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On Other Pages

COMMENTS	..	2
<i>View From Delhi</i>		
FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT	..	6
INDIA AND NEPAL		
PUSPA LAL	..	7
CZECHOSLOVAKIA—CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM		
S. N. MISHRA	..	10
CALCUTTA DIARY		
GYAN KAPUR	..	12
<i>Book Review</i>		
SOVIET INDOLOGY SERIES		
PRIMILA LEWIS	..	13
MAOIST JATRA		
MRINAL SEN	..	14
LETTERS	..	15

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HARDLY A SOLUTION

S ORRY, Mrs Gandhi, but the Punjab-Haryana cauldron will keep on boiling for years. Last week's announcements hardly add up to a final solution. Chandigarh for Punjab, yes, but not for the present, only five years hence; meanwhile, it merely provides an alibi for Sant Fateh Singh to climb down, with almost a vulgar alacrity, from the funeral pyre. Fazilka for Haryana, yes, plus hush money of Rs 20 crores for building a new capital, but there is a catch in this decision too: a special commission will go into Punjab's counter-claims on nearly 450 villages now in Haryana. As the experience since 1966 amply illustrates, what a commission proposes can be successfully disposed of by subsequent other commissions—and by Government fiat. Depending upon the trickiness of the circumstances, this kind of instalment-wise border demarcation between the two states will merely stoke the ambition for further blackmails.

What is however of even greater concern is the trend that is being set for Centre-State relations. It is one of the axioms of organised social behaviour that you cannot simultaneously subsidise all sections of your society; you can subsidise *a* only at the cost of *b*; if *a* and *b* are both to be subsidised, the cost has to be borne by maybe another segment of society, say, *c*; it is only through the deprivation of some that you can provide for the additional satisfaction of some others. In her present predicament the Prime Minister is trying to fly in the face of this incontrovertible mathematical logic. Taking something from Haryana and giving it to Punjab, and then taking something else from Punjab and presenting it to Haryana is an exercise in *non sequitur*-ism: such gimmicks may allow her to buy some immediate peace, but the real problem is thereby not got rid of. Besides, the sum of Rs 20 crores, which is to be bestowed on Haryana, will have to be extracted from the citizenry of this country; this amount cannot possibly be financed via the bounty of, for example the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. Those who are additionally taxed so that Haryana could have its own counter-Chandigarh will not feel amused. To assuage their hurt feelings, then, it might become necessary to think up another series of compensatory stratagems. And on and on the merry game will continue...

Already Sardar Gurnam Singh has started making ominous noises about a corridor through Haryana's territory, and, the carrot of Chandigarh being no longer there, Haryana's populace have launched on a public property destroying rampage. The Jana Sangh in the Punjab Ministry is protesting. Since Mrs Gandhi needs both States to survive in power, she undoubtedly will have sweet words, evenly distributed, in response to the threats-cum-riots. Such things are to be discouraged only in relation to issues concerning class-based ideology; when riots promote the cause of obscurantism, the Prime Minister and her advisers do not mind—or perhaps cannot afford to mind. For, despite the brave words uttered in earlier weeks, the fact remains that Mrs Gandhi failed to call Sant Fateh Singh's bluff, and did not dare postpone her decision—obfuscating or not—on Chandigarh till after February 1. Having thus succumbed once, she has now set up the precedent for equally distinguished surrenders in the future.

Even from the point of view of short-term tactics the Prime Minister will—or so it seems—regret this particular quasi-finale of the Chandigarh issue. In the course of the gymnastics which have been gone through for arriving at a satisfactory solution to the Punjab-Haryana tangle, there has at least been one revelation, namely, that, as of now, she is terribly afraid of practically everybody; press her hard, and she will give in. This knowledge can well provoke the start of a cynical season. Take any bunch of half-a-dozen MPs; let them be the lobbyists for a most unscrupulous cause; they can still walk up to the Prime Minister and force her into semi-conceding all kinds of scandalous demands.

But maybe with the clumsy, curious decision over Chandigarh and Fazilka behind her, she is over the hump. However for the present the provisional verdict has to be otherwise. The new wave—*nouvelle vague*—is now almost seven months old, and it is in deep danger of degenerating into a stale joke.

Comic Relief

When this issue is published Rajyapal Shanti Swarup Dhawan will have returned to Calcutta after savouring the delights of Kalinga sculpture. At the time of writing, however, we cannot pretend to know what he will have been told by Chief Minister Ajoy Kumar. Nor, for that matter, are we sure if Wednesday's United Front meeting will have been held as scheduled. But this uncertainty makes little matter. Whether this Government goes within a few days or nominally exists for a little while longer, the United Front has lost all its credibility. The process began months ago; now it is complete. The inter-party clashes were bad enough; the Bangla Congress comic opera at Curzon Park was grotesque; but what has happened since makes even a patch-up unity well-nigh impossible. All this would have been dreadfully tiresome without Mr Ajoy Mukherjee entertaining all in diverse ways. We have long been used to his describing himself as an unwanted but watchful dog or asking whether he was mukhya-mantri (Chief Minister) or murkha-mantri (an idiotic Minister). Latterly, however, the self-styled dog seems to have been suffering from an urge to transform itself into a lion. In his last letter to Mr Jyoti Basu, Mr Mukherjee not only quoted British constitutional precedents, referring in particular to what Macmillan and Wilson had done, but also cast himself in the role of Churchill at the head of the wartime national Government. Nobody questioned Churchill's predominance; how could Mr Basu challenge Mr Mukherjee.

If it were not for the fact that senior bureaucrats have little sense of humour, one might suspect that whoever drafted Mr Mukherjee's recent letters to Mr Basu was treating the whole thing as a huge joke. The Chief Minister, of course, is quite incapable of seeing the richly comic effect he has produced. He did not end with Churchill, Macmillan and Wilson; in his last letter he informed

Mr Basu that in 1922 Liberal Lloyd George sacked Tory Montague from his coalition Government. Perhaps even more hilarious was the Chief Minister's profound concern that Mr Basu's references to the "antics" (with the meaning of "antic" given in brackets for general enlightenment) of two British Prime Ministers might affect India's relations with a friendly Power. It is not for nothing that among the Chief Minister's various responsibilities is Commonwealth Relations, though we thought this was a hangover from days when the West Bengal Government had something to do with visas for travelling to and from East Pakistan. No, all this is too funny to be unintended. Who knows, a senior civil servant has probably developed a sense of humour towards the end of his career.

But Mr Mukherjee, we repeat, must be totally unaware of the entertainment he is providing in such generous measure. The old man must be in a very bad temper. Not everything has gone according to plan. Mrs Gandhi apparently advised Mr Dhara against any immediate move to bring down the Government and form another without the CPI(M). The CPI and the Forward Bloc, too, were a little hesitant last week and Mr Dhara did not try to conceal his disappointment that "a few parties are seemingly indulging in opportunism". The Bangla Congress, it appeared, would act on its own. But how? Take the Home portfolio away from Mr Basu? No general upheaval might follow, but are the Bangla Congress and its allies strong enough to deal with the kind of trouble that they might still have to face? Another possibility is for the Bangla Congress to quit the Front which, according to Mr Dhara, has outlived its purpose, without resigning from the Government. In the resulting confusion, the forces would be realigned, the calculations being that the majority would be with the Bangla Congress. What the CPI(M) proposes to do if it is manoeuvred out of office in this fashion is not clear; hitherto most of its revolutionary effort has been spent on pre-

venting any such manoeuvre. Mr Basu even went to the extent of admitting the communists' "mistake in their assessment of Netaji". But there is a limit beyond which it cannot go to placate the other parties without surrendering all its stated aims and policies. Large sections of the party's rank and file are getting more and more restive, as can be seen from their recent clashes with the police. The Politbureau's eminently pragmatic advice against "falling a prey to provocations" is unlikely to satisfy them. The comic relief will have to come to an end.

Their Fair Lady

The New Year's eve Gallup poll in New York revealed that Mrs Indira Gandhi is the second most popular lady in the USA. Mrs Golda Meir happens to be the fourth. Mrs Mamie Eisenhower tops the popularity list and the Queen of Great Britain is the ninth.

The negotiations on the Goa Fertiliser Project and on release of the blocked PL-480 rupees probably indicate that Mrs Gandhi is working in earnest to elevate her position in American popularity. The US Steel has secured, some say, more than 50 per cent of equity shares in the Goa Fertiliser Project. And release of the blocked PL-480 rupees will enable the Americans to use about Rs 675 crores in building houses, promoting export-oriented industries and executing such other noble missions in this country. Mrs Gandhi stands a fair chance of toppling Mrs Eisenhower if only the Americans can get over their denseness and sentimentality.

It was in the fitness of things that the Tarapore atomic power project was inaugurated last month. Built entirely on American genius, the plant will generate low-cost power and upgrade India's industrial capabilities. Modernisation of Indian industries has become exceptionally important for the Americans, because they have invested in this country about Rs 6770 crores. The big shots

here have hailed the Tarapore plant as the symbol of U.S. goodwill for India. About a century ago all the stalwarts of the Indian renaissance hailed the opening up of railways in India as a symbol of the British goodwill towards India. The drain of Indian wealth as a result of the opening of the railways was talked about when the British nearly finished the business.

Indeed, Mrs Gandhi is proceeding correctly. But some of her co-travellers advise her to hasten a bit slowly, for they think she is becoming obvious. It looked odd to them that, only a few hours after the Bombay session where Mrs Gandhi hovered as the socialist angel, she should give the green signal to the Birlas to start the Goa fertilisers. After all, the Birlas have been charged with several offences only recently and an enquiry commission was promised to be set up. How come they are given responsibility for something which, in the picturesque language of the Planning Commission, is a commanding height in the Indian economy? How come that she, after blasting the monopolists of the country, should offer a project that requires an initial investment of Rs 55 crores to a monopolist? And if she can bless one monopolist, why not another? The Tatas have been so very agreeable to start the Mithapore fertilisers. The Planning Commission has of course a rationale that such big projects cannot but be given away to the monopolists. But the rationale seems somewhat silly. Why can't the Government undertake the projects, if lack of private capital is the prime question? The Government may have been impressed by the way the Birlas secured American collaboration—the idea of the big fish swallowing the small being, so far as the Government is concerned, mere fable. But not people like Chandrasekhars. They want the Birlas to be blacklisted because the Birlas sort of lack a sense of propriety. They want a cover for the prime movers, the imperialist Americans, by kicking up dust over the pawns.

Mrs Gandhi, the undaunted lady,

is however least concerned that she is sinking the country in debt. After all she is not doing anything new but carrying on the work of her glorious predecessors. Even the Goa Fertiliser Project. It was not she who sanctioned it—it came to her already sanctioned. She might talk of a new look for the Congress but not for something that really counts. She might have rejected the proposal to float the PL-480 blocked funds two years earlier—but now she can do it because she has been quite successful in creating a socialist halo around her. Isn't she doing it for building houses for the poor, for creating industries to export quality products to sophisticated countries and earn foreign exchange for the country? Isn't she manufacturing fertilisers for the continuation of the green revolution? It will take time for the illiterate Indians to realise that none of these projects are meant for them. By the time they realise this, she will be able to sell out the country and become the most popular lady in the USA.

Nixon's Promises

Election promises are exactly what they are—simply promises. And President Nixon cannot be accused of such gross deviations as fulfilment of election promises. The promise of bringing the boys back home from Vietnam has since been given a safe burial together with the murdered Vietnamese peasants. But what about hunger in the south and ghettos in the north of God's own country? What about prices which have been climbing for the past four years at an annual rate of almost 6 per cent? What about the growing army of the unemployed? To be sure President Nixon has a promise for each.

Before marching into the White House he promised to check inflation within six months. A year after his installation at the White House inflation continues, further widening the gap between people's

income and prices. With the ever shrinking purse of the consumers, sales on the U.S. domestic market in 1969 dropped 3 per cent compared with 1968. Barring Nixon's pets like the war industry, others have suffered cutbacks in orders. Since August last year industrial production has been on a journey downhill. The citadel of capitalism, it is now admitted by some American economists, is "going to get the greatest economic shock of our lives."

In the past twenty years the Pentagon spent some \$1,100,000 million to wage wars of aggression for the control of the world's markets and resources, resulting in huge budgetary deficits in 17 fiscal years. Unrestricted issuance of paper money, one of the most handy solutions for budget deficits, started the inflation spiral. Commitment of American troops to Vietnam and the resultant skyrocketing military expenditure have now brought the American economy to a point where it is bursting at the seams. What can President Nixon do with this inflated baby of the military-industrial complex? To use worn-out tricks like tax increase, higher interest rates and tight credit would plunge the economy fathoms deep in recession, throwing a larger number of people out of work and shrinking the market like a pricked balloon. But unabated inflation would damage much more than merely the purchasing power of the consumer. By making American exports too expensive to sell it will accelerate the currency crisis and lead to the erosion of the already weakened dollar. Between these two extremes President Nixon seems to have chosen the so-called "gradualist" method which amounts to passing the buck to the strangled consumer in the form of price and wage freezes.

President Nixon in fact learns nothing and forgets nothing. His own Violence Commission says that the main threat to the nation's security is internal. Wise men close to the Presidential ear warn that the danger in the seventies comes not from military aggression abroad but poverty and social turmoil at home. But

one third of the budget still goes to the dark funnels of the Pentagon. One third of the defence budget is still forked out to resist imaginary "Chinese nuclear blackmail". The military-industrial complex continues merrily to produce super-killers while unemployment and hunger lengthen their shadows over the American people.

The Prague Story

Mr Dubcek, tired and tight-lipped, is in Ankara. Mr Cernik is out. Of the men who were taken to Moscow after the Warsaw Pact troops moved into Czechoslovakia, President Svoboda continues to hold the fort. The so-called Prague spring is all over.

From the nature of the leadership and the state of political education in Czechoslovakia, it was clear, almost from the very beginning of the invasion, that the diehards would take over in the long run. Mr Dubcek and his men did not try to mobilise the people against the invaders. They decided to remain in power and collaborate with them. The unrest was allowed to fizzle out. The road back to power for the diehards, the friends of Brezhnev and co. was slow but steady.

It is now evident that the West German bogey was a sheer concoction of the Russians. Even before the advent to power of Mr Willy Brandt, the leader of an important West German delegation to Moscow noted with interest that the Russians made no reference whatsoever to the machinations of Bonn in Prague. Even the most gullible should have realised that W. Germany would not have dared to send troops to exploit the Czechoslovak situation. As for cultural subversion, for a people to succumb to it is an admission of the failure of Communist Party leadership. A party without a sense of mission aids the corruption of Marxist values—a process evident in most countries controlled by caviar socialists. Some of this corruption was present among those who took

part in the spring-cleaning in Czechoslovakia.

The Czech leaders have always been 'pragmatic'. But it would be difficult for them, for a time, to inspire the sullen workers to greater feats of production. However, economic incentives will keep the structure going. There is little possibility of another outburst, unless something drastic takes place in the international situation.

The Russians claimed at the time of the invasion that they had been invited by some of the Czech leaders. Even under pressure, they would not give out the names. But look at the men who are now taking over. It is beyond doubt that some of these were the men who had asked the Kremlin to intervene.

Bertrand Russell

"My grandmother," Russell recalled about nine years ago, "was a woman of caustic and biting wit. When she was eighty-three she became kind and gentle. She noticed the change in herself, and, reading the handwriting on the wall, she said to me, 'Bertie, I'll soon be dead.' And soon she was." Russell was already approaching ninety, and still thriving on controversy and opposition. Only a few months before he had brought an intellectual hornets' nest about his ears by publicly attacking the Positivistic coterie rule in the British philosophical Establishment. But that had been largely a diversion. During the later years of his life, Russell's concern was increasingly with the social and political condition of man. The campaign against nuclear weapons found the oldest and the most celebrated philosopher of the time demonstrating in the streets, organizing protest meetings and writing angry letters to Heads of State. Even after all this, his passion was not spent; he was yet to speak out in fiercer protest. He was among the first in the Western world to raise his voice against American brutalities in Vietnam; it was he who conceived an

International Tribunal on War Crimes in Vietnam, whose operation was financed by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation. He did not end there. At the age of ninety-five, he gave the world a profoundly shocking and moving *exposé* of the systematic destruction of a small people by an arrogant Power armed with napalm and "lazy dogs", gas and chemicals, corruption and concentration camps. As late as last December he urged U Thant to support a full-fledged international commission to investigate the genocide in South Vietnam. He was then over ninety-seven. Was the fearless voice going to be heard for ever? Russell, the man of science, would not have believed it. He died before completing his ninety-eighth year, but, unlike his grandmother, he remained unchanged till the end.

Unchanged in the essential qualities of intellect and spirit; a man consumed by such intellectual and spiritual energy could hardly be expected to conform throughout his long life to any rigid pattern of ideas and pursuits. The minds of few men in history have explored such a fantastic range of academic, social, political and practical concerns. History may assess the relative importance of his contributions to philosophy and mathematical logic; it is also possible that he will be remembered more as a stimulator, corrector and coordinator of ideas than as the originator of a profound and systematic body of thought; some may well think that his friend G. E. Moore made a more substantial, and his pupil Wittgenstein a more original, contribution to philosophy. But all this is relatively unimportant in the context of Russell's total effect on the intellectual history of our times. More than any other man, he has been responsible for awakening and sustaining a scientific spirit in the pursuit of knowledge and in the conduct of human affairs. The forces working against this spirit are still unvanquished, indeed formidable; but that only shows the magnitude of the struggle that he chose as his own. Three passions, he said in the

Prologue to his Autobiography, had governed his life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge and an unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind. Many years earlier he had defined the good life as one guided by knowledge and inspired by love. Perhaps, he was the most successful in his search for knowledge, in his effort to "apprehend the Pythagorean power by which number holds sway above the flux". But he was the greatest when love and knowledge failed to satisfy him, when pity in the highest sense of the word brought him back to earth. "I long to alleviate the evil, but I cannot, and I too suffer." But he tried all his life, and found life worth living. And in so doing he somehow enriched the quality of human life.

Visva-Bharati

People elsewhere may be fighting for student participation in university administration; the demands which are being heard in Santiniketan over the last year are not however that radical. There it is the teachers and employees who are demanding a say in the administration. The threat of resignation of the Vice-Chancellor and its withdrawal last July were all part of this fight. He considered the demand of the teachers and employees for having representatives on the executive bodies of the University unreasonable. The week-long student strike, processions taken out by students, employees and teachers, sit-in at the Vice-Chancellor's office, which all followed the V.C.'s threat to resign, were somewhat unusual in the stagnant life of this fashion resort of West Bengal.

Visva-Bharati University was planned by the dead poet to be something unique; since his death the University has expanded but not in the direction the poet wanted. That was however not exactly unexpected. It was the height of romanticism to hope that people born in a commercial society could be forced into Nature's recluse and developed into

rounded personalities. The interesting thing in the present Santiniketan affairs is that the teachers and employees who have openly come out against the authority are agitating against those very people who were reportedly nurtured in the lap of Mother Nature.

The alumni association of the University is not what one means by *Ashram* or *Sangha*. Nevertheless it sports both the terms to describe itself. It is a closely-guarded affair, restricted to the few elites, who alone are privileged to send elected representatives to the Karma Samiti and Sansad of the University. It was a quirk of the University Act, or possibly it was conceived after many thoughtful hours to prescribe that anyone employed in the University shall not be a member of the *Ashramik Sangha*. Thus the employees were debarred from electing their men to the executive body of the University. The *Sangha*, much as the absentee zamindars did, thus became a part of the University administration without having any idea of what goes on in Santiniketan.

Unique in the world Visva-Bharati was once; unique it still is. How many universities are there today where teachers have no direct representation on the executive bodies? In Santiniketan, there are no service rules either for teachers who work truly under the pleasure of the Vice-Chancellor or those whose puppet he is. Teachers are appointed through the grace of those who consider the Visva-Bharati their clan business.

There is nothing special about the education given in Santiniketan. It churns out students, much as any other university in India does, who join the commercial rat race in right earnest. But that is what outsiders think. The people who run the show are enormously proud of the prestigious Bhavans in Santiniketan; so much so that a broad distinction has grown up between the Bhavans in Santiniketan and the Sadans in rural Sriniketan, which are treated as an appendage and penal stations for employees who fall from grace in urbane Santiniketan!

From Russia With Love

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

AT long last, New Delhi admitted by implication what the world had known for over two years now—the acquisition of Su (khai)-7 bombers from the Soviet Union. The belated admission came in the form of an innocuous announcement that the Sukhais would lead the supersonic block of the fly-past on January 26. The fly-past had to be a truncated one due to bad weather and neither the Sukhais nor the familiar MIG-21s were seen. But the parade provided a fair indication of the growing Indian dependence on Soviet military aid. The long-range MIG fighters and the Sukhai ground-attack planes give India an edge over the Chinese air force, rated the world's third largest. The T-55 and PT-76 tanks and the Soviet surface-to-air missiles and the 130 mm guns on parade (meant for use against Pakistan) were a clammy reminder of the Dullesian arms race on the sub-continent revived in the sixties by the Soviet Union.

In a cold war situation a non-aligned country like India could have all the options. Non-alignment gave India the leverage to play one super-power against the other and get economic aid. The line between economic aid and military aid is thin as is the line between aid and intervention. In fact, all aid is intervention in one form or the other. When the Congress passed the famous Nagpur resolution on co-operative farming, Mr S. K. Patil could scuttle its implementation by striking the PL-480 deal. Food has been the 'Achilles' heel of the Indian economy and the Soviet Union is hardly the country that could give us food. It had to be from the United States while aid in other sectors came from the Soviet Union.

When the cold war was easing, India became the focal point of the

U.S.-Soviet detente. The interests of the two super-powers converge in India, reducing our non-alignment to dual satellitism.

Time was when the United States dumped military aid on Pakistan and economic aid on India. But now the bulk of the economic aid to India has to come from the West and almost the entire military aid from the Soviet Union. The cold war has virtually ended but the sinister game of containing China gives New Delhi the leverage it needs. There seems to be a tacit U.S.-Soviet understanding on the arms balance on the sub-continent and between India and China though the U.S. has not supported India's stand on the Sino-Indian border dispute.

A recent study on aid policies in India* has thrown up certain interesting conclusions. The U.S. attitude to aid for India has been confused from the beginning and has gone through several phases. From limited involvement in the early phase, it moved to one of hostility to non-alignment and was followed by a liberal stalemate until the Sino-Indian border dispute exploded into a border war in 1962. In the context of the growing Sino-Soviet differences, India's close economic and military relationship with the Soviet Union is not objectionable to the United States.

But what about Soviet aid to India? The analysis of the triangular relationship between the Soviet and Indian governments and the CPI in this study is interesting. According to P. J. Eldridge, the author, Moscow had abandoned its objectives of in-

* P. J. Eldridge: *The Politics of Foreign Aid in India*, London School of Economics and Political Science and Vikas Publications, New Delhi. Rs. 37.50.

ternal subversion in India—if indeed these were serious—as early as 1950 when Nehru's role in world affairs became an important factor in Soviet calculations. Soviet aid to India was primarily an instrument of Russian foreign policy rather than an aspect of international communist strategy. With the emergence of the strategy of "peaceful co-existence", of which aid was the primary instrument, bonhomie with the Congress Government became all important.

The Soviet Union could not have cared a damn for the CPI's fortunes in the Andhra mid-term elections in 1955 and later in Kerala when the Namboodiripad ministry was dismissed. The dismissal of the first elected communist ministry in the country through blatant subversion of the Constitution did not inhibit the Soviet Union from signing a Rs. 300-crore credit agreement for the Third Plan. Both the CPI and the CPI (M) might argue that socialist aid is helping India to resist imperialist economic pressures. But the public sector that has been growing largely with Soviet and socialist aid could lead to growing power of the monopolies and growing comprador character of the bourgeoisie. The CPI is known to have claimed credit for the new-fangled concept of National Democracy and a National Democratic Front. The CPSU leadership latched on to this dubious contribution of the CPI to rationalise Soviet aid to some of the most reactionary regimes in the Third World, including the one in India.

Defensive

Eldridge is obliged to conclude, and justifiably, that Soviet aid to India has been the product of "nothing precisely definable than a general desire for good relations with India". The primary Soviet policy objective has been defensive, to keep India away from any Western military bloc. Thus U.S. and Soviet objectives have been similar because the United States came to accept Indian non-alignment, reluctantly though. Eldridge also concludes that the Soviet Union is now more involved in the balance of po-

wer issues on the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent and shares common interest with the United States in preservation of an overall framework of regional stability. India's bargaining power has shrunk, though still considerable.

But Eldridge seems to have missed something here. While the U.S.-Soviet detente has deprived India of some of her bargaining power, the Sino-Soviet conflict restores it more than what it has lost. Soviet aid to India following the 1962 border war, particularly the massive military aid, itself became an issue in the Sino-Soviet ideological dispute.

Drawn into the super-power game of containing China, India has settled for a comfortable phase of "aided democracy". One kind of dependence is being replaced by another and socialist aid is not all that altruistic. Talk to Indian diplomats and they could tell you in private how arrogant and brusque Soviet behaviour is at the negotiating table. One is reminded of the British behaviour on such occasions in the early days of our independence. The Soviet Union is ready to underwrite the stability of the regime in New Delhi because it has massive investments in the key sectors of the Indian economy to defend and a comprador class to protect as the bulwark against China.

The ruling classes and the "progressive" intellectuals are settling for the comfort of a five per cent growth rate that would not disturb the status quo and would meet the Soviet ends. Amidst the Indo-Pakistani war, there was the brave talk of doing without aid if need be. But the exercises in self-reliance and import substitution have been forgotten. Any talk of self-reliance is ridiculed in New Delhi now. The IAS official who prepared the paper on 10 per cent growth rate dispensing with all aid got from the hardened bureaucrats the treatment reserved for cranks. And when does the next delegation to beg for aid for the Fourth Plan leave New Delhi?

February 1, 1970

India And Nepal

PUSPA LAL

SINCE India's independence Indo-Nepal relations have followed a zigzag course, and often the subject has generated more heat than understanding. A dispassionate analysis of the problem is essential to the promotion of genuine friendship between the two neighbours.

Relations between the peoples of India and Nepal before 1947 were cordial and based on revolutionary objectives. Nepal gave shelter to many Indian revolutionaries, particularly during the 1942 movement. Mr J. P. Narayan and Dr Lohia were prominent among them. And the people of Nepal can never forget the friendly help received from India in their fight against the Ranashahi. The Indian national movement, in fact, inspired the Nepalese in their fight for democracy. Despite the severe restrictions imposed by the then Ranas and the British authorities, the revolutionaries of the two countries could manage to meet and discuss their common problems. Indian leaders were highly respected in Nepal. But, contrary to expectations, these relations began to take a different turn in the post-independence period and over a number of issues controversies arose.

Partly this unhappy situation may be attributed to the policy of the British Government in India. The British treated Nepal as a protectorate. But the Indian leaders went a step further. To them, Nepal appeared as a part of India. "The only true independent kingdom in India is Nepal on the north-eastern frontier", Nehru wrote in his *Discovery of India*. It was a startling discovery indeed. To him, Nepal was not an independent and sovereign country, but a "Kingdom in India". If a statesman of his stature could go so wrong in his understanding of the position, no wonder the people of India still labour under a similar illusion.

This wrong understanding found expression in the foreign policy of the Indian Government headed by Nehru himself. Time and again he proclaimed in and outside Parliament that India's frontier extended up to the Himalayas. Further, he said that one of the main responsibilities of his government was to protect Nepal from external aggression, because of India's special interests in Nepal. It was unfortunate that the end of the British rule in India did not affect the official Indian viewpoint on Nepal. Immediately after the end of the Ranashahi in 1951, the Government of India's intervention in the internal affairs of Nepal was marked. In addition to the Indian Embassy, Mr Govinda Narayan was deputed to the royal palace. His job, as it was officially stated, was to arrange appointments between the King and the people of Nepal!

The high-handedness of the then Indian Ambassador, Mr C. P. N. Singh, was so glaring that even Mr B. P. Koirala, who had been Home Minister in the coalition Ministry formed after the overthrow of the Ranashahi, had to protest publicly. He charged Mr Singh with taking an "undue" interest in Nepal's affairs. Every plan for ministerial changes in Nepal was conceived in New Delhi on Mr Singh's recommendation. Mr Robert Trumbull of *The New York Times* then reported that Nepal appeared to fear India's encroachment on her ancient freedom more than communist infiltration from her northern neighbour. It was said openly in Kathmandu that the real ruler of Nepal was the Indian Ambassador. Gradually the Indian intervention extended to the military sphere also. In the name of reorganising the Nepalese army, an Indian military mission was despatched to Kathmandu, which busied itself with purging the national army. This was the biggest purge ever known in the history of Nepal. The strength of the army was reduced from 25,000 to 6,000. The mission also paved the way for establishment of military check-posts on the Tibet-Nepal frontier. Even

now these posts are manned and controlled by Indian Army personnel who maintain a direct line with the concerned departments of the Government of India.

"Internal Stability"

Why does New Delhi want to have a firm hold over the political and military affairs of Nepal? As one Indian journalist points out, the threat to India's position in Nepal does not arise merely from the activities of the Chinese Government. The rise of the local communists' influence may serve China's interests and militate against India's. The Gorkha soldiers have merely to be given an idea and a gun and they can be a menace to India's security. The preservation of internal stability in Nepal, continues the journalist, is therefore of vital interest to India—"India's national interests have, of course, to be protected in Nepal". (*India Meets China In Nepal* by Girilal Jain).

This idea of disarming a nation or encroaching on its sovereignty is the general practice of the representatives of monopoly capital and big landlords. In fact, the Government of India seems determined to protect the interests of these elements in Nepal.

More than 95% of Nepal's import and export trade is with India and the Marwaris are in a dominating position even in her remotest trading centres. Nepal has been a safe shelter for Indian black money. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry finds a favourable climate for investment in the mountain kingdom. The neo-colonialist policy of collaborating with native capital has also been adopted by the Indian monopolists. More than 80 joint projects were to be executed in Nepal.

Previously Nepal used to import duty-free goods from countries other than Britain, particularly from Japan and Germany and Nepalese merchants enjoyed greater rights and privileges in their country than merchants of Indian origin. Goods were cheaper than in the Indian markets.

The situation was changed in favour of India immediately after India achieved independence. Taking advantage of Nepal's weak position, a trade treaty was imposed making it obligatory for Nepal not to sell goods at home at rates lower than those in the Indian markets. Nepal's right of transit facilities for an effective implementation of a policy of diversification of trade is not opposed in theory but in practice. Many obstacles in its way are placed.

For all-round development Nepal needs a network of transport and communication. India is not opposed to this, but some of her responsible leaders think that these should be constructed to serve primarily the national interests of India, not those of Nepal. Hence their opposition to the modernisation of the Kathmandu-Kodari Road and the Kathmandu-Pokhara Road.

It is well known that every year the untamed rivers of Nepal cause great damage to the people of North Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. To harness them is imperative. But many clauses in the Kosi and Gandak arrangements are detrimental to the national interests of Nepal. Thousands of people have demonstrated in the streets of Nepal for amendments in the arrangements so that the peoples of both the countries might benefit to the maximum from the projects.

The story will be incomplete without a reference to Mr J. P. Narayan's proposal about the formation of a federation consisting of India, Pakistan, Kashmir, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and Nagaland. The proposal looks like a break in the traditional thinking of India. It is not. It is simply old wine in new bottles. The proposal seeks to realize the dream of greater India in the guise of equality of nations. It is a proposal after the fashion of the European Common Market. The formation of the Common Market has meant the subjugation of the weaker and backward nations by the developed ones. Needless to say, India is the most developed country

among the proposed members of Mr Narayan's federation.

Hindi-speaking People

The impact of the traditional thinking expounded by the late Mr Nehru is so great that even a Marxist scholar like Mahapandit Rahul San-kriyayana succumbed to it. In the foreword to *Nepal Ki Kahani* published in 1955, he wrote: "It has to be remembered that the Hindi-speaking people of the Tarai constitute the majority of the population in Nepal and they are compelled to pay the lion's share of the revenue of the Nepalese Government. The Hindi-speaking population of the Tarai region may one day present a difficult problem, if the present rulers of Nepal also follow the same policy as was adopted by the Gorkha rulers during their rule. The attitude of the Nepalese rulers towards the people of the Tarai is even more contemptuous than that of the Pakistani rulers towards East Pakistan. They do not want that the people of the Tarai should be represented in the administrative machinery of Nepal in keeping with their numbers. It is definite that people with this obvious superiority of numbers cannot be denied their proper place in the administration, nor can they be made to bear the heaviest taxes. Every well-wisher of Nepal would hope that in future the Tarai people are treated not as conquered subjects but as free citizens. The Government and administration should not be considered the monopoly of the 'Pahadia' people alone and the mentality of taking the people of the Tarai as slavish subjects should be given up as early as possible. It would not be wise (on the part of the Nepalese rulers) to take undue advantage of these millions upon millions of our brothers who were forced to live in Nepal. After all the Hindi-speaking people of the Tarai from Morang to the banks of the Kali-Sarda river, are the very flesh of flesh and blood of blood of the people who inhabit the districts from Purnea to Philibhit to the south of them."

Rahul's statement completely negates the class struggle going on in Nepal. An unworthy attempt was made to divide the population of Nepal into two factions—Pahadias and Medhias—and then to threaten the Pahadia ruling group to see reason or face the communal problem. Rahul's stand encourages the separatist elements in Nepal and hence is a threat to Nepal's national integration. In his comments Rahul threw the Marxist-Leninist ideology overboard, and adopted the bourgeois chauvinistic outlook.

"Cultural Unity"

Cultural unity between Nepal and India is a point on which much emphasis is laid by most of the Indian leaders. They see no reason why India and Nepal, both having the same cultural heritage, i.e. Hinduism, should have major differences. But it is entirely misleading to refer to Indian culture as Hindu culture. Buddhism and Jainism are certainly not Hinduism. Neither Vedic nor the Indus Valley culture is Hinduism. Hinduism is a concept which developed in India on the eve of the Persian, Afghan and Turkish invasions. It is a concept fostered by Hindu landlords and orthodox Brahmins who claim to follow the ancient faith in their fight against other sections of landlords and rival faiths.

We do not deny the impact of Indian culture on Nepalese society. But Indian culture is certainly not Hinduism. Hinduism is a part of Indian culture, not the whole of it. Indian culture today is not what it was in ancient days. It has undergone constant change owing to external and internal factors. Contact with other cultures and the internal changes in the economic basis are bound to affect the cultural structure of society. This is as much true of India as of any other country.

In fact, the revivalists' stress on unity based on Hindu culture is only a cover for their desire to glorify and strengthen the feudal structure of Nepalese society.

The Nepalese had hopes of getting help from India in their endeavour for national regeneration. But during the last twenty years the Indian leaders have tried to influence the democratic and national movement in Nepal in such a way that it might become an appendage of Indian monopoly capital which is the enemy of the Indian people as much as of the Nepalese.

Since 1950 the people of Nepal have been fighting against the many-sided penetrations of Indian monopoly capital in Nepal. The Indian Press, controlled by monopolists and landlords have sought to mislead the Indian people by mischievous canards that Nepalese communists are responsible for creating "anti-Indian" feeling in Nepal. But it is not the Nepalese communists alone who are opposed to India.

This national protest could not but influence the Indian leaders and there were attempts at reappraisal of India's policy. Some self-critical articles and news did appear in the Indian Press. Mrs Laxmi Menon, former Minister of State in the Indian Ministry of External affairs, issued a public statement in February, 1961 saying "We as Indians claim to be great champions of co-existence but in our heart of hearts we do not believe in what we say and preach—Indians thought they were doing Nepal a great favour by assisting her with her river projects. But many Indian rivers originate in Nepal and it was to India's advantage to help Nepal with the river projects and thus save the country from perennial floods".

No Basic Change

However, words not matched by deeds carry no meaning. No basic change in the policies of the Indian Government has taken place.

Some months back when Mr Dinesh Singh, India's Foreign Minister, paid a state visit to Nepal, he did not fail to say that India wants "special relations" with Nepal. The people of Nepal are conscious enough to understand the hidden meaning of this special relationship.

It means that New Delhi has not departed from its traditional policy towards Nepal, formulated and fostered by the British imperialists—the policy of Big Brotherism or big nation chauvinism. Since the transfer of power from the British in 1947, under the cover of special relations with Nepal, the Government of India has wanted to grab many facilities in Nepal so that it might be able to turn Nepal against China and thereby endanger the national sovereignty of Nepal. Even the Nepal Government was compelled to protest against the statement under the pressure of public opinion. It is true, however, that the king wants to use this national sentiment to strengthen his own position.

This chauvinistic policy of the Indian ruling class has earned a bad name for the Indian people not only in Nepal but in almost all the neighbouring countries of India.

Some people argue that since there are no common aims now between the peoples of India and Nepal no revolutionary friendship is possible between them. They further argue that they should think only in terms of national interest. But if we look beyond our nose it will not be difficult to see that the international reaction headed by American imperialism and the reactionary forces of both the countries are the common enemy of the peoples of both India and Nepal and that it is necessary for their democratic and progressive forces to understand common problems and support each other in dealing with the forces of reaction.

But unfortunately, the democratic and progressive opposition parties in India show no interest in understanding the problems of their neighbours, particularly Nepal. It is their duty to exert effective pressure upon the Government to stop it from becoming the instrument of Indian monopoly capital in Nepal. Big nation chauvinism has hampered friendship between India and Nepal. A different outlook on the part of Indian leaders towards Nepal is necessary.

Czechoslovakia—Capitalism And Socialism

S. N. MISHRA

EMOTIONAL reactions to the Soviet-led intervention in Czechoslovakia in August 1968 are long over now except in those quarters for whom anniversaries have a ritual value. A satisfying Marxist explanation of the intervention has, however, not appeared so far. No doubt interesting pages have been written by Paul M. Sweezy and Charles Bettelheim in the *Monthly Review* which *Frontier* made accessible to a larger body of interested readers in India. (February 15, 22; August 2, 1969) Sweezy in course of his original article and his reply to Bettelheim's comment comes to develop some sort of a theory of society in transition between capitalism and socialism. This theory aims at encompassing the present-day social life of all the Soviet bloc countries. In his comment, Bettelheim also throws up a few theoretical props which of course do not amount to a theory. This is not to deny that he may be having one in his book referred to by Sweezy, but the book in any case is not open to the English readers. In their controversy Sweezy and Bettelheim raise interesting philosophical problems such as that of essential and contingent causes and of the role of determinist and voluntarist elements in historical causation. In itself their effort to arrive at a viable theory of transitional societies is welcome and commendable. Immediate motivation for such effort came from the invasion of Czechoslovakia. That Marxists of the competence of Sweezy and Bettelheim were moved to make such efforts points to the criticality of the events of August 21, 1968, the swift and tragic drama that followed between Moscow and Prague, and finally the heavy curtain that is gradually descending on Czechoslovakia under Dr Gustav Husak.

No one can be so simple as to believe that the events of August 21, 1968 and their immediate after-

math provide 'sufficient basis for a transitional social theory. But the fact remains that if the events are instrumental in prompting such a theory, the theory in turn must be able to explain the events. It is in this respect that Sweezy and Bettelheim do not satisfy us fully. In fact, the cryptic explanation of the invasion and the theoretical propositions have little affinity between them, so much so that without loss of consistency Bettelheim while disagreeing with Sweezy's theoretical position, agrees with his explanatory statement that, 'in the final analysis...the Czechoslovak invasion was a sign of weakness in the face of a growing crisis in the bloc as a whole'. In fact, as we shall see later, their different theories, when stretched to their logical ends, produce almost similar explanations of the invasion.

Bettelheim's complete theoretical position is admittedly not available to us. In his comment, however, he maintains that it is impossible to explain the invasion without the assumption that, 'the proletariat (Soviet or Czech) has lost its power to a new bourgeoisie'. How in point of fact this political proposition explains the invasion we are not told. Its implications, however, are obvious. Since the 'juridical' form of 'ownership' of property is not terribly crucial, following this proposition, the Soviet Union and the Eastern European democracies together constitute a complex of capitalist countries. The invasion of Czechoslovakia, just as any other invasion among them, is, therefore, explicable in terms of the usual economic arguments corresponding to the imperialist phase of capitalism—competition for market, raw material needs, export of finance capital, etc.

It is doubtful, however, whether Bettelheim would permit us to imply such economic inference from his political proposition. On the contrary, he equally strongly believes

that, in the restoration of capitalism, and, therefore, in the explanation of the invasion too, 'the decisive factor —i.e. the dominant factor is not economic but political' (original italics). In fact, in this proposition Bettelheim has taken the most revolutionary step, so to say, in that he has inverted one of the most celebrated universal Marxian theses, that of the primary or dominance of the economic over all other factors. The logical next step of this inversion is the dissolution of the distinction between the 'base' and the 'super-structure', and the consequent admission of sophism, opportunism and pragmatism in the Marxian thought system.

How seriously Bettelheim believes in this inversion is also, however, not certain. For while criticising Sweezy, he argues at some length that basic relationships lie at the level of production, which indeed means recognition of the primacy or dominance of the economic base. If he stands by this recognition, then, as we said earlier, the invasion of Czechoslovakia becomes explicable in terms of bourgeois exploitation at the international level, appearing at a crisis point when the urge of the exploited Czech economy for independence had become dangerous. The proletariat of the two countries in question are left with the role of spectators or forced to join in the bourgeois game. The Soviet proletariat—like the British or French during the heyday of the Empire—may indeed connive with the invasion in the hope of sharing the fruits of exploitation. The economic hobnobbing of Czechoslovakia with the Western capitalist economies cited by Sweezy, and Brezhnev's obnoxious behaviour at the post-invasion Moscow talks (disclosed in *Le Monde* and reproduced in *Frontier*, very well bear these conclusions. Incidentally, Brezhnev's threat to dissolve Czechoslovakia as a nation could come from a worse imperialist.

Two Contradictions

Sweezy does not go as far as to

maintain that a capitalist class is in power in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Democracies. Instead, a 'managerial elite', which, for all practical purposes, behaves and works like a capitalist class, has come to occupy an important place in these countries. It stands in opposition to the old 'bureaucratic group'. This opposition is a reflection of a more basic contradiction, namely, the plan-market contradiction. Depending upon the movement of these two contradictions, hereafter respectively designed as B/M and P/M, the Soviet bloc countries are assumed to be moving towards capitalism, each at a different pace determined by the relative position of forces within the contradictions.

Moving from this general theoretical position to the specific question of the Czechoslovak invasion, we have the following situation. In the Soviet Union, the 'bureaucratic group' is in control of power; while in Czechoslovakia, the 'managerial elite' had come to power at the time of the invasion and was fast consolidating its position. The Soviet 'bureaucratic group' decided on the invasion for two reasons (two 'fears', in Sweezy's words): (1) Self-preservation of the group from the managerial elite at home, by *ex ante* show of strength, (2) preservation of the bloc from possible disintegration under the stress of the 'marked', hectically granted ascendancy by the ruling managerial elite of Czechoslovakia.

This is what one can best make out which is apparently consistent with Sweezy's general theoretical position. A deeper look would make it clear, however, that it is based upon two assumptions which lead it at variance with the normal movement of contradictions B/M and P/M in any of the transitional societies. The first assumption is that the Czech society functions as an experimental ground of the ruling group in the Soviet Union. The second is that the inevitable course of social development envisaged in the movement of postulated contradictions is open to armed interference of this group, if the

course deviates from its interest. Taken together the two assumptions lead to a position where everything in Czechoslovakia, and for that matter perhaps in every other smaller partner of the bloc, depends upon the relative power location in Moscow.

This position does not do much credit to Sweezy's general theory of transitional societies between capitalism and socialism in more than one sense. Firstly, a position of this kind can be arrived at from a much simpler premise, namely, that, among the group in question the Soviet society is central and the others are its subsidiaries. Secondly, since asymmetry in the movement of the B/M and P/M contradictions between the Soviet society and any other in the group is open to correction according to the choice of the former, the social development of the latter ultimately depends on the contradictions within the Soviet society. Under such circumstances when all roads lead to Moscow, what is the need or justification for a general theory of transitional societies between capitalism and socialism? From a purely theoretical angle, the trouble does not end here. The expected consequences of Sweezy's theory also did not follow in real life. At the time of the invasion, following the movement of the B/M contradiction, the Czech 'bureaucratic group' should have risen to the occasion in support of the invasion, should have provided a new location of power and should have saved its Soviet counterpart from the embarrassment of negotiating a settlement with the Czech 'managerial elite'. At least this is what Sweezy's theory would want it to do. But it did not do so even while Soviet tanks were littered all over Czechoslovakia in its support. That, instead, Czechoslovakia as a whole appeared in opposition to the invasion remains unexplained by the theory. This leads us to doubt whether Sweezy's postulated contradictions are real or largely formal.

Market and Planning

It may be noted that under the

stress of modern 'forces of production', the 'market' under capitalism is assimilating 'planning' at a growing scale. Surely this assimilation is meant not to weaken but to strengthen capitalism. Can we under the circumstances infer that movement of P/M in the direction of P is a movement towards socialism? Or, can we say that such a movement of P/M invariably means a weakening of M? The answer to either question is in the negative. Nor can, under the modern conditions of production, the movement of P/M in the direction of P can, by the same token, provide a *differentia specifica* of socialism. When 'planning' has become a tool of the 'market', the contradiction P/M, as a force of social transformation, is dead for ever.

The other contradiction, B/M, being the political manifestation of P/M, cannot stand on its own once the latter falls. Indeed the modern 'forces of production' have fused B and M to such an extent that the very distinction between the two appears spurious. With fantastic advances in information technology and the sprawling nature of production complexes, a mechanised member of class M behaves in the same manner as a member of class B. Once the 'blind' market is replaced by the planned market, the distance between M and B tends to close down.

For a proper Marxist understanding of the invasion, we need to have a better knowledge of the structure of the economies in question, of their linkage at the base, and of how the social surplus was being appropriated in them. Without this, we shall remain in a world of unverified hypotheses. There are of course definite signs that private appropriation of the social surplus in the Eastern democracies and the Soviet Union has gone to the extent of producing a privileged class of rulers towards which Sweezy and Bettelheim are alluding in their own ways. Neither this fact nor a large dose of 'market' provides a sufficient basis, however, for characterising either this class as a 'bourgeois class', or

Calcutta Diary

GYAN KAPUR

these societies as 'bourgeois societies' or transitional societies on the road back to capitalism. These are easy epithets no doubt, but do not help the science of development of society. Historically, a class of exploiters, and also the market, have existed in pre-capitalist societies as well. Cannot we, therefore, equally legitimately maintain that these societies mutating back to feudalism or even to the slave system? Why not, if skipping of stages is a well recognised possibility and a unilinear path of social development is neither unique nor universal? If this possibility is granted, the characterisation of the ruling class in these countries as 'bourgeois class' and of the societies as ones on the road to capitalism becomes untenable.

Another important question which arises at this point is whether the assumption of 'back mutation' is absolutely necessary for explaining the emergence of a class structure and the enlargement of the market in the societies under discussion. If the general irreversibility of the economic process has any meaning, 'back mutation' is not the first but the last possibility a social system would adapt. We must therefore look initially for the first possibilities. Such possibilities must be sought in a 'forward mutation' which produces alongside a growing differentiation in the social system. In a system with social 'ownership' of the means of production, the differentiation can first arise at the level of consumption and can thereafter sustain itself indefinitely without disturbing the 'ownership' pattern. We can give any number of examples of such tribal societies from Indian history. Those who claim the lion's share of the social product are the rulers, and the rest are simply the producers of the society and for the society, working on the social means of production. Indeed, such exploitative systems have been found to be far more stable, because myth plays a greater role in them. Something of this sort seems to have happened in the Soviet Union and the Eastern democracies.

TIME was when betting on horses was considered, outside the charmed circle of the aristocrats, as something to be ashamed of and not to be mentioned in decent society. There was no dearth of bucket shop bookies who took bets of 5 annas or 10 annas and made a living out of it. For some it was good business indeed and even their touts managed to eke out their existence on the miseries of their victims.

Days, however, seem to have changed radically with the upsurge in the mass movements in Calcutta at least. There can be no other explanation for the wild scenes witnessed on the Calcutta Race Course recently when a free-for-all took place, to control which the police had to fire tear-gas shells. Whether there was ground for resentment against a particular horse winning, is neither here nor there. There are ways available to challenge the decisions but then these are open only to those who belong to the charmed circle of the racing fraternity, to wit the members of the Royal Calcutta Turf Club.

These means, of course, were not available to all those who had gone to watch the fate of their hopes pinned on particular horses. Not being members of the elite they could not reach the racing authorities and hence the resentment. But that is not the main point which should be noted. The extent of the rioting on the race course disclosed a fact which should make us sit up and ponder the situation. There were thousands upon thousands of betters or punters as they are called who were prepared to fight it out with the police and thought nothing of the consequences.

All this shows to what extent the rot has spread. Betting has been on the increase steadily. If you feel like it, there is always some bookie conveniently around to take your money. Even if you don't feel like going to the race course itself, you can put your fiver on the Club's Cal-

cutta office in pleasant surroundings. In the process a vast network has been built up over the city of touts, bookies and their agents to cater to the demand. In spite of the political upsurge and the two United Front governments, on the one hand the stigma attaching to horse betting is fast disappearing, leading more and more men to have their fling, and on the other hand the mounting unemployment is forcing increasing numbers into the shady business.

* *

Crises have become the normal thing for the United Front and each new one leaves it more exhausted than the last one. As a result no one knows what is keeping the Front from total collapse unless it is the wrath of the great mass of people who pinned their hopes on it. While the 14 partners go on playing their game of mutual mud-slinging but hesitate to take the final plunge, they forget that there may be others who delight in fishing in the troubled waters of the State. There is nothing like a state of equilibrium in nature, much less in politics. If the people, are not allowed to go forward under the leadership of the United Front, there are elements ready to play their game of turning different sections of the people against each other.

In this context the Jana Sangh-led riot inside the Calcutta Corporation in which councillors were attacked assumes a special importance. That it was preplanned appears obvious. As yet, in spite of talk to the contrary, the Jana Sangh remains in this State a party of the vested interests from outside the State. Thanks to the political understanding of the people, the BNVP in West Bengal is a sort of non-starter whereas its counterpart in Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena, prospered like anything. But the type of agitation indulged in by the Jana Sangh has dangerous possibilities. The denizens of Burrabazar, of course, are not all rich people. They have genuine grievances no doubt about the quality of the civic services available to them, but

so have hundreds of thousands of other Calcutta citizens. So far, however, they have not aligned themselves in any significant way with the aspirations of the common people and the area remains a hot-bed of reaction. Such Marwari-led agitations can only serve to fan the fires of latent chauvinistic feelings.

* * *

A whole new generation of young men and women has grown up since the British left India. But in Calcutta at least any Briton going around at festival time would be happy to find how British we are in so many ways still. Whether it is an immersion procession for any puja, or to celebrate any one of the so many national days, the local club band is a must these days. In actual fact there may be so many and do a thriving business on such occasions. Most of them are made up of young kids under the guidance of young men. Some of the more ambitious ones have young men as the players. Apart from the flute and drum ones, the bagpipe bands are a favourite of the organisers and this should gladden Scottish hearts.

Invariably these bands are well turned out and play superbly. In fact, I have heard the military bands and considering the facilities available to them and to these youngsters, these amateurs have an edge over the professionals of the armed services. Which makes me think of the wide separation between the people and the State machinery as shown by the celebrations on the two national days, January 23 and 26. Since January 23 has been declared a national day, it is up to the Government that it is observed in a fitting manner. However, apart from these club bands, it is usually a very poor show. There is no reason why the armed forces should not be asked to join in the processions. On the other hand the January 26 parade is wholly an official affair and follows its traditional venue, the Brigade Parade Ground. With the change of times, the procession could be made to pass through the streets of the

city and more non-official organisations could be asked to join in. The innumerable club bands in particular should be invited to take part. They would be a creditable addition

Book Review

Soviet Indology Series

PRIMILA LEWIS

Vol. I, *Modern Ideological Struggle of India* by N. P. Anikeev. Vol. II, *Papers of Th. Stcherbatsky*. Published by India Past and Present. Calcutta.

THIS would be a useful and welcome series were it not for the dubious ideological grounds which the Soviet Government bases itself upon today. For this is of course an officially sponsored project, and although at least in the first two volumes one cannot detect any indication of the current ideological split in communism, one is wary of the very nature of scholarship in a society which has lost its sense of direction, at least officially. Where a society has adopted a spurious ideology through the deliberate revision of its original lofty aims it undergoes an impoverishment of spirit and intellect. At best there is honest confusion, at worst, patronizing charlatantry. All conviction has gone.

With these reservations in mind, one would say that Vol. I serves the layman well by giving a broad perspective of the major trends in both bourgeois and Marxist (i.e. almost exclusively Soviet and Indian Marxists) scholarship in Indian philosophy. The central argument is that while bourgeois scholars have indeed done worthwhile work in the study of Indian philosophy, their interpretations of this philosophy suffer from a number of serious limitations. "The majority of these scholars are adherents of idealism and are influenced by the ideology of some or other school (most frequently Neo-Kantianism or Neo-Hegelianism) (P. 7).

Moreover, most bourgeois scholars (including such eminent ones as

to the Republic Day Parade and bring the Government and the people closer together, even if in a very small way. But perhaps that is what the few at the top really want.

Hegel, Schweitzer, Muller, Radhakrishnan, Whitehead and Zimmer) make a categorical differentiation between Western and Indian philosophy. Whereas Western philosophy is empirical, logical, rational, Indian philosophy is spiritual, transcendental, intuitive, mystic. "The fact is," says Whitehead, "that the great eastern civilizations do not command sufficient balance of thought necessary for scientific research." (P. 12.)

This general view of 'Indian thought, summed up by Deussen as a "total absence of conflict between religion and philosophy," (P. 13.) has led to the comforting assumption (dangerous too, if not sinister,) on the part of latter-day Western politicians, diplomats and scholars that, "the millennial philosophy of Hinduism, reinvigorated by Gandhi for practical application in the 20th century, is fundamentally incompatible with the ideology of communism" (p. 27.) And Chester Bowles is reputed to have stated that this "religious approach to life via Gandhism should be recommended to all the peoples of Asia and Africa struggling for national independence, as this would be a more effective way of keeping people under the influence of the West than any military or economic assistance." (p. 28.)

Materialist Argument

All this is certainly partially true of the Indian philosophical tradition, but it is by no means the whole

truth. There is, in fact, no lack of emphasis on "the reality of the external world or in the optimistic view of life understood in its larger sense." (p. 31). And this materialist approach dates back to before the 5th century B.C., according to Bhovani Sen. The materialist argument centres round the Carvaka-Lokayata school and the individual system of Dignaga, Dharmakirti and Vacaspati Misra, as well as the southern school of Buddhist philosophy. Indeed, as certain Indian Marxists have pointed out, the widespread concept of spiritual culture in India being pessimistic and negating the material world and secular life, wrongly glorified by the West as the religious-mystic attainment of "spiritual secrets of existence", simply does not make sense in view of the lusty tradition of Indian art, painting, sculpture, poetry, metallurgy, ship-building and other technological skills: the flourishing cities of the Maurya empire when the population was greater than that of the entire Roman empire, the politicians and heroes of the grand old epics. Indeed, "Indian history could not have been traced to even a thousand years, if the negation of world and life constituted the Indian peculiarity." (P. 63.)

Of course, nobody can deny that the influence of the conflicting trends of religio-idealistic thought is deep rooted in Indian tradition. Concepts of moksa, avidya, karma and yoga are venerated throughout the country and are an essential cause of our backwardness. For, as Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya has pointed out, unless we can uproot this fatalistic, subjective, individualistic and negative ideology we shall never achieve the scientific outlook so necessary to liberate us from our feudal and colonial backwardness.

"By showing the presence of un-interrupted and highly developed traditions of rationalism, atheism and materialism in Indian philosophy, the Marxists justly denounce the vain theoretical attempts of these anti-communist ideologists who claim that dialectical materialism is not applicable to Indian conditions." (P. 65)

Such, in brief, is the substance of Volume I. *The Papers of Th. Stcherbatzky*, with a long introduction by Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, (who is also the editor of this series) are obviously the work of a dedicated and truly scholarly Indologist, whose findings in the Indian materialist tradition began well before the October Revolution. Thus, although he is accused of an unfortunate residue of Neo-Kantianism, there is no questioning either his profound knowledge of chiefly the Buddhist philosophical school, or of his motives being anything objective and sincere. His essays on the *History of Materialism in India*, or, *Scientific Achievements*.

in India, amongst others, are of both academic and social value.

It is a pity that the quality of translation, printing and proof-reading leaves so much to be desired—in both these books, to the extent that in places even the sense of the text becomes unintelligible. But this aside, as also one's general reservation about officially sponsored Soviet projects, this series could perform a useful function in making available a comprehensive study of Indian traditions from a Marxist viewpoint. That is, as long as the Soviets make a pretence of Marxism at least in the academic sphere, however spurious even this may ultimately be.

Maoist Jatra

MRINAL SEN ✓

UTPAL Dutt's characters, when he writes plays, are almost always conspicuously one-dimensional. Quite naturally, therefore, the validity of such characterisation is often challenged by the aesthetes. But the challenge, as you will see, does not disturb him at all. Criticisms notwithstanding, he does the same over again, offering no apology and in so doing uses his medium as a propagandist's pulpit. In jatra, where there are plenty of extremes and very little or none of middle tones, this "technique" seems to be the most effective. And it has been particularly so in Dutt's *Sonrey Malik*, produced by Bibek Jatra Samaj, directed by himself and played by him and his own people.

The story presents a political thesis and one has to ignore the minor and the major differences that exist among various Maoist formations to see that Dutt's thesis agrees more or less with the politics of the Naxalites. The action, however, is reminiscent of the scene in Debra and Gopiballavpur (Midnapore), but Dutt prefers to take a gigantic leap into the future when the soldiers join hands with the revolutionary peasants and build a formidable core against the imperialists and their indigenous lackeys.

In the beginning, as in all traditional jatras, there is a prologue when, from amongst a group of soldiers caught in macabre rhythm, a jawan, son of a Garhwal peasant, declares that he is dead, gives a sarcastic account of his performance on various "borders" and submits what the play is about. The focus is, of course, on a certain village in Midnapore but the scene, after the military recruitment takes place in the same area, shifts from the Indo-Chinese "border" in 1962 to the Indo-Pak "border" in 1965.

The logic of history operating in the play continues to prove its point: the mysterious "border" is now seen to move into the interior of the country where, in the Midnapore village, the jawans are called in to act as in 1962 and 1965. The rest is the story of peasants' consolidation, formation of peoples' militia ready for continuous attacks from their hide-outs or in the open and a leap into the future, the militants and the jawans forming a common front.

The characters, all made into "types", conform, by and large, to the needs of jatra. The situations are almost always larger than life, the emotions on higher pitch and so is the manner of speech. The response,

as a result, is immediate, predominantly on the physical plane. And, to my mind, this is precisely what Utpal Dutt aims at: physical response rather than intellectual. This is in the true spirit of jatra.

Interestingly enough, nowhere in the play is there any reference to such familiar terms like "revisionism" and "neo-revisionism". Here, in this context, I would submit a point which, if only for a political appraisal of the play, deserves scrutiny. The action in the Midnapore village which, I believe, is more or less in the image of the Debra-Gopiballavpur scene, takes place in 1966. That was the time when the Congress was in power in [West Bengal]. Naxalbari flared up a year later and Debra-Gopiballavpur in 1969, both during the UF rule. While, on one hand, this discrepancy in the timings of the play-action and the actuality is rather intriguing to me, I would like to watch and see how an accomplished Naxalite reacts to the same.

Letters

Aranyer Dinratri

Since one cannot imagine that A Film Critic wrote his piece on *Aranyer Dinratri* (January 24) out of malice it has to be assumed that he is either ignorant or had not followed the film carefully. The review is not just out of focus and misconceived; the casualness of some of the remarks is truly breathtaking.

For instance, he thinks nothing of making the outrageous statement that *Aranyer Dinratri* could be viewed as a sort of *Barjatri* made uptodate. Schematically conceptually, technically or thematically the two films have, of course, nothing in common, unless the critic feels that an outing by a few friends is ipso facto a common denominator binding all films having a group of friends and some amusing episodes.

Then again, he found the story told in a cheap pulp-fiction style, but at the same time found it "annoyingly ponderous". A "cheap pulp-fiction style" if it means anything

means a neatly arranged unreal tale of either romance burgeoning and blossoming into a glowing bloom of united happiness or hero and/or heroine dying in a blaze of uplifted glory or noble suffering. Whatever else the style of such fiction may be, ponderous is the one thing it never is. If by any chance the critic was referring to the style of the film as distinct from the style of storytelling, how could he, at the same time, enjoy it, however, moderately, as "a pure light comedy?" How does a pure light comedy acquire a ponderous style?

To mention another instance, A Film Critic writes that "sex has been treated in the typical Sunday school manner". I would dearly love to know how exactly sex is treated in a typical Sunday school. Commenting on the seduction scene he further writes that everything has been "depicted with a cautious mother superior type attitude". Not knowing many mother superiors I am not very sure what their attitude to out-of-door seduction is, but I should imagine that they disapprove of the whole thing and would not just be cautious about it.

A Film Critic found Soumitra Chatterjee dead wood, Subhendu Chatterjee just making the grade and Sharmila Tagore coarsely coy—yet another instance of sweeping, unsubstantiated remarks. How exactly did Soumitra embody ligneous death when he interpreted the character subtly and well and what are the sights set for an actor—Subhendu's has been one of the finest performances of his career—to be considered major, are questions I would like to ask. As for Sharmila, whether she has acted well or not she has certainly not been either coarse or coy.

A Film Critic has viewed the film as "the story of four friends holidaying in a forest bungalow and indulging in a bit of soul searching and self-revelation". In another review of the film in a daily paper a similar view has been expressed and the reviewer has asked, "what are these young men suffering from? Maladjustment? Alienation? Angst"? Is

it asking too much of film critics to be a little less careless and a little more attentive? If some thought was spared on the different characters the absurdity of lumping all the four together as a group of soul searching, suffering young men would have been apparent.

Of the four Shekhar (Rabi Ghosh) is an uncomplicated extrovert. Nowhere in the film has it been suggested that he is indulging in self-revelation. It would be absurd if he did. Nor does Hari (Samit Bhanja) do any such thing. His suffering is a direct outcome of his having been jilted and is a violently reactive one. He is not an introspective type at all as was clearly established in the flash back. A Film Critic writes that "for him the Santhal woman whom he seduces is another woman to sleep with bereft of any emotional bond." Precisely. Being the sort of person he is he behaves like a wounded animal wrecking his vengeance without thought of either the victim or himself. There is no question of any "tragedy of non-communication." How can a director bring to the fore something which is just not there and which if arbitrarily put in would be artistically invalid?

As for Sanjoy (Subhendu Chatterjee) he has in his life compromised with his principles. But since he has succeeded in rationalising his compromise he has got out of a possible complex of guilt. In his case also the question of suffering peculiar to an "outsider" does not arise.

Of the four only Ashim (Soumitra Chatterjee) suffers from occasional doubts about the price one pays for material advancement in life. In a way he is a modern archetype and his suffering is also archetypal. In any case he does not "indulge" in it. To label all these diverse persons with one tag of a few vogue words is another instance of casual irresponsibility.

For considerations of space I refrain from going into other instances of casualness or into the obiters liberally thrown about. What struck me most, however, is the absence of any sign of reaction to the formal com-

plexity and density of the film. Can it be that your reviewer felt lost or far too lazy to bother about unaccustomed complexity of either form or characters?

I may as well add that I have been concerned in this letter with the review and not, except indirectly, with the film.

S.T.K.
Calcutta

Aranyer Dinratri is a repulsive attempt 'at, orchestration of perversion, buffoonery and debauchery through four discordant keys representing the four friends bred in urban culture and manners who, it is given to understand, were out at Palamau to enjoy a holiday from the obligation of observance of any routine and discipline of the society they escaped from. The risqué exposures—presumably to the palmed off on the audience as the necessity of art—to the lens of the camera of the arm-pit of Kaberi Bose, portions of the *psoas magnus* and *parvus* of Simi, the four friends in their courtesy-clout, so to say, everytime in full view of the youthful ladies of the family of Mr Tripathy, and, finally, the upper front of the bodies of Simi and Samit Bhanja locked up in love-making—out of all these unsublimated raw material has been created—rather manufactured—something in which the artist in Satyajit Ray has yielded place to the vulgar mercantilist.

Your Film Critic has rightly pointed out the hollowness of the film and correctly assessed the sophomoric level of social consciousness of Satyajit Ray. But his ecstatic effusion about the pulchritude of Kaberi Bose is anything but critical in its contents.

R. N. DEBBARMA
Bansdroni, 24-Parganas

Sanghis In Session

Mr N. K. Singh ("The Sanghis in Session", January 17) says, "For our W. Bengal readers it will be amusing to learn that 1045 delegates from their Red State (mostly Calcutta Marwaris) attended the conference".

One-fourth of the 1045 delegates from West Bengal to the Patna session were not Marwaris. Most of the delegates from West Bengal who attended the Patna session of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh were Bengalis.

Your correspondent has a prejudice against the Marwaris and his comment smacks of provincialism. During the mid-term poll most of the rich and wealthy Marwaris of Burra Bazar of Calcutta tried hard to defeat the Jana Sangh candidate. In Jorasanko the rich and capitalist Marwaris left no stone unturned to defeat the Jana Sangh candidate. The majority of West Bengal Marwaris are not pro-Jana Sangh. In my home town, Asansol, most of the Marwaris worked against the Jana Sangh candidate during the mid-term election. It must be remembered that all Marwaris are not rich. There are also lakhs of middle class and poor Marwaris.

At one place Mr Singh says, "Ask any villager and he will tell you that it is a Marwari Bania party." This comment is without foundation. In U.P., Bihar, M.P., Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab etc, the Sangh is popular among the farmers and villagers. The villagers of Bihar and Northern India do not regard it as a Marwari Bania party.

MIHIR KUMAR MUKHERJEE
President, Asansol Jana Sangh

'Sham' Struggles

In Kerala recently, according to a newspaper report, Marxist transport workers burnt to death three bus passengers and stoned over a score of others. Another "Marxist" follower made an attempt on the life of the Home Minister at Tellicherry. Two days earlier the CPM followers had tried to attack the ISP Chairman.

Are these the acts of Leninists or Narodniks? The CPM is violently trying to "jettison real class struggle by sham class struggle", as Mr P. Dutt has brilliantly pointed out in his article (January 10). It never explains to its followers that the mini-front Government in Kerala

is the government of the exploiters. Instead it teaches its followers to hate individuals like Koya and K. M. George. So the innocent followers who are not theoretically trained are filled with hatred of individuals, not hatred of a particular class. The moment a landlord supports the CPM, there is no dispute with him. It is said that in Palghat and Trivandrum districts the CPM did not try any "land grab" campaign because the landlords there are supporters of the CPM.

Why is the CPM conducting the transport strike? The mini-government of Achutha Menon, supported by all reactionaries, has dismissed 750 transport employees taken by the Marxists during their stewardship, without any interview. These 750 people were appointed after receiving 80,000 applications—the fee for each was Rs 10. From this it can be seen how the CPM pampered its followers. It is this arrogant misuse of power that has alienated the CPM from the general public in Kerala.

M. N. D. NAIR
Trivandrum

In The Hills

In reference to your editorial "Eruption in the Hills" (January 17) I would like to point out the situation at my place, a maffussil town, a few miles away from Darjeeling. One of the staff of the Electricity Board, while coming out from the office, was attacked by a mob. He screamed and appealed that he was not a Bengali but a Behari. He was spared. In the maffussil area the Gurkha BDO moved about freely while the social worker and extension educator, of Bengali origin, attached to health centres were reported to have been manhandled. This is definitely not a sign of estrangement between the Government and the people, but between peoples.

Why this hatred for Bengalis in particular? It is true that little has been done for improvement of the area in the past 22 years and the

blame is put on Government employees, mostly Bengalis. This idea gets a chauvinistic turn, thanks to a communal party like the Gurkha League. Also, people do not understand the role of Marwaris and local sardars who symbolise the exploiting jotedars of the plains. But the philistine outlook of the government staff in Darjeeling is no less a cause. They think the Gurkhas are sub-human.

N. K. PAUL
Darjeeling

"Distortions"

I have been reading with interest the controversy on what Mao Tse-tung says and how it is to be interpreted. But the real problem is that of interpreting the Indian situation. No doubt the Russian, the Chinese and the Vietnamese experiences must be studied carefully; no doubt each has some similarities with the Indian situation. In some

respects India may be compared with pre-1949 China or with Vietnam; in other respects it resembles the Russian situation before 1917. Here we see tele-guided neo-colonialism in indirect form and on the other hand there is no physical presence of an imperialist army. Moreover, till now there have been two forms of revolutionary struggle: armed insurrection in towns followed by seizure of the countryside and vice versa. Lenin used the first method, Mao Tse-tung, Ho Chi Minh and NLF have used the second. As the situation in India has affinities with both, the method must not be a carbon copy of any of them. A creative assimilation is necessary.

Secondly, we should not be obsessed with the word Revolution. Mao Tse-tung's famous image of "fish and water" must always be remembered. Without intensive political training, violence may bring isolation. Crude terrorisation of the people alienates them. In towns, vandalism now goes in the name

of revolution, and with revolutionary slogans. Lack of political education is blatant here. We should remember that even after final preparations for an uprising by Giap, Ho Chi Minh stopped it as there was no ample political preparation. It is true the idea of a "fixed base" in Debray's sense is not applicable everywhere, but a "fixed base" must be built in the hearts of the people. Plethora of violence alone cannot create it.

ARJUN BANDYOPADHYAYA
Naihati.

Mr Rafiqul Islam, a self-styled Emile Zola, in his article (October 18, 1968) and a few letters in *Frontier* distorts the political resolution of the CPI (ML). This resolution clearly states that "the Indian people will have to wage a bitter, protracted struggle against U.S. and Soviet imperialism too. By liberating themselves from the yoke of feudalism, the Indian people will liberate

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themselves also from the yoke of imperialism and comprador bureaucratic-capital, because the struggle against feudalism is also a struggle against the other two enemies."

Mr Islam in his translation tries to omit the question of U.S. and Soviet imperialism from the original resolution and starts his impeachment that the resolution guards and shields imperialism from the masses and he misquotes Mao to help him in his game. What Mao said was: "when imperialism launches a war of aggression against such a country, all its various classes, except for some traitors, can temporarily unite in a national war against imperialism. At such a time, the contradiction between imperialism and the country concerned becomes the principal contradiction, while all other contradictions among the various classes within the country (including what was the principal contradiction between the feudal system and the great masses of the people) are temporarily relegated to a secondary and subordinate position". Does it not prove that before direct imperialist aggression, the principal contradiction in China was between the feudal system and the great masses of the people?

The CPI (ML) leader, Mr Charu Majumdar, has also made it clear that the Indian people can liberate themselves by overthrowing the "four major contradictions in our country today, contradictions between the Indian people on the one hand and U.S. imperialism, Soviet social imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic-capital on the other". (*Liberation*, Vol. 3, No. 1).

Rafiqul Islam attempts to vulgarise the entire history of Marxism-Leninism on the question of national liberation in a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country. This question in India is one of peasants' armed struggle under the leadership of the working class. In 1925 Stalin, in a speech concerning the national question in Yugoslavia, said "...the peasantry constitute the main army of the national movement—there is no powerful national movement without the peasant army, nor can there be. That

is what is meant when it is said that in essence the national question is a pleasant question." Quoting these lines, Mao Tse-tung also says in his famous thesis 'On New Democracy'— "...the Chinese revolution is essentially a peasant revolution..." In spite of all these facts Rafiqul Islam alleges that the CPI (ML) has "nothing to say about the Punjabi or the Maharastrian or the Bengalee official approach to the problem, which fits parties like the DMK, Shiv Sena etc. As Mao says, "In the final analysis a national struggle is a question of class struggle." So when Rafiqul Islam raises the question of Punjabis, Bengalis and Maharashtrians without the question of class, it should be well understood which network he belongs to.

Again, Rafiqul Islam charges that the CPI (ML) is destroying every possibility of building a democratic front and that it is abandoning and disturbing mass organisations in defiance of Mao's instructions. He starts abusing the CPI (ML) for not organising mass organisations. He starts this mischief with an apology that as there is no red army there cannot be any red base. So the CPI (ML) should now organise mass organisations. This is the same old cry of the revisionists of all hues. According to Mao, through guerilla struggles and guerilla activities a regular army and base area can be established. He says, "Thus the transformation of a guerilla zone into a base area is an arduous creative process, and its accomplishment depends on the extent to which the enemy is destroyed and the masses are aroused."

The CPI (ML) will adhere to the teachings of Chairman Mao and will tell its cadres, "we are now living in a time when the principle of 'going up into the hills' applies; meetings, work, classes, newspaper publications, the writing of books, theatrical performances—everything is done up in the hills and all essentially for the sake of the peasants."

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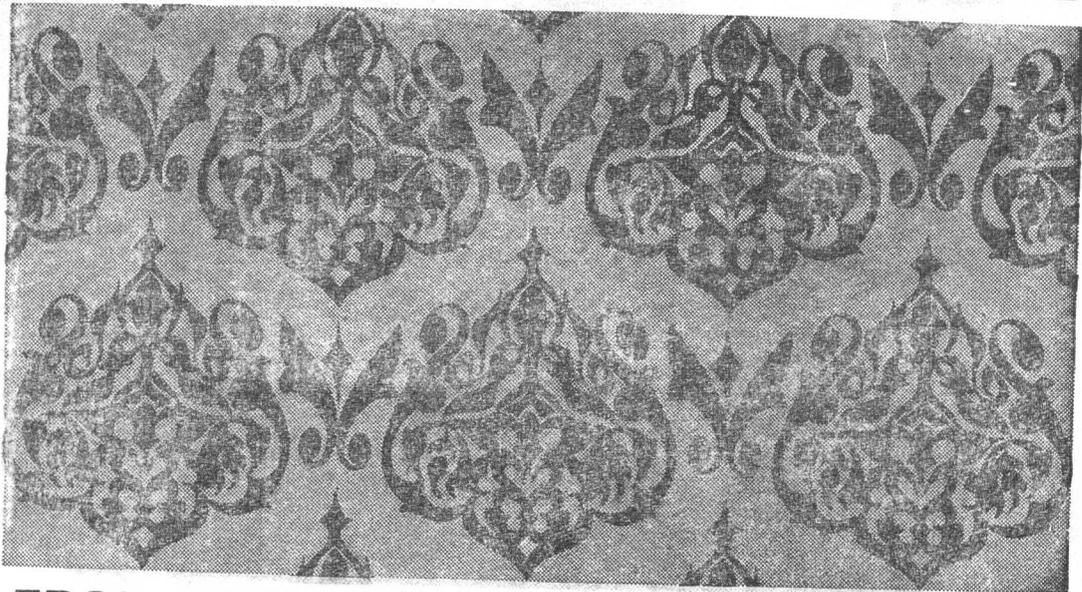
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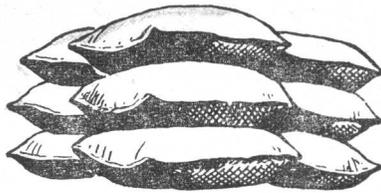
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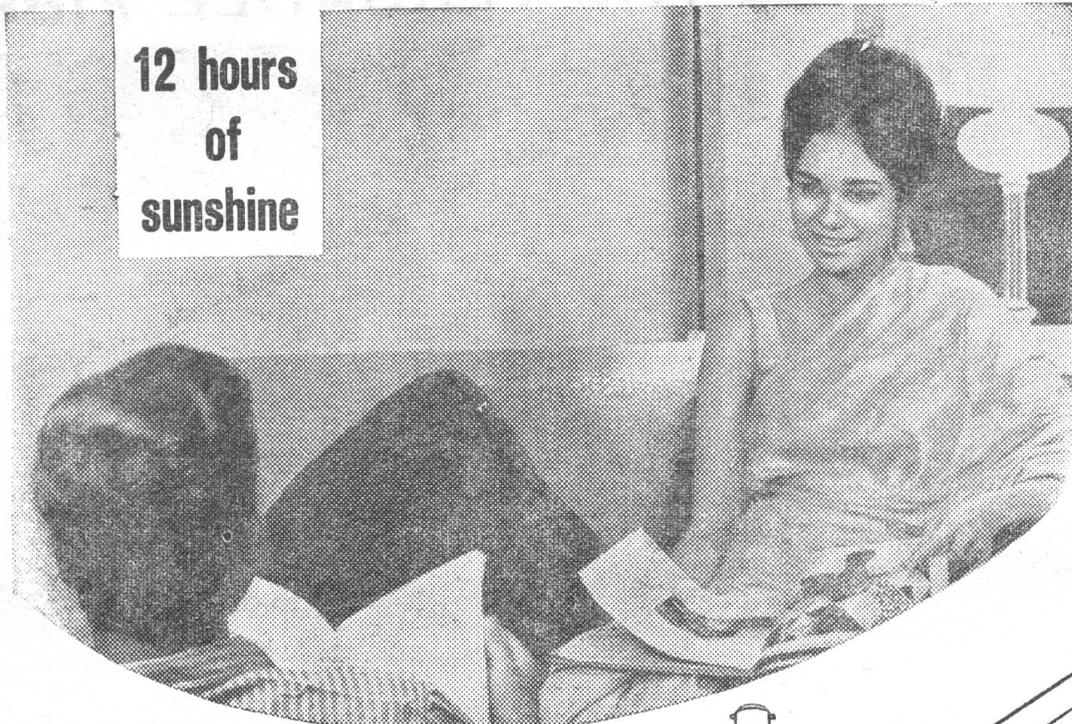


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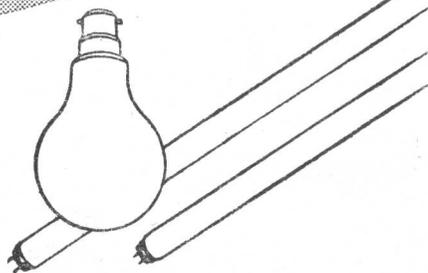
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