

frontier

Vol. 5: No. 20

AUGUST 26, 1972

PRICE : 35 PAISE

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PRINTED AT MODERN INDIA PRESS,
7, RAJA SUBODH MULLICK SQUARE,
CALCUTTA-13 AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY
FOR GERMINAL PUBLICATIONS (P) LTD.
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THEY ARE NOT FOR HANGING

SOME one thousand freedom fighters assembled in Delhi the other day to receive citations in copper from the Prime Minister. How they were treated in the capital is another matter. (See Clippings). But it would be interesting if some of them compared their prison notes with those in detention now in the Congress regime. Police torture was not unknown to the terrorists but it was never so widespread as now, never so indiscriminate, so brutal. Thousands of others in detention in those days, however, did not experience this brutality. Quite a few put on weight because the food provided was not inadequate. The allowance per detenu was not bad. Jail going was not a nightmare and garlands awaited those who were released.

This is not to paint an idyllic picture of the situation during the British Raj. The British could be ferocious but their native successors, the apostles of non-violence, have been unsurpassed in their treatment of detainees, particularly after Mrs Gandhi became the Home Minister. With her minions in power in most of the States, there have never been so many jail killings. No reports of enquiries into killings in jails and outside are ever published. Hijli is history; Alipore, Asansol, Berhampore, Hazaribagh are tedious routine.

Patriotic songs about Kshudiram who was hanged by the British and the rest continue to inspire people. But has it struck them that legal hanging of political activists is now a thing of the past for a strange reason? To hang a man you have to try him and the legal process is tortuous and the accused sometimes have to be freed for lack of evidence. Such delay, no such risk can be permitted now. So the police, with the obvious consent of the Centre, have taken the law into their own hands. They finish off men, sometimes in collaboration with armed thugs passing off as members of resistance committees. No more can songs be composed or sung about patriotic men who face death by hanging, after trial; they are paying the ultimate penalty for their convictions in swift 'encounters' with the forces of law and order in obscure corners. Other deaths, too, occur in devious ways. There has been no demand for an enquiry, in this State, into the death of a sick man twelve days after his capture, in police custody, though credit must be given to those who raised doubts in Parliament.

The Pakistan National Assembly raised an outcry about the reported move by a high Pakistani official in the USA to buy instruments of torture. The deal, made by the Yahya regime, will be scrapped. Members of the National Assembly heard details of the torture inflicted on some by the previous regimes. Sardar Shaukat Hyat Khan, President of the opposition Council Moslem League, said that his son lost his mental balance because of torture.

The number of people who have gone mad or died or been mutilated as a result of torture in various Indian States will not be inconsiderable. The number of people bold enough to question these methods, however, is small. Taking advantage of their silence, the police have kept up their sordid offensive. Men and women are being picked up every day. And all the while patriotic tamashas go on and a semi-starved, soulless people are enthralled by crumbs from the table. The promises of the establishment, the tactics, the stunts—all seem to be copied from Germany in the thirties, with the difference that women prime ministers can charm the universe and get away with murder. Thank God, the world has only three of them at the moment.

Normalising Emergency

Those who were looking forward to an early termination of the emergency as a democratic gesture from the Government on the occasion of the silver jubilee of independence will be disappointed by the bluff statement of the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs that the time for revocation of the emergency has not come yet. Lest the Government be misunderstood, Mr Pant has assured that it did not want to prolong the state of emergency a day longer than necessary. What prompts the Government to continue the emergency much against its will he has not disclosed, though. After the victory in the December war and

especially after the Simla accord, nobody in the Government can seriously suggest that any external threat to the country's security exists. The state of emergency was proclaimed at the time of the war, and normally it should have ended long ago. It is not New Delhi's case, one may hope, that the need for the emergency remains because Pakistan and China have not yet recognised Bangladesh.

The only other justification for the emergency can be a threat of internal subversion. That also is not the Government's contention. It is claimed that democracy has taken firm roots in the country and after a brief spell of waywardness political stability has returned. The Congress is in absolute power, and the Prime Minister is in absolute control of the party. The opposition has been scotched, if not killed; even the extremists are in such disarray that the Centre has advised the State governments to deal with them in a humane way and to take steps for their "rehabilitation". On the Government's own admission none of the opposition parties are in a position to throw any challenge. As a member of Parliament had said some time ago, there was no threat of subversion to the country, and if there was at all any threat of subversion it was to the ruling party. But emergency and the Defence of India Rules are not the weapons to fight internal dissensions in the Congress; they will cease as soon as the Prime Minister decides that she has no use for them.

The refusal of the Government to

cite some specific reasons for continuing the emergency encourages suspicion that it has none. The Government has been so accustomed to the state of emergency in the past decade that it cannot think of administering without extraordinary powers. The last brief respite from emergency was granted solely because the ruling party was not in absolute command in Parliament and had to yield to the combined demand of the opposition. The situation has vastly changed since then. Therefore, the Government not only has proclaimed the state of emergency at the first opportunity, but is reluctant to revoke it even when no plausible pretext for its continuance exists. Emergency has become so much a part of the Indian way of life that, in spite of it, free and fair elections can be held and the silver jubilee of the democratic experiment in the country can be celebrated. The Prime Minister recently told a group of American tourists that the nineteenth century definition of democracy was no longer applicable. What she seems intent on proving is that democracy can thrive even in the absence of opposition and democratic rights and a government does not lose its claim to being democratic even if it exercises extraordinary powers when at war not only with external aggression and internal subversion, but also against poverty. Her Government refuses to link the emergency with any specific problem, because every problem has an end; vagueness about reasons alone can make for indefinite continuance of emergency.

Equity Shares : Two Pictures

In 1970-71, 56 private sector companies issued capital amounting to Rs. 42.26 crores. Out of this, Rs. 24 crores was subscribed by way of equity capital. The amount underwritten by financial institutions was a little less than Rs. 14 crores. But the financial institutions invested in

equity an amount of Rs. 86 lakhs. That means, their investment in equity was less than 6 per cent. In contrast, out of nearly Rs. 11 crores of preference shares underwritten, nearly 28 per cent of the shares were taken up by the underwriters. In case of debentures, the amount in-

vested by the underwriters was more than half of the debenture issue.

This is what the latest annual report on the working and administration of the Companies Act tells us. But there is no one to explain why LIC and other public financial institutions have gone against the Government's confessed policy, after the Dutt Committee report, that the public financial institutions should take more of equity in large companies. There was an option to the controvertibility clause, too, added to loan agreements so that public money was not wasted in the interest of private companies. But committee or no committee, Government policy or non-policy, public money is being used in the form of loans to the private sector.

What is the other side of this picture? The Government has proposed to give a consortium of Japanese and American companies 49 per cent of equity share holding in the Kundremukh iron ore project, which is Mr Mohan Kumaramangalam's charge. This Rs. 175-crore project will involve the single biggest foreign equity participation in the country. The project will produce 7.5 million tonnes of magnetite iron concentrates and the entire production will be exported to Japan. Because the Japanese-American combine will be the dominant equity participant, we will have no choice as regards our supplies. We will have to abide by the foreigners' decisions, whatever may be the competitive market prices. And because it is equity participation, and not a loan that can be paid off and all liabilities ended, dividends will be a perpetual affair and in foreign exchange.

It will be interesting to see both the pictures side by side. On the one side, public financial institutions lend money to the private sector and forego, by not taking the equity shares, a say in the management of the private sector. On the other side, the Government offers equity shares to foreign collaborators to such an extent that a total techni-

cal and management control by the foreigners is established.

Since ours is supposed to be a socialist economy and not comprador, how does one explain this phenomenon? Incidentally, the questions are perplexing both Mr Chandra Shekhar, Young Turk, and a well-known Moscow-leaning journalist in New Delhi. The former is puzzled by the Government's shyness in taking equity shares in local private companies. The latter is confounded by Mr Mohan Kumaramangalam.

Too Late

By introducing a bill to amend the Companies Act of 1956 so late in the day the Government has only acknowledged that all the so-called socialist measures that pretended to make the corporate sector feel the crunch have really failed to achieve anything. Not that a confirmation of such an obvious fact was really necessary; whatever little significance the bill has is possibly that New Delhi has at last tried to come out of its ostrich-like supreme unconcern for all that has been too evident to see. The boxwallahs cannot but be grateful to the government for allowing them the much-needed time to set their house, and accounts, in order. For them, the period has come as a boon to fatten their black money hoards and to foil all the pretensions of a reformist policy. Thus while the tax laws have been progressively tightened on paper and the public sector has expanded its boundaries in many directions, the rich has only become richer, the monopolists have tightened their grip on the economy, and manufacturers have cashed in on a sellers' market by deliberately restricting production. The Companies Act, which has often been praised as one of the lengthiest laws in the world, has in its present form failed for all practical purposes either to curb the acquisitive laissez faire of big business

or the growth and ascendancy of a group of hangers-on of the rich who have gloated in expense accounts and fabulous perquisites. The search for a classless society has ironically led to the birth of a newer privileged class so different from the rest.

And now when these vested interests have entrenched themselves deeply through governmental indulgence, an attempt is being made amidst a lot of fanfare to tighten up the law. The amending bill has all the frills of radicalism. It seeks to restrict transfer of shares on a big scale and requires companies to have prior consent of the government for making takeover bids. The loose definitions of "inter-connected undertakings" and of companies "under the same management", which have allowed some of the bigger fish to get away through the anti-monopolies net, are being sought to be enunciated with a little more precision. Companies have also been asked to exercise greater control over declaration of dividends out of reserves and for raising funds through public deposits—a practice which has now assumed alarming proportions. About foreign companies it envisages much greater powers for the government to oversee and regulate their working. But the question is: will all this work? Will the legislation be able to check the all-corrupting money power that has so far made a mockery of the numerous half-hearted checks and balances on the corporate sector which have miserably failed in their purpose?

Chile

Last month Chile's principal opposition groups which include socialists, radicals, members of the Action Movement for Popular Unity, the Christian left and the MIR—met in Concepcion and denounced Mr Allende and his coalition as reactionary. This meeting undoes his long effort to isolate the MIR, a Tupamaro-style organisation of the

Chilian revolutionaries. But the threat to him comes from within his ranks too. Though his Popular Unity Front is united in condemning the effort in Concepcion, they are at loggerheads over their own government's course of action. A recent compromise meeting of the coalition partners has failed to bear any result.

Mr Allende's plight is the plight of a socialist who practises legality while professing revolution. His catch-calls of land to the peasant, rapid industrialisation, state control of foreign interests and people's power have harmed his government more than anything and threaten to tear it apart. Its revolutionary phrasemongering has encouraged peasant rebellion in Chile's countryside. But its inability to carry it through and break the entrenched interests has deepened the peasants' frustration and bred further discontent. No industrial base, or even the promise of it, could be laid and Chile still remains a pawn of the world copper price. Jobs have become scarcer. The middle class and the youths are the hardest hit. Worse still, Santiago has failed to dislodge the foreign interests, particularly American, and their henchmen in the country. Though foreign assets have dropped considerably in the wake of the 1971 nationalisation, they still give enough power for arm-twisting. Now they are being used to bring Santiago to book.

The rightists and the conservatives, who have been marking time, have now openly come out against Mr Allende's regime, despite the latter's truce offer. Mr Allende is, however, more awed by the recrudescence of the revolutionary left headed by the MIR. On August 13, they set up a people's assembly in Concepcion and their call is getting increasing response. The recently contracted \$260 million rouble aid may give Mr Allende some elbow room in this political game, but his ultimate rescue from the morass will be difficult.

View from Delhi

POW-OW

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THERE is a certain hypocrisy about all that talk about China's stance in the UN vis-a-vis Bangladesh's entry diluting the Simla spirit. The fact is that India-Bangladesh calculations over the prisoners of war have gone awry somewhere and neither can get much mileage out of the issue.

To India's surprise, Mr Bhutto did not make the prisoners of war much of an issue because the domestic pressure for their return had worked itself out and he was in no hurry to make major concessions just to get them back. India had all along insisted on a bilateral approach to issues and the Simla agreement skirted the POW issue because India maintained that it was a trilateral one involving Bangladesh. So there is no justification for India raising new issues or for contending that Pakistan's failure to recognise Bangladesh would jeopardise the Simla agreement or that the thaw is in the danger of freezing back. India cannot raise the recognition issue which is entirely a bilateral matter between Pakistan and Bangladesh and as long as Mr Bhutto is prepared to keep the POW issue in cold storage India and Bangladesh would have no leverage through it.

An absurd situation is likely to develop now. The Simla agreement has to be implemented and Mr Bhutto loses nothing by insisting on its implementation. If things go to schedule, Indian and Pakistani troops would have pulled out of each other's occupied areas, the line of control would have been delineated in Jammu and Kashmir, and trade, communications and cultural links restored. If after all this, the India-Bangladesh joint command continues to hold over 70,000 Pakistani war prisoners, it would indeed be a bizarre situation.

What India has to worry about is the possibility of a massive UN resolution denouncing India. This was the reason India was more anxious than Pakistan to get the POW issue out of the way at Simla but Mr Bhutto proved too smart for the Indian tactics. In the event of a resolution calling upon India to release the prisoners, a large number of small and medium countries would back it no matter if some of them happen to have recognised Bangladesh. It would be a damning indictment of India in the world forum.

Judging from the Chinese threat to veto the entry of Bangladesh into the UN, it would hardly be surprising if a General Assembly resolution calling for release of the prisoners of war is sponsored by China. The pattern of voting would be predictable. Even the Soviet Union and the eastern bloc would find it hard to oppose it.

The biggest leverage India had was the prisoners of war and this will be lost in no time. With every passing day world opinion would build in favour of a small, defeated country. The advantage would pass on to Mr Bhutto who can very well link up the question of Pakistani recognition of Bangladesh with the prisoners of war issue and the Indian position would look a trifle ridiculous. Despite assertions that there is no difference in Indian and Bangladesh approaches to the prisoners issue, it was clear on the eve of the Murree talks that differences did exist and Mr D. P. Dhar had to make a dash to Dacca to sort things out. Bangladesh was taking a tougher line. Now the climb-down depends on Dacca and India will be left in a state of despair, having to go ahead with the implementation of the Simla agreement so as not to look insincere in the eyes of the world.

There has been a certain consistency about the Chinese attitude to Bangladesh. About October last year, the Chinese attitude was undergoing some change. When Mr Bhutto went to Peking in November, there was a student demonstration against repression against the "Bengali" people of Pakistan's eas-

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tern wing. But the Bangladesh situation changed qualitatively about this time. To the Chinese it was becoming a direct India-Pakistan issue and part of a super-power design against Pakistan.

When the United States kept its consulate running in Dacca while not recognising the government there, the Chinese promptly closed their mission down. Of the 76 countries which have now recognised Bangladesh hardly three backed the Bangladesh struggle and many were patently opposed to it. But the Chinese position has been consistent and there will be no Chinese recognition until after Pakistani recognition.

By insisting that the prisoners of war issue was a trilateral one India was linking it up with Pakistani recognition of Bangladesh and took seriously Mr Bhutto's remark that Pakistan would be an odd man out in the UN if it did not recognise Bangladesh before the General Assembly met. Now, if Bangladesh's entry is blocked for this year, Mr Bhutto stands to gain by keeping the prisoners of war issue frozen. He is not desperately in need of the men back because he does not want to re-induct them into the army. He thinks they have been brainwashed in the Indian camps. Mrs Gandhi's fear that returning them would mean returning four fully developed divisions intact would prove baseless. Any argument along these lines would look untenable.

India did not bargain for this kind of situation. And the Indo-Soviet treaty whose anniversary was celebrated as a laboured official ritual (the audience for the Vithalbhai Patel House meeting had to be brought in chartered buses to ensure that it did not flop) does not provide for a situation like this.

Mr P. N. Haksar has replaced Mr D. P. Dhar as India's Kissinger and his visit to Dacca after the Simla agreement has some significance. But the Moscow lobby is gunning for all ex-comrades in the government except Mr D. P. Dhar, which could mean a lot of things. The ex-CPI

lobby in the Council of Ministers comprises political lightweights, mere page boys but the hardening of the CPI line towards them came in the wake of a top-level mission to Moscow. The growing ineffectiveness of the CPI (due to its soft line towards Mrs Gandhi and more particularly the ex-comrades in her ministry) was underlined by the Soviet leaders at the Moscow discussions. The Indian delegation was told in so many words that the CPI has been losing its better cadres and getting isolated in the mass movements, and a harder line combined with selective support to the Prime Minister was called for. The CPI's role in the Tamil Nadu farmers' agitation was just despicable and the local unit has been taking instructions from Mr Mohan Kumaramangalam who is still the commissar in Madras. This is causing immense embarrassment to the central leadership of the CPI. Former members who have made good in other parties still wield influence in party matters and the irked central leadership is going hammer and sickle for these worthies in the government who are charting the non-capitalist path for India's development.

Kerala

Victory For Church-NSS

RAMJI

THE 'Indira Wave' has helped to give a big boost to the organisational strength of Nair-Christian communal forces in Kerala. In the two-and-a-half-month-long unresolved struggle between the Nair-Christian private college managements and the State Government, Mrs Gandhi intervened as a mediator and her formula has conceded victory to the college managements. The private colleges (69 of them under the Church and the NSS) which refused to obey the Government and remained closed for over two months have now opened after an agreement with

the Government on the Indira formula which, in effect, is more favourable to them than their own terms for an agreement. The Congress (R) which spearheaded the movement for 'controlling' the private college managements and the Government are now busy celebrating a "victory" over the private managements.

The managements have every justification for celebrating a victory. The entire responsibility for payment to the teaching and non-teaching staff, the expenses for maintenance of colleges etc will henceforth be borne by the Government. In return, they have to submit to so-called control by the Government in the matter of appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff and the admission of students. However, this is a farcical concept of control. The five-member panel for selection of teachers is virtually selected by the management. For, the nominees of the Government and the university, one each, have to be approved by the management from a panel of names submitted to them by the government and the university. The managements have every right to turn down a list of names if they feel that one in it will not serve their interests. This is supposed to be the much vaunted "supervision" and "control" of the Government and the university. A bigger hoax on the public no administration has played. And the cost of this is terrible. More than Rs 3 crores will have to be spent additionally every year by the Government for this control which is only a shameless face-saving terminology. And every year the cost for this will go up. Already the State is the highest taxed one in India and with this the sky will be the taxation limit.

The Pradesh Congress, the youth wing of it and the student wing, had proclaimed a do-or-die fight to end once for all the stranglehold of the Catholic Church and the Nair Service Society over college education. Nothing less than complete surrender of these forces was on the cards of the Congress and the Kerala Gov-

ernment too. But, even while they breathed fire and brimstone against the managements the Government and the ruling parties failed to implement the minimum measures needed to bring the managements to heel. Although there was talk about it, no ordinance to take over closed colleges was issued. And no alternative arrangements were made to open colleges under government auspices. Except high sounding resolves and talk of rigid determination, the ruling parties and the Government did nothing tangible.

The managements, on the other hand, got away with actions and words that would have been considered rank treason coming from any other source. The leaders of the private managements openly challenged the Government and warned it that they would meet force with force and that blood would flow. Open incitement to violence and resistance to constitutional authority by the managements went unchallenged. It appeared as if they were above governmental control altogether; a super-government in fact. One hundredth of such a stance by any trade union or peasant organisation would have immediately triggered action under DIR with summary arrests and summary assaults by the police. But the managements got away with their prolonged exercise of open challenge to government and open mobilisation of forces to prevent any take-over of private college premises. The bishops themselves led demonstrations and threatened that they and their followers would take up arms and break the heads of those who attempted to take over their colleges. And in the end, thanks to Mrs Gandhi, they have proved that they are above all governmental authority.

Old Tradition

The old Travancore tradition has been cemented by Mrs Gandhi. The Church has always shown that it is mightier than the Government in Travancore. Under the regime of Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer during

the princely era, later, under Mr Panampilly Govinda Menon, and subsequently under the first Communist Ministry led by E.M.S., the Church-Nair combine has been able to defy the government whenever these posed a threat to the big business in education carried on by the Church and NSS. And with this, the communal forces have received another shot in the arm.

From the very start this issue which started as a demand for unified fees in private colleges on a par with those in government colleges, was a relatively less urgent issue. After all, the matter affected the purse of that section which is affluent enough to send their children to colleges. A section which does not mind paying a little more for a better standard of education. Anyway, both the Congress and the Government gave this issue the foremost priority as if it were a life and death issue for the people. On account of this exercise, the entire administration became moribund. And the fee unification benefit which will be enjoyed by a minority affluent section of the community will be at the cost of the taxpayer, mostly the have-nots. For, the funds needed to pay more to the managements will have to come from indirect taxes, which hit the common man below the belt.

Now that the Government has taken up the responsibility for payment to teachers and staff, the managements will be able to demand bigger 'donations' for appointment of teaching and other staff. Applicants will be more than eager to pay more, since, instead of uncertain and arbitrary pay scales, they would now get an assured income every month. The terms of agreement give the managements a right which is not warranted under the Indian Constitution. For, communal representation has been allowed in the case of selection of students and teachers by such forward communities like the Nairs. The net result of the agreement is that the managements get more for less responsibility. All expenses will be taken care of by the

Government. The managements have only to sit back and rake in capitation and other traditional "taxes" imposed by them in their sovereign territory, the private colleges.

While the youth and student wings of the Congress stampeded the other parties into joining this fray, none of the ruling parties, including the elders in the Congress, were sincerely behind it. The CPI, RSP and the Muslim League were playing a double game with an eye on the organised votes which the Church and the NSS command. This was very helpful to the managements. And of course, when Mrs Gandhi stepped in and laid down her dictum there was no other choice for the ruling parties than abject submission. Communalism has become the most potent force in Kerala now, thanks to Mrs Gandhi.

Manipur

Shades Of Police State

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

THE Congress for the present is forced to lie low. Its attempt to topple the MPP-led Ministry proved premature and hence abortive. There is no denying the fact that the Ministry has been living from crisis to crisis and its survival is nothing less than a miracle. It has shown remarkable resilience and staying stamina in face of the near constant sniping and skittles indulged by the Congress none too graciously.

CORRECTION

August 5, "On Gandhi". On P 15 'The bhadrolok leadership believed in some sort of nationalism. It was... national attitude.' It should have been 'rationalism' and 'rational attitude'. On the same page, Col. 2, 41-42 line, read 'by dresses' instead of 'by dreams'. 51st line—'Chamars' not 'chassars'.

But those who had looked forward to a people's ministry after the longish President's Rule are disenchanted. The detractors and opponents may add weird touches of detail to the sordid corruption rampant. But even the supporters and fellow-travellers of this Ministry concede that nepotism, bribery and rank injustice, with a dash of high-handedness, have beaten all previous records hollow. A clerk, for having helped the MPP at the polls, is raised to a gazetted officer superseding many. The editor of a language daily, the organ of the MPP, becomes the super Director of Publicity with a jeep, an office, and a handsome honorarium. His job? To issue lists of imaginary achievements by the Ministry projecting a favourable image among the people. Promotion, transfer or stay of transfer, can be had for a consideration. Consequently, those who have no money to grease palms or would not resort to bribery on principle cannot get a wee bit of their work done.

This is not all. The bureaucratic cancer has dug deeper into the entrails of the administration. The ministers are unable to control this leviathan because it is in collusion with them. So naked loot by the two is pauperising the State. Not one officer guilty of living beyond his means and grossly violating all rules of procedure has either been suspended, shunted out or sacked. Ministers are helped to pomp and privilege by the corrupt executive, which in its turn, receives from the former the charter for criminal misuse of position. The monthly organ of the Pan Manipur Youth League has listed a huge mass of immoral acts by this government in its recent issue which is selling like a hot cake.

Anti-socials have been hired by the government. So also the hostiles released from jails. They are employed to shadow the wavering MLAs who may defect. Physical intimidation and threat of liquidation by these toughs have held the Ministry together. The Ministry with a 33-strong tally is understandably resort-

ing to terror tactics. The people are not yet aware of the fascist nightmare this betokens. The MPP being a regional party commands the emotional attachment of the populace, whose loyalty to the Congress, for a variety of reasons, could never be more than wafer thin.

The Congress, uncannily, is synonymous here with New Delhi, with the ugly outsider, with President's Rule, with the exploiting Marwari. In short, with the devil, or, as the Chinese would say, with the demon. And, Sheelbhadra Yaji's frequent visits here are resented. Indiraji's trusted agent for the East, Mr Yaji has been outwitted by the MPP in

each of his gambits. The Congress impatience for power and the weight of Mrs Gandhi behind the Congress manoeuvres have further alienated the people.

But if the alleged collaboration between the MPP and the underground, according to the latest on the political grapevine here, has even an iota of truth in it, then the sinister implications of a police State in the offing, as detailed above, must chill the hearts of those who value every individual's freedom and his right to live according to his lights. The Government of India will get an excuse for unseating the ministry and make a short shrift of it.

Education : Illusion And Reality

HIREN GHOSH

AT present we are having something like a cultural revolution in reverse in our schools, colleges and universities. As before, the students remain the protagonists with the present system of education in the role of a villain. And if you have some taste for sardonic humour, the teachers and administrators may, in the present show, suggest the image partly of a puzzled body of spectators and partly of stage-designers with some indirect responsibility for rehearsal of this preposterous farce. And stretching the metaphor a little further one might be left vaguely guessing about any possible production manager behind the scenes.

It is a cultural revolution in reverse; there is disparity as well as affinity between the present anarchy and the one that preceded it. The dull puppet-like monotony of the present performance can hardly be called an agreeable change from the blind fury of a Samson that kindled the earlier outbreak. The disparity goes even deeper. The youths who indulged in wanton destruction in educational institutions rightly conceived the latter to be an extension

of the oppressive social order, one of the chief propagators of its atrocious values, the training ground for future administrators, bureaucrats, licensed murderers and torturers and the vast body of meek, obedient tools of exploitation. But they were wrong in thinking that by striking at these institutions they could kill the hydra-headed monster of social injustice.

The gross short-sightedness of this noble anger is borne out by the sequel. The students are herding back into the fold in the deluded hope of social equality through education. They want jobs and status. Their impatience with discrimination cannot stop at gaining access to the seats of learning but extends to demands for an automatic certificate of success. Hence the spree of copying at examinations. While the student rebels of the earlier phase saw the educational institutions as an elaborate lie, a hated symbol of bad faith when contrasted with the sordid misery in which people live and die all around, their successors find in the selfsame institutions a potent instrument for levelling down in-

equalities by fictitious attainments.

The earlier rebels may have sinned on the side of excessive idealism with an inadequate sense of reality while their present-day successors are self-deluded pragmatists who expect miracles by malpractice. They are not against the values of the ruling classes, do not question the moral basis of the existing society. They only hope to wangle the benefits and spoils of exploitation. Though most of them must remain poor and deprived for the rest of their lives the prospect of a university degree gives the illusion of success and attainment for the present. These children of the middle class and affluent peasantry have the feeling of having arrived after suffering from centuries of discrimination through intellectual inferiority. They forget the misery of the overwhelming majority of the urban and rural population for whom even this delusion of social success through fake education does not exist. Their own misery in grotesque wish-fulfilment remains shut off from their awareness and is perceptible only to the social psychologist. Because of their illusion they remain prisoners of the social lies which preserve the unjust system and even become its active supporters. They are the clay of which fascist idols are made.

Thus if the student revolt of the earlier phase had something quixotic about it, the phenomenon that has replaced it recalls the antics of Sancho Panza. Now Cervantes leaves us in no doubt that both the mad visionary and his wily follower were victims of delusion, but while the former was a pursuer of lofty ideals and utterly regardless of his material interests, the latter was a credulous self-seeker. Even so, it seems easy to show both aspects of the revolt as bound together by a logical process of reciprocal causation, vaguely fulfilling a similar and obscure impulse of the more articulate sections of the masses. The themes and variations of the revolt are of such apparent complexity that it is a hard job unravelling the common motif

which is, however, all too simple at the bottom: a general frustration with the purpose and paraphernalia of education and through education all cultural activities which enshrine, sanctify and seek to perpetuate social discrimination. If one cannot set out to change the meaning of education, by changing the society, one can either strike in a blind rage against some of its venerable symbols or console oneself by desecrating some pious rituals. And there is a corresponding attitude of a positive kind derived from this rage, which is to expect salvation through desecration. When salvation through piety remains beyond reach, the masses may be encouraged to seek it in sacrilege. This trans-valuation of values preserves the old illusions in renewed vitality. This is going for a kind of pop-education, our equivalent of Western pop culture—both of which breed identical illusions of freedom and equality.

Religious Verbiage

The use of religious verbiage may not be altogether out of place in this context. The revised pop-religion in the West in the form of "happenings" suggests the imagery to one's mind. Everywhere the meaning of salvation for man retains the old illusions to the material advantage and intense spiritual well-being of the ruling classes and everywhere the people are shielded against the cold reality of their misery and the meaninglessness of the promised salvation. Everywhere the people are prevented from realising that there is no salvation in the values of their masters whether by consecration or desecration, no social betterment through popular culture or education but only in creating new values and pursuits by creating a new society of free and equal individuals bound by mutual love and cooperation. But our students, most of whom are from the middle strata, along with the rest of their social classes are, like the two tramps in Beckett's play, still waiting for Godot.

At its initial phase, the desperation

led, among the more resolute fringe, to a fairly sustained burst of destructive fury. Classes and examination halls, were deserted, at first for weeks and then for months. There was an outcry. The outcry was frenzied when the sculptured gods of our recent history were beheaded. Then followed the revival of the gods, a sustained re-affirmation of the faith, the regular incantatory chanting of names and spells. By a process of reversal, all the old sanctities have returned and rehabilitated themselves. The gods are receiving prayers and sacrifices, the congregation swells, and the rulers are once again safe in their seats of power. Classes are being held for considerable stretches and the walls are adorned by the smiling face of Bharat Mata and not the dour profile of a foreign idol.

The gods are on the pedestal again, but at some sacrifice of their dignity. The values have revived but only at the cost of much devaluation. Books and notes are allowed to the examinees who can freely crib under the eyes of their teachers. They insist on the presence of their teachers to ensure the legitimacy of their performance, for the University authorities have developed quite a fixation about the legitimisation rites. After one Vice-Chancellor was made to eat the humble pie, the rest of the high priests have been obliged to ensure the consecration of the rituals of examination by a ceremonial presence of the teachers.

If democracy has to be saved by rigging elections, education can only be saved by rigging examinations. Nobody seems to bother about the meaning of a particular social ceremony as long as the formal observances are kept up in all externals. The habit is of magical origin and ritual formalities can replace rational behaviour at all levels. The daily services in honour of parliamentary democracy, legal and human rights, cultural tradition, values of education and high social ideals are stepped up in proportion as these objects of popular cults are divested of any

sense or significance in real life. The ceremonial rigidity and elaboration of rites grow, with the increasing invalidation of their practical content.

Performers

In our educational life the teachers and administrators are the priestly functionaries who perform the stupid rites. As all magical rites and spells are conceived to ward off evils and ensure general well-being, the spells and ceremonies in the present case are intended to exorcise the forces of disruption that perennially threaten the order. Somehow the system must be kept running no matter at what level of degradation.

Thus the most ingenious device to perpetuate a system is in the process of being discovered and applied. If the rigours of higher culture and education appear beyond the competence of the general mass of students at the present level of their living conditions and social background, which inevitably generates a sense of alienation and hostility, the best way to preserve higher culture against popular resentment at its invidiousness is to make it apparently accessible to all and look less exclusive than it really is. And in a country where learning and intellectual occupations have traditionally been the exclusive privilege of a small minority of hereditary elite who looked upon all occupations except their own and the art of warfare as degrading and justifying the most inhuman treatment of their practitioners, the seductive appeal of universal higher education is understandable. But the point is how far this education has become really universal or can become so under the present economic system. If higher education is a status symbol or a passport to higher earning it becomes meaningless when made really universal since its meaning consists of exclusiveness. In fact it cannot be made universal in its present function and character as a prerogative for the few.

The Western proletariat have long

since experienced this. In all Western countries the vast majority of the people are excluded from any real education and condemned to a life-long repetition of stereotyped operations of the simplest mechanical skill acquired at an early age. As for their cultural life, it is compounded of a passive and predetermined response to standardized products of commercial mass media. Their only solace lies in material possessions which give them some illusory sense of equality with their masters. In India the possessing classes have little surplus wealth to share even with the middle strata. Some pretension at learning and superior skill and competence always remains a potent charm to break into the narrow circle of power and possession. Education is also a means of overcoming socially inherited disabilities. Thus a university degree to a peasant boy or a middle-class girl stands for what a TV set or an automobile is to a Western worker. Both are fictitious symbols of an elusive prosperity and social advantage.

For the under-privileged in any society there is no real freedom from exploitation and inequality except through a rejection of the values of privilege whether in the form of material possession or cultural attainments. The mystique of private possessions or intellectual superiority is the greatest factor of their enslavement. This is the source of their corruption too. For the materially and culturally dispossessed the lure of private possession or higher education is a bourgeois illusion. So long as private property or educational attachments remain a condition of man's alienation from the natural function of his labour and other human beings, all efforts at their acquisition on society's terms can only perpetuate such alienation and always result in a feeling of frustration and sense of absurdity. The Western industrial worker acts in bad faith when he seeks to drown this feeling in a more frantic pursuit of private acquisition without probing the source of his despair

which lies in the very fact of his alienation. And so does an Indian youth of the poorer classes when he hopes to improve his condition with a university degree, hardly realizing that the 'degree' by its very definition has made his social condition what it is and will continue to do so unless the very concept of education is changed.

Demystification

It is just because the concept of personal possession and attainments remains unchanged that the Soviet Union and her East European satellites are nearer to Western society than to China or Vietnam. In our society true material and cultural affluence can come only by way of demystification of property and attainments. The dispossessed classes must accept their alienation from property and culture, reject their sacred character and mystification, (and through and after revaluation create new material and intellectual wealth for social consumption. All other forms of protest and revolt take their departure from an inverted acceptance of the existing values of property and educational attainments. They are self-defeating and result in frustration. They are like the secret longing for God which some atheists harbour against all dictates of reason. The thing is that neither material possessions nor intellectual attainments can be really universal and a satisfying experience to the individual in a society based on exploitation and alienation, a society, that is, where competitive acquisition of wealth and efficiency robs any achievement, material or cultural, of its true human significance. Indeed, competition makes universal sharing of wealth and education a transparent lie. Somehow or other, the privilege of wealth and education as an instrument of power tends to become exclusive, for the very concept of privilege or the values associated with property, education and power in all class societies rest on exclusion. For a worker to own a cheap automobile or have a son in the univer-

sity makes no difference to this brute fact of in-built social exclusion.

The ossification of the values of culture and education can only be prevented by a process of perpetual renewal. In all past ages, the narrow class basis of higher culture has precluded self-renewal and brought about inevitable decadence. Our own period faces this crisis of senility. The people remain the one inexhaustible source of vitality, as is borne out by the tenacity of folk tradition and its unspoilt freshness of appeal. Every renewal of culture under the new dominant minority has been accompanied by an infusion of the popular tradition, as every social revolution has been accomplished by active participation of the oppressed

classes. In our age all inherent worth of education and culture as well as their material correlatives can be preserved from decay and distortion at the hands of the ruling class and its sycophants only through social revolution, which will be the work of the people who have neither property nor education. Their invasion of the sources of material and intellectual power will have nothing in common with the mass copying at examinations or any equivalent manifestation of the spirit in other walks of public life. The latter is a sign of corruption of the people by the general rot of the system, no promise of its renewal. The renewal can follow only the death of the old.

nography has to be given some sort of 'social' footing in order to be relished. It is too much to believe that this cloak of mock seriousness became indispensable because of the sudden dawning of a sense of aesthetic sanity. Aesthetics, of all things, is the last to have any concern with 'Hindi' films.

Previously, the 'pure' pornographers' happy plea was that they were helpless if the people themselves craved for such things; otherwise, why did they flock to the houses in such mammoth numbers? But this euphoria proved to be transient. The enthusiasm seemed to die away. The hard reality was brought to surface not only by a number of box-office disasters, but also by the growing popularity of saner films. Some days back, a Hindi-film maker lamented over this shift in the masses' minds. The tycoons, with their somewhat 'extra-human' capabilities, began to sense the ultimate consequences of this positive swing. They responded with immediate promptness by changing over from a 'nakedly naked' formula to one of 'cloaked nakedness'. It is this latter formula that now reigns supreme, its efficacy corroborated by the full houses.

Is it but a coincidence that this 'new wave' raised its head in the course of those very years which were probably the most crucial ones in the recent past? Accumulated grievances had begun to burst out into the open—a sure evidence of the maturing social consciousness of the people. The motor force behind society—the economy—seemed to be in a shambles. The shattered paradise made the masters realise the ineffectiveness of their baits. In these new circumstances, they showed their mettle by choosing to tamper and not eliminate. From then on sex began to be projected as perverted sex, loyalty as the self-extinction of the ruled at the feet of the ruler, humanism as the off-time recreation of the millionaire. You got everything—right from the sublime cabaret hall, to the ridiculous worship chamber.

A Camouflaged Strategy

A. K. LAHIRI

'UNIVERSALITY of character is incomplete without a share of vulgarity.' Our masters of art seem very well to have cashed in on this thesis of Bernard Shaw. In whichever respects our 'universality of character' may be lacking, its share of vulgarity is more than brimful—the unprecedented growth of pornography in various forms over the last few years testifies to that. The apparent callousness of those on the throne is not only understandable but expected. What we common people fail to comprehend is the callousness of those who profess to be engaged in overturning that throne.

'Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic etc. development', we are told by Engels, 'is based on economic development. But all these react upon one another and also upon the economic basis. It is not that the economic situation is cause, solely effective, while everything else is only passive effect.' Accordingly, the argument that it is useless to attack the superstructure,

without first demolishing the economic base, does not hold much water.

There is a tendency to underestimate the dangers posed by these superstructural 'elevations'. The Hindi film, for example, is pooh-pooled as merely samples of an empty-headed bluntness and an abominably low taste. But the actual danger is not so much the absence of a serious approach towards life as the camouflage of a high seriousness. If the pressure of your blood permits an 'analysis' of the basic ingredients that go to make the customary Hindi film, you will find that while presenting crude, perverted sex as the main merchandise, there inevitably are some corollary philosophisings on such 'human' virtues as honesty, loyalty, sympathy, etc. as also a high-pitched glorification of the traditional Hindu ways of life, with particular reflections on the virtues of so-called womanhood.

True, these are only camouflages—and very ill-made at that. But the significant thing is that these have become indispensable, that even por-

Sex and Religion

Perverted sex and religion—these became the two poles of hypocrisy, one complementing the other. Hinduism became a common ingredient of the Hindi film. The Hindu ways of life, the old old beliefs—all began to be shown as inalienable and irreplaceable. A wilful suspension of the integrity of the individual woman began to be highlighted as *satitwa*. As a paradox, the more the upper classes got steeped in blunt Yankeeism, the more were the 'people' advised to follow the eternal Hindu path of sacrifice, of inconspicuous plain living. A peculiarly hybrid culture is the net impact—as is of course every other thing in this domain of suspended disbeliefs.

This is raising a storm in a coffee cup!—some might say. But the very dimension and gravity of the problem should debar one from such comments. When you go to a blue film you know what is what, that you are not being healthy, to say the least. But what words can express the pitiful condition of the man who sees a blue film with the satisfaction of enjoying a *Battleship Potemkin* or a *Subarnarekha*? This is just where the Hindi film today portends a very ill omen. For it does not merely exploit the vulgar—that would have been tolerable—but it at the same time debases the positive side of the psyche.

In a way, the Hindi film embodies the characteristic features and the multifacedness of the attack of Indian reaction. Sex, to be more exact, pornography, is already a part and parcel of sophisticated modernism. The fabulous growth of a number of magazines, and the general trend of 'serious' literature prove it. It was a matter of the proximal past when the stalls in Calcutta suddenly began to be flooded with numerous pornographic magazines, which seemed to come up almost every day. Here again the frightening aspect was not the knowledge that such things did exist, but their daringly open and practically unchallenged exuberance. Spectacular has also

been the popularity of some nauseatingly vulgar so-called 'pop' songs (other than 'filmigana').

A sort of new wave is sweeping the religious sphere too. The mushroom-like sprouting of numerous 'meditating centres' and their worldwide publicity,* the activities of

* The following is from *The Statesman* of 8-7-72:

"quick results are obtained by transcendental meditation, a technique discovered by Maharshi Mahesh Yogi.

"Drug users are increasingly switching to TM because the 'state of wakeful rest' produced by meditation is far better than that obtained with marijuana, LSD, narcotics or alcohol.

"the USA has already launched anti-drug programmes based on the TM technique. There are about 250,000 meditators in these programmes and 10,000 more are joining each month. In Britain, there are

the International Krishna Chaitanya Society, the Hare Krishna craze, the phenomenal popularity of Sain Baba;—these are but a few arbitrary examples of the present religious renaissance. All these have been taking place in such a short span of time and with such organization as to make one conscious of a missing but vital link connecting all these apparently haphazard phenomena.

Religion is a time-tested and trusted narcotic. But what is singularly striking in the religious overtures noticeable at present in this Land of Religions is an obvious attempt to give this hoary old thing a modern, rational face lift. And what could be more modern than what the Yanks do? 'Religion', said Caud-

20,000 meditators with a monthly addition of 300..."

Did not Vivekananda prophesy that a day would come when the Hindu would be the spiritual Guru of the West?

The career of Mao Tse-tung spans more than half a century of efforts to free China from the legacy of her past and to set her on the road to social and economic development.

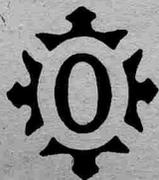
In this volume the author describes Mao's struggle after the Liberation of 1949 to embody his political thought in the institutions of the People's Republic. He begins by exploring China's traditional political culture, and then discusses the development of Mao Tse-tung's conceptions of political leadership.

Professor Solomon suggests that Mao's particular innovation has been his concept of a political process that will motivate peasants to strive for a proletarian revolution.

**Mao's
Revolution
and the
Chinese
Political Culture**

RICHARD H. SOLOMON

Rs 70



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Delhi

Bombay

Calcutta

Madras

well, 'is brought in by man to plaster up a decaying culture.'

A typical example of how this modernized and rationalized religion is slowly but definitely encroaching upon politics, is a strengthening in the activities of the Proutist Block of India. Distinctly different from the classical Jana Sangh and Hindu Mahasabha style and having influence over quite a few intelligent young men, the Proutists clamour for a social revolution, armed if necessary, based on the Vivekanandian ideals of a society based on the caste-system (they call it a Sad-Vipra Samaj), and free either from capitalism, which makes a man beggar, or communism, which makes a man even worse, a beast. Their battle-cry, 'Baba Nam Keblam' has been found to adorn many a wall in Calcutta.

While the subtle and attractively modern concept of a dreadfully void and meaningless life is being implanted in the so-called intelligentsia, the other people are being held an easy prey to a more crude, but nevertheless effective, bluntness. The division is obvious: if you are an intellectual, you go and get stuck with the colourless, tasteless, odourless run of the mill world of *Ebam Indrajit*. And if you happen to be a ruffian deprived of the privileges of tasting an educated frustration, the doors of *Apna Desh* are open for you to step in. Then again, if you want to get rid of the drudgery of the purposeless life, well, there religion has an eager hand to help you out. The scheme is thus a complete one.

In this complete, well thought out and calculated strategy, celluloid is by no means the only matter. But by dint of its infinite accessibility, the film has naturally become the first line of defence, or offence, if you please. 'The cinema is for us the most important of the arts';—it is the us' that can make a world of difference between Lenin and Indira Gandhi. The ruling machinery is in more direct contact with this form of art, by virtue of its 'censor' wings.

This fact lends an added concrete dimension to the suspicion about some precarious designs lurking behind the technicolour, merry world of Hindi cinema.

Prima facie, it is reaction that

has triumphed in the first round. It remains to be seen whether our progressive forces can muster sufficient strength to counter these trends inimical to the people, or choose to be the legendary one-eyed deer.

Indian Scientists

NARENDRA SINGH

THE suicide of Dr V. H. Shah, in Delhi, earned prominent attention in *Nature*, the reputed science weekly from London, in the form of a leading article and a reportage (*Nature*, Vol. 237, pages 130 and 134, 1972). In its commentary on issues of social and economic importance, *Nature* presents a typical approach—a cynical approach abounding in mere technological and management solutions for problems which need socio-economic and political solutions. For recent outspoken examples, one may refer to its diatribe against "A Blue-Print for Survival" under the title of "The case against hysteria" (Vol. 235, pp 63-64), and its commentary on the British miners' strike and its settlement, under the leader entitled "Set-back for Mr Micawber" (Vol. 235, pp 409-410). In dealing with situations in India (or elsewhere in developing countries), *Nature* speaks from a pedestal of superior knowledge and experience, with a paternalistic and benevolent mixture of misgivings, approvals, hopes, fears and reprimands. This was again reflected in its title of "How not to run research councils (Indian style)", (Vol. 237, p. 130). A reference to *Nature* is necessary because this weekly is a fount of inspiration for, and largely reflects the opinions and aspiration of, the great majority of scientists everywhere, including Indian scientists with their heritage and continuing training in traditions of science represented in this and other journals of the clan.

Dr Shah's suicide or that of another

(Dr Joseph of the same institute more than a decade back) cannot be judged, as *Nature* has done, merely in terms of the futility of sacrifice of the individual's "life in disgust so that other scientists may get proper treatment", and of hopes and fears around piecemeal reforms and adjustments, under pressure of the incidental situations. This must be viewed in the context of the continuing frustration of the Indian scientists, which is a subjective phenomenon, and more relevantly in the broad context of the frustration of science, reflecting an objective situation. The former needs to be analysed to expose the narrow, selfish aspirations of the scientific workers, and the latter for understanding the realities, to be able to use science as the effective tool for the progress of the people as a whole.

Suicide is the most extreme form of expression of disgust and helplessness in the individual's frustration, building up under pressures within oneself. Almost all scientists in India (directors, professors, senior and juniors alike) go on voicing disgust with the frustrating conditions of their work. The foreign-returned ones are invariably more vocal; they consider themselves to be of a higher order and more deserving just by virtue of their visits abroad or a foreign degree or diploma. In definition of frustration, their disgust refers mainly to the lack of free privileges for promotion, emoluments, social status and individual freedom for work and movement, though this is adorned with calls for improvements in working conditions for and in the name of

better scientific activity, whatever it might mean. Arguments of non-availability of jobs are referred to but in reality the will to accept any change to lower remuneration, lesser security and lower status, social or otherwise, is altogether missing. In spite of their frustration, they remain engaged in pursuits towards, and aspiring for, windfalls within the system. No dispute that there is a wide disparity among themselves, but these professionals themselves are by far better off, in terms of social and economic privileges than the less privileged masses of peasants and workers.

The Indian scientists hail from that caste and class stratum of society which has been by tradition totally divorced from direct production activities. Science, their professed plank of activity, has not come into play as a factor for production in India from the demands of the society itself. The complex interactions of their own past traditions and the traditions of bourgeois ideology with the super-imposed science education, as products of European culture, give rise to evidently dichotomous attitudes in them. From caste and class traditions, an indulgent and magnified view of their own social and material problems sustains their apathy and unconcern for the surrounding misery and poverty of the less privileged masses, and their instilled faith in the system with over-riding respect for social hierarchy and authority keeps them eager for favours. With their social traditions and the profession divorced from production activities, they by nature go in for esoteric and stereotyped pursuits, marked by an intellectual servility for ready transplants from "superior" ideologies, presently of bourgeois Europe and America. From the latter's cultural background, assisted by the prevalent and dominant education and communications systems, the urge of individualism is more readily acquired, for obvious reasons. This essentially means aspirations for individual freedom to work for personal gain and/or fame, to sell one's services to the highest bidder, to constantly strive for

one's own elitist, social and material status, the higher the better. The intensity of individualism is no doubt greater with personal experiences of life and work abroad, and even more so with the experiences in the USA, where the whole system nurtures and promotes most rampant individualism, materialism and commercialism, with full opportunities and encouragement for self-prostitution of the individual.

In privilege-ridden societies, scientists belong to and are maintained in the middle stratum of professionals mainly to serve the ruling interests. Opportunities do exist, but only for a very few of the more capable ones to rise higher, farther away from the commoners. In this process, the ability to articulately draw upon and push forth one's own professional competence in the service of the ruling interests is no doubt a great asset, the more articulate being more capable and also more hopeful to rise. In the semi-colonial societies, social heritage and relations also come into operation because of the background of long feudal traditions and of the continuing semi-feudal relations. And in these societies also operate, in cruder and more accentuated forms, corruptions, bribery and favours, which are characteristic features of all privilege-ridden societies. Since in the semi-colonial and semi-feudal societies the opportunities are invariably more limited from the growing impoverishment and widening disparity between the rich and poor, only some of those capable of the maximum social manipulations can really benefit in the rush for favours. And the most capable would be those who can be counted upon to serve best the foreign and local ruling interests. Most of the rest of the professionals of the middle stratum are bound to suffer from the continuing and growing frustrations or failures in their aspirations.

Can and would the scientists realise the fallacy of their aspirations and recognise the reality of the situation? Centres of science exist and are multiplying in the country. Scientists there work, but under continuing and grow-

ing frustrating conditions. In spite of repeated calls and incidental efforts, off and on, there have been no radical changes in the mode of functioning and activity in these centres. This situation merely points in one direction. The objectives and modes of scientific activity continue to be such that they either serve and promote the ruling interests, or do not create any obstacles in the path of these interests and hence are tolerated and maintained. So far science continues to operate for either of these purposes, the need for change does not arise. But is it the purpose of science? This raises the more fundamental issue of the continuing frustration of science in India, revolving round the question whose interests it has to serve. One may refer to Bernal's and others' essays with reference to the crisis of the early thirties in England, as an introduction to this question. This has to be dealt with separately on its own.

Book Review

Solomon's Wisdom

SINCE Richard H. Solomon is a recognised professor of political science at the University of Michigan, he acquires an unbridled right to dwell upon anything pertaining to political science in a way he considers wise, no matter whether the method adopted has any connection whatsoever with the science of politics.

The manner in which Prof Solomon studies Mao's revolution and the Chinese political culture* offers one a simple yet novel formula as a key to an understanding of any socio-political complexity. Readers of this book can learn from him that a series of interviews with 91 people,

* Mao's Revolution and the Chinese Political Culture

By Richard H. Solomon
University of California Press, 1971
Bombay: Oxford University Press.
Price: Rs. 70/-.

all emigrés of course, supported by meticulous selection of some stray out-of-context words of various authors, can serve as effective material for a clear understanding of the complex socio-political relations in a country populated by seven hundred million. Any shortcoming or loophole inevitable in this way of study may easily be overcome, as Prof Solomon's book suggests, by holding firm to a premise built on subjective presumptions. If any difficulty or discrepancy still comes in, the Professor teaches us to indulge in the indiscriminate use of such words as 'guess', 'hypothesis', 'seems', 'appears', 'tends' etc., etc.

Even then Prof Solomon himself is fully aware that, "There are obviously basic difficulties in attempting to do interview research on a society inaccessible to direct observation. Interviews with emigrés always carry the danger of biases because, for a variety of reasons, these people have left the society." (P. 12). But then the problem of this 'inaccessibility' or the danger of biases can nevertheless be solved through 'empirical research'. So we find these lines from him, "... the question is in what respects are Chinese alike, and in what ways is there individuality expressed? Such a question, it seems to us, is best answered through empirical research." (P. 25). And to have this empirical approach as to 'in what respects are Chinese alike', interviews with 91 emigre respondents are not inadequate, even if "in terms of economic class background, the respondents were largely

from families of the middle to upper income levels of Chinese society."

Naturally, therefore, the study by Prof Solomon stresses as the 'dialectic' in China's national development not the conflict of classes but the tension between established patterns of culture and personality and the new values and behavioural norms which Mao Tse-tung sees as the basis for the reconstruction of the world's largest political and economic community. (P. 6).

As to this culture and personality, 'they are both systemic in quality: They are not unrelated collections of ideas, or attitudes and emotions. They are both structured around certain themes or assertions.' (P. 4).

In order, therefore, to make one understand "Mao's revolution", the erudite professor of political science labours hard to find out this system and the 'structure' when he probes the Freudian concept of Oedipus complex. After finding Oedipus complex as a vital determinant in moulding personality and cultural traits, the professor finds that 'For a Chinese the basis sense of social well being and security remains linked throughout life to the ritual of eating.' (P. 43). So he tries to project an elaboration of the table manners as well as many other manners and customs centring round eating.

Prof Solomon has thus endeavoured hard to see a stabilized tradition in Chinese life formed through different stages of development, from infancy to adolescence and youth. This finding, however, could not deter him from realizing the fact that "since almost all historical materials on China have come from the 'great tradition' of Confucian scholarship and public service our view of Chinese society has tended to be filtered through the values and worldview of this elite social stratum." "Hence we do not have direct evidence of the social attitude of illiterate peasants." (P. 92).

To Prof Solomon, this hiatus notwithstanding, 'the following interpretation seems justified as a working hypothesis'. The general set of

attitudes toward self and interpersonal relations which we have characterized as the "dependency social orientation—in particular a hierarchical conception of authority, a strong group sense, and anxiety about aggression and conflict—had an enduring rationale in the context of China's social and economic pattern of family and village-centered agriculture. Since the elite continued to rise from and return to this social base and maintained its source of wealth in the system of land tenure and agricultural taxation, it sustained strong links to the pattern of rural life. One senses that the formal logic of Confucianism and the life style of the scholar official represented an elaboration and ideological justification of the peasant cultural pattern, rather than being divorced from it." (P. 93).

So, the data collected by Prof Solomon "reveal no significant variation in concern with social conflict or differences in conception of authority associated with socio-economic class or educational level," and he pleasingly reports that 'direct observations of peasant life by anthropologists support this data...' Consequently, he takes the trouble of covering "the full extent of continuity in basic 'cultural linkage' between the elite of Chinese society and the peasantry," in the next 140 pages of the book, when he finds that "probably part of the aloofness with which the cultivate literate held themselves apart from the peasantry, and their stern use of authority in dealing with the common people, was based on the apprehension that these uneducated souls lacked self-discipline. Just as a child required stern paternal authority to keep him from becoming bad, so the common people required the harshness of 'father-mother officials' to keep them from becoming unruly." (P. 102). He discovers that the basic cultural pattern is moulded in the tradition of Confucian family life, where the sense of respect for authority was seen as basic to the stability of the dynasty and in political life

"And its presentation at the moment is entirely appropriate for, ... it is very much contemporary in essence".

—Frontier

● অ্যাকাডেমী মঞ্চে পূর্বরত্ন ●
(প্রোফেসার সামলক

৭ই সেপ্টেম্বর ॥ বৃহস্পতিবার ॥ ৬টা ৩০মি:
শয়লা থেকে কাউন্টারে টিকিট (৪টা-৭টা)

attempts to establish alliances or stabilize relationship of power frequently took the form of family ritual. (Pp. 108-9). And in family life, Prof Solomon's research work shows, the notion that superiors in status are models of behaviour to be emulated is quite basic to a child's image of parental authority.

After developing an ambivalent attitude towards parental authority in accordance with the Oedipus complex, where a Chinese child becomes a grown-up Chinese through a process that suits Prof Solomon's fanciful conjectures, what is the difficulty for him to undertake the task of a thorough study of Chinese revolution and Chinese political culture?

'Emotional Storm'

But even then, the prior thing to be done is to identify all the complex problems of socio-political and cultural revolution with the problems of personality traits of a single man and Prof Solomon has earnestly done this, by taking up the entire Chinese problem as Mao's own problem and the Chinese revolution as Mao's revolution. In an interview with Edgar Snow, Mao recalls the treatment he received from his father. This immediately paves the way for a professor of political science to fully understand Mao as a revolutionary and he rushes to say, "Mao's basic conception of political motivation is thus that of an emotional storm, in which hatred, resentment and a sense of hopeless desperation burst through social restraints in an overwhelming surge." (P. 166). Thus Mao's personal style, which in combination with his ability to generalize personal difficulties in terms of social ills 'seems' to clarify things for an explorer of political science. The bulk of some 600 pages, therefore, sees Prof Solomon toiling his utmost to establish a host of subjectively conjectured hypotheses.

He indiscriminately borrows from anthropology, sociology, psychology and many other logos but not political science. He has learned from these

that the Confucian tradition and its immutability in Chinese life is fundamental and vital as well in determining China's political revolution and political culture. In order to prove this immutability he bases himself on some immutable psychological traits in man as propounded by the Freudian school of thought. But he fails to explain or rather refrain from explaining, why all these start from the Confucian era and not before. The professed pedantry conveniently considers it prudent to remain mute as to why on the basis of this very immutable psychological traits the primitive cultural tradition and primitive way of Chinese life should not have found an unswerving continuity. Is the Confucian tradition for the Chinese people and society, an absolute entity coming into existence from nowhere?

In fact, while the task of political science should be to clear off the subjectivist rubbish of psychology by objectively analysing the whole content of complicated social relations in a society, Prof Solomon, a political scientist though, takes the other way round. Having thus placed political science at the mercy of psychological, anthropological or sociological empiricism for more than 500 pages, he admits, 'As an exercise in the highly imperfect science of political analysis, our conclusions about the future course of China's continuing social revolution can be little more than educated guesses.' (P. 511).

But in the urge of substantiating his guesses or justifying his arbitrary hypotheses through the book, Prof Solomon unhesitatingly and unscrupulously distorts history to suit his requirements; he frequently indulges in simple guess-work and says, "unexpectedly swift victory in the civil war seems to have caught party leaders almost unprepared for the constructive dimension of their revolution," (P. 249) or the like. At times, however, he enthusiastically assumes an air of authenticity to inform his readers that "in the turmoil which followed the first months of

the Cultural Revolution Mao was increasingly to use study of his little red book of quotations as a method of imposing social order and discipline." (P. 258).

With such 'scientific' approach, then, our learned professor of political science studies and interprets everything of the Chinese revolution, whether it is the Tsunyi Conference of 1935 or the Cultural Revolution of 1966-69, whether the political controversy is over the Chen Tu-hsiu line or over the lines advocated by Wang Ming, Li Li-san or Liu Shao-chi. Everything can be explained, we are told, and has been explained, in terms of Mao's personality traits.

Thus, the book projects the epoch-making historical Chinese revolution in such a manner that the long, weary, revolutionary struggle of China is, as it were, a socio-political manifestation of acute struggle of contradictory forces within Mao's own personality traits. Everything that makes a Chinese develop from infancy to manhood remaining the same, why of the 700 million people Mao alone has developed a personality trait that can impose a whole range of revolution on a traditionally tranquil and stagnant society is not to be found in the book. In fact, as the book suggests, had there been no singularly moulded personality traits with their conflicts and contradictions in Mao Tse-tung there would have been no revolution in China. In naming the book the use of the phrase Mao's Revolution is, therefore, nothing casual.

Prof Solomon at one stage makes a preposterous orientation of even the cardinal point is Marx's historical materialism. Marx said, 'It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.' But the professor of political science says, "Although party leaders continued to use Marxist rhetoric to articulate policy, many had come to question Marxism's basic assumption, that man's economic life determines his

social behaviour." (P. 409). The difference between the two presentations is vital and the professor is not that simpleton to miss it. It is in fact an act of deliberate commission to prove once more that the Cultural Revolution of 1966-69 too was an offshoot of the play of contradictory forces within the realm of Mao's own personality traits and had nothing to do with Marxist teachings.

Of late, the Chinese revolution is having its tremendous impact all over the world, particularly in the colonial and semi-colonial world, where the people are trying to understand this revolution and pursue a similar revolutionary line. That the book is not unconcerned about this fact is easily detected from Prof Solomon's appraisal of the present world situation. University intellectuals like Prof Solomon can do a lot to stem the tide of this worldwide revolutionary upsurge, but surely not by using force like the ruling elite. Their duty is to muddle the whole question of revolution with the help of high-sounding intellectual jargon. Herein lies the real meaning of the book.

A. SEN

Two Old Favourites

BY A DRAMA CRITIC

TODAY'S neo-drama movement of the Bengali stage owes much to the late Tulsi Lahiri. Elders will surely remember his two striking plays, *Chhenda Tar* and *Dukkkhir Iman*. It was therefore heartening news that two of his old favourites were going to be staged at the Parish Hall by the Art Theatre Group on the evening of August 18.

The first was a serio-comic based on the social conditions of Bengal, particularly of the Calcutta middle class in the years immediately following the transfer of power. It was the same picture of unemployment aggravated by the spiralling of prices; the same

picture of political deception hoodwinked by jingoistic ideology; the same breaking down of values without new ones to substitute them.

The plot centres round a retail cloth shop and the theme unfolds through verbose dialogue instead of dramatic developments. It is a one-act play consisting of one scene play.

The players depended on static acting much of which was over-done, particularly by Gaba, the lumpen proletariat, and Tari, the intellectual prostitute. The active portion of the play needed more rehearsal to improve the team-work and minimise the over-dose of theatricality.

Mani-kanchan was surely a longer and better stuff. The theme centres round the lending of an umbrella to an unknown lady by an unemployed young man. It is a hilarious comedy which finds solution in the union of the couple under the benign patronage of a rising city-father. The roles were more or less well enacted. Mr Anil Mukherjee as Ganapati deserves special mention. More praiseworthy was the group's venture to act on a plain stage in white light. Background music was well conceived.

Amjad Disappoints

HIRENDRA CHAKRABARTY

SURESH Sangit Sangsad observed the silver jubilee of Indian independence by holding a morning session of classical music at the Kala Mandir on August 15. The sale proceeds were donated for founding a free bed for indigent artists in the R. K. M. Hospital.

The musical programme was initiated by Pandit Shamtaprosad and his son, Kailash, who gave a demonstration of tabla-lahar in trital.

Siddheswari Devi of Banaras gave a recital of Miaki Todi supported by her daughter, Savita, and Mr Sangkha Chatterji on the tabla. The slow tempo composition was set to ektal and the quick tempo in trital.

Most of the khyal singing was done by the daughter who possesses a rich and tuneful voice. But her laboured throws in the upper octave were out of tune and harsh. It is time for singers to realise that going beyond one's range to imitate the upper flights of the late Ghulam Ali is neither musically desirable nor essential; on the contrary it mars the beauty created so far and therefore ought to be avoided.

Siddheswari Devi's next item was a Purvi thumri in Bhairavi. She gave a better account of herself in this item and the Kajri that followed it. With advanced age her voice has lost much of its natural charm and grace. But the loss was partly compensated by her masterly bol and bhav progression and partly by the sonorous support rendered by her daughter. The Kajri of the Vanarasi type was appreciated for its emotional conduct. On request she sang a short tappa. Mr Sangkha Chatterji's tabla accompaniment was indifferent. He seldom enters into the music.

The star artiste of the function was Mr Amjad Ali Khan, son of Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan. He played alap in raga Deshi Todi. But apart from the tonal structure of the raga he failed to create any emotional appeal, as a result of which it was a dry demonstration of tonal combinations. He could not register any improvement in the gat portion which was set to jham tal and supported by Pandit Shamtaprosad on the tabla. This is how a growing musician is spoilt by too much of undue applause and thoughtless flattery.

Clippings

Hungry Heroes

New Delhi, August 16— It looked like a refugee camp. A group of old—some of them infirm—people sat huddled together on torn and dirty mattresses spread on the floor in a small dingy room.

Outside, under a shamiana, it was the same depressing sight. Men and flies shared what was being served by way of "food". Hungry dogs hovered around the tables. A 65-year-old man scooped out a fly from his plate and left the table in disgust.

This was the scene today at Gulabi Bagh where 940 freedom fighters were housed by the Delhi Administration. They were invited from all over the country so that on the occasion of the independence silver jubilee the nation could honour them for their sacrifices.

In the true Indian tradition the freedom fighters did not want to criticise. But looking at the old men and women, who in the prime of their youth had defied and fought against the British Raj, one could see that they were upset—in fact hurt. They had expected no red carpet treatment. But they did not expect flies in their food either.

The son of one of the revolutionaries, who works in Delhi, was so disgusted with the Gulabi Bagh arrangements that he forced his father to come and stay with him.

Some "sensible States," not relying on local hospitality, arranged for the stay of the revolutionaries at their guest houses.

Yesterday, at the Red Fort, the nation honoured the freedom fighters by presenting them with tamra patras.

The revolutionaries were roused at four in the morning, were given just a cup of tea and hustled to the Red Fort in crowded buses. The morning ceremony over, they were asked to stay on for the afternoon function at the Diwan-e-Aam inaugurated by the President. The Prime Minister was to present them with the tamra patras at this function.

A young man said the freedom fighters were given neither food nor water. At the function the "honoured guests" took a back seat, for the front rows were occupied by local officials, their wives and children, their friends and acquaintances.

The freedom fighters were openly critical about the manner in which the tamra patras were presented. Instead of presenting them individually, the Prime Minister chose 27 representatives.

"What was the point of calling all of us here? The tamra patras could have been sent by post if it was not possible for the Prime Minister to present them individually," they said.

The function had a finale not quite elegant. When snacks were served, the freedom fighters were forgotten by the front benchers.

Various organisations have arranged all sorts of "homage" for those who made sacrifices when the nation needed them most. Yet what the revolutionaries will remember are their torn mattresses and the hovering flies. (*Hindustan Times* Correspondent, Delhi).

Even Hospitals Bombed

Washington, August 17. . . Mr Ramsey Clark, former Attorney-General in the Johnson Cabinet, who has just returned from a visit to North Vietnam, today enlarged the scope of the charge against the U.S. Government by declaring in a television programme that not only dykes but homes and hospitals had also been the targets of American bombing.

Some of the hospitals which were "out in woods" and were far from any military establishment had been virtually razed to ground.

Mr Clark, who also testified before a Senate committee not only repeated the charge about the bombing of dykes but also asserted that the U.S. had dropped "anti-personnel" bombs over civilian areas in North Vietnam. Such bombs—Mr Clark produced an unexploded one which he had brought with him from Vietnam—were designed primarily to kill and maim and if the U.S. had used them, the action, he said, was morally reprehensible.

Under stern questioning from a pro-Administration Republican Senator on the committee, Mr Clark stated that he had seen many bombed dykes

and that he noticed no gun emplacements or missile sites on or near those dykes to justify their bombing.

...Mr Clark, claimed that the American people had been given a highly distorted picture of what their Government had been doing in Indo-China.

Mr Clark is widely acknowledged in this country as a person of integrity and independence and his accusation has caused the Administration as much embarrassment as Mr Waldheim's charge did.

(Krishan Bhatia in *Hindustan Times*).

Target : Civilians

New York, August 16. A group of scientists of Cornell University has come to the conclusion that the U.S. air war in Indochina is directed chiefly against the civilian population and not against military targets, as claimed by the United States, Tass reported on Tuesday.

The scientists who investigated U.S. bombing in Indochina reported their findings in the just published book "Air War in Indochina."

The scientists said that in between 1965 and 1971 American planes dropped 6.3 million tons of bombs on Indochina. While U.S. planes dumped 3.9 million tons of bombs on South Viet Nam, 600,000 tons fell on North Viet Nam, and the rest on Laos and Cambodia. During the same period, U.S. ground and naval forces and America's "allies" used seven million tons of shells, rockets and other ammunition in South Vietnam.

The book said that in South Viet Nam, only 10 per cent, of bombing raids were made in support of the ground forces with the remaining 90 per cent, being directed chiefly against the civilian population, particularly in the "free-fire areas" where everything was ruthlessly destroyed. Thus, 70 per cent of the villages had been destroyed in the South Vietnamese province of Quang Nghai by the end of 1967.

As a result of military operations

by American and "allied" troops in South Viet Nam, at least 5000,000 civilians had been killed or wounded till the beginning of 1971. Six more million South Vietnamese, one-third of the population, became "refugees" in their own country, particularly as a result of merciless bombings, the book said.

Letters

Defend Prisoners

During the past few years several thousand young men have been taken into custody by the police on political grounds; several have been killed as political opponents. Many have been butchered inside prisons in the country.

The young detainees are denied the privilege or the right to defend themselves in a court of law.

The public is aware of the fact that to defend oneself one must know what are the charges for which one has been detained. Even if, in some cases, one knows the charges, one is unable to defend oneself because it involves considerable expenditure and preparation, which are beyond one's reach.

To meet the various difficulties of these young men a Legal Aid Committee has been formed. The committee plans to arrange for their defence in courts of law.

We appeal to the public in general on behalf of the Legal Aid Committee to render all possible help for the defence of these young men, including donations.

We also appeal to the legal profession to render legal help in courts of law.

Let us not forget that today these young men have fallen victims of political rivalry, but it may happen to any of us in no distant future.

Contributions may kindly be sent to:

Srimati Bina Banerjee, President, 'Legal Aid Committee' T-76B, Kaiser Street, Calcutta-9 or to Srimati Jayasree Rana, Secretary, Legal Aid Committee, at the same address.

In Tagore's Style

Apropos Mr A. K. Lahiri's letter (August 5) Mr Hirendra Chakrabarty in his article "In Tagore's Style" made no comment about the respective artistic merits of Mr Devabrata Biswas and Mrs Suchitra Mitra. Rather he paid a tribute to both for having propagated Tagore's style of singing during the forties and fifties. So the question of his equating these singers cannot arise at all. Apparently Mr Lahiri suffers from a fixation; otherwise why should he think that the expression "bad money etc." was applicable to Mrs Mitra? It could as well to any such commercial singer as Mr Hemanta Mukherjee, Mr Chinmoy Chatterjee etc, who are actually responsible for the process.

Mr Lahiri is sure that Mrs Kanika Banerjee "contradicts the multi-faced and living style that was indeed her forte" and that the contribution of Devabrata Biswas is "the modern Tagore pop". But what about Mrs Mitra? Well, she is above suspicion. But will Mr Lahiri care to enquire whether Mrs Mitra is not the same person who approves and certifies the disc versions of the same "modern Tagore pops" before they are released for commercial circulation?

Mr Lahiri peremptorily claims that "Rabindra-Sangit before and after Suchitra Mitra are two different identities" (sic). A fan of Mr Chinmoy Chatterjee can also make the same claim with equal force (as they actually do); so can a fan of Mrs Kanika Banerjee or Mrs Rajeswari Dutta or Mr Devabrata Biswas. Certainly Mr Lahiri is not going to agree with these contenders as they are not going to agree with him.

His statement that "Nilima Sen still remains a self-contented artiste who caters to the aesthetically sophisticated few" is a travesty of truth. Mrs Sen has been an artiste of the radio and the gramophone companies for a long time, participating in public performances on such boards as Rabindra Sadan etc. dur-

ing the last two decades. Maybe Mrs Mitra sells more than she but at what cost? It is not a fact that Mrs Sen shuns the mass media of her own accord, rather it is the other way round. Moreover, is it not far better to cater to the aesthetically sophisticated few than to the unaesthetic and degenerated popular taste for not *anything concrete* (Mr Lahiri's hint in the case of Kanika Banerjee) but pure love of art alone?

Mr Lahiri's attitude is far from that of a real music-lover. Himself a blind fan of Mrs Mitra, he finds fault with a fan of Mr Devabrata Biswas and does not hesitate to call him a fanatic while he himself betrays the symptoms of the same: the changes brought about by Mr Biswas are "modern Tagore pops" while those done by Mrs Mitra are "direct, forceful and penetrating, style... typically her own"!

As regards departures from musical authenticity, Mrs Mitra's are no fewer than others'. As regards extraneous ornamentation she is no less fond of instrumental embellishment than any other commercial singer of Tagore songs. Tagore never used the harmonium owing to its lack of the *meend* and so never allowed it to enter his precincts. Is it not a fact that it was banished from AIR at his behest? Then, how is it that Mrs Mitra is seldom found to teach and sing except in its accompaniment? How is she different from any other commercial singer?

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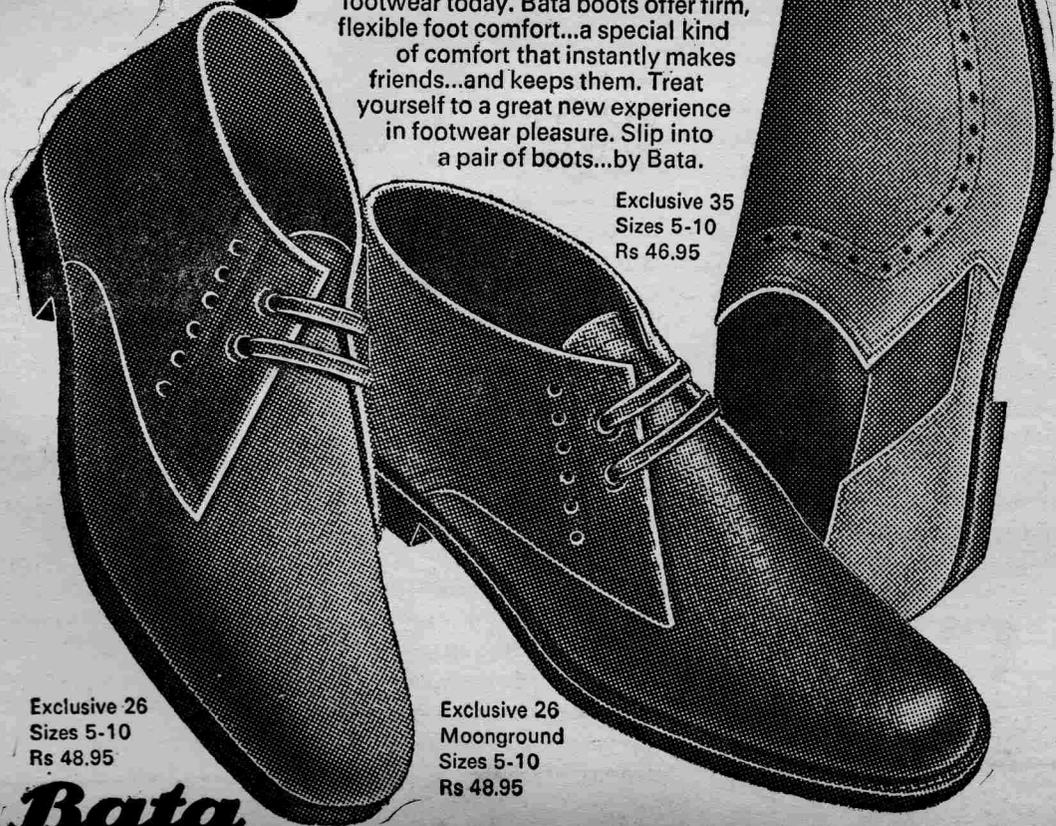
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