

frontier

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WINTER STORIES

THE nine days without newspapers in West Bengal proved that AIR is no substitute. But with the newspapers back in circulation, it is again clear that they have little independent role to play in the interpretation of news, tending as they do to become organs of the Government of India when a crisis deepens.

What is happening along our borders with East Bengal is pretty well known to laymen. Why try to fob off on them an insipid winter's tale? As for foreign correspondents, they have been over-friendly to the Government of India. But something went wrong with the official propaganda machinery on November 22-24, and the stories put out were so dubious that even the obliging foreigners were not taken in.

The fact is, November 21 was a date. If we are to believe what first appeared in the newspapers, the Mukti Bahini on that day launched a big offensive, destroyed over a dozen Pakistani tanks and were marching towards Jessore. That a 'guerilla' force which did not exist eight months ago could acquire such formidable strength as to go in for pitched battles in such a short time made it a miracle force, the envy of all guerillas, past, present and future. But part of the miracle was given away by Mrs Gandhi when, realising that not all men are simpletons though they would like to be for her sake, she admitted that Indian tanks went into operation across the border when Pakistani tanks and aircraft were seen advancing towards the border in a menacing manner. The world has got used to 'hot pursuit' practised by the Americans. We have now proclaimed the right to cross the border in self-defence. The right is being exercised—"protective reaction strikes", as the Americanese goes.

This tactic or strategy may lead to open war, a continuation of politics by other means. If it does, it would indeed be almost a record—to have to go to war three times within nine years, not including the Rann of Kutch affair and the military operations against internal subversive forces.

A war with Pakistan will of course be highly popular, a pop-war, as most wars are to begin with. We have the chronic tension on this sub-continent ever since 1947. Besides, the record of the Yahya Khan regime has been terrible in East Bengal and the immense concentration of refugees has created the feeling that without war, the problem cannot be

solved. There is little logic in the feeling, but a people without hope care a damn for logic. And since India is a big country, the terrible record of repression in West Bengal and some other parts of the country will not stand in the way of general support for a war, the more so because of the servility of the social democratic parties, at least of their leadership. Some of these, while advocating all-out support to the Awami League Bangladesh Government and the Mukti Bahini, had warned against intervention by the army. What now? But some of those who are not tied to any party, at least some people, cannot go into ecstasy if the Indian Government casts itself in the role of liberators. That the problem of East Bengal may be solved by the Indian Army, in uniform or in lungi, with the Mukti Bahini—we are not doubting the motivation and courage of the Bahini—playing a subsidiary role will prove to be a great damper for the emerging left forces in East Bengal. If these forces, having once tasted the power of arms, do not see eye to eye with the nationalist regime that is proposed to be set up in Dacca, the repression will be severe and concerted, as in Ceylon. The situation would have been different if indigenous forces were the decisive factor in the war against Yahya Khan. That would have meant real revenge and also brought the day of reckoning nearer in West Bengal, to start with.

But this is counting the chickens, ugly or not, before they are hatched. Meanwhile, it would be much easier and safer to speak of two nations, of unrelenting class struggle, to criticise the Government, doubt whatever it says and does at home, but sing in chorus as soon as the same Government goes to war: at home a hussy, abroad a Savitri. Then all ranks close, overnight we become one nation and lap up as truth everything the Government proclaims.

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Genocide In Jails

Gone are the days when a cool Police Commissioner of Calcutta could claim nonchalantly that the guardians of wayward extremists were queuing up in his office to persuade him to arrest their wards so that they might not be shot down in the streets like rabid dogs by the police. Neither police lock-ups nor government-run jails are safe for those whom the police have chosen to call extremists; they have long ceased to be. One should have thought that with the lull in extremist activities, partly because of the decimation of their ranks by the Government's policy of extermination and inter-party and intra-party vendetta and partly because of the policy re-think said to be going on in the leadership, the Government would counsel some restraint to the pack of murder-maniacs it has set on the extremists. But "bomb-throwing" extremists continue to be killed in clashes with the police who fire but in 'self-defence,' and under-trial prisoners are still dying like fleas in mild lathi-charges by well-meaning jail staff trying to prevent them from escaping. The government has become so brazen that it does not consider even a slight variation of the blatant lies necessary.

What exactly happened in Alipore jail last week will never be known. The new Inspector-General of Prisons, who had never condescended to meet the Press before, suddenly shook off his shyness and called reporters to his room a few hours after the massacre. He read out a prepared statement which was carried by all newspapers next day. The casualty list was published some thirty-six hours later, but no one, not even a jail visitor, was allowed to interview the injured. A Press party was taken to the place of incident full one day after the massacre to be shown the brickbats and tiles to escape from which the jail staff had to wield lathis; as if that could be a confirmation of the plea of defensive action, which, according to some reports, has result-

ed in the death of about 50 people. Few will believe that the bulk of the victims had made any bid to escape, for after the last attempt at jail-break in Alipore, armed policemen are constantly on the watch outside to shoot down anyone jumping the prison wall. More likely, the jail staff settled scores with the extremists for the murder of an official of the jail in Nadia district.

Appropriate noises have been made by the political parties over the mass murder and mayhem, much in the same manner as they had done on the six previous occasions when under-trials were similarly killed or disabled in different jails in the State. It is reported that repeated telephone inquiries were received at the Secretariat on the day of the incident from CPM leaders who were anxious to know if any of their men had been killed. They needed double assurance, for not only do some of the under-trials belong to the party but the warders specializing in beating under-trials to death also belong to a CPM-dominated union. The involvement of other parties is marginal, for though they claim to belong to the Opposition, the Government does not think it necessary to arrest any of their supporters. Now that a judicial inquiry has been announced, which, incidentally, is a slap on the face of the Chief Secretary who had earlier contended that the incident did not call for anything more than a routine administrative inquiry, all political parties will remain quiet till this policy of extermination is put through in another jail. There will be no dearth of agents-provocateurs around to simulate escape bids and provide alibis for bumping off as many extremists as possible before the Prevention of Violent Activities Act under which the bulk of them are being held lapses early next year. And if the extremist prisoners are moved to exclusive centres built or renovated for them, as the plans go, a stark fate awaits many of them. Even gas chambers were more humane than the methods being used to exterminate them.

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Marvellous United Action

Last Saturday Calcutta witnessed a marvellous rally and procession. Thousands of young men and women, belonging to youth organisations of the Congress and the CPI, jointly staged the rally, waved tricolours and red flags, shouted their all-out support for Bangladesh, their deep abhorrence of American imperialism and their profound love for the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty. The CPI youths came mostly from mofussil towns and mingled with the Congress youths of the metropolitan city to get congratulatory addresses from the Soviet Consul-General and the Bangladesh Mission chief. The CPI has underlined the uniqueness of the rally, the first ever in Calcutta, when the tricolour and the red flag mingled in protest against imperialist designs on Bangladesh.

After the Cossipore-Baranagar, Ichapore, Howrah purges of the leftists, after the killings of leftists in various West Bengal jails, after the police acquiring the licence to kill anybody they consider leftist, this rally was certainly heartening. That the Congress youths would demean themselves by associating with Marx-citing youths is a magnanimous gesture indeed (or do they consider the CPI paper communists?). Be that as it may, many Calcuttans would breathe a sigh of relief to know that the youths of the State, or some sections of them, have regained their senses, that the progressive section of the Congress is now fraternal with the co-existence-believing communists. The fraternisation was long due, ever since the CPI offered all-out co-operation with the 'progressive' Congress, but Calcutta being what it is, irrational and adventurist, no one expected the fraternisation to come through in the vitiated streets of this weird city.

The purpose of the joint rally was to express youths' solidarity against the fascist onslaught on Bangladesh. Which is curious. When Mrs Bandaranaike swooped down upon the youths of Ceylon or when Mrs Gan-

dhi launched her naked attack on the youths of West Bengal and elsewhere, it was not fascism. Without mitigating the barbarous and fascist attack on the East Bengalis by Yahya Khan, it is yet impossible to discern a line between fascism in Ceylon and fascism in East Pakistan, between fascism in India and fascism in East Pakistan. In all the three countries people resorting to force to capture State power were crushed. If fascism has to be condemned in East Pakistan, why should it not be in India and Ceylon? And if this be so, what is the point of the joint rally? Who joins whom and for what?

And if the joint rally was a form of united front, was it motivated by Marxist ideals? The CPI refused to cooperate with the CPM because it did not want itself to be swallowed by the bigger party. Does it expect to keep itself safe by cooperating with a yet bigger party? And if the term of reference be Marxist, does the CPI expect to form a united front with the liberal bourgeoisie and maintain its independent character and ultimately capture State power? From the goings-on however it appears that the CPI is working on a united front thesis other than Lenin's or Dimitrov's, that the CPI does not expect to crush the Congress in order to form a proletarian State but hopes that the 'progressive' Congress would become more progressive and yet more, and eventually become CPI. Theirs is not a thesis of clash; it is the thesis of a change of character.

Ulster

Despite their claim to restraint, the rulers in Westminster have been no less ruthless to the rebels in Ulster than others of their tribe elsewhere in similar situations. For years they have freely employed terror—the most tried method in a confrontation like this. Not only has the Royal Ulster Constabulary been rearmed with automatics but the British special forces have gone there to fight out the IRA in the winding streets of Londonderry

and Belfast. House-to-house searches, arrests and harassment have become a part of the life in Ulster.

Things took an uglier turn on the question of internment by the army and the reported torture of the internees. It was said that the prisoners were abused, beaten up and badly bruised—at least on one occasion the captive was made to stand with hands on the wall for more than 43 hours. Though the news of the ill-treatment came out first in the Irish press, it found quite a response in the British press which called for an enquiry into the army interrogation system. The enquiry report, submitted by Sir Edmund Compton, largely contradicts the seriousness of the allegations. The report, after dealing with the complaints in five different groups, found only traces of ill-treatment but not brutality in the sense that the captor finds pleasure in the wounds inflicted on the victims. On individual cases of allegations, it could make no findings and singles out conflicts of evidence and non-appearance of the victims as the cause of the failure.

Hardly anything more can be expected from an official enquiry, particularly when it was made in an atmosphere of distrust and violence. As admitted by the tribunal, only nine out of 342 people arrested on August 9 agreed to make complaints to it and only two actually did. Nobody from the Crumlin gaol or the HMS Madison, the prison ship, would even make the complaint. Because of this non-cooperation on the part of the affected—which is natural in the situation—the report had to depend on official sources for information, that is, the records of the police and the army whose atrocities it was enquiring into. This has seriously limited the credibility of the enquiry as free and fair.

Perhaps Mr Health and his Government did not want it to be so. A more solid-seeming explanation of this hurriedly called enquiry is that it was intended to ease the popular misgivings that allegations of brutalities have given rise to in Britain and, also, to counter the IRA propaganda. It

was also a sop to the grumbling British press. Though it does not carry much of a brief for the insurrectionists, the press in Britain has been critical of the army's manner of handling the internees, in marked contrast to their debased brethren in this country where more heinous acts by the government have been glossed over. The British Government offered the carrot of enquiry to the more vocal section while using the stick to beat up the extremists in the streets.

Rhodesia

Who is afraid of that unknown quantity described as world opinion? At least not Her Majesty's Government which has recently signed an agreement with The Rhodesian government to end the six-year-old crisis. Even before the British Foreign Secretary flew into Salisbury, the Africans knew that the purpose of the visit was to settle with Ian Smith on surrender terms and condemn over five million people to permanent racial helotry. There is no reason to believe that Sir Alec Douglas-Home did anything more than explain to African representatives how 'circumscribed' was his country's position. A draft agreement acceptable in principle to both the governments which, however, did not take into account the African opinion, was already there. This was leaked to the Press by one of the chairmen of the delegations which met Sir Alec and he stood by every word he said when the report was described as garbled by a British spokesman. The appearance of the Africans on the scene was a mere formality and a group of former political prisoners deplored the fact that they were being brought into the negotiations at a time when the Heath Government had "come to an agreement with the rebel regime." Still Sir Alec was asked to include in any settlement of the Rhodesian issue the following points: immediate parity in

parliamentary representation for five years after which a new Parliament would be elected on a straight majority rule basis; an immediate voting majority for the Africans; an end to all discriminatory legislation, especially the Land Tenure Act which divides the country equally between a quarter of a million whites and over five million blacks; a bill of rights which can be tested in court with the British Privy Council as the court of final appeal; and the immediate release of all political detainees. But the Smith-Douglas-Home agreement does not visualise African majority rule within a specific time. The recommendations of an "independent" commission to end racial discrimination will be subject to considerations of an "overriding character". The Africans are baffled that Britain will appoint a commission to assess acceptability instead of arranging a referendum. But then the agreement is worth no more than a piece of paper and Smith will be free to misuse British "aid" meant for the advancement of the Africans. The Rhodesian whites have secured their life-style by joining the Afrikaner laager to the south.

The settlement marks the victory of the U.K.'s commercial interests. Large companies have been putting pressure on the Heath Government to enable them to resume trade with Rhodesia. The Government itself is sick of the economic sanctions which are costing the country some £100 million a year. The American decision to lift the ban on the import of chrome from Rhodesia in violation of the UN embargo has been a morale booster to the U.K. The British capitulation has come at a time when Rhodesia is facing economic troubles. Admittedly, Heath cares little for anything else besides his country's economic interests and teaching the African leaders a lesson for riding roughshod over him at Singapore. It is now clear that Lord Goodman's brief did not include the question of principle. The Heath Government does not need a figleaf to cover its shame.

View from Delhi

Waiting For De-Escalation

FROM A POLITICAL
CORRESPONDENT

DETERRENCE to aggression against India was the point of Mr Swaran Singh's hard-sell when the Indo-Soviet treaty was signed in haste about four months ago. Far from providing the infrastructure for the liberation of Bangladesh, the treaty has not only curtailed India's options by forcing her to buy more Soviet hardware but has also increased the danger of a war. In any case, the treaty did not deter Pakistan from moving troops to the border and planning a pre-emptive strike in mid-October. If this was forestalled, the credit does not certainly belong to the treaty.

Last week, the Soviet Union made an attempt of sorts to retrieve its initiative on the Bangladesh issue. It tried to warn Pakistan against escalating the situation. (This was after the air battle and the tank battle on the eastern sector). Immediately came counter-pressure on India from the Western powers who said in so many words that they were trying for a political settlement by putting pressure on General Yahya Khan for the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and if India did anything so escalate the situation, they would be obliged to raise the issue in the Security Council. Thus the Soviet tactic against Pakistan misfired.

New Delhi had gambled on a strategy of peace through escalation. When the air battle had taken place, there was a planned effort not to announce the shooting down of three Pakistani Sabre-jets but when Pakistan proclaimed the emergency the next day, the announcement had to be made belatedly on November 23. Similarly, the news of the tank battle was withheld for days and it was left

to the Prime Minister to disclose this on November 24. Pakistan's effort has been to prove that there were skirmishes on its borders with India calling for international intervention. It was in Pakistan's interest to publicise more things than happened while it was in India's interest to play things down quietly.

The issue may go to the United Nations even without a war. The Belgian draft is indeed a big personal set-back for Mrs Indira Gandhi who barely four weeks ago was trying to make out that she had a triumphant state visit to Belgium and that world opinion was veering round to India's viewpoint. Now New Delhi looks to Moscow for support, to veto any Security Council resolution that might favour Pakistan. The assurance of such a veto seems to have been secured. This is claimed as one of the tangible benefits of the treaty but then if the Soviet Union has so much solicitude for India, the veto could have been exercised even without extracting the price in the form of a treaty. Any way, a 20-year treaty is too high a price for any country to pay for a mere veto. The Chinese cannot be blamed if they force the Soviet Union to exercise a veto in India's favour and find itself isolated.

New Delhi had banked on a semi-military solution to the Bangladesh crisis without a war. The Mukti Bahini offensive was meant to be a low-risk operation to squeeze Pakistani troops out of East Bengal without the contingency of a war.

One hears a lot about India's will to defy the world powers and go ahead with her plans for unilateral action. So far, Pakistan has refused to be drawn into a conflict and so has India. It is a question of who will oblige whom. Pakistan's interest in war is to secure international intervention, which it seems to be securing already. To this extent, India's strategy has been blunted. At stake in Bangladesh are the lives of 85,000 Pakistani military personnel and thousands of other West Pakistanis there. The military elite is a

factor in Pakistan and General Yahya Khan would not be allowed to reconcile to the massacre of the 85,000 in Bangladesh. Even their escape routes have been cut off and there is no hope for them, if the Mukti Bahini's plans go through in full. In sheer retaliation against this, Yahya Khan might be forced into a war.

The CIA-Bhutto line in Pakistan is for a facade of civilianisation and in any case, Yahya Khan had announced plans for a new Constitution, to be made known on December 20. The Western powers are trying to get a military conflict, even if necessary, put off by a few weeks so that there is some chance of a political settlement. The ban on the National Awami Party in the western wing suggests that Yahya Khan is not terribly keen on a political settlement.

Mr Tajuddin Ahmed came to New Delhi last week. There was talk of the imminent fall of the Jessore cantonment which would mean effective Mukti Bahini control of the eight districts west of the Padma river. In that case India would recognise

Bangladesh. So will Hungary and the GDR. The draft of a defence treaty, plans for civil administration in the eight districts and a Rs. 750-crore plan for economic reconstruction—everything is ready but not Bangladesh which needs all these. If by any chance, Yahya Khan yields to Western pressure (he has rebuffed the Soviet Union already) and releases the Sheikh, India would be in a tight corner. It would have no locus standi on the question of a political settlement in Bangladesh. The settlement that might come about might have nothing to do with what India expects. New Delhi has already stabilised Tajuddin Ahmed as a lasting ally to play off against Sheikh Mujibur Rahman if necessary. Tajuddin Ahmed would be more amenable to Soviet persuasion than Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

If it is a flare-up all along the borders before there is Western intervention, India would have no option. Whether she would defy international pressure is a matter for speculation.

November 28, 1971

With Or Without War

R. P. MULLICK

RULING circles behind the Indian Government have well mapped out their future steps, in conformity with their class-interests, over Bangladesh. That the break-up of Pakistan, sooner or later, into two States is the objective is no longer in doubt, although a loose confederation of West and East Pakistan is also envisaged, with or without war.

The inexorable economic crisis—evident during the presentation of the Rs 240 crore deficit budget early this year—has become worse still, what with the import surcharge imposed by the USA affecting nearly 17% of India's total exports (approximately Rs 30 crores worth of goods), the indirect trade discrimination by the U.K. against Indian textiles, and the slow but steady erosion of the economy

under the burdens of refugee maintenance and defence expenditure. The same arguments so far advanced for making dark prophecies that the impending economic collapse of Pakistan would hustle her rulers into a misadventure with India, now stare India in the face. The vicious cycle of uncontrollable defence expenditure, depleting foreign-exchange resources, mounting cost of debt-servicing, runaway inflation and the aftermath of all-round recession in productivity and depression of general business, has gripped India and Pakistan alike. This is why the USA, the supreme wielder of capital-exporting control on the economy of developing countries whose rulers have chosen the path of collaborationist subservience to world imperialism, has such effec-

tive political leverage on both the Congress Government here and the military regime in Pakistan.

The USA, for all its apparent solicitude for peace in this subcontinent, has begun to modify its international strategy in South Asia. After the return of Kissinger from his second visit to Peking, and the complete fiasco of its policy of hamstringing China within the UN, and after the ouster of Taiwan, a new twist has been given to this strategy. It now wants to translate into reality the worst fears of Peking—a Sino-Soviet armed confrontation. Although this possibility has been staved off through the intelligence and savoir faire of China's foreign policy, by the statesmanlike gesture of "friendly and good neighbourly relations" and the expression of "desire to settle all outstanding issues with the Soviet Union", the danger still exists that the first super-power might continue to exploit all the exigencies of a developing revolutionary situation to bring about such a confrontation. In a tripolar equation of power politics, it is the USA that has employed all the artifices of diplomacy and made military moves to use Pakistan as a decoy to China. Before the repression in East Bengal started, Islamabad sent No. 2 of its hierarchy to Peking with a view to playing upon China's past susceptibilities about Tibet's integration with the People's Republic, and to mislead the latter into drawing a false analogy with Bangladesh. However, China has perhaps realised that the similarity is more with the demand for self-determination of Kashmir. The present

Chinese stance seems to be one of waiting for the historic forces to reveal themselves in the crucial eastern region of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. And, not merely in Bangladesh. Across the border, things are "hotting up" (to quote Mr K. C. Pant, Indian Minister of State for Home affairs). The "domesticated" Government of Nagaland has had its crisis recently. New Delhi has so far failed to either blandish or bamboozle the Angami Ministry into accepting Central surveillance over the provincial subject of internal security, and the scheme for a grandiose North Eastern Security Council, a supra-provincial authority under the direct control of New Delhi, had to be watered down. China knows the historic background of the Naga people's fight for independence, which is about half-a-century old, and the spread of its emotional appeal beyond the Indo-Burmese border. The struggle of the East Bengal people for liberation has to be viewed in the perspective of the entire sub-Himalayan geopolitical complex.

Self-Determination

Unfulfilled popular demands for self-determination have strengthened among many tribal peoples, from Sikkim, Bhutan and Manipur to Nagaland, Mizoram and Tripura. Against a background of "spheres of influence", the urge of repressed ethnic-cultural groups for freedom acquires a new dimension in the north-eastern and eastern regions of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent, and contradicts the expansionist trends of the two super-powers, the USA and the USSR. A great tussle is on to have the Indian Ocean under strategic naval control. Since it is imperative for the USA to build up a new sphere of influence in the post-Vietnam period to retrieve the "grave sense of withdrawal from Asia" and, also, to re-establish its fading image of power, the U.S. advisers on national security and international policy have begun a reconstruction of the USA's basic relationships. Japan's tremendous economic growth, unlike the burden of affluence

of West Germany, serves as a potential reservoir for nuclear armoury. In fact, its small but logistically well-equipped armed forces have an incredibly high percentage of trained officers, which implies that the three wings of its war machine can be swiftly expanded. Mr James Reston, the American journalist and representative of the liberal section of the U.S. oligopoly, who had the opportunity to study China at first hand recently, testifies to the growing anxiety in Peking over Japan's formidable military potential, including nuclear. He has confirmed the basic fears of China about a resurgent and perhaps revengeful neo-nationalist Japan being groomed by the USA economically and militarily to carry out the policy of making Asians fight Asians. He has also corroborated the fact that China is not "seeking spheres of influence like the Soviet Union or the United States, and certainly not sending soldiers or navies abroad like the two super-powers." Even where China is ideologically involved in the liberation struggle of other peoples, the State policy of the PRC does not envisage giving material support (as distinct from moral), and interfering in the affairs of other sovereign States. This attitude explains the otherwise intriguing silence it maintains over the guerilla fighters within Bangladesh.

China has been, to quote Mr Reston again, "self-contained", long before the United States tried to "contain", even strangulate, the incipient Socialist Republic with a cordon sanitaire. But for the vanguard-imperialist USA, with its economy in travail, with the purchasing power of the dollar falling on the European market, with its national monopoly-capitalists turning outward for investing their capital rather than risk a cut in the profit-margin and shrinkage of the possibilities for chain industrial-proliferation, the political counterpart of postwar expansionism is much too real to be given up. Australia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Near to Middle East, Israel-Saudi Arabia-Jordan, together with the oil-rich Sheikdoms on the western side of the In-

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dian Ocean, serve the USA as apron-bearers of world imperialism.

The only rift in the lute is provided by the growing naval presence of the USSR.

"The state of relations between India and Pakistan means much for peace in Southern Asia, an area of concern to the Soviet Union as it fronts both China and Soviet Central Asia." Thus Mr Kosygin spoke on June 10 this year, two months before the signing of the Indo-Soviet treaty. After the treaty, Mr Gromyko, reporting on it to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, said: "The Indo-Soviet treaty was particularly important in the light of the situation developing south of the borders of the Soviet Union". Together, these indicate the trend of official thinking in Soviet Russia, and her concept of the strategy apropos the new questions of power-relationship.

Southern Asia is vital for Soviet Russia's image of an Asian Power. It flanks China's southern frontier too. With the eclipse of the Dullesian strategy, the USA has begun its politico-military retreat; paradoxically this retreat started in those very critical years of the sixties when it had its last supreme throw of military weight in Vietnam, Laos and later in Cambodia. The hard-boiled pragmatist, Kissinger, realized the utter futility of an involvement in South East Asia, so ruinous for the economy and so counter-productive. It was his master-mind which led Nixon to embark on a plan of queering the pitch in Sino-Soviet relations, with

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pretentious overtures of friendship towards both. If the make-believe succeeded, it could mean the end of revolutionary socialism, and a turning back from the ultimate goal of a communistic world-state towards temporary chaos and neo-fascism sprouting everywhere. If it did not, the USA could still have a breathing spell of tenuously balanced detente with either while utilising the time gained for continuing its feverish preparations for perfecting an anti-ballistic missile system at home, and a massive build-up of nuclear arsenal. Simultaneously with the mock irony of "Strategic Arms Limitation Talks" there goes on feverish rearmament of both the super-powers and their follower-States. India has not been lagging behind. The hush-hush she has maintained regarding progress towards production, on a logistically optimum level, of missiles of short and intermediate range fitted with atomic warhead (the type suitable for a modified version of conventional war and carrying a payload up to 1200 kg) has not succeeded in concealing facts. Indeed, it is a long way since Mr Trudeau, the Canadian Prime Minister, spoke of his conviction that India had not reached the technical capability to explode an underground nuclear device. That her defence budget, now spilling over Rs. 1,100 crores, has possibilities of atomic armament, is no secret any more. It was not for nothing that the Government of India refused to sign the treaty on nuclear non-proliferation.

Near-Parallel

To what extent is Soviet Russia prepared to help in arming India with sophisticated weaponry? What are the concealed clauses apropos defence measures? Does Russia intend to shore up the present Government from the acute economic crisis, complicated by recession in industries, with black-money running wild to inflation? The imponderables are many, but its interests in a South Asia remaining free from U.S. control and China's revolutionary influence will oblige it to part with much of its

treasured military expertise, and to rear up a militarily efficient bourgeois State in India. The near-parallel which exists between the Egyptian-Israeli confrontation in the Near East and that between India and Pakistan, is too obvious to be missed by the technocrats of international diplomacy in the Kremlin.

The spate of political forecasts that the economic crisis in Pakistan would compel the military-industrial-landlord complex there to start a military "misadventure" is a pointer to New Delhi's mood. The ruling complex which holds the political destiny of India today is close to the rulers of Pakistan from considerations of class-analogy and apprehends the forces at work. This may hustle the power-wielders in both towards war as an escape-route. A short but trying experience it would be, they hope; but it would be rewarding, nevertheless, in the shape of a semi-colonial Bangladesh, as the rulers in India see it; and a grand prize—Kashmir—as the rulers in Pakistan hope for. A really independent Bangladesh would be disconcerting for the Indian Government since it would cease to serve the purpose of a buffer State and happy hunting ground for exploitation by jute interests. Similarly, a Kashmiri people enjoying the right of self-determination and forging their chosen political destiny, would be an anathema to the present dictatorial regime in Islamabad if it ever acquires this prize.

In the event of a war breaking out, it is a safe guess that India would push up her armed personnel, a considerable part disguised as the Mukti Bahini, and try to liberate as big a slice of East Bengal as possible before the Pakistani forces get time for regrouping. On the other hand, it is a fair plausibility that Pakistan will launch the fiercest possible offensive on the western front on the blitzkrieg model and territory as possible from Jammu and Kashmir, the Jaisalmeer-Barmer-Ganganagar areas and possibly from Kutch.

Countervailing measures to such

moves, that are militaristic primarily, are possible on the political front, and will be taken by the authorities of both the countries. But perhaps the military administration in East Bengal, although committed to keeping itself entrenched there, will be able to transform its role vis-a-vis the people of Bangladesh with greater flexibility and rapidity than what the "democratic" Indian Government is likely to achieve in Kashmir. Should the hawks of New Delhi prevail, the Kashmiri people will be in for a great time of stress, and repression by occupation-authorities in both sectors of the divided State. But the inexorable balance of conflicting armies might help the people ultimately to evolve their own cells of struggle. If a left-oriented patriotic front emerges in Bangladesh, how long the Awami League and its allies would hold on to their pro-Indian stance and still be able to win people's support is difficult to guess. In any case neither Government is likely to retain a whip hand over the situation despite military success for the time being.

A critical transition from an era of suspended animation and undeclared war is due to close. The next phase, of liberation of the sub-continent from the overlordship and politico-economic interference of the super-powers is about to begin, with war or without it.

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Kerala

A Great Victory !

RAMJI

THE ultra-progressive Achutha Menon Ministry has won a great victory over the disruptive and subversive forces which had erupted alarmingly all over the State and which had the support of the Marxist opposition.

The big army of teachers in private colleges, who had gone on a do-or-die strike for direct payment and other decencies of service, had to withdraw their struggle unconditionally, after sticking to it for nearly two months at a stretch. It was a great victory for the private college managements—for the Church, the Nair Services Society and SNDP and—sundry individual managements. And this victory was gifted to the age-old vested interests in the big business in education, by no less an administration than the CPI-led minifronters buttressed by the newly joined four-member Congress(R) Cabinet team.

The technique adopted was simple and traditional. The Government created a black leg, out of a kingpin of the struggle: the president of the association of private college teachers association, a Congress(R) stalwart. He was offered the post of chairman of the Rubber Board; a godsend on the eve of his retirement and he promptly responded to this by issuing a statement calling off the agitation.

This progressive measure was buttressed by a two-pronged move which effectively curbed the allegedly radical, fire-eating elements of the Congress(R), its student and youth wings. Its student wing, the KSU, and the Youth Congress which had even clamoured for the blood of Mr R. Sankar, the Congress oldtimer in charge of SNDP colleges, were told where exactly they got off and very obediently these sections which had built up an image for independent, radical action, despite the old fogeys

of the Congress, tucked their tails in and behaved like the true conformists they are. This self-exposure of the youth and student wings of the Congress(R) sections, the torch-bearers of Indira's Instant Socialism, has dealt a blow to the emerging Congress strength here, from which it would be difficult for the Congress(R) to recover.

The KSU conveniently gave up their demand for uniformity of college fees between the fancy rates charged by private managements and the rates laid down by the government. They and the youth sidestepped the issue and tried to becloud their double dealing by mounting an attack on the private college teachers whose self-proclaimed allies they had professed themselves to be. Overnight they 'discovered' that the teachers were agitating against the Government and not against the private managements. A remarkable discovery, since the 'discoverers' themselves had been agitating against the Government for failure to curb the freebooting tendencies of the managements of colleges.

And to make the picture true to age-old tradition, the erstwhile "agitators", the Youth Congress and the KSU, have turned round and started accusing the Marxists of trying to undermine the stable government with the help of the striking college teachers.

Another embarrassment to the Government posed by the NGOs who had declared their intention to strike from November 10th onwards in protest against the attempts of the Government to curtail trade union rights was also effectively stifled by the Ministry. The NGOs come under two different unions. The NGO Union, with a pro-Marxist leadership, has overwhelming numerical strength. But there is another union, an anti-Marxist one, the NGOs Association, which commands only nominal strength. The resolution to strike had been jointly adopted by the two unions. But, overnight, the situation underwent a change. Unilaterally, the NGOs Association called

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off the strike. The unexpected stab in the back nonplussed the NGOs Union which was obliged to postpone the strike.

Thus, the Ministry has succeeded in tiding over a crisis which threatened its very existence. Its stand on the private college teachers' demand is highly illuminating. It is ready to make direct payment to the college teachers, in colleges where the managements willingly surrender this right to the Government. This revolutionary step would be undertaken by the Government from the next academic year onwards. This absurd stand by the Government has been received by the public and a majority of the newspapers in a matter-of-fact manner.

The CPI after this exercise in operation black leg, called for a "protest day" on November 15 against the recent Central Government levies under the excuse of Bangladesh refugees. Perhaps the protest was staged. No one witnessed it. The biggest demonstration under this head had no more than a dozen participants. But the CPI had the satisfaction of setting its revolutionary image set straight on paper.

The next exercise in revolution was the anti-Marxist day on the 16th, a call for which was made by all the ruling parties together. The allegation is that the Marxists are blood-thirsty believers in violence which has to be resisted at all costs by peace-loving democratic parties. To be honest, the Marxist party here, in spite of its massive following, has been at the receiving end of violence to which it has reacted at best in highly constitutional protests, in as impotent a style as any reactionary Government could desire. Anyway, the Marxists got this compliment at the hands of the ruling parties. But the demonstration by these never got off.

On the other hand the series of district conferences of the CPM as a build up for their Ninth Party Congress in Madurai this month, have been impressive in terms of mass turnout and mass demonstrations. For

example, the Marxist demonstration in Cochin on the 21st, to mark the culmination of the Ernakulam District Conference of the party, far exceeded in numerical strength the rally staged by the 9th Congress of the CPI held in Cochin in October.

But this mass support is wasted on the Marxist party, which seems to be bereft of all revolutionary programmes. This is a classical example of the enervating influence of the parliamentary system on revolutionary spirit and style of action.

Bihar

Changing Pattern Of Caste Politics

N. K. SINGH

BY 1 a.m. there are but a few persons—barring some loafers and policemen—left on the historic Gandhi Maidan of Patna. But on a particular night there were more. A good number of students (including their evergreen variety known as student leaders) had assembled to approve a historic compact in support of the Bhumihar-Rajput grand alliance—formed in the light of the coming election of the Patna University Students' Union. The informal meeting started. A few of the caste leaders highlighted in their learned speeches how the 'backward' castes had so long been exploiting the 'forward' ones. The need of the hour was unity among the different 'upper' castes.

After a few speeches by the leaders of the concerned castes, the compact was approved and pledges were taken to honour it. The meeting dispersed amidst the shouting of 'Bhumihar-Rajput Unity Zindabad!'

To many observers of Bihar politics, a Bhumihar-Rajput alliance would seem impossible. These two castes had not been seeing eye to eye till very recently. The State politics was divided between the Bhumihar and Rajput camps, which were at the

helm of affairs through the undivided Congress. But the changing pattern of caste politics—particularly developments since the 1967 general elections—has brought these two supposedly sworn enemies to the same platform. The 'impossible' has happened.

The midnight 'secret' meeting did pay dividends to the Bhumihar and Rajput (student) leaders. Their alliance—a combination unheard of in the fifty years of university politics—captured nearly all the key posts, while the all-powerful 'backward' caste-alliance led by the mighty Yadavas was reduced to a non-entity. A Bhumihar was elected president of the union—a post which had been monopolised by the 'backward' alliance since 1962—while his Rajput accomplice was elected general secretary.

While these caste politicians had the courage and honesty to call a spade a spade (the president had publicly admitted that his candidature was supported by a particular caste-alliance), their 'progressive' counterparts proved themselves arch-opportunists in the worst sense of the term. Declaring an "all out war against casteism and nepotism" in leaflets and posters is one thing—in fact the more casteist a man is, the more violent is his campaign against casteism—and implementing the same in day-to-day life is quite another.

In this year's election too, students' wings of all the important political parties—from the CPM to the Jana Sangh—and different caste alliances backed by the respective caste leaders in 'high-level' politics laboured hard to prove their 'progressive' credentials. But those familiar with the currents of bourgeois politics in Bihar were not taken in by the overt brands of 'anti-casteists'. The covert story was something else.

Barring the Chhatra Federation (affiliated with the Students Federation of India, a CPM front organisation), all the groups initiated, roused, practised and exploited casteism. Ideology does not bring votes (the Chhatra Federation's share in the

polling was quite poor) while caste can—and more easily at that. The silent revolutionaries of the CPI are familiar with this formula. And this year, the Students' Federation (affiliated with the Dangeite-controlled All India Students' Federation) outdid all the other student organisations in caste politics. Caste considerations came not only in the setting up of candidates and making alliances with others (following the pattern set-up by its paternal organisation) but also in begging votes. As a result many of the SF candidates were supported by different caste alliances too. And perhaps that was why the SF won a number of seats in the Patna University Students' Union. As a brilliant member of the Dangeite bandwagon said, "Achieve your aim *per fas aut nefas*." (Through right or wrong).

Changing Pattern

As hinted at earlier, the way the union election was conducted was but a reflection of the 'high-level' politics of Bihar whose dimension has been changing a little swiftly. The 1971 mid-term poll stands as a milestone in this direction. In that election, for the first time in the history of Bihar, the established leaders of the Bhumihar and Rajput castes had joined hands under the banner of the Congress(O). A deeper study would reveal that this prodigious phenomenon had emerged as a reaction to the so-called backward caste leaders who, in the past few years, had gradually shunted the 'upper' caste leaders to the backward.

Bhumihar and Rajput are the castes of the land-owning gentry; statistics prove that they constitute 78.6 per cent of the landowners in Bihar. Naturally, in a semi-feudal set-up such as ours, they had the 'say' in politics through their economic superiority. Though constituting only about ten per cent of the population, they long dominated politics through the undivided Congress politics was divided between the Bhumihar and Rajput factions—all the other castes taking sides with this or that faction

according to their convenience.

Gradually but almost unnoticed two significant changes were under way all this time: decline of the Congress and the subsequent rise of the opposition parties on the one hand and the rise of the so-called middle castes on the other.

Among the 'middle' castes a large number consists of either craftsmen or men pursuing certain types of profession, such as the Yadav, Vaisya, Dhanuk, Taili, Kumhar, Kurmi, Kesri etc. Though called 'backward', economically these castes—constituting 52.16 per cent of the population—are by no means depressed so far agriculture and cattle-feeding are concerned. But these new-rich landowning 'middle' castes are not considered social equals by the Brahmins, Rajputs, Bhumihars and Kayasthas and have yet to attain the urbanity and sophistication of the so-called upper castes.

The aspirations of the 'backward' castes have grown along with their economic improvement and they have been seeking a higher social status and a share in political power. This accounts for the rise of what is known as 'backwardism'—a factor that has caused alarm in high-caste circles. Among the political parties, the main beneficiary of 'backwardism' was the SSP which, under the leadership of the late Dr Lohia, made it a creed and emerged as the second party in the 1967 elections and again in 1971 mid-term poll.

Thus, thanks to the 'backward versus forward' politics advanced by the SSP, the 'middle'-caste leaders came in the limelight. And because of their numerical superiority soon enough they were able to make wide political gains in Bihar. In the earlier phase of their growth, the friendship of 'backward' politicians was much sought after by the 'upper' caste leadership of other parties. As a consequence, many 'backward' castemen found a place in the top hierarchy of several parties (for the Congress monopoly had somewhat loosened by then). Gradually a time came when the minority 'upper'-caste

leaders were forced into the background—out of the seven chief Ministers Bihar has had since 1967, four were from 'backward' castes and one a Harijan.

It was high time the 'upper' caste groups realised their folly—the folly of fighting between themselves and handing over the *raj* to the *shudras*. Hence their unity in the 1971 mid-term poll.

But it was too late. The 'backwards' have occupied a place no one can dare snatch from them. They have learned the secrets of political gimmicks from their erstwhile 'higher'-caste *gurus*. By making a front with the Brahmins, they were able to capture 23 out of 53 seats in the last mid-term parliamentary poll. This was really a big improvement over their performance in the first general elections. The Rajput-Bhumihar unity is more or less like the meeting of two railway tracks; so long as they are parallel they function smoothly, but their unity blocks the way. And blocked is the way of development of the Rajput and Bhumihar castes in the political life of Bihar.

New Strategy

But with the Rajputs, Bhumihars and Kayasthas united, the overall value of 'backwardism' has decreased. This has led to re-thinking on the part of the policy-makers of different political parties. A new strategy has been evolved and many political parties are in the process of getting rid of their old strategy of counting on one particular caste or a group of castes for their political existence. Gone are the days of 'Bhumihar-Rajput politics' or even of 'backward' politics. The changing dimension of caste politics has forced the political parties to prepare a well-proportioned amalgam of all the castes.

The 1971 election was, again, a pointer in this direction. In that election, the Congress(R) was the first to pick up the new strategy, and that explains partly its spectacular victory. The Congress(O) and the SSP, the two main losers, had adopted a policy

contrary to the one adopted by the Congress (R). While the Congress (O) was boasting of its support from the erstwhile ruling trinity of the Bhumihar, Rajput and Kayastha, the SSP was harping on the tune of 'backwardism'. The result was disastrous for both of them. Just as the 'upper' casteism of the Syndicate alienated it from the middle and lower castes, the SSP's 'backwardism' isolated it from the upper castes. As against them, the Indira Congress had a very homo-

geneous character, i.e. it was a good combination of nearly all the castes. While it drew its main support from the Brahmins, scheduled castes, and 'middle' castes, the 'upper' caste Bhumihar and Rajput also had a well-proportioned representation in the party.

Perhaps the story is finished. But no, it can't be till one-sixth of the population, known as scheduled castes in the government dictionary, and

called 'untouchables', 'Harijans' and 'lower' castes, mostly agricultural labourers, or landless peasants, continue to live in a condition of starvation and semi-starvation. In a very short time they will rise like "a tornado or tempest, a force so extraordinarily swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to suppress it. They will break through all the trammels that now bind them and dash forward along the road to liberation..."

Japanese Imperialism And Oil

LASSE AND LISA BERG

“FOREIGN Minister Kichi Aichi said in the Diet on Thursday that the participation in the development of under-sea oil resources off South Vietnam by Japanese oil companies does not pose any legal problem.”

“Kaiyo Oil Co., Ltd., which was established on Wednesday, will tender a joint bid with Gulf Oil of the U.S. in April for the development of the oil resources off the Mekong Delta, South Vietnam, it was learned Wednesday.”

“The nation's increasing demand for oil and constant pressure from foreign oil interests for higher crude oil import prices have convinced both the Government and local oil refineries of the absolute necessity of finding their own oil resources. For Japan, a stable supply of crude oil is desperately needed for its economy and sustenance of prosperity since its oil production amounts to only one per cent of the total domestic demand.”

These are extracts from two Japanese dailies, *Mainichi Daily News* and *Asahi Evening News*, between March 12 and 23 this year. There surely was feverish activity among the leaders of the Japanese big business, the Zaibatsu, those days. If you read the newspapers closely you could also find a lot of other small notices, interesting but with an

ominous sound to it:

“Japan's Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shinsaku Hogen, said Thursday ‘Naturally, Japan is most concerned with the future of Middle East oil and the safety of the 6,800-nautical-mile-long shipping lane which connects Japan with the Persian Gulf through the Indian Ocean and the Straits of Malacca... Efforts must be made, therefore to prevent any situation which might cause political instability in the coastal regions of the Indian Ocean in the vicinity of which pass the all-important sea routes’. He pledged that Japan will always be ready to extend economic, technical and other forms of assistance should they be desired for the safety of navigation.”

—“Japan will run out of most of its essentially poor underground mineral deposits in about 10 or 20 years, it was officially announced Tuesday. Iron deposits will disappear in 11 years, mercury in 9.8 years, gold in 11.7 years, copper in 14.5 years, lead in 17.7 to 20.7 years and iron sand in 17.5 years”.

Or you could just look at some of the headlines in those newspapers from that time: “Napalm is defensive: Nakasone” (Nakasone was the director-general of the Japanese defence agency), “Kawasaki to reinforce Missile Project”, “Defense orders will be trebled” (in the new five-

year Fourth Defense Buildup Programme), “No adequate reason is given for boosting defense budget—greater fire power, mobility emphasized”. “Defense industry hopes for expanded business”, “Japan may be forced into big military role”. “Industry eyes more flexible arms business.”

So what was all this fuss about? First, the Defence Agency had presented the finalized draft of the fourth defence buildup programme, which really was a suitable name because it contained a heavy build-up of defence. The budget was increased 2.2 times from the present third programme running from 1966-1971. With a size of the budget of Yen 5,800,000 million (360 yen is equal to one U.S. \$ at present) the annual defence spending now ranking 12th in the world will be 1976 be raised to sixth or seventh and by the end of the seventies Japanese defence is expected to be the third biggest in the world. Most of the increase will be in the air and marine “self-defence forces” with an increase of 2.71 and 2.28 times the current programme respectively. The ground forces will be increased 1.83 times the present programme. It will be a highly mechanised defence, the personnel cost will increase by 1.75 times while the cost for procurement of combat and other weapons will increase by 3.12 times. It will be a defence with small manpower

equipped with superior arms. And those arms will be produced by the Japanese big business itself. The ratio of domestic production of arms will be raised from 50% to 80% or 90% and this will triple the defence industry orders.

Why are Japanese rulers in such a haste to build up defence in a few years hence, outstripping those of all other nations on earth except those of the USA and the USSR?

A part of the answer to that question can be found in the first newspaper notes in the beginning of this article. Today the Japanese big business is in a frantic search for natural resources to feed the Japanese industries with fuel and raw materials. Japanese industrialists are looking for cheap labour in Asia at a time when the Japanese workers are demanding their share of the "miracle". They are seeking markets for their products and sites for their pollution producing industries when public opinion at home is forcing them to adjust their profit-calculations.

In all this play for power oil is of supreme importance to the Japanese Zaibatsu. Japan is importing 99% of her oil and is by far the largest importer of crude oil in the world with an import of around 200 million tons a year. That import is expected to rise 70% by 1975. Ninety per cent of her supplies are covered by import from West Asia alone. In December 1970 and January 1971 the Japanese Government decided to reorient Japan's national oil policy to get her own oil resources in order to be less dependent on the big oil companies or a possible increased nationalist strength among the oil producing West Asian countries. What had happened was that OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), which is a consultative association of the governments of the biggest oil producing countries, in December 1970 and the beginning of 1971 started flexing their muscles demanding higher prices for oil.

Looking For Oil

So the Ministry of International

Trade and Industry proposed that the Government in the next five years should channel around 500 billion into oil development projects. All around the world Japanese oil companies are now desperately searching for oil and trying to get concessions wherever there is the faintest possibility of finding oil. The government-sponsored Japan Petroleum Development Corporation is, through the oil company JAPEX, of which it owns 51.3%, searching for oil off East Kalimantan (East Borneo) and North Sumatra, but like most other Japanese companies they have been very unsuccessful. There are up to now only two Japanese companies producing any oil, North Sumatra Oil and Arabian Oil Company, and it is estimated that they in the next five years will be able to supply less than 10% only of the Japanese consumption. Now the Japanese big business is hoping to get hold of some part of the newly found oil-fields in Alaska, and in Southeast Asia, off South Vietnam and Indonesia. But the oilfields off South Vietnam are not the only ones likely to get the eager Japanese Zaibatsu into political trouble. They are also trying to get hold of oilfields in the troubled waters off Korea and the disputed area around the so-called Senkaku-islands between Okinawa and Taiwan.

To get a deeper understanding of the state of Japanese imperialism today, especially in regard to oil we turned to one of Japan's most knowledgeable experts on Japanese imperialism, Haruki Wada, professor at the prestigious Tokyo University. When the university was in turmoil and occupation in protest against the American-Japanese security treaty, his room was the only one left untouched by the revolutionary students and it was there that we met him.

Question—Would you give us some kind of overview of the development of the Japanese imperialism since the Second World War?

Wada—The economy made a rapid growth from 1955 and in ten years the structure of Japanese society changed. In that change we can find

the reappearance of Japanese imperialism. Of course we can say that Japanese imperialism never died, it changed its form of existence and it survived and reappeared with full strength.

1965 is a symbolical year for Japanese imperialism. In that year the Japanese Government concluded an agreement with the Republic of Korea, so-called South Korea. Korea was the main colony of Japanese imperialism for 45 years. In that agreement the Japanese Government did not say that they should never repeat that history or that they apologized for the harm and damage and humiliations which Japanese imperialism caused the Korean people. We think now that the agreement of 1965 was in fact a declaration that the Japanese ruling classes were again adopting the policy of their forerunners. From then on Japanese expansionism in South Korea grew bigger every year.

From the same time began Japanese expansion into South-East Asia. The main target is Indonesia. Between Indonesia and Japan there have been complicated relations but after the fall of Sukarno and the birth of the Suharto regime the Japanese imperialists expanded their enterprise in Indonesia.

The third field of interest of Japanese imperialism is Indochina. Several years ago the Japanese ruling classes, the leaders of the Japanese monopoly capital, began to say that the Malacca Straits is the lifeline of Japan because of oil. From the Middle East tankers carry oil through the Malacca Straits. If some disorders happened in the area adjoining the Straits so that the tankers could not pass, the oil will not come to Japan. Several people in the Liberal Democratic Party began to say that the defence of this area belonged to the Japanese Self-Defence Forces. Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam are now becoming very important to Japan.

Q.—I suppose that although they have said this about the Malacca Straits being the lifeline of Japan, the interest of this area to the Japanese

ruling class is not mainly as a link of communication. Just as well as the tankers now are going around Africa they could also go around Australia, even though it would become somewhat more expensive. The main interest in the area must be in the resources, markets etc.

W.—Yes, yes. Now this area is becoming an important market also supplying resources. The war in Vietnam is also a paying business especially to Japan.

Q.—And among the resources, oil is important?

W.—Indonesia can supply oil. Japanese monopoly capital has set up many companies to get oil in Indonesia, but it is not enough. Oil has become a big problem to the Japanese capitalists. At the beginning of this year, after the OPEC demands, the big Japanese companies were pressing the Japanese Government to help them in getting oilfields in Iran. They said that we should get oilfields there by every means. They pressed Sato to give aid to the Iranian Government to allow them into the oilfields.

But Iran is in the Middle East, so the question of the Malacca Straits remains and they want to have oilfields closer to Japan. After Indonesia they turned their attention to the newly discovered oil sources off the coast of South Vietnam. On March 10 they set up a new company—Kaiyo Oil. It is not so important because of the size of its capital—it is a rather small company yet—but because of its components. It comprises the main elements of Japanese capitalism. The centre of the company is the semi-official corporation Japan Petroleum Development Corporation with maybe a fourth of the capital. Two of the Zaibatsu have also joined, Mitsui & Co. and Mitsubishi Shoji. The others are Marubeni-Iida, C. Itoh & Co. and Nissho-Iwai Co. These are the five biggest all-selling companies in Japan—they are selling everything from bags to the U.S. Army to small packets of instant noodles. They are the spearhead of Japanese expansion. They are selling Japanese manufactures all over the

world. In Kaiyo Oil there are also two oil companies, Alaska Oil and Idemitsu Kosan Co. Idemitsu is a purely national company. The last company is Toyota, automobile manufacturers, who are planning to expand their business and set up factories in South Vietnam. That is why they joined this scheme. We can see in these components the representative firms of Japanese capitalism. Kaiyo Oil will be acting in cooperation with Gulf Oil of the U.S. 30% of the capital will be supplied by the Japanese side. This is a national business of Japanese imperialism. I think it is a very dangerous scheme for the Japanese people.

Q.—The problem of oil for Japanese imperialism is not a new problem.

W.—In the Pacific war the oil problem played an important role for the Japanese. To get oil resources against the blockade of the Dutch, English, French and Americans was the main excuse to start the Pacific war. Japanese airborne men dived and landed on the oilfields of Indonesia. The oil problem is the traditional problem of Japanese imperialism. It was said in Japan during the war that every oil drop is a blood drop.

Q.—But don't you think that a re-appearance of that kind of imperialist exploitation of foreign oil resources will be opposed by the Japanese people?

W.—This new scheme is so dangerous to the Japanese people because perhaps they will be willing to accept the explanation by the monopoly capital that oil is necessary to Japan, that oil is necessary to the Japanese people, so we must get oil if necessary by force, with war vessels. Many Japanese are now using motor cars and without oil how can you use your cars the rulers will say. That might make people upset or put them in panic. I think this scheme is very dangerous.

Q.—So you think Japanese imperialism will be an imperialism with war vessels and wars?

W.—In South Vietnam and in Laos Japanese manufactured goods

are occupying the market. The Japanese do not care about the effect of this system on the people of those areas. Japanese imperialism is producing a very dangerous situation.

From the standpoint of Lenin—imperialism makes wars necessary. Even so some people say that Japanese imperialism is not yet grown up because in military ways it is not independent. In my opinion all imperialists want to grab resources and exploit people peacefully if possible. It is cheaper so. But if there are people who resist they need war vessels and warplanes and troops. I think Japanese imperialism is most imperialistic now without using any war vessels. But if we cannot stop them, then they will go to war with people who resist. I think that Japanese imperialism now is completely grown up.

Q.—But it is often said here that there is in Japan an especially strong aversion against war. Won't that be a difficulty for a more militaristic Japanese imperialism?

W.—But people will be educated according to their plans. Now that the Japanese are enjoying their life in a rather stable situation, their main fear is to lose their standard of living. If they threaten to lower this standard, they will agree to the decision of their Government to wage war to preserve this standard, this welfare.

Q.—In the case of the U.S. the racism, especially that against Asians, has made it easier for American imperialism to wage a war in Indochina. In some cases the racism directed against the Vietnamese has been intentionally taught to the GIs. In Japan we have found a rather strong racism—I suppose that would be increased intentionally by the Japanese imperialists and used as a weapon by them.

W.—Yes, The racism of the ordinary Japanese is not so aggressive. So if the Government decides to wage war, they will educate people to make their racism more aggressive. If a person already has a feeling of superiority towards people who are from another part of the world, that feeling could be made aggressive if that person is threatened.

Most Japanese now are indifferent to the situation that is arising from the Japanese effort in several areas. I think our people lost a very good chance to think over what it is to be an imperialistic nation. That was the end of the last war. I checked the liberal magazine *Sekai* in the period of the five years from 1945-1949 and I found only *one* article in that period dealing with our colonial rule. In that article there was not a word of apology—instead it wrote that it was humanistic and romantic to wish to treat Koreans equally with the Japanese! The only article in five years!

Our people lost a precious chance which was allowed us by the vic-

tims, the Korean people. We committed the crimes and then we forgot and now we are committing the crimes again. It is a very difficult situation.

Every war has begun in the name of peace. Even at the start of the Pacific war the Japanese Emperor said that this war was for the purpose of achieving eternal peace in East Asia. Prime Minister Sato is telling us that we have a peace constitution, that we are not a militaristic nation, that we are making our way to a peace State. Saying so he might send troops to South-East Asia. If we cannot check him we will in the near future see killing in the name of the peace constitution.

home countries are becoming very expensive from increasing labour costs; the plants proposed to be set up are of course second hand, but even so they are very modern compared to those already existing in India: the emphasis will be on exporting the products manufactured at these "transferred" plants to the donor countries (*Statesman Weekly*, 25 September).

The latest ventures could be part of a process on behalf of the world monopolies, cartels and corporations (private or social and State), in connivance and collaboration with the new elite of bureaucrats, entrepreneurs and professionals (see UNESC, CSD report on Social Development in Asia, March 1971), for converting the masses of India into a cheap labour force for agricultural and also for industrial production. To smother the possibilities of instability, unrest and revolt from sheer hunger and misery, while letting the local forces act as the main instruments of repression and oppression, efforts to maintain this labour force in a minimum state of physical fitness and comfort for the purpose itself would form a necessary part of the whole process...and towards that, also continuing doles to avert disasters from famines and other causes. Could one draw an analogy with the slaves of ancient Greeks who used the then technology for the elites but were themselves deprived of freedom of innovation and progress? The present process is aimed at converting the vast masses of the underdeveloped world into a labour force, agricultural and industrial, to serve the affluent areas of the world and the local elite. Whether the inherent contradictions would permit a smooth operation of this process is another matter.

However, these developments should give rise to a serious concern in the scientific community in general and particularly in CSIR and other establishments devoted to indigenous R & D for self-reliant industrial and economic development. In campaigns for improvements in economic,

Industrialisation Without Indigenous R & D ?

NARENDRA SINGH

DURING the last six months in India, after the March elections, we have witnessed exaggeration of a process of development with very serious consequences for the indigenous R & D. After a long stagnation, fresh signs reappeared in April in the press, reporting that the political stability and climate of the country had reassured the foreign vested interests that India is safe for investments and for profitable exploitation of the manpower and natural resources in collaboration with the local forces.

The economic mission of the Japanese monopoly, Mitsubishi, found the country's stability, burgeoning market and the tremendous potentialities for new investments with the Indian government and industrialists willing for and inviting collaboration, as plus factors for shifting its (Japan's) accent towards India (*Economic Times*, 22 April). The U.S. administration found the whole region in turmoil except for India which stood out as an oasis of stability, indicating the need for serious Indo-American discussions on the emerging role of

India in the region and for the further strengthening of deep economic and political relations between the two countries (*Indian Express*, 23 April). The Chairman of the Indian Investment Centre and the ICICI, Mr G. L. Mehta, stated that India's political stability, confirmed after the last general elections, had favourably influenced the British investors for opportunities in India; the British government has been considering special measures to encourage British firms to seek out more opportunities for investment in poorer countries (*Indian Express*, 29 April).

There has been reaffirmation of assistance to India in various ways from various quarters, both from the capitalist and Soviet bloc countries. The latest in the process are reported offers from the industrially advanced countries (West Germany, U.K. and Japan, mentioned by name) to shift large industrial plants and set them up in India in collaboration with the local entrepreneurs; the Government is understood to have expressed its willingness to offer prompt facilities for these industries which are labour intensive and whose operations in

social and professional conditions, there has been a growing recognition (and a sober one indeed!) among them of the futility, without positive directional changes in the objectivity and purpose, of the indigenous R & D. Among the hordes of obstructive factors from the prevalent socio-economic and political situation, attention has been repeatedly drawn in recent times to the continuing obstacles from expanding foreign subsidiaries, investments and technical collaboration. The transfer of whole industrial plants, as part of investment and collaboration in new plans and policies of the world and local social-economic and political forces, would further reduce the need for indigenous R & D and, therefore, any need for positive changes to conducive economic, social and professional environment for the scientific community.

This may be industrialisation without indigenous R & D, but for whom and at what costs to the common people, including the scientific workers and their future? High time the scientific community woke up and participated in the struggle for its present and future.

Films From Japan

BY A FILM CRITIC

THE excellence of the Japanese cinema has long ceased to be a debating point. Within the limited opportunities had occasion to see Japanese films from time to time. Kurosawa or Mizoguchi, or Ozu or Ichikawa are no obscure names in books and journals. We have seen samples of their work. We have seen bad films too. The three films being shown by the film societies in Calcutta now do not boast of any well recognised name. However, two of them should easily convince anyone of the power and artistry of the two directors.

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Kozaburo alias Kimisaburo Yoshimura has often been compared to Mizoguchi for the sensitive portraits of women he draws in his films. He has also been described as a versatile director, i.e. one who can create any kind of film, tackle any kind of subject. In that way he is supposed to be unique in Japan. Since this is our first introduction to Yoshimura we cannot speak of those qualities as being self-evident. There is no doubt however that he reveals his class in *Kokoro-No-Sammyaku*. He is definitely a director sure of his skill and the theme he handles. The problems faced by a middle-aged woman with a temporary teaching assignment in a school are nothing extraordinary. There is no plot line, no high crest of dramatic tension. And the film is worthy of attention because of the very absence of elements with usual popular appeal. Yoshimura's exploration of the relationship of the teacher and the most troublesome boy is sincere. At times the film bores the viewer essentially because of the absence of any plot whatsoever but a near fluid editing compels us to sit in the hall till the end. It is not a great film but certainly not one to be dismissed casually. There are a lot of amateurs playing the different roles and it is to the credit of the director that they play well. Yoji Yamada is young and has already attracted the attention of Japanese critics. *Where Spring Comes Late* has also won for him Japan's coveted Kinema Jumbo award. This story of a migrating family from one end of Japan to another has an epic canvas in that in the process of seeking a new child greets their arrival in their new habitation the family experiences two deaths and the birth of a child greets their arrival in their new pastures. The film is in colour and that and the family's encounter with big cities like Tokyo and Osaka give the director enough scope to explore many facets of life. But there are some unnecessary details, often pretty flashback sequences in monochrome which could have been avoided.

Clippings

Inner Tension In E. Bengal

Two divergent—at times even contradictory—trends have become perceptible within Bangladesh despite the common will and effort to free their country through their own strenuous efforts and to dislodge the West Pakistani forces from its soil.

On the one hand, the Mukti Bahini—especially its guerilla forces—have been increasing their activities and have dared to initiate military action within less than 40 kilometres of Dacca and have been able to set up civil government in the liberated zones.

...On the other hand, political dissensions have emerged because some political elements could not be accommodated by the Awami League within the advisory board set up two months back at Mujibnagar. For instance, the members of the co-ordination committee of the leftists were not taken into the advisory board, though NAP (Muzaffar Ahmed group), CBP (Moni Singh group), National Congress (Manoranjan Dhar) and NAP (Maulana Bhashani group) were co-opted as members of the advisory board. These inner dissensions increased to such a pitch that Maulana Bhashani did not attend the last meeting of the advisory board probably because he seemed dissatisfied with its membership as well as with its working.

It is widely known that the Awami League leaders were not in favour of constituting this advisory board because they claimed that because of being returned in open elections last December, they were the sole political representatives of...Bangladesh. This contention has been controverted by other political elements now fighting against the military junta.

The advisory board of the Bangladesh government was set up under the diplomatic pressure of the USSR, mostly to get the two pro-Moscow

parties, NAP and CPB in a better political focus inside and outside Bangladesh. Their actual following is rather limited in numbers till now. But it is reliably learnt that with the liberal financial aid of "brother parties" (which include CPI and CP of Great Britain, probably acting as a conduit for funds originating in Eastern Europe and the USSR) and training provided to nearly 2,000 youth belonging to these two pro-Moscow parties in Bihar, their actual showing in the field might improve. But the armed youth of these two parties have still to go into military action inside Bangladesh.

Then there is another armed youth force known as Mujib Bahini or the special guerilla squad (S.S. for short) which maintains its own identity, its own leadership and operates independently of the national command of Mukti Bahini. When in operation within Bangladesh, some skirmishes were reported to have occurred between Mukti Bahini (a force entirely under the Bangladesh government) and the so-called Mujib Bahini (an independent force). It has been noticed that while the Mukti Bahini leadership keeps to the nationalist political directions of its own government, the so-called Mujib Bahini takes a more rightist line in its actions.

It is reported that youths belonging to the so-called Mujib Bahini have killed deliberately or unknowingly quite a few left-wing cadres of various political parties of Bangladesh. It is because of these actions—rather than because of any particular political utterances of its leaders or writings in its mouthpiece "Banglar Bani" (a Bengali weekly)—that the American influence is suspected in its ranks through infiltration. In any case, the so-called Mujib Bahini is better armed, better clothed and better fed than the Mukti Bahini. It generally undertakes guerilla actions only.

...Mrs Indira Gandhi is likely to be faced with the problem of inner dissensions and tensions emerging within the ranks of Bangladesh leadership, where less openly visible interference by both the USSR and the

US together with the political vacillations of New Delhi, have created a situation which could be described as far from happy.

For one thing, President Nixon's announcement that the US has discontinued arms aid to Pakistan has a positive effect on Bangladesh leaders. It has tended to create the political environment in which American appeal to Bangladesh leaders could become potent. This trend could ultimately result in a weak compromise with the military junta of Islamabad. It is stressed here that a weak compromise between Awami League in Bangladesh and military junta in Islamabad would be generally anti-Indian in character if not in intent.

(From *The Economic Times*, November 10).

Letters

The Two Parties

Mr A. K. Sanyal (October 30) has been very critical of the CPM; he also writes that a great deal of what the Naxalites are still doing is wrong. We have now only two parties which believe in the need for revolutionary change in our society and if we let them down like this, where shall we go? We think it is high time to recognise that next to the CP(ML) the CPM is a powerful revolutionary party and we should not all the time be critical of it. Now that the bourgeoisie has taken full advantage of their quarrels, we should work for co-operation between the two parties.

The CPM has a solid base among the people. Despite all the terror inflicted by the police, CRP and the military more than 50% of the people—leave out the bourgeoisie and the landlords, rich peasants and their stooges—the lawyers managers, traders, businessmen, doctors, engineers etc.—have backed the party in all its ups and downs. The main accusation against the CPM is that it often sides with the jotedars against landless labourers. We think the accusa-

tion is not true—the CPM has built so many unions of landless labourers. That apart, one cannot escape the fact that the middle peasant, whom you perhaps call a jotedar, is the main core in the countryside and landless labourers are usually less than one-third of the rural population. So if you want to build up a mass party in rural areas, you can never afford to have the middle peasant out of your fold. In fact, the CPM has put in practice the well-known Mao theory that with the base among landless labourers, the party has to include middle peasants. Working on this theory, the CPM has been quite successful in forming a mass party in West Bengal.

Next, if you think of its strong base among the urban proletariat in several States and such a mass build-up in West Bengal and Kerala, calling it a petty bourgeois party smells of prejudice if not jaundice.

About ministry grabbing, this is an empty phrase when we know that a revolutionary or near-revolutionary situation has not arisen except in West Bengal, and the Centre is too powerful to be ignored, as is seen from the successful combing operations it has carried out in all the Naxalite strongholds. So, what wrong is there if a ministry is grabbed for educating the people about the limitations of reforms by bourgeois parliaments and for helping the proletariat in their struggles against the bourgeoisie?

Mr Sanyal is caustic about the phrase "one section of the police is good". Even he must be appreciating the fact that for any revolutionary change in a society, the workers must infiltrate all its sections, in course of which some policemen are bound to appreciate the need for a revolutionary change and thus become good. Particularly this would be true today (if not in the times of Marx) when the police cannot remain aloof from the political currents in the country.

We can appreciate your bias for the Naxalites because we also have great respect for their sacrifices and for some of the pioneering and educating work they have done in the cause

of revolution. But at the same time, we do wish that you appreciate too the tremendous work that the CPM has done among the masses and try to bring about some form of cooperation between the two parties whether they agree in their practical programme or not. After all even Mr Sanyal has admitted that a great deal of what the Naxalies are still doing is wrong.

J. D. VOHRA
Bombay

At The Cross-Road

Apropos Mr Sunanta Banerjee's 'The CPI(ML) At Crossroads' (November 20) though Ashim Chatterjee has made the fantastic mistake of placing Yahya in the same category as Sihanouk, it doesn't appear to me that his is an irreconcilable attitude. Much of the haughty remarks of Chatterjee has its origin in Mr Mazumdar's authoritarian leadership. I don't think Chatterjee and his followers seriously mean that their stand should be the sole line of the party. The document issued was meant to be discussed in the C.C.

I don't think the CPI(ML), by defying the CPC would be doing the same thing as the CPC did vis-a-vis the CPSU, as Mr Banerjee seems to think. The failure of the CPI(ML) is not the result of blindly carrying out the dictates of the CPC; on the contrary it is precisely its inability to follow the instructions that is at the root of all this. I leave aside the point that unlike the CPSU, the CPC never issues any mandatory instructions, except general ones, and so the question of blind adherence should not arise. Take for instance the question of mass struggle. Even as Peking was pouring forth abuse on the revisionists of both varieties, it highlighted the mass struggles led by these renegades. This was a clear enough indication that Peking still recognises the importance of such forms of struggle as it stressed on more than one occasion in quite unambiguous terms. But this never took the

form of any mandatory advice. Yet, while the CPI(ML) was loudly advertising its allegiance, it did not implement China's line. This is just one of the many instances.

It is exhilarating to note, however, that the belated consciousness that what is to be abandoned is not mass struggle in its entirety but the reactionary attire that clings to it, is gradually developing. I therefore, can accept that the CPI(ML) 'has suffered a setback', at best with some reserve.

A READER
Calcutta.

The inner-party struggle that had been going inside the CPI(ML) has taken an ugly form after the expulsion of Charu Mazumdar. This for a long time will serve as an example of how a party which had fallen prey to liberalism breaks down at the outset of white terror by the State machine. No doubt we are passing through an age of revolutionary struggle but Charu Mazumdar, his comrades-in-arms, sympathisers and the revolutionary masses will have to remember that this is nothing new in the history of revolution. Chairman Mao also had to suffer such 'defeats' when he was on the absolutely correct path. What matters is not a numerical majority but the correctness of the line, revolutionary perseverance and the spirit of 'serving the people' by making a revolution. We have seen enough of the 'wise old men' and we would stick to the spirit of the 'foolish old man' in removing the 'four mountains'.

The formation of the nuclei of the PLA was possibly the most historically significant incident after the Naxalbari and Srikakulam struggles. One has to admit that PLA is really weak now and proper education on warfare is still lacking. Chairman Mao's military writings are to be popularised in the PLA. The political commissars will have to learn from the Chinese experience how the 'roving rebel' nature of the army can

be gradually overcome. The method of building strong party units inside the PLA has to be practised.

A really effective line for mobilising the working class still tied up in the shackles of revisionism has to be found out so that they can rapidly assume their role of leadership in the Peoples' Democratic Revolution. The revisionist doping has been highly effective and our comrades may have to find the method of overcoming it. No readymade solution will be available in the Marxist classics.

SHARAD SENAPATI
Allahabad.

Berhampore Jail

Two college students in tehsil Batala (Punjab) were arrested and shot dead before a large number of people. They were suspected to be Naxalites but had not been tried in any court. All the political parties, students and trade union leaders demanded a judicial inquiry but the State Government was silent.

In another incident, in tehsil Barnala, the police tortured an entire village, criminally assaulted the women-folk, destroyed property and crops. All this was done to arrest an alleged Naxalite.

The Punjab police interrogate the intelligentsia including university teachers and writers, search their houses, take away their belongings and harass them in whatever manner it thinks proper. Many teachers, writers, students and trade union leaders have been implicated in false cases.

On October 31 some 500 Punjabi writers took out a procession at Jullundur protesting against police atrocities. The bourgeois press did not find it worth publishing.

S. S. DOSAJ
Organising Secretary,
Kendri Panjabi Lekhak Sabha
Jullundur.

Gandhi And Rape

Most of the Indian radicals I have come across are moralists in a narrow technical sense; their attitude towards sex, alcohol, et alia, is almost that of the proverbial small-time shop-keeper. Some of my progressive acquaintances, for example, went into a rapture when, some time ago, a certain middle-aged bureaucrat banned a novel, written by one of the few significant Bengali writers still alive, on grounds of obscenity. It is as though obscenity could be located in one specific zone of our existence. Ban it, burn it, Gentlemen of the Bourgeoisie, and we are safe!

This pettifoggery and chicanery, however, are symptomatic of a deep-rooted moral aberration, and let me assure the revolutionary sans-culottes of our society that in this they are in good company. For some reason or other, the Calcutta Radio Station airs the views of M. K. Gandhi every

Friday. One Friday a lady ready out selections from his writing. She blandly reminded us that he believed in non-violence. In fact, it was so much an integral part of his philosophy that, the lady continued undaunted, his advice to unfortunate women who might happen to be raped, obviously against their will, was to commit suicide rather than fight it out in a court of law.

Now I should like to know what the educated ladies feel about this safe advice from their essentially non-violent spiritual father. Supposing, since his authority is near scriptural, that an unfortunate lady takes it seriously and kills herself, whom must we hold responsible?

ANIRUDDHA LAHIRI
Calcutta.

Writers Protest

The cold-blooded murder of eleven Naxalite prisoners in Berhampore

Jail in February has not perhaps faded from public memory. Another attempt to repeat the performance has come to light. On November 7 at Berhampore Jail the Naxal prisoners were shouting slogans on the occasion of the 54th anniversary of the October Revolution when the legalised hooligans and murderers fell upon them and severely beat them up. At least four prisoners were seriously wounded. When this incident became public, the jail authorities gave a list of four 'minor' wounded persons. But when the local jail visitors and a pleader went inside the jail, they found that the wounds of the prisoners were by no means minor and they had not been given any medical treatment, and that above all, the 'list' given by the jail authorities did not at all tally with the actual list of the wounded.

A CITIZEN
Berhampore

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