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THE IDES OF KERALA ?

THERE is a lesson to be drawn from the results of the municipal elections in Kerala, but not the one which newspaper proprietors would like us to draw. Contrary to the impression which might be conveyed by the gushing headlines, the shift in the Kerala electorate's mood has been perhaps scarcely more than marginal. About half-a-dozen municipalities, out of a total of nearly forty, will now be additionally under the control of Congress and Kerala Congress councillors. The elections have also shown that the Congress and its cohorts continue to retain the allegiance of roughly one-third of the Kerala voters. The Left Communists too have maintained their share of the total votes and have in fact increased their overall representation on the municipal councils; the performance of the Muslim League has been equally impressive. It is only the other partners in the United Front—the multi-hued SSP, the Right Communists, KSP, KTP and all that—who have lost grievously. Their overweening ambition induced them to put forward candidates here, there, everywhere: these candidatures had little relationship with their basic strength in the constituencies; there was also a demonstrated alacrity to cut off their own noses to spite the CPI(M). It cannot quite be said that they have succeeded in the latter objective; but they have certainly endangered the concept of the United Front, and, in the process, helped to promote exaggerated hopes of a come-back in assorted Congress bosoms.

Mr Namboodiripad must be a somewhat chastened man today; his architecture of the United Front will now be having more critics within the CPI(M) than there were till about a week ago, and the fire next time can be still worse. But at least the CPI(M) has its mass base unimpaired and can afford to go it alone if the unreasonableness of some others exceeds the limits of tolerance. This could however hardly be said about the main instigators of indiscipline within the United Front. The bourbons of Kerala, it would seem, learn nothing and forget everything: otherwise memories of the disaster of 1965 would have urged them to halt.

The weekend results from Kerala should convey a message to the individuals who are busy allocating the United Front seats for the coming mid-term elections in West Bengal. We need waste no sympathy on the CPI(M) who in this State are hoist by their own UF petard. But that hardly exonerates the demeanour of certain groups and individuals, whose

entire passion, if external evidence is to be believed, is currently devoted more to working out stratagems for containing the Left Communists than for defeating the Congress. Some extraordinary logic has been heard of late in this connection. How dare the CPI(M) claim 104 seats—righteous indignation boiling over, we have been asked—when everybody in the world knows the strength of the Naxalbari group has increased substantially in recent months, and, to that extent, the official CPI(M) is diminished? Render not unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar. Since the electorate has turned more left, the seats which should normally have gone to the left should, according to this particular school of thought, now go to proper renegades like the PSP, or perhaps to those who, believing in eternal verities, keep on exploring mass bases within the Swantantra Party and the Jana Sangh.

To these gentlemen we say, enough is enough. If they swear by elections, there are certain rules of the game. If the results of municipal elections here in West Bengal do not offer them any early warning signal, they should at least be impressed by the fate that has overtaken their comrades in Kerala. For, unlike the bourbons, the electorate perhaps forgets very little.

A Vote-Catching Campaign

The Government of India's reported decision to compile the directives issued by it from time to time to the State Governments on measures to maintain communal amity will certainly yield a formidable volume. If prolix directives could solve a problem, there would not have been the frequent repetition in recent weeks of ugly clashes in different parts of the country; for currently the South Block is flooding the State Governments with do's and don'ts on the communal situation. The man of action that he is, Mr Chavan is not satisfied with this paper war on communalism; he has called a conference of State Chief Ministers towards the middle of this month to

evolve "effective and urgent" counter-measures. Mr Chavan's efforts have been promptly supplemented by that august, though somewhat effete, body, the Congress Working Committee, which in a fit of self-criticism has lamented that the Congress organisation has failed in its duty to ensure security to the minority community. It has recommended a ban on communal organisations and the setting up of departments of minority affairs at Central and State levels to explore avenues of employment for the minorities. Lest she lag behind, the Prime Minister has declared at the Parliamentarians' convention in New Delhi that communalism would not be tolerated any longer.

Neither the Congress nor the Government run by it has ever lacked in platitudes. Had they carried out even a fraction of their assurances, the communal problem—and this is not limited to people of different religious denominations alone—would not have been what it is today. The Government cannot possibly think up any suggestion which was not made before in one form or another. For years we had a Minority Minister at the Centre, and West Bengal is still reported to have a Minority Commission, presided over by a Minister when that species was extant and now by the chairman of the State Council. How many times the Commission has met in its nearly eighteen years of existence will give an idea of its colossal inactivity. Naturally, the latest suggestions appear tiresomely repetitive, and it should not be surprising if they are dismissed unceremoniously. Over the years a kind of agreement appears to have been reached between the Centre and the States under which the Centre's right to issue directives, strongly worded if necessary, and the States' right to flout them have both been conceded. The arrangement suits the Centre well, for it can proclaim innocence and pass on the blame to the State Governments. Mr Chavan is already started on this course, and the only purpose his golden treasury of Central directives on communalism is designed to serve is to sustain his claim that the Centre

has never failed to be vigilant. What Mr Chavan will not explain is how the States could dare ignore Central insistence. He must be well aware of the means at his disposal to bring recalcitrant States to their senses; he knows how to put the screw on, as did all his predecessors. Nor is it that the Centre is averse to exerting pressure. On political considerations it does, and it would appear that the problem of communalism is neither grave nor urgent enough to warrant such steps. The Centre cannot claim a better record even when the Congress had a monopoly of power. More than simple credulity will be necessary to concede that for nearly two decades the Congress Government at the Centre found itself helpless against the insubordination of its vassals in the States.

The inaction was self-imposed; otherwise, in the Centre's own spheres the minorities would have fared better. Their proportion in Central services is not significantly, if at all, higher than those of the States. But for the quinquennial solicitations on the eve of general elections the minorities have been largely left to the mercies of communalists. The present importunity, though out of season, is in step with this policy, for in both Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, where mid-term polls are due, the minorities constitute a sizable portion of the electorate. In West Bengal at least the Congress was humbled to a large extent by the minorities who were unable to forget their harsh experiences of 1964-65. The sudden concern of Congress leaders for the minorities will, in the coming months, be voiced from many more forums to wean them from their anti-Congress stance. What the Congress leaders do not realise is that by promises alone they cannot live down their past omissions. Wishy-washy statements cannot conceal the accumulated inadequacy of decades; nor can they restore the confidence of the sufferer in a party that has failed him not because it lacks the necessary authority but because it is not free from the perversion of which it accuses others.

Change In Assam

The situation in north-east India is becoming so complex that some people have already found in it an excuse for suggesting that the entire area be placed under Central rule. The armed forces are already a formidable presence in the region and could be depended on to put down any expression of popular protest against the suspension, if not abolition, of such institutions of democracy as exist. But New Delhi must have known by now that pacification by methods made familiar by the Americans is a hopelessly uncertain and crippling expensive exercise. What has happened in Nagaland and the Mizo hills could happen in the neighbourhood of Shillong. After the promises and assurances of so many years, it is not even politically easy to put a moratorium on all change in Assam.

Some kind of a federal link between the various units of Assam, and possibly one or two neighbouring territories, would have been the least undesirable of all possible solutions. But the politicians of the Brahmaputra Valley would have none of it, and they are as adept in working up parochial passions among the plains people as in blackmailing the Centre into abandoning its pious resolutions. New Delhi had no hesitation in going back on its offer to the APHLC of reorganization on federal lines. Gauhati and its followers will be equally resistant to any modified version of the federal plan, and it is doubtful if the Centre has either the will or the ability to introduce any change in the face of such opposition.

But something will have to be done about the APHLC dominated districts; if a decision is further delayed there will be trouble in the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo hills. Equally certainly, there will be fresh trouble in the plains if anything is done to upset the status quo. Constitution of the two hill districts which are clearly under the APHLC's control into Union territories could be a temporary solution, but new problems would arise. Cachar would demand a separate unit or unification with Tripura, though the

latter is not anxious to take on a territory with a large Muslim population. North Cachar and Mikir hills would have a difficult choice, though it would perhaps prefer to join the adjacent hill districts.

Even in the Brahmaputra Valley, the Ahoms would intensify their agitation for a separate State and the Bodos of Goalpara would claim greater autonomy. What would be left of the Assam hitherto dominated by the caste Hindus of Kamrup? Three or four districts with a Muslim population whose size would bring no comfort to the dominant Hindu elite. Not unnaturally, Gauhati is opposed to any change; the slightest upset to the present political and social arrangement could release forces to undermine the position of the dominant minority. And that minority is clever enough to point out that the mess could also mean the territorial disintegration of a sensitive border region.

Yet New Delhi must realize that a much surer way to disintegration would be to let the present tensions build up within a framework of artificial unity. Legitimate aspirations for autonomy must be respected and met. Plans for reorganization must be clear and just and they should be carried out without excessive concern for the interests of the local Congress politicians who have created the present mess. But the ability of a dithering Central Government to do anything of this nature is doubtful. The mess it has made in Mizoland inspires no hope.

Winning Friends

It is difficult to estimate how serious Mr Nijalingappa, the Congress President, was when last week he told reporters in the Press Club in Delhi that, if necessary and in "the interest of the country," the Congress might well form a coalition at the Centre, as it had done, with only limited success, in certain States since the elections last year. For the Swatantra Party and some other quarters there have been off and on several appeals for a national government; but Mrs Gandhi's reaction to these gestures have

been uniformly resistant. At least once she permitted herself to say that the Government at the Centre had never been stronger—a tall claim. The Congress had hitherto, since 1937 in fact, treated every other political party in India as an untouchable; a coalition with Fazlul Huq in Bengal in that year might have changed the course of Indian history; there were other wasted opportunities of coming to terms with the Muslim League. Whence, then, this new eagerness for togetherness? Weakness?

The Lok Sabha figures seem firm enough. None of the no-confidence motions against the Congress in the last twenty years made anything like a respectable showing. At one time it seemed that the parties in the Opposition might unite sufficiently to block any Congress-inspired amendment to the Constitution. Since then, however, there have been signs of an anti-Communist line-up, in the name of democracy of course; and may be Congress as a dominating party is not much weaker today than it was in February or March last year vis-à-vis the left. It does not appear to be widely realised that, for all her failures, which are obvious enough, Mrs Gandhi might have done far worse than she has in fact done.

Mr Nijalingappa's open arms to so-called "like-minded" parties may be no more than yet another indication of weaknesses within the Congress. It is not divided Opposition which has made a shattering impact on the Congress leadership; but the built-in contradictions inside the Congress Party are now assuming proportions which can no longer be concealed. The Congress President, Mr Nijalingappa, still seems something of a *badli* in his no longer august office, for his heart is still in Bangalore where he feels securer. He is also under an obligation, to his followers, to show that he is not anybody's "boy", while keeping up the posture that Mysore needs him. It is possible that he will, with unconcealed reluctance, abandon one of his gaddis in a month or so, as he has said, not for the first time; but it is difficult to see how, short of taking over the party presidentship herself,

à la her farther, the Prime Minister can impose on her party that minimal discipline without which the whole show of party-government relationship looks just ridiculous. What the Indian people ought to insist on is an identification parade, for Mr Nijalingappa may be only the top of an iceberg. There must be others who should stand up and be counted. The Congress President's overtures, vague though they are, to other parties seem a first salvo against the Prime Minister which Mrs Gandhi may be wise to watch.

Colour Contrasts

The British Government's attitude to Asian immigrants from Kenya has been nothing short of abominable, which is not to say that the behaviour of every other party involved has been exemplary. The circumstances in which so many people of Asian origin felt obliged to take out British passports are complex and many, few doing much credit to neither the expatriates or the Governments of India and Pakistan. Current British beastliness appears to have made many forget that the U. K. was under no inescapable moral or political obligation to hand out so many British passports. It was an act of faith, much like New Delhi's unhonoured assurances to Hindus in Pakistan in 1947. The fact is that we have been living in a glass-house without ever desisting from throwing stones at others.

This fact admitted, India has other confessions to make. The reasons for which so many Asians in Kenya did not opt for Indian or Pakistani passports are again varied and complex, none doing much credit to either Delhi or Rawalpindi. Most of the Asians preferred England to India or Pakistan, their beloved motherlands, because neither seemed attractive after so many years of planning and basic democracy. Mr Jomo Kenyatta, who is quick to take offence on questions of colour, should also be reminded that the present crisis in Kenya might never have arisen if he had not taken a discriminatory attitude towards the Asians in Kenya, who exploited the

country all right but not without building something for East Africa as a whole. It is the Government of Kenya which has created a crisis which need not have arisen at all. Indeed, there is evidence that soon there may be a gap in Kenya's economy which Kenyans cannot immediately fill. Like some other countries, mostly in Africa, such as the Congo, Kenya apparently wants to learn things the hard way. Let it if it chooses so.

Mr Enoch Powell's recent speech in Birmingham embarrassed even the Conservative Party but it helped to reveal the ugly face of Britain as did the subsequent demonstrations, the colour arrogance and fear of the workers who are supposed to be the vanguard of revolutionary forces. The other fact which cannot be hammered too often is that few of the Kenyan Asians wanted to come back to India. Mr Powell, no friend of India to be sure, brought out what largely imaginary Commonwealth bonhomie had hidden so long. Commonwealth or no, black remains black and white wants to remain white. It is not much use looking for a justification of the present policy, the present state of the British economy or, for that matter, the state of the Indian economy. The colour is, always has been, there. It will be a pity, however, if the present conflict is viewed only in terms of colour. The failures of so many countries, including Kenya and Britain and India and Pakistan in their respective economic endeavours have brought about the present crisis to which no early answer seems visible. The truth is that there are many shades between black and white, which neither whites nor blacks are prepared to see in halftone terms.

Panicky Allies

Following the All Fool's Eve broadcast by LBJ on peace moves in Vietnam the American allies in Asia have grown jittery. The spectre of peace now literally haunts the citadels of 'freedom' in Asia. Impassioned discussions about the 'domino theory' have been revived. If Vietnam goes, they

ask, can Laos be far behind? What will then befall Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Burma? The allies no doubt have to approve formally the Washington move, but their nod could hardly hide their chagrin. While the Thai Minister, Praphas Charusathein, and the Philippine Ambassador at the UN conjure up visions of Asia overrun by Communist hordes, Prince Boun Oum, the right-wing leader of Laos, said with a pathetic wisdom that in case of U.S. withdrawal, "you would be stabbing yourselves in the back. Not to mention what you would be doing to us." The question is not simply a military one. Peace indeed threatens their existence in more ways than one.

Dominoes or no dominoes, the American allies are going to be hit very hard economically if the much apprehended peace finally breaks out in Vietnam. Their economy, so long moving by the steam generated by the Vietnam war, might come to a screeching halt. In Thailand the presence of half a-dozen military bases and 45,000 troops of the USA together with the inflow of up to 1000 U.S. troops everyday on R & R leave have generated capital as well as demand for consumer products. The consequent balloon-like boom is now in danger of being pricked. The Vietnam war has boosted South Korean exports to the record level of \$14 million a year, not to speak of the money earned by the participation of 48,000 South Korean mercenaries in the war. One thousand million dollars worth of Japanese export every year is due to the Vietnam war. Drying up of this source will make worse Japan's already serious balance of payments deficit and industrial recession. All the other allies from the Philippines to Australia are direct beneficiaries of the Vietnam war through increased exports and G.I.s, spending. If the economy of these countries is thrown out of gear, its impact is not likely to be confined to the economic field alone.

Political opposition to the governments, which has already taken the form of armed struggle in many countries, will be immeasurably strengthened.

ed by the example of a victorious people's war no less than by the deepening crisis of the ruling class. All this danger underlines the necessity of U.S. military presence in Asia. While people's war threatens Asia from the Philippines to Burma (and beyond?) can the 'freedom'-loving rulers afford to let the U.S. suffer a defeat in Vietnam, let alone withdrawal of U.S.

troops from Asian soil? Confidence in the invincibility of the U.S. military machine, which has been shaken by the offer of negotiations, could not be restored by the assurances Mr Johnson might have given to his minions in Honolulu. The most dangerous thing will be to allow the people to realize that the USA, after all, is a paper tiger.

big money combined with good public relations with the Chief Ministers even if they be from other political parties. Smalltime politicking does play. The Prime Minister sent her most sophisticated emissary to convince Mr E. M. S. Namboodiripad that if his Government did not collide with the Centre's policies a way could still be found to lift Kerala out of its financial difficulties. The temptation should be strong for a populist ministry which has achieved precious little besides the Rs 18 crore budget deficit.

View from Delhi

Left CPI Disintegration?

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

ALL politics in New Delhi is getting lost in a murky whirl of pettifoggery and dissipation. Everyone wants to settle for the status quo and nothing seems to be wrong with the country. Mr Kosygin might have told Mrs Gandhi that President Ayub Khan was her best bet and Indo-Pakistani issues might never be resolved under another President. He might have also warned that she cannot afford to ignore the Sheikh or that she cannot take the Kashmiri Muslims for granted, but there is ready advice from Mr G. M. Sadiq to counter this. Mr Sadiq thinks the Sheikh is a spent force. Mr Chavan is content to blame the States for the recurrence of communal riots (though Allahabad is under President's rule) but Mr S. K. Patil indicted the Centre on this count at the Congress Working Committee meeting. Mr Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed is committed to introducing a Bill in Parliament to ban company donations to political parties but the Cabinet is divided on the issue. There is nothing like the status quo and the comfortable feeling it brings, even to the Left Communists.

The sordid Thacker episode has blown over and Mr Fakhruddin Ahmed survived a privilege motion in Parliament because issues of privilege are decided on the basis of majority. The merits are often secondary. But some of the Opposition groups were rather soft on Mr Ahmed for unex-

plained reasons. The Right Communists seem to think the committee headed by Prof Thacker (and its future possibly by Mr S. Dutt) is a welcome substitute for class struggle because one of the defectors from the party who landed a Government job is among the members. So they were a little harsh on the Minister and Prof Thacker. But the Left Communists did not know for a moment where they stood. The Thacker episode itself had something to do with the grisly in-fighting in the Congress party. A certain Big Business house which promoted Mrs Gandhi's re-election as Prime Minister is now on the defence and another Big Business house known to be apolitical in the past has developed undue interest in Congress power politics and has been manipulating political decisions at the Centre. The Thacker episode was being used to isolate Mr Ahmed in the Cabinet and to get him out of it because he was supposed to be contemplating a probe against a Big Business house. Mr Ahmed found support and sympathy in the Opposition groups, which again is mystifying.

Mrs Gandhi's Cabinet is caught in the cross-fire of two Big Business houses, and recession, which has hit the flow of funds to the Congress, has not lifted yet. Mrs Gandhi's ambition is to survive as a "Popular Front" leader with a leftist image, Congress political support and the backing of

political freebooters who have found berths in the Kerala Cabinet confirms one's fears that the United Front Ministry has failed to check corruption in the State. Corruption is becoming institutionalised and the United Front Ministry has not made any impact on the electorate. The CPI (M) in Kerala is about the most status quo conscious party in the United Front. The Centre cannot be blamed all the time for the rice muddle caused partly by its own failure to procure grain from the big landlords whom the Ministry cannot afford to antagonise. After piling up a staggering budget deficit, the CPI(M) leadership perhaps thinks the Centre would sack the Ministry following a financial breakdown when the Government is unable to pay salaries to its staff after a few months. Bihar has run a Rs 32-crore deficit but the Centre can rationalise any help it might give Bihar because the State has been afflicted by drought and there is a chance of a Congress comeback there. But the compulsions in Kerala are quite different. A populist Ministry in Kerala, with no fight left in it, could think only in terms of easy compromise. The Centre would extract a political price for helping it out of the financial crisis or would make a martyr of it.

Civic Rout

The United Front's rout at the municipal elections is almost decisive. It is a clear verdict against the opportunism of the seven-party alliance by a sensitive, intelligent electorate which is sick of the continuing traffic in public credulity. The CPI(M)'s volun-

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teer force (called the Gopala Sena by its critics) is a purposeless outfit with no political objective because the party itself has settled for a status quo.

At the State level, proximity to power makes a party opportunistic. The CPI(M) in West Bengal or Kerala has to compromise on many things to keep power or to return to power. The CPI(M) in Kerala would hate to see the party launch any mass action that would invite the Centre's wrath, just as the party's West Bengal leadership detested the Naxalbari developments. In Andhra Pradesh, the party is the farthest from power and has no inhibitions against colliding with the Centre.

The general mood in the party on the eve of the Burdwan plenum was against another split so soon. But the trend was unmistakable. In the Andhra Pradesh Committee, the hardliners who reject the status-quo politics of the official leadership had a clear majority. There were vague apprehensions that after Burdwan, the Andhra Committee would be dissolved and replaced by an ad hoc panel of conformists. The Centre, on its part, thought there would be a split at Burdwan, making the isolation of the hardliners and a crackdown on them easier. The Centre has always wanted the party leadership to disown its hardliners and has often found itself obliged.

With the split averted at Burdwan, the party is going through a tortuous convulsion. In the Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh (on the Orissa border), an 800-mile tribal tract is now surrounded by armed police who are closing in on the hide-outs of the leaders of a semi-Naxalbari type of movement which has been on for six months. The immediate problem for the Andhra Pradesh party is to save the 250-odd cadres who have been trapped in the pincer movement of the police.

Surprisingly, one reads nothing about this movement in the party's official journals. It was not until Big Business papers reported it that the country came to know of a mini-Telengana. Far away from the Orissa-Andhra Pradesh border tribal belt, in

Nalgonda (Telengana) 3,000 criminal cases have been registered against peasants in one district in connection with a movement that has been growing. The situation is tense and clashes between Communist volunteers and the armed police are inevitable any moment. The hard-lining leadership of the State party fears that the moment there is such a clash anywhere in Andhra Pradesh, the official leadership at the Centre would be quick to disown the movements as 'adventurist'—a signal for the Government to swoop on the extremists.

Sooner or later, it would become

Andhra Pradesh

Class War

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

ANDHRA is much in the news all over the country. Not for its achievements in foodgrains production or for its involvement in river waters dispute but for the harijan killing spree of the landlords during the past two months. Even those who had all the sympathy for the victims and all the hatred for those who perpetrated such an inhuman act as roasting a harijan alive in Kanchakacherla in Krishna district were not able to understand the real meaning of such a noise over this incident in Parliament. Perhaps, the law-makers at Delhi felt uncomfortable over such happenings, when they were shouting against similar forms of treatment by the whites of the blacks either in South Africa or America.

But behind the caste twist given to this incident lies the story of a class war declared by the feudal gentry against the poor in the country-side.

It all started in October last when the landlords in Gummalaxmipuram in the Parvatipuram area of Srikakulam district shot dead two tribals for having dared to join a movement asking for implementation of the 1917 regulations enacted by the British rulers, prohibiting alienation of tribal

necessary for the official leadership to disown the Andhra Pradesh unit or force a split in it by expelling the turbulent leaders. This would have its repercussions on other State units, crystallising a split.

The movement in the Srikakulam tribal tract is going to be smashed by the police offensive. The CPI(M)'s attitude to the situation would have been very different if the party was not in power in Kerala and close to it in West Bengal. The lure of office takes its toll of militancy.

April 29, 1968

lands by plainmen. It was not the Communists who took law and order into their own hands, but the landlords. But, strangely enough, the Government sent five platoons of special police to put down the tribals who were victims of landlord brutality.

This was indeed a signal for the landlord class in the whole State to go on a attack-and-kill spree. No price need be paid for killing a poor man, provided the killer is a landlord and a supporter of the Government.

The most prominent incident that took place between the attack on tribals and the harijan boy incident in February was the thirty-six-hour-long raid on Takulapalli village in Khammam district by the followers of a Minister from that district. The goondas went in lorries to the hamlet of lambadis (tribals), surrounded the village, looted every house and carried the booty in lorries after setting fire to the houses, raping at least half-a-dozen women and beating up literally everyone, including a sixty-year-old man. Some people were reluctantly arrested, and then one doesn't know what happened to them.

The facts of the Kanchakacherla incident in which a harijan boy was

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tied to a pole and an attempt made to burn him alive by a group of people led by a fifty-year-old woman (owning 50 acres of virginia tobacco land) are too well known to be repeated here. The only significant aspect of this incident is that the State Government's police were sleeping over the incident until it was raised in Parliament and then only arrested the culprits.

As Parliament was discussing this matter, another group of landlords rounded up a group of tribals in Kamavaripalem village in the same Krishna district, confined them for two days without food and water, alleging that they came to the village to commit thefts. These tribals have been coming to the village every year, for years together in that season for agricultural operations.

More Murders

Within a week of this incident, an agricultural labourer was hacked and speared to death in Inapur village in the same district. This was followed by the murder of an agricultural labourer in a village in Warangal district, another in Khammam district and yet another in Manikonda village in Krishna district again.

Without exception, in all these cases, it was the landlord that killed a poor man. As the former Union Minister, Mr D. Sanjeeviah, put it at a recent public meeting here, these sections have arrogated themselves the powers of police and judiciary in the villages. It was the deliberate pro-landlord policies of the Government that made these people get rich quick. Blinded by their wealth and their confidence that they can get away scotfree even after such attacks and killings and emboldened by the absence of any movement among these people, they have been committing these crimes.

It is a clear case of class war declared by the landed gentry on the landless.

It is to cover up this that a harijan twist is being given and attempts are being made to sidetrack the attention of the public from the real cause. Simultaneous attempts are being made to split the trade union movement on scheduled caste non-scheduled caste

basis. It is significant that right in the midst of such incidents Andhra was chosen as the venue by the scheduled caste employees in the Posts and Telegraphs Department all over the country for their first conference and that it formed an all-India federation of scheduled caste P & T employees.

Unemployed Congress leaders like Sanjivayya have raised the banner of unity of minorities against the majority. Unite all harijans, Christians, Muslims to oust the Government, that was the slogan given by him. It is only the politically blind that refuse to see who are the disruptors of the country's unity.

The Left Communist leader, Mr N. Reddy, said on the floor of the Assembly that his party was not fighting any of owning up its responsibility in the struggle of the tribal people in the Kulam district. He did not say here. He told the Government that his party could not be expected to sit tight when the Government itself, by its policies, was unfolding a situation for his party to jump into the fray and lead the people against injustice.

Kerala

Storm Over Project

RAMJI

ALL the political parties including the partners in the United Front are at the moment ranged against the CPI(M) because, perhaps, it commands the most massive popular support in Kerala and wields the major share of administrative power.

This bitterness is nurtured and projected even at the expense of the professed basic ideologies of the non-Communist parties. A classic example of this accounts for the current sensation in Kerala. The huge hydel project at Idiki which is under way with the help of the Canadian Government has been turned into a political weapon to damn the CPM and the chief prosecutor is the Right CPI.

The Rs. 70-crore project would, when completed, make Kerala affluent in power, sufficient to meet her needs

and those of neighbouring States too, in part. The Hindustan Construction Company (a unit of the Walchand group) has undertaken the contract for work on this project. The site is over 35 miles from the nearest township, in the heart of heavily forested mountainous country. Nearly four thousand people had been working there, clearing forests, blasting rocks, building tunnels on some of the toughest jobs, under sub-human conditions of life.

The project attracted labour from all corners of Kerala. The terrific rush for jobs, any jobs, came in handy for the contractors to enforce the notorious conditions for labour unpalatable. Even primary, rock-bottom amenities were denied to the workers, camping and working in the inhospitable wilderness. Many cases occurred in which the bodies of workers involved in fatal accidents were disposed off without trace. The contractors wielded tyrannical power through their sword arm represented by a tough band of men brought from Bombay, which included a hard core of professional goondas too. These "security men" have been responsible for coldblooded murder of local workers. Physical assaults with the help of the goonda force were the reply of the firm to any agitation by the workers.

Some time back the firm folded up work on the plea of insecurity at the hands of allegedly violent workers.

A hue and cry has been raised. The blame for holding up the project is put on the CPM-led workers and all the language papers without exception and the non-Marxist political leaders have been unanimous in condemning their "anti-State, anti-national tactics." A leading figure in this campaign has been Mr M. N. Govindan Nair, the Right CPI leader, who holds the Electricity portfolio in the EMS Cabinet. Mr Nair, with his pro-working class tradition, has nothing to say in favour of the workers: not a word about the intolerable conditions of work or the tyrannical attitude of the firm. He has spearheaded the attack against the Marxists and has become a champion of the HCC.

He even rushed to the Press with the news that he had received a telegram from the Canadian Government threatening to stop the aid. This provoked a scandalised, sanctimonious flood of accusations against the Marxists and the HCC became the aggrieved party, near-martyrs. Subsequently it came out that no such telegram had been sent by the Canadian Government. The firm is exploiting the situation cleverly and has demanded that the area be declared a protected area. The Chief Minister has turned down the demand. The stalemate continues, and Communist-baiting goes on. The refusal on the part of Mr M. N. Govindan Nair to take the workers' side of the dispute can be attributed to the bitter trade union rivalry between the Right and the Communists, which is bedevilling the trade union movement in Kerala.

Though everybody knows of the utter dependence of the State on the Centre for its rice supplies, the Youth Congress is carrying on an agitation for rice. Though the Centre has never fulfilled the promised quota during any month, the Youth Congress is striving hard to put the blame for the attenuated 3 oz. ration on the State Government.

A "hunger march" by well-to-do and well-fed Youth Congress leaders is traversing the State from north to south. This has not created even a ripple among the public. Yet the stunt gets generous coverage in the Press. Knowledgeable circles point out that this hunger march is just a probe to find out the possibility of another liberation struggle against the Government. The signs are not very favourable for this. But maybe, it would attract the attention of the Centre and perhaps induce it to intervene.

(This was received before the civic elections in Kerala took place).

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BUSINESS MANAGER
Frontier

Madras

Honeymoon Over

A. S. SATYAMURTHI

THE alliance between the non-Congress parties in Madras State has been subject to a great deal of stress and strain during recent months. As a result many of the differences among the constituents of the United Front have come to the surface. The most disillusioned among the alliance parties today is perhaps the Swatantra Party, which evolved the electoral strategy leading to the sweeping victory of the DMK at the polls; it now feels neglected because the DMK is trying to become independent of it.

It would be difficult to find fault with the Swatantra Party for its present attitude, because its link with the DMK dates back to the days when Mr C. Rajagopalachari took up cudgels against the Congress and picked up the DMK as a stick to beat it with. Those were the fledgeling years of the DMK, and Mr Rajagopalachari succeeded in drawing the DMK leaders within the orbit of his limited power by placing a common ideal before them, namely, the routing of the Congress. The open reliance of the then Kamaraj Government on the Dravida Kazhagam of Mr E. V. Ramaswami Naicker for mass support, gave a handle to Rajaji to form a counter-axis with the help of the DMK.

The astute politician that Rajaji is, it cost him little effort to persuade the DMK politicians into thinking that toeing his line would fetch them rich dividends in the long run. Under his guidance, the DMK gradually gave up its cry of separate Tamiland and also shed its communal colour, which stood out as the single major factor in swaying entire blocks of upper and middle-class votes in its favour in the 1967 elections. The calculation of the Swatantra leader, however, misfired to the extent that while he had expected the DMK to emerge as the strongest opposition in the State, it emerged as the single largest party in

the Legislative Assembly, strong enough to form a government on its own.

A great blow to Mr Rajagopalachari's prestige was dealt by the DMK when the Chief Minister, Mr Annadurai, immediately on assuming office, declared that the entire Madras Cabinet was a "tribute" to Mr E. V. Ramaswami Naicker, the founder of the Dravida Kazhagam, from which the DMK had broken away in the fifties. People noted with great interest at that time that it was Rajaji, and not Mr Naicker, who made it a point to attend the swearing-in-ceremony of the first DMK government in Madras, in spite of ill-health. That was roughly the starting point of the loosening of Rajaji's grip on the DMK—a trend that has since continued unabated.

This is not to give the impression that the DMK leaders had always seen eye to eye with Rajaji on basic issues and that the breach came in the wake of the DMK's ascendancy to power. The question of a common plank did not arise so long as both the DMK and Swatantra parties functioned as mere opposition to the Congress. Their almost fanatical opposition to the Congress in itself served as a cementing factor between the two. The situation underwent a positive change when the DMK took up the reins of administration and the Swatantra party found itself thrown into a role extremely difficult to fit in. While as a member of the United Front, which had helped the DMK to come to power, it was robbed of its character as an opposition party, it was for the first time face to face with the reality that it had very little in common with the DMK in the shape of a social or economic programme.

Under Fire

During the one-year DMK rule, the Swatantra Party has not found it possible to lend support to the government on a single issue. Every DMK programme, beginning with nationalisation of bus transport to procurement of foodgrains has come under fire from the Swatantra Party, and its members have openly criticised the

Government in the Assembly for failure to introduce free trade in food-grains and abolish rationing and controls.

On the language issue, the differences have become most apparent. A staunch supporter of English, Mr Rajagopalachari has expressed his tacit disapproval of the way the DMK Government has tried to canalise the anti-Hindi sentiments of the student community into the fanning up of Tamil chauvinism. He has also looked with suspicion on the DMK Government's soft handling of the Centre on the language question, despite the fact that the Centre has imposed an unequal language burden on the students of Tamilnad by adopting the language policy resolution in Parliament.

A point of current political interest is the lack of unanimity within the DMK on the question of continued allegiance to Rajaji. While a large section within the ruling party would like the DMK to cut forthwith its Swatantra moorings, another equally strong section, led by the DMK intellectuals, considers it the height of ingratitude to break away from Rajaji after he has led the DMK into a safe harbour. There is also justifiable apprehension in DMK circles that estrangement from Rajaji would mean the loss of support of the intelligentsia whose vote for the DMK was nothing but an indirect vote for Rajaji.

Rajaji also has left the DMK in no doubt through his actions and speeches that he would not hesitate to put the ruling party in the wrong light if the latter made bold to flout him openly. A case in point is the recent controversy started off by Rajaji on the question of a judicial inquiry into the student-busmen clashes. While Mr Annadurai, prior to his departure for the United States, made it clear that Rajaji was thoroughly satisfied with the Government's action in ordering a judicial inquiry by Mr B. Somasundaram, District Judge, Rajaji contradicted this statement after Mr Annadurai's departure.

In a caustic 300-word statement, he has expressed his dissatisfaction with the way the Government has

handled the entire question. He says "The aggrieved students and a large section of the public as well as myself would have preferred a High Court judge to have been asked to handle the

matter inasmuch as impartiality of the Government was questioned."

By some strange coincidence, Rajaji's stand in this matter has drawn wide support from Congress circles.

Calcutta Diary

GYAN KAPUR

DEATH is life, said the owners of Burn & Co long seven months back but the workers refused to accept the dictum. They did not agree to have 1,750 of their colleagues thrown out of employment. Angered at the challenge, the owners of the vast industrial complex locked out 9,000 workers to teach them a

If truth be told, Sir Biren hands down. While this and— Wagon—has been probably the most protracted dispute ever in West Bengal, it can be said with certainty that never have the industrialists beaten down the workers to the extent they have in the terms of "settlement" arrived at in the New Secretariat.

The atmosphere seems to have been cynical in the extreme, with the Deputy Labour Commissioner smilingly informing reporters that the two parties were eating sweets together. If the impression was sought to be created that it was a joyful celebration, we must protest. But perhaps the participants were fully aware of what was happening. There is another and equally common practice all the world over among practically all communities—to wit, the funeral feast. What was celebrated on that fateful Sunday in the New Secretariat was the killing of the spirit of resistance of the workers of Burn & Co. We mourn the loss, which is of all working people in the State and the country.

We also mourn the deaths by suicide, accidents, starvation and malnutrition directly due to the lockout. Of these no accurate account is possible but they may be far more numerous than can be guessed from the stray reports.

It might have been hoped that in their hour of triumph Sir Biren or his

agents would be a little generous. But no, they must have their pound of flesh. Total and complete surrender, those are the terms. Even pending disputes are to be dropped. Over this "settlement" the union representatives find the heart to eat sweets! During the long drawn out misery of the workers no stone seems to have been left unturned to cow them down. They could not even take out money from their provident funds. It has been reported without any official denial that a senior official who was in favour of this was hurriedly transferred to Delhi.

One term of the agreement deserves special attention. The workers will be called to join by notices pasted on the factory gates and if they do not turn up within 15 days, their services will be automatically terminated. With large numbers of workers having left the area and spread out all over the country during the past seven months, the hated question of retrenchment has been skilfully got over in this way to the satisfaction of both the management and the workers' representatives but not the workers. We suspect a much larger number than 1750 will be proved to be "not interested in rejoining" without their even coming to know that they were expected to join work.

The question which arises out of the massacre is this: Did the union leaders discharge their responsibilities properly? Unfortunately, it does not seem so. On the contrary the workers were apparently led up the garden path and came to grief. Too many union leaders think that all they have to do is to threaten a strike and the employers will come down on bended knees asking for mercy. The

facts of life are otherwise. With the bloated profits in the past years and bonus shares, most of the big guns in business are not at all worried at the prospect of a shut-down and some in fact would not mind helping the process along just to put the workers in their proper place. After all, they do not have the problem of paying the grocer.

Many union leaders believe only in rhetoric and emotionalism. They are prepared neither to educate the workers nor themselves. It is a fact that often union representatives who go to the conference table to bargain for a bigger share of profits, cannot read a balance-sheet and when this is the case, under their noses they can be seen on petulantly demanding what they want without being able to substantiate their claims. They cut a sorry figure indeed before the managements and are not averse to taking foolhardy action just to keep up their image before the workers. A little homework in such cases would go much longer than a lot of gesticulation. But it would be ever so prosaic and shorn of glamour!

What is needed today is a new strategy in which the whole struggle is kept in view and the workers are not considered expendable human material to satisfy the whims of grandeur of individual leaders. In a battle it would be a foolish general indeed who got his whole command knowingly ambushed. He would be disgraced in no time at all. On the other hand it often becomes necessary to fight a rearguard action with a small force who are doomed to extinction so that the main army escapes to fight another day. The events in Burn & Co. only show that Capital with a shrewd understanding of the lay of the land, smashed an entire army which may take years to rebuild, thus exposing other flanks to attack. And for this the blame rests squarely on the union 'generals' who led the workers.

It has always intrigued me as to what the organisers of processions and demonstrations gain by deliberately preventing others from using the roads. The remarks from ordinary workers

and clerks held up on their way home from office or somewhere else by a passing demonstration are often caustic, even though they have full sympathy for the demonstrators.

This type of demonstration seems to be a peculiarity of Calcutta alone. A colleague in Delhi who had occasion to tour Kerala extensively and witness demonstrations by the CPI (M) and other leftists throughout the State was quite surprised by the pattern of these things in Calcutta. He was all praise for the orderly way in which demonstrations and processions were carried on in Kerala with the least possible discomfort to those not taking part in them. This genuine concern for the common people, he was reciprocated by confidence in the leftists.

Why do our leftists do not have the time or the mood for thinking of such things. Or maybe they feel they have nothing to learn from others.

The weekend plan of West Bengal Government employees was of course different, but the police used it for a cynical show of strength.

In keeping the new tradition of his job, Calcutta's Mayor, Mr Gobinda Dey, recently took part in a nice little function to unveil a plaque to commemorate, of all things, the centenary of the rosogolla. That the shop where the sweet was first made, closed down three years ago owing to the ban on 'chhana' sweets was unfortunately an unpleasant fact but this did not daunt either the sponsors of the function or Mr Dey whose picture was in all the papers.

Presently, of course, rosogolla is available in Calcutta 5½ days of the week. But milk being short as it is, it is anybody's guess how long you can continue to get it or for the matter of that how much milk actually goes into the making of the sweet. However, real lovers of the sweet need not despair. Even if rosogolla dies in the land of its origin for want of milk, it will live on in the USA. Plans have been finalised to export the know-how to the USA and start manufacture with local collaboration. Even the necessary equipment, if re-

ports are to be believed, has been built.

The time may not be far off when rosogollas will come only on PL480, the local variety having disappeared but we shall be able to pride ourselves on having won a cultural victory over the USA on the sweets front.

* * *

What exactly the National Crime Prevention Week was expected to do is hard to guess. If its aim was to build up further the image of the police, it may have had a very limited success with the unthinking. But in a country where large communities can still go about cutting each other's throats with impunity, talk of crime prevention seems frivolous. Or is it that the authorities who organize such things do not really include communal orgies under the heading 'crime'?

One result of the Week and the Exhibition which Calcutta's police put up was only to highlight the prevalence of crime, the varied means at the disposal of the criminals and the apparent helplessness of the police. Just under the report of the opening of the exhibition by the Governor, Mr Dharma Vira, a contemporary carried the news of an attack on the police by wagon-breakers. On another page was a long report about law-breakers going about unchecked in the Chitpur yard of the Eastern Railway.

What then do the police expect of the people? To talk of people helping crime prevention, as the I.G. of Police, Mr Upananda Mukherji did, may be all right. People's co-operation in unmasking hoarders and blackmarketeers has all along been available for the asking. The police are not known to have been particularly keen on taking such help. With the recent role of the police in West Bengal still fresh in their minds, there does not seem any reason why the people here should go out of their way to pull the policemen's chestnuts out of the fire and take upon themselves the wrath of organized gangs of wagon-breakers, dope peddlars and illicit distillers whom the police treat with a healthy respect born out of fear.

HUNGER!!!

India's poverty is paradoxical. Here, too many people toil to wrest a living from the earth, but the earth yields far too little. Embarrassed by the richness of resources and the poverty of means to exploit them, India produces not enough food to feed all of its population.

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Election Prospects

ROBI CHAKRAVORTI

THE Presidential election this year has turned out to be the wildest guessing game. At this stage of the game, guessing is restricted to the nomination of the candidate of the two parties, and the pollsters and commentators are literally mushrooming with their projections and predictions. In this land of fat newspapers and prolific commentators, even a knowledgeable observer of American politics is liable to be lost in the forest of news and speculations. At this stage, news and speculations change from day to day like autumn leaves.

One day, you hear that Kennedy gets mobbed wherever he goes. The next day, you learn that he was booed by young listeners in San Francisco for his support of the draft. Today, you hear that Hubert Humphrey is washed up. Tomorrow, you learn that Hubert's cause is not lost yet. Don't give up Triple H, as James Reston warns. Nixon, you hear, is heading all the polls; and yet, there are Republican leaders who are not sure that he is the candidate that can beat a Democratic nominee. And now Rockefeller is on the scene.

Eugene McCarthy's young storm troopers worked miracle at New Hampshire and Wisconsin, and "suddenly there was hope in America", as a full page advertisement proclaimed. Now, you hear that he is not making much headway among the Negro communities and that his chances at Indiana and Nebraska primaries are not too bright.

These are some of the trees in the forest of news and speculations in the primary-nomination phase of the Presidential election politics. And we are likely to miss the forest for the trees.

We are likely to miss the fact that although the young people mob Kennedy and hover around McCarthy as a new messiah, the 1968 electorate is

basically unyoung. This is the careful finding of Mr Scammon of the Governmental Affairs Institute and a former director of the Census Bureau.

We are likely to miss the fact that if the American electorate is unyoung, it also includes a vast segment that is conservative and unenlightened to a degree that will appal the voters from a so-called undeveloped country. The leaders of this crucial conservative section of American voters had grown up in a system of patronage and favouritism that would be unthinkable in a country like India.

Take the case of George Wallace of Alabama, for instance. Although he does not hold any office in the State at all, he has on his campaign entourage several State officials. On one California trip, Wallace brought along no fewer than 20 State police officers. Wherever he goes, he takes with him a varying number of Alabama State troopers, both in and out of uniform, some equipped with walkie-talkies and all equipped with firearms.

The patronage system is a feature of the American political system. A recent report says that in Indiana political appointees regularly give two percent of their salaries to the party in power. A small businessman in Alabama recently charged that his low bids or contract were consistently turned down in favour of others who agreed to pay kickbacks into the pocket of Seymore Trammell, a self-made entrepreneur who handles all of Wallace's financial affairs from the state treasury to the campaign war chest. The businessman has filed a case and it is likely to blow up into a big scandal.

Bossism

Political bossism through wire-pulling and patronage is nothing new in politics, but in the United States these have been institutionalized into a sys-

tem. From time to time, the system is challenged and scandals hit the newspapers. But the system, by all accounts, has not changed much. It is because of the strength of this system that you hear so much about political bosses controlling votes which can be handed over to the candidate of their choice.

Another characteristic of the forest that is American politics is that an American voter can be swayed by trivia. This is perhaps a harsh thing to say, but from the way the American public opinion shifts from week to week even in face of such crucial problems as the Vietnam war, the riots in the ghettos and now, the threat of inflation, it is obvious that the issues are either slurred over by public opinion leaders or that, in spite of high literacy and affluence, the average American voter does not care to think deeply over the problems that beset his country and the world, the immense capacities for good that this resourceful country has and the little of this potential it has so far achieved.

I list these negative features of American politics with regret. I emphasize these, because often these are not taken into account in assessing the trends and prospects of American politics. Politicians and propagandists generally talk glowingly of the bright side of the picture and if commentators occasionally point their fingers at the dark currents of American politics, they tend to take the populist posture that in the long run "the people" will set things right. But the trouble is that we are dealing with short run issues and in the short run, there are visible and not so visible features of American politics that inhibit the progress towards enlightenment.

Enthusiastic radicals abroad are likely to make the same mistake as hopeful populists and liberals in this country. The picture of young people tearing at Kennedy's shirt or gaping wide-eyed at the serene face of McCarthy may give an impression that America has turned the corner and are headed towards a kind of renaissance of spirit. This will be a wrong im-

FRONTIER

pression. The young people campaigning for McCarthy are indeed a refreshing departure from traditional American political pattern, but the cruel fact is that they do not constitute the majority among the youth population in the country. Besides, as Scammon has so cogently argued, the essential decisive segment of the electorate is "unyoung, unblack and unpoor."

The electorate is "unyoung" because despite the much advertised youth explosion, the average voter is in his mid-to-late forties. In 1964, three-fourths of the votes cast for President were cast by those thirty-five and over; this year, those under twenty-five will represent a mere one in ten votes and the students no more than one percent of the electorate. As Scammon shrewdly points out, there are probably more Teamsters than students who will vote in the coming election. The President of the Teamsters' Union, if the reader hasn't forgotten, is James Hoffa and he's in jail.

The electorate is unblack. It is known that the proportionate election turnout of Negroes is lower than that of whites; of the poor, lower than that of the better off; of the less educated, lower than that of the well-educated. The electorate is 90% white.

Unpoor

The electorate is unpoor. Although poverty is still widespread, particularly among the coloured people, a great many people have moved into or within the middle classes since 1960. Of that 90 percent of the electorate which is white, that which is not rural is also, in the main, not poor.

As Scammon argues, American politics are dominated as never before by lower-middle and middle-middle class whites. This is the class that will elect Presidents. And, it is this group that goes to Church, believes in Christian righteousness, looks at uppity Negroes as a threat and perhaps harbour paranoid feelings about militants, anarchists, socialists, communists, state controls and individual rights.

Add to all this the fact that an average American is too busy with his day to day work and leisure activities in

vacation time to think deeply on the issues that face this nation and the world. Candidates may argue in detail on the issues that the electorate may faintly understand or care to understand or perhaps even to listen.

Perhaps, I've drawn a pessimistic picture of the American political process in this Presidential election year. But somehow I cannot help remembering that the American electorate chose Eisenhower over Stevenson at a time when this country was also faced with a crisis in Asia. Even now, the polls say that Eisenhower is the most admired politician in the United States.

The Press

THE Soviet Prime Minister's first ever visit to Pakistan appeared to have Indian newspapers in the sulks. Days before the visit they carried reports that President Ayub Khan would try to impress on Mr Kosygin the need for stopping Soviet military assistance to India for the sake of peace in the sub-continent. It was reported that as a bait to the Soviet Union the Pakistani President may even offer not to renew the lease for the American electronic intelligence base near Peshawar. Mr Kosygin's public utterances in Pakistan could not also have been soothing to many Indian ears. He noted the stupendous economic progress and political stability attained by Pakistan under Mr Ayub Khan and described Pakistan's foreign policy as independent and worth emulating by the emerging nations. He promised a steel mill in West Pakistan and an atomic power station in East Pakistan; he offered to sign a long-term trade pact with Pakistan and actually signed a cultural and scientific exchange programme. All this showed how remarkably President Ayub's foreign policy of triangular tight-rope walking was succeeding while our own non-

There are lots of people in the campuses and the cities who think that he was a poor leader and a poor President. These are the people who are now shouting either for McCarthy or Kennedy. There is something heart-warming and exciting about their clamour and enthusiasm, but the point is that these intellectuals and liberals neither make nor mar a Presidential candidate.

LBJ is gone from the scene. But do not underestimate Triple H. One who runs may not necessarily finish.

N d

COMMENTATOR

alignment remained a suspect. There was a perceptible feeling that what India had gained by assiduously cultivating the Soviet friendship might be secured by Pakistan without much effort and in spite of its close relations with China and the USA. Mr Kosygin's detour on his return journey to Moscow for an unscheduled stopover in New Delhi salved this hurt, and newspapers seized the opportunity to stress how much the Soviet Union valued India's friendship and how eager Mr Kosygin was to remove any misunderstanding that his Pakistan visit might have created in India.

The Times of India thinks that the Soviet Prime Minister would not have made the detour unless he wanted to prove once and for all that his Government is not seeking friendly relations with Pakistan at the cost of well-tested ties with India. The Government of India did not expect him to make a detour specially to apprise Mrs Indira Gandhi personally with the substance of his discussions with President Ayub Khan. Moscow has repeatedly made the point that India has nothing to fear from its policy of be-friending Pakistan and has provided enough evidence of its sincerity. For

instance, the Soviet Union has shown great appreciation of India's defence needs vis-a-vis China and has not, unlike the United States, allowed Rawalpindi to exercise a veto on its military supplies to this country. Mr Kosygin has not made any concession to Pakistan's susceptibilities on this issue during his visit there. The paper says in Pakistan the key issue now is that of succession, and the jockeying for succession has already started. In a sense Washington also is trying to regain its influence over the army officer corps by allowing it to sell 100 Patton tanks to Rawalpindi. This is a matter of interest to India as well. The Soviet Union has exercised a measure of influence in the region and is clearly interested in it. This and not the desire to play himself in a mediatory role may explain the timing of Mr Kosygin's visit to Rawalpindi.

The Hindustan Times advises that Indian opinion would do well to get accustomed to an increasingly even-handed approach by Moscow to issues concerning the sub-continent. This is the lesson of Tashkent, and it has been reinforced by the Soviet Premier's visit to Pakistan. Soviet-Pakistan relations, involving such issues as the renewal of the US military base in Peshawar and Pakistan's affiliation with China, seem to have been the main subjects discussed. Moscow cannot hope to detach Pakistan from the United States or China, but it has sought to introduce itself into the equation by offering enhanced aid to Pakistan. The Soviet offers are substantial, and Pakistan would seem to have got the best of all worlds in securing aid from the US, China and Russia simultaneously. Regarding the Pakistani campaign against Soviet arms deliveries to India the paper says Mr Kosygin could well have pointed out that Pakistan draws on the US and China and other suppliers of arms. But in his speeches Mr Kosygin did lay stress on the need to reduce the heavy expenditure on arms by India and Pakistan. This could possibly indicate a willingness to slow the pace of arms deliveries to India if Pakistan's suppliers would do the same. The interests of Moscow, New

Delhi and Rawalpindi clearly lie in the emergence of a stable and friendly sub-continent on good terms with the Soviet Union. The problem is to secure agreement on priorities and timing and to disperse the suspicion with which India and Pakistan view each other's actions.

More Than A Gesture

Mr Kosygin's stopover in New Delhi appears to *The Statesman* as more than a gesture. It confirms a powerful neighbour's anxiety not to let any avoidable misunderstanding cloud its relations with her. Mr Kosygin probably had more to put across to Mrs Gandhi than can be through the routine channels of diplomacy and the spoken word; the very private nature of the discussion between them suggests this. The Soviet interest in maintaining stability in this area is by now clear and well-established. Because of that, it would seem, Mr Kosygin had to disappoint Pakistan's expectations of Soviet military aid even at the risk of losing something in his other great game of weaning Pakistan simultaneously from China and the West; it would be natural for him to try to see what compensation could be found in terms of Indo-Pakistan relations. Ideas of Soviet economic aid to Pakistan, which were generalised and vague so far, have assumed the shape of two clear and prestigious commitments. The resulting impact on Indo-Pakistan relations will not be easily known, but it would be surprising if there were none. Quite possibly there will be little impact, certainly little very soon, on the problem of Kashmir. But certainly it is likely that chances of useful discussions between India and Pakistan on the other problems between them have improved as a result of Mr Kosygin's visit to Pakistan.

Patriot has interpreted Mr Kosygin's unscheduled visit as a reaffirmation of the fact that Indo-Soviet relations are on an unusual plane of international affairs. That the Soviet Prime Minister made it a point to say just before he left Karachi that no understanding with Rawalpindi will be so designed as to damage the Soviet Union's warm

friendship with this country and his decision to go out of his way to visit Delhi are indications of the special nature of the Indo-Soviet entente that is such an important constituent of world peace and international stability today. The paper says that there are many subjects requiring constant interchange of opinions between Moscow and New Delhi, and personal contact at the highest level, specially when India's attitudes on so many issues are so uncertain and anomalous, is extremely useful. Indo-Pakistan relations, the non-proliferation treaty, the Vietnam war and the establishment of a firm base for a new pattern of economic cooperation are the most important of them. Noting that "there is a slight difference of approach" to the non-proliferation treaty between Moscow and New Delhi the paper says both sides understand the compulsions that lead to their respective stands and mutual explanation will clear the air. It believes that "contact with Mr Kosygin and individuals like him" can clear the many doubts that often befog the minds of those who are responsible for government in this country.

In assessing the outcome of the Kosygin visit *The Indian Express* says that New Delhi deludes herself if she continues to believe she is the favourite wife. She might have been the more favoured, but if Mr Kosygin is to induce peace in the zenana, Moscow will have to distribute its favours more discreetly on the principle of moving step by step. The Kremlin has initially favoured India's plea. But that does not mean that it has lost sight of the major bauble in dispute. Pakistan has not abandoned her claim to Kashmir, nor has Moscow ruled it out of court. Will temporary patience bring its permanent reward? Pakistan evidently waits in hope. Meanwhile Mr Kosygin, like a wise if harassed husband, keeps his lips sealed and fingers crossed. If India is to emerge comparatively intact from this exercise she must show a livelier awareness than she has done of the permutations and combinations in play. There is no room here for wishful thinking in which New Delhi seems to delight. Without questioning anybody's motives

the Government of India should show more awareness of realities. Mr Kosygin is sincere when he says that Moscow is not interested in the old imperialist game of divide and rule, since it is demonstrably in Soviet Russia's interest that Pakistan and India should draw closer to each other. In their unity blessed by Moscow lies their strength which can only fortify Russia's.

Before Mr Kosygin's plan to visit New Delhi was known *The Hindu* derived comfort from the thought that no change in the political positions of Chairman Kosygin and President Ayub Khan was evident after their meeting in Rawalpindi. The paper says Mr Ayub Khan refuses to admit that the strengthening of India's forces is necessary to prevent a repetition of China's unprovoked invasion of India in 1962. This belittlement of the Chinese threat is scarcely likely to carry much conviction to Mr Kosygin in view of the fact that China has been pouring arms into Pakistan after the latter's unsuccessful attack on Kashmir in 1965. While Mr Ayub Khan did not fail to raise the Kashmir issue, the wind was taken out of his sails by Mrs Gandhi's letter delivered to Mr Kosygin on the eve of his trip to Pakistan. While Pakistan's recent change of policy on such issues as the Arab-Israeli dispute and the Vietnam war is likely to be welcomed by the Russians, they would have also noted that there has been no sharp break in Pakistan's alliance with the Western Powers. The paper, however, concedes that the most notable result of the Kosygin-Ayub exchanges is the Russian agreement to give Pakistan massive aid in the area of heavy industry. It is the publicly declared intention of the planners in Pakistan to follow India on the road to industrialisation. Ever since the Tashkent Declaration, the Russians have been anxious to build up their influence on the sub-continent. Since Pakistan follows a highly capitalist economic model, Moscow may be all the keener to get that country move in the direction of State enterprise and socialism.

Anticipations

ANIRUDHA GUPTA

IN writing this, I hope, I am not infringing on the privileges of the editor. The policy of a journal depends entirely on the discretion of its editor (or, at least, it should be so); but as one who has some association with the working of different weeklies, I presume, it would not be impertinent on my part to say a few words in anticipation. Every writer, poet, or artist has an image in his mind to which he gives concrete shape in ink or colour; a journal too—a collective effort—has an image before it which it hopes to realise in time.

Perhaps this aspect is in danger for too often journals are written with a fanfare which appears, no time, like stale sandwiches on a Sunday morning. I do not know if such publications make any impression, except on the minds of those who publish, edit or write them. Here, in this matter, it seems to me that journals which claim to be 'Leftist' need to learn a lot from those they call either "capitalist" or "reactionary". After all, the latter take a great deal of care to push their circulation. A journal like the *Weekend Review* shows what technical skill can do to transform a few pages of ordinary writing into most attractive reading. A journal with a Leftist bias, on the other hand, takes it for granted that its readers are going to be "like-minded"; hence it is their "moral duty" to go through the pages of indigestible printing and very sloppy editing.

Why should this be so at all? One must now question the basic assumption of all "Left thinking" intellectuals, groups, and journals who take their public for granted. The attitude familiar to all of them is that "If the rest do not understand us, it is surely their fault, not ours". This attitude—let us not deny has made *Leftism* merely a fad among various groups who fight more among themselves for what they hold to be "morally superior"

opinions rather than explain why they are superior.

After 20 years of Independence and with a world vastly changed from what it was at the end of the Second World War, can any thought, concept, or notion remain sacrosanct? The materialist view of the world as a phenomenon has gone a sea-change in the consciousness of the people. It is time to accept new postures and to examine old situations and ideas, but to draw a new line

between a journal is largely a function of such a function. It can be rendered if one has a pound of energy and a good understanding, analysing and explaining the issues to the readers. Unfortunately this aspect remains most neglected: writers in weeklies spend little time on what they write or else express opinions on any and everything without caring to substantiate them. It is this, above everything else, that makes a journal soul-less.

It is true that a weekly cannot always maintain such vigorous discipline—its editorial staff are overworked; articles do not reach it on time and, of course, there is the problem of finance. Yet, this aspect cannot be neglected. By and large, a weekly also tries to inform public opinion or to become informative. It is here that it can play a truly constructive role, for very little has been done by our national newspapers to inform the Indian reader. It is true that *Frontier* cannot be reasonably expected to do all this in the beginning; nevertheless a beginning can be made if it carries from time to time supplements covering important national or international issues. Such supplements may contain only two or three articles but they should be produced with a view to examining the issues from every angle, to give a presentation immediately attractive to the readers and, if possible, to carry conviction to them.

It is here that we should realize the

limitations of a journal produced in the English language. Functioning in a society where the common man does not know English, it can only work as a journal of the English-knowing *elite*—the university students, teachers, writers and other professional classes. This is our greatest drawback—whereas the common man is not literate in English, but then if we write in his own language, the language of the masses, India signifi- cantly. The language in which the ma in which the language is for *Frontier*. The character and line of the language are known, then it is that role which brings about a change in the ma- jority of the ma- jority; if it does not, the stuff will deluge the other hand, perhaps to inform the readers what work on in different Indian languages—not only in the literary sense but in all other aspects of life. In this respect the review columns should be devoted only to books written by Indian authors either in English or other languages and only such foreign books should be brought to the readers' notice which, according to the editorial board, are worth noticing. Apart from book-reviews, advertisements of books in different languages must somehow be secured so that one may know the degree and direction of intellectual life in the country. This is an aspect which the existing weeklies or even dailies have neglected; but it should be looked into if one wants to make any contribution to our struggle for national integration.

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MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

BOND is no more a lone ranger these days. He has many competitors equally intent on carrying out their deadly missions. There are the men from *Uncle* led by the suave and dignified Napoleon Solo; the girl-happy Boysie Oakes; the invincible Flint and, of course, the cynic Lemas, the antithesis of super-spy glamour, to whom spy-ship is just another form of life's syphean labours. Now we have Matt Helm launched into the firmament of international espionage and *Blenders* (directed by Phil Karlson) details the exploits of this debonair photographer turned secret agent summoned by the government to foil all the menacing plans of Big O, who is trying to drag the world into another global conflict. As usual, the hero triumphs in the end and in the process we are served with gadgets, girls and tricks. But almost all the items, like a backfiring automatic which produces some comic interludes, are a trifle over-used. Burnett Guffey's expressive lighting and Joseph Wright's plush sets do little to hide the essential hollowness of the script; so does the colourless acting by Dean Martin who appears to be a complete misfit in his role which calls for a tauter and a more polished performance.

The Bible

It is surprising to see a director like John Huston going in for bigs and making an artistic flop like *The Bible*. Indeed, had the credits not included Huston's name, the film would not have been worth a line's notice. Starting from the creation of the world, this over-long and dreary film carries us through a long procession of episodes heaped upon one another without purpose or significance. Interpretations, arrangement, cohesion and order—these elements are singularly absent from the script. Indeed sometimes the film looks like carelessly chopped-off bits from the

first rushes. The rough edges are too many and even the spectacle element has not been dished out properly. Lastly, one blasphemous thought, Adam and Eve behaved so foolishly before eating the forbidden fruit in this film, one almost started thanking that Satan after all did a good turn to our forebears.

The Family Way

Boulting brothers are famous for their family entertainment marked by the innocent home-spun writing aiming always at the middlebrow. Their latest bit, *The Family Way*, about the pangs of the unconsummated marriage is also a sure-fire at the box office, as proved by packed houses even in the sixth week. The original story with its coy hints at homosexual relations and other emotional tangles has interesting ingredients of a serious film but all these have been streamlined into a mediocre thing with a plodding pace and some undergraduate comedy patches and an indelicate handling of the basic situation has imparted the sickening look of case-history to the film instead of making it a penetrating study of the adolescent world. To me, of course, the main obstacle to the marital happiness is just a creaking bed. The rest is all bosh.

Scenes From Lear

RUDRAPRASAD SEN GUPTA

BENGALI drama in its formative years freely drew on Shakespeare for its nourishment; yet in its later stage, the master's status was reduced. Through decades of persistent, painstaking labour, the academicians considerably succeeded in rendering Shakespeare unworthy for the stage. If the stock of Shakespearean plays is generally low in the modern Bengali theatre, the case of *King Lear* has been particularly deplorable. Thanks to the brilliant misunderstanding of the stageability of this play raised by Charles Lamb and thanks to the Bengali admirers of Lamb, *King Lear* is almost a taboo for any Bengali producer.

national Press. All the dailies of New Delhi and both the news agencies, PTI and UNI, have their correspondents at Ajmer. But none dared to flash the news of the killing of the poor Muslims.

I am writing this letter with a full sense of responsibility and can help the CBI or any other official or non-official agency to make a proper investigation into the interested matters.

Black Revolution

Illuminating as part, Mr Greenberg's inaugural issue and incomplete.

The liberation of Afro-Americans is no doubt a *minority* issue. And it is also true that minorities have made revolutions—e.g. the whole series of bourgeois-democratic revolutions starting from the Cromwellian revolution in England and ending with the fall of Batista. But I think it is impossible in this year of the most glorious Tet offensive in South Vietnam and in

this epoch where the principal task is the destruction of U.S. imperialism to envision a *minority* revolution. Mr Greenberg appears to disagree. He thinks that the Afro-Americans, because of their employment in pivotal sectors of the economy, can paralyze U. S. imperialism at home (and thus win black liberation) by sabotaging those pivotal sectors. Quite naturally, in his thesis Mr Greenberg finds no occasion to discuss the role of white proletarians, even though he recognizes that the black revolution is class and requires for its success the combined action of the oppressed all over the world.

I raise the issue of the white proletarians because of my view that the liberation of black proletarians is completely with the liberation of the white proletariat in this is bound to be true if one recognizes the fact that the struggle within the U. S. will be protracted and extremely more complicated than a series of quick terrorist actions to paralyze the economy. U. S. imperialism, which in Mr Greenberg's opinion, "will stop at nothing, probably not even nuclear weapons," can surely be expected to take care of the situation when the sabotaging begins by building blockhouses for blacks and a more skilful use of white proletarians coupled with further automation in the economy. I think at that point, Mr Greenberg and others will have to shed their petty-bourgeois romanticism and look to the black and white masses for their base.

Maoist leaders of black liberation such as Bill Epton or John Harris, both architects of tremendous mass action in the Harlem and Watts Country, Los Angeles, uprisings, realize this. That is why the Progressive Labour Party, the proletarian vanguard of America, prepares for the final reckoning by militant action and patient base building among both the black and white proletarians.

VASKAR NANDY
Jalpaiguri

I read the article, "The Black Revolution" by Marc Greenberg (14.4.68). I think I shall not be

entirely wrong if I say that many Communists have lost hope in the prospect of a successful socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries. They have also come almost to agree with the view of the anti-Marxists that Marx's dictum that the capitalist system will decay and a new socialist system will emerge in the major capitalist countries has become a fallacy. I even remember that Maurice Dobb said somewhere that Lenin's dictum that with the success of the national liberation movements the capitalism would face ultimate doom no longer holds good.

The USA today has a stable economy and therefore one reads with surprise, "The USA, a nation, subsisting by the oppression of the blacks at home, by exploitation, counter-revolution and colonial wars abroad, has virtually precluded the possibility of a peaceful domestic revolution".

The analysis as to how backward and agricultural America became industrialist and capitalist is correct and how America became imperialist and faces the opposition of the Cubans and the Vietnamese and the oppressed is true. But is it not going too far to say that these are signs which show that the capitalist system of the USA is doomed? "The fight of the black people in the USA marks the beginning of the end of the US capitalist system". I wonder how the writer is so sure. Even today the U.S. capitalist system is strong.

AJIT KUMAR ROY
Bankura

Marc Greenberg has rightly set the example of the heroic Vietnamese people as a source of inspiration. It is right opportunism to cling to the idea that some percentage of the people should be ready before the beginning of revolution. On the other hand, it is left adventurism to reject the idea that the success of revolution is impossible without a nationwide crisis affecting both the exploiters and the exploited. It is the task of all victorious revolutions to develop and suppress revolution in other countries.

JYOTIRBIKAS KUNDU
Calcutta

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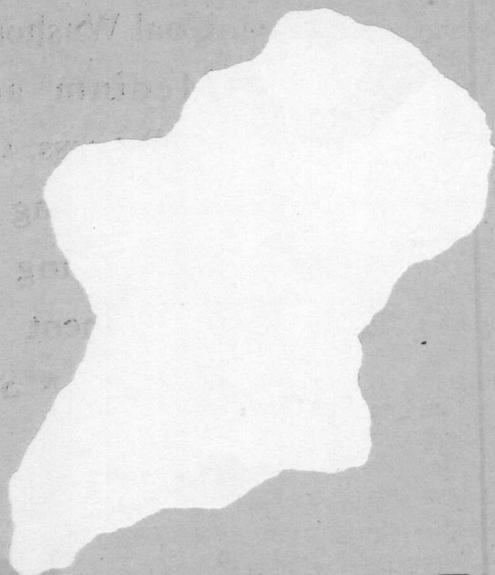
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