

frontier

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END OF A STRIKE

ON May 27, the 10th death anniversary of Mr Nehru, the Action Committee of the National Co-ordination Committee for Railwaymen's Struggle decided to call off the rail strike unconditionally. The performance of the strikers was in sharp contrast with that of the faltering, equivocal leadership. They fought against tremendous odds. The massive mobilisation of means of repression, backed by psychological warfare based on lies and deceit, the enlistment of paid Congress volunteers and diverse ruffians on a huge scale, the ruthless action against the strikers and their families—the 50,000 or so arrests, 10,000 dismissal notices, 30,000 evictions from quarters—all this could not curb the determination of the workers at the initial stage. Many railway workers left their colonies and went into hiding, pursued by police and paramilitary forces. The older folk and the women and children left behind lived in terror and resisted police and goonda attacks. It was leadership that was lacking. The 25-day strike by locomotive running staff in July—August last year showed what leadership can achieve, though their union was not recognised by the Government. But in the present case the strikers did not know what to do at the critical moment; the leaders did not tell them.

The Government had a provocative plan which it carried out on a war-footing. Indeed, in breaking strikes and in 'law and order' operations—and in nuclear explosion—it has achieved a high level of efficiency and sophistication worthy of a bureaucratic-military complex. This efficiency, though, is never seen in action against profiteers, hoarders, blackmarketeers, unscrupulous traders in essentials and kulaks for the simple reason that these elements are acceptable to the Government as part of the system that feeds it. It is a pity, it is a scandal that the leftist parties, wedded to parliamentarism do not have any counter-plans. On the eve of any all-India action, these old and bald heads in New Delhi and State capitals take it for granted that the Government will act in a civilised manner, that Mrs Gandhi will play fair. As the Government resorts to massive and unscrupulous use of repression, they begin to vacillate and whine but they cannot organise any counter-action. As a result the workers are left to themselves and have to undergo a terrible ordeal. The militants are sorted out and rot in jail or in the

pitiless wilderness outside.

The Action Committee has spoken of the enemy within. It is a veiled reference to the CPI-dominated AITUC which, two or three days before the strike was called off, said that the decision to withdraw the strike could be taken by railwaymen, group by group or zone by zone. That was the last straw and the men still holding out knew that the hour of surrender had come. But the other all-India trade union organisations cannot escape the blame for the surrender. Now they would all agitate, as they always do, for 'no victimisation', they would appeal for

pity and compassion, and not struggle for acceptance of the demands of railwaymen. The Government would make limited gestures while taking the sternest action against the hard core of the strikers. Drawing on its experience, it will further streamline its strategy and tactics of war against the masses but the opposition parties will keep on using the old methods because they want to play safe. What happened in Kharagpur on Tuesday is a warning that workers will not take everything lying down. Also, that the authorities will let hell loose.

Nuclear Hazards

Any concern that the nuclear powers of the world, who also happen to be the Big Five of the United Nations, may express at India's underground nuclear test in the waste of Rajasthan will be unwelcome in India. Comment in America has been raucous. It is illogical because the U.S. has carried out the largest number of nuclear experiments—539 by the only country to have used the bomb as a weapon of war. The other super-power, the Soviet Union, has made no comment, though the Soviet Press and Radio have repeatedly—and rather lovingly—recalled India's assurance that the test was made for peaceful uses of atomic energy. The first Indian satellite and the rocket to fire it into orbit are being manufactured in the Soviet Union, and it may be presumed with reasonable certitude that India's nuclear plans are not unknown to Soviet Union. The Soviet contribution to India's nuclear capability is not known, but if Indian rockets can be manufactured in the Soviet Union why not Indian nuclear devices? An India with nuclear teeth will be a more useful ally of the Soviet Union in "collective defence" against China. This possibility notwithstanding China has taken it

cool; it has shown no inclination to be in jitters.

It is claimed that there has been no radioactive fallout and the explosion in Rajasthan was practically clean unlike our politics. From the device to the Bomb of course is a process that will be longer if a sophisticated delivery system has to be built. For distant countries the Rajasthan experiment holds no fear as yet. The countries of South Asia stand on a different footing though. Acquisition of nuclear might by India will upset them and tension in the region will rise to an unprecedented level. How India can reassure them is a difficult problem of diplomacy. Mrs Gandhi has written a charming letter to the Pakistan Prime Minister who, however, may not be quite eager to accept everything she says at its face value, particularly when even the big powers have not been able to use nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes.

Some of the bitter critics of the Indian experiment are also the major aid-givers of India. Official spokesmen have said that not a single paisa in foreign exchange has been spent on the experiment whose total cost was a paltry sum between Rs. 10 lakhs and Rs. 30 lakhs! Even without

trying to refute these claims, the aid-giving countries may turn the screw on India by choking the flow. If they do it—our hunch is they won't for geopolitical reasons—the Government in New Delhi will be forced to reconsider its priorities. Should a Government which cannot maintain the vast majority of its people on a subhuman level without sizable foreign assistance continue with its nuclear programme which has already eaten up some Rs. 200 crores? Whether India will submit to the credit pressure is a matter of political decision. Only a self-reliant country can ignore the threat, which India is not and China is. And in making the decision New Delhi may bear in mind the comment of the Calcutta fruit vendor that he does not know anything of the Rajasthan experiment and he does not care.

An Oily Deal

It is a little hard to share the sense of satisfaction that New Delhi has expressed at the agreement, it has now entered into with two American groups for offshore exploration at the Bengal and Kutch basins. The terms, it has been said, are more favourable than those secured for instance by Indonesia and Britain. Admittedly in the circumstances they are nearly the best that the country could expect. The provisions relating to cost sharing, risk bearing, duration of the contract and sharing of crude are certainly as good as New Delhi will like them to be. But there is no mistaking that the tune has been called by the foreign collaborators. They have obviously bargained from a position of strength which is but natural. We have got to pay the price for the insensate neglect of oil exploration for nearly the whole of the 1960s and the early 1970s. A curious ideological fixation, together with rank callousness, has resulted in loss of several valuable years and in a condition when the economy does not

know how to face the oil crisis. The country could have certainly secured much better terms if such contracts were signed in, say, the early 1960s when a series of exploration successes had raised its stock substantially. But we have missed the bus and are now left stranded as even countries like Indonesia have forged ahead.

Oil exploration, particularly in offshore areas, is a highly risky, speculative operation, and few governments can have the expertise or the resources for it. It is a job best done by specialist and even highly developed countries are constrained to seek foreign assistance. But in India's case there is a danger in all this. In all, nine areas excluding the Bombay High are intended to be offered to foreign parties. And assuming that oil is struck in all or at least most of these places,—which in itself will be an extremely lucky thing for the country—foreign interests will come to hold a dominant influence over the oil industry. The so-called built-in safeguards will hardly suffice to stand up to the combined pressure of this lobby. If oil is not struck, then also India will have to depend on foreign companies who, in any case, will thus come to wield excessive importance. Could not New Delhi even at this late stage try to develop its own exploration agencies—with aid from the World Bank and the like—to take charge of prospecting in some of these promising areas?

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JUNE 1, 1974

Hunger-Strike

A correspondent writes :

Several political prisoners have gone on an indefinite hunger-strike in various jails of West Bengal since May 17. Their demands include recognition as political prisoners, granting of political status, permission to read all legally published books and magazines, repudiation of all black acts like MISA, DIR, PVA etc. On the eighth day of their hunger-strike, the condition of seven prisoners was very critical. Among them are Santosh Rana, Nema Ghosh, Badal Ghosh, Basu Ghosal, Suprasanto Halder, Ashim Chatterjee, and Jangal Santhal. Their blood pressure and pulse bit wave fallen to 90/60 mm. Hg. and 40/min., respectively. Forced feeding by the authorities has made the situation worse. If this situation continues, there is a strong possibility that the striking prisoners would be permanently paralysed or die. Representatives of the APDR, Legal Aid Committee and Committee for Fighting against the Parvatipuram Conspiracy Case met the Jail Minister on the 17th but to no avail. A joint procession was also taken out by the three organisations on May 22 in support of the striking prisoners. To carry the struggle forward and bring pressure on the Government, relatives and friends of political prisoners were to start a relay hunger-strike from May 29 at Esplanade East. The Secretary General of the UNO, and Amnesty International have already been told of the alarming situation prevailing inside the jails.

Democratic and freedom loving people should stand by the fasting political prisoners and demand that the Government immediately concede their just demands to save them from death.

'The Captains Of Industry' Meet

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

THE annual meeting of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry this year played out in the open what had been mostly behind-the-stage developments in economic events. It seemed that the FICCI never found the Government so inclined, as now, to accept, with sweet reasonableness, the prognoses and the dictates carefully couched, of course, in the vocabulary of the sophisticated technocratic planning; nor, would it seem, the Government ever found more sympathetic comrades-in-arms. Their analysis of the present economic crisis offered but little. Both were perturbed by the growing politics of disruption; both emphasized shortages of energy, and industrial raw materials and dislocation of the transport system as the main causes of industrial stagnation. Both underlined the imminent requirements of production and the crucial importance of controlling inflation through restraint on food prices. Mrs Gandhi, addressing the opening day's session, expressed appreciation of the fact that the speech this year of the Federation President, Mr Charat Ram, was not an enumeration of grievances but had dealt with the problems of today. Each appeared to be so much the benign spirit of mutual accord that it almost seemed as if the transcripts of the speeches of Mrs Gandhi and Mr Charat Ram could have been accidentally interchanged. The latter could have been displaying our planners' verbiage (although, interestingly enough, the existence of the Fifth Plan was not much noticed during the meeting except occasional references) when he declared that the question was not of choosing between economic growth and social equity but of economic growth being so directed as to lead to larger employment opportunities

and moderating of disparities in income. He even attacked the concept of laissez faire and elaborated at some length his support for the garibi hatao policy".

Mrs Gandhi, however, was concerned with the pressing needs of the present (although the unmistakable emphasis was on the political situation)—higher production—and called for restraint on unproductive consumption (conspicuous consumption and jewellery by now almost reduced to the profanity of a slogan). She appealed to the businessmen to evolve a code of conduct and to adopt some means of penalising those who failed to conform to "business ethics". (There could be no better appreciation by the Government and the FICCI of each other's philosophy of action and ethics). As to the trouble of the present times, apart from haranguing against the handful of people exploiting the good intentions of idealist students for nefarious purposes and drawing into the fray some sections of the working classes, she philosophized on the meta-forces of historical destiny. All over the world hung a heavy gloom of anxiety. Had the Pole Star moved? "The affluent feared for their prosperity and the poor whose progress was never smooth were finding the going tougher. How inevitable all this must seem when "as science moves forward, the technology grows, so does the side and complexity of our problem". True, the developing countries had "discovered" that the operations of the market system resulted in unequal development. But before you draw the lesson, note: Had not the centrally planned economies too discovered at last that 'profit surpluses' are an index of efficiency in the management of scarce resources? Hence, behold; all roads lead inevitably to the rationality of profit maximization and the ultimate solace is to be drawn from increasing production. Logically enough, Mrs Gandhi appealed to the private industry's instinct for profit maximization and coaxed gently: Now that the licens-

ing procedure had been streamlined and industrial policy rationalized it was upto the private sector to come forward to invest in industries which were vital to the economy and which were open to it. Would it not be also clear, by and by, that what is 'vital' is a definitional convenience and what is 'open' is but a matter of raising the shutters which requires but gentle pushing? Mrs Gandhi, with her usual candour for making well-timed confessions, agreed that the administered prices had been less flexible than industry wished, that economy had been held up by shortages, by inefficiencies and what was needed was a powerful shot in the arm of production.

The FICCI showed a considerable degree of positive optimism; capital that was going so shy and recalcitrant in the recent past could be coaxed into making a bolder and willing appearance provided certain constraints were removed *without delay*. Mr Charat Ram, in his presidential address, projected that if some of the more serious constraints were removed forthwith, industrial production could grow by 10 per cent. Mr A. K. Jain went to the extent of declaring that "resources had never been the problem for the plans in the country because none of the previous plans had foundered for lack of it". (Could Mr Chavan hope for better? He believed that with an extensive scheme of reforms, continuation of development rebate, abolition both of surtax and restrictions on intercorporate investments, rebates on shares of new investment, raising of income tax exemption limits etc., the investment target of the Fifth Plan would be well within reach.

The discussion on removal of restraints underlined the importance of increasing agricultural production. Mr Charat Ram pleaded for the allocation of the country's best 'management resources' to agriculture and of foreign exchange and raw materials to industries basic for agricultural production. The key words were Management and Technology

again, although there was no searching as to how the green revolution had turned prematurely grey. Mrs Gandhi was warmly congratulated for the bold steps to end the wheat take-over but of course industry could not afford runaway food prices. So the traders were reminded of their ethical responsibility. The shortfall in the country's achievements was attributed, apropos the resurging spirit of nationalism, to uncritical acceptance in the past of foreign concepts and organisation—American and Russian patterns of 'gigantism' and 'centralism'. "What was important", declared Mr Charat Ram in promoting production was not to whom the State allocates the task of development and exploitation of any particular resource and industry but that development should proceed apace and unabated. The emphasis should be on "quick decisions". Indeed, shortages especially in crucial sectors like power and coal could be removed if the private sector is permitted to give the country the benefits of its efficient management.

The industrialists also proposed that, in the interest of accelerating production, an industrial truce for five years should be declared. There had to be rethinking on the concept of 'large houses' in industrial licensing as with high prices, high cost of investment only large houses could undertake large projects. This called for suspension of the Act regarding monopolistic trade practices. Mr Charat Ram made a special plea that the government policy should be designed to encourage import substitution, in addition to strengthening of export promotion. Mrs Gandhi, in reply, assured him that

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indeed it would be so. Of course, it was neither the occasion nor the place to question what repercussions drive for import substitution and export promotion *per se* may have on the pattern of industrial production and distribution.

Quick Action

That the Government has not been too slow to act on these suggestions and possibly in some cases the proposals were but formalizations of trends already in stride was clear from pieces of news that appeared in the same week. It was reported that the U.P. Government had already allowed 'an unco-ordinated private sector plan emerging from the local corporate thinking of U.P.'s industrial executives' to generate power on a cooperative basis, with long-term finance from the Government. The tariff rates were to be decided upon by the industrialists. *The Economic Times* reported: "Under the guise of diversification of production the Centre is understood to have decided to modify the industrial policy resolution. The new scheme to be announced soon will permit carbon and alloy steels now reserved for the public sector to be rolled by the private sector steel units". It was reported that although the decision on this was taken some time back and a gazette notification from the Ministry of Industrial Development was on its way, neither the Minister of Industrial Development nor of Steel and Mines had taken Parliament into confidence to explain the implications of this move when their grants came up for discussion. That such an erosion of policies

may not be exceptional is hinted at in a letter reportedly from Justice Nain, the Chairman of the Monopolies Commission, addressed to the Government raising strong objection to the Government's sanctioning licences to companies belonging to large industrial houses and dominant undertakings, bypassing the Commission which was "without work". (*Economic Times*, April 19).

Addressing the FICCI, Mr C. Subramaniam, Minister for Industrial Development, gave the assurance in no uncertain terms that the Government had already enunciated its policy towards the monopoly houses and foreign companies a year in advance of the fifth plan and the policy would remain stable at least during the plan. He further assured industry that despite the great strain on foreign exchange sources, the Government would cater fully to the industry's current years' requirements and the industry should not upset its long-term plans. He further said that schemes of administered prices and distribution would be evolved in consultation with the FICCI.

Indeed, the stage has been set, if would seem, for an honourable and holy alliance. It was left to the Union Minister for Heavy Industries, Mr. T. A. Pai, to call for an end to industrial class (I) distinctions between industries as being large, medium and small and between the public and private sectors. (*Economic Times*, April 22). Proliferating of meanings attached to words and of words themselves—

It would appear that we have almost reached a new concept of 'classless' society of socialistic vintage. Despite all the rampant chaos in the economy perhaps what is emerging sharply is the unmasking of the ruling class.

The Railway Strike

A Statement

The trick that the Government is playing is that to the people in North India they have been saying that trains in South, East and West are moving well; to the people in South they say that trains in East, West and North have been running normal, and to the people in the West they are talking just the same, and so on and so forth. It is not possible for an ordinary man to go and verify and to form any impression. Over Rs. 6 lakhs have so far been spent on newspaper advertisements alone, and to confront the strike the budget is about Rs. 20 crores.

The North Indian press is full of news that trains are moving in near normalcy in the Bombay region. But when I went there I found that the strike was complete and absolutely successful. I also had been to Haryana and Rajasthan. There also the conditions are just as in Bombay. The Railway authorities are using their gazetted staff to run trains. In some places policemen are also on the job. They have also brought in some people from industry and other sectors. As a result very frequent and serious accidents are taking place, and only a few of them are finding a place in the news. The government is spreading canards of sabotage and intimidation. During our meeting of the 13th with the Prime Minister she started by saying that sabotage has been done and loyal workers were being intimidated. When I asked her if she could give definite and specific first-hand information, she remained silent. The Coordination Committee's circular, which has been religiously adhered to by the workers, absolutely puts a ban on sabotage and all that. If there is any sabotage that is being organised by the Government. It is using agents provocateurs and black legs to do it.

What actually the Prime Minister said is "We are landed in this pre-

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JUNE 1, 1974

sent trouble because we accepted certain settlements in the past". She said that it is not possible for her to sit for negotiations because, she feels, that if she sat for negotiations the strike may aggravate and more demands will come. She went to Teheran where she met American stalwarts. It could be seen from there that she wrote a letter stating that no bonus will be allowed to railwaymen. One of the demands of the railwaymen is need-based wage, pending parity with public sector undertakings. For this the resolution unanimously adopted at the 15th Session of the Indian Labour Conference (July 1957) clearly reads as follows:

"With regard to minimum wage fixation it was agreed that the minimum wage was a need-based one and should ensure the minimum human needs of the industrial worker irrespective of any other consideration". It was a government meeting in which all the Ministries of the Central Government and all the State Governments participated. Sarvasree Guljarilal Nanda, the then Labour Minister, Morarji Desai, the then Finance Minister, Jagjivan Ram, the then Railway Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Swaran Singh, K. C. Reddy, Abid Ali and above all Lalit Narayan Misra, the present Railway Minister (the then Parliamentary Secretary Labour and Employment) participated.

Another demand of the railwaymen is the supply of subsidised food-grains. This is the thing which the British did during the whole of the Second World War. Even the present Minister for Steel and Mines has promised to supply subsidised food-grains to the workers of public undertakings. Then why this discrimination?

The Railways were never serious about genuine negotiations or a negotiated settlement for various reasons. On April 7, 4 days before even the negotiations started and more than a month before the date of strike, the Ministry of Home Affairs sent out secret circulars and in one of them it stated: "One of

the important ingredients of effective action will be the arrests and removal from the scene of their activities of persons who otherwise would either contribute to the success of the strike... or create serious law and order problems. It will be appreciated that the timings of such preventive arrests should be neither premature nor late" and "The provisions of the Maintenance of Internal Security Act could be profitably invoked while undertaking preventive action. Section (i) (a) (iii) specifically enables detention of any person with a view to preventing him from acting in any manner prejudicial to maintenance of services essential to the Community.

Order one were passed on to District Magistrates for organising eviction of striking railway workers' families and then on April 25, circulars went out authorising the executives to create black legs. Although the Railways are very reluctant to pay Rs. 35 crores as bonus, they have so far spent at least Rs. 20 crores to break the strike. And the material loss in cash and kind is beyond calculation. As early as April 27, in order to antagonise the travelling public, they cancelled as many as 200 passenger trains. They never meant a negotiated settlement and wanted a showdown.

The Public Accounts Committee (1973-1974) has reported the following: 1.39. The Committee note with concern that during 1971-72, the inventory holdings of the Railways increased to Rs. 149.6 crores as against Rs. 129.8 crores at the end of the previous year. (40) Inventory holding on the Indian Rlys is too high, inasmuch as it is over 50 per cent of annual issues as against 33 per cent in Canadian Railways. The value of surplus stores included in the balance under stores in stock has gone up (1971-72) from Rs. 603.6 lakhs to Rs. 670.3 lakhs.

The Railways are incurring an annual loss of about Rs. 35 crores on the carriage of 17 low rated commodities because the tariff rates in these cases do not even cover the

cost of transportation. In the list of these commodities were sugarcane, bamboo, oil seeds, molasses etc. they do not see any reason why industrial raw materials should be transported at a loss.

... it is imperative to augment revenue by improving the carrying capacity of the coaches and wagons. Since 1940 very slight improvement in the ratio of fare weight to the payloads had been effected by altering the designs of B. G. wagons and coaches.

Referring to certain equipment, IBM (Accountancy) equipment, the Committee says "it is interesting to find that the CIF cost of these equipment was declared as Rs. 6.14 lakhs by the arm and the hire charge was declared as Rs. 6.14 lakhs by the firm and the hire charges paid up to June 1972 worked out to Rs. 50.17 lakhs....."

Referring to the purchase of 39 disc packs (IBM Company automation) the Committee has this to say: The payment was made in November 1966 at the rate of Rs. 3712 each equivalent to the firm's catalogue price of \$400. The agreement provided for the payment at the firm's established price at the time of delivery or the catalogue price whichever was lower. The term "established price" had however not been defined in the agreement. It is subsequently noticed that the prices of these disc packs shown by the firm in the bills of entry ranged between 265 and 275 DM (Rs. 498 and Rs. 517).

The Central Police cost 1950-51: 3 crores, 1974/75: 169/04 crores, Income Tax arrears of rich people 900 crores, Defence cost 500-1600 crores. PM's meeting security cost 85,000. Maintenance of each Central Minister 50,000-70,000 p.m. Nehru used to take a few seats in a plane for trips abroad.

Jyotirmoy Bosu, M.P.
(This statement was issued before the strike was called off).

Our sole agent in Bangladesh
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The Two Meet Again

March 21, 1973—Nixon, Dean

D—The reason that I thought we ought to talk this morning is because in conversations I have the impression that you don't know everything I know and it makes it very difficult for you to make judgments that only you can make on some of these things and I thought that.

P—In other words, I have to know why you feel that we shouldn't unravel something?

D—Let me give you my overall first.

P—In other words, your judgment as to where it stands, and where we will go.

D—I think that there is no doubt about the seriousness of the problem we've got. We have a cancer within close to the presidency, that is growing daily.

It's compounded, growing geometrically now, because it compounds itself. That will be clear if I, you know, explain some of the details of why it is. Basically, it is because we are being blackmailed; people are going to start perjuring themselves very quickly that have not had to perjure themselves to protect other people in the line. And there is no assurance.

P—That that won't bust?

D—That that won't bust. So let me give you the sort of basic facts, talking first about the Watergate; and then about Segretti; and then about some of the peripheral items that have come up.

First of all on the Watergate; how did it all start, where did it start? OK. It started with an instruction to me from Bob Haldeman to see if we couldn't set up a perfectly legitimate campaign intelligence operation over at the reelection committee. Not being in this business, I turned to somebody who had been in this business, Jack Caulfield. I don't remem-

ber whether you remember Jack or not. He was your original body-guard before they had the candidate protection, an old city policeman.

P—Yes, I know him.

D—Jack worked for John and then was transferred to my office, I said, Jack come up with a plan that, you know, a normal infiltration, buying information from secretaries and all that sort of thing. He did, he put together a plan. It was kicked around. I went to Ehrlichman with it. I went to Mitchell with it, and the consensus was that Caulfield was not the man to do this.

In retrospect, that might have been a bad call because he is an incredibly cautious person and wouldn't have put the situation where it is today. After rejecting that, they said we still need something so I was told to look around for someone who could go over to 1701 and do this. That is when I came up with Gordon Liddy. They needed a lawyer. Gordon had an intelligence background from his FBI service. I was aware of the fact that he had done some extremely sensitive things for the White House and he had apparently done them well. Going out in Ellsberg's doctor's office.

P—Oh, yeah.

D—And things like this. He worked with leaks. He tracked these things down, so the report that I got from Krogh was that he was a hell of a good man and not only that, a good lawyer and could set up a proper operation. So we talked to Liddy. He was interested in doing it.

I took Liddy over to meet Mitchell. Mitchell thought highly of him because Mitchell was partly involved in his coming to the White House to work for Krogh. Liddy had been at Treasury before that. Then Liddy was told to put to-

gether his plan. You know. How he would run an intelligence operation. This was after he was hired over there at the committee. Magruder called me in January of 1972 and said I would like to have you come over and see Liddy's plan.

"You come over to Mitchell's office and sit in a meeting where Liddy is going to lay his plan out". I said I don't really know if I am the man, but if you want me there I will be happy to. So I came over and Liddy laid out a million dollar plan that was the most incredible thing I have ever laid my eyes on—all in codes, and involved black bag operations, kidnapping, providing prostitutes to weaken the opposition, bugging, mugging teams. It was just an incredible thing.

P—Tell me this, did Mitchell go along?

D—No, No, not at all. Mitchell just sat there puffing and laughing, I could tell from—after Liddy left the office I said that is the most incredible thing I have ever seen. He said, I agree. And so Liddy was told to go back in the drawing board and come up with something realistic. So there was a second meeting.

They asked me to come over to that. I came into the tail end of the meeting. I wasn't there for the first part. I don't know how long the meeting lasted. At this point, they were discussing again bugging, kidnapping and the like. As this point I said right in front of everybody, very clearly, I said. "These are not the sort of things that are ever to be discussed in the office of the Attorney General of the United States—that was where he still was—and I am personally incensed"; and I am trying to get Mitchell off the hook. He is a nice person and doesn't like to have to say "No" when he is talking with people he is going to have to work with.

P—That's right.

D—So I let it be known. I said: "You all pack that stuff up and get it the hell out of here. You

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just can't talk this way in this office and you should, reexamine your whole thinking.

P—Who all was present?

D—It was Magruder, Mitchell, Liddy and myself. I came back right after the meeting and told Bob, "Bob, we have a growing disaster on our hands if they are thinking this way, and I said: The White House has got to stay out of this and I, frankly, am not going to be involved in it".

He said: "I agree, John". I thought at that point that the thing was turned off because it was an absurd proposal.

P—Yeah.

D—Liddy, I did have dealings with him afterwards and we never talked about it. Now that would be hard to believe for some people, but we never did. That is the fact of the matter.

P—Well, you were talking with him about other things.

D—We had so many other things.

P—He had some legal problems too. But you were his adviser. And I understand you had conversations about the campaign laws, etc. Haldeman told me that you were handling all of that for us. Go ahead.

D—Now. So Liddy went back after that and was over at 1701. The committee, and this is where I come into having put the pieces together after the fact as to what I can put together about what happened. Liddy sat over there and tried to come up with another plan that he could sell.

They were talking to him, telling him that he was putting too much money in it. I don't think they were discounting the illegal points. Jeb is not a lawyer. He did not know whether this is the way the game was played and what it was all about. They came up, apparently, with another plan, but they couldn't get it approved by anybody over there. So Liddy and Hunt apparently came to see Chuck Colson, and Chuck Colson picked up the telephone and called Magruder and said: "You all either fish or cut bait. This is absurd to have these guys over there and not

using them. If you are not going to use them, I may use them". Things of this nature.

P—When was this?

D—This was apparently February of 1972.

P—Did Colson know what they were talking about?

D—I can only assume, because of his close relationship with Hunt, that he had a damn good idea what they were talking about, a damn good idea. He would probably deny it today and probably get away with denying it. But I still—unless Hunt blows on him.

P—But then Hunt isn't enough. It takes two doesn't it?

D—Probably, probably. But Liddy was there also and if Liddy were to blow....

P—Then you have a problem—I was saying as to the criminal liability in the White House.

D—I will go back over that, and take out any of the soft spots.

P—Colson you think was the person who pushed?

D—I think he helped to get the thing off the dime. Now something else occurred though....

P—Did Colson—had he talked to anybody here?

D—No, I think this was...

P—Did he talk with Haldeman?

D—No, I don't think so. But here is the next thing that comes in the chain. I think Bob was assuming that they had something that was proper over there, some intelligence gathering operation that Liddy was operating. And through Strachan, who was his tickler, he started pushing them to get some information and they—Magruder—took that as a signal to probably go to Mitchell and to say: "They are pushing us like crazy for this from the White House". And so Mitchell probably puffed on his pipe and said "go ahead", and never really reflected on what it was all about.

So they had some plan that obviously had. I gather, different targets they were going to go after. They were going to infiltrate, and bug, and do all this sort of thing to

a lot of these targets. This is knowledge I have after the fact. Apparently after they had initially broken in and bugged the DNC they were getting information. The information was coming over here to Strachan and some of it was given to Haldeman, there is no doubt about it.

P—Did he know where it was coming from?

D—I don't really know if he would.

P—Not necessarily?

D—Not necessarily. Strachan knew it. There is no doubt about it. And whether Strachan—I have never come to press these people on these points because it hurts them to give up that next inch. So I had to piece things together—Strachan was aware of receiving information, reporting to Bob.

At once point Bob even gave instructions to change their capabilities from Muskie to McGovern and passed this back through Strachan to Magruder and apparently to Liddy. And Liddy was starting to make arrangements to go in and bug the McGovern operation.

D—Now what has happened post June 17? I was under pretty clear instructions not to investigate this, but this could have been disastrous on the electorate if all hell had broken loose. I worked on a theory of containment....

P—Sure.

D—To try to hold it right where it was.

P—Right.

D—There is no doubt that I was totally aware of what the bureau was doing at all times. I was totally aware of what the grand jury was doing. I knew what witnesses were going to be called. I knew what they were asked, and I had to.

P—Why did Peterson play the game so straight with us?

D—Because Peterson is a soldier. He kept me informed. He told me when had problems where we had problems and the like he believes in you and he believes in this Administration. This Administration has made him. I don't think he has done anything improper, but he did

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make sure that the investigation was narrowed down to the very fine criminal thing which was a break for... There is no doubt about it...

D—Well, they had a—Cuban committee and they had —some of it was given to Hunt's lawyer, who in turn passed it out. You know, when Hunt's wife was flying to Chicago with \$10,000 she was actually, I understand after the fact now, was going to pass that money to one of the Cubans—to meet him in Chicago and pass it to somebody there.

P—(unintelligible). But I would certainly keep that cover for whatever it is worth.

Obstruction of Justice

D—That's the most troublesome post-thing because Bob is involved in that. John is involved in that I am involved in that Mitchell is involved in that. And that is an obstruction of justice.

P—In other words, the bad it does. You were taking care of witnesses. How did Bob get in it?

D—Well, they ran out of lot money over there. Bob had \$150,000 in a safe over here that was really set aside for polling purposes. And there was no other source of money, so they came on and said you all have got to give us some money.

I had to go to Bob and say; "Bob, they need some money over there". He said: "What for?" "So I had to tell him what it was for because he wasn't just about to send money over there willy-nilly. And John was involved in those discussions. And then we decided there was no price too high to pay to let this thing blow up in front of the elections

P—I think we should be able to handle that issue pretty well. Maybe some lawsuits.

D—I think we can too. Here is what is happening right now. What sort of—brings matters to the (unintelligible)? One, this is going to be a continual blackmail operation by Hunt and Liddy and the Cubans. No doubt about it. And McCord, who is another one involved. McCord has asked for nothing.

McCord did ask to meet with somebody with Jack Caulfield, who is his old friend who had gotten him hired over there, and when Caulfield had him hired, he was a perfectly legitimate security man. And he wanted to talk about commutation, and things like that.

And as you know Colson has talked indirectly to Hunt about commutation. All of these things are had, is that they are problems, they are promises, they are commitments. They are the very sort of thing that the Senate is going to be looking most for. I don't think they can find them, frankly.

P—Pretty hard.

D—Pretty hard, Damn hard. It's all cash.

P—Pretty hard, I mean as far as the witnesses are concerned.

D—All right, now, the blackmail is continuing. Hunt called one of the lawyers from the reelection committee on last Friday to leave it with him over the weekend. The guy came in to see me to give a message directly to me, from Hunt to me.

P—Is Hunt out on bail?

D—Pardon?

P—Is Hunt on bail?

D—Hunt is on bail. Correct. Hunt now is demanding another \$72,000 for his own personal expenses. Another \$50,000 to pay attorneys fees; \$120,000... He wanted it as of the close of business yesterday. He said: "I am going to be sentenced on Friday and I've got to get my financial affairs in order." I told this fellow O'Brien: "If you want money, you came to the wrong man, fellow. I am not involved in the money. I don't know a thing about it. I can't help you. You better scramble about elsewhere." O'Brien is a ball player. He carried tremendous water for us.

P—He isn't Hunt's lawyer?

D—No, he is our lawyer at the re-election committee.

P—I see.

D—So he is safe. There is no problem there. So it raises the whole question. Hunt has now made a direct threat against Ehrlichman.

As a result of this, this is his blackmail. He says: "I will bring John Ehrlichman down to his knees and put him in jail. I have done enough seamy things for him and Krogh. They'll never survive it."

P—Was he talking about Ellsberg?

'Where are the Soft Points?'

O—Ellsberg, and apparently some other things. I don't know the full extent of it.

P—I don't know about anything else.

D—I don't know either, and I hate to learn some of these things. So that is that situation. Now, where are the soft points? How many people know about this? Well, let me go one step further in this whole thing. The Cubans that were used in the Watergate were also the same Cubans that Hunt and Liddy used for this California Ellsberg thing, for the break-in out there. So they are aware of that. How high their knowledge is, is something else. Hunt and Liddy, of course, are totally aware of it, of the fact that it is right out of the White House. ...

D—You've got, then, an awful lot of the principals involved who know. Some people's wives know. Mrs Hunt was the savviest woman in the world. She had the whole picture together.

P—Did she?

D—Yes. Apparently, she was the pillar of strength in that family before the death.

P—Great sadness. As a matter of fact, there was a discussion with somebody about Hunt's problem on account of his wife and I said, of course, commutation could be considered on the basis of his wife's death, and that is the only conversation I ever had in that light.

D—Right.

D—So that is it. That is the extent of the knowledge. So where are the soft spots on this? Well, first of all, there is the problem of the continued blackmail, which will not only go on now, but it will go

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on while these people are in prison, and it will compound the obstruction of justice situation. It will cost money. It is dangerous.

People around here are not "pros" at this sort of thing. This is the sort of thing "Mafia" people can do; washing money, getting clean money, and things like that. We just don't know about those things, because we are not criminals and not used to dealing in that business.

P—That's right.

D—It is a tough thing to know how to do.

P—Maybe it takes a gang to do that.

D—That's right. There is a real problem as to whether we could even do it. Plus there is the real problem in raising money. Mitchell has been working on raising some money. He is one of the ones with the most to lose. But there is no denying the fact that the White House, in Ehrlichman, Haldeman and Dean, are involved in some of the early money decisions.

P—How much money do you need?

D—I would say these people are going to cost a million dollars over the next two years.

P—We could get that. On the money, if you need the money you could get that. You could get a million dollars. You could get it in cash. I know where it could be gotten. It is not easy, but it could be done. But the question is, who the hell would handle it? Any ideas on that?

D—That's right. Well, I think that is something that Mitchell ought to be charged with.

P—I would think so too.

D—And get some "pros" to help him.

P—Let me say there shouldn't

be a lot of people running around getting money....

P—Your major guy to keep under control is Hunt?

D—That is right.

P—I think. Does he know a lot?

P—He knows so much. He could sink "Chuck" Colson. Apparently he is quite distressed with Colson. He thinks Colson has abandoned him. Colson was to meet with him when he was out there after, you know, he had left the White House. He, me with him, through his lawyer. Hunt raised the question he wanted money. Colson's lawyer told him Colson wasn't doing anything with money. Hunt took offence with that immediately and felt Colson had abandoned him.

P—Just looking at the immediate problem, don't you think you have to handle Hunt's financial situation damn soon?

D—I think that is..I talked with Mitchell about that last night and..

P—It seems to me we have to keep the cap on the bottle that much, or we don't have any option.

D—That's right.

P—Either that, or it all blows right now?

D—That's the question.

D—What really bothers me is this growing situation. As I say, it is growing because of the continued need to provide support for the Watergate people who are going to hold us up for everything we've got. And the need for some people to perjure themselves as they go down the road here. If this thing ever blows, then we are in a cover-up situation. I think it would be extremely damaging to you and the— (President breaks in).

P—Sure. The whole concept of administration justice. Which we cannot have!

D—That is what really troubles me. For example, what happens if it starts breaking, and they do find a criminal case against a Haldeman, a Dean, a Mitchell, and Ehrlichman? That is that....

P—If it really comes down to that, we would have to (unintelligible)

some of the men.

D—That's right. I am coming down to what I really think, is that Bob and John and John Mitchell and I can sit down and spend a day or however long, to figure out one, how this can be carved away from you so that it does not damage you or the presidency. It just can't. You are not involved in it and it is something you shouldn't....

P—That is true.

D—I know, sir, I can just tell from our conversation that these are things that you have no knowledge of.

P—You certainly can! Bugging, etc. Let me say, I am keenly aware of the fact Colson, et al, were doing their best to get information as we went along. But they all knew very well they were supposed to comply with the law. There was no question about that. You feel that really the trigger man was really Colson on this thing?

D—No. He was one of us. He was just in the chain. He helped push the thing.... Well, I have been a conduit for information on taking care of people out there who are guilty of crimes.

P—Oh, you mean like blackmailers?

D—The blackmailers. Right.

P—Well, I wonder if part of it can't be, I wonder if that doesn't— let me put it frankly — I wonder if that doesn't have to be continued. Let me put it this way, let us suppose that you get the million bucks, and you get the proper way to handle it. You could hold that side?

D—Uh, huh.

P—It would seem to me that would be worthwhile.

D—Well, that's one problem.

P—I know you have a problem here. You have the problem with Hunt and his clemency.

D—That's right. And you are going to have a clemency problem. With the others. They all are going to expect to be out and that may put you in a position that is just untenable at some point. You know, the Watergate hearing's just over. Hunt's now demanding clemency or

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he is going to blow. And politically it's impossible for you to do it.

P—That's right.

D—I am not sure that you will ever be able to deliver on the clemency. It may be just too hot.

P—You can't do it politically until after the 1974 elections, that's for sure. You're point is that even then you couldn't do it.

D—That's right. It may further involve you in a way. You should not be involved in this.

P—No. It is wrong. That's for sure.

D—Well there have been some bad judgments made. There have been some necessary judgments made.

P—Before the election?

D—Before the election and in the wake. The necessary one you know, before the election. You know, with me, there was no way, but the burden of the second Administration is something that is not going to go away.

P—No, it isn't.

D—It is not going to go away.

P—It is not going to go away.

D—Exactly.

D—What I'm coming in to-day with is: I don't have a plan on how to solve it right now, but I think it is at the juncture that we should begin to think in terms of how to cut the losses; how to minimize the further growth of this thing, rather than further compound it by, you know ultimately paying these guys for ever. I think we've got to look—

P—But at the moment, don't you agree it is better to get the Hunt thing back where that—

D—That it worth buying time on.

P—That is buying time, I agree.

D—There are two routes. One is to figure out how to cut the losses and minimize the human impact and get you up and out and away from it in any way. In a way it would never come back to haunt you. That is one general alternative. The other is to go down the road, just hunker down, fight it at every corner, every turn, don't let people testify—cover it up is what we are really talking about.

A Letter From France

From A Correspondent

The situation of immigrant workers in France has for some time been much talked of. But recently a series of actions undertaken by extreme left organisations have highlighted their miserable working and living conditions. The most spectacular of these was the nominating of an 18-year old Tunisian worker, Djellali Kamal, as candidate for the presidential elections. Kamal and a group of some 35 Pakistani, Mauritian and Arab immigrant workers went on a hunger-strike in March. Their demands are work permits for everybody, free entry into France for those looking for work and improvement of working conditions.

The leading French trade unions, the CGT and the CFDT, were busy with election campaigns for Mitterrand, united Left candidate. So it was up to the leftist organisations to look after the floods in Punjab last immigrants, mostly Pakistanis who came after the year. Many of them have been living on bread and tea, selling newspapers on the streets. The MTA (Mouvement des Travailleurs Arabes) and other leftist unions decided then to undertake the hunger-strike in order to obtain the work permits.

Other actions undertaken were a demonstration by immigrant workers. These actions have led to clashes with semi-official organisations like the Amicale des Algériens en Europe. At an anti-racist meeting sponsored by the CGT, the CFDT and the Amicale, the workers on hunger-strike were not allowed to use the mike and were even beaten by members of the Amicale. On April 3, when an Algerian worker was found murdered, the Consulate was informed on the telephone. The reply was: "If all of you kicked the bucket, I don't care". Further proof of official Algerian solidarity with the workers in France.

In a communiqué, the immigrant

workers declared that Kamal's candidature was no joke. "It is the cry of millions of men reduced to serfdom. All over Europe 14 million men are enchained in the Common Market of slavery". Future actions of immigrant workers movement will be on an all-European scale.

For the first time since 1945, the French trade unions and Left parties were not on the streets for May Day. The reason: the electoral truce. The French Communist Party and the CGT attached greater importance to Mitterrand's candidature and bourgeois electioneering than to the traditional worker's day. In spite of the union's decisions several workers were on the streets with the extreme left organisations—the Trotskyists, the Chilean committees, the Women's Liberation Movement, the immigrant workers, the separatist movements (Breton, Basque, etc.). Around 30,000 militants filed past the Pere Lachaise Cemetery (where a hundred years ago, the last heroes of the Commune fell). An interesting detail: the same afternoon, at a country fete held by same unions who boycotted the May Day demonstration, several members of the Chilean Committee were physically assaulted by the union members, for having dared to sell papers at "their" fete. One of the slogans of the United Left is a 'guarantee' of liberty.

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JUNE 1, 1974

Book Review

CHILE'S ROAD TO SOCIALISM

By Salvador Allende
Penguin Books

THERE is a body of opinion that in the world today, where there is a mighty socialist world side by side with the capitalist world, the capture of power may not be by armed uprising or any protracted armed struggle; that socialism is already on the order of the day and the question of who wins has already been settled more or less. Therefore, the proletariat may come to power through peaceful and parliamentary means. This controversy is not new, though today the issue may be posed in a special manner. The controversy had been raging in the communist world since the death of Engels in 1895. It was thought after misinterpreting him, that the founder of Marxism had come to the conclusion that the era of forcible overthrow and seizure of power by the exploited class was over and now there was nothing for it but engage in peaceful parliamentary battles for the capture of State power. In the early years of this century, Lenin waged a sharp theoretical struggle against this revision of Marxism. His conclusions on this question are unquestionably still valid. In sharp polemics with Kautsky particularly, Lenin propounded the thesis that the exploited class could not go over to the building of socialism unless it seized power and established a dictatorship. The very idea of dictatorship implied force or violence, of course against the minority of the population, the ruling class, the exploiters.

The entire political development in Chile from the day of the election victory of Salvador Allende to the day of his fall after a military coup in September 1973 is to be judged in the background of Lenin's theory. When Allende came to power in November 1970 on the basis of elections, he had to depend on the mercy of the Christian Democrats. Accord-

ing to the Constitution of Chile, where no candidate at a presidential election gets absolute majority, it is the Congress which elects one of the first two getting the highest votes. In the Congress, the Christian Democrats had 85 members, the Popular Unity Bloc which supported Allende had 80 members and the extreme right party, the National Party, had only 40 members. Both before and after the elections, Allende declared that he would depend on the law of the land to implement the radical measures of the party such as nationalisation of the foreign-owned mines. In June 1971, the Allende Government nationalised copper, coal and other mines and in October 1971, the export trade in copper. It went on to nationalise 200 industries controlling as much as 70 per cent of national production. It also nationalised the banks. The Government seems to have dragged its feet, however, in the matter of land reform. When in December 1970, the peasants started taking possession of the latifundias, Allende sternly suppressed the movement. In fact, on May 16, 1972, the police fired on a crowd of cultivators killing unarmed men. The attitude of the Government was that all steps towards national freedom and socialism would be taken peacefully.

From the very beginning, the Allende Government as well as the Popular Unity Bloc which supported it eschewed revolutionary action and insisted on strictly constitutional means for achieving their objectives. They wanted to take the whole people with them and, necessarily, all the parties. The Government came to power with the support of the right-wing Christian Democrats, a bourgeois party, and even recked nothing of including even representatives of the armed forces in the Cabinet. These were included as early as October 1972. But further developments were more tragic. When the right-wing reactionaries consisting of the bourgeoisie and agents of the imperialists began to plot for the overthrow of the Government, the Gov-

ernment more and more slid towards those very classes which were plotting for its overthrow. As late as August 9, 1973, only a few weeks before the fateful September 11, Allende resuffled his Cabinet and took four representatives of the armed forces.

The people were not to be blamed. They demonstrated again and again against the conspiracy of the reactionaries to topple the Allende Government. There was a general strike in Chile on June 21, 1973, in support of the Government (and about one million working people marched in the streets of Santiago). It appears, however, that there was no serious attempt to organise the proletarian revolutionary organisations, nor was there any attempt to arm the people against a possible coup by the military in the interests of the imperialists and the bourgeoisie. When there was a proposal to organise armed people's militia in February 1972, the Government rejected that idea because it was wedded to bringing about socialist transformations only in a legal, peaceful and constitutional manner. Woefully enough, it relied on the State machinery of the bourgeoisie to bring about a socialist transformation of society. The armed forces are the most important coercive machinery on which the class rule of the bourgeoisie depends but the Allende Government still hoped to build socialism without smashing the army. Similarly, the bureaucracy was left intact. So abject was the reliance of the Government on the existing State machinery of the ruling class that it reformed the Cabinet by taking in representatives of the military. On the other hand, no armed de-

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ardments of the class-conscious proletariat were formed to carry forward the revolution. It was Allende who seemed to have refused to accept one of the first principles of Marxism that socialism as a condition of society is not automatically born within the womb of the old society. Even, if all prerequisites of transition to socialist society are there in the old society, socialism cannot be built unless there is a revolutionary overthrow of the ruling class. And talk of revolutionary overthrow is not an empty phrase. It means, inter alia, smashing the State machinery of the ruling classes.

In Chile, none of the basic principles of the Marxist concept of capture of power and revolutionary transformation of society was remembered. Allende declared: "... Torrents of blood, imprisonment and death mark the paths of revolutionary struggles of many lands in many continents. Even in those countries where the Revolution did triumph, the social cost has been very high. It has been paid for in lives, comrades, paid for with the priceless lives of children, men and women. Even in those countries where the Revolution triumphed, they still had to overcome the economic chaos caused by the struggle and trauma of combat or civil war. Here we can make the Revolution along lines that Chile has established, at the minimum social cost, without sacrificing lives and without disorganising production..." (Speech broadcast on radio and television on Labour Day, on May 1, 1971).

There are hundreds of utterances like this in the book under review which is a selection of plans and ideas from Allende's programme, taken from his speeches and statements during the first six months of his presidency and including his inaugural address and his first annual message to Congress.

KALYAN CHAUDHURI

What Price Self-Determination ?

I. K. SHUKLA

DOES separation necessarily lead to flowering and fulfilment or does it singe and shrink individuals and communities? Or is self-determination a certain symbiosis involving temporary abrasions but impelling permanent adjustments? Does not parting of the ways snap and slash much that we hold dear? In short, does it not kill?

Oddly, these thoughts occur as one sees *Garm Hawa* and *Kora Kagaz* (released in Bombay April 26 and May 10 respectively), the former relating to 1947 and its aftermath and the latter to a matrimonial mayhem, the former portraying the dilemma of a community, and the latter that of a couple. In both of them something is aflame besides the ego. Is the game worth the candle? Could the wafton waste be avoided or its quantum cut?

Kora Kagaz, despite its snapt, Gulshan Nandaesque title, is a clean commercial sensitively handled. It is based on a story of Ashutosh Mukhopadhyaya. A conceited mother ruins the married life of her own daughter Archana (Jaya) seeking to regulate it according to her own lights which are awfully poor and enormously vulgar. The daughter is caught in a cross. The distance between her and her self-respecting, but edgy, husband goes on widening, culminating in a divorce, which she signs much against her will! She becomes a teacher and after a dreary year of rapid routine, is ready, as usual, to leave for home during the vacations. On the platform she sees Sukesh (Vijay Anand), her husband, no less forlorn and penitent. Follows mutual recantation and, of course, the reunion.

Acting honours are due to Jaya Bhaduri and Vijay Anand. But Goldie's age shows. The economy of frames is commendable and the

tear-jerker moment of reunion, psychologically so charged, unexceptionable. Inducting Deven Varma for a comic patch is perhaps a concession to the Bombay gharana of filmcraft. But it jars, and makes a mature work look stupid. Equally wrong is the title in that the theme is exactly contrary to it. Life is not a plain paper. It suffers much splotching and a good deal of scribbling both dirty and delightful. The symbolism of dry, bare trees and leaves aflutter has been a little too heavily stressed. A meaningful story intelligently shown. *Kora Kagaz* breathes a fresh air in the den of musty sterility known as Hindi film.

It is communal fires trailing our 'freedom' in 1947 that *Garm Hawa* recalls. Based on a story of Ismat Chughtai, and fringed with couplets of Kaifi Azmi both as prologue and epilogue read in his own voice, this is a far cry from the arty and trendy clap-trap usually financed by the Film Finance Corporation. For once the FFC deserves thanks and congratulations for having subsidized a film which breathes freshness in every frame. Director M. M. Sathyu and the cast of unprofessional faces enact a memorable period piece with utter candour which is as timely thematically as it is precious as a document.

Salim Mirza, a man of old world decencies, apolitical, essentially shy, is a shoe-manufacturer of Agra. Partition sees his friends and relatives making for Pakistan. His elder brother, a demagogue Leaguer and hypocrite, speaks away to the Promised Land. His daughter Mina commits suicide, two fiances having deserted her and bolted to Pakistan. His business is in a shambles for want of finance. His crafty brother-in-law, Faghru, an erstwhile Leaguer, is now flourishing as a Congressite. Abandoned and alone, Salim would not budge and would stick it out in India. But, his elder son Bakar, failing to retrieve the situation for him goes away to Pakistan. His younger son Sikander, a bright graduate, is jobless. He is reduced to penury. His

mother, a well-conceived character with her deadpan comments bringing the house down with laughter, is Mother Time watching the bizarre unfold, hurt but helpless. She dies in her husband's haveli—a death of peace, even though it is now evacuee property. Salim Mirza's spacious haveli sold out, he is a tenant in a claustrophobic setting, iron bars overhead accentuating the effect of a captive existence. Similarly, clappings melt into gunshots in a scene, the fusion being imaginative and opportune. The evocative grandeur of the Taj and Salim Chishti's mausoleum are awe-inspiring offsetting as they do human desires and frustrations. Balraj Sahni, eminently cut out for the role of Salim Mirza, invests the film with a stoic grandeur and humane nobility all his own. The film will remain his best memorial. Shankar Kaifi as his wife acquits herself superbly.

Some minor flaw. Agra as locate does not 'register' with its specific sights and sound. The clothes could be a little less starphed. The joining of a leftist procession by Salim towards the close of the film is a little too abrupt and out of character. Had the shot been prolonged, showing him cogitating, perhaps the scene would not have appeared so contrived. Then the camera lingering too fondly on Amina and Shabnam in the boat makes for smutty arousal and not pompassion for Amina which is what the story seeks for her from the audience. The character of the tea-vendor is not well developed, though well conceived. We have known his like in the Dacca University Canteen, he (Santoshda?) along with his family having been gunned down by the Pak lordes in 1971 for having been popular with and generous to the students.

But these small items of sloveness do not very seriously distract the viewer. It will remain a memorable film for many reasons for quite long. If the idiom is too obvious it is nothing to cavil at. Hindi cine audiences, fed on unadulterat-

ed horse play and fairyland vulgarities over several decades, need not be scared away by the subtleties fit for a too sophisticated and intelligent set of aesthetes. On many counts this film marks a breakthrough and will remain distinguished for its frank expose of the Indian Muslim's dilemma. Here is an example of a film that educates its audiences.

Letter

A Protest

Sri Chanchal Chatterjee, Sri Girin Chakraborty, Sri Mrinal Sen, Dr Asoke Mitra, Sri Birendra Chatterji, Dr Aurobindu Podder, Sri Jyotsna Sinha Roy, Prof Dilip Chakraborty, Prof. Santosh Mitra, Prof Saurindranath Bhattacharyya, Dr Budhadeb Bhattacharyya, Prof Nirmal Bose, Prof Sukomal Das Gupta, Prof Subir Basu Roy, Prof Satya Pradhan Chakraborty, Prof Asoke Mukherjee Prof Sudhansu Das Mr Samar Sen, have issued the following statement:

In giving expression to our protest against the way the Congress Government has unleashed ruthless oppression on the striking railwaymen and even on members of their families, including women, and the way the civic rights of workers are being trampled upon, throwing to the winds all provisions of the Constitution and democratic norms, we can only register our hatred of such actions and cry shame at the perpetrators of such monstrosities. Thousands of railwaymen and other leaders and workers have been arrested throughout the country. Their member has been mounting daily. Reports of large-scale eviction of striking railwaymen from their quarters and numerous instances of attacks even on women by the police and anti-socials are destructive of all our sense of values. We register our protest against this worst form of perversion of all democratic norms in a State claiming itself to

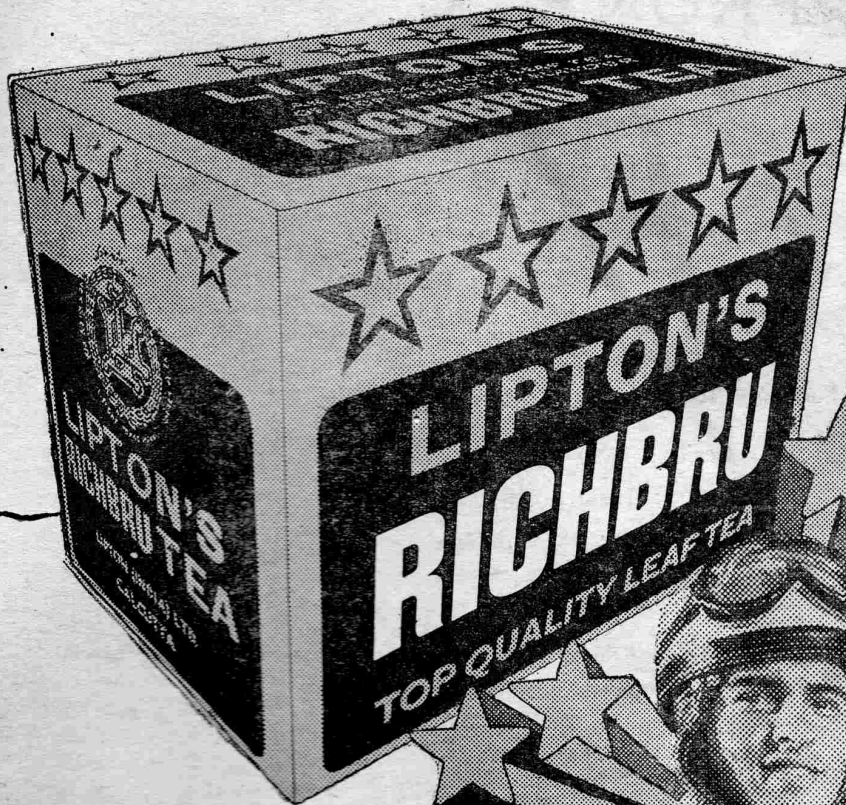
be a democracy. The Congress Government has placed the railway and their property which are described as national property at the disposal of party volunteers. As citizens of this country we strongly condemn this conversion of national property into party property. In consequence, railway property has been exposed to permanent damage. The Government has no right thus to gamble with the fate of the nation. By this act the Congress Government has made the grossest misuse of its administrative powers. We would emphatically declare that the people of the country do not endorse such unprincipled acts of the Congress Government in any way. Rather, they are being more and more organised in order to ensure that this Government is not able for long to pursue its impertinent policies.

We are of firm opinion that, in the face of awakened public opinion these government oppressors would be forced to stage a retreat and the right of workers and employers to live established.

We would in this connection warn the Central Government of the consequence of oppression let loose by it on the youths in particular and the common man in general. The police force of the country and hooligans are being deployed for the purpose. In West Bengal alone more than 30,000 young men and women have been kept confined in prisons. The People of this country are not all deaf and dumb. They have been witnessing all these incidents with eyes and ears open and would seek retribution one day.

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