

frontier

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FRATERNAL SUPPRESSION

THE Russians are determined to defend socialism in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovaks do not seem to have quite learnt the lesson of August 21, 1968, when the stirrings of an independent experiment—whatever its merits—were suppressed by Russian tanks. They beat the Russians in ice hockey and in celebrating the victory they demonstrated against the presence of alien troops—a natural enough reaction in any country. *Pravda* and Moscow Radio lost no time in condemning these lapses and though Prague newspapers did not support such excesses as might have been committed during the anti-Soviet demonstrations, they failed fully to endorse all the criticism from Moscow. This was intolerable, and so on March 31 Marshal Grechko, the Soviet Defence Minister, and Mr Semyonov, the Deputy Foreign Minister, arrived in Prague to tell the pliant President Svoboda and Mr Dubcek what they thought of the entire Czech exercise in impertinence. In fact, the Soviet Ministers delivered a Note from the Kremlin warning the Czechoslovak Government that, if it failed to prevent further anti-Soviet demonstrations, the Soviet Army would intervene even without the approval of Prague and the demonstrators would be run over by tanks. What are a few hundred tanks or a few thousand dead between two fraternal parties when you have the Brezhnev doctrine to tie them together?

The Note has not been published, but according to more than one well-informed source in Prague it was harsher in tone than even Mr Brezhnev's letter to Mr Dubcek before the August invasion. The Czechoslovak Communist Party Presidium held an all-night session to ponder the new crisis, and, as expected, decided finally to play for safety. On April 2, it issued a communique that might have been drafted in Moscow; it criticized the information media for specific anti-Soviet deviations, warning certain journals that they must mend their ways or cease publication, and accused Mr Smrkovsky of making speeches "at variance with the November resolution" of the Party's Central Committee. Apparently, even this did not mollify Moscow; it was all right to admit errors, but how about meting out some punishment? So the erring Czechoslovaks decided to punish themselves; pre-publication censorship of the Press has been reimposed, two prominent editors have been sacked and the security services (which probably means the secret service) have been armed with more powers.

All this the Czechoslovak authorities have been made to do at Moscow's behest, but the Russians are taking no chances. According to one report, the number of Russian troops stationed in Czechoslovakia is being raised from some 70,000 to around 115,000. The Czechoslovaks and others might regard these as occupation troops, but in the light of the Brezhnev doctrine they should appear in a different hue. Since the sovereignty of a socialist country is perforce limited (though no one would be pardoned for suggesting any such limitation for Mother Russia), these troops must be regarded as the forces by which the fountainhead of socialist sovereignty controls the less sovereign socialist States. Cynics might prefer simpler language and say that these are the troops of an imperial Power, but then the cynics never bother to appreciate the subtleties of a doctrine such as has been invented by Comrade Brezhnev.

The subtleties be damned; what the Russians are doing is nothing but brazen intervention in the affairs of a fraternal country by the naked use of force. To say this is not to endorse everything that the Czechoslovaks have attempted; the worth of the attempt has been dimmed even further by the cowering timidity that the Czechoslovak leaders show at any sign of serious Russian displeasure. The less said about them the better. The Rumanians and the Yugoslavs, in their different ways, are at least less pusillanimous. Of course, the three countries are not in exactly similar positions. The Yugoslavs have long been out of the Soviet orbit, though not in exemplary fashion. The Rumanians, though increasingly showing some independence of Moscow, cannot be accused of any inclination towards bourgeois ways. The Russians too, for reasons of their political and military plans, are prepared to let alone Yugoslavia and allow greater independence to Bucharest than to Prague. Their continued, even increased, sensitivity to any anti-Russian sentiment in Czechoslovakia also suggests that they are getting more and more nervous before the communist summit

planned for July. Their hope of getting the summit to pledge unquestioning ideological loyalty to Moscow is now based more on force than on persuasion; at least those countries which can still be compelled to sign on the dotted line at the summit must be made to do so. If Czechoslovakia is allowed any freedom of dissent, unpleasant surprises may come from more quarters which have so far been faithful. So Prague must be prevented from misbehaving at all costs. And who cares about costs in terms of world opinion so long as the Americans understand and accept what the Russians are doing to the Czechoslovak people?

"We Want Money"

The Pearson Commission on International Development is visiting the wrong countries. If the flow of foreign "aid" has dried up, the recipient countries can do little about it; one should look into the factors which have led to the clogging of the flow in the "donor" countries. None amongst the aid-receiving countries—barring possibly Marshal Ky's celebrated regime and Thailand—had egged on the United States to the misadventure in Vietnam; none of them can be held responsible for the deep internal strifes which have torn that country apart in recent years. And certainly not all of them have abetted in the lowering of the tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union: if blackmail money—often otherwise known as "international aid"—has gone down in supply, the blackmailers surely cannot be held responsible for the denouement.

Vietnam, after all, is bleeding the American citizens white, and if they want to pin their current "disenchantment" with foreign aid on the alleged lack of success of the aid programmes, that could be accepted as a quasi-respectable rationalisation, even though not as 24-carat truth. We dare say in several instances external loans and grants have been ill spent, have been used to further private gains at

the cost of potential social benefits, and have been scandalously badly managed, have been made the means to render an already skew structure of income distribution in society further skewed. It is even possible to quote examples where the process of economic growth itself has been hampered by the unimaginative deployment of foreign resources made available—and often such deployment has been made with the active connivance of the aid-pushers themselves. But all this recounting of old wives' tale is an irrelevance. None of these factors by itself would, in the normal course, have choked the flow of aid. The more the aid was mismanaged, the more the aid would have flowed—if the shadow of Vietnam was not there, if racial unrest had not torn apart the fabric of American society, and if the Soviet Union had not decided for a rapid embourgeoisement of its foreign policy.

The Pearson Commission should therefore try other tacks. It can—if it dares to—ask President Nixon to do something about Vietnam. It can try to make a contribution towards suggesting solutions for the ending of social conflicts in the United States. And since it would be unable to persuade Mr Brezhnev to go back on the proletarian goal of being chummy with the Western world, the Pearson Commission could at least try to set up China as a big enough bogey with the help of which the United States and the Soviet Union together could be blackmailed against. But, in this last instance, the aid-seekers themselves will have to offer a minimum cooperation. They must be persuaded not to declare *a priori* that China is, and will remain, a permanent enemy; with such an inflexible declaration, no blackmailing game could proceed. Neither Mr Nixon nor Mr Kosygin will, after all, be interested in forking out money for a country which promises to be always with them and always against China, come hell or high water.

Most of the above argumentations may be described as belonging to the genre of the tongue-in-cheek, but that scarcely absolves the indignity of offi-

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cial, and not so official, Indian cringingness. Last week, when Mr Pearson and two of his colleagues hit New Delhi, the usual beeline was there: Ministers, Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister not excluded, members of the Planning Commission, assorted high officials, businessmen and industrialists of various dubious hues, and, making up the rear, economists: amongst economists there were some who never tire of preaching self-sufficiency and socialism in other forums. It was a remarkable demonstration of a joint patriotic front: we want money.

Of course, we want money. We need the money to feed the defence contractors, to pamper the already bloated kulaks, to finance the exploits of hypocrite ministers' idling sons, to replenish party funds, to put on gay Republic Day parades, to keep a police force in train so that ordinary people may be prevented from committing excesses... We need money so that we will be saved the bother of taxing ourselves. If only Mr Pearson can do something about it, it would once more turn into such a cushy world.

Increase In D.A.

West Bengal Government employees would be paid dearness allowance at Central Government rates and the benefit, it was also announced, would be extended to employees of aided non-Government institutions. It is a courageous decision, in view of the fact that the parity would cost the State an additional burden of Rs 45 crores over the next five years. But it is less clear how the Government would meet the new commitment without pruning some of its development projects, unless it succeeds spectacularly in implementing the 32nd point of its programme, that is, acquiring more autonomy and power for the State by changing the Constitution.

By bringing about the parity, the Government has met a long-standing demand of its employees, but in the process it has put itself in an em-

barrassing situation. Extension of the Central rate of D.A. to employees of non-Government institutions, it was found later, would be unbearable for the Government and so about a week later, the Government announced that such employees would get a flat increase of Rs 10. The invidious distinction thus made between Government and Government-aided employees has thrown the Government open to the criticism that it considers its own employees as its first charge of responsibility in preference to people in general.

The Cabinet decision to raise the D.A. appears hasty in view of the fact that a Pay Commission is already working over the issue and its report is expected to be published soon. When the State's resources are reported to be slender, and when almost every issue is being deferred till Centre-State relations are changed in favour of the State, what was the particular hurry in placating the Government employees, ignoring everybody else?

The discrimination appeared particularly painful when the primary school teachers were rebuffed on the plea that the kitty was short. Admitted, the State has slender resources, but why not distribute its limited funds equitably? Why should not the more wretched section of society be considered the first responsibility of the Government which recognises the fact that the economic status of the primary school teachers is lower than that of the Class IV Government staff? There should be a sense of priority.

It is true that the primary school teachers in the State number 120,000 and it is no small task for any Government, however resourceful, to improve their financial lot. But the morale of the people would have been unaffected had a particular section not been viewed in a more favourable light. The case of Government employees who get a pay, say between Rs 500 and Rs 1000, is certainly not sadder than a teacher's who gets Rs 70 a month.

It is common knowledge that marginal increases of pay or D.A. would

not make life more tolerable when the price line is not held steady. Holding the price line steady is of course the Centre's job but the State has also its limited responsibility. People are anxious to know more about what the UF Government is doing to implement the 3rd and 4th points of the programme, namely, self-sufficiency in food and its equitable distribution. What is the latest position of food procurement? What is the chance of assuring a stable rice price in the lean season? And finally, in the matter of removing the anomaly in the allocation of funds and resources between the Centre and States, what sort of pressure, other than sweet reasonableness, does the UF Government propose to put on the Centre? The leftists who consider parliamentary government as a mere instrument to heighten public consciousness in politics would do better in getting down to these brass tacks than making a deliberate distinction between Government and non-Government people.

Behind The Relief

A correspondent writes :

The question of dearness allowance has been raised so many times in recent years that the official announcements had fallen into a set pattern. The latest announcement, however, made a departure in more than one respect. The announcement was unaccompanied by the customary details of how the decision was going to benefit the employees in different salary slabs; it took the Government full five days to come out with these details.

More intriguing was the official confusion over the date on which the increased rates would come into force. The Information Minister, Mr Jyoti Bhattacharyya, announced immediately after the Cabinet meeting that the revised rates could be effective from April 1. Next day he confessed to having committed a mistake and said the date would be March 27,

that is, the day on which the Cabinet decision was taken.

It is extremely unusual and perhaps without precedent anywhere that a general increase in dearness allowance or salary of a vast army of employees has been made effective only five days ahead of a new financial year. The fact is Government employees must thank the Finance Commission for the windfall. In its memorandum to the Commission the State Government had shown a non-plan revenue expenditure of Rs 260 crores in the five years beginning from 1969-70 as dearness allowance to its employees at Central rates. At the Cabinet meeting of March 27, which was the last before the Finance Commission's visit to the State, it struck an official that the recommendations of the Commission would be based on the financial condition of the State at the end of 1968-69 and the Commission could not, even if it wished to, concern itself with any expenditure that the State Government might undertake subsequently. To buttress the demand for Rs 260 crores it was, therefore, necessary to sanction an increase in dearness allowance by March. The Commission would have to be faced with a *fait accompli*, otherwise it would refuse to consider the full demand.

The official was able to railroad the Cabinet into an immediate decision. Not all Ministers perhaps understood what was said; and the result was the Information Minister's announcement that the increased rates would come into force on April 1. Newspaper reports next morning created a flutter in the Finance Department whose plan to confront the Finance Commission with an additional committed revenue expenditure of nearly Rs 50 crores, had been sabotaged unwittingly. To counter the newspaper reports an order was immediately issued giving effect to the decision from March 27. The original idea was to make the increments effective from March 1 so that the sudden decision of the Cabinet may not be linked with the impending visit of the Finance Commission. But the idea had to be abandoned after

the confusion, and the decision had to be given "immediate" and not retrospective effect.

Cossipore

Durgapur — and now Cossipore. Firing seems to have become the order of the day. It is time to neutralise the hounds of the Centre in this State—though about the thousands of plainclothes men employed by Mr Chavan nothing much can be done. Cossipore is an issue which should not be allowed to be talked out. Things are flaring up here and there, revealing a sinister pattern. Under the cover of Central overlordship shady elements seem to be at work. These must be tackled.

Coming Referendum

The biggest trade union in France, the CGT, has been playing well in President de Gaulle's hand. It was known beforehand that the March rendezvous between the Government and trade unions, promised by the former Prime Minister, M. Georges Pompidou, would be unsuccessful. And the consequences could be nothing more than an impressive rally of some 1,00,000 workers, with some students, and some noise. These suit de Gaulle perfectly well. The General, on the air, could raise the spectre of anarchy and red peril by saying that the "same assailants and the same accomplices are seeking to crush the economy and the Republic" which, until the March 11 strike, had made a spectacular recovery. De Gaulle ended his broadcast by appealing for a "yes" vote for the regionalisation scheme—which will also be an expression of confidence in him. If he had resorted to his favourite ploy of dramatizing the situation it was because the widespread apathy towards the referendum to be held on April 27 could result in heavy absenteeism. Moreover, the senators are against giving the regional assemblies some

rights to tax and spend, since in the process they will lose their limited powers and become mere advisers. Some Gaullist deputies are also apathetic to the referendum. The General has condemned them all as enemies of the regime.

Unlike the May and June uprising, there was no promise of a revolution in the recent strike which was staged as a showpiece of strength. The CGT did not want a repetition of the May explosion. Last time it had to jump on the bandwagon to scuttle the promise of a revolution. This time it took the precautionary measure of insulating the workers from the leftist students. The bankruptcy of ideas and the impotence of the CGT leadership were apparent in the decision to return to the pre-May tactics, that is to stage a peaceful day's strike. Until the alternative presented by the leftists that by seizing power the workers can achieve permanent redistribution of income becomes an axiom of the trade union movement, the workers will only suffer frustrations from their strikes and demonstrations. The Government has refused to increase the wage rates by more than 4 per cent for the nationalized sector of industry, although the cost of living since the across-the-board wage increase at the Grenelle conference has risen by 6 per cent. Taking into account last year's exceptional rise in productivity, the authorities are trying to keep down wages so that profitability can be restored to the pre-May level. This will also help increase the competitive ability of French goods on overseas markets and stop speculation against the franc. Meanwhile, many workers are becoming militant following their disappointment with the wage-hike negotiations. They seemed to be moving towards a "struggle that pays." The occurrence of violence at the Renault and Peugeot factories has caused no less concern to the CGT than to the Government. The actual mood of the rank and file will be clearly seen during the coming weeks of negotiations at the plant level.

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The watchers of the French political scene point to an interesting change in de Gaulle's thinking. There was no threat from the General to resign if he does not get massive electoral support on April 27. For, to many Frenchmen the "me or chaos" tactic has a hollow ring and they find in M. Georges Pompidou a suitable substitute for de Gaulle. After Pompidou engineered a massive Gaullist victory, de Gaulle decided to keep him in the political void for his

alleged disloyalty. (It is now reported that Pompidou and some other Gaullists decided after the May-June crisis that de Gaulle should go). This has provided Pompidou with a splendid opportunity to emerge as the leading contender to replace de Gaulle. But this could not endear him either to de Gaulle or to the other aspirants for the Presidency, and for months an organized political campaign against Pompidou has been under way.

the disadvantage of the Prime Minister.

The Patil committee's report on Congress reorganisation in fact seeks to establish the party's control over the ministerial wing at the Centre by making the Prime Minister accountable to the party. The supremacy of the party over the Government is sought to be built into the set-up, even if the Congress would have to share power with someone at the Centre.

But in spite of the Syndicate's bid for control of the Governmental wing, the initiative on all immediate issues is still with the Prime Minister and the Government. The Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Mr Sanjiva Reddy, took some initiative to solve the Telengana problem but the Government and the Prime Minister frown upon any political approach. Everything is sought to be contained at the governmental level, as though the Telengana issue is a mere detail to be settled between the Centre and the State Government. Mr Chavan's refusal to back Mr Sanjiva Reddy's proposal for a parliamentary committee on Telengana was a gentle rebuff to the Speaker because the Centre wants all credit for any settlement. The High Command has failed to assert itself and has even, abdicated its role because the Congress is still in power in Andhra Pradesh and at the Centre.

Whatever the nature of the Telengana movement, it has now become a matter of Congress factional politics. Even the CPI has been drawn into the game because it is identifying itself with one of the factions. The CPI's call for the dismissal of the Brahmanna Reddy Ministry could either mean that the rival faction in the Congress should come to power in the State or it wants President's Rule. The CPI doesn't seem to realise that it is a dangerous game to demand President's Rule in a State even if it suits its immediate needs.

The demand for a separate Telengana State is not a thing to be dismissed so lightly. The demand does not negate the principle of linguistic States. People speaking the same language can have more than one

View from Delhi

Coalition Calculus

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE wing loading and aerodynamics of the bumble bee is such, it is said, that it cannot fly. But it does fly, defying all the known laws. Everything had pointed to the imminent disintegration of the Congress but the party continues to survive as an entity. This perhaps is because nobody really wants to force its disintegration.

But the point has been reached where the Congress itself feels it will blow itself up (in the sense its existence has no rationale the moment it is edged out of power at the Centre in 1972) before long and the only hope of delaying the doomsday lies in a quick power adjustment. This is the purport of Mr C. Subramaniam's theorisation on a "deadlocked parliament" in 1972. In the past, it was easy for the Prime Minister to threaten a mid-term poll for the Lok Sabha to keep Congress MPs from defecting. But as 1972 draws near, the threat is sure to lose its edge. And in any case where is the certainty that the Congress would win a mid-term election?

Mr C. Subramaniam is right when he thinks that the rightist parties in the North are likely to band themselves into a compact in 1972 and this would lead to a shrinkage of Congress representation in the Lok Sabha.

In the Congress calculus, it would do them good to arrive at an adjustment with some of the parties before the elections so that the Congress could still hope for a bare majority at the Centre. Failing that, there would still be the chance of the Congress and its election allies together mustering enough strength to hold office at the Centre. Or a coalition at the Centre is likely even before the 1972 elections, say in 1970.

The Congress could disintegrate earlier through a split in which case the coalition perspective would be different. But what surprises one most is the total confusion among other parties in the face of the coming power crisis. Every party with stakes in the elections is trying to realign itself but all are dead stuck on their strategy. The disintegration of the Congress might be so fast that all the parties might find themselves overtaken by the events.

The disintegration might begin at the top, the moment Mr S. K. Patil returns to the Lok Sabha via the Banaskantha by-election on May 4. The election of the new executive of the Congress Parliamentary Party is to take place a few days after that. If Mr Patil comes in, the alignments inside the party are sure to change to

State (there are five Hindi-speaking States now) but it certainly goes against the principle of linguistic States to have a State whose people speak more than one language. It is clear that the CPI itself is split on regional lines in Andhra Pradesh. So it is with every party in the State.

The Centre has reason to worry about the possible impact of this demand because it might revive the dormant agitations for a Nag Vidharbha State in Maharashtra and for a Saurashtra State in Gujarat.

Not News

In New Delhi, Kerala is not news any more though Mr A. K. Gopalan might choose to talk vaguely about a "police conspiracy" with vested interests to topple the United Front Ministry. And Mr Namboodiripad no longer tries to make an issue of the State's food needs. Nor is West Bengal news here any more though not a day passes without one of the

Ministers hopping in, for nothing in particular though. For instance, what exactly did Mr Jatin Chakravarty seek to achieve through his visit to New Delhi, the ostensible purpose of which was to demand the Centre's support to the abolition of the Upper House in the State legislature? And who told him the Centre was likely to oppose it? As early as 1967, the Law Minister of the Centre had said that the decision was entirely for the States if they wanted to abolish the second chamber. Once the State Assembly passes the resolution by a two-thirds majority as required by the Constitution, Parliament has to ratify it through a simple majority. And for Mr Jatin Chakravarty to remind the Centre that even the Congress members had backed the move for abolition of the second chamber sounds a little puerile and amateurish. The visits of most other Ministers to New Delhi are as pointless.

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every locality". Ironically indeed, on the same day, February 10, our people's Corporator, Smt. Ahalya Rangneker of the true Marxist persuasion, seemed to be giving tacit support to the SS by saying that the "Central and State governments had taught the people to seek solutions to such problems (meaning of course the one at the boundary of this State) in the streets". In effect, on February 10, this statement was like backing up the attacks on the minorities here. As if the fascist Sena was conducting a people's struggle!

The Gujarathi and Parsi sections of big business protested. The entire merchant community protested and demanded compensation. So did three Chief Ministers from southern States. A full-fledged judicial probe was demanded, not by local communists, but by well-known anti-communists. The Bombay Shroff's Association was the first to demand a judicial enquiry, and it was followed by the Indian Merchants' Chamber, the United Women's Organisation, representing about one hundred social welfare organisations, the Bombay unit of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the National Executive of the PSP, the BPCC, and that paragon of all political virtues, Mr Nijalingappa himself. But the Chief Minister, Mr Naik, was in no hurry, he had other ideas. In good time, he came out with a statement that too many people were prejudiced against Maharashtra; in fact very few were unbiased like Mr Jai Prakash Narain who had taken time from his precious Sarvodaya to make an on-the-spot study here. Asked for his impression by reporters J. P. had sagely commented that it was difficult to blame anybody, human nature being what it was. Our CM could understand such wisdom. Others who had blamed the government and the police were casting aspersions on the fair name of Maharashtra. The Chief Ministers and leaders of other States had no business to be so much interested in what was cooking in our kitchen here. The MPCC and the Government had nothing at all to do with the SS, the one-and-only leader of Maharashtra had said it long ago, but still some

Maharashtra

After The Riots

SHAHUL

THE Shiv Sena chief had threatened dire consequences, it is true, if the "boundary issue" was not solved to his satisfaction. But it would seem that neither he nor his supporters in the various political parties were prepared for the holocaust that followed. They did not anticipate so much destruction and looting, and the nationwide indignation and protest. When Rajaji went to the extent of demanding Central intervention in Bombay, Madhu Mehta, the local chief of the Swatantra Party who had all along been hand in glove with the SS, found himself in a quandary. PSP men here were part of the Sena and N. G. Gorey had made a peremptory demand for the release of Thakre, but when Nath Pai had to make a volte face, the Bombay PSP started looking innocent. The SSP leader, Datta Samant,

was the first to court arrest to back up the Sena agitation but when Madhu Limaye, MP from Bihar, condemned the SS, our local SSP gents began explaining their earlier stand in somewhat philosophic terms. The powerful attacks mounted in Parliament by Ramamurti and Bhupesh Gupta (was it Bombay's MP, Dange?) and others had a salutary effect also on our local communists whom the border issue had landed very much in the SS camp. Everybody in politics then started disowning and condemning the SS and one was left wondering how this monstrous organisation had grown when all these people were so much against it!

It was Mr Hafizka of the BPCC who made a forthright attack on the SS and gave a stirring call to the people to "organise defence against it in

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people would not stop maligning Maharashtra! As for a judicial probe, it would be a time-taking affair; just to save everyone's time he had arranged for a magisterial type (terms of reference not important) of enquiry and that would be speedy enough.

Proceedings in the Maharashtra Assembly and the Municipal Corporation when the SS riots came up for consideration were also very interesting. There was a "no-confidence" motion, nothing less than that, against the Government and opposition leaders thundered. The issue, however, was not the SS riots or violence against the minorities. They would not waste time on such things, they were concerned with the "main issue"—the boundary dispute with Mysore. The riots against non-Maharashtrians were mentioned only in passing as a related incident. In fact the PSP man, Ram Mahadik, went to the extent of saying: "The main issue—the solution of the boundary dispute—was being sidetracked under the pretext of Shiv Sena riots". He castigated the non-Maharashtrians who talked of a City-State and said they were supposed to identify themselves with the majority. Compensation was to be paid to the families of the SS boys who had fallen for the Cause. The police and the Government were to blame for firing on those innocent people, and for not solving the problem for which they were agitating. The leader of all opposition in the Assembly (also leader of the Samithy, being a leader of its leading unit, the Peasants and Workers Party), Mr K. N. Dhulup, then castigated the Government for its failure (to protect the minorities? Oh! No!) to solve the boundary dispute. And this great leader of the Sampoorna Maharashtra Samithi declared: "Shiv Sena took up the border issue when others had kept silent... Whatever was seen in Bombay during the recent disturbances was comparatively nothing as compared with what will take place all over Maharashtra if the Government fails to take immediate steps." He then went on to charge the police with "wanton, inhuman firing on the innocent people" and did not say one word

of sympathy for the victims of the riots. And this point about the unwillingness of the leader of the opposition "to utter a single word against the Shiv Sena or the riots" was effectively exposed, not by any communist (how could they, as members of the Samithi and opposition?) but by Mr Pranlal Vora (Congress). The CPI(R) leader, Mr Gulabrao Ganacharya, did mention "the 103 riots by the SS in one year", "conspiracy between the Chief Minister, big business and the CIA" etc. He also spoke about SS activities under the nose of the police and many other things but did not suggest any concrete measure to ensure equality of treatment to the minorities. Ganacharya did not say anything in defence of the rights of minorities but some well-known anti-communists came forward to speak for them.

The riots came to be mentioned in the Bombay Municipal Corporation not because the communists or anybody in the opposition showed concern for the helpless minorities, but because the ruling BPCC party came forward with a resolution asking the Government of Maharashtra to pay compensation to the riot victims. Unlike other parties the BPCC looked only to the City population for votes and the minorities together formed the majority of voters. They took people of all languages into their fold keeping out only those guilty of socialist thoughts. In the Corporation they stood for cosmopolitanism, and the Shiv Sena which leads the opposition pressed for Marathification at a forced pace. The communists as Samithi men were necessarily with the opposition and they did not seem to care much about any separate identity for themselves. It was therefore not infrequently that we heard of communists (both left and right) "voting with" or "walking out with" the SS corporators who were opposing the non-Maharashtrian Congressmen. After the riots SS men were under detention but their cause did not at all seem to suffer in the Corporation debates. The BPCC resolution was asking for compensation to the mino-

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rities who had suffered during the riots, in this city—some distance from Mysore—but the Marxist Corporator, Smt. Ahalya Rangneker, managed to shift the emphasis to the boundary. She knew the role of the police which had become notorious and was aware of the demands for non-Maharashtrian representation in the City Police. A meeting of the various Sikh and Punjabi organisations in the city held at Dadar on February 22 (*Sunday Standard* report) had urged the Government to recruit non-Maharashtrians to the police department. Smt. Ahalya Rangneker, however, went out of her way to ridicule this idea of a "mixed police". The Marathi purity had to be maintained. In this city of mixed population what was so wrong, from the Marxist point of view, in having a mixed policy? Moreover, what exactly was the Marxist justification for denying representation to 66% of the population in the city's administration? She did not care to go into

such "irrelevant" details and set her sights beyond—on the boundary.

There must indeed be some "Marxist" understanding and explanation and logic linking this boundary with class struggle, or else why should our local communists give it so much importance? It might be that the ruthless monopoly capital of Karnataka—the most hateful, comprador type—more than others, was oppressing the Maharashtrian "nationality" and working class, and since Marxists were supposed to look at every issue with a view to advancing the interests of class struggle—the fight had to be taken up. Besides, considering all aspects of the international and Indian situation, the principal aspect of the chief contradiction of our time must be at the boundary. It could well be that the Udipi hotels recently burned down in the City were in fact espionage centres maintained by the agents of the aforesaid comprador bourgeoisie of Mysore State.

the Meiji Restoration.... The Meiji Government's early ideal of education was expressed in the following statement contained in the National Chancellor's Proclamation of August 1872 (the 5th year of the Meiji): 'Efforts should be made so that there will be no uneducated homes in the village and no uneducated persons in the home'. The previous conception that learning should be a 'matter of concern to people of the warrior class and above' and pursued 'only for the sake of the state,' was superseded by the new conception that learning should be 'the means by which each individual can distinguish himself in the world, increase his fortune, flourish in occupation, and live a successful life to the full'. The idea behind this was, in short, that one could get ahead in the world by acquiring the knowledge and skill useful for modern industrial life, and that the foundation for such achievement could be built up only through school education.

For the general public of that time, who were yet at low levels of income, it was necessary to use children of school age as labour force to increase income, rather than to send them to school. There were great disparities in enrolment rates as between urban and rural areas and among parental occupational groups. For instance, as of 1887, a year after compulsory education was legislated, elementary school enrolment rates by parental occupations were overwhelmingly in favour of parental occupation in white collar and professional jobs and of urban areas. Such being the situation, there was strong demand for public support of schools at the general, compulsory education level, a demand finally met in 1900 when economic development had reached a certain stage.

The diffusion of general primary education has a long run cumulative effect on economic development as illiteracy decreases, the general public acquires a minimum

The Small Family Norm And Literacy—III

ASOK MITRA

TWO historic examples come to one's mind relatable to comparable conditions in India of our day: One is Japan at the turn of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century and the other Russia in the 1920's.

In regard to Japan scholars like Colin Clark, Simon Kuznets and William Lockwood long ago pointed out the importance of education in Japan's economic growth. Recently Koichi Emi, himself a Japanese, has written at length on economic development and educational investment in the Meiji Era. While the Emperor of Japan took no responsibility for other branches of social welfare like sanitation and health, legislation was introduced for compulsory primary education throughout the country. Koichi Emi observes:

Previous attempts to probe the

secret of the very high growth rate of the Japanese economy from the beginning of the Meiji Era had concentrated on the high ratio of savings or high ratio of investment, but recently increasing attention has been drawn to the human agent as a factor in the development. The view is now widely prevalent that fundamentally Japanese economic development is attributable to the preparation of human capital at the very initial stage and the magnitude of educational investments for further development of human capital. Japan's efforts to adapt itself to the new situation on its own power were set on the right track through the establishment of the national education system, begun in a series of measures taken immediately after

ability in 'reading, writing and reckoning,' and the channels of communication are thereby extended and widened. The effect of this process will grow as new graduates replace the older generations."

Russia

A second example comes from Russia. Following the October Revolution in 1917, a question arose as to what priority should be accorded to compulsory school teaching against the claims of capital works for the national economy. Between 1919 and 1924, and again in 1928-29, S. G. Strumilin, B. I. Babynin and others were able to establish the claim of school teaching as having tremendous advantages over factory teaching. They argued that "by already developing the mind of a child at an age when it is incapable of productive work it gives it the later possibility of more rapidly acquiring technical skill and achieving significantly better results than workers who bypass schools and end up in the factory."

Faced with the challenge of priority and investment, whether investment in school education would have preference over the construction of hydro-electric plants or other capital goods, Strumilin was able to establish the claim of return on education as follows:

Consideration of the salaries and productivity of different categories of manual and other workers in relation to their educational qualifications, showed conclusively that even the most elementary school education is much more beneficial to a worker than a similar period of practical training at the bench. In making these calculations, we took into account the effects of several factors, such as age, professional experience and technical qualifications. For example, the rudimentary instruction gained in one year of primary education increases a worker's productivity on the average by 30 per cent whereas the improvements in the qualifications of illiterate workers and

the increase in their output, resulting from a similar period of apprenticeship at a factory, is only 12 to 16 per cent a year. The improvement in qualification resulting from one year's education at school is, on the average, 2.6 times greater than that resulting from one year's apprenticeship. After four years' primary education, a worker's output and wages were 79 per cent higher than those of a first-category worker who has had no schooling. After seven years' study (incomplete secondary course), an office worker's qualifications may be as much as 235 per cent above the lowest level; after nine years' study (complete secondary course), as much as 280 per cent above; and after thirteen or fourteen years' study (higher education), as much as 320 per cent above.

Highly qualified workers lead to high productivity of labour and increase not only their own earnings but also the social product and, consequently the national income. The return from production may also be determined by comparing a society's expenditure on school education with the resulting increase in the national income. For example, according to the calculations made in 1924, the sums required to carry out the proposed reform in primary education (to increase the number of children enrolled in schools from 4 to over 8 million in ten years) were estimated at 1,622 million (old) roubles. The increase in the national income resulting from the rise in the productivity of labour of workers educated during these years was already by the end of the period (after only five years' employment), as much as 2,000 million roubles, which more than covered the expenditure. The active life of a worker, between leaving school and retiring, is however, not five but thirty-five to forty years and the greater competency acquired by study at school—the cost of which is broadly offset after the first five years of employment

—continues to serve without placing any burden on the budget. According to the same estimate, the enormous rise in the productivity of labour due to primary education will increase the national income, over this period of years, not by 2,000 million but by 69,000 million (old) roubles. Such are the return from primary education, which is the least expensive to provide.

The first major objective of the Soviet educational development plan was in fact already practically achieved by the beginning of 1934. Compulsory primary education was provided everywhere and the length of the course had been extended to seven years in the towns. The next object was to introduce secondary education for all. Although progress was temporarily delayed by Hitler's invasion, the work is now well on the way.

Strumilin concluded by saying that "with the planned methods of reconstruction of the national economy on a new socialist base, it is essential to take into account not only powerful material factors in this revolution such as electrification, but also less tangible efforts such as national education without which it would scarcely have been possible to carry out successfully the plan for electrification." This is how he summed up in 1929 his struggle for securing a sufficient priority for school education between the years 1919 and 1924.

... For six years of education, we find a rise from 2.3 to 3.2, or 39%, in qualification ratings, representing a rise of not less than 6.5% for every year of education. Compared with apprenticeship, which produces an annual rise of not more than 2%, one year of education is equivalent to over three apprenticeship years... The average annual wage increase for all employees of both sexes works out at 6.1% for one year of education and 2.3% for one year of apprenticeship, which means that one year of education has the equiva-

lent effect on wages of 2.7 years of apprenticeship . . .

Compared with physical labour, training in office work plays a much greater role in the process of raising the level of qualification of the worker . . . The seven-year secondary school raises the office worker's qualifications nearly 2.5 times more than those of the manual worker.

And even the four-year primary school raises the former's qualifications by 90% more than those of the latter.

It is extremely interesting to compare the effectiveness of school training and in-service factory instruction in raising qualifications. Considering only the total coefficients, the conclusion that emerges is that one year of school education produces a rise in qualification 2.6 times greater than that produced by one year of factory apprenticeship . . .

It follows that everything which the school is able to give the worker from age 8 to age 16 is a net gain for him in his further professional activity.

The question, however, can be put more broadly. We can concern ourselves here not only with the gain accruing to the individual worker who has received a school education at State expense but also with general State interests as regards the cheaper and more effective training of skilled labour. School education, in whatever doses, may be extremely desirable and useful for the individual worker if he gets it for nothing. But is the State, which has to bear the cost of that education, able to recoup itself, or not, whatever the dose, by a corresponding increase in the productivity of the national economy? And if not, what level of school qualification and what school expenditure per worker is most profitable, from that angle, in using the national income for the purpose of further developing that education?

This purely economic approach to the problem of public education

does not, of course, exclude political and all other assessments of its significance . . .

To reach a rational solution of the problem of the optimum periods of school education for workers, a determination must be made of what each extra year of instruction gives the worker and the State, and how much it costs the worker's family and the State as a whole.

Under the general collective agreements for April-June 1924, the rates for Russian grade I factory workers averaged 11.75 (old) roubles a month, or 141 roubles a year. Reckoning from this, an illiterate labourer, during his working life (37 years), would have earned $37 \times 2 \times 141 = 10,434$ roubles, whereas a worker with one year of school education earns 1,565 roubles, or 15% more. It is thus that the first year of school should be evaluated from the standpoint of the income of a worker's family. The yield from a second school year is already smaller, 1,200 roubles in all, while the yields from third, fourth and fifth years are 782, 574 and 470 roubles respectively.

Such is the significance of school instruction in the worker's budget, on the income side. But in the country's economic budget it is incomparably greater. The point is that the worker by the product of his labour, creates not only the value of his earnings but also an additional product for society. The surplus product, which increases with the rise in labour productivity and the worker's qualifications, amounted before the Revolution to not less than 100% of his earnings, at the most modest estimate. Hence the significance of the school for the income side of the State budget should be roughly double.

After calculating the prime cost of teaching, from the data for 1924, Strumilin draws the following conclusion: "We obtain the following comparative figures for profits and ex-

penditure for each year of primary instruction (in old roubles) :

| School Year | Expenditure | Profit | Balance |
|-------------|-------------|--------|------------|
| 1st | 17.80 | 1,565 | + 1,547.20 |
| 2nd | 28.00 | 1,200 | + 1,172.00 |
| 3rd | 39.00 | 782 | + 743.00 |
| 4th | 41.20 | 574 | + 532.80 |
| 5th | 44.00 | 470 | + 426.00 |
| 1st-5th | 170.00 | 4,591 | + 4,421.00 |
| of which | | | |
| 1st-4th | 126.00 | 4,121 | + 3,995.00 |

As can be seen, the profits accruing from the increase in labour productivity are 27.6 times greater than the corresponding outlay by the State on school education; this capital outlay from the exchequer is already repaid with interest during the first 1 1/2 years, while during the following 35 1/2 years the State receives an annual net income from this 'capital' without any expenditure whatsoever.

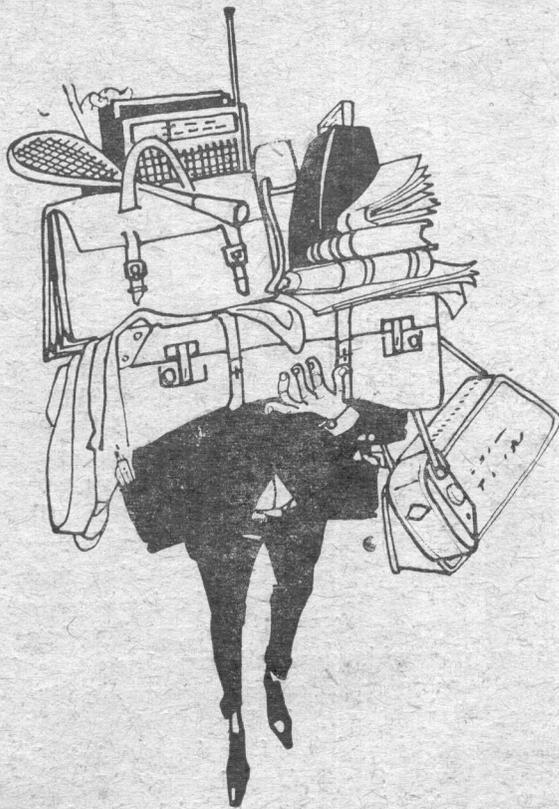
A more profitable investment of 'capital' could hardly be imagined, even in countries with such extraordinary possibilities as Soviet Russia.

And even so, we have still not taken into account the profits accruing, in the process, to the worker who raises his qualifications.

In 1924, the State Planning Commission completed the preparation of a plan for developing a network of schools necessary for achieving universal compulsory education. Under this rather modest plan, only by the end of ten years from the initiation of the reform would it have been possible to provide primary education for the existing child population aged between 8 and 12 . . . To provide primary education for only four age groups of children was not much of an achievement, in all conscience; yet the amount of expenditure required for that highly essential reform represented such a sum—to us so vast—that it was very difficult, at the time, to decide to go ahead and carry it through.

However, it was sufficient to set the scale of that expenditure against

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its positive economic effects in increasing the productive forces of the country to show what losses we have incurred each year by delaying action in that direction.

Implications

This carries tremendous implications for the success of the family planning programme which has been rightly placed at the very centre of planning activity in India. A series of investigations has recently been completed by Mary Bowman and C. A. Anderson which demonstrates very clearly the positive relationship between the level of education and the level of wages particularly in the lower bands. But that apart, let me return to the double standards that I have spoken of at the start. We are aiming at the family norm that has come so far only to industrialised, comparatively high income, urbanised and literate societies. The double standard comes when the enthusiasts insist that the small family norm must come even before agriculture-non-agriculture, rural-urban transfers and a much more substantial industrial base, when they without recognising the need to widen national effort and along with it the consumption base by a resolution of latifundia and minifundia merely insist that the small family norm will prevail if only the Green Revolution reasonably succeeds over a small fraction of our territory. The double standard comes when it is sought to be glossed over that a much more massive transfer from agriculture to non-agriculture in employment, and from rural to urban with the building of an attendant industrial climate even in the rural regions is a most necessary precondition, to which education, both general and on-the-job, holds the vital key. The desire for the small family is now almost universal but between the desire and the fulfilment falls the shadow. The time has come when instead of imagining that with a shade more strenuous publicity and exhortation the small family norm will drop of its own into our laps like manna from the skies—our capacity for make-believe knows few bounds—we addressed ourselves again to what

investment support would be necessary to the key sectors of our national plan to enable the fruition of this very urgent goal.

Primary education and literacy is

one such vital sector which cannot brook any more neglect, even in the matter of achieving the small family norm.

(Concluded)

Calcutta Diary

GYAN KAPUR

GENERAL Yahya Khan may shun publicity but it is not easy for most people in power. A certain amount of hankering for his name in print may be forgiven any minister of whatever shade of political colour. So, nobody really minds if even UF Ministers in West Bengal should play a little to the gallery. But some of them seem to have forgotten the past and learnt nothing. Prominent among them is the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Mr Jatin Chakravarty. The Department entrusted to him is really not of much importance to the people. If the compulsion of having a certain number of Ministers were not there, it could very well have been tagged on to some other department. But having got it, Mr Chakravarty is showing signs of having the itch for greatness and making all efforts to raise his ministry to a higher level. As a result we have some curious goings-on which might project his image in a better light but only at the cost of the UF Government as a whole.

It is one thing for the UF Government to have voted for the abolition of the Legislative Council but quite another to go around begging for the favour of its quick implementation. It may have been necessary for Mr Chakravarty to meet the Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, at the airport, he being the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs. But was it necessary for him to take a copy of the resolution for abolition of the Council to hand it over to her while she was on the way to Burma? There must surely be some official machinery for forwarding the resolution on to the Centre for taking action. The episode made the UF Government look slightly ridicu-

lous after its get-tough-with-the-Centre attitude not so long ago.

The subsequent activities of the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs were of a piece with the Dum Dum Airport episode. He has already been to Delhi to speed up the abolition of the Council. A comic element was introduced into the project by the other purpose of his visit as reported. The Minister would also take the opportunity to meet the Election Commissioner for, of all things, to finalise arrangements for elections to the Council. On the one hand abolition of the Council, and on the other during the same visit discussions for elections to the self-same Council. A truly Gilbert and Sullivan situation. But it is more saddening than amusing. Because clearly all is not well in the State of West Bengal even if the UF Government is there. Not the police alone are out of touch with things and taken by surprise when disturbances break out. Even their political masters have no lines of communication with a large section of the students. And therein lie seeds of future trouble.

Which brings me to the subject of the disturbances in the jute belt on both sides of the Hooghly. Happily things are quiet at the time of writing but, given the objective conditions, there is no knowing when there will be a flare-up again. The police have of course been rightly blamed for failing to anticipate trouble but that in all fairness is simply passing the buck on to them. For the truth is that none of the parties who swear by Marxism or even Maoism have any real footing in the jute industrial belt even though they may control the unions. When communal passions

are aroused, it is not a job for the bhadrak who control the unions. All they can do is to make futile efforts, unable to reach the level of consciousness at which communal passions seethe.

We are accustomed to think of Bihar and some other States being ridden by politics on cast lines. West Bengal, of course, is supposed to be above such things. Apparently this is so but if we go down a little deeper into the matter a similar pattern will be evident here. If anything, the stranglehold of the upper castes of Hindu society is still more complete and all-pervading. Going through the list of Hindu names of legislators and Ministers one would think that West Bengal was all populated by the upper castes and there were few tillers of the soil or artisans and workers outside the charmed circle who must monopolise all power and the best things of life. These castes are practically synonymous with the middle class and as a result there is little real change due to political changes. It is ever so difficult for an individual to give up power to another willingly. For a class it must be still more difficult. So we see the spectacle of an entire leadership of the trade union movement, with very few exceptions, coming from this particular class which is probably the main weakness of trade unions. In and around Telinipara the situation is still more complicated by the fact that the workers come from other States. Even to communicate effectively with them is difficult, much less live with them. I am reminded of an incident which happened over a score of years back.

A journalist colleague who happened to be also a Communist Party worker decided to give up his career and devote himself completely to party work. In vain I tried to impress upon him that he should try to be useful to the Party while following his career and anything else would not be suitable for him. In a fit of enthusiasm he went somewhere into the jute industrial belt trying to declass himself, living and working among jute mill workers. I saw him occasionally on visits to Calcutta and

he had a progressively haggard look. He tried his best to hide it, but the filth and squalor was more than he could bear in spite of all his desire. Within a short period of six months he had the first signs of tuberculosis and he was back again among those of his own class. It was a job to nurse him back to health and years before he could hold a job.

Perhaps the significance of Naxalbari may be that it did throw up a few leaders who came from a different class altogether than the ruling one. Only time will show whether it was just a flash in the pan or whether the workers' and peasants' movement has struck gold at long last.

* * *

The recent announcement of the Central Government's help towards starting of a Rs 2-crore hotel in Calcutta is another one of those misconceived steps to promote tourism and show sympathy for the City. The entire thinking on attracting more tourists is based on the idea of getting more jaded American or European rich people to do India. Such people of course expect the best in everything but for a country like India it would be next to impossible to provide them with the amenities to which they are used. India can never be home for them and it is pointless to try to do it. Hence the futility of all efforts to promote tourism as at present.

Even the hippies have not opened the eyes of authority. There must be and, if the tourist trade in other countries is any guide, there is in between a vast number of potential customers who can, with a little effort and imagination, add to our earnings from the tourist trade. However, before that can happen the entire outlook not only of the Governments, at the Centre and the States, has to be changed, but of the people also. If we want to have tourists we must be prepared to let our hair down and be not afraid of their seeing us in that condition. If sari-wearing foreign women are chased and insulted, as has happened in Delhi—though Calcutta is kinder in this respect—and if anyone from outside

India is to be heckled and liable to have his camera snatched if he takes snaps of the seamy side of Indian life, we may as well forget about having any tourist trade worth the name.

Added to all the other difficulties is the unfortunate fact that we have to look for customers for the tourist trade from far-off countries. Countries in Europe doing a brisk tourist business such as Spain, Italy or France depend on nearby countries. But we do not have that option. We cannot look to the two nearest countries, Pakistan and China, to provide the tourist trade with its business as would have happened had things been otherwise.

Even so if we set our sights on a different type of tourist and advertise our wares better there is no reason why vastly improved business should not result. Given the right attitude to tourists, thousands would flock to see the real Indian life and eat good cheap meals in small restaurants. If only we had the confidence, Durga Puja and other Pujas in Calcutta, Diwali all over India or even Holi without its dirtiness would be as irresistible as festivals are on the Continent in numerous small and unknown places.

I do not know of any Tourist Bureau folder telling the outside world to see India at the time of the Festival of Lights. But perhaps it would be wrong to expect more imagination from those who run these things when for most of them their life's ambition is to be more like the foreigners.

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Statehood For Telengana

COMMENTATOR

THE simmering discontent in Telengana over the unfair and inequitable treatment it has received from the Congress Government of Andhra Pradesh has boiled over. With the Bill over the proposed reorganisation of Assam to ensure to the hill people a bigger say in the shaping of their destiny still on the legislative anvil, the Congress leadership is now faced with a similar demand from another region. The Information Minister of Andhra, Mr K. L. Bapuji, who hails from Telengana, has resigned in protest against the rejection of his demand for regional autonomy for Telengana by the Andhra Chief Minister and the central leadership of the Congress party. Mr Bapuji's demand was comparatively moderate; he had wanted a set-up on the pattern proposed for Assam. But the Congress leaders, as is their wont, have set their face against any reorganisation of the State. They want the people of Telengana to remain satisfied with only oral assurances of fair deal in future, though the Supreme Court has, in a recent judgement, declared "ultra vires" any reservation in the services within Telengana on the basis of regional domicile. Often in the past the Congress leaders have submitted to pressure of public opinion and conceded what they had earlier opposed bitterly. A repetition of this familiar sequence of events cannot be ruled out in Telengana; the Government is being stubborn perhaps because the full price has not yet been paid in life and property. The newspapers have not denied that the people of Telengana have reasonable grounds for grievance. But they are at one with the Government that a remedy should be found within the existing framework and the demand for a separate State cannot be countenanced.

According to *The Hindustan Times*, this sorry episode holds out some

obvious lessons. The first is the folly of making commitments which are not then honoured. The second is the danger of permitting regional disparities and consequent regional discontent to grow to a point where they become emotional barriers. There have been demands for separate statehood in certain other regions as also on the part of Union Territories like Himachal Pradesh. There are vast differences in the area, population and financial resources of different States in the Union. It might be conceivably useful to examine whether political, administrative, and developmental experience indicates any optimum size for States or even districts. There is something to be said for organising the country in a larger number of smaller and more compact States so as to bring the government closer to the citizen precisely in those areas where the administration touches the life of the people. This would also be a means or promoting effective political decentralisation without unduly tampering with the Constitution. In the circumstances, the paper says, it would be undesirable to encourage anything which fosters regional separatism in Telengana. What happens in Telengana could have repercussions elsewhere. Despite the Supreme Court judgment there is no reason why the specific grievances of the Telengana region cannot be removed given a sincere and statesmanlike commitment to implement the promised regional safeguards. Whatever the past record, the Andhra Government should be given a fair chance to live up to its promise of a new deal. Renewed or more bitter agitation is unlikely to help.

The Hindu has asked those fishing in the troubled waters of Telengana discontent to take note of the wave of strong disapproval that the extremist demand for separation has evoked all over the country. If every region within a State is to be allowed to set itself up as a separate entity on the plea of its felt grievances not having been met, there can be no end to the process and the worst sufferers of such dismemberment would be those regions so cut up and cut down. The

grievances of the Telengana people are very much real, the all-party leaders' accord of January 19 itself being a confession of past failure to implement the Telengana safeguards. It is true that one part of the all-party accord to ensure more job opportunities for the Telengana people has become infructuous on account of the Supreme Court striking down the domiciliary rule. It would have been indeed a matter for concern if the Court had failed to do so, considering that the issue is a fundamental one of equality of opportunity to all Indian citizens, irrespective of his place of birth or residence. Mr Brahmananda Reddy, the Chief Minister, has shown his desire to implement the accord in spirit by proposing the creation of 2,000 additional jobs in Telengana to mitigate the effect of the judgment as well as initiating other steps. The trouble is that these steps are not considered by some to be equal to the needs of the occasion. The paper asks all the leaders to "put their heads and hearts" into the business of keeping the State together. A good part of that business will be to convince Telengana of the advantages of continuing to be where it is now in terms of the flow of investment and talent into the region from the rest of the State and the country too. It would also be easy to show how regional chauvinism will only frighten away industry and risk capital, thus aggravating the very backwardness which they resent. What seems to have failed in Andhra Pradesh is a breakdown of communication between the avowed leaders and the people.

The Times of India says that even the worst detractors of Mr Brahmananda Reddy cannot say that remedies for Telengana's legitimate grievances can be found easily or quickly. Whether he should have promised to create only 2,000 new posts in the State Government's service for the people of the region or many more, can be a matter of debate. But no one can seriously argue that a change in the Andhra Government's recruitment policy can alone provide adequate job opportunities for the educated unemployed in Telengana, let alone

put the region on the road to economic progress. In any case the Supreme Court's subsequent decision, quashing the Andhra Government's orders which sought to favour the Telengana "mulkis", cannot be bypassed. Any move on Mr Reddy's part to revive such orders in the future will have to await amendment of the relevant clauses of the Constitution. In the meantime, Telengana's own politicians may discover, if they apply their mind to it, that the worst way of using the accumulated surpluses of revenue in Telengana is to fritter them away in paying the salaries of redundant men in government service. This is not to say that the question of utilising these surpluses for worthwhile schemes of industrial and agricultural development in Telengana will be free from difficulties. The State Government has not merely failed in the past to earmark enough resources for the development of the region but also neglected to draw up the requisite plans and to build up the infrastructure needed to implement them. Nor have the Opposition parties in the State yet made the slightest effort to diagnose Telengana's basic problems and seek their solution within the framework of a comprehensive plan to promote economic progress in the State as a whole.

Patriot says that if proof were required to show that certain disgruntled Congressmen of Telengana have been instrumental in fanning the flames of separatism and encouraging rowdiness in this behalf, it is provided by the decision taken by these elements to float a so-called Pradesh Congress Committee of their own as "a prelude to a separate State." It is obvious that Telengana is hardly capable of being a viable State, and this is why the other parties are anxious that the unity of Andhra Pradesh should not be sought to be destroyed. But the ambitious Congressmen of Telengana saw in the demand for proper implementation of the safeguards promised to the region a chance to appeal to the basest chauvinistic feelings and embarrass their rivals in the State Congress. That the unhappy events marking the course of the agitation

have not sobered them but have led to the adoption of an extreme and totally untenable stand only shows that they hold their personal advancement more important than the interest of the State and its people. While the many Congress factions in Andhra Pradesh must be blamed for this situation, the Central leadership of the party must be held guilty of failure to discipline the local "leaders" and prevent them from acting against the national interest.

Commenting on the situation in Nagaland where the extremist demand is for independence, *The Indian Express* says the Union Government's policy of patience coupled with vigilance has paid off. The split in the rebel camp has widened and there is growing evidence that the extremists have been almost completely isolated. This does not mean that the time has come for resumption of talks with the underground. The Union Government has taken the right attitude in neither acceding to Mr Kughato Sukhai's plea for a fresh round of discussions nor rejecting it out of hand. There can be no meaningful discussions unless the rebels give up their secessionist demand and agree to a settlement within the framework of the Indian Union. It follows from this that the Centre, instead of dealing directly with the rebels, should associate the Government of Nagaland with the efforts to achieve a settlement. The Government of Nagaland has been bypassed in the past. This did not enhance its prestige in the eyes of the people of the State or strengthen its hands in meeting the challenge to law and order. The Centre has realised its mistake and Mr Sukhai has been asked to get in touch with the Governor of Nagaland for preliminary discussions. If he agrees to the suggestion it will show not only that the hostiles really want a peaceful settlement but that they are willing to take a realistic view of the situation. There is no reason to doubt that the underground's willingness to accept a settlement within the framework of the Indian Constitution will evoke an appropriate response from the Centre.

Sharing Media

PRABODH KUMAR MAITRA

LAST week a two-reeler made by a private producer featuring the United Front's coming back to power was referred to the Central Board by the Regional Censor official in Calcutta. A decision could not be taken by the Regional Board apparently because it contained inflammable material. The tone of the film is overtly political. It depicts the phases of the movement from the dismissal of the first UF Ministry in 1967 to its march to power in last February. Much of the material is taken from still photographs of police oppression and the movement soon after the dismissal. Newspaper headlines are copiously used to bring the narrative up to this year's elections. The conspiracy hatched against the UF, the machinations, a scathing indictment of the Centre and a certain political party, are all there in the film which is certainly the first political screen document of its kind in this country.

The lack of a political cinema in this country has often been attributed to the Indian Censor Code. While there is no explicit provision whereby even a film with a political slant can be refused certificate if it does not contravene Clause (E) (bringing "into contempt the armed forces or the public services or persons entrusted with administration of law and order") of the guidelines laid down by the Union Government, the area of undefined discretionary powers seems wide enough to cover any item not mentioned in the guidelines. The Censor Code itself smacks of an excessive pre-occupation with sex on the one hand and concern for law and order on the other. The assumption that the Establishment is sacrosanct seems to stifle a spirit of enquiry. If the decision of the Central Board is unsatisfactory appeal lies with the Central Government only and no legal remedy can be had in term of Section 7F of The Cinematograph Act 1952.

As this is a case unique in the annals of the history of censorship in India the Khosla Committee on censorship, which is likely to submit its report in a few months, should take cognisance of it before finalising its recommendations. But apart from the limited context of censorship regulations, it brings into light more fundamental issues of Centre-State relations in the sphere of mass communication. What is involved is the basic question of monopoly in the use and operation of different media and how adjustment needs to be made in this very vital area of handling the machinery of persuasion in the State sector. Two years back the episode relating to All India Radio and the then UF Labour Minister of West Bengal brought into limelight another area of controversy which is far from resolved. The two episodes together pose the very important question of whether a State Government is within its rights to express its own view or enable others to air theirs with which it is in broad agreement by using a medium whose overall control is vested in the Centre, and how in the changed political mosaic of the country since 1967 such constraints may be done away with. In respect of films it may be recalled that there used to be Censor Boards in Calcutta and Bombay till the Patil Committee's recommendations put an end to it. A Central Board with regional offices was recommended in conformity with the constitutional provision which places certification of films for exhibition in the Union list. This is unlike most countries of the West where local bodies retain a measure of control to undo the censors' intransigence. Here a sort of moronic uniformity was sought to be imposed because a multiplicity of views is anathema to the authorities. It is interesting to observe that censorship of posters and film publicity has been assigned to the States perhaps as a sop.

It may be a little premature to abolish censorship altogether in this country but in the changed context the composition of the body and its functions should undergo drastic changes. The censors cannot remain

the custodian of the interests of Centre and State authorities and private producers should have every right to air their views through films at least within their own State, if not throughout the country.

Centre's Coffer

Other considerations of media operation and use also suggest themselves. The Films Division is a Central apparatus and its newsreels and documentaries are compulsory screening material in all the showhouses in India for up to twenty minutes. This is of course not free, the exhibitors have to pay the Division on weekly calculations. The State has to obtain permission to screen its own material from the Films Division. This goes to the Centre's coffer. It is interesting to note that the Centre has no direct responsibility for the film industry as such and in a moment of crisis the State Governments are asked to settle matters. The Centre has other dispensations, particularly in respect of raw stock which has to be imported and in the distribution of which also the States have no say. (The States are not in the picture in the allotment of newsprint quota either). So the Centre has its finger in every pie and the use of media, owned by the State and private hands, is very much controlled by Delhi to the exclusion of the legitimate authority of the States.

Ingenuous moves are often made to give it a decentralised look. The Films Division is very much Bombay based and its newsreels and documentaries show that slant. Even in an era when the same party ruled at the Centre and the States it scarcely projected State events. A fresh move to decentralise the outfit will hardly meet the demands of the new situation. For proper utilisation of the film medium the State should have their own apparatus of production, distribution and unrestricted exhibition. Part of the wherewithal should come from the takings of the Films Division. The film-goer pays to see also the State image and screening time needs to be shared.

If in respect of films there is pro-

vision for accommodation of State productions to a limited degree. All India Radio has a virtual monopoly of the listening time. Here also licences fees and commercials paid for by listeners and advertisers fatten the Central fund. The user hardly gets the benefit of such a potential medium. The fact that it functions as an adjunct of a Central Ministry is enough to sum up the inadequacies, some of which have been listed by the Chanda Committee. The Centre's reluctance to convert it into a corporation as demanded many times is sure evidence of lack of a spirit of accommodation. When TV comes in a big way as it must in a few years, author powerful instrument will be monopolised by Delhi to put across the only set of views held by it.

The Chanda Committee has only scratched the surface of the problem of media. But some recommendations have been sat over by the authorities which appointed the Committee to probe the problems. A council of mass communications representing all the interests merits special attention. What seems equally important is to have State councils for all the media so that the States can exercise their legitimate right of participation in the task of persuasion. It also seems called for that Radio, TV and films should be placed on the Concurrent list.

The time has come to repen the issues involved in such monopolistic practices of the Centre. The reality of a situation in which different political parties or groups of them rule the Centre and different States has not been appreciated in its proper perspective. The voter votes to exercise his individual choice and he legitimately feels that different media must assume obligations of social responsibility and if they do not someone must see that they do. The voter not only votes, he pays for the services of the media.

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Calcutta Painters

BY AN ART CRITIC

CALCUTTA Painters' 1969 group exhibition, held at the Calcutta Information Centre, showed 47 paintings by nine artists. The three whose paintings dominated the show were Mohim Roodro, Prakash Karmarkar and Rabin Mondal. Of Roodro's six paintings, a striking one was called *Mysterious Cosmic Sense*, perhaps intended to help lame viewers over the stile. Caption or no caption, the painting, with its deep dark ground and circles and shapes in orange, grey, mauve and green, did convey a sense of space. His colourful *Spirit of Spring* was more obviously pleasing to look at.

Prakash Karmarkar had an intriguing painting with an animal head. But his smaller paintings, compositions in various shades of grey, had a subtle appeal and rare charm.

Rabin Mondal exhibited a number of faces of which *Subhadra* and *Boy with a Bird* were excellent.

Some other paintings that deserve mention were Tapan Ghosh's colourful *Stable*, Dilip Kundu's large and dazzling *Enjoying*, one of Nikhilesh Das's 'abstracts with yellow ground', and a couple of little quiet *Intaglios* (prints) by Amitabha Sen Gupta.

Taken altogether, the Calcutta Painters' exhibition had a character. A rare virtue these days when so many shows, particularly of abstract paintings, have hardly anything to commend themselves except their anonymity.

Poles Apart

Rabin Halder, who held a one-man show at the Academy last week, is poles apart from the Calcutta Painters. A realistic painter, Halder chooses subjects that lend themselves

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to pictorial narration. He displayed many roadside scenes and landscapes and some of his paintings were a commentary on Calcutta life. For instance, *habitués gossiping in the Coffee House* and a *Saraswati Puja procession with young men in drain-pipes doing 'rock and roll'*. While the paintings had an appeal, many of Halder's canvases were illustrations rather than paintings.

Landscape Painter

Also at the Academy were shown (April 3 to 9) water colours and temperas of Vasant Pandit, a painter from Madhya Pradesh. The paintings, mostly depicting hills and plains, rivers and forts, were not only beautiful but, more important, had local colour. The technique by which Pandit executes temperas and water colours is somewhat complicated. He first wets the paper and thereby gets the basic shapes accidentally and partly deliberately by a controlled spilling of ink on the moist paper. Finally, he imparts the finishing touches with a minimum of drawing.

Pandit is technically distinguished and possesses a true love of nature in her pristine glory, undefiled by human intrusion. A typical and beautiful example was the *Bridge*. An exquisite landscape with trees, valleys and hills in lovely tones with a tiny little bridge tacked away in it. The bridge somehow intensified the solitude and beauty of nature that the painter wished to convey.

Sketching Club Show

The Sketching Club, run by the Academy of Fine Arts held its twelfth annual show last week. There were over 80 exhibits, mostly sketches, and water colours with a few oils and graphics thrown in for good measure.

Among the sketches, nudes were most prevalent. Generally uninspiring except for two beautiful pieces of D. N. Ghose. There were a couple of fine water colours by W. R. Kapoor and Swadhin Dutta and some interesting sketches. None of the oils deserve mention. Easily the best exhibit in the show was Samaresh Chowdhury's excellent sculpture of a head.

Letters

Boycott Slogan

The slogan of election-boycott in West Bengal has been proved premature so far as the immediate task is concerned and helped the CPI (M) and the CPI to strengthen their grip on the people with the illusion of a government of their own. Once again history has been repeated. The petty-bourgeois leaders of the communist movement have again succeeded in mobilising the people in the election movement, exploiting their anti-Congress feelings.

What happened is very simple and concrete. But the Revolutionary Communists are dogmatically refusing to understand it.

The objective condition in West Bengal is revolutionary to some extent no doubt, a political crisis is here. The Naxalbari movement showed the way out of the crisis. But what about subjective conditions? Where is the revolutionary party which will lead the people in this revolutionary situation? A Marxist-Leninist cannot think of a revolutionary movement without a revolutionary party. As Comrade Mao has said, "If there is a revolution, there must be a revolutionary party". (Selected Works vol. IV P 284).

It is unfortunate that Communist Revolutionaries found inspiration for their election boycott from the history of the boycott of the first Duma by the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks were then the most organised communist party in the world. It was deeply entrenched among the politically mature working class, who were organised in militant mass organisations. The political situation was such that the boycott took the shape of a great revolutionary upheaval of the workers and the other toiling masses. Does the situation in West Bengal correspond to this situation? There is no Marxist-Leninist party in West Bengal; on the contrary revisionist communist parties still hold the grip on a considerable section of the masses. The illusion of ending the

Congress rule through elections exists almost in all classes. In this situation, the call of election boycott was subjective and contradictory to the present objective situation.

It is not a historical truth that the Marxist-Leninists fight against the parliamentary way to power by calling for a boycott of elections. The slogan of boycott is given in a particular advanced stage when a considerable section of politically advanced masses puts the slogan into practice, launching a revolutionary mass upsurge. But if the situation is not such, they take part in the elections single-handed. "Even in the constituencies, where there is no prospect of our candidate being elected, the workers must nevertheless put up candidates in order to maintain their independence, to steel their forces and to bring their revolutionary attitude and party views before the public", (Marx). *A Handbook of Marxism*, edited by Emil Burns).

The Marxist Leninists utilize this platform in the interest of revolution, not for taking part in legislative work or to form government, but "to explain to the people the impossibility of achieving political freedom by parliamentary means" (Lenin's Collected Works, Vol. 13, P. 129).

It is often argued that parliamentary life corrupts the communists. So revolutionary communists must not take part in it.

The fault is not with parliamentary life, but with the party life. If Marxist-Leninist party principles, strict discipline and struggle between ideas of different kinds are practised self-critically, within the party, the communists will not fail to set example of how to fight against parliamentary vices.

If honest self-criticism is made, it will come out that the boycott of elections was a call which did not correspond with the immediate condition of the State, the level of consciousness of the broad masses and the condition of both a revolutionary party and mass organisations. Most people, saw that there would be an election and that a government would come to power. From their

limited realisation they could not agree that the Congress and the UF are exactly the same. They particularised and decided to rout the Congress at the poll and elected UF candidates with an overwhelming majority. As there is no popular revolutionary party and mass organisation to launch an immediate movement for the realisation of their basic demands, they thought the slogan of boycott a negative one and rallied round the UF under the leadership of the parliamentary communist parties for realisation of their immediate demands. The revolutionary communists failed to be with the masses in this election movement and thus failed to learn from the people.

The more the Communist Revolutionaries fail to accept the reality through honest self-criticism, the more they will be isolated in the mire of dogmatism.

It is high time they formed a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party. The idea that there never was a communist party in India, so we should start from the primitive stage by forming groups, is subjective and a distortion of history. Again the idea that the party will come into existence by the process of continuous militant mass struggle in also alien to Marxism as it leads to the theory of spontaneity.

The Indian communist movement is as old as that of China. It is true that it has been dominated by petty-bourgeois leadership at almost all levels and a series of left and right deviations have prevailed in the party. But how can we forget the heroic Telengana movement, the RIN mutiny, the Telengana and Hajong agrarian revolution, in which hundreds of comrades fought and sacrificed their lives? If we fail to understand this vital historical reality, if we fail to be proud of our revolutionary heritage we can not build a revolutionary party. By not forming a party, the communist revolutionaries have allowed anarchism to flourish.

GOPAL DAS MUKHERJEE
Bhadrakali, Hooghly.

Jadavpur

In their letter (March 29) on Jadavpur, some students of the Faculty of Engineering and some members of the staff (are they teachers?) of the Faculty of Science have concealed the basic fact that, had there been no denial of promotion to four students by the authorities, the demonstration would not have been held. The anger of the students should be viewed in this perspective.

There are some questions to ask. What about the two-month gap between the incident and the show cause notice served on nine students, the majority of whom were not even present at the time of the demonstration in the University? And how many universities in India have such an alarmingly large number of industrial tycoons "furthest from things educational" in the Governing Body? Did not these men form an unholy alliance against the present Vice-Chancellor who is a popular teacher and does not their writ run on the whole campus? Is it conducive to the healthy growth of the academic life in the University?

Something is rotten in Jadavpur. The smell is out and the present Education Minister has some responsibility in the matter.

GOUTAM SARMA,
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