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TO THE RICH, WITH LOVE

MR C. Subramaniam has done it. And far more daringly than his predecessor, Mr Y. B. Chavan, ever attempted to do. His budget has met cally point by point the demands of big business. He has agreed to virtually practically point by point the demands of big business. He has agreed to virtually clamouring for a long time. He has extended the facilities under tax holidays, raised the concessions under initial depreciation allowance and widened the span and coverage of the development rebate. He has withdrawn depreciation in respect of imported cars acquired after February 28, 1975 and at the same time has allowed full depreciation for indigenous cars, irrespective of their costs. A more novel gift for the makers of Indian cars is difficult to imagine. But, if we are not mistaken, it was Mr Subramaniam who had described the Ambassador cars as tin-boxes and Hindustan Motors as a junkshop when he was serving a stint as the Minister for Industrial Development some years ago. Mr Subramaniam will make India safe for the capitalists.

It would be wrong to say however that the Finance Minister has not thought of the common man. He has, insofar as it is necessary to serve his purpose. The common man in India is perhaps the most docile creature on earth. Every year the budget keeps on adding to his burden. Still, when it comes to accepting more burden, he is full of grace. Mr Subramaniam has accordingly put another load of Rs 288 crores on his shoulder as the first instalment. More will come as the year progresses. Almost everything that the middle classes and the poor consume has been brought under additional taxation. And even those items which have been left uncovered by the tax net will also now be many times dearer, if only in sympathy. But the purchasing power of the fixed income group remains fixed, indeed is being reduced because of the price rise. Even the payment of dearness allowance has become an issue of intense study and imputed importance. The longer it is delayed, the better it is for the Government. Yes, a few sops have been thrown at the middle class like the increased income-tax rebate on account of provident fund deductions and life insurance premiums. But the few bucks that it may save from all this would be more than swept away by the burgeoning bill on other necessities. With the elections not very far off, Mr Subramaniam apparently has tamed his socialist fervour which, so has been our impression, boils in the heart of many of our distinguished leaders. He for one at least has not mistaken which side of the bread is buttered.

Rising Tensions

Tensions have somewhat heightened after the U.S. decision to lift the arms embargo on Pakistan—and India—and the installation of Sheikh Abdullah as the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. The Congress party itself is facing some tension—or excitement—after the summary expulsion from the Central Council of Ministers of Mr Mohan Dharia for his advocacy of a dialogue with Mr J. P. Narayan. The U.S. decision has provided the ruling party with a diversionary tactic to distract the attention of the people from their economic and political misery. The counter-offensive of Sheikh Abdullah against Mr Bhutto serves the same purpose. The Dharia episode is providing a futile debate on democratic norms, consensus, reconciliation and all that in a country where the vast majority is illiterate and starving. It is a debate for the elite, though it does not mean that Mr Dharia does not deserve any compliments for his nonconformism.

What about Sheikh Abdullah? Many people are glad that this tall fighter is back in power after a lapse of about 22 years. But he has returned on other terms, stooping to the lady. He stood for the right of self-determination, but now he will have to change the nomenclature of the Plebiscite Front, after his deal with Mrs Indira Gandhi which does not concede much autonomy to Kashmir. Under the system there is very little that he can do to ease the economic crisis in the State. Temporary and limited jubilation over his come-back will soon give way to disillusionment—and to greater repression of dissidents. The Sheikh seems to think that he has an all-India role; as a Congress-backed champion of 'secular and democratic forces' he may wield some influence on the Muslim masses in the next elections—at least that is the idea of the ruling party. But can a leader who goes back on his stance retain the same influence Time alone can tell. Perhaps Sheikh Abdullah is already rather uneasy. He

could have ignored Mr Bhutto and got down to his task at home. The flare-up of the debate on whether Kashmir is an internal affair or not can be a welcome diversion. There is no dearth of people who think that so long as Kashmir remains on the U.N. agenda, it is not a domestic affair.

The hostile Awami Action Committee of Mirwaiz Farooq apart, there are others who distrust the Sheikh. The Jan Sangh thinks that he will turn out to be a Trojan horse at the opportune moment. Of these bigoted critics the less said the better. The Sheikh will have little independence of action so long as the massive presence of the Indian Army in Kashmir continues. It is reported that the Sheikh revised his pro-plebiscite stand after Bangladesh

which, in fact, should have strengthened the argument for a plebiscite. But the Sheikh was convinced by the might of the Indian Army and decided to fall in line. He has travelled a long and tortuous path. Let's see what changes follow his fresh accession to power. He will be wearing a crown of thorns in his earthly paradise. The ruling party is perhaps crooning too soon over Kashmir.

Over Kashmir, Mrs Gandhi was in favour of reconciliation. About Mr Dharia, she has been ruthless: no reconciliation, no nonsense. The non-CPI opposition is pointing out that while she is a very loyal friend of unscrupulous fund-raisers, she does not hesitate to chuck out honest Joneses. Are there shades of Sheikh Mujibur in her latest act of intolerance? And what is she going to do about the recalcitrant Chogyal of Sikkim?

After the Convention

The citizens' convention in Calcutta to demand restoration of democratic rights and civil liberty in West Bengal was evidence not so much of strange realignment of political forces in the State as of the near-total isolation of the ruling party. The convention was attended by almost all political parties in West Bengal save, of course, the ruling party and its unfailing ally, the CPI. Three of the left parties did not attend the convention, because parties like the Congress (O) and the Jan Sangh were associated with it; they had no quarrel with the aims of the convention. Even the CPI's support to the Congress on this issue is not stable, it seems conditional on the ruling party's agreeing to a fair sharing of seats with the CPI in the coming parliamentary election. Having been in alliance with the Congress in the 1972 Assembly election, it is not possible for the CPI to endorse the leftist allegation of rigging; after all, it is a CPI nonentity who defeated Mr

Jyoti Basu at Baranagar, but CPI leaders are on record that in the Congress regime citizens are being denied their democratic and fundamental rights. The CPI has set a price on its support to the Congress, and its criticism may gain in stridency if the ruling party refuses to pay the price.

The West Bengal Chief Minister whose sudden ascendance to power is comparable only to that of Abu Hossain of the Arabian Nights has been, as usual, unable to grasp the significance of the convention. He has warned Mr Sen that he may meet the fate of Mr Ajoy Mukherjee if he collaborated with the CPI(M), forgetting that politically Mr Mukherjee started hurtling downhill when he ganged up with the Congress. He shot into a short-lived epiphany and twice became Chief Minister of West Bengal when he threw in his lot with the leftists; that it was imprudent of the left to elevate him to that key position is a different matter.

Mr Sen remains an inveterate anti-communist, and Mr Jyoti Basu has not become overnight ardent admirer of the former Chief Minister; the past has not been forgotten by either. Only a natural urge for political survival has brought them together, they have realised that the long and rapid strides along the democratic path that the Congress is taking, using its Congress and youth cadre as stilts, may soon bring about a situation in which there will be no Congress (O) and the CPI(M) even to fight between themselves. It is the Congress party's calculated use of murder and mayhem as instruments of policy that has led to this otherwise impossible combination.

The opposition parties should not be under any illusion that Mr Ray will yield to the demands voiced at the convention; to concede will amount to abdication. There is not much time left for him to plan his electioneering strategy so that the Congress may again be safely ensconced in office. With the steep decline in the personal popularity of the Prime Minister the party is likely to depend more heavily on the proven methods of 1972 to win the election. What the opposition parties can look forward to is not a return to democratic norms of conduct on the part of the Government but further curtailment of people's rights. The rights have to be wrested from the hands of a reluctant government. Obviously, this cannot be done by passing resolutions. Whether the opposition parties are prepared to undertake a more hazardous programme than mere talking and whether they will be able to remain united when a mass movement takes to its inexorable course are not clear yet.

The Confrontation

A.P.M.

THIS year began with a convinced statement from the citadel of Indian entrepreneurship, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), that industry had already come under the "cloud of recessionary forces". There was a quick rebuttal from the Government side, by no less a person than the Prime Minister herself. The private sector's cries of anguish, simulated or genuine, have since then been smothered quickly by stout denials and increasingly rosy picturisations of the economy in the first two months of 1975. At times it looked as if private enterprisewallahs had finally succumbed to New Delhi's spirited defence of the generally messy manner in which Mrs Gandhi's Government has so far tackled the economic and financial problems.

Now, after the lull in the private sector's hesitant attempts to build up an informed public opinion critical of the administration of economic and allied issues, comes a sign of renewed activity. The Tata Engineering and Locomotive Co. Ltd. (TELCO) has started issuing a two-page questionnaire to various industrial units, containing queries on the recipients' production performances, market trends, approximate sales, etc. The choice of units which have already received the questionnaire is wide and therefore, significant; apparently, an attempt is being made to undertake as comprehensive a survey as feasible for a private organisation. The questionnaire intends to assess the actual state of affairs in the industrial sector of the economy as being experienced by the large, medium and small-scale units. It seems unlikely that the TELCO as an individual company would be interested in this sort of survey, for it is certainly wider in scope than a modest attempt at charting demand projections for one's products. One probability is that the Tatas, and stretching the inference further, the Swatantra Party, are interested in the outcome of the survey, possibly to be used as a tool against the

statistical bulldozer. New Delhi is unleashing almost daily on a still largely sceptical citizenship.

The lingering debate on the existence of a recession in the Indian economy exposes yet again the peculiar relationship existing between the Government and business in this country. The latter criticises the former on policy matters only to an extent; as if an agreement on this far and no farther has to be honoured. Of course, the essentially gentlemanly approach both sides adopt owes its origin to the wider class relationship of the two. But, they fight mainly on ideological grounds at least to a point and this aspect makes such engagement all the more interesting. Indian business has a very valid reason to be eternally grateful to the Government because it is the latter which has made it possible for both industry and trade to operate in a virtually competition-less market. It has been long acknowledged that no capitalist country has ever provided the extent of protection that India has extended to her private sector. This situation has of course led to two developments now equally well known: the average rate of growth of profit in all these years has been enormous (this is something which even government statistics cannot, or do not, hide) and the constant absence of competition has rendered Indian trade and industry almost totally incapable of facing rivalry in world markets. After all, what has been India's achievement in export? For every bit of foreign exchange that an Indian exporter earns, scores of domestic buyers have to pay through their noses in order to subsidise the export which has actually been done at a loss. The export subsidy comes from the effectively covered home market and this is something that may not be uncomprehending even to a Youth Congressman.

All this comes out in the open whenever a confrontation develops between the Government and business in this country. Recently, government spokesmen have been uncommonly harsh in replying to the private sector's tales of woe. This might indicate a growing unwillingness to pamper a spoilt child to an extent made unnecessary by the

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bounty already bestowed on it. But there is reason to suspect that this development is confined to fewer people than the Government of the day comprises.

Closest Affinity.

The first quarter of 1975 perhaps witnessed the closest ideological affinity between Government and business in independent India. The paradox of a private sector making hay while the economy as a whole suffers has never been more apparent. True, 1974 has been a bad year for the industrial sector, but the trading sector has reaped a harvest of uncommon size. And when the close relationship, and often the identification of, between the two sectors is remembered, it may be appreciated that the loss or relatively less profits in one has been more than compensated by huge profits in the other. Almost all big business houses are involved in the sugar industry; it is common knowledge that the government policy pursued since 1973 in respect of this industry has enabled these houses to profit on a scale which is quite truthfully unprecedented. New Delhi has kept on reassuring the private sector paper industry, 80% of which is controlled by five houses, that it would not be taken over. One Central Ministry has till now successfully prevented another Ministry from initiating a retention price policy in respect of new cement units which the older units, all owned by large houses, oppose vehemently because it would disturb their profit making in relation to the new ones. Most foreign-owned large-profitability companies are branching out into high-profitability, low-risk fields through the excellent loophole of the obligation to comply with the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act. The Minister of State dealing with petroleum and pharmaceuticals had to make it very clear to whoever was interested that the Government was still far from committing a sacrilege like planning to take over the foreign drug companies. In short, the private sector has every reason to remain grateful to such an astonishingly understanding Government.

This essentially intimate relationship is sometimes overshadowed by temporary conflicts, like the one concerning recession. When these conflicts can also be developed into political materials, the private sector's tenacity to pursue them becomes noticeable. It is probably this that is happening in the case of the TELCO questionnaire.

Interview with Mohammad Toaha

LASSE BERG

L.B.: How would you describe the present situation in Bangladesh?

M.T.: There has been a gradual transformation in the attitude of the common people in respect of this Government. The Government headed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman played all the tricks in the past and successfully hoodwinked the people in respect of their economic and various other problems. It is well known that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, while he agitated on the six-point programme, promised the people that he would feed them. Rice would be sold at Rs. 20 taka per maund and wheat at 10 taka. Now the people are experiencing quite different conditions. The Government is now totally isolated from the people. That is the whole position.

L.B.: So what should be done to change this situation?

M.T.: Personally I believe, and my associates also believe, in certain principles. Revolutionary change is a task of the people. It depends on the people and if they can be organised a successful revolutionary change can be effected. The precondition for that is the unity of the left and patriotic forces. This is what we generally think. A revolutionary change is inevitable, nobody can check it. The temper of the people is also changing on that line. There is still a vacuum in the leadership of the left movement, so to say. So unity of the left forces and other patriotic sections of the people can create conditions where-

in we can go ahead and expect a revolutionary change in our country.

L.B.: How should this revolution come about?

M.T.: As I have already told you, the revolution is the task of the millions. When millions of people will move then you can expect a revolutionary change, otherwise no. It is not just a job of a handful of people with a revolutionary determination and courage—that is not enough. The main task of carrying forward the revolutionary struggle depends on leadership, but leadership must be connected with the masses, who are the real force of the revolution. So, fighting mass struggles, mass movements headed by a revolutionary party organised on the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Mao thought can lead the country to our expected goal. That is what we think, there is no alternative.

L.B.: What do you think will be the role of various foreign countries if there is a revolutionary development in Bangladesh? Do you foresee any foreign intervention in such a case?

M.T.: Perhaps this question should have been widely discussed in the context of the whole so-called liberation struggle. We are of the clear opinion that the war of 1971 was conspiratorially arranged by interested imperialist powers in collaboration with their agents in our country. The agents are now at the top of the Government. Naturally they will never welcome a revolutionary change in our country. We issued a statement (in which) we made certain observations in respect of the role of the imperialist powers, particularly the USA, Soviet Russia and India. These three foreign powers are not interested in any good of this country. Any change for the better for the people can be achieved only through a revolutionary change.

In the creation of Bangladesh both the super-powers had their hands. It was internationally conspired. This however doesn't mean that people didn't want their right of self-determination. During this long period of 25 years

that the left democratic movement developed, they read the temper and will of the people and accordingly they formulated their political line. The Marxist-Leninist Party of this country was in a pioneer in putting forward a real solution on the question of the national problem of Pakistan. Pakistan was carved out of two slabs of territory with five linguistic nationalities. The birth of Pakistan did not lead to any solution of this national question. So the Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries moved with the times, they tried to study the will of the people. On that basis when it became clear that this regionally separated wing should have its full right of secession, the Marxists-Leninists put forward a programme before the people and, as a matter of fact, this scared the imperialist powers and their collaborating agents. This national question definitely would have been solved by the people through a scientific method, on the basis of the Marxist-Leninist principle of national self-determination. Before the left progressives and particularly the Marxist-Leninists could take concrete steps in organising the people on this particular demand and also on general socio-political issues, they were forestalled by imperialist powers and their agents. Mujib's six-point programme and his subsequent movement was nothing but the product of this conspiracy against the right of national self-determination of the people of this wing as the people of the other parts of Pakistan. Our people wanted their democratic right of national self-determination, they wanted liberation from the clutches of imperialist exploiters and their inter-

nal collaborating classes, particularly the feudal class in the villages. Before that desire could be given a proper shape the enemies of the people backed by the imperialist powers sabotaged the whole movement. Now people are realising what is what. You have already seen the change that has taken place in the course of these three years. Three years before when Mujib agitated people took him to be the real deliverer. Today the picture is otherwise.

L.B.: 75% of the development budget in Bangladesh is at present financed by foreign aid. What is your opinion on the effect of foreign aid in Bangladesh?

M.T.: You see, it has destroyed our whole economy, so to say. A nation can build itself up only by observing certain principles. Number one: it must have the courage to stand on its own feet. Foreign assistance may be necessary but it is not the main thing, particularly in a poor country like ours with 70 million people. Here so much manpower is wasted. We can build up certain sectors of our economy only by labour-intensive methods. We believe our country can be built up only by using our own resources first. Foreign assistance may be needed in the sphere of technical know-how etc.

L.B.: What form does repression take in this country?

M.T.: Perhaps foreigners do not know the types of repression that go on here. When the Awami Leaguers in 1971 started their so-called liberation movement they consciously took certain measures just to curb the genuine freedom fighters. A secret circular was issued by the central office of the Awami League that the leftists must be treated as enemies. So they organised repression in the urban areas, with the hooligans and thieves in the villages; they called it volunteer corps. Since the beginning of the so-called liberation movement launched by the Awami League they started killing and repressing the left progressives. A secret circular, we are told, signed by the government in exile in India, said the leftists should be disarmed and killed. The authenticity of this document cannot be denied because

we have seen it with our own eyes.

During those nine months of so-called liberation struggle they organised several armed bands in India. One is the Mujib Bahini which was trained by a Major General of the Indian Army. They were organised only to kill the genuine left forces. They entered Bangladesh after December 16 and started killing the left progressive forces. In certain districts even whole villages were surrounded by the Mujib Bahini people backed by the Indian Army and then they looted everything, they killed whomsoever they came across, a reign of terror was let loose throughout the area.

After this emigre Government was flown into the country and placed at the helm of affairs, they organised one after another several killer gangs. There is the Red Guards in Bengali, it is called the Lal Bahini; there is another, the Green Guards, Shabuj Bahini. In the villages these Green Guards are organised to repress the peasants. These volunteer corps have established concentration camps and torture chambers. They go out at night, catch hold of the people, take them to the torture chamber; killing is the final stage. Several torture chambers have been established throughout the country in different areas. Everywhere Awami League MPs are the top bosses. You might have heard about the so-called Special Team, they have got police squads for killing and some of the important officers in the police department having direct links with the Prime Minister, Home Minister etc get the directives and they go on with their plan. Mujib the other day decried secret killings, but who are the secret killers? They organise the secret killer gangs. Retaliatory measures are there no doubt; but these retaliations are not

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done by the politically organised, conscious revolutionaries. Last year a police report came out in our press. Mujib says that 3000 Awami League people have been killed. But perhaps he didn't care to go through the news item published in his own newspaper. It was an interview with one of the top-ranking police officers of Dacca. The police officer said that "till this time, from our records we get over 15,000 killed". Unofficial records would say perhaps 20,000. That gentleman regretted that he could not take any steps against these killings because of intervention from influential political circles. So killing is a day-to-day affair organised by the ruling party at various levels. They let loose this Frankenstein's monster and at times they couldn't control it, so their own men were killed. Five MPs were killed, at least three were killed due to their own factional quarrels.

Mujib the other day in his speech on December 16 discovered two enemies only—not imperialism, not feudalism—smugglers are Awami Leaguers, every-smugglers are the enemies of the people, we know. But who are the smugglers? Smugglers are Awami Leaguers, everywhere.

So repression and killing are the general political line of this regime. Another interesting thing about our recent economic crisis and the Government's way to fight it: the Government has ordered procurement of the surplus paddy of the big producers. What actually is taking place? Yesterday I received a report from one area. The local MP, who everywhere is the main person entrusted with the task of procuring surplus paddy, virtually snatched away everything that the poor and middle peo-

sants are producing. One jotedar, big landlord, owning several hundreds of acres of land gave only eight maunds of paddy to the government procurement body. That local MP has made several lakhs of takas.

L.B.: How would you compare the present situation with that during the rule of Yahya Khan in regard to repression?

M.T.: Qualitatively this repression is of a different kind from that of Yahya Khan. Yahya Khan's repression was the result of an illegal revolt against an established government. We fought against Yahya Khan's repression, in the face of foreign aggression we fought, we fought both ways, we fought Yahya Khan's army, we fought against Indian aggression also. Repression during the time of Yahya Khan was the product of certain people going against an established government. This is a different situation. Yahya Khan did not destroy the industries, Yahya Khan's army in the initial stage were killing no doubt, but after some time the killing was stopped. The main target of Yahya Khan's repression were the rebels. But now the type of repression going on in Bangladesh under the regime is not a repression against rebels, it is repression against the people, peace-loving people who want to survive as human beings, who want to make the country free from the clutches of imperialism. Our country is still controlled by social-imperialism and Indian expansionism. On every important official in the Bangladesh Army once told one of our friends that "you see the Marxist-Leninist party have been all through writing about this Rakkhi Bahini, we have been reading their papers and now I am convinced that it is 100% an Indian contingent". So this Rakkhi Bahini is being used for repressing the people. These hijackers are Awami Leaguers, the looters are Awami Leaguers, the repressors are Awami Leaguers. This is just an organised affair of a set of people who are out to loot the people in any way they can.

L.B.: How would you assess the relations between different foreign powers in Bangladesh like the U.S., the Soviet Union, India? Which do you see as the main enemy?

M.T.: At this stage the principal enemy is social imperialism and Indian expansionism. You know in this region of South East Asia India has got a unique position. The Indian bourgeoisie is a very cunning and shrewd kind of bourgeoisie and it has been all through collaborating with imperialism... Both collaborating with imperialism... Both the super-powers in this part of Asia think it advantageous to utilise India in their aggressive designs. The Indian big bourgeoisie and the Government collaborated with the two super-powers in various fields. India had economic development in the private sector with the help of American money and in the public sector with Soviet roubles. So India has that peculiar advantage of bargaining strength of gaining from two camps. Because the Indian big bourgeoisie has been all through collaborating with imperialism in this region any freedom movement, any people's movement or struggle will be repressed by the super-powers through India. India is their base here.

L.B.: Do you see the revolutionary process in Bangladesh as a very long-term affair? When will Bangladesh be governed by a revolutionary government?

M.T.: Since the revolution in China it has been the general feature of revolutionary struggle everywhere that no revolutionary struggle can achieve final victory just by a stroke. It has got to be a protracted war of liberation. We do not visualise a quick end of it. And we are making our people conscious along this line.

L.B.: How many political prisoners do you think there are in Bangladesh?

M.T.: It would be approximately over 10,000.

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“Unite to Build A Single Party”

AN excellent revolutionary situation exists in the world as well as in our country. A new upsurge has begun in the revolutionary struggle of the Indian people against the four big mountains—an upsurge which promises to be far deeper and higher than any that our country and people have witnessed ever since 1947. All the basic contradictions of the Indian society have been greatly aggravated. The reactionary ruling classes have split and are at each other's throats.

The negative feature of the present political situation is that there exist fragmentation and disarray in the ranks of the communist revolutionaries. As a result of this division, the reactionary and the revisionist forces in the country are trying their level best to divert the struggles of the people from the path of revolution. The reactionary Government has left no one in doubt that it would strive for causing division among the broad masses of the people by bringing about further splits and division in the vanguard i.e., among the communist revolutionaries. The enemies rejoice at our split.

It is very encouraging that an overwhelming majority of cadres of the revolutionary groups are fed up with the existing group regimes and an irresistible trend of achieving unity in a single party has overtaken them. However, subjective prejudices and sectarianism continue to place handicaps and prevent the urge for unity from taking concrete material shape. Often minor differences, that can very well be resolved within the framework of a single Marxist-Leninist party, are exaggerated... and attempts at unification get frustrated. This situation must end. If there is to be a revolution, there has to be a revolutionary party.

*The statement has been abridged.

The CPI (ML) and the Andhra Pradesh Revolutionary Communist Party have been seriously striving for bringing about unification and consolidation in the ranks of the communist revolutionaries under the banner of a single Marxist-Leninist party ever since 1972. Their efforts took a concrete shape when together they issued a joint appeal.

After prolonged and thorough discussions the representatives of the CPI (ML) and the APRCP have reached agreement on the following major points of programme, tactics and party building.

Ours is a semi-colonial, semi-feudal country in which several imperialist powers contend, the principal being the Soviet social-imperialism and U.S. imperialism.

The Indian Revolution in the present stage is anti-imperialist... It is New Democratic Revolution in nature.

The four major enemies of the Indian people are (i) Soviet social imperialism, (ii) U.S. imperialism, (iii) feudalism and (iv) comprador-bureaucratic capitalism.

Alliance of the four classes i.e., the working class, peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie, has to be forged for leading the new democratic revolution. The working class is the leader of this united front and the worker-peasant alliance is the core of the united front. The working class absolutely relies on the landless and poor peasants, firmly unites with the middle peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie, seeks to win the rich peasants and the national bourgeoisie and directs the main edge of its attack against imperialism, feudalism and comprador-bureaucratic capitalism.

The working class is conscious that the rich peasantry and the national bourgeoisie are vacillating and wavering allies of the new democratic revolution.

There are four basic contradictions in the present Indian society. They are.

(i) Contradiction between feudalism and the broad masses of the people.

(ii) Contradiction between social-imperialism and imperialism on the one hand and the nation on the other.

(iii) Contradiction between the working class and the bourgeoisie, and

(iv) Inter-imperialist (including social-imperialism) contradictions and the inner contradictions in the ruling classes which are led by big landlords and big bourgeoisie.

Out of all these basic contradictions, the principal contradiction at the present phase is the one between feudalism and the broad masses of the people.

The axis of the new democratic revolution is the agrarian revolution.

The programme of new democratic revolution recognises the right of nations to self-determination.

The socialist revolution can be achieved only after completing the new democratic revolution.

Party and the Tactical Line

The working class wants the party to rely on the peasants, establish base areas in the countryside in protected armed struggle and use the countryside to encircle and finally capture the cities.

The working class and the people must forge three magic weapons without which victory in revolution is impossible—a Marxist-Leninist party, a people's army and a revolutionary united front. It is the party that commands the army and it is the party that leads the united front.

All the struggles of the people against economic, political, cultural and military policies of the reactionary State are revolutionary struggles and the revolutionaries must initiate, conduct and lead these struggles. The broad masses of the people can be organised for revolution only through complementing the armed struggle by mass struggle. It is reformism to confine struggles of the people to economic and partial demands only and it is adventurism to ignore or boycott the mass struggles of the people on economic and partial demands on the pretext of conducting political struggles. Marxist-Leninists strive to forge a united front of all democratic classes from the very beginning of their activities and they strive to develop the united front in course of sharp class struggles of the people against their oppressors.

Marxist-Leninists must resolutely op-

pose parliamentary cretinism and individual terrorism as they obstruct the development of people's war and isolate them from the people.

Marxist-Leninists must take the countryside as the centre of gravity while not abandoning work in the towns and cities.

While working in the countryside for building the base areas and the people's army, they must give top priority to concentrating on the mountainous and forest regions and the river valleys in a planned manner. The people in the plain areas and adjacent to such zones should also be organised.

While working in the countryside and the urban areas efforts must begin to build the people's army. The party must command the gun and the gun must never command the party. The experience of the Chinese Communist Party, other fraternal parties and also our own experience teach us that a people's army is built in course of politically arousing the broad masses of the people, in course of mobilising them for realisation of their economic and political demands, in course of fierce class battles against their exploiters and by drawing the countless militants from the working class, the peasantry and the urban intelligentsia. Our experience teaches further that attempt to build a people's army by killing indiscriminately landlords and other exploiters in a conspiratorial manner, through a campaign of annihilation of class 'enemies' alienates the fighters from politics, people and party and causes disaster. It is only a terrorist band that we get and not a people's army out of the theory and practice of individual terrorism. The party must integrate with the landless and poor peasants and firmly unite with the middle peasants, it must politically arouse broad masses of the peasantry on the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought; it must arm peasant masses and disarm the landlords, it must form village defence corps and armed guerilla squads from among the peasantry. It must form revolutionary peasant committees and develop them as organs of people's rule. It must lead the pea-

sant masses to seize landlord's land and other properties for distribution among the peasants as it is the key issue of the agrarian revolution, and it must punish the despotic landlords, usurers, local bullies and corrupt officials. And in course of carrying out the above mentioned tasks it must recruit and train innumerable militants born out of class struggles and make them good soldiers and commanders of the people's army and lead them to attack and smash the armed forces of the enemy following the strategy and the tactics of people's war formulated by Comrade Mao Tse-tung.

The working class which leads the new democratic revolution, while fighting class battles on economic and political issues, on national and international issues will act as the inspirer and unifier of other revolutionary classes by launching solidarity mass actions in support of their struggle, specially the struggles of the peasantry.

Special attention will be given to organising the working class employed in the strategic industries.

They must utilise the contradictions in the camp of their enemies, at a given time and unite all the forces that can be united and develop revolutionary struggles of the people in the country while retaining their independence and initiative.

Party Building

The Marxist-Leninists must unite in a single party that takes Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought as its theoretical guide and adhere to proletarian internationalism.

The party is to be built by giving top priority to work in the countryside while giving proper importance to work in the towns and cities also.

The party must master various forms of struggle and organisation and style of work. It must strive to combine the legal with illegal, open with secret, mass organisation with armed organisation and mass struggle with armed struggle.

The party must adhere to mass line i.e., it must pursue the style "From the masses to the masses" in all its activities. It must combat tailism and com-

(Continued on page 14)

The Other Cinema

SOUGATA BANOPADHYAY

THE pleasure principle adopted in the capitalist cine or surplus-value cinema does not exist in the 'other cinema'. The cinema of the revolution, as Octavo Getino and Fernands Solanas say in *Towards A Third Cinema*, is at the same time one of destruction and construction, destruction of the image that neo-colonialism has created of itself, and construction of a throbbing living reality which recaptures truth in many of its expressions. The restitution of things to their real place and meaning is an eminently subversive fact both in the neo-colonial situation and in the consumer societies. "In the former, seeming ambiguity or pseudo-objectivity in newspapers, literature etc. and the relative freedom of the people's organisations to provide their own information cease to exist, giving way to overt restriction, when it is a question of television and radio. The events of May 1968 in France are quite explicit on this point".

Details of different aspects of the other cinema are difficult to collect, but impact has significance for the Third World cinema. Though a newcomer compared to bourgeois cinema, it is gaining momentum and strength from Newsreel, a U.S. film group, the Cine-Giornali of the Italian student movement, the films made by the Etats Generaux du Cinema Francois, and those of the British and Japanese student movements, all a continuation and deepening of the work of a Joris Iven or a Chris Marker. Many film makers, particularly from Latin American countries, want to discard the conventional form of making political films. Speculation is not different from praxis. On the other hand speculation and praxis can be synthesised. Film is not only an art form; it is an action meant for the metamorphosis of the consciousness of the audience who also participates in the action. The students who raised barricades on the Avenida 18 de Julio in Montivideo after the showing

of *Me Gustan Los Estomtes* (Mario Handler) those who demonstrated and sang the Internationale in Merida and Caracas after the showing of *La Hora De Los Hornos*, marked the beginning of a twisted and difficult road being travelled in the consumer societies by the masses.

Aesthetics of the revolutionary cinema demands that events should not be painted horribly, what is wanted is "expansion" of the inner reality of the event and a committed film-maker should not judge the event superficially from an objective standpoint, rather he should aim at artistic unfoldment of the content. Here content is not a subsidiary element. As Prof. J. S. Saxena asserts: "The motion picture's content is not the same thing as its subject matter but what the movie-maker sees in his subject matter. The content as the movie-maker sees it and the viewer comprehends it, becomes an independent force, that extra emotion or movement of feeling, which is always flowing back and modifying the movie-makers' basic assumption and values. The content of Indian films is a subsidiary element, a decorative embellishment of the surfaces of the subject matter for it never intensifies, diffuses or disrupts the experience through its specific images and still more specific words. Whatever be the subject matter, the visual content of the Indian films is avowdly reactionary." ("Adventures of Film Watching").

On the other hand, revolutionary form emerges from the correct handling of content. The subject matter of a political film is not clear to all of us. In a real political cinema, facts of the class struggle are treated with absolute objectivity and the film is rich in content and correct in orientation. But the discipline required for a correlation of objectivity and subjectivity is rigorous enough to dispel illusions about so-called political films, particularly in our country. The laws of cinematic imagination are stricter than ordinary laws because the demands, which the cinema makes are much more rigorous than in other arts. The greater the charge of the vision, the stricter, the deeper the discipline in normalcy, the sturdier the base of repeated references to solid comparatives. This is the dialectics of the

cinema. The so-called political films avoid real subjectivity.

A protest film should be compelling, disturbing and bitter and the dialectical elements of the film will not portray, interpret, symbolise or allegorise but enquire. A protest film being a made of investigation, is made with the 'unity of content and form, the unity of revolutionary political content and the highest possible perfection of artistic forms'. Content cannot be sacrificed in the name of form—elevation is also important in the branch of art. So a protest film is an instrument of investigation of the world and amidst the backdrop of class-struggle illusions in the realist cinema serve the purpose of contradictions, like Jean Luc Godard's films. Films of suffering should be spectacular and didactic and should not deal only with horrid sentimentality which evaporates like the spirit of camphor. It should not deal only with effect but with the cause of sufferings, of the cry. Personal exercise with forms (like the personal essays of Chris Marker) can be called author's cinema. A protest film (some call it earnest cinema or cinema engage) "should distract its spectators from realities, but unless a revolution is desired, (which means nothing less than coinciding with and embodying collective fantasies) it will never take place. A revolutionary cinema which has to operate at different levels—fantasy, ideology, science and articulation of these levels, which involve different modes of discourse and different positions of the subject, is a complicated matter.

It is not easy to categorise different types of films falling within the purview of Other Cinema. However, an attempt is being made.

A. Films dealing with liberation movements and anti-imperialist struggle: Some films based on documentary/reportage style: e.g.

1. Pontecarvo: 'Battle of Algiers', 'Quemada'.
2. Joris Evans—(a) 'The Spanish Earth'
(b) 'The Four Hundred Million'
(c) 'The Seventeenth Parallel: The Treating Sky'
3. Nagisha Oshima: 'Dear Summer

Sister'.

4. Jean Luc Godard: 1. Louin de Vietnam'.

2. Till Victory.

Here, except in Godard's films, communication is simple and direct and the director goes straight to the problems of the affected country.

B. Films dealing with local political issues: Some issues require immediate attention—

1. Nagisha Oshima: 'Night and Fog over Japan' (film dealing with the fight between President Americans and Japanese students).
2. Noriaki Tsuchimoto: 'Mūamata' (deals with the pollution affecting a minority community in Japan).

These films are instruments of political agitation and the director dialectically unites impersonal observation and personal participation. In these film it is not believed that the masses are 'mute'.

C. Anti-establishment films bordering on reformism which never question the cause but merely portray events and never speak of different modes of representation.

D. Films dealing with political subjects and the film maker raises issues that exploitation in neo-colonialist societies is the root of all trouble e.g. Jorge Sanjines (1) 'Ukamau'; (2) 'Blood of Condor'; (3) 'Knight of St Juan'. Here the camera acts as a rifle and through this medium the director explains the objective conditions in consonance with subjective reality and film makers like Amberto Rieso ('The Cry of the People') and Remundo Glaucher ('Mexico—the Foreign Revolution') directly call for active participation in resistance struggle. Anti-imperialist struggle in different countries of the Third World is the order of the day and the importance of such films needs no elaborate recounting. The Other Cinema i.e. third cinema, in the opinion of Octovio Getina and Fernando Solanas, "is the cinema that recognises in that struggle the most gigan-

tic cultural, scientific and artistic manifestation of our time, the great possibility of constructing a liberated personality with each people as the starting point,—in a word, the decolonisation of culture”.

Ousmane Sembene, maker of 'Mandabi', himself a protagonist of Marxism-Leninism, speaks of a cinema at the same time spectacular and didactic. What he wants is a series of militant African films to promote the cause of truly indigenous African cinema, one that can serve as a political tool in Africa's struggle to free itself from colonialism and neo-colonialism.

The best example of this category of films is 'La Hora de Los Hornos' (The Hour of the Furnaces) made in 1966 by Solanas and Octavio Getina, of Argentina. It can be called a period piece of political film showing in three parts a series of political events, the history, origin in other words or the 'chronicle of Peronism', 'chronicle of the resistance' and the act of inciting violence for liberation. The film has been shown in factories and the audiences have been harassed by the police. Hence underground screening was arranged at different places. In the words of Salanas and Getino 'Beyond its specific qualities, the film is intended as a provocative element, and an act towards liberation. The special feature of the film is that before the screening texts are distributed reproducing General San Martin's order of 1819 exhorting the people to fight for liberation. Revolutionary marches are heard. In the intervals, a speaker will guide. A slogan underlines the nature of the situation. "Every spectator is a coward or a traitor".

The film directly exhorts the audience not to be a passive onlooker but to act towards liberation. The conditions as

described in the first part of the film are engendered by imperialist oppression and dependence: the violence acting against the people is daily very well camouflaged and has no need to manifest itself in explicit forms. Its consequences are hunger, illiteracy, alienation, the destruction of authentic national values.

E. Protest films made in allegorical or surrealist forms e.g. 'Themrock' is another kind of anti-establishment film made in surrealist style. Here the form dominates over content. Hence it is not easy for the audiences to understand the gossamer substances of the surrealist presentation. Some of these films which can be called a 'progressive wing of the establishment cinema' or anti-conventional cinema, are not made to help make revolution, but they are intended to make profit or serve personal gratification. Here leftism is a kind of product which can be marketed easily—where no Marxist film maker is yet in existence. These films are generally financed and prized by semi-government or government institutions and the bias of the authorities towards this kind of pseudo-political film is not shrouded in mystery. John Mathews comments: "What of Solanas' personal achievement? Obviously he is in danger of being swallowed by the patronage of Western intellectuals—as happened to his unfortunate predecessor, Glauber Rocha. La Hora de Los Hornos was treated in Paris with all the tenderness given to a specious orchid in a hothouse. It was displayed for the gratification of the discriminating in a chic Parisian film studio".

F. Films on Marxism and other political subjects and achieving a form that question the mode of representation—From the standpoint of representation—Jean Luc Godard's 'Vent d'Est', 'British Sounds' and 'Pravda' are quite different from Glauber Rocha's 'Black God'—'White Devil', 'Land in a Trance'. While Rocha believes in spontaneity, mysticism and anguish of the individual. Godard's approach in making political films is quite different. He wants to approach the audience politically. Godard scrupulously avoids rush of emotions. Film makers from Latin Ame-

rica, particularly Glauber Rocha, insist on different modes of distribution, production and exhibition of militant political films. On the other hand Godard is struggling hard in the matter of perfection of form and content. The maker of 'La Chinoise', 'Wind from the East' firmly proclaims that the camera is a theoretical rifle and the rifle is a practical camera. From his 'Week End' he has switched over to counter-cinema whose values are diametrically opposite to the bourgeois cinema. Godard was right to break with Hollywood cinema and to set up his counter cinema and, for this alone, he is the most important director working today. Nevertheless, there are people who think that there are confusions in his strategy, which blunt its edge even tend to nullify it: his confusion over the series of terms, fiction mystification / ideology / lies / deception / illusion / representation etc.

The movement for the Other Cinema or counter-cinema must be vigorously launched through production and distribution of militant films in different centres. The people in the Third World are living in conditions of acute struggle against hellish life, there is no democracy and freedom for the millions. The possibility for the continuity of a revolutionary cinema rests upon the strengthening of rigorously underground base structures.

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The Third Triennale—New Delhi

SANDIP SARKAR

THE Third Triennale at New Delhi was declared open on February 7 and would continue up to March 21 at the Lalit Kala Galleries Rabindra Bhavan and the Bahalpur House annexe which is very near. The critics and press were called a day earlier. There was an element of unreality in the whole atmosphere—the foreign artists, commissioners, dignitaries, the press, critics, office-bearers, the TV people and their Indian counterparts. Delhi is haunted by a spectre of unreality, insulated against events, and one almost had the feeling that one was inside a capsule speeding away toward some planet. Old Delhi had its riots and curfew but not even a ripple reached this isolated shore. Everyone seemed oblivious of India. One heard many languages but there was a touch of the tower of babel. Altogether two dozen countries participated, and an international jury consisting of Monroe Wheeler (USA), Walter Zanini (Brazil) and V. R. Ambedkar (India) awarded a gold medal each with cash prizes to P. Luminkangas (Finland), H. Weiss (France), Kozo Mio (Japan), J. B. Stever (F. R. of Germany), D. Van De Kop (Holland) and Shanti Dave (India).

One would agree with the jury who said: "Perhaps, it would be wiser to abolish the awards .. and institute fellowships and funds to provide knowledge of new achievements all over the world". Personally, I think it would be better to abolish the Triennale altogether and canalise the money to needy and talented artists, in various centres in India. For after all the arty crowd in New Delhi is very small and to give it an expensive toy worth Rs 8 or 10 lakhs is beside the point.

Politics and rumours were in the air. Artists who had been rejected were having a show in the AIFACS galleries but from talking to them one could feel that they would forgive the selectors if their work was exhibited next time. One heard how the protesters of the last triennale were won over by diplomacy, and

the wall space given to artists living in Delhi compared to other Indian cities was just amazing and members of the triennale committee thought it was better to keep the Gir lions happy than be worried by the Royal Bengal Tigers of the Sunderbans or the mysterious sea monsters of the Arabian Sea. A Madvi Parekh was given more space than Bijon Chaudhury and Rabin Mandal together. Only posterity will judge how ridiculous they were. This is one example and one could tell many many more.

One could feel that in Delhi the artists were favoured outcastes supported by black money and upper-middle-class Westernised people and the Delhi artists were happy to know that they were producers of goods for the luxury market. The gallery owners and critics ganged up to build an image of one artist and to demolish that of another. The Dhoomi Mal Gallery handed out invitation cards at the triennale to honour Shanti Dave and it was clearly stated that it 'invites you for drinks'. There are intelligent critics in Delhi like Jaya Appaswamy, Mr Krishnan of *The Statesman* and the delightful Mr Keshav Mallick but there was one who went about like a self-important cock in his shorts and add to this Rabindra Bhavan and the National Gallery of Modern Art and you have a complete picture. Some are good politicians and have vested interests, others play the game of diplomacy and still others are like prostitutes. Those who have sensitive souls like Keshav Mallick suffer. In fact I saw the violent reactions of two or three commissioners and as we had the same reaction we could communicate. One began to question such myths as the sacredness of the artist's personality. The meaning of art could cross national frontiers but some art could be meaningful in a certain cultural context but meaningless in a cross-cultural situation. Much was applied technological methods rather than works of art, they were produced for mass entertainment and like and furniture designing one could see the built-in

obsolescence. Much of this so-called art was dehumanised and smelt of decay and incoherence, but about five per cent of the work one felt that it was the real thing.

Today, because of the shrinking of the world and the network of mass media, it is quite easy for an artist to reach a very large public and conversely he is liable to be bullied by international trends. Secondly, as the standards of judgment are loose, a charlatan may quite easily pass off as an artist, and conspiracy of the dealer-critic-publicity junta might create confusion. Gujral sells at a higher price than Jamini Ray, therefore Gujral is a better artist than Jamini Ray — one might get away with such silly syllogisms; On the other hand, one could also learn humility at this triennale. A bad artist does not become a best seller intentionally. A good artist cannot become a best seller by intentionally choosing to do certain things that he thinks the public likes. Because his insincerity will be evident immediately. Shanti Dave attracts people who have money but no soul because he is sincere and works hard to be convincing. His award-winning 'Shankar Dhaj' (300×17 cm) has a lot of flourish but appears like a longwinded speech. It is as saccharine like and antiseptic as Delhi city. One thinks that Mr Ambedkar, the Indian juror, failed to do his duty by allowing the foreign jury to give this one a prize. Perhaps he had a hand in it too!

International Sanction

The artists, in a technological society, is trying to say he is free and can do as he chooses. This is partly because he feels insecure as a fringe element; and the capitalist with his Gargantuan stomach can gobble up all protest art including 'Guernica'. This is the measure of the artist's insecurity and he is made to feel through subtle pressure that he is at the mercy of forces that are larger than him. Moreover, there is the pressure of becoming backdated and the shadow of technology, which forces the artists to use ever newer industrial techniques, but the net result as far as aesthetics goes is very little. A lot of it

is exercise in styles rather than language.

Let us take certain examples. The Australian artist, Ewa Pachucka, sculpts figures with string and crochet hook but her exact copying of the human figure has something very vulgar. On the other hand we remember the Australian exhibition in Calcutta a few years ago where one could feel man and nature and the nudity of both. Michael Taylor is sensitive but nearer to American action painting than anything else. Surprisingly this is the first time I have been bowled over by American art. Louise Nevelson was an assistant to the Mexican painter Diego Rivera. She has a very personal idiom and uses boxed assemblage to form a sort of wooden screen for a wall. A single uniform colour is used—black this time—and wooden shapes which are not shapes in isolation but in relation to each other. Her acquaint and college graphics work on smooth abstract shapes in juxtaposition, and this wordless poetry has something that affects the inside. By comparison Satish Gujral's sculpture looks sham, because the social reality that made Nevelson's work possible is not there in Gujral's case. Hence the hollowness in spite of the mature technique. Yet, it is interesting to note that they were both trained by Mexican artists.

Apart from America, possibly Japan had the most interesting things on view. The selectors were careful to show how the artists of the present time view human beings. On the whole the Japanese seem to be very restrained and the tension of modern life is camouflaged. J. Watanabe shows human beings as having inflated agos which make them act as monsters. Surrealist in content but expressionistic in approach, he has very dry humour. T. Oshima is surrealist too but there is an intensity in his aristocratic poetry where trees assume human character and a girl flies a butterfly instead of kite, but the imagery is literary rather than pictorial. Kozo Mio pursues photo-realism to the extreme point and uses a spraygun and acrylic and the effect almost collides with photography. The face of a woman is viewed from front and side and this is juxtaposed with butterfly, or it is view-

ed upside down from the forehead to the chin and a piece of folded cloth is arranged in a manner so that it seems to be flying out of the canvas. Technique-wise he is brilliant but the first impact seems to wear off. It shows us a technological society at its zenith when creativity becomes routine and soulless in the process.

F. Boyd and L. Evans' technique is near to that of Kozo Mio, but the British pair seem to be influenced more by photography than the Japanese are; as there is no stylisation involved but only selection, one wonders whether these two artists' joint venture could be called painting. However, 'Story' creates a mood with a sandy sea-shore taking up a lot of space in the foreground and a distant sea with almost invisible bathers and a beautiful sky. On the foreground one sees a man coming out of a pale white car. There is subtle drama but is it painting? Howard Hodgkin is more of a real painter than these other two (recently H. H. had a one-man show of serigraphs at the Academy of Fine Arts). Hodgkin's point of departure is Ferdinand Leger in some ways but he is capable of walking out on his own. He reduces everything to the bare essentials and communicates with suggestions and his almost monastic austerity has power.

The Federal Republic of Germany has also photo-realism and spray-gun pictures which had one dominant colour—white—and reminded one of asylums and hospitals. G. Richter, Krieg or Willikens take us for a walk with photographic optical illusion but cannot move us. France showed us a revival of surrealism with another name. Of the three artists we see none seems to have a French name and only J. J. Brown was born in France but he has a peculiar non-French name. This section has some quite powerful works but pictorially speaking one experiences nothing new. Atila and H. Weiss have intensity of vision but they hardly break new ground.

If this exhibition is any indicator, then one could say without any hesitation that probably industrial technique, surrealism and fantasy dominate the art of man today.

(To be continued)

Ramleela

BY A DRAMA CRITIC

ADVERTISING rates being what they are, it is not possible for every theatre group to seek publicity through the medium of newspapers. As a result a number of excellent plays are left out in the cold and often run to half-empty houses. This was the fate of the play **Ramleela** staged by Amra, a theatre unit from Uttarpara, at the Academy of Fine Arts on February 22. Written by Dipak Sen and directed by Alokesh Bandopadhyay, the play swung into action effortlessly and did not allow our interest to slacken for a single unguarded moment. A jatra party led by a lecherous ex-tout is scouting around for female talent when a rich zamindar, who happens to be on the spot, suggests that the local prostitute, Belarani, should be given the role of Sita in the jatra **Ramleela** as modern audiences lapped up sex and she would help to make every show a commercial success. The prostitute, however, is not willing to vulgarise her life any further and resists the idea that she, as Sita, should lend sex appeal to her role and give the audience the sort of titillation it looks for. The local zamindar and the leader of the jatra exert constant pressure on the girl. One day villagers flock from distant areas to see the jatra, the jatra players rebel against the roles imposed on them and begin to speak of the harsh realities of their own broken, impoverished lives, which rouses the passive, rustic audience as no **Ramleela** could ever hope to do. While all this goes on, two urban intellectuals arrive on the scene and explain to the aggrieved players and villagers that from now on they must portray their ordinary crisis-ridden lives in plays and jatras and not go through the perfunctory and mechanical motions of typical jatra players depicting scenes from the ancient epics. All this has an electrifying impact and the zamindar with his fond dreams of a sex-charged jatra and vast hungry audiences stands condemned and utterly dejected before the public.

MARCH 8, 1975

This play was very intelligently devised and seemed a powerful crusade against the kind of vulgar, obscene and effete play which has now taken Calcutta by storm and is now, quite the rage in some middle class and upper-middle class circles. It is also a plea for making common people more conscious of their rights and of what needs amputation in this corrupt society. Lately, there have been many plays with a similar message and vision but unfortunately most of them either peddled slogans and became blatant political tracts without any artistic effect or downright poster dramas. Here we have the ingredients of a mature play and the message which is so clearly put across is well integrated with the structure of the play itself, so that we do not feel that we are being got at. The actors enjoyed their roles tremendously and gave a very scintillating performance. One would like to single out in particular Bela, Kedar, Kshitu and Bipin for their excellent acting. Tamal and Dibakar as the two urban intellectuals, lacked conviction and gave a self-consciously dead-earnest sort of performance. Bela's having to explain away the nature of her profession to everyone she meets was a little repetitive and could, perhaps, be cut out to enable us to take her at her face value. The lighting and stage sets need no comment. There was abundant outspoken humour in the right places and for boldness of speech and clarity of thought the playwright is to be congratulated.

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MARCH 3, 1975

Book Review

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA: PROGRAMMES AND PROBLEMS

By Kailash Chandra

Rama Krishna & Sons, New Delhi

Price not stated.

ONCE a protege of the Government of India, both as an administrator and as a social worker, but now ditched by it, Mr Chandra has not just made a virtue of necessity in getting his own back on the Government. He is right in pointing out that its performance in the field of social welfare leaves much to be desired. Planning in India had an auspicious beginning, but in the subsequent period a curious twist in the planners' attitude played the deuce with the spirit of participation of the people. Thwarted and unfulfilled expectations left the people estranged. Resistance erment has only exposed itself. It is 24 years now since it resorted to five year plans. But in spite of that the country has gone to the dogs, and now when the fifth plan is virtually a non-starter and the country observes a plan-holiday, the timeliness of the book is unquestionable.

The Government has fallen back on one first principle after another. "Community Development" has been supplanted by "Minimum Needs", and the rulers of India have wished these noble ideas to work miracles. But if wishes were horses, beggars would ride. Implementation of these projects or their operational part has been largely neglected. The planners, social scientists, and social workers in India look askance at one another and any concerted effort towards progress remains a far cry.

For Mr Chandra the virus of decline lies in extreme politicisation, and he thinks depoliticisation is the panacea for all social evils. He makes a distinction between participation and commitment (as if there is anything intrinsically bad in commitment of any kind). The book is full of other naivetes. Mr. Chandra thinks the only cure of the economic malaise is greater reliance on voluntary endeavour, that mysterious maid-of-all-work, and he calls for a

greater leverage for voluntary organisations in this respect. He would have clipped the wings of bureaucracy. He makes a point of crying down every Government enterprise and of flattering all voluntary endeavour to the skies. He has discarded GNP and per capita income as yardsticks of progress, but his attitude to the National Programme for Minimum Needs is just this side idolatry. However, left alone to indicate his preferences as to the Minimum Needs Programme and such voluntary efforts as Youth Against Famine, Mr Chandra can make only a Hobson's choice. For, his allergy to an ameliorative service programme organised by the Government is endemic to Indian intellectuals. Criticism of any social welfare programme is an intellectual commonplace in India and Mr Chandra is so much of a prey to this tendency that he cannot see that both the "National Programme for Minimum Needs" and "Youth Against Famine" remained pious wishes, and while extolling one, one could not safely cry the other down.

Mr Chandra's prescription of a Social Sector of Private Enterprises is non-descript. Economically speaking it is a half-way house between laissez faire and mixed economy. Politically speaking it gets us nowhere. It is neither individualism nor collectivism. It is at best a jumble.

The book abounds in quaint ideas. The Gandhian scheme of basic education was abandoned by Indian politicians though they paid lip service to it. But the Chinese system, Mr Chandra assumes, was inspired by it, and the credit for its giving expected result goes to Gandhi.

The book is a watered down version of India's economic and social ills, and though Mr Chandra has uttered few home truths that could not very well be palatable to the Government, the end product is muddled.

Amartya Mukhopadhyay

Unity

(Continued from p. 8)

mandism in its style of working.

The party must adhere to the principles of democratic centralism in its functioning. It must strictly adhere to the four disciplines: individual is subordinate to the unit; lower committees are subordinate to the higher committees, minority is subordinate to the majority and all the party members are subordinate to the Central Committee. The party must not permit establishment of personal regimes. It must function on the basis of the "committee system" and the "method of leadership" laid down by Comrade Mao Tse-tung. Factions are incompatible with the party.

In view of the common understanding between the two parties on all the major points of programme, tactics and party building, we have decided to unite into a single party i.e. Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist).

We believe, this approach will be welcomed by all the communist revolutionaries in our country, and they too will come forward to unite in the CPI (ML) without further delay.

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Letters

Murder of Mahalanobis

It is highly regrettable that you should have published an article with the above title in your columns. Within any organisation there are petty squabbles between different sections of employees. The article reflects the squabble interests of some sections of the professional workers of the Indian Statistical Institute. Many of the views expressed in the article about the conditions within that organisation before and after the death of Professor P. C. Mahalanobis, whether the organisation was holding aloft some academic ideals all these days and whether they were sacrificed all at one stroke by a recent symposium held in the organisation—described by the cheap sensational title "Murder of Mahalanobis"—are matters on which there will be differences of opinion among those who belong to the organisation or who know about its affairs. But many a reader like myself regard **Frontier** as a political journal, a journal that looks at social, economic and political problems of the country from the viewpoint of the interests of the masses. The internal squabbles of the Indian Statistical Institute are in no way of any interest to the masses of the country or even to what is called the educated public. It has interest only for a tiny section of that privileged group of professional people who, one and all, earn a good living at the cost of the masses as employees of the white elephants which are the research institutions in this country. So why should **Frontier** go out of its way to give prominence to such opinions?

Ashok Rudra
New Delhi

Trouble in Delhi

The Indira Government's trigger-happy policemen and the anti-socials in their anxiety to grab power everywhere took a toll of at least nine lives of the minorities in the Jama Masjid area. In the Home Consultative Committee meet I hammered the issue and the Government had no reply to put

forward.

The anger of the people at the government's conduct was to intense that a Minister, Janab S. N. Khan, had to run away and hide in a latrine; where he was locked up from outside to give people the impression that there was nobody inside.

That Sunday while people were running in search of shelter, the police were after their blood in the Jama Masjid and teargas was used and the police fired indiscriminately and the situation lasted at least two hours. It was alleged that the police even climbed on to roof-tops and fired, resulting in a few on-the-spot deaths. There were cases when the police broke into residential houses, harassed and molested women in the Gali Garia area. Many were seriously injured and some of them are in hospital. In many areas Muslim shops were burnt by policemen and there were even cases where people were burnt to death. The police did not allow extinguishing of fire in these shops. This happened right under the nose of the Government at Delhi.

It is stated that the Sahi Imam of Jama Masjid, Syed Abdulla Bukhari, who inherited the Imamship, was severe on the ruling Congress and condemned the Indira Government which wanted to take away his Imamship. The Wakf Board is controlled by government nominated members. Being a religious body it should be really independent. There were serious allegations all over the country that Congressmen, MPs and Ministers like Janab S. N. Khan, Janab T. Hossain etc. have turned the Wakf Board into an arena of politics. There were numerous cases of misappropriation and malpractices.

The Imam stated at a public meeting that S. N. Khan, Minister, had threatened him saying that he would shoot him, and the Imam accepted the challenge.

Our minority brethren should know the real character of Mrs Gandhi and her government. The time has come when they have to fight within the mainstream of the country and root out for good the exploitation, repression and misery of all of us.

Jyotirmay Basu, MP
Calcutta

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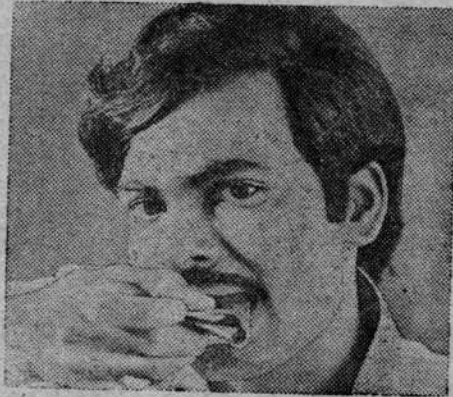
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