

frontier

Vol. 1: No. 10

JUNE 15, 1968

PRICE 35 PAISE

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PRINTED AT MODERN INDIA PRESS,
7, RAJA SUBODH MULLICK SQUARE,
CALCUTTA-13 AND PUBLISHED BY SAMAR
SEN FROM 61, MOTT LANE, CALCUTTA-13

THE VIOLENT SOCIETY

SO much has been said in the last few days about Robert Kennedy's assassination that almost any comment now may be repetitious. Yet a few facts need restating. That the alleged assassin was not a White supremacist from the American south, a John Bircher from the West Coast, or one of the Vietnam war-hawks infesting the entire country may have been some comfort to such liberal opinion as exists in the United States. But the assassin's origin or motive is much less relevant than the feature of American life of which his act is the latest striking symptom. According to a report in *The Times*, 11,000 people are murdered in the United States every year, 7,000 of them by shooting. Twenty thousand people take their own lives, 11,000 by shooting; at least 3,000 shooting accidents occur each year. In addition, about 50,000 serious assaults and 60,000 robberies involve the use of firearms.

Free sale of firearms in America has always had a powerful lobby behind it; after all, there may not always be a Vietnam war to yield enough profits for the American arms manufacturers. Although seven out of 10 men and eight out of 10 women supported a Bill for federal control of firearms, the arms lobby was successful in blocking its passage through the Senate. After Martin Luther King's assassination on April 2, there was fresh demand for control, and a Bill banning the sale of handguns by inter-State mail, and over the counter to non-State residents, was approved by the Senate. But it made little difference; the Bill did not provide for registration, nor did it restrict in any way the sale of rifles and long guns. How many guns are in the hands of private individuals in America is anybody's guess—according to one estimate it is 200 million—and few seem to care until one of these decent, democratic toys gets a Kennedy or a Luther King.

A prominent Senator is quoted as saying: "If you take all the guns away from everybody, you disarm the law-abiding public." This may well be true in a country where the law-enforcement machinery is so corrupt as in America; suspicion of even a trace of any progressive movement will startle everybody right up to the White House but a murder or a gun-fight causes not the slightest concern even to the police on the spot. But who, one wonders, is law-abiding, and who not. The Mayor of

Los Angeles has blamed last week's tragedy on the suspected assassin's allegedly Communist ideas; someone had to come out with this suggestion. But surely even Mr Johnson would not suggest that Marx and Lenin, Mao and Ho, or Castro and Guevara have influenced the freedom-loving, baby-kissing Americans to such an extent as to make them kill and injure tens of thousands of their own kin every year. The powerful National Rifle Association has raised a marvellous slogan to counter the demand for control of firearms sales. "It's not guns that kill, it's people", says the Association. This is perhaps truer than the arms lobby suspects. The question is what kind of people.

What kind of people are these that enjoy so much violence at home and abroad? The terrifying incidence of violent crime in the United States is perfectly natural for a nation that has not hesitated to indulge in history's most organized, most brutal, most brazen crimes against another people in another part of the world. The Americans in their homes see on television what their countrymen are doing in Vietnam, and have perhaps come to enjoy not only the fictitious violence of crime films but also the scenes of actual killing, maiming and torture so systematically performed by their forces in Vietnam. It's such an exciting, such a terrific show. Even the murder of a Kennedy or a Luther King perhaps gives them a kick; as the New York correspondent of *Izvestia* put it—for once there was *pravda* in what it carried—, by show-scenes of the injured Senator on television, "the cruel society instantly turned a tragedy into a spectacle". And this is the society whose values we are being asked to imbibe in the name of democracy, whose aggressive acts and designs we are being asked to condone in the interests of the Free World and Pox Americana.

Robert Kennedy was no revolutionary idealist, but he had the decency to be dismayed by the racial and economic injustices on which American society is based, also a certain passion, to expose some of its pretensions. He had his own ambitions, but

at least he was not seeking their fulfilment by working upon the aggressive instincts and fanatical prejudices of the American Whites. At least he had the courage to disagree with some of the particularly perverse policies of the Johnson Government, though whether he would have practised as President what he said as Senator is open to doubt. Now LBJ can perhaps look forward to a worthier successor in the man who looks like Bob Hope but is not half as amusing. But the succession will be no less appropriate if it passes straight on to Richard Nixon.

Up North

What happened within ten miles of Kohima all Friday last week? "Heavy casualties on both sides" is a familiar enough heading from World War II which can mean exactly nothing. Even those who do not have the slightest sympathy for Naga aspirations, never defined with much positive clarity, see that what official spokesmen in New Delhi and Kohima say merely adds to the "curtain of ignorance" already built around goings-on in North-East India. No comment is possible on the military operations as such. Not enough is known on the doings of either side. New Delhi's tardiness in agreeing to the underground's proposal for an extension of the ceasefire to the end of July makes less convincing those allegations about supposed extremists with foreign connexions. No independent observer can accept merely official versions that so many "hostiles" have done this or that and got killed by the security forces in the process. There is no state of war between two well-defined parties. It is thus left to agitated or plainly "alarmed" local authorities to decide who is a hostile or a rebel; anyone killed can be labelled either. It is no wonder that the "credibility gap" between official pronouncements from New Delhi and Kohima and the rest of the world has tended to widen. Most of us do not know whether last week's flare-up between the Naga underground and the Indian security forces followed or preceded alleged raids on al-

leged underground camps. It is perhaps futile to attempt any apportionment of blame. What is suggested is that the Government of India's superior control of the media of communication or propaganda within India does not necessarily make its case more convincing.

If most of this is a relatively harmless exercise in inter-ministry politicking and military-cum-bureaucratic attitudinising, the affairs of Nagaland and adjacent areas seem a good deal more ominous because New Delhi seems too prone to involve neighbouring countries such as Burma, Pakistan and China. It is said that some of the Naga "rebels" carried arms and ammunition with Chinese or some other marking. China could also argue that Indian arms were seen on Khampa "rebels", again proving nothing in particular. Peking might even say that New Delhi was trying to involve foreign Powers in a confrontation which India claims to be firmly internal; it may even go farther and suggest that it is all being done for domestic political rivalries, as evident in the dispute over hill people's demands in Assam. All in all, Delhi seems to be playing a dangerous game all over North-East India; and, in its own interests, it had better be warned of any possible repetition of past misfortunes flowing from past impetuosity.

A Costly Deal

After two months of vacillation Mr Ajoy Mukherjee has finally broken away from the Bharatiya Kranti Dal and revived the Bangla Congress. His old party is not what it was before and immediately after the last general election. Defection has taken a heavy toll from it, and in some cases individual desertions have been accompanied by organisational erosions. The party has gone down in public esteem also, mainly because of the shifting politics of its leader. What made him finally decide to throw in his lot with the United Front and sever connections with the BKD, of which West Bengal's was the strongest and most prestigious unit, is not known yet. But

there are reports that he feels assured that his leadership of the UF would not be challenged; which means he will be Chief Minister again if the UF is returned to power. The only party which can put up a claim for the Front's leadership with any degree of legitimacy is the CPI(M), and it may not be entirely without significance that Mr Mukherjee's long spell of dithering ended only after his closed-door meeting with some CPI(M) leaders last month. Maybe the bait with which the national executive of the BKD had tried to hook him was dangled by the CPI(M) also, and Mr Mukherjee agreed to be caught because he could not hope to make a better bargain. Indeed, he has played his cards extremely well, though in the manner of an unprincipled opportunist. If Mr Mahamaya Prasad Sinha can be believed—some would say that it is a very big if—then Mr Mukherjee had promised to walk out of the Front. The only event of significance that occurred between the promise and its breach was his meeting with the CPI(M) leaders.

Mr Mukherjee has said that a section of the national executive of the BKD had always been opposed to the Bangla Congress remaining in the party. This would mean that the executive's directive to the State unit to quit the UF, dominated by "anti-national" Left Communists, was a ruse; the directive was designed only to create a situation in which Mr Mukherjee and his followers would be forced to part company with the BKD. If this reading is correct, Mr Mukherjee's wavering goes unexplained. If he was convinced that he was the real target of the national executive, the only straightforward course would have been for him not to wait so long to come out of the party; nor to create an impression that there was substance in the executive's decision and his only difference with the central leadership was over when the implementation of the decision should be timed. Even now he is vague on this question, though he has, in the mean time, issued a certificate, whatever its worth, that the Left Communists are not anti-national. What is more probable is that there

has been a clash of interests, and Mr Mukherjee, who has to function in West Bengal, has opted for what is likely to yield richer dividends. His colleagues in the national executive have chosen a different course because that may serve them better in their own States. Mr Charan Singh's Gandhism will have no difficulty in coexisting with Swatantra policy in Uttar Pradesh just as Mr Mukherjee thinks that he can collaborate with the Left Communists without compromising his Gandhian principles.

The CPI(M) must have its own reasons for striking a deal with Mr Mukherjee and the Bangla Congress. Its insistence, however, that the UF is not a mere combination of parties but a movement which has forced Mr Mukherjee to quit the BKD will convince none. For the recent polemics between the two parties would have been irrelevant and the joint statement by their leaders unnecessary if the CPI(M) really believed that it would not be possible for Mr Mukherjee, and some others in his footsteps, to quit the UF movement. The CPI(M) was afraid of a split in the UF more or less on the pattern of the two left fronts before the last general election. The UF movement or whatever it is could not add to the party's self-confidence. On the contrary, the party seems to have developed a defeatism which makes it think that nothing short of an all-in alliance, however disparate and riven with inner contradictions, can hope to be a match for the Congress. To regain its self-confidence it was necessary for the party to ensure that Mr Mukherjee remains in the UF. In the process, it has turned the table on some of its partners in the Front who were preparing to snipe at it under the cover of the Bangla Congress. What price it had to pay under the table for this will be known gradually. Whatever little has appeared about the reported common programme which the UF will seek to carry out if it is able to form a government after the mid-term poll indicates that the understanding has been at the cost of principles. In this bleak situation one should perhaps be thankful to Dr P. C. Ghosh

and Mr Humayun Kabir for providing some comic relief by their antics over their mini-party.

Education ?

North Bengal University, it seems, is interested in anything but education. The cavalier fashion in which it has been conducting its affairs for the last one year is simply breathtaking. The bureaucrats who run the show there may justifiably be proud of one achievement: they have shown how a university could be turned into its opposite, that is un-university. And so the recent allegation by the West Bengal University and College Teachers' Association that the University had conducted its post-graduate examinations with "gross irregularities" and neglected the interest of ninety per cent of the students need raise no brow afresh.

A brief recapitulation of the 'achievements' of the University shows that its latest feat is quite in line with the policy it has been pursuing so long. The original sin of the students was that they took the oft repeated sermons about serving the society too seriously and instead of indulging in some adult pastime they went around the neighbouring villages and led the starving peasants to unearth huge stocks of paddy hoarded by the local kulaks. This sort of 'anti-social' and 'anti-national' activity in a sensitive border region inevitably brought upon them the wrath of the guardians of law and order. Student leaders were duly arrested and the University authorities did their part of the duty by serving suspension notices on them and withdrawing research scholarships. Meanwhile a goonda brigade, euphemistically called University Security Force, was organised. The ruling UF Government too was prompt in setting up police camps inside the campus. The students, demanding the withdrawal of the USF and suspension orders, boycotted the M.Sc examination. The University authorities, however, enacted a drama of the Absurd by holding examinations without a single soul to write answers.

Wiser by experience (or did they

read Mao's *Problems of Strategy in Guerilla War Against Japan*?) the University authorities adopted the strategy of splitting up the examination schedule and holding the examination simultaneously at seven centres all over North Bengal, thus spreading the 'enemy' thin and putting great strain on their mobility and logistics. The WBCUTA, invited by the Vice Chancellor to suggest a way out, was ignominiously shoved aside when they refused to oblige the host by rubber-stamping his scheme.

However, this guerilla strategy also came to grief. Massive pulling of resources, USF and police in and around the examination halls was matched by more massive boycott of the examination. Such a slap in the face was too much even for the NBU authorities. The furious generals launched a second examination offensive in which they took the examination at any hour of the day and under any roof where an examinee could be coaxed in. The battle of examination ended in heavy casualties for the boycotting students—two were stabbed, several beaten up, a girl student molested, all by the USF, and scores of others were arrested. Some of the students held at that time under the PD Act are still rotting in jail.

The recent 'revelation' by the WBCUTA that the answer scripts of the last examination (at least what passed by that name) were examined within the unusual period of sixteen hours really fails to surprise. If instant examination could be taken at an arbitrary hour and place under the pointing dagger of the USF, what's the harm if the rest of the tamasha is performed in similar fashion? Rather the tamasha is poorer by the fact that the USF was deprived of its legitimate right of examining the answer scripts. Meanwhile, our politicians and leader writers may go waxing eloquent about the grievances of the French students of Sorbonne. They are, after all, white.

Bobby

A. M. writes:

The forefinger jabbing the air, the nasal, monotonous voice a

cross between anger and resoluteness, the unruly lock of hair cutting a swarth on the forehead, most of the time in shirtsleeves, the right sleeve carelessly tucked up about one-quarter the way, the slightly sinister, almost boyish appearance. The impression of sinisterness was partly on account of hearsay. Bobby, after all, had his graduation with Senator McCarthy—the other Senator McCarthy—in the early 1950's; subsequently, he was the Chief Counsel for Senator McCellan's Labour Investigations Committee, and, while the target of this particular crusade was Jimmy Hoffa, the not-so-impeccable leader of the Teamsters, Bobby could hardly escape the stigma of being purposefully anti-labour. A legend was slowly in the making: the legend of the fearsome Bobby, the most ruthless—and the most ambitious,—of Joe Kennedy's three surviving sons; who, backed by Pop's money, were bent on blitzkrieging their way to American Presidential power. Bobby, the organiser and the co-ordinator, had the coolest brain amongst the lot; he was the one who in fact was putting the Irish Mafia in shape. Jack was to provide the charisma, Jackie the glamour; but it was the mind of Bobby at work behind everything. Even when they were playing touch football, the Kennedys were up to some political machination, and Bobby must be planning a fresh crookedness. Even as the hearts of the bobbysoxers were set aflame by Jack during the 1960 Presidential campaign, all eyes were, at least tangentially, on Bobby—the Bobby who, allegedly, was almost wizardly in his strategies and manoeuvres.

Bobby emerged, at the Democratic National Convention at Los Angeles in August, 1960, larger than life: Bobby the Sinister, Bobby the arm-twister, Bobby the wringer of necks. The glare of television lights revealed this young man as a vast reservoir of calculated efficiency: the stands were packed with wild raving supporters of Adlai Stevenson, there were umpteen attempts to stampede the State delegations into deserting for Stevenson, Eugene McCarthy set the rivers of

emotion on fire by a wringing oration—half-sincere, half-demagogic—while nominating Adlai, but nothing was of any avail. Bobby had done his arithmetic, he knew where the votes were, his agents, equipped with two-way walkie-talkies, were keeping a constant vigil over the delegates. No desertions took place. As the old pro's looked on with amazement, Jack made it in the very first ballot. Bobby had won.

Bobby went on, as campaign manager to win the Presidential election itself for Jack. It was a cliff-hanger, but Bobby won all right. The New Frontier was on. At this time, Bobby would still evoke an admixture of admiration and hateful fear. Even as Jack was installed as President, there were many who hoped that, now that Bobby had accomplished what he had set out to accomplish, he would somehow fade away into the background, never to be heard of again. But no such thing happened. Jack named Bobby Attorney-General. The primal emotions were aroused to fever pitch. People were aghast at the insatiable ambition of the Boston Irish. That grim joke started making the rounds once more: Jack will stay President for two terms, Bobby will take over in 1968, again for two terms; in 1976 Teddy will step in, and, at the end of his two terms, it will in any case be 1984.....

Bobby surprised everybody. He started according to expectations, by finally succeeding in his attempt to lock up Jimmy Hoffa. But it was a different story from then on. Very few had suspected Bobby to be capable of passion. They were wrong. As Attorney-General, he brought into the enforcement of civil rights legislation a zeal which was marked by an intensity of feeling hitherto altogether unknown in the United States. Bobby discovered the Negroes, and it was not just a discovery of convenience. There was an inner core of mutual trust in the interchange. Decades of prejudice cannot simply be wished away, the basic crust of reaction in American society will not succumb under the weight of just good intentions alone. Maybe it is already too late, and it is only bloody retribution

which awaits the American White. But Bobby at least tried, and tried hard. And he brought to his trying a love which was altogether too genuine.

This was Bobby in transition. His brother's death provided a further cathartic experience. There is a certain nobility in such deaths which purifies emotions, and paves for the accretion of spiritual strength to those who are immediately affected. Bobby matured. His shrill voice attained a depth, some of the impatience and haughtiness began to drop out of his character. Now that Jack was not around to do the thinking, Bobby started to do the homework on his own. One cannot vouchsafe that the Kennedy ambition—the perennial dream of the down-and-out Irish immigrant to succeed—the restless itch of the Kennedy clan to move back, once more, to the centre of power—did not play a part in all this. But by now the credibility of Bobby had got transformed; the Kennedy ambition was only peripheral to the image. Bobby parted company with Lyndon Johnson, and proceeded to win a Senate seat from New York. He arrived, very much at ease, a leader of national stature, who had carved, very much with his own effort, his place in American politics. The grim jokes had all been worn out. Bobby the Sinister had grown into Bobby the Responsible.

From this, it was only a short halt to discovering the futility of Vietnam. Perhaps the younger generation of America had nudged him along, their bitterness and sense of frustration have perhaps been for him a catalyst of convictions, but at least the man had the courage to learn. There is a material difference here from Eugene McCarthy's position. Bobby, let it not be forgotten, was very much a part of the Establishment which sponsored the ignominy of Vietnam; both Dean Rusk and Robert McNamara were given their appointments by Jack; the escalation of the war was first contemplated even while Jack was still President. McCarthy has been away from it all from the very beginning. Bobby could claim no such expiation. But it is precisely because of this that it was

a hundred times more difficult for him to take the stand that he finally took. By implication, Bobby came to admit that, on Vietnam, Jack was wrong, he was wrong, they all were wrong, and this wrong had to be righted if the American nation is to recuperate its moral stature. Call it opportunism if you must, but call it also courage.

It was, however, too late, at least for Bobby. The Americans will have to learn—and learn the hard way—that violence is indivisible. If you live by violence, you will also die by violence, and no amount of metaphysical splitting of hair over the distinction between collective and individual violence would obliterate this central truth. It is impossible to isolate the impact of extra-territorial, organised brigandage of the sort which the Americans have launched in Vietnam from the home-front. You cannot continue murdering innocent men and women in their thousands in a foreign country, maim and burn their children, demolish their huts, destroy their fields and systems of communication, merely because they want to fashion their life and society according to their will and desires and not according to yours, and yet expect that life at home will be tranquil, genteel and full of love. If you want to impose your will on others by the brutality of force, the idea is likely to catch on, and close to home. The decoy of the Arab-Israel animosity is an irrelevance; Sirhan or no Sirhan. Bobby would have been felled by a gun-shot sooner or later, as Jack was four and a half years ago, and as King was in April. Vietnam will be out, and, however much one might sympathise with the Americans in their present dazed state, the fire of retribution will have to rage away: it will not perhaps come to a pause until it has claimed as victim the entire flower of American leadership. These are terrible times for the Americans, but catharsis is always a terrible thing.

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Black And White

BIPLAB DAS GUPA

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LIFE in Britain was never very smooth and easy for the black immigrants since the enactment of the 1962 law controlling immigration. Discrimination in jobs and housing was widespread, acts of harassment were frequent, and racial violence was not altogether unknown. But the atmosphere, although bad, was not intolerable, until the infamous April speech of Enoch Powell at Birmingham. According to the papers, no other politician, since the war days of Churchill, has succeeded in creating such a powerful impact on the minds of the average Briton by a single speech. That Mr Powell is a leading Tory did not prevent the dock workers, and also some other sections of the working class from taking out processions in his support in various parts of the country. So many letters of support arrived in the first week after his speech in his name that the post office had to operate a special wing to deal with these. And the public opinion poll clearly showed for the first time that an overwhelming majority of the British public are in favour of stricter control on immigration, and fully agree with the sentiments expressed by Mr Enoch Powell on this subject.

Though weeks have passed it is still worth while to recapitulate what he said.

In his speech Mr Powell, an unsuccessful contestant for Tory leadership about three years back, made a direct appeal to the statistically unfounded fear of the British people that their small and overcrowded island would be taken over in future by black people, who would impose an alien culture and society on the native population. He warned, by quoting one of his constituents, that "In this country in 15 or 20 years time the black man will have the whip hand over the white man". He threatened bloodshed and civil war by saying, "like the

Roman, I seem to see the river Tiber foaming with much blood." He fiercely attacked the Government for its inability to stop the flood of immigration, though the present policy of the Government is to issue only 5000 vouchers for the whole of the Commonwealth, and when not all the voucher holders settle permanently. But facts and figures do not matter, as far as Mr Powell's analysis is concerned. He went on to express his disappointment in "watching a nation busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre." But only a total prohibition would not satisfy him, as it would "leave the basic character of the danger unaffected", and nothing short of a vigorous policy of "re-immigration" would make him feel happy. He is also opposed to the Race Relations Bill, which is considered to be inadequate, to the point of being meaningless, in putting an end to discrimination, by all the immigrants' organisations. According to him "... to enact legislation of this kind is to risk throwing a match on to the gunpowder", because it would make the Britons "strangers in their own country". He did not hesitate to blame the immigrants for the shortage of medical and educational facilities. The most objectionable aspect of his speech was the way he sought to illustrate the cases of alleged torture of the white population by the black hoodlums. He referred to an old widow, the sole white inhabitant in a black locality, who is regularly abused, humiliated, and intimidated by the black rowdies, and through whose door they push the excreta. This story was taken up by various research groups and the television news service, but even after frantic search no old widow of this description could be found in a black area. Mr Powell was not helpful either when, in answer to a question challenging the authenticity of the story, he declined to give further information.

It is not for the first time that these racist views have been expressed in public. In fact the first reaction of Mr Colin Jordan and Oswald Mosley, the leaders of fascist groups in this country, to this speech was to point

out that both of them had tried in the past to convey exactly the same feelings on this subject. What explains the powerful impact of Mr Powell's speech is his national stature and intellectual image. His speech has made racialism respectable, not something to be hidden and to be ashamed of. Previously even an active believer in discrimination based on colour was unwilling to acknowledge it publicly; now he would proudly declare his honesty and truthfulness in speaking out "in the national interest".

Blood

In addition, by a superb choice of words and phrases, Powell has succeeded in inflaming the passion of racial hatred which cannot be simply kept confined to public debate and private discrimination. Sporadic acts of violence are being reported from various parts of the country, along with accusations of police indifference. This is how one of the victims, an Indian student, described his experience in his letter to *The Times*:

"I do not know whether Mr Powell like the Roman has seen blood or not, but, as an Indian overseas student, I have seen blood, my own, when I was beaten up, punched, kicked, and slashed indiscriminately by a group of four white youths, hardly aged more than 16 years, on April 26, Friday evening, near Highbury fields. They kept shouting 'Blackman, Blackman Enoch, Enoch & c', in a frenzy, football style while my face bled, my clothes were torn apart, and I had to run for my life."

Along with these reports of frenzied attacks on defenceless immigrants, other reports speak of harassment, abuse, and humiliation in day-to-day contacts with the native population.

As in the past, Mr Harold Wilson's Government is more concerned with its own survival than the security of the foreign nationals. It has tended to appease the uninformed and prejudiced public opinion, instead of taking a bold policy of educating the public about the immigrants. No campaign has been launched to counter the lies which are being circulated about the black immigrants—their cul-

ture, way of life, and the effect of their presence on the country's economy. The demand for repatriation of immigrants through what is being called "persuasion" and what in effect might mean compulsion, has been conceded in principle. No policy decision has been made regarding the safety of the foreign nationals, although the British Government has always demanded from every country the complete safety of its nationals while abroad.

It is true that the Race Relations Bill is in Parliament, but apart from its inadequacy, there is no reason to believe that the Government would implement its provisions so long the present atmosphere of racial tension continues, when it is incapable of implementing the existing laws. About 30 organisations asked for the prosecution of Mr Enoch Powell for inciting racial hatred, but the Attorney General refused to entertain this request, although a number of people—mostly black—have in the past been prosecuted and convicted for similar offences of less significance. The Government has almost completely surrendered to racialism. Through its immigration laws, through talks about expatriation of immigrants, and through its unwillingness to adopt stern measures against the miscreants, it is serving as the instrument of the racials. As long as racialism keeps the minds of the electorate away from the present economic problems and their roots, the present Government has no desire to take unpopular action.

Perhaps this account gives a grossly one-sided picture of British society. Almost everywhere the students have voiced strong opposition to the growth of racist feeling, and have demonstrated against Mr Powell wherever he has gone after his speech, chanting "Enoch, we want you—dead". The coverage of the BBC and two leading newspapers of the country has generally been fair to the immigrants. But that does not preclude the fact that the vast majority of the people, by their own admission, are now colour prejudiced.

Again, one should be careful not to put the responsibility for racialism

on the masses. The common people in Britain, as in any other country in the Western world, despite the overall prosperity, suffer from inequality and injustice, and can be easily misled by unscrupulous groups into thinking that the presence of foreigners, who are conspicuous by their colour, is the root cause of their trouble. A progressive government policy to promote racial harmony can easily wipe out traces of racialism through mass education. The media of mass communication can be used to make known to the people the valuable services rendered by the black immigrants, without whom many of the essential services, including medical and transport, would immediately collapse. People can be told that more white immigrants enter this country than blacks every year, and that the latter put less pressure on the national health and other services than the average per capita. People can also be informed that the black immigrants constitute only less than 2% of the total population, and there is no immediate danger of a black take-over, that a policy of expatriation of human capital would jeopardise the foreign investment of British capital, and physical violence against foreign nationals may provoke retaliatory action abroad. None of these has been so far clearly told for understandable reasons. As a result, in the world of an average Briton, every black he sees on the street has entered the country by evading immigration laws and is unjustly making demands on the social benefits, and a large part of the taxpayers money is just being given away to the black countries as charity, without that being spent for improving their standard of living.

The responsibility also lies on the High Commissions of the black countries, including that of our country, which have failed to insist on the protection of their nationals from both physical and mental violence. They have also failed to explain the role of the immigrants in Britain, their importance to the British economy, as also the nature of foreign loans, which are called "foreign aid", to the common people of this country. When

some of the British planters were harassed during the Naxalbari episode, the British Government, as also the Press, took up the matter seriously and called on the Indian Government, to take appropriate action. But when Indian nationals are beaten up in the streets of London, and feel insecure, neither the British nor the Indian Government shows any concern for their interest.

Black And Brown

I. AKHTAR

"Forty million Africans were removed by Europeans in the 17th and 16th centuries, 26 million by the British. Their sale and their labour largely financed England's industrial revolution."

THIS is a stark statement by Patrick Montgomery, a retired British army colonel, who is secretary of the Anti-slavery Society. The good intentioned colonel further observes: 'It is at least arguable that since the high standard of living in Europe and America was founded on slavery and slave trade—and nowhere as much as in England—we all have a debt to pay and it would be appropriate to pay it by helping to end slavery.'

The good colonel must be feeling sorely disappointed, for not long after he showed such a soft corner for the Blacks, White America murdered Dr Martin Luther King. The de-gooding colonel has a misplaced hope in America, for he has pinned his rosy hopes on a country which is currently trying to enslave the brave land and braver people of Vietnam. As for the tight little island of England, Colonel Montgomery must be fiddling with his fingers at the rabid inflammatory speech of Mr Enoch Powell.

The verbal sparks of the coming racial violence have really begun to fly, one assumes, dashing the hopes of Col. Montgomery. Still, one can be forgiven the sneaking suspicion, in

view of the experiences of the past, that Mr Montgomery's otherwise laudable movement is nothing but a gambit of reimposing the white chains of slavery, from which the slaves have freed themselves so recently.

It is not that White Man alone is bugged by the Africa problem. The Indians also have an African problem of their own, which was spotlighted by Mr Bali Ram Bhagat's uninvited guest appearance in Nairobi. The Kenya President, Mr Jomo Kenyatta, could not find time to see the uninvited guest; the uproar Mr Bhagat's unsolicited visit caused at home was, to say the least, ridiculous and pathetic. And it was not bereft of meaning. The Browns have begun to show their true colour.

Let us ask some relevant questions, which are rarely asked, for fear of unsavoury answers. What is the class character of Indians who had settled down in great numbers in the East African colonies? What has been their past role in the life of enslaved Africa and what role they are currently playing?

It is rarely noticed, yet it is an undeniable fact that no other Asian people except the Indians (and Pakistanis) have followed the Union Jack in such large numbers as its soldiers of arms and soldiers of petty fortune. In point of fact, by and large India and Indians' anti-imperialism has always been anaemic and half-hearted. We never hated our former masters as much as we made it out to be.

For example, the ICS cadre, which was the pillar of British rule in our country, retained the same stranglehold on bureaucracy even after the hauling down of Union Jack. And to this day, the old relics of the Indian Civil Service warm the seats of governors, administrators of "public" undertakings, etc etc. Not only was the hold of the "Imperial Consolidation Service" not broken after independence, even the armed apparatus created by the imperialists to suppress the Indian people was retained intact. There is no example of punishment being meted out to the policemen and police officers who had shot and killed

the Indian people before independence. All this is true of India as well as Pakistan.

Seen in this perspective, the plight of Indians settled in Kenya is of their own making. And these "Indians" have not overcome their fondness for their former masters. The scavengers of imperialism were offered three choices by the Kenya Government. They could accept the citizenship of Kenya; they could opt for the citizenship of the country of their origin or accept the citizenship of "Great" Britain.

These "Indians" did not opt for the citizenship of India! And they were afraid of accepting the citizenship of Kenya as the sins of the past have perhaps become a part of their unconscious. More significantly, they showed their unmistakable love for

the country of their former masters, under whose benign protection they had scavenged petty fortunes. The "real beauty" of the situation was that the white masters slammed the doors of their smoky island in the face of their doggish followers!

How much these, "Indians" love the country of their origin is clear from the statement made by one of their leaders. Pleading with the former masters to show some leniency to their willing slaves, he had claimed, "We are different from Indians. We enjoy a higher standard of living."

Sympathy for the Kenya Asians is sheer waste of a fine sentiment. Still, these "Indians" should count themselves lucky that it was only a wind of change which swept Africa. It could have been a whirlwind of change.

position in the party and the Government, is today facing an uncertain future. The results of the elections to the Central Election Committee indicate her growing isolation. The Syndicate and their allies are now in a pre-dominant position in the CEC.

To what miserable depths the Prime Minister is compelled to stoop nowadays was evident on the second day of the AICC session—just on the eve of the CEC elections—when she came down secretly to Mr Atulya Ghosh's Canning Lane residence to patch up the differences. The ostensible reason was to congratulate the West Bengal Congress delegates on the victory of the party in the recent Krishnagar by-election. This was an indirect admission of her defeat as she was known to have pooh-poohed the prospect of a Congress victory in the by-election. Mr Atulya Ghosh and his gang scored a victory on this point.

The Krishnagar by-election result and Mrs Gandhi's consequent overtures to Mr Ghosh dampened the spirit of the handful of anti-Atulya Congressmen who came to attend the AICC session. They had hopes of lobbying among delegates from other States against Atulya Babu's candidature and relied to a great extent on Mrs Gandhi's aid. But things took a different turn and it is almost certain now that the anti-Atulya group will worm its way back into Atulya Babu's favour. Now that the CEC dominated by Mr Ghosh's friends will decide on the candidature for the coming mid-term poll in West Bengal, they cannot afford to annoy Mr Ghosh and forfeit thereby their chances in the election.

The Krishnagar result and the Syndicate's victory in the CEC have undoubtedly given Mr Atulya Ghosh and his followers a tremendous boost. If the unpredictable and easily-swayed voters of West Bengal decide to bring back his group to power again in the mid-term poll, all chances of removing his coterie from the West Bengal Congress as cherished by Mrs Gandhi and a few others would vanish. It is therefore natural that she would readjust herself to the new situation

View from Delhi

Indira And Atulya

FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

SUMMER has begun in right earnest here. Most of the capital's VIPs have either already left for hill stations or are planning to leave. And Delhi University's "progressive" intellectuals, who are always available for signing statements condemning US bombing in Vietnam, have gone on their annual summer vacation tours of the campus in Michigan or Harvard at the invitation of the US Government.

Meanwhile, national issues are being given a rest. The reorganization of Assam which, we are being told every alternate day, is "imminent", still remains a vague promise to the impatient hill people. The nature of the talks on the issue has now assumed a fairly worn-out pattern of moving round a circle. Almost every month, the talks begin in an atmosphere of feverish activity with the Assam Congress and the Hill leaders meeting every now and then the Central Ministers. Journalists claiming knowledge of what is going on behind the scenes

come out with stories of future plans for reorganization, each differing from the other. Their predictions of an early announcement are invariably proved false and as the Assam Congress and Hill leaders depart, Mrs Gandhi sounds the finale by repeating her old pleadings for an amicable settlement.

The last but one bout of deliberations on Assam followed the same pattern. Mrs Gandhi's isolation was almost complete in the meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party executive where she was taken to task for trying to placate the hill people. Her pleading with the Hill leaders too failed to evoke any favourable response. The APHLC delegation told her flatly that they could not accept the position of a subordinate State to please the whims of Assam's Congress bosses. Her failure to keep her commitments to the hill people is fast losing her the latter's sympathies.

Mrs Gandhi, who only a month ago appeared to have fortified her

and go to any length to win the favour of Atulya Babu.

The Syndicate, which is the most organized of the several factions within the Congress now, will keep Mrs Gandhi as the Prime Minister as long as it cannot agree on an acceptable candidate. In the meantime, it will see to it that Mrs Gandhi toes its line. For the coming few months, the country can expect a more Rightist orientation to Mrs Gandhi's policies, both at home and abroad. Although from the background, the Syndicate will make its presence felt very much in the policy decisions.

BKD

The Bharatiya Kranti Dal, known for its ambiguous and indeterminate decisions, is at long last coming out in its true colours. Last week, it made no bones about its sharp anti-Communist ideology when it punished Mr Ajoy Mukherjee for hobnobbing with the Communists by dissolving the West Bengal BKD unit.

Till the last moment, there were some faint hopes that the BKD central leaders, true to their political eclecticism, might not annoy Mr Mukherjee and the anti-Communist policy resolution might after all remain a dead letter. But we underrated the sharply emerging Rightist character of the party. Mr Charan Singh appears to be on the ascendancy in the party. The anti-Communist character has to be asserted now to enable him to have alliances with the Jana Sangh.

Although the party's policy resolution says that the BKD is against all anti-secular and anti-democratic forces, it is willing to accommodate the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra party. The main target of attack are the Communists. The party's anti-Congress stand is also more a pose than a genuine attitude. Otherwise how could one explain Mr Kumbharam Arya's open advocacy of Mr Banshi Lal's candidature for the Chief Ministership of Haryana?

One must appreciate the party's difficulty in coming to any immediate understanding with the Congress. Apart from the risk of losing whatever popular support it still enjoys,

the prospect of deriving advantages from an alliance with the Congress is yet to be measured carefully. But the party's attempts to befriend the Congress are on. It has found a useful channel in Dr P. C. Ghosh, the professional turncoat. Mr Charan Singh

Kerala

Right-Left Confrontation

RAMJI

THE cold war between the Right and the Left Communists, both partners of the United Front Government in Kerala, has turned into a shooting war. The Right CPI, which initiated this development and pressed it with vigour during the last few months, recently received a savage mauling at the hands of the Marxists. At a forthright, outspoken Press conference, Mr E. M. S. Namboodiripad and Mr A. K. Gopalan accused the Right CPI of conspiring with the Congress, the Kerala Congress and the Jana Sangh to oust the EMS Ministry and supplant it with one led by the CPI Minister for Industries, Mr T. V. Thomas. The entire political atmosphere here is charged with the savage retaliation by the Marxists, and the self-righteous are falling back to regroup their forces in view of EMS's proposal to place the evidence before the co-ordination committee of the United Front.

It is interesting, in this context, to recall his words—prephesy rather—when the CPI split into two in 1964-65. The Right CPI would become the tail of the Congress by allying with it, he said. The approach to the Congress was itself one of the basic factors causing the split between the two sections. In the 1965 mid-term election the CPI was routed; it got a miserable bag of three seats and established a record in losing deposits. By its intransigent stance of keeping aloof from the United Front, it helped the Congress to win 36 seats.

and Mr Mahamaya Prasad Sinha were closeted with him for quite some time when he was here a few days ago. A feeler to the West Bengal Congress must have been sent through him.

June 10, 1968.

This bitter lesson went home. When the 1967 general election came round, the Right CPI could not find any ideological obstacle to joining the United Front sponsored by the Marxists, although the Muslim League was there as large as life. Thanks to this unprincipled—according to CPI norms—alliance, the CPI became a credible party with 20 seats and two Cabinet posts covering Agriculture, Industry, and Electricity, which together account for 90% of the economic life of the State. The Industries portfolio in the hands of Mr T. V. Thomas made the party rather attractive to big business. The big industrialists, the monopoly language press and the national English dailies began to boost the two CPI Ministers for their efficiency, nationalism and other true-blue virtues.

A few months back, Mr Thomas, together with ten leading industrialists, including some Congress leaders-cum-businessmen, went on a jaunt to Japan. The newspapers boosted the trip and announced that the millennium was around the corner and that Mr Thomas would return with plans that would entail an investment of anything from Rs. 1,000 to 2,000 crores in industries in this industries-starved State. The trip turned out to be an absolute waste of time and money. But both the Press and the CPI tried to cover up their failure, by putting the blame on the Marxists.

While the mythical industrial upsurge did not come off, the CPI mounted a raging campaign against Mrs

Gouri Thomas, the Marxist Food Minister, on her failure to handle her portfolio properly, although it was well known that the grave rice situation was solely due to the double-dealing by the Centre which consistently failed to keep its pledges and delivered just one-fourth of the quantities announced on paper.

Along with the campaign against Mrs Gouri Thomas, the CPI has been crying for the blood of Mr Imbichi Bava, the Marxist Minister for Transport. Mr Bava has been doing good work in the nationalisation of bus transport and in the improvement of minor ports in the State, but the CPI, with the help of the monopoly Press, has been attempting to denigrate him. As a clever move the CPI had been refraining from attacking EMS personally.

It is reported that certain leading lights of the Congress, the Kerala (Rebel) Congress and the Jana Sangh made overtures to the CPI, particularly to Mr T. V. Thomas, and that the CPI leadership promptly responded and some secret and not so secret negotiations began between them. The plan was to overthrow the EMS Ministry and replace it with a Ministry led by Mr T. V. Thomas, which would enjoy the support of the Congress and the Kerala Congress MLAs, 15 in number. Along with it, they hoped to wean the other partners of the United Front from the Marxists and reduce them to their inherent strength of 55 in the Assembly. The Muslim League was not a party to this conspiracy. Neither was it against it. The League stated that it wanted a popular government and it would support any Government that came to power, including the proposed one under Mr Thomas.

Unfortunately, the State SSP which has 20 seats in the Assembly, split into two and it became clear to all that no government could enjoy the support of both the sections of the SSP. The operation overthrow had to be kept in cold storage.

The question that is agitating minds here is the proposed stir against the Centre by the Marxists. Actually, this was one of the important items in the pre-election programme of he

United Front. This came up as a major issue in view of the consistent neglect by the Centre in granting food aid, and the Marxists took the lead. But the CPI is opposing it vehemently and has joined the Congress and the Kerala Congress in a strident campaign against the Marxists on this issue. Things became so unbearable that EMS and AKG were forced to hold the Press conference and expose the CPI.

Meanwhile, finding that their plan for a coup lies shattered, the Congress is grooming its forces to mount another 'liberation struggle' in which they confidently hope to secure the ardent support of the CPI.

Calcutta Diary

GYAN KAPUR

IN Western countries, 'cutting off the gas' is a phrase which indicates the depth of poverty to which one has sunk. The nearest parallel in our country to this is the disconnection of electric supply where this facility is available, which practically means the towns.

Disconnections of electric supply for failure to pay bills are not rare. But by all accounts to cut off the electric supply of a whole town is a thing unheard of anywhere at any time. In that way Bongaon, near Calcutta, has created for itself probably a first-ever position in the world, thanks to the West Bengal Government. A sort of racketeering seems to have been going on in the rates charged by the local electric supply firm, which the consumers found themselves unable to pay. Ultimately, the whole supply was cut off—a fine bureaucratic way of solving the problem. It does seem that the present set-up has started falling apart at the seams; but it is too early to say anything for certain.

Nearer home, in Calcutta, things are not moving very smoothly with the local electric supply company either, though in a different way. The installation of the computer seems to have created more problems than it

has solved, judging by the results as far as the consumers are concerned. Some months back thousands of consumers found that the date of payment of the bill had been advanced all of a sudden and in fact they had to pay for two months' consumption at a time. Practically, it has meant additional income for the Company and loss to the consumers, since thousands found it difficult to pay the extra money and have been losing the rebate since then. And now many thousands are faced with the prospect of paying the additional amounts on account of the revised rates of duty which came into effect in the middle of November last but which the Company has not been able to calculate till now. With the erratic methods of billing followed, it is certain that many who really need not have paid the higher duty will be forced to do so now. And on top of that the demand for the additional duty for all these months at one go is bound to be a real problem for all but the really affluent. As yet there are of course no signs of the Bongaon spirit catching on in Calcutta and electric supply men wanting to cut off a connection being driven away. But then, I am told, computer or no computer, the old and much vaunted efficiency is gone and the Company makes no move even a month after a bill remains unpaid. Or perhaps the Company is wise enough not to provoke a Bongaon-type of situation.

* *

Governmental advertising of a functional nature is one thing, apart from the controversy about which papers should or should not be favoured with the additional revenue. But of late governments in our country have been won over by the line of thinking of commercial houses. As such, advertisements frequently appear in the papers extolling the achievements of particular State governments thus indirectly building up the prestige of the party in power. For a commercial house to go in for 'prestige' advertising is its own affair; but governmental advertising to boost its image in the public eye is quite another cup of tea. The people have every right to

know why this money should be wasted. It cannot be the case of the bureaucrats and their masters that the Press does not give adequate publicity to their statements.

In industrial disputes it is the practice of employers to put out long advertisements castigating the workers and giving their version of the reasons for retrenchment, lock-out, etc. This may be necessary for them as some of their statements may be difficult even for the Establishment papers to carry, even though the employers' point of view finds too much space as compared to that of the workers. However, for the West Bengal Government to bring itself down to the same level is surprising, to say the least.

Yet this is what the West Bengal Government did. In their dispute with the Government employees, after all the statements and Press notes of the Governor and others, long advertisements appeared in some of the papers putting across the Government's case and branding the employ-

ees practically as mischief-mongers. An enquiry at the Information Department failed to establish the amount wasted on this uncalled for advertisement but it cannot have been less than 5 or 6 thousand rupees. A negligible amount, no doubt, by Government standards but which the employees could hardly afford if they wanted to mount a counter-attack.

Going through the text of the advertisement, which followed more or less the pattern of announcements by various employers from time to time listing the crimes of the employees and then announcing a lock-out, I was almost apprehensive that the conclusion might be the same. But at the end I breathed a sigh of relief. The Government had not declared a lock-out. It only wanted "to take the people into confidence."

But in that single phrase it had betrayed its own nature. A Government which has to put out paid advertisements to confide in the people it is supposed to govern has al-

ready lost their confidence and the right to rule over them.

Currently the Calcutta Corporation, particularly its Mayor, Mr Gobinda Dey, are getting rather tied up in knots over the question of hiring lorries for garbage clearance out of funds meant for purchase of new vehicles. As might have been expected, there is a fly in the ointment, to wit, the relevant file which is reported to be missing, making it all the more difficult for any sane discussion on the subject.

Though little is heard of it now, the Corporation not so long ago used to suffer from a take-over itch for the city's trams. If the trams and even buses are handed over to the Corporation, all its problems will be solved. By night and in the early morning the cars can be used to carry the garbage and by day they can carry passengers. The tramway system would start running economically with the additional revenue while the garbage would be cleared at a nominal cost.

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On Marx

III

MONITOR

THE October Revolution took place in a country that was imperialist and, though backward in relation to Europe, was advanced in relation to the colonies and semi-colonies. Besides being an exploiting country—though itself subject to exploitation by foreign capital—Tsarist Russia had already developed a moderate industrial base with a sizable and well-organized working class.

The next major breakthrough on the world imperialist front occurred in China, a semi-colony with islets of modern industry dispersed over a vast ocean of feudal or semi-feudal production relations. To tackle this situation was a stupendous task for the revolutionaries as Lenin had already envisaged when, addressing the Communists of the East, he said, "You are confronted with a task never before encountered by the Communists of the world, that is, you must, in the light of the special conditions unknown to the European countries, apply the general Communist theory and Communist measures and realize that peasants are the principal masses and that it is not the capital but the survivals of the Middle Ages that is to be opposed". (1)

The achievement of the Chinese Communist Party under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung lay precisely in tackling this extraordinary situation by the correct application of the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of China. To achieve complete success in the revolution Mao had to show, first, who were the principal enemies of the Chinese people and, secondly, by what means these enemies were to be defeated. By "people" Mao meant, in the context of the revolution in China, the proletariat, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and, to a certain extent, the 'national'—that is, anti-imperialist—bourgeoisie, all to be united under the leadership of the proletariat on the basis of a firm

worker-peasant alliance. The principal enemies of the Chinese people, Mao pointed out, were imperialism—along with the 'comprador' bourgeoisie servile to foreign capital—and feudalism. In other words, the principal tasks of the revolution were anti-imperialist and anti-feudal. As regards the principal form of the struggle, it was to be armed struggle from the very beginning, there being no scope for parliamentary or other 'peaceful' methods of struggle in the conditions of China.

But how was the armed struggle to proceed? Since China's key cities had been occupied by the imperialists and their native lackeys it was imperative for the revolutionaries to turn the backward villages into advanced, consolidated base areas, into great military, political, economic and cultural bastions of the revolution from which to fight the enemies and in this way gradually to achieve complete victory. "The victory of the Chinese revolution", Mao maintained, "can be won first in rural areas and this is possible because China's economic development is uneven, because her territory is extensive, because the counter-revolutionary camp is disunited . . . and because the struggle of the peasants, who are the main force of the revolution, is led by the Communist Party, the party of the proletariat; but on the other hand these very circumstances make the revolution uneven and render the task of winning complete victory protracted and arduous". (2)

In short, the outstanding contribution of Mao Tse-tung to the revolution in the semi-colonial and semi-feudal conditions was his theory of building and developing revolutionary bases in the countryside as the main form of alliance between the working class and the peasantry under the leadership of the Communist Party in the political, military, economic and cultural fields, and of taking such bases as the starting points of revolution and nationwide victory. This was a great contribution to Marxism-Leninism. As is well-known, unlike the October Revolution which was a proletarian socialist revolution, the

Chinese Revolution, which was initially a New Democratic Revolution, developed, after its complete victory, into a socialist revolution. (3)

In the period of socialist construction in China Mao's outstanding contribution to Marxism-Leninism lay in his analysis of contradictions in a socialist society. There are two types of contradiction in such a society, according to Mao: (1) contradictions between the enemy and the people which are antagonistic in character and (2) contradictions among the people which are non-antagonistic in character. In a socialist society, Mao further pointed out, contradictions continue to exist between the relations of production and the forces of production as well as between the economic base and the superstructure. The nature of these contradictions in socialism is of course very different from that in capitalism. Capitalist contradictions cannot be resolved by the capitalist system itself and can only lead the capitalist system to extinction whereas the contradictions in socialism can be gradually resolved by the socialist system and through this resolution the society advances to a higher, that is, communist stage. (4)

Mao Tse-tung's thought thus enriched Marxism-Leninism in the new world conditions and acquired international significance.

Vietnam, Algeria, Cuba

After the Second World War, with the worldwide victory over Fascism, socialism became triumphant over one-third of the globe, established itself as a world system and thus demonstrated the universal validity of Marxism-Leninism. The most important anti-imperialist battles after the Second World War were fought in Vietnam, Algeria and Cuba. Of the three, the Algerian Revolution alone, in spite of its tremendous and heroic sacrifices, could not transcend its anti-imperialist and nationalist bounds and develop into a socialist revolution—due, mainly, to the two-fold dichotomy in the revolutionary leadership between its external and internal and between its political and military wings, inadequate political-

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sation of the masses, including the cadres of the National Liberation Front, and the gross betrayal of the revolution by the Communist leadership of Algeria and France, engendering, in the process, a certain amount of anti-communism among the revolutionaries. However the issue very much remains to be settled.

While the basic tasks of the revolution in Vietnam were the same as in China, namely, anti-imperialist and anti-feudal, the essential political difference in the two situations lay in the fact that while China was—except for the foreign settlements and the temporary Japanese occupation over a part of her territory—formally independent, Vietnam, like India, was a colony of foreign imperialism. The greatness of the Communist Party of Vietnam under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh consisted precisely in its ability—unique among the Communist parties of the colonies—to give expression to the deepest aspirations of the Vietnamese people by raising high the banner of patriotism and lead them to victory. The Vietnamese Communist Party under Ho Chi Minh further enriched Marxism-Leninism in the construction of socialism in the North as well as in creatively applying and extending the theory of people's war first against French and later against U.S. imperialism. Front-rankers in the anti-imperialist struggle, the Vietnamese freedom-fighters have taught particularly two important lessons to the world, besides the lesson of unprecedented revolutionary heroism; *first*, given a correct leadership, a people's army firmly basing itself on the peasant masses—the 'damned of the earth', the most exploited in a colonial situation, with an immense revolutionary potentiality—is beyond defeat by *any* professional counter-revolutionary army, and, *secondly*, the colonial and semi-colonial people in general are actually and potentially far more revolutionary than the working class in the metropolitan countries and in fact greatly help the latter by accentuating the economic and political crisis—including the crisis of conscience—inside the metropolis itself.

The Cuban Revolution presented some very unusual features. Here was a small island under the direct 'sphere of influence' of the United States imperialism, formally independent but under an incredibly corrupt and repressive 'native' regime tied to the apron strings of U.S. imperialism, economically backward and lop-sided and dominated by American capital but with considerable capitalist development compared with other underdeveloped countries (about 57 per cent of the Cuban people were urban according to the 1953 census and only 42 per cent of the total labour force were engaged in agriculture of whom 70 per cent were wage-labourers on huge and concentrated 'latifunda'). (5) The revolution which began with the heroic attack on Moncada led by Fidel Castro on July 26, 1953 was, at the initial stage, what the Marxists would call 'national democratic' in character. Later on it developed into socialist revolution. Without yet proclaiming Marxism-Leninism as its ideology the Cuban Revolution under Fidel followed, specially after the epic *Granma* landing in late 1956, a correct revolutionary path by first firmly relying on and arming the peasant masses and later uniting all who could be united against the Batista tyranny and its master, U.S. imperialism. The invincibility of people's war was once more demonstrated on the soil of Cuba. Even though the revolutionary ideology was not very clearly articulated at the beginning it was true, as 'Che' Guevara said in 1960, "the laws of Marxism are present in the events of the Cuban Revolution, independently of what its leaders profess or fully know of those laws from a theoretical point of view". (6) The socialist character of the Cuban Revolution was later proclaimed by Fidel in his historic speech of December 2, 1961. It must be pointed out that the heroic struggle of the Cuban people under Fidel was denounced by the Cuban Communist leadership almost to the end as "adventurist", "putschist" and "terroristic" and their revolutionary heroism as "false and

sterile". (7) The party leadership in fact betrayed the revolution like its counterpart in Algeria.

There are people—among them even 'Marxists'—who assert that the Cuban Revolution was not in line with Marxism-Leninism because it was not led by the Communist Party. We, on the contrary hold, that far from disproving the universal validity of Marxism-Leninism, the Cuban revolution demonstrated its two basic truths: *first*, that it is ultimately one's *practice* and not what one professes that determines whether one is or can be a Communist and, *secondly*, that if the established Communist Party does not do its duty, betrays the revolution and thus ceases to be Communist there will be honest, consistent revolutionaries, uncontaminated by opportunism and uninhibited by class limitations who will hold high the red banner and regroup themselves into a *real* Communist Party in order to lead the revolution. Cuba will not be the last example in this respect.

(To be continued)

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Bosses Triumph

COMMENTATOR

THE angry men of the Congress have been routed by the smiling old men of the party at the specially requisitioned session of the All-India Congress Committee. The only person who seems to have gained from the session is Mr S. N. Mishra with his simulated rebellion against the bosses. Neither angry nor young, Mr Mishra has found out the easy way of getting into the Press by sponsoring a non-conformist resolution and withdrawing it at the end at almost every AICC session. He has played the trick so often that it seems strange that it should have worked again. The other group of angries, going under the label of "Young Turks", possibly to distinguish themselves from Mr Mishra's Socialist Forum, was roundly defeated in the election to the party's central election committee. Its candidate, Mr Chandra Sekhar, was struggling with fifty votes only when the other five candidates, all nominees of the bosses, had romped in. The impression of *The Indian Express* was that the session which began with a bang concluded on a tame note and from the angry, roaring, impatient rebel Mr Mishra became almost an advocate for the Congress Working Committee. *The Times of India* reported that when the session began it had all the portents of a serious challenge to the leadership but by the time it ended it appeared that, if anything, the prestige of the High Command had been enhanced. *The Hindustan Times* felt that the High Command had its way in the session while *Patriot* with its obvious sympathy for the "rebels" comforted itself with the thought that a "good fight" had been put up by Mr Chandra Shekhar.

In an article in *The Times of India* Sham Lal has chided the rebels for some of their pretensions and their habit of indulging in irrelevancies. Referring to their warning that if the Congress did not mend its ways, there

might be a repetition of France in this country Sham Lal says it is fanciful to point to the revolt of the students and the workers in France and to say that the story can be repeated here. There it is a question of not by cake alone. Here there is not enough bread to go round. If the young student here is overcome by a feeling of despair it is because he senses, while still at the university, that the future holds no promise, that he will be hard put to it even to eke out a living. How can he keep his poise when he sees so many young men with new skills—on training whom the Government has spent so much money—sitting idle? The main threat to stability in India lies not in the spread of the fever that has infected Paris but in the swelling ranks of those without work and without hope in every small and big town. Peace in the countryside will be of little avail if tensions continue to build up in urban areas. There is no room for make-believe here. Neither agriculture nor village industry can provide work to the millions who join the labour force every year. It is no use saying that a solution will be found in the long run. For, as the late Lord Keynes said, in the long run we are all dead. When there are ten million idle persons in the cities it may be too late. Editorially the paper advises those parading under such fancy names as Young Turks, Socialist Forum and so on that if their object was to win support not for any particular group but for a particular set of principles and policies, they should get to work at the party's grassroots in the mandal and among the primary members so as to mobilise opinion and influence the voting at these levels. To imagine that this can be done with an eruption of eloquence in support of a ten-point plan or other similar proposals at sessions of the AICC and to smoulder in silence during the interval is only to provoke a degree of amused scepticism both about the plan and the strength of conviction with which it is put forward.

The Statesman has noted that after perfervid eloquence devoted to a sweeping denunciation of the leadership, the angry young men of the party who

had requisitioned the session cheerfully withdrew their original resolution and voted instead for a substitute motion reaffirming full faith in the Congress Working Committee. This is a measure of the unreality of AICC debates in general and the latest one in particular. In the circumstances, the wisest delegates would seem to be those who, turning a deaf ear to the avalanche of words, decided to go off to sleep in the airconditioned comfort of Mavalankar Hall. If the Delhi AICC served any purpose at all it was to demonstrate once again the phenomenal hold of the State bosses on the party machine. The electorate in the country may reject them; delegates to the AICC may abuse them; but apparently nobody can dislodge them.

In a doleful mood *Patriot* writes that the AICC has left all the issues facing the Congress party exactly where they were and once again affirmed the truth that the Congress far outlived its use. Individuals who have spent the greater parts of their lives in or around office and power have to be extraordinarily thick-skinned and clever in the ways of diversion and avoidance of confrontation. The "leaders" almost pretended that they had not heard what was said about them and delivered long sermons when their turn came, knowing very well that no one cares whether what they said meant anything. The session was chiefly interested in deciding who would effectively be able to choose the party candidates for the approaching general elections in Bengal and U.P. It did not matter to those who contributed to the victories of Mr C. B. Gupta and Mr Atulya Ghosh that the Congress chances in the elections have grown less thereby. Just as the Congress itself grew more important than the country in Congressmen's eyes in the course of the last twenty years, the factions are more important than the Congress in the factionalists' eyes today. It has ceased to matter for the majority of Congressmen whether the party wins or loses. What matters is whether one's own boss is in business.

New Look

In its attempt to give a new look

to its editorial page *Hindusthan Standard* had done away with its legend of thirty odd years declaring the paper as "an independent organ of Indian nationalism". But display is the least part of the change that the paper has suddenly sprung on its readers. In matters of editorial policy it has started bending over backwards to prove that it can think independently and even critically of the Congress. Naturally, the break had to be announced with a bitter piece on Mr Atulya Ghosh, "the West Bengal Congress Party's chief mentor". For all one knows, Mr Ghosh is the chief mentor of not only the State Congress but also of many institutions and individuals, though some of them, like dissident Congressmen, are showing signs of temporary delinquency. The editorial somersault has perhaps been occasioned by the sudden initiative in its rival, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, which in its centenary year has begun taking interest in proliferation or pubs in Park Street, prostitution, and "personal" disease among girl students and housewives. After all, the needs of circulation are paramount, and there must be more than one way of seducing readers.

In its eagerness to counter the salacity of a centenarian with its own youthful inconstancy of thirtyone years *Hindusthan Standard* has started challenging its own views of recent past. Commenting on the Krishnagar by-election result on May 22 the paper said in many of the non-Congress States from Kerala to Uttar Pradesh, from Haryana to West Bengal developments had occurred that were "plainly favourable" to the Congress and unfavourable to the non-Congress parties. Referring to the civic elections in Kerala and Uttar Pradesh, the mid-term poll in Haryana, and the State Council elections and Lok Sabha by-election in West Bengal it said "the Congress had reasons to feel elated" at the turn of events in so many States. It would be a mistake to suppose that the Congress victory in Krishnagar was all a fluke or that it was a personal triumph for the victorious candidate. It is more than probable that the result is a reflec-

tion of erosion of faith in the United Front. But in its comment on the AICC session on June 5 the paper chides the Congress President, Mr Nijalingappa, for thinking that the political tide had turned in favour of his party. It says that there is "little reason for the party leadership to feel elated" at the limited elective successes in recent months. The gains are at best negative and it is pertinent to recall that negative politics did not yield dividends to non-Congress parties. The paper deplores that the newly elected Congress Central Election Committee contains the same familiar—and controversial—faces. Bossism seems to be still as firmly entrenched in the party as ever, which suggests that the lesson of the last general election is lost on the Congress High Command. It should have realised that the essential precondition to the political rehabilitation of the Congress is to refurbish its political image. To seek to do that with men who are not exactly popular idols, however unquestioned their competence may be, is to deliberately undermine the chances of success". All this after Mr Atulya Ghosh's election to the CEC!

Kennedy

Writing before Robert Kennedy's death *The Indian Express* expressed its anxiety over the incidence of murderous violence in American politics. It says there might not be any direct connection between the assassination of John Kennedy, the murder of Martin Luther King and the attempt on Robert Kennedy's life. On the other hand, these cannot be considered wholly isolated incidents and shrugged off as the work of persons of unsound mind. There is a discernible pattern of calculated violence of a kind not seen in most parts of the world. The right to bear arms freely was guaranteed to Americans in their Constitution by their Founding Fathers. This Constitutional guarantee has given a nightmarish aspect to the American scene. The original purpose of the Founding Fathers in granting the right to bear arms has been perverted into licence for private violence. Various attempts

to tackle the problem rationally have been defeated in the US Congress by Representatives and Senators who talk glibly of traditional rights. Perhaps after the latest outrage in Los Angeles, Americans will take a hard look at one of their most cherished but dangerous rights.

Unable to go to this length, *The Hindustan Times* has chosen to be obscure. It says that the attack on Robert Kennedy, so soon after the assassination of Dr Martin Luther King, another American who became famous in his thirties, and of John Kennedy reflects the undercurrent of violence in American society. It is an obvious occasion to reiterate the fact that affluence does not put an end to social tensions and to point again to the vicious role of lobbies in preventing legislation against free sale of firearms. But avoiding the logical conclusion the paper adds irrelevantly that opportunity to youth is also an aspect of American society, and in any event the Kennedy story is moving and eventful enough to transcend national boundaries and be viewed as part of the human condition.



La Dolce Vita

ASHOK RUDRA

THE Establishment in Delhi is only superficially westernised. It is westernised in its expressions of social grace. It is westernised in the intonation with which the host asks you, "whisky, gin or beer? with soda or without?" It is westernised in so far as dinners are served in the buffet style and after-dinner cocktails, with or without dancing, extend beyond midnight. It is westernised in the topics of the small talk which froth in these parties. But in the heart of hearts the Establishment is Indian. As Indian as the Indian joint family. It would be difficult to make a sociological analysis of this elite and discover any other prototype. C. Wright Mills unravelled several layers in the power elite of the United States. It is doubtful whether there are any such layers in the emerging power elite of post-independence India; just as there are no power or privilege layers—there cannot be any—in a joint family. There are no divisions within this Establishment, no deep-seated conflicts, no rivalries for status. Of course a secretary is treated with greater deference than a Deputy Secretary is and a First Secretary of an embassy is "more equal" than a Second Secretary. But this is a differentiation that is accepted; just as, in a joint family, an uncle is more respected than an elder brother. This differentiation is a built-in part of the institution: it does not give rise to any disharmonies or tensions.

Who are the members of this joint family? The easiest and quickest way of finding this out is to attend a few cocktail parties. Some high Government officials; some MPs who may be from any party, from the extreme Right to the extreme Left; some top-ranking journalists, some university professors and readers, especially from the social sciences; and odd assortment of writers and artists; the troop of wives and of course some society ladies who preside over or at least are members of various fancy committees

set up by the Government. High executives from business houses also feature, but rather marginally. Among this crowd of Indians there would inevitably be a sprinkling of Anglo-Saxons—visiting experts, representatives of international organisations, secretaries of embassies—who conduct themselves as if they were just as much an integral part of the Delhi Establishment as any Indian can be.

A typical joint-family aspect of this society is the very great tolerance it practises with regard to the individuals. It protects its eccentrics just as the joint family does. The Delhi Establishment does not really bother a great deal about what your political or social beliefs or ideals are. You may style yourself a "progressive" or others may call you a reactionary; but if your hostess reacts to your views with "how interesting" you would remain interesting to the Establishment. You may be a vegetarian with Gandhian fads; you may think that socialism is bunk, that the public sector deserves to be auctioned and the country run by American experts; or you may carry Mao's little Red Book in your pocket or grow a beard like Fidel Castro. None of these things would matter at all as long as you are thought to have a sense of humour; as long as you are regarded as a decent sort of a fellow; that is, as long as you follow the Rules of the Game. What matters is correct behaviour, not views. There would never be any dearth of whiskies for you as long as you know how to hold your glass and don't spill it on your hostess' sari—this is meant both figuratively and literally.

No Views of its Own

One important reason why tolerance is such an important rule of this Establishment game is that the Establishment does not have any views of its own. It has no politics, no ideology, no social values or philosophy. Its code of conduct is loyalty to who or whatever might be the political power sitting on top of it. The individual members of the Establishment however have a certain personal philosophy—La Dolce Vita. The sweet life, the gentle life. The Establishment

people in Delhi are true epicureans. Mind you, a true epicurean does not indulge in excesses: the tensions and excitement of hectic pleasure seeking are not at all compatible with this ancient Greek ideal of life, which has also been the most widely practised amongst Indians of all times. There are, therefore no orgies in Delhi's social life. No adventures, no risk taking. Only the more quiet pleasures of life, based upon pucca foundations of security. Quarters large as villas, with generous lawns and extensive gardens; children to go to public schools or convents; cars to be purchased with Government loans (if not a foreign make procured while abroad) and to be at the disposal of the Mem sahib while the Sahib runs around in staff cars; a few trips abroad per year on official duty or to attend conferences; giving or going out to parties four or five evenings a week. These are some of the modest ingredients of this non-passionate Dolce Vita.

It is indeed possible to lead a sweet and gentle life in New Delhi. As a matter of fact, New Delhi is meant precisely for that sort of life. Not for everybody of course. If you are outside the Establishment club then you may wait for hours at the bus-stop for non-existent buses; you may live in one of those characterless houses meant for the different, well-defined categories of lower Government servants. But the Dolce Vita is available to all members of the club. Not equally, of course, but equitably; and it is this equity that goes to provide the cohesion and harmony.

Let us consider an example. Everybody knows that the top doctors of Delhi who head the leading hospitals are busy a large part of their time looking after patients from among the ranks of Cabinet Ministers as well as the more important Members of Parliament. This of course is in blatant violation of the service rules. As public servants they are expected to select patients not according to their importance in society but according to the difficult nature of their ailments. But nobody in Delhi complains about this. The clerical proletariat does not protest, because there probably is

nowhere on earth a more submissive and sheepish lot of underlings than these inhabitants of Patelnagar and Rajindernagar Vinoyagar and Lodi Colony. But supposing you are not of this class but a member of the Establishment though you do not qualify to get the attention of these top doctors every time your child sneezes. Even then you do not protest. That is because of the fair and equitable distribution of the privileges. Let us imagine that your ranking in the Establishment is 2.37. Then first you do get the privileged attention of doctors of the rank of 2.37 for your children's coughs and colds even when hundreds of patients lower down the scale in the social hierarchy are waiting with much more serious ailments. Secondly, when you require more serious medical attention, you can always jump queues and receive the attention of the very top doctors. The length of the queue you can jump is proportional to your own rank member, i.e. 2.37.

Cantelever

It is this cantelever arrangement of mutual benefits that supports the edifice in all its parts. Why should you, as a high Government official, mind that high business executives always manage to avoid attempts on the part of the income-tax authorities to curtail their luxury consumption? The box-walla is generous with the supply of drinks in his parties; and any way, the perquisites enjoyed by the executives are not really so very much more than all the free services a top civil servant enjoys. In terms of residential housing alone the latter saves an income-tax-free Rs. 2,000 per month. Why should a university professor mind that a visiting American expert has greater access to secret government files than he has to ordinary unpublished materials? His appointment in the first place as a professor was perhaps based upon recommendations from these visiting experts. Then it is through the good offices of these foreigners that he manages to make the trips abroad he makes every year. Last but not the least, it is these foreign friends who supply the scotch whisky and liqueur which the professor finds

so indispensable for his scholarly social life.

The test of this Dolce Vita as a cohesive force is provided by the excellent and civilised manner in which the Establishment tackles its drawing-room rebels and revolutionaries. This little society is too mature, too grown up, to be upset by any shrill defiances from any extremists. You just cannot shock or scandalise it. Even if you think that you are a rebel poet or artist, you will just not manage to die of consumption like Baudelaire or Van Gogh. The Establishment will buy your paintings and adorn its drawing-room walls, or commission you to decorate the innumerable exhibitions and show rooms that are always being set up. You may think you are an extreme left revolutionary, but you will not manage to become the victim of any barbarian witch-hunting. Instead, you would be given a comfortable job, and you would be invited to all the dinner parties and you will sink into the softness of the sofa and expound your extreme left doctrines to sympathetic listeners with drinks going all around. What it all means is that whatever talents you might have would go towards supporting whatever the Establishment is concerned with supporting; while you will have the satisfaction of believing that you have not compromised your conscience.

This Dolce Vita technique works wonderfully well. There are many fiery revolutionaries among the intellectuals of Delhi. But who among them would be so perverse as not to enjoy the sound and healthy pleasures of a balanced, good life? Who could not like to live in those spacious houses with lawns and servants' quarters? Who would think that one could get education for their children in any school short of the Modern School or Frank Anthony School? Who would deny the broadening effect on one's views of frequent trips abroad—whether to the West or to Moscow and other East European capitals (for a medical check-up if not for anything else)? There is nothing wrong at all in any one of these simple and wholesome pleasures of life. But it is through these simple pleasures that the

Establishment manages to get whatever it wants to get out of the rebel intellectuals. Like Anne in Shaw's *Man and Superman*, it says "Never mind her dear. Go on talking" and like Anne it gets what it wants. What it wants and what it gets, is that the intellectuals, including all the extremists, rebels and revolutionaries, should constitute themselves into a retinue of advisers to the Government sometimes for the sake of advice that is really given and taken, more often for the sake of creating an illusion that the Government is run with the help of expert advice. The measure of success of the Establishment in this respect is the fact that among the teeming intellectuals of Delhi there is probably not one who could not be made by a P. A. taking up the telephone receiver to get up from bed at any odd hour of the night and spend Rs. 20 or so on taxis to meet some VIP who wants to prepare some speech he has to give next morning. Refusal to meet VIPs is considered ill-bred and, as we have mentioned before, all that you have to do to enjoy La Dolce Vita is to be well-bred.

Wartime Story

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

THE films of John Frankenheimer, considered as one of Hollywood's powerful rebels, fall into two distinct categories. On the one hand, there are movies on personal themes, bold excursions into the nervous world of adolescents and youths, and on the other, themes with wider canvases dealing with controversial social and political issues. Frankenheimer's flair for visual splendour and his observant selection of subtle details are of course, evident in both the genres. *The Train*, a variation on the resistance theme, has as its background the last days of the Nazi occupation of France when the Germans plan to carry off some valuable French paintings, and the railway resistance fighters are up against this scheme. The German general (a remarkable portrayal by Paul

Scofield) is pitted against the resolute engine-driver, Labiche, in this battle of wits and the unity of the French railwaymen, acts as a strong lever against the German oppression. The treatment is a beautiful blending of documentary and fiction. The din and bustle of the railway yards recalls the best of the neo-realistic tradition whereas the intricate planning of the elaborate railway hoax to fool the Germans into believing that the trainful of treasures is Deutschlandbound while it is actually being decoyed back to Paris, almost puts to shame the ingenuity of an Eric Ambler plot. But the real trouble begins when Frankenheimer attempts to thread out the bigger issues and the film is suddenly reduced to a pedestrian level, the messages getting vain and dry as text-book platitudes. The ending, though highlighting Frankenheimer's penchant for irony and bleak observation, is highly dubious; and even the excellent concluding shot of a victorious yet fagged-out and fed-up Labiche moving away in a long shot and the foreground littered with the case-loads of Renoir, Degas et al and the dead bodies of the French hostages and the German general huddled together signifying the futility of it all, does little to brush off the stigma of banality. The film would, of course, be remembered for Burt Lancaster's disciplined underplaying as Labiche and Michel Simon's rendering as Papa Bull, the taut cameo of a rustic engine-driver who, while giving a damn for abstract phrases like "national heritage" or "glory of France"; courts his death doing what he considers his supreme duty, that is, driving the train to its destination. Jeanne Moreau's role as the hotel-proprietress providing a sort of romantic interlude is thoroughly superfluous.

The Bobo

The Bobo (directed by Robert Parrish) is a far cry from the black world of the French railway resistance. Here everything is soft, rosy and chic and even the disappointed Romeo has a contented look. The film is woven round the high society of Barcelona into which Juan Battista, a

singing matador from the country, unwittingly stumbles and falls for the vivacious Olympia, a gold-hungry demi-monde, "the most desirable witch in Barcelona", as one of the characters says with a sigh. The film starts off as a bright and promising erotic comedy but soon tends to degenerate into sentimental slush, leading to an incongruous finale when Olympia has Juan dyed in blue as a punishment for deceit as she finds out that the Prince Charming is poor as a church mouse. The matador returns to his bulls and Olympia to her new games. Why blue? Just the caprice of a curvaceous heroine? Or blue is the sign of technicolour love?

Atul Bose's Technique

BY AN ART CRITIC

ATUL Bose had an exhibition, last week, at the premises of the Academy of Fine Arts, Calcutta. All of the exhibits were shown at the same place about a year ago. However, one welcomes another chance of viewing the works of this major figure in contemporary Indian art.

That Mr Bose's technique is impeccable, is acknowledged by all and sundry. To see it is a pleasure. How he makes his lines articulate, making all the difference in the world by a little more pressure in one place and a light touch in some other, the pencil or charcoal responding to his fingers like a well-tuned musical instrument. He shows how one can hold character and transfer it on paper with a minimum of lines; in some cases, when drawing on coloured paper, he sometimes uses a little white for relief, but throughout one feels that the dominating spirit is restraint. In some of the exhibits the modelling is so delicate that at first one does not even notice it. But how vital it is to the general build-up of this subject makes itself gradually felt as one looks on. Without any overstatement anywhere, the artist carries his message through with ease.

Mr Bose's name has long been as-

sociated with the art of portraiture. Among the portraits shown here the most appealing, we thought, were his Self-Portrait, that of Lady Ranu Mukherjee, of Jamini Roy and the one called "Just a Scribble".

Letters

Another Murder

Retribution is infallible and swift. The misdeeds of the cloak-and-dagger CIA that cut short the lives of Folsom in South Vietnam and Lumumba in the Congo are now coming home to roost. And so, there is nothing to wonder at the murder of Senator Robert Kennedy and Dr Martin Luther King. Something is rotten in the United States. As Prof Galbraith writes: "In America if you seek to design a better mousetrap you are the soul of enterprise, but if you seek to design a better society you are the crackpot." Further he almost admits that the Sherman anti-Trust laws are positive proof of the very fabric of American society being illegal.

We in India should derive comfort from the fact that the egg-heads who take great pains to befool us by projecting and peddling a shoddy model must be dithering as these stark events unfold the real face of the model.

Jyoti P. Roy-Choudhury
Dum Dum Cantonment.

After "King", Bob Kennedy! The culture of vultures is again in action. We have nothing to comment, only to see the face behind the mask which preaches democracy to the world.

SARIT TOKDER,
Patiram, W. Dinajpur.

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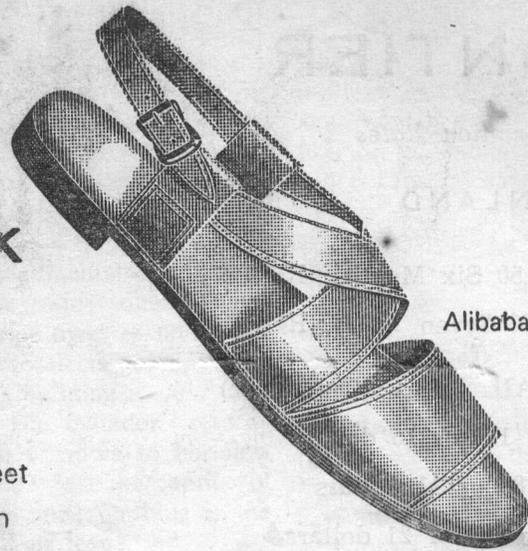
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