

# frontier

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## IN QUEST OF HAPPINESS

THE ritual has been gone through, and last weekend in New Delhi Mrs Gandhi got the Indian National Congress she wanted. Happy happy happy was the dominating refrain. Friends of the Soviet Union would feel happy with the nomination of Mr Chandrajeet Yadav and Mrs Nandini Satpathi in the Indira Working Committee; and, going through the dust-laden records, it could even be discovered that Mr K. R. Ganesh too was, once upon a time, an 'activist' member of the Students Federation. But the noble Americans need not feel downcast either; with Mr C. Subramaniam installed as President pro tem, they can feel equally blissful about Mrs Gandhi's fluorescent socialism. Mr T. T. Krishnamachari, the socialist capitalist—or have we got it wrong, the capitalist socialist?—made a dramatic last-minute air dash to New Delhi to ensure due representation for the hegemony of the rich. He will now be one of the "permanent invitees" to the Working Committee; so will be Mr Fatehsingh Gaekwad, the looker-after of the interests of both the princes and the Cricket Club of India. The kulaks will have due representation through Mr Shyama Charan Shukla and Mr Brahmananda Reddy; the "comprador" capitalists will have Mr Mohanlal Sukhadia and Mr V. P. Naik. The major minority community will have its quota filled through Mr Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and Mir Qasim. Even the habitual tax-defaulters might feel assured that Mrs Gandhi has not ignored their legitimate cause: the Union Minister for Food and Agriculture continues to be in the Working Committee.

After such eclecticism, what fear? Come one, come all, went the call; the response has been magnificent; the delegates have not been fussy, they have not been choosey, they have all come, each and every one of them. Nobody, not even Mr S. K. Patil, can now insinuate that Mrs Gandhi's Congress is any less reactionary than Mr Kamaraj's and Mr Nijalingappa's; one is the spit image of the other, and if Mr Asoka Mehta and Mr Ravindra Verma can compose high-falutin' prose on the onrushing socialism, so can, with equal facility—or is it felicity—Mr Subramaniam and Mr Chandra Sekhar. Competitive essay-writing will now approach the hour of the high noon. Nothing else is changed: but, instead of having just one Old Man River, we will have the privilege of witnessing two of them, technical identities, in full-throated pursuit of

the goal of heavenly socialism, going on for ever.

Wisdom is as it was practised in the past. At the New Delhi jamboree, there was thus a carefully planned backing away from the promises of a time-bound economic programme, spelled out in terms, not of vacuities, but specific, taxonomic detail. Precision is a virtue of little minds: the Congress is bigger, broader, wider, nobler than all that. Some morsels will of course be thrown toward the proper direction, and the timing of such gestures will be staggered with a sophistication which would take Morarji Desai's breath away. A new Pay Commission for the Central Government employees, including those in the public enterprises, is being announced; the Commission will not report for at least two years, but that is so much the better—there are umpteen sweet uses of a post-dated cheque. There will be brave talk of the imperative need for drastic land reforms, and at least for speedy and official implementation of existing legislation on the subject: the first salvo is being fired at the special conference of the Chief Ministers now meeting in New Delhi. But the Prime Minister has already worked out her alibi in case no substantial results follow: she has already given her broad directions and what could she, poor thing, do if the State governments, who have the constitutional jurisdiction over land problems, refuse to fall in? And if perchance some measures of reform do slip through, affecting the rural oligarchs, she could compensate them adequately through the devices of the nationalised banking sector. Perhaps the coming Union Budget will introduce a kind of token tax on urban property: that will duly be hailed as another giant stride towards socialist brotherhood; after the predictable amendments and modifications are incorporated, the net yield from the new tax will perhaps yield a bare crore or two of rupees annually; the urban bourgeoisie too will be duly compensated for that little touch: they can raise the prices of some industrial goods or other, and

no questions will be asked.

It will thus be a painless, costless march to socialism, in true sarvodaya fashion, and that repository of all-purpose conscience, Mr Jayaprakash Narayan, will be only too happy to join. Messrs Kamaraj and Morarji Desai may keep up their grousing, but they can be pensioned off. We will then truly have happiness that passeth understanding. And in case there would still happen to be professional spoilers of sport, our patriotic newspapers will not report their activities.

## “Pacification”

The history of war records hardly any kind of atrocity that the Americans have not committed in Vietnam. The death and destruction rained on unarmed men, women and children by bombers, helicopters or artillery are too obvious to merit mention, though particular care is taken to add an extra touch of barbarism by napalm, crop-destroying gases and other horrors in the Free World's chemical, and probably biological, arsenals. But even this mass devastation is perhaps less revolting to contemplate than the cold savagery practised at individual or group levels. People are killed or tortured merely on suspicion, or perhaps simply for the “kick” the brave Americans get from cruelty. It must be added, however, that sometimes they let their South Vietnamese servants do the job, so that they can get a special “kick” from watching. They provide special tools for torture, advanced technical know-how for pain, mutilation or slow death. Perhaps they reinforce their faith in all-American values from the spectacle of their stooges torturing children, maiming women or killing famished old men.

Whenever there have been reports of such atrocities, Washington has first tried to deny them. When the denials have proved useless, it has tried to blame it all on the South Vietnamese. These people may have had the good sense to seek American

protection, but they are after all Asiatic bastards, whom the decent GIs cannot always control. But the record of what happened in the small village of My Lai is far too detailed to be suppressed in this fashion. The communist version of the incident could be dismissed as propaganda, but this time some Western journalists have taken the trouble of finding out for themselves. Here is a summary of the account put out by such respectable sources as Reuter and United Press International, but curiously played down in the Indian Press.

My Lai, a small hamlet set among South Vietnam's swamps and paddy fields, maintained its poverty-stricken existence until the middle of March last year. Only some fire-blackened and empty stone houses and open patches are all that remain of it today. All but some 80 of its total population of more than 400 were killed by American troops who entered the village one day about 20 months ago. The survivors moved to Son My, a neighbouring refugee village. What had the villagers done? They were given no explanation, though one South Vietnamese official claims that in 1964 the Vietcong had set up a base at My Lai and the Americans last year avenged the death of some American soldiers killed in the area four years previously. This certainly needs no comment. But let the facts be unfolded.

One of the survivors, 48-year-old Do Chue, told the visiting journalists that the American troops had ordered or pulled out the villagers from their huts, divided them into three groups of 200, 100 and 70, and then opened fire with machine-guns and automatic rifles. He showed a photograph of two girls: “They were my daughters. They were killed by the Americans the day of the massacre. So was my aunt.” A 14-year-old boy showed where two of his fingers had been shot off. Another survivor said that the dead were later buried in a mass grave. All the survivors said that at least 300 people had been killed, but some put the number at twice as many.

Do Chue, whose account was confirmed by the other survivors, said that the Americans had been to their village before and had no reason to be hostile. "We had no reason to fear them. We were eating breakfast that morning. Suddenly artillery rounds started exploding all round. We hid in bunkers. Then eight helicopters landed and American troops came into the village. They ordered us out of our house. Everyone—old men, children and women with babies. They marched us a few hundred yards and told us to squat down... They set up one gun with legs that I had never seen before. Now the people were crying and begging... Then shooting started. I was wounded in the leg. I was covered by dead bodies, but I dared not move. I stayed there for about one hour until the soldiers walked away towards the sea. When it was quiet the survivors, maybe 80 of us, ran to the Son Thanh marketplace about half a mile away for help."

Comment, as we said, is unnecessary. Some stir has been created, even within the USA. But Richard Nixon can perhaps be expected to accept the advice of George Brown, the British Labour Party leader, who has advised the Americans to "stop weeping" over atrocities in Vietnam and get on with the war.

## Okinawa

With the US decision to restore Okinawa to Japan militant Japanese students and workers seem to have won their first round even if their desperate bid to prevent Eisaku Sato from leaving for Washington did not succeed. By agreeing to the reversion of the island President Nixon has admitted, among other things, the political cost of the mounting anger and violence of Japanese youth. However, no Japanese would fail to notice that Nixon is just coming to terms with not only a political but a strategic reality. To insist on keeping the island under Stars and Stripes for the sake of retaining a nu-

clear base is an anachronism in the age of ICBMs, MIRVs and Polaris (and in any case other Pacific bases like Guam are there). Besides, the end of American rule does not end the presence of American air and naval bases. Nixon has not forgotten to make sure that American B-52 bombers would as usual continue to use the Okinawa base for attacks on Vietnam. The fact that once under Japanese sovereignty the Americans are required to make prior consultation for using the base presents no insurmountable difficulty. Both Tokyo and Washington agree that South Korea and Taiwan are within the area where the US can conduct combat operations directly from bases on Okinawa. And it means that in any prior consultation Japan would say 'yes'. In deference to the Japanese Constitution which forbids stationing of nuclear arms on Japanese soil Washington agreed last week to withdraw nuclear weapons from the island before the reversion takes place. But Nixon made a mockery of this deference by reserving the right to reintroduce nuclear weapons at a time of emergency.

In exchange of these dubious concessions Americans had their pound of flesh. The Japan-US Security Treaty due to expire next June will be 'automatically continued' by Sato and his party. The Japanese Foreign Minister, Mr Kiichi Aichi's heroics about never allowing a "textile trade dispute to be tied in with the Okinawa talks" notwithstanding, Japan agreed to a package deal for the benefit of the American textile industry which felt menaced by the flood of cheap Japanese textiles. The other price extracted even before the joint communiqué on Okinawa was signed was the opening up of the Japanese automobile industry to American capital. Tokyo, which has been resisting the pressure of the American automobile industry since 1967 has finally given in. But unhappy with joint ventures at 50:50 basis the Americans have already started clamouring for hundred per cent freeing of the Japanese auto market. Japanese industrialists ap-

pear to be ready to hand over the automobile industry to the Americans to safeguard their other more valuable interests. Liberalization of import restrictions which Japan maintains on 118 articles in favour of American exporters is now a question of time.

The other concession to the Pentagon about which Tokyo would prefer to be discreet is an increasing role in the so-called 'security of Asia'. The Japanese Defence Agency recently started drafting the five year programme to begin in 1972. The plan, as wished by the Pentagon, is expected to call for a big improvement in the equipment and capacity of the 'Self Defence Forces' raising the defence expenditure from 0.8 p.c. of the GNP to 2 p.c. And nothing would please the American military-industrial complex more than an order for jets and missiles to shore up Japanese 'defence'. Washington could not care less if the Japanese Sun replaced the American Stars and Stripes over Okinawa.

## Mission To Delhi

It does no credit to Mr Ajoy Mukherjee, or to the UF either, that political tongues begin to wag whenever he visits New Delhi. Mr Mukherjee has himself to blame if his meetings with the Prime Minister or the Union Home Minister are invariably linked with moves to topple the UF Government. Even otherwise it would have been difficult to forget what he was about to do two years ago; memories linger, and by his performance and pronouncements he has freshened them up in the past few weeks. His current visit to New Delhi has evoked more than the normal quota of speculation because of his party's six-week-old jehad against the CPI(M), backed by appropriate noises by some other constituents of the Front. To strengthen his hands at the negotiating table in New Delhi the Bangla Congress Secretariat advanced by three days its stock-taking

of the law and order situation ; its conclusion was foregone, though, for the leader himself had stated a few days ago that no civilised government was functioning in the State. He sought to justify this indictment of his own government on the ground that he had not forfeited his right to speak out the truth simply because he happened to head the ministry. Someone should tell the truth-loving Chief Minister that a corresponding love of honesty would have dictated him to resign before he did his obeisance to truth.

This is perhaps the type of advice he is getting in New Delhi, though for an altogether different purpose ; Mr Chavan has practically said as much. The Union Home Minister has expressed concern at the situation in West Bengal and sympathised with the Chief Minister in his helplessness to stem the tide of events. Mr Mukherjee has responded readily by sharing Mr Chavan's concern, though his colleague, Mr Jyoti Basu, has dismissed the Union Home Minister's comments as interference in the internal affairs of the State. Mr Chavan has succeeded in bringing to the fore the rift in the UF Cabinet by his sham tear-shedding ; he will be the last person to worry if law and order crumbles in a leftist regime for that gives him an opportunity to show off his strongmanship. His statements on West Bengal are an encouragement to Mr Mukherjee and like-minded leaders of some other UF parties, an assurance that the Centre and the brave new Congress of Mrs Gandhi are with them. Naturally, Mr Sushil Dhara, who, as the leader of the victorious camp in the factional fight in the Bangla Con-

gress, has sired the satyagraha idea, is elated. He has given out that to enable the fasting Mr Mukherjee to function as Chief Minister from the park where he will offer satyagraha telephone cables are being laid. Mr Mukherjee will fast for three days only ; he can function from home as he often does; even a short respite from Chief Ministership of an uncivilised government should not be unwelcome to him. Mr Dhara's gimmick will cost the exchequer some money. As Finance Minister Mr Mukherjee should stop this waste of public funds for party stunts.

Mr Mukherjee holds the ace of trumps in West Bengal for he can reshuffle the Cabinet any time he chooses. That it will be a breach of a UF agreement is of small consequence ; few UF agreements are being honoured, and one more or less cannot matter. Moreover, it may not be difficult for him to secure a majority in the UF in favour of a redistribution of portfolios. Any party walking out of the Front in protest will then be guilty of desertion. In that sense he is not helpless. His worry is whether he will be able to come up on top if he takes the plunge, whether he will be in a position to head the successor ministry. In this matter the Prime Minister and Mr Chavan can help him a lot. His discussion with the Union Home Minister on the law and order situation may be a cover ; they may devote more time to a fresh counting of heads. With the precedents of Kerala and New Delhi Mr Mukherjee has more than one option. What will best suit the situation in West Bengal will require cool calculation and prior working out of political and administrative details. It may not be a mere coincidence that the likely protagonists of a palace coup are all in New Delhi now, including the Governor and the Chief Secretary. It will indeed be surprising if the Chief Minister does not return from New Delhi fully cured of his feeling of helplessness, particularly after the formation of the ad hoc Congress Committee.

## CPI And Chandigarh

The CPI claims to have taken a principled stand on Chandigarh. It considers that the Shah Commission on Chandigarh was misled by the 1961 Census which was twisted by Hindi-mongers and therefore Chandigarh, which is a Punjabi-speaking area, should go to Punjab. Its boisterous participation in the all-party action committee on Chandigarh, launched by the Akalis and Congressmen in Punjab, is therefore based on a principle. Apparently nothing objectionable, except the fact that the CPI is still considered by its affiliates as a workers' party. What is in reality involved in this Chandigarh issue? What bearing has it on the workers? All the excitement that has been whipped up by Pherumans and Fateh Singhs is being used by the ruling clique to blanket off the basic struggles of workers. It is but an extended form of territorial greed. Mixed with religion and language, the factional quarrel over Chandigarh is another form of the game that the bourgeois played so successfully during the partition of the country. By joining the all-party action committee, the CPI is just playing the bourgeois game. The CPI can of course rationalise its behaviour by saying that it is entrenching itself in Punjab by keeping itself in the mainstream of popular emotions. Nobody would be however interested to see how the CPI would in future canalise a fundamentally reactionary course into a progressive upsurge.

It is not difficult to understand why the CPI is so zealously fighting over the Chandigarh issue. It sneers at the CPM which it calls a local party, confined within West Bengal and Kerala. It considers itself an all-India party. It will be interesting however to note how it acquired the all-India character. Punjab offers a good study.

The Congress in Punjab is fast losing its hold. Out of the 38 members elected to the Assembly in the February mid-term poll, 10 have already left the party to join the Akalis.

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More are suspected to be on the move. The Congress is however not too much worried over the defections, for the splitting members are being absorbed by the Akalis and the Jana Sangh—its two other fronts. The CPI could have made some sense if it had analysed the class character of all these three parties—Congress, Akali and Jana Sangh—and sought to forge its own independent way. But of such stuff the CPI was never made. It rushed towards the Akalis when the Jana Sangh threatened to quit the coalition Government if the Government-aided schools were not given the choice to opt out for their own medium of instruction. The Jana Sangh demand was in effect a demand for Hindi in Punjab. Punjab was carved out three years ago on this very language issue. But the Akalis conceded the Jana Sangh demand and kept itself in the ministry. The CPI, feeling stranded, since then has formed a clique with the Congress stragglers and is seeking to countervail the Akali-Jana Sangh combine. An admirable exercise in parliamentary politics indeed but

it has hardly anything to do with any principle. By launching itself in the all-party action committee, the CPI has even compromised with its own principle, or whatever of it was still left. In this too, the CPI did not want to harass the Congress at the Centre

much too much. It soft-pedalled the agitation when the Congress was going through its galloping factional crisis. Now that the Indira Government has sort of steadied itself, the CPI wants to go into action. Other people call it opportunism. The CPI calls it principle.

## More About The Massacre

Since our editorial comment ("Pacification") on the massacre at My Lai in South Vietnam was written, three American soldiers who belonged to the company that carried out the mass murder have testified to every atrocity reported earlier by some of the survivors. Here are the main points from their accounts, mostly reproduced verbatim.

The unit was led by a platoon commanded by Lieutenant William L. Calley (now officially charged with the murder of 109 South Vietnamese civilians), and the unit included Sergeant Bernhardt, belonging to a different platoon. The latter, describ-

ing the incident, says that he had been delayed and had fallen slightly behind the company as it entered the village area. He could already see that Lieutenant Calley's men "were doing a whole lot of shooting up there".

"I walked up and saw those guys doing strange things. They were doing it three ways. One: they were setting fire to the hootches and huts and waiting for people to come out and then shooting them. Two: they were going into the hootches and then shooting them up. Three: they were gathering people in groups and shooting them.



"As I walked in you could see piles of people all through the village... all over.

"They were shooting women and children just like anybody else. We met no resistance... we had no casualties. It was just like any other Vietnamese village—old papa-sans and kids... I don't remember seeing one military-age male in the entire place, dead or alive.

"The whole thing was so deliberate. It was point-blank murder."

Another witness, Private Michael Terry, has described the operation thus: "They just marched through shooting everybody. Seems like no one said anything—they just started pulling people out and shooting them."

Private Terry recalls that at one point some 20 to 30 villagers were lined up in front of a ditch and shot. "They had them in a group standing over a ditch... just like a Nazi-type thing. I don't remember seeing any men in the ditch; mostly women and kids". Later, when he and some others were lunching near the ditch, he noticed that some of the people shot were still breathing. "They weren't going to get any medical help, and so we shot them."

Another soldier remembers seeing a boy of about three or four years standing with a gunshot wound in one arm. "The boy was clutching his wounded arm with his other hand, while blood trickled between his fingers... He just stood there with big eyes staring around, like he didn't understand; he didn't believe what was happening. Then the captain's radio operator put a burst of 16 (M16 fire) into him."

But why? Sergeant Burnhardt says: "A lot of guys feel that they (South Vietnamese civilians) aren't human beings. We just treated them like animals." He also recalls that after the massacre "guys were saying how great it was". Commenting on the incident a veteran British correspondent in Washington says that one explanation is "that no foreigner is worth the life of an 'American bay'" and this is coupled with the Americans' "fear and low opinion of

Asians". A book has just been published in the USA describing how a five-man American patrol abducted

a Vietnamese girl, raped her, and then murdered her. This must have been great too.

### *View from Delhi*

## Splitting At The Base

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE bandwagon has got to a creaking start at last and anybody who has trouble with his income-tax returns or a CBI dossier against him is part of it. But there was hardly anything in the "requisitioned" AICC—described pompously by Mrs Indira Gandhi as a turning point—from the AICC sessions of the past. The tired Syndicate leadership was not there but the smell of decadence was in the air. It was the same string of pious platitudes and homilies, the same cliché-thinking resulting from inbreeding in thought. In short, all the paradoxes and contradictions of the ye olde Congress were there in the "new look" organisation which Mrs Gandhi's face from myriad posters launched.

It looks as though the Young Turks and their programme are the first casualties of the turning point. The requisitioned session could not do with the cow-above-country Seth Govind Das and the fire-eating Syndicate stormtrooper of yore, Ram Sam Saheb Pandey, to project the new party. Nor the two barristers from West Bengal, Mr Asoke Sen and Mr Siddhartha Shankar Raf, both of them famous for their role in drafting the midnight invecives for the Prime Minister. The "new-look" Working Committee (the old faces were automatically re-elected so that the new faces could be nominated) could not be constituted without the wily D. P. Mishra and the confused V. C. Shukla. The Young Turks got their lollipops—two former CPI card holders, K. R. Ganesh and Chandrajeev Yadav found themselves nominated to the Working Committee and poor S. Chandrasekhar got a consol-

ation prize in the form of a special invitation to all the meetings, without the voting rights.

None of the excitement witnessed on the first day, when Mrs Gandhi completed the formalities of a split and cleared the decks for a beach-landing operation to seize the party machinery was to be found the following morning. Ideology and economic programme have always been anathema to the leadership, old or new. The same old counterfeit slogans like a socialist charter for children, land reforms and what have you and the ritual was over. No more talk of abolishing privy purses or imposing ceilings on urban property because the heterogeneous anti-ideology menagerie has to be held together. Every point in the 10-point programme when implemented would cost Mrs Gandhi the support of 20 to 30 of her MPs just as every ministerial appointment she makes would drive five MPs on average out of her fold. If the choice is between ideology and survival, Mrs Gandhi's priorities would never be in doubt.

Even before the session ended there were rumblings of revolt from Orissa because Mr Bijoyanand Patnaik has been short-changed over the composition of the Working Committee, from Maharashtra because Mr Y. B. Chavan has been eclipsed, from Andhra Pradesh because Br Brahmamanda Reddy cannot countenance Mr D. Sanjiviah being made the President and there was no end to the bickerings. The best of the bargain went to Madhya Pradesh which gained two places in the Working Committee.

True Mrs Gandhi has demonstrat-

ed her numerical superiority at various levels, middle upwards—at the Congress Parliamentary Party and in Parliament. Ten of the PCCs are with her and six re-divided. But with the call for a plenary session the split extends to the base. The proportion of Mrs Gandhi's strength varies from one level to another. In all likelihood the split at the base would be in the ratio of sixty-forty which is very different from the steam-roller majority she had in the Congress Parliamentary Party at the time of its split. Mrs Gandhi is also inheriting the Syndicate intact at the Pradesh level, as for example in Madhya Pradesh. Syndicate storm-troopers and crypto-communists are viable partners in the "new look" Congress, which makes the whole exercise so puerile and devoid of any ideology. Those in power carry the majority and the have-nots stand marooned.

In Parliament, Mrs Gandhi's was an illusory victory though the elaborate arithmetical exercises tried to

establish that she does not depend on either of the two communist parties for her survival. The fact remains she is heading a minority ministry because not more than 210 Congress MPs could have voted for her on the Rabat censure motion. An issue like the Preventive Detention Act could force a new alignment or at least bully the communists into staying neutral. On some other issue her tenuous majority might give way and it might be a snap defeat. It cannot be a Congress Government at the Centre any more however much the two spokesmen of the two communist parties hate the thought that Dr Ram Subhag Singh could be the first Leader of the Opposition in Parliament vide Erskine May. The Centre would save the communists of embarrassment over the Preventive Detention Act by leaving it to the States which want to enact suitable detention law after the present Act lapses. A break-up of the number of Naxalites held by Mr Jyoti Basu under the Preventive Detention Act is not

available. But preventive detention is a concurrent subject and Jammu and Kashmir has its own legislation on it. So Mrs Gandhi's Government need not collapse on the issue of preventive detention. The alibi has been found.

#### Quid Pro Quo

It is not the defeat of the Government in Parliament that is worrying the super-Powers. Moscow honestly thinks there would be an Indonesia-style coup in New Delhi if Mrs Gandhi is not propped now. The Achutha Menon ministry in Kerala is as much a minority ministry as Mrs Gandhi's is. The basis for the quid pro quo could always be found. In Trivandrum, the CPI is now sure the SSP would not support it and the five pro-Indira Gandhi MLAs of the Congress party are being assiduously wooed in return for promise of CPI support at the Centre. Until the other day both the CPI(M) and the CPI were canvassing in the Parliament House lobbies for the elec-

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Extension to Residence

tion of Mr P. K. Vasudevan Nair (CPI) as the Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha. But Mrs Gandhi told a top CPI leader that much as she wanted Mr Nair's election, she had to think of her following which might not endorse the deal.

The fortunes of the CPI(M) in West Bengal are linked with the fate of the Government at the Centre and that of the CPI-led ministry in Kerala. Until a few weeks ago, Mrs Gandhi was thinking of inducting Mr Ajoy Mukherjee into the Central Cabinet so that the CPI(M) could have responsibility commensurate with its strength in West Bengal which of course is the euphemism for elevating Mr Jyoti Basu to Chief Ministership, even if the CPI does not like the proposition. Now, the time-table has been drawn up for a Kerala-style coup in West Bengal, to ease the Marxists out of power and prop a non-Congress, non-CPI(M) ministry of the Bangla Congress-CPI axis with the external support of the Siddhartha Shankar Ray group Congress.

At least this is what one hears about West Bengal in the corridors of New Delhi. Logic ordains that Mrs Gandhi should leave the West Bengal United Front undisturbed. The same logic ordains that Mr Jyoti Basu support Mrs Gandhi at the Centre. But then the CPI(M) is divided about its tactics. Mr P. Ramamurti made a half-hearted speech on the Rabat issue, under his party's dictates while Mr S. A. Dange turned out to be the best spokesman for the Government. But neither party is sure of its stand on a no-confidence or censure motion against Mrs Gandhi. The voting behaviour of the two parties in Parliament needs legitimisation. This can be contrived without difficulty to hoodwink their respective ranks—for the present. But a long-term commitment of support to Mrs Gandhi by any leftist party needs to be rationalised in more credible terms. Neither party would be in a position to do so except at the cost of sounding hollow and hypocritical.

November 23, 1969

## Palestine : The Arabs And Zionism-I

TABITHA PETRAN

THE Arab case on Palestine is straightforward and obvious. It is understood and supported by colonial liberation movements everywhere. Few in the West ever bother to think about it, and an extraordinary double standard prevails. It is not difficult to imagine the reaction of Western opinion if in the June 1967 war the roles of Israel and the Arabs had been reversed, if the Arab states had made a *blitzkrieg* attack on Israel, if Arab armies had forcibly evicted Israelis from homes and land in Israel as the Israeli Army ruthlessly evicted Arabs from their homes and lands in occupied Jordan, Syria, Gaza, Sinai, and has continued to do ever since.

Let us suppose that Israel was established by agreed decision, that it accepted as final the frontiers laid down by this decision, that the grave injury inflicted on the indigenous Palestine Arab population had been recognized and some compensation offered. This would have been asking of the Palestine Arabs, still more than two thirds the population after half a century of Zionist colonization, an unprecedented sacrifice. Yet perhaps some accommodation could have been reached. At the least the history of the past two decades would have been very different.

For none of these suppositions have a basis in reality.

—Israel was established not by agreed decision but by force, as Israeli leaders are the first to proclaim in boasting that they owe nothing to the UN, and in violating virtually every one of the many UN resolutions applying to the Palestine question.<sup>1</sup>

Tabitha Petran is an American Jewess.

<sup>1</sup> Among numerous examples see David Ben-Gurion: "Establishment of the State was not in effect given in the UN resolution of last November 29... but our ability to bring about a decision in the country by force." *Daily News Bulletin*, Jewish Telegraph Agency, April 26, 1963. For the main UN

—Israel has never accepted any frontiers other than those of the Zionist concept of *Eretz Israel* (Land of Israel). Herzl defined this as extending "from the Brook of Egypt to the Euphrates"<sup>2</sup> and more significantly asserted: "We will demand the land we need: the more immigrants the more land."<sup>3</sup> Ben-Gurion explained<sup>4</sup> Israel's refusal to define its borders in 1948 by reference to the refusal of the original 13 American States to define the US border and their subsequent expansion to 50 states stretching from the Atlantic to the mid-Pacific. Israel's 1967 conquests still fall short of the minimum territorial goals demanded of the 1919 Peace Conference: these included Southern Lebanon, Southern Syria to the gates of Damascus, Transjordan and part of Sinai.<sup>5</sup> In January 1967 Premier Eshkol told *Le Monde's* Eric Rouleau, "there remains to us no more than 20,000 kilometers of ancient Palestine," thereby indicating, commented Rouleau, that he considers a part of Iraq, a part of Syria, West Jordan, and Transjordan to be part of "ancient Palestine."<sup>6</sup>

—Israel and the Zionists have never recognized the rights of the indigenous Arab population, have never acknowledged the injustice done to them, and have proved incapable of even one humane gesture in their

resolutions defied by Israel see below.

<sup>2</sup> *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Vol. II, Herzl Foundation, 1960, p. 711.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 701-702.

<sup>4</sup> *Haretz*, October 20, 1967. The Arabs, in other words, are Israel's Red Indians.

<sup>5</sup> Document submitted by the Zionist Organization to the Peace Conference in Paris, February 3, 1919, in J. D. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East—Documentary Record: 1914-1956*, Vol. II, Princeton, N.J., 1956, pp. 45-48.

<sup>6</sup> *Le Monde*, January 13, 1967; Eric Rouleau et al., *Israel et les Arabes*, Paris, 1967, pp. 68-69.

direction. "What Arabs? They are hardly of any consequence," replied the "moderate" Zionist leader, Chaim Weizmann, when Albert Einstein, who opposed the Jewish State,<sup>7</sup> asked him: "What about the Arabs if Palestine were given to the Jews?"<sup>8</sup> This is the typical attitude of a racist settler movement.

The Balfour Declaration, November 2, 1917, expressed Britain's intention to assist "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." At that time, Jews made up 7% of the Palestine population. Most of them were opposed to political Zionism. The intentionally ambiguous 67-word Declaration, presented as the work of the British Government, had been drafted with elaborate care by the Zionists.<sup>9</sup> It dismissed the indigenous Arab majority—93% of the population owning 97.5% of the land—as "existing non-Jewish communities."

This was done, wrote J.M.N. Jeffries, "to conceal the fact that the Arabs to all intents constituted the population of the country. . . . to conceal the true ratio between Arabs and Jews and thereby to make easier the supersession of the former."<sup>10</sup> The Declaration guaranteed "religious" and undefined "civil" rights to these so-called "non-Jewish communities"

<sup>7</sup> Einstein testified before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine, *The New York Times*, January 12, 1946, p. 7, col. 1: "The State idea is not according to my heart. I cannot understand why it is needed. It is connected with narrow-mindedness and economic obstacles. I believe it is bad. I have always been against it." In his *Out of My Later Years*, New York, 1950, p. 263, he expressed his resistance to "the idea of a Jewish State" and his fear of the "damage Judaism will sustain." Alfred Lilienthal, *What Price Israel*, Chicago, 1953, pp. 171-173, has exposed the story of the Zionist "capture" of Einstein.

<sup>8</sup> Einstein interview in Alfred Lilienthal, *There Goes the Middle East*, New York, 1957, p. 240.

<sup>9</sup> See J.M.N. Jeffries, *Palestine the Reality*, London, 1939, Chapter XI.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

but omitted any mention of political rights. In a memorandum to the British Government, August 11, 1919, Balfour was more frank: "In Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country."<sup>11</sup>

The "present inhabitants" had occupied Palestine as Arabs continuously for thirteen centuries, "a period of time conveying such evident and absolute ownership that anywhere else in the civilized world a kindred title would only be questioned by lunatics and disregarded by rogues."<sup>12</sup> The Zionists claim Palestine on the basis of a promise received directly from God and an alleged Jewish historical connection which rests mainly on David and Solomon's 73-year rule—some 3,000 years ago—over a part of Palestine. But if remote historical connection is to confer title deeds, these also belong to the Palestine Arabs. A great scholar, Sir James Frazer, asserted that:

in the opinion of competent judges the modern fellahin or Arabic-speaking peasants of Palestine are the descendants of pagan tribes which dwelt there before the Israelite invasion, and have clung to the soil ever since, being submerged but never destroyed by each successive wave of conquest which has swept over the land.<sup>13</sup>

### Invaders

The Israelites came to Palestine as invaders: their occupation, never complete, was intermittent and unstable. For centuries before the Romans destroyed the temple in 70 AD—when Zionist mythology pre-

<sup>11</sup> *First Series of Documents on British Foreign Policy*, ed. by Woodward and Butler (HMSO 1952), Vol. IV, Chap. 2, p. 340.

<sup>12</sup> Jeffries, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> Sir James George Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament, Studies in Comparative Religion, Legend and Law*, abridged edition, New York, 1923, p. 167. See also Sir Richard Temple, *Palestine Illustrated*, London, 1888, p. 125.

tends all Jews were driven into world exile—the Jews had been emigrating from Palestine of their own choice: influential Jewish settlements flourished in all the great cities of the Roman Empire and Persia, and Jews in Palestine at the beginning of the Christian era numbered but a small fraction of the total Jewish population of the Roman Empire alone.<sup>14</sup> For more than 2000 years the overwhelming majority of world Jewry lived outside Palestine because it wanted to—and still does. The "longing for Zion" of a part of the Jews was always religious, differing little in character from the attachment of Christians to the Holy Land.<sup>15</sup> The 1881 pogroms in Russia provoked tens of thousands to emigrate annually to the US; a bare few hundred to Palestine.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Zionist racial theory claiming purity of descent of modern European-American Jews from the ancient Hebrews is demonstrably false.<sup>17</sup>

Initially predisposed to Zionism, the King-Crane Commission in 1919 asserted that the Zionist claim to Palestine could not be taken seriously.<sup>18</sup> But this claim provided a convenient pretext for a British pres-

<sup>14</sup> See *Encyclopedia Biblica, a Dictionary of the Bible*, London MDCCCXCIX, Vol. I, Dispersion, Col. 1107-1112; also Jeffries, *op. cit.*, p. 30, citing the Zionist Leonard Stein. On the Israelite connection with Palestine; see also Jeffries, Chapters I and IV; Neville Barbour, *Nist Dominus*, London, 1946, Chaps. I and II.

<sup>15</sup> See Rabbi Jacob Agus, "Myth, Faith and Reality in Jewish Life," *Studies of the Leo Baeck Institute*, ed. Max Kreutzberger, New York, 1967, p. 226.

<sup>16</sup> S. M. Dubnow, *Die neueste Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes 1789-1914*, Berlin, Judischer Verlag, 1920-23, Tome III, p. 327, edited in Maxime Rodinson, "Israël, fait colonial", *Les Temps Modernes*, June 1967.

<sup>17</sup> See the distinguished anthropologist Juan Comas, in *Issues* (American Council for Judaism), Winter 1965-68, pp. 21-23; and Harry I. Shapiro, *The Jewish People*, UNESCO, 1960, pp. 74-75.

<sup>18</sup> Harry N. Howard, *The King-Crane Commission*, Beirut, 1963, p. 351.

ence in Palestine, as Weizmann frequently underscored. The most stalwart imperialists—Leopold Amery, Philip Kerr (later Lord Lothian), General Smuts of South Africa, etc.—were the most ardent Zionist enthusiasts. Amery, wrote Weizmann, “realized the importance of a Jewish Palestine in the British imperial scheme of things more than anyone else.”<sup>19</sup> With the Balfour Declaration, Britain created a problem where there was none, assumed responsibility for it, and so secured British claims in the Ottoman Empire and kept France away from the “strategic corridor” protecting Suez.

Under the cover of the League of Nations, Britain assigned to itself the Palestine Mandate, all of whose important terms were written by the Zionists.<sup>20</sup> The Mandate sealed the British-Zionist alliance and in effect established a British World Zionist Organization condominium to rule Palestine. Under the Mandate Britain assisted the Zionists to build a state within a state since it was understood between them that the “National Home” was the Jewish State in incubation;<sup>21</sup> granted Jews everywhere a passport to enter Palestine “of right not on sufferance,” thus destroying the political status of the indigenous population; allowed the Zionists to build their own military forces, their own racially exclusive school, labour, and cooperative system, and gave them an exclusive concession to exploit all Palestine.<sup>22</sup> In the period 1919-48, £300-£350 million (the pound sterling was then worth three to four times its present value) was contributed from abroad to Zionist state-building. This capital transfer

amounted to £638 per immigrant—16 times the per capita income of the Arab population.<sup>23</sup>

To the indigenous Arab majority, whose opposition to this European settler invasion was held down by British police and military forces, the British-Zionist condominium denied all political rights and the means of self-defence. Yet Arab uprisings in 1921, 1929, 1933, and 1936-39 testified to an unremitting Arab struggle for the right to self-determination in their own country.

Within world Jewry the Zionists remained a minority. Without the rise of Nazism in Europe the Zionist Palestine venture would almost certainly have failed. The interaction of Zionism and Nazism played a crucial role in the establishment of the Jewish State.

#### Zionism and Nazism

Arnold Toynbee has pointed out: “Zionism and anti-Semitism are expressions of an identical point of view.”<sup>24</sup> This is the alleged “indigestibility” of the Jews. “Each country can absorb only a limited number of Jews if she does not want disorders in her stomach. Germany already has too many Jews.” This statement was made not by Julius Streicher but by Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann to a German audience in 1912.<sup>25</sup> Nazi anti-Semitic and Zionist propaganda, writes Rabbi Jacob Agus,<sup>26</sup> popularized the same slogans: that emancipation was a mistake; the presence of Jews in Europe, disruptive; that all Jews constitute “one folk” and are unique and unintegrable; that anti-Semitism is a natural, hence ineradicable, expression of the “folk feeling” of European nations and anti-Semitic ravings therefore

understandable. Benjamin Matovu<sup>27</sup> has documented the fact that direct reproduction of Zionist writings became the pattern of Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda. Among the Zionists most frequently quoted by the Nazis were Weizmann, Jacob Klatzkin, and Nahum Goldman, later a prime leader in the creation of Israel and longtime president of the World Zionist Organization, who held that “Germans have the right to prevent Jews from intruding in the affairs of their folk” and already in 1920 advanced the Jewish stab-in-the-back theory to explain the 1818 defeat.<sup>28</sup>

Asking whether “the Zionist programme and philosophy” contributed “decisively” to the Nazi extermination of six million Jews, Rabbi Agus concludes that on the basis of present knowledge “it is impossible to answer this question.”<sup>29</sup> Nonetheless, he emphasizes that:

- 1) Zionist propaganda “could not but reinforce the basic anti-Semitic assumption of the Jews as an eternal alien . . .”;
- 2) the usefulness of anti-Semitism depended on its appeal to the large uncommitted middle class and this class “was neutralized and paralyzed in Central Europe by the feeling that Jews were alien and would-be emigrants by their own admission”;
- 3) when Central Europe was opened to democratic ideas after the First World War the Zionist orientation of the Jews put liberal opponents of anti-Semitism on the defensive;
- 4) in those countries where Jews were Zionist-oriented they were “marked for slaughter with hardly a ripple of protest, while in Western countries . . . where Jews were distinguished by religion only, concerted efforts were made to save them . . .”

There is more, however, to the Zionist-Nazi story than the identity of Nazi and Zionist propaganda about

<sup>19</sup> Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, New York, 1949, p. 182. See also pp. 366 and 179.

<sup>20</sup> Jeffries, *op. cit.*, pp. 521-543 for documentation.

<sup>21</sup> See Weizmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 211-212; Jeffries, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>22</sup> This was the Rutenberg Concession. See Jeffries, Chap. XXV.

<sup>23</sup> George C. Corm, *Les finances d'Israël*, Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, 1968, p. 23.

<sup>24</sup> To the American Council for Judaism, Philadelphia, *The New York Times*, May 7, 1961.

<sup>25</sup> March 18, 1912, Berlin. Cited by Benjamin Matovu, “The Zionist Wish and the Nazi Deed, How Zionist Propaganda Fed Nazi Theorists,” *Issues*, Winter 1966-67.

<sup>26</sup> Agus, *op. cit.*, and Agus, *The Meaning of Jewish History*, New York, 1963, Vol. II, pp. 387-445.

<sup>27</sup> Matovu, *op. cit.*

<sup>28</sup> Cited by Agus, *Meaning*, *op. cit.*, pp. 427-428.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 442 et seq.

the Jews. In the tradition of Herzl, who held anti-Semitic governments to be Zionism's best ally, German Zionists welcome the Nazi rise to power as the death blow to assimilationism.<sup>30</sup> Zionist leaders offered the Nazi Government their cooperation in finding a solution to the Jewish question, urged Jews to wear the Yellow Star six years before the Nazis ordered it, and capitalized on their position as the only Jews able to associate with the Nazis to discredit non-Zionist Jews.<sup>31</sup> The Nazi Government and the Jewish Agency for Palestine concluded an agreement under which Zionist-selected Jews were permitted to emigrate to Palestine and transfer their property to be exchanged there against British pounds: Palestine was flooded with German goods while American Jewry tried to organize a boycott of Nazi Germany. Zionist emissaries came from Palestine—in the words of the Zionist Kimche brothers—not "to save German Jews; that was not their job."<sup>32</sup> Their job was to select "suitable material," and they talked openly of "mutual interests."<sup>33</sup> They were even allowed to set up "training camps" for Palestine under Nazi auspices.<sup>34</sup> Zionists invited Eichmann to Palestine, and when the British refused him permission to enter, Histadrut representatives journeyed to Cairo to visit him.<sup>35</sup>

The price for this Zionist-Nazi collaboration was, as Dr Hannah Arendt has emphasized, inevitably paid by non-Zionist Jews, the non-selected majority who found "themselves confronted with two enemies—the Nazi authorities and the Jewish authorities."<sup>36</sup> The Nazi Government dropped its pro-Zionist policy in 1939, but organized Jewry's collaboration re-

mained "the very cornerstone" of its Jewish policy.<sup>37</sup> Without it, writes Dr Arendt, the "final solution" would not have been possible: "Without Jewish help in administrative and police works... there would have been chaos or an impossibly severe drain on German manpower."<sup>38</sup>

The trial in Israel in which Zionist leader and high Israeli official, Rudolf Kastner, backed by the full power of the Israeli Government, tried (unsuccessfully) to clear himself of charges of having assisted Eichmann in the slaughter of nearly a million Hungarian and Polish Jews; Ben Hecht's *Perfidy*, based on sworn evidence at this trial; Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*; Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews*—these clearly documented how Jewish Agency leaders withheld from the masses of Jews in Eastern Europe the fact that they were marked for shipment to death camps... [and] clearly suggest that by maintaining the Nazis' secret, the Zionist leadership, inside and outside Hitler's Europe, made unlikely a mass uprising of the Jews and enabled the route to the gas chamber to remain unblocked by the desperate rebellion of doomed men. In return, some hundreds of Zionist leaders were permitted to escape to Palestine.<sup>39</sup>

Zionist leaders themselves insisted that their first concern was not rescue of the Jews but the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. In 1943, at the height of the exterminations, Itzhak Greenbaum, head of the Jewish Agency Rescue Committee, declared: "If I am asked could you give from UJA [United Jewish Appeal] money to rescue Jews? I say 'No!' and I say again, 'No.' In my opinion we have to resist that wave which puts Zionist activities in the second line."<sup>40</sup>

American Zionist leader Rabbi

Abba Silver stated in 1946 "that the rescue of a certain number of refugees, however vital and urgent, is not Zionism and that the clear purpose of Zionism was and is to give the Jewish people the status of a nation."<sup>41</sup> Richard Crossman, a member of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine, wrote: "Another important point has gradually emerged from the Zionists' own statements. Their main preoccupation is not to save the Jews alive out of Europe, but to get Jews into Palestine and establish a Jewish State."<sup>42</sup>

In line with this policy the Zionists deliberately sabotaged all rescue efforts not directed to Palestine—among others, Roosevelt's plan to rescue 500,000; projects for settlement in Alaska, Australia, Surinam; a British parliamentary resolution for temporary refuge during the war.<sup>43</sup> "Who can tell how many thousands of Jewish lives might have been saved if these anti-Jewish pressures exerted by Jews had not been effected?" asked the Freeland League.<sup>44</sup> Erskine Childers, writing of this successful Zionist campaign to close the doors of other countries to Jewish refugees, found it "incredible that so grave and grim a campaign has received so little attention in the account of the Pales-

<sup>41</sup> Statement to the Administrative Council of the Zionist Organization of America, July 13, 1946.

<sup>42</sup> Richard Crossman, *Palestine Mission*, Hamish Hamilton, London, p. 47.

<sup>43</sup> See Morris L. Ernst's account of the Zionist sabotage of Roosevelt's plan in "Jewish Self-Segregation is Reactionary," *Council News* (American Council for Judaism), May 1950; L.M. Fruchtbaum, "Where Else Could the Jews Have Gone?," *Issues*, Winter 1967/Spring 1968, an account of the Zionist sabotage of The Freeland League's projects for settlement of Jewish refugees; and letter to *The Times* (London), Reuters, June 6, 1961, from Dr. Solomon Schonfeld, executive director, Religious Emergency Council, set up by Britain's Chief Rabbi to help Nazi victims.

<sup>44</sup> *Freeland* magazine, New York, October-November 1959.

<sup>30</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, London, 1963, p. 54.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>32</sup> Jan & David Kimche, *The Secret Road: "Illegal" Migration of a People 1938-48*, London, 1954, p. 27.

<sup>33</sup> Arendt, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>34</sup> Kimche, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>35</sup> Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 104-111.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>39</sup> Matovu, *op. cit.*

<sup>40</sup> Statement to the Zionist Executive Council, February 18, 1949; "On the Holocaust and the Reaction," Cited in Ben Hecht, *Perfidy*, New York, 1961, p. 50.

tine struggle—it was a campaign that literally shaped all history.”<sup>45</sup>

Behind this grim campaign was Zionist determination to persuade the world and especially the US—to which Zionism had moved its power base during the war—that there was only one solution to the refugee problem; the creation of a Jewish State. “For while many Americans might not support a Jewish State,” wrote Richard Stevens, “traditional American humanitarianism could be exploited in favour of the Zionist cause through the refugee problem. Indeed... the refugee problem had to remain unsolved in order to insure the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine.”<sup>46</sup> This Zionist campaign linking the refugee problem to the creation of the state was enormously successful in the US.

The Nazi chapter in Zionist state-building suggests answers to crucial questions concerning the effect upon the Jews themselves of Zionist racial and collaborationist policies and of overriding Zionist power ambitions in Palestine. That Zionism contributed to the almost universal collaboration of organized Jewry with the Nazis and to the general absence of resistance can hardly be denied. The late William Zukerman pointed out:

The heroic men and women who died on the barricades of Warsaw belonged to a section of the Jews who held their home, was in the countries where they had been born, had worked, and had contributed to wealth and culture... to them the future of European Jews, after the war, lay in Europe, in the homes they had loved and fought for...<sup>47</sup>

(To be continued)

<sup>45</sup> Childers, *Spectator*, July 22, 1960.

<sup>46</sup> Richard P. Stevens, *American Zionism and US Foreign Policy*, New York, 1962, p. 28.

<sup>47</sup> *The Jewish Newsletter*, cited by Elmer Berger, *The Jewish Dilemma*, New York, 1946, p. 37.

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## Calcutta Diary

GYAN KAPUR

NOW that a High Court judge has been appointed to go into the Ekbalpore incidents, it is hoped that truth will come out about what sparked off the trouble leading to at least three deaths. As it is not a judicial enquiry, some comments can, however, be safely made. It is somewhat enlightening about the nature of our secular State that the incidents made much less impact on the minds of Calcuttans and the politicians than they would have, had they taken place in some other part of Calcutta.

Jana Sanghis and like-minded politicians, of course, have been silent on the issue. Perhaps they just failed to realise the possibilities while there was time to exploit the issue. In any case people can rejoice that the unorganized sections of the minority community in Calcutta appear to have joined the mainstream of life in the city and started hating the police with vigour. Of course there were some alarmist rumours and fears circulating among the local residents but the demonstrators were clearly bent only on thing; to settle their scores with the police. As a result few passers-by knew anything was amiss only a little distance away.

While the enquiry may establish the actual facts, by all accounts it all started with the police trying their old game of rounding up a few destitute women eking out a miserable existence selling rice. The first UF ministry at least decided to turn a Nelson's eye on such petty smuggling when they could do nothing against the big sharks. The second UF ministry, however, seems now to think that inflow into the high purchasing power areas must be stopped. As a result the police are in their elements again, hounding and harassing small game.

Mr Jyoti Basu has rightly said that the police, who have been used as the weapon of oppression for the last 20 years, cannot be changed over-

night. But why 20 years? They were no angels before that. But what is the alternative? And what is the Government doing? Even if nothing is immediately possible, it would be reassuring to know what is contemplated, though it may not be possible to carry out basic changes, with the present state of the United Front. Mere transfers of a few officers lead nowhere.

The truth is that the whole governmental and administrative machinery is cracking apart. Formed on the pattern of our past masters to enforce exploitation of the masses, it is proving completely ineffective under changed conditions. A few ministers chosen by the people make very little difference in the working of this machinery. As a result the people are getting more and more divorced from authority which is as much an imposed one as under alien rule. So we have these unhappy incidents.

In this pattern, the legislators, councillors and such other elected gentlemen have become the new aristocracy arrogating to themselves all the rights. Unfortunately, they are too often elsewhere when trouble is brewing and are out of touch. Given the will, means can certainly be found of associating young men and maybe women on a voluntary basis to bridge the gap between the administration and the people.

\* \* \*

The jungle that is Burra Bazar in Calcutta has only one law: cringe before those who hold power and trample underfoot the weak. Viewed in this light, the porters' movement and its aftermath form a coherent whole. The wholesale merchants whose transactions run into millions hate to have too many records. The less the better. As such, for decades they have been carrying on with the least number of workers on their payrolls. The worst sufferers in this respect are the porters, many of whom work year in and year out for the same dealer, doing the work of human donkeys for want of any other job. Go to any dealer, buy your things, pay for them and ask them to be delivered where you will and it

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will be done with the assurance that the man will not run away. Without a regular tie-up with the porters who do the job, it would be a rash dealer indeed who would accept the responsibility of safe delivery. However, from the cries of horror raised by these gentlemen it would seem they never even know who are the porters who frequent their shops and godowns.

With the Chief Minister himself raising the bogey of law and order, the dealers could not have chosen a better time to shout about the supposed failure of the government in this respect. They know which way the wind is blowing and would rather kill two birds with one stone. One or two cases of snatching of goods, of course, have been heard. But it is hard on the poor porters that it should be blamed on them. Such cases are bound to occur with the unsettled conditions. Logically, the dealers are as much to blame for it.

Prices of commodities have been rising all these months and there has been precious little done by the United Front to curb the activities of these dealers who know every trick under the sun, legal, quasi-legal and just plain illegal to make people pay a little more. To make the best of a bad situation is an art learnt very early in Burra Bazar and the present is no exception. To prepare the ground, the dealers have already started talking about the effect on prices. As the present dislocation may not be sufficient, in the present mood of the people, to increase prices, a two-day hartal was called of the entire wholesale and retail trade. Whatever loss of business the wholesalers will suffer and anything they might in the end be forced to pay the porters will surely be passed on to the consumer.

#### NOTICE

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Business Manager  
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## The Press

### Center And States

#### READER

THE happenings in Delhi have not kept the States entirely unaffected. The division in Congress ranks in most States, first felt during the Presidential election, has come to the open. Thus Uttar Pradesh, which, surprisingly enough, had a good number of legislators to vote for Mr Giri, was faced with a ministerial crisis with the resignation of Mr Kamalapati Tripathi and seven other pro-Prime Minister ministers from the C. B. Gupta Cabinet. In Bihar it was the pro-Syndicate group which called a requisition meeting of the Pradesh Congress Committee, adopted a no-confidence motion against its president, Mr A. P. Sharma and it is now almost certain that the State will not have a Congress ministry. Mutual bickerings have started elsewhere also. Indeed, this has been one of the few occasions to prove that Delhi and the States are not separate entities.

Not only the States with Congress governments have been affected. The Delhi wind has reached West Bengal also. With both Mr Ajoy Mukherjee and Mr Y. B. Chavan expressing concern at the law and order situation and all other parties, including the Congress, pinpointing the CPI(M) as their target of attack, an alternative arrangement does seem to be in the offing.

The *Hindusthan Standard* says that unity no longer being desirable in the Congress, factionalism will rear its ugly head everywhere and, in the name of fighting reaction to strengthen progressive forces, will topple one State ministry after another. The means the topplers will adopt need not be honourable or respectable. It can be confidently predicted that there will soon be a lot of dirty linen washing in public in the States; open indulgence in groupism and factionalism will masquerade as honest dissidence. None of the States

appear to be absolutely safe. Referring to the recent happenings in Uttar Pradesh (before the Cabinet expansion), the paper says that these should cause no surprise. That the Gupta ministry should have been the first target of the Prime Minister's group, is understandable. There are at least two reasons why it should have been so. In the first place, U.P. is the home State both of Mrs Gandhi and the External Affairs Minister, Mr Dinesh Singh; secondly, the Ministry is headed by a person who has for quite some time now not only been persona non grata with the Prime Minister but has been closely identified with the organization men against whom her supporters are waging a bitter war for the control of the Congress Party.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika* says that the battle in Delhi will be carried over to the States, has never been in doubt; an all-India party cannot be divided at the top and remain united at the bottom. In Bihar the PCC has removed Mr A. P. Sharma from the office of president and has elected Mr K. B. Sahay as his successor, an act described by the pro-P.M. group as "unconstitutional, unauthorised and invalid". While the legality can be judged by a court, the political implications are clear enough. Mr Sahay is one of those senior Congress leaders who were not allowed by the High Command to contest the last election and it is doubtful whether he can revitalise the Congress under Mr Nijalingappa's banner. On the other hand, the group which has chosen him as its leader seems capable at this stage of preventing the pro-P.M. group from capturing the organisational machinery. Elsewhere, in Gujarat, the statement of the Gaekwad and restlessness inside the Swatantra Party appear to have created a situation more or less favourable to the pro-P.M. group. It would however, be a wrong strategy on the part of these Congressmen to seek to overthrow the Hitendra Desai ministry with Swatantra and princely support. Troubles are also certain to start in Haryana, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh as soon as decisions on pending

issues—Chandigarh and Telengana—are taken by Delhi. For the country as a whole this is a cheerless prospect.

Writing in *The Statesman*, Mr Kuldeep Nayar says that when some Congress Chief Ministers had made a last minute bid to save the party from breaking up, they were mainly impelled by the fear that a split would affect their political fortunes. And they were not entirely wrong. Mrs Gandhi's group will try to oust Mr Nijalingappa's men and vice versa; and no tactic will be considered too extreme nor no price too high to accomplish this. And with other parties shifting support as the situation demands, political equations in the States would take on a new look. The line-up in Tamil Nadu and Punjab will look very curious. The DMK happens to be a big prop for Mrs Gandhi's Government at the Centre. If Mr Subramaniam, her man in that State, tries to weaken the DMK he will embarrass Mrs Gandhi. If he sits quiet, he will allow his supporters to be liquidated. In Punjab Mr Zail Singh who has been fighting the Akalis all his life will now have to lie low as their support to Mrs Gandhi in Delhi will silence him. In Andhra Pradesh, the pro-Telengana members in the Assembly are opposed to Mr Brahmananda Reddy but are loyal to the Prime Minister because they hope she will help them get a separate State. But how can she do so, when Mrs Gandhi has to rely on Mr Reddy? The Chief Mi-

nister will be in real danger when the pro-Telengana group revolts despite Mrs Gandhi's advice to them to be patient. According to Mr Nayar, one State where the break-up of the Congress Party is having an immediate impact is West Bengal. Mrs Gandhi's supporters are hoping to oust the Marxists with a Kerala pattern of government to follow. Mr Atulya Ghosh and Mr Jyoti Basu may find themselves strange bed-fellows because both will try to see that the new United Front does not succeed.

Thus all these papers have expressed concern at the growing rift in the organisation at State levels. The pro-Indira *Amrita Bazar Patrika* has made clear whom it supports when, talking of Bihar, it has lamented that Mr Krishna Ballav Sahay will not be able to revitalise the Congress. While there should be no love lost for Mr Sahay, it is incredible that the paper should still think in terms of revitalising an organisation, already on its way to find a place in the dustbins of history.

*The Statesman* and Mr Nayar have also not given up the game as lost. Mr Nayar's analysis has sought to create the impression that the Prime Minister in her bid to remain in power is in the process of weakening that of her followers in the States. The paper had earlier tried, through its reporting of parliamentary proceedings and arrangement of news, to show that Mrs Gandhi did not enjoy the strength she claimed. That having failed, it is now trying to play her against her followers. Mr Nayar must have felt considerable strain in writing his piece, which perhaps accounts for his giving the Bharatiya Kranti Dal 33 seats (was it a slip for the Bangla Congress?), in the West Bengal Assembly and the Congress 50. For Mr Nayar's and *The Statesman's* information, the BKD is unrepresented in the State Assembly and the Congress enjoys 55 seats. Also, the CPI(M) has been shown to have 80 seats, which should be 83.

## Alienation And After

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

CHATURMUKH's production of *Atha Malati-Brishava Katha* (inspired by Brecht's *St Joan of the Stockyards*) is an unhappy example of the non-digestion of Brechtian precepts in the theatre. Whereas the adaptation by Ajit Ganguly has a dramatic flow and structural integrity, the execution suffers from a lack of understanding of Brecht's conception of the theatre built on the alienation effect as opposed to Aristotelian catharsis. Brecht's candid and cruel portrayal of the world of monopoly business peopled with sentimental plutocrats, frustrated visionaries and downtrodden *untermensch* where the big fish swallow up the small ones, is totally absent in this production. The acting style is completely alien to Brechtian norms. Some pose for stylisation, which, in the present case, is a convenient camouflage for the torrid overacting, and some, especially Malati (the modern *St Joan* played by Chitrita Mondal) just ad-lib the words without going into their implications. The ensemble acting is spoiled by compositional weaknesses and improper orchestration, while the songs (set to excellent tunes by Sunanda Sanyal), an essential part of Brecht's theatrical ideas, are thoroughly ineffective due to faulty rendering. The trouble with such groups is that in bridging the gap between the ages and crossing the barriers between the commercial theatre and the complex pattern of the modern stage, they generally miss a couple of leaps, thereby degrading Brecht's theatrical laboratory of revolutionary enlightenment into a rhumba of crude political pamphleteering.

From Brecht to *Vidyasundar* is indeed a giant stride. Sitting in the Seesh Mahal, Howrah's solitary public stage, one is plunged into the forgotten days of the commercial theatre with its magic world of painted backdrops representing palaces, streets and princess' chambers and the

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dazzling costumes conjure up the vision of a hoary past when the theatre was just an after-dinner entertainment. The story of Vidya and Sundar, another of the world's immortal couples, is good meat for a musical comedy replete with erotic overtones and in some of the scenes (especially where the courtiers complain to the king about their wives' distraction after they have set their eyes on the fair-looking Sundar, the dialogues of the clown marvellously played by Tarun Kumar, the charming cameo of a go-between Hira Malini by Jayshree Sen and the magnetic antics of Anjali Chatterjee as Vidya's maid) the earthy wit of Bharat Chandra has been superbly captured, but on the whole the adaptation remains a motley collection of loosely-knit episodes.

## Young German Film

PRABODH KUMAR MAITRA

SINCE the silent era of film-making in the twenties the German cinema has hardly created any flutter. The intervening decades were full of confusion, uncertainty and destruction. Other European countries like Italy, France, Sweden, Poland and Czechoslovakia contributed handsomely, particularly after the war, and the most meaningful phase of film-making gave rise to new hopes of artistic attainment. But the Western segment of postwar Germany remained the bourgeois paradise, engrossed in all sorts of experiments to bolster the image of an affluent society. It was not till the early sixties that the faint murmur could be heard of the young film-makers who took upon themselves the task of expressing the accelerated anguish of the younger generation. The recent festival of contemporary West German films makes one aware that the mental climate of the twenties as expressed in the cinema of the period remains much the same—the same resignation and uncertainty, the sense of despair and helplessness and the

lack of assertion of life. In the current phase the youngsters sometimes are found to be vociferous and faintly revolting to the established order. But in the end they either erase themselves or run away from it all.

*You are a Man my Boy* unfolds the story of some young boys in a boarding school before the First World War period. The adolescents are insulated from the harsh outside world but they create situations for themselves which are brutal, sadistic and engulfing. The main character is at first a wilful witness of the tortures inflicted on a fellow-mate and then inexorably becomes a part of the process, as he thinks that by not opposing it he is also morally culpable. In the end he goes away.

The film is well made in black and white with excellent camera work and a confident spell of acting by the teenaged performers. What one cannot appreciate is the philosophical higger-mugger in which they occasionally indulge.

*Lust for Love* does not unfortunately turn out to be lust for life for the hero who takes his own life at the end. The widow, the mother of five children, finds new love and moves across the seas to the new world of America to sustain her new found love. The characters are full of self-pity. That something is radically wrong with the society is evident from their frustration and failure to live up to something different.

*Come to the Point, Darling* is an ambitious film by a young woman film director, May Spils. The characters have a sprightly existence in their non-conformist way. The comic possibilities are well worked out in the series of mini-events taking twenty-four hours. At the end, however, the reality of living gets the better of their carefree and gay existence. In terms of film-making it comes close to the French new wave.

*Tattoo* is made in delightful colour and it relates to the pangs of a boy who finds new affection in a new home away from the dreary orphanage. But even the new environ weighs down on him. Even the girl fails to hold him. The boy basically

remains an outsider and the director means the film to be the vehicle of his ideas on the schizophrenic situation of the contemporary Germans—West Germany at any rate and he focuses his attention on the Berlin Wall often to drive that home. The glittering colour seems a veneer to the affluent present which however does not hide the tensions underneath once you scratch the surface.

*Wild Rider Ltd* shows a grotesque world where even suspension of disbelief is stretched to a breaking point. Here again the favourite theme of the snare into which the unwary walks and from where there is apparently no escape, is worked out in a somewhat laboured manner. The innocence of the young man is writ large on his face. The gruesome world around shatters the dream and engulfs him.

*In Signs of Life* we find a young soldier at odds with his surroundings. He wants to be free from the trappings of his immediate periphery but ultimately is taken to hospital. The isolation of the soldier is heightened by the director by concentrating on his rugged exterior of the island and the scene where the windmills take him to his dreamland. The immediate reality becomes less overpowering for the moment. At the end the car that takes him to the hospital leaves behind a trail of dust on the arid island that envelops his feeble effort at alienating himself from what seemed to him hostility itself.

Alexander Kluge's *The Artistes under the Big Top: Disoriented* is a somewhat ponderous name for an ambitious theme. It is highly metaphorical and seems to have layers of meaning. One can, however, hardly do justice to it by viewing it only once. What is clear is the enormous care put in by the director to give it a sparkling quality. At times baffling, it nevertheless is a delight to watch. The world of the passionate artist—the circus arena representing it in its infinite variety—is plagued by more imponderables than one can cope with. Even if the utopia comes true the curtain is rung down before the show starts for fear of destroying the

dream. Macluhancy takes its toll of the dreamer whose absorption with mass media seems to drag her right into the vortex of contemporary mythmaking. The dreamer becomes a pedlar and a panderer—a new identity and a new role that interestingly is not something scoffed at by the adherents.

## Letters

### Our Civilised CM

The Chief Minister, Mr Ajoy Mukherjee, told reporters in Calcutta on November 10 "the State must protect the life and property of people but unfortunately it is not being done in West Bengal. There is no precedent for this state of affairs in a civilised world". Obviously the Chief Minister in his exuberance of pious indignation thought little of the huge loss of life and property in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat, the home State of the apostle of truth and non-violence, both of which are in the civilised world. To a question whether his observation on the law and order situation was an indictment of his own government he said, "you may think so, but a fact is a fact". There was also a striking resemblance between the Chief Minister's scathing condemnation and the "voice of protest" of the former Chief Minister P. C. Sen, who while inaugurating the Congress election campaign for the party candidate in the bye-election in the Raina constituency branded the UF regime in West Bengal as "a reign of terror". This is not surprising for great men think alike. What is surprising is the way the Chief Minister cum Leader of the UF compromised with his conscience by signing a joint appeal to the electorate in the Tollygunge and Raina constituencies to vote for the UF candidates who belong to the party of the Home Minister, and who do not know about the Chief Minister's uncompromising hostility to this party. The disillusioned

electorate may well ask the Chief Minister "where lies the dividing line between hypocrisy and dishonesty"?

The Chief Minister waxed eloquent in the context of forcible collection of paddy, about the sanctity of "legally owned property" and preferred to be non-committed about the inequity of the large-scale benami transfers which helped the acquisition of much of such property through loopholes in the existing laws to enrich those who have more than enough and to deprive those who have little or nothing and which constitute a glaring example of how the law can ride roughshod over legitimacy.

About his special responsibility as Chief Minister in regard to the law and order situation he pleaded that it should be tackled by all the parties of the UF. "The Chief Minister is not a dictator", he added. Could there be a more irresponsible utterance from the head of the government of a civilised state? Besides, did all the parties in the UF ask him to indulge recklessly in a campaign of calumny and pose a threat of satyagraha while clinging to his office as the head of the government which is the target of his attack and much vaunted follow-up action?

SOMNATH BHATTACHARYYA  
Santragachi, Howrah

### What's To Be Done ?

Mr Rafiqul Islam in his "The General Line in Colonial Revolution" (October 18), says that the CPI (ML) has misrepresented Maoism by declaring that—"In the present stage, the principal contradiction in our country is between feudalism and our peasant masses. In this stage, the Indian revolution is the new type of democratic revolution—people's democratic revolution." But didn't Mao say in his 'On Contradiction', that, when imperialism is indirectly exploiting a country, then the 'principal' contradiction is between "the masses" on the one "hand" and the

alliance of imperialism and the feudal classes on the other?

To avoid controversy, it is necessary to quote directly from Mao Tse-tung: "When imperialism does not apply the pressure of war, but adopts comparatively mild forms, political, economic, cultural, etc., to carry, on its oppression, the ruling classes in the semi-colonial countries will capitulate to imperialism; the two will form an alliance for the joint oppression of the great masses of the people. At such a time, the great masses of the people often adopt the form of civil war to oppose the alliance of imperialism and the feudal classes while imperialism often adopts indirect methods in helping the reactionaries in the semi-colonial countries to oppress the people without taking direct action; and the internal contradiction thereby becomes especially sharp." ('On Contradiction', Lawrence & Wishart, 1954 Edition, Pp. 36).

Here Mao does not say that when imperialism exploits indirectly the "principal" contradiction is between "the masses" and the "alliance of imperialism and the feudal classes". This contradiction is not "principal", but basic or overall contradiction.

According to the political resolution of the CPI (ML) there are four contradictions which exist in contemporary India. These are between the Indian masses and imperialism, between the working class and the comprador bourgeoisie, between the peasantry and the feudal exploiting classes, and among the various groups of the reactionary ruling classes. Which of these is the principal contradiction? As Mao Tse-tung has pointed out in his 'On Contradiction'—"... in any process a number of contradictions exist, only one of them is the principal contradiction playing the leading and decisive role while the rest occupy a secondary or subordinate position."

The CPI (ML) says that in the present stage, the principal contradiction in our country is between the peasantry and the feudal landlords. Why? In a particular historical era, that production relation which tries

to bridle the development of the productive forces and the class contradiction inherent in such relations is the principal contradiction. In the post-war period, decaying imperialism has taken the path of indirect exploitation of its former colonies. In such a situation, the internal contradictions of the colonies become especially sharp, principally the contradiction between the peasantry and the feudal class. In other words, the antagonistic contradiction between the peasant masses and the feudal classes becomes principal and if, without resolving this contradiction, we try to resolve that between the workers and the comprador-bureaucratic bourgeoisie, taking it as the principal contradiction, then that will merely help the survival of the chief impediment to the development of the Indian social system. Without attacking the feudal system first, how is it possible to attack the hidden enemy behind the feudal class, i.e., imperialism?

Secondly, according to Mr Islam, the CPI (ML) has distorted the thoughts of Mao Tse-tung by saying that in the present stage... in the stage of people's democratic revolution, the principal contradiction constantly remains the same. The CPI (ML) has never said so.

At the present stage, when imperialism is still indirectly exploiting the Indian masses through its agents, the principal contradiction between the peasant masses and the feudal classes will remain the same representing the democratic aspect of the people's democratic revolution. But when imperialism goes in for direct aggression in order to save its agents and lackeys, then the principal contradiction of the previous period will become non-principal and the contradiction between imperialism and the Indian masses will become the principal one, thus representing the national aspect of the people's democratic revolution. Thus it will not do to accuse the CPI (ML) of trying to shield imperialism from the scrutiny of the people.

SUMIT BISWAS  
Calcutta

It is really funny to note that Mr Rafiqul Islam while rebuking the CPI (ML) for misquoting Mao Tse-tung has himself misquoted him in his article 'The General Line in Colonial Revolution' (October 18). He claims to quote Mao from "On Contradiction" saying that the principal contradiction is between "the masses" and "the alliance of imperialism and the feudal classes". But nowhere in the article has Mao said such a thing. What he said in the context is: "At such a time, the masses often resort to civil war against the alliance of imperialism and the feudal classes". Mr Islam has interpreted the statement in his own way.

As a matter of fact the very concept is erroneous. While elucidating the particularity of contradictions, Mao has clearly expressed that the contradiction between imperialism and a nation and the contradiction between feudalism and the broad masses of the people are two different contradictions. Therefore both cannot be simultaneously the principal contradiction. Accord to Mao, the principal contradiction is that contradiction "whose existence and development determine or influence the existence and development of the other contradictions". So the problem is to find out which of the two has the determining or governing role. Mr Islam has written "imperialism as the real master behind the feudals and the big bourgeoisie". Mao has written that the relation between imperialism and the country's reactionary ruling classes (including feudal classes) is like that of master and servant. Now who has the governing role—master or servant? To be sure, let me quote Chen Po-ta from "On the Ten-Year Civil War (1927-37)". After thoroughly discussing the contradictions in the period he has concluded with the remark: "Of course Mao Tse-tung did not credit all these contradictions with the same importance, nor did he isolate one from the other. He perceived their inter-relations and interactions; he perceived how the contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation (characteristic of semi-colo-

nial China) precipitated or influenced the development of the other contradictions."

Can't we be sure now that the principal contradiction in that period was between imperialism and the nation? What conclusion does follow?

DILIP MITRA  
Calcutta

### Rank And File

I find your journal critical of the role of the CPI and the CPI (M) on the whole, but some columnists betray their faith in the leadership of the CPI (M), which is called revisionist by the Communist Revolutionaries. But at the same time no Communist Revolutionary worth the name has ever said that the whole party has gone revisionist. It is believed that nearly three-fourths of the total membership of the CPI (M) are still revolutionary in spirit and action. The contention of Charan Gupta that "it still represents the mainstream of the resurgent masses in this country" (November 8) does not necessarily mean that the leadership is truly Marxist-Leninist. The leaders are, in fact, still reaping the fruits of their past rejection of the totally bankrupt leadership of the CPI in 1964. The other factor which is responsible for their position in the party is their art of theorisation which creates illusions in the minds of the rank and file of the party and thus binds them to the party. About two decades of experience in public life have led me to believe that the Indian masses are by nature traditional. They leave their party and ideology only after a lot of drubbing. Under these circumstances no Communist Revolutionary can think of bypassing such a party. Their strategy should be to bypass the leadership and to win over the rank and file.

Your feature on Kerala is regularly written by Ramji. It is better you advise him to write in the official journals of the CPI (M).

Your remarks in your earlier issues like 'God knows', 'Heavens will not

fall' etc. seem incompatible with the nature of a Marxist-Leninist journal.

Will you or any of your readers let me know whether Charu Majumdar, the leader of the CPI (ML), keeps a portrait of the Goddess Kali in his house? It is reported that when asked by a foreign correspondent he justified it by saying that "Kali is the goddess of destruction and hence her place in my house."

SURAJ SINGH  
Delhi

## Behind The Facade

As I stay in Bombay, some of the glaring features of its economy strike me, as glaring as the city is. Superb multistoreyed buildings, excellent roads, good communication—yes, but one cannot but think of the factors behind these. The huge income from octroi—around Rs. 5 crores—is swallowed by the city's finance. The benefit of the suburban train service which incurs a loss of the same order is at the cost of the national exchequer. The enormous profit from the electric supply system is again ploughed back into the city's economy. In addition, the Maharashtra Government's outlay for Bombay City alone up to 1980 is around Rs. 800-1,000 crores. I understand that most of this comes and will come from the State outlay on five year plans.

On the other hand the per capita income of people in Maharashtra is among the lowest, most probably fourth from the bottom. Ninety-seven Industries in the Vidarbha area have been closed down owing to lack of finance. Besides, no emphasis is laid on fertilizers.

Is it healthy to make such a concentrated economic effort for a city where the Maharashtrians are around 32%? For whom is this money being spent? When a city develops, the human element is generally drawn from all parts of the country and the benefits of the outlay go to them. The State becomes poorer, the people become poorer. Then what is all this for?

RKP  
Bombay

## Gandhi

I need hardly tell you with what interest I read Gopal Haldar's 'Father of the Nation' (October 18). It is an imprecise article and inadequate from both a scholar's and an ordinary man's point of view. It cannot easily be countered except on its own terms: by lobbing one unsupported opinion against another.

What does Mr Haldar intend to convey by the phrase 'typical class analysis' and what does he mean by 'faith in the masses'? Is there any morality or humanism that is above class? In the Communist Manifesto Marx and Engels expressed their contempt for German socialism because it had espoused "the interests of human nature, of man in general who belongs to no class, has no reality and subsists only in the realm of philosophical phantasy". That Gandhiji had very much a class bias was noted not only by the Marxists but also by the non-Marxist freedom fighters, including Mr Haldar when he was in the Forward Bloc with Subhash Chandra Bose. The irony is heightened by the fact that Mr Haldar is quite unaware of the radical discontinuity between his past estimation of Gandhi and his present evaluation but that is a common enough fate. Mr Haldar too makes a class analysis of Gandhi. Had it been a real Marxist analysis he could not have written what he did in conclusion—'violence is not the only force that decides issues', after what had happened and has been happening in India before and after Gandhi's death. Could he cite one instance, major or minor where factors other than force decided the issue as the midwife of history? Marx and Engels ended the Communist Manifesto with the celebrated passage, "The communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions." After reading Gopal Haldar I could appreciate what made Marx remark 'all I know is that I am not a Marxist'. Speaking of Marxism, it is the attitude to-

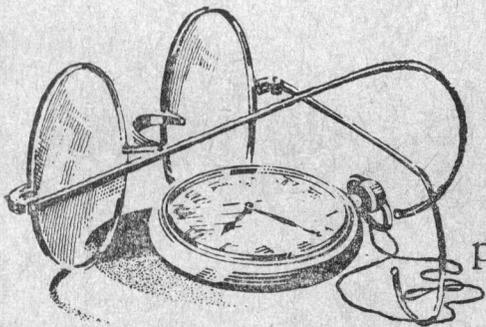
wards violence that separates the Marxist from the reformist. However in the comparatively tolerant but distinctly philistine atmosphere of the present-day communist world spurious things can be made to pass for genuine.

To obscure the thinness of meaning by a lyric surge of argument Mr Haldar writes, "his ideas and practices appeared to form all one piece". This concept is absurd. Is there a man—unless it is Jesus Christ—in which all elements are all of a piece? In Gandhi's case, he was unique in his paradoxicality. False and trivial substance was uplifted and rendered significant and grandiose by his mystifying mode of expression. The masses were enlisted and some of their demands too, to enlist them 'because in every movement the contending classes are forced to appeal to the masses'. If the British imperialist was his vanishing opponent, the working class, the Left, was his rising enemy. He always preferred to compromise with the vanishing opponent rather than to strengthen the rising enemy. No wonder that the reaction of the enemy to this opponent was timid, almost affectionate. To us limited mortals, the attitude of the enemy is the single simple criterion for judging a friend. The domestic and foreign enemies have given enough of their minds about Gandhi both during his life time and after his death. And they are quite illuminating.

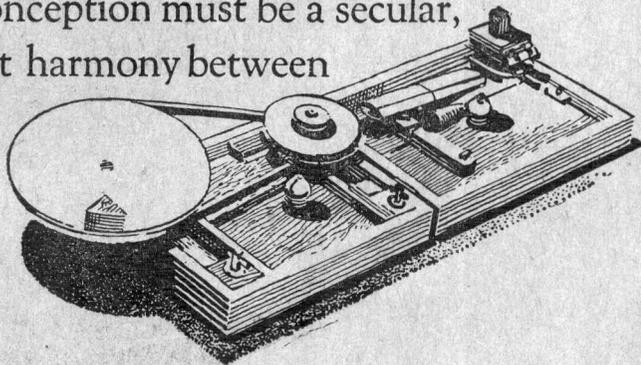
I am not young enough and the experiences and reactions of any Bengali middle class citizen of my generation are not much dissimilar to Mr Haldar's. So as I read, I keep stopping to wonder at his capacity for accommodating the changing requirements of the party line. Gandhiji has been enjoying a dramatic promotion in the Soviet Union following the 20th Congress of the Communist Party. Gopal Haldar's philosophy consists in a shimmering coalescence of the contemporary Russian thought with his own small private modification of it.

PROBODH CHANDRA DUTTA  
Calcutta

# One nation: One people



“There is so much in common between people in the same State, under the same flag and owing undivided allegiance to it...that those who believe in India as a nation can have no minority or majority question. All are entitled to equal privileges, equal treatment... The state of our conception must be a secular, democratic state, having perfect harmony between different units.” —Mahatma Gandhi



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