

frontier

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

TELEPHONE: 24-3202

KERENSKY TO KOSYGIN

A near-nonagerian died last week in a New York hospital. The name was Alexander Kerensky. Nobody seemed to care. Alexander who? The name was Kerensky. A whiff of distant memory barely disturbed the placidity of current emotions. Perhaps the only comment noteworthy on the occasion is with respect to the sequence of two dates: poor Alexander Kerensky had to wait for his death; the centenary of Lenin's birth was in the way, first things first. History, inexorable history, determinist history, still likes to indulge in sundry ironies.

Kerensky the interregnum was, for nearly half a century, Kerensky the relict. It was almost an indecently long period to keep on bearing witness, in person, to the historicity of a futile endeavour. Printed words are often doctored words; it is therefore difficult to vouchsafe, despite Kerensky's own published commentaries, whether he really did enjoy the role. There is of course the lure of money, fabulous standard of living, an excess of ersatz hero-worship. But did all this—and does all this—compensate for the basic indignity that is involved: running down one's own country and its people, their magnificent achievements, and their equally magnificent dreams? It is a question which one needs scarcely confine to Kerensky, the gentleman-politician-cum-amateur-social-revolutionary with a distaste for the sight of blood. As the revolution proceeded in the Soviet Union, a steady stream of other deserters joined the deposed figurehead of the first post-Romanov regime. The Revolution was not—it could not be—devoid of mistakes and minor blunders; a social re-ordering without trials and errors is an impossibility. Those who cited such errors as justification for forsaking the historical process are pitiable creatures.

Beginning with Kerensky and, for the present, ending with Stalin's daughter, it is not a small list of deserters. Maybe this is where Kerensky would have claimed vindication of the path he chose: even as *rigor mortis* was setting into his physical frame, the offspring of Stalin was regaling Goldwaterish American hearts with stories of native torture. Marxist tenets as they stand, let us have the honesty to admit, are incapable of explaining such quirks as are represented by Alliluyeva or Kuznetsov. What is often crudely described as human engineering can suffer from a lack of integration in a briskly socialist clime, and the consequence may

Compromise And Survive

be varied. The depiction of socialism as a human utopia assumed a certain transformation of attitudes, motivations and mental frames. It could be that a model of rapid economic growth which is over-biased towards piece rate of wages and the Liberman principle has rather poor defences against the manifestations of individual avarice. It could be that defections from the system are a symptom—a symptom of the maladies that rise in case the pent-up needs of a cultural revolution are deliberately throttled from above.

On such matters, speculation can indeed be unending. And it is fair enough that, on occasion, the benefit of the doubt be accorded to the apologists in Moscow—and their professional henchmen across the six continents. But what does one do in the face of incontrovertible evidence that the Kerensky clap has infected the entire leadership of the most powerful State supposedly ruled by a Communist Party? Revolution is not a land-locked concept, and no nation or its leaders can claim an inalienable right for the ultimate interpretation of the content of socialism. Yet, it is easy to indicate what is *not* socialism, what violates the principles of international brotherhood. The current craze for bourgeois conformism in the Soviet Union is not socialism, the push into Czechoslovakia has been pure Kolchak, the machinations against China are an outrage, the alacrity with which the Soviet leadership is seeking *camaraderie* with Richard Nixon the boor is nauseating. While using the banner of the Red Flag, the rulers of the USSR are resolutely going about to sabotage socialist principles.

Thus, despite the quiet obituaries, Alexander Kerensky has died with victory well grasped. His soul *will* rest in peace, for, finally, the Soviet Union itself has defected to counter-revolution.

NOTICE

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Business Manager
Frontier

With an air of great profundity the Requisitionists' AICC listed five dangers facing the nation. Naturally the way the party is trying to take the people for a ride was not listed as one of the five. A calculatedly vague indictment of vested interests and Right reaction breaks no bones so long as socialist transformation remains an equally vague verbal exercise. The political resolution even shied away from what would have been no more than an empty call for Left consolidation. Mrs Gandhi was for progress so long as the pace remained slow; she would, she said, have to work with the people's consent. And if people wanted to act instead of waiting indefinitely for progressive Congressmen to honour their pledges, it would be Left adventurism, "a crude expression"—to quote the political resolution's lofty language—"of impatience and frustration". Even more loftily, the resolution added that such crudity "has only temporary appeal".

The Congress(R) apparently thinks that its successes in recent by-elections indicate a more durable appeal which has given a "severe jolt" to the "adventurist Left". But the "adventurists" have no time for such elections; so why should they be bothered? And why bother about them when their appeal is so temporary? The Congress(R) analysis of the by-elections is a delightful essay in self-complacency: not only has the "adventurist Left" received a jolt, but the Right too has been categorically rejected. If Mr Subramaniam noted a process of Right consolidation, it was not mentioned in official documents. On one point, however, the by-election document may cause a little embarrassment. "The parties of the cheap leftist stance" are said to have been "down-graded". Well, well, for once the Congress(R) seems to be right, though perhaps not in the sense intended. But then the CPI is surely excluded.

The entire session marked a compromise between shadow-boxing and surrender. The economic issues

were given very perfunctory treatment lest the noisy radicals should ask too many questions. A foreign policy resolution was packed with platitudes. And the platitudes were not very consistent either. A peaceful solution of differences with China is a harmless wish, but the resolution also wanted such a solution to "bring back the Indian territory illegally occupied by China". The extent of the territory meant was not defined; so it might appear that the Congress(R) thinks it possible that China will give up even Aksai Chin in order to make peace with India. Perhaps the Congress(R) leaders themselves did not know what they meant. The only bit of courage shown was the demand for withdrawal of U.S. troops from Cambodia. Let us be grateful for even the smallest mercies, though they do not amount to anything but a gesture.

Since these men were much more voluble on communalism some people may be led to believe that here at least is a clear-cut policy. But there is not the slightest evidence that any action is intended. The demand for a ban on the RSS was neatly shelved; the Shiv Sena was not even recognized as a communal organization. Mr Chavan frankly admitted that the decision on a ban would have to be political: whether by acting against the RSS the Congress(R) would lose some political support. There were also hints that elections were near. Clearly Mrs Gandhi thinks that her best bet is to win as many votes as possible by a wordy crusade against communalists and reactionaries without losing any by acting against such people among her own supporters.

The Prime Minister and her advisers were, of course, shrewd enough to see that a progressive stance, however unrelated to action, would look ludicrous if she imposed a ban on West Bengal's "Left adventurists". Besides, she must have an alibi for not imposing one on what the Congress(R) itself calls "para-military communal organizations". So

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she had to disappoint a pathetic group from West Bengal led by Mr Bijoy Singh Nahar. Mr Tarun Kanti Ghosh was reportedly shocked to see Naxalite activities being described as "Left adventurism" when, in his opinion, they constituted plain treason. Another West Bengal stalwart thought that Mr Jyoti Basu was Mr

Dhavan's "brain and conscience". Anyway, even Mrs Gandhi now seems to think the West Bengal Congress eminently expendable. In the other direction, others' turns will come in good time, which is a point for the Leftist parties to ponder. We do not mean the CPI alone.

political structure of the country be overhauled to ensure employment, will the demand be considered political? Or, when they condemn harassment of innocent students by house-to-house searches? Or, when they demand a popular government? The situation in the country today is such that no issue can be taken in isolation from politics. Even the most clear-headed chiefs of educational institutions should be congratulated if they can determine where the politicality of an issue begins.

Curbing Students

Political rallies will not be hereafter allowed inside West Bengal schools, colleges or universities. The chiefs of the educational institutions have been reminded by the State Government that the Bengal Education Code does not permit any political assembly within educational campuses, because politics is no part of education.

The revival of the colonial code, devised by the British to suppress freedom struggles, may appear to many as ridiculously anachronistic but the bureaucrats must have their own logic. They know the stuff the students of this State are made of and they should have no doubt that the code will be honoured by violations. That is what they are possibly counting on. They have deliberately laid the trap; they want to draw the militant students out to put them under trial on concrete charges, such as violation of the code or unlawful assembly. The P.D. Act being temporarily put in abeyance, the police must be armed in some such ways. Another convention that the police will not enter educational campuses without permission of the authorities concerned has been already thrown to the winds. So, the stage is set. The State is ready for the battle and waiting for students to reappear in their institutions after the summer vacation.

It is no use reminding the bureaucrats that the revival of the code brings forth several contradictions. Wise guys as they are, they know it better than anyone else but could not care less. The code clashes against the fundamental rights of the country, formulated after the code. The universities have prescribed political

science as a part of the humanities syllabus, and the code clashes against the spirit of the studies. And, who determines the politicality of any assembly? If students assemble within the campus and demand, for example, reduction of tuition fees, re-examination of answer papers, dismissal of corrupt teachers, probe into fraudulent use of funds, will the assembly be deemed political? If the students demand that they be given jobs when they pass out and the socio-economic

The Government, it seems, is more worried over the student power today than over workers' or peasants' struggle in the State. With the political parties wrangling over the leadership of the workers and the peasants, the movement on these fronts has virtually come to a stop. The Government must have chosen the moment to be the most opportune to strike at the students whose burgeoning strength might give the peasants and workers a new direction.

A Manila Story

A correspondent writes:

There has never been any doubt about the democratic credentials of the Government of the Philippines. Manila's concern specially for freedom of the press has always been very touching. Manila not only chose to become the headquarters of the International Press Institute, one of the staunchest guardians of the "free" press but also offered to host any jamboree dedicated to this cause. The latest proof of this concern came last month when President Marcos, undeterred by any traditional regard for law or morality and braving all public criticism, deported two journalists to Taiwan for their anti-democratic and subversive writings.

Earlier at the time of the "One Asia Assembly" sponsored by the Press Foundation of Asia, held as 'usual' at Manila, the Mecca of the free press, President Marcos foiled attempts to subvert the democratic press by barring entry to Mrs Han

Suyin, novelist and journalist who had earned notoriety for her pro-Chinese views. "One Asia" as envisioned by President Marcos, had no room for such journalists who had forfeited their right to be Asian by sympathising with un-Asian countries like China. The Filipino Immigration Commissioner, Edmundo Reyes, made no bones about it when he said, as reported by *Japan Times*, that Dr Han Suyin stood for an "ideology and a political system diametrically opposed to our own" and her visit "at this time will surely add fuel to the flames of subversion and revolt that are increasingly leaping with uncontrolled funny (sic) at our free institutions".

But preventing infiltrators from outside like Han Suyin was easier than weeding out subversive agents within. And the remedy called for had to be strong. President Marcos lately found out that two Chinese journalists working in Manila itself,

Quintin and Rizal Yuyitung, were engaged in subverting Filipino democracy by writing mischievous articles in their newspaper the *Chinese Commercial News*. On countless occasions they had tried to undermine government's authority by criticising the administrative corruption and failure. The paper's support for student demonstrators was designed to overthrow the government by violent revolution. The Chinese brothers (one of whom even managed to become the President of the Manila Overseas Press Club) were arrested at the Press Club and whisked away to Taipei in an air force jet. Generalissimo Chiang's judges were certainly the fittest people to assess their anti-democratic crimes.

A few days before their arrest the Yuyitung brothers had renounced their Chinese citizenship to avoid deportation to Taiwan. They said they owed their allegiance to the Chinese people but not to Taiwan. Wasn't this another way of saying that they owed allegiance to People's China? With such conclusive proofs at hand President Marcos could not be expected to take into consideration minor things like the illegality of deportation to a country the deportees do not belong to. Of course President Marcos demonstrated an unwarranted humanitarian concern for the Chinese brothers. They had so enraged the Filipino people by their pro-communist writing that their life was in danger. That is why, as the Government stated, "to protect their lives and avoid embarrassment to the Philippines Government, we have taken the necessary steps to prevent any untoward incident, however remote, so that it would not be said that this Government has been remiss in its duty to protect their lives".

The democratic press in India which showed a sleepless concern for the British correspondent detained last year in Peking on the charge of spying must have been unaware of the Filipino developments. Or how to explain their silence about the courageous measures taken by Manila that ensured once again the cherished ideal of freedom of the press?

Kerala

Danger Signals

RAMJI

WHILE a big hue and cry erupted over the "Indianisation" proposal of the Jana Sangh, it is interesting to note a process that has been gathering momentum in Kerala. The process is highlighted by the communalisation of the Muslim population, through political influence and power. And, of late, with a Muslim League leader enjoying autocratic power as the Home Minister cum Education Minister in the CPI-led minifront Cabinet, it has reached quite some proportion. It is a glaring factor of the Kerala administration today that although on paper the CPI is supposed to lead the administration, the de facto leader is the Muslim League and to a lesser extent the Kerala Congress. This seems to have gone to the heads of the League following which in turn has led, as a side-effect, to the emergence of militant Hindu communalism.

Consider the sequel to the Madai by-election and to the strike by the teachers. The victory in the two by-elections at Kottarakara and Nilambur had fired the minifront parties with redoubled determination to wrest the Madai seat from the Marxists. To this end they employed all means, fair and foul. But the Marxists won. There followed terror against the voters in pockets like Matool and Madai panchayats. In broad daylight organised armed gangs of Leaguers go about burning houses and destroying property of suspected Marxists and Syndicate Congress supporters. Large numbers of people have fled from Madai to refugee camps in Papinisseri and other places. Many have lost their lives and many have just disappeared. The police look helplessly on, as the League goondas run riot. The police got their cue when they arrested a few Leaguers carrying arms. Nine police

officials were suspended for the crime. And the fantastic part of it all is that the minifront and their hallelujah newspapers put out stories of alleged 'Marxist atrocity' in Madai. Dispassionate observers who toured Marxist strongholds in this area have reported that the Marxists have not thought fit to pay the League back in its own coin, yet. But, if this situation continues, the people will have to mobilise themselves and this would be the ideal condition for the Jana Sangh and the RSS to win large sections to their side. And the stage would be ready for a widespread communal conflict.

The strike by over a lakh of high school teachers (going on at the time of writing), has been taken by the Muslim League Education Minister and his party as a prestige issue. While the teachers struck work against increased workload and irrational 'improvements' introduced during the current academic year, the Education Minister stood firm and made an appeal to the public to resist the struggle of the teachers. This has been taken by the League as an open invitation for massive intervention in the struggle. Its goondas have been specialising in assaulting picketing teachers in Malapuram District and in parts of Cannanore. Intimidation of striking teachers, manhandling of teachers, foul mouthed insults to picketing women teachers and armed intervention by which headmasters are obliged at the point of the dagger to open the schools and run them, whether there are staff and students or not, this is the picture of intervention. The only section among teachers who have not joined the strike are the Arabic teachers, Leaguers all of them. Incidentally, under the Education Minister Mr Mohamed Koya's dispensation, Arabic, which even the Kerala

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Muslims do not speak, has been given the pride of place in the curriculum, in the process thrusting back the regional language and Hindi and English, though there are hardly enough students to warrant the enormous increase in staff and in the number of teaching hours for Arabic.

In all justice it has to be admitted that the Marxists were responsible for initiating this process of communalism. The 1965 understanding with the Muslim League which became the 1967 alliance in which the CPI also participated, pushed the Muslim League stature up. A League representative got the Education portfolio under E.M.S. Then came the creation of Malapuram District, a prestige point for the League, under the E.M.S. administration. And with the take over of administration by the minifront, the League has become virtual rulers of Kerala. No wonder the League following feel they can get away with anything in Kerala.

An incident which would normally have gained headlines in newspapers was practically killed by the news media: the arrest by the Central Excise, of the son of Dr Bafaqui Thangal, the State Muslim League President, for complicity in gold smuggling from Dubai. After the initial leakage of the news of arrest, no further report has appeared. There are allegations that Mr Thangal and the minifront parties are exerting pressure on the Centre to suppress the case.

Our agent at Alipurduar

Mr SUBHAS BOSE,

Newtown Library,

Alipurduar, P.O.,

Dist. Jalpaiguri,

West Bengal.

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Letter from Bombay

Aftermath Of A Murder

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

THE news of the murder of Krishna Desai, CPI MLA and vice-president of a workers' Union, led about 30,000 working class people to join a funeral procession which was unique. From windows, galleries, terraces and from congregated crowds in street corners tribute was paid to the dead. Krishna Desai, after two consecutive attacks on Dalvi Building where the CPI office is situated, had realised the gravity of the danger posed by the Shiv Sena and was believed to have started organising a volunteer corps to meet any further challenge. He was known for his constant exposure of the Shiv Sena's evil designs in the Assembly. For this he had been intimidated on several occasions. He was critical of his party's line in allowing the Sena to go on the rampage in February and for the support extended on March 2 to the Bandh call given by the Sena. Desai is said to have told his party comrade Dhume that the leaders would realise their folly if somebody became a victim of the Sena. Part of his prophecy has come true. It remains to be seen whether his death would awaken people to the grave danger.

On the day following his murder a rally was held at Nare Park where all the 15 spokesmen of different political parties condemned the act and unanimously held the Shiv Sena guilty and the Naik Government as an abettor. The meeting demanded the resignation of the Chief Minister for failure.

A reverse verdict was passed by the University students gathered for a postmortem of Krishna's political murder. They blamed all the progressive forces in Bombay for the murder. Hadn't these forces allowed Shiv Sena rule in the February riots without any retaliation? One trade union after another had fallen into the

hands of the Sena. The March 2 Bandh was also supported by the CPI and opposed only on paper by other parties, without any challenge. The PSP joined hands with the Sena for elections. The PWP wanted to enter into an alliance with it. Even the SSP, once the acclaimed organiser of Bombay bandh, failed miserably on both occasions. The CPI office was twice attacked. But a 'progressive' like K.K. Singhvi, a prominent lawyer once connected with the CPI, appeared for Bal Thakre when he was arrested. On top of it all, Mr Naik, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, was invited by the CPI to inaugurate the Lenin centenary week, despite the fact that the Sena from its inception had received regular patronage from the Naik Government.

The Sena at first started agitation against Keralites and Madhyas and gradually went on to attack the Muslims. Except the fact-finding mission formed after the recent riots, concerted political action has not been thought of by any party. The Kamgar Maidan from where glorious working class movements were once led is now deserted under the threat of the Shiv Sena. Nowhere is militancy in the movement felt. Yes, militancy was recently demonstrated by both communist parties as a token of trailing behind the Indira Government on the eve of bank nationalisation. But follow-up for worker participation in the management of the banking industry was never organised though the CPI controls the banking union. Truth is hard to face, said one of the participants in the university group discussion.

What is the lesson to be drawn from the murder of Desai? There will be other murders so long as State power remains with the Congress, R or O. The Naik Government will

use the Shiv Sena against the communist movement in view of the elections of 1972. At the moment we await the arrival of militant cadres in the political field. But in the 'larger' interest of capturing political power

by peaceful means at the Centre as partners in a coalition government headed by Indira Gandhi, the real murderer, class enemy, may conveniently be forgotten by most left parties till 1972.

view had gone so far as to append a regular monthly Ecological Supplement. Songs sung in the Ecology teach-ins were in the rock tradition. The popular 'Age of Aquarius' from *Hair* was sung in one teach-in in Ann Arbor; the other hit—'rain-drops falling on the head' from *Easy Rider* was sung in chorus in another teach-in.

Letter From America

Earth Day

ROBI CHAKRAVORTI

COME to think of it now—April 22 was Earth Day in America! About two thousand communities across the country then celebrated the first Earth Day with teach-ins, lectures, music, symbolic demonstrations and clean-up of litters from streets—all focusing on the latest issue on which the people were getting worked up, namely, the threat to the environment. All that seems a long way off, after what happened following the U.S. entry into Cambodia.

The movement had grown in the past few months, almost like a genie from a lamp which seemed to have been rubbed by unseen hands. The growth of the movement was weird in its suddenness. Some political observers compared the movement with the civil rights movement of the early sixties and the anti-Vietnam war protest movement that followed it. But few have found a pattern in the succession—the rise and fall of a movement and its quick replacement by another.

Barely forty-eight hours before Earth Day, a deflated Sam Brown, who had come to national prominence in October last year with his successful coordination of the nationwide Moratorium movement, announced the closing of the headquarters of the movement in Washington D.C. In between the two events came Nixon's nationally televised broadcast announcing possible withdrawal of 150,000 additional troops from Vietnam in the next twelve months.

All these three events were inter-

related. The anti-war protest movement seemed to have died just as its predecessor the civil rights movement had—without a funeral sermon. Nixon had, meanwhile, been successful in defusing—as a commentator wrote—anti-war sentiments in the country. This he had done partly by throwing sops of phased troop withdrawals and partly by appealing to the so-called Silent Majority, which is a sloganeering term to describe the core of the American heartland which is conservative, racist, nervy and unenlightened.

Many students who were involved in were certainly involved in the ecological movement; a handful of them, seasoned veterans of freedom and peace marches, had splintered off into radical groups, indulging in what one of their leaders, Abbie Hoffman, called, 'Revolution for the hell of it' (the title of his book). They were throwing bombs, burning buildings, uttering obscenities in print and before microphones.

The ecology movement appeared in the midst of what was described as the debris of two massive movements, the civil rights and anti-Vietnam, and the decadence of radical politics. The form of this movement, however, was the same as that of the earlier movements. (To be fair, the civil rights movement was better organized, had more muscle to it). As a writer pointed out, there were ecological jokes, ecological bookstores, advertisements, seminars, teach-ins, buttons. Bookstores were receiving and displaying ecological books in tons. The *Saturday Re-*

It was all very colourful to behold. Girls with long hair, boys ditto, slightly-bored looks on their face, sat, listened and applauded and went off, perhaps, to smoke marijuana. Congressmen, professors, student leaders took the podium and harangued the audience. Only five years ago, I had seen the same scene on the campuses of Harvard and the University of Michigan. The issue then was Vietnam.

The issue of ecology is all-embracing and by the same measure, somewhat abstract, whereas the issues raised by the Civil Rights movement and anti-war protests are more specific and concrete. The issues these movements have raised all relate to the American social, economic and political system; but they are seen in isolated bits while the system goes merrily on, rolling with occasional misdirected punches.

Another interesting point is that the two earlier movements were caused by factors originating outside the system: the Negroes have lived on the periphery of what Galbraith called the Affluent Society and, of course, Vietnam is about halfway around the globe. The crises generated outside the system shook it up and showed up the weaknesses of its basic premises.

The movement against the threat to environment should sooner or later raise widespread questions about the system itself.

There is no question about the fact that American ingenuity in technology is tremendous, and that some of the threats to the environment—such as smoke from automobiles' exhaust—can be controlled through technology. There is already a suggestion, which is technologically feasible, for converting a ton of garbage

(which is per capita per year) into a barrel of oil.

But as you probe deeply into the problem of pollution of the air, water and the earth in America, you will find, as the Bengali saying goes, that as you pull harder at the ear, the head must also be pulled. Mere technological solutions are not enough; changes in the system are also in order.

Deeper Questions

I was somewhat surprised to note that so early in the ecology movement, deeper questions on the American social system were being raised—not by radicals, but by some writers and intellectuals who are somewhere in the centre of the spectrum. Walter Cronkite of the CBS raised the question in a muted way. Can we solve the problem merely through 'more of the same', namely technology or a change in our values? This, he declared in a broad-

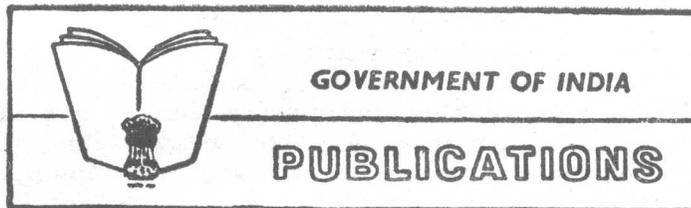
cast, is going to be the question of the seventies.

John Fisher, who has been writing 'The Easy Chair' column in the *Harper's* magazine for fourteen years, recently confessed in a closely-reasoned piece that without altering three American values, it is impossible to find a solution of the pollution problem. These three values are: emphasis on economic growth for its own sake, belief in technology and faith in private property. Paul Ehrlich of Stanford University, who has been in the forefront of the campaign for population control, was interviewed on the popular Johnny Carson show. He pleaded for population control in the U.S., pointing out that the population problem is more serious here than in India in terms of the threat to environment because an American disposes of many times more wastage than an Indian. Carson, then, casually intervened, asking, "What

will then happen to our consumer market? Will it not shrink?" Ehrlich acidly replied, "Unplanned growth is like cancer." The point was not pursued.

Robert Heilbroner in an article in the *New York Review of Books* has put the question in the language of political economy. The issue of the threat to environment, he reasoned, is related to the problem of bringing economic activities into a sustainable relationship with the resource capabilities and waste absorption properties, and all these in their turn, are related to a fundamental problem. "This problem," Heilbroner wrote, "can be stated as a crucial test as to who was right—John Stuart Mill or Karl Marx."

Since the problem raised by Heilbroner is crucial and far-reaching, it is worth pondering on. He wrote: "Mill maintained in his famous *Principles*, that the terminus of capitalist evolution would be a stationary



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On Lenin—VIII

MONITOR

state. In effect, he prophesied the transformation of capitalism, in an environment of abundance, into a balanced economy, in which the capitalist both as the generator of change and as the main claimant of surplus generated by change, would in effect undergo a painless euthanasia."

"The Marxian view is of course quite the opposite. The very essence of capitalism, according to Marx, is expansion—which is to say, the capitalist, as a historical 'type', finds his *raison d'être* in the insatiable search for additional money-wealth gained through the constant growth of the economic system. The idea of a 'stationary' capitalism is, in Marxian eyes, a contradiction in terms, on a logical par with a democratic aristocracy or an industrial feudalism."

The issue is that of political economy, not of econometrics, individual behaviour, or technology. The American society has reached a stage where it can be choked by its own irrational system of production matched by its equally irrational belief in unplanned economy and technology. The irony of the situation is evident in the recent campaign by the famous economist Kenneth Boulding who labels the Gross National Product as the Gross National Cost!

The ecological movement therefore will pose serious questions about the American system itself. Since it is a broad movement which touches the entire system, it is also easier to confuse it, divert it and splinter it off into different directions. The chances are that it will run its course and another movement will rise, like the crest of a wave, and then, again, crash on the shifting sand of general confusion.

For FRONTIER contact

S. P. CHATTERJEE

Statesman Office

Steel Market

Durgapur-4

IF the central question of revolutionary politics is the question of state power it follows that the proletariat must prepare itself in all seriousness for the conquest of state power from the bourgeoisie. The proletariat can capture state power only under a well-organized revolutionary party steered in battle. It is not the task of a loose, ill-organized, amateurish body conceived by Lenin's opponents. This amateurishness and primitivism in politics, Lenin combated with all his might. This 'primitivism' which undermines "the establishment of an organization of revolutionaries capable of maintaining the energy, the stability and continuity of the political struggle" would result in the warriors marching to battle "with astonishingly primitive equipment and training like peasants from the plough, snatching up a club".¹ The type of revolutionary organization conceived by Lenin, on the other hand, would alone have the flexibility indispensable for a battle, that is, the ability to adapt itself immediately to the most varied and changing conditions in course of the battle, the ability "on the one hand to avoid any open battle against an overwhelming enemy when the enemy has concentrated all its forces at one spot, and yet, on the other, to take advantage of his unwieldiness and to attack him when and where he least expects it".² It would indeed be a grave error for the revolutionaries to count only on explosions, only on street battles or only on day-to-day 'peaceful' struggles of the proletariat. "The revolution must not by any means be regarded as a single act but as a series of more or less powerful outbreaks rapidly alternating with more or less intense calm. For that

reason the principal content of the activity of our party organization, the focus of this activity should be to carry on work that is possible and necessary in the period of the most powerful outbreaks as well as in the period of complete calm".³

Thus the class struggle manifests itself as a protracted war comprising 'peaceful' phases—that is, where violence is 'hidden'—and non-peaceful phases—that is, where violence is 'open'. Corresponding to the specific phases of the struggle the proletariat and its allies, headed by its revolutionary vanguard, must be good at utilizing the different forms of the movement (as was shown by the history of Bolshevism)—"legal and illegal, peaceful and stormy, underground and open, circles and mass movements, parliamentary and terrorist".⁴ The question of the form of the movement and of the method of struggle is never an absolute and abstract question for the Marxists. This question is concrete and must be set in a specific political situation. For instance, the revolutionaries will participate in or boycott the bourgeois parliament depending on the specific political situation prevailing in a country. In general, during the period of the rising tide of the revolution, when extra-parliamentary, revolutionary mass action grows with exceptional rapidity, when not a single section of the proletariat and its allies can support the existing government, when the revolutionary proletariat acquires influence over the broad, backward masses by means of strike struggle and the agrarian movement, boycott of parliament is an absolutely correct and justified method of struggle.⁵ This was in fact

¹ *What is to be done?* Chapter IV, Section A. Lenin's emphasis.

² *Where To Begin* (1901) in *Collected Works*, vol. 5, p. 23.

³ *What is to be done?* Chapter IV, Section C.

⁴ *Left-wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder* (1920), ch. II.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ch. VII.

proved by the Bolsheviks in 1905. But when the revolutionary movement is at a low ebb, when a very rapid rise of the revolutionary tide and its conversion into an uprising cannot be expected, boycott of parliament is a mistake. That is why "the boycott of the 'Duma' by the Bolsheviks in 1906 was a mistake, although a small and easily remediable one".⁶

When the Marxists say that "it is obligatory to combine legal and illegal forms of struggle, that it is obligatory to participate even in a most reactionary parliament"⁷ (depending on the specific political situation) they do not, for a single moment, forget the class character of law and parliament in a capitalist régime. They do not, particularly, forget that the function of the parliament in such a régime is to "decide periodically which member of the ruling class is to represent and repress the people in parliament" (Marx). They know that simply by capturing the majority of seats in the bourgeois parliament—which is not at all certain, provided they are really revolutionary—they have not captured state power on behalf of the proletariat (the state power of the bourgeoisie whose essence lies in bureaucracy, police and the standing army, has got to be smashed as we have seen earlier). Even when they enter parliament they behave like Karl Liebknecht, the only real Marxist deputy in the German Parliament in 1914 having the courage and revolutionary honesty to vote *alone* against the war credits in contrast with the rest of the Social Democrats, in fact the social chauvinists and lackeys of German imperialism, who supported the imperialist war under the slogan of the "defence of the fatherland". They behave like the Bolshevik deputies in the Duma who, in contrast with the Mensheviks, did not cease for a single moment, under the conditions of extreme repression, to utilize the Duma for a vigorous denunciation

of the reactionary autocracy and to put forth the class view of the proletariat on every question. It must, however, be added that there are Marxists who under the terrifically revolutionary slogan that "the parliament is a weapon of class struggle" exactly do the opposite *in practice* and themselves become integrated with the bourgeois regime. "There are different kinds of parliamentarism. Some utilise the parliamentary arena in order to win the favour of their government... others utilize parliamentarism in order to remain revolutionary to the end, to perform their duty as Socialists and internationalists even under the most difficult circumstances. The parliamentary activities of some bring them into ministerial seats; the parliamentary activities of others being them to prison, to exile, to penal servitude. Some serve the bourgeoisie, others—the proletariat. Some are social-imperialists. Others are revolutionary Marxists."⁸ (Witness our 'Communists—never mind the difference between the 'Right' and the 'Left' which in practice is a difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee—who participate in parliamentary elections, form ministries in collaboration with the representatives of the exploiting classes, show great 'militancy' in their shadow fights against the 'reactionary' Centre and employ the oppressive bourgeois-landlord state apparatus to crush the revolutionary struggles of the masses in order to continue and thrive in their ministerial offices, all in the name of Leninism exactly in the same way as their predecessors Kautsky and his cohorts, served the imperialist bourgeoisie and betrayed the proletariat in the name of Marxism).

All this boils down to the fundamental truth that in the political struggle which represents a war under all its forms the proletariat must have its *proper strategy and tactics*. Following Stalin's exposition of Leninist principles on this point we can say that strategy is the determination

of the direction of the main blow of the proletariat at a given stage of the revolution, the elaboration of a corresponding plan for the disposition of the revolutionary forces, the fight to carry out this plan throughout the given stage of the revolution. Thus the scale of the strategy is global, historic and its aim is to win the war as a *whole*. Tactics, on the other hand, aim at winning a *particular* engagement or a particular battle corresponding to the concrete circumstances in the given period of rise or decline in the revolution. Tactics are a part of strategy, subordinate to it and serving it. Thus while the strategy remains unchanged during a given stage of the revolution tactics change according to flow or ebb of the movement.⁹

In the beginning the proletariat and its allies, considered as an army, are always weak and its adversaries, the bourgeoisie and its allies, always strong. The exploiting class possesses organization, experience, arms and the State power. But, in the long run, the proletariat with its allies, constituting the immense majority of the population, will win because of its infinite devotion and unlimited self sacrifice as well as consciousness and knowledge, including the consciousness of its own strength and the knowledge of its adversaries, their resources, their objective potentialities, their strategy and tactics imposed by the objective conditions; while the adversaries of the proletariat will never have the full grasp of the resources of the proletariat and its methods of struggle.

It is interesting to note that Lenin avidly read Clausewitz in 1915. [Karl Von Clausewitz (1780-1831) was a German General who drew important lessons from the Napoleonic wars in his celebrated work on war, *Vom Kriege* (*On War*), published posthumously in 1832. Lenin thought very highly of Clausewitz). In Clausewitz Lenin only saw the confirmation of the dialectical law: there

⁶ *Ibid.*, ch. IV.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Socialism and War* (1915), ch. II.

⁹ Stalin—*Foundations of Leninism* (1924), ch. VII.

is neither absolute continuity nor absolute discontinuity in a process. There is a unity between peace and war, offensive and defensive, though there is a profound contradiction between them (as was to be confirmed again by Mao Tse-tung's genius two decades later). As regards the first Clausewitz's famous statement that "war is the continuation of politics by other (i.e. violent) means"¹⁰ is true not only between states, but also between the contending classes. As regards the second, defensive and offensive are but the two different phases of the same process; just as offensive consolidates the defensive and carries the battle forward, similarly it is the defensive that prepares the offensive and the final victory. The same relation holds between advance and retreat in a battle. "The revolutionary parties must complete their education. They have learned to attack. Now they have to realize that this knowledge must be supplemented with the knowledge how to retreat properly. Victory is impossible unless they have learned both how to attack and how to retreat properly," wrote Lenin referring to the Bolsheviks who retreated with the least loss to their 'army' during the years of extreme reaction (1907-1910).¹¹

The objective of the class-struggle, for either of the contending classes is exactly similar to the objective of war between states—the destruction of the adversary, that is political destruction as an organized force. The definition of war between the states is also equally applicable to the war between all classes—"war is an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will".¹²

The Marxists never take an uncritical attitude to war. They always try to go beyond all mystification to the class-origins of a war. Unlike the bourgeois pacifists, the Marxists always understand the inevitable connection between wars and the class-

struggles and hold that war cannot be abolished unless classes are abolished and socialism is created. "Only after we have overthrown, finally vanquished, and expropriated the bourgeoisie of the whole world, and not only of one country, will wars become impossible".¹³ Secondly, the Marxists do not condemn all wars but always make a distinction between a just war and an unjust war, between a defensive war and an aggressive war, supporting the first, opposing the second. An unjust war in a class society is a war for the benefit of the exploiters, for maintaining and extending their domination. A just war is, on the other hand, a war for the benefit of the exploited, for destroying the domination of the exploiters. Lenin distinguished three kinds of just war. First, the war of national liberation. "If Morocco were to declare war on France, India on Britain, Persia or China on Russia those would be 'just', 'defensive' wars, irrespective of who attacked first".¹⁴ Secondly, the civil war as "the inevitable continuation, development, and intensification of the class struggle." "To repudiate civil war, or to forget about it, would mean sinking into extreme opportunism and renouncing the socialist revolution".¹⁵ Thirdly, the war waged by a socialist state against imperialist aggression.

All such wars, it goes without saying, must be supported by the revolutionaries.

The bourgeois pacifists and the social opportunists 'forget' that one of the most important facts of capitalist society is that the bourgeoisie is armed against the proletariat. It is sufficient to recall the use of troops against strikers in all capitalist countries. In such a situation to ask the exploited to disarm is nothing but a

gross betrayal of revolutionary principles. "Our slogan must be: the arming of the proletariat for the purpose of vanquishing, expropriating and disarming the bourgeoisie... Only after the proletariat has disarmed the bourgeoisie will it be able, without betraying the world-historical mission, to throw all armaments on the scrap heap; and the proletariat will undoubtedly do this, but only when this condition has been fulfilled, certainly not before".¹⁶

* * *

To the incalculable loss of the international proletariat Lenin died before even he could consolidate the victory of the Socialist Revolution. This is not the place to go into the question of how in the Soviet Union, the land of the first successful Socialist Revolution, revisionism ultimately triumphed in the leading positions of the party and the state. We can only say that the process began long ago and that various factors contributed to it—inability of the Russian proletariat under the Bolsheviks to smash the old state machine in course of the revolution as admitted by Lenin himself;¹⁷ absence of any previous experience for the leaders of the revolution; continuation of the aggressive capitalist encirclement; inability, on the part of Lenin's immediate successors, to apply *dialectically* the principles of democratic centralism in party life and to always distinguish between enemies and friends in course of the fight against the counter-revolutionary forces; over-emphasis on technical efficiency and excessive differentiation in material rewards for work; and above all, the absence of a well-defined mass line in practice ('from the masses to the masses'). The revisionist renegacy of the Soviet leadership later showed itself on a series of fundamental questions—transition to socialism, proletarian dictatorship and the character of the state under

¹³ *War Programme of the Proletarian Revolution* (1916), Section I, our emphasis.

¹⁴ *Socialism and War* (1915), Chapter I, Lenin's emphasis.

¹⁵ *War Programme of the Proletarian Revolution*, Section I.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Sec. II, Lenin's emphasis.

¹⁷ See, e.g., *Five Years of the Russian Revolution and the Prospects of the World Revolution* (1922).

¹⁰ *On War*, BKI, ch. I, Art. 24.

¹¹ *Left-Wing Communism*, chapter III.

¹² Clausewitz—*On War*, Book I, Chapter I, Art. 2. Emphasis in the original.

socialism, attitude to the national liberation movements, war and peace etc.

At the height of German Social Democracy Karl Kautsky, still a Marxist had predicted the shift of revolutionary centre from Germany to Russia. The revolutionary centre has now shifted further to the East. In the contemporary world it is, in fact, Mao Tse-tung who, by his contributions to revolutionary theory and practice, has proved himself, more than any single individual, to be the continuator and successor of Lenin and it is under his leadership that the

Chinese Communist Party, ably assisted by the Vietnamese and other Parties and the revolutionary and national liberation movements throughout the world, is giving the battle royal all along the line against imperialism, social-imperialism and their lackeys. At the same time, as a true disciple of Lenin, Mao, with the Chinese Communist Party under him, is fighting a protracted war against the possible rise and victory of revisionism inside China, which will serve as a beacon light for the revolutionary movements everywhere.

[(Concluded)]

The Left Radical Viewpoint

GAUTAM ADHIKARI

IN a survey conducted among 'Left Radical' students, an ever increasing section of the student community in India, three very popular questions were put forward. And from the answers given, emerged, quite expectedly, a large number of common trends. What follows is an attempt by the author to present these views in one comprehensive whole and answer these questions faithfully on behalf of the students.

Question: What aspects of modern national society and establishment seem unacceptable to the youth? At least one graduate pointed that the way this question was framed betrayed a fundamental misconception about the nature of the students' problem today.

At an earlier state of development of their consciousness viz.—during the freedom movement or immediately thereafter—the students used to believe that piecemeal reform was a significant way of improving society. Today, however, they have seen the futility of this method and are aiming at total social reorganisation through revolution. Once this attitude is arrived at, piecemeal agitation is seen to harm the cause of revolution rather than promote it. The issues continue to be piecemeal

because this is the way by which one can involve the largest number of people and raise the level of their political consciousness. But, as far as the leadership is concerned, the relative nature of this form of agitation is always kept in mind.

It is therefore no longer a matter of satisfying the students by mere piecemeal reforms. When one set of demands are conceded the next set of demands will be automatically raised and raised in a way that breaks down the power of the old order and strengthens the cause of revolution.

The proper way to phrase the question therefore would be to ask which features of society lead students—at the first stage of the development of their political consciousness—to become critical of society?

Logically, these fall into three categories. *First*, the insufficient per capita investment on students—the search for quantity at the cost of quality in educational expansion which has been going on now for quite some time. This leads to—

- (a) a high student-teacher ratio
- (b) insufficiency of books and reading material
- (c) insufficiency of scientific equipment

- (d) the poor quality of recreational facilities etc. etc.

The second major field is the irrelevance of the training to the students' fields of interest. For example, the courses continue to be built on 19th century British university models and information about interesting things like the Black Power movement in U.S.A. or the Cultural Revolution in China has to be collected outside the classroom. "In fact, this educational system stinks of colonialism", commented one surly young man. "A prescribed nursery text-book published from Bombay still contains this old 'Baba Sahibs' favourite: 'Eena meena mo, catch a nigger by his toe, if he squeals let him go...!' As long as students cannot relate what is being taught to what they want to know, dissatisfaction is bound to remain—particularly among high quality students.

The third problem is the low rate of return on educational expenses. The amount of time and money spent on the student community entitles them on an average to much higher emoluments and better employment opportunities than they receive. As each student nears the end of his educational career this fact can no longer be hidden from him. Therefore he feels that the time or money he and his family have spent on education have been wasted and that he has been socially betrayed.

Although the student typically starts from these problems he soon finds that they are not separately remediable and that short of a total reversal of the social order, they cannot be other than what they are. He finds, as one revolutionary pointed out, for example that "underemployment is a result of monopoly capitalism". He finds that more money for the students will not necessarily mean a better deal. He realises with dismay that the present system of education is not accidentally slanted against modern topics but deliberately so.

Alternatives

When he has reached this stage there are only two alternatives left

open for him. The student either withdraws completely from social criticism or he becomes a revolutionary.

Question: What changes do the students desire in the national culture and Establishment?

As regards this question it is important to separate the field of culture from the field of Establishment. The bulk of Indian students who are critical of the Establishment are not necessarily critical of Indian culture at all. As a matter of fact, those who have advanced far enough to see the absolute necessity for a cultural revolution realise that at this stage it is much more important to attack imperialistic excrescences like "Yankee" culture rather than denigrate the central body of Indian culture itself.

Of course the struggle against the Establishment involves a struggle against what might be called 'pseudo' Indian culture. The typical form of this is seen in the maxim "chhatranam—adhyang—tapah" which means that learning is the job of students. The important question which is raised in the passage of the Mundapa Upanishad where this particular dictum appears is—"Learning what? And the answer given is surprisingly modern. 'Learn that which helps you to live.' Divorced from this context it is a highly reactionary dictum and it is used as such. But in its proper context and properly utilised this means only that students should be serious about learning things which help them, which is by no means a reactionary attitude.

A similar attempt is made when modern teachers try to pose as gurus of old. When dictums like these are advanced it is certainly overlooked that (a) a guru was supposed to feed the students who came to him; (b) was supposed to look after all aspects of their personal welfare; and (c) receive the "gurudakshina" only when the student was satisfied that he had learned something. The traditional Indian guru, therefore, naturally commanded respect. He did not have to refer to tradition for that.

The point at issue is simply how Indian culture is being used. Is it used to make the student obedient to the Establishment? Or is it used as a critique of the Establishment? The attitude of the student must be governed by this.

Caste and untouchability probably represent the only points at which the modern student is opposed to Indian culture. Connected to this are also the priestly excesses of Indian religions which involve unjustified expenses of time and money and more critically the misdirection of energy. But the way to protest against these is positively to emphasize the materialistic point of view and not necessarily to take out 'anti-cow protection' marches.

What the progressive student will emphasize is, the folk content of Indian culture, the materialistic and socially critical schools of philosophy and the high art form that constitute the permanent Indian contribution to human culture. The rest he would replace by thought and behaviour more suited to the modern environment—even if this means the replacing of Gandhi and his non-violence with the thoughts of Mao Tse-tung and Lenin!

Having disposed of the question of culture we can now turn to the Establishment. The first change the student wants is that the Establishment cease to function as a self-regenerating elite. This, as he reads it, involves social revolution. The next thing he wants to change is that the Establishment should cease functioning as a puppet of imperialistic forces. This again involves social revolution. Finally he wants that the Establishment should stop functioning as an anti-people force. This too involves social revolution. In short all that the student wants is to depose the present establishment by a gigantic social upheaval. In doing so he is ready to combat all those aspects of Indian culture which function as tools of the establishment and try to foster all the socially progressive features of Indian tradition.

Question: What is the conceptual framework at the back of youth resurgence today?

By youth resurgence we can mean either a metaphysical entity in which youth as an idea is divorced from its material environment and counterposed as an equally metaphysical older generation. As against this a correct materialistic viewpoint looks upon the "youth predicament in India" (by which is meant the predicament of the bourgeois youth in India) as one of the aspects of the total social predicament which is the class-struggle.

Class Struggle

Seen in this context youth activities i.e., student activities, within the universities take on the character of a small scale replica of class struggle. Mao Tse-tung says that in society a class struggle is endlessly reproduced as images in a hall of mirrors (the revolutionary peasant movement in Yen-an a pamphlet addressed to the students of Peking University). But all the mirrors are not perfect mirrors—some are biased. The university environment is biased because although it contains all class elements it contains petit-bourgeois element in bulk.

In the total struggle within society as a whole the bourgeois intellectual (which is the historical role of the students) is emancipating himself from elite allegiance and going over to mass allegiance. How is this reproduced in the University? In this field elite stands for authority. If therefore the students have to stand against the elite they must also stand uncompromisingly against authority. But what about siding with the masses? This cannot merely take the form of giving union support to the economic demands of fourth-class employees of the University (although this is indispensable tactically).

Therefore the field of student activity must extend beyond the university. The student must progress from the class room to the streets. Thus we have identified two basic principles of the youth movement.

- (a) A struggle against university and
(b) the joining up of students in political activities.

What about the role of the faculty? These are petit-bourgeois intellectuals par excellence. Therefore in the context of the total struggle they will have to choose sides. If they become reactionaries, they will have to side with the elite, that is, the authorities. By doing so they betray their intellectual consciousness and become incapable of any further intellectual work. The other group of progressive intellectuals side with the students. Thus they become the victims of the counter-revolutionary activities of the authority. It becomes the duty of the students therefore to protect such elements whenever and wherever possible. But this is not the main point at issue. The main point is that the faculty becomes split within itself and this leads to a catastrophic decline in the quality of teaching and intellectual performance.

Let us now draw the threads of the argument together. Within the universities the class struggle takes the form of an alliance of progressive students and progressive teachers against the forces of reaction as a whole. This means not only reaction within but also outside the university. As a by-product of this we have indiscipline (the anti-authority struggle), the "intrusion" of politics into student activities (extension of student activities to politics) and disunity within the faculty (i.e., the polarisation of petit-bourgeois intellectuals). From the reactionary point of view these are great problems. From the students, point of view these are the really encouraging features of the situation. What are problems to them are totally different.

These are—that so many students are still not indisciplined, i.e., they meekly obey authority, that so many students are yet apolitical which means that they are objectively (not necessarily subjectively) reactionary, that so few of the faculty are really siding with the students and so many are turning into reactionaries. But

as the struggle intensifies in the total sphere all these temporary trends will pass as they are in fact passing. At that point where no society as a whole takes the dialectic leap the

university environment will inevitably develop the conditions for a dialectic leap. Preparing for that great leap forward is the fundamental framework of student activity today.

Calcutta Diary

GYAN KAPUR

WHAT actually inspired the West Bengal Governor, Mr S. S. Dhavan, to throw a stone into the hornet's nest of the legal fraternity is difficult to guess. But he could not have been in any doubt about what their reaction would be, being one of them. The expected has happened and to mix metaphors a bit, the lawyers are up in arms against the Governor. Whether Mr Dhavan himself practised what he preached to them is a different matter altogether. But his home truths have really gone home and rankled very hard. The law may or may not be an ass. But so far as our country is concerned it can safely be said that it is a giant spider and whoever chances to fall into its web is lucky to get out without being sucked dry. Not for nothing is it said that the worst thing you can wish your enemy is that he should get involved in a law suit.

In a previous Diary I had written about theft of certain of my belongings from the locked flat in broad daylight. This had an aftermath. Some of the things were found by the police but it was the burglar himself who showed them where he had taken them from. All the previous reports to the police station and visits by them, it seemed, had gone underground. However, to come to the point I wish to make, it was quite a job to get back my things recovered by the police. First of all it seemed I had to make an application to a Magistrate for which it was absolutely necessary that I should take the help of a lawyer. A kind gentleman was found who very graciously agreed to stand for me on two days as required

by the law and for this he took only Rs 20, informing me in the process that only because of the circumstances he was taking such a ridiculously low sum. Thereafter I had to execute a bond to produce my own things as and when the law might demand and for this again another 15 or 20 rupees were required, most of which went by way of greasing the palms of court staff and that too before I even knew for what I was paying. Out of the entire amount spent only one rupee went to the Government and about four rupees to the lawyer's clerk and typist.

What struck me at the time was that the actual expense should not have been more than a fiver. Another thing. The whole system was both corrupt and bent on propping up the vested interests of the lawyers. Actually I observed that the lawyer knew nothing about the whole matter. While writing the application, the lawyer had to refer again and again to the clerk who apparently knew the whole thing from A to Z. And when the Magistrate finally passed the order for restoration of my property, I had again to answer questions put to the lawyer. But the law required his presence.

Apart from all this, the whole process took about seven days which I was in the happy position of being able to spare, being on leave. No wonder when I finally took delivery of my things from Lal Bazar I found the godown of recovered goods chock-full. Apparently many had been unable to find the time to complete the process I had done having nothing else to do.

West Bengal seems to have become the happy hunting ground of police of various types and classes. All, however, is not plain sailing. Leaving aside occasional noises from sundry leftists against CRP and such units and the Naxalites who would prefer to send all of them to hell in one bunch, nobody seems to mind whether a few more units are added. Now perhaps the law of diminishing returns has started working against further increases in police forces. Or may be it is the Beaver Principle. For those not much interested in natural history, these industrious animals who spend much of their time felling trees and building dams are in general great believers in living and working together. But once their population crosses a certain level beyond which the land and water around them cannot support them, they become firm believers in genocide. They lash out at each other until the beaver population is brought within manageable limits

either by murder or by an exodus.

The police forces in West Bengal seem to have reached this dangerous stage of overpopulation as compared to the heads to be broken. Otherwise it is difficult to believe the report that Calcutta Police have objected to the proposal by the Calcutta Port Commissioners' plan to induct the Central Industrial Security Force in the port area.

The Calcutta Police are also said to have made a curious statement. According to the report, the Calcutta Police dispute the Port Commissioners' assertion that cases of pilferage increase whenever the police are withdrawn from the port area for getting tough elsewhere. The Calcutta Police on the other hand feel that cases of pilferage have been going down. Has all this any connection with the popular belief, so difficult to prove, that organised pilferage, thefts and burglaries, and crime in general only take place with the benevolent patronage of the police?

While on the subject I cannot resist the temptation to reproduce in toto a letter written by Mr N. Mirza to the Calcutta Statesman. Here it is:

Sir,—The proliferation of police forces in West Bengal could be one of the causes of the law and order problem; co-ordinating their activities must be a herculean task. There are the Calcutta (Metropolitan) Police, Calcutta Armed Police, West Bengal Police, Railway Protection Force, Government Railway Police, Central Industrial Security Force, Central Reserve Police, Eastern Frontier Rifles, Border Security Force, West Bengal Volunteer Force and Calcutta Port Police, not to mention the watch and ward staff maintained by different government establishments. The confusion can only benefit lawbreakers.—Yours etc.

Tailpiece: One surgeon to another, "What did you operate him for?" "Three hundred rupees." "No, no, I mean what did he have?" "He had ready cash."

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Keynesism Today—II

SAMIR DAS GUPTA

PERHAPS what really distinguished Keynes was his ingenious way of defending capitalism by purging it of what he called its "transitory and unnecessary muddle". For this purpose, Keynes (a) emphasised the vital role of the government for maintaining a desired level of aggregate demand, (b) pulled out the twin rabbits from his hat—the multiplier and (by implication) the accelerator—to buttress his strategy, and (c) advocated redistribution of income from people who would spend less to those who would spend more. But here also there were borrowed ideas all around, a fact which must not be overlooked. Like Malthus, Keynes advocated unproductive consumption as a means of avoiding overproduction, or underconsumption and a depression from a glutted market. Malthus was, of course, aware that the extent to which unproductive consumers should be fostered depended on the power to produce and the willingness of capitalists to spend. "An ingenious people cannot only support a considerable proportion of unproductive consumers without injury, but may absolutely require such a body of demanders, in order to give effect to their powers of production." Many years later Keynes was talking of employing men to dig holes in the ground and then asking them to fill them up again. Essentially, it is the old Malthusian wine put in a new bottle. Certainly there is no question of plagiarism in all this. But apart from some wonderful and technical looking decorations around this basic idea and the useful reference to secondary, tertiary and subsequent effects of an initial wasteful spending, there seems to be precious little which is new about the 'New Economics'. Indeed, Malthus was 'modern' enough even to suggest that "if the depression is bad enough, it is desirable that these wasteful expenditures

be funneled into activities that create no saleable product. It must not enhance supply or hurl additional goods upon a market which already is suffering from a glut. It is well to build roads, libraries, and other public works".

The above quotation indicates, furthermore, that there is nothing in Malthus's theoretical constructs which precludes large-scale, active government intervention in so-called capitalist systems. The other prop to the theory of government intervention, which also accounts for the Keynesian methodological shift from micro-to macro-economics, is the well known 'fallacy of composition'. But, on this point again, having read Lauderdale recently, one discovers little that is new or novel in what Keynes has written on the subject. One could thus possibly conclude that Keynes had a rare genius for borrowing, selecting, arranging and synthesising other people's ideas. Indeed, Professor Leijonhufvud does argue: "A sampling of the debates on policy in the thirties shows that Keynes, although certainly a most prominent participant, was very far from alone either in opposing general wage-cuts and budget balancing or in pressing for budget deficits and public works".

An interesting and controversial point which Leckachman tries to make is that the Keynesian techniques are neutral insofar as their political implications are concerned. The techniques, he argues, are "capable of distributing national income either more or less equitably, and increasing or decreasing the importance of the public sector of the economy. Keynes's personal history and the early affiliation of liberals and radicals with the Keynesian doctrine have obscured this vital point". However, the above observation—obviously referring to the theoretical symmetry of the Keynesian system—does less than justice to whatever

progressive bias Keynes genuinely held. Perhaps, Keynes's great populariser, Alvin Hansen (and such arch conservatives as Haberler) have made too much of the simple arithmetic of the Keynesian system, which, as such, suggests, for example, that a tax-cut programme is equivalent to a public works programme. But the assertion of neutrality is a rather tricky proposition and had better be done without an implied approval of the master himself.

Champion of Capitalism

Of course, as has already been noted, Keynes was an ardent champion of capitalism and hence could not possibly care less about what his theory meant for the working class *per se*, which he dismissed as 'the boorish proletariat'. Nor was he concerned, for example, about the restrictive forces of monopoly in the system, so that he had no qualms about writing that "when nine million men are employed out of ten million willing and able to work, there is no evidence that the labour of these nine million men is misdirected". Nevertheless, one cannot help feeling that he had a certain enlightened delight in that his search for the "outstanding fault of the economic system in which we live" led him to the discovery of an "arbitrary and inequitable distribution of wealth and incomes" and enabled him to explode the myth that the prosperity of industrial capitalism depended largely "on the savings of the rich out of their superfluity". He brought his entire theoretical apparatus to bear on his proposition that "in contemporary conditions the growth of wealth, so far from being dependent on the abstinence of the rich, as is commonly supposed, is more likely to be impeded by it", and thus it is only logical that "one of the chief justifications of great social inequality of wealth" be removed. The Keynesian non-neutrality is here clear enough, and to belittle its importance is not the same thing as, for example, claiming (occasionally on valid grounds) that the poor do not have a signifi-

cantly higher marginal propensity to consume compared with the rich and that, therefore, a Keynesian redistribution strategy may fail to bolster aggregate spending.

The alleged neutrality of Keynes between tax-cut and public works programmes is equally dubious. Since a lot has already been written by various authors on the greater fiscal efficacy of a public expenditure programme compared with an equivalent tax-cut programme, one could simply ask Professor Leckachman to produce more persuasive arguments, in favour of his contention. Unfortunately, empirical evidence is either inadequate or calls for sophisticated processing before being used for a test of the given hypothesis. Again, there is no point looking at the contemporary American scene. True, both tax-cut and public expenditure have been featured prominently there on the very Keynesian argument that they would take up the slack in the economy. In actuality, however, American public expenditure *à la* Vietnam has done lamentably little to curb unemployment and price increases at home, and the programme of fuller capacity-utilisation through regressive tax-cut policies has been associated with a boom that mainly benefits the rich. Keynes could hardly have approved of such 'Keynesian' policies in the first place, let alone the question of his neutrality between them. To label otherwise grandiose public expenditure programmes which substitute wars for slum clearance and other urgent welfare measures as Keynesian is to undermine the cultural and social standards which Keynes represented and shorn of which his economics would certainly turn into a bunch of neutral, if not monstrous, equations.

Refreshingly enough, however, Leckachman, like Galbraith, is not unaware of the widespread cultural and social abuses that are currently being made of Keynesism. That it is dangerous, for example, to believe or work on the assumption that stable growth is all we need, regardless of how the social output is used or whether people are in a position to

maintain a reasonable balance between automobile fans and Bach recitals, is well emphasised by him. The growing tendency on the part of opulent societies to equate happiness with the capacity to consume goods and services obtainable on the mass market is aptly described by him as 'Commercial Keynesism'. Although he does not go beyond where Galbraith left the subject in his celebrated book, Leckachman's disapproval of this surging wave of commodity fetishism and its inherent cynicism would have the blessings of the greatest apologist of modern industrial capitalism.

For was it not Keynes again who, in an almost prophetic vein, once wrote: 'It will be those peoples who can keep alive, and cultivate into fuller perfection, the art of life itself, and do not sell themselves for the means of life, who will be able to enjoy the abundance when it comes?' Lesser economists of the present generation might sneer at such naive 'value judgments' only at their own peril.

Book Review

RAJASTHAN AND SUKHADIA

"YOU should understand that Pandit Hiralal Shastri as premier is not responsible to the Provincial Congress, which cannot appropriate to itself the functions of the legislature. He owes his premiership not to his election as leader or the mandate of the PCC but to my choice of leadership..." Thus, read a telegram dated June 17, 1949 from Sardar Patel, the then Deputy Prime Minister at the Centre, to Rajasthan PCC leaders.

Much has changed in the balance of power in Centre-States relations even within the Congress party since 1949. In the mid-sixties Mr Morarji Desai had to protest against the domination of 'provincial satraps' in the process of selecting the leader at the Centre. Today, the Chief Ministers not only enjoy independent power within their domain but also a strong voice in the composition of the

leadership at the national level. Mr Mohan Lal Sukhadia is one of the powerful State bosses, and as a Chief Minister since November, 1954, is the seniormost in the College of Congress Cardinals. He played a very important role during the 1969 split in the Congress by siding with the Indira wing, leaving his old Syndicate friends. But it is open to doubt whether this courageous decision was a matter of independent choice.

Many observers believe that Mr Sukhadia enjoyed after 1967 a position similar to that of Pandit Hiralal Shastri in 1949 vis-a-vis the Centre. His heart was with his friends like Atulya Ghosh and Morarji Desai, but his slender majority in the State legislature and the empty coffers of the State Treasury gave him little freedom to ignore the Prime Minister and the powerful Union Home Minister. A large number of his followers in the State Cabinet and legislature, tired of his bossism and narrow vision, were keen to exploit the opportunity that "conscience" gave them to unseat him. Sensing this and also the interest of intimate patron-sets, Mr Sukhadia had no option but side with Mrs Gandhi.

The Congress in Rajasthan is not a nationalist movement turned into a political party, as it was in the former British Indian provinces. It had no tradition of a national movement behind it. The Praja Mandal in Rajasthan was limited. Thus the Congress came into being only with a view to fighting the feudal system, particularly for the grant of civil rights and only during the post-independence period it broadened its base. In doing so it incorporated even the feudal elite. It did not rally mass support.

According to Dr Kamal's thesis,* "compromise became the idiom of the Congress Party. On the basis of its functioning in Rajasthan, it may be described as a centrist party". This second point may not be palatable to the Indian Left Establish-

*Party Politics in an Indian State. By K. L. Kamal. S. Chand & Co. 1969. Rs 25.

ment to whom both Charan Singh and Sukhadia are leftists not because of their own ideas and programmes but because of those of their opponents.

One of the short-term effects of universal adult suffrage in developing societies is to strengthen caste and/or tribe. No explanation of provincial politics in any part of India is possible without caste. The Jat-Rajput tension was the chief characteristic of Rajasthan politics but the Janata-BKD party of 1966-67 posed a serious challenge to this and the ad hoc compromises of the Sukhadia faction. Fortunately for Sukhadia, Raja Harishchandra's untimely demise indirectly helped the modernisation of politics in Rajasthan.

Dr Kamal has provided an analytical and chronological study of the three principal parties of Rajasthan—Congress, Jana Sangh (the RSS) and the Swatantra. The four chapters on the Congress provide the basic material of the story of contemporary Rajasthan politics. The excellent documentation and presentation will be appreciated by all political scientists and chroniclers. The traditional order of the Princes and Jajirdars in Rajasthan became politicised. Competition in politics tended to transform the mode of political behaviour of the old elite. Despite the representative institutions and democratisation, the feudal elite continues to remain effective in the arid and semi-arid areas of Rajasthan. Dr Kamal's study has brought out this with intelligent presentation of data and analysis. The study of all the four general elections in Rajasthan shows that the voter is increasingly becoming more articulate and his growing sensitivity to the economic and political problems shows that caste is only one of the main determining factors in his voting behaviour. According to Dr Kamal, the operation of caste does not prove that the democratic polity is ill-suited to the structure of Indian society. His study reveals that the political behaviour of the people in this part of India is a complex mixture of tradition and modernity.

Summing up his analysis of the State Congress, Dr Kamal states: (a) The Rajasthan Congress was never a cohesive and disciplined body so as to provide articulate leadership to the State; (b) the party had to make compromises with the forces of the old order with a view to remaining in power; (c) the party succumbed to pressure emanating from the opposition as a result of which it could not take bold decisions since it has remained in a precarious majority in all the general elections; (d) the intra-party factions and representation of different interest groups made it difficult for the Congress party to pursue a clear line consistent with its professed ideology. The pressure groups coinciding with communal and economic interests prevented the party from fully implementing the assurances given to the electorate at the time of the polls and made it essentially a centrist party.

Now the issue is whether the all-India Union of State-level Centrist parties can evolve a left-of-the-centre party at the national level.

DIPAK B. R. CHAUDHURI

'Sara Akash'

BY A FILM CRITIC

MOST of the Calcutta film critics who saw *Sara Akash*, the first feature film by Basu Chatterjee, liked it. The story is simple, so simple that doubt persists whether the ardent lovers of Hindi films will be enamoured. But one can be wrong about audience reactions these days. Think of the crowds which enjoyed Mrinal Sen's *Bhuban Shome*. The problem now, after the film has been acclaimed by film critics, is to find a distributor or exhibitor. They are hard nuts to crack. Really, it is a racket wherever one looks in this country.

The story, based on a novel by Rajendra Yadav, is about a student who wants to do something out of the run. He is haunted by the need to dedicate himself to something and thinks that marriage will be a big

handicap. But he marries under family pressure. He takes out his resentment on his educated wife but later, almost inevitably, is reconciled to her.

It is to the credit of Basu Chatterjee that he has not tried to concoct melodramatic situations leading up to the reconciliation. The incidents, the small complications in a not too affluent middle class family in Agra area are drawn in an even tempo, with great attention to detail, and the spectators feel that they have been there before. Even the Hindi film which the student-hero sees along with his boisterous friend and the friend's wife and which awakens tender feelings in him, sort of romanticises him for a while, is typical, i.e. ludicrous. Such verisimilitude in a first feature film betokens talent. Acting is competent and the photography by K. K. Mahajan—Mrinal Sen's find—is excellent.

But then you do feel that the theme is rather flimsy. The idealistic student, for all one knows, may be good material for an RSS chap in the making—his aspirations are too vague. One hopes that Basu Chatterjee will devote his undoubted talents to more solid material.

Letters

After Lenin

Monitor's series on Lenin, on the whole, is a wellrounded presentation of Lenin's main ideas and his great contributions to Marxism. But this picture cannot be complete without studying what became of Lenin's Bolshevik Party in Russia after his death. Mr Bandyopadhyay in his letter (June 6) has tried to work in that direction.

It must be remembered that the Bolsheviks worked under very adverse conditions—the compulsions of a world war, the German occupation etc. In Rosa Luxemburg's opinion these difficulties naturally led to the Bolsheviks' particular socialist policy. But she added that the main danger arose when they tried to make

a virtue of necessity and called their own rule the correct one, under all circumstances.

Her criticism in this regard is definitely valid. By 1924, when Lenin died, no revolution had succeeded in Western Europe. Soviet Russia found herself surrounded by hostile countries and living under the continual threat of war. Stalinism was the natural outcome of this. By using a strongly centralised force, calling for strict obedience to itself, it tried to industrialise a backward Russia.

What most bourgeois historians overlook is that Stalinism worked. It did succeed in the impossible task of making Soviet Russia catch up with Western Europe. The question, however, arises, whether all the various actions and policies of Stalin were necessary for this task. Or did Stalin commit the error of making a virtue of the necessity of living under a military-like rule?

The task of today's Marxist historians is to re-examine the history of the Bolshevik Party, not from a simple anti-Stalinist viewpoint (that, as Mr Bandyopadhyay warns, will be nothing but sheer opportunism and revisionism), but also by not ignoring the many purposeful distortions manifest during the Stalinist period.

Today, Trotsky is an unmentionable villain in communist circle. Books which were published during Lenin's time, are now suppressed in the Soviet Union. I do not intend to hold a brief for personalities like Trotsky and other Bolsheviks who were damned during the Stalinist era. But the fact remains that their roles and ideas have often been misrepresented. It would be interesting therefore to re-examine the part they played in the history of Soviet Russia.

KABIR SEN
Calcutta

Police Excesses

The news that some of those arrested in the current hunt for Naxalites—mostly young boys and girls—

have been subjected to tortures of one kind or another while in police custody is disturbing. Of course, a certain police officer is reported to have denied this and has in fact almost challenged that specific incidents be made public.

I think the Civil Liberties Union, the Association of Democratic Lawyers and the various local bar associations in Calcutta and elsewhere should undertake a serious and immediate probe into these charges by collecting information from persons who have recently been in police custody and are now on bail, in order to check the veracity of these allegations. Political parties, trade unions, kisan organisations, students' and teachers' bodies and other democratic organisations and individuals should extend their assistance to enable the truth to come out.

It must be assured that the authorities claiming to enforce respect for law should convince the public that they are by no means resorting to extra-legal methods. Our ex-judge Governor, ever emphasizing respect for law, should see that the police force now directly under his orders do not commit illegal acts.

We might add that initiative in this matter and protest against excesses by the police and demand that this practice must stop, do not necessarily imply one's approval of policies and activities of the parties or groups subjected to those excesses.

S. NAQVI
Calcutta

Jadavpur

A reader in his letter calls the militant section of the CPI (ML) "Mao-quoting Inu Mitras", Nani Saha of our locality is a militant youth of the CPM who does not know who Marx is. He always uses four letter words, know only how to murder the CPI (ML) cadre and break wagons.

BALARAM DAS
Belgharia

'Naxalite Fireworks'

In his article 'Naxalite Fireworks' (May 30, 1970) Mr Rudra has made some amusing comments. At one point he remarks that during the two months of Governor's Rule in W. Bengal the Naxalites have made Calcutta their playground. He thinks that their "successful encounters" with the police at various places in and around Calcutta entitle them to be compared with a well-disciplined army.

We have a different way of judging the organisational strength of a party. We think that storming educational institutions or government offices to break furniture, set fire to the files and books and to flee from the scene before the arrival of the police do not prove discipline or organisational strength. This sort of mischief can be done by small groups anywhere and everywhere. However, we have got nothing to say about the author's admiration for the Naxalites. What we deplore is that out of antipathy to the CP(M) he has made some comments which cannot be justified by facts. Who told him that the youngest cadres of the CPM belong to the age groups—40 to 45? His accusation about most of the senior members of the CP(M) is that once they took an adventurist line and have now forsaken the path of struggle and resorted to the path of opportunism, careerism and compromise.

The struggles waged by the CP(M)'s different mass fronts during the last six years and its emergence as the biggest political force in Kerala and W. Bengal prove beyond doubt that the party is guided by an able and wise leadership. Even the very recent records of political events will show that its cadres—young and old,—shed their blood everyday to defend the rights of the people. Lastly, cannot we expect from *Frontier* a better appraisal of the CP(M)'s role?

PRABIR K. MUKHERJEE
SUMITA BANERJEE (Miss)
Belgharia

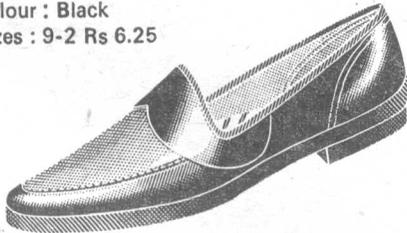
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