuals, and a quite significant body of Negroes. The blacks are the major insurrectionary force in American society and yet their objective class status is much closer to being unorganized, disemployed lumpen proletariat than organized, trade-union workers. This is not to write off the working class as a force which will most easily accept the new demands of a socialist society, but it does question whether it is now, or in the near future will be, the vanguard of the revolutionary struggle.

If this picture of the working class in developed countries is a true one, then much that has been standard to revolutionary theory must be seen as instrumental in bringing about this state of affairs. Although the forces which facilitated the greater exploita-

tion of the under-developed world and the feeding of the crumbs of capitalist profit-making to the working class are also extremely significant in explaining this, the failure of revolutionary tactics must be seen to play its part. It is curious that we did not learn our basic lessons from the total collapse of the most organized, politically conscious working class movement in modern history—the debacle of the German working class in the 1930's (the recent Indonesian experience is another dramatic example). Long-range education of an abstract nature, painstaking organizing for bread and butter unionism, and engagement in parliamentary politics can no longer be seen as productive tactics except in very special and very clearly defined circumstances. Exactly what should be done in the working class of developed countries at the present time is not easy to answer, but what should not be done appears clearly borne out of the major events of our century.

The present formulation assumes that the locus of revolutionary action has shifted to the "Third World". Although the general theoretical explanation of this shift is only now beginning to be made, we already have a great deal of successful revolutionary experience to justify this thesis. Both the quality of mass misery and the repression that sustains it in the under-developed world have brought about conditions wherein armed struggle has been not only possible, but eminently successful. The struggle between bourgeois and proletariat has intensified just as predicted by the original Marxist exposition, but this struggle must now be seen in global rather than national terms. National liberation wars have become more successful, have become more hopeful for the future, the more they have defined themselves in these terms. In any ultimate sense, a revolutionary should fearlessly accept power whenever the opportunity presents itself even if that opportunity is not in accord with the theory of the moment. It appears, however, that these opportunities are increasingly being presented in a new context demanding tactics different from the earlier revolutionary tradition.

The Andhra "Extremists"

H. RAO

EXPERTS in Communist affairs and the top brass of the Communist movement in Andhra of right, left and extremist views might turn round and say "didn't I tell you so?", on the latest split in the Communist ranks, but to the thousands of Communists and their sympathisers and the lakhs of common people who voted for them in the last four general elections, the news brings disappointment and despair.

It is this feeling that is overlooked by those who indulge in the fierce debate raging in this State in recent weeks. The people's mood of despair often turns into anger and many oldtimers and strong supporters are heard to remark that the Communist movement is now buried fathoms deep and there is no hope of its revival for decades. Should the leaders carry on this dog-fight when discontent is overwhelming the people and they are desperately looking for a way out? they ask.

It is against this background that the recent split in the Communist movement has to be judged. The CPM leadership started with its game of expulsions in West Bengal. Whenever the Government laid its hands on certain CPM cadres and leaders in that State, the top leadership rushed to the Press disowning the arrested. Very soon, "Operation Expulsion" became their biggest weapon: Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Kashmir, and now comes the turn of Andhra. Expulsions in Andhra proved the last straw and there is talk of a third Communist party in the air. Mr Nagi Reddy is the 'man in the news'.

An amazing similarity between the situation in 1964 when the first split took place and now is the use of the phrase "Chinese agents", then by the 'revisionists' and Government together against the Marxists, and now by both of them plus the Marxists against the extremists. At that time, some Peking Radio broadcasts were men-

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tioned by Dange and his friends to prove that the split was brought about at the instance of Peking. The story repeats itself today with exact similarity, the only difference being that the chorus is joined in by Sundarayya.

Following the characterisation of Mr Nagi Reddy's followers as "extremists" or "revolutionaries" by the jute Press, the Marxists too label them as adventurists itching for revolution overnight. Their basic support to Naxalbari is adduced as evidence. But, if his Press statements are any indication, Mr Nagi Reddy does not seem to be dreaming of instant revolution; nor can he be quoted as saying that he would resign his seat in the Andhra Assembly, ask like-minded people to do so and breathe and spit revolution day and night. On the contrary, he went on record saying that it would take at least a year to give an organisational shape to the movement and gather forces around the slogan of winning demands through struggles alone. His complaint is: The CPM is much too preoccupied with defending Kerala and winning the election battle in West Bengal to even think of putting the party on the rails of struggle. When he canvassed support and wanted the party to rally round the struggle of the tribal people in Sriakulam district and think in terms of such struggles wherever people are already prepared to protect their interests from the government-landlord onslaught, his proposal was cold-shouldered on the plea that it would lead to adventurism. The attack against people in Nalgonda and some other pockets, which started at the time of the elections, was intensified, involving literally thousands of people and party workers in hundreds of cases; they were beaten up, local party leaders were even murdered and local party units were posed with the question of defending themselves and protecting the party. Let alone Marxism-Leninism, sheer necessity demanded that the victims of such attacks defend their life and property. They looked up to the Party for guidance, which was not forthcoming. This brought disillusionment with the present leadership.

The problem was taken to the organisational level through an alter-

nate document presented at the special plenum called before the Burdwan meeting. It was natural for Mr Nagi Reddy and his followers to have felt justified in their line of thinking when the overwhelming majority of Andhra comrades voted for it. However, he was in a hopeless minority when he placed it at the all-India level.

Believers of the alternate line have certain differences with him. They agree with him on practically all aspects but doubt whether his line should be pushed through right down to the cadres, cutting across the party's disciplinary barriers, inviting justifiable anger of the State CPM leadership, followed by warnings and, ultimately, expulsions. His friends ask: If he exhibits so much impatience, what is the guarantee that his followers would not turn equally impatient? Would not Mr Nagi Reddy himself take at least a year to gather forces and give his line an organisational shape? By his actions he has only justified the action of the CPM leaders in being equally impatient and rushing to the extreme by expelling a stalwart like Nagi Reddy.

Though there were ideological and political questions on which both Mr Reddy and the leadership differed widely, the parting of ways came at the organisational level, giving rise to a feeling that perhaps this could have been avoided had some restraint been exhibited.

Mr Nagi Reddy's proposals deserve some attention in this context. Ideological and political problems at a policy level can be finally decided only at a Party Congress. Therefore, allow a full-throated discussion on both the lines before a decision is taken at the Party Congress. In the meantime, withdraw the open party letter sent to cadres against himself and his followers, as also the disciplinary action.

But the CPM leadership which met in Calcutta recently seems to be more interested in cleansing the party rather than revitalising it with a militant line of thinking and action—the same thing which promoted them to break with the CPI.

The Press

Ditched By Moscow ?

COMMENTATOR

ALL scoops are not what Evelyn Waugh would have his readers believe; nor are they always, as has become the practice in India, deliberate leaks by Authority to a band of select correspondents when such disclosures suit the Government. Even in this age when news is what official hand-outs say, an alert correspondent may occasionally carry off a scoop sufficiently important to turn his rivals green and flutter New Delhi's doves. It is doubtful if the Government of India wanted the news of the Soviet Union's decision to supply arms to Pakistan to be broken on the eve of President Zakir Husain's trip to Moscow. Though not much of a believer in quiet diplomacy, the Government would have liked to await the result of the President's remonstrance with the Soviet leaders, suitably backed by sulky protest notes on diplomatic level. But the plan has been upset by the Delhi correspondent of *Hindusthan Standard*, who not only reported the Soviet-Pakistan arms deal but also the jittery reaction of the Government of India. Working on an obvious clue, he scored over the rest of New Delhi's reporting fraternity who must have dismissed the Prime Minister's sudden decision to curtail her programme at Chandrapura as too trivial to bother over on a Sunday afternoon. They ignored the clue and missed the hectic activity in the capital of the two days that preceded the President's departure for Moscow. The disclosure was followed by the familiar exercise among reporters of dog-biting-dog; some said it was premature to ring the alarm bell, some claimed the story had no foundation, while some others reported that the Soviet Union had agreed to supply only defensive weapons to Pakistan. But the ripples the disclosure raised immediately in the placid politics of New Delhi in the silly season, should have set at rest all doubts about its authenticity. After some initial hesitation the Prime Minister has confirmed the news, but

the Government has not yet fully joined the petulant chorus, possibly because the President is still in the Soviet Union. It will surely not lag behind once the President is back, forgetting that its foreign policy has been so shorn of manoeuvrability in the last few years that it can no longer hope to enjoy a monopoly of Soviet bounties and must learn to co-exist with Pakistan in the Soviet heart.

The leader-writers have not, however, given their correspondents the benefit of the doubt and have proceeded to lay down what India should do in the face of Soviet "ditching". Of course, very few have suggested the obvious that India should so fashion its policy that its dependence on foreign arms for security decreases. *The Times of India* regards the reported deal as a sign of change in the Soviet policy the rationale of which the Russians have so far avoided spelling out. The paper says that in the past the Russians have fobbed off Indian inquiries with the vague assurance that they are not seeking Pakistan's friendship at the cost of their relations with this country. These generalities will no longer suffice. The Soviet leaders will have to be far more candid if they wish to restore the old confidence between Moscow and New Delhi. It is idle to pretend that this confidence is in no danger of being undermined. In the Indian view Pakistan has been China's accomplice in undermining the stability of the region. In agreeing to provide arms to Rawalpindi Moscow has apparently chosen to ignore this reality as well as the fact that Pakistan has no ground to fear India. This is a grave error of judgment. The worst of it is that so far as is known the Soviet leaders have done all this without even making sure that Pakistan is prepared to normalise its relations with India. They know that Pakistan has neither given up its aim of changing the status of Kashmir, by force if necessary, nor abandoned its policy of seeking the dismemberment of the tribal belt in north-eastern India in active collusion with China. In the absence of any firm commitment by the Ayub regime to respect the status quo, a policy of enforcing an arms balance in the sub-continent can only endanger its stability.

In the opinion of *The Hindustan Times*, India cannot but take a grave view of this development. Pakistan acknowledges no other enemy except India; any accretion to its military strength, therefore, is designed only for use against India. The Soviet move is also disappointing because it goes counter to the assumption that Moscow's arms supply policy to South Asia was based on the assessment that India's size and diverse security problems merited a limited increase in its military capability, but the same did not hold good for Pakistan. It contrasts with the receptivity several Western countries have shown to New Delhi's representations against arms supplies to Pakistan. For Moscow to supply both countries in the present circumstances is to encourage an arms race between them and lead to a further diversion of resources away from economic development. The lesson to be learnt from this development is to realise that relations with other countries are built on mutual interest; and not on recognition of the intrinsic merits of one country's policies by another. Unfortunately, official spokesmen have given the impression that there is something special about Indo-Soviet relations and have angrily rejected suggestions that Moscow's attitude to the sub-continent is liable to change. In the immediate future, India has no alternative but to counter and keep ahead of Pakistan's efforts to increase its military strength. But this situation cannot be accepted as permanent. Neither country can afford a continuing increase in military expenditure. And, as events have shown, neither can depend on powerful friends to sustain them unconditionally. The fact is that continuing hostility and suspicion have made them absurdly vulnerable to the geo-political designs of bigger powers and the independence of both will be endangered unless long-range policy is aimed at evolving some way of living together amicably.

"Let Down"

The Statesman thinks India has been "let down by Moscow". The direct Russian contribution to the Pakistan military machine, in addition to the arms Pakistan gets from the USA,

other Western sources and China, will impinge on India's security. Nor are the political and psychological implications of the Soviet decision any less serious than its purely military consequences. The paper hopes that even the most naive of policy-makers would not be taken in by the glib talk that the inflow of Russian arms into Pakistan would have an impact on the sub-continent as beneficial and stabilising as the earlier Soviet policies beginning with the initiative to convene the Tashkent talks. Quite obviously, the Russians, motivated by self-interest are acting in disregard of Indian interests, and there is no reason why India should not tell them so. Apart from the immediate problem it raises, the Soviet let-down of India has some long-term lessons which New Delhi cannot afford to ignore. It has been established once again that relations between nations are not immutable; South Block's habit of taking friendships for granted can, therefore, be very dangerous. The virtues of flexibility in international relations have also been demonstrated vividly. Pakistan today is able to get arms from the USA, China and the USSR, while India is being *done* down even by those who were considered very reliable friends. Obviously, the rigidity of India's relationship with China is doing it little good because it practically deprives it of all leverage with Moscow and Washington. This is something the country should ponder over even though an improvement in relations with China does not seem feasible in the foreseeable future.

All suggestions for a rapprochement with either Pakistan or China appear to be repugnant to *The Hindu*, which says that Russia's decision to give arms to Pakistan has thrown into the crucible all aspects of India's policy, political, military and economic. While our general interests no doubt lie in maintaining the friendliest relations with the East and the West, we should not also lose sight of the fact that there is more in common, in terms of political and economic philosophies and ways of life, between our country and the other democracies of the world. It should, therefore, not need any further argument to drive home the point that our special interests lie in cultiva-

ting the friendship of these countries, with the same ardour, if not more, as we are doing in the case of the Communist countries. Contending that delivery of arms to Pakistan by three such diverse Powers as the United States, Russia and China "has made nonsense of alignment and consequently of non-alignment" the paper says that the Soviet decision to give arms to Pakistan has injected a new factor in the sub-continent which may upset the prevailing military balance. The Government will now have to think of ways to meet this threat, even at the risk of getting dragged into an armed race we do not want. It is particularly important that the Government does not allow itself to be manoeuvred into a position where we may have to depend on some single source for all our requirements. Russia has been the main source of arms for us, not only because of the comparatively favourable terms of transaction but also because our field of choice was limited by our own meagre foreign exchange resources. We

would have freedom to acquire arms from whatever source we think is best only if we had currency enough to pay for them or had special arrangements with Western sources. This would call for gearing our foreign trade to earning the resources to meet all our defence needs or for forging new ties with the West.

Refusing to be disenchanted with the Soviet Union, *Patriot* seeks the reasons for the "hysterical pose" affected by a section of the Press in the determination of the reactionary trend in our politics to exploit any development, in internal affairs or in the field of foreign policy, so as to harm the cause of democracy and socialism. This reactionary trend is a secret united front made up of monopolists and feudal vested interests, the section of the Press that tirelessly totes their ambitions and woes as national issues, groups in the bureaucracy who are no more than bondsmen of foreign and Indian monopoly-capitalists and finally, individuals in the Congress party and the Govern-

ment. The present howls of those who did not even whisper when Washington replaced all Pakistani military hardware damaged during the clash with us, are more than proof that their attitude is nothing more than a mischievous effort to embarrass and, if possible, threaten the Prime Minister and other members of her Government who show signs of determination to pursue the radical path in economic affairs. The reactionaries whether in the Congress or outside know very well that with its well-known commitment to help in maintaining peace in Asia, Soviet arms of decisive significance will never be given to a still doubtful quantity like Pakistan. If, in spite of such knowledge, the American lobby and its adherents in the Congress and the "kept" Press dare initiate such propaganda, it is only because the socialists and radical democrats in the Congress do not assert themselves and take the offensive in the matter of explaining economic and foreign policies designed to achieve the objective of self-reliance.

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This volume is the first in a new series called *Studies in Imperialism and the Cold War* edited by David Horowitz, who is the author of one of the earliest systematic statements of the New Left position (*Student*, 1962) and a formidable critique of recent American foreign policy (*From Yalta to Vietnam*, revised edition 1967).

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Utpal Dutt's Latest

SUMANTA BANERJEE

THE call for 'Black Power' by the American Negroes has provoked certain Communists and Leftist intellectuals in India and elsewhere to brand the movement as "adventurist" and "racist". In an atmosphere of such misleading propaganda, Mr Utpal Dutt's latest production, *Manusher Adhikarey*, is timely. The tragic paradox of the non-violent struggle by the American black people for equal rights bound within the framework of a constitution deliberately prepared to deprive them of those rights—climaxed recently by the assassination of Martin Luther King—should be borne in mind before one rushes to condemn the Negroes for taking to arms.

Manusher Adhikarey, now being staged at the Minerva Theatre, is a bitter reminder to the worshippers of non-violence of the tragedy of a peaceful legalistic struggle in a society where racism is sanctioned by law and supported by mass prejudice. The play is a departure from the usual run of translations and adaptations. It is an original piece, written by Mr Dutt himself and based on the court proceedings of a case in Alabama about 38 years ago, when a Negro was convicted on a trumped up charge of rape of a white girl and sent to the electric chair.

The main part of the play takes place in the court room and its dramatic potentialities are strong enough to rank it among the best specimens of court room plays. Mr Dutt himself acts in the role of the main character, Sam Libovits, the lawyer defending the innocent Negro, Haywood. It is an experience watching him cross-examining the witnesses and tearing to shreds the prosecution case, passionately appealing in the process to the conscience of America, to free the black people. Mr Dutt's performance is memorable and reveals a wide gamut of historic flair, and subtle emotional gestures. Noteworthy among the actors and actresses are particularly those who appear in the roles of witnesses for

the prosecution. A remarkable panorama of characters unrolls itself before the audience. Mr Samaresh Banerjee appears in the role of the judge, Callahan, who however could have been portrayed as a more dispassionate character. Satya Banerjee in the role of the lawyer for the prosecution, Tom Night, is superb. The set by Mr Nirmal Guha Ray conjures up the atmosphere of the period and the country and the team work is excellent. Particularly memorable is the use of Negro spirituals and folk songs during the intervals which help to sustain the mood throughout the play. Although there is little scope for creating magic by lighting on the stage (as in "Angar" or "Kallol") Tapas Sen makes his presence felt by the subtle touches, in keeping with the mood of the play. Barring the prelude and the finale, the play is refreshingly free from the crude propaganda one is apt to associate with Little Theatre Group productions. It is marked by a remarkable sense of restraint and highlighted by eloquent suggestions. One will always remember, for instance, that bitter and laconic comment of the accused youth Haywood (acted by Mrinal Ghosh) "But I shall never forgive," at the end of the second act, when the liberal Libovits advises his wife to forgive the fanatic white population of Alabama who have attacked her. Or the last words of Haywood when he is taken away by the guards: "They made a mistake. My accusers will die before I die. When my people will take up arms and put them to death, I shall come back to life."

The entire burden of the play indicates the futility of the liberals' struggle for justice in a race-ridden society. Trials in such a society are always reduced to a farce. At the end of the court-room scene the audience is left with the same sense of frustration and despair shared by the Negro youth. After this it is not too difficult for one to understand why the younger black people of modern America are seek-

ing more militant ways to win their rights.

It is precisely for this reason—the obvious message of the court-room scene—that the prelude and the finale strike a jarring note and seem redundant. The play opens with a scene in a part of modern Detroit where advocates of Black Power have created a "free territory" and are trying a white American soldier for his crimes in Vietnam. There is a long lecture on the need for armed retaliation against white supremacy. In justification, the advocate for violence tells his followers the story of the Alabama trial and with the flashback the actual play begins.

In the finale, we are brought back again to the scene of the prelude. There is again another lecture on the solidarity of the oppressed all over the world and the need for weapons—rifles, or even any missile—to fight back.

One wonders whether Mr Dutt had to add the prelude and the finale—they were not in the first version of the play when it was published in a Bengali theatre magazine some months ago—to play to the gallery. Both the scenes are so out of tune with the main play that it seems that Mr Dutt wanted to provide some sop to the revolutionary slogan-mongering sentiments of a section of the audience.

It is possible to understand to some extent his difficulties. Fanatics do not understand subtleties. The previous productions of the Little Theatre Group, for all their technical brilliance, failed artistically, primarily because of their direct appeal through slogans and crude contents to the fanaticism of the fashionable ultra-revolutionaries of Calcutta.

Volte Face

Against the background of this ultra-revolutionary pose which Mr Dutt had to strike again and again to satisfy his admirers, his volte face—his deal with the 20th Century Fox and the abject surrender to the Government, by signing a bond to get out of jail—damaged his image. In his present production he is possibly fighting between the desire to rehabilitate his revolutionary image and satisfy the artistic needs of dramaturgy.

Film Fiasco

P. KUMAR

THE strike of the cinema-house workers petered out after a hundred glorious days of resolute fight. The much-hoped-for unity in the ranks of workers on the one hand and toilers in other wings of the trade on the other could never be effectively forged. Instead there was complete disarray. The strike ended without any central agreement. The houseowners in many cases forced employees to sign bonds, to their disadvantage.

True, the Government did not agree to the 10-paise increase per ticket as demanded by the exhibitors. But its role was one of callous passivity. Not only did it allow itself to be deprived of more than Rs. 1 crore in amusement tax revenue for the exhibitors' intransigence, its utter ignorance of what goes on in the industry and its complete collapse in the face of blackmail were staggering.

The progressive forces have not a better record either to their credit. The trade unions and the United Front entered the scene at the fag end somewhat halfheartedly and even that, after considerable prodding. Apparently, their revolutionary fervour found a more natural outlet in the scramble for Assembly seats and the striking workers could well be left in the lurch.

Now that the houses have started opening the scene is getting curiozier and curiozier. The much-vaunted Sangrakshan Samity, the self-appointed coterie, found itself forsaken by the exhibitors. The Samity's game is by now clear. When the strike was on, it refused to have any truck with the workers. It blacklisted some actors, maligned the technicians and directors known for their progressive views to please the powerful exhibitors. In fact the coterie's intention was to settle with the exhibitors. The strike did give them a lever. Already the three-in-one among them, the producers, distributors and exhibitors all at once, have deserted them now that no strike threat is lurking. The exhibitors refuse to recognise the Samity for simple reasons. The EIMPA is

still there, representing all the three wings. But the warring faction of producers and distributors does not leave the organisation. The exhibitors are taking advantage of the situation. Meanwhile, the Samity reels off statistics in newspaper columns to prove their claim. The newspapers lost advertisement revenue during the strike; the claims and counter-claims some how make up for a part of their lost money.

The Samitywallahs have now taken to the street—a farce in which some actors have been cast. The filmgoers, rather than going inside the halls at a price, have the pleasure of seeing the faded heroes in their novel roles. Some even pelted one or two questions, uncomfortable ones. The heroes had to beat a hasty retreat.

The exhibitors now propose to dole out charity. The same people who refused to grant a paisa more to their workers suddenly “feel called upon” to contribute “voluntarily” from next month 10% of I.N.R. collections to the State Government to enable the technicians and studio workers to make documentaries. They have become quality conscious too, for they blame the producers for the bad run of pictures which they have to show “perforce”. The exhibitors further contemplate having their own cooperative to make films. The Samitywallahs are now getting it in the neck.

The picture is pretty confusing. Much valuable time has been wasted which could have been effectively utilised if the call of unity of the workers was listened to and acted upon. The Government's inaction has created more problems. The industry's ailments are not only institutional, the unlimited greed and sordid goings-on seem to defy any corrective measure. The self-seekers find a convenient berth in films because of their money. If the gamble fails to pay off, they jettison them to find other alternatives.

The strike and its aftermath point to one direction—the regulation of the industry. The Government's intentions are not clear. Some reports and recommendations, of course, are trotted out. It is time a new consolidation took place among the workers, actors, technicians and the elements with a healthy awareness.

Letter

On Marx

Frontier should be congratulated for publishing the essay 'On Marx'. I have rarely come across such a well thought out and at the same time amply documented piece of writing dealing with contemporary trends in the socialist movement.

Basic policy statements by any Communist party always require an analysis of the international situation. So far all these analyses, in this country at least, have usually been dogmatic and derivative. In the name of safeguarding fraternal relations between Communist parties all over the world many essential and urgent aspects have been either ignored or distorted. Particularly after the Second World War the entire socialist movement has undergone almost a qualitative change. Thus, true Marxists are facing the task of clearing the Augean stables. The present context demands a creative assimilation of Marxian dialectic. Glimpses of such assimilation abound in the essay 'On Marx'. But this dialectical approach would have been adequate if an analysis of the Indian situation were incorporated in it.

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