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AFTER THE TOUR

THE Prime Minister is returning empty-handed from her tour abroad. The countries she visited were carefully chosen; they are the principal aid-givers to Pakistan. Perhaps the Prime Minister had thought that if she personally explained to the governments of these countries General Yahya Khan's perfidy over Bangladesh and the plight of the people there, they might use aid as a leverage to make the Pakistan President agree to a dialogue with the captive Sheikh. Not only has she not received any such assurance from the host countries, but some of them have frankly informed her of their unwillingness to do so. Britain tried a confidence-trick on her when she agreed with the Indian view that there should be a political settlement of the Bangladesh issue. But the political settlement Britain has in mind can be anything but what India thinks is imperative for lifting the load of evacuees from her. The British Queen's declaration that her Government will continue its efforts for a political settlement could not have cheered the Prime Minister's heart. President Nixon was gracious enough to promise that Pakistan would receive no arms from the U.S. The quantity in the pipe-line was beginning to seem inexhaustible, for since the one-time exception to the U.S. arms embargo to this sub-continent several shiploads of U.S. arms have reached Karachi.

The Prime Minister said in the U.S. that her discussion with President Nixon was satisfactory for it helped them to understand each other's point of view. This is merely a polite way of saying that the twain did not meet. Her peeved retorts to television interviews in Britain were a measure of her disappointment at the British attitude. She had expected that as the head of government of a country suddenly burdened with nearly ten million evacuees she would receive sympathy. Sympathy she might have got, but that was not backed by any promise of assistance. On the contrary, she was much lectured on how she should conduct herself to avert a catastrophic war in the subcontinent. In spite of her repeatedly asserting that India was not involved in the Bangladesh dispute and her sole concern was to get rid of the overflow of the dispute, the host countries are still insisting on an Indo-Pakistan summit to resolve the problem. China also has urged the same course. Obviously, India suffers from a credibility gap in these countries. Perhaps because she has

less manoeuvrability than Pakistan in international relations, and even that little is exhausted with the Indo-Soviet Treaty. The Soviet Union's stand on Bangladesh is not radically different from that of the West, and India is now pledged to consult the Soviet Union before launching on a course that does not flow from the Soviet stance.

In London the Prime Minister declared in exasperation that Indians knew what they wanted and they were going to do it. What India wants is known; but how she is going to secure the return of the millions of evacuees in safety and dignity is unclear. India's last hope has

been dashed, and the authorities are now left with only their brave words and promises. The hawks in this country may rejoice, and some of the Prime Minister's presently supine rivals may try to gain on her by rash professions and rasher actions. With the winter session of Parliament beginning in a few days the pressure may mount. The hawks do not realise and the doves may not always remember that while a war will not necessarily ensure the return of the evacuees, it will certainly create a new horde of destitutes and at the end India may find herself burdened with a bigger problem than what she is facing now.

Patriots All ?

Last August the police shot dead a man at Howrah Station suspecting him to be Ashim Chatterjee of the Bengal-Bihar-Orissa Border Regional Committee of the CP(ML). Later, people were called in to identify the corpse in the morgue. The police claimed he was the man they wanted but CP(ML) sources were confident that Ashim Chatterjee was alive.

This time it is Ashim Chatterjee, caught alive, along with two friends, at a small railway station in Bihar. It is being said that with his arrest, one phase of the Naxalite movement is about to end. Ashim Chatterjee and his comrades were known for their painstaking work among the landless and poor peasants in Debra-Gopiballavpur and Birbhum. And if this is the mass line they had decided to continue and extend on a wider scale, the phase is most unlikely to come to an end, for this is the phase that matters in the long run. And since it does so, the police are and will be unrelenting in their campaign of arrest and annihilation of the cadres who count, with the help of Congress and other hoodlums; also of people who call themselves leftists.

The police have again started mass arrests of the CPM rank and file in their strongholds. The more militant

among them are being liquidated. This 'monstrous repression of democratic movement', the CPM Central Committee says, is hindering the Bangladesh struggle. In what way are our people struggling for Bangladesh? The struggle, if it can be so called, is in the hands of the army and diehard bureaucrats, and quite a lot of people are making a pretty pie—a wartime atmosphere is like sardines to sharks. There are no reports of any close collaboration between Indian leftists and the Mukti Bahini or the refugees. The Bahini is under the strict surveillance of other people. If these people go to war, a full-fledged war, the CPM thinks that Indians will rise to a man to defend the nation. Despite 'the monstrous repression' at home? Is there then

an understanding that despite protests against the repression of the rank and file, the party men at the top will continue to be patriotic and election-minded and collaborate with all sorts of groups and committees sponsored by the repressive authorities?

There is practically no democratic movement at the moment. The agitation against the arbitrary dismissal of Government employees has petered out. In these circumstances, the CPM rally on November 7 was most impressive. Leave out the partisans who believe and do what they are told. There must have been thousands of others on the Maidan who sought an answer to the contradiction inherent in the assumption that a war would be just though the executors of that war are fascistic; there were thousands driven out from their own homes in this city who perhaps wanted to know how they could go back, how they could meet the joint onslaught of the young fascists backed by the police and CRP. What is the way out of the mess of rising prices and increasing unemployment? Do they have to take the war noises seriously—stay put on the street in the posture of a lizard when the sirens begin to wail or dim their lights occasionally in the evening? Or are these just part of the election stunts of the Congress(R)? Elections? Some of those on the Maidan must have wondered whether the CPM has been reduced to a paper tiger prowling to jump into the ballot box.

The questions, big and small, remain unanswered.

Hurrying Socialism

The President has promulgated in the last three weeks nine ordinances. Parliament sits on November 15. The President did not wait for the legislators. Justice delayed is justice denied, he must have thought. He must have been overridden by the wish to deliver the goods before No-

vember 15. He has no time either to explain the emergency under which the ordinances were made.

To the uninitiated in State affairs, all the ordinances however appear a bit funny. The latest is the funniest.

This amends the 1951 Act on de-

velopment and regulation of industries and empowers the Government to take over any industrial undertaking closed for more than three months. The ordinance aims at reviving industries in the country.

It looks funny because it gives the impression that the Government is capable of reviving the industries before November 15 by taking over closed units. It looks funny because the number of closed units is negligible in comparison with the total industrial units in the country; revival of the former would make no dent on the general industrial scene. It looks funny because State management is considered better than private management, although public sector performance has till date given no cause for such optimism. It is queer because it gives the Government power to take over closed units without prior investigation; its omnipotence seems to be matched only by its omniscience. It empowers the bureaucrats to rule the closed factories dictatorially; it dispenses with the need, for the bureaucrats, to observe the Industrial Disputes Act, 1951 and even the obligation to pay the creditors of the closed units. The workers are shorn of their trade union rights; they and their rights obviously are considered the root cause of the mismanagement of the units. It is funny because it does not propose to take over without paying compensation; it obviously does not consider the proprietors of the closed units responsible in any way for the closures.

Mr Nijalingappa however should have known it better. He is not somebody uninitiated in governmental ways of doing things. He wondered why the Government should not start

independent, new, viable industrial units instead of wasting public funds on what he called mere junks which had outlived their utility. Asked why he advanced Rs 80 lakhs to two sick mills in Mysore while he was the Chief Minister, Mr Nijalingappa candidly confessed that he was a fool. He had already calculated and found that the Government had lost, in Bombay alone, Rs 5 crores in running sick mills.

What Mr Nijalingappa would not say is of course the fact that his government as all the other State governments in the country are do-

ing their bit in helping the sick mills and sick capitalists through public funds. There being no difference between private capital and bureaucratic capital so far as the immediate interests of the workers are concerned, the workers may think that they are now on to frying fans from out of fire, but Mr Nijalingappa has no reason to call the ordinance a piece of political chicanery. Had he been in power, he would have done the same thing. Elections are coming on fast. There must be fast gimmicks. Burnish something to hold on and expatiate upon at election meetings.

The War Goes On

Washington has tried to make the world believe that the Cambodian operation has been well done and all is quiet on that front. But as the events have shown, neither was it a success nor has the war stopped. To the great chagrin of the U.S. the communists have reappeared in strength and demonstrated that they can still strike and destroy. Last May their sappers blew up Phnom Penh's main petrol complex, destroying more than 40 per cent of the stored oil. Recently, the guerillas were seen in Snoul and in Memut and also around Krek where heavy fighting is on to gain control of the strategic plantation town.

The war has badly shaken the Cambodian economy; and it is fast sinking to a new low. Crops have been destroyed and the country is importing rice, salt and other essentials from outside. Prices have gone up alarmingly and the trade deficit has widened undermining the credit of the riel. To cope with the situation the authorities have been forced to think out certain control devices. Luxury imports are said to have either been downgraded or suspended. The riel has been devalued from 55 to the dollar to about 140 on an adjustable basis. Sok Chong, the second Deputy Premier and Finance Minister, has announced that efforts would be made

to boost home production though the Minister could neither lay down the details nor hint how the intended measures could be put into effect at a time when fighting goes on unabated.

Perhaps the minister deliberately withheld information for he knows that the only thing that can boost the economy is American aid. And Lon Nol, the Cambodian Premier, after returning from his sojourn to America, is said to have confided to his cohorts in Phnom Penh that Washington could at last be made to understand the real cause of Cambodia's ailment—the war 'imposed' by Hanoi and its southern collaborators'—and it has agreed to spoonfeed Cambodia by generous grants. Meanwhile, the Premier has set out to put his house in order. The National Assembly had long been rendered powerless by the gradual weeding out of those who dared to disagree with Lon Nol. But even then that toothless institution became a sore to the Premier. Declaring that democracy and freedom are futile in wartime he has suspended the Assembly and decided to rule by decree.

Nobody knows what exactly happened between Lon Nol and President Nixon but evidently he did not draw blank. An additional military aid of \$200 million together

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with an economic aid of \$110 million and a food aid of \$20 million is a handsome contribution from a patronising master. And the visit of the commander of the U.S. Pacific Forces indicates that Cambodia is quite high on the Pentagon's list of military priorities. This may well be

the pattern of Nixon's new-look Indochina policy. He wants to avoid direct combat engagement in the treacherous undergrowth of Indochina, but is eager to provide the apparatus for mutual throat-slitting so that the U.S. can stay in the country.

Italian Labour

Doubts have started creeping among Italy's big corporations whether their political extension, the Centre-Left coalition, is any longer in a position to control the new situation developing out of the new phase in workers' struggle. But has the Italian big business anything to do with the revival of the fascist threat? Just when the outside world was getting fed up with the Centro-Sinistra phenomenon of 'more it changes the more it remains the same', striking fascist gains in local elections revived interest in the country's politics. No less important than the question whether the spectre of fascism is inspired by big business is the fact that the fascists have been able to rally more people in the south which has not at all benefited from the economic miracle than in the north which has become a pace-setter in economic development for other Common Market members. The inability of the Centre-Left to carry out necessary reforms and the failure of the Communist Party to offer an alternative programme have created a vacuum where the fascists have moved in. They are being used to preserve law and order in the streets and to maintain discipline in factories.

Big business has not yet felt the necessity of announcing that it is supporting the fascists to ensure that the political balance does not shift too far to the left. In a sense, neo-fascism is still a reserve force.

The issues on which Italian labour is fighting have caught the bureaucratic trade union in cold feet. Labour movements have been in most cases spontaneous, being encouraged from below or the shop floor level. No doubt, more money is demanded but higher wages are not to be related to improvement in productivity. Equal pay rise for all is claimed and not percentage increase with a view to reducing disparities in pay. The concept of incentives is challenged; the barrier between wages and salaries is sought to be done away with; there is rejection of the hierarchical order in factories; there is refusal to work in unhealthy conditions even if employers are ready to pay higher wages.

Who are leading this new struggle? The answer is to be found in the slogan "we are the trade union". The rank and file elect their own representatives who in many cases are not trade unionists. Many new platforms like general assemblies and shop and factory councils were born over which the bureaucratic trade unions had little control. The new wave in the labour movement is in clash with the very concept of capitalism, but the employers are yet in a fix whether to confront the working class directly or to continue to rely on trade unions, particularly on the Communist-dominated CGIL, to bring the struggle back into the traditional framework. True, the

movement reached its climax in 1969, but the force is not yet spent.

Italy's major political parties are now in a state of confusion. The Centre-Left is not yet decided whether the opening to the left should be extended to include the Communists. But Communist Deputies are cooperating with the Government in Parliament. The fascist success in local elections has, however, convinced a section of the Christian Democratic Party to shun the company of the Communists. The PCI had also to exclude those who openly said that the Party should have a revolutionary programme. The biggest Communist Party in Europe has still its use to Italian big business; there seems to be a tacit agreement under which the Communists will maintain industrial peace and the employers will give a few concessions to labour from time to time.

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The Safari Is Over

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

MRS Indira Gandhi drew blank in Washington. Yet it was sought to be made out in New Delhi through inspired news reports that the lack of White House response to her personalised diplomacy was no surprise to her. The political tyros who plan her foreign policy advised her to go to Washington. The visit was not at the United States initiative. Her advisers are supposed to have briefed her on the eve of the safari that the United States was opposed to the break-up of Pakistan and wanted at least a year's cooling-off period. In which case, the visit was uncalled for unless Mrs Gandhi had a very inflated idea of her diplomatic prowess.

The uneasy interlude during her absence from New Delhi will not last long after her return. The Bhutto mission to Peking seems to have upset the Foreign Office. Its own assessment has been that China will not intervene in an Indo-Pakistani conflict. Mr Swaran Singh told Parliament's Consultative Committee this. General Yahya Khan, in his two shrewdly timed newspaper interviews, has said China would give them arms and ammunition and did not talk of Chinese involvement in a conflict. But Mr Bhutto has said at least twice that if there were to be a war more than two armies would be involved. While General Yahya Khan was harping on the theme of Chinese arms to put pressure on the United States to give more arms, Mr Bhutto's statements were designed to put diplomatic counter-pressure on the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, the leadership in New Delhi would not take chances until the outcome of the Bhutto mission is known.

At best, Mr Bhutto might be seeking a treaty on the lines of the Indo-Soviet treaty as a diplomatic checkmate on the Soviet Union. Any arms

or ammunition Pakistan might get from China will be of little consequence to the immediate military balance between India and Pakistan. A conflict in the next 12 weeks will not be materially affected by such aid. It is extremely improbable that China would intervene militarily in a conflict between India and Pakistan, by opening a second front. It is more probable that Mr Bhutto, unnerved at signs of change in China's attitude to the Bangladesh issue, is trying to commit Peking to intervening diplomatically.

Time is running out for New Delhi and the next two weeks are crucial. The Prime Minister's return will put the issues back in proper focus. Pakistan, material-wise can fight 90 days but personnel-wise cannot hold on for more than 45 days. Nevertheless any conflict will be a short-duration (15 days) affair before the super-powers intervene to impose a ceasefire. No war is fought to the finish these days. The super-powers never fight wars directly.

The plans are becoming clearer. If some eight districts of Bangladesh territory are freed and the Bangladesh government establishes physical control of the territory, India might sign a 10-year-treaty with it and the Mukti Bahini offensive will continue.

Militarily Pakistan has been over-extended on the borders. On the eastern sector if it faces the Indian army, its position would be most vulnerable behind the lines where the Mukti Bahini would be operating effectively after the monsoon waters drain off.

What is likely to be achieved through a short and swift operation is anybody's guess. Both the sides would in that event be gambling on a short-duration confrontation.

There is little chance of a political solution now. The Mujibnagar lea-

dership is divided: seven out of the 33-member Awami League executive are said to be with Mr Khondakar Mustaque Ahmed favouring a political solution within the framework of Pakistan. The rest are opposed to it. At a recent meeting of the executive open challenges and counter-challenges were exchanged and there it stays.

One can think of many plausible reasons why the military leadership in Pakistan would not like to lose Bangladesh without a war. The army regulars have contempt for the irregulars. General Yahya Khan would rather lose Bangladesh to the Indian army than to the rag-tag Mukti Bahini. On another plane, a theocratic state that Pakistan is would rather fight a non-Muslim country than limiting the fight to a Muslim-majority East Bengal.

The Soviet role in the big game is still baffling. It is going all out to step up military aid to India but is assuring Pakistan that it does not want any conflict in the sub-continent. The Soviets would like to see a political solution within Pakistan and a government amenable to its influence in Dacca. As the next best, they would countenance an independent Bangladesh which would swoon in gratitude to the Soviet Union. If neither of these materialises, Moscow would have lost its game. Chinese influence over an independent Bangladesh is the thing the Soviets dread most.

In the Foreign Office nobody talks about China these days. But it looks as though New Delhi has instilled more politics into the ping-pong team's visit than the Chinese could have possibly thought of. The two newsmen whose visit with the team was ably contrived are for all purposes government representatives. One is from the radio and another is

from the semi-government news agency, its defence correspondent. The players were subjected to long political lectures by China experts to insulate them against possible brain-washing. The ping-pong team as a whole is an apolitical lot and there was no need to politicise them for the visit.

The plan for restoring relations

with China at the ambassadorial level has got jammed up somewhere. The career diplomats in the Foreign Office would like a politician to be sent to Peking. They want one of their own men there. Mishra Jr. with his father's influence wanted to be the first Charge d'Affaires to be promoted as Ambassador, having earned that famous Mao smile two May days ago.

November 7, 1971

War : Myth And Reality

SAIKAT SEN

THE Government of India and its drummer boys are very busy creating a war-psychosis, especially in the sensitive border provinces and its immediate vicinities. The propaganda machinery is in full swing about the war preparations by both sides, offensive in the case of Pakistan and defensive in the case of India.

Calcutta and its suburbs have been sporadically observing a virtual black-out for the past few months thanks to the outbreak of power-troubles in the DVC. This endless suffering of the people has now been given a logical basis in the name of black-out rehearsals. The demons of darkness, the storm-troopers of the ruling Congress, are sharpening their old knives. Participants in the fraudulent movement in mock protests against price rise they are on fast today and will break it tomorrow presumably not by drinking cups of lemon-juice, but fresh cups of blood of their political opponents. The prices will go up. Termination of employees' services will be continued in different sectors. The army has been kept alert after a long lull of no-war; reservists have been called up. Declaration of a state of emergency is in the offing. The people of West Bengal have been asked to be mentally ready to accept anything and to face any situation. Both the 'thing' and the 'situation' have been preceded by the term 'any'

just to magnify the degree of uncertainty. What is a special case in West Bengal today will surely become a general one for the whole of India tomorrow.

Public memory is short but the fastidious cannot just forget. At this critical hour, they should recall the cooked-up stories about our defensive offensive of this very nature in the days of 1962.

It is being argued by the hucksters of peace in our country that Pakistan, with a view to diverting the attention of the people of the world from the East Bengal problem to the Indo-Pakistan conflict, may start a war against India. But is this an acceptable argument? Has the East Bengal problem ever been a headache of the people of the world?

There is no strong reason to believe that President Yahya Khan is itching to launch an abortive war of aggression against India. War, on the other hand, may be necessary for those who want a short-cut solution to the problem which is popularly known as the 'political settlement of the Bangladesh issue. What kind of a fruit can a war bring to one who has already resorted to arms to suppress the upsurge of the insurrectionists in East Bengal? There are two possible outcomes of an Indo-Pakistan war if it comes... while Yahya will remain enmeshed in combating the sophisticatedly trained Indian Army, he

may completely lose his grip over East Bengal. Why should he want to achieve this at the cost of an expensive and suicidal military adventure? War may lead to a "political settlement" of the East Bengal problem by crude peddling of the issue by the shrewd big powers. Is it credible that Yahya Khan will be eager to have such an unpalatable dish on his political dining table in any Taskent-type round-table conference under the direct control of the two super-powers?

If Yahya Khan was bent on war, Mrs Gandhi would not have gone out on a tour of the two continents.

The idea of a "political settlement of the Bangladesh" issue is being propounded by those who do not take a single step that does not serve their immediate interests. Surely they don't and can't; this is a matter of their class interests. Should the people yield to their dictates of war and peace?

Very often we, the wretched Indian people, are urged to believe that it is the responsibility of all those interested in peace to create conditions that will stop further influx of refugees and enable those already in India to return to their homes without further delay. It is being assumed by nearly all and sundry that the refugees will go back to their homes if favourable conditions are created. How far is this assumption justified? This is the crux of the matter.

When the refugees were allowed to swarm into India did they give any guarantee of their going back? They did not. No such commitment was demanded of them. They came in fear—in some cases they were evicted by the local communalist tyrants, at other places, lacking in the spirit of collec-

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tive resistance, they were forced to leave by the brutal atrocities of the Pakistan Army. Our generous Government (of course not so at home), always a bit forward in displaying its fund of mercy and compassion, allowed these poor creatures to come to this sacred (!) land of the world's biggest democracy. This was *voluntarily* done by them (the owners of the existing state machinery) and not under constraint. Certainly Yahya Khan did not send a message requesting our Government to accommodate the people tortured and driven out by his armed regiments. So to say that the burden of the refugees has been imposed on us will not be altogether correct.

The next question is: will the evacuees who have once left their dear motherland to save their lives and honour be ever willing to go back if and when normalcy is restored through the process of the much-talked-about 'political settlement'? The evacuees are by and large Hindus. They do sustain and will sustain the same intense fear about those communalist hooligans and other anti-social elements who drove them out. The evacuees are now destitutes and they will discount all hopes of getting back their properties intact even if a smooth return is possible for them. In such a case what is likely to be our outlook and action? We will probably have no alternative but to remove them forcefully. By what moral right will we have to repulse people whom we permitted an unconditional entry out of human sympathy and consideration?

Side by side we have no tears to shed for the innumerable distressed men of this soil who live no better than beasts day after day in the streets, in railway stations, in dismal bustees and elsewhere. Should charity not begin at home?

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NOVEMBER, 13, 1971

In the official opinion of the Indian Government, a liberation war is going on in East Bengal. Every able-bodied person is a precious unit of the liberation force. A section of the people who are now under the shelter of the Indian Government would have been forced to join the liberation fighters by the drift of the situation—repression always breeds resistance in the long run. By indulging the people to leave the battlefield and come under the safe and costly umbrella of democracy (!) in their millions, the government has reduced the volume of force in support of the liberation fighters.

Meanwhile, additional taxes of Rs 70 crores have been imposed on the already burdened and bent backs of the Indian masses. But don't mind—this is also done with a pious end, i.e. just to meet the exigencies caused by the heavy refugee influx. The presence of the evacuees is not to be a permanent feature according to the analysis and assessment of Government officials. So the additional taxation would be withdrawn as soon as the excess strain of refugee-maintenance is eliminated. The rulers of New Delhi have long been experts in hoodwinking the people by their highfalutin verbiage but this time they have gone to the extreme.

Under the aegis of Mrs Gandhi the country is facing either an unjust cumulative war or an uneasy peace and is going to the dogs. The country will be mauled more and more by an ever-deepening economic crisis manifesting itself in poverty, unemployment and moral-intellectual prostitution. A reign of random persecution has already been let loose and shades of fascism are engulfing parts of the country under the veil of democracy. Leftists of all hues have proved themselves rather bankrupt, senile and impotent vis-a-vis the aggression and onslaught of the existing anti-people state machinery. A consciously-attempted and correctly-oriented, well-organised armed class-war is the only answer to any anti-people war, the only way out of this crisis.

Kerala

From Communism To Conformism

RAMJI

THE volte-face of the CPI is complete. In 1957 when they came to power in Kerala, they introduced the Education Bill, aimed at curbing big business in education, which the Catholic Church, the Nair Society, the SNDP and other organisations and individuals were carrying on with heavy subsidy from public funds. This triggered the 'Liberation Struggle' spearheaded by the Nair chief, Mannom, and backed fanatically by the Church and all other vested interests. The Ministry was eventually dismissed on the excuse of 'mass upsurge' against it. Mrs Gandhi, the then Congress boss, played a leading role in this dismissal.

Now, after fourteen years, the CPI is in power, as leader of a multi-party front. Over 6,000 teachers employed in private colleges numbering over 130 have been on strike for over 50 days. College education has virtually come to a halt in the State, since in education the private sector far exceeds the public sector. The teachers demand direct payment of their salaries by the Government who foots the bills anyway through its grants to private colleges. This and other demands for curbing the autocratic power of the management and their built-in tendency to mulct the teachers have been resisted stoutly by the CPI chief, Mr Achutha Menon, and, significantly enough, by the Muslim League. These two parties are now with the management while all other parties of the ruling front and the opposition are with the teachers. This is perhaps the ultimate in the aberration of progressivism.

Never in the history of this agitation-prone State have so many agitations mushroomed in such profusion.

To back the demands of the private college teachers, the entire student

community led by the Congress(R) and the Marxists mostly, have boycotted schools and colleges and are now engaged in demonstrations, picketing etc. The Youth Congress, the militant wing of the Congress(R), has entered the fray. And so have all the ruling Front parties except the Muslim League and the CPI. The CPI youth wing characteristically enough dubs this move by students and youth 'adventurism' and asserts that without amending the Constitution the managements cannot be brought to heel. This is the stand of Mr Achutha Menon and the CPI. The theory of the Marxists—Administration and Agitation simultaneously—which used to be ridiculed by the Congress and others was adopted by the Congress. The CPI stands isolated.

The NGOs in the State have issued notice of strike from November 10 onwards. This has been triggered by what is termed here as the Governor-Dias-style action of the Government in denying pay to the staff of the Director of Public Instruction, for the day they resorted to a pen-down strike, some time back. NGOs' associations following different political parties have all come together to protest against this anti-trade union move of the Government. In this the pro-CPI NGOs have also teamed up with the others.

The vast army of school teachers are on the war path. They demand that the new rules introduced by the Government for recognition of their associations be scrapped. They call these rules pernicious, aimed at splitting their organisational unity, with the sole intent and purpose of implementing the 'divide and rule' principle.

The pavement in front of the Secretariat at Trivandrum these days presents a strange sight. Dozens of awnings, bunting, placards, etc. put up by the satyagrahis of various hues, provided the entire area with strong overtones of a typical village fair. For, apart from the major agitations mentioned above, there are dozens of minor agitations going on at all levels

all over the State. And these are represented in front of the Secretariat.

Even the big Malayalam press which had been maintaining a conspiracy of silence over the acts of commission and omission of the Government is now obliged to come out with whimpering protests. The situation has reached crisis point at the time of writing (November 4). The Pradesh Congress Committee which is assuming more and more power overt-

ly with the entry of the Congress into the Cabinet fold is due to meet on the 5th to take stock of the situation. Nothing could be predicted at this stage. What if the Pradesh unit openly repudiates the CPI line? Since to the CPI power is an end in itself, it will cling on to the ministerial gadi, even though it is now proved that a vast mass upsurge has fairly engulfed it.

November 4, 1971

Industrialists In Distress

A. P. M.

TWO colliery owners were discussing their workers' agitation for bonus. "What do you do in such a situation?" asked one. "Go to the court. At least that's what I do," replied the other. "That's the best way of discouraging the union-wallahs. After all, they can't afford to go to court everytime there is a dispute. Unions must show result within a short period of time; they also lack funds. You dampen them really quickly by taking a dispute to court." "Yes, I think that's what I'll do," replied the man.

The adviser and the advised met the Calcuta press recently in an effort to present a united front of the coal industry in the context of the fair amount of slander heaped on it continuously since the Government take-over of the 214 coking coal mines. The gentleman who accepted the advice of taking labour disputes to court in order to harass the unions, agreed that the industry ought to have met the press much earlier, to be precise, immediately after the take-over was announced. It could not, because "we were not here." Where had they been? Though it was not disclosed at the press conference, the gentlemen, five in number, had been to New Delhi in a frantic attempt to stop the Government from taking over the ownership of the mines (by the present ordinance the Government has taken over the management, and not

the ownership, of the mines). They had also pressed two leading lawyers, both of whom have served big business and the princes in their recent misfortunes with zeal, to take up their case against nationalisation. Both the Government and the lawyers, however, dampened their spirit. The New Delhi Ministers and bureaucrats made it plain that the Government was serious, at the very least for the time being, about nationalisation of the mines. It would be futile to hope for their return in the foreseeable future. A bill was being prepared for taking over their ownership before long. The second damper came from the lawyers. "You cannot challenge the ordinance", they advised. "New Delhi has been really careful this time."

As a result, the gentlemen uttered two solid untruths at the press conference. "We welcome the take-over," they said. "And we want nationalisation real quick". This wish, as can be seen here, is an afterthought, induced by dismay rather than by any positive response to the executive action. The other lie was that the industry was not interested in seeking legal advice regarding the ordinance. The truth, as we have seen, is otherwise. Legal advice was sought, but the result has been rather disappointing. But will the industry not seek even an injunction, as businessmen usually do, whenever

the Government barges in? "Not even an injunction," the gentlemen solemnly said. Almost at the same time, the industry had talked two lawyers into applying for an injunction before the Calcutta High Court.

In many ways the response of the industry as a whole to the take-over has been interesting. Usually, a major industry responds to adverse executive actions in an organised and predictable manner. It is seldom that a patently hostile measure like take-over of units is welcomed. Yet following the take-over of the mines, the Indian Colliery Owners' Association did actually welcome it, assuring the Government of necessary help in executing it as well. Yet, for nearly a month before the take-over, during which period of time rumours of an imminent nationalisation spread in the coalfields, movable properties and records were sought to be removed from the mines that might be nationalised. The five big groups dominating about 90% of the coking coal output in the private sector kept their officers busy in New Delhi in attempts to find out which mines were being included in the list of take-over.

It is, however, a fact that not all mine-owners participated in the loot.

It took place mainly among two types of mining groups, those which included both coking and non-coking coal mines and those which were relatively smaller. Mr Kumaramangalam's statement that the clandestine removal of machinery and other movable properties was confined to a few mines, is a calculated understatement. Many colliery managers, who as a group have been opposing the colliery owners for a considerable period of time, have reported removals from a fairly large number of collieries. For various reasons, the Government does not wish to rub in this fact.

With the take-over of the mines, a fait accompli, the position of the industry can be described in the following manner: 'It is no use crying over spilled milk. By God's grace we have been able to manage things to some extent before the custodians came in. Our bank balances are pretty lean. We have let it be known that we were working on a tight money schedule. The truth is that we had been transferring funds elsewhere for quite some time. Our greatest help, of course, comes from the Provident Fund accounts. A good deal of money has accumulated there. Well, you can't expect us to behave

like scout boys, can you? If you have the power to take away our property, we also have the power to ensure that the loss of property does not leave us exactly poor'.

The insidious behaviour of the industry will be apparent from what is now happening in the non-coking coal sector. The miners' unions have been alleging transfers of machinery and records from a number of non-coking coal mines. The industry admits of panic among the non-coking coal mines, though it does not confirm reports of transfers of assets and records. Individual colliery owners, however, admit freely of these. The Government pleads helplessness, which is understandable. Unless the non-coking coal mines are also taken over there is no way of stopping the owners from transferring the assets and records. The industry had demanded a categorical statement from New Delhi that no such move is under contemplation. This has been given. Yet, the clandestine transfers are going on. The intention obviously is to make hay while the sun still shines. And in India, the sun mercifully shines longer and stronger than in many other countries.

Will Stalin's Prediction Come True ?

SANJOY GUPTA

STALIN in his celebrated *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* said: "Consequently the struggle of the capitalist countries for markets and their desire to crush their competitors proved in practice to be stronger than the contradictions between the capitalist camp and the socialist camp.

"What guarantee is there that Germany and Japan will not rise to their feet again, will not attempt to break out of American bondage, live their own independent lives? I think there is no such guarantee."

The recent dollar and monetary

crisis and the measures taken by U.S. imperialism are nothing more than an attempt to shift as much as possible of the burden of the crisis on to the competitors and weaker nations and to push down the living standards of the people in the industrialised as well as colonial and semi-colonial countries. This will intensify and not counter the financial crisis, the contradiction between the people and imperialism as well among imperialist powers.

In 1967-68 financial centres of the capitalist world were violently shaken three times: (1) the unusual rush for

gold in November 1967 substantially weakened the dollar and as a result the British pound had to be devalued by 14.3 per cent; (2) in March, 1968, another rush took a huge amount of gold out of America only in three weeks. It further weakened the dollar which forced the Johnson administration to set up a so-called "two-tier" system for gold which for all practical purposes was a further devaluation; (3) in November 1968, the French experienced a financial crisis that affected the British pound also and more than \$5 billion fled to West Germany followed by an 11.1 per cent devaluation of the franc,

The monetary and financial repercussions hit hard the very roots of capitalism. Confidence in the dollar was shaken everywhere in the world. The outflow of gold from America, particularly to West Germany, became almost a normal feature. The heavy selling of shares in America by foreign holders brought down New York Exchange prices by 17 per cent.

What are the political consequences of these violent storms? On the one hand U.S. imperialism and its junior partner, British imperialism are trying hard to maintain the existing financial and monetary system, for which Britain had so long not been allowed to join the Common Market; on the other hand, under the leadership and guidance of West Germany, some of the West European powers have been resisting the inflationary policies of U.S. and Britain. The existing monetary and financial policy confers special advantages on the dollar and the pound sterling as the main reserve currencies, while the bloc led by West Germany insists that the U.S. and Britain make concessions to them or face the consequences. West Germany has got favourable balances of trade and a large reserve of convertible currencies, while the U.S. has already lost its favourable trade balances and her convertibility is fast depleting. West Germany is pressing more and more vociferously for hegemony over Western Europe. France cannot yet decide her stand, so she has invited Britain to join the Common Market. The capitalist world monetary system is in the throes of disintegration. It is nothing but the reflection of irreconcilable internal and inter-imperialist contradictions.

No emergency measures can rescue the monetary system or the financial crises now getting worse everyday and party reaching a climax and nemesis. It is now more than 100 years since Marx predicted the inevitability of periodic economic crises of capitalist society as a result of the contradiction between the social character of production and the private appropriation by the capitalists of the values produced, who use these values for the

purpose of appropriating more profits. Marx wrote: "The last cause of all real crises always remains in the poverty and the restricted consumption of the masses..." The tendency of the productive power to expand and the restricted purchasing power of the masses is what was called by Marx "absolute impoverishment." The great depression of 1929 lasted up to 1934. Then the making and remaking of war blocs began in right earnest. The imperialist war itself was a crisis of capitalism. After the war Keynesian monetary theory and military economic practices could for some time postpone but not prevent the periodic economic crises of capitalism. Due to the "absence" of an economic crisis of the magnitude of 1929, bourgeois economists and the Soviet revisionists began to call these periodic crises as "recession," not crises. From the very rostrum of the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, the revisionists declared that Marx's theory of absolute impoverishment was invalid and "discovered" a new era of capitalism in which depression was no longer inevitable. Paul Sweezy and others came to rescue Marxism revising Marx's economic theory and the historic role of the working class. Capitalist economists and the revisionists began to dance to the same tune and on the same floor, calling Stalin's *Economic Problems* "trash" and "nonsense".

But U.S. imperialism is now facing the gravest political crisis because of the war. A way out was sought through East-West trade and the export of capital and goods to the Soviet bloc countries. But the Soviet Union also has now become America's contender in the world market and she is not willing to loosen her grip on the East European countries, although the contradictions between the Soviet Union and East European countries are growing fast. West Germany also casts a greedy look towards East European countries. Besides, the U.S. trade with the Soviet bloc as a whole is quite negligible. The U.S. Congress wants to remove restrictions on the sale of non-essen-

tial exports to "communist countries", meaning both the Soviet bloc and China. The Soviet Union demands long-term credit in major deals involving trade and capital investment, whereas the U.S., faced with an unfavourable balance of trade, is not in a position to grant such loans. Therefore the Soviet Union has been turning to West Germany and Japan as the most likely sources for long-term credit, particularly at this time of the U.S.'s difficulty.

This is the European picture so far as America is concerned. As to the Far East Japan is no longer willing to remain a "good boy" of U.S. imperialism. She has already demanded, in her latest plan announcement, absolute control over Korea, Indochina, Taiwan, Burma and elsewhere. America is still haunted by memories of Pearl Harbour; she no longer finds an easy market for her over-produced goods. At home there is the trouble of both white and "black" workers and of the returned soldiers. So Nixon finds no alternative but to woo China. China has extended her hand to Nixon to complete the disintegration of the capitalist system.

So the observation of Stalin that "the struggle of the capitalist countries for markets and desire to crush their competitors" are "stronger than the contradiction between the capitalist camp and the socialist camp" and the prediction that Japan and Germany will "attempt to break out of American bondage..." no longer sound so foolish to pundits.

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Cut The Classics ?

S. M. CHANDA

FOR quite a few weeks, in the early sixties, *John O' London's*, a literary weekly now defunct, acted as forum for a debate on whether the great classics should be abridged or not. Some distinguished writers crossed swords. The principal participant on one side was John Creasey, making a powerful plea for cutting nearly all the classics so as to make editions which could be read by anybody of reasonable intelligence, and on the other side was John O' London himself, suggesting in his gentle fashion that works of art would always be appreciated by a cultured minority and would invariably become debased by being made available to the multitude. Now, about a decade after that famous controversy, it can be said that the popularization of the classics by means of abridged versions, as advocated by Creasey, is in progress but, ironically, what John O' London apprehended has partly come true. The situation now, with a glut of 'classics retold' or 'classics abridged' on the market, is one that needs watching.

What is disquieting about this business of handling the classics is the tendency of many to make them spuriously accessible to the unthinking multitude. In a good many cases the edited classics are slovenly, abridgements made in a slipshod manner, at times even garbled.

Quite often the job is done unimaginatively, turning abridgement into sheer precis-making. It is a mistake to suppose that abridgement is an attempt only to reduce the length of the original. It requires, naturally, a great deal of slashing, but slashing has to be done adroitly so that the spirit and some exquisite qualities of the original are not damaged. The task is, briefly, one of reducing the quantity of the original without seriously impairing its quality. Somehow a judicious balance has to be struck.

I would give examples to show how unintelligent pruning, done mainly for compression, causes a deviation from the meaning of the original and so a partial misrepresentation of facts. In chapter 15 of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, after an angry outburst by Heathcliff, accusing Catherine of having tortured him, there is a twelve-line passage describing Catherine's psychology. It runs: 'The two, to a cool spectator, made a strange and fearful picture. Well might Catherine deem that heaven would be a land of exile to her, unless with her mortal body she cast away her moral character also. Her present countenance had a wild vindictiveness in its white cheek, and a bloodless lip and scintillating eye; and she retained in her closed fingers a portion of the locks she had been grasping...' This is followed by a torrent of excited words from Heathcliff.

In R. H. Durham's abridged version of *Wuthering Heights*, this powerful scene, described in twenty-three lines in the original, has been reduced to a four-line paragraph, ignoring completely the reference to Catherine's psychology. The result is most unfortunate: what is a scene of tempestuous passion in the original has become with Durham just an exchange of words. Its emotive quality has been sacrificed for the sake of simplification. Another instance of weakening the emotional effect of the original is in Durham's description of the death of Heathcliff. While the original reports—

"...I combed his black long hair from his forehead; I tried to close his eyes: to extinguish, if possible, that frightful, life gaze of exultation before any one else beheld it. They would not shut: they seemed to sneer at my attempts: and his parted lips and sharp white teeth sneered too" Durham simply skips it, thereby rejecting the symbolic value of Heathcliff's eyes refusing to close. We need to

remember that this image of the eyes refusing to close has thematic implications and to drop it is to dispense with an artistic device used by Brontë.

One serious defect of B. M. Chester's abridged version of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, on the whole a competent work, is that it rejects most of those short descriptive paragraphs which Conan Doyle incorporates in his book in order to create an atmosphere of mystery and suspense. Chester ignores the importance of these passages. For a down-to-earth writer like Conan Doyle descriptive paragraphs are functional, not mere scenes; they are intended either to evoke 'atmospheres' or to provide clues. Chester drops most of these and thereby ignores one of the constituent elements of Conan Doyle's art.

I do not agree with those puritans who consider every word, every sentence and almost every punctuation mark in the original to be sacrosanct and so to be kept inviolate. I feel that modifications, in vocabulary and syntactical constructions, are occasionally desirable for the sake of abridgement. But in making such modifications the utmost care should be taken to ensure that the special meaning of a particular word or punctuation mark in the original is not tampered with. Here is an example of an ill-chosen descriptive word in an abridged version of a classic, in preference to an expressive adverb in the original, shifting the emphasis to a point altogether different from what was intended by the classic-writer. When Jim, the poor husband, in O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi*, comes to hear of his wife having cut off her beautiful cascade-like hair, he is stunned. O. Henry's sentence runs: "'You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet, even after the hardest mental labour". Anthony Toyne's version of it is: "'You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, slowly, as if he had not

arrived at that obvious fact even after the hardest mental labour.' The adverb 'slowly', replacing 'laboriously', dwells on the speed of Jim's speech, whereas the latter is intended by O. Henry to suggest the mental strain Jim is going through in the context of the situation.

The substitution of 'a wooden leg' for 'a timber leg' in the description of Long John Silver in an abridged version of *Treasure Island* seems to me atrocious, for 'wooden' though logically correct is certainly not as evocative as 'timber'.

Personally, I welcome the idea of cutting the classics. It is a fact that in a great many of them, for instance, in the works of Dickens, Thackeray and Trollope, who were required by their publishers to write in serial form, to provide a certain amount of material to fill a certain number of pages, there is a lot of what may be described as dead wood. If this dead wood is removed from a masterpiece with tact and discrimination, it will be read and enjoyed by a much larger public than now. I do not hold that every masterpiece can be subjected to such a process. I cannot think of an abridged version of such a fascinating novel as *Pride and Prejudice*, of which every page is important, or of a compact work like *Madame Bovary*. But there are masterpieces which are not likely to lose much on account of abridgement. Interesting in this connexion is a remark made by Maugham on the popularity of Shaw in Germany. He wrote once that the Shavian plays were much more successful in Germany than in England not, as GBS himself believed, because of the greater intelligence of the Germans but because in Germany the directors in violation of Shaw's instruction—his insistence that every word in his play should be spoken—mercilessly pruned them of the verbiage they considered irrelevant to the dramatic action. Maugham suggests that pruning made GBS more enjoyable to the German public.

After 78 Days

By A FILM CRITIC

REALISTIC portrayals of contemporary life and events are hard to come by in the Indian cinema, Bengali films not excluded. And when such an attempt is made by a director whose artistic credibility has always been below par, it is all the more surprising. Ajit Lahiri has made many films but *Atattar Din Parey*, his latest, should get him more plaudits than those he may have earned earlier. Here is a film, though not devoid of melodrama, which is competently directed, helped largely by a very taut script and editing. The regret is that Lahiri did not dare part completely from the furrows of convention.

Till the romantic predilections of the retrenched factory worker turned wagon-breaker do not intrude heavily on our perceptibility, the film compels us to take notice of the director's skill and his intentions. The first opening shots before the titles appear ably present what the audience can expect in the next two hours or so. Dim lights of the railway yard, the ghostly figures of the wagon-breakers at their job, the shrill blasts of shunting engines, police whistles, shuffling movement of both the pursuer and the pursued, sounds of guns firing—visual, sound and both. Such control over the tools of the art are evident even later.

Consider the flashback to Fatik's happy days with Jhanti or even when melodrama reaches bursting point as Fatik, learning of the affair between Jhanti, his girl, and his brother, goes to kill her. Fatik raises the knife and he whole scene begins to swing slowly, a softly sung lullaby is also heard. The aim is profusion of sentimentality as the next scenes make clear, but how cleverly it is done. Mention must be made also of the moment when Fatik brings Jhanti to his house after the death of her father. Here we get to know Fatik a little

better, another side of his character, his genuine love for Jhanti.

The political issues raised by Ajit Lahiri are deliberate but the character of his political hero Hemanta is not easy to accept. Is Fatik really the protagonist of Hemanta's dream of a proletarian revolution? And then why does Hemanta run away from the scene? And his reformist attitude towards Fatik, the wagon-breaker, hardly justifies his political stance.

Saimit Bhanja gives a powerful portrayal as Fatik but the same acting laurels cannot be claimed by the others.

Clippings

East Bengal Guerillas

ALTHOUGH today newspaper reports on the Mukti Bahini's operations and its successes against the Pakistan army are not as wildly exaggerated as they used to be during the early days of the Bangla Desh war, they are still unrealistically sanguine and reflect a degree of unfamiliarity of the nature of the military operations that are being conducted in that country.

For instance, there are frequent reports about "liberated" areas under the occupation of the Bahini. A delegate to the recent International Conference on Bangla Desh claimed that the guerillas are taking a toll of 5,000 Pakistan army casualties every month and that the Pakistan Government is forced to spend up to 150 crores per month on the counter-insurgency operations, these overtly optimistic reports help nobody, least of all the Mukti Bahini. Ultimately, such reports will lead to the impression that the defeat of the Pakistan army is just around the corner and that the Bahini is well able to achieve its aims by itself.

One of the reasons for this unrealistic reportage is that though we now know something of the strength, organisation and tactics of the Mukti

Bahini, not much is known about the method of operation of the Pakistan army. The result is that in the absence of any definite information from the "other side of the hill", the success stories of the guerillas leave one with the impression of a Pakistan army with its back to the wall, fighting a losing battle in an atmosphere of terror and defeatism. This is not the case.

...the tactics of the Pakistan Army today is to maintain firm control in all major towns and cantonments all over Bangla Desh and to establish check posts along all the critical border areas. From these firm bases, detachments of troops are sent fanning out to border areas or other Mukti Bahini strongholds whenever intelligence is received about their movements. This is not counter-insurgency tactics; this is basically a defensive posture. However, if the Pakistan Government's aim is to maintain a military presence throughout the country, then it is achieving its aim. This is a strong military position because the guerilla tactics of the Mukti Bahini can strike only at its periphery. To dislodge any part of it—and only then can there be a claim to a "liberated area"—will entail set-piece battles in open combat. This the Bahini forces are unable to carry out, as they learned at great cost in April-May.

Nor is it realistic to assume that the Pakistan military operations are unduly logistically hampered or economically ruinous. It is true that rail road communications have been effectively disrupted, particularly in the Dacca-Comilla-Chittagong sector. But they are not entirely inoperable. In any case, Pakistan has been able to utilise a fleet of helicopters and patrol boats which were received from the United States during the relief operations following the East Bengal hurricanes, to augment their air maintenance capacity. Since the army is conducting an essentially lowintensive campaign, the maintenance requirements of the forces are only marginally above normal. There has certainly been a tightening of belts,

but no indication that logistical maintenance is breaking down.

It is not the purpose here to belittle the heroic efforts of the Mukti Bahini but to introduce a degree of realism into the unduly optimistic picture that is so often painted about the purely military operations that are being conducted. The Mukti Bahini is a resistance regular armed force: it is not feasible to expect it to achieve a military victory.

On the other hand, whenever the guerillas and saboteurs are active—in the border belts, in various pockets in the Dacca or Mymensingh regions, and in the southern delta regions—their sabotage operations against shipping at Chalna, Chittagong and Narayanpur have been remarkably successful—they have forced the enemy on to the defensive. They have prevented the occupation government from exercising effective administrative control over most parts of the country. And they have succeeded in demoralising Pakistan armed forces personnel to an extent where the government now has to offer inducements in the form of extra pay and promotion to personnel posted... (Major Gen. D. K. Palit (Retd.) in *Hindustan Times*).

Waiting For War ?

Pakistani troops have almost completely disappeared from the interior of East Bengal during the past few weeks, moving to the border to join units already deployed to meet a possible Indian attack... The Pakistani Army from the very beginning of the Bangladesh crisis aimed at getting most of its troops braced on the border both to intercept returning Mukti Bahini and to block the Indian Army's likely routes of advance should there be a war. But Pakistani build-up in the border areas is now even more obvious and complete than it was, for example, in June. The war against the Mukti Bahini within East Bengal is now being fought, insofar as it is being fought at all, largely by police and Razakars

stiffened in some really troublesome areas by a few army units. This has allowed the Mukti Bahini to concentrate in comparative safety around Dacca and they have already begun a bombing, burning, and demolition offensive that in the next few weeks could become a real problem for the army and the authorities.

But the army's concentration in the border areas does not now mean, any more than it did two months ago, that Pakistan is convinced that India is about to attack, nor that she herself is about to attack in the West. Unfortunately for the Pakistan Army's hopes of dealing swiftly with the Mukti Foj forces in the interior, it is the only deployment open to them as long as there is any threat of war. The generals here know that in a war they would lose the use of Dacca airport and of the district air strips and that their use of roads and railways would be at least greatly impeded. They would have to fight where they are now with what they have got now... In fact most senior officers here still believe an Indian attack to be unlikely, but they cannot take a chance on standing down troops or using them in the interior. If India did attack they would never be able to get them back into line.

If there is a war, the generals here hope that the Indians would be hampered by the inadequate road system of the province and by its many river and stream lines. They argue that the Indian Army could not squeeze its admitted general superiority in infantry and artillery on to the available axes of advance. Thus Pakistani units would be fighting at better odds than would appear on paper.

...The theory that Pakistan itself might start a war as a means of getting out of an unbearable situation carries little plausibility, apparently reflecting attitudes in the West...

There are no illusions about Pakistan being able to win a war in the East. While the army believes it could hold the Indians in a short war they know that once existing supplies were used up in combat that would be the end. The only hope would be that the fight

in the West would go sufficiently well for Pakistan to bring an early ceasefire.

Most Western diplomats here also believe that war, while not impossible, is unlikely. They point out that the Indian build-up on this border was largely complete two months ago, and that although there may have been some sub-unit reinforcements, there has been no recent major addition to the Indian forces around East Bengal.

As to the cross-border shelling it has been going on for months, and although it has increased recently, so have Mukti Bahini infiltrations and raids which it is largely designed to cover. And apart from diverting the Pakistan Army's attention from the Mukti Bahini and keeping it generally off-balance, the Indian military threat was and remains a cord that India can use diplomatically for at least two purposes, generating international pressure on Pakistan for a settlement and inducing the international community to give more help on the refugee problem.

The general view in Dacca, both of West Pakistanis and foreigners, is thus that war is not just round the corner in spite of the bellicose statements of the Indian Defence Minister which, it is carefully noted, have not been backed up in any way by Mrs Gandhi. There is less optimism about the avoidance of war in the longer term with many believing that ultimately only a conventional military fight can bring a permanent solution. For the meantime, however, the belief is that both sides still regard other options as preferable to war. (Marlin Woollacott in *The Guardian*, London).

Sheikh And Khan

Frequent meetings in Dacca between the wife of Shaikh Mujibur Rahman and Dr Abdul Malik, interim Governor of East Pakistan, have strengthened the belief in high Bengal quarters that the Awami League leader, now facing trial for treason in West Pakistan, will eventually be pardoned by President Yahya Khan.

A well-informed East Bengali, who has just arrived in Britain from Dacca, told me that Dr Malik, who is also a Bengali and a close friend of the President, is acting as intermediary between Shaikh Mujib and President Yahya in an effort to allow the Awami League leader, who has an enormous following in East Pakistan, to clear himself of the charge of treason.

There are persistent reports in official East Bengal circles that talks have been taking place between President Yahya and Shaikh Mujib despite the fact that the treason trial is still continuing somewhere in West Pakistan.

The likely outcome, according to the East Bengal source, is that Shaikh Mujib will be able to clear himself of the treason and secessionist charges and that, in the interest of winning popular East Bengal support, he will be given a pardon.

The source told me that it was expected in well-informed circles in Dacca that Shaikh Mujib eventually will be permitted to re-enter the political scene and to campaign for greater autonomy for the Bengalis within a united Pakistan.

He said that Shaikh Mujib's wife and family in East Pakistan were being well treated. (Ralph Shaw in *The Times*, London).

Closer Liaison

At the end of the two-day deliberations on October 28, the Awami League Working Committee here decided against having any immediate changes in the existing leadership structure, but to concentrate on extending organisational control and supervision over the activities of freedom fighters. In concrete terms, as Awami League sources explain, joint councils will be formed on a zonal basis on which apart from the Mukti Bahini, Mujib Bahini representing the young hardliners, and the Awami League will be represented, so that the Awami League may have a greater supervision over the recruitment, disbursement of funds

and distribution of arms in respect of the Mukti Bahini.

It has been agreed that two registers will have to be maintained—one to be held by the Mukti Bahini and the other by the local Awami League cell—containing detailed information on the three points relating to the Mukti Bahini, so that at the end of hostilities, the Awami League can keep a check on the return of arms by the freedom fighters. This organisational pattern, if considered necessary, might be followed at lower levels also. (*The Times of India*).

Sugar-Coated

While people are being called upon to make sacrifices and, through taxation, are being made to tighten their belt further, (for Bangladesh) the business community is at work earning huge extra profits. And, strange to say, in some fields facilities for this have been created by the Centre itself. Sugar was fully decontrolled in May this year. Since there were adequate stocks with mills, the price was likely to fall unless the mill-owners were able to hold on to these. The nationalised banks gave them a credit of Rs 160 crores just before the Puja season was to begin. Stocks were not released as required, and the price began to rise. Between July and September the retail price in Delhi went up from Rs 1.90 a kilogram to Rs 2.20. Consumption of sugar during the festive months, September to December, averages 450,000 tonnes a month. An additional profit of 30 paise a kilogram means Rs 300 a tonne or Rs 13 crores 50 lakhs for 450,000 tonnes. During the past two months the extra profit on account of sugar amounted to Rs 27 crores—and two months of the festive season are still to go. The Reserve Bank has ordered tightening credit but only after the price reached its peak. In our country once the price of an article rises, there is apparently no means to bring it down. (Ranjit Roy in *The Hindustan Standard*).

NOVEMBER 13, 1971

For Whom The Bell Tolls

I should like to bring some points to the notice of Mr Arun Kumar Ray about his 'For Whom The Bell Tolls' (October 30). The young Naxalites at Agartala took the offensive against the CPM after the bitter antagonism between the two parties started in West Bengal. I should say that the idea was transported from West Bengal and perhaps it is not correct to say that Naxalites took the offensive against the CPM as a whole. Let us consider the events of the past.

At the time of 'coordination' our appeal to all Marxist revolutionaries to wage an armed struggle faced a rebuff from CPM leaders. We showed reasons for supporting our view of armed struggle started by the peasants at Naxalbari, and the contradictions were not antagonistic (at least acutely). But being then in the government the CPM leaders cannot deny the responsibility for the brutalities practised by the police and para-military groups on the peasants at various places in West Bengal. Our party was built in 1969 and CPM leaders announced from the Maidan that 'Naxalites are semi-dacoits' and declared that they would wage an ideological struggle against us. We welcome ideological struggle but what we got from the CPM was not ideological at all. In the same year they drove away all the Naxalites from Belgharia and killed some of them with the help of the police. The CPM was then in power.

CPM leaders were so transformed after joining the ministry that if any of their cadres saw something progressive in Naxalism and talked about it, he faced ill-treatment and sometimes expulsion (Mr Ray should consider his own case). The 'ideological struggle' continued and in the main took the form of informing the police about the whereabouts of the revolutionaries and also killing them whenever possible. Even their own (loyal) cadres whom they suspected of having a revolutionary ideology,

were handed over to the police to be tortured and then released on bail to give them a lesson that the time of armed struggle had not yet come and the enemy is strong. There are specific examples of all these events.

Side by side with the open-secret CPM-police or anti-Naxalite front, CPM leaders put the slogan of Congress-Naxal-police alliance and incited their cadres to attack us and to give information to the police. At that time the police and CRP began to kill us on the streets, in jails, in police custody, but the slogan continued. When we took the offensive against the police CPM leaders found another 'police-Naxal' alliance to kill progressive policemen'. In all their meetings with Congress and other parties CPM leaders announced several times that they would cooperate with the Government to liquidate the Naxalites. Facing all these, the young Naxalites thought the CPM was the fifth column of reactionaries. They cannot be rectified.

Knowing that there are hard-core rebels in the CPM who believe armed struggle to be the final path, but have been poisoned by the revisionist ideology of non-faith in the capacity of the masses to hold arms, some Naxalites always advocated a non-antagonistic ideological struggle with CPM cadres 'fighting against reaction'. They also knew that the police and reactionary papers were taking advantage of the bitter clashes between the CPM and the CPI(ML) to strengthen the hands of the ruling classes and that, annihilation of anybody who is not isolated from the masses on the basis of class consciousness, would lead to worse situations.

To prevent another 'Indonesia' We waged armed struggle but there have been shades of Indonesia. In this the role of middle roaders is not insignificant. I know, we have committed mistakes somewhere, and we are ready to take lessons from these. We are continuing an ideological struggle within our party to find the correct path and comrades! we are determined to carry on our struggle to the

end. It would be proved again that getting more seats in Parliament or Assembly is no achievement. At any time the ruling classes can kick them out and gun them down in the streets. I consider that the time to form a people's anti-fascist front on the basis of armed struggle as the main and other forms of struggle as subsidiary, has come. All Marxist revolutionaries should think our the matter.

A CPI(ML) CADRE
Howrah

Mr Arun Kumar Ray's messianic endeavour to investigate the causes of the conflict between the CPI(M) and the CPI(ML) is, of course, coloured by the orientations of his 'former' political party. It is indeed silly to reduce the entire matter to the stratagem of the reactionaries to play off one against the other.

He declares that by no stretch of imagination could the CPI(M) be called the spokesman of those classes (feudal plus comprador bourgeoisie). Under whose tacit approval was the armed constabulary sent to Naxalbari to quell the peasant uprising? And for whose interest did Mr Jyoti Basu despatch the EFR to Debra-Gopiballavpur to slaughter the peasants?

In a class-ridden society, all the political parties play a historical role. Either they try to maintain the status quo or smash it and usher in a new one. If any political party endeavours to smash the established order then antagonistic contradiction develops with the other parties who have a stake in the status quo. If the former tries to change this world by means of violence, it is inevitable and quite logical that violent conflicts will occur with the latter parties.

What is the class character of the political parties of West Bengal other than the CPI(ML)? By their very actions they have demonstrated their stake in the status quo. On the other hand the CPI(ML) openly declared their determination to smash this decrepit social system, to wrest

state power from the hands of reactionaries by violent revolution. Hence, armed conflict between the CPI(ML) and other parties is inescapable. Mr Ray is perhaps aware of the fact that one of the reasons for the emergence of the CPI(M)-CPI(ML) conflict is the brutal murder of one CPI(M)-turned-Naxalite youth by the notorious 'revolutionary-cum-bandit' Nani Saha of the CPI(M). The jail killings of the innocent youths and the revolutionaries in West Bengal by the CPI(M) dominated Warders' Association is also a pointer to the fact. More recently, the notorious resistance committees organised by the Congress(R) or 'Gandhiite fascists' whose sole objective is to destroy the CPI(ML) received enthusiastic welcome from the other parties including the CPI(M). For instance in Dum Dum both the Congress(R) and the CPI(M) are included in the resistance committee and they have embarked on their joint venture to liquidate the Naxalites. Of course, the Naxalites have made mistakes. They failed to draw a distinction between the cadres and their revisionist leaders, their hired hirelings and general supporters and to give revolutionary politics to their cadres. As a result, the difference between the revolutionary violence and counter-revolutionary violence has been blurred in the eyes of the urban people who are unable to understand the significance of the revolutionary character of the inter-party conflict. In spite of that it is quite illogical to blame the Naxalites solely for the interparty conflicts.

Mr Ray's enunciation that "the whole line of considering the alleged 'revisionists' to be the main enemy... is the reflection of the international diplomacy of China" is quite amazing. He tried to reduce the Sino-Soviet schism to a shrewd exploitation of their differences by the West. He failed to understand Mao's warning—"Revisionism is the main danger in the era of decline of imperialism."

Don't we see a silver lining in these gloomy inter-party clashes? In spite

of the consternation and bellicosity of the CPI(M) leaders the genuine cadres of the CPI(M) have at least realised their mistakes. At least, in some parts of West Bengal they have offered to collaborate with the revolutionaries, to fight the murderous fascist gangs of the Congress(R). It is a good symptom. I sincerely believe that with the development of class struggle and with the sincere endeavour of the Naxalites to distinguish between the cadres and the leaders of the revisionist parties and to hold firmly 'politics in command', the honest rank and file of the revisionist parties will rally under the banner of revolutionary politics. However, Mr Ray's attempt to question some of the dictates of his Party leadership (for which he has been expelled from the Party) is inspiring.

MORRIS ROY
Calcutta

'Culture And Anarchy'

If what "Sympathiser" writes (October 16) is true, should anyone feel surprised if teachers, students and guardians feel happy to hear that the CPI(ML) "has lost or is losing mass connections and... most of its leaders and members are dead or in jail"? All over West Bengal, particularly in the zones where the Naxalites had launched their "smash schools" programme, they caused suffering and anxiety over non-receipt of salary, threats, assaults and insults. Why penalise the teacher and the more fortunate among the poor for the wretched condition of society? Naxalites are suspect in the eyes of many an honest working man. They are disturbed by the thought that these youths are attempting to force the poor to keep their children illiterate since they cannot send them to institutions in "Safe Zones" when the upper classes in Calcutta and other places are getting fatter and richer in peace—so that later these raw, green ignorant youths and children can serve as mere hewers of wood and drawers of wa-

ter in the New Social Order they are trying to establish, while the ranks of the new ruling class will be filled by the educated sons of today's rich.

They are also responsible for making a section of the population who are not consciously standing in the way of the revolutionaries—and many of whom may even be potential revolutionaries—face death and destitution involuntarily while the "upper" and "upper upper classes", the chief beneficiaries of the present socio-economic system, roll in luxury.

Can one really blame people if they harbour the suspicion that there is an alliance between those who are prospering in the present reactionary system [and are therefore interested in its maintenance] and those who profess to destroy it by "revolutionary" violence? In fact, they might even think—and not without reason—that the Naxalites are conscious or unconscious tools in the hands of a group which wants their activities to be directed against the interests of the masses of India.

A MAN FROM BIRBHUM

Story Of A Naxalite

As a CPI(ML) sympathiser I read with keen interest the 'Story of a Naxalite' (September 11). But I feel very much disappointed to find that the whole story is full of distortion of facts and mischievous manipulations. As a matter of fact, what stands out in prominence in the whole story is the 'Naxalite' youth's feeble attempt at making out a case in favour of his escape from the reality which once drew him to CPI(ML) ideology. Nowhere in his story has he at all cared for any self-analysis; his self-eulogy is unbecoming of a revolutionary.

There is no 'radical' newspaper in Tripura to which 'Sudhir' reportedly belonged, and his Calcutta story is also a fraud. From his story it is likely to appear to one outside Tripura that it was he who was responsible for organising the CPI(ML) in Tripura,

but this is not at all in harmony with facts. The CPI(ML) activists were working in Tripura long before his reported sojourn to Calcutta and there was no 'economist' among them at that time or thereafter. The TOC was not at all in existence during the period in question, it actually came into being very recently but was dissolved subsequently.

True, a temporary setback has been suffered by the CPI(ML) in Tripura. But the reasons ascribed to it are from true. It is not due to the wrong course the CPI(ML) followed in Tripura or due to the 'absence' of any mass support that the CPI(ML) suffered this setback; it was mainly for the vacillating character and the craze of a number of 'Sudhirs' for leadership that the party suffered. It was they who sought to wreck the party from within in order to shape the CPI(ML) in Tripura after their own narrow model.

The revolutionary masses in Tripura remember with a sense of deep regard the immense contributions and sacrifice the 'Big Three' have made towards ushering in a revolutionary struggle in Tripura. As everybody knows, it is these 'Big Three' from Calcutta who broke the icy stranglehold to which people in Tripura were subjected and exposed the political character of the ruling clique and the so-called leftists. Today they are rotting in jail. However, in spite of mourning repression, the CPI(ML) in Tripura has been able to overcome the initial setback and is steadfastly trying to correct its past mistakes.

It is really surprising that so much of your valuable space should have been devoted to the story of an escapist like 'Sudhir', which provides good material for the bourgeois press.

A CPI(ML) SYMPATHISER
Agartala

Attacks On Lawyers

The West Bengal Association of Democratic Lawyers notes with deep dismay and horror that legal practitioners are now increasingly the object

of attack of anti-social elements backed by the police. Within a short period, we have lost Bhabadish Roy, the advocate who was dedicated to defending the victims of police terror and goonda action. He was killed by goondas. Shri Debu Bhattacharyya, another advocate of Burdwan, was badly assaulted because he was a similar defence advocate.

There was a dastardly attack on Syed Mansur Habibullah, an advocate, when he was on the dais as a speaker at a meeting place in Burdwan. The situation in Kalna is so serious that advocates cannot go to court even to practise their profession. Shri Amiya Mullick, an advocate of Kalna Court, has been forced to leave Kalna and is now in Calcutta trying to shift his lucrative practice from Kalna.

It is clear to everybody that the ruling circles are indulging in fascist terror against the citizens, particularly those who are involved in democratic movement. A further evidence of fascism is provided by these organised attacks on lawyers and advocates, abetted and directly supported and helped by the police.

The West Bengal Association of Democratic Lawyers records its strongest protest against these attacks and calls upon the citizens as well as lawyers to organise themselves against the crudest ever fascist onslaught launched by the ruling circles in the unfortunate State of West Bengal.

ARUN PRAKAS CHATTERJEE
Joint Secretary, West Bengal Association of Democratic Lawyers

'Subjective'

After reading some of the articles of Ashok Rudra in *Frontier* for the last two years, I have come to the conclusion that his main defect is that he is subjective in his arguments. He sounds reasonable to the uninitiated, but I do not think his writings will be relished by many who can read between the lines.

Let us take his article in the Autumn Number of *Frontier* (25.9.71). Mr Rudra is afraid to be on the wrong side of China, fearing that he may be branded a reactionary or revisionist. So he is also a China worshipper. But he wants to be with the current of popular opinion also. What is the popular opinion in India? Jai Bangla! That slogan has the permission of the bourgeoisie. The Indian bourgeoisie want to swallow East Bengal. But the Pakistani bourgeoisie will not allow it. So instead of understanding the Bangla problem primarily as one of contradiction in the enemy camps, Mr Rudra treats it as a contradiction between the oppressor and the oppressed. But this is not correct. At best what a real revolutionary can do is to turn this Indian capitalist-backed revolt into a class revolution. But as things stand now, the geopolitics and power politics are not opportune. This does not mean that we should keep away from the primarily nationalist revolution in East Bengal. Even though Lenin knew fully well that the 1905 revolution led by the anarchists in Russia was doomed, he asked the communists to participate in it. And afterwards he declared that if there had been no revolution in 1905, there would have been no successful revolution in 1917. So the communists should participate in the East Bengal revolt and should try to turn it into a class liberation war in the long run, without allowing the Indian capitalists and landowners to swallow the fruits of the nationalist revolution. It was to prevent a class revolution that the Russians came to the help of the Indian capitalists. The Chinese have never condemned the Bengal rebellion. They have only warned the Indian capitalists not to interfere in East Bengal and thus prevent the transformation of the national liberation movement into a class liberation one. Without understanding this Mr Rudra has swallowed the popular lie that China is against the East Bengal rebellion.

M. N. D. NAIR
Trivandrum

In Coastal Waters

The *Economic Times* dated 25-9-71 featured on the front page a news item which, without pulling puns, is fishy. It seems that imperialist-own-

ed companies as well as their compradors are about to plunge in a big way in India's vast and strategic coastal waters. The facts are given below :

Name of the Company	Present Investment	Futurs Plans
Union Carbide (U.S. owned)	Two 72' long imported trawlers—Rs 40 lakhs invested	50—60 trawlers Rs 20 crores
DCM (Sri Ram comprador Group)	30 trawlers Rs 11 crores
Britannia Biscuits (British owned)	4 trawlers Rs 1.1/2 crores
Tata Oil Mills (was first in the field)	Has shore Plants at Cochin plus Madras and 3 trawlers. Rs 59 lakhs	not known
Birla— Under the name of Eastern Seafoods Limited and Mulberry Aquatic Products	Has Plants in Madras and Mangalore and 8 trawlers Rs 1 crore 52 lakhs	not known
JK-Singhania Group	Are functioning in a small way
India Tobacco (British owned)	}	Have plans for deep sea fishing projects off the Indian Coast
Imperial Chemical (British owned)		
International Fisheries (U.S. owned)	Have a chain of operations in Kerala and Madras	unknown

Besides, the Soviet Union and Japan are operating through the Governments of India, Kerala and Tamilnadu.

What secrets lie below the dark minds of these enemies of the Indian people we do not know. But for a biscuit or a chemical or an oil or a cigarette manufacturer to take up fishing in India's coastal areas is peculiar enough to merit attention, consideration and suspicion. Of course, one immediate effect of the threshing about of these big financial sharks

will be to liquidate the small entrepreneurs who operated in these areas. *The Economic Times* reports that they are being "driven out".

But the other aspect is even more alarming. Large, fast trawlers on India's coasts, run and managed by imperialists and compradors, could play a future role not unlike the "fishing boats" on the Mekong and the Tonkin Bay.

Will someone investigate ?

T. DAS
Calcutta

Solidarity ?

There is very little reason why the common people should, now and again, spend a day in complete idleness for, say, Government employees who think they are a privileged set and are much more interested in personal gains than in the service they are supposed to render to the people whose money maintains them. Unresponsive to the needs of the public government servants (barring exceptions) are more a liability than an asset because of the utter difference with which they treat their jobs.

As for the so-called unity supposed to be existing between workers and white-collar employees, it can only be said that it is simply non-existent. A Reserve Bank employee with his pay growing thicker with surprising rapidity is not going to spend any sleepless night for what happens to a poor primary school teacher whose pittance, euphemistically called salary, is awfully inadequate to keep his body and soul together. There is no earthly reason why a worker of a government-owned industrial establishment should have a feeling of oneness with his counterpart working in a small private establishment; the problems each faces are quite different as also their respective interests. Every worker or employee is guided by his sectional interests. That is why we very often find that the government servants of a particular department do not facilitate the payment of dearness allowances to teachers (who are supposed to get it after three months but actually get it much later) unless 'speed money' is given to the clerks concerned.

This lack of feeling for others, so often displayed by employees, is the biggest stumbling block in the way of creating solidarity among different sections of employees and workers, so essential for the success of any sustained agitation.

PHANI BHUSAN GHOSH
Ashokenagar

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