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Editor : Samar Sen

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BY SAMAR SEN FROM 61, MOTT LANE,
CALCUTTA-13
TELEPHONE: 243202

OPERATION BIHAR

IN this year of stark hunger, the Bihar Government, with the fullest connivance of the Centre, staged a naked show of force which perhaps has no parallel in this country for the degree of organisation, any deployment of security men. The preparations, as on the eve of the railway strike of May, were prolonged and meticulous. To prevent the gherao of the Secretariat and of Ministers and legislators, all routes to Patna were barricaded within a thirty-mile radius, and all transport was searched and later cancelled on November 4. Thousands of people were arrested before and during the demonstration and the participants on Monday were themselves gheraoed, tear-gassed and lathi-charged. Battered and bruised, they put up a desperate satyagraha. Mr J. P. Narayan was hurt. About 3,000 arrested satyagrahis who were kept in the Botanical Gardens went without food and blankets.

Reports so far indicate that the procession led by Mr Narayan was peaceful. There were so many barricades and security forces that it was not possible to get near the Secretariat—in fact, relations of Ministers made a fortune out of the bamboo barricades.

Mr Ghafoor, who was in the Control Room, was happy at the success of this operation on a war footing which, according to him, went off just as the Prime Minister had wanted it.

Like some others who are in the habit of desiring to have a dialogue with Mrs Gandhi before launching a 'momentous' movement, Mr Narayan met the lady; but not much harm was done. Mrs Gandhi was against dissolution of the Assembly and the Ministry in Bihar under pressure—forgetting what she did in Kerala in 1959; she swore by elections, knowing full well that it would be difficult for any party to beat her in that game, considering the resources she can mobilise by any means and the tricks the mastans of her party have perfected. Mr Narayan wanted the Assembly and Ministry to be dissolved. The country or those few people who can read and write heard some hair-splitting discourse on satyagraha, mass action and representative democracy. People could care less for these abstractions. Mr Narayan, who was surprised by the 'shameless cruelty', and the 'barbarism' of the authorities on November 4, has said that if he lives he will bring those responsible for these acts to their senses. He will now go on with his plans for a janata assembly and ministry, and the sympathies and support of many will be on his side. The Congress and its jackals—the CPI—in the mean time will launch a country-

wide 'counter-offensive' against Bihar-type movements. The CPI(M) is unhappy that the Jan Sangh and the Congress(O) are on the Bihar Co-ordination Committee with the socialists and talks of an independent movement to force the Assembly and the Ministry to go.

The movement in Bihar will gain if the party theoreticians of many hues do something in their own States. If the 'disorder' spreads, the forces of law and order will be stretched thin. As for November 4 in Patna, the unprecedented

steps taken by the Government are evidence that Mr Narayan won. One does not know why he is not calling on the workers and poor peasants to join in. Perhaps communist influence on the workers is one reason; another may be that, unlike the students who have not much to lose but their classes, the workers cannot afford to risk their wages these days. As for the poor peasants, one does not know their reaction. But unless these classes are brought in, J.P. will find his task—whatever it is—much harder.

A Walkover For Kissinger

The inimitable Henry is come and gone, leaving behind a trail of fallen Finance Ministers in the three countries of the subcontinent he visited. If this was meant to propitiate him so that more wheat and dollar may flow into the three countries, the gesture may not have been entirely lost on him. He has made some promises which may be supplemented if the countries behave during their period of probation. In the course of his previous trip to this subcontinent Mr Kissinger had disappeared somewhere in Pakistan to surface in Peking to prepare the ground for the now-famous Nixon visit. On this trip he came via Moscow possibly because he wanted to demonstrate to India that he has corrected his 1971 tilt towards Pakistan. Much to the elation of our rulers, he declared in New Delhi that the U.S. recognised India's leading role in South Asian affairs and to underscore it stayed in New Delhi for three and a half days for talks not only with the Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister but also with some lightweights in the Cabinet all of whom were duly impressed by the sudden surge of friendliness in the U.S. administration towards the Government of Mrs Gandhi which the CIA is alleged to be trying constantly to topple. Bangladesh and Pakistan were not worth more than a day's visit each; clearly they are not the countries Mr Kissinger came to conquer.

New Delhi was eager to be conquer-

ed; it had only to eat its brave words of the past about self-reliance, about the CIA's sinister plots, apparently with the connivance of the U.S. administration, about the U.S. attempt to influence India's independent policy through external and internal pressures. The understanding U.S. Secretary of State played his role gallantly. He said the U.S. accepted nonalignment, of course of the Indian variety; he said the U.S. had no objection to India's close relationship with the USSR, as if the U.S. itself is not trying for it especially after China's refusal to respond with the expected warmth to American overtures; he said the U.S. was ready to leave behind the peaks and valleys of Indo-American relationship with the U.S. This was, in effect, a declaration that the Indian policy did not clash with American aims in this region and as long as India persists in this policy the U.S. would not mind occasional anti-U.S. outbursts by Indian leaders for home consumption. India may continue to make appropriate noises about the proposed U.S. naval base at Diego Garcia and the Soviet Union may begin an experiment in co-existence in the Indian Ocean, but that will not affect India's relations with either. Mrs Bandaranaike's overnight halt in New Delhi for talks with Mrs Gandhi was not without reason.

Weeks before Mr Kissinger's visit, India had agreed to the proposal for setting up a joint commission and an untold number of sub-commissions un-

der it for promoting economic, cultural, educational, and technological exchanges between the two countries. Such commissions are already looking after Indo-Soviet relations, and the U.S. could not lag behind. Obviously, neither the U.S. nor the USSR can ignore a nuclear India, and they are determined to collaborate in propping up its crumbling economy and discredited regime as far as they can. They must have a unity of purpose of which Mr Kissinger might have made sure in Moscow before he descended on New Delhi. The new and mature relationship between India and the U.S. of which the foundation was laid by him during his new Delhi trip will be contingent on India not departing from its present policy in international affairs. Mr Kissinger has denied that the U.S. has any hegemonist ambitions but has demanded that Indian attitudes must subserve American interests as they are doing now. He has not clarified the deviations to which the U.S. will object, at least not publicly. But since the U.S. and the USSR have made it a common point, one of the deviations may well be any Indian attempt for a rapprochement with China.

Thieu At Bay

Things are on the move again, on the political plane this time, in South Vietnam. The fighting of course never ceased and the fatalities have been enormous. Thieu had to give up a large number of outposts in the Mekong delta, the ratio of desertions from his army is rising, and the army cannot let off any number of shells and bombs they like because of the cut in U.S. supplies. The Communists, however, are not preparing for a major offensive. They know that the fantastic inflation, corruption and inefficiency will wear out the regime. But they have made it clear that they will have nothing to do with Thieu, a persistent demand before the Paris agreement, which they had to give up for the sake of peace. Thieu and his American allies have cared little for the terms of the agreement. Political pri-

soners continue to rot in their thousands in jails; the third force has not been allowed to be formed, and no government of national concord is in sight. The intermittent talks are deadlocked.

Internal causes and the fall of Nixon perhaps have encouraged the opposition forces to make a public appearance. Buddhist as well as Catholic leaders have expressed their discontent over the present state of affairs and even hinted that Thieu should go. This time Thieu has not shown his usual fangs but allowed some opposition, in the hope that it will help let off steam and nothing much will happen: What will happen in Saigon may not affect his fate; perhaps it is being decided in the countryside. But Saigon may dramatise the problem of Vietnam which the world seems to have forgotten.

The Mediterranean

A correspondent writes:

The Soviet Union and the United States are locked in a sharp contention in the Mediterranean. Large numbers of Soviet and U.S. warships are deployed there. This display of force is part of a scramble for world hegemony, each trying to outwit the other.

The Mediterranean is of great strategic importance, for it is the hub of the sea traffic of Europe, Asia and Africa and the southern barrier of Europe, the focus of U.S.-Soviet contention for hegemony. Their struggle for predominance there is a part of their struggle for predominance in Europe and the Middle East. It also forms an important link in their rivalry for maritime hegemony. In recent years, the Soviet Union has despatched a large number of warships to the Mediterranean from the Black Sea, challenging U.S. imperialism, until then the overlord in this part of the world. The number of ships maintained by the U.S. Sixth Fleet and the Soviet permanent fleet is about the same usually around 50. During the Mid-east October war last year, the number of Soviet ships increased to over 90. The Mediterranean has thus become a sea with the highest concentration of

Soviet and U.S. warships in the world.

Each of the two super-powers seeks to consolidate and expand its own hegemony while trying to weaken and wipe out the influence of the other. In this rivalry the Mediterranean countries become victims. Military manoeuvres are held there from time to time, endangering the freedom of navigation of other countries. U.S. and Soviet ships follow each other, keeping a close watch on each other's movements and spying for information. Apart from maintaining huge permanent fleets, the Soviet Union and the U.S. have sent big mercantile, fishing and "oceanographic research" fleets there. Most of these ships are tools for plundering the resources of other countries and spy-ships in disguise. In the design for overseas expansion, the Soviet Union offers to "help" others to expand ports, build docks, train technical personnel for port administration, set up "joint oceanographic study stations" and so on and so forth.

The tension in Cyprus and the eastern Mediterranean illustrates the insecurity in the region. Both super-powers have tried to gain control of this island country of strategic importance which has always been regarded by imperialism as an "unsinkable carrier". The July 15 coup in Cyprus took place against the background of their bitter rivalry in the eastern Mediterranean. To facilitate its expansion in the Mediterranean, the Soviet Union made a lot of noise, asserting that "the Soviet Union is a Black Sea Power and also a Mediterranean power", that "we are by no means a guest in the Mediterranean", etc. Isn't it rather far-fetched for the Soviet Union to claim that it is among the Mediterranean countries?

More than ever, the Mediterranean people today do not reconcile themselves to the aggression, control, interference, plunder and bullying by the two powers. They want U.S. and Soviet warships and military bases to pull out of the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean countries with a total population of some 300 million are a big force and should be able to resist the U.S.-Soviet attempt to establish economic and political domination.

Armed Struggle In India : The Ghadar Party—I

GAIL OMVEDT

Introduction

THIS paper is about a little known trend in the Indian liberation movement, the Ghadar Party, which was active first as a revolutionary nationalist organisation focused on armed struggle prior to World War I, and then as a communist-led movement in the 1920s.

The Ghadar movement deserves to be better known for several reasons. First, it was the most international of all Indian revolutionary organisations, with a sphere of operation that ran quite literally from Stockton, California, to Shanghai, China. Second, it was the organisation that took most seriously the issue of armed struggle for independence and was for a number of reasons the best-placed to actually attempt it. Third, while it took the liberation of India as its goal, it was not really an "all-Indian" party but was rather based on one linguistic-national group: the Punjabi Sikhs whose homeland is in northwestern India. Thus, the history of Ghadar—how it arose and why it took the form it did, why it failed and in the end became absorbed within an Indian communist movement that took a quite different direction—gives important insights into the nature and special problems of Indian nationalism and communism and into the multinational characteristics of Indian social history.

The Ghadar movement itself went through at least three distinct phases of development. The first was prior to 1917, when the Ghadar Party was organised in 1913 among Indian immigrants (primarily Sikhs) to the west coast of North America, with the goal of organising armed insurrection for total independence in India and fomenting mutiny among Sikh soldiers in the British imperial army throughout the world. A particularly provoking incident here was the voyage of the

Komagata Maru, a ship bearing 376 immigrants to Vancouver, which was refused landing and finally forced to return to India, where its travellers were fired upon by the police upon landing in Calcutta (with 18 killed) and arrested. The highlight of this period came in 1914 and 1915, after the outbreak of World War I, when Ghadarites from North America and other areas of Sikh settlement throughout Asia returned en masse to India to attempt an uprising. In the context of the general unwillingness of Indian nationalists to oppose the British at this time, their insurrection was smashed. The British were able to intercept and arrest nearly all of them, and a series of trials resulted in the hanging of 42 men and the sentencing of 207 others in the Lahore conspiracy cases, and the shooting of 45 and the sentencing of 184 in court martials arising out of a mutiny among soldiers in Singapore.

Nevertheless, the Ghadar movement was revived after 1920, and its second phase was predominantly a communist one. The leadership now was almost entirely drawn from the Punjab Sikh immigrants who had been farm-workers in California, lumberworkers in Oregon and British Columbia; the few non-Sikh intellectuals who had sparked the earlier phase (such as Lala Hardayal) no longer were involved. The Ghadar activists in this period continued the earlier efforts to get military aid from powers hostile to the British government, only now they looked to the Soviet Union instead of Germany and Japan as earlier revolutionaries had done. They continued efforts to instigate mutiny among Indian soldiers and to establish organisational bases wherever the British army was stationed—only now the main effort, the most threatening one to the British empire, focused on China, where they had connections with the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party and where they joined Koreans and Vietnamese in an organisation known as the "International Union of Oppressed Peoples of the East," formed under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh in 1925. Finally, they continued to return to India itself to organise in the Punjab, only now they sought to supplement their insurrectional goals

with efforts to establish a mass base: It was in this period that they began the organising of peasant movements.

This phase in many ways ended with the failure in China in 1927, though Ghadar Communists in India maintained something of a separate identity through the 1930s and 1940s until they were finally absorbed into the regular Indian Communist Party. A third phase would be the role of the Ghadar movement in the U.S. where it became finally a focus of ethnic identity among Punjabi immigrants in California.

This article will focus on the second phase, the Ghadar communism of the 1920s. The remarkable thing about this aspect of Ghadar is that it is so little known and so little written about. From the communist side, the major books on Indian communism, such as Overstreet and Windmiller's massive history, and the major memoirs of early Indian leaders, such as those of M. N. Roy, scarcely mention it. On the side of Ghadar historiography, it is equally ignored: most of the nationalist histories stop with the first phase, apparently a much safer part of the Indian nationalist tradition. And the few accounts that do deal with the communist period have little or nothing to say of China; for instance, Mathur's *Indian Revolutionary Movement in the U.S.A.* writes of the Ghadarites that from 1923 onwards "the center of their activity was in Afghanistan". Similarly an account by a leader of the pro-Moscow Communist Party of India (CPI)* mentions briefly the efforts to work through Afghanistan but says nothing of China: it is perhaps possible that the CPI today is reluctant to admit even the existence of revolution in China in the 1920s.

From these published secondary sources one might guess that Ghadar communism, and particularly the "Chinese connection", was of little importance. And yet a major documentary source on Indian communism in this period indicates the contrary. This is a book published originally in 1927 only for use by counter-intelligence officials in India and abroad, written by Sir David Petrie,

* (G. Adhikari, **Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna**, People's Publishing House).

Director of the Intelligence Bureau for the Government of India from 1924, on *Communism in India, 1924-1927*. Petrie notes that "Sikhs of the Ghadar persuasion, whether in America, India or elsewhere, have ever been ready to league themselves with any of our enemies, almost without waiting to be asked". And remarkably, in a book of 292 pages focusing on all of India, Petrie gives 70 pages specifically to Ghadar activities, and of that 52 pages to the Ghadar organising in China and 18 pages to Ghadar organising in the Punjab. And in his "who's who" communist activists and sympathisers following the narrative, 50 to 212 persons mentioned were part of the Ghadar movement. Later we will return to Petrie's own analysis, but the attention given to this movement indicates at the very least that it carried a disproportionate weight in the leading British thinking of the time.

Finally, Punjabi communism today is relatively strong within India as a whole. In terms of votes polled by communist parties in state legislative assemblies since independence, it has run fourth behind West Bengal, Kerala, and Andhra, and this vote has been much more rural-based than any of the other States. It had in the 1950s the strongest kisan sabhas of any State in India. And this Punjabi communism has grown almost directly out of Ghadar-based organising in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Punjab

The Ghadar movement was limited almost entirely to Punjabis and mainly to Punjabi Sikhs, not out of any desire to be a movement with a regional or provincial base, but because the multinational character of India and the specific historical development of its different linguistic nationalities made this the framework of Ghadar organising. (Therefore, any account of Ghadar must begin with a description of the place of the Punjab within India).

The Punjab occupies the northwest of India, the "land of the five rivers". Its population includes three main religious groups, Hindus, Muslims, and the Sikhs, whose religion arose out of an effort to syncretise aspects of Hinduism and Islam but developed a separate and

very militant identity in the 17th century in the context of fights against the Mughal empire. The larger Punjab province under British rule was split into Muslim (Pakistan) and Hindu-Sikh (India) sections upon partition in 1947; the State after that was split again into Hindi-speaking (Hindu) Haryana and Punjabi-speaking (Sikh) Punjab in 1966. The smaller Punjab State of today has a population of about 13,500,000 or 2.5% of the Indian total and a land area of 1.5% of the total area of India. Considered the Sikh homeland, during the British period its population was fairly evenly split among Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, and it contained the districts that were the heartland of Ghadar activity and influence.

The special characteristics of the Punjab province under British imperialism were that it was both geographically strategic, located as it was near the traditionally northwest routes of invasion into the subcontinent, and socially strategic, since it provided the largest component of soldiers to the British army. At the time of the Mutiny or "first war of independence" in 1857, the Punjab had been just recently conquered and its soldiers did not join other Indians in revolt; the British rulers were conscious of this loyalty and from that time forth began to favour the Punjabis as a special "martial race". In a process which one writer has called the "Punjabisation" of the Indian army from 1892 to 1914, a total of 57 out of 123 infantry units were recruited from the Punjab and more Punjabis filled the Bombay units. Thus, the Punjabis (Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus) were the most numerous of any Indian nationality within the British army.

The role of Punjabis as soldiers had two results. First, it was probably because of their importance that British administration continued to favour the Punjab with development funds. The Punjab absorbed a greater amount of investment in irrigation, power and roads than any other province. Its share was particularly high during the period 1897-98 to 1918-19, when the province got 27% of all gross public investment in the three together and 47% of all gross public investment in irrigation alone. This investment produced significant agri-

cultural development and was a main factor in laying the foundation for Punjab's position today as practically the only part of India where the "green revolution" can be honestly said to be working.

The second result of Punjabi recruitment to the army was to spread them throughout the world. Wherever British armies were, Punjabi soldiers were to be found, and civilians apparently found it possible to follow. The linguistic-national specificity of Indian migration is a striking fact: low-caste Tamils of the South have been found as plantation labourers and coolies throughout Asia and South Africa while Indian merchants in the same Asian countries have come from different castes and regions. In this pattern, the Punjabis have been the only group of Indians to migrate in any significant numbers to the advanced capitalist world, especially North America. Even today in Canada they remain the only working-class Indian settlers, contrasting with other Indian immigrants who are middle-class technicians, engineers and professionals and whose position in the U.S. and elsewhere represents a "brain-drain" rather than the provision of cheap manual labour. And the Punjabis arrived in North America originally following the British army around the world: Vancouver and later California represented the end of a route that had led through Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong.

This special position of Punjabis in the army and as North American immigrants was crucial to the fact that a revolutionary party based upon them would be different from all others in India at the time. Their role in the army presented the possibilities of mutiny arising not only in India itself, but also (for example) in Singapore; and even more important, once the Ghadar party began seriously organising to consider the possibilities of armed insurrection, supplies, external bases and so forth, they had contacts throughout the world and a natural base of worker-soldiers to organise. Further, the relative "castelessness" of the Sikh religion probably meant less of a barrier between Punjabi Sikh intellectuals and Punjabi Sikh soldiers and peasants than in

other parts of India. Thus, while the terrorist groups in other parts of India before 1917 were almost entirely Brahmin and other high-caste young radicals isolated from mass support—and because of this unable to recruit from the army even when they tried—the Punjabi revolutionaries had organic contact with the masses.

Once the Ghadar movement began and again when it was revived under communist leadership in the 1920s, it was based upon North American immigrants. Now the particular situation of working-class immigrants to the West seems to be this: While they are the most oppressed groups of workers within the imperialist homeland (and Punjabis were certainly as discriminated against as Chinese or Japanese workers), they are nevertheless better off financially than the totally oppressed workers of the colony itself, and they have access to skills of literacy and education available in the West and an opportunity to make some use of legal freedom that are absolutely denied in the colony. Thus, the Punjabis could organise from within the U.S. and Canada.

Proletarian Element

What this meant was that besides the fact of being able to generate a good amount of funds throughout, the Ghadar national revolutionaries and Ghadar communists contrasted with other Indian nationalist and communist organising of their day in having "from the very beginning" a truly proletarian element. It was California farm workers, Oregon and Vancouver lumber workers, who provided not only the social base of the movement, but many of its organisers.

Unfortunately, it also seems that this worker-soldier-peasant foundation of the Punjabi community and the Ghadar party was perhaps also related to its isolation, organisationally, from the rest of Indian nationalism and communism. In the first period, the Ghadar movement had Hindu non-Sikh intellectual leaders such as Har Dayal and Ram Chandra who helped to spark the party, but Indian writers have described tension between the Hindu intellectual leadership and the Sikh working class

leadership, and a recent work* on Har Dayal calls the Ghadar period an "aberration" for him and notes that he hardly anticipated the impetuous readiness of Sikh ex-soldiers to return to India for armed revolution in 1915. In the second period, the Sikh immigrants themselves took the initiative in becoming communist (apparently recruited first by American communists) and were not approached or recruited by the leading Indian communist organisers of the time such as M. N. Roy; Ghadar communism as a whole apparently remained

* "The Ideology of an International Revolutionary Elite", by Emily Brown; paper given at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Boston.

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quite organisationally isolated from the rest of Indian communism through the 1920s.

In fact, it appears that the cosmopolitan intellectuals of India who were the earliest national and communist leaders looked upon the Punjabi Sikhs with the same kind of bias they are viewed today in India, where the "Sikh joke" seems to play the same sort of role as "Polack jokes" have played in the U.S. Har Dayal and his group apparently viewed most of the Sikh immigrants they worked with as "ignorant, illiterate peasants". (Emily Brown's paper). M. N. Roy describes his one contact with a Ghadar leader, Bhagwan Singh, when they were smuggled together in a ship in 1916 across the Pacific, in terms of disgust at the man's beer-drinking lustfulness: "Bhagwan Singh was a heavily built man of about fifty, who had picked up many vulgarities of the American 'He-man' without losing any of the equally objectionable native characteristics". It seems that while their particular social-historical situation gave Punjabi Sikh intellectual leaders greater natural contact with workers, peasants and soldiers, the rest of the Indian radical leadership was isolated from them by undeniable elements of regional and class prejudice. Thus, it was that the Ghadar party developed as a revolutionary party that aimed at independence for all of India, that included at some points activists from other linguistic nationalities, that carried from the beginning a secular and universalistic ideology calling for the unity of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs—but was at the same time entirely Punjabi Sikh based and heavily isolated from other Indian national groups.

(To be continued)

'Land Reform' In Sri Lanka

N. SANMUGATHASAN

MANY articles have appeared in the press and many speeches have been made by politicians hailing the recent land reform as nothing short of a social revolution and as a step in the building of socialism. But let us look at the question a bit closely.

Land reform is basically an anti-feudal measure. In every country in the world, land was originally owned in common. It is only with the emergence of class society that a few people succeeded in grabbing large tracts of land by force or by deceit and in forcing others to work on their lands as serfs.

This was the picture we found in pre-revolutionary Russia or pre-liberation China. In these countries, land reform meant dividing the vast lands owned by the feudal landlords among the serfs who tilled them. This was accomplished by means of an agrarian revolution which was carried out by force of arms. In these countries, the peasants who had been given land i.e. individual holdings, were guided by the example of State farms and by political propaganda into socialist forms of agriculture, like co-operative farms, collective farms, people's communes etc. But this was possible only because State power was in the hands of the working class and all machinations of the deposed land-owning class could be crushed under the iron heel of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But the picture in Sri Lanka is different. Not only is an attempt at land reform taking place under the dictatorship of the imperialists and the bourgeoisie and without an armed revolution, the land problem as it exists in Sri Lanka is also different from the situation we find in most south-east Asian countries. We do not have many big feudal landowners under whom hundreds of serfs toil on thousands of acres.

The reason for this is that when the British finally conquered our country in 1815, they superimposed a colonial

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plantation economy on the feudal system of agriculture they found here. This ruined the self-sufficient and natural economy that existed under the Sinhalese kings and which has been so ably described by Robert Knox, who was a prisoner for 19 years under Rajasinghe II.

The British conquerors dispossessed the Kandyan peasants of their lands by means of the Crown Lands (Encroachments) Ordinance No. 12 of 1840, the Waste Lands Ordinance No. 1 of 1897 and the Grains Tax Ordinance of 1878. The peasants practically died out as a class, as is remarked by the 1935 Land Commission Report.

It is on the basis of these dispossessed lands, which are reported to have been sold at 50 cents per acre to the British planters, that the plantation economy was built. Thus, the best and most fertile part of our land passed into the hands of the British planters. Subsequently, Ceylonese planters also joined in. Thus it is that we do not see large-scale feudal holdings in Sri Lanka. Instead, the biggest landowners are the foreign and local companies which own our tea, rubber and cocoanut plantations.

The claim is now being made that these lands have been taken over and that a wrong has been righted. This is just not true. The overwhelming portion of the land that was expropriated from the Kandyan peasants is today still being owned by British imperialists or the Ceylonese landowning class, both of whom have incorporated these lands into public companies. Not an acre of these lands has been touched. That is why although Sri Lanka has nearly 5 million acres of cultivated land and although two million of these are cultivated with tea, rubber and cocoanut, the acreage taken over is only in the region of 550,000. The biggest landowners in Sri Lanka—the British imperialists and their Ceylonese counterparts—have been allowed to go scot free.

There can be no defence for exempting the lands owned by the public companies from the operation of the land reform act. All lands owned by foreign imperialists and the

big Ceylonese landowners should have been taken over first. The expropriators should have been expropriated. This has not been done.

The claim of the Prime Minister, in her May Day speech, that this Government had dealt a death blow to capitalism looks ridiculous in the face of the fact that all the big plantations which bring in the major part of our revenue continue to remain in the hands of the imperialists and their stooges. Socialism cannot be built in Sri Lanka so long as the commanding heights of our economy are in the hands of foreign imperialist vested interests.

The second question is whether, even if all the estates were taken over, it is wise or economic to break them up into individual holdings. The answer is 'no'. That is why we passed the anti-fragmentation law. Plantation economy is a form of capitalised agriculture and is more advanced than an economy based on individual holding.

Amalgamated Estates

Then, how do we solve the land problems in Sri Lanka? The answer is to nationalise all large estates without compensation and run them as big, amalgamated estates, as recommended by the Perera-Whitelaw Commission. Out of these lands and from unused and unusable lands, we could create a land pool to partially satisfy the land hunger of the landless peasants.

But this would not be enough. What do we do? There are two answers. One is that a portion of them must be absorbed by industry. Agriculture alone cannot absorb all the landless and unemployed. We must develop both industry and agriculture—learn to walk on both legs, as the Chinese say.

The second is to alienate Crown land on the basis of a scientific plan. But, just giving land will not do. Adequate irrigation facilities must be supplied. To do this, we must re-forest our hilltops, solve the problems of soil erosion, dredge our rivers and build reservoirs at the upper reaches of our rivers—all anti-imperialist tasks.

Land reform is also an attempt to broad-base ownership of land because too much of land in too few hands is

the surest spur to revolution. In that sense, land reform strengthens capitalism and has been insisted upon as a pre-condition before grant of loans by the World Bank. Except where the working class is in power, land reform is not a socialist measure.

The Prime Minister and her children sold 18 acres of their lands for Rs. 2,65,000/- just before the Land Reform Act became operative. This is both illegal and immoral. Besides, she is allowed to retain 50 acres of high land and 25 acres of paddy land. Further, she receives compensation at the rate of fifteen times the average annual profit over the past 5 years or the value as assessed for income tax purposes. These will be in the form of 25-year bonds but they carry an interest of 7% and can be encashed to pay income-tax and government dues or for investment in approved ventures. Not bad at all!

(The writer is the General Secretary of the Ceylon Communist Party.)

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The Population Problem In West Bengal—I

ASOK MITRA

IN one of our most relevant films of recent years, *Padatik*, Sri Mrinal Sen introduces a sequence of interviews on the status of women. There is in it, one feels, an unintended touch of irony in the fact that while most persons interviewed are prominent in Calcutta's public life and express deep concern on the lack of status of women in West Bengal, the problem itself is not as widely and seriously discussed, as it deserved to be, in the other media, like newspapers and journals, or even in the Calcutta Station of All India Radio. Discussion of this problem on the stage has been mostly confined to variations of Doll's House theme, while the spirited women of Bankim Chandra, Sarat Chandra and Rabindranath battling against the world of discrimination, have shown a remarkable willingness to compromise in much recent Bengali fiction. Oddly enough, there are comparatively fewer women poets and creative writers publicly concerned with this problem today than in the first half of the century. There is no vigorous suffragette movement keeping the question aburning. Occasionally there is a triumphant assertion in the press and in private conversation that women are much safer in the streets of Calcutta and West Bengal than in any other place in India, but that may well be for the reason that in the Bengal pantheon while the gods are merely content to pontificate with many faces the goddesses invariably possess many arms each wielding deadly weapons.

But then, that is not the problem at all. From whatever evidence is available to demographers and sociologists the world over three things seem to play a great role in determining a woman's decision to limit the number of children she could bear. One is education, the second is work and livelihood outside home, and the third the certainty of survival of the children already born.

Given these three, a wife can always bring her husband to reason and no amount of talk on the part of codifiers of family planning on the attitudes of made dominance or males determining family size are of much avail. These three factors will determine the pace of the acceptance of the small family norm in our country and its effective implementation in most homes. There is of course a host of disciplines concerned with each of these factors which have to be effectively meshed in social and economic policy to make the small family norm work. Not least will be the efficient coordination and administration of the family planning services, in which the voluntary and cooperative element must have a much bigger say than at present, for unfortunately these services themselves, in our country, are about the least efficient of all other countries. But the point must be made that, even with the most efficient and aggressive servicing, but without the three concomitants I have spoken of, rapid reduction in the birth rate would hardly ever be a straight function of the family planning clinic and current contraceptive technology.

And in all these three domains, West Bengal's position has been deteriorating over the decades not only in relation to other States of India, but often even absolutely.

Education

Let us take education or rather literacy, for education of any kind, as we shall see, is still a far cry for the vast bulk of people in West Bengal. What is worse, the horizon of literacy and education in West Bengal seems to be receding rather than advancing compared to other States of India. In 1951 West Bengal, if we left out the Capital of New Delhi, was second, although by a long chalk, in literacy to Kerala, a place which she has occupied since the

turn of the century. West Bengal's percentage was 24 while Kerala's was 41. All the same, the Census Superintendent of West Bengal in 1951 was able to report several happy trends. First, there was no decrease in literacy ratio in any age group in 1951 as compared to 1941. On the other hand in the age group of 5-9 there was an increase of as much as 64.4 per cent over the 1941 figures for West Bengal. Literacy among girls in West Bengal in 1951 was increasing at a faster rate than among boys, literacy among girls of age 5-14 having nearly doubled since 1941. He however deplored the neglect to which the campaign of literacy among adult females had fallen.

Nonetheless the picture in 1951 was very little to be proud of, for the comforting picture for this State in 1951 was largely owing to the fact that Calcutta and 24 Parganas accounted for 43 per cent of all literates in the State and the remaining 57 per cent were all too thinly distributed over the districts. What is more the distribution of literates in 1951 had stagnated and even deteriorated from 1901. For example, out of every 100 literate females in West Bengal in 1901 Cooch Behar could claim 1.2, while in 1951 it could claim only one. Even in 1951 of every 100 literate females in the State as many as nine districts could claim no more than 5 each, while as many as five districts—Malda, West Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling and Cooch Behar—could claim much less than 2, Cooch Behar and Malda claiming only one each. The picture of distribution of female literacy in rural areas in 1951 was even more dismal.

In 1961 West Bengal descended to the sixth position in overall literacy in the All-India picture, from the third in 1951. In 1971 it descended still further in rank, to the 12th place, if one counts all the Union Territories in, but 7th if one counts only Delhi in. It will be tiresome to go into the details of 1961 but some account of the 1971 Census results is necessary if only to underline the edge of what kind of precipice we in West Bengal are on for literacy today.

Based on the 1 per cent sample tabu-

lation for the States, a distinct improvement is discernible both in literacy and the lower educational levels in 1971. The performance of age group 10-14 and 15-19 in 1971, in literacy—primary, middle and higher secondary—in the urban areas went up nearly three times that of the same age groups in 1961. But in the rural areas, although progress has been appreciable the actual results are not so spectacular as in urban areas. It would be interesting to speculate as to how much the improvement in literacy and education particularly in urban areas has been responsible for the recent trend of decline in fertility one hears about, particularly in the urban areas.

At the same time, however, there were still three districts in West Bengal in 1971 in which the percentage of rural female literates did not exceed 10 and averaged no more than 8. Rural female literacy averaged 18 per cent in seven districts and 12 per cent in three districts. These makes her 15 districts. Fortunately, there is no district in West Bengal where rural female literacy is less than 5 per cent, but I fear there will be many Thanas, particularly in North Bengal and in the Western districts, where the level will still be unconscionably low. On the other, there is no district in West Bengal where the percentage of rural female literacy has reached even 25, whereas as many as 32 districts in India have surpassed this figure, 10 of which are in Kerala with an average rural female literacy of 53 per cent and three such in Maharashtra, Mysore, Punjab and Tamil Nadu with percentages ranging from 27 to 34.

In our sub-continent Sri Lanka has been the first country where the decline in fertility over the decade 1960-1970 forcefully suggests a strong association between the growth of literacy and education and a fall in the birth rate. About a year ago, Dr K. N. Raj wrote to me to say that with a tradition of universal enrolment in the primary schools in Kerala he has been noticing a decline of about five points in primary school enrolment in Kerala in the last three or four years. He was inclined to agree with me that this decline might

be the result of a fall in the birth rate since 1965-66. I have suggested on more than one occasion that the spectacular success of the Vasectomy Fairs in Ernakulam in November-December 1970 and again in July 1971 might have as much to do with the high level of female literacy in Kerala as with the excellence of organisation and servicing in the fair itself. Tamil Nadu with its forced pace of female literacy and education will, I believe, show a real decline of four to five points in birth rate capable of being reflected in primary school enrolment around 1978. Provided, of course, the agricultural situation and the infant mortality patterns do not deteriorate. When will rural West Bengal begin to move?

Occupations

As long ago as in the 1951 Census Report I had occasion to raise the alarm on the rapid rate at which the absolute numbers of self-supporting women in the non-agricultural occupations had declined from nearly 1.1 million in 1901 to as few as 610,000 in 1951, although the total population had more than doubled. The decline had occurred in all the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors, the most noticeable declines having been in stock-raising, rearing of small animals and insects, fishing, processing of grains and pulses, vegetable oil and dairy products, cotton textiles, wearing apparel, non-metallic mineral products, wood and wood products, retail trade in foodstuffs, retail trade in fuel, retail trade in textiles and leather goods, construction and maintenance of roads and bridges, barbers and beauty shops, laundries and laundry services, religious, charitable and welfare services and services otherwise unclassified. On the other hand, non-agricultural occupations which had gained in women labour were coal-mining, manufacture of metal products, iron and steel, medical and other health services, educational services, employees of municipalities and local boards, hotels, restaurants and eating houses. As can be guessed the occupations that had lost were more rural based while the occupations which marginally gained, except for coal-mining, were urban based. But coal-mining

has now been put out of the pale of female employment.

West Bengal traditionally, more for sociological reasons perhaps, has had a noticeably lower rate of female participation in the working force than other States. In 1961 the percentage of workers among the female population of West Bengal was only 9.4, the second lowest in India, next to Punjab's 5.5. The All-India average was 28 per cent. In 1971 this still further dwindled to 4.43. I am aware that definitional changes must account for part of this decrease but it is hard to disbelieve one's common impression that in very many occupations males have usurped the time honoured preserves of females. Fishwives, for example, that impressive but formidable tribe, are dwindling fast in the markets of Calcutta and so are washerwomen, barber-women and female cooks. A small Table showing the distribution of every 100 working women among the eight main industrial classes of the Indian Censuses in 1961 and 1971. This Table shows that women agricultural labourers account for 45 out of every 100 female workers of all kinds in 1971 against 21 in 1961 and 1971 shows fishing, quarrying, livestock, forestry, fishing and hunting etc. has increased from 9 in 1961 to 12 in 1971. Household industry has sharply declined from 12 per cent in 1961 to 5 in 1971 (displacement by males?), manufacturing other than household industry and construction have held firm at around 5 and 0.3 per cent; so has trade and commerce at around 2.3. Transport has registered a slight improvement; while the services have moved up from 13 to round 18. It must be recalled again that the absolute base has shrunk and the improvement has occurred in two sectors, one, agricultural labour, which, rural based, may favour higher fertility, and the other, services, which presumably more urban based, may favour lower fertility.

Mortality

The third area that I wish briefly to touch is mortality. Here the statistics are too scanty to speculate upon future trends. But our confidence

of the last decade that the problem has been soundly tackled stands today a little shaken. I still do not believe that the life-expectancy revolution stands in the same predicament as the green revolution, or the obstacles assailing the green revolution have been aggravated by the fertilizer crisis. All we can say at the moment is that the war on mortality will still have to be tough and not so smoothsailing. Already all over India the Registrar General's sample registration system has indicated a distinct rise in mortality, only some of which but not all can be attributed to improved efficiency in registration. On the assumption of constancy in error, West Bengal indicates a low but distinct rise. How much of it is due to mortality at very young ages is not known for certain. But common experience shows that epidemics, weanling diarrhoea, diseases due to exposure and, very unfortunately, malaria are taking bigger tolls.

To an agricultural labourer and to persons who need little fresh capital to be able to produce or earn, an extra child is very good risk capital. The perceived cost of this risk capital for the first ten years, provided the child is not taken away to school to study, is so small and the perceived returns from it after the age of 10 are so tempting that it is very worthwhile for a woman agricultural labourer or small cultivator or handicraft worker to take the risk of another child on the basis of a slightly higher expectation of survival of the child to the age of 10 or even on an equal probability of death or survival. A woman, for replacement purposes, will be more prone to gamble on this risk capital the greater the chances of losing the child before 10, but she will gamble significantly less if the chances of loss diminish because she will spend more on the certainties of survival. The perceived cost of the child will grow if

the woman understands the value of education (that is, if she has some education herself and thinks it was worthwhile to have it) and still more if the woman is palpably working and earning by bringing home investible savings, for she will not like to risk losing her job and working efficiency by frequent child-bearing. On the other hand, she would aspire to leave childbearing and child-rearing as soon as possible behind her, to get the best wages or returns in the prime ages of 30-45.

This to me is the heart of the matter which has to be approached in an inter-disciplinary manner. Obviously the clinic approach alone will not suffice. It will also be wrong to think of folding our hands on our lap and sitting on our haunches waiting for the day when every woman has had education and work. It is of the utmost importance to organise and man the clinics, extend the rural health centres and sub-centres, spread the message and improve the efficiency and administration of the family planning movement. For admittedly this administration suffers from remarkable inefficiency in spite of brilliant and dedicated odd workers. But it is also important to think of the family planning campaign as an essential adjunct to day-to-day economic life.

One of the most obvious areas of neglect is the inefficiency of family planning activity in large white collar and blue collar establishments. Few large private or public sector offices have efficient counselling and family planning centres on the premises. Fewer still have creches attached in which working women can leave their babies and toddlers to effective care. Very few industrial workshops have adult education or efficient family planning counselling and servicing facilities. Few industrial canteens or fair price shops at all suggest any rough and ready cost benefit idea such as that if one did not have a child for two years he or she might go in for such and such an array of urgently needed goods with the savings on an unborn child. Few premises insist on the need of primary education for children or on the need for proper nutrition at young ages.

(To be concluded)

The Press

Prisoners Of Conscience

PATRAKAR

ALMOST the entire press including the leisure-pleasure mag, **Debonair**—discovered all of a sudden in September that a huge number of Naxalites had been languishing in jails without trial for the last five years and that there were serious allegations (sic!) of torture and other atrocities in and outside prison. The national press also woke up from its slumber; till then with the sole exception of **The Indian Express** which carried an editorial just after being taken over by Mr Mulgaojkar, all had maintained a self-imposed silence on the question.

This welcome break was, no doubt, a result of the pressure of public opinion, expedited by some national and international organisations, and championing of the Naxalite cause by some intrepid left journals.

The coverage of the controversy on the Naxalite prisoners' plight, at the same time, underlines how little our fourth estate cares for investigative reporting. Almost all the reports—prompted by a **Purba Taranga** story on torture of women prisoners—were second hand; mere faithful reproductions of allegations by the Association for the Protection of Democratic Rights and stories earlier published in various journals plus the version of the State Government. Little trace of any log-work, or even homework, not to speak of investigation. Not a single correspondent tried to meet any of the prisoners—not a very difficult task—and get firsthand information. Was it because it would not have gone on the right side of the powers that be?

The same evasive attitude was reflected in the coverage of the much-publicised Amnesty International report. No wonder, there were more than enough takers when the Government of India came out with a denial.

It should be remembered that initially the national press had by and large ignored the marathon hunger-strike by

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some prisoners in the four central jails in Calcutta—though Amnesty International had moved in, prepared a report and forwarded it to the Government of India, which did not even care to acknowledge it. (Incidentally, this news was scooped by *Pratipaksha*, whose chief editor happens to be chief of Amnesty in India.) Meanwhile came the widely-noticed appeal by 300 academics from all over the world.

Then, there was the Supreme Court ruling that convicts have fundamental rights, which prompted the Sunday editor of *The Times of India* to comment that gaolers have a free hand in dealing with the political prisoners.

In early September, *Illustrated Weekly* carried an article, 'political prisoners are persecuted', by Hironmay Dhar and Darryl D'Monte. In spite of the licence-scandal stealing the show of the session, it is 'their' journal.

On September 12 two of the New Delhi papers, *Hindustan Times* and *Indian Express*, published reports on Naxalite prisoners in West Bengal by their Calcutta correspondents. The emphasis of both the reports was on the torture side. After the publication of the Amnesty report, the *Times of India* also came out with a report from its Calcutta correspondent. All the three reports were too vegetarian; the special correspondents proved themselves brilliant stenographers, nothing more, nothing less.

Editorially almost everyone—except *The Statesman*—urged a "thorough and impartial enquiry into the grave charges". After the sharp reaction of the GOI on the Amnesty reports, the *Indian Express* put a very vital question: "Why the government did not come out with the facts for so long... if the allegations are exaggerated, the government has everything to gain by agreeing to the demand for an impartial enquiry". However the *Express* could not conceal the real cause of its concern: "the torture of undertrials will, instead of isolating the Naxalites, create a surge of public sympathy for them and what they stand for." (Emphasis added.) Even the conservative *Hindu* wanted an enquiry though it said that the charges seem exaggerated.

The Statesman, which was busy publishing 'special' reports on Naxalite regrouping in Bihar and West Bengal all these days, stood apart. After the publication of the Amnesty report it wrote an editorial, however. After wasting a precious 200 words to argue that 2000 and not 20,000 are behind bars (as if the number makes any difference) it concluded that their detention without trial, though "unpleasant", was "unavoidable" for the sake of democracy! Naxalite prisoners, it claimed, "have a good deal of internal freedom, perhaps too much, since there have been several concerted jail-breaks". (It conveniently forgot to mention the number of those killed in jails.)

The Times of India, which had earlier written a fairly balanced leader in a Sunday edition (referred to earlier) wrote an utterly miserable and biased editorial on the appeal of intellectuals academics (to counter-balance?). It said: "they acknowledge the prevalence of democracy in India and then go on to campaign on behalf of those who are out to subvert democracy". A known Gandhian, Ramadhar, hit back in the letters column: "When the Naxalites allegedly indulged in violence to 'subvert' the so-called democratic system, they were arrested and sent to jails and thus prevented from doing any harm. The friends from the West have questioned not the right of the government to take such actions but to violate its own laws and the code of treatment for prisoners."

Smugglers All

A New Delhi weekly has taken upon itself the role of a crusader against Hazi Mastan Mirza, one of the smuggler kingpins. However, it has conveniently forgotten to publish anything about another kingpin—though in all probability it must have had a bulkier dossier on him; he is said to be a friend of the weekly's editor, who admitted recently of having given shelter to the former "to save him from the wrath of Mastan".

In sharp contrast, another weekly avoided the name of Mastan like a plague. Just after a change in the editorial chair, the weekly had published an 'exclusive' interview with him—depicting what a great philanthropist he was.

Soon after the interview was published, the new editor came to mysteriously acquire the majority of shares of the weekly and he is now virtually the sole owner.

Music & Dance—A New Dimension

By A CRITIC

THE organisers of Sur Bahar, a centre of cultural studies at Kasba, arranged a festival of ballets and dance-drama based on the toiling and oppressed masses at Rabindra Sadan. The ballet sketch *Matha Makkhan* depicted through classical dances and music the humdrum daily life of an Ahir (milkman) accompanied by melodious voices rendering *elap* and *khvals* in Ahir Bhairon, Bilabhal, Lalit, Tarana in Sudha Sarang and Thumri in Pilu. But the international ballad 'John Henry' composed on the Negro miner singing the glory of labour could not fairly convey the message of the human soul's ideological triumph over the forces of tyranny and oppression, owing to shortage of time. However, *Manasa Mangal Pala*, the major attraction of the evening, brought out a new dimension—the social and political problems of the present in the context of the past. The playwright, Mr Sunil Saha, succeeded in putting the theme of this folklore in a logical sequence through dance and music and to raise a voice of protest against social evils in the garb of religion and superstition. The tyrant and hypocrite Manasa was comparable to the power-mongers of the present day, bent upon achieving their ends at any cost. Chand was portrayed as a human spirit which faces all the conspiracies and machinations of evil and unscrupulous forces veiled in Manasa and Neta, the accomplice. Both Arati Mazumder and Shambhu Bhattacharya were excellent in their execution of the characters of Manasa and Chand respectively. Anuradha Maitra (Neta), Madhumita Maitra (Behula), Dhurjoti Sen (Kalnag) and

a host of young dancers also did well in their respective roles. The entire choreography was based on folk style and resourceful Bengali folk songs were very effectively utilised by Hemango Biswas. Krishna Samadder, Rathin Banerjee and others contributed largely to its musical success. Stage decor by Nirmalya Nag and Salil Mazumder deserves artistic appreciation.

Book Review

The Fiend As Philanthrope

I. K. SHUKLA

THE horse used in ancient India's Ashwamedha was a crude cousin of the wooden one the Greeks devised and smuggled into Troy. Both were instruments of aggression. As for Helen, if there was none at hand one could be invented for the launching of warships and lobbing of bombs. That foreign "aid" is a sinister source of sabotage and remote control exercised by the USA against the Third World, despite trappings of Christian charity, and that like the CIA it is a part of the State Department's foreign policy pursuits, diluting the sovereignty and dynamiting the freedom of the recipient countries, is investigatively brought out in a work of research value by Steve Weissman, members of Pacific Studies Center and the North American Congress of Latin America (**The Trojan Horse: A Radical Look at Foreign Aid**, Ramparts Press, San Francisco, pp. 250, \$4.95, Feb. 1974). Neo-imperialism and neo-colonialism are far more insidious and extensive than is generally known. Some of its guises and ramifications are laid bare in the dozen articles comprised in this book.

Interestingly, religion has obligingly been in tandem with the overt and covert aggression throughout the ages. A news item (**Times of India**, Oct. 12) on the Director-General of International Monetary Fund, Mr J. Witteveen, visiting India, carried at the end an enlight-

ening piece of information: "He is interested in the Sufi cult and may visit some dargahs in India". Not much to cavil at this innocent hobby? But, let readers recall, on Mr R. C. Majumdar's testimony, the twin faces of Sufism in India. In his Kemala lectures at Calcutta University in 1966, he said: "The Sufis fought against the local Hindu chiefs in collaboration with the Muslim rulers, but sometimes even on their own account, because they knew that fighting for the cause of Islam was sanctioned by the Islamic law. The most notable instance is that of Sheikh Shah Jalal... on a campaign of subduing all Hindu States which ended with the conquest of Sylhet. The Sufis also interfered in internal politics in order to mould State policies. They successfully protested against the policy adopted by the Sultan Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah of appointing the Hindus to high posts. It was a Sufi leader who invited the Muslim Sultan of Jaunpur to invade Bengal and destroy the power of the Hindu ruler Ganes. These facts should be remembered by those who are apt to look upon the Sufis only as a set of liberal-minded pious Muslim saints who brought about a cordial relation between the Hindus and Muslims. The fear of the Sufi Pirs who exercised great political authority, and the hope of receiving favour from them have been regarded by some, not without reason, as one of the factors that induced the Hindus to revere the Muslim saints..." (pp. 130-131). This rather lengthy quote can be better appreciated by referring in the same news item to the speculation that "the IMF might insist on laying down policy guidelines for the government as a condition for advancing more loans". Thus are nations crippled.

On October 23, addressing a U.N. development forum, the Nobel Laureate, Dr Gunnar Myrdal, gave foreign aid a clinical description by saying: "American aid is translated into military and political strategy". Despite this anti-septic look, foreign aid remains a "sophisticated instrument of control" and is nothing apart from overall policy of American expansionism and dominance. The aid-givers coordinate their beneficence with other levers of con-

trol, from diplomatic pressure and private philanthropy to military intervention. Security assistance, development assistance, humanitarian aid are the various labels used as guiles. The only unique feature of this assistance is that it aids the giver more than the recipient. If anything, this aid degrades and disintegrates the latter. Aeneid could well have said: "Do not trust the AID, simpletons". Only, Virgil should have been living in our century so that the last two words in the above would not be "horse, Trojans".

It is a fact that "the U.S. gives so many different kinds of aid—beans, bullets, dollars, DDT—sprinkled with so much rhetoric and intended to pry loose so many different things. Foreign aid buys it all: the continued existence of anticommunist governments in South-east Asia, access to raw materials in Latin America, markets for American fertilisers everywhere, aid buys or even builds local allies to help the aid-givers pursue a whole range of interests".

'Development' Aid

And the so-called development assistance through the UN, the World Bank, and other multi-national institutions? For whom does it bring development? The answer is obvious, according to Steve Weissman: "for the multinational businessmen who dominate the World Bank. For, with all that, "the world's burden of poverty is increasing rather than declining". Development, or even military, aid "might jack up the per capita GNP figure in Korea, Taiwan, or Brazil. But the development doesn't trickle down very far".

As to the growing gap between the rich countries of the Northern and the poor countries of the Southern hemisphere, let us hear George Ball: "We are not going to reduce the disparity... it has been growing and will continue to grow... With luck the poor will get richer, but the rich will, in absolute terms, get richer much faster". We all know luck favours the rich.

Whatever the form of aid, or even trade, Weissman concludes: "We see no realistic way in which the rich na-

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tions can transfer resources to the poor without pursuing their own profits and expanding their own power." So development assistance "as a new form of imperialism" merits, in the view of the radical researchers, "early burial close behind the old imperialism". Neither Green Berets (Vietnam) nor multi-nationals (IT & T) are availing.

For an answer, without being a radical one, can look up to "the experience of China". Observers have been impressed by two principles, says Weissman. One, as the World Bank economist Mahbubul Haq puts it: "(The Chinese) looked at the problem of development from the point of view of eradication of poverty and not of reaching a certain per capita income level". Let Weissman go at it: "Capitalist development generally builds on the best, investing where the rate of return is greatest. This favours those who already have skills and capital, and it provides first for those who already have the income to generate demand". The Chinese Communists built on the worst. They attacked the worst forms of poverty first: malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, squalor, unemployment, and inequalities. The Chinese worried less about how much was produced and for whom. Development trickled up, not down."

And the second principle? It is "even more impressive: they did it, and without us". Us is, as is evident, the USA. He refers the reader to "Capitalist and Maoist Economic Development", Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, June 1970, for "a brilliant comparison of detrickled up, not down."

If anti-communism and counter-insurgency were the motivations behind aid in the past, now it is "development". Never ask whose. Grant, a veteran of AID's pacification drive in Vietnam, warns, "If we are to develop a firm deterrent to anarchy and subversion in two-thirds of the world seized by the revolution of rising expectations, something far more fundamental than AID is required". But why multi-nationals? The answer is pointed, though primitive (the U.S. threatened the oil producers in the Middle East with war): "Because they have greater potential for intervening effectively into the domestic affairs of

a developing country". The job is assigned to the Overseas Development Council in Washington. On its Board of Directors are Rockefeller and other tycoons, for aid, like charity, begins at home. The ODC has on it churchmen, civic leaders, representatives of giant foundations and universities. The top men of the top universities rub shoulders with the Trustees of Ford and Rockefeller foundations on the ODC. Edward Mason of the Harvard Development Advisory Service worked for the CIA. His efforts blossomed into MIT's Center for International Studies. Earlier he was with the Office of Strategic Services, its Research and Analysis (R&A) Branch. (So, our RAW too is borrowed from there. Only, Wing has greater range and mobility than Branch). Area study programmes in the U.S. universities burgeoned, designed for scholastic conditioning as an offshoot of intelligence. Bundy noted with satisfaction "a high measure of interpenetration between universities with area programmes and information-gathering agencies of the government of the US". Ford Foundation pioneered the elite-building drive in the captive third world. The Presidential Commission on Private Enterprise in Foreign Aid, 1965, said, "At every opportunity we ought to broaden and strengthen the private sector."

Where do organisations like the World Bank fit in? "The poor nations were growing more fearful of American control; the World Bank could exercise greater control with lower visibility". The IMF and the World Bank were given a big role in supporting private investment in the poor countries. The aid-seekers are dictated a Letter of Intent to redress the imbalances in their economies through stability (status quo) and deflation, free trade. Chile, Peru, Argentina, Colombia, Philippines and India have bowed to the pressures of IMF-IBRD-World Bank, from time to time. When they agree to devalue it is not only their currency, but much else besides, that gets compromised. Hongkong-based China watchers' and U.S.-trained China scholars' demurral notwithstanding.

For U.S. Economy

Even a small statistical detail will give

enough insight into what AID does for the U.S. economy. "It is said that the U.S. sends funds abroad. This is not true. Mostly, the U.S. sends goods and services abroad". AID dollars buy goods from over 4,000 American companies and pay some 1,000 private institutions, firms, and individuals in all 50 States for technical and professional services to carry out projects overseas. In 1970, AID funds bought commodities valued at \$976 million from all over the U.S., accounting for 98% of AID-financed commodity procurement. AID had 1,284 active technical service contracts with private institutions, companies, and individuals, valued at \$632 million. Of these, 127 American colleges and universities held 332 contracts worth \$242 million. "The International Finance Corporation and the International Development Association are affiliates of the IMF and the World Bank, their membership nearly the same. (Whose interests the World Bank serves became recently clear when **The Times of India**, October 12, reported that it would give credit worth \$31 million to the FCI and FACT for installing fertiliser plants. But the sets will have to be imported since BHEL would take a long time manufacturing them!)

The two essays on the IMF and the World Bank bare their role in the world capitalist system and provide an invaluable tool for predicting the alternatives and the chances for success of attempted revolutions, and for understanding the real reasons for the failure of democracy in the Third World. It would then no more remain a mystery why IMF missions descend like vultures in the wake of right-wing coups in countries such as Ghana, Indonesia, and Brazil. The resources it controls and its power to interfere in the internal affairs of borrowing nations give it the authority of which U.N. advocates can only dream. Only the U.S. military establishment with its client armies can rival the IMF as the key institution of imperialism in the world today, and their functions are complementary. The discipline imposed by the IMF has often eliminated the need for direct military intervention in order to preserve a climate friendly towards foreign investments. Those defying its "advice" forfeit

credit all major sources of the capitalist world which has delegated immense authority to the IMF making it a supra-national leviathan. The poor nations are vulnerable because of foreign exchange difficulties which result from many factors. Once in the noose of debts, there is no getting out. Debts to Indonesia after the 1965 coup had impelled **The Far Eastern Economic Review** to ask: "Do donors really intend to force Djakarta into bankruptcy in the long run? Or does the West believe the enormous debts are essential to control Suharto?" It is a redundant question. Neo-colonialism first lures and then licks up nations. How the failure is blamed on "socialist" policies makes funny reading. The recipients become permanent peons of the "international debt slavery" that the IMF inflicts on them. Let alone socialist, not even social-welfare measures are allowed by the IMF. The policies it requires "penalise the average citizen by reducing his income and raising the prices of essential goods, and services". Indonesia provides a case study of massive unemployment, and a large number of native-owned industries closing down, thanks to the ravenous appetite (advice) of the IMF. As to devaluation, its favourite prescription, the three groups that benefit by it are: exporters i.e., kulaks or foreign corporations owning mines or plantations; foreign consumers of these exports; and foreign companies buying up local businesses hit by the recession (a form of invisible export), thus the scheme ostensibly meant to arrest inflation and improve the balance of payments produces just the opposite effect. "The rigid linkage of control of inflation with devaluation and currency convertibility plus incentives for foreign investment effectively shut off all alternatives for autonomous national development." Cuba did not agree to peso convertibility and welcome foreign investment, nor did Japan allow the latter. It has both growth and currency stability. If the IMF could have had its say Cuba and Japan would now be in the beggars' brigade. The crucial part played by the IMF in the Third World with respect to subversion of social revolutions and the death of democracy must

be studied to be believed. Bolivia is a pointer. India 1957 and Chile need not be forgotten as documented cases. There is a fundamental contradiction between obedience to the IMF's demands and responsibility to the electorate in a democracy. In Argentina military repression is necessary to contain popular unrest and to prevent populist leaders opting for a radical solution. "The destruction of democracy seems well under way in Ceylon at present."

"Alliance For Progress"

There are other caboodles in the game—Alliance for Progress. It strengthened Latin American armies, defended U.S. business, and helped native elites stave off basic reforms. Not Kennedy or Castro, its real father is Rockefeller. The best known Alliance intellectual is W. W. Rostow, an expert on paramilitary counter-insurgency, who calls communists "scavengers of the modernisation process". Schlesinger speaks of Kennedy's "absolute determination to prevent any new state from going down the Castro road and so giving the Soviet Union a second bridgehead in the hemisphere." CIA, AID, USA and the Pentagon join in subverting the nations in Latin America and elsewhere. The Peace Corps is part of it. Argentina, Peru, Guatemala, Ecuador, Dominican Republic and Honduras had military coups in less than a year of Kennedy's brave words that Alliance would be non-militaristic. But, Latin America is a major source of essential raw materials and a major market for the U.S. products. Any threat to profits is a national threat. The U.S. simply pre-empted it. The havoc that the U.S. military and merchants are causing to Latin America will make the devil appear an angel. By the way, most U.S. consular staff abroad are trained in espionage and counter-insurgency.

David Ransom details how the USA built up the elite in Indonesia. It is blood-curdling to learn that behind the massacre were U.S.-trained economists and intellectuals, and that the students were "used" for toppling Soekarno. The star figures were Soedjatmoko and Sumitro, affluent, socialists.

Judy Carnoy and Louise Levison in

a chapter "The Humanitarians" expose the UN, Catholic Relief Services, CARE, International Rescue Service, and other voluntary agencies serving U.S. foreign policy interests slyly, cynically.

"Herbert Hoover Feeds the World" and "Food for Peace Arsenal" by Walter Cohen and Israel Yost unmask the crimes and conspiracies made respectable under these programmes. How these undermine the recipient nations is well worth a look by the pleaders for U.S. charity.

There is an "orgy of construction" on in South Vietnam, the U.S. is the beneficiary. For raw materials and a captive market the U.S. has plans for keeping it so permanently underdeveloped that the NLF will have a ready grist to its mill of mobilising the natives. Green Revolution in South Vietnam is being pushed through bombing. Sounds weird? Read Garrett here. Revolution can be Red only. Of special interest to us must be the last three essays on the Green Revolution and Military Aid. Why Borlaug got the Nobel Prize net for biology but peace, has not bothered us. Well, here is the query with its answer. Even the eight-point summary on page 191 is illuminating. And the mechanics of military aid and its cognates of murky manoeuvres form the theme of Lenny Siegel's write-up on the military. Why police aid is necessary for tyrants abroad in the interest of the USA forms the subject-matter of the Stein/Klare article.

Readers will be interested to know that Kissinger held summer seminars for Indonesian elites at Harvard. He was also associated with some voluntary agencies of the U.S. laddling out aid under the charity umbrella. His presidency of the '40 Committee and CIA connection make him an outstanding cloak-and-dagger figure so essential for promoting U.S. foreign policy aims.

Global subversion by the U.S. is now a well developed science and should form a major subject of study in its own right. More than criticism, this book is a critique of the U.S. and its satellite agencies in and outside the UN in their murderous aspects. China experts trained in the U.S. must not study it. It is too bitter for their palates, too burning for their stomachs.

Letter

Indo-U.S. Commission

What some of us have been apprehending from the time Mrs Indira Gandhi visited Teheran and met Dr Kissinger secretly and also the heads of many American multi-national corporations has now come to be true with the revelation of the proposed Indo-U.S. joint commission which will associate American private enterprise with so-called efforts to promote economic co-operation, which is nothing but a garb for exploitation of the Indian economy. They will control trade, economic relations, science, technology and cultural affairs. This is a complete sell-out.

I have gathered from very responsible quarters that in Teheran the American multi-national corporations insisted on i) keeping these corporations out of the purview of the Foreign Exchange Regulations Act so as to enable them to remit their profits without any ceiling or control; (ii) exemption from certain sections of the direct taxes, e.g. corporation tax, wealth tax, etc. etc.; (iii)

more liberal treatment for them in the matter of customs, excise, import and export regulation; and (iv) an assurance from the Government of India that they should handle the employees and workers with a very firm hand.

There will be a significant departure from the pattern of joint activities, as for example, with Soviet Russia; in this case the sub-group of the economic commission will be dominated and controlled by American private firms which will enable the U.S. private sector to bleed us white.

Even European countries like France (specially in the De Gaulle regime) kept the Americans out of the major field of economic activities. The ECM had also shown a hard attitude towards the same. Very recently they have been critical of some of the U.S. multi-national corporation like IBM and threatened to take action against them. The Public Accounts Committee of both Houses of Parliament, of which I am the present Chairman, last year published a revealing report which shows how very powerful they are in every sphere in our life and are always dictating their terms without any hind-

rance. For an item where landed cost is about Rs. 500 they charge the government around Rs. 3500.

Mrs Gandhi's association with the American ruling class, the Pentagon and the CIA is no news to us. Even today there is a joint electronic surveillance system operating on the India-China borders where the International Dynamics Corporation collaborates with Bharat Dynamics, a public sector body. And during the India-China conflict the American airforce planes (bombers and photographers) were secretly allowed to use our airfields for illegal flights over Chinese territory. Our top intelligence officers are sent to the CIA for training in counter-insurgency. I know the number is quite substantial.

The Americans are after another game. After being driven out from Vietnam they are now looking for a place to consolidate in order to dominate over Indian Ocean politics. They have made Diago Garcia a war base equipped with modern and nuclear weapons. Mrs Gandhi's complete surrender will kill many birds with one stone.

Jyotirmoy Bosu, MP

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