

# frontier

Vol. 4: No. 50

MARCH 25, 1972

PRICE: 35 PAISE

## On Other Pages

COMMENT ..	2
<i>View From Delhi</i>	
POLL TO END POLLS? FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT ..	4
<i>Kerala</i>	
GROWING TENSIONS RAMJI ..	5
POLITICS OF CONCESSION R. S. ..	6
RETURN OF THE REFUGEES PHANI BHUSAN GHOSH ..	10
<i>Clippings</i>	
WHERE WILL WE END UP? ..	12
GAINERS AND LOSERS ..	13
<i>Book Review</i>	
COMMUNICATIONS AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN COMMUNIST CHINA ..	14
LETTERS ..	16

Editor : Samar Sen

PRINTED AT MODERN INDIA PRESS,  
7, RAJA SUBODH MULLICK SQUARE,  
CALCUTTA-13 AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY  
FOR GERMINAL PUBLICATIONS (P) LTD.  
BY SAMAR SEN FROM 61, MOTT LANE,  
CALCUTTA-13  
TELEPHONE: 243202

## HUMANITY AND INTEREST

WHEN Mrs Gandhi referred to the 'forces of destruction' in the context of the Indo-Bangladesh treaty, she must have been hinting at Pakistan, China and America. India can take on Pakistan by herself; for that she does not require any cooperation from Bangladesh. India has not at any time feared an attack from the USA. Therefore it is obvious, the 25-year treaty is meant as a shield against any action by China. In a recent seminar in New Delhi, Lt-General Harbaksh Singh was not so reticent. He said that China would be at a military disadvantage when an Indo-Bangladesh defence treaty was signed. This imitation treaty then proves that China was justified in her fear that the Indian intervention to liberate Bangladesh was a move against her. Of course China had nothing to fear militarily from India alone. But India has already been chained, by another 'friendship' treaty, to Russia which poses a threat to Chinese territorial security and which has a grand scheme of Asian collective security to replace the domino theory of the USA.

The friendship treaties, it is said, are not military pacts. They stipulate for consultations only (Article 9 'again!') when a military threat comes from a third country. One may all the same wonder, what are the consultations for? Are they something like formal poetry or abstract art, for the sake of consultations only? Besides, who attacks when is always open to dispute, as the 1962 and 1971 operations have shown. Mrs Gandhi may take Indians for granted, after reducing the Opposition parties to a non-entity. Mr Kosygin may take the Russians for granted—nobody will be allowed to question what the 'collective leadership' tells them. But why should Mrs Gandhi and Mr Kosygin presume that the whole world will abide by what they say?

General trade agreements between India and Bangladesh will be signed later. Meanwhile, India has kept aside Rs 200 crores as assistance money to Bangladesh for 1972-73. For a country which has a foreign debt to the tune of Rs 8,200 crores, which is more than twice her annual revenue receipts, such offers of assistance are indeed generous. But as Edmund Burke said long ago, it is 'humanity and interest' that should determine the policy of a big country towards a small one, for instance, England and the American colonies in the eighteenth century.

When India spends Rs 365 crores on refugees from Bangladesh, gives Rs 200 crores as development assistance to a ruined country, takes on a war for the sake of humanity, it is difficult to miss the 'interest' part. There are people in the world, not excluding Bangladesh, who are viewing with suspicion Indian overtures to that country which may well develop into a protectorate. Agriculture in India has entered a capitalist phase in some pockets; the capitalist farmers want a market. Industrialists are clamouring for a market too, because peasants and workers have been too pauperised to be fleeced any more. Yahya Khan's colossal bungling in East Pakistan came as a Mammon-send to Mrs Gandhi, who is, if anything, alert to her toes. With the Americans rather miserly with relief assistance, and the Russians for the time being content to sound the capacity of Sonar Bangla to absorb Russian socialist help, Bangladesh has of necessity turned towards India for executing its task of reconstruction. Mrs Gandhi can for a time hide her interests behind the humane umbrella, but how long? The Sheikh has got to repay his immense debt not only in kind but in cash too. The Indian businessmen will see to it that he does. And because that will be entirely for the benefit of the Indian ruling class, not many of the terms of the trade agreements will be subjected to adverse criticism in this country. The 25-year treaty will be for peace and friendship all right—for those who are cashing in on the credulity of the common man in both countries.

## Bhutto's Gesture

What diplomatic manoeuvres preceded President Bhutto's permission to two Indian correspondents to visit Pakistan are not known; a third has been granted the privilege, and he was scheduled to go to Pakistan after Mr Bhutto's return from Moscow. Officially, the two countries are still in a state of war which precludes travel

between the two countries. The Indian correspondents could not have gone to Pakistan if the restrictions had not been set aside; not only had Mr Bhutto agreed to receive the correspondents, but the Government of India also had acquiesced in the visit. In fact, it is doubtful if a formal approach had been made to Mr Bhutto without prior clearance from New Delhi. This implies that both governments set some store by these visits, and they were, in a way, jointly promoted. Maybe, India wants to assess how sincere the Pakistan President is in his periodic professions of friendly intent to India and to what length he can, or is in a position to go to accommodate India. The main reason for Mr Bhutto's interest in the visits perhaps is that they may be of help in probing New Delhi's mind. The correspondents have, therefore, been cast in the role of go-betweens of a sort. Whether their visits have been utilised by either Government to convey views or sentiments not reflected in the published accounts of their interviews with President Bhutto will not be known for some time, though they will no doubt go into the framing of policies by the two countries.

What is on record is clear. The Pakistan President has indicated that he is prepared to disengage his Government from Kashmir. Mr Bhutto has always been a man in love with vivid phrases, and even in the midst of all his harrying problems he does not seem to have lost his flair for words. But in plain terms he is prepared for a give and take. Not that Pakistan has lost all interest in Kashmir; but Mr Bhutto is prepared to pledge that Pakistan will no longer react in the manner it did in the past to help Kashmir's struggle for self-determination. Whether this means that Pakistan will also desist from periodical airing of the Kashmir dispute in the Security Council is perhaps a matter for discussions in detail. What he wants in exchange is the release of the Pakistan POWs. He has fortified his offer with the assurance that he is firmly in saddle and India can unhesitatingly do busi-

ness with him. The first response of New Delhi has been lukewarm. The relations between India and Pakistan cannot be normalised as long as the two countries remain at dispute over Kashmir. Mr Bhutto was not far wrong when he said it was a legal fiction that India and Bangladesh had joint jurisdiction over the POWs. The prisoners are all in India and in Indian custody, and in the present state of relations between India and Bangladesh it is extremely unlikely that the Government at Dacca would object if India wants to release the prisoners as part of the deal over Kashmir. Normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan will be a step towards the eventual normalisation of relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh; but to set the recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan as a pre-condition for return of the prisoners may defer it indefinitely. New Delhi seems to be still insistent that the issue of prisoners cannot be settled in isolation; it should form part of a package deal over the issues arising out of the last war. Yet in the past India had advocated a step-by-step solution of the Indo-Pakistan problems while Pakistan had advocated a package deal. It does little credit to India if an impression is created that she has resiled from her position to bend Pakistan to her will. Any attempt to turn the screw on Mr Bhutto for further accommodation may impair the possibilities of a negotiated settlement. But, then, India can always accuse other Powers of a conspiracy to impair Indo-Pakistan relations.

---

## NOTICE

Articles cannot be returned unless accompanied by return postage.

Business Manager  
Frontier

MARCH 25, 1972

## The Budget

The budget that Mr Chavan presented last week is one of the biggest non-events in our fiscal history of recent times. The worst part of it is not that it contains little of that much-vaunted "garibi hatao" bombast but that it shows little concern for correcting the many obvious lacunae in the fiscal structure. While the Economic Survey has sensibly observed that the scope for indirect taxation has nearly been exhausted, thus implying that direct levies have to be depended on mainly for raising the badly-needed resources, Mr Chavan has evidently failed to muster strength to prod the privileged sections of society to make a little sacrifice for the have-nots. The hullabaloo about what the big business lobby describes as the crushing burden of taxes has obviously swayed his judgment. But if Mr Chavan is hoping that by being pleasant to the corporate sector he can bring about industrial regeneration in the country he is only fooling himself, for the simple fact is that all this plea about taxes eating into investible resources and about raising prices is nothing but part of pressure tactics to force the government to capitulate. And the budget has been the greatest success of this strategy so far.

Mr Chavan has, however, already given considerable advance publicity to some of the measures he intends to take later for dealing with agricultural taxation, black money, smuggling, foreign exchange leakage and personal income tax—the measures, which he expects us to believe, would mark the beginning of the socialist millennium. But the public knows better that however stringent the laws may be made on paper, they almost always fail to catch the real culprit or to plug the real loopholes. Unless Mr Chavan shows more imaginativeness and courage in framing and implementing these measures, they would prove to be no more successful

than most of the previous ones. But he cannot afford to fail; unabated accumulation of rural wealth and black money on the one hand and growing unemployment and rising inflation on the other have already distorted the pattern of income distribution to an extent that is good neither for the economic nor the political health of the country.

Mr Chavan has made conscious efforts to create an illusion by a few not-very-original gimmicks that what he has presented is truly a socialist budget. Most important among such measures is the increased allocation on social welfare schemes—which rises from Rs 130 crores in 1971-72 to Rs 240 crores. But as he himself has noted in connection with the progress of the employment programmes included in his first budget last year, most of these well-meaning schemes are often casualties of bureaucratic formalities. And till the government has shown greater firmness in toning up the administrative machinery, there is no reason to believe that the plans Mr Chavan has now outlined will meet with any greater success than the earlier ones. In the meantime, the public—that is the section of it which is too docile to play the tricks that help the rich to evade the levies or to pass them on to others—has to foot once again an additional tax bill of Rs 183 crores, over and above last year's Rs 500 crores. But in spite of that, Mr Chavan has been constrained to leave an uncovered deficit of Rs 242 crores which he hopes, like this year's figure of about Rs 375 crores, would not prove too inflationary. Of course the pressing needs of defence and of assistance to Bangladesh, accounting between themselves for over Rs 1640 crores or over 25% of aggregate receipts, have greatly limited his options. Budget deficits are, however, still viewed as one of the major fiscal don'ts—and with good reasons too—but considering the style of the government in New Delhi, one perhaps should not expect anything better.

## More About March 11

How long did it take one to vote this year when the procedure was a bit more complicated? Most of the literate said, from three to five minutes when there was no interruption. But let's say, to please the authorities, that on an average it took two minutes for each vote to be cast—everyone was expected to go through the same process, with, of course, the option between signature and thumb impression. This assumption, however, gives rise to a mystery.

In Dum Dum where the CPM candidate lost by over 76,000 votes, the total number of valid votes cast was a little over 106,000. Multiplied by two minutes—for each vote to be cast—it works out at more than 3533 hours. Divided by the 163 or so polling booths, the polling time consumed should have been more than 21 hours. But the polling hours were from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.—ten hours. How did so many people, even with thousands of thumb impressions, squeeze in? And, by the way, why was the number of invalid votes not reported in the papers this time?

The same mystery arises in Baranagar, where Mr Jyoti Basu lost his seat after so many years and where nearly 100,000 valid votes were cast this year compared to about 70,000 in the 1971 election. The mystery will become a familiar pattern in the case of almost every constituency where the polling percentage was spectacular.

The CPM did not learn any lesson from the Burdwan civic elections. It also did not realise that if the Chhatra Parishad could win so many college union elections through terror (terror alone?), the pattern could be repeated in a general election. Students set the pace, either way—left or right—when political parties fail.

The debate on whether there was wholesale rigging, no rigging or just normal rigging goes on. Some people think that the Congress would have won in any case, though the rout of the CPM makes

them uneasy. It was, as the Americans say, an instance of overkill. Haven't the British taught us that there should be a strong opposition to make any country safe for democracy? Now that there will be no chance to move no-confidence motions—if the Left Front (CPM-14, others 6) boycotts the Assembly for good—or to raise thorny points of order, democracy would be reduced to a dumb whore. Might not the leftists go underground and take to arms now that the parliamentary safety-valve is no longer there? CPM leaders, of course, have been saying that this is a piece of blasphemy.

In the meantime—and not much time has been given—the machinery of the Congress has been put into second gear. CPM men and supporters, it is said, are being driven out from their areas with exemplary vigour. Some five thousand in Baranagar alone have been forced to leave, and, as Mr Basu said, the left parties might have to set up refugee camps. Let there be no doubt—this time the Congress and the CPI will go all out to capture and dominate labour and employee organisations. Fed on economism, these organisations may be unable to resist. Young men of the Congress will 'go back to villages' to 'fight' landlords and local bureaucrats and 'educate' the landless. In the first phase, they say, the main attention will be paid to Naxalbari, Debra and Gopiballavpur. The Progressive Democratic Alliance will perfect some of the tactics tried by the CPM. Is the State destined to become, still more, an area of darkness?

---

For Frontier contact

People's Book House

Meher House,

Cowasji Patel Street,

Fort, Bombay

## View from Delhi

### Poll To End Polls ?

From A Political Correspondent

**A**FTER what appears to have been an election to end the need for further elections, it is the Spring of sycophancy and flattery in New Delhi. All the tributes had been paid and cliches exhausted when the Prime Minister went to discover Bangladesh, complete with a written-up mini-speech in Bengali. Here the Lok Sabha collapsed symbolically the next day, for want of a quorum as if to underline the superfluousness of a Parliament when the country had returned to one-party dominance and a moron-like conformism.

At the moment, it is the high-noon of tilting left-of-centrism. Bhutto tilted towards the Soviet Union in the hope Mr Kosygin would play the honest broker. Ceylon is tilting towards the United States out of imagined or real fears of India's big-nation chauvinism, last year's export of counter-revolution notwithstanding. India is not very clear about the position on the Kashmir ceasefire line because the Prime Minister's earlier speeches do not tally with the statement of Mr Swaran Singh and the United Nations military observers' group is still supposed to be doing its job. Bhutto's tilt towards India was well-anticipated by the Indian journalists flown to Larkana for a depth-interview to sound the Indian government.

Though neither side wants third party mediation, the Soviet Union has succeeded in establishing its Asian presence once again, however phoney its claim to be an Asian power. Mr Kosygin is now pushing the Brezhnev plan for collective security, which, Mr Swaran Singh said recently has always been welcomed by India. When the plan was mooted in its incoherent form in 1969, India pretended it did not know what it was. Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh though it could be anything

from cultural and economic co-operation to an innocuous land route from the Soviet Union to India through Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. But India seems to have known that the collective security plan was a great deal more than all that. The Indo-Soviet treaty and the latest India-Bangladesh treaty are part of the pattern that is already emerging. Bangladesh does not feel the need for a friendship treaty directly with the Soviet Union but the Moscow-Delhi-Dacca triangle has already emerged, one linking the other directly or indirectly. The earlier Soviet plan for a treaty with Bangladesh was quietly given up. The Indo-Soviet treaty has had the effect of arousing vague fears in Ceylon and Indonesia and is fast proving doubtful in its utility. There have been overtures to Ceylon for a treaty with the Soviet Union but the Ceylonese have chosen to tilt towards the United States to underline to the Soviet Union that its role in Ceylon was far from friendly. The lone communist Minister, Mr Peter Kuenemann might have to pack up shortly. Bangladesh has reason to be wary of a direct treaty with the Soviet Union for the same reason Ceylon does not want to swallow the bait. In the past, Nehru used to thunder against the Dullesian pacts in Asia because they linked a metropolitan country with countries of Asia. The Indo-Soviet treaty links a Western country, a super-power with an Asian country. It is significant that the Soviets could not sell such a treaty to anyone else since its treaty with India on August 9, 1971.

#### The Tail

The battered opposition is in no mood to give serious thought to all the issues. It is a tragic anti-climax for all except of course the CPI which is very much part of the Government. The CPI's regret is that the tail cannot wag the dog any more. The Congress does not want the CPI's participation in West Bengal, Bihar and Punjab ministries. The chances of CPI-Congress coalition at the Centre are almost nil now.

MARCH 25, 1972

In Kerala, the Youth Congress is restive and wants to force a fresh poll. The Muslim League's presence in the present coalition is being made an issue to break the coalition. The Congress did not seek an electoral alliance with the League anywhere this time because the Centre is planning to ban political activity by communal organisations including the League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the RSS and the Jamait-i-Islami. The Congress Young Troups in Kerala think they can win independent power if elections are forced now because the communist parties would never get together and the Congress will have its way.

There is a strange nemesis to Mr Jyoti Basu's decision to withdraw from the fight after the polling had begun in Baranagore, and his party's directive to its MLAs in West Bengal to boycott the Assembly, though it is not known for how long. It certainly does not mean that the party is opting out of the parliamentary system like the Maoists. Its members are not averse to participating in the other State Assemblies and an exception cannot be made in West Bengal. It certainly would not add to Mr Jyoti Basu's joy to tell himself that he and his party would have to quit fighting elections. Mr E. M. S. Namboodiripad threatened in Trivandrum the other day that his party would make common cause with anybody, from idol-breaking Mr E. V. Ramaswami Naicker in Tamil Nadu to the cow-protecting Jana Sangh is to fight the Congress which was fast turning "fascist". This is politics of despair. In none of its strongholds it has a chance of winning power through ballot box now. The proximity to power had made the party conformist in West Bengal and Kerala. It fancied itself the ruling party in the newly-created Tripura State. Another election in Kerala and the CPI-M would be cut to size.

The CPI-M is at last realising that the Congress is determined to establish total one-party dominance in the country and its tolerance for non-

Congress ministries is at an end. It has plans to recapture Orissa through Mr Bijoyanand Patnaik, to force fresh elections in Kerala and to engineer a major split in the Tamil Nadu DMK so that the State goes to polls within this year. The CPI-M would be realising rather belatedly that the parliamentary system has little to offer its cadre whatever the leadership might think. When the Congress declared war in 1969 against right reaction and left opportunism, it decided to take on the Naxalites first and the CPI-M later. Like the Congress, the CPI thinks that anything to the left of the CPI is left adventurism. The CPI has already adduced adequate proof that it is not adventurist and established its counter-revolutionary bona fides. The Soviet Union is there to underwrite the CPI's guarantee but the CPI-M has no friends within or without. Once when Mr Jyoti Basu went to Bucharest, the Chinese party leaders he met there are believed to have told him that if the CPI-M gave up its participation in the parliamentary system, they might recognise it as India's only genuine communist party. One does not know if the offer still stands, after the CPI-M's stance in the Bangladesh issue.

## Kerala

### Growing Tensions

RAMJI

MR Achutha Menon's heart has become as famous as Mr Menon himself. His heart has been playing an important role. He has a heart "condition", figuratively and literally. Figuratively, his heart is supposed to be in the right place: progressive, pro-Indira and all that, and anti-Marxist. Literally, he has a heart 'condition' which, in any embarrassing political or administrative situation, comes to his rescue: the 'condition' de've'ops and he takes to bed. He could not visit the trouble spot in riot-torn Tellichery

or any other centres of serious clashes in the State, including locations where the police showed their partiality for bullets. But when it is a question of electioneering in far-away West Bengal or in nearby Trichur, during a recent by-election, his heart cooperates with his sense of duty and inclinations and he becomes as active as any other party activist. With his heart acting as a useful facade, Mr Menon has been slowly effacing himself from the administrative front ever since the Congress joined the Ministry. Now the Congress Home Minister, Mr Karunakaran, is fast becoming the de facto head of the Government. Most probably Mr Menon will end up his career as a State Governor.

The most active hounds of Mrs Gandhi and her firebrand radicalism are the KSU, the student wing of the Congress (R) and the Youth Congress. These two sections, commanding a very big following among the youths and students of the State have become a law unto themselves. They recognise only one leader and that is Mrs Gandhi. They behave as her sword arm. It was a Youth Congress man who murdered the ex-Congress MLA, Mr Abdul Kader, some six months back. So far he has not been arrested. Very recently this wanted man encashed a cheque in the State Bank of India at Kodungalloor, the scene of the murder.

The youth and the KSU mouth ultra-radicalism which leaves the Marxists and Naxalites far behind. And to add spice to it and to underscore their revolutionary ardour, during their jathas and demonstrations they resort to filthy language, coarse derivatives from the sexual act even, to describe and discredit their political opponents. The rowdiness of the student wing has led to clashes with the rival student wing, the KSC of the Kerala Congress. Both anti-Marxist and both having their genesis in the notorious Vimochana Samara (liberation war) of the late fifties in Kerala, they are now engaged in bitter warfare with no holds barred.

The rivalry and clashes among the students have disrupted college and high school education completely. But, apart from pious hopes and platitudes, neither Achutha Menon nor his colleagues have been able to find any solution. The solution is not easy, because the culprits are ardent followers of Mrs G, and her pets, allegedly. So, the State has to put up with this goondaism which is growing steadily.

### Operation Topple

On paper at least the Youth Congress is more progressive than any radical section in the country. To them instant socialism with no loopholes is a must and they claim that Mrs Indira Gandhi with the youth as the radical spearhead is fast achieving this. To accent this verbal stance, the Pradesh Congress Secretary and convenor of the Ruling Front Liaison Committee, Mr A. K. Antony, an erstwhile Youth Congress leader and still a Young Turk, delivered a blood-and-thunder speech in the Assembly during the discussion of the State Budget that put to shame the opposition parties in the virulence and uncompromising style of attack on the administration. In so many words Mr Antony dubbed the government uselses and declared that it was a waste to spend colossal amounts of the taxpayers' money on the Administration. His diatribe, while it helped to furbish the image of the youth considerably, had an-

other angle too, according to knowledgeable observers. They read in it a signal for an operation topple in Kerala, Indira brand. The plan, it would seem, is to ditch the Muslim League and, with the CPI as the junior partner, form another united front government with the Congress in the lead. The chances of a mid-term election in Kerala are rather bright against the background of this and of the massive victories chalked up by the Congress in other States.

The Muslim League is being thrust more and more into the background. The curious assumption that the State wing of this party is noncommunal while the all-India party is in the eyes of the Congress, has been viewed with suspicion by the party leaders here. They feel that the turn of the Muslim League is coming and that, overnight, Mrs Gandhi might "discover" that the Muslim League in Kerala is communal. The Muslim League leader, Mr Md. Koya, the Education Minister, did electioneering for his party candidates in Bombay and Delhi. Maybe, as soon as he crossed the borders into Kerala he became noncommunal.

After Tellichery there has been a series of clashes in Poovar, a coastal fishing village near Trivandrum, between Christians and Muslims, with the Muslims getting the worst of it in terms of broken limbs and destroyed houses and property. The curious aspect of this has been the colossal smugness of the Government and

the Congress Home Minister over the entire affair. When the clashes first took place a few weeks ago, the Home Minister sought to silence the clamour for proper preventive measures raised in the Assembly by the Marxists and other opposition parties, by saying that there was no cause for alarm at Poovar and that the Marxists were at the bottom of the mischief that had taken place. Within hours of his speech there was a big clash during which many houses went up in flames: Muslim houses mostly. And arson took place right in front of the police station with the policemen looking on in perfect indifference. Even this only triggered further irresponsible statements from the Home Minister about a Marxist plot etc. But a few days after this a huge mob of Christians from across the border in Tamil Nadu marched on Poovar and the police had to shoot, wounding two seriously. Communal tension is erupting here and there in the State. Even as the opposition keeps warning about the snowballing tensions, the Government keeps on shoving its responsibility by calling such warnings just opposition machinations. The tendency to twist and distort any and every adverse development as evidence of opposition conspiracy has rendered the Government absolutely impotent in highly sensitive sectors where positive non-partisan action is called for in the interest of the general public.

## Politics Of Concession

R. S.

ONCE again the old wine has been served in a new bottle. Declared pledges have been reiterated. The politics of concession has been affirmed. The old strategy of diverting the frustrated middle class from the orbit of revolution by holding temptations before them has been launched on a wider scale. The author of this strategy is once again the party in power at the Centre.

Now the elections are over and we are in a position to assess the commitments made by the ruling Congress to the people of West Bengal. This year has been one of great activity and movement for the Congress in West Bengal. The Prime Minister made almost district to district campaigns. Twice she addressed the Calcutta public. Newspaper photographs showed her getting into and

off the planes losing no time between two election meetings. This is somewhat new in the election-history of this country. Her too frequent appearance in this State overshadowed her local managers. She made herself the focus of public attention and her excessive dynamism robbed her agents here of public initiative, accentuating in the process the rise of the Indira cult in the country.

The frequent appearance of the Prime Minister was the tactical part of her campaign. Her strategy remains unchanged. She went all out to win the sentiment of the people. Her declared aim was to heal the agony of West Bengal. She held before the people the picture of El Dorado. Social injustices would be removed (Anyay Hatao). The economic condition would be improved (Garibi Hatao). These were the two running slogans of the Congress. But it was not a free and open pledge. All welfare schemes would stand only if the people voted Congress to power and strengthened her hand. 'Madat', i.e. people's support or lining up behind her was the essential pre-condition of any improvement. This is a clear policy of give and take. People can have no legitimate share in the deployment of social resources until they vote Congress to power. The Prime Minister warned the people against the grave consequences that would follow if other parties came to power. She could tell the people confidently that they had strengthened her hand at the Centre and in return she has given them military victory. Similarly if they voted the Congress to power they would be graced with an all-round improvement of their life. There would be a "beautiful Bengal" in place of the present one.

These are not new pledges. They were floated during the past one year. These pledges were there in the Congress election manifesto of 1971. Prior to that election the Prime Minister in all her speeches in West Bengal offered to improve its lot provided the people stood up against the cult of violence and voted Congress to power (*Statesman*, 6-3-1971). On 15th March 1971 the Congress (R) Working Committee meeting in Delhi under the shadow of the massive election victory re-affirmed its pre-election commitment to "tackle the problems of poverty, unemployment and glaring disparities". Together with it there was an expression of concern over the resort to violence in West Bengal. On April 1, 1971 the Prime

Minister told the Rajya Sabha, that the Congress was determined to remove unemployment from the country. On the 10th of the same month she addressed a gathering of merchants in Delhi. There she lashed out at the industrialists and threatened to intervene in the private sector in support of the Congress commitment to dispel unemployment. Meanwhile Mr Siddhartha Sankar Ray was sent to West Bengal as the Prime Minister's man on the spot to tackle the problems of the State. On July 3, 1971 Mr Ray announced in Calcutta the policy objectives of the new Government at the Centre with regard to West Bengal. The end, he said, was to make its economy stand on its own feet. The same pledge was reiterated by Mr Chavan on September 19, 1971 in his address to the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Calcutta. On October 13, 1971 Mr Hanumanthiya reaffirmed the government's decision to begin the construction of the underground railway in Calcutta by February 1972. On November 9, 1971 Mr Subramaniam expressed the desire to create a new planning cell for West Bengal.

These do not exhaust the list of Congress commitments to the people. On March 24, 1971 the President enunciated the policy objectives of the government that had just come to power. A mid-term reappraisal of the Fourth Plan, campaigns against the remaining bastions of feudalism in the form of abolition of privy purses and princely privileges, a crusade against the bigger section of the urban bourgeoisie in the form of property ceiling, opening of new careers for the middle class through a speedy implementation of investment programmes in the public and private sectors of industry—all these were a part of the baits offered by the President to the masses (*Frontier*, August 14, 1971, pp 6-7). Again there was a pledge to provide openings of employment to two hundred thousand people of West Bengal (*Jugantar* 26-7-1971). One hundred thousand people were to get em-

ployment at Haldia. The Centre also appointed a committee to investigate the closure of industries in the State. This committee and a team of experts made frequent visits to Calcutta. They told the reporter of *Jugantar* that in no time at least 144 industries would re-open in West Bengal. (This hope was belied). Congress bosses came down to Calcutta and tried to influence the chambers of commerce. But no tangible improvement took place in the life of the people.

#### Many Schemes

Let us take Calcutta as our unit of study. This is because the government is concerned not so much with villages as with Calcutta. (It was only recently that the Prime Minister in one of her speeches in West Bengal mentioned the government's desire to improve the living conditions of the rural folk). One reason for this extraordinary sensitivity of the government towards Calcutta is that it is the nerve-centre of political tensions in West Bengal (see *Dialogue with Naxalites*, *Frontier*, 14-8-1971). Whatever be the cause, the government has recently become excessively concerned with Calcutta. About a year and a half back it decided to undertake some expensive schemes for the rebuilding of the city. These schemes were to be implemented through the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) which began to function about seventeen months ago. It was provided with a finance of Rs 150 crores under the Fourth Five Year Plan. This is not a big sum vis-a-vis the needs of Calcutta. The area of its work is large, starting from water supply, sewerage and drainage schemes to traffic, transportation and the improvement of the condition of bustee dwellers. It has floated 400 schemes encompassing all these fields and they are to be implemented by 52 agencies. But until now the CMDA has made a poor show. Already it has been announced that the bulk of CMDA projects are to be commissioned in 1973 and 1974. Some will spill over

into the Fifth Plan. A great expenditure has been incurred (about 19 crores) but actual progress is lagging behind schedule.

Apart from the CMDA schemes the Central Government will finance certain projects like the second river crossing over the Hooghly, the underground railway system, the Haldia Port development etc. The fate of these schemes is still hanging in the balance.

What about employment? While presenting the interim budget to Parliament (in the middle of 1971) Mr Chavan said: "A good deal has been done in the course of the past year to initiate measures for creating gainful work for the urban employed as well as the rural under-employed" (mark the cautiously guarded expression). "In other words", writes a commentator (*Link*, June 6, 1971), "nothing concrete has been achieved so far—only measures initiated". The government was supposed to adopt special programmes for employment openings in 46 districts. But nothing beyond some preliminary work has been done in 26 districts. In districts like Darjeeling and Purnea the government set up as early as 1969 administrative machinery to facilitate job-oriented programmes. There has been little improvement so far. The backlog of unemployment at the beginning of the Second Plan was placed at 5.3 million—2.8 million in the rural areas and 2.5 million in the urban areas. At the beginning of the Third Plan the unemployment figure was computed at 9 million. The same figure remained at the beginning of the Fourth Plan. Out of these, 7 million jobless persons were believed to be in the rural sector.

These are official statistics and as such highly doubtful. For example, the unemployment figure of 9 million was the backlog of both the Third and Fourth Plans while the labour force between these two Plans was estimated to rise by 17 million. How could the unemployment figure remain stationary while the labour force was increasing? Again the unemployment figure of 9 million

as the backlog of the Third Plan was later revised and following the sixteenth round of the National Sample Survey, total unemployment in 1960-61 was estimated at 7 million instead of 9 million. Even if these official statistics are admitted to be authentic, the government has failed to create new openings and liquidate mounting unemployment. During the Second Plan period additional employment was created for 8 million as against the earlier estimate of 10 million (this is given in the Third Plan Document). During the Third Plan period the total employment potential was computed at about 14 million while the increase of the labour force during the same period was to be 17 million. Again the net addition to the labour force during 1966-71 was computed at 23 million while the employment potential of the Fourth Plan was estimated at above 18.5 million to 19 million.

Thus it is a picture of total bungling, and bungling for twenty-five years. These bungs result directly from the bourgeois character of the Indian body politic. The Indian state power has been captured, monopolised and exercised during the last twenty-five years by a class of people whose motivation is profit earning through the interception of social surplus. In the process it has built up a mechanism of administration which has choked all avenues of social productivity. Ever since independence the Indian ruling class has lived entirely as appendages of the international bourgeoisie, depending upon imperialism for its survival and growth (see Mao Tse-tung: *Selected Works* Vol 1 P13, Peking 1967). Lashed by their international guardian superiors at London, Washington and Moscow, the Indian managers have exerted their utmost to buttress the Indian market for their masters. Thus with an adverse balance of trade India remained for long a purchaser country providing in the process all conditions necessary for the maintenance of the semi-feudal and semi-colonial character of the Indian economy. This was the

ideal milieu in which the Indian bourgeoisie could flourish. Big groups emerged to control national assets through their control of banks, insurance and other companies. The bulk of the private assets was controlled by thirty big groups (*Frontier* 11-3-72, p 5) in India (while in Pakistan it was done by 22 families)

### Monopolists

This is an invariable sign of growth of the anti-popular omnipotence of monopolies. The recent price spiral is an indisputable evidence of this. It is interesting to note that nowhere had the Congress pledged to control the price spiral. As noted above, Mr Chavan said that measures were initiated 'for creating gainful work for the urban employed as well as the rural underemployed'. One important measure in this direction was concessions administered on the wage front in the shape of partial increase in DA and pay revision. But in the context of rising inflation this cannot be regarded as a meaningful concession because the gains of wage increase are offset by the sinister play of monopolies in the form of price-rise. There is no increase in the real wage of the workers. The Indian rulers cannot check inflation and control monopolies because, as Lenin said, it is in the nature of the bourgeois State that a handful of private owners should control land, factories, machines etc. and 'extract millions of profits out of the poverty of the people' (Lenin: *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, Moscow 1961, p. 92). The result of this exploitation of the majority by a minority has been well-explained by Leontyev:

"Millions of people are doomed to protracted unemployment. The cream of the working class has to lead a purposeless existence. They lose the skills they acquired during years of strenuous work. Workers, having reached a certain age, have to give up the hope of ever returning to the bench. The growing generation of the working class is barred from production. Highly skilled people, trained in educational institu-

tions. cannot apply the knowledge they have acquired, there is also unemployment among the intelligentsia.

"The capitalists use crises and unemployment to lower wages and worsen labour conditions. During crises it is much more difficult for the working class and its trade unions to fight the actions of the capitalists directed at lowering the living standard of the working people. Crises therefore not only bring down enormous want on the unemployed but also deteriorate the position of the working class as a whole." (L. Leontyev, pp. 140-141).

Given this, the question arises: why does the ruling junta hold out pledges of concessions to the people? The answer is simple. The bourgeoisie always try to dress up modern capitalism as a welfare state (Ibid p. 196). They conceal the true nature and the causes of crises under capitalism. "...They assert that these are a result of accidental causes, which according to them can be obviated even under the capitalist system of economy. The ultimate cause of crises, they declare, is an accidental disturbance in the proportionality between the branches of production, or 'underconsumption', and they recommend such means as the arms race and war to do away with it." (Ibid pp. 141-142). "Actually both the lack of proportionality in production and 'underconsumption' are not accidental but are inevitable because they are products of the basic contradiction of capitalism, which cannot be abolished as long as that system continues to exist. In the intervals between crises bourgeois politicians, scholars, businessmen, often shout from the rooftops that an end has come to all crises, that capitalism has entered the road of crisis-free development. The facts invariably reveal that these statements are as unsound as are all the

remedies for curing capitalism of its ills." (Ibid p. 142). This is how a Marxist economist explains the working of the bourgeois politics of concession. It should be noted that concession-giving has always been a fascist technique for grabbing power. Did not Hitler pledge every young man employment, every woman a husband and every old man and woman rehabilitation?

The Indian rulers are playing the same trick. Pledge of concessions is their operational strategy. From time to time they would embark on reforms to maintain this show of concessions. Popular attention must be diverted from the axis of revolution to reformism. In this they got some dividends. At least they have succeeded in evolving the concept of people's mandate, an ideal basis of the omniscient power of the bourgeois State. During the last one year the idea of people's mandate has been nicely manipulated. All perversion in social life has been defended in the name of the people. Subversion of legitimate governments, mobilisation of the army, reinforcement of the police force by CRP, suppression of popular movements, curtailment of people's rights and liberties, bringing of academic institutions under bureaucratic control, ruthless coercion of the youth, selective killing in jails—all these have been done in the name of the people. Recently the Prime Minister said in one of her election meetings in West Bengal that the Indian army could register the military victory only because the people stood united behind them. Thus the general will of the society has been given a new orientation.

History does not repeat itself. India cannot be Germany and Italy of the 'thirties. Old fascism has certainly passed away. New fascism may come. Signs of its emergence are many in the Indian body politic. The people

face the inexorable threat of pauperism and ruination. The grip of monopolies will become more and more difficult to bear. Yet the spirit of the suffering humanity will assert itself. The working masses will continue to fight oppression and bourgeois domination and will try to break the decayed capitalist shell in order to release the powerful productive forces created by man and use

PLACE A REGULAR ORDER  
FOR YOUR

## FRONTIER

### Subscription Rates

#### INLAND

Six Months	..	Rs.	8.25
One year	..	Rs.	16.50
Five Years	..	Rs.	75.00
Seven years	..	Rs.	100.00

#### Foreign AIR MAIL Rates (One Year)

Europe:	Rs. 120 or 15 dollars
Asia:	Rs. 88 or 11 dollars
America:	Rs. 168 or 21 dollars

#### By Surface Mail

All countries: Rs. 40 or 5 dollars

Back numbers of *Frontier*, more than two months' old, cost Re 1 each if they are available.

*Frontier* will no longer be sent by VPP

Long-term Subscriptions will help the weekly

# Return Of The Refugees

PHANI BHUSAN GHOSH

**M**ANY of the Bangladesh refugees have gone back to their homeland. Those left behind are waiting for their turn to go, but quite a sizeable number has decided not to go at all. The camps are being demolished; emergency offices are being wound up; contractors who made some quick money by constructing makeshift structures for the refugees are no longer in a hurry; Government officials who have done more for themselves than for the refugees are relieved of their additional work-load and the camp officials who enjoyed their work not so much for what they had to do as for the opportunity it gave them to enrich themselves at the cost of the uprooted humanity are facing retrenchment.

Had the refugees been left to themselves, it can be said with some emphasis that many would have stayed on. It is only the stoppage of rations and other reliefs that forced the unwilling refugees to go back. But with what hopes are these victims of man's brutality setting their feet on the sacred soil of their 'Sonar Bangla', about which they were once so enthusiastic? The hopes are there undoubtedly—the hope of getting back what they left behind—houses, lands—and, last but not the least, of being in the midst of a familiar environment associated with so many memories. But whatever the romantic feelings these may inspire, the hopes of the home-bound refugees are not unmixed with a certain amount of uncertainty, stemming from the fluid political situation in the country. Despite the Government's promises, the refugees going back by official transport are having a lingering doubt that is sometimes reinforced by reports, not all unreliable, coming across the border, and this is writ large on their faces, which, notwithstanding the unmistakable signs of happiness, betray a sign of uneasiness. This stems from their lack of

total confidence in the promises being made by the Bangladesh Government.

Circumstances have made these people patient, so much so that they seem to have become surprisingly immune to ordinary mortals' vices such as ill-temper, impatience, disgust. Their test of patience is in all probability not yet over. The same waiting they used to do in front of ration shop still goes on but this time with a bitter difference.

Surrounded by a lot of baggages they may have accumulated during their stay on this side of the border along with the earlier possessions they managed to bring with them at the time of their memorable exodus, they wait at the railway stations, BDO offices and the camps. Any observer will have noticed that there is more of sobriety than the excitement they so eloquently displayed at the time of the liberation of Bangladesh; the earlier euphoria has given way to a calm resignation, apathetic reconciliation to inevitability. Much more intimately acquainted with the environmental hazards than the propaganda machinery of the Government is credited with, the home-bound refugees must have made an objective assessment of the realities as they emerge in war-devastated Bangladesh. There is nothing unnatural in their feeling of being disappointed when these realities do not fit in with their earlier enthusiasm and excitement.

They have waited here for about a year and somehow managed to keep their souls and bodies together on public charity but they do not know what is in store for them in their own country. With the little ration that is likely to last about a fortnight and less money which will surely be spent by the time they reach their destination, they are going back to their houses burnt, landed property forcibly occupied, furniture and other domestic articles looted and whole

villages turned into a wilderness. The sky will be the only roof they will have to take shelter under. Neighbours will definitely come but not with joy to see their known faces after the painful separation of about a year. The village roads have become covered with grass; they remained untrodden for long and seem to be staring at them as if they find it difficult to recognise them. The dogs and cats that were once part and parcel of the household are no more; they have either died or been killed or have gone somewhere else in search of food and shelter. The big trees which were once an indivisible part of their life have been chopped off; the idols are destroyed or have been removed from their places of worship and then thrown away. In fact, everything they loved and delighted in is conspicuous by its absence except the land because it could not be taken away. It seems as if they have trekked a long, long distance to discover a new country where everything is unknown, the atmosphere is eerie, so peacefully silent that even a breath is afraid of breaking that stony silence. With a philosopher's detachment, they must be looking around in eager search for anything they can claim as their own. But even in their desolate homes, mute witnesses to man's insatiable greed and avarice, they seem to be trespassers with nothing to substantiate their claims. There is nothing, absolutely nothing they can claim except the ground under their feet if it is still unoccupied.

## Miles To Go

Had their epic tales of misery and humiliation ended here, they would have thanked their stars. Their journey has already been long and painful but it will be much longer and no less painful before they rehabilitate themselves in their homes. The price for freedom has not yet been paid in full. It will be much higher than they had anticipated. Those who were from towns and who have gone back at the earliest opportunity have mostly got back their abandon-

ed property without much dilly-dallying because the towns can claim to have some semblance of civil administration. But in villages, which sometimes remain inaccessible not only from the capital but also district headquarters, the present Dacca establishment's writ is yet to run with sufficient authority. Here the refugees cannot rely on government's authority, far less any action on its part to speed up the process of their rehabilitation through the restoration of their property. The ruling party's local units are the only agencies which can help them in the matter. If they try to work strictly in accordance with the Government's declared policies, there is some hope for the refugees. But here also there are some ticklish political problems they will have to face, not often without embarrassment. It needs to be remembered here that most of the people of Bangladesh are poor, poorer than they are supposed to be. Their poverty is as much due to the existing socio-economic structure as is India's, both being integral parts of this subcontinent only the other day. If they wanted to mitigate their poverty by occupying the lands left behind by the Hindus, they cannot be blamed even if this does not fit in with the ethical standards of human behaviour. When the former owners return and demand their property back, it is likely that they will get back some, if not all, but not without creating some subtle tensions. The communal organisations, now lying low, will no doubt seek the opportunity and will be out to create mischief by presenting the issue to the people as a purely economic one, carefully concealing its communal implications. In that case, the political agencies will find it very difficult to

counter it, knowing it full well that in villages the edicts of mollahs and maulvis, the faithful agents of right reactionaries, carry sufficient weight with the illiterate masses. To prevent the situation from taking a communal turn, the Dacca regime should have come out with a firm policy of land ceiling that would have benefited the poorer sections of both the communities, antagonising in the process the vested interests of both.

Apart from the problem of getting back their property, the refugees will have to face a much more formidable one—that of finding the wherewithal of sustaining themselves for some time. The Bangladesh economy being in a complete mess due to Pakistani depredations, it is difficult to anticipate to what extent the refugees will get any help from the Government, despite the assistance given by India. Whatever little they will be allotted will eventually be consumed greedily by the various agencies through which it will have to pass before it reaches the receiving end. It can be fairly imagined that the plight of these people will not be very qualitatively different from what it was on this side of the border, the only consolation (if it can be so called) being that they are once again in their 'Sonar Bangla'. Indian aid notwithstanding, the realities of the economic situation in Bangladesh, particularly in rural areas where most of the refugees will have to go back, are very grim, with industrial production totally disrupted, agricultural activities in a state of suspension and trade and commerce in utter confusion. The employment opportunities in such a state of economy are, to say the least, only marginal, if not totally absent; naturally, even if the refugees somehow manage to rehabilitate themselves, they will be at their wit's end to find out the source of their sustenance in their own country where the prices of daily necessities have already gone beyond the common man's reach.

#### Secularism

But the thought that haunts them

even now is whether this will be the end of their long and painful trek from one country to another for mere physical survival. Even though they hear the repeated declarations of secularism by the Government of Bangladesh, their hesitancy in putting complete confidence in the bona fides of the Government stems from their earlier nightmarish experiences which gave a deep shock to their whole outlook on political professions. When neighbours turn hostile, friends conspire, colleagues betray for no fault of theirs, the heaven seems to be falling upside down with a bang leading to the erosion of all faith in human goodness. The vast panorama of darkness in which the refugees had to live all these years was not without its due share of silver lining, but it could scarcely effect the overall picture of distrust and pathological hatred that bedevilled the entire atmosphere. The feeling of distrust and suspicion of which the minorities of both the countries are equal victims are both psychological and economical; so long diligently and patiently nurtured by interested parties, it cannot be washed away overnight. The love for the Bengali language and literature which the educated, middle-class Bengalis successfully exploited to spearhead their movement against the West Pakistani military junta is confined to a very small section. The majority of the people, still steeped in medieval religious bigotry and ignorance, do not care very much for secularism or for language and literature. Barring a few enlightened, it is difficult to believe that most of the people, so long fed on religious dishes, will be able to get rid of their religious bias and prejudices when so many are round the corner to exploit religion in the name of social justice and economic emancipation only with declarations of a secular policy from the housetops. Secularism is a way of life that cannot be imposed from above; to help it influence the outlook of the masses requires, above all, a political set-up exclusively committed to the economic betterment

FRONTIER is available from

CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY

23/90 Connaught Place

New Delhi-1

MARCH 25, 1972

of the people irrespective of their religion. It is only a half-truth to say that the people of Bangladesh have discovered the hollowness of religion as a cementing factor among people of different regions.

The Bangladesh refugees are going back with hope, not very high at all,

## Clippings

### Where Will We End Up ?

It is time everybody realised that the "bloody birth" of Bangladesh was anything but a social revolution. It was a struggle for national liberation. A nation has been created and now the nation has to be made.

It will be extremely fallacious to believe that the blood of three million people has been able to wash our links with the past. Nothing dies harder than habit...

Thus we still have spineless sycophants crowding the Prime Minister's official residence, the ministers' offices, the MCAs' houses and the darbars of the mini-zaminders of the secretariat and autonomous bodies waiting for a crumb of favour to be thrown at them.

We still have social climbers lurking in the corridors of financial institutions trying to oil their way to some irregular deal on the basis of old acquaintanceship.

Job-seekers are too numerous to bear mention.

We have officials with petrified brains who are too slow to understand the difference between a weak currency and a comparatively strong currency and for whom it does not matter whether a transaction is made in terms of dollars or sterling and are too lazy to change the proformas of Pakistani days from one currency to the other just because it is a bother and for whom a quotation in a foreign currency constitutes the international market and not what was actually going on there.

We also have such cement-necked

but not without lingering doubts as to what awaits them. So many questions crowd together in their minds that much of the pleasure of the journey back, so eagerly awaited, is lost. Many a mile will they have to walk and spend many a sleepless night before the sun once again smiles to them.

dolls in pinstripe suits in various ministries for whom comments like "we do not attach any importance to it" or "complete ignorance is the answer" is a genuine exercise of their intellect when confronted with queries seeking important information... For some others the summum bonum of their life is to find out how many vacancies there are in any particular department and who are going to fill it up.

And then we have the sharks.

Prices of essential commodities have sky-rocketed in the name of 'shortage' and yet one finds that the goods are there in the market. Only one has to pay the price. One hears of impending price rise of medicines because of what is described as "low stock" and one also hears in confidential circles that such and such company still has enough raw material to produce particular kinds of drugs for the coming six months.

Administrators of mills and factories have now to be reminded that they are just administrators and not owners of the establishments entrusted to them. Fact is, they know it and some of them are making hay while the sun shines. That is why complaints pour into the ministries of Commerce and Industries that administrators are plundering all they can get their hands on.

The small shopkeeper hardly ever practises that virtue called honesty. So he pushes poison down the throat of his customers in the name of edible oil. He power-sells rotten mate-

rial wrapped in fine cellophane paper. The customer is not allowed to unwrap the stuff. If he does so he does it under the pain of having to make full payment for the goods, irrespective of the fact whether it is good or bad, useful or useless.

Above all both self-respect and mutual respect appear to be disappearing altogether.

With our misplaced trust in the efficiency and strength of moral fibre, always a rather ephemeral concept, of the elected representatives we are entrusting them with all kinds of responsibilities. The result is some of them are just inflated versions of the basic democrat of yesterday. They are said to be writing recommendations in such large numbers and dispensing favours, possibly including relief material, in such proportions that Sheikh Sahib is understood to be contemplating issuing a statement on all this. Statement or not, some of these 'gentlemen of the people' are allegedly behaving like kings. People have to seek their darshan even to have a school committee constituted. The king has no time to go and see in what condition the educational institutions in their domain have been left by the Pakistan army.

Youngsters are not left unaffected by this contagion.

There has recently been a case of assault on some teachers of a university by some young thugs which smacks of a revival of the ugly Momen era. I know of at least one principal of a college who has come to Dacca in fear of being roughed up by a student who was not allowed to copy in his exam. The boy is now a 'zonal administrator' or something of that sort.

Finally we have not even cared to show our respect for the martyrs or sympathy for their families.

Guerrillas, of course, could not carry anything which could identify them during the struggle. But their commanders knew them and the commanders were known to the high command. It was thus not difficult to record which of our valiant freedom fighters fell and where. And yet

there are scores of advertisements in the newspapers everyday seeking information about missing freedom fighters. The advertisements have invariably been inserted by some bereaved relative. This, in other words, means that the high command of our now disbanded liberation forces has not informed parents or next of kin regarding the deaths of the freedom fighters. I know of one bereaved parent who himself drafted a letter of condolence on the loss of his soldier-son so that his commander had something to sign upon. In a civilised society this tantamounts to a crime.

This callousness, this total absence of a change in attitude towards work, towards life and towards each other, can only be the result of the low level of politicalisation of people during our struggle for liberation. We know what we were fighting for in the short term but we did not know what we should have aimed for in the long run. So we fought against an external enemy but not against the internal enemies. It is now time that this struggle began.

The Awami League, it is reported, will be reorganised to suit the requirements of a new country and its ideals. Let the other parties also begin work in political education instead of monotonously repeating "me too".

(Ataus Samad in *Holiday*, Dacca).

## Gainers And Losers

From all the sordid and shameful affair in which Pakistan, India and Russia have all contributed their own version of oppression, hypocrisy and aggression, using the Bengali people as pawns, some facts emerge glaringly: *First*. Even though the government of Pakistan was guilty of exploiting the people of East Pakistan—as well as people of West Pakistan—the country did not deserve to be dismembered through Indian military aggression. It may well turn out that only the *people* of both the wings have been penalized

and have paid a huge price for the stupidity of an unimaginative regime. In a united Pakistan with a population of 132 million people, under a revolutionary and committed government, the country could have emerged as a viable Asian power—strong, secure, economically prosperous and independent. Now that chance has been lost. Separately the people of Bangladesh and West Pakistan, even with economic prosperity under progressive Socialist governments, can never achieve that position of leadership and potential for a first-rate power. Let us face it, Cuba will never be the same as China. The wisdom and desirability of becoming an important *power* can also be questioned. But the fact remains that it is a rough and cold world out there, as we should now well know. Divided, both wings will now have to live under constant fear of manipulation and aggression by a vastly more powerful and arrogant India, aided by Russia. It will perpetuate our dependency on big powers, friendly and hostile. The state of Bangladesh will be a special target for both Indian and Russian exploitation and control. In the end, despite the bloodshed and sacrifices of many, nothing worthwhile may really have been achieved for the masses of Bengali population. Only the face and location of the exploiter may have changed. And that too at the cost of a permanently dismembered Pakistan. *Second*. The people of West Pakistan cannot be blamed for the oppression of Bengalis or for the dismemberment of the country any more than the Bengalis can be, for the same corrupt civilian and military clique that did violence to the right of the East Pakistanis also exploited and brutalized the people of West Pakistan and kept them in the dark about the plight and aspirations of their eastern countrymen. All this was accomplished by keeping people mostly illiterate and preoccupied with their basic needs by depriving them of such essentials as decent food, housing, health care, personal freedom etc.

Also by cultivating stereotypes and suspicions against Bengalis and perpetuating ignorance of actual facts through controlled information media. People, therefore, cannot be held responsible for the present or the past chaos. Only their unimaginative and ruthless rulers. So, *ideally*, instead of splitting up with the punch of Indian tanks and planes and creating two weaker states, the people of *both* wings should have united and *together* overthrown their common exploiters and taken power in their own hands. With a progressive government and socialist economic structure and with all the peoples and regions sharing the power and wealth, United Pakistan, despite its regional differences in culture, language, etc., could have been transformed into a prosperous power, a society based on justice, beholden to no one. That of course, did not happen.

*Third*. Who are the winners' who are the losers? Pakistan is the loser along with her allies, China and the U.S.A. Pakistan has lost territory and a big potential. China has lost credibility in Pakistan and perhaps elsewhere. And both the U.S.A. and China have lost in the political and diplomatic Big Power struggle. Clearly Russia has won. It won a U.N. Big Power round, managed to embarrass the U.S.A. and China in the eyes of the Third World, neutralized China's southern flank, gained a strong political and military foothold in the subcontinent and possibly achieved new markets for her arms and other goods as well as new naval facilities in the Indian Ocean. India is the big winner. Even if she has no designs of economic and political exploitation of Bangladesh—a highly doubtful assumption—she has completed her biggest mission, the old dream of dismembering Pakistan and thus getting a powerful foe off her back. Nothing now stands in the way of her present or future ambitions.

Have the people of Bangladesh won? Under the circumstances it is highly questionable that they have.

Could real independence, sovereignty and the end of exploitation for the Bengali masses be brought about by a bourgeois leadership and a government launched in Calcutta, and by gaining their power and territory while riding on Indian tanks? Would there be some real progress and sharing of wealth and power by all the people of Bangladesh or would they serve as nothing more than convenient pawns of India and the Soviet Union? And if Bangladesh is truly to be a homeland of all Bengali people then what about the people of West Bengal who also want to overthrow the tyranny of New Delhi? Other than having satisfied some sense of nationalism would Mujeeb and his associates be really capable of bringing revolutionary economic and social changes desperately needed in the lives of the Bengali people? These are the questions we all must address ourselves to before automatically endorsing or celebrating the "victory" or "liberation" of Bangladesh.

Even in our keen ideological fervor and championship of the rights of oppressed people we must not lose sight of the hard and cold political and military realities, especially for the sake of those very people whose plight we desire to change. We must not bury our heads in the dogmatic sand and faithfully or mechanically approve of every break-up, every conflict and every dismemberment of a country, regardless of the means by which it is achieved or its ultimate effects on the people in whose name such acts are accomplished.

*Fourth.* Where do we go from here? For the people of Bangladesh let us hope that somehow they will rise above all our apprehensions and conquer the formidable practical odds against them. Let us hope that at least 78 million human beings of the subcontinent would have achieved freedom and gained liberation from their socio-economic and political miseries. Let us hope that Bangladesh can be the answer for their hopes and dreams. But for the sake of these very people, let

us keep our eyes opened. Let us not be overwhelmed with false anticipation and optimism. Let us be just as ruthless in our criticism and exposure of the exploitation of the people of East Bengal, either by their own leaders or by their Indian patrons, as we were with the Pakistani military regime.

As for West Pakistan we should concentrate now on attacking our huge problems of mass poverty, hunger, illiteracy and class disparities rather than crying for revenge. We should be strong enough to face the new realities and demand revolutionary political and economic changes from our new, more receptive, government. Crying for military revenge would be merely playing into the hands of those responsible for our defeat. It will divert attention from our real and grave issues of social and economic injustices, it will perpetuate militarism in our society. We should press our government to actively engage in meaningful dialogue, negotiations and co-operation with Bangladesh people and leaders. We must not alienate them further. Once we make West Pakistan attractive as a prosperous and progressive society, based on social justice, it could then conceivably provide an incentive to the Bangladesh people for a possible reunion some time in the future. Any potential reunion would have to be voluntary and desired by the people themselves, for it could never be, as we have seen, an imposed military 'solution'. So we must concentrate all our physical and intellectual energies, at home and abroad, on making Pakistan a progressive and technologically advanced new state. West Pakistan, with its industrial and commercial base already installed, is a very viable region. A prosperous and dynamic new society, based on a new social and economic order can be created on this soil. But first the emphasis on militarism and sentiments of national chauvinism must end. The military's role as king or king-maker must end and the soldiers must be sent to their barracks.

All power must belong to the people. Armed forces should be reorganized on defensive lines because an economically well-off Pakistan can one day become a tempting target for an emboldment and all-powerful India. And we must keep our hands of friendship extended and our bridges open to the people of Bangladesh.

(Arshad Ameer Khan in *Pakistan Forum*)

## Book Review

### COMMUNICATIONS AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN COMMUNIST CHINA

By Alan P. L. Liu.  
Oxford University Press, 1971.  
Price Rs 45, pages 225.

FROM a weak, toddling country in 1949, China has come up a long way to become one of the most important nations of the world. But the process has not been easy. Lacking even some of the basic prerequisites for the creation of a nation, like a common language, developed communication links and an effective bureaucracy, one of the first tasks before the new leadership was to integrate the sprawling country into one unified entity. In this task, the communications media were asked to play, and did play, a major role. They spread on the one hand the message of the new social order and on the other helped the process of national integration. And the success that China has achieved has, in a larger sense, relevance to many other developing countries also whose resources do not permit them to build the essential communications network which they so badly need.

What China lacked in material resources, it more than made up by ingenuity. One of the methods it adopted was to cover the entire country with a radio network. Small radio stations were set up in practically every part of the country. Each

of them would monitor programmes from central, provincial and municipal stations and broadcast its own country programmes in turn. From the county radio station, wires would be extended to numerous loudspeakers in all the villages within its jurisdiction. And by 1964, Dr Liu says, there were six million such loudspeakers. Similarly, movies would be shown by mobile projection teams which, in the absence of anything better would sometimes travel even on bicycles. Post offices would rent newspapers to those too poor to buy them. Information bulletins bearing instructions and gist of major outside developments would be distributed among Party cadres. Discussion meetings attended by hundreds of millions of people would be held every week, and sometimes more often, to disseminate news about the goings-on both inside and outside the country. And many of these practices are still in use in China as part of a massive drive to educate the people for one of the most outstanding experiments in social transformation.

Inevitably, there were some difference as to the relative merit and efficacy of the methods followed, as Dr Liu mentions. But he seems eager to fit them into a pattern, with the result that the exercise sometimes gives the impression of being greatly oversimplified. It is all very appropriate for him to mention that many of these unorthodox approaches which were mainly advocated by Mao Tse-tung and by what the author describes as the left wing in the Chinese Communist Party did not have the approval of the bureau-

cratic wing which preferred a more professionalised system—newspapers with mass circulation, a Press service, a national radio and a Ministry of Culture, all taking instructions from a propaganda department of the Central Committee of the Party. Dr Liu's contention is that the propaganda system in China has alternated between these two approaches as the political pendulum has swung between left and right. Whenever Mao's experiments like the Great Leap Forward in 1958 and the Cultural Revolution in 1966 have faltered, Dr Liu holds, the bureaucratic wing has moved in quickly to revert to the more conventional approach. But how far can the mass media in China, and for that matter in any country, operate on such a stop-go basis?

Basing himself mainly on original Chinese Communist publications and nearly all available sources in the United States, Hong Kong and Taiwan, Dr Liu concludes that China in 1970 is, in terms of national identity, a more integrated nation than it was before 1949. "But, if we look further", he adds, "and consider the prospect of modernization, then China's national integration is still fraught with problems". Among the arguments he cites to support this view, one is that a national language is yet to be institutionalized (but is that a problem typical of China alone?) Another is "the continuous lack of involvement of the peasantry in the Communist media system, except the oral ones" (are most of the other developing countries more fortunate?). And a no less important problem is the Party leaders' especially Mao's, "virulent anti-intellectualism" (but has not this view been shown to be overstated?). A more pertinent point the author raises is: what happens when some of the symbols on which the media have played upon lose their relevance? "The mass media in China have kept the foreign threat alive through continuous anti-American campaigns and the propaganda for 'liberation of Taiwan'." To the

extent Dr Liu is correct, it would be interesting to watch what happens after the historic vote-catching visit that the chief executive of the world's powerful nation has paid to the world's most populous one.

BASAB SEN

## Letters

### After The Polls

The people of West Bengal have seen the rise and fall of left-adventurism. Now they have seen the election debacle of the Left Front under the aegis of the CPI(M). The miserable defeat of the CPI(M) and its small allies in the election should serve as an eye-opener to the innumerable cadres and rank and file. Revisionism has met the inevitable consequence, has at last received the final and decisive blow which it deserved long ago. Of course, there have been large-scale malpractices. But the left leaders should know that this is something not unprecedented and unpredictable. If they do not accept and yield to the stark and unpleasant reality as the verdict of the people they will have to explain to the masses, at least to their sensible cadres, why they spent so much time, energy as well as blood of the people running after parliamentary benefits through farcical elections, how they correctly (?) strove to achieve People's Democracy or Socialist Democracy through this means. A marked swing was noticeable in the mind of the people in the college union elections which were held in a more or less peaceful atmosphere. The attempt to explain the situation merely in terms of the ruling party's adoption of all possible unfair means and thus to fool the masses will only help lessen the residual popularity of the left leaders and make them greater objects of public ridicule.

Yes, there was manipulation—but that was principally the manipulation of the voters' psychology. Con-

For FRONTIER contact

S. P. CHATTERJEE

Statesman Office

Steel Market

Durgapur-4

MARCH 25, 1972

gress cows and calves owe much to the left leaders for this to happen. There was hardly any tangible difference in the stances on major socio-political issues between the pseudo-left camp and the open reactionaries. For example, on the Bangladesh question the CPI(M)-raised-slogans were implemented one by one by the ruling Congress Government. So people gave the credit to the Government and voted for it.

There is yet another reason for the defeat of the Left Front. The Young Turks of the Congress in the election took up a very shrewd line of appealing to the sentiment of the common man. They abstained from using harsh language, slanderous clichés and tried to make their speeches apparently constructive in spirit. The left leaders in their propaganda blasts could not combat this style of spreading sugar-coated poison. Let me cite an example. Mr Priyaranjan Das Munshi said in a public meeting—“Whatever may be our briefs in any ‘ism’, be it Marxism, Maoism or Gandhism, let us come forward to resist this fratricidal blood-bath because the colour of the blood flowing through the arteries of all of us is reddish.” This appeals to the emotion of one who is not politically conscious and mature. Certainly this could be counteracted by stories of the torn brassiere or blooded petticoat of an unfortunate girl without blending the propoganda with positive politics.

The gulf of difference between the leftists' politics and pronouncements; their commitments to ideological life and their modes of personal life, embittered the people day by day. Not only this. Their voices vary from leader to leader and time to time on the same issue so frequently and

so grossly that people could not rest their faith in their vacillating nature.

The old leaders are likely to cling to the old beaten track. But the new entrants who have a long way to go, who have aspirations and enthusiasm, honesty and fervour, will have to trace a new path, a new programme. The spectrum of the CPI(M), the biggest party of the Left Front, through this process of self-searching is likely to be as follows: (i) The opportunists and fortune-hunters of the party will tilt towards the Congress, (ii) A section of the party's cadres and strong sympathisers, now frustrated, will become idle and go back to apolitical middle-class life. (iii) A section, definitely a small section, will tail behind the present leadership. (iv) A considerable portion which comprises the devoted, serious, sincere elements of the party, genuine lovers of revolution who had so long nourished the illusion that they had been working for revolution through the parliamentary way will surely change their attitude and try to find out the correct path.

The ruling party's assurances, however high-sounding they may be, will certainly prove futile with the passage of time, as the case has been in the past. The poor semi-colonial economy cannot let them be fully fascist even in the short run. Time is already ripe objectively, though. One has reason to be dejected with the subjective situation: the left forces are divided, fragmented to pieces; there is no established revolutionary theory for the revolution already in hand.

One silver lining in the sombre cloud is that the CPI(ML) cadres have come back to their senses. They have reached the stage of self-rectification through a continued process of criticism, self-criticism and struggle-unity-struggle after paying a heavy price. They should now try to interact and exchange ideas with the honest elements of the CPI(M) cadres and second-ranking leaders, solve the contradictions through healthy debate-cum-negotiations and on the basis of reasoned mutual flexi-

bility—not certainly on unprincipled compromise. The creation, from the debris of the old undesirable animosity, of a new party based on the unshakeable foundation of class solidarity and tenets of Marxism-Leninism-Mao's thought is the crying need of the hour in the midst of all the suffocation that living under the Congress umbrella entails.

SAIKAT SEN  
Calcutta

The great people of India have taught us all a great lesson. They have taught the CPI(M) leaders and cadres that opportunism will not do. They do not believe the CPI(M) leaders' utterances about making revolution while begging for votes. Hence they have thrown the CPI(M) into the dustbin of politics. I do not think the CPI(M) leaders will take any lesson from the people's verdict. Because even after this landslide defeat they argue that the election was totally rigged, hence their extinction. They complained before the election that they could not enter 32 constituencies. Just after the election they demanded re-poll in 18 constituencies. It was after the results elsewhere had swept them away that they discovered that the election was totally rigged. Is it a new feature for the ruling class to rig an election? The ruling classes have done it in the past and will do so in future whenever they deem necessary to safeguard their class interests.

The question is: if the election was going to be rigged, why did the CPM participate in it at all? Why didn't they boycott it? And still these scoundrels (in the language of the great Lenin) say that they are doing all these things only to prepare the ground for organising revolution. Through participation in elections they would make the people conscious—as if they were not so. What will they say now? I emphatically say, the people have become remarkably conscious and they have clearly and sharply pointed out the path to be

Our agent at Varanasi

MANNALAL DAS

D-35/321A Jangamari

adopted by real revolutionaries, by totally rejecting the CPI(M) at the polls. There is still time for those revolutionary cadres who are still with the CPI(M) to ponder and revolt against betrayal.

A SUPPORTER OF MCC.  
Calcutta

The founders of the Congress would have turned in their graves seeing what their power-mongering heirs have turned elections into. Even a military dictator like Yahya Khan had the courage to hold a free election only to lose it, but our so-called leaders of democracy had recourse only to hypocrisy. All the leading newspapers sold themselves for newsprint quota and Government ads and are vying with each other to create an air of CPM-phobia in West Bengal. Democracy is dead, long live the Congress.

S. K. SINHA  
Calcutta

The veil has now decisively been torn off that recreational farce of the ruling classes called election. The cadres of the CPI(M), many of them honest and militant, have now come to realise this. These are the factors which we, the people at large, can count upon.

As for the patriotic war-cum-twist dances with shrill accompaniments of Bande Mataram, Dr Johnson has perhaps an apt expression: When a butcher says his heart bleeds for the country, it cannot be said that he is in a very unusual condition.

A READER  
Calcutta

1969 and 1972: 'historical' polls both. Every additional seat for the victorious party was cheered wildly by crowds thronging every available listening point in 1969. Yet on Wednesday (March 15) night, when practically all the results had come

out, why was the 'jubilation' of a demonstrative people who had lighted the whole city red in 1969 and were distributing sweets to all and sundry, confined to 'revellers' in trucks? They had coloured powder on their faces and were throwing the stuff out liberally. Only the 'Protima' was missing. The chant however was there.

T. R. RAMALINGAM  
Calcutta

## About WBCUTA

The rebels of "A Section of the WBCUTA" (March 11) who have expressed their grievances against the bankrupt leadership of WBCUTA are justified. Through your journal let us offer them our warm revolutionary salutations. We pledge to stand by them firmly. The entire past history of WBCUTA is one of compromise and uncritical collaboration with the bureaucratic academic authority. By hiding the fascist face of the present state machinery it has practically betrayed the consciousness and militancy of the teaching community. Because of its revisionist limitations the leadership of WBCUTA cannot fulfil its task of forming an anti-fascist front, against the present ruling authority and the repressive agencies associated with it. Hence the responsibility of forming such a front lies with the rank and file members of WBCUTA.

ANOTHER SECTION OF WBCUTA  
Calcutta

## The Communiqué

The ridiculous lengths to which you sometimes go to defend China! In your editorial on the Chou-Nixon communiqué (4-3-72), while you, as is your wont, give due credit for what is said in the communiqué, you scarcely say a word about what is left unsaid. If the two countries had really wanted, as they officially declared, to ease the atmosphere in some parts of the world, the communiqué should have mentioned the

areas of conflict and tensions, particularly the Middle East. Had the meeting been intended for bilateral issues only, the present tensions stemming from the emergence of Bangladesh and the defeat of the Pakistani army should not have come under the joint review of the two countries. The fresh assertion of Chinese friendship for Pakistan is connected with the thorough overhauling of the highest echelon of its army set-up, resulting in the elevation of Tikka Khan and Bhutto's dilly-dallying in responding to India's unconditional offer of bilateral talks.

While you admit that there is something in the communiqué that can disturb India (I don't know whether you have done it ironically) you do not try to clarify your contention. Is it because you find the fears which the PM has been expressing very often these days to be without any basis?

The last sentence seems to have exceeded the limits of sober political assessment. Since the North Vietnamese know the Chinese leadership intimately they have not been reassured despite repeated Chinese assertions that no settlement about Vietnam would be reached behind their back.

PHANI BHUSHAN GHOSH  
Ashokenagar

## That Subject Again

After having eagerly made a more or less clinical survey of Mr Manik Ghosh's "China and the Left Intellectuals", I feel genuinely outraged. Mr Ghosh views China's stand on the Pakistan issue as something arising out of the interests of national defence. One is also led to think that China wants to suppress the truth about inner revolutionary forces or speak about them partially as the case may be, while maintaining diplomatic relations with different countries and their governments of different nature.

Mr Ghosh has defined the clash between India and Pakistan as, more

or less, a clash between the two super-Powers and described the two concerned regions as comprador. The "comprador bourgeoisie are wholly appendages of the international bourgeoisie, depending upon imperialism for their survival and growth". (Selected Works, Mao Tse-tung, Peking Ed.). Is Mr Ghosh trying to suggest that struggle is the dominant aspect in the relationship between the two super-Powers in the era of world-wide victory of socialism?

In a vain attempt to patch up the difference between his views and those held by China, he preaches that China, though defending her national interests primarily, tried to practise some amount of proletarian internationalism in the present context. Is this the reason for which the Chinese attempt "of preventing the Indo-Russian action and creation of Bangladtsh has materially failed" and "China has succeeded in exposing expansionism and social-imperialism"? I don't say that Mr Ghosh desires to say so, but in essence, he tries to extol how cleverly China practised national chauvinism while having donned the garb of proletarian internationalism.

Mr Ghosh has been busy with 'contradiction' and 'principal contradiction' as such. He says, very

humbly, that contradictions between imperialist forces may turn antagonistic so as to be resolved by war and turn 'determinant' in furthering the contradiction between the people of the world and imperialism. In its letter of the 14th June, 1963 to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Chinese Communist Party refers to the contradiction between the people of the world and imperialism as the principal contradiction. The principal contradiction is that "whose existence and development determine or influence the existence and development of the other contradictions." (On Contradiction, Mao Tse-tung). Isn't Mr Ghosh full of contradictions himself? To support China or to oppose it—I wonder which is the principal contradiction in his case.

Will it be irrelevant and an excess to remember that a certain revolutionary party in India recently suffered serious splits on the aforesaid issues when some sham Marxists gave an echo of China's stand" and turned themselves into social chauvinists and surreptitiously, or rather like centrists, viewed China's stand with their infra-red Marxist opera-glass? I hope that Mr Ghosh's vitws are accidentally the same.

Surprisingly, Mr Ghosh has failed

to hail the just struggle of the Pakistan Government and people in their fight against Indian expansionism instigated by the two super-Powers. On the contrary, he views the Indian expansionists' attempt to sieze East Pakistan as the Bangladesh Liberation Movement. He seems to find no use of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence which are supposed to be upheld by each and every truly politically honest person.

As to your 'Clippings', you have published an article by Claude Julien called "China; Realists vs Purists" where China's 'interests' in safeguarding her national integrity have been voiced and shadowy forecast on Nixon's visit and the so-called Lin Piao affair have been made. If I am not to challenge your authority blatantly. Authenticity could be called for. These articles have been published in immediate continuance of Ashok Rudra's "China in Bullshop" and Rafikul Hasan's "Whither Bangladesh?" It would not be too much, I presume, if you are asked to make a clean breast of things, or else, I shall have to call you 'an anti-China Frontier' in the near future.

AMITAVA BAGCHI  
Calcutta

(This correspondence is closed, except for Mr Ghosh if he wishes to reply.—Editor).

# ASSAM BENGAL RIVER SERVICE PVT. LTD.

POWER BOAT BUILDERS & ENGINEERS

26A, EZRA MANSIONS

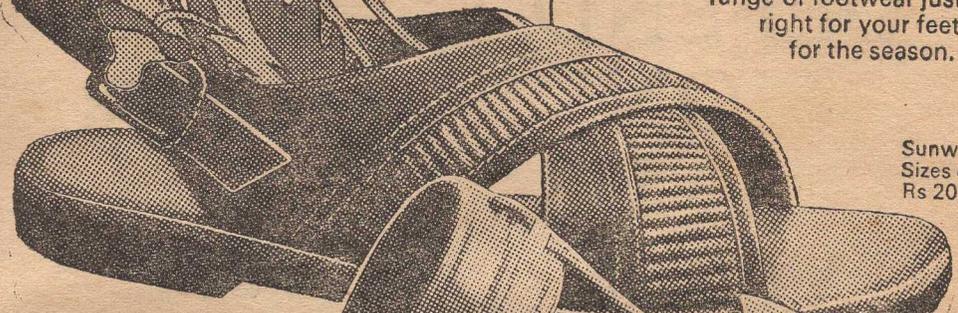
10 GOVT. PLACE EAST,

CALCUTTA-1

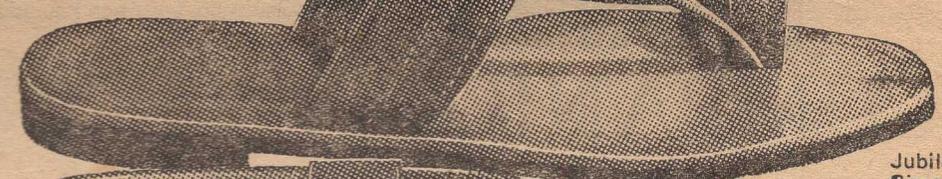
# COME.. GREET THE SPRING



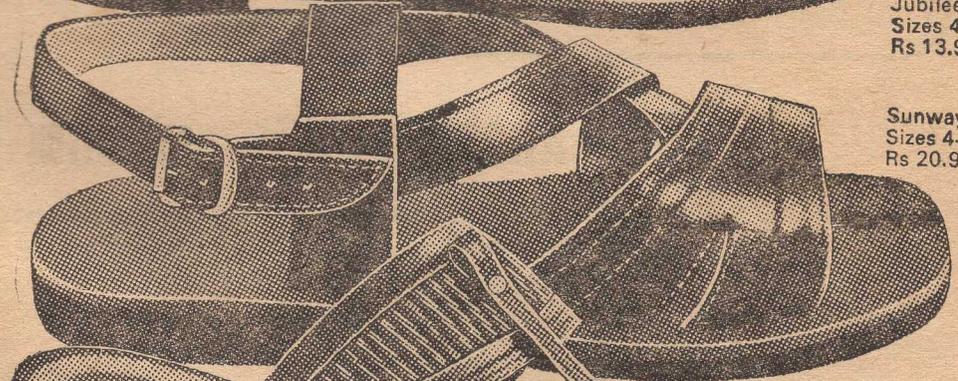
Spring is here in all its splendour. It is the time for brisk activity. Walking becomes a sheer delight. You can walk as much as you like. Only make sure that you have the right type of footwear. Your feet should have adequate protection and yet breathe the helpful airs of spring and absorb the soft sunshine. Bata have a range of footwear just right for your feet and for the season.



Sunway 34  
Sizes 4-10  
Rs 20.95



Jubilee 71  
Sizes 4-10  
Rs 13.95



Sunway 16  
Sizes 4-10  
Rs 20.95



Sunshine 06  
Sizes 4-10  
Rs 10.50

**Bata**

**WE ARE SOLE DISTRIBUTORS  
IN EASTERN INDIA FOR:**

DEPEND  
ON  
US...  
YOUR  
**SOUND**  
COMPANION

**MURPHY**

Radio

**POLYDOR**

Record

**AHUJA**

P. A. Equipment, Stereogram,  
Stereo Amplifier, Tape Recorder

**PYE**

Car Radio

**ARCEY**

Car Aerial, Condenser  
Suppressor

**MECOM**

Intercommunication



**DEBSONS PRIVATE LIMITED**

CALCUTTA • PATNA • JABALPUR  
CUTTACK • GAUHATI

2710161332