

# frontier

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## FERMENT IN PAKISTAN

THE turmoil in Pakistan has shattered the image of stability which the present regime was trying to project through the celebration of "the decade of progress" to mark the completion of ten years of President Ayub's ascendance to power. From the little that can filter through the communication barrier East Pakistan is known to have been in ferment for years and has defied all attempts at integration. This is inevitable in any country where gross regional disparities prevail. Sheikh Mujibar Rahman may have been singled out for voicing the demand for autonomy, but the urge is widely shared in East Pakistan, and it is bound to grow with the passage of time. The contagion has now spread to West Pakistan where, despite the one-unit, seeds of regional discontent are sprouting in the shape of demands for Pakhtoonistan, greater Baluchistan and autonomy for Sind. All these separate demands tended to converge in a massive expression of dissatisfaction at the regime last week. Several West Pakistan towns were in the throes of a convulsion, and the Government resorted to the traditional methods of repression to assert its authority. Pakistan's is not the only government not to realise that such demands cannot be silenced by violence and terror; the only way to tackle them is to let the will of the people prevail. Much acerbity can be avoided if this is done in time and in good grace; on the other hand, delay corrodes the sense of belonging which alone provides a stable basis for national unity.

Many of Pakistan's present difficulties arise from the Government's failure to evolve a sane and sympathetic policy towards regional aspirations. Progress, such of it as has been made in the last decade, is not spread even. There is a strong feeling that certain regions are prospering at the cost of others and whatever may be the virtues of President Ayub's basic democracy, regional parity is not one of them. The fabulous wealth that twenty select families have been allowed to amass in the present regime has aggravated the feeling of alienation among the people. Instead of trying to remove the grievances, many of them genuine, which are at the back of this feeling, the Government has clapped in prison about 200 people, including its former Foreign Minister, Mr Z. A. Bhutto. The charges against Mr Bhutto are many and varied, but they add up to one word, "treason". There is a grim irony in the fact that the man

whose standing with the regime was next only to President Ayub's should find himself in such a predicament so soon after quitting office. What exactly led to Mr Bhutto's exit from the presidential Cabinet is still a mystery, but there are reports that Mr Ayub Khan had acted then, as he is acting now, under American pressure. This does not seem unlikely, for the USA can have no reason to feel enchanted about the man who proved that it was possible for Pakistan to be something other than a virtual satellite of the USA. He was the architect of Sino-Pak friendship, which gave Pakistan's foreign policy a new dimension and made it the envy of many countries.

In the context of Pakistani politics Mr Bhutto's anti-Indian outbursts are understandable; so also his stand regarding Kashmir. He is not the only leader in Pakistan against whom this charge can be laid; leaders in office, from whom some restraint could be expected, do not lag behind him in this matter. Maybe in his youthful exuberance he sometimes allows himself "to be carried away by his forensic flow", as he had regretted once. But any estimate of his current role in Pakistani politics on that basis would be misleading. He is one of the few leaders in Pakistan who have dared to stand up against the present regime, and perhaps the only one who commands support in the country's two disparate wings. In his years out of office he has grown into an idol of the younger generation, which is as restive in Pakistan as elsewhere, as impatient with the masked champions of the status quo. Mr Bhutto represents an emerging trend, a questioning spirit, which refuses to accept meekly the basic tenets of the founding fathers of Pakistan. He tried to breathe some fresh air in Pakistan's musty politics—a need not confined to Pakistan alone. His ob-

ject was to bring together the fragmented opposition in Pakistan in a united front of like-minded parties so that it might influence the country's polity. Though the Pakistan People's Party, of which Mr Bhutto is the president, wants the country to remain a theocratic State, it stands for democracy and socialism also, neither of

them qualified in any way. Whether such fusion is feasible is not of immediate concern; but he has triggered off a clash of ideas, and possibly ideals, so long sadly lacking in Pakistan. It would be a mistake to assume that he has been detained merely because President Ayub wanted to eliminate a possible rival in next year's election.

## Waiting For Thieu

Lyndon B. Johnson, whose admirers—hitherto impressed by his success in war—now seem overwhelmed by his contribution to the cause of peace, once described Diem as "the Churchill of Vietnam". It might not be out of character if the far-seeing Texan now hailed Thieu as the Gandhi of the Far East. Much is being made, at the time of writing, of the embarrassment Thieu is said to have caused the outgoing American President by refusing to fall in line with the plans announced by Washington for substantive peace negotiations on Vietnam. But can one be sure that Johnson did not know, if not privately approve, Thieu's comic posture? If he did, he can't be sorry; he can claim that once again he acted in good faith but without taking full account of the independent resolution of the Saigon regime which the communists have been trying to subvert. Neither Johnson nor Thieu has anything to lose from this myth of independence; if it could be made a little credible, the myth might even improve the Washington-Saigon bargaining position in Paris. Almost predictably, Thieu first said "Never"; Washington kept silent for some time and then went through the motions of trying to prove its bona fides by hinting at talks even in the absence of Thieu's man; and finally came the suggestion that Thieu might agree to a compromise basis for the talks. Wouldn't Hanoi and the NLF be sensible enough to accept the compromise for the sake of a "meaningful dialogue"?

The carefully inspired expectation last weekend was that Thieu would not take more than a fortnight to an-

nounce his compromise basis for taking part in the projected Paris talks. In the meantime, Johnson will have time to complete the consultations he must have already initiated with Nixon—notwithstanding the heroic announcement that anything done in the next two months will be entirely on the outgoing President's responsibility. Not that Johnson, on his own or on Nixon's advice, would think it prudent immediately to back out of the pledge on peace talks, but both might think it time to put some pressure again. The futility of military pressure has been acknowledged so recently that the most tempting tactic at the moment is perhaps to try to put the other side in the wrong with charges of violation of the agreement on the basis on which the peace negotiations are to be held. The Americans, therefore, have found it not only useful to renew the allegation that the North Vietnamese have been violating the status of the Demilitarized Zone but also necessary to resume attacks on the DMZ in the name of acting against such violations. They are keeping their options open. If the tactics they have employed in the past three weeks promise to improve their position in Paris, let the talks begin; if that seems unlikely, further escalation of the war need not be ruled out—either in place of talks or in aid of the kind of success that Washington and Saigon still hope to achieve in the talks. But the calculation must be palpable to both the North Vietnamese and the NLF; if they have chosen to wait for a man like Thieu, it is not because they have forgotten the lessons of the past three decades of Vietnamese history.

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## Uncle For A Day

Mr Yashawantraj Chavan is not exactly what we commonly call a father figure. He however made himself one when he came to celebrate Children's Day in Calcutta on November 14. Of course Uncle Chavan did it in his own way. He arrived at Dum Dum by a specially chartered plane and drove straight to a place between Ultadanga and Bagmari to lay the foundation stone of the B. C. Roy Children's Park. But he could not lay it, that is, in the way authenticated by his stone-laying predecessors. It was raining even though it was Children's Day and so the Uncle stood on the dais under a samiana, scooped cement from the ceremonial pot, which was transferred to the dais because of the rain, and spread the cement on the ceremonial silver tray. Thus founding the stone, Uncle Chavan delivered a speech and drove back to Dum Dum to leave for New Delhi.

The other figure who, large as he is, loomed larger on Children's Day, was Mr Atulya Ghosh—generally speaking, not a very father figure either. He gladdened the hearts of the handful of children, who had gathered to see the foundation stone laid, by saying that he would see that one million rupees were spent to build the park, including a swimming pool, a hobby centre and an auditorium. He also informed the kids that a sum of over fifty lakhs of rupees had been raised in West Bengal in memory of Dr B. C. Roy within three months of his death, such a great man Dr Roy was.

The third father figure was Mr Dharma Vira who was, needless to say, more culturally oriented. Emphasising the need of educating children in the right way, he said that the Children's Park would be a place

where children could come close to Nature.

The 2-acre expanse of the park site was absolutely desolate when these things were being said and done. Children of the Ultadanga and Bagmari bustees probably knew, although they had never heard of Wordsworth or such things, that nature was not merely hummingbirds but bats too. Whether they kept themselves aloof from the fun of Children's Day because of the rain or because they considered the Uncles not exactly hummingbirds, cannot be known for certain. But something else can be safely vouchsafed for. Had the Uncles strayed a bit from the VIP Road and entered the bustees, they would have found that the children, for whom the hobby-centre, swimming pool and auditorium were being planned, were fighting to collect drinking water and that water, although pumped right out of tubewells, had a thin layer of white scum. People of Ultadanga are used to drinking such water. The Uncles would have also found that the children there were used to sleeping on roads at night and some even to fight with dogs for the privilege of burrowing inside dustbins on winter nights. What they eat or wear, whether they ever sat inside a Corporation school is nobody's concern, not certainly of the Uncles for a day.

That the Uncles have failed to satisfy the basic and primary needs of the children of the country is not surprising; because that requires sane planning, organization and control. But that they would publicly dare to pose themselves as so many *chachas*, even for a day, and get along merrily is, if anything, infuriating.

When on Children's Day, all the *chachas*, Zakir Husains and Atulya Ghoshes, were busy celebrating the occasion, the Collector of Jaisalmer, a drought-stricken district in Rajasthan, was busy refuting a report that 100 children of that district had recently died of malnutrition. He said that the number of such deaths was less than a hundred.

## The Fertiliser Scene

There is a certain ordering in the way things are planned and executed. First came the slogan-mongering over the miracle of the high-yielding varieties of seeds. The fact that, barring wheat, and possibly some varieties of maize, the 'high-yielding' varieties have not yet proved high-yielding under Indian conditions has been sought to be immersed under high-pressure public relations. Even in the case of wheat, the phenomenon of higher productivity is till now essentially regional, and associated with cultivation in big-sized holdings. The slogan however lives and from there it is just one short haul to the clamour for expanding fertiliser output in the private sector, for otherwise the miracle varieties will allegedly be starved. Through the entire period of the Second and Third Plans, it will be remembered, the pillars of the private sector were most reluctant to expand fertiliser capacity; licences generously doled out had remained unused. They held back, for certain key concessions in the pricing and distribution policies were first wanted of New Delhi. There the wobbly Government has conceded, and the locusts have come a-swarming. American and British units have now appeared on the fertiliser scene; the local entrepreneurs either are too lazy to raise their own resources or have no trust in the technology proposed by native sons. In the process, as everywhere else, the original intent of the Industrial Policy Resolution has been thrown out of the window. The latest instance of abject surrender is the approval of the fertiliser project at Visakhapatnam sponsored by the U.S.-based Occidental Company. For the first time, a foreign unit is being allowed to own the majority shares in a fertiliser plant. The Occidental Company will hold 52½ per cent of the equity; the country can expect little *quid pro quo* from the deal, which is significant for another departure as well. The lobby for liquid ammonia has finally won the day. Despite the availability of alternative raw materials within the country, for example,

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heavy oil and coal, the Government has now given the *carte blanche* for fertiliser production based on imported liquid ammonia. Nobody can claim that enough basic research has already taken place in regard to the relative merits of liquid ammonia, naphtha, heavy petroleum and coal as the most economic raw material for producing chemical fertiliser in the country. Whatever studies have been undertaken have been closely guarded affairs within the Government; perhaps the constant reversals of official policy in the matter are based on issues which have nothing to do with technology. For instance, when the fertiliser project at Barauni was proposed, it was specifically mentioned that heavy oil will be available as raw material from the refinery established there, and this would be economical in several senses since no alternative use for heavy oil was to be found in the region. Apparently a fresh decision has now been taken to base the project on naphtha, which however is likely to be in short supply in only about two years' time, and for which there is already considerable demand elsewhere. There is fair ground for suspicion that elements in New Delhi, hand-in-glove with foreign oil concerns, have taken this decision to sabotage the refinery at Barauni, and also to strengthen the case for the import of liquid ammonia when internal supply of naphtha runs dry. Similarly, the fertiliser project at Korba was originally intended to be based on coal. But something happened, and the project has been abandoned in favour of the one being set up at Kanpur with ICI collaboration, and which will again depend upon naphtha. Could it be that even in this instance the decision to scuttle the Korba plant and take up the project at Kanpur—and a parallel one at Kotah—was based exclusively on non-technical considerations? These are unsavoury details, but have to be mentioned. A senior member of the Ministry of Petroleum and Chemicals—till recently serving a foreign oil concern—is a near relation of the native gentlemen who are floating the Kotah project. Does this fact have anything to do with the hokey-pokey? When foreign ex-

change is short, the case for setting up coal-based fertiliser projects is exceedingly strong, provided our technologists are convinced—as they reportedly are—of the feasibility of such projects. But where the interests of the country are judged in the light of the overall wellbeing of foreigners, the right technological decisions would invariably be kept in abeyance. There is clearly a case for investigating the mess. It is not our technologists who are failing us, but the shady ones prowling the catwalks of power in New Delhi.

## The Prince And The Yanks

*A correspondent writes :*

For all his goodwill Prince Sihanouk, it seems, has been very shabbily treated by the Americans. Following the bombing halt announced by Johnson he appealed to the US not to leave Asia, for he needed "some cards" in his hand to maintain balance. He also grew extremely generous to the American soldiers imprisoned in Phnom Penh for trespassing into Cambodia. They received personal invitations from his Royal Highness to a gala dinner, dance and a film festival opening. The festival must have included films made by Prince Sihanouk himself (winner of one Moscow film award). But only within a few hours the US Air Force opened up rocket and machine-gun attacks on a Cambodian village, killing three and wounding 21 civilians. This was in addition to 300 Cambodians already killed by US forces as a matter of "self-defence". Every time they get away with murder. The Prince issues fiery statements to the Press and the Cambodian delegates to the UN duly register their protests. Then the Prince, besides freeing prisoners as a token of respect for some dead Americans like Senator Robert Kennedy, manoeuvres to get US tractors in exchange of dead Cambodians and American prisoners until a new occasion involving murder of Cambo-

dians emerges. In an interview with the US magazine *Look* last April Sihanouk said, "It's not money I want for the people you kill. But don't you think it would be a decent gesture to offer us some bulldozers to make up for damage." And now in the wake of the US bombing halt Sihanouk seems ready to commute the demand for 14 bulldozers in exchange of US prisoners to a simple promise from a lame-duck Johnson that Cambodian territory would be spared by the US army. Well, the Prince is perfectly within his rights to demand anything from bulldozers to lollypop as ransom for the US prisoners. But one wonders if resistance to the murders could not have been more decent"!

Asian patriots like Souvanna Phouma, Thanom Kittikachorn and Tunku Abdul Rahman get cold feet at the prospect of US withdrawal. Their people's love for them is so deep and precious that it must be preserved with the help of American Green Berets and napalm. It is really interesting to see Prince Sihanouk joining the unholy chorus, for only a few days ago he denounced Americans for assuming the role of 'policemen of Asia'. And earlier on countless occasions he had spoken in favour of US withdrawal from Vietnam. Now he wants them to stay on, but where? In Vietnam or somewhere else in Indochina? If it is not his kingdom, the Prince cannot obviously act on behalf of other nations in pleading for US presence.

What produced this drastic change in Sihanouk's policy cannot now be told for certain. But the contrast between his prompt and ruthless suppression of peasant agitation and his conciliatory attitude to US aggression is significant. To him any expression of grievance by the unemployed youth or oppressed peasantry must be inspired by Hanoi and Peking and any journalist reporting this is promptly labelled by the Prince as pro-communist. On occasion Sihanouk showed remarkable independence but he cannot go too far. Anti-communism and anti-imperialism are indeed strange bedfellows.

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# Oil Workers

BY A CORRESPONDENT

THE expensive advertisements put out in numerous dailies by big companies when retrenching workmen or closing down offices are, on the whole, well drafted and convincing. But one does not get the other side of the picture for the simple reason that the unions concerned cannot buy space in newspapers and their press statements are either ignored or cut down for obvious reasons. Take the case of Burmah-Shell. On November 9, it advertised in numerous dailies, to defend point by point, the retrenchment of 115 clerks and 235 labour staff in Calcutta. The workers, whose case is not publicised and whom the Governor could not see though he saw many others involved, hold that the retrenchment is due to the installation of a computer in the Bomby Office and the contract labour system; that it is no use blaming the union for being unreasonable when the company itself turned down the Union Labour Minister's proposal for bipartite talks; that as the matter is pending before a Commission of Inquiry, Burmah-Shell or any other foreign oil company can neither declare a surplus nor ask any union to accept it; that the early retirement scheme was neither voluntary nor generous—most of the workmen will get not more than Rs. 8,000 and the clerical staff not more than Rs. 15,000—and employees with a long record of service (15 to 20 years) will find it impossible to get other jobs.

The Burmah-Shell case that it has surplus staff because the Indian Oil Corporation has taken over substantial trade from it was refuted by Mr Indu Vira, Branch Manager of the IOC, Eastern Region, in a statement categorically declaring that the IOC is not in any way responsible for the so-called surpluses declared by the foreign oil companies. In contradicting Burmah-Shell's contention, the Petroleum Workers' Union points out that as the IOC was incorporated as a company in 1959, figures of expansion or otherwise of business and sales of petroleum

products by Burmah-Shell and other foreign oil companies vis-a-vis staff strength should take 1958 as the base year. On this basis the all-India position, according to the Petroleum Workers' Union was :

## BURMAH-SHELL

Year	Quantity (M. Ltrs.)	Value (Rs. crores)	Staff strength
1958	4092.7	132.4	15000
1960	4461.0	178.8	13520
1966	4848.0	247.9	8553
**	+18.45	+87.24	-42.9
** % of increase/decrease	in 1966 over 1958.		

## ESSO

Year	Quantity (M. Ltrs.)	Value (Rs. crores)	Staff strength
1958	1903.1	62.2	5500
1960	2609.7	84.2	4874
1966	3226.1	135.9	3248
**	+69.52	+118.49	-40.95
** % of increase/decrease	in 1966 over 1958.		

## CALTEX

Year	Quantity (M. Ltrs.)	Value (Rs. crores)	Staff strength
1958	1140.4	39.6	3947
1960	1588.0	56.2	3808
1966	1689.0	73.5	2553
**	+48.11	+83.08	-35.32
** % of increase/decrease	in 1966 over 1958.		

Small wonder that in 1966 the Chairman of the Tripartite Committee on Job Security, Mr R. L. Mehta, remarked : "What is the justification for reducing both existing staff and employment potential while sales are increasing, average capital employed considerably more than what was estimated by the Damle Committee and the profit position satisfactory?"

Sales would have increased further had the companies agreed to distribute kerosene oil imported from Russia against rupee payment. In that case, the throughput of the Budge Budge

installation in kerosene would have been 68% more compared to 1958. But the foreign oil companies are allergic to "red" oil. Besides, there is the margin of profit. This margin on kerosene (superior) is Rs. 11.48 per KL and on the inferior variety Rs. 8.84, whereas on other products it ranges from 18.73% (high speed diesel) to 24.09% (aviation spirit). It is not surprising that the foreign oil companies should not be interested in selling kerosene other than what is produced in their own refineries.

This politico-financial indifference to kerosene has far-reaching implications. Twenty-one percent of the total requirement of petroleum products is kerosene and 90% of kerosene is used in the villages for lighting. The closure of the can factories of the foreign oil companies means no kerosene in cans and this leads to repeated kerosene crisis. It is difficult to carry kerosene in bulk to village—there are not many motorable roads. In the past village grocers and small dealers used to buy kerosene oil in packed tins which were carried on bullock-cart, the back of a cycle, even on heads. But now they have either to buy it in bulk, which their pockets do not permit, or bring their own containers, which means higher transport charges. Periodic shortage or disappearance of kerosene means dark villages, idle ovens and restless students.

## Automation

About automation, the union says that all clerical work has been centralised in the computer installed in the Bombay Office of Burmah-Shell. The 13,500 forms in 1958 have been reduced to 4000 for use in the computer. "Computerisation leads to centralised accounting work, reciprocal decentralisation of other functions and in this process the *intermediary functions of the Branch Offices are eliminated . . .*". (italics added), Elimination of intermediary offices is a gradual process and the clerks in Calcutta lose jobs as work is transferred to the computer in Bombay.

Payments made by Burmah-Shell for hiring automatic accounting machines and computers, with the corres-

ponding wage equivalent of the number of clerical staff, taking Rs. 6000 as the average yearly earning of a clerk in Burmah-Shell, were as follows :

Parliament noted that the profit margins on account of refining are regulated by the procedure of fixing the prices of petroleum products which are based on import parity and that

Prices in 1965, heavy payments, amounting to approximately Rs. 1.6 crores, are being made annually to their overseas offices by the various oil companies on account of services rendered.

Is the future so dark that the foreign oil companies should mope? Here's an Esso advertisement in *The Statesman* of November 11: "Running an oil company is not a problem—it's a host of problems. Demand for Petroleum Products will more than double in the next seven years from the present 14 million tonnes (italics added).

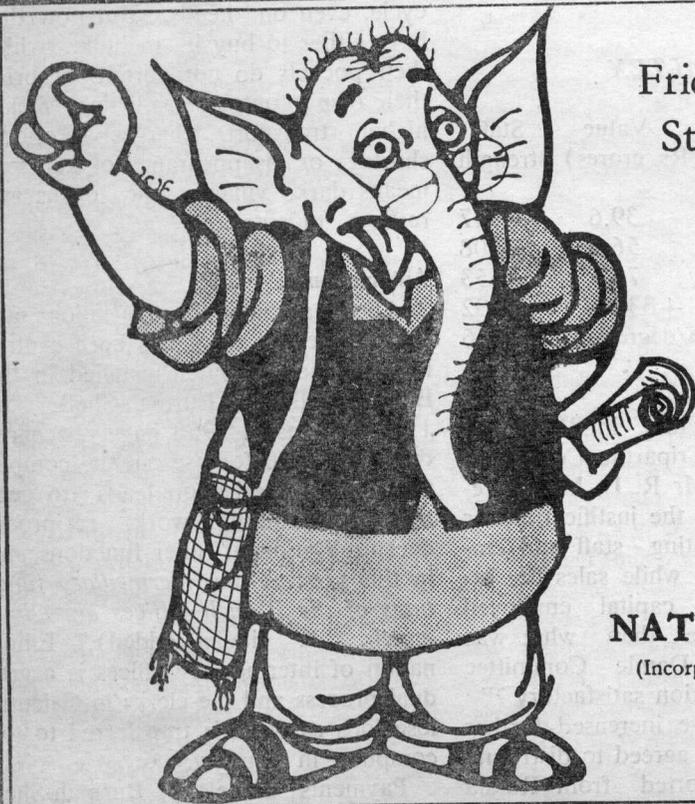
Why then retrench people in such haste? To exert pressure on the Government for some extra refining capacity?

Meanwhile, both the Government and the trade union leaders seem incapable of resisting the foreign oil companies. When these do not even wait for the report of the Enquiry Commission the Government mumbles.

Year	Regular Rental (in Rs.)		Total	Equivalent to the wages of
	EAM Machines	1401 Computer		
1960	399,456.00	—	399,456.00	67 Clerks
1961	391,296.00	—	391,296.00	65 Clerks
1962	162,177.60	442,656.00	604,833.60	100 Clerks
1963	129,120.00	442,656.00	571,776.00	95 Clerks
1964	127,497.60	442,686.00	570,153.60	95 Clerks
1965	136,771.20	442,656.00	579,427.20	97 Clerks
1966	177,750.60	562,840.00	640,951.10	106 Clerks
1967	196,245.00	756,300.00	852,545.00	142 Clerks

Petroleum is almost nectar: in 1965 the capital employed by Burmah-Shell, Esso and Caltex in both the marketing and refinery business was Rs. 1,42,92,80,000. Between 1954 and 1965 the three companies made a total net profit of Rs. 86,55,07,000. In 1967-68 the Estimate Committee of

this system allows a very high margin of profit to the refineries and stand in the way of reducing the prices of petroleum for the consumers. The Committee regretted to observe that in spite of the recommendations of the Oil Prices Enquiry Committee in 1961 and the Working Group on Oil



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# The NLF : South Vietnam's Other Government—II

LARRY DAVIS  
AL ADAMS

**WHAT** services does the NLF perform for the people? A large majority of the Vietnamese people are peasants. One of the main services a government can provide for a peasant is to offer him land. The NLF has provided this service for the peasants of South Vietnam.

The Liberation Front's land policies were described in a report by the Committee on Government Operations (U.S. House of Representatives), after the Committee's members made an on-the-spot investigation of land reform in Vietnam. According to the report, the NLF has

recognized the importance of land reform in any effort aimed at winning the allegiance of the Vietnamese people. The subcommittee was informed in Saigon that the Vietcong have achieved two important changes in tenure relationships in areas under their control; they have eliminated landlord domination and reallocated lands owned by the GVN [Saigon government] and by absentee landlords to the landless and to others who cooperate with Vietcong authorities.

While the NLF has provided a land-to-the tiller programme Saigon has followed a land-from-the-tiller policy. As the report by the Committee on Government Operations pointed out, Saigon has done little more than pay lip-service to the need for land reform. In fact, under existing Saigon policies, when rural areas are recovered from NLF control, ownership rights are restored to the absentee landlords. "This means that even if the occupants are permitted to remain on the land allocated to them they will return to the status of tenants." So, as even this U.S. Congressional committee admits, the NLF offers a new deal to the majority of farmers in Vietnam (the small operators farming land

primarily owned by landlords), whereas Saigon represents a land policy based on landlordism and reaction.

Besides providing land to the tiller, the NLF also provides a system of free education for the people in Liberation Territory. After visiting villages in Liberation Territory, an Austrian journalist (Kuno Knoebl) gave a first-hand account of the Liberation Front's village educational programme. According to Knoebl's report, the liberated areas are divided into school districts. Each one has circuit-traveling educational cadres consisting of five or six teachers, and usually including one or more women. The districts are sufficiently small for the migratory educators to visit every village on their circuit once or twice a month. They come with a prepared programme and stay in each village from several days to a week.

NLF educators make the most of limited teaching facilities. Students generally attend classes in an all-purpose building, which, beyond serving as a school house, is also the people's meeting hall and village administration building. The teaching cadres bring the textbooks when they visit a village. (Some villages own a few of their own school books. One village had several volumes of poetry, readers, old French textbooks, and a biography of Napoleon.) The NLF's Ministry of Education provides the children with additional free education materials. Notebooks are purchased in Saigon, and the people of Liberation Territory produce their own ink.

The teaching curriculum includes classes in writing, arithmetic, agricultural instruction, geography, history, and a history of the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front. Especially designed for South Vietnam's war-time conditions, a distinctive Practical Arts course is offered to the children

of Liberation Territory: a class in guerilla warfare. An NLF village chief showed Kuno Knoebl the course of study:

Nguyen Hoi pulled a small, worn notebook out of his shirt. The yellowed, graph-lined pages were crowded with sketches of traps, pitfalls, and the like, with instructions for waging guerilla warfare in neat writing. A girl from one of the education teams had prepared it for the villagers. I leafed through the notebook and found information on ambushes, sketches of weapons, instructions on making mines from old tin cans, drawings of tunnels and trenches, data on how to protect fortifications with bamboo spikes and traps, on how to manufacture foot traps, and the best ways of concealing them on paths and in rice paddies.

The NLF teaching cadres also hold adult education classes. The adult education curriculum offers agricultural courses, political indoctrination, and some military training.

The Liberation Front also gives the people free medical service. The Liberation Front's physicians are graduates of twelve-month medical schools located in safe jungle areas. Their programme is similar to that studied by a U.S. Army medic. They work in hospitals, many of them underground. Captured equipment indicates that routine laboratory procedures on blood, urine, and stool are available in NLF hospitals, as are facilities for surgery, amputation, and orthopaedic procedures.

NLF physicians often use native medicines and herb imitations. But they also acquire pharmaceuticals from the black market and the legitimate market. Most drug items sold by prescription only in the United States can be purchased openly in Vietnamese drug stores. Tetracycline, chloramphenicol and antihelminthics are featured in store windows. This ready access aids the Liberation Front's supply. (The Deputy Director of the U.S. AID and the former head of America's economic programme in Vietnam, Rutherford Poats, admitted that substantial quantities of

American-supplied drugs go to the NLF.) Given the difficulties of maintaining adequate public health service during time of war, the Liberation Front has provided remarkable medical care for its soldiers and civilian population.

### The Leaders

*Who are the NLF leaders, and what are their backgrounds?* From its hamlet-level administration the NLF's organizational structure pyramids upward to its Central Committee, whose Chairman is Nguyen Huu Tho, a former Saigon lawyer. Tho led a large anti-colonial student demonstration in Saigon in 1950. For this, the French colonials imprisoned him in the mountain town of Lai Chau. By 1954 France surrendered its Indochina colonies and released many of its Vietnamese prisoners. Thus Tho was out of prison—but not for long. During the early years of the government of Ngo Dinh Diem (who inherited the French administration in South Vietnam), Tho became head of an anti-Diem political organization (Committee of Defence of Peace and the Geneva Agreements) which had branches in various South Vietnamese provincial capitals. Never one to mix politics with tolerance of dissent, Diem outlawed Tho's organization and sent him back to prison. This time Tho spent almost seven years in a detention camp at Tuy Hoa, until NLF guerillas liberated him in 1961. In December 1960—prior to his release—Tho was elected Chairman of the NLF *in absentia*. (He was chosen by other NLF leaders at a secret meeting in South Vietnam.) Tho was again elected head of the Presidium of the NLF's Central Committee at the first congress of the Liberation Front in 1962 and confirmed in this office by the second congress.

The NLF's second-ranking official is Huynh Tan Phat, a former Saigon architect who is the secretary-general of the Liberation Front's Central Committee. Phat is a veteran of Vietnam's anti-French war for independence. (Unlike Saigon president Nguyen Van Thieu, Phat fought on the side of the Vietnamese nationalists

against the French. Thieu was trained by and fought for the French.) During this war, Phat served on the Vietnamese nationalists (Viet Minh's) Executive Committee in South Vietnam and was the Viet Minh's propaganda chief in the Saigon area.

Thirty-eight other NLF leaders are cited in a *Who's Who* in the National Liberation Front, an NLF-published document providing biographical data and photos of leaders of the Liberation Front. As Bernard Fall has noted, the background of these leaders shows the normal social background of Vietnamese leadership in general, from medical doctors and pharmacists, to lawyers and even army officers (though the sprinkling of Montagnards and women is more typical of the likewise classic "united front" picture). *And they have one remarkable common characteristic which thus far no Saigon government has been able to match; they are all from south of the 17th parallel.*

(In contrast to the Southern composition of the NLF leadership, the Vice-President of the Saigon government, Nguyen Cao Ky, and many other Saigon leaders are from North Vietnam.)

In sum, three points can be made about the Liberation Front leaders. They are native Southerners. They have professional backgrounds. And the NLF's two principal officials, Nguyen Huu Tho and Huynh Tan Phat, have for nearly two decades been prominent in revolutionary activities in South Vietnam.

*What is the NLF's relationship with Hanoi?* According to the U.S. government, the Liberation Front is directed from North Vietnam and is thus a puppet government. In defence of this contention, the American government cites captured enemy documents which reportedly show that the Liberation Front is dominated by the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP), an avowed Marxist-Leninist political party. (The PRP is one of several political parties within the organizational structure of the National Liberation Front. Another party,

South Vietnam's Democratic Party, is headed by Huynh Tan Phat, the secretary-general of the NLF.) And the PRP, so the U.S. government contends, is the Southern extension of the Vietnamese Communist Party, whose leaders are also the leaders of North Vietnam. Thus the PRP is allegedly an instrument through which North Vietnam dominates the NLF.

But the U.S. government has failed to produce any eye-witness testimonies (or other reliable evidence) of the inter-personal power relationships between the leaders of the supposedly Hanoi-dominated PRP and the high-ranking officials of the NLF, Nguyen Huu Tho and Huynh Tan Phat. The contention that North Vietnam directs the NLF is rooted in inconclusive evidence.

On the other hand, it is clear that the NLF is at least *physically* independent of Hanoi. As has previously been shown, the Liberation Front can govern (and in parts of Vietnam already is governing) underground. Thus, when faced with overwhelming firepower and superior numbers of U.S. troops, NLF village administrators can go underground and continue to exert authority on the clandestine level. To do this, they do not need Northern-supplied war materials or the assistance of North Vietnamese soldiers.

In addition to having a *governmental* capacity which is physically independent of Hanoi, the NLF also has an independent *military* capacity. This was admitted by General Maxwell Taylor, who is a former U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam as well as a former Chairman of the U.S. military's Joint Chiefs of Staff. Taylor said he has often made the following point when discussing the war with hawkish critics of Washington's Vietnam policy:

Suppose everything of value in the North were destroyed, we would still have over 200,000 armed guerillas in South Vietnam who would have to be accounted for in some way. For food they could live off the land without supplies from the North. If they avoided contact with large military forces, they could husband their weapons and ammunition stocks and maintain for

a long time a low level of sustained depredations and terrorist activity.

And, Taylor concluded, that even without assistance from the North, the NLF Army "could conceivably remain in action for the next ten years, or the next twenty years, and we might still be tied down by this vast guerilla action." (In contrast to the NLF's physical independence of outside assistance, Saigon is completely dependent on external support: America's. Since 1954 the U.S. has supplied Saigon with over ninety per cent of the equipment used in training its army. And since 1957 the U.S. has paid about two-thirds of even the non-military expenditures of the Saigon government.

It has been widely assumed in the United States that the reported increasing amount of troop infiltration from North Vietnam is proof of growing NLF weakness and dependence on Hanoi. This assumption is unsound. In fact, the opposite is true. Increasing infiltration from the North demonstrates the strength of the NLF—not its weakness. As insurgent warfare expert Robert Thompson has pointed out, the infiltration of Northern troops (PAVN) into the South is limited by the *absorptive capacity* of the areas under NLF control. That is, PAVN regulars depend on the villages in Liberation Territory for logistic support: supplies and men bearers to transport heavy munitions (rockets and mortar shells). So the infiltration of PAVN soldiers is limited by the capacity of the liberated areas to absorb them, or to provide them with logistic support. Hence, increasing PAVN infiltration shows the enormous absorptive capacity of Liberation Territory. (U.S. intelligence reports reveal the tremendous capability of the liberated areas for giving logistical support to the PAVN soldiers. According to U.S. intelligence, most of the supplies for enemy troops in the South have come from the Southern villages.

#### **Fear or Popularity?**

By what means does the NLF govern? While writing the official his-

tory of the U.S. Special Forces in Vietnam, other Special Forces historians and I pondered the methods which the enemy employed to exercise authority over the civilian population. We considered the widespread notion that terror was the principal means of NLF authority. Yet the reports sent to us from Special Forces troops in the field—who were closer to the people of the countryside than any other U.S. Army personnel—provided no support for this notion. On the contrary, the field reports indicated that terror was only one and not necessarily the principal means used by the NLF to achieve their influence with the people. The Liberation Front also used other forms of persuasion; an important part of the NLF's authority rests on the popularity it has attained by identifying closely with the people.

In addition to identifying with the people's aspirations, the NLF also influenced the people by controlling their sources of information through functional associations such as the Youth's Liberation Association and the Women's Liberation Association. The Liberation Front has organized associations for everyone regardless of age or sex. There is even a liberation association for grandmother revolutionaries. According to U.S. official Douglas Pike, the Liberation Front uses these associations to "transmit information, data, ideals, beliefs and values."

The Liberation Associations were led by dedicated NLF cadres. As Pike noted, the cadre served as "combination priest, policeman, and editorial writer." He interprets events for the people so that American and Saigon actions are made to appear malevolently motivated, and NLF policies, benignly inspired.

The cadres are also natives of the village they serve. While I was receiving training for the Special Forces at Fort Bragg, my teachers explained why the NLF insists that cadres be personnel native to each particular village. Historically, village-level administration was the basic unit of government in Vietnam. Further, village ties are so strong, even Vietna-

mese from other villages are viewed as outsiders. By building its village-level administration with personnel native to each village, the NLF penetrates the warp and woof of Vietnamese village life.

The very nature of the NLF's village-level government makes it sufficiently resilient to endure intact all American-Saigon attempts to destroy it. Even if enough American forces were sent to Vietnam to occupy the whole country, NLF leaders who govern Liberation Territory would only need to go underground to retain their influence with the people. The Liberation Front's underground government is more than a match for the American military, as shown in the nominal Saigon-controlled areas where NLF cadres control millions of people behind the backs of U.S. troops and Saigon officials. The essential strength of the NLF's village administration (whether underground, in nominal Saigon-controlled areas or above-ground in Liberation Territory) is a direct personal relationship between local Liberation Front administrators and villagers. This relationship is cemented by a racial, cultural, and lingual identity. Americans cannot counter NLF village administration; they are disqualified on racial, cultural, and lingual grounds. Only Vietnamese working in direct contact with the villagers would be able to effectively challenge the Liberation Front's grassroots power.

Unable to out-administer NLF cadres, the U.S.-Saigon forces have attempted to destroy the government of the Liberation Front with firepower. But those who rely on American military technology have their heads in the sand. NLF administrators are indistinguishable from the people they govern. Consequently the American military cannot eliminate them with firepower without destroying the civilian population and making a mockery of America's commitment to the Vietnamese people. To destroy the NLF with napalm would be like ridding a dog of fleas with a blow-torch.

What are the U.S. government's options in dealing with the NLF?

Theoretically, a real mutual compromise could take the form of a coalition government in which Saigon and the NLF shared power. But the essential military-political conditions in South Vietnam make it unlikely that such a governmental coalition will be formed. As an absolute prerequisite for NLF participation in a coalition, the Liberation Front's leaders stipulate that they be given the right to appoint either the minister of interior or the minister of defence (or preferably but not necessarily both). (The minister of interior heads the police; the minister of defence, the army.) The Saigon leaders will never agree *willingly* to this stipulation. With the NLF's monopoly of grassroots organizational power in South Vietnam, as soon as either the Saigon police or the Saigon army came under NLF authority, the outcome would be a foregone conclusion; an eventual, if somewhat delayed, Liberation Front victory. Because Saigon's Thieu and Ky know this (only an ostrich in their position would not), they will never accept a coalition government agreement which gives the NLF the right to appoint either the minister of defence or the minister of interior. For the Saigon leaders to enter such a coalition would be tantamount to going to bed with a tiger—and not a paper tiger. The Saigon leaders may lack political common sense. But they are not insane.

Is there then any reasonable hope that the NLF will soften its position and accept a coalition government in which Thieu and Ky maintain control of the army and the police? Of course not. Under such an arrangement, NLF leaders would be safer in the jungle than in a government cabinet meeting.

Though a coalition government offers little hope for a real compromise, it could be used as a smoke-screen to conceal an NLF victory. A coalition arrangement could be made to *appear* like a compromise settlement instead of a victory for the Liberation Front—even if the NLF had the dominant position. And by concealing an NLF victory and an American defeat, a coalition

government could provide window-dressing for a U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam. It is obvious, however, that Ky and Thieu could never voluntarily agree to a coalition arrangement. Yet it would not be necessary for the American Government to impose such a coalition arrangement on the Saigon leaders. The U.S. would only have to pull out the props (American support) from under Thieu and his government would collapse. An NLF-dominated coalition government could then be constructed on the ruins.

If it is unrealistic to expect NLF and Saigon leaders to voluntarily form a governmental coalition, why not allow an election to determine who governs South Vietnam? Answer: Saigon would never permit a free election, because Ky and Thieu could never win against the grassroots organizational power of the NLF. (It is significant that Saigon has refused to allow NLF or even neutral candidates to participate in past elections). An election is as irrelevant to the political-military realities of South Vietnam as was Sophia Loren's elbow in her rise to stardom.

What then? Can South Vietnam be partitioned into Saigon-controlled and NLF-controlled areas? No. Throughout "Saigon-controlled" territory the NLF has an underground movement which is actually more effective than Saigon's aboveground administration. The NLF cannot be walled out from nominal Saigon areas—it is already inside.

Despite all wishful thinking to the contrary, objective analysis leads to the harsh conclusion that there is no real possibility of peaceful coexistence between South Vietnam's two governments (the NLF and Saigon). There will be war until one is overthrown. As we have shown, the NLF is too much a part of the South Vietnamese landscape to be destroyed (assuming the U.S. government will not adopt a policy of genocide in South Vietnam). Thus NLF power will continue. On the other hand, Saigon's power can be turned off like a faucet. The Thieu-Ky regime is totally dependent on American support. If that support

were withdrawn, the Saigon government would fall, the NLF would win, and the war would be over. Thus, in the final analysis, the war is perpetuated by the American Government's determination to sustain Saigon. As long as the United States refuses to withdraw support from Thieu and Ky, the U.S.-North Vietnamese talks in Paris (or talks between anyone, anywhere, at any time) will be of no avail. And American military might will continue to be frustrated by the governmental power of the National Liberation Front.

(Concluded).

From the *Minority of One*, November 1968. Abridged.

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NOVEMBER 23, 1968

## Prime Minister Devalued

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

INDIA'S first generation working class, led by starry-eyed militants, might have slugged it out on the streets. But the more fortunate among its fourth generation, led by terylene-wearing unionists, vote Shiv Sena or are busy acquiring ownership flats or promoting housing co-operatives or such other legitimate business. No wonder the parties of the "labour aristocracy" let down the Central Government employees on September 19 and thereafter—and so badly.

As if to live down the guilt, the communists and the Samyukta Socialists found themselves devaluing the Prime Minister and Parliament in general. Which indeed is a sign of political maturity and one only hopes that the new-found predilection for rather unorthodox methods not permitted by May's Parliamentary Practice is not a mere aberration.

If nothing else, history of sorts was made last Wednesday. Amidst all the slogan shouting and fist clenching in the Lok Sabha by the three parties who had discovered a strange unity of action (the Jana Sangh and the PSP were content to be on the sidelines while the Swatantra Party was against it) the Prime Minister could not speak in the no-confidence debate. The next morning, most big papers reported the happenings as though the Prime Minister had the last word when she said she refused to be bullied and reserved her right not to speak. Mrs Indira Gandhi survived her sixth censure motion in less than 22 months, which is some international record, one presumes.

What is the balance sheet at the end of all the pandemonium? The Opposition's principal target was Mr Chavan and his strong-arm methods. But Mr Chavan had no difficulty in having his say in the debate though Prof Hiren Mukherjee later said the speech was "provocative." True, Mr

Chavan did not say anything about the Opposition demand to reopen the whole question of victimisation of the strikers. They wanted the Prime Minister to spell out the Government's stand on this even before she proceeded with anything else. And yet she was not allowed to speak.

Later in the day Mr Bhupesh Gupta met her, to be told that she was thinking of announcing some kind of amnesty and since they would not let her speak, she saw no point in holding any talks with the Central staff through the political leaders and if she had to, she would do it directly. Mr S. M. Joshi was told much the same thing when he called on her a little later.

It is possible Mrs Gandhi is not reconciled to the thought that while Mr Chavan who handled the strike got past unscathed, she should have been singled out for such rough treatment in the House. No Leader of the House had to run the gauntlet in this manner. It looks as though it is now a matter of Mrs Gandhi's prestige. She might still declare an amnesty and get all the credit for it. She is trying to make out as though her colleagues were to blame for the inept handling of the strike and her personal intervention resulted in the sack notices on over 40,000 temporary staff being withdrawn. Even the Communists seem to look to her as a kind of godmother of mercy who would reinstate all those dismissed and withdraw the cases against the strikers.

Meantime, Mr Chavan is going ahead with his plans to streamline the Central Reserve Police into a federal police. In addition to powers of arrest, powers to launch prosecutions to enforce Central laws are to be vested in the CRP. At present, the CRP units deployed in a State function under the command of the State Inspector-General of Police. But when the Bill is passed, the CRP

units would be under the operational control of the Centre.

### Kerala

When Mr E. M. S. Namboodiripad was here later in October, a story was conveyed to a Congress newspaper in Kerala from the Chief Minister's camp that even the deadline for the dismissal of the Ministry, which was regarded imminent, had been set. The elaborate explanation given was that Mr Namboodiripad had done such tough talking to Mr Chavan that he got an indication that he would be dismissed by October 24.

Mr Namboodiripad had been under severe attack from breakaway party-men like Mr Kosalarama Das who had charged that every time Mr Namboodiripad's party executive or the executive of the co-ordination committee met, the Chief Minister was found visiting New Delhi exactly a week earlier. The insinuation was that Mr Namboodiripad was taking instructions from the Centre. Did Mr Namboodiripad try to dispel this impression through the story about his imminent dismissal?

The Union Home Ministry has received an intelligence report which is in the nature of a compendium of instances of nepotism and corruption in the Kerala State administration. Some day when the Ministry is dismissed, the report is expected to be exploited to provide enough material to justify the action.

Admittedly, the October 23 anti-Centre bandh was a total flop in Kerala and the Pradesh Congress leadership has been lobbying for immediate President's rule. The lobbying was stepped up in Kerala when deputations met the Prime Minister to tell her that law and order was deteriorating following the fiasco of the bandh and Congress workers were being implicated in cases and harassed. All this seems to have unnerved the United Front leadership and Mr Namboodiripad now talks of the need to maintain law and order.

### Odd Man Out

Dr Triguna Sen is the odd man out in Mrs Gandhi's Cabinet. According

to the political grapevine, his exit is imminent if and when the next Cabinet reshuffle comes. The Banaras Hindu University politics, always murky, became more complicated when a pro-RSS man became its Vice-Chancellor. The CPI-led All-India Students Federation has been gunning for him. In the Lok Sabha, while Mr S. N. Banerjee demanded the dismissal of the Vice-Chancellor, an Independent member known for his Hindu loyalties suggested that the Centre

was trying to topple the Vice-Chancellor there. Dr Triguna Sen is caught in the cross-fire and if the Centre wants a scapegoat, there is one in him. He has never been happy in the cramped Governmental set-up and ironically he was the Minister who fought to establish the convention that no Minister could ever become a Vice-Chancellor. As he himself said once, he could never go back as a Vice-Chancellor, having made the rule.

November 17, 1968

## Calcutta Diary

CHARAN GUPTA

MR Robert McNamara is in town this week, and at the time of writing one does not know how this petty bourgeois city would receive him. Ten or fifteen years ago, Calcutta carried the reputation of being a Red city. That, however, belongs to the faded pages of history. Today, the city is emotionally neutral; ideology, even though not quite dead, has attained a form of *nirvana*. This was confirmed even by the trend of voting for the Assembly and Corporation seats. Will it be borne out this week, when Mr McNamara would come and go, and will all remain quiet on each front? Perhaps very few even amongst the most ardent ones care to remember that this gentleman was one of the main architects of Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam policy and was in total charge for overseeing the efficiency of the American military thrust. Mr McNamara wears his sin lightly. Each year, under his direct auspices, thirty to thirty-five billion dollars worth of death and destruction were showered on Vietnam; this fact has perhaps ceased to bother him. Or perhaps it did not bother him at all at any stage. Perhaps, being the whiz kid that he is, he could recognise a sinking cause, stopped the world and got off early. Being President, poor Johnson had no way of getting off.

But there it is, Mr McNamara could

easily migrate from the position of U.S. Defence Secretary to that of President of the World Bank. Vietnam is behind him; he can now appear as a ministering Santa Claus. The World Bank is respectable; it is multi-national; even Yugoslavia and the United Arab Republic belong to it, as does India. It is such an effortless rehabilitation for Mr McNamara. Even the erstwhile Red city of Calcutta might welcome him. Perhaps nobody any longer cares. The cynicism—or is it fatalism—which has now entered into the blood stream of almost all sections of the Calcutta community has also killed what, ten years ago, would have passed as normal reflexes. With open arms, Calcutta therefore welcomes about everybody, including goons and tycoons. The money-bags would be out in strength again, the official machinery mobilised to the hilt, and every attempt made to make the city don its best look.

That will be a mistake, although it is equally true that, even with the best of efforts, the squalor of Calcutta cannot really be concealed. Still and all, if the intent is to impress McNamara, the city should be revealed in its nakedest form; only that way the agony of the nightmare which it is could be transmitted to the bounty-dispensing nobleman from Washington, D.C. On his part, Mr McNamara must be savouring a

wry smile over the irony of the situation. At about the time he left the Defence Department, he was presiding over an annual expenditure of something like ninety billion dollars. One per cent of that would have meant 900 million dollars or Rs. 675 crores; even one-tenth of one per cent would work out to Rs. 68 crores, enough to get Calcutta on the way to a new life, if the CMPO calculations are right. But Mr McNamara has now to constrict himself to a much lower scale of accounting. In the World Bank, the equity itself does not exceed twenty-one billion dollars; the Bank's annual transactions in recent years, even with those of its subsidiaries thrown in, are scarcely more than one billion dollars. What is more, with Vietnam still stuck at the throat, U.S. funds have tapered off; the rest of the affluent members feel no moral compulsion to fill in where the rich Americans themselves have begged off. For the present, McNamara the Destroyer can therefore only purvey the scene, his credibility as Creator is yet to be established.

He will drive through Calcutta's rickety streets, see the filthy, dirty crowds, watch the congestion in the port, discuss the prospects of law and order with Government officials, worry over our industrial and financial efficiency with the *boxwallahs* and their bosses. How much efficiency does he expect out of the shambles which Calcutta—and the country in general—is? The per capita income here is scarcely more than 2 per cent of the per capita income in the United States: at this level of income, how much of efficiency does the World Bank expect of us? And certainly the point can be established that, with all our squalor, our efficiency over the decades has not been any inferior to that of the highly sophisticated American military machine in Vietnam.

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Yet it is sickening, the way the Government has gone about to propitiate the visiting Shahensah. Mc-

Namara has to be chaperoned by, let me count, one, two, . . . three—yes, all told three Secretaries to the Government of India on his visit to Calcutta's slums. It has now gone much beyond tourists being your honoured guests ; by our behaviour, we are merely proving that we are prepared to go any length provided at the end of the trek somebody will offer us a five-dollar bit, or perhaps even a dime. What a denouement to reach in the Gandhi centenary year ! Or perhaps this is only as it should be. Gandhi's invocations about non-material strivings and aspirations always contained quite a bit of sham : the assortment of Birlas and Bajajs and Rajas and Rajkumaris who used to congregate around him did not exactly constitute a pastoral group. The foremost among the latter-day Gandhian adventurists, Mr Morarji Desai, flaunts a similar moral righteousness garnished by highfalutin hypocrisy. We will talk of India's noble tradition, her spiritual grandeur, her Buddha and Asoka and at the same time lick any passing boot so long as a few morsels of *bucksheesh* are thrown our way. The gravamen of the charges against the Congress party is not so much that it has made a shambles of the country's economy in twenty years' time and converted it into a thieves' paradise, but that it has endeavoured to make begging an emblem of national pride. Mr McNamara's visit is therefore a kind of status symbol for the rulers : behold, here is the man from whom we beg. They even go one step forward and announce with great aplomb that India is the World Bank's largest borrower. The very act of borrowing itself has now been consecrated by moral fervour ; as if borrowing is for its own sake, and one need not

worry with the end-products—about what happens with all the money that is received in bond, whether it is thrown down the drain or used to line the pocket of A, who is the minister's son, or B, who is his nephew-in-law. Actually, any of us ordinary folk could have told New Delhi that all this kowtowing to McNamara is not only totally uncalled for, but also bad strategy. Since we are the World Bank's largest creditors, we can stop worrying about the Bank ; it cannot afford to rub us in the wrong. If I borrow a hundred rupee bit from you, I am beholden to you and will be properly deferential ; but in case I have borrowed ten thousand rupees, then it is your turn to be properly deferential to me, for otherwise you are in danger of losing the entire sum. Even if one, two . . . three Secretaries to the Government of India had not accompanied Mr Robert S. McNamara to Calcutta, the World Bank would in any case have to shore us up. It has nowhere to go. The fact that we are its largest creditors will ensure that the Bank puts on its best behaviour when dealing in India. So why be extra-servile ; there is no percentage in it. Or is it that servility is an attitude of the mind?

\* \* \*

McNamaras will come and go, as they have come and gone in Vietnam. But even with all the fatalism that is there in the air, I doubt whether this country can be saved for capitalism very long. The basic question is one of structure. Money and might could not save Vietnam for colonialism, these only made the already corrupt more corrupted, and the people went with the National Liberation Front. The hearts of the capitalists in Calcutta may go pit-a-pat with the World Bank President's visit, but, at this stage, no amount of infusion of money can turn the course of history back. Even if the so-called revolutionaries decide to sit it out, things are bound to happen. Or am I once more indulging in that shop-worn chant of wish-fulfilment?

## A Lesson From Brooklyn

SAM CLARK

**I**N Ocean Hill-Brownsville (a school district of Brooklyn) one hundred public school teachers began the school year by staying at home. On September 9 the United Federation of Teachers struck to protest against the refusal of the local governing board of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district to reinstate ten teachers it had ordered ousted last May on charges of sabotaging the school decentralization plan. Ocean Hill-Brownsville is predominantly Negro and Puerto Rican ; so is the school board. The board has been fighting for greater decentralization of school administration in New York City in order that Black schooling can be Black-run. So far as the board was concerned these teachers represented a threat to that goal.

The teachers' strike as well as the interference of city and even State governments (who eventually reinstated the teachers after the strike had broadened to include half of New York City's schools) further subverted decentralization and the right of the Black people of Ocean Hill-Brownsville to self-determination. The United Federation of Teachers predictably claimed that the issue at stake was not decentralization but "due process". Less predictable but more disturbing was the position taken by the Black trade unionists ; they sided with the striking teachers and claimed that the real issue was due process. (See their advertisement in the *New York Times*, September 19).

That's like saying wars are fought over who fired the first shot. Will liberals ever get it into their heads that explosions of conflict are manifestations of deeper divisions in society—divisions that cannot be resolved by sweet talk and courtesies ? Doing things "right and proper" does not resolve basic conflicts in society and if the dismissals last May had been carried out in due process the recent crisis would not have been

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averted. The issue at stake was that the teachers did not like the way the Blacks were going to run their schools.

Why? Because these teachers (some Black, some White) have a vested interest in the old centralized system. They fear what the Black community might do if it had complete control over the schools. With greater decentralization education would no longer serve to perpetuate the values of the White society and its ally, the Black bourgeoisie. The same considerations underlie the support given to the teachers by the Black trade unionists. The sad spectacle we witness is the identification of the interests of unions (professional teacher unions, but even Black worker unions) with the maintenance of the status quo, with bourgeois exploitation.

What has happened in Ocean Hill-Brownsville is only part of a general trend in North America. Worker unions are abandoning revolutionary aims (if they ever had any) and trying instead to get more of the goodies the capitalist system has to offer. And the blame cannot be placed entirely on the union leaders, as one might be tempted to do in the flare-up in Ocean Hill-Brownsville. We must face the fact that what workers themselves want most of all is a greater share of the pie.

One wonders whether Marx didn't underestimate the ability of the capitalist system to buy off workers and thereby destroy their revolutionary potential. According to Marx the polarization of society into two antagonistic social classes would be an inevitable consequence of capitalist economic organization. He argued that the concentration of workers under capitalism (both in an economic sense and in a geographical sense) would permit, indeed ensure, that a working-class consciousness would emerge. No dosage of religious opium or whatever bogus would be sufficient, said Marx, to prevent the workers from perceiving their common station, that is their exploitation. The drive of capitalists for more profit would induce them to exploit the working class to the ultimate limit. As well as introducing economic contradictions (such as over-

production), this maximum exploitation would engender widespread discontent, the outcome of which could only be revolution.

#### Focal Point

Although intellectuals would provide important leadership for the revolution, the focal point, according to Marx, for the emergence of a class consciousness would be the organization of workers in trade unions. "The workers begin," he wrote, "to form combinations (trade unions) against the bourgeois; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for the occasional revolts. Here and there the contest breaks out into riots," (Manifesto of the Communist Party.)

It has become increasingly clear that worker organizations, in North America at any rate, have not contributed to the formation of a generalized working class consciousness. Rather they have contributed to the strengthening of various interest group consciousnesses. For that is what trade unions in America have come to be—interest groups. They have been co-opted by the bourgeoisie. And it is too easy, much too easy, to attribute this to a sell-out by union leaders. It is a sell-out by entire unions, by the workers themselves. And the Ocean Hill-Brownsville incident suggests that not only White unions, but Black unions as well are willing to abandon the unorganized proletariat in an effort to acquire a larger portion of the spoils of the capitalist system.

The capitalist class in America has not, as Marx said it would, exploited the worker to the ultimate limit but has bought his political support by incorporating him into the bourgeoisie. The unionized worker sells his soul for a single family dwelling, a hundred-dollar suit and a late-model car. He rationalizes his treachery by telling himself that "they" would have attained his respectability if "they" had worked as hard as he has.

Meanwhile the unorganized working class provides the surplus that keeps the capitalist, the professional bourgeoisie and the working class bour-

geoisie in comfortable style. These bourgeois classes are predominantly White but always enough Blacks are co-opted to prevent the unification of the Black community and the growth of a Black consciousness. The unorganized working class is predominantly Black, but has a sizable number of poor Whites among its ranks. It tries in vain to organize itself. Attempts to operate its own schools are met with resistance from established unions who fear that grass-roots democracy will destroy the due process that ensures their bourgeois status. Attempts to consolidate Black Power are met with charges of racism because Black Power threatens the supremacy of White Power in a way that liberal Negro movements never have.

In American society a majority exploits a minority. The capitalists surrender just enough of the spoils to keep the majority of the population on their side. Until we admit to the fact that the unorganized working class is exploited not only by the capitalists, but also by the professional class and the respectable working class as well, we cannot hope to understand what is going on in American society. The lesson from Brooklyn is that Black unions have joined in this exploitation.



## Trends In Pakistan

COMMENTATOR

PAKISTAN seems to have suddenly come alive. Internal developments in that country had long ceased to be news for papers here, presumably because the present regime appeared to be firmly saddled in office. Only news having some bearing on Indo-Pakistan relations could expect to find place in Indian newspapers, which forgot that, in a sense, everything happening in Pakistan had some relevance for India, because, despite the politicians, the bonds that hold the two countries together are more numerous than the problems that keep them apart. As a result, little was known here about the tension building up in Pakistan, the changing mood of the people and their preparation for assertion against the regime. The first reports of student unrest on a wide scale in Lahore, Peshawar, and Rawalpindi came as a surprise, but not much importance was attached to them. The newspapers took it as part of the general unrest among students and youth from which India also is not free, as any day's newspaper will bear out. But the quick succession of events subsequently has proved that the unrest in Pakistan has deeper roots. Indian newspapers woke up to the situation in Pakistan with the alleged attempt to assassinate President Ayub Khan. Though in their final version of the incident Pakistani news agencies preferred to be vague about whether the shots were fired at the Pakistan President, the report made lead story in all papers. The promptness with which the President and the Prime Minister of India sent congratulatory messages to President Ayub on his "providential escape" showed that the Government also had no doubt about who the target was. Since then Pakistan has become front-page story. The recrudescence of anti-government demonstrations in eight Pakistan towns was prominently displayed, and the

arrest of Mr Bhutto became lead story in many papers. Political commentators have got busy over these developments and their possible repercussions on Indo-Pakistan relations. One correspondent has predicted a "further freeze" in the relations between the two countries until the current political turmoil in Pakistan has died down; another has reported that political circles in New Delhi are not surprised at the arrest because Mr Bhutto was making violent speeches and had once predicted bloodshed if the rulers of Pakistan continued in their present way. It would appear that blood has somehow become almost a four-letter word in the vocabulary of politics.

In an article in *The Times of India* Girilal Jain does not rule out that, like Mr Mujibar Rahman in East Bengal, Mr Bhutto might also be framed on charges of treason. The West Pakistan Governor's broadcast points in that direction. But even if Mr Bhutto himself is put out of action, President Ayub Khan cannot easily dispose of the force that he has come to represent, the force of radical nationalism. Jain contends that it would be clearly erroneous to assume that Mr Bhutto owes his immense popularity to his posture of unrelenting hostility to India. Hostility towards India is a common denominator of Pakistan's politics. This is not Mr Bhutto's speciality. His distinction lies in the fact that he is the only important political figure in West Pakistan who can claim to represent the emerging force of radical nationalism there. This point deserves special emphasis in view of the widespread impression that Mr Bhutto's popularity derives exclusively from the fact of his being anti-Indian. The dominant feature of radical nationalism is its "irrational and intense" xenophobia. The hatred is not directed against all foreigners indiscriminately. Generally the Communist world is spared and the fire is concentrated against the liberal West and the regional enemy. Xenophobia is a product of a desperate search for national identity and of the unnerving dislocations which the process of modernisation involves

in traditional societies. Both the factors—search for identity and modernisation—apply in the case of Pakistan. The Pakistani intelligentsia is not able to decide whether traditional Islam can provide the basis of a viable society in our times. It knows the great majority of Muslims supported the movement for Pakistan in the hope that Pakistan would bring into existence an Islamic society. But the modernist leaders do not know how to modernise Islam. Yet they need Islam to keep the two wings together and united against India. This is a serious matter because Pakistan claims to be an ideological state in the same sense as Communist states and Israel. To the extent the intelligentsia loses faith in the credibility of Islam serving as the basis of a modern state it would find it difficult to justify partition and all that has happened since. The acuteness of the dilemma explains the intensity of the hatred against India as well as the liberal West because in different ways both challenge the educated Pakistani to face the realities of modern life and adjust himself to them. On this reckoning it is not an accident that Mr Bhutto should have adopted a bitterly hostile posture towards the West in spite of its massive military and economic aid and its steadfastly helpful attitude towards Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir. Radical nationalism is, as a rule, not an ally of the old order. It seeks to force the pace of change as the only way out of the dilemma that it represents. Since President Ayub Khan favours gradual change and good relations with the West the conflict between him and Mr Bhutto is fundamental and cannot be compromised.

### Inevitable

In the opinion of *The Hindustan Times* Mr Bhutto's arrest was inevitable. A regime which will not allow its people free speech, free Press, and the right to campaign peacefully for political demands will not tolerate threats to its existence and even agitations for change. Mr Bhutto is one of the most volatile and colourful characters on Pakistan's political scene. He had

undoubted ability which President Ayub was quick to detect and quick to utilise. As Minister he was—and still is—virulently anti-Indian. The reasons for his undoing were that he was ambitious and refused to play the second fiddle and that his compulsions on Pakistan's international posture underwent suitable changes over the years. As a yes man he could have continued as a powerful minister in the President's Cabinet. Out of it, however, he was a threat to the President, and that is why he has been put out of circulation. President Ayub has now on hand, apart from the two centres of armed unrest, that is the Frontier and Baluchistan, two sets of security prisoners: Mr Bhutto and associates in the western wing and Sheikh Mujibar Rahman in the eastern. The real victim, at the end, may turn out to be the election itself.

Writing before the arrest of Mr Bhutto *The Indian Express* says that few could have anticipated the attempt on President Ayub's life. The major casualty of this attempt is likely to be the former Foreign Minister, Mr Z. A. Bhutto. Since his summary exit from office, that stormy politician has come out openly against President Ayub with the heady slogan of a tougher line vis-a-vis India. Mr Bhutto draws his main support from the younger elements, notably the students among whom he commands wide popularity and a strong following. Opposition to the President is now crystallised in Mr Bhutto's so-called People's Party. It is likely that much more will be heard of Mr Bhutto and his party during the next few weeks. Youthful unrest is no phenomenon nowadays, and in India also these eruptions have become commonplace. The danger in Pakistan is that following recent events the demonstrations may ignite into more serious incidents with political overtones. In that unfortunate event the widespread, almost universal, gap between the generations may induce in Pakistan a head-on collision between the youth of that country and the Government. President Ayub has so far acted with commendable moderation. It would serve Pakistan's in-

terests best if he were to continue that wise policy.

*Patriot* thinks that in the muddled political situation in Pakistan two different conclusions may be drawn from the incident at the Peshawar meeting. The two shots fired might have been a serious attempt at assassination. Peshawar is an area where the President is not particularly loved. The Pakhtoons have a deep grudge against the Pindi set-up and the gathering opposition in other parts of the country could have stoked the fires of anger among the Pathans and driven one young man to a desperate course. Alternatively, the incident might have been pre-arranged to provide the President an excuse to launch action against his growing number of critics. Even if the latter view is closer to the truth, it is revealing of the state of political opinion in Pakistan. Progress in Pakistan's "decade of progress" has, evidently, not been confined to the subjects that official propagandists of the regime want to advertise. There has also been much progress in the growth of opposition to the Ayub regime. This is democratic in one respect but in another, although Mr Bhutto swears by the one-man-one-vote principle, it comes from the right of Mr Ayub Khan, from a platform which has propagation of anti-Indian feelings as its first and last plank. In any case, Mr Ayub Khan cannot resist for any length of time the pressure for democratic rights and freedom of political activity. The fabrication of conspiracy cases and charges of plots against individuals can be only of limited help.

#### Irony

*The Statesman* has noted the irony of the demonstrations in Pakistan erupting with such fury at the very moment when President Ayub is celebrating the successful completion of a decade of his rule. The paper says that President Ayub will be sadly deluding himself if he believes what he says—that his troubles are the handiwork of a handful of traitors and malcontents who have never reconciled themselves to the ideology of Pakistan. There are strong economic

and political reasons for the present turbulence and the suppression of legitimate regional and linguistic aspirations among them. Even more important is the decade-long denial of elementary liberties. Also, President Ayub is reaping the whirlwind of the anti-Indian wind that he constantly sows in Pakistan's political soil; the angry students stomping the streets are unabashed supporters of the extremist, Mr Bhutto, and his hysterical anti-Indian policies. This should discourage any tendency in India to snigger over President Ayub's embarrassments; such snickering indeed would be undesirable in any circumstances notwithstanding Pakistan's habit of gloating over Indian difficulties. From this country's point of view the worst thing that can happen in Pakistan is chaos, and chaos is bound to follow an abrupt removal of President Ayub from the Pakistani scene.

#### Book Review

##### PUBLIC SECTOR INDUSTRY IN RETROSPECT

By Bimal Mukherjee

S. C. Sarkar & Sons.  
Price Rs. 8.

THERE can hardly be a more timely and important subject for economic analysis than an empirical study of the relevance, performance and socio-economic impact of public sector industries in India. The problem has both micro and macro-economic aspects and demands a clear distinction between scientific findings and normative aspects.

This book begins with a more or less extensive but non-penetrating review of the ideas and rationale upholding public sector economy.

Critics of public sector enterprises employ separate sets of levers of logic and premises to arrive at an interestingly identical disapproval of these. One group is dismayed by the rapidly growing trend towards virtual rejection by India's ruling circles of the philosophy of graduated socialism (or call it by some other name). Today's India is

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the result of the interplay of forces released or revitalized during the last twenty years. And what does she look like today? There is a picture of hesitant and disjointed forces of production, with an undeniable entrenchment of monopoly interests in some private quarters. The patterns of distributive justice have been proved platitudinous. An unorganised agricultural sector which still contributes nearly 70 to 80 per cent of the national income is entirely left to private-interest manipulations. Private foreign capital is steadily encroaching on even basic sectors of industries initially kept for public enterprise.

But for a few philosophic remarks in the first chapter of his book, Mr Mukherjee has altogether avoided this intriguing, urgent aspect of the public sector. Instead he sets himself the task of analysing the inner working of such enterprises. The keynote of his study is an attempt to prove the operational feasibility of public enterprises with welfare orientation. He makes an attempt to familiarize the group of critics who are impatient with the inefficient public enterprises with a set of value judgments.

The author has altogether avoided the group of critics who oppose the public sector on socio-political grounds. But the study as an exercise in the theory of welfare-biased public enterprises is inadequate and does not

satisfy the conditions of empiricity. The inept manipulation of the scanty statistical data which he has used leaves the reader where he was. In Chapter XI the author gives the estimates of profitability of public enterprises; but in doing so he does not feel the necessity of giving information about the magnitudes of investments or cost composition. To quote him, "The Administrative Reforms Commission report reveals that out of some 40 major running concerns, eight incurred losses during 1965-66 and the remaining ones showed small profits. The total net profit of these 40 concerns added up to the paltry sum of Rs. 9.6 crores as against Rs. 18.8 crores in 1964-65."

In dealing with the mess in which accountability of public enterprises is, the author has only pointed out a number of problems plaguing the sector. He has not pursued the causes to their logical source of origin. Though he raises a set of pertinent questions about the indecision and lack of planning at the unit level in Chapter IV, a complete absence of facts and figures makes his remarks appear as cryptic and opinionated.

Public sector enterprises are subject to the swings and shifts of the political pendulum and the issue of the political trappings of trade unions, even if vexing, cannot be summarily scrapped as irrelevant or undesirable. The question is whether the growing politicalization of trade unions is the result of a realization by workers that intra-industry activity and efforts are futile.

The author, I am afraid, has failed to be factual in ascribing the increasing shrinkage of economic activity both in the public and the private sector to the strategy of encirclement (gherao) adopted by labour. The summary of the report of the commission headed by Mr Gajendragadkar has not entirely confirmed the opinion of the author. A vexing question remains: whether "gheraos" were the cause or were they the effect of a prolonged recession and a dangerous dalliance on the part of the management to discharge their duties in the spirit of the laws of the land.

H. N. Sinha

## "Loot"

By A DRAMA CRITIC

JOE Orton's *Loot* must have shocked the pre-Hitler audiences more than it entertained them; today however, it is at best an amusement piece.

Its tilt at organised religion hardly compares with the bombing of churches and the connivance at mass butchery. How can the condoning of eight or nine murders outrage the conscience of people who accepted Hiroshima before and allow Vietnam today?

The "new twist" of a pair of youthful bank robbers going scot-free by bribing one of the "Yard" inspectors is a sort of poetic justice in reverse; the robbers buying over the guardian of the law with the money looted from the bank.

In fairness to the producers it must be said that choosing a play for an ersatz audience which Calcutta provides for the English stage is a difficult task indeed. It is unfortunate for the English performing groups to suffer from a constantly shrinking and a totally stultified conglomeration of people. It goes to the credit of the Calcutta Drama Group to have received the appreciation it did by running down the very establishment to which most members of the audience look for protection.

The production of *Loot* was neat and well mounted for CDG's maiden venture. One could see that experienced men had helped behind the scenes. One can recall better performances perhaps but then one can also recall many that were considerably worse. This production augurs well for the future and we can expect better things.

Judging from the acting ability and experience of the cast the play was a suitable choice. It did not call for dramatic talent of a very high order. The characters were straight and movement on the stage considerable. The director made full use of these opportunities and prevented the actors from becoming wooden or static. In

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one case an actor tried depicting a slight perversion which could have been avoided quite easily. The relationship between the two young men could be normal without the audience feeling any sense of loss.

What was very pleasing indeed was the clarity of diction. Actors spoke audibly and Vijay Krishna is to be commended on his clarity even with his pipe.

So far as stagecraft was concerned it was simple; the only baffling bit came at the end of the play when the lights were suddenly switched off. This seemed out of context because a slow curtain would have eased the audience out of their tensions.

Although the costumes were ordinary—nothing elaborate being called for—Mr McLeavy's (Alexander Archard) suit could have been pressed to convey his social position. In fact he did not even look his age—his youth was coming through his make-up. He could have avoided covering his mouth with his sleeve towards the latter part of the play unless he intended to rub off his make-up.

Fay McMahon (Christine Stracey)—whose surname was pronounced in more ways than one—was convincing up to the point where her crimes are discovered—her portrayal of discomfiture seemed put on.

Harold (Jimmy Choudhury) and Dennis (Ashley Simmons) both made a good pair of friends but terribly amateur criminals—which is what the author wanted. Harold's detachment was well brought out.

Inspector Truscott (Vijay Krishna) conveyed very much the man of experience. He never once faltered but did an efficient job as any policeman is expected to do. His finest moment was the one before he yielded to temptation. Truscott's assistant, Sgt Meadows (Angus Rotchell), gave the impression of having been caught in the wrong district.

Although the director's note was forbidding it was a welcome relief to see the director getting as much from his cast as they were capable of giving.

## Letters

### Naxalbari

Will the advocates of armed revolution consider the military aspect of the struggle as well as the social and political? Apart from the reasons which Kanu Sanyal gives (November 9), the real cause of the failure of the Naxalbari movement (which was "not for land but State power") was the weakness and isolated nature of the struggle in a hostile territory with an army having modern weapons, tanks and planes. The existence of the UF government, in the absence of a people's army, did not make a military difference. The fish may imagine a compartment within the sea, though water, as a rule, equalises pressure everywhere. But haven't we seen such idle dreams before, in Telengana? The least one could learn from the protracted struggle in Vietnam is that there are no short-cuts to revolution. They invariably turn into short-circuit.

S. D. BEDEKAR,  
Bombay.

### Compulsory Voting ?

The Election Commissioner wants to make voting compulsory. But the right to vote also includes the right not to vote. Every voter should ask himself if he has enough faith in a particular candidate. If he hasn't, he should not vote. The position of the Election Commissioner is like that of a bus conductor whose job is just to charge the passengers who have got into the bus, and not to bother about who has not boarded it. The most he can do is to urge for the creation of an atmosphere that will lessen the peoples' disenchantment with elections. Is he worried because the Naxalites are stepping up their campaign to boycott the ballot-box?

BIPUL ROY  
Sodepur, 24-Parganas

### "Rule The Roost ?"

Mr F. T. Wood in his *Current English Usage* says that "to rule the

roast" is the old form, whereas, "to rule the roost" is now the accepted form. Mr Hornby, too, mentions the latter. Mr McMordie in *English idioms and how to use them*, mentions both the forms. But bigger scholars give a different version. Mr V. H. Collins in *A Book of English Idioms* observes: "The metaphor is commonly supposed to be from a cock that in a henhouse decides where it will perch and what hen or hens shall be nearer it. Brewer doubts whether the phrase was originally *Rule the roost* and gives reasons for thinking it was *Rule the roast* and applied to the person who directed the cooking of meat in a kitchen." Fowler in his *Modern English Usage* and Sir Ernest Gowers in the revised edition of Fowler's book warn against "roost" and advise them to stick to "roast". Oxford English Dictionary (latest edition) gives no countenance to "rule the roost". Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary (new edition) condemns "to rule the roost" as a mistake. Webster's English Dictionary does not mention "Rule the roost".

I found "to rule the roost" in your editorial comments dated October 19, 1968. I should like to be enlightened.

SAKHA NATH BOSE  
Calcutta

"Rule the roost" or "rule the roost"? "Ruling the roost" will have less impact as an image in this vastly vegetarian country than "ruling the roost". Aren't we chicken-hearted people, with a female Prime Minister?

S. N. S.  
Calcutta

### Gauguin

Gauguin painted in Tahiti, not Haiti as Mr Maitra seems to think in his review of *The Comedians*.

P. ROY  
Calcutta

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