

frontier

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Editor : Samar Sen

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BY SAMAR SEN FROM 61, MOTT LANE,
CALCUTTA-13

TELEPHONE: 243202

POLITICS IN COMMAND !

EVERYTHING is fair in politics. Politics, after all, is a question of power, and no matter how you define power, in India it means the Secretariat. The trouble is, one may forget the political contortions all parties go through to cling to their plums if these contortions are spread over days, but different stances in course of the same day are rather uncomfortable.

When Mr Ajoy Mukherjee said he would quit, the heavens darkened. Mr Jyoti Basu warned against a mini-front and said that, since the people had voted for the UF as a whole, there should be fresh elections. Fair enough. In the meantime, there would be hartals. He also said—the reporters must have misquoted him—that his party could not form a government without the Bangla Congress. Perhaps he forgot that divorce is now permitted. Mr Promode Das Gupta, the strongman of the CPM, asked his followers to keep their powder dry, to listen to news bulletins and take to the streets as soon as the government is overthrown.

The prices of things went up in the bazaars as people with refrigerators wanted to store provisions for a few days and those without for at least one day. Some of them cursed the CM for not telling people when he would resign.

On Monday afternoon a whisper went round, first in the Calcutta-1 postal area—Jyoti Babu may be the CM! The parties friendly to the Bangla Congress were all angry with it for the unilateral, almost adventurist, decision to quit the Front just now. It is true that the CPM is a set of scoundrels, but co-existence with scoundrels can have a civilising effect on the barbarians in the long run—till people are fed up with them. The BC should have waited—there is a tide in the affairs of parties and the Gandhian helmsman and his not-so-Gandhian mate should have waited. The 'friendly' parties were reported to be so exasperated that the CPM decided to make overtures to them: no elections now, let us carry on without the Bangla Congress—the unmitigated defectors.

There is a good deal of sense—in the context prevailing in the State today—in this move—280 minus 55 (undivided Congress) minus 33 (Bangla Congress). And in this move, above, all, there is a good deal of profitability. You just cannot ask the "Front"line Ministers to take a plunge. They have many things to lose besides their telephones. Let the

show continue. Let there be a debate on thana-level committees.

That people were taken in by the CPM move, alas, shows the lack of their credibility in the professions of the parties.

We do not know what will happen in the short run. What we write today may be dated. We do not know if the Midnapore brothers will be separated, whether the most revolution-

ary leader of the SUC will be satisfied with a bigger portfolio. But this is politics. Never mind if the UF continues as an instrument of internal trouble, of interminable conspiracy. Conspirators can co-exist, though their followers need not. After all many things happen in the Hindu undivided family but it would be a damned wicked thing to break it up.

campaign concealed is that the UF was losing ground; not to the Congress but to forces of extreme right reaction which were deemed to have been given a permanent burial by the mid-term poll. Maybe, the CPM supporters were not quite active in electioneering for the Bangla Congress candidate; a different attitude should not have been expected in view of the sustained campaign against their party by the Bangla Congress leaders over the last six months. But the PML has improved its position vastly even in areas where the friendly parties of the Bangla Congress dominate. It is obvious that a disenchantment with the UF has set in, and the frustration of the uncommitted voter is seeking expression through political bypaths. Communalism of the minority is no less deadly than the communalism of the majority, and either can set off a chain reaction which will be difficult to break. The Basirhat result should have made the UF take a hard look at itself and mend its ways; but brinkmanship came in the way. A little self-criticism would have given the constituents an opportunity to undo the mischief they have done by their constant infighting.

The Unlearnt Lesson

A correspondent writes :

It is a sad irony that instead of coming closer the UF parties have gone over the brink over the result of the parliamentary by-election in Basirhat. That some UF parties would try to use the result as also that of the Midnapore Assembly by-election about a week ago for pillorying the CPM had been clear for some time. Rumours were sedulously spread that in both constituencies the CPM had thrown in its weight against the UF candidates. The result of the Midnapore by-election should have scotched such rumours, for the candidates of the two Congress parties together polled fewer votes than had the undivided party's nominee in the mid-term poll. Mr Ajoy Mukherjee was so sure of his younger brother's victory in Midnapore that he had fixed the date of Mr Biswanath Mukherjee's swearing-in even before the votes had been cast. The younger Mukherjee won the by-election by a far bigger margin than had his party colleague who was made to vacate the seat for his leader. Yet in the victory celebration itself Mr Biswanath Mukherjee delivered a broadside against the CPM accusing it of working for the ruling Congress candidate. He merely prepared the ground for Mr Sushil Dhara to take over after Basirhat.

Mr Dhara has done his job gloriously, more gloriously perhaps than the CPI had wanted him to. The indifferent performance of the Bangla Congress candidate suited him fine. Taking the cue from Mr Mukherjee he held the CPM responsible for the poor

show put up by his party's candidate and the astonishing performance of the Progressive Muslim League. He used the allegation as the climactic misbehaviour of the CPM and made it the immediate issue on which the party directed the Chief Minister to resign by 16 March and announced its dissociation from the UF. From the Bangla Congress-CPI chorus it appeared that the CPM had deliberately reduced the margin of victory of the Bangla Congress from over 140,000 in 1967 to about 12,000 in 1970. In suggesting this, they attributed to the CPM an influence that it would like to, but did not have. Maybe the PML candidate polled more votes in the two base Assembly constituencies dominated by the CPM than did the Bangla Congress candidate; but in none of the seven base Assembly constituencies the performance of the Bangla Congress was comparable to the results of the UF candidates there in the mid-term poll. In Swarupnagar, Basirhat and Hasnabad constituencies where the CPI had won in the mid-term poll, the Bangla Congress candidate polled much less than what CPI had done a year ago. Even in Bhangar the defeated Bangla Congress candidate in the mid-term poll had polled more than what his party candidate secured in the parliamentary by-election this month. All these did not worry the Bangla Congress and its allies for they were determined to exploit the result politically.

The ugly fact that the anti-CPM

The Birla Employees

In this Lenin centenary year, it is for intellectuals to discuss Leninism as an interlude between Lenin dramas and Lenin films. Lenin's observations on the relation between the party and the trade union are for quotes. The Birla affairs as developing in Calcutta over the last fortnight may indicate an estrangement of workers from union leaders and party chiefs. But that is hardly relevant. The security of workers in Birla firms in West Bengal is expendable; what matters is the supremacy of factions in the trade unions which are again mere appendages to various political parties.

Let us take note of the curious happenings in the Birla concerns. Some time ago three Birla factories—

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National Engineering at Barrackpore, Metal Engraving Corporation at Belgharia and Air Conditioning Corporation at Taratola—were wound up. Nothing much was heard then about the plight of the workers rendered jobless; the number of employees in the Air Conditioning Corporation alone was more than one thousand.

On February 23, the employees of Orient Paper Mills, Hindusthan Aluminium Corporation, Renuagar Power, Industrial Plant, Hindusthan Motors, and Western Coals—all Birla firms—came to office and were told that they had been transferred; some to Madhya Pradesh, some to Orissa. A few days later, employees of some more Birla offices, all situated at the India Exchange Place, were transferred to work-sites within West Bengal.

Neither the Government nor the trade union leadership in the State took up the cause seriously. The Labour Minister said the transfers mattered little so long as the factories were not disturbed. Moreover, it was gathered from his subsequent statements that he was trying to tackle the question as a whole—closure of 127 mills in the State and the Birla affairs were insignificant in the total picture. Probably he was contemplating a legal way out. But it was not known how he could tackle the whole, leaving the parts to disintegrate. Besides, when there was no legal remedy at hand, mass protests and activities were surely the only way for the workers to fight. But the Minister allowed the matter to drift.

It was a golden opportunity for the CPI to start its vicious propaganda against the CPM. It sought to prove that the CPM was an agent of the Birlas. The silence of the Engineering Workers' Federation, the secrecy with which the Deputy Chief Minister conducted talks with the Birlas and the police protection given to Birla House came to the CPI as very convenient handles. But the CPI, weak on the trade union front and made weaker after the UF's second accession to power, could do little by itself to resist the Birlas,

except making appeals to the CPM. Its swing from calumny to appeals and back to calumny exposed its frothing effete-ness in trade union activities.

The CPM however was least perturbed by the CPI aggressiveness. In a lordly fashion, it staged processions, one-day strike and all that in quite a half-hearted manner. Its indifference to the Birla office employees whom the CPI seeks to unite under the Birla Brothers and Its Allied Concerns Employees Union, may be well due to the fact that it was stung by the Guntur session of the AITUC. The massive processions it has been staging recently may be stated to be demonstrations against the conspirators out to wreck the UF; these are in-reality a show of strength against the mini-frontiers. In this bigger and obvious-ly more important struggle, the CPM

has little interest in the security of the Birla employees.

It was a good chance for the Birlas to mount assaults on the workers. The public reasons they offered for the transfers not only contradicted one another but were obviously unconvincing. They began by saying that the transfers were necessitated by the impending abolition of the managing agency system. That was a hell of a reason for taking an overnight decision! Later they switched on to saying that continuous disturbances at the offices made it necessary to shift them. It was again a fishy charge, not only because there were no disturbances at the offices except one, but also because they brought the charge overnight. Whatever their reason, the workers of the Birla firms must be feeling helpless now, with the factional quarrel becoming uppermost.

The Netaji Mystique

A correspondent writes :

A totem is a totem, and we guess it is too late now to do anything in the way of even a mild debunking of the Netaji mystique. Mr Jyoti Basu duly gave in: as one of the principal tacticians of what is the principal political party in this State, he had perhaps concluded that temporising was the better part of valour. Polycentrism is the current pass code. How does it matter if, paying homage to the exigencies of a local situation, Marxism picks up on the wagon a few standard-bearers of contrary ideologies? It takes all sorts to make a people's revolution, hell-bent on the Brigade Parade Ground.

For the record is quite straight, and in cold print. Subhas Bose, alas, was a prolific writer of indifferent prose: the ideas he propagated did not elavate that prose. He dilated, at umpteen number of places, on his concept of the ideal policy for this misshaped land: it was to be an amalgam of fascism and communism. Such ideas are dangerous. Patriotism can be no expiation for the barbarity

which is fascism. The gentlemen of the PSP who are mad with the Forward Bloc for having daubed Subhas Bose with a Marxist tint are for once absolutely right. From Elgin Road he must have, in his time, read a few Hegelian tracts; but if that made him a Marxist, I daresay Mrs Tarakeshwari Sinha is one too.

It was years ago since somebody quipped about a Bengali double wish-fulfilment: Subhas Bose making a triumphant return to the country, and as General Secretary of the Communist Party of India (undivided and un-Naxalled as it then was). There has been no qualitative shift in the Bengali mind in between: Communism is good, but Subhas Bose is equally good; even Mr Jyoti Basu says so. We are not sure, but there may be a tract too already in existence drawing a parallel between the Oaten Incident, 1917 and the Baker Laboratory Uprising, 1970.

After such opportunism, it is inevitable that obscurantists and opportunists of all varieties will have a heady time. Once more, a demand has

been raised for a fresh enquiry into the circumstances of Subhas Bose's disappearance. This will keep the pot boiling for some time for a few unscrupulous politicians. Most of this genre have in recent months made a specialisation of the business of running down Bengal in the press and Parliament. Any scary story about law and order being in shambles in West Bengal—boys and girls on a permanent Molotov cocktail rampage, women ravished by the dozen, industrial workers sabotaging plant and equipment, village rowdies looting the honest peasant's paddy—makes excellent headlines. The Subhas Bose lovers, great patriots all, are also turning out to be Bengal-phobes par excellence: anything to clout the residents of this State on the head with is good copy for them. It is an altogether new interpretation: you denigrate the part of the country you come from, and you are a great patriot. The patriots are now much exercised over the Republic Day award to Ritwik Ghatak. The epithet Ghatak used has a wider applicability.

View from Delhi

Oh ! Calcutta ! ?

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

ALL organised politics has lapsed into the game of power adjustment at various levels through a series of dexterous manipulations from New Delhi. The developments in West Bengal are not altogether unrelated to the survival politics at the Centre. The point has been reached where the support of the 19-member CPI(M) group in the Lok Sabha is an expendable quantity in the voting arithmetic.

When this column wrote on February 15 that if everything went according to Mrs Indira Gandhi's plan, "there would be a mini-front ministry in West Bengal within six weeks" (*Frontier*, February 21), the master plan had been cleared here and Mr Sushil Dhara, its chief executor, had told his friends that they had provided for five days of bloody riots in Calcutta which they hoped to contain. The street-fighting the CPI(M) would initiate would not last longer than five days, according to Mr Dhara. The CRP and the army were to be moved in even when Mr Ajoy Mukerjee was leading the United Front ministry so that after the "swift" if violent coup, the mini-front can rely on the presence of these units for its stability. The benediction of a "leftist" Governor (significantly the "leftist" tabloid the Governor has had a famous association with in the past has been spearheading the tearing campaign about the law and order breakdown in the State) was to be a plus factor for the Bangla Congress in executing this plan.

As this column is being written, the CPI(M)'s prognostication that March 15 will be the D-Day has gained wide credibility here amidst unconfirmed reports that Mr Ajoy Mukherjee might have already resigned and that the CRP and the military units might be requisitioned to

assist the State police.

Whether the United Front goes on March 15 or drags a few weeks longer, the compulsions of the survival logic in New Delhi cannot be overlooked. The CPI(M)'s support was crucial to Mrs Gandhi's survival until a week ago. But the new alignment of parties changes the balance against the CPI(M) which can be jettisoned if necessary. In any case, the CPI(M), through its initial support to Mrs Gandhi, has committed itself to positions it cannot retreat from and a fear of isolation from other parties is gripping it. Its manoeuvrability is completely lost in the Lok Sabha for various reasons. As a long-term ally, the Bangla Congress is more useful to Mrs Gandhi because an alliance with it holds out the prospect of an ultimate merger of the Congress-R and the Bangla Congress. Mrs Gandhi has been working on the basis of the same hypothesis in relation to the BKD in Uttar Pradesh. The Basirhat by-election outcome should strengthen her belief that it would be good to knock together a Congress-R, Bangla Congress, CPI front in West Bengal at a mid-term poll or in a general election.

The CPI(M) would find to its dismay one of these days that the stage has been reached where nobody would be able to blame the Centre if a mini-front pulls off a mini-coup in West Bengal. Mr Jyoti Basu's feints notwithstanding, in the public eye, such a change would not exactly amount to Central intervention. Nobody regards the exit of the Kerala United Front ministry as the result of Central intervention though the mini-front survives solely on the Congress-R's support. Mr Namboodiripad can take some consolation if the Kerala pattern repeats itself in West Bengal. In Kerala, Mr Namboodiripad had to be trapped in a

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position that made his resignation inevitable. Things are far easier in West Bengal where the Chief Ministership is not with the CPI(M).

Mr Chavan's new stance on Central intervention is revealing for more than one reason. When confronted with Mr Nath Pai's poser on what the criterion for Central intervention was (over law and order breakdown), Mr Chavan tried to make out that it was a matter of political assessment and after all he had to secure Parliament's support for such intervention. One of the interpretations of Mr Chavan's statement, that he was willing to intervene only if Parliament backed him, is rather far-fetched. Clearly Mr Chavan was not seeking Parliament's consensus for intervention. In the past, Mr Chavan has always maintained that the Centre invariably acted on the advice of the Governors in the matter. This time he was significantly silent on the Governor's position, though, according to the constitution, whether there is a law and order breakdown or not was to be decided by the Governor which means that a subjective assessment of the Governor was the sole guiding principle. The one and only instance when a government was dismissed on the law and order issue was in Kerala in 1959, on the basis of Governor Ramakrishna Rao's report though the Ministry had not lost its House majority.

"Mass Movement"

Obviously, the Centre does not want President's Rule in West Bengal if it could be avoided. Its first preference is for a mini-front government and the CPI(M), under a little threat, could be talked into accepting the position. The Centre's own assessment is that the CPI(M) cannot get any major mass movement off the ground. The damp-squib land-grab movement in Kerala and the climb-down over the transport staff strike seem to have emboldened the Centre into arriving at this assessment.

Psychologically, this is the best moment for the Centre to take a

swipe at all those not supporting it. A new offensive ostensibly against the extreme right and the extreme left was fashioned by Mr Chavan at the Bombay plenary session of his party and the line was clearly echoed in President Giri's address to Parliament. Against the rightist parties, it must be a mere political offensive but against the extreme left it will be a para-military offensive. Mrs Gandhi's Lok Sabha speech made it a point to attack the Congress-O Swatantra-Jana Sangh alliance but did not deem it necessary to attack the two communist parties, the two socialist parties and the parties of left communalism like the Muslim League and the Akalis. The SSP's move for a non-Congress-R coalition at the Centre is being checkmated with plans for a Congress-R coalition with "like-minded parties" like the PSP though Mrs Gandhi is still reluctant to take regional parties like the DMK into such a compact.

Voting Pattern

The voting pattern in the Lok Sabha on the President's Address gives enough indication of the power adjustment that is going on. The Central employees' demands were an issue on which the Opposition could have united to defeat Mrs Gandhi. In fact, the biggest vote against the Government—127 with about 170 voting for the Government—was on this issue. But the fact that only about 300 members were present in a 520-odd House is indication of the total lack of a crisis atmosphere. The Congress-R turnout was about 180 and the combined Opposition's less than 130. Party whips now say the Government could have been defeated on the Central employees' issue but then Mrs Gandhi's following would have turned out in full force to meet the challenge. Arithmetically, the combined Opposition vote exceeds the Congress-R's. But the Congress-R knew that the leftist parties were not serious about the Central employees' demands and it was more a gimmick to give the impression that they had not given a blank cheque to Mrs

Gandhi. There are reports in the lobbies that the Congress-R tackled each of the leftist parties individually and ensured that large chunks of their membership managed to be away from the House on the voting day. But there is no excuse for the thin attendance on the Congress-O, Swatantra and Jana Sangh benches unless some of them had been influenced by the Congress-R. Even the DMK, which wanted to put Mr Kamaraj's anti-Hindi bona fides to test and embarrass his party, did not muster its full strength. On the issue of abolishing the fundamental right to property, the rightist parties were neutral while Mrs Gandhi's party voted against the amendment. On the nationalisation of the 75 monopoly houses, the pattern was the same. On the Hindi issue, the DMK amendment got a bare 20 votes, from the DMK and the Muslim League, all others were neutral and Mrs Gandhi's party voted against it. So much for the shadow-boxing in Parliament.

The biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha have already forced parties into alignment with one Congress party or the other and two constellations of parties are emerging. The Maharashtrians in every party, Mr Dange through Mr S. M. Joshi to Mr Nath Pai, are with Mr Chavan's party and to hell with what their own parties think. The CPI(M) will not know where it is until it is eased out of office in West Bengal. If Mr Chavan wants he can bring about a rift in the CPI(M) by choosing the hardliners in various States as the targets of the indicated offensive against the "extremists". Mr Nanda once tried it, leaving Mr Nambudiripad and Mr Jyoti Basu out while rounding up others less soft to the Government in power.

A new operational line is being worked out by the Centre for containing the "Naxalites". Mr Chavan's replies to questions on Chinese arms with Naxalites were calculated to suggest enough so that an alibi could be built up for a major crack-down. The Centre has found that no State in the country has police units

trained in anti-guerilla operations even to the extent of being able to meet the hit-and-run raids of Naxalites engaged in "annihilating" the class enemy. The Border Security Force is the only para-military outfit in the country that can smash

Naxalite insurgency. If Mr Jyoti Basu and his party are out of office in West Bengal, the services of the BSP would be proffered by the Centre and gratefully accepted by whoever is ruling the State.

Sunday morning (March 8).

of a chance for hiding. It is a bare patch of open ground, which no sane person could use for his shelter, much less one being hunted by a veritable army of armed police. On the other hand, it is an ideal place for a firing squad to operate. And this was the sum and substance of the "encounter." It is gathered that Verghese was caught while sleeping in a hut in a sheltered nook, some two furlongs away from the spot where he was murdered. The police entered via the roof after removing the tiles and caught Verghese. From the house he was taken across a paddy field to the police camp near Tirunelly temple. He was tortured most mercilessly. One eye was gouged out and when his life was nearly extinct under the torture, he was tied to a post and shot dead.

People in the locality testify to this in private, but they are too afraid of the mighty police force camped in the area to make any public statement. It is significant that within an hour of his capture the news reached the Cannanore Deputy Superintendent of Police's office. On enquiry there it was revealed that he had been captured. This was confirmed by the local office of the *Manorama*, the mass circulation Malayalam daily, which has all along been playing the role of publicity and propaganda agency of the police. But five to six hours later the official news came that Verghese had been shot dead in an encounter in which he fired on the police. The police, as usual in such encounters, did not suffer a scratch even.

The Manhunt

A huge army of police with machine-guns, rifles, walkie-talkie equipment, dogs and other outfit, started combing the Wynaad forests after some houses in Tirunelly and Trissaleri had been looted by a gang of armed persons and two householders shot dead by them. The operations of the police in the Wynaad forests have been projected at length by the press as object lessons in the sense of duty, supreme courage and fortitude. However, their objective

Kerala

Murder In Wynaad

RAMJI

A Verghese, the young Naxalite leader, was murdered in cold blood by the police; shot dead, tied to a post, at Tirunelly, in the Wynaad forests of north Kerala. This came as a climax to the "effectiveness" and "virility" of the police force, under the new dispensation of the mini-front Ministry.

Of course, despite the ruthless police onslaughts on the people all over the State we know that the police can do no wrong, that they are the guardians of the fundamental rights of the people through liberal and indiscriminate use of lathis and guns on all and sundry. But even they still believe in retaining a fig leaf of propriety and so they turn out statements of 'mob violence', "terrorism," "possession of arms" etc. in order to cover up their benevolent brutality. This is indeed a concession to popular sentiments. But, beyond this, the police do not concede. Police statements, religiously echoed and defended by the Government and highlighted by the 'big' press, are embodiments of truth and nothing but the truth; those who question them are either Naxalites, Marxists or other elements who fail to realise that without the police functioning as accusers, judges and executioners, democracy, fundamental rights, the rule of law and other attributes of freedom would be in danger.

And so, Verghese was shot dead in an 'encounter' with the police, the sort of encounter so familiarly trotted out in Srikakulam. According to

police reports, they came upon Verghese sheltered behind rocks in his hide-out and he fired upon the police party, who returned the fire and a bullet pierced his heart. As proof of Verghese's belligerence a photo of his dead body was published, with the chin resting on a piece of rock and with one eye closed. The police say that this closed eye is sufficient proof that Verghese was in the act of taking aim with his gun when the police bullet pierced his heart. It is a tribute to the close cooperation of the police and the big press, that the news reports eulogise the bravery and the indomitable determination of the police in facing great vicissitudes in their manhunt inside the wilderness, while they dub Verghese a murderer and dacoit. This is a clear indication that times have changed and that the big newspapers, along with the police, have the right to accuse and sit in full and final judgment over the culprits chosen by them.

But facts contradict the police statement. It is clear that the police had pre-planned to kill Verghese and his companions. With the precedent of the cases in connection with the raids on Tellichery and Pulpalli police stations which still drag on, the police obviously, were aware that it would be difficult to prove any charges against Verghese or his companions. The only solution was to take the law into their own hands. Which the police did. The spot where Verghese is alleged to have made his last stand while in hiding affords no ghost

seemed insignificant when compared to the size and scope of the army thrown into the operation: just half a dozen alleged dacoities and murders. That in spite of such massive preparations four men escaped their clutches is also another curious feature of the police version. It is alleged by the police that these four threw bombs at the police party. Yet no policeman was hurt. The assailants escaped. Before that they had discarded a gun. Maybe they had decided to eschew violence and take to satyagraha! Anyway this triggered much publicity and the police redoubled their activities which resulted in the killing of Verghese.

The police army in the Wynaad forests have been perpetrating atrocities on the tribals, called Kurichiyars. They are suspect. For, under Verghese's leadership the Kurichiyars had organised themselves and fought for and secured better wages and better treatment at the hands of the landlords. Even otherwise, it is well known that without the knowledge and cooperation of the tribals, it is impossible for anyone to operate inside the forest or to take shelter there. Thus, the police have been 'investigating' in the Wynaad forest with a vengeance. The investigation consists in torturing the illiterate, nearly inarticulate tribals, raping their womenfolk who still go about topless, and in other ways performing their duties as the absolute autocrats of the State. It is interesting to note that the CPI, which even organised a defence committee in support of the accused in the Pulpally-Tellichery police station raid cases, is now heading a Government in which the police have taken to judgment and execution, reminiscent of front-line techniques during war.

The police zoolium in the State has started provoking murmurs from pro-mini frontiers too. While the masses are being trampled underfoot by the police, their champions, the Marxists, have thought fit to adopt a technique which reveals that, in spite of blood-and-thunder utterances, the party leadership has become soft, and does not want to lead their following

in unprovoked confrontations with the police. The parliamentary system and the formal peaceful agitations that go with it come more naturally to the Marxist leadership than the risks and sufferings that go with the act of resisting police atrocities along the 'front lines' in Kuttanad and elsewhere. For, instead of going round the trouble spots and leading their following in their desperate battle against wanton raids by the police and the goondas of the mini-front parties, the Marxists staged a

fast before the Secretariat gates, in true Gandhian style. The fast helped to throw limelight on the Marxist leaders and secured some concessions from the government, the ultimate benefit of which remains dubious. But, results apart, it is plain that most of the present Marxist leaders have become too soft to do anything more than pay lip service to any organised, violent revolt against intolerable conditions, which the present administration is providing in plenty to the have-nots.

RECRUITMENT OF INSPECTORS OF INCOME-TAX

The Directorate of Inspection (Income-tax) will hold a Competitive Exam. on the 25th and the 26th May, 1970 at Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Bangalore, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Bombay, Calcutta, Ernakulam, Gauhati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jammu, Kanpur, Lucknow, Madras, Nagpur, New Delhi, Patiala, Patna and Poona, for Selection of candidates for the preparation of a panel of names for appointment as Inspectors in the various charges in the Income-tax Department. Pay Rs. 210-10-290-15-320 EB-15-425-EB-15-485 plus usual allowances. The Examination Centres are liable to be changed at the discretion of the Directorate of Inspection (Income-tax).

Reservation for candidates belonging to Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe, for Ex-Servicemen and for candidates of State Governments participating in the scheme of recruitment to non-gazetted posts under the Central Government Departments will be made in accordance with the orders in force. The appointment of State Government employees in Andhra Pradesh will be further subject to such orders as the High Court of Andhra Pradesh may pass in Civil Miscellaneous Petition No. 570 of 1969.

Candidates must apply in the prescribed form of application to the Commissioner of Income-tax to whose charge they wish to be nominated. The application must reach the Commissioner of Income-tax concerned on or before 31st March, 1970.

All persons who are Indian citizens or are otherwise eligible under the Rules and who possess a degree of a recognised University and have attained the age of 19 years, but not 23 years on the 1st January, 1970, are eligible to appear for the examination.

Candidates who appear for the degree examination in April/May 1970, would also be eligible to appear in this examination on the strength of a certificate from the Principal of College/Registrar of the University. Such candidates will be admitted to the examination, if otherwise eligible, but the admission would be deemed to be provisional and subject to cancellation if they do

not produce proof of having passed the examination, as soon as possible and in any case not later than two months after the commencement of his examination.

The upper age limit prescribed above will be relaxable in certain specified cases the details of which are given in the Rules.

Copies of application Forms and Rules relating to the examination which are published in Part III, Section I, of the Gazette of India dated 21-2-1970 may be obtained from the Commissioner of Income-tax on payment of Re. 1/- which should be remitted by Crossed Indian Postal Order payable to the Commissioner of Income-tax concerned at a post office located at his headquarters. The postal order should bear the signature of the issuing Post Master and a clear stamp of the issuing Post Office. Candidates should send a stamped envelope (23cm x 10 cm or larger) with their address, while applying for application forms.

The examination will comprise a written test in three subjects, viz., General English, General Knowledge and Arithmetic, followed by an interview of candidates who secure the minimum percentage of marks prescribed by the Commissioner of Income-tax concerned. Question papers of the previous three examinations can be had from any authorised book-seller dealing in Government of India publications.

In addition to Re. 1/- payable for the application form, an examination fee of Rs. 6.50 paise (87 paise in the case of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates) will be payable by the candidates who actually apply for the examination. This fee should also be remitted by a Postal order in the manner indicated above.

No T. A./D. A. would be admissible either for appearing in the examination or for the interview.

All communications in respect of the examination should be addressed to the Commissioner of Income-tax concerned. No correspondence on the subject will be entertained by this Directorate.

Sikkim . . . Whither ?

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

ONE thing is most painfully obvious in Sikkim today—that the people continue to be treated as the “chattel” they were once described to be in the never-to-be-forgotten article “The Sikkimese Theory of Landholding and the Darjeeling Grant.” The article which appeared in the *Bulletin of Tibetology* in July, 1966, under the name of Hope Cooke (Gyalmo), raised angry protests and replies, particularly from Darjeeling district.

Now, what have we in Sikkim that warrants this statement? First of all there are the Chogyal’s “advisers” who tremble to give him any honest and correct advice, who agree to his every whim, and who have neither the courage nor inclination to resign in protest when he rejects their timidly proffered advice.

Secondly, there is the “Sikkim

Youth Study Forum”, with the Gyalmo as President. What is its objective? One of its members informed me that the Forum was to “protect” the Chogyal—they would project the Chogyal’s views, desires and ambitions, without the Chogyal actually coming into the picture and incurring the wrath of the Government of India, the protecting power.

This bright member told me how some members of the Forum aspire to become ambassadors and ministers plenipotentiary, and other world luminaries, striding the forums of the world colossus-wise! His main objective, and he fervently assured me that this was shared by his fellow members, is to share the limelight of world politics, and to make “careers” for themselves. All this despite the fact that not one of them has the slightest grounding in world politics,

geo-politics, economics, history, languages, etc. They constitute the usual type of illiterate MAs and BAs (Hons.) in which this area unfortunately abounds. From these people alone we hear demands for “independence”, although they are blissfully unaware of any aspect whatsoever of economics, and forget that there are less than two lakhs of people in Sikkim to all of whom their particular type of “independence” would only mean further oppression and continued injustice. The theory of a nation being “self-supporting” they have apparently never heard of. Of legal niceties they are abysmally ignorant. Of democracy they do not wish to hear, for it is poison to their ambitions. Service to the people is unheard of in their milieu and looked down upon. What they are after are the glamorous trappings of “diplomacy”.

For all it is a matter of personal self-aggrandisement, with never a thought for or backward glance at the Sikkimese masses who still groan

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MARCH 14, 1970

Hongkong vs Peking

GAUTAM ADHIKARI

under the lack of a written constitution or any fundamental rights, the lack of codified laws, the lack of a high court with a charter. Would it not be true to state that the Sikkimese masses are, even today in this year of grace 1970, still the "chattel" of a group of adventurers?

Take, for example, the custom prevalent in Sikkim of the three obeisances, i.e. the touching of the floor, or ground, with the head, before the "Divine Presence" of the Chogyal. Is there any other country in the world that tolerates such a debased custom, nay, indeed, encourages it? Any villager who does not touch the ground three times with his head before the Chogyal or his American Gyalmo are dubbed "communists." Yet the members of the Sikkim Youth Study Forum themselves exult in hitting the floor three times before their Ruler, thus putting the clock back hundreds of years. One wonders why the word "study" comes into their group's name, for, surely, all study leads one to a nobler, greater concept of the emancipation of mankind, and not to a destructive nationalism that is vigorously pursued for the member's personal ambitions of power and glory, the trappings of an outmoded autocracy, the delights of all Ruritania!

Recently at Kathmandu

To the intense amazement of all at Kathmandu the four-man delegation sent by the Chogyal of Sikkim to the wedding of the Crown Prince of Nepal was accompanied by letters from the Chogyal describing them as "My Ministers", and himself as HM The King of Sikkim.

When journalists present asked the Foreign Minister of Nepal as to why these men were accepted as "Ministers" the Foreign Minister was shocked and said that this description had come from Gangtok, and he felt helpless about it all.

It is understood that the Chogyal and Gyalmo of Sikkim declined the invitation to the marriage on the grounds that their precedence was beside that of the Secretary to HM The King of Laos!

PROFESSOR C. Northcote Parkinson has a reputation not only as a humorist but also as a social thinker. His analysis of bureaucracy in England in *Parkinson's Law* followed up by *In-laws and Out-laws*, is a contribution to sociology. So, when such people speak they are listened to. But one is constrained to note that when they start sermonising outside the region of their central specialisation they tend to produce a most dangerous form of nonsense. A particularly striking example is Prof Parkinson's recent "Hongkong versus Peking" speeches in Calcutta.

The professor, when he states that India must choose between Hongkong and Peking, presumably starts from two premises. First, Hongkong, meaning capitalism, and Peking, symbolising socialism, represent the only two feasible growth paths for a backward economy and India's miserable plight is due to the fact that she belongs to neither. Second, when India does choose any of the two alternatives it is better to choose Hongkong, viz. capitalism. This is so because choosing socialism is 'far more difficult', as Prof. Parkinson stated in St. Xavier's College Hall, and a socialist process is a 'costly process'—one supposes, from the point of view of capitalists. Therefore, the logical conclusion seems to be to choose Hongkong.

What is the praxeological meaning of the phrase "choose Hongkong"? Who is going to choose Hongkong? Certainly Prof Parkinson cannot be referring to the masses. As a matter of fact, in Hongkong itself the masses are not very sure whether their rejection of Peking came as a result of their own free choice. Therefore, by using the term 'India' he must be referring to the ruling elite. But then the fact is that the business elite has chosen Hongkong long ago without Prof Parkinson's promptings. Unfortuna-

tely, it cannot come out openly with this viewpoint as it knows full well that an open declaration in favour of capitalism will lead it into the same political wilderness in which parties like the Swatantra and the Congress (O) now find themselves. The steadily increasing consciousness among the Indian masses ensures this fate. Obviously, therefore, the praxeology implied in Prof Parkinson's statement boils down to choosing Hongkong while pretending not to do so. But this implies the pseudo-socialism of the sorts already in practice in India under the banners of various political parties which swear by socialism, including the highly reactionary 'Indicate' Congress. In other words, this is exactly the policy that has been adopted by the government today. Where lies the novelty in the honourable professor's suggestion?

This is as far as political considerations go. How about the philosophical angle of Prof Parkinson's statement? He possibly visualises the masses of India as taking Hongkong in the right hand and Peking in the left and choosing 'rationally' between them.

When social change of any fundamental sort (i.e. a qualitative change) takes place it cannot do so but through revolution. What does it prove to us? It shows that Prof Parkinson's recommendation boils down to a 'capitalist revolution' by the masses; that is to say, the masses betray their own class nature and take up the cause of a class alien to themselves, viz. the bourgeoisie. But when this factor is put into its proper historical context we find that ever since the days of Gandhi, the masses in India have been consistently rejecting the capitalist path. The popular appeal of various parties has always, in the broader perspective, been based on the slogan of socialism, no matter how pseudo, and if nothing else, at least the verbal rejection

of Western capitalism. In such a 'hostile' environment what does Prof Parkinson understand by a capitalist revolution?

For economic development to take place, there must be a correlation between the social framework and the development patterns. There must exist a fundamental harmony between the socio-political and economic orders within a society. If this is kept in mind, then it is hardly difficult to realise what '—ism' is best suited for a nation of long exploited, oppressed and discontented millions. The only possible selection from Prof Parkinson's standpoint would seem to be that India has to be split apart—'Hongkong India' on the one hand comprising States like Rajasthan, My-

sore and Bombay, with the possible addition of the territory of Delhi, and Peking India, on the other. But then the 'India' visualised today by Prof Parkinson remains only fit for the graveyard. Whether any sane person in the present day would recommend such a repartitioning along 'capitalistic' and 'communitic' lines, is of course left open to question! And even this repartitioning is after all feasible only if the broad masses of Indians go the way of Peking. Hongkong's prosperity today is due to the fact that both the capital and enterprise of China has been concentrated there in an enclave. But this concentration simply reflects the result of the Chinese people's revolution. That Hongkong can now choose Hongkong is because the

Chinese people have chosen Mao. Spread over a wide area like India one cannot visualise a Hongkong. There are just too few of the propertied and enterprising and too many of the propertyless and oppressed. This is after all the reason why capitalism is not a success in India and why it is 'successful' in Hongkong and Singapore.

When Prof Parkinson forgets this he forgets the reality in India. Under the present circumstances Hongkong is not a feasible path at all if India is to remain united. Already the Indian subcontinent has been partitioned once, thanks to Western ideology and enterprise; one hopes that Parkinson's speeches do not herald the beginning of another.

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Frankly Speaking

SANJOY

WHAT to do with Mr Dhara? Indeed, what to do with the Bangla Congress?—people thought last week. Sometimes, if one persuades oneself to think within the limited, tortuous, wretched framework of the United Front, one wonders what makes these people strut on the stage and give an exhibition of not-so-harmless melodramatics almost thrice a week? Arrange a tamasha in Curzon Park or somewhere else. Call for a meeting to decide to what extent the revolutionaries of the CPM will climb down, at which tea and snacks will be served; and then, at the last moment, make everyone go home without a debate.

This week it has been kind enough to give advance intimation—it will quit the UF. The deadline is March 16, and the actual timing has been left to the pater familias of West Bengal's National Democratic Front—Mr Ajoy Mukherjee. (By the time this issue is out—if at all—he might have left...but it yet seems too good to be true). The angry Birlas, some people say, have urged the BC to force the crisis. The CPI, though lip-angry, is quite pleased. Another Kerala lobster!!!

The latest grouse of the Bangla Congress was its low majority in the Basirhat parliamentary constituency. And the latest disgrace—until the weekend—was the protestation of the CPM that it did ask people to vote for this strange party. To the Bangla Congress, the Enemy No. 1 is the CPM. For it no holds are barred. Fair enough. If supporters of the constituents of the United Front can dip their hands in the blood of one another, it would not have been foul for the CPM to campaign against the Bangla Congress, because the slogans of the BC centre on law and order and restoration of the status quo. For the political education of people who adore the Mother Durga of the United Front, the

CPM should have used the occasion to expose the BC. It did not. But the BC thinks it did—at least it must have carried on a whispering campaign! Those who know anything about electioneering also know that a whispering campaign requires a much bigger organisational effort, a door-to-door approach. The CPM, bent on staying in office, could be sullen and petulant but not go in for this sort of campaign on a scale that would have mattered. It is evident. So why should it have to protest that it had been chaste, even to the Bangla Congress!

* *

We may pretend that we are non-provincial in many things, that we have an all-India outlook. But there is a thing called Bengali pride and one tries to rationalise it. In 1967, when defections crisscrossed the political map of India, some of us were snooty and said these things could not happen in Bengal. Then Bangla Congress showed that we are not that different. Then came Ashu Ghosh and his tribe and we knew we were swines of the same herd.

Some of the pride revived in February 1969 when the voters kicked out the defectors. One realised with a pleasant shock that communalism did not play any significant part in the electoral verdict.

But now? After only one year of the UF, the Progressive Muslim League has emerged as a party to reckon with in a part of "revolutionary" 24-Parganas. Perhaps the voters thought there was little to choose between the three Congresses, and a new party should be tried! Anyway, the daily antics of UF leaders have left little scope for any pride in Bengali politics, though we have not lost our faith in the basic sanity of the people.

Law and Order

The Statesman review of the break-

down of law and order in Calcutta was a clever, insidious piece of work. It has touched the hearts of the non-party upper and middle classes. Many stories are going round of men and women in distress, with no one to turn to for succour and protection. The report has sharpened and spread the feeling of insecurity. In middle-class homes, women are reluctant to go out in the dark, boys are scared of homosexuals and cats and dogs of homo sapiens. Night shows in cinema-houses even in South Calcutta are not being well patronised. (By the way, a film actor who should know has pointed out that such shows in North Calcutta have not been well attended for the past five years. It is for reporters—if their masters allow them—to check up on this view).

What was not being emphasized, until three or four days ago, is the role of the police. The police, it is obvious, are following a deliberate policy of non-intervention even in cases where no politics is involved. It would be a bad mistake to think that the inaction is the result of lethargy on the part of ordinary policemen or sub-inspectors. The policy is being encouraged from the highest quarters of the police administration. Non-action will exasperate the public, and a time will come when not only the upper and middle classes but others also will come to think of an efficient police force as the upholders of civilisation, a bulwark against barbarism. Till that time, the police will continue to make a pretty pie, thanks to their age-old links with the antisocial elements, their old pals.

When the hour of the police comes with a vengeance, as in Kerala, it is not the anti-social elements who will face most of the music, but the political. The difference between the two has already been blurred by the Home Minister. And so far as the now-tough warnings to some elements of the police force go, one knows that the smaller fry-like police constables and sub-inspectors will be reprimanded, whereas the prime movers, the big officers, will go scotch-free.

The Calcutta police are clever.

MARCH 14, 1970

After the University rampage it hinted that some students had flourished revolvers—though onlookers thought of toy pistols. The Centre has taken up the cue: extremists in Assam have received arms from the Nagas and Mizos; the extremists in Assam are in contact with the extremists in West Bengal; therefore the latter must have got some weapons. The extremists will now be made to appear in the limelight. The UF supporters with their assorted weapons and bombs will get the benefit of the doubt—and the patronage of their leaders. West Bengal-Assam-Pakistan-China—it is something geopolitical, you know, whereas the United Front disorders and murders are just part of neo-socialism.

Get Out of Quebec!

General J. N. Chaudhuri, is still remembered. We learn from the *Afro-Asian*, a monthly publication from Montreal, Canada, that he is "being rewarded by McGill University's Center for Developing Areas Study with 40,000 dollars to do research on the 'Role of the Military in developing countries of South Asia.'" The journal, in rather picturesque terms, comments: "General Chaudhuri, a confirmed lackey of U.S. imperialism, is a traitor to the Indian people... he must be thrown out of Quebec... on November 6th. Afro-Asian students and supporters, in response to a call given by the Committee to oppose General Chaudhuri, marched in a militant demonstration against the C.D.A.S. shouting slogans: Chaudhuri Get Out of Quebec!... and, Hands off Asia, Africa and Latin America!"

Perhaps Chaudhuri himself did not know how important a person he is.

NOTICE

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Book Review

Crux Of The Problem : Suspicion

N. P. G.

THE first article of faith of Mr Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is: Pakistan's security and territorial integrity are more important than her economic development.

The second is: Pakistan is a State with an ideology. It is a God-inspired country—an expression of the idea of justice and equality translated into reality by the process of self-determination.

The third is: Formerly the Great Powers adopted the tactics of 'divide and rule' in colonial countries for economic and military exploitation. Today the imperialists have adopted the tactics of 'unite and rule' for the same purpose. That is why neither the British nor the Americans consented to the Partition of India. That Pakistan was eventually carved out was because the people of Pakistan relentlessly fought for their separate Muslim identity.

The fourth is: The USA wants Pakistan to be subservient to India so that India in cooperation with Pakistan can effectively contain Red China.

The fifth is: India never agreed to the idea of partition and will never. She will leave no effort untried to bring Pakistan back into her old territorial pattern.

The sixth is: Pakistan cannot cooperate with India without the points of dispute being settled totally in favour of Pakistan. Since India will never agree to settle the disputes in favour of Pakistan, India will always remain the enemy of Pakistan and all of Pakistan's national and international relations will have to be based on this fundamental premise.

One may agree or may not with Mr Bhutto's faith but that does not matter much. What is important is to realise that Mr Bhutto represents the ruling clique of Pakistan, whether or not at any point of time he

is in the Government. Mr Bhutto never talks of the people of Pakistan, what he is concerned with is the State power. In that sense, the title of his book *The Myth of Independence** is totally misleading. When he talks of independence, he does not mean the independence of people but of the State. And when he talks of 'myth', he does not mean that the independence of Pakistan is non-existent but that it is perpetually threatened by India. He thinks nothing of military alliances or subservience to the USA as long as Pakistan can effectively counteract the beligerence of India.

It will be interesting, for a change, to see Indian affairs from the other end of the telescope, as Mr Bhutto and the like-minded leaders of Pakistan see them.

In order to go to the roots of Indo-Pakistani relations, Mr Bhutto contends that one must examine the nature of Hindu alias Indian nationalism. He quotes Mr Nirad C. Chaudhuri with approval: "There is a streak of insanity in the Hindus... This madness lurks within their ordinary workaday self... In all Hindu activities, especially in the public sphere, can be detected clear signs of either a feebleness of mental faculties or a perversion of them." This insanity, according to Mr Bhutto, grew out of a sense of superiority to all other cultures. The Hindus hate the Muslims because they were not able to assimilate the Muslims as they did the earlier religions. Fed on centuries of hatred, their sense of injury received under Muslim rule reinforced by religious dogma, all Hindu movements have conceived the assimilation of the Muslim minority.

* *The Myth of Independence*. By Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Oxford University Press. Rs 28.50.

city as part of their political objective, differing only in method. The Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS were committed to violence and the forcible conversion of Muslims to the lowest strata of Indian society. Mr Gandhi's methods were subtle. He spoke of Muslims as blood-brothers and held out assurances that their rights would be safeguarded under a Congress-governed rule; but whenever called upon to define their rights and share of political power in an independent India, he invariably evaded a clear answer. Mr Nehru dismissed the fact of a separate Muslim culture in the sub-continent.

Jinnah's Mission

Mr Bhutto believes that Mr M. A. Jinnah was the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity and even the Indian National Congress regarded him as such. Mr Jinnah had all along tried to promote the cause of Indian independence so that the Hindu and the Muslim could live side by side within a single polity. But he found out that the Indian leaders sought the cooperation of Muslims not as equals but only to eliminate their identity. The only logical course open to him after the realisation was the demand for Pakistan. Once he was resolved on the decisive step, neither the sweet words of Mrs Sarojini Naidu nor the hypnotic dialectics of Mr Gandhi could deflect him.

When Britain was forced to concede Pakistan, as Mr Bhutto understands it, she furnished India with massive advantages against Pakistan. In violation of the principle of partition according to the composition of population in contiguous regions, vast Muslim populated territories stretching up to the fringe of Amritsar and including Gurudaspur and Ferozepur were arbitrarily handed over to India. Assam was relinquished, Bengal partitioned, and India was granted corridors allowing access to Jammu and Kashmir, and to Assam and Tripura. In North Bengal, India was provided with uninterrupted contiguity with Nepal and access to Sikkim and Bhutan bordering on China.

No attempt was made to provide Pakistan with the minimum requirements for administration, defence and finance. In the maintenance of law and order, the division of assets, military stores, sterling balances and even in transfer of funds, India was given a stranglehold over Pakistan. Britain and India intended to punish the Muslims for winning self-determination.

India now considers Pakistan a cruel mutilation of *Bharat Mata* and desperately tries to re-absorb Pakistan. She has sought to destroy the edifice of Pakistan by every possible means. She forced an economic blockade on Pakistan. Considering East Pakistan particularly vulnerable, forces of disruption and subversion were let loose there. Culturally too, East Pakistanis were wooed and sought to be united with Bengalis in West Bengal. When these failed, India adopted a policy of eviction of Muslims, through communal violence, from West Bengal and Assam. By evicting five million Muslims from West Bengal and Assam, India not only subjected East Pakistan to the physical pressure of having to rehabilitate them but also to the responsibilities of ensuring the protection of its Hindu minority in order to save the sixty million Muslims in India who were treated as hostages.

Crux of the Problem

India's occupation of Junagarh and Hyderabad created political and psychological conditions which were of incalculable advantage to her. But the crux of the problem became Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr Nehru maintained that the resolution of the J & K dispute would not bring peace and amity to the sub-continent because Indo-Pakistani disputes were only the symptoms of the bigoted attitude of the theocratic and reactionary Pakistan to the secular and progressive India. On the other hand Pakistan maintained that only by a resolution of the disputes would it be possible to determine whether they were the causes or symptoms of Indo-Pakistani differences. It is strange logic, Mr Bhutto observes, to

usurp the territorial and economic rights of a country on the ground that enmity with that country is unavoidable.

Pakistan's case for J & K is simple. India occupied Hyderabad and Junagarh, pleading self-determination of the people there. Pakistan in the same way demands self-determination for the people of J & K. But Pakistan is convinced that India would never by herself give away her immoral occupation of J & K.

According to Mr Bhutto, India holds J & K because their valley is the head of the body of Pakistan. Its possession enables India to cripple the economy of West Pakistan and, militarily, to dominate the country. India retains J & K because she wants to increase her strategic importance by having common borders with Russia and China and correspondingly deny their frontiers to Pakistan. Above all, she retains the State to negate the two-nation theory, the basis of Pakistan. If a Muslim majority area can remain a part of India, then the *raison d'être* of Pakistan collapses.

What will happen if Pakistan softens down on her claims to J & K? India then would turn her attention to the rich and alluvial portion of East Pakistan. The present theme of Indian propaganda is that the fifty-five million people of East Pakistan should not 'sacrifice their future for the sake of the five million of J & K. Incessant appeals are made to East Pakistan to end the 'domination' of West Pakistan. Once the national resolve to liberate J & K is broken, subversion to break the link between the two wings of Pakistan would increase in both wings.

There are other points of dispute between Pakistan and India. There are the dispute over the canal waters, the dispute over the future of the Ganges waters and that occasioned by the eviction of Muslims from India. There is again the dispute over Assam and some districts of India adjacent to East Pakistan. The future of the Farakka barrage and the general problem of the uses of rivers have yet to be equitably settled. Al-

though the Nehru-Noon agreement was concluded some ten years ago, Berubari is still to be transferred to Pakistan. Both wings of the country have legitimate grievances against India and until the principal disputes are resolved, it would be futile to expect relations to improve.

Change of Tactics

It has taken twenty years and two wars to establish the separate identity of Pakistan. India tried to prevent Pakistan from coming into being. After Independence she imposed an economic blockade in order to destroy the Pakistani economy. The September war of 1965 has now convinced India that she cannot destroy Pakistan by confrontation. Her policy has therefore shifted from confrontation to cooperation, to the Spirit of Tashkent. She now seeks to convert Pakistan into her satellite by holding out inducements of peaceful cooperation. In this she is abetted by foreign Powers. But here is a dilemma for India. The point of departure between India's objective to absorb Pakistan and the U.S. objective to allow it is reached the moment the latter presses for India's aggressive confrontation with China. India wants to obtain the submission of Pakistan for her own glory and not for confrontation with or containing China. Pakistan has to assess the situation correctly so that she can bring them to cancel each other.

Pakistan rejects the proposals for joint ventures for Pakistan and India, because there cannot be joint economic ventures between States with unresolved territorial and other fundamental disputes. Without the settlement of disputes and in disregard of the principles relevant to the protection of sovereign rights, the World Bank wants to intervene high-handedly to impose a solution for the utilisation of the waters of the Ganges. It wants to bring about cooperation between the two countries by making East Pakistan share its waters with West Bengal and vice versa. The analogy of the Indus Basin Treaty does not hold. This was intended to divide the waters between India

and Pakistan to decrease interdependence. In the case of the Ganges waters, a solution is sought to be imposed by which East Pakistan would be dependent upon West Bengal. With this precedent, other projects would follow for joint participation in hydro-electric schemes leading to collaboration in agriculture and industry.

Talk of cooperation is all, Mr Bhutto holds, a cover for constitutional terms like confederation and condominium, which are outdated. Mr Nehru floated the idea of confederation but with no response from Pakistan, who was alert to the real nature of the face behind the mask. Today talk of confederation will fail because it is charged with historical prejudices. However, once a meeting of minds, through cooperation, takes place and a common purpose evolved, formulas can always be found to translate cooperation into constitutional language. Hence Pakistan's suspicions against all cooperative stance on the part of India.

Armed Forces

Reduction of armed forces cannot but be suicidal for Pakistan. The U.S. decision to terminate military assistance both to India and Pakistan was a shock to Mr Bhutto. The U.S. decision was not meant as a punishment both for India and Pakistan for their 'silly war'. It was in fact a subtle way of helping India against Pakistan. This is how Mr Bhutto sees it.

India is vastly bigger than Pakistan, in population, in territory, in economy, in industry. As such India stands always superior to Pakistan. The U.S. should have therefore armed Pakistan in a much bigger proportion in inverse ratio to Indian superiority so that Pakistan can stand on an equal footing with India. The U.S. armed Pakistan in initial stages no doubt but never in the adequate proportions. Since the Sino-Indian war, the U.S. has given more arms to India than to Pakistan. Therefore, the decision by which the U.S. stopped arming India and Pakistan after the Indo-Pakistan war, came as the

greatest blow to Pakistani security.

The U.S. cannot justifiably withhold arms on the ground that arms would lead to an arms race between India and Pakistan; nor can it be seriously contended that the decision to stop military assistance to Pakistan is influenced either by the desire to prevent war or an arms race leading to war. Turkey and Greece receive massive arms assistance from the U.S. and more than once have been on the brink of war over Cyprus, yet the U.S. has not suspended military assistance to either of them.

It cannot be contended either that military assistance has been stopped to divert defence expenditure to economic development. From the very beginning India and Pakistan have been spending a large part of their resources on defence (and yet for many years the U.S. continued to supply arms to both countries without political or economic preconditions. The U.S. had no concern for economic prosperity of either Pakistan or India. If India or Pakistan had been economically self-sufficient, they would not have allowed foreign presence on their soil. The only concern of the U.S. is to use India, with Pakistan appended to her, against China. The U.S. had no opportunity to arm India because of Mr Nehru's non-alignment policy. The Sino-Indian war came to the U.S. as a god-send for which it had been waiting patiently. Now the U.S. has India under its sphere of influence and can afford to ignore Pakistan.

To Whose Benefit?

After two decades of independence Indo-Pakistani relations have remained static. None of the animosities have been removed, none of the causes of partition remedied. In the prevailing conditions, a reduction in the armed forces of India and Pakistan would freeze the disputes for ever and benefit India. It would amount to de facto recognition of India's supremacy on the sub-continent and for all practical purposes legalise her usurpation of Pakistan's economic and territorial rights. There cannot be bilateral dis-

armament between States with fundamental unresolved territorial disputes; it is a negation of sovereignty and an admission of defeat by one of them.

A reduction in armed forces is impracticable for more mundane reasons, Mr Bhutto contents. It cannot come by budgetary control alone. Nor can it be enforced by Pakistan's having one man in uniform for every three or four Indians in uniform. In a technological age disarmament is no longer as simple as that. In reducing the level of armed forces, Pakistan would have to take into account India's manpower outside her regular forces, her progress in the development of weapons, her advances in nuclear development, her fuel and mineral resources, the number and quality of her factories producing tanks and aircraft and automatic weapons. In addition, there would have to be means of verifying the implementation of such an agreement. India's record in the implementation of past agreements is woefully inadequate.

Just as India happens to be Pakistan's only enemy, Pakistan also happens to be India's enemy number one. India's foreign relations have to be understood only in this light, Mr Bhutto asserts.

Because the principal objective of Indian foreign policy has been to isolate Pakistan, India in the early days concentrated her diplomatic activity against Pakistan in the Arab world recognizing the fact that Pakistan had affinities with the Middle East. When Pakistan in self-defence moved towards the U.S., India denounced U.S.-Pak defence agreements. Taking advantage of Soviet hostility towards the CENTO, which was conceived to counteract communism, India embarked on a comprehensive plan for co-operation with the USSR. She also put all sorts of barriers in the way of Soviet-Pak relations.

India's initial objective was promotion of grandiose designs in South-East Asia and total isolation of Pakistan as a client of the Western Powers and therefore unsuited to play any role in Afro-Asian matters. On the

one hand, India preached peace and on the other hand she continued to increase her defence expenditure. She preached non-alignment and continued to exploit both power blocs for her own purpose, which was the emaciation of Pakistan.

The U.S. believed that Indo-Pakistani disputes would sooner or later be resolved under the compulsion of geography and of economic and other factors. It believed that with the increase of its influence in the sub-continent, it would assist the two countries to come to terms. It believed that if India and Pakistan resolved their differences, Pakistan at least would play a part in the struggle against communism. Pakistan had an ideology different from communism and a conservative leadership was in firm control of the country.

The U.S. assisted Pakistan for one set of reasons. Pakistan however received the assistance for another set; confrontation with India. To this contradiction the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 added an entirely new element. Mr Nehru ceased to be an antagonist of the U.S. It was non-aligned India and not aligned Pakistan that had joined battle with America's chief adversary in Asia. The U.S. had stopped assisting Pakistan because it had got in India a bigger ally. Moreover, all along, Pakistan, in spite of assistance, refused to be involved in a confrontation with China. She could never be persuaded to fight Vietnam even though she was browbeaten by the U.S. on a number of occasions.

Since 1962, the year of Sino-Indian confrontation, the U.S. stand on Kashmir has undergone a sea-change. It is for this reason that the UN resolutions calling for the exercise of the right of self-determination by the Kashmiri people have faded into the background. The U.S. now, a friend of India, considers Kashmir an embarrassing obstruction in the realisation of its plan to encircle China. It has to consider India's need to hold the Valley with its lines of communications to the sensitive region of Ladakh.

The American entente with India

leaves for Pakistan only one way out—looking up to China for help. China had been all along friendly to Pakistan. She always stood for self-determination for the Kashmiri people. When Chou En-lai visited India at the height of their mutual bonhomie, the Chinese leader refused to visit Kashmir and compromise the Chinese stand on Kashmir.

Pakistan looked forward to U.S. help to meet the Indian intention to annihilate Pakistan. Since the U.S. has succeeded in getting a firm hold on India and now considers Pakistan expendable, Pakistan cannot but foster good relations with China. Moreover, she has no dispute with China.

This in short is Mr Bhutto's theme elaborated in *The Myth of Independence*. The book as well as Mr Bhutto's understanding of Indo-Pakistan and international affairs is a strange brew of truths, half-truths and falsehoods. Any discerning student of modern history can find out for himself where Mr Bhutto is correct and where he errs. But it is impossible to dismiss Mr Bhutto as a quirk simply because, in spite of all his ad hoc principles, he is fairly successful in presenting the basic point of Indo-Pakistani relations: suspicion. So long as Pakistan views India with the suspicion that she is out to destroy Pakistan, there cannot be solution of any dispute. *The Myth of Independence* is valuable to Indians, not because it is a wise book but because it will help them understand the Pakistani psyche.

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MANNALAL DAS

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Village Tales

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

SHASTI (directed by Swadesh Sarkar) has been done with the honest intention of making it an aesthetically valid proposition, and the courage in doing away with the principal box-office element of the star-system is really laudable. But the net product again serves as evidence of the oft-proved dictum that for artistic activities sincerity of purpose alone is not enough. Tagore's original story has a subdued violence, a simmering kind of hell-fury of a woman denied of her legitimate rights as a human being and as a wife, and a deep insight into the currents and cross-currents of human behaviour. The movie version, by filtering away all these qualities of the original, has become just another tear-jerking tale of rural life, complete with high-strung peasants, village shrews, benevolent tax-collector, tyrant zamindar and his familiar retinue of courtiers, servants and nautch-girls and the zamindari oppression has been heavily spelt in gory double-print images of the peasants being hustled out of their homes and the amassing of bank notes. The story's focus is on Chandara, the heroine, an apparently contented and tame housewife, but boiling with fiery passions, secretly nursing scorn and contempt for her fickle and weak husband whose affection for his wife is overshadowed by his devotion to the elder brother. Of all Rabindranath's heroines Chandara seems to be the most human in her desires and demands, almost a flesh-and-blood representation of the enigmatic feminine forms in Tagore paintings. In the film, she has been treated as a tomboy during the first half (and Savitri Chatterjee as a sprightly damsel is indeed an offensive sight) and when in the final sequences, she is called upon to summon up some depth, she draws a blank and all the other characters follow suit. The true flavour of village life has also been lost in the confusing maze of melodrama, and the crude photo-

graphy, slapdash direction and a shoddy design scheme have added to the artificiality of the whole thing.

Even if Shasti could boast of a little courage in launching a daring project without adequate box-office insurances, Trilok Jetly's *Godaan* (based on Premchand's novel) lacks even that. A long-winding saga burdened with unnecessary and irritating details, the film is without any thematic or structural cohesion, retaining all the impurities of the original. The film is technically poor, the music by Ravi Shankar is listless and the overall direction is just a childish tinkering with the medium.

Letters

Wedding Guest

CPI, CPI(M), Red Revolution, CPI(ML), Equality, Fraternity, United Front, Long Live the Revolution, Bombs, Swords, Srikakulam, Lenin, Mao, Lin Piao, Bombs, Workers of the World Unite etc. etc.

A wedding feast. Some dark dusty bony shabby shapes (they are called human beings, a kind of) gather close around. The banana leaves with the left-over, chewed-over, spat-over foods and bones are thrown out into the street in a heap. The shapes ransack the heap, eat from it, like pariah dogs... shut up Mohim, it's an old sentimental story you are refurbishing.

The shamiana is bright, people are chewing pans, women (many in very beautiful saris) are exchanging news, another lot is pressing in to take seats to eat. A ragged boy, I mean one of those shapes, weaves fast between the benches, picks up whatever he can from the banana leaves with the left-over chewed-up foods. He is lucky for before he is turned out he has managed to fill his two hands. He, i.e. the dark scraggy shape, slides out quickly, melting into the darkness outside. Shut up Mohim, we have all seen this, we see it always, what are you trying to tell us?

Of course, weddings need not stop. The very fact that human being have been constructed in two distinct

shapes calls for some consideration for the institution of marriage.

Of course, it can be, it should be an occasion for joy, an occasion when relatives and friends get together.

And of course, a little eating on the occasion can be pleasant. A Little Eating, I said.

But what kind of joy can it be when you chew through your twelve delicacies and leave a heap of waste and wild-eyed hungry skin-bone human beings cluster around the doorway waiting for your remnants? What kind of joy?

Revolutionaries, bomb throwers, sword swishers, have you not even felt like vomiting all that you have eaten, when, as you come out of one of the feasts you see this? Have you? You have? Then, in the name of all the holies of holies and reds of reds, why haven't all the parties declared that it is indecent to eat gluttonous meals at weddings when relics of human beings, famished and animalized, hang around the doorside, and that their members and followers will not attend any wedding where there is a feast? Eight snacks, a little dalmut, a cup of tea, ok. The revolution is necessary and may come, but that shouldn't stop one from being with a friend who is getting married and sharing a little dalmut with everybody there. But, why don't the revolutionaries, their parties' instructions or not, take individual decision not to participate in wedding feasts until the day when hungry human shapes need not watch your hand lift food to your mouth?

I am afraid such small contradictions in behaviour upset neither the hot ones nor the cool ones, neither the communists nor the Congressites nor the Gandhites. They are carrying on, going to weddings, eating the food, leaving a lot, chewing the pans and coming out shaking their bellies walking past the huddle of the dark shapes hovering around for the refuse.

What non-sense, Mohim, how sentimental can you go? Why don't you shut up?

MOHIM ROODRO
Calcutta

"Compradors"

In its *Ideological Debate Summed Up*, published in June 1968, the CPM took up the issue whether the Indian big bourgeoisie was comprador and concluded: We know from history of sections of comprador bourgeoisie, smaller or bigger in number depending upon several factors, evolving into the industrial category. That is what took place in India, and probably with the other big bourgeoisie of some colonial and semi-colonial countries. But we are yet to know of the reverse course of an industrial big bourgeoisie of a backward and underdeveloped state evolving a comprador category."

This conclusion takes care of the first question put by Mr Amritava Banerjee (March 7). The second question can be dismissed simply because in your comments compradors were not equated with collaborators. The answer to the third question is that American capital can take care of a bad pasture by means of its superior resources and long-term objectives, while the Birlas look out for only quickies. Besides, the Americans have not given up better pastures in Africa; they are very much there.

A READER
Calcutta

Caste And Class

In his article 'Caste and Class' (February 21) Mr N. K. Singh, while talking of the Rajput camp, mentions the name of Mr Y. B. Chavan, the Union Home Minister. It is a well known fact that Mr Chavan belongs to a backward community of Maharashtra, i.e. a purely peasant community, the community which produced Shivaji. In Maharashtra, it is considered a Sudra community. It is a historical fact that at the time of Shivaji's coronation, after he had carved out a principality of his own, the Brahmin priests of Maharashtra refused to perform the ceremony on the grounds that he was a Sudra. Shivaji had to bribe a

Brahmin priest of Varanasi to do the job.

On the whole the analysis by the author is correct. I can speak with first-hand knowledge. As a student in Bihar, I had to stay in a hostel for about two years. I know how high-ups used to be involved, purely on caste consideration, even in the appointments of peons, granting of stipends, freeships etc. Even those from other States were often forced to take sides on the basis of caste.

We like your comments. But at the same time I must frankly say that sometimes it is difficult to understand the meaning. For example, on the front page (21-2-70) the use of the expression 'her Thomas Hardy' is not clear to me. Could you add one more page at the end of the magazine for notes on such phrases? We find such notes in Marxist-Leninist literature published from Moscow and Peking. That will solve our problem.

SURAJ SINGH
Delhi

Author's Regrets

I have just received your letter... bearing the information that Mr Girish Mishra and Braj Kumar Pandey have alleged that my article on caste and class is 'more or less a copy' of their research paper.

I admit the fact that while writing the article, I took some help from their research paper along with other references. Actually, at first I attempted to review their paper—but being no reviewer I failed in the task. I wrote an article, which had to be short and hence I could not afford to quote them.

I apologize for the damage, if any, done by me.

N. K. SINGH
Patna

Of Films And Frontier

To *Frontier* culture means only cinema, and occasional chitchats on theatre. Even trash Hindi films are

regarded worthy of comment. Each journal or magazine has its own readers. Since teenaged school students, presumably, are not your readers, it is not your duty to inculcate among them a taste against the vulgarity of Hindi films. Of course sociological analyses of the popularity and the motives of Hindi films are welcome.

You seem to regard cinema as the most important medium of expression, yet films which demand honest attention are discussed in a casual manner and with ignorance. For example Prabodh Kumar Maitra's review of Young German film (November 29, 1969). He does injustice to Alexander Kluge's *Big Top* by using just meaningless adjectives. But his comments on Young Joërlès are really disastrous. Probably he is not aware of the fact that the film is based on the novel of Robert Musil, an important German author, at least according to George Lukacs. In his novel, Musil makes a parable of power and its misuse which has thrown Europe into two disastrous wars in the present century. The director understood the allegorical side of the novel (written in 1906) and utilised it in making his own allegory of the crisis of Germany and the modern world. He made the implicit suggestion explicit with perfect consciousness—indeed it was the best film of the festival. At least how the director selected the incidents from the novel should have been mentioned—his omissions and selections remind me of Pasolini's utterance that the characters and facts of novels are only catalysts to the director. Was it wrong on my part to expect a mention of all the facts from a reviewer in *Frontier*?

Another example of how casual a film review can be is the comment on Satyajit Ray's *Aranyer Din Ratri*. The review's attitude is basically correct—Satyajit Ray must be debunked. But this should be done seriously. The last few lines on Kaveri Bose are the utterance of a devoted fan of this film actress. How these lines could be published in *Frontier* with-

out editing is a miracle. Moreover Satyajit Ray is at present an establishment and is an idol of our bourgeois press. So he must be criticised seriously. The man who started with *Pather Panchali* and at least made *Aparajito*, *Kanchanjangha* and *Two Sisters* is now making *Aranyer Din Ratri*: it is a subject of fascinating study. The overall failure of his latest film is a case-study, from a social as well as a cultural standpoint.

ARJUN BANDYOPADHYAYA
Naihati

Aranyer Din Ratri

For Mr Rudrangsu Mukherjee, "as yet a student", (February 28), it is but natural to be intrigued by Satyajit's *Aranyer Din Ratri*. The film, we are told, depicts the complexities of "many a modern mind" in all seriousness and light-hearted cynicism can go hand-in-hand in the case of an artistic creation. Pretty intriguing indeed!

Mr Mukherjee has accused me of moving in a world of cliché-ridden commentary where fair criticism of the film is absent. Unfortunately for him, cliché is a thing I hate most. Perhaps Mr Mukherjee could not find proper words to describe my anger and indignation which I expressed rather bluntly. This instant film is patently a cross between a light comedy and a serio-comic nonsense, and it does not deserve any serious attention.

Mr K. Raghavan (March 7) has laboured much to build up a defence for Satyajit Ray. He has hailed the

film as "a forerunner of many socially conscious films to come from Satyajit Ray." This sort of sweeping comment naturally leads to a specific question: Is Satyajit really conscious of contemporary society? Mr Raghavan and S.T.K. may disagree, but my answer to this question is an emphatic 'no'. Had Ray any sincere intention to portray the complex modern mind with all its desire and despair, its hunger and anger, its lust for life and utter helplessness, its pretences and bankruptcy, he could not have chosen a sham novelette and found an excuse for an escapade to a place near Palamau. "Art is the product of society", says Christopher Caudwell, "as the pearl is the product of oyster". A socially conscious artist is not expected to nibble at things like a parvenu as Ray has done in this case. I will always admit that Satyajit Ray is a master of his craft; but he is not conscious of the society in which he lives.

SIDDHARTHA DASGUPTA
Calcutta

About *Aranyer Din Ratri* I have only one thing to ask: What's the purpose of making such a film out of a mawkish and wishy-washy novel by Sunil Ganguly? Ray himself was not clear what picture he was making and on what theme. As a result his product is lost in a jumble of mock-serious babble.

And last, but not the least, Ray's endeavour in making this film is tantamount to dabbling in bourgeois morality. Maybe Ray, like Godard, does not believe that "ideas are guns". But then let him turn for lesson to his one-time favourite director Louis Bunuel, who says: "I am against conventional morals, traditional phantasms, sentimentalism, and all that moral uncleanness that sentimentalism introduces into society. Bourgeois morality is for me immoral, and to be fought..."

I, like thousands of his admirers, hope that Ray will come out of his temporary rut and prove what Pene-

lope Houston said—"Satyajit Ray's Bengal will be the cinema's India."

PRADIP BISWAS
Calcutta

(This correspondence is closed—
Editor.)

Still Waiting

The controversy about the real financial position and prospects of college teachers is still raging. There can be no gainsaying the fact that a considerable section of college teachers, namely those belonging to the Third Plan colleges, have not yet reaped the full benefit of the improved pay scale, though it has no doubt accrued to a section of the senior college teachers, many of whom have reached quite a decent figure. What is regrettable is that these fortunate gentlemen as also members of the public conveniently forget the dismal lot of a large section of comparatively junior college teachers, by no means underqualified or less devoted, who are being put off from year to year in the matter of pay fixation, and have to rest content only with ad-hoc, inadequate and precarious payments. It appears that the old policy of divide and rule adopted by alien rulers has reappeared in spite of the 'socialistic' ideals of our administrative bodies. The WBCUTA should be alive to this invidious distinction which tends to split the teaching fraternity in two.

DEBAL KUMAR CHAKRAVARTI
Calcutta

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