

frontier

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ON THE BRINK

ON assumption of office the ruling coalition of West Bengal had announced with much fanfare a seven-point programme in which the pride of place was given to restoration of law and order. Nearly three months later, it is still fiddling with reports of police officers of proven inability to handle the situation. The reports are said to be confidential, but anyone with the slightest knowledge of the ways of the bureaucracy can say without any fear of going wrong that they have asked for substantial expansion of the police force and creation of some new posts at the top to accommodate their favourites. Their suggestion will no doubt be favourably considered by the Ministry which is too busy mending its fences to think of any other problem. In the meantime, the politics of assassination will stabilise in its next higher phase of mass murder and gang warfare, so far associated with head-hunting tribals. Carnage has become so frequent that it moves us not any longer; nor does it the septuagenarian permanent Chief Minister of West Bengal who had resigned in disgust last year because he was heading a barbarous and uncivilised ministry.

West Bengal is already bursting with policemen, indigenous and imported. The developments in Bangladesh and the consequent influx of evacuees have become a handy plea for deployment of security forces of different kinds. The army, which came into the picture to ensure free and fair elections, has not been withdrawn. On the contrary, there is a mounting pressure from the State Government that it should be associated more actively with the maintenance of law and order. The pressure has not been very much effective so far, because the army is not prepared to take more on its plate before it is assured of a bigger say in the conduct of affairs. Intelligence agencies are springing up like mushrooms, and no one can be sure that the next man is not a police informer. Terror grips the people who are caught between the two stools of aimless political violence and mad police frenzy. The ground has been well laid for a police state.

The final act in this process of transition will be to raise armed "resistance groups". Not that such groups do not exist already. Every political party has its own armed bands of volunteers for the ostensible purpose of defending its own men and areas; each party can boast of

a quota of "reformed" criminals, skilled in the art of killing. The reported decision of the Government will legalise the thuggery of the gangs maintained by the partners of the ruling coalition. Somewhat belatedly, the Deputy Chief Minister has said that it was not the intention of the Government to supply arms to the resistance groups. Perhaps he wants it to be believed that the resistance groups, like the "Harekrishna"-chanting Americans who recently held a jamboree on the Maidan, will preach non-violence to their opponents to win them over. It is not necessary for the Government to supply arms openly. The parties and the volunteer bands are competent enough to procure all the arms they require. All that they need is that there would be no governmental intervention in their efforts to arm themselves. This the Government has done, and their last trace of inhibition is removed. To cover up its inefficiency the Ministry is pushing West Bengal to the brink of civil strife. It is deliberately pursuing a policy which can end only in army take-over.

The U.S. In Indochina

The revelations in the *New York Times* about the origins of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam war should not have caused surprise or righteous indignation. That the revelations are based on a top-secret Pentagon study is, of course, something that might convince some of the habitual admirers of the USA of the deception inherent in the system. But the sordid record of successive American administrations in Indochina is so open that the recent revelations should have caused just a ripple. Presidents, whether Democratic or Republican, have been guilty of policies that led to war crimes in Vietnam. Even Kennedy, over whom the liberals used to go lyrical, was no exception. In fact it was he who broadened the U.S. commitment. No wonder. He was also responsible for the Bay of

Pigs attempt to overthrow the Castro regime. Liberals rush in where conservatives fear to tread.

The data so far published in the *New York Times* and two other papers make it clear that the U.S. intervention in Indochina began as early as 1945 when Truman decided to help the French. When the French were battered into defeat, Mr Nixon, then Vice-President, urged the use of tactical nuclear weapons against the Viet Minh. At the Geneva Conference in 1954 the USA tried to see that there was no provision for elections in 1956, because in any such election the charisma of Ho Chi Minh would have resulted in total victory for the forces of unification. It was the sabotage of these elections that in course of time led to total American intervention and genocide. What, however, has irked the U.S. Senators is the way they were hustled into approval of American commitments after the Gulf of Tonkin incidents. The incidents were stage-managed. Long before they were manipulated the plan for a massive bombing of North Vietnam was ready. The famous egghead, Rostow, was convinced that the only way to defeat the communists was to cut off the sources of support and supply. The CIA, it now appears, had better prescience. It was of the opinion that the sources of communist strength in South Vietnam were indigenous and that bombing of the North would not lead to a decision.

It is also revealed that even before Kennedy assumed power, he had been told that the key place in the area was Laos. It is no wonder that the Americans have been waging an expensive and undeclared war in northern Laos for years and that Thai troops are also involved. The invasion of Southern Laos lifted the veil for a time.

The Pentagon study runs to about forty volumes. Extracts from latter parts would be damaging to the earlier phases of Mr Nixon. But the affair might be taken to another plane. The action against the *New York Times*—now lifted—and the injunc-

tion allowing the government to lodge an appeal against resumed publication of the Pentagon study, would continue to occupy the conscience of democrats. More space is being devoted to this aspect than to the disclosures. The debate on the freedom of the press would excite those in this country who swallow a camel of repression at home without batting an eye. Of course, it is the American bourgeois press which has spotlighted some of the horrors of the Indochina war and one can give these papers their due. One cannot be so charitable about the Indian press whose servility to the government in the matter of hiding our own chicanery and violence is well known.

Collaborators

Things have suddenly started to look up for New Delhi. Big powers have begun to appreciate India's concern over the happenings in East Bengal and the aid-givers have consented to give more to her beggar's bowl. The Aid India Consortium—a body of ex-colonists and neo-colonists to keep a watch on their interests in this country—have in their last get-together okayed India's application; a wholesome dole from it is virtually assured. To ordinary men living might have become harsher but for our benevolent donors the Indian situation has certainly been better. Not without reason. Apart from the promptness with which India moved in to tackle the wayward youths in Ceylon, the Indian rulers have also shown their readiness to open up their protected land to their foreign big brothers for use. The other day the Foreign Trade Ministry of the GOI issued a note which promised a freer approach to foreign collaboration "in the case of primarily export-oriented units and in trading activities provided such collaboration is intended exclusively for export." Of course what constituted an 'export-oriented' unit is not specified and is left to the discretion of officials.

Foreign collaboration is nothing new. Theorists of Indian planning have pontificated on it as a means to bridge the gap between the country's economic and technical backwardness. A large number of foreign firms were in fact called in and a huge sum has been frittered away as royalty payments. (Let us ignore the vexing question of profit for the moment.) And here the public sector has been the largest sharer and its show is the poorest. For instance, there is the record of Bharat Heavy Electricals which still runs arrears and depends on imported spares for its upkeep. The performance of other units is as bad.

The question of foreign collaboration has come up once again in connection with scooters and TV. Despite the assertion that local talents will be used when they are available, the Government is reportedly in touch with Piaggio, the makers of Vespa, to set up a unit under its supervision. A number of scooter models locally developed have been rejected out of hand by the authority and the reason put up for it is the poor quality of local designs and the time they will take to improve.

Inscrutable too is the deal in TV. Though CEERI—a Government institute—has succeeded in developing a workable set, the Government is reported to be hobnobbing with Philips to set up a unit to manufacture TV. And the firm's willingness to surrender claims to royalty has been upheld by the officials concerned as an excuse for this magnanimous gesture to this monopolist, though people with a more scheming turn of mind have estimated that Philips' profit harvest out of the venture could be as high as Rs 100 per set.

No doubt expertise is an important thing and its intake in some form or other is not unwelcome, particularly if it comes in the desired spheres and in acceptable terms. But the 'ifs' have remained unanswered and the official reaction to it so far has been naive. Further, one is at a loss to

understand how these rich people's items like TV and scooters could come so high in the priority list and how such a policy could fit into Mrs Gandhi's oft repeated creed of evolving an egalitarian society. But then the problem of solving such contradictions is unlikely to bother the men

in high office and those who holler for such things are running a fool's errand. Obviously New Delhi has bosses in the West to oblige and even if anyone chooses to act differently in moments of forgetfulness there are Eugene Blacks and Mac-Namaras to cure the amnesia.

View from Delhi

Jam Today, Jam Tomorrow

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

IN precise American terminology, one should call this a logjam. India has saddled itself with a refugee problem of frightening dimensions. The refugees are a reality and everything else about Bangladesh peddled in New Delhi is a myth. A diplomatic offensive of sorts has been launched to internationalise the responsibility for the refugees who, we are told, would be sent back in any case. The international community is being told that if it failed to act, India would be forced to act unilaterally. No one knows the purport of the veiled warning and there seems to be a total confusion about the immediate and long-run objectives.

A new line is already being canvassed here: the cost of a limited military action by India will not be higher than the cost of a tenuous peace. The implication is that the only way to reverse the flow of refugees is to embark on some kind of action to restore normality and peace in Bangladesh. Mr Swaran Singh's return to New Delhi is awaited anxiously.

It is not clear yet whether Mrs Gandhi is for a political settlement in Bangladesh or not because she has spoken in so many voices. It is also not clear how long the refugees are to be with us. She seemed to endorse the move for a political settlement when she spoke to newsmen in Silchar. The next day in the Rajya Sabha she flatly contradicted herself

and even said that a political settlement was becoming difficult with every passing day though it was possible at one stage if the international community had intervened. Later, when she met the economic editors, she virtually pleaded for a political settlement. Those who are supposed to know the Prime Minister's mind have been cribbing on the political settlement business. Mrs Gandhi wants a settlement between the military regime and the Awami League which means total independence for Bangladesh while the powers putting pressure on General Yahya Khan want a settlement within the present framework, that is within Pakistan.

India has lost the diplomatic initiative. The super-powers have nearly succeeded in convincing Mrs Gandhi that an independent Bangladesh would not be in India's interest for more than one reason and a political settlement would be the only answer. The superpowers would not approve of any military action by India at this stage or any stage. Simultaneously, they are mounting pressure on General Yahya Khan to find a political settlement.

NOTICE

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Business Manager
Frontier

The Lok Sabha resolution demanding recognition of Bangladesh notwithstanding, nobody here seriously thinks in terms of recognition now. If the Bangladesh government had any locus standi or jurisdiction six million refugees would not have swarmed across our borders. The Mujibnagar myth does not wash. It exists in the datelines for clumsily fabricated news agency stories and nowhere beyond. The demand instead is for military action.

Thinking inside the Government seems divided on action though it is vaguely expected that something dramatic would happen shortly after Mr Swaran Singh's return. The political hawks who want action are thinking in terms of "limited action." But who is to decide the limits of the action? Will it remain a "limited" action and would not escalate? It is generally believed that China might not open a front against India in the event of any military action in East Bengal. If this is the political assessment, the military appreciation of the situation points to the contrary. Ultimately, it will be a political decision and the military leadership would have no say.

The bungling on the diplomatic front is a sordid story. Close on the heels of Mr Swaran Singh, all and sundry have been despatched to the various world capitals. This gimmick was tried in the wake of the 1962 war when even political nondescripts and plain political adventurers found themselves recognised as spokesmen for India and despatched on diplomatic passports. This time, the choice has been fortunately limited to those in government but one cannot help wondering if these worthies are speaking from a brief or just through their hats. For instance, Mr Siddhartha Senkar Ray, the debonair enfant terrible in the pantry Cabinet, said something in Bangkok and one would like to know if that reflects the government's thinking or even the Prime Minister's thinking. The Press Section of the External Affairs Ministry reports Mr Ray as referring to activities of extremists in India.

"He said that India was deeply committed to a policy of not permitting communalism to rear its ugly head. The Eastern part of India had to be saved from falling into the hands of extremists and communalists and this was the task not only for the salvation of India but of the whole of South-East Asia, the Minister said." Perhaps Mr Ray did not know that this kind of talk does not wash any more in South-East Asia where almost every country is seeking a detente with China and the China bogey lacks credibility even in India.

Arab Lobby

It would appear that the Foreign Office has slipped badly. Worse, it has alienated many diplomatic missions in New Delhi. In the earlier stages, it maintained communication on the Bangladesh issue with the two super-powers. At a later stage, France and Germany were included in the list. Even the United Kingdom was slighted and the high-ups in the South Block would not so much as explain India's position to the envoys who wanted to know about it. Alongside, the Arab lobby which intricately interlocks with the Moscow lobby has been openly playing politics. The Ambassador of an Arab country has even been organising the communalist Muslims to make pro-Pakistani pronouncements. Another Arab envoy has been indulging in blatant pro-Pakistani activities. But the Government dare not expel either of them because they enjoy the protection of a super-power and they have a powerful lobby that extends to the ruling party and the CPI. The Arab lobbyist is necessarily a leftist committed to Mrs Gandhi's socialism.

When the Government did not care to explain its position to the envoys accredited to New Delhi, junkets by dilettantes can achieve little. What is the logic, for instance, for the despatch of Muslim ministers to Muslim countries? And an ex-communist to the people's undemocratic countries? By that token, a Catholic (if any) should have gone to Italy and a Protestant to West Germany. It is

a well-known story now that Mrs Gandhi found that her Council of Ministers did not have enough Muslim ministers to go round all the Muslim countries and a Muslim from the Rajasthan Cabinet was seriously thought of for a diplomatic mission.

As someone said, the credibility of New Delhi's predictions has been eroded. All those stories cooked up from the South Block and fobbed off on the nation via a national news agency and All India Radio make comic reading now. The imminent collapse of the Pakistani military machinery and economy has not come off. The parallel government from Mujibnagar is a mythical quantity. Pakistan just will not disintegrate except as a result of external intervention. Emotion is giving place to cold reasoning. No Chief Minister wants to commit himself on the refugees, for nobody believes they would go back in six months or even one year. It is alright for Mrs Gandhi to tell the Rajya Sabha that we will go through hell. But the Chief Ministers are not prepared for all this and hell too. A massive majority in Parliament might make the passage of preventive detention laws easy but Mrs Gandhi certainly did not bargain for the jam the nation is in when she made all those speeches supporting Bangladesh.

A political settlement on the lines envisaged by the super-powers as well as action by India—both are on the cards at the moment. Ultimately, the super-powers might prevail to forestall action. Or even if any action is initiated, there would be super-power intervention to end it. Mrs Gandhi knows that the super-powers will never countenance an independent Bangladesh. One doubts if India's ruling classes want it either. They should be happy if they can pack the refugees off in the near future. From independent Bangladesh the problem has whittled itself down to cold arithmetic, of the cost of the refugee problem.

June 20, 1971.

JUNE 26, 1971

A Report On Birbhum

By A CORRESPONDENT

AFTER Srikakulam and Debra it is Birbhum. There the CPI (ML) has built up a stronghold and the days are fast nearing when the Government, inspite of deploying hundreds of its butter-fed, goose-stepping CRP, may have to face a lot of difficulties. The Party has already spread over the entire district, at least at police station level, and if it can carry on its activities with the same speed and discipline and if no new split affects its leadership, there is a possibility that Birbhum will become a liberated zone in the true sense of the term.

Uptil now, near about 50 persons have been killed by the CPI (ML). Of them more than half were land-owners and moneylenders and the rest both petty and big Government officials including the police. More than two hundred and fifty-five arms including rifles, muskets and revolvers have been snatched with plenty of ammunition and the number of "liberated villages, though scattered all over the district and isolated from one another, has been rapidly increasing. Although truckloads of CRP are seen patrolling the village streets, they seem to be rather sceptical of their success and their gestures have proved it beyond all doubt that their duty has become a liability to them. The sooner they can get rid of it the the better. One CRP officer expressed his embarrassment to me, "These Naxalites are moving like rats, it is very difficult to capture them" (Naxal logue chuan ke mafik ata hai, jata hai, pakorna bahut mushkil).

There was no exaggeration in this remark. At Bolpur, Dubrajpur, Suri, Rampurhat and other towns the CPI (ML) boys are openly moving in daylight. Those who belong to the respective localities are all well known. But nobody dares to identify them; even the local Bengal Police have turned strictly neutral, because

constables and officers who dared to chase the CPI (ML) workers or sympathisers have met their doom. One single instance will show how panic-stricken are the local police. Towards the end of last month, the local unit of the CPI (ML) at Bolpur came to learn that a new CID constable, Dilip Chakravarty, had been employed against them and that he had been seen along the lanes and bylanes of Ukilpatti. Immediately, dozens of its boys began to follow Dilip, his every movement from dawn to dusk. At last they became sure that he was a spy and killed him. The story of the operation against Dilip has been collected from an eyewitness who lives at Ukilpatti where the operation took place. At about 2 p.m. Dilip was seen running very fast along the main lane of Ukilpatti towards the Bolpur-Palitpur Road. Behind him was a young man, his face covered by a mask and he had a pipegun. He fired, the bullet hit Dilip but the injury was not fatal, so he could continue running. But as soon as he reached the junction of Ukilpatti Lane and Bolpur-Palitpur Road two boys appeared as if from nowhere, knifed him on both sides of the chest and then disappeared crying "An agent has been killed, Long Live Mao, Long Live CPI (ML)". The police outpost is only 75 yards away from the spot where Dilip fell. As men on the street began to gather round the body and their noise gradually increased, the officer in charge of the outpost climbed up the roof of his office building. He had behind him dozens of sepoy's, all armed and ready for a fresh attack (But they were sure that there was then no Naxalite to attack them)! The OC, from the house-top, began to shout "disperse, disperse, my men are going". The people dispersed, but even after that nobody came from the outpost to take possession of the dead body. The OC feared that he might be

gunned down, the constables feared they might be gunned down, so there was none to bell the cat. At last after one and a half hours more than a dozen constables cautiously stepped out of the outpost, appeared on the spot and carried back the corpse of the C.I.D. constable. Perhaps the OC realised that such timidity would induce the local people to ridicule him and also invite the wrath of higher officials if they could in any way come to learn about the incident; so nobody was arrested. No enquiry was made and after this no policeman, either in uniform or in plain clothes, dares enter Ukilpatti.

Growing Support

Although in comparison to other areas the activities of the CPI (ML) in Birbhum have started much later—the history of the rise of the party cannot be traced beyond six or seven months—uptil now it has succeeded in extending itself and its operations have seldom failed. Another thing, which is an encouraging factor for the Party, is that the number of its workers and sympathisers is fast increasing. A large number of local people, especially the students, have been attracted to it. That its confidence and audacity have also increased can be seen in the following incidents.

Only two weeks ago Narayan Banerjee, a wealthy businessman of Battala (Bolpur PS) was murdered by the CPI (ML). About 6 p.m. Narayan was sitting under a banyan tree near his rice mill where more than 200 people were husking rice from paddy or were engaged in other work. Six young men came to Narayan and placed before him a sheet of paper and requested him to get it printed for them from his press (Narayan also owned a small press). He stood up and asked them to come to the press along with him. No sooner had he proceeded a step than one of the boys hit him on the back of his head

with a ramdao and two others pushed their knives into his abdomen. Narayan groaned and fell down on the ground. Blood was oozing from his body. He was just trying to crawl. His men were watching the scene. But they were all ashen grey. They could not move. The young men began to walk towards the crowded station road, instead of running along the more desolate and less dangerous Bopur-Supur Road. The shopkeepers and others who saw them did not dare to cry out, they soon left that place abandoning their business.

On June 19, more than 200 men entered Itanda, a village in Bolpur PS. They had with them 25 rifles, six or seven revolvers, bombs and spears. They encircled the house of the Pynes, a landowning family of the village, dragged the head of the family out of his room, lined him up against a big mango tree and then knifed him to death. The Santals who participated in the action were chanting in the favourite slogans of the CPI [ML]. A large number of villagers gathered on the spot as silent on-lookers. None of them dared make any protest. The party then dispersed through the paddyfields.

On the same day another party of about 300 men, some of them armed with rifles, muskets, pipeguns, pistols, bombs and spears, entered Madhabpur village and raided the house of Tarapada Daktar, an LMF practitioner. He was also a big notorious landowner. Dozens of Santals and young men chanting, "kill, kill, kill Tarapada" invaded the rooms and dragged him out. He was then tied to the trunk of a tree just in front of his house. His relatives came out and began to weep, some of them fainted and others fell at the feet of the leaders and begged for the doctor's life. Meanwhile almost all the villagers gathered on the spot. After some time one of the leaders made a very brief speech narrating Tarak's misdeeds. He then asked, "Tell what sentence he actually deserves? Do you want him to live and spoil the society? Do you?" A large number of people, especially the Santals who were in the procession cried, "Death, death,

he deserves death and nothing else." "Then Tarapada will die," replied the leaders. He then gave a rifle to a Santal and ordered him to kill the doctor. The Santal took up position and fired at the doctor's head but missed. The man did not die. The leader then gave the rifle to a young man. The boy fired just one round and the bullet pierced the heart of Tarak. He died instantaneously. The rifle with which Tarapada was killed had been snatched from another big landowner, who was a very good friend of Tarapada.

CRP in Action

On June 18 more than 40 young men entered Kankalitala on the bank of Rabindranath's beloved Kopai. They had with them seven rifles, about the same number of pistols and two airbags loaded with bombs. They approached a wealthy landowner and ordered him to cook for them. The landowner considered himself lucky enough because the punishment might have been death. He prepared the lunch for his 'guests' with great care, the latter enjoyed the old man's fear and the food and then left his house. In the meantime some trucks full of the CRP were seen in the village streets. As they started chasing the boys, they crossed the river and entered the jungle. The CRP were happy. They shouted "Bhag gia, bhag gia" and went back to beat the innocent boys of the village.

The moneylenders of the district, like the landowners, were the most-unhappy people. They have been told that if they fail to return the deposits of their clients and if they refuse to forgo their claims on both the interest and the loans to the farmers, they will be killed and their bodies thrown to street dogs. This has created an unprecedented panic among the moneylenders and a large number of them have obeyed the instructions and others are likely to do so in the near future. One Sudhir Kumar of Ukilpatti was served a notice from the Party that he would be killed and his shop burnt down. Sudhir immediately

contacted the Party's local unit, promised not to run his business in future and to return the deposits of his clients without any claim to the interest and loans. The Party, therefore, has changed its decision; Sudhir has not been killed. Another moneylender, Samanta, received the same notice. At first he took things rather lightly and bargained with the representatives of the Party over the payment of interest and loans. He was then served with another notice in which something was written to this effect: "If you dare to disobey our instructions, next morning your relatives and friends will find your head rolling on the road." The moneylender realised that he had already reached the limit; one more step would be dangerous. He therefore wrote over the entrance of his shop "My clients are hereby requested to take back their deposits within the next 72 hours. They will not have to pay the interest on the loans. I've decided to wind up my business."

The cases of Kamar and Samanta have had their impact upon other moneylenders. Although they are grinding their teeth in anger, they are expected to yield before the decision of the ML boys.

But had the activities of the CPI (ML) in Birbhum remained limited to such actions, there would have been not much to distinguish their present role from the one they have played in other parts of this province. Here they have cowed down all other political parties, including the CPI (M) and the ruling Congress and have almost been running a parallel administration in the major towns and villages including Bolpur, Suri, Rampurhat, Dubrajpur and Surul. It should be remembered that in the last general elections the CPI(M) won the maximum number of seats from this district and therefore deserves to

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SANYAL BROS.

26, Main Road, Jamshedpur-1.

JUNE 26, 1971

be counted as a major political force. The ruling Congress, though its performance in the polls was utterly hopeless, has had at its disposal all the coercive machinery which it has already put into action, but both the parties are no match for the CPI(ML).

A young man, who was until a month ago the secretary of a local Yuba Congress, confessed that he resigned his secretaryship out of fear. He was given a death sentence by the CPI(ML) and his younger brother who is a cadre of that party requested him to cut off his connections with the Yuba Congress. This ex-Yuba Congress leader said that there was a lengthy discussion between him and his brother over Marxism and the CPI(ML)'s ideology and programme and finally he agreed to come out of the Yuba Congress. "My brother was right, I can realize it now", he said.

A large number of local boys who once leaned towards the Congress camp have now turned sincere sympathisers of the CPI(ML) and the real threat to the parliamentary parties is coming from their side.

Doubts

However there are doubts among the common people about the role of the CPI(ML) some of whose acts seem very strange to them. So far as the murders are concerned, people describe them as arbitrary actions and ask why the Party does not hold a people's court and put the man on trial before killing him. As already described, the local party unit at Bolpur, before killing two big landowners in the presence of the villagers, asked them to suggest punishment for the two persons. But in these cases it was the Santals who had joined the procession who gave the verdict, not the local people. They wanted to avoid involvement and did not open their mouths. Thus though the operation was public, there was no real people's court. As a result, the people appear very critical about the Party's "annihilation operations". They say that "you will not realize your offence even after your death until they put up

some posters on the walls to explain it".

Many petty businessmen of Suri, Rampurhat and Bolpur have been threatened. They wonder why and ransack their memory for their offence. Some of them ask why the CPI(ML) avoids holding a public trial of its enemies. This proves its organizational weakness. If more errors are committed, that will be fatal for the party.

The operations against the moneylenders, though a source of great encouragement to the poor people, specially to the day labourers, have one loophole. As moneylenders were instructed to return all the deposit to their clients, people who had never deposited anything started pressing for money and gold. As a result, the liabilities of the moneylenders extend beyond their capacity. Moreover, this has led to mutual jealousy and suspicion among many individuals. Those who dislike their neighbours have described them to the CPI(ML) as moneylenders and then placed before them many embarrassing demands.

The Party's local unit at Surul (P.S. Bolpur) a few days ago staged a march of its "red army" along an eight-mile track from Sriniketan to Jadabpur. There were Santals and others carrying rifles and muskets. The police had the information but did not turn up. Even the CRP refused to face the marching Naxalities. This proves the increasing organizational strength of the Party. But upto now its activities have been limited mainly among the Santals and there too economic demands have been emphasized rather than the ideology and programme of the Party.

Topographically, Birbhum is an ideal place for operations. But it is not the topography of a country but that of the human mind, exploration and exploitation of which is the foremost precondition of success for a true Marxist Party. If the CPI(ML) can remove the misunderstandings from the minds of the local people created by its own excesses, the flames of class struggle may soon engulf the adjacent districts.

Bihar

Education In The Doldrums

N. K. SINGH

THE academic and political circles of the State were not taken by surprise when a quarrel among the sponsors of the Patliputra Medical College, Patna, exposed the skeletons in the cupboard of the private medical colleges in particular and the capitalist education system in general. While the Registrar of the said college charged its managing committee chairman, a former Chief Minister of Bihar, and others closely connected with it with defalcation of college funds up to a tune of Rs 1 crore, the Secretary was reported to have threatened the Treasurer with a revolver. As a sequel the Patna police in collaboration with CID officers carried out a number of house searches in different parts of the city and seized some incriminating documents. Since then a virtual lock-out has been declared in the institution. Wide public resentment forced the Bihar Government to ban the opening of private medical colleges without its prior permission.

The Patliputra Medical College scandal confirms the fact that in a capitalist set-up everything is judged by the criterion of profit. Education is no exception.

The unemployment problem is acute. However, the administrative, technical and medical lines still offer some jobs. Hence, many people want to take up these lines. Besides, there is a scarcity of medical colleges in Bihar which has been allocated a very low quota in comparison with other States. While Maharashtra with a population of 4,84,84,000 has 12 medical colleges and Mysore with a population of 2,84,75,000 has nine, the 5,59,85,000 inhabitants of Bihar have to share among themselves only three medical colleges. This en-

couraged some to open "private medical colleges". Profit is the catchword. The clever businessmen of our society found a good scope for extending their business empire in the educational field, a business with practically no capital.

This 'no capital' business had the backing of some influential persons including ministers, legislators, senior doctors and so-called academicians. Taking advantage of the situation four 'private medical colleges' sprang up overnight last year without any building, teaching staff, equipment and hospital facilities. These basic facilities were supposed to be created later on, with the help of "donations" raised from the students.

The association of some so-called respectable people helped to create the hallucination that in the long run these private colleges will be affiliated to different universities and ultimately the Medical Council of India would recognise them. Several hundred students were lured to get themselves admitted to these colleges, no better than teaching shops, by paying, besides the heavy tuition fee, a lump sum donation of Rs 20,000 or thereabouts. Even some third divisioners were admitted on paying sumptuous donations. In this way the sponsors were able to collect several crores of rupees—their sole motive behind opening these teaching shops.

Defalcation

One of these teaching shops was the Patliputra Medical College. Near-

ly Rs 1 crore, a big part of which came in the form of "donations" from students, collected. But only a few months after it had opened a quarrel broke out among its sponsors and a sensational case was registered with the Patna police—the Patliputra Medical College Defalcation Case.

Meanwhile, the teachers have given up teaching as they have not been paid for the past four months. A virtual lock-out was declared in the college and the students were forced to go on strike from April 9. Recently they have taken to more militant paths like dharna, gherao etc. Some of the would-be doctors including girl students were put behind bars.

The main demand of the students is that, as an immediate solution of the problem, the Government should take over the college.

The Patliputra racket is a big conspiracy in which some influential persons are involved. The whole case should be referred to the Central Bureau of Investigation. Since the amount involved is nearly a crore of rupees and since India's international image is involved (some foreign students also have been admitted) the matter deserves to be dealt with at the highest level.

The Government should also take over the other three private medical colleges which have funds amounting to several crores of rupees. Only because their sponsors have not quarrelled it does not mean that there is nothing wrong with them. All

these colleges were started on the basis of handsome donations by students almost all of whom could not be admitted to the Government medical college because of lack of merit. If doctors are to be manufactured on the basis of the financial capacity of their guardians it will mean catastrophe in the health services.

However, instead of taking over all the private medical colleges, the erstwhile Karpoori Thakur Ministry, which till the other day had openly dissociated itself from these teaching shops, decided to provide assistance to two of them. This action caused wide resentment in academic circles. The political pressure behind it is evident from the fact that while it was decided to assist two private medical colleges, the case of the Patliputra Medical College which deserves the utmost attention at present, was neglected.

It is clear that the Medical Council of India would not recognise the degrees conferred by the private medical colleges and the genuine sufferers would be the students. In the ultimate analysis it is the responsibility of the Government to provide adequate facilities for medical education. A very cruel and unrealistic policy of restricting the opening of new medical colleges—some leading doctors are suspected to have formed a vested interest in preventing the spread of medical education in the State for fear of losing their practice—has made students an easy prey to unscrupulous operators.

Our Attitude To Bangladesh : An Anatomy Of Indian Reaction—I

S. R.

SO far as India is concerned the major impact of the war in East Pakistan lies in the sharpening of the line of demarcation between those who want a drastic change in the social order through violence and

those who want to maintain the status quo and profit by it. In the context of what happened in Laos, Cambodia and Ceylon and the play of super-power politics in the Asian theatre, the war in Pakistan cannot but ex-

plode the camp of the Indian reactionaries.

"Indian reactionaries" here means those communal baiters who try to extend the logic of the pre-partition civil war to the present situation ;

those Hindu maniacs who could not reconcile themselves to the creation of Pakistan, a new homeland of the traditionally oppressed minority in India and to whom the breakdown of Pakistan and the explosion of the concept of Islamic solidarity and of Jinnah's two-nation theory is a matter for rejoicing; those Islamic obscurantists who support the military junta of Pakistan and all their atrocities in East Bengal in the name of Islamic fraternity; those cynical politicians and regionalists who support the disintegration of Pakistan because that will give them a plea to advance their own logic of regionalism; in a word those who play on the sensitive base of religion and cultivate on the alluvial slime of illiteracy, and those who shepherd the masses into the narrow and parochial fold of nationalism and turn them away from the basic fact of tyranny to which they have been subjected all over the Indian sub-continent, by fanning regional aspirations.

The onset of reaction in Indian politics since the beginning of the war in Pakistan is fraught with grave consequences. All mass media have become unbelievably sentimental and, true to our past conduct, we have geared ourselves to all the massive outputs of sentiment and unreason. In the process we have aggravated all those unresolved problems which have frustrated the dreams of two generations since independence and are going to pester a new and rising generation.

On what fields do the reactionaries operate? They are the two broad fields of religion and regionalism. Their operational strategy is the time-worn method of concealing and distorting facts, preaching lies, misinterpreting history, championing obscurantism, suppressing politico-economic

factors i.e., in a word, subordinating rational objectively to an irrational and subjective thinking process.

The behaviour of modern Indian reactionaries has been recorded in the journals, periodicals, newspapers, all of which massively came out to deceive people and train them in the art of reaction. Ever since the outbreak of the war in East Pakistan the East Bengalis have been told by the Indian and the foreign press that their aspirations were being trampled by the Punjabis. *The Organiser* (May 1, 1971) published an article entitled "Bengali and Punjabi Muslims have always been poles apart". It has three major sub-headings: "Bengali Muslim hated the British", "Punjabi Muslim looked on British as maai-baap" and "West Punjabis attack East Bengalis". With these sinister title and sub-titles what could be the theme of the essay is anybody's guess. Another essay published in the same paper (with the title "Pak spies infiltrating into North Bihar" and sub-title "Muslim communalists support Yahya") provided ample incentive to communal baiters. A very serious allegation has been launched by this journal against the minority community: "However, a peculiar thing with a number of communal Muslim papers is that they have no sympathy for the political aspirations of Bangladesh. This is because it is the cause of Pakistan i.e. West Pakistan which is dearest to the heart of these people;" "...the communal Muslim papers...have even gone to the extent of justifying the Pak atrocities on the Bangla populace, in the name of the integrity and security of Pakistan".

Recently some journals published in North India quoted a Jamaat-e-Islami paper saying that the bonds of Islam transcend those of the motherland. The papers from the capital and almost all the major dailies and weeklies in this country have given wide publicity to reports that Pak agents have infiltrated into Jammu and Kashmir and in Eastern India.

The Illustrated Weekly of India, owned by Bennet Coleman & Co. and controlled by the Government of

India, published an article (May 9, 1971) which spoke of the torture of the Hindus in Pakistan by the Muslims there in the past: "What torture the Hindus had to suffer can be explained by Hindu population figures which plummeted from one crore and thirty-three lakhs in 1947 to mere 90,00,000". The same article quoted Mr Surhawardy as saying, "how many battles can Bengalis fight with the Punjabi soldiers?" Another article in the same issue carrying the title "Bengali culture versus the Urdu-Punjabi" brought the Bengalis and the Punjabis vis-a-vis each other over the issue of cultural supremacy. A recent issue of a Delhi weekly had this obnoxious title: "Our secularism has made us cowardly eunuchs". The same issue quoted Viveknaanda as saying that "there has not been a religion which has shed so much blood and been so cruel to other men" as Islam.

Bengali Papers

Bengali newspapers and journals have followed the lead given by their English counterparts. *Swastika* (May 3, 1971), published simultaneously from Calcutta and Agartala, said categorically in a headline that Mr Mehdi Masud, the Pakistan Deputy High Commissioner in Calcutta, was hobnobbing with communal baiters. Another essay published in the same issue said that the Muslims, wherever they formed the minority as in Somalia, Thailand, Philippines etc., created mischief. This paper has come out as a rival to *Radiance*, the spokesman of Jamaat-e-Islami, and preaches communalism.

The May 7 issue of *Bangla Desh*, a new weekly, published a front-page report that Mr Mehdi Masud had opened a secret Pak employment exchange the sole aim of which was to rally the Urdu-speaking people here. This paper has posed a parochial Bengali nationalist approach to the problem of Pakistan.

'Selective Killing'

Since the beginning of the war in East Pakistan almost all the papers

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in this country have been vocal over the selective killing of Bengali Hindus. In a special article on the 'Hindus in Bangla Desh' in *The Statesman* (Delhi 29. 4. 71) the resident editor Kuldip Nayar wrote: "The Indian Deputy High Commissioner in Dacca, Mr Sengupta, has reported to the Ministry of External Affairs that no Hindu is left in the city; nearly all Hindu localities have been razed to the ground and the people who lived there have either fled or been killed". "Rawalpindi's purpose probably is to eliminate gradually the 10 million Hindus so that West Pakistan with a population of 67 million has an edge over East Pakistan which will then be reduced from 75 to 65 million. West Pakistan's pro-Government *Nawa-i-Waqt*, an Urdu daily, commented that representation for the Hindus in the National Assembly had killed the original concept of Pakistan, a land of the pure, meaning that it is only for the Muslims.

"Following this comment there have been demands to reduce the importance of Hindus in the political field. A Muslim paper in Delhi, *Dawat*, has echoed the same thoughts: the present crisis in Pakistan has come up 'because there had never been any sincere effort in Pakistan to reconstruct the nation on the basis of Islam'.

"There is nothing illegal about the idea of making Hindus political orphans because if the whites in South Africa can disenfranchise the blacks, there is nothing to stop West Pakistan from disenfranchising the Hindus. It is, however, difficult to comprehend what difference it would have made if the Hindus in East Bengal had no vote. The Awami League candidates won with such an overwhelming majority that the loss of the Hindu votes would not have made any difference".

Reports of such selective killing are given extensive publicity and produce appropriate reactions upon the minority community.

On the other side are those who have used their religion as a shield and are preparing for a counter-offen-

sive in the communal politics of India. *Jamaiat Times*, said to be official organ of the Muslim Majlis in Delhi, chided (April 23, 1971) a 'nationalist' Muslim MP for saying that the Bengali people in Pakistan "are being deprived of the fulfilment of their legitimate constitutional rights and I am greatly grieved over the inhuman and horrible treatment meted out to innocent people of East Pakistan". The same paper declared that great atrocities were being committed by the Bengalis on non-Bengalis.

Radiance (May 2, 1971) spoke thus of the Hindu reactionaries: "In the Middle East their sympathies are with Israel and not with the Arabs, because the Arabs are mostly Muslims. In Africa they support Haile Selassie against the Eritreans because the latter also happen to be Muslims. That the situation in Eritrea is the same as in East Bengal does not move them. They have no sympathy with the Muslim freedom fighters of Eritrea or Palestine."

The same issue says elsewhere about Acharya Vinoba Bhave: "The Acharya who seems to have made it a point never to say a word in condemnation of the atrocities perpetrated against innocent Muslim citizens of India in a communal riot, has expressed the greatest sense of horror at what is being done in East Pakistan. Are the lives of the Bengali Muslims in any way more precious than the lives of the Indian Muslims? Or the Acharya too is happy because Pakistan seems to be on the point of disintegration?"

Radiance charges the Hindu reactionaries with trying "to denigrate Islam as much as possible." On April 18, 1971 it published the Quoran injunction: "Cling to the Rope of Allah and do not split"—obviously a counterpoise to the propaganda that the events in Pakistan have exploded the myth of Islamic solidarity. It pointed out that in the seventh century when Arabs fell into factionalism and fratricide the Holy Quoran said: "you were enemies."

The same issue speaking over the

"reprisals in Bangla Desh" said: "...there is no reason why the wells of humanitarianism should go dry when the followers of Shaikh Mujib do to West Pakistanis what the West Pakistanis have done to them."

Radiance (2-5-71) launched an attack on the Hindu reactionaries of the north: "Annihilation of Muslims in their own country is a matter of great consolation and satisfaction for Jana Sangh whereas they are vociferously showering their sympathies and blessings over the unfortunate people of East Bengal..."

Very recently all the Muslim papers of North India expressed indignation over the publication of a photograph showing the head of a Pakistani military officer being gleefully exhibited by freedom fighters. Photographs of similar reprisals were published in almost all the newspapers coming from the capital on April 7, 1971. We have enough experience of communal riots in this country and they invariably gather momentum from such reports and photographs.

Foreign Reporters

It is interesting to note what role foreign reporters played in this campaign. In *The Statesman* (4-4-71) James Cowley writing his London Note Book quoted a report from preceding Friday's *Times* regarding "the massacre of Punjabi settlers in the town (Jessore) in reprisal for the equally brutal shootings by Pakistan armymen from the Western province". The report quotes 'eyewitnesses' who detected "half alive and bloody bodies of men whom we recognized as the Punjabi prisoners we had seen an hour before." These

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witnesses say that they saw another "40 Punjabi spies being taken towards the killing-ground with their hands on their heads, irregulars pushing them in the back with primitive guns, before they were forced to leave the scene by the supporters of Sheikh Mujib."

The *Daily Telegraph* (29-3-71) said: "The genie of Bengali nationalism and separatism is now well and truly out of the bottle. Not all the bayonets from the Punjab will shove it back."

The Statesman (31-3-71) quoted this report from the *Daily Sketch*: "Seventy thousand Punjabi soldiers trying to trample down the legitimate aspirations of 70 million Bengalis—that's no act of national unity. Its more like race dictatorship at the point of the gun."

The despatch of Mr Collin Smith of the *Observer*, London, (he was the first British newspaperman to reach Dacca after foreign correspondents had been expelled following the outbreak of the war) dated 17th April, 1971 says: "Some of the West Pakistan units seem to have been possessed by blood-lust directed against the Hindus of East Pakistan, recalling the massacre of 1947 at the time of partition."

Pakistani Papers

The Pakistan Times (29-3-71) which has extensive circulation in North India, particularly among the Urdu-speaking people, provided a panacea for the present crisis: "First of all the concept of Muslim nationhood must be resurrected...one of the worst mistakes we have made is the abandonment of a separate electorate...." It lamented that the basis of East Bengal was a joint electorate through Muslim-Hindu merger. It advised the military hawks at Islamabad to partition East Bengal into two parts. Most of the Indian newspapers quoted excerpts from this essay (mostly in a distorted form), side by side with the news that the Punjabi soldiers are oppressing Hindus in East Bengal.

Another issue of *The Pakistan*

Times came out with an article entitled 'Rock of Muslim Nationhood': "Muslim nationhood is a historical phenomenon. It marks the cumulative impact of our one thousand years of existence in the milieu of the sub-continent. The Muslims stood apart from the Hindus when they were the rulers of the land. They stood apart from the Hindus when they were the co-subjects of the British. The two national streams of thinking ran parallel and never mixed and intermingled. If a people can retain their personality in as sharp and distinct contours as the Muslims have done through the centuries, they must be possessed of remarkably hard and indestructible national characteristics."

Why call these papers and journals reactionary? Because they have played upon the communal sentiments of the people, harping on their religious and regional differences; because they have failed to drive home the fact that the current strife in East Bengal is the result of the exploitation of one class by another, of the people by the feudal landlords and comprador bourgeoisie backed by their imperialist superiors, i.e. by those who have monopolized the state power and by virtue of it appropriate the social surplus for their own benefit and for the benefit of their masters. True to their character the reactionaries in India have avoided the elementary truth that the nature of exploiters is the same everywhere, be they Hindu or Muslim, a Punjabi or a Bengali. They have failed to appreciate that in the semi-colonial and semi-feudal milieu of the Indian sub-continent the structure of class and rank exploitation has lost its old equilibrium. The ruling class of militarists and landowners was incapable of producing a solution to the economic difficulties. The working people all over the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent vigorously put forward the question of ownership to bring about a new radical organisation of society. This problem needs to be resolved and over the question of how this should be done the contradictions of the ruling class are manifested. The pro-

perted class sharply reacted to the popular demand for new modes of production and distribution allowing a revival of productivity which has gone down in the eastern part of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. But this reaction was not homogeneous because the class of exploiters had their own contradictions and the present crisis is the direct offshoot of it.

These fundamental truths have not been brought to light. Half-truths have been compounded with lies and ignorance with concealment to keep the people in the dark. For example, how many papers have intimidated the people that at least five communal riots broke out recently in different parts in India? (These places are Burhanpur, Madhya Pradesh, Petlad a Kaira district, Gujarat; Aligarh, Philibit and Moradabad). How many of us have been told that on March 30 when the Prime Minister met opposition leaders the Muslim League representatives complained that their party's statements condemning the West Pakistan action did not receive adequate publicity? The Indian mass media have not told the people about the reaction of the minority community here.

(To be concluded)

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Kataragama Desecrated

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

KATARAGAMA is a small town about 200 miles along the south coast of Ceylon. It is world renowned for its Hindu shrine dedicated to God Skanda. In Ceylon (and from India) thousands of Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and Moslems flock to this town.

The armed forces of the Bandaranaike Government in their massive and ruthless hunt for the left-wing rebels captured a young girl at Kataragama. She was an ex-beauty queen and was known in Sinhalese as the 'Avurudu Kumari'—the New Year Queen. After capture, she was tortured for information and then paraded nude along the streets, in the presence of hundreds of local residents, shocked into silence. Not satisfied with this, the army platoon leader, a volunteer, (known in Colombo as a drunk and spiv) had her raped by a Buddhist monk, also a captured rebel. Then she became a target for shooting practice. Even after the last shot she cried out for water which she drank, and still while alive, was dragged away to be buried.

In the near future perhaps the masses will flock to Kataragama, but to the shrine of the Avuduru Kumari.

The Coalition Government, led by Mrs Bandaranaike, President of the

Sri Lanka Freedom Party—representing the national bourgeoisie—continues its ruthless activities, bombing innocent villagers, burning and looting. They were the first to declare a Buddhist Calendar in Ceylon when in office in 1970. Their supporters are lobbying now to make Buddhism the State religion in the new Constitution. Mrs Bandaranaike in early April referred to "this sacred island of ours". Behind this mask of Buddhism and "I will be lenient" to those who surrender, the government has sanctioned the most medieval crimes by the armed forces. The emergency laws allow the armed forces to kill, burn and bury with no enquiry, no recourse to the law, no coroners.

It has cost the country over 20,000 young lives, men and women, to shake the government from its stupor. Today 15,000 young people are in jail, a high proportion of them women. Unless some radical reforms are made, the Government cannot continue long. But who is going to administer land reform, price control etc. etc? No policeman can enter his village, no MP can dare go back to his constituency. No civilian government is possible under this regime.

A unique and ironic situation exists in Ceylon. A repressive government has to rely on those it has entrusted to kill and burn en masse, to introduce what they call Socialism with the Gun.

POLITICS IN INDIA

By Rajni Kothari
Orient Longman Ltd., 1970

P*POLITICS in India* by Rajni Kothari is a well documented account of the nation building process in India since 1947. In this Mr Kothari has brought all his expertise to provide a rationale for the survival of the existing political system.

The author tries to prove that everything is good with the Indian political system and that it is moving gradually forward. At best, the system needs to be only tinkered to adjust itself to pressures from time to time. "The analysis" he writes, "has underlined the great potency of the Indian model...there is no great need to change the basic contours of the Indian political profile". (Page 447). Thus it is important to note at the outset that the book suffers from all the limitations of a bourgeois intellectual's work—its failure to see the problems beyond the set boundaries and to make meaningful suggestions.

The author gives a chauvinistic account of the historical antecedents. In his view all factors necessary for attaining independence from colonialism were inherent in India's historical and religious forces. The impact of Hinduism, "the solid bedrock and unifying framework of Indian society", the effect of the rational-legal" approach of British rule, and the "reconstructive nationalism" of the pre-independence era paved the way for the emergence of an "open and eclectic model of development" consisting of a dominant party without ideology and programme of action, charismatic leadership, and English educated, urban upper class elite, as levers of modernization in the post-independence India. The constitutional framework with a federal structure and a strong Centre added to the vitality of the "eclectic" model. The author adds that the ambivalence of the party provided the necessary stimulus for the unification

Our agent at Alipurduar

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West Bengal.

and mobilization of various elements in India. Gandhi, the agent of ambivalence, brought several groups under the Congress party to enable it to play the "eclectic role". Nehru's intuition and pragmatism strengthened the consensus system. The debacle of the Congress party in several States in the 1967 general elections only marked a shift from Dominant Party system to one of "Competitive Dominance" without affecting the consensus of the political system. The author adds that the politicization of caste is helping the consensus system to find its roots in the soil. The salient features of Indian culture such as the tolerance of ambiguity, fragmented authority, and the role of the elite as morality-builder (page 264) have provided additional tools for the smooth functioning of the consensus system and its gradual movement towards modernization. In the arena of economic development the author says that "India has shown remarkable capacity to survive various degrees of crises so far, and generally to profit from each of them" (page 382).

In Kothari's view, India needs not only industrial prowess and political stability to play an effective and "natural role" in world politics, but also "symbolic evidence of greatness" such as nuclear power and a satellite programme (page 418).

In the last chapter of the book, Kothari gives a list of suggestions to increase the capability of the Indian political system to adjust itself to various pressures and demands. The list includes the need to strengthen the organization of the political parties, accommodate the counter elites of the regional units by the Centre and persuade the Muslims to resolve their "identity crisis" etc.

Anyone who is concerned about the people of India and has not developed a vested interest in passionately preserving the present "consensus system" that protects only the elites, cannot fail to raise a number of questions about the views expressed, suggestions made, and the very thesis of Kothari's book. What accounts

for the increasing number of cracks in the political system if the historical and religious forces, the party system, the social environment with caste as a modernizing agent, the political culture of the society, and the factors of economic development, are all providing an excellent setting for nation building and modernization? Mr Kothari wants to perpetuate the myth that the Congress party has no ideology. Any honest student of Indian politics would admit that it has very much a definite ideology and a deep commitment—the ideology of the bourgeois and the commitment to protect the existing system against the onslaught by the toiling masses. This ideology has been concretely expressed in the working of the system during the last two decades. The fact that the Congress has been getting the dominant position at the Centre in the general elections is certainly not a reflection of the desire of the people to maintain the status quo, given the hypocrisy of the election process in India. On the contrary the evidence shows that people are increasingly being alienated from the "consensus system". The failure of the family planning programme, the anti-cow slaughter demonstrations of 1966 which almost threatened the survival of the political system, and the lack of enthusiasm of the farmers in several parts of India to modernize agriculture, clearly prove that Mr Kothari is living in a make-believe world in his assessment of the political culture. His arguments for resolving the "identity crisis" of the Muslims is nothing but a sophisticated expression of the Jana Sangh programme of Indianization of the Muslims.

Mr Kothari's call for developing "symbolic evidence of greatness" such as nuclear power clearly reveals his closeness to Jana Sangh culture. Can an impoverished nation play a "natural" and dominant role in world politics merely by possessing nuclear weapons? Secondly, can the country, at the present stage of development, afford to divert its resources for producing "symbolic evidence of great-

ness"? Should priority be given to the "greatness" or to the basic needs of the people at a time when the poor in India are becoming poorer? What would be the aim of such an elite which acquires "greatness"—to protect the people or to protect its own interests against the people by fortifying the bastions of its power? Mr Kothari has only to look into history for answers to all these questions.

In his typical bourgeois-intellectual approach consolidation becomes the main theme in the study of the political system. All forces of consolidation are carefully sorted out and presented systematically. The forces and causes of alienation, the role of alienated groups, and the efficacy of the political system in the context of both consolidation and alienation is completely ignored. Thus it is essentially an incomplete study of the system written to justify the status quo.

Is the maintenance of the system an end in itself? Mr Kothari, by the very position he holds in the ruling class, seems inherently incapable of understanding the basic law of motion of the Indian polity.

SAVITHRI CHATTOPADHYAY

Good Person Of Setzuan

RUDRAPRASAD SENGUPTA

MR Martin Esslin, one of the noted Brecht-monopolists, along with a good many other critics of the 'free world' pontifically asserts that Brecht, much against his desire, is not for the common people but can be fully enjoyed by the intellectuals alone. It must be true, for who other than very uncommon people could sit cosily to the end of *The Amateurs' production of The Good Person of Setzuan* and applaud it so very thunderously? The Amateurs in their previous productions have seldom done anything great but 'Good Person' seems to be a very bad let-down.

With the rise of the curtain, seven minutes later than scheduled, charac-

ters started marching in ; some of them really looked every inch Chinese because they were so made up with meticulous care, some looked European (God knows why ?) and others seemed picked up straight from Calcutta streets. Some of the riffraffs wore real rags while others wore dresses freshly delivered from the tailor as it were. The lighting was bright enough but the spots somehow always seemed to illuminate zones just a little beyond the characters. Even when these were on them, as they are supposed to be, because of odd placements every inch of the characters remained illuminated except their eyes. Adi Gazdar's music was appropriate but even this could not be properly utilized. The song of the Eighth Elephant was well sung, accompanied by smart choreography. But the group performing this sequence was dumped into a half-lit remote corner of the stage. The acting company was no better. Junie Bose in the role of Shen Te worked very hard. But in the domineering hard-boiled role of Shui Ta, she proved absolutely inadequate ; her gait, her voice, her delivery—everything remained Shen Te's. John Clapham's Water-seller was convincing yet why on earth was he made to use that worn-out trick of stammering ? Anju Kumar's Mrs Mi Tzu and Vijay Crishna's Grandfather were well acted but Adrian Bullock's Shu Fu seemed to be imported straight from Beaumarchais' *Le Barbier de Séville*.

One could very well overlook all these and many more, for example, the naturalistic delivery of 'direct addresses' to the audience ; one could ignore the clumsy and tedious arrangements for scene-shiftings ; one could, grudgingly though, stifle the desire to know why the Song of Defencelessness was omitted. But to

exculpate Rajen Brijnath, the director, would be a difficult task indeed. Obviously he didn't understand the real strength of the play. *The Good Person of Setzuan* is one of the greatest plays of our times precisely because it doesn't deal with social theories alone nor does it happen to be the ineffectual poetry of a wishful poet. It blends the ruthless social theorist and the passionate poet in one. Mr Brijnath sometimes emphasized the sociologist and sometimes

the poet, forgetting that these two are one in this play. Because of this muddleheaded approach, this magnificent play loses its tremendous impact. The poetry of the gutter is reduced to sheer sentimental mish-mash ; the bitterest cries of the exploited become drawing-room cynicisms ; irreconcilable human situations become superficial gags and the vital issue of our times—how to change this mad bad dangerous world—becomes a play-thing for The Amateurs.

The Eternal Woman

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

KANTILAL Rathod is quite a name in the field of short and animation film-making and his feature debut *Kanku* (based on the famous Gujarati novel by Pannalal Patel) naturally fills us with expectations. The film starts with a marriage procession, beautifully unfolding the different facets of a Gujarat village in which *Kanku*, a young bride, comes to live with her husband. The short-lived bliss of their married life is drawn in sensible details (especially the husband's nervous reaction, his feeling of expectancy and his impatient waiting during *Kanku*'s childbirth, all these conflicting emotions are made totally convincing) although the harvesting sequence with a loud background song is an unhappy reminder of the Mehboob tradition and the inundation scenes (a motley collection of stills) and the subsequent death of *Kanku*'s husband, are quite amateurish. The intimate study of the village set-up and the evocative rural types, particularly the women-folk, and the general restraint in the treatment are really commendable. But the film's faults lie in the flimsy construction and the implausible situations ; the story starts plodding as it comes to the most crucial point, the relationship between *Kanku* and Malakchand, the village moneylender. It is true that Rathod's sophistication has saved him from painting Malak-

chand as a villain with rolling eyes. There is only the hint of a subtle and tender communion between the two, but on this slender thread the director tries to build up the denouement and naturally the whole structure crumbles down. There is hardly any space for the development of this mutual relationship and so the bravura whirling of the roof during the seduction scene symbolising the emotional tumult, remains a price of cheap camera-jugglery. Perhaps the director sought to depict his heroine as the eternal woman, combining the images of fiancée, wife and mother, but Pallavi Mehta's placid personality precludes any portrayed in depth.

While Rathod's choice of a significant subject and his refusal to compromise with the conventional cinema make his first feature work a major break-through in the Gujarati film-scene, he must learn a thing or two about the scenario-construction in visual terms, should he seek to bridge the gap between ambition and achievement.

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Clippings

British On Bangladesh

...The British Press and Broadcasting have been going all out to express their sympathy for the people of East Bengal, have been generally supporters and admirers of the Government of India, and have unqualified disapproval for the conduct of the Government of West Pakistan.

...But—it is this combination of support, partisanship, and sympathy which is to be most dreaded. If I were one of the suffering East Bengal Bengalis, as I am a Bengali from West Bengal who feels the predicament of West Bengal very deeply, I would in both capacities reject the support and pity of all "Leftist, Liberal Labour, Radical, Revolutionary" sections of the British people for us with repugnance, if not with contempt.

...My observation of the results of the support of this kind of British people for any nation or section of a nation which has suffered from the application of Governmental force

has led me to this double-sided conclusion: (1) that it cannot bring about any relief to the suffering people; and (2) that, on the contrary, it is an omen of complete ruin for them. Let me give four instances of British sympathy in the last few years: 1. Biafra; 2. Czechoslovakia; 3. The French Students; 4. The Arab Guerillas.

In each case, the group in question has suffered. So I would say to any community to which the support and partisanship of these British elements are shown through the Press and Broadcasting, that it should immediately assume that it is all over with them.

...I need not rub in this point by saying that all the support and sympathy of the British Press and Broadcasting for the people of East Bengal has only resulted in a catastrophe for them. The continuing support is even preventing relief work for the sufferers still within East Pakistan.

So my argument may be summed up in a few words: Any Government which is determined and ruthless enough can snap its fingers at its

British critics and go on with its suppression; and the objects of the sympathy alone will suffer.

I have...my diagnosis of the mental state out of which this dwelling on troubles and misery on the part of British journalists and even of the public comes. Collectively, it seems to me that the British people feel themselves out of sympathy and tune with any human group or country which is succeeding or showing itself capable of asserting itself in the world. There is a very strong tendency in Britain to line up with underdogs. (Nirad C. Chaudhuri in *Hindusthan Standard*.)

Why Blame Punjabis ?

A fundamental problem which the military regime (in Pakistan) faces today is its extremely narrow socio-economic base. Unlike the Ayub regime, the present ruling elite is not identified with the most powerful province in West Pakistan, the Punjab. Among a dozen most important officers of the Establishment, hardly



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one-fourth are Punjabis. Barring the Air Force, no service is headed by an officer from the Punjab.

...While talking about West Pakistan, a special word is needed about the Punjab. The Punjabis have been generally associated with the exploitation of East Bengal. The image of the Punjabis as a people has been the darkest in the eyes of the Bengalees. This is grossly unfair, at least in the present circumstances. It is perhaps due to a popular misconception in Bangla Desh, that has tended to associate almost every West Pakistani, including Urdu-speaking refugees from Bihar, with the Punjab. Drawing a parallel with India, one could say that misconception about Punjabis in Bangla Desh, is almost similar to the popular belief in North India, where any one from the South is regarded as a "Madrasai".

With vehemence the Punjabis point out that neither General Yahya Khan, nor Bhutto and not even General Tikka Khan is a Punjabi. Punjabi share in the army and the civil services is far less than other West Pakistani people. Whatever economic, political or emotional stakes the Punjabis might have had in keeping East Bengal under bondage in the past, the attraction for maintaining this colonial rule is fast disappearing due to the changing socio-economic conditions.

A fact which is generally ignored is the changing mood of the people in Punjab. This change of mood has been conditioned by socio-economic changes, brought about during the last decade. Newspaper reports, for example, indicate a very poor response in the Punjab to recent recruitment drive by the military. The people apparently do not consider military service attractive enough to

offer themselves as mercenaries. Reports by Pakistani experts in recent years have continuously talked about the lack of enthusiasm among the Punjabi educated youth to join the officer corps of the defence services. This, in turn, explains the apathy with which the Punjabis, hitherto regarded as the back-bone of West Pakistani Establishment, view President Yahya's war.

Punjabi intellectuals have been at pains to explain that sins of exploitation by a handful of West Pakistani industrialists should not be attributed to the people of Punjab. Out of the 22 topmost industrial families who are known to control 70 per cent of Pakistan's organised economic resources, only two are Punjabis. Those like the Ispahanis, Haroons, Adamees, and Daud Seths, who have dominated the economy of Bangla Desh have nothing to do with the Punjab. Gains of such exploitation have accrued to a small coterie of persons who simultaneously control the military, trade and commerce, as well as bureaucracy. The fact that Punjabi prosperity is attributed to agriculture and small-scale industries has further convinced the common man in Lahore and Rawalpindi that General Yahya Khan was not fighting his war.

What is true of the Punjab is even more true of Sind, not to speak of NWFP and Baluchistan. Realisation is growing everywhere in West Pakistan that the people as such have nothing to gain from the continued exploitation of Bangla Desh. The only people who have a stake in the war and in the exploitation are the ruling brass-hats and a handful of industrial tycoons and landed gentry. (Dewan Berindranath in *Mainstream*).

Tupamaros

Last year, the Uruguayan Government tried to hire a "specialist" in locating objects or persons in an effort to find the Tupamaros National Liberation Movement's "People's Prison."

...Mrs Zapiola, who practices spi-

ritualism, claims that she is gifted with special powers to receive impressions which other persons cannot receive through usual methods. This way, she explained, it is relatively easy to locate water, minerals, missing persons and even missing papers.

According to Mrs Zapiola, the interference of too many persons in a case disturbs the work of the seer. "That's what happened in the case of the Uruguayan Government's request, when I was asked to cooperate in the case of the Tupamaros," she said. (*Granma*, Havana).

Letters

East Bengal

The question of recognition of the Bangladesh Government has put Mrs Indira Gandhi into an awkward embarrassment.

Any Bangladesh Government under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the outspoken anti-Communist, would obviously benefit the Indian Government. The two governments, with their similar class-interests, will be able to consolidate their anti-Communist bloc. What then, frightens her? Is it the Communist guerillas? Perhaps so.

The Communist guerillas, who were preparing for some time for a genuine national liberation movement, are already there on the scene, fighting the army independently. There is already a considerable decline of the Awami League elements in the leadership of the battle. Should the battle last long there is every possibility of its being transformed into a protracted war of national liberation and the entire leadership would go into the hands of the guerilla liberation force. There's the rub! The Provisional Government of Bangladesh, against the fast changing background of the battle, cannot, at this moment, assure Mrs Gandhi of the course that East Bengal politics is going to take. Hence perhaps her hesitation.

ABDUS SALAM MALLIK
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China's Foreign Policy

Some of your readers contend that the Chinese stand on the Pakistan issue is justified by the resolution of 'non-interference', just because the struggle concerned is led by the bourgeoisie of East Bengal and because the struggling Bengalis are getting the sympathy and support of various imperialist powers and their stooges who try to use this 'godsent' opportunity to interfere in the internal affairs of Pakistan. This is over-simplification of an issue involving the folly of oneness in analysis. The mystery of the Chinese stand cannot be comprehended unless it is seen from the viewpoint of the foreign policy of a socialist State. Bourgeois leadership is certainly not the criterion to judge the Chinese stand of 'non-interference,' which lies deep in a foreign policy first formulated by Lenin.

According to the Chinese Communist Party, the general line of the foreign policy of socialist countries must have the following content: to develop relations of friendship, mutual assistance and co-operation among the countries in the socialist camp in accordance with the principles of proletarian internationalism; to strive for peaceful coexistence on the basis of the five principles with countries having different social systems and oppose the imperialist policies of aggression and war; and to support and assist the revolutionary struggle of all the oppressed peoples and

nations. These three aspects are interrelated and indivisible, and not a single one can be omitted, (*A Proposal Concerning the General Line of Communist Movement*. Communist Party Publication, India; 1963; Page 28). So when a revolutionary struggle emerges in any country with whom China is not bound by the five principles of coexistence, China has not to consider the second aspect in formulating her specific foreign policy. But when such a struggle breaks out in a country with whom China is related diplomatically, the second aspect has to be considered. Though the general support and sympathy to the revolutionary people remains there always, she is unable to voice her open support in the latter type, as 'it is absolutely impermissible and impossible for countries practicing peaceful co-existence to touch even a chair of each other's social system'; (Ibid, P-27). It is on these that China bases her specific policies, and she is doing exactly that when formulating her present policies regarding the struggles in Pakistan and Ceylon, with both of whom she has diplomatic relations based on the five principles of co-existence. That is why there is no open Chinese support for these revolutionary struggles and won't be 'either until the relations between these two types of countries change at the initiative of the governments of these semi-colonial countries.

This restraint on China's part cannot but be a compromise and she does not deny this. Is this type of compromise permissible? The CPC says, 'It is necessary for the socialist countries to engage in negotiations of one kind or another with the imperialist countries. It is possible to reach agreements through negotiation by relying on the correct policies of the socialist countries and on the pressure of the people of all countries.' (Ibid, P. 28) And she concludes, 'but necessary compromises

the imperialist countries do not require between the socialist countries and nations to follow suit and compromise with imperialism and its lackeys.' (Ibid, P 28) What message does this convey to the revolutionary peoples of Pakistan and Ceylon? Does this not convey true revolutionary support and sympathy of the socialist state concerned to them? To do away with the least confusion from even the most fastidious mind, the CPC has further stated, 'No one should ever demand in the name of peaceful coexistence that the oppressed people and nations should give up their revolutionary struggle.' (Ibid, P. 28).

Thus, it is clear that regarding Pakistan, China has two open and clear stands—to support the Pakistani people and government if and when imperialists or their henchmen interfere in the former's internal affairs; and to deem the present struggle (and any such struggle) over there strictly to be an internal affair of that country which totally correspond to what the CPC has declared to be the guide line for the foreign-policy of a socialist state in their article '*More on the differences between Comrade Togliatti and us,*' on March 4, 1963—'...the socialist countries stand for and adhere to the policy of peaceful coexistence with countries and develop friendly relations and carry on trade on the basis of equality with them. In pursuing the policy of peaceful coexistence, the socialist countries oppose the use of force to settle disputes between states and do not interfere in the internal affair of any other country.' (Peking Publication, P-85) So, summing up, we can rightly quote once again: 'Our proletarian foreign policy is not based on expediency, it is a policy in which we have long persisted. This is what we did in the past and we will persist in doing the same in the future.' (Report To The Ninth Congress of The Communist Party of China by Lin Piao; *Peoples Democracy*, Appendix-1, Page 56-57).

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Mao And Psychology

Psychology is given undue importance in a capitalist society to focus people's attention on the mental and not the material disabilities of society. That is why the French students in 1968 started their revolution by boycotting the Psychology classes in the colleges. They contended that psychology is being used to produce morons to serve the capitalist machinery.

It is but natural that Mao did not find any use for psychology. So if Black Power leaders like Fanon raise the status of psychology (*Frontier*, May 15, 1971, Orville Schell's article), it only shows the lingering power of capitalism even in the revolutionary movement. I do not know how far Schell is correct in stating that "There is a clear tension between the public and private, between class and individual. This idea of "tension between the private and public" even in the minds of revolutionaries shows how "alive and kicking" Adam Smith still is in the imperialist world.

M. N. D. NAIR
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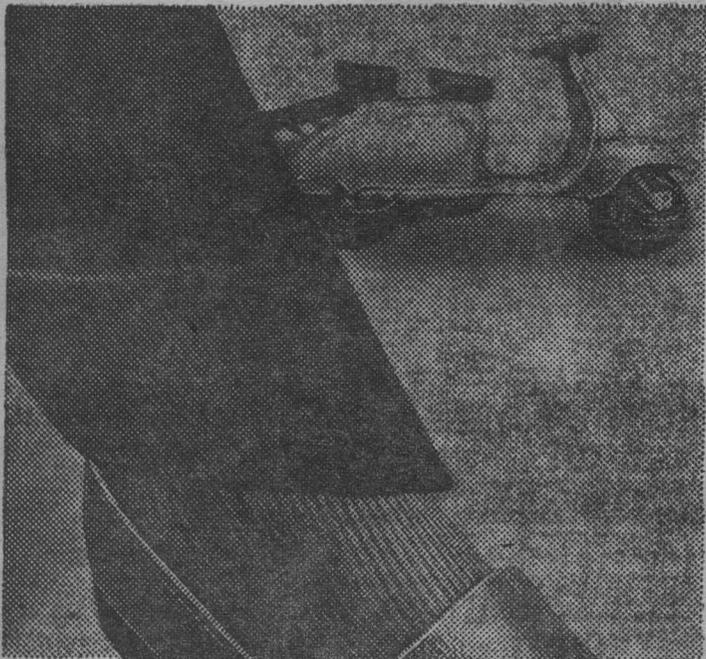
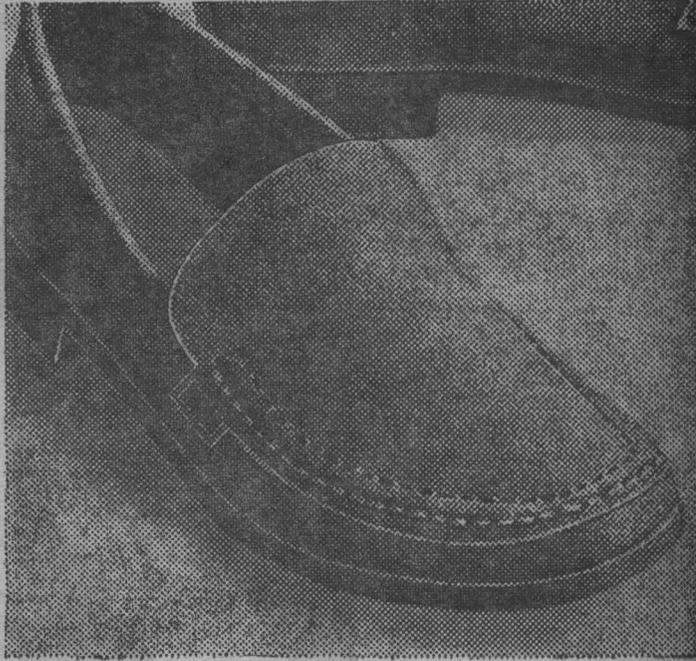
Ekhoney

I fully agree with Mr Ashok Rudra when he says that the review of *Ekhoney* was unfair. I do not feel that *Ekhoney* is a great film. But it is high time this type of snobbery stopped in the pages of *Frontier*.

ASOKE DASGUPTO
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