

frontier

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BENEFIT SHOW FOR CONGRESS

MUCH of what was discussed in camera between the Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh at Raj Bhavan will never be known, and the curious will have to content themselves with the joint statement and the effusions of friendship and bonhomie on the Brigade Parade ground and at the State banquet. This suits the Government fine, for the tricky questions that the two Governments must settle before they can get down to their normal work are not for public airing. The ruling party in India would like these questions to remain shelved until after the assembly elections so that it may cash in on the unmitigated euphoria over the defeat of Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh. The sole purpose of inviting the Bangladesh Prime Minister to Calcutta was to remind the voters of the assistance the Congress Government gave to the people of Bangladesh in realising their thwarted ambitions. Mr Siddhartha Shankar Ray had lobbied hard last month for putting the Sheikh on view in Calcutta for a few hours even before his return to Dacca. He had announced the Sheikh's programme in the city before flying to New Delhi to bring him here. But the proposal fell through, because people in New Delhi and Dacca were not equally enthusiastic; understandably, for they are not going to be West Bengal's chief minister if the Congress wins. But the Sheikh had to come later to put up a benefit performance for the Congress in West Bengal.

The Sheikh has, however, spoken at least one home truth which should not be lost on the leaders of secular India. He said that their movement had, in the past, often received setbacks because of the communal disturbances in this country. Though he had the courtesy to declare that these outbursts of communal frenzy in India were in reaction to communal riots in Pakistan, his plea for maintenance of communal harmony in this country was a clear hint that the success of secularism in Bangladesh depended on how India behaved. After all, persecution of Hindus in what is left of Pakistan is no longer possible for the simple reason that there are no Hindus there. The Sheikh's plea would have been pointless if he believed that communal riots could occur in India only as a reaction to similar disturbances within Pakistan; he has made it clear that he does not rule out the possibility of self-generating communalism in this country. It will be utterly dishonest to argue that the hallelujahs

to Mrs Gandhi and her party are all because of the active support they have given to the struggle in Bangladesh. Many would not have been half as enthusiastic if, in the process, Pakistan had not been humbled and dismembered. The Government has realised a long-cherished dream, not merely of the Jana Sangh and like-minded parties, of teaching Pakistan a lesson and asserting Indian superiority—not an altogether secular dream. In the coming weeks when party propagandists will scour almost the whole country, the secular wrapping may fall off and the electioneering may turn into unabashed gloating over Hindu victory. The professed secularism of the political parties, especially of the Congress, is on test.

Peace and stability in this region also depend on what attitude the Government of India takes to the overtures of Pakistan. The report of the possibility of Mr Bhutto visiting New Delhi may be a feeler; perhaps the Pakistan President wants to ascertain if India is prepared to reciprocate. It will be a mistake for India not to respond to Mr Bhutto's gesture and endorse Mr Jagjivan Ram's bellicosity. Independent Bangladesh may not have any links with Pakistan, but that does not mean that the two countries should have no relations. Whatever be the ultimate pattern of this relationship, it will be necessary for Bangladesh to start a dialogue with Pakistan to settle a host of questions like the future of the Pakistanis in Bangladesh and of the Bengalis in Pakistan, if for nothing else at least for preventing recurrence of Mirpur. Indefinite presence of Indian troops in Bangladesh, even at the request of the Government there, would have, in the long run, impaired the friendly relations between the two countries, for foreign troops cannot be tolerated for long by a really independent people, especially when there is no threat of external aggression. If the troops are withdrawn by March 25, the ground for a dialogue between Mr Bhutto and Mr Rahman may be laid.

It is being assumed in many quarters that Mr Bhutto is prepared to come to terms with an independent Bangladesh, but not with a Bangladesh whose independence appears to be underwritten by India.

Valley Of Frauds

It is well known that every election in Jammu and Kashmir since 1957 has been brazenly rigged in favour of the Great One, Congress.

J & K will have an election this year too. Election, for those who are with or curry favour with the Congress. Those who don't are out.

Sheikh Abdullah and two of his colleagues have been under a ban for more than a year and cannot enter the Valley. The Plebiscite Front is banned and its members cannot contest the election even as independents, or under any new party banner. And now Begum Abdullah is externed from the State for six months. Mr Mohiuddin Karra, president of the Political Conference, and 20 of his party colleagues have been arrested. All under the Jammu and Kashmir Public Security Act.

Maybe the arrests and externments are based on incontrovertible evidence. But similar arrests and externments, made in the past, were not always so. Mr Jayaprakash Narayan, the trusted go-between of the Indian Government and the Sheikh, does not think that there is any ground to suspect the bona fides of the Sheikh, even if the Sheikh is prone to uttering 'irresponsible' and 'mischievous' words. On the contrary, he strongly recommends that the Sheikh and his followers should be given a chance to contest the elections and form the government if they win. Given fuller autonomy, the Sheikh and his party, he believes, will behave responsibly, just as the Nagaland people are supposed to be behaving. But Mr Mir Qasim, obviously with the concurrence of the Union Government, has no intention to allow a fair and free election, fair and free

that is even under the terms of the Election Commission. Mr Narayan finds that Mrs Indira Gandhi, known for her love of democracy, is rather inscrutable regarding the Kashmir Valley.

The Valley has two faces, one the nationalists in the country love to admire and the other they abhor. The Valley has a majority of Muslims who, the nationalists here fear, would opt out for Pakistan if given a choice. After Bangladesh, the nationalists are glad that the wind has been taken out of the 'pro-Pakistan' sails, because religion has been proved to be of dubious significance in forming a nation and certainly a State. The two-nation theory being buried, the nationalists gleefully point out, Muslim Kashmiris have no reason for acceding to Pakistan and seceding from India.

But the Valley has the other face too, which the champions of Bangladesh fear to look at. The people of Bangladesh demanded autonomy and then freedom and the Government of India gladly helped them have it. If the people of the Valley demand autonomy and independence, would it volunteer with the same gusto? Or will it throw overboard the broad morality shown in Bangladesh and resort to complex technicalities sans the morality? The question is not hypothetical. It has been the issue all along.

Mr Narayan of course thinks that the Government of India is foolish. With the redrawing of the Cease-fire Line, with the weakening of the Pakistani Army and Government, with the morale of the Pakistanis sagging, there is no reason to fear that the secessionists are a great force in the Valley. On the other hand, the time is just opportune to take the initiative and hand over power to men whom the Valley people trust. But the Mir Qasim band cannot be denied the plums. Mrs Gandhi is afraid to extend a bourgeois democratic revolution in the Valley. Those who contend that the state power in the country is held by the big bourgeoisie may kindly note.

The Nixon Plan

By his latest peace offer Nixon has tried to show the world and his people that he is as innocent as Picasso's Dove and it is the incorrigible North Vietnamese and their camp followers in the south who are to blame for the continuation of the dirty war in Vietnam and the spilling of so much American blood there. In a TV appearance Nixon dramatically revealed how he ordered his super-envoy 13 times to Paris to sell his peace plans and how each time he was rebuffed by the communists. And now he pulls off the veils to expose the dubious communists and show the world his own seriousness about peace.

Although Nixon's new eight-point plan indicates some formal changes in the U.S. stand, it contributes little in substance to the stalemated peace talks in Paris. It differs from its predecessors in only that it gives a definite withdrawal (date in exchange) of the war prisoners. But it makes the withdrawal conditional upon a general cease-fire throughout Indochina and proposes holding a guided election there. Thieu is to make the election look fairer by vacating the office a month before the polls. Though the North Vietnamese and their comrades would have no objection to the first proposition, they could not reconcile themselves to the idea of a general cease-fire and an election of Nixon's variety. In the last July proposals, which formed the core of their talks, the communists agreed to a partial cease-fire with the departing U.S. troops only and the formation of an interim government that is to include the communists also. Such an interim government was to supervise an election which in reality was to be a plebiscite on Vietnam's future.

The new proposal has scuttled this irreconcilable stand of the Vietnamese and offered instead an ungainly plan for surrender. By trying to goad the North Vietnamese and the NLF to lay down arms and agree to an

uncertain election it has asked them to give up in peace what they have won in years of war.

Nixon, in fact, has offered nothing but a shopworn peace plan, slightly refurbished with the proposal of a withdrawal date. The best way out of the Indochina war is to stop supporting the Saigon regime. And the North Vietnamese and the NLF have repeatedly reaffirmed this basic aspect of the Vietnamese question by demanding that Washington cease all its bellicose activities in the peninsula and stop backing the Thieu group. Though Nixon has frequently talked about peace, he has ignored this part of the problem and

offered his adversaries a wholly untenable proposition. Perhaps Nixon gave an inkling of his real motive when he said that the revelation about the secret talks and the newly mooted proposal was meant to counter the communist tactics to divide the American people and silence the critics of his Vietnam policy before the American elections. Evidently he seeks to cajole his electorate to select him for another term in the White House so that he can continue the unjust war in the name of peace. Incidentally, the Chinese would take note of the fact that secret talks with the Americans may not remain secret for long.

Enquiry In Phnom Penh

The ever tottering Lon Nol regime has again become a subject of speculation for the diplomats posted in Phnom Penh. Perhaps the worst crisis it faced since the illegal deposition of Prince Sihanouk about two years ago, the disaster at Route Six has forced the Government to make public admission of the corruption in the army and order an inquiry into the Tchenla Two operation. Since Lon Nol was associated with the campaign to the extent of giving day-to-day direction, the total rout of 20,000 elite Cambodian troops has made the Prime Minister the sole target of attack. The punch line of the critics is that it was foolish of Lon Nol to have stretched the operation 50 kilometres beyond the village of Kompong Thmar, all the way to the provincial capital of Kompong Thom. By doing this the troops were made easily vulnerable to the flanking attack of the guerillas. Then the retreat decision was made against the advice of field officers. If Lon Nol is criticised by politicians and generals, some with ambition to his office, the FANK is now held in contempt by the civilian officials.

Corruption is seen not only in the army, it is all pervasive in today's Cambodia. How many phan-

tom soldiers are there in each unit's rolls is still anybody's guess. Army officers make a lot of money by listing more men in their units than really exist. This is a perk which they are not willing to see go. But the cancerous regime in Phnom Penh does not realise that this prodigality cannot continue for long even with American munificence.

The impatience for Lon Nol's departure is growing, the civilian officials are pressing for a greater say in military affairs but nothing spectacular has yet happened. It is not because the Marshal is unwilling to depart or that he has successfully manoeuvred to hold his rivals at bay. None of the aspirants is as much acceptable to the different layers of the power structure as the Marshal is. That was proved once before when Lon Nol resigned on grounds of health. In Tam, Son Ngoc Thanh and the Americans' blue-eyed general Sirik Matak are all heading particular factions. Sirik Matak can challenge the Marshal only with the tacit consent of the Americans. But the latter are not willing to stir another hornets' nest now. The situation as is developing is likely to force Lon Nol to give up some of his authority.

Winner Takes All

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE flattering Congress margin at Darbhanga should restore sunshine to the hearts of those who traffick in public credulity even if the CPI is unhappy to find that the reaction is still strong in Bihar. The margin is proof that the same caste combinations that obtained at President V. V. Giri's election in August 1969 and the Lok Sabha poll in March 1971 persist to assure Mrs Indira Gandhi another landslide victory. The intermediary elites are finished and a new elite combination trading in the aspirations of the minorities and the backward classes and peddling pseudo-radical populist slogans devoid of any ideological content will carry the day. There will be more Brahmin and Muslim Chief Ministers in the country after March than at any time since independence and that is supposed to prove our secular bona fides to the world. The vertical mobilisation Mrs Gandhi has been managing since 1969 was through a peculiar combination of the Brahmins, Harijans, Muslims and the backward classes. Darbhanga is a microcosm of the new-type caste politics Mrs Gandhi succeeded in promoting, as the caste-wise break-up shows: Brahmins 1,25,000; Muslims 1,20,000; Yadavas 1,00,000, Harijans 1,00,000; Nishads 80,000; Rajput Bhumihars 60,000 and others—to make a constituency of seven hundred thousand voters.

The formula that brings about the winning combination in any constituency is fool-proof. A few minor adjustments need to be made here and there. The Congress headquarters has made an analysis of each of the assembly constituencies going to poll in March, with computer-like precisions (no confirmation yet that computers were really used!). If

money is found to be the decisive factor in a particular constituency, if is pumped in with gusto. If the tabulation shows that the candidate has to belong to a particular caste, one is chosen with this requirement in view. It is a streamlined process and the State machinery has obviously been used to carry out the data gathering, processing and analysis. Manipulate a winning combination and that is victory for democracy, socialism and secularism.

Nevertheless, factional considerations cut into the formula sometimes. The AICC headquarters has collected 8,000 odd petitions and complaints against the official selections for the Assembly seats. Each of the petitions makes libellous and defamatory copy and is therefore unprintable. No one will read them in any case and the unsuccessful of the ticket-seeking lot have left New Delhi bitter and sullen. The Congress Socialist Forum has lost heavily in the bargain because the "more-radical-than-thou" gimmick does not wash. It is the same kind of political charlatan who is coming into his own through the elections. Everyone is loyal to Mrs Gandhi and at the same time belongs to one faction or the other. Once the elections are over and it comes to a matter of choosing the Prime Minister, the all-powerful deity at the Centre will decide and the lucky winner will find himself gathering support without any effort. Leadership at the Pradesh level is a creation from the top. Power flows vertically down and does not interlock vertically upwards any more.

The Congress, nevertheless, does not seem to be too sure of a massive victory in West Bengal any more. The earlier confidence is eroding fast but then the CPI(M) does not seem

to be joining the battle with a high degree of confidence either. A month ago, the CPI(M) was content to win 50 seats but now it could hope for 70 plus judging from the bickerings in the Congress. One possibility is the debacle of the CPI which has been allotted seats in the three districts (Midnapur, Burdwan and 24-Parganas) where the Congress-CPI combination could not make much impact last time.

Allocation of 41 seats to the CPI in West Bengal and fifty in Bihar was the result of a decision at the top level and not of the CPI's bargaining power. Even in a State like Mysore, where the CPI does not count for anything in the constituencies allotted to it, the accommodation was made by the Pradesh leadership at the insistence of the High Command. Perhaps the Congress wants to demonstrate to one of the signatories of the Indo-Soviet treaty that it is not turning rightist. Understandably, the Congress might feel the need to use the CPI to undercut the appeal of the CPI(M) in West Bengal but it was not under such a compulsion in Bihar. Significantly, the bosses from Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra refused to accommodate the CPI but what it has got is far out of proportion to its actual strength—some 120 seats in nine states, and about 90 of them from Bengal and Bihar. The Congress in a sense still needs a CPI functioning as a viable party, well-financed, as a miserable counterweight to the far-out left in the parliamentary spectrum.

Once again, opposition to the Congress is becoming internalised as evident from the revolt by dissidents who would be backing independents at the polls while remaining Congressmen. The CPI spokesmen are becoming shriller in their denunciation of the alleged influx of reactionaries into the Congress.

The Brush

The brush between the CPI(M) leaders from West Bengal and Mrs Indira Gandhi here went practically

unpublicised. Mrs Gandhi is supposed to have described the memorandum presented by the deputation as "full of lies" and told Mr Jyotirmoy Basu that she was not prepared to listen to him after his performance in Parliament. She was told that they had come to see her as the Prime Minister of the country and not as a Congress leader. But Mrs Gandhi was throughout talking like a partisan Congress leader as though she and her Government had no responsibility for law and order in a President-ruled State like West Bengal. At one point, she threatened to "walk back home" from the meeting and nothing came out of the deputation. Mr Jyoti Basu could only give the Press a hand-out which included the list of constituencies which were alleged to be inaccessible to the CPI-

(M) thanks to Congress terror.

The CPI(M) obviously did not quite bargain for terror from the other side. Mr Jyoti Basu is known to have vaguely hinted to the Prime Minister about what he and his party had in view as an alternative to the ballot box. But Mrs Gandhi could not have been greatly impressed by these threats because she knows that the CPI(M) was her last reserve in Parliament when she had no house majority until March 1971. In any case, the CPI(M) which was calling Mrs Gandhi's government semi-fascist should not place reliance on the efficacy of petitions, memoranda and deputations which were the classical forms of struggle of the Congress during the colonial days.

February 6, 1972

Bihar

Darbhanga By-Election

N. K. SINGH

TO read any significance in the victory of Mrs Indira Gandhi's Congress in the by-election to the Darbhanga Lok Sabha constituency beyond that of the fate of an individual politician will be to dramatize the event beyond proportion, says an optimistic political commentator. The results mark no change in the political complexion of the country in general and Bihar in particular. The constituency had returned a Congress candidate in the last mid-term parliamentary poll, it has again chosen a candidate of the same party. Even the caste of the victor remains unchanged. The only change is that in place of the late Pandit Binodanand Jha, Mr L. N. Mishra would sit in the Lok Sabha.

Mr Mishra's victory was a foregone conclusion. The by-election had been designed cleverly—barely five weeks before a general election to the State Assembly was due—to yield a favourable result for the ruling Con-

gress and consequently demoralize the opposition parties. An entirely safe constituency was chosen. Darbhanga has always been a Congress stronghold. Ever since the first general election it had always—even during the peak of 'non-Congressism' in the 1967 poll—returned a Congress candidate. Even from the caste point of view which, like sex, is the Freudian instinct in Bihar politics, it was a head-I-win-tail-you-lose game. The constituency is dominated by Mr L. N. Mishra's own castemen—and Mrs Gandhi's too—Brahmins.

To make its success absolutely sure the Congress had mustered all the strength under its command—the Government's as well as the Party's. All top party leaders were pushed into service and as a precaution the selection of the Congress candidate to the forthcoming Assembly elections was held up until after the Darbhanga poll.

The manoeuvre has proved a success. Newspaper stories say that besides dealing a stunning blow to the major opposition parties, the Darbhanga result has badly shaken their confidence (if any) and it is like a "post-dated cheque" meant to be cashed by the Congress in the coming poll.

Besides the Union Foreign Trade Minister, L. N. Mishra, the Bihar lieutenant of Mrs Gandhi, and the socialist leader, Ram Sevak Yadav, five more candidates were in the (rat) race for this prestigious Lok Sabha seat which had fallen vacant after the death of its Congress holder, Mr Binodanand Jha. While the CPI, the rebel PSP and the Muslim League were supporting the Indicate candidate, the Jana Sangh boycotted the election in protest against delinking of the Lok Sabha by-election from the Assembly election. Observers feel that the main reason for the boycott was the Sangh's fear of exposing its own weakness which might have had disastrous consequences for it in the Assembly elections. The rest of the opposition parties, ranging from the Swatantra to the CPM, were supporting the Socialist candidate.

Mr L. N. Mishra polled 267,512 votes against 176,436 secured by Mr Ram Sevak Yadav. The other five candidates (all independents) jointly secured 5,944 votes. There are six Assembly seats falling within the Darbhanga Lok Sabha constituency. Mr Mishra had a comfortable lead in all but one constituency. While his victory in four constituencies—three of them were represented by the Congress and one by the CPI in the dissolved Assembly—caused no surprise, his lead of more than seven thousand votes in the Bahari constituency, formerly held by the Swatantra Party, astonished friends and foes alike. The only constituency in which Mr Mishra fared worse than his Socialist rival was the one held by the SP in the dissolved Assembly.

"Free and Fair"

In our free and fair elections the party with the biggest recruit of goondas always wins. Darbhanga

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was no exception. On the eve of the poll reports came in of the arrival in every constituency of truckloads and busloads of goondas from the neighbouring districts and on the polling day booths were captured by Congressmen, according to Socialist leader George Fernandes who termed the by-election a "rape of democracy."

According to eye-witnesses, the Darbhanga poll was one of the costliest elections ever held in this country. Money was used by both the Socialist and Congress parties as it had never been used before in any one single constituency. By a modest estimate the Congress must have spent Rs 1 crore. While the Socialist Party puts the number of vehicles used by the Congress at 500, the Congressmen say that at least 70 automobiles were deployed by the 'Grand Alliance' for poll campaigning.

However, there was one difference between the Congress and the Socialists. While the former could (mis)use the official machinery, the latter was unable to do so. Jeeps belonging to Central Government departments like Family Planning and State Government departments like the Block Development were openly used for canvassing in favour of the 'cow and calf'. The Private Secretary plus the entire staff allocated to the Union Minister for Foreign Trade were camping in Darbhanga for weeks before the election.

But the Union Foreign Trade Minister was not satisfied with it. Money and lavish use of official machinery alone do not bring victory in parliamentary democracy, as the results of the 1967 elections point out. Even the Indira 'charisma' was

not likely to cut much ice with the electorate of Darbhanga which happens to be one of the poorest regions in the country; its per capita annual income is only Rs 96 against the national average of Rs 500. Something more local and accurate was needed. So, just two weeks before the election announcement, gifts began to come in for the Darbhanga electorate: formation of Mithila University; export of Mithila paintings; a micro-wave station in Darbhanga; some more miles of railway line in the region and so on.

Casteism

To be precise, Mr Ram Sevak Yadav fell a victim to his own party's slogan of 'militant backwardism'—the main plank of its election strategy. As a consequence, the upper caste Hindu voters turned their faces against Mr Yadav. On the other hand Mr Mishra was right to declare: "I am confident of getting the Muslim vote en bloc... I am equally confident of getting massive support of Rajputs, Bhumihars, Kayasthas, Yadavas, Backwards and Harijans." (He did not mention the Brahmins, of course, who, it was taken for granted, would vote for Mr Mishra, the leader of the Brahmin group in the Bihar Congress.)

About one lakh Muslim voters of Darbhanga, it seems, chose to vote for the ruling Congress despite the Socialist Party's constant propaganda (the editor of a Patna Urdu daily known for his communal bias was requisitioned for this purpose) about Bihari Muslims being killed in Bangladesh. Actually the majority of Darbhanga Muslims come from lower castes who had not migrated to Pakistan and hence they had no stake in Bengali Muslims killing Bihari Muslims.

By the way do you know the percentage of Mr L. N. Mishra's votes? There are 693,000 voters in Darbhanga. Mr Mishra polled 267,462. That comes to a little less than forty per cent. What about the remaining sixty per cent?

King Mohendra

R. P. MULLICK

BENEATH the crypto-eulogistic professions of respect in circles representing the establishment in India, the role that King Mohendra fulfilled in the sixties, a landmark for Nepal in many ways, has been lost sight of. It is of course true that he remained a king as a king would, and even drew upon himself the likeness of a despot. Yet he bequeathed to his country an institutional heritage which showed monarchy in a new light in the age of transition. He presaged a system that held all the possibilities of transforming itself and finally, withering away.

His revolt against parliamentary democracy of the party-bound type, had the *raison d'être* of a poor mountainous country, handicapped by lack of economic development, and non-availability of resources which alone go to help build up political maturity as a necessary background. At the watershed of history, he tried to evolve a system of party-less decentralized administration which was largely misinterpreted outside Nepal as synonymous with personalized dictatorship, but which nevertheless did seek to bring in the lower depths of the Nepalese people into active participation with the Government. His ideas about Panchayati Democracy, as diffusion of political power to the people, were mainly taken over from traditional Indian concepts; intriguingly, it was in India that he suffered the great erosion of his image, though as a monarch he was really close to his people, largely because he had tried to make short shrift of party-politics and, along with it, of the social power-echelons of a feudal-petty-bourgeois complex in Nepal. His 1960 Constitution had raised a greater flutter of disappointment and chagrin in this country. Nepal's powerful southern neighbour, than in his motherland. The reason was not far to seek. He had

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caused offence to the rising comprador bourgeoisie cum ex-feudals, in league with the hierarchy of bureaucrats who nursed, and nurse still, fond dreams of playing the mentor to Nepal and ushering in a guided pattern of parliamentary Raj there. King Mohendra, however, had the courage to go up to the last hedge in making an end-of-the-road-break with factionalism, intrigue and power-politik, with which unscrupulous and parasitic class-politicians had impregnated parliamentarianism. Naturally suspicions were excited, eyebrows raised and unwarranted slanders even, though obliquely and in sotto voce, made to the effect that Nepal was being mortgaged to the "designs" of her northern neighbour. Nothing could have been more infamous than this unedifying and persistently uncharitable attempt made by the pro-Establishment upper classes in India—with their vested interests to grind—for queering the pitch of normal friendly relationship between Nepal and China. Even an innocuous demand by Nepal on India for withdrawing the latter's military checkpoints and the unduly large body of its military "advisers" from Nepalese soil, was distorted to suit some ulterior purpose. To the credit of King Mohendra it must be said that he did not budge in his efforts to continue the international policy of Nepal on an impartial keel of neutrality, a strict balancing of friendly relations with both China and India.

Plodding through successive plans to rear up the requisite infra-structure of Nepal's economy was no mean task for him, since foreign donors are seldom devoid of big-power interests. History will record the King's finesse, tact and savoir faire in judging the country's needs and equating them with the aid available, and finally achieving a balance between the givers so delicately poised as to prevent any of them from exerting political leverage on little Nepal. This provided the incentive and fundamentals of independence for Nepal's foreign policy—whence flowed the people's

natural urge for diversifying the country's foreign trade. That such, and the connected desire for an outlet to the land-locked state should have been slurred over by India and its rulers with all protestations of sympathy and "special relations" too loudly aired, is a pity! The very tortuous progress of Indo-Nepalese negotiations that preceded the recently signed trade treaty is a pointer to the difficulties and the duress to which Nepal has been subjected in the past. King Mohendra did stoop towards the end for saving the country's interests, since by stalling the process India had nothing to lose, but Nepal had.

King Mohendra had all the makings of a Sihanouk in him, and led the country to the threshold of freedom from machinations of neo-imperialism. At the back of his mental reserve there remained the spurtings of the Indian bourgeoisie's big-brother superciliousness and a Nehruian attitude of taking Nepal for granted as India's appendage. Before him opened a new perspective of the third world of small nations determining their political destiny through their own efforts and mutual aid, undeterred by expansionist surveillance. Would the new king succeed in carrying forward this trend?

The Rise And Fall Of U.S. Power

DICK KROOTH

MANY people on the Left are unable to explain what appears to be an aberration in U.S. foreign policy—President Nixon's doctrine to force other capitalist nations to pay for imperialism, and the President's coming visit to China. Other radicals are also unable to grasp the reason for China's present foreign policy *manoeuvres*—Chou En-lai's programme that Japanese traders selling in China must be free of dealings with South Korea or Taiwan, and the Chinese support of nationalist, rather than revolutionary, movements.

In fact, both the U.S. and the Chinese policies are flexibly designed to deal with a weakened U.S. giant and a strengthened Japanese power. But what forces are behind these shifts in power?

On one hand, as the rising cost of U.S. imperial power has shifted heavier taxes to the domestic working class—while the capitalists have also given the workers less and less real pay—unmistakable signs of workers' protests have become more frequent. To deal with this situation—to stem the tide of a radicalized work force—the ruling class has been careful to

slowly impose new burdens on the workers' wage. Meanwhile, to maintain the U.S. empire, the ruling class has been forced to seek military funds from allies like Japan and West Germany. The U.S. programme, then, is class peace at home, capitalist hegemony abroad.

On the other hand, to offset the more equal alliance of U.S., Japanese and Western European imperialisms (i.e. the Nixon Doctrine), People's China has been compelled to rearrange the list of her most dangerous capitalist enemies, removing the U.S. from the first-place position it once held in the postwar years and placing it second behind Japan.

From both the U.S. and the Chinese points of view, then, Japan has been turned loose to build an independent empire of her own. But will this empire expand without U.S. or Chinese counter-measures? Hardly, as the U.S. hopes to keep Japan's empire in check to prevent her from building a tight-knit commercial zone which would exclude U.S. traders from Asia. China too hopes to prevent Japanese businessmen from moving to include South Korea, Taiwan and even Manchuria in their

plans for a new sphere of Asian influence. So, however different their reasons, to control Japan a loose U.S.-Chinese link is being formed today to offset Japan's power tomorrow. President Nixon's well-planned visit to China is the first concrete step in this new alignment against Japan.

Among the capitalist nations, the new struggle for expanding markets must be distinguished from the old battle which dates from the years after World War I. By the 1930s, keen competition between the leading capitalist countries culminated in an orgy of nationalist *manoeuvres* for self-sufficiency and self-contained markets. Thus, the United States, Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands—to name the most important nations with colonies or spheres of commercial power—as well as Germany, Italy and Japan—those nations without or with too few colonies—tried to erect tariffs and barriers against foreign goods entering their home markets. The first five of these countries also tightened up commerce with their colonies and zones of influence to the exclusion of manufactured goods coming from, and raw materials going to, the last three nations.

In response to their encirclement by the other Powers, the three Powers with too few colonies formed an Axis to create a new order in the commercial world. They agreed that Japan was to be given exclusive rights to Asia, while Germany and Italy were to be awarded such rights in Europe. For Japan this meant a war in Pacific Asia to replace a century of occupation by the Western colonial Powers, as well as to remove their administrative pawns in China, South and East Asia, and the East Indies. For Germany and Italy too this meant a new military imperialism designed to take over Eastern Europe and the USSR, as well as all of Western Europe and Britain.

The ensuing conflagration buried the old relations of commercial power, however. Now neither Britain nor France, neither Holland nor Belgium, had the military power, the

means of production, the capital finance, or the people to maintain their empires. Now as well, Japan, Italy and Germany were occupied by the Allied Powers and stripped of their colonial acquisitions. Moreover, now the USSR used her conquered territories to expand the sphere of socialism in both Western Europe and Asia. And, now too, to "contain" the spread of this socialism—and, thereby, to protect the capitalist sphere of influence—the U.S. alone held sufficient military and economic power. This U.S. power then established a "defensive" perimeter in both Asia and Europe.

The United States selected Japan as the Asian outpost and bulwark for the capitalist sphere of influence. This is why the U.S. Occupation put down all dissent within Japan, replaced the positions held by Japan's imperial army and navy in order to stop revolutions in China and the rest of Asia, re-started Japan's world commerce, put the *Zaibatsu* monopolists back in the economic and social saddle, and let the businessmen ride roughshod over any obligations to pay reparations for restoring Japanese-caused war damage. With U.S. backing Japan became—and still is—the workshop of Asia.

Meanwhile, in Europe, the U.S., British and French zones of Germany were selected as the focal points for "containing" the spread of Soviet Communism. Western Germany, therefore, was rebuilt as the capitalist showroom of Europe; U.S. Marshall Plan aid saved all of the Western Continent for capitalism with West Germany acting as the industrial and commercial hub.

Capitalist world trade and finance were salvaged and secured by the meetings at Bretton Woods establishing the International Monetary Fund, the meetings of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and the creation of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation. By laying the basic foundation for capitalist cooperation in economic affairs, these agreements and the institutions they created attempted to

avoid the disastrous competitive devaluations and nationalistic economic policies of the pre-World War II period.

These agreements and institutions also dealt with the one important missing link in re-establishing capitalist world trade: colonies. Before World War II, the colonies had acted as the third tier of a three-legged commerce which moved raw materials and foodstuffs from the colonies to the industrial nations, then moved capital investments and manufactured consumer goods from the industrial nations to the colonies, and finally moved both producer goods and consumer wares between the industrial nations themselves. While this triangular commerce had been severed in the protectionist 30s—and turned into a two-legged exchange between metropolitan countries and their colonies—the U.S. tried to re-establish it after World War II. The Marshall Plan, for example, rebuilt Western European capitalism and fortified it in order to re-establish the colonial system.

Similarly, once the U.S. Supreme Command scrapped the Pauley Plan (to strip Japan of her industrial status), U.S. aid and purchases from Japan stimulated her economy, and then the U.S.-supported Colombo Plan kept the Asian door ajar for Western and Japanese trade and investments. True, China, North Korea and North Vietnam closed the door on the imperial businessmen. But, with sustained U.S. help, almost a quarter of a century later, Japan used its new industrial system to re-establish a sphere of influence throughout Asia.

U.S. hegemony over the non-socialist world eventually was eclipsed by the growing strength of the other capitalist powers. How had this balance of power changed?

From 1945 to 1970, the United States was the most powerful imperial nation in the world. She was the world policeman. She re-established triangular world commerce. She sold her goods in both Europe and European colonies. She exported vast

sums of capital, and her capital exports became even more important than her commodity outflow. She also set up manufacturing and commercial outlets throughout Europe, as well as in Latin America, Asia, and—to a lesser degree—Africa. She protected these investments and made them pay by forcing the U.S. working class to foot the bill for an aid and military system that spread its tentacles throughout the world.

But a point was reached in 1971, when the cost of U.S. imperial hegemony was too great for her working people to shoulder. Worker revolts for better pay and working conditions were periodically breaking out at home. And, protest against U.S. military operations in South-East Asia took on a new meaning for the ordinary people who, seeing their sons die there, were also caught in the domestic pincers of relatively stable wages and higher taxes and prices. To make matters worse, the economic complement to President Nixon's doctrine was a New Economic Policy that forced the workers to work still harder and to eat still less. Not surprisingly, greater numbers of workers began to question why they should sacrifice their own well being in the name of a holy war against communism.

Yet workers' protests did not enter the political arena on any substantial scale; but, just in case they did, to nip any potential economic change in its political bud, the programmes of the Republican and Democratic wings of the property party inched closer together. Both parties began to advocate an end to using U.S. footsoldiers in Asia. Both spoke of paring the ballooning military budget. Both called for peace. On reflection of the danger to the U.S. world role, both urged more military and economic "aid" to U.S. client governments in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Both supported the Nixon Doctrine—creating an axis of U.S. imperialists with the imperialists from the other major powers. Finally, both agreed that the U.S. role as Big Brother to Japan, Britain

and Western Europe had now ended and must be replaced by a more or less equal imperial axis between the U.S. and these other capitalist nations.

No sooner was this new imperial axis created than it began to show signs of decay. Almost immediately, for example, the U.S. started to close the trade door on Japanese manufactured goods which were produced with cheaper labour than could be found in the United States. The U.S. also attempted to compete favourably with Japanese and European goods, lowering the price of its exports by realigning capitalist world currencies. Finally, the U.S. attempted to shift her costs as world policeman and "aid" giver by placing this burden on Japan, Britain and Western Europe, and then asking these other Powers to assume a world role by making their workers pay in larger taxes, higher prices and lower wages.

The U.S. planned that Japan, most of all, should increase her imports, eliminate her export subsidies, stimulate her aid and capital outflows, up-value her yen, and—someday soon—extend her military operations abroad. Japanese leaders in the ruling, monopoly Liberal Democratic Party seized the opportunity to simultaneously defend their \$10.5 billion commercial link with the U.S. and extend their market in Asia. The monopolists geared to build a new pan-Asian market, where Japan would obtain raw materials for home industries, foodstuffs for the Japanese workers, cheap labour for the production of light manufactured goods, and a vent for the sale of Japan's complicated and heavy manufactures. To establish this commercial relationship, plans were made to increase the export of Japanese capital and supportive "aid" to Asia. Gradually too, plans were implemented to train the so-called Self Defence Forces for counter-insurgency duty in order to secure South-East Asia for Japanese commerce. Above all, a Japanese-U.S. Security Treaty was expanded to allow Japan's "defensive" zone to include Ryukyus (Okinawa), Taiwan

and South Korea. So economic ties were bolstered by potential military power and together they became linked in building Japan's new sphere of influence in South and East Asia. The stronger this Asian empire grew, however, the harder other imperial traders had to struggle to maintain their commercial share of Asia's wealth. And this led directly to a sharp disagreement between Japan and the United States, and China's greatest fear.

What did the United States and China do about Japan's growing empire in Asia?

Communist China immediately responded with a three-point programme designed to build a *defensive arc* against Japan's expanding commercial network. First China tried to cool the *Zaibatsu* businessmen's zeal in turning Taiwan and South Korea into Japanese neo-colonies. (To this end, China refused to trade with those Japanese companies that were tied to these areas.) Then China turned to a variety of commercial-type exchanges and interest-free loans with other Asian nations as a means to tie them to an anti-Japanese foreign policy. Finally, China turned to negotiations with the United States, for it was fairly clear that the temporary imperial axis between the U.S. and Japan would end in a trade war where both nations would attempt to tariff-protect their home markets while building an exclusive sphere of foreign influence where the goods of competitor nations could not enter.

The U.S. too saw the writing on the wall: Asia was bound to become a Japanese trading area where U.S. goods would be excluded. Frantic to arrange temporary protection for her traders, the U.S. sought a powerful Asian country to slow the growth of Japan's commercial empire.

This does not mean that China will alter its firm stand for the U.S. to exit from South-East Asia and Taiwan (as the Nixon Doctrine also provides); it does mean there will be future U.S. Chinese moves against Japanese imperialism.

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Language As A Unifying / Divisive Weapon

N. P. G.

THROUGHOUT the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with national movement. For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose population speaks a single language, with all obstacles to the development of that language and to its consolidation in literature eliminated. Therein lies the economic foundation of national movement. Language is the most important means of human intercourse. Unity and unimpeded growth of language are the most important conditions for genuinely free and extensive commerce on a scale commensurate with modern capitalism, for a free and broad grouping of the population in all its various classes, and lastly, for the establishment of a close connection between the market and each and every proprietor, big or little, and between seller and buyer.

This is Lenin. In this Leninist frame, language is a weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie against its fight against feudalism and in so far as capitalism is a more progressive state of society than feudalism, it is a positive weapon.

A common language is an important factor in constituting a nation but not the only factor. A nation is a historically constituted stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture. A nation again cannot be equated with a State; a State can be multilingual.

What are the problems of a multilingual and multinational States like India and Pakistan? Let us once again go back to Lenin.

Other conditions being equal, the

class-conscious proletariat will always stand for the larger State. It will always fight against medieval particularism and will always welcome the closest possible economic amalgamation of large territories in which the proletariat's struggle against the bourgeoisie can develop on a broad basis. Capitalism's broad and rapid development of productive forces calls for large, politically compact and united territories, since only here can the bourgeois class, together with its inevitable antipode, the proletarian class, unite and sweep away all the old, medieval, caste, parochial, petty-national, religious and other barriers.

While advocating centralism, which is a tremendous historical step forward from medieval disunity to the future socialist unity, Lenin of course advocated democratic socialism. One cannot conceive of a modern, truly democratic state that did not grant such autonomy to every region having appreciably distinct economic and social features and populations of a specific national composition. The principle of centralism is to be applied democratically and not bureaucratically. Autonomy facilitates the concentration of capital, the development of the productive forces, the unity of the bourgeoisie and the unity of the proletariat on a countrywide scale; bureaucratic interference in purely local, regional, national questions obstructs economic and political developments.

All these from Lenin are quoted by Satyendra Narayan Mazumdar.* Let

Marxism and the Language Problem in India

By Satyendra Narayan Mazumdar
People's Publishing House

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us now split the issue; Languages and Pakistan; Languages and India.

Democratic forces in Bangladesh rallied on the issue of language, Bengali, and seceded from Pakistan. Although the democratic forces in Bangladesh did not start with the idea of secession, the army crackdown advanced the idea and made it the determining factor of the democratic movement. Language was the potent weapon in rallying the secessionists; it was there already; the military junta forced it into operation. The CPI, to which Mr Mazumdar once belonged, hailed the secessionist movement, hailed the secessionist movement, with the idea that Bengali would thus attain its rightful place in the region. Language, a divisive factor in Pakistan, was thus given a positive character by the CPI. The CPI (M) did the same.

Why did the Indian communists go against Leninist principles on language and proletarian struggle? Bangladesh, seceding from Pakistan, has made both the wings weaker and thus thrust the bourgeoisie of Pakistan and Bangladesh towards imperialist hegemony. Evidently they must have taken shelter under Lenin's words: "other things being equal". They must have considered that the Punjabi nation guiding West Pakistan an oppressive nation in Bangladesh and therefore Bangladesh, rallying her common language, Bengali, and seceding from Pakistan, did the right thing in liberating the people, bourgeois and proletariat alike, from the oppressing rulers.

Equating the military junta with the Punjabi nation, the Indian communists however made a major blunder. The fight was in reality between the Awami League, a bourgeois party, and the bourgeois ruling class in West Pakistan. The language issue at this stage came as a

smoke-screen and lent the struggle an appearance of national liberation. By supporting the independence movement of Bangladesh, the communists made the same blunder as they did during the freedom struggle of India when they supported the independence struggle for Pakistan under the banner of the Muslim League. In 1971 language played the same role in Bangladesh as religion did in India before 1947. While the communists should have supported only autonomy for Bangladesh, they went the whole hog by supporting their demand for independence. And thus they lent their support to the weakening of the capitalists and therefore of the proletariat in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Mr Mazumdar is of course theoretically aware that language can be a smoke-screen to confuse the issue. As he says, there can be a conflict of interest between the bourgeoisie of different linguistic groups in which every group tries to enlist the support of the masses by rousing linguistic passions. His comrades however would not apply this brake in the Pakistan-Bangladesh issue; without questioning the class character of the struggle they went all out to champion the separatism engineered by the issue of language.

Languages and India

What Mr Mazumdar writes about the language problems of India, however, conforms to Leninist principles. They can be summarised thus:

India is a country of multiple nationalities and multiple languages. Previous to Independence, British imperialism - thwarted the development of different nationalities and languages and sowed and nurtured elements of disunity. Although India was never one nation or one state before the British rule, the interest of all nationalities and linguistic groups required strong bonds of unity to throw off the oppressing British imperialism. After independence too the common enemy of all nationalities and linguistic groups is the landlord-bourgeois combine that

encompasses all the nationalities and groups. Therefore, secession is not a positive weapon, because no particular nationality or state in this country is the oppressor. This is very much unlike the pre-revolution Russia where the Great Russian nationality oppressed other nationalities and so Lenin recognised their right of secession.

The key to solving the language problems in India is to recognise the right of every language, irrespective of the number of people speaking it, to develop. If the people so wish there should be autonomous linguistic states. This is the correct line, in the interests of both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, for different Leninist reason as started at the beginning of this essay. The farseeing Motilal Nehru Report of 1928 correctly assessed the situation and advised linguistic reorganisation of the country. Later Jawaharlal Nehru and also the Dar Commission of 1948 missed the essential point because of their over-eagerness to centralise the state power. Lots of energy and blood have been shed thereafter unnecessarily. Autonomous states on the linguistic principle do not go against bourgeois interests; they facilitate smooth running of the administration and concentration of capital. And in the proletarian interest too, the larger the state the stronger is the proletarian power to throw off their shackles.

The constitution-makers made a blunder in certifying Hindi as capable of serving as the official language and naming several languages as regional or national languages. Just because the constitution-makers wanted these languages named, all the other languages were relegated to secondary importance. Resources are being spent largely on Hindi, secondarily on named regional languages and none on the little developed languages (and nationalities), giving wide scope for animosity on the part of the neglected languages and nationalities. This has

developed friction and agitation which behoves no good for the country as a whole.

Clippings

Indian Army Dilemma

One of the top thinkers in the (Bangladesh) government told me "The Sheikh is nobody's client." All indications are that the Government of India is going out of its way to avoid giving any impression of superciliousness...

The presence of the Indian army here is a different matter. The moving scenes of love and greeting which attended the entry of the first Indian troops into the capital city are an integral part of the subcontinent's history—but nothing more. It was natural for the people of Bangladesh to exultingly celebrate their deliverance of which the Indian soldier was the most outstanding symbol. It is again natural for them, when the dust has settled, to see the Indian troops for what they really are: a foreign army.

...Muffled murmurs already have started about the Indian army's lingering presence...I understood from a fairly reliable source that the army command has requested New Delhi to recall them at the earliest possible opportunity. It would be entirely to India's advantage if this is done. But again the issue is not that simple for any sudden withdrawal of the Indian forces could land Bangladesh in trouble. This is where the immediate problems facing the new country come to the fore.

The most pressing of these is law and order. Bangladesh has not yet got an organised police force or army which can take over peace-keeping duties from the Indians. On the other hand, peace-keeping is a very delicate and very difficult priority matter for a variety of reasons.

For one thing, the proliferation of Bahinis has generated an air of uncertainty. There are any number of hooligans masquerading as one Ba-

hini or another and they are all well armed. Car lifting has been one of their activities. I saw a public demonstration by city hawkers protesting against extortion by men who claim to be Mukti Bahini.

The Sheikh's personal stature has made the 'surrender arms' call a reasonable success. However, for every gun surrendered, there may be two hidden. Some may be kept by anti-social elements and perhaps more by politically conscious groups such as the Maoists.

The Prime Minister has openly warned that those found keeping unregistered arms in future will be considered law-breakers and treated as such. At the anti-social level, this would be fine. But at the political level it could lead to armed confrontations between government forces (as and when these are effectively formed) and dedicated leftist revolutionaries, ingredients of a "protracted warfare." Some prominent politicians opposed to the Awami League have said that sooner rather than later, the League would use groupings like the Mujib Bahini to physically liquidate its political opponents.

"Bihari" Problem

Another source of worry is the "Bihari" problem. It is fully contained at the present moment, but this is because the Indian army is mounting guard. Even so, Bihari areas like Mirpur and Mohammedpur are not considered safe. When I wished to visit Mirpur, I was advised to go first to the police station where I was provided with two armed escorts.

The Biharis must take much of the blame for the plight they are in. Not only did they collaborate with the Pakistan army but they persist in their belligerent attitude. I met a couple of "Biharis" (erstwhile Moplahs from Malabar) who refuse to admit the Pakistani army committed atrocities and who hardly have a good word for the Bengalis among whom they live. The Biharis are, besides, very heavily armed.

In the circumstances some killings

would be unavoidable if the protection now afforded by the Indian army to the Biharis is withdrawn in the immediate future. The Sheikh's call for an exchange of population (with the Bengalis in Pakistan) has not helped either.

Two other major problems remain—administration and economy. There is a mad scramble for jobs today in Dacca. On the one hand, this slows down the organisation of an efficient administrative machinery so urgently needed; on the other, it produces a degree of disillusionment among the idealistic youth who fought the Pakistani army.

The Sheikh has a large heart and tremendous loyalty to friends. These qualities have been reflected in some of his early appointments which have caused controversy.

Perhaps the most criticised move of the Sheikh's is the reinstatement of some of the notorious "three hundred and three"—senior civil servants dismissed during the Ayub regime for corrupt practices. The point raised is that, under any government, a corrupt bureaucrat is just that and the new government could do without the stigma attached to the "three hundred and three". In any case, the reinstatement has not contributed to creating popular confidence in Bangla Desh's emerging civil service.

Economic problems facing the new country are widely discussed, but this is mostly in terms of aid and strings. Not so fully realised yet are the potentialities for unrest on this count. The rupee has fallen in value from the Pakistan rate of 4.8 to the U.S. dollar, to the Indian level of 7.2. One result of this is that consumer prices are up, in many cases double the previous figures. The situation will stabilise soon, but the general price level may well stay higher than in the past. This is only one of the factors that would make the people feel that independence has brought on hardship.

It is useful to remember that the Awami League-led people's movement started here not for independence but for autonomy as a means to a

better life. It was the yearning for economic improvement that made the East Bengali stand up and fight in the first place.

As events developed, he went through the traumatic experience of armed revolution. Having tasted that, the Bangla Desh masses would be willing and ready for another revolution should they feel their basic aspirations are getting frustrated.

For the moment, Sheikh Mujib is the repository of all hope. His long experience and selflessness are the best guarantee that Bangla Desh will move forward. But even he cannot afford to forget the fact that the people of Bangla Desh are different from those of Pakistan or India in one crucial detail: they have graduated in the school of revolution.

(T. J. S. George in *Hindustan Times*)

Letters

The Ultra-Left

The emergence of an ultra-leftist trend in China, at this stage of the development of socialism in the largest petty-bourgeois country of the present-day world, is not at all fortuitous: it is quite natural and, to some extent, unavoidable; it is a manifestation of legitimate—I would say, sacred—hatred for the party persons in authority taking the capitalist road who managed to entrench themselves in some vital points in the party and the state and strove to change the colour of socialist China.

It is not that the core of the party headed by Mao did not foresee the danger. In the second plenary session of the ninth Central Committee (August, 1969), Mao gave timely warning by saying that each kind of deviation covers and nurtures its twin of the opposite nature, and the party should be extremely careful in handling the contradictions. Ruthless struggle against right reformism may and does engender 'left' excesses, but the leading cadres of the party should see to it that these excesses do not grow

into a fullfledged ideological system.

For some time, the advocates of this ultra-left trend dominated the publicity media of the party. As our own experience in India will prove, these 'left' comrades did immense harm to the nascent communist movement here that had torn itself from the ideological and organisational trammels of revisionism, and was striving—very painfully slowly, indeed—to find its bearings to the host of very complex problems of a socio-political revolution in India—the most capitalistically developed semi-colony of the present-day world. The Chinese 'left' helped us a lot when they exposed the ministerialist leadership of the CPI(M) who condoned the police murder of the peasants fighting for their just rights and stuck to their office. But they committed a grave error when they read in the spontaneous Naxalbari peasant uprising (India has seen scores of such spontaneous peasant uprisings in the last two hundred years) signs of a struggle for revolutionary power consciously organised and led by a mature Marxist-Leninist, proletarian leadership; their assessment of the maturity of the revolutionary situation in India was absolutely subjective—it did not conform to reality.

The 'left' comrades guiding the publicity media of the Chinese party, instead of encouraging the genuine communist elements here to make a concrete, all-sided study of the actual conditions of Indian life—the actual state of the correlation of forces—and formulate their tactical policy on the granite foundation of objective development of socio-political history (a task never attempted by the revisionist leadership in fifty years), oversimplified the problem, spread the idea that the democratic revolution of semi-colonial India will be a replica of that of the semi-colonial China, and tried to impose, willy-nilly, the tactical policy of the Chinese Revolution on India. They did not care to notice that pre-revolutionary China and India have some

dissimilarities of fundamental nature: the development of capitalist relations in India is more extensive; it has a communication system spread far and wide; it has a numerous army of industrial workers concentrated in large modern enterprises spread throughout the length and breadth of this vast country, and these industrial workers are in daily physical relation with the countryside facilitating thereby actual realisation of proletarian leadership over the peasant struggles. Instead of taking these nationally specific factors into close consideration (and urging upon the comrades here to do so), they prescribed in an oversimplified manner the Chinese path for the Indian revolution.

These 'left' comrades of the CPC lent their zealous support to an organisation whose knowledge of the history of the Indian people's revolutionary struggles was almost nil, experience of practical revolutionary work very meagre, and understanding of the theories of Marxism-Leninism lop-sided; and they continued to support this petty-bourgeois movement even after it turned into decentralised conspiratorial bands of roving terrorists.

Those in this country eager to see the birth of a genuine communist movement here are happy to find that the CPC is gradually correcting the mistakes committed by these 'lefts'. They are quite certain that China's mature and far-seeing central leadership headed by Mao will cleanse the party of opportunistic dross of both right and 'left' varieties, and will play in the near future (a still more fruitful and decisive role in dealing mortal blows to modern revisionism, and in rebuilding the international communist movement on the granite foundation of Marxism-Leninism.

It may now be hoped that comrades here will cultivate self-reliance, master the basic theories of social revolution as propounded by Marxism-Leninism, and learn to apply such forms of struggles and activities as tend to unite them, the vanguard,

with the masses of the toiling people in the industries and in the vast countryside. A vanguard divorced from the day-to-day struggle of the people can achieve nothing.

S. GUPTA
Calcutta

Mrs Gandhi's Army

The CPM says it is improper to give kudos to Indira Gandhi and her ruling clique for the victory in the recent war. Why should Indira take the credit when it was the "heroic" jawans who brought India victory?

When the Indian Army, CRP and other fascist hordes run amuck in Birbhum, North Bengal, or Burdwan or when they pounce upon CPM cadres in Jadavpur-Tollygunje, the CPM does cry out against both Dias and his paid agents. Why then this line of demarcation between Indira and Manekshaw's men?

When it comes to international issues, footlicking the policies of the ruling clique is the mass-line of the CPM leadership but as soon as elections are announced some amazing line of separation is found between the masters and their paid agents. Then Manekshaw and Indira pursue different political ends.

The CPM has now announced that it is also going to have a 'secret' party apparatus, together with the open organisation it already has, to deal with the Congress (R) which has been "augmented by Naxalites". And all this while news filters in about the political commissar, let alone the squad commander, of a guerilla unit in North Bengal being a landless peasant and the formation of trenches and sentry boxes outside police outposts after the recent Birsinghjote ambush.

PRASANTA NEOGY
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Election Code

The 12-point model code for political parties to ensure peace during the coming general elections, laid down by the Election Commission, and perhaps drafted after discussions with all the political parties including leftists, exposes the hollowness of parliamentary democracy. It asks the parties not to expose and stress the exploitation based on differences of caste and community, religious or linguistic, however genuine or oppressive these may be. This code will provide an effective shield against exposure of the private lives of politicians, however unsocial or corrupt they may be. Complaints against policemen should first be taken up with the higher authorities and not to be communicated to the public first. Political leaders are asked more to collaborate with the state power than to put reliance on the masses. It also hopes that Government offices will take care not to impose undue restrictions on the civil liberties of the people. However, the term 'undue restrictions' is not defined and it is a clear admission that the coming election is going to be held in an atmosphere of restricted civil liberties. This code also prohibits appealing to caste or communal feelings for securing votes. Also mosques, churches or temples should not be made a forum for election propaganda. It presupposes that the masses are ignorant of the ethics of parliamentary democracy and they can easily be incited by caste or communal feelings. We remember, Dr B. C. Roy, the then chief Minister

Mr SUBHAS BOSE,

Our agent at Alipurduar

Newtown Library,

Alipurduar P.O.,

Dist. Jalpaiguri,

West Bengal.

of West Bengal, did visit and utilise Nakhoda Masjid for capturing Muslim votes in 1957.

Probably these norms will be appreciated by all the parties. The leftists, while supporting these, will accuse the party capturing the state power of gross violation. However, it is clear to us that the ruling class and their collaborators are afraid to rely on the masses. Such norms of election have not been originated and developed by our people, but are being imposed on us by the ruling class. The type of democracy, we see, is also a guided democracy, a democracy for the bourgeoisie. Popular discontents cannot be focused at the time of elections in our country, but the same norms were not remembered when the ruling class championed the secessionist and communal causes in a neighbouring sovereign country and utilised these as a pretext for physical occupation.

SHAKTI DHAR
Calcutta

No Urdu ?

The Bangladesh Premier, Sk. Mujibur Rahman, said at a press conference that the non-Bengalis (known as Biharis) of Bangladesh should accept the Bengali language and culture and that they should give up their own language and culture. No one should raise any objection if Bengali be made the national and the State language of Bangladesh because it is the language of more than 80% of the people there, but one can hardly understand and appreciate a democracy in which a particular section of the people should give up their language and culture. It is painful that those very people who fought for the sake of their own language and culture should show such an attitude to others' language and culture,

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