

frontier

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A CASE FOR PATHOLOGISTS

THE parting advice to Congressmen at the AICC session recently concluded in New Delhi was from the Prime Minister, and the advice was not to wash dirty linen in public. And that precisely sums up the sense of urgency with which the ruling party views the situation in the country which seems to be racing headlong towards bankruptcy. The preceding twelve months have been bewildering ones; with a thirty per cent rise in prices, negative industrial growth and stagnant foodgrains output. With this economic background, the Prime Minister had no more important discussions to hold than to plead that explosions of internal squabbles, like the Indian nuclear test, should be kept underground so that the opposition parties may not take advantage of an atmospheric fall-out. But things have come to such a pass that the nastiest things about the party are being said by Congressmen themselves, which is a rather uncomfortable thing. The opposition criticism can be waived away as motivated or misinformed but not the criticism that comes from within. For instance, when a party man says that black-moneywallahs are encouraged by the Congress itself because most of the funds the party gets belongs to this category. What a thing to say when the Prime Minister gave the cue and all and sundry are trying to paint JP as an instrument of the dishonest rich! Providing some comic relief—unless one is biased enough to view the entire session as one broad farce—there was an exchange of views on whether to continue khaddar-wearing and liquor-abstaining; many alluded to the lavish and not necessarily non-liquid style of living of the Congress members. Probably the Prime Minister was right. The main problem of the Congress, which the PM views as a catalyst of a new society, is organisational: not to let the cat slip out of the bag, vide Wanchoo Commission-ridden West Bengal.

This being the major problem of the party, we may assume, that the other big problem which had been plaguing the party so long has been successfully solved. Anyone, even if given to a pathological fondness for making tall promises too frequently, normally finds it difficult to make the two ends—of promise and action—meet. But there is now no more of such a problem for our Government, if ever there was. It is not too brazen for it to keep the millions of this country fed with incessant doses of socialism-sounding promises and then pushing them down (let not say the poverty line which our economists have found indefinable) below living standards which by all accounts seem

to be the lowest in the world. Who else can swear by the masses and then fill the coffers of the traders through price hikes in coal, cloth, wheat, rice, bread, fertilisers that beat all accountancy and common sense? Where else the margin of profit in industry, needless to say private, rises even if the rate of production growth becomes negative? Who else could have devised a plan to canalise 1200 or more crores of rupees in villages to make them look shabbier, sicker and more starved? Who could have put thousands of people in jail without trial, beat them to pulp and then accuse others of fascist mentality? Who could have wrecked all standards of democracy during elections and yet look aghast at the extra-parliamentary activities of JP? Who could have reduced the education system of the country to a shambles, where examinations are never held or when held are mere exercises in copying from books, and yet is unable to understand what boycotting of schools and colleges means? Who could have planned to check inflation by credit squeeze, compulsory deposit and so forth when most of the money is unorganised and black? Clearly, here is a case for pathologists.

Cyprus

Cyprus is a curious mix-up, with troops of quite a few nationalities stationed on the strategic island. The predominating force, of course, is Greek; and it was the Greek-officered National Guard that has started the latest crisis.

It is not known to what extent the cry for Enosis—union with Greece—rings in Cypriot Greek hearts, except as a counter-balance to the presence of a minority of 20 per cent Cypriot Turks, backed by Turkey. The hero of the campaign for Enosis, the romantic Colonel Grivas, who fell out with Makarios, is dead. But Makarios agreed to the induction of a large number of Greek—and Turkish—officers and men as a safeguard against any renewed communal strife, and the Greeks have played the role of a Trojan horse indeed. They be-

gan to supply arms to the EOKA terrorists and carried on a secret campaign for Enosis. On July 6 Makarios requested Athens to repatriate the officers. The reply was the coup. The Greek President and the head of the military police as well as other army officers who constitute the present Athens junta had worked together in Cyprus in 1963-64 when the National Guard was formed.

Athens, of course, says that the coup is an internal affair and that it has no designs on Cyprus. The man whom the Greek officers made the president, for a while proclaimed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the island. It is on this declaration that there has been no violation of the 1960 Treaty that the new regime will fight the case for non-interference by Turkey and the Nato powers. Already there are signs of a change in the British attitude which is attributed to the American advice to play it cool. The Russians blame Nato for the coup; isn't Nato unfriendly to Makarios? The Greeks and their men in Cyprus seemed convinced that the storm would blow over; and that, after a lapse of time, with most pro-Makarios forces curbed or eliminated, they would be able to talk again about the glory that is Greece(!). The world always accepts a fait accompli.

This was the position when Turkey, whose rulers are no better than the Greek junta, went into armed action. There have been clashes between the Turkish and Greek forces in Cyprus, off the coast and fighting might have broken out nearer home. The prospect of war between two Nato allies and that, too, in Europe itself was terrifying and a cease-fire has been arranged.

The Americans, who do not like Makarios and depend on Greek bases for the 6th fleet to operate in the Eastern Mediterranean, must have been displeased with Ankara. The Russians like the Turkish action, because it may help restore the status quo and because the Greco-Turkish confrontation will soften up the southern flank of Nato. For the second time since October last year, the Russians kept ready an air-borne division—action befitting a super-power. The Americans took this in their stride this time.

The future is uncertain. What is pretty bad is that the conflict between Greece and Turkey has aroused the communal passions of the two communities in Cyprus and both sides are already speaking of atrocities. The tension was there, but the war will inflame it hundredfold. The solution of 1959-60 was very intricate patchwork, with troops of so many nations maintaining an uneasy peace. The balance will be very hard to maintain now.

A correspondent writes: In the fifties the British realised that it was impossible as well as unprofitable for them to hold Cyprus using their own military resources. They generated the Greek-Turkish military contest for the first time on the island. The deaths of a few Turkish constables during the anti-colonial struggle were used to generate mass murders of the Greek community by the Turkish populace which, in turn, brought about Greek retaliation.

The Turkish community is a most significant minority consisting of a few wealthy, landowning families who established themselves on the island in the 16th century during the Ottoman era, and a mixture of soldiers, constables and other servants of the State who settled in Cyprus during the same era. The rest of the community may be defined as opportunistic elements who joined the Moslem faith during that era hoping, or rather seeking, a preferential treatment from the State. These elements seem to be the majority or the most vital part of the Turkish community. During the British colonial era they pursued the same course as before of tying themselves to the State or to the machinery that perpetuates the State, i.e., the constabulary, Customs and other bureaucratic apparatus, thus divorcing themselves from the social, economic and political development of the rest of the population. An important part of this Turkish community is the poor Turkish peasant, a class which evolved during the last one hundred years, and which is absolutely under the domination of the big Turkish landowners. These peasants have not yet played a substantial role in the political developments on the island, but one feels that they could

play-out if they joined the rest of the population in the anti-imperialist struggle. However, according to many political observers, the age-old process of co-optation of the national bourgeoisie, both of Greek and Turkish origin, through increasing dependence on their part on the imperialists' capitals, has been gaining ground in recent times; and it would not be too unreasonable to predict that in the near future the familiar strategy of imposing a "solution" on the suffering people of Cyprus will be initiated by the imperialist powers without any resistance from the national bourgeoisie. Neo-colonialism will once again operate under some benevolent guise; and all forms of exploitation and brutality will be justified in the name of freedom and justice.

Certainly, the people's struggle will have to continue until their liberation.

Saturday Afternoon

It looked like an unprovoked attack and a cold-blooded murder. The Calcutta Police now seem to have become so powerful that they are not supposed to explain to any one their brutal conduct. And so the gunmen from the Lalbazar police headquarters openly went into action in the Curzon Park area in Chowringhee last Saturday. A 20-year-old student died and several others were injured. Brandishing pistols and revolvers, the police surrounded the entire area as the organisers of some progressive drama units and publishers of some political weeklies gathered to observe the Vietnam Solidarity and Anti-imperialist Day inside the park with open-air poster plays depicting the U.S. aggression in the Third World. The trigger-happy gunmen ran amuck. It is only the Home Minister and the Commissioner of Police who have discovered that the plainclothes men who had gone there in search of "some highly wanted Naxalites", were beaten up by people watching the show. There are, of course, some newspapers (like The Statesman and Amrita Bazar Patrika) which are always busy suppressing the misdeeds of the police and obliging the Government; they corroborated the Police

Commissioner's version that the police had to take action when a group of demonstrating people attacked them without any provocation and the officer-in-charge of the Hare Street police station was kicked in the stomach and hit on the face with a lathi. These two dailies did not report the fact that a big force of policemen just swooped down on the spectators and made an indiscriminate lathi-charge as a result of which one died on the spot. As briefed by the Lalbazar officials, the two newspapers, on the contrary, helped to create confusion by suggesting that the young man might not have died in the police action in Curzon Park. That he was brought dead from Curzon Park after the lathi-charge was, however, confirmed by the emergency staff of the Medical College.

Why this lathi-charge? Have the Calcutta police authorities decided to stop all processions and demonstrations by people who are opposed to the Government? Have they been provided with the dangerous power of terrorising the citizens by deploying gunmen in public places and lifting of those who "appear to be Naxalites" and killing them in the presence of terror-stricken people to leave them demoralised for ever? In Tiljala the other day a student of Calcutta University was picked up from his house at night and taken to the local thana by some plainclothes men. He was tortured in the lock-up the whole night. When his guardians went to the police station the next morning, the officer-in-charge told them that the boy had been arrested because "he looked like a Naxalite". There was no specific charge against him and the OC agreed to release him only if he promised to visit the thana thrice a week and act as an informer.

A reign of terror, raids and arrests is on. There is no strong popular resistance. During the fortnight ending July 22 more than 300 suspected Naxalites, including a good number of girls, were arrested. Any careful newspaper reader will find that the number of girls arrested has increased in the city. And there is another fact. The girls are usually arrested on Saturdays so that the police do not have to produce them in court

before Monday. The thana officials thus have time enough, it is said, to satisfy their own perversions on the plea of forcing out confessions. The State Government has been repeatedly informed of these acts of police savagery by some political leaders, including Mr Indrajit Gupta, MP, but it has dismissed the allegations as baseless. What else can one expect from a party which rules the State under the heavy protection of the police force and rowdies?

Shock In Stocks

The stock exchanges in India are passing through a trauma. The clamping of a 12 per cent ceiling on dividends and limiting of distributable profits to 33-1/3 per cent of the net profit after tax have upset the speculators who have been making a quick buck from buying and selling of shares out of the large grants of black money provided by their moneyed patrons. They have been artificially keeping the share prices rising in total disregard of the economic reality because a bullish market yields the best returns. And the Government has allowed this game to continue. It could not certainly have been unaware of what was going on, of the extent of black money being either turned white or made to yield very high margins or, for that matter, of the fact that the markets were becoming increasingly vulnerable. By not doing anything about all this for all these months, the Government, true to its style, has only helped the tycoons. And now when the markets have collapsed, the genuine small savers, who account roughly for one-third of the shareholders, have been left dazed by the substantial losses thrown on them.

The bigger operators have however largely saved their skin. Take the case of one of the leading bull brokers. When the crisis came, he was in an overbought position with a commitment to pay about Rs 70 lakhs. When the prices slumped, he should have been on the mat. But no, he has his own laws. He has refused to pay the amount and he has reportedly managed to almost get away with it because he has

been able to invoke the support of appropriately important authorities both within the stock market and outside. Or take the case of another leading broker. He had a tip of the dividend ordinance by the noon of Friday, July 5. The following day, the offloaded about 20,000 shares of a leading company which were nearly at the top of the table of good

scrips, and thus netted a good amount. Such instances are not surprising. Who in our country is immune to the easy charm of black money? And now the leaders are talking of checking it all by ordinances. Are they talking through their hats? Perhaps they know that nobody is taking them seriously.

pliedly, the Plebiscite Front as well) to accept a final settlement of the problem in terms of Kashmir as a constituent unit of India, eliminating Pakistan's locus standi in the matter, even across the area of "Azad Kashmir". It will not eminently suit India's interests to plump for a set-up that may land Kashmir within the zone of its immediate political control. Thirdly, erosion of Pakistan's strategic-diplomatic strength and capability, that will invariably result from a political modus vivendi between India and Sheikh Abdullah, can ensure for India the sort of security on its north-western frontier as was obtained by the elimination of East Pakistan and emergence of Bangladesh on its eastern. Fourthly, the possibility of utilising the political personality and historical antecedents of Sheikh Abdullah on an all-India plane for maintaining the rulers' moral-ideological grip on the minority community (especially, to tame those who clamour for the right of Muslims to cultural and hence socio-political identity as a distinct linguistic cultural group) will brighten.

However, this was sort of tested during the February U. P. elections but the influence of the Sheikh did not measure up to the expectations of the ruling party. This is the reason why the Government has decided to keep the pace of the present negotiations about Kashmir as unhurried as possible. In fact, prolongation of the status quo will suit the vested interests of the commercial-industrial tycoons, the hawks, the elitist bureaucrats (wedded to the post-1953 dispensation in Kashmir) and Hindu revivalists—all supporters of the neo-imperialist giant emerging in South Asia as an unchallenged counterweight to China, and also, as a possible aid to the massive global strategy of the super-powers to penetrate the latter from the south (by interfering in Tibetan affairs and dragging round the ghost of the Dalai Lama all over the world to endow it with a plausibility that is just not there). If Kashmir can be bolstered up as an example of internally negotiated settlement, there remains no bar, apparently, to inhibit India from seeking a plebiscite in Tibet by infiltrating the Dalai Lama as its Trojan horse. But this process

From Kashmir To Sikkim

R. P. MULLICK

BETWEEN 1953 and 1964, the years when Mr Nehru tried to make up with Sheikh Abdullah and make amends to the Kashmiri people for the denial of their right to self-determination, Kashmir was the cockpit of imperialist intrigue. It is now part of history. During this epoch, the two neo-imperialist neighbour-States of Kashmir tried their best to maintain the facade of international legitimacy in their respective attitudes and conduct. Yet, Kashmiris on both sides of the cease-fire line continued to be deprived of the right to determine their political destiny. Resolutions passed by the Security Council, missions of the UN remained under the shadow of suspicion and no solution could be reached because neither India nor Pakistan (nor the super-powers behind them) willed it. The cease-fire line became virtually an international frontier and the neo-imperialistic national interests of both India and Pakistan coalesced at a point where both agreed to maintain the unnatural partitioning of Kashmir. It is all the more to the discredit of India, since Mr Nehru had declared that the Kashmiri people would decide their own future. This process has been shelved for over two decades now, under a smokescreen of propaganda, and the fundamental issue smothered under the cunning waiver of accession by a king who had represented nobody but himself. Sheikh Abdullah, trying his hardest to get a new deal—perhaps the status and role of an accessory State within the federal polity of India (which it is not)—has had to speak out his inner reservations thus: "Pakistan invaded us in 1947

and began to broadcast its support to us after that event. Before that it never spoke in support of us. This was not the case with India at that time. The latter went back on its pledges in 1953".

Although India has tried to put the lid on the truth about Kashmir, some people like Miss Mridula Sarabhai and Mr Y. D. Gundevia (former Secretary for Commonwealth Relations and Foreign Affairs) have not hesitated to bring out facts. Mr Gundevia says: "What happened in 1953 (the year of Sheikh Abdullah's enforced ouster from Chief Ministership was not a volte face by the Sheikh; it was a volte face on the part of the Government of India, with the Home Ministry winning all along the line—and Jawaharlal Nehru gradually succumbing to rightwing pressure". (The Testament of Sheikh Abdullah by the author). Does Mrs Gandhi propose to take up the threads from where these were left in the 1964 Nehru-Abdullah talks and retrieve the blunders of 1953 and of the decades following? Unfortunately, however, the latest indications are that she is trying to split fine strands between the "quantum" and "extent" of autonomy to be granted to Kashmir as one of the many provinces of the Indian Union.

India has allowed the Kashmir problem to become a subject for negotiations, afresh, for more than one reason. If India was that solicitous of the right of self-determination of the Bangladesh people, it cannot deny the same right to the Kashmiris. Secondly, Sheikh Abdullah seems to be resigned to the changed balance of power on the sub-continent and is publicly committed (im-

may boomerang on itself. The sub-Himalayan States are a pointer.

Clear Focus

In Sikkim India's policy has assumed a clear focus now. Its long-term goal is to transform Sikkim into a province of the Indian Union. The short-term objectives are two-pronged (i) To encourage the pro-Indian section of the Nepalese-speaking settlers to form the power-wielding caucus within Sikkim and function as a decoy in respect of the Nepalese feudal gentry in Nepal (who have been feverishly trying to return Nepal to the parliamentary system, on the Indian model, since 1960); (ii) To hold down the 20% (or nearabouts) minority of original Sikkimese, both politically and ideologically, and make them thoroughly dependent on the political grace of the Indian Chief Executive (compare the political Resident of the British imperialist regime of pre-1947 days).

The recent coronation of the Bhutanes king afforded an insight into the regulatory activities of the Indian political agents and secret police there. The apparent liberalism shown earlier by Indian rulers towards the political exiles from Bhutan (who have been pining their years outside Bhutan for about a decade now), evaporated into thin air; the shadows of India's expansionist machinations before and since 1964 lengthened out into 1974. Yet not all of the expansionist assessments turned true. A large section of Tibetan refugees, not only in Bhutan but in India as well, have been found unreliable. The Dalai Lama is upset. Should disillusionment set in among his followers so soon, not many would be left to stage the brave return to Tibet if and when China is crushed by a nuclear blitzkrieg by the USSR from

the north and west and a conventional-cum nuclear attack from the south.

Strategically speaking, the long arm of neo-imperialistic interference has been active since 1959 when the so-called Khampa rebellion took place in Tibet and the Dalai Lama, together with his entourage, came over to India (under the protective escort of militarily equipped helicopters provided by the CIA) and was later installed as the virtual head of a Tibetan emigre government. He still gives out statements as though he were so. Speaking at Gaya on January 19, he is reported to have said that he was prepared to go back to Tibet, "provided the Chinese agreed to hold an internationally supervised plebiscite".

India's China policy since 1962 has remained unchanged, both in direction and content. The present nuclear weapon programme was a sequel to panicky fears raised after China had exploded its nuclear bomb. If the intention in exploding the "nuclear device" was peaceful, the Government could make a clear and categorical statement accepting international supervision. On the contrary authoritative statements, although guarded, by Mrs Gandhi and the Defence Minister, that India intends to continue perfecting "nuclear devices" through successive experiments show that India is dead set on acquiring a nuclear-weapons and matching delivery system, though this would imply hiking up the defence budget higher and higher. (Earlier estimate of defence spending in 1973-74; Rs 1,600 crores, revised estimate: Rs 1,753 crores. In the current year the first estimate has been tentatively made at Rs 1,915 crores i.e. an approximate 20 per cent increase over the year).

India's concern for utilisation of atomic energy rings hollow in the face of the studied neglect of this aspect in its planning. The World Bank was obliged to comment that India, like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, has little resilience in meeting even short-term implications of a world crisis in energy. It would be worthwhile to refer in this context to the vast sums earmarked and spent on nuclear energy programmes in the USA. After more than one and a half decades of planning, the Atomic (Energy) Industrial Forum Inc. reported that 45 nuclear

reactors have been classed as "operable" with a total capacity of 25,670 megawatt, i.e. about 5.6% of the nation's capacity for generating electricity. In addition to these operables, the U.S. has made a commitment of 213 such: 56, with a total capacity of 53,680 megawatt are now under construction: 101 with capacity of 109,740 megawatt are under firm order; and 14 covered under letters of intent. The vast dimensions of nuclear electricity generation programmes can easily be guessed from these and similar figures, e.g. those envisaged by Euratom founded by European powers in travail arising out of the 1956 Suez crisis. The goal of Euratom was to build, by the end of 1967, nuclear power plants capable of producing 15,000mw—the minimal production level necessary to help Europe stabilise fuel (oil) imports at the 1962-63 level. France is said to have a tentative programme for 13 nuclear fuelled power stations by 1974-1975, with a capacity of 1000 mw (equivalent to the country's total output of conventional electricity in 1962), and it would require an investment of 13,000 million francs! Has India any comparable programme for producing atomic electricity on a scale faintly resembling these? The Government of India is yet to take the nation into confidence in this regard, or even apropos the three nuclear units near the operating stage, or reported to be so, at present.

The reality is that the Government has opted for nuclear arms for political supremacy in South Asia, while aiming specious alibis about the atom for peace.

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The Conquest Of Sikkim

K. VIJAYKUMAR

YOU couldn't have had it better. It was a piece right out of Grimm's fairy Tales. Once upon a time there was a Very Wicked King who Oppressed his People. And, as the story goes, the Poor Oppressed People turned to the Good and Nice Princess in the neighbouring Kingdom for help. . . What more does the stage need? The scene was perfectly set for a 'democratic annexation Indira-style', or as All India Radio would have it 'India-style', which by no means is the same though some people would prefer it so. The State? I am the State and all that . . .

What has happened in Sikkim has left the left confused, the Indira regime jubilant, and the democratic masses ignorant. In the thrill of watching the Chogyal climb down, the left and democratic forces have failed to understand and draw the correct lessons from the events. It may be remembered that chronologically this drama begins much earlier; over a year back when a tripartite agreement was entered into between the Chogyal, the Indira regime, and the political parties in Sikkim. This agreement was necessitated by the friction that had developed between the Chogyal and the political parties concerning the granting of fuller democratic rights, to the people; or so it seemed. The Indira regime entered the picture since it had, in its own official language, a "historical and special relationship with Sikkim". The tripartite agreement sought to prepare a new constitution for Sikkim which would, so the agreement said, recognise the interests of all the three parties concerned. What exactly are these interests? An answer to this question will give us a clearer picture as to what lies behind the events that took place in Sikkim. Such an answer will have to be based on a class-analysis of the forces that constitute these interests, and in this we on the left have so very little data on Sikkim to work on. We hope that in the near future Sikkimese comrades would fulfil these tasks. Therefore what follows is only a tentative hypothesis

which does not claim to be a substitute for a well-reasoned analysis.

There can be no doubt that feudal relations predominate in Sikkim and that the Chogyal is its political expression. In the normal schema of events Sikkim too would have had to undergo a bourgeois-democratic revolution. The question is: can the recent events be classified as a bourgeois-democratic revolution as is being made out by most people on the left in this country? To answer this question we must ask ourselves whether a bourgeoisie exists in Sikkim and whether it is powerful enough, or developed enough to overthrow and substitute its own relations of production (i.e. capitalistic relations) in place of feudal relations. The answer to this is brief and short; it is, No!

Today in Sikkim there may be small pockets of capitalistic relations of production (and this is in accord with the laws of uneven development), but by and large the country is feudal; and in such a situation to speak of a viable bourgeois-democratic revolution is wrong. The aspirations of the political parties (I mean the broad masses who support these parties) may be democratic, but they do not have another set of relations to substitute for the ones that they want to displace; and History, like Nature, abhors a vacuum.

It is really here that the Princess enters our story and the constitution which she has handed down begins to take on new shades of meaning. One does not intend to go into the history of the birth of this document, or the travails which produced it, except to state that it was produced by a constitutional adviser deputed by the Indira regime. This was quite natural, considering the much acclaimed 'historic and special relationship' and the fact that India is especially well-suited for this role. If the mother of parliaments has an unwritten constitution, her offspring has a written one which in sheer length and pious wishes finishes a close second to the erstwhile Weimar Constitution. Thus for any

'emerging' nation trying to toddle along the good, old democratic way, and wanting a brand-new constitution to prove its bona fides, the Government of India was the chappie to call on; the expert in the field; the only thing we are good at, besides pan-handling.

The Word

And so as the story goes the Princess gave the Oppressed People the Word which was supposed to set them free. But between the word and the deed falls a shadow and even a cursory glance at the constitution would convince us of three things. One, that the powers of the Chogyal have been severely curtailed and that he has been reduced to a mere figurehead. Two, that the powers which used to rest with him have now been delegated, shorn off their feudal frills and dressing, to one who has been designated as the Chief Executive. This official, needless to say, is a nominee of the Government of India. And three, the political parties have been given all the bourgeois-democracy that they want without getting sick on it. So much so that they can have elections, attend parliaments, make speeches, and just for the heck of it even go to a court presided over by a real independent judge! What more do you want? The bourgeois-democratic revolution has really begun for the people of Sikkim.

At the moment of writing Sikkim Congress leaders are having a field day, enjoying the thrill of being real politicians operating in a country with a real parliament. In Delhi they have been received and feted in style when compared with the Chogyal who had to wait like penitent Henry at the gates of Canossa. As far as the Indira regime is concerned it has no more use for the Chogyal or for what he offers. It wants a vassal State which is not too encumbered with feudal relations. The Chogyal, on the other hand, keeps on repeating like an old phonograph that the special status and independence of Sikkim has been eroded by the new constitution. The truth is that this erosion has been in process for a long time and the constitution is only the legitimisation of the writing on the wall. So the Chogyal must go . . . especially when the Sikkim

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Congress leaders offer more attractive terms to the Indira regime. Birds of a feather fly together; and the Sikkim birds, as a class incapable of undertaking a real bourgeois-democratic revolution, can only resort to leasing out Sikkim to the more 'bigger' and carnivorous birds in Delhi. This is but natural, considering the underdeveloped nature of the Sikkim economy which ensures that only two options are open to them—either to flourish under the protective shade of the Indira regime, or to undertake an anti-feudal anti-imperialist people's democratic revolution. In the face of this choice they have chosen the former. They get ecstatic about Sikkim's ties with India or speak with emotion about democracy and such other things. The people of Sikkim will soon enough realise that special ties mean the hegemony of the Indian ruling class, and that democracy means a constitution and an independent judiciary for the ruling class, and certain laws that go under harmless abbreviations like MISA and DIR for the working class. Democracy for the masses does not lie in this constitution; it lies in a people's democratic revolution which can neither be led by the feudal elements represented by the Chogyal, nor the collaborationist ruling class represented by the Sikkim Congress. The answer to Sikkim's predicament, the ability to create a truly independent Sikkim, lies in the success of a people's democratic revolution led by a Marxist-Leninist party wedded to the principles of armed struggle. To prepare and make this revolution is the need of the day for the basic masses of Sikkim, and in this they will surely have a friend and comrade in the Indian working class.

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JULY 27, 1974

Book Review

Colonialism : The Latest Phase

I. K. SHUKLA

ASIA, Africa and Latin America have known at first hand the depredations of imperial colonialism. Even so, it is necessary to realise that neither have they been allowed to recover from its exploitative assault, nor is it a dead and spent force. A primer on its role and ramifications at present, therefore, is a welcome and timely reminder that the guards be not dropped against the enemy on the prowl. This makes "An Introduction to Neo-Colonialism" by Jack Woddis an extremely useful work, which for its concise and lucid exposition deserves to be better known. First published in 1967 by the International Publishers, New York this paperback edition was brought out later.

Dedicated to Van Troi, Turcios Lima, and Ben Barka "who gave their lives in the struggle to liberate Vietnam, Guatemala and Morocco from the chains of imperialism and neo-colonialism" in three continents, it has, besides an Introduction, four well-packed chapters on What Is Colonialism, Why Neo-Colonialism, Neo-Colonialism at Work, and The Future of Neo-Colonialism.

Imperialism preferred colonialism, according to Lenin, because colonialism alone "gives complete guarantees of success to the monopolies against all the risks of the struggle with competitors..." since "in colonial market it is easier to eliminate competition, to make sure of orders, to strengthen the necessary 'connections' etc. by monopolist methods (and sometimes it is the only possible way)."

Consequently the economy of the colonies was ruined beyond measure, and got 'distorted'.

An illustration. Prof Rene Dumont visiting Chad in 1950 reckoned that "one hour of work for a cotton labourer would bring him about three-tenths of an inch of ordinary cotton cloth". That is, for 3 yards of cloth, he would have to work for over 300 hours.

To maintain the profits from an expropriative system, the colonial powers prevented industrialisation in the colonies. Their agriculture was no less distorted, so that 'the ordinary Gold Coast family never saw a glass of fresh milk in its life', said Kwame Nkrumah in his book "Africa Must Unite".

Who were the allies of the colonial robber? "The indigenous ruling forces, those who held the dominant economic and political positions under the European administrators and monopoly firms, feudal landlords, traders...the forces of tradition". So, colonialism became foreign rule allied with certain economic and political strata of the indigenous people which had an interest in supporting colonialism. Thus arose a stratum of educated individuals drawn from the indigenous productions, reared in the traditions of the colony-owning power, and apart from a difference in the colour of the skin, was often virtually a carbon copy of the original.

This new elite, according to Fatma Mansur, was "not a new elite created by the colonial impact out of a diversified society at random, but a part of the traditional elite, whether political or cultural". Some of them may have played a part in the national independence movements, but many passively accepted the colonial system; and the colonial powers, in fostering them, regarded them as a secondary support to their major ally, the traditional rulers and landlords. It is this elite which even after winning independence helped maintain in the Third World the "presence" of the imperialist powers.

To many it would come as a shock of recognition that it was (not 'non-violence, non-cooperation, nor Quit India of 1942, but) the naval mutiny of 1946, which, according to the author, 'compelled Britain to concede India independence a year later'. Woddis makes this

unambiguous assertion twice in the book.

Why and when neo-colonialism? Harold R. Isaac details in "No Peace for Asia" how with British grace and Japanese aid the French regained Indo-China after the war, how the Dutch with British and Japanese troops invaded Jakarta, how Aung San in Burma was assassinated in 1948 by Western henchmen. To cap all is the U.S. repression in the Philippines. So, counter-revolution is an essential element of neo-colonialism. After 1945 the Western powers intended and strove hard to re-establish the colonial pattern but they beat a retreat in face of the world situation and the sweeping tide of the national liberation movements.

Strategy of Imperialism

In Latin America the U.S. established "one of the cruellest and most bloody empires the world has ever seen". So neo-colonialism, now the dominant form, is a strategy of imperialism, not a new stage.

For its purposes, as in the past, it seeks out those social and political forces which, in their own class interest, would not push the national revolution too far nor allow any danger to the interests of Western powers. The new elite comprising the petty-bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, the new administrators, technicians and military leaders, and the emerging indigenous capitalist forces helps the imperialists in arresting their countries' advance in the direction of socialism.

A stratum of richer peasants emerging in the countryside and the former landlords became the large-scale capitalist farmers. Western powers relied on them to provide a barrier to revolutionary change in the countryside.

This makes neo-colonialism the greatest threat to African countries that have won their independence or those approaching this status. It operates in economic, political, religious, ideological and cultural spheres, according to Nkrumah.

Its overall character was defined at the First Afro-Asian-Latin American Peoples' Solidarity Conference in Havana in January 1966.

"To guarantee its domination, imperialism tries to destroy the national, cultural and spiritual values of each country, and forms an apparatus of domination which includes national armed forces docile to their policy, the establishment of military bases, the creation of organs of repression, with technical advisers from imperialist countries, the signing of secret military pacts, the formation of regional and international war-mongering alliances. It encourages and carries out coups d'etat and political assassinations to ensure puppet governments. . . at the same time, in the economic field it resorts to deceptive formulas, such as the so-called Alliance for Progress, Food for Peace and other similar forms, while using international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to reinforce its economic domination."

For these purposes were sought out and supported the most conservative and right-wing forces in the Third World which were placed on top before conceding independence, by Britain, France, USA and West Germany. The U.S. perfidy in Guyana where Dr Jagan's PPP Government was thrice forced out will constitute a book by itself.

Again, the 7-year-old conflict in Congo (Kinshasa) was not simply one between the national liberation movement and imperialism; it was equally conditioned and shaped by the fierce conflict between the various imperialist powers themselves, the U.S. striving to weaken or oust the former Anglo-Belgian alliance, and France and West Germany attempting to gain footholds too. Italy and Japan entered the scene.

Complementarily, collective forms of neo-colonialism, economic and military, are being forged to safeguard and intensify the exploitation of the Third World. The U.S. has replaced Japan in South Korea, ousted the French in South Vietnam, ended British and Japanese influence in Thailand, and is pressing on British/French toes throughout Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the Caribbean.

Like the U.S. Peace Corps, an organ of the CIA, West Germany has German

Development Service. West Germany has admitted "this is unarmed guerilla warfare". Its Institute for International Solidarity is financed by the Christian Democrats and the State. Its function is to intervene politically and financially in the affairs of other countries, particularly in Latin America. Before Allende, Frei was hoisted to Presidency by GDS. The German Foundation for Developing Countries supplements its efforts.

The US-UK-OECD-CENTO-aided Middle East Technical University in Ankara has professors in the employ of the CIA which runs the New Asia Trading Co. in India. Firms in Nigeria are disguised CIA agencies. Trade Unions in the Third World are penetrated by CIA money. The American Institute for Free Labour Development engineered rioting against Dr Jagan's PPP Government. Some murders and coups to the CIA's credit are: Mossadeq in Iran (1953), the Arbenz Government of Guatemala (1954), Lumumba (1960), Indonesia (1965), Allende in Chile (1973). [Howard Hunt, the ex-White House Counsellor, said on July 1 under cross-examination that his 20-year stint in CIA involved overthrowing of foreign governments.]

Enemy Within

The internal forces helping the neo-colonialists can be identified as: "Feudal landlords anxious to maintain or regain their former economic status and privileged position in society; traders and speculators who fear the advent of socialism and wish to continue as middlemen of the big international monopolies; sections of the new elite, bribed and corrupted, in a hurry to grow rich on the fruits of office before the undernourished millions demand a reckoning; all the hangers-on of capitalism, the new rich, the career boys and diplomats, the police chiefs and generals, all the nauseating imitators of the most decadent and parasitical classes in the West. . ."

Amilcar Cabral had pinpointed an essential aim of neo-colonialism, viz., to create a false bourgeoisie, to put a brake on the revolution, and to enlarge the possibilities of the petty bourgeoisie

neutraliser of the revolution. Handy come the propaganda media, libraries, information centres, social and economic institutes, which constantly tell people that they need "Western know-how", and "cannot do without foreign capital", must concentrate on agriculture rather than on industry which is only a "prestige building" trifle.

The 1,234 U.S. bases in 44 countries are essential in stopping the wars of liberation. A. L. Ratcliffe of the War Ministry, West Germany, admits in an article that military bases provide the military foundations for political intervention in times of peace. This ensures the Third World remaining the primary producing hinterland of imperialism and importing the bulk of its machinery and manufactured goods from the metropolitan countries. U.S. investments in mining and plantation account for gross profits of \$8,000 million a year.

Between 1956-1962 the Western monopolies exported over 30,000 million dollars to 56 developing countries, but received back in interest and profits 15,000 million dollars. It stipulates that there be no heavy industry and no assistance to the State sector at the cost of private enterprise. Liberia is the classic example of bloody loot. It exported \$160 million worth of rubber, but got only \$8 million!

This aid towards infrastructure (political-military aims), for the private sector, and the high rate of interest becomes a liability and a blood-sucking leech. The 71 countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America owed in 1962 foreign debts worth \$27,000 million, on which they paid interest and service charges of \$5,000 million. This indebtedness in 1964 was at \$33,000 million. This means that half the total international flow of financial 'aid' to the developing countries is now offset by interest on their debts, and by the outflow of profits and dividends to the foreign monopoly firms which have invested in their countries.

Then there is the unfair price relationship, besides robbery through profits and interest. In 1952 Ghana got £467 a ton for cocoa. With independence in 1957 she predicated her planned growth on a modest £200 a ton for several

years. But by 1965 the price went down to £85 a ton—a major factor in the coup against Nkrumah.

Latin America suffered a loss of \$20,500 million in 1951-62 from this non-equivalent exchange. For the Third World the figure was, for 1970, \$7,000 million.

Commenting on the Clay Committee report the London "Times" said on March 28, 1963: "American aid is a part of foreign policy, 44% of it being military and economic support for allied countries bordering the communist bloc, and if the sums spent in Vietnam/Laos are included, the share of total appropriations comes to 72%". In Laos, in 1957, \$74 million was thus distributed—7 million (police), 7 million (admin.), 50 million (army of 25,000 men), 10 million (for 250 American advisers/experts). Not a single dollar for agricultural or industrial development!

Dr Franz Pick, visiting Pakistan, 1963, said that U.S. aid is a veiled form of self-financing, a subsidy to the U.S. domestic industry. He found that 90% of the \$4,500 annual aid by the U.S. to developing countries is spent in the U.S. itself.

Multi-nationals

In the neo-colonial brigandage the multi-nationals play a vital role. The Iron Ore Company of Mekambo has French, West German, Italian, Dutch, U.S. and Belgian capital operating in Gabon; Miferma (British, French, West German, Italian capital) exploiting iron ore of Mauretania; Fria (American, British, French, Swiss capital) exploiting bauxite of Guinea. IMF, IBRD, IDA, International Fund for Economic Development, IFC are all dominated by U.S. banks.

Institutions like Alliance for Progress (U.S./Latin America) and ECM are other tools of exploitation and iniquity. ECM imports between 1963-65 from "associated" African countries rose by 66%, but their value only by 17%.

The African exports meet prohibitive tariff—180% on green coffee in West Germany, 148% on cocoa in Italy. The non-associated countries face still higher tariffs.

The motives? When Upper Volta sought to utilise a part of ECM's development funds for piping oil from the Sahara fields to West Africa, in order to assist industries, this was refused. Between 1961-1965 only 4% of the sums allocated went into industrial development, and even that went to the U.S. firms in Latin America. The sum paid out every year by it to overseas interests amounts to almost one-third of the total value of its exports.

For even this measly aid the price sought is "stabilisation". Spelled out, it means frozen wages, tight credit, showdown on expansion, halt in industrialisation. John Gerassi therefore aptly calls the Alliance to be one between the U.S. and U.S. businesses in Latin America rather than between the U.S. and Latin America.

Then, the military aid appropriations under the Alliance add a sinister dimension. And 1500 million dollars of public funds are stolen from the Latin American treasuries each year. By who? Duvalier of Haiti got from U.S. 30 million dollars, Jimenez of Venezuela had in 1958 400 million dollars in foreign banks. Venezuela, the 'rich' country, has 800,000 unemployed, 500,000 living in the slums of its capital. 300,000 children with no places in schools. Therefore, Prof Aguilar calls the Alliance an instrument in defence of the ruling classes, an expression of Monroism, and an outpost of anti-communism, an answer to popular discontent, a barricade against any desire for emancipation, an alternative and check to the Cuban Revolution and a new Holy Alliance directed against the revolutionary struggle of the people.

Because the Alliance failed, the U.S. started counter-guerilla forces and continental military force. Five such schools are there for Latin America alone. These will prevent the spread of communism and are commanded by U.S. officers, 98% of the military wares is furnished by the U.S.

What does the future indicate? Independence in the Third World has spawned new appetites and new possibilities.

"The two decades since 1945 are strewn with the wreckage of parties,

guerilla forces, national movements, and governments which incurred the enmity of imperialism. Pressure from the right has opened new opportunities for neo-colonialism in Ceylon and India. A million liquidated in Indonesia, assassination of Lumumba, removal of Ben Bella, overthrow of Nkrumah, massacre of communists in Sudan, Oginga Odinga imprisoned in Kenya attest that a dying animal (neo-colonialism) can be vicious and dangerous. It is not simply imperialism in retreat but imperialism finding a new basis for its activities in the Third World. So, the rajahs of India have been substituted by the Indian National Congress, by the monopoly capitalist firms of Tata and Birla."

Neo-colonialism does not rest on complete capitalism but on a restricted, stunted and controlled form which weakens the very capitalist rulers on whom it depends for maintaining its influence. So the imperialist offensive has won in Ghana, Indonesia, but failed in Guinea, Mali, Tanzania, for people will not tolerate for long the ostentatious and luxury living of the new elite.

Vigilance is the watchword. It requires new state organs after the withdrawal of colonial rule—an army, intelligence and police, based on tried and tested opponents of colonialism and imperialism and not on well-groomed, brain-washed, West-oriented trainees from Sandhurst, St. Cyr and Fort Bragg. The political and administrative sides have to be staffed with genuine patriots and democrats. Asian, African, or Latin American civil servants who are more British than the English, or more French than the French, or more American than the Americans, are unlikely to prove the most consistent and effective opponents of neo-colonialism.

Woddis is certain that the removal of governments collaborating with imperialism involves armed conflict which will be feasible only if there is a revolutionary party and worldwide mobilisation of liberation movements.

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Man's Ingratitude

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

COMMUNALISM, like dormant syphilis, is a long-lasting disease. That it is almost incurable is again proved by the attacks which a part of the Calcutta film press has mounted against a sincere and forthright film like "Garm Hava". They have accused the director of falsifying history and of a one-sided portrayal of religious minorities in India, saying that the Muslims in India have suffered almost nothing in comparison with the Hindus in Pakistan. The self-styled film aesthetes have the temerity to brand the film as "mischievous" and "purposeless". This sickening attitude is a slur on Calcutta's intelligentsia which boasts of its liberal ideas. We thought that during all these dark years of the post-independence period, we in West Bengal had been able at least to get rid of one thing, and that was communal disharmony. But we were wrong. Scratch a little and the old beast will show its claws. The obscurantists who have been fanning the anger against the film, often tend to forget that it is not merely a question of haggling over the proportionate number of men and women killed, raped and tortured on both sides of the border (although, on these scores, the accounts may be more than squared up and nobody's hands are clean). What the film has so beautifully done is the portrayal of a particular moment in the history of our political tragedy and the depiction of fear, anxiety and the feelings of helplessness of those used as pawns in the power game. The responsibility for communal crimes does not rest with any particular community. To paraphrase the poet's saying, it is everybody's sin and everybody must atone for it. The director of "Garm Hava" has the courage and honesty to do it, and in doing so, he has held up a mirror to our conscience and his film by its intelligent integration of artistic excellence and sociological insight, has served a significant human purpose.

The centre of the events is a Muslim shoe-merchant's family in Agra with

Salim Mirza as the reigning patriarch. He is a man of integrity with an inborn faith in his fellow men. Partition has just hit the country and many of Salim's kinsmen cross the border. But he is unflinching in his attachment to the land where he was born. Torture, humiliation, death, financial ruin, nothing seems to shake his loyalty. But one day, even he fails to stick to his decision, when after his daughter commits suicide Salim Mirza is dubbed a spy. He along with his son and wife, prepares for a journey to Pakistan. On their way to the station, the tonga is stopped by a procession of unemployed youths demanding food, jobs and better education. This becomes a moment of truth for Salim Mirza and a new belief dawns on him. He realises that escape is no way out. He has to fight his battle right on the spot by joining hands with others. He and his son join the procession and merge into the seething waves of humanity carrying shining red flags, betokening Salim Mirza's recovery of faith.

As one critic has rightly pointed out, the greatest achievement of M. S. Sathyu is that he has wonderfully interpreted an aspect of our socio-political tragedy in "purely human terms". And he has done it without the slightest tinge of sentimentality and melodrama. His command over the medium is sure and competent. The sensitivity with which he has painted his set-up, embroidering it with the subtle nuances of socio-cultural values, is a memorable tribute to his creative imagination. The "haveli" is almost humanised and its gradual break-up assumes a symbolic significance representing the general disintegration of the society itself. Almost all the performances are unforgettable and Balraj Sahni (now dead) as Salim Mirza towers above all. It is more than just acting out a dramatic role, it is the quintessence of everything great in human civilisation. Ustad Bahadur Khan's score adds to the spontaneity and simple nobility of the film and the fine 'qawali' is used as an evocative back-

group. The elevating finale has a stunning power and the restraint and ease with which it is handled should serve as a lesson to all who intend to make films of this genre.

Unnamed Group

SANDIP SARKAR

EIGHT artists, all of them ex-students of Kala Bhavan, have for some years now been exhibiting together. To the chagrin of viewers they have not found a name for themselves. An exhibition of their recent drawings and graphics, at the Academy of Fine Arts (July 13-19) was rather unimpressive. However, there were some exceptions too.

Parthapratim Deb was not at his best but his "President's Eleven" had a quaint quality. Suchibrata Deb's line drawings had affinities with folk culture and had much in common with folk simplicity. His "Folk Dancer II", "Boats" and "Woman with her Child" were deftly composed and had fine lines. Tapani Mitra's graphics were more technical than, aesthetical, while Santanu Bhattacharya's remind one of collage, but there was nothing that could grip the viewer. Anil Ray's drawings done with a single colour have minimum strokes and his arrangement of figures creates an illusion. Chinmay Ray is decorative and pretty. Pranab Sengupta's work is geometrical and calculated but seems to be a puerile exercise. Ishar Das Gupta's "Sketches" remind one of Nikhil Biswas' drawings but they do not have his power.

On the whole this exhibition was not convincing.

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JULY 27, 1974

Clippings

Shake-Up In Chinese Science

The usually staid columns of "Scientia Sinica", the foremost English-language journal, of Chinese science, have recently erupted in criticism of Lin Piao and Confucianism. A section severely and colourfully attacking revisionism in Chinese society is inserted among rather more austere papers on mathematics, geology and genetics. Three self-styled "workers", peasants and bumpkins" are the authors.

Papers in "Scientia Sinica" often touch lightly on the sayings of Chairman Mao. In the most recent issue, however, more contentious ground is covered. Confucius's saying, "only the highest, who are wise, and the lowest, who are stupid, cannot be changed", and Lin Piao's "fascist revisionism" through a theory of innate genius are bitterly confronted with Mao's "the lowly are most intelligent; the elite are most ignorant". The experiences of the three authors are used as examples. In essence it is a grassroots attack on knowledge and ability being 'a priori' assets, a somewhat crude contribution to the nature-nurture debate.

The three scientists (one terms himself a worker-peasant-soldier-student) are in the business of mercury vapour lamp manufacture, peanut growing, and acupuncture for deaf-mutes.

In the 1960s "imperialists gloated over (Chinese) incapacity to make high-pressure mercury vapour lamps", indeed the saying apparently went round in revisionist circles, "advanced architecture but backward lighting in China". That so riled the Electric Light Source Laboratory, Shanghai, that it got down to making a mercury vapour lamp, which was done in half a year from scratch with no prior knowledge—indeed even the molybdenum plate had to be made by hammering molybdenum pole.

Increasing the peanut yield likewise needed a return to basic principles, and hard labour in the fields. "I was, so to speak, living together with the peasants" the member of Tuanchieh Production Brigade writes. He is ultimately

rewarded with an increase in output of 25 per cent when he learns that removing the earth round the basal stem to give it sun is beneficial.

Finally the multiply-employed student reports on successes with deaf-mutes. He had been restrained by book-learning from inserting needles too deep into "forbidden ones". The failure to cure deaf-mutes thereby convinced him that those zones needed exploring, and that he did by inserting needles to hitherto unknown lengths in himself, risking a "worthy death". Encouraged by the results he ventured to do the same to Wang Ya-chin and within three days she cried out: "Long live Chairman Mao". Since then his team has cured more than 3,000.

The moral is carefully spelt out in each case (and by the same hand?). From Confucius down to Lin Piao reactionary elements have preached innate genius, intellectual a priorism and a return to the old master-slave relationship. The successes of those of humble origin refute all that. In the words of the electric light worker: "The lowest who are stupid" are the wisest while 'the highest who are wise' are the most stupid".

(Nature-Times News Service, 1974)

Cost of Nuclear Device

It is difficult to arrive at any exact estimate of the cost of acquiring new nuclear weapons but there are some indications in a United Nations report issued in 1968 by a study group which included Professor Emelyanov of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, and Lord Zuckerman, then chief scientific adviser to the British Government. The cost of testing one 20 kiloton device was estimated at between £4m and £5m.

(Lord Chalfont in The Times, London, June 26, 1974)

Teachers who cannot write English

A new row has broken out in the turbulent world of New York teachers. Allegations have been made that some

newly appointed school principals cannot even write English, and have been sending out memoranda full of spelling mistakes.

The principal of a school in the Bronx is accused of writing "coz" instead of "cause", and "becuz" instead of "because".

A principal from the lower East side of Manhattan was said to have written a sentence with five spelling mistakes and no punctuation. It read: "Are allyour childring receiving practice for MAT regardless of Math program in which the mig be involved."

(Peter Stafford in The Times, London)

Letters

Hand Of Friendship

Mrs Indira Gandhi, replying to the Press at Calcutta on July 17 regarding her Government's stand on the question of relations with China, said "one could not shake hands with a person who did not stretch his hand in response". I had been in China for nearly two and a half years, from 1957 to 1959, as a guest of the Chinese Communist Party. Naturally I have many friends there, I was very happy to meet them again during my latest visit to China. Ours was a non-official goodwill delegation (Dr Kotnis Memorial Committee) and there was no scope for any formal political discussion. But I would like to share with the public the personal impressions I gathered from the occasional talks that I had with my old friends there, some of whom are holding responsible posts in the party and the Government.

The spontaneous greetings and ovations given by the people everywhere, in cities and villages, have been mentioned by all the members of the delegation on their return to India. Specially decorated arches and banners inscribed with Chinese hieroglyphs, "Hearty welcome to our Indian friends", the joyous beatings of Chinese drums and cymbals, offerings of fruits, groundnuts etc. by the commune members who have themselves produced them, urging us to sing in

fields, factories, schools and even in railway compartments "Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai"—the song of friendship composed long ago by Harindra Chattopadhyaya when the first Indian cultural delegation visited China in 1952 and which was then rendered into Chinese and widely popularised—all these are the surest indications. My conversational knowledge of the Chinese language enabled me to mix more closely with the people. The common words of their greetings towards us were "Womendi Lao Fangio", Our Old Friends. The most striking was the fact that nowhere, in no talks, did they ever express anything even distantly hinting at the unfortunate border clash with India.

Now the question of the attitude of the Government of China towards India. One of the policy makers of China, Marshal Yeh Chien-ying, Vice-Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party and a member of the Standing Committee of the Polit Bureau of the CPC, gave a banquet in our honour in the Great Hall of the People. For full two hours he was with us and in a very homely and informal way he recapitulated his visit to India in 1956 as the leader of the military delegation. In a reminiscent mood he narrated in detail the happy experiences of his 42-day visit. When he spoke of India and China—he very often referred to them as "14 hundred millions" meaning the total population of India and China—two great neighbourly peoples "that cannot afford to quarrel". He repeated and reminded us of Chairman Mao's friendly gesture to the Indian Charge d'Affaires in 1970. He did not for a moment try to be a diplomat, with his tongue in the check. Next day "People's Daily" frontpaged the report of the banquet along with a three-column photo of the delegation with Marshal Yeh. "People's Daily" also subsequently in three issues covered our tour programme with prominent display.

Not only this. In all the big cities, besides our hosts of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, some important persons from the Government and the party came as chief hosts in the banquets given in our honour and proposing toasts

to the "general friendship of the Chinese and the Indian people", spoke in unmistakable terms about "the common destiny of the two great nations". Two members including the leader of our delegation left earlier from Shanghai, Miss Kotnis and I remained behind. But even this fragmented delegation was given a unique honour at Hangchow, where no less a person than a woman member of the Central Committee of the CPC came to the banquet as the chief hostess. A young working class leader as she is, she spoke in a very simple and touching way about "our eternal friendship".

I would like in this connection to point out that it is not out of any pragmatist outlook that they were expressing such sentiments of friendship. Chinese leaders, true to their principle of "politics in command", as I understand it, view the India-China friendship issue from the angle of their new survey of the international situation mapped out by Vice-Premier Teng Shiao-ping at the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in April this year. It is pertinent to quote an important passage from his speech to explain my point; "As a result of the emergence of Social Imperialism, the socialist camp which existed for a time after World War II is no longer in existence. Owing to the law of the uneven development of capitalism the Western imperialist bloc, too, is disintegrating. Judging from the changes in international relations the world today actually consists of three parts or three worlds that are both interconnected with and in contradiction to one another. The United States and the Soviet Union make up the 'First World'. Against these two super-powers the Chinese leadership places India and China along with other developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America in the Third World. They have a common cause to fight against the super-powers for their economic and political independence. It is against this background that they expressed their eagerness for normalisation of relations with India."

The general impression that I got from my stray talks with my friends there is that they do not understand what kind

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of response the Government of India expects from China. They think that India unilaterally withdrew her ambassador from China without consulting the latter and if India sincerely wants to normalise relations it is again India's duty to unilaterally reinstate her ambassador in Peking. I have the definite impression that China will immediately reciprocate by sending her ambassador.

The Indian Charge d'Affaires, Mr Mehrotra, was kind enough to receive us at the airport in Peking. In a reception to our delegation in the Indian Embassy which was attended by Chinese friends led by Yang-chi, Vice-Chairman of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, Mr Mehrotra hailed our delegation as "harbingers of a new dawn in India-China relations".

Then what is that dark shadow that still overcasts the eastern horizon? Marshal Yeh Ch'ien-ying says that China's hand of friendship towards India remains ever extended and Mrs Gandhi says the same thing. Who is not clasping the other's hand? Let the people judge.

Hemanga Biswas
Calcutta

Political Plays

The last few years in Calcutta we have had a spate of Bengali plays which have either very subtly analysed the political situation in West Bengal or satirized the rigmarole that passes for efficient administration under a party on the brink of disintegration.

That the situation calls for an active involvement of the arts in such exposure can hardly be denied but what is ultimately the net result of such political plays? They run to packed houses and the audience consists mainly of the middle classes who are amongst the worst sufferers today—reeling under the impact of an inflation that seems to get worse each year for the most vulnerable sections of society. These plays have the advantage of making hundreds of people aware of the gross inadequacies of the social, political and economic structure under which they live and die. This awareness, however, is a dead end and often amounts to no more than a tempo-

rary mental upheaval caused by the repetition of unpalatable truths and the revelation of the gangster methods adopted by the establishment to perpetuate its misrule. Those of us who see the plays experience in our daily lives all the miseries and frustrations that are sought to be shown on the stage and we can do precious little about them. We are in no position to brace ourselves for the final apocalypse with our in-built weaknesses, middle-class prejudices and vacillations. I personally feel that the politically sophisticated urban city dweller is already sated with political jargon and Marxist ideological outpourings. It is time these political plays went over to the villages where there is a need for whipping up a multiplicity of human awareness, to teach the people there the need for closing their ranks if they want to face a common enemy and resist his premeditated onslaught.

We must face the fact that daring plays cannot make a dent in the callousness of the administration nor is there

any evidence for believing that this government can be forced to change its anti-people policies by protests and demonstrations. The villages exist in a sort of political vacuum and there is hardly any organisation worth the name which they can fall back on to get their grievances redressed.

If political plays are the order of the day and quite justifiably so, they should extend their field of operations to the vast areas of darkness and passivity. If they are confined merely to the posh halls in the cities patronised by the social elite, their usefulness will be limited to rousing the middle classes temporarily who will again after a while drift back to their humdrum lives. Let the theatre be treated as a cultural extension of the revolutionary movement in the villages from where the process of change must gradually begin if it is to have any lasting effects.

Samir Mukherjee
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IMPERIALISM AND REVOLUTION IN SOUTH ASIA

Edited by

**Kathleen Gough and
Hari P. Sharma**

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Murder Of A Poet

It is reported that Kim Chi Ha, a progressive poet of South Korea, has been murdered by the reactionary Government there in connexion with charges of conspiratorial activities along with the Communist Student Front, against the State. Though we have no first-hand acquaintance with the writings of Kim Chi Ha, we, in the name of this dead poet and other martyrs of liberty, demand punishment for those who are spattering this world with blood and by whose command such crimes are being committed. We do also express our solidarity with the movement for progress, liberty and peace launched by the South Korean people in line with the worldwide struggle against revisionism and imperialism.

On behalf of the intellectual labourers of India

Leadership

A correct appraisal of CPM leadership has been given by Mr Balai Dutta in the July 13 issue of 'Frontier'. He has reported a small incident at the APDR meeting. I give some other incidents about which the CPM leadership is keeping silent. When railwaymen were fighting, their battle required some support not by words alone but by deeds i.e. solidarity action throughout the country particularly in West Bengal, which the CPM leadership claims to be its citadel. But what was the leadership doing? The railway strike was withdrawn on May 27 but the West Bengal CPM leadership, after a marathon meeting of the State Committee for four days (up to May 26) expelled "two bad and notorious elements" from the party. It had no time for the poor struggling railwaymen. It had no time to ponder over the failure of the Central Government employees' strike.

Again, the West Bengal State Committee meeting of the CPM from July 7 to 9 had no time to take a resolution on the torture of woman prisoners, not to speak of any positive programme.

About the coming Presidential elec-

tion, the CPM leadership will perhaps remain silent.

Perhaps they also serve, who only stand and wait.

Sudhansu Palit
Calcutta

Handcuffed In Court

We have read that Gopal Majumdar, editor of weekly "Deshabrati", is being produced before the Magistrate with bar fetters and handcuffs on. Members

of the Revolutionary Writers Association of Andhra Pradesh, who include the publisher and editor of "Pilupu", a political fortnightly, and "Srjana" a literary monthly, were produced, handcuffed, before the Magistrate. The advocates pointed out this gross violation of law to the Magistrate but it appears that he has not bothered to take any action in this regard so far.

G. Linga Reddy
Secretary, Twin Cities Civil Liberties Committee, Hyderabad

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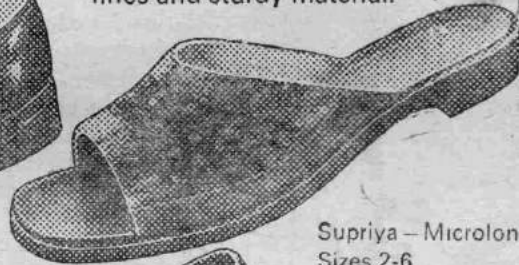
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