

# frontier

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## THE CHOICE

THE electorate in Uttar Pradesh and Nagaland have already started trekking to the polling booths, and, on Sunday, they will be joined by the voters in Punjab, Bihar and West Bengal. For the people of West Bengal, the issue posed by the mid-term election is altogether clear-cut. It is the issue of morality. There would have been no occasion for such an election if the Congress had not sought to defy the mandate of the electorate by stooping to the lowliest business of buying legislators at the marketplace. Today, its only identification is with the avarice of power. Power over the apparatus of the State is the *raison d'etre* for Congressmen remaining Congressmen; such power can be used for the furthering of private gains, for committing crimes against the people, for stifling all efforts towards social and economic transformation in the country. The white-capped hypocrites, dumped by the electorate of this State in 1967, therefore chose the murky way back to power. The doctrine of market purchase of legislators, which the Congress had unashamedly put into practice in the north-western parts of the country, was attempted even in this State. To our consternation, it succeeded: West Bengal, alas, was no holier soil, and politicians, ready to sell their loyalty and conscience if the price is right, turned up in just adequate numbers. A Governor, whose sense of morality was what New Delhi ordained it to be, played the role of a co-conspirator, and, in the darkness of the night, the wobbly UF government was pushed out.

The Congress, however, could not last for long, and a reluctant New Delhi has been forced to allow the voters to offer their verdict on the goings-on of the past two years. Whatever our other reservations, this verdict has to be exercised. Some people may prefer to sit it out on Sunday, but those who will come out must not provide the impression that the people of West Bengal are neutral on the merits of Congress skulduggery, that they are indifferent to whether the morality of Haryana is inseminated successfully in West Bengal.

This journal has no particular illusions about the efficacy of parliamentary democracy in bringing about a re-ordering of Indian society under the existing constraints of the polity. But the enemy still deserves to be mauled where it can be mauled even within the limits of these constraints. If the Congress is given another drubbing in this State, it would be impossible for

it to recover. The liquidation of the Congress, once and for all, will be a major achievement, and one which cannot but give an impetus to the historical process.

It is with a view to furthering this goal that the electorate ought to be voting on Sunday. Those who go to the polling booth must vote UF to crush the Congress, it must vote to teach turncoats like Dr P. C. Ghosh and Mr Humayun Kabir that even political crimes are still linked to inexorable punishment. It must vote to tell the helicopter-hopping, high-living Central Ministers and Dharma Viras where to get off.

This journal does not believe in turning the Nelson's eye on the many failings and foibles of any particular group or groups in the United Front. It has been unsparing in its rebuke of the United Front or its constituents whenever it has felt that the occasion for administering such rebukes has arisen. No doubt, such occasions will also arise in the future. But the main enemy still is the Congress, which has to be buried. The corpse has been stinking far too long.

## Teh Other Three

If the outlook for the Congress party is not too bright in West Bengal, the party's chances in Bihar and Punjab are even bleaker; in Uttar Pradesh they are at best doubtful. In recent weeks much has been heard about the Congress promise of stability, but a stable Congress Government in any of the four States can be ruled out for the foreseeable future. Which does not mean, however, that stability will be provided by non-Congress or anti-Congress forces jointly sharing authority in all the four States. In West Bengal, there is at least a reasonably close alliance of leftist and other democratic forces; there is none in any of the other three States, and coalitions attempted after the elections are unlikely to have much cohesion. Besides, the so-called left democratic forces have no reason to be pleased with trends in these

States. In Bihar, the CPI, and on a much smaller scale the CPI(M), may make some headway, but to what immediate effect? And even such limited gains may not be registered in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. The SSP has lost some of even that wayward vigour that it once used to display over very odd issues; about the PSP, the less said the better. Dissident and breakaway Congressmen, such as those led by Mr Charan Singh in Uttar Pradesh, may remain a factor in non-Congress coalitions, but they too have failed to emerge as a vital, unified force.

Gloating over the disintegration of the Congress will simply not be enough. As can be seen in Bihar and Punjab at the moment, and as was seen earlier in some other parts of the country, the forces of rabid reaction are more energetic in taking advantage of this situation than are the leftists. Some will probably see in this signs of desirable polarization; this would have been true only if the leftists constituted a pole at all. Recent developments may have done some good by demonstrating that the leftists cannot exist on the same pole with a party like the Jana Sangh, but the leftists themselves have not demonstrated this by isolating the Sangh. What has happened is simply that the Sangh has grown powerful enough to be able to dispense with leftist company. It is to be hoped that the CPI has profited from the experience. Mr Dange predicts continuing stalemate until the next general elections, with a better opportunity for leftist consolidation in the meantime. The nature and size of that opportunity may be a little clearer after the mid-term elections, but an excess of optimism is certainly not in order.

## Sanity Wins

It goes more to the credit of the people of Calcutta than to the law-enforcing authorities that the violence in the city on January 31 subsided almost as quickly as it had erupted. Despite provocations and wild ru-

mours, spread with or without a purpose, the people kept their sanity. The disturbances remained confined to a small locality, and outside of it life was normal. Even in the disturbed area normalcy would have returned earlier but for the police rampage. The Commissioner of Police had ordered his men to shoot at sight any killer or would-be killer, any incendiary or looter. The police lived up to this order and managed to fire 78 rounds within a brief hour or so. They depended more on their muskets than on tear-gas shells and lathis to deal with the situation. (Two days later in another area they fired four rounds without swinging their lathis or bursting a single tear-gas shell.) This crass disregard for human life was by itself a grave provocation; there are also serious allegations that the police tried to incite people in some localities to "retaliate". Some of the acts of lawlessness were expressions of anger at the police excess, and the poor victims would certainly have been spared if the police had not run amuck. All attempts to turn the disturbances into a communal riot failed because the people were wary enough to keep off the trap.

The disturbances did not come all of a sudden. For weeks a rumour was circulating about the possibility of a communal riot to provide a pretext for prolongation of President's rule indefinitely. No, it was not the Naxalites who were being mentioned as the conspirators; the suspect was the Congress, for with every passing day the party was losing a chunk of its fond hope of a dazzling comeback. The prompt statement by the State Congress President, who himself seems to be fighting a losing battle in Sealdah constituency, accusing unnamed parties of attempting to misguide and confuse the people before the mid-term poll does not lift the suspicion; its effect may be exactly the opposite. It would indeed be surprising if the rumour did not reach the authorities; perhaps their intelligence sources can dry up conveniently for the Congress. Not only was no action taken all these weeks, but the police displayed unaccustomed res-

traint even the day before the disturbances when the demonstration before the Statesman House showed that emotions were on the point of boiling over. Only late at night was a Congress councillor of Calcutta Corporation arrested, but nothing was done to assuage those whose sentiments had been outraged. The expression of regret by *The Statesman* was said to have been at the instance of Governor Dharma Vira. If that independent paper in a free country could persuade itself or be persuaded to regret publication of the offending reference a day earlier, trouble would have been avoided.

## Telengana

The remarkable promptness with which all the political parties in Andhra agreed to honour the Telengana safeguards could have been a big thing if it did not appear so unreal. The State Congress chief signed the agreement and let it be known afterwards that he had signed blindly. But that need not provoke indignation. The Congress Government slept over the Gentlemen's Agreement on safeguards for Telengana for as long as twelve years and it can be imagined how agreements are usually signed by the bosses of the nation.

The latest agreement appears unreal because of the fixation of a time limit. The Chief Minister felt no qualms in extending the statutory recognition of the Telengana safeguards which expire in March this year by five years. Why five years? By which alchemy will a programme, which could not be even as much as taken up in twelve years, be implemented in five precise years?

It cannot be said that Telengana has been neglected because the Cabinet is overwhelmingly staffed by non-Telengi ministers. One of the demands of the agitators over Andhra rights is that the Cabinet must be reshuffled in favour of the non-Telengi people. It appears that the Telengi ministers themselves remained indifferent to the safeguards. One more

instance of how the party chiefs live estranged from people they supposedly represent.

The way in which the safeguards are promised to be implemented makes the whole affair more unreal. The crucial problem of developing the Telengana region is shoved aside. The Accountant-General has been asked to assess the Telengana funds and people are assured that development is on the way. There is no commitment on enquiries about the misappropriation of the funds, which the safeguardists allege, occurred. The Government is more engaged, rather vigorously, in the peripheral demand regarding removal of non-domiciled personnel from government jobs. They are being removed, leaving the posts widely vacant because qualified people are not readily available. Those who may start worrying over the collapse of administration because of this can rest in peace. Of the 4,000 posts thus affected, 2,500 happen to be teachers. Education has not acquired that dimension in our planners' chart that a few vacant posts will retard the growth of the country.

The agreement of the political parties failed to serve as a sop to the agitators; the Army had to be called in. The agitation continues, although its external manifestations have abated. The Congress suspects a CPI hand behind the continued agitation, the CPI sees the Jana Sangh hand behind it, the Jana Sangh sees a Congress faction running the show and an Establishment newspaper editorially refers to Mr Nagi Reddi as the mastermind behind the separatist movement. The mutual recriminations are all fine in the game. But what is more significant is that students who started the agitation are going beyond the tether of political party directives. They felt aggrieved over non-implementation of the service safeguards but they have adopted a charter of demands which goes much beyond their immediate self-interest—the development of the Telengana region. They have drawn in shop employees and merchants and now labourers. Hatred is in the air. It is indeed dark humour that students have resorted to

threatening national integration, which is about the only holy cow left to political parties of all creeds.

## “Friends, Not Foes”

“Ayub ready to talk with Opponents. Over 1,000 Arrested in East Pakistan”—the lead headline in a Calcutta daily sounded funny but was not so. President Ayub is now trying to divide the opposition by coming down on the militants so that he can continue to rule. His February 1 broadcast is an invitation to those of the Direct Action Committee who believe in sharing some sort of power through negotiations. Of the two parties not in the DAC, the leader of one, Mr Bhutto, is in jail. But the man to watch was Maulana Bhashani, whose hold on the countryside is considerable. Any government knows that while trouble in cities can somehow be brought under control, a turbulent countryside is a different proposition altogether. This is what made the Maulana so dangerous; he was engaged in rousing the villages and the villages were responding. Besides, his wing of the National Awami Party stands for full autonomy for all the constituent units of Pakistan—a demand which responds to the urge for self-determination of not only East Pakistanis, but Baluchis, Sindhis, Punjabis and Pathans in West Pakistan. For various reasons, the Maulana is not trusted by the moderates of the DAC who tried not to contact him when the Dacca charter of demands was drafted. President Ayub has obliged them.

With the Maulana now in jail and the President benign enough to talk, how will the DAC react? The recent widespread upsurge has made even some of the moderates in the DAC realise that political power is not always a matter of negotiation, that an active struggle which brings in the masses is a necessity. It remains to be seen whether these elements have gained the upper hand over those who want to sneak into the Secretariat through machinations or

those extreme right forces who have continued to raise anti-left slogans in violation of the DAC programme. President Ayub hopes to split the DAC before it is carried forward by the momentum of a popular movement. He will pick up the militants one by one and continue to make gracious gestures to those interested in the semblance of power. He will raise the eternal bogey of the external enemy. Ten years in office has taught him how to muster his friends even though they try to pass off as his foes. He has them in this country too; by creating communal tension leading to killings, they may help President Ayub divert the Pakistanis from the path of political struggle.

## A Dravida Dubcek

The manner in which Mr C. N. Annadurai withstood his first operation in September and his second last month naturally evoked the highest admiration from all. The end came still, early on Monday morning, after he had been unconscious for many hours, perhaps mercifully because the disease he had been suffering from was nothing less than cancer. Repeated heart attacks of a severe nature made survival virtually impossible. Neither surgery nor prayers could save the man who in his last few months transformed a strident regionalism into an agreeably mellow nationalism. New Delhi's Kosygin and Brezhnev did not very much care for the Tamil Dubcek; but the post-mortem grief in the capital may not be wholly hypocritical. Those who speak so loud and unclear about national integration must know by now that in Mr Annadurai they had the gentlest enemy.

As an orator in Tamil Mr Annadurai had no peer; he held huge audiences absolutely spellbound. It is an error to think that a certain style of handling words makes great oratory. The skill itself comes from an inner depth of feeling without which words uttered, however craftily chosen,

sound utterly hollow. What Mr Annadurai was able to do was to voice with great effect what his fellow Tamilians were able only to feel. As long ago as 1937, when Mr Rajagopalachari tried to make the South swallow Hindi, bitterly to regret it many years later, Mr Annadurai, then relatively young, stood up for Tamil, for he saw that the imposition of Hindi had behind it a darker design in the Hindi-speaking North. It is perfectly true that he was not anti-Hindi; he only wanted no part of it in his Tamil Nadu.

C.N.A., or just Anna, was basically a writer. He must have discovered fairly early that, to achieve certain objectives, there is no alternative to political action. He often seemed an extremist. But there remained a writer's sensibility, perhaps taking away something from what would be called truly revolutionary fervour. The party he founded, the DMK, which had just about wiped out the Congress, lacked many things in the way of ideology but it did impart to New Delhi quite a few salutary lessons. There is no reason to think that New Delhi no longer needs tuition from Madras—and some other places. Even those who did not go all the way with CNA must see that he was a necessary force in today's Indian politics.

## The Foreign Touch

*R. C. writes :*

It has become almost customary for politicians and plutocrats to go abroad for treatment or even check-up or have foreign experts brought here. This is often for diseases that can be easily and are often treated successfully here. Dr Radhakrishnan went abroad for a cataract operation; Dr B. C. Roy had an ophthalmologist brought from Vienna to operate on him and Mrs Gandhi a British doctor to do a small diagnostic operation on her some time back. When a dignitary goes abroad a large amount of foreign exchange is released for the entourage, specially in the case of politicians. Expenses for the immediate

family and the patient can be understood in bonafide cases, but the exchange used for hangers-on could be better utilised for equipment and drugs not available in the country.

The present policy of the Government, at least in theory, is that training in this country is as good as that abroad. It therefore at one time made it practically impossible for the young medical graduate without the necessary connections in high places to go abroad for training. For some time past it has stopped the holding of the ECFMG examination in this country, without passing which no foreign medical graduate is allowed to do clinical work in the United States. The aspiring young doctor therefore has to take the examination from one of the neighbouring countries where it is held.

The Reserve Bank is showing increasing stringency in allowing foreign exchange for medical scientists going abroad to participate in conferences etc. It is true that there is often misuse of such visits which become an excuse for tourism. However, the bonafide scientist is often stopped from attending an important conference, even when invited. The policy in these cases should be oriented towards the individual case and not be arbitrary. Decision should be taken by a qualified expert (or experts) able to assess the merits of the individual case rather than by clerical staff without the requisite specialised knowledge.

The treatment of cancer is very poorly organised in this country. The estimated annual death-rate is over 250,000 and is increasing while the total number of specialised beds is less than 700 in cancer hospitals and institutes. The facilities for rehabilitation are usually non-existent or minimal.

Cancer of the oesophagus or gullet, for which Mr Annadurai was operated upon in New York, is a common disease here—about 6 to 7 per cent of all cases seen at the CCH or the Tata Hospital. Surgery of cancer is done at many centres such as Madras, Vellore, Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi etc. The results are not much worse than

those published from the Western countries. The technique is difficult but does not require equipment that is not available in the country or is very expensive or very difficult to manufacture.

For treatment of oesophageal cancer, there is often a need for deep radiation therapy. Here the high energy radiation sources (million volt, telecobalt, telecesium etc.) offer some advantages over the conventional or orthovoltage machines. It is stated that the Trombay plant has the technical knowledge to make these machines—if it does not, this should be developed *pari passu* with the manufacture of other electronic instruments. The Government frowns upon the importation of telecobalt and telecesium machines—a machine costs about 1.6 lakhs and can treat about 500 patients a year at least. While there are very few supervoltage machines in the country, there are installations in Madras, Vellore, Pondicherry, Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and other centres.

The treatment of cancer by the implementation of radioactive sources—permanent such as radon or iridium or cobalt needles—is an old and well-documented method. For the use of the 'seeds', specialised equipment is needed—both for the fabrication of the seeds and for their correct placement. This, as any other form of specialised treatment effort, requires the formation of specialised teams of workers. The composition of such teams should be left to the specialists working in the field and not to administrators without the requisite know-how.

## Democracy Thai-Style

*A correspondent writes :*

The day after West Bengal goes to the polls—for the second time in two years—the people of Thailand are expected to make their journey to the polling booth—for the first time in a decade. Much to the satisfaction of the 'democratic' Americans who felt a bit uneasy in supporting the brutal

military dictatorship in Thailand, the dictators themselves dished out a 'democratic' Constitution in June last year. But hardly anybody in Thailand has gone into raptures over the dawn of democracy. Not to speak of the communists, to safeguard against whose pernicious influence the 'Political Parties Act' has taken elaborate measures, even the Right-wing opposition of Generals Thanom and Praphas has not found in the Constitution anything to go wild about. The Constitution has provided for an elected House of Representatives and an appointed Senate. The King will appoint the Prime Minister and 30 ministers who need not be elected members of the House of Representatives. And then the King would appoint the rest of the members of the Senate according to the advice of the Prime Minister. The Lower House may vote on certain issues but not on that of confidence in the Council of Ministers. So parties may come and go but the old gang will rule for ever, at least so they hope.

Despite constitutional subterfuge, the Thai people have shown very little enthusiasm for the 'democratic' rights. In a provincial election last year there was a turnout below 5 per cent at places. Gimmicks like restoration of free speech etcetera this year may not raise the turnout much higher.

It is perhaps no accident that the generals have finally handed down a Constitution, however bogus, at a time when the guerilla war launched by the Thailand Patriotic Front has spread to 31 of the 71 provinces. That the Thai Army and their 46,000 American comrades-in-arms have followed up this granting of a Constitution with intensified repression is no coincidence either. It is the age-old dual tactic of military repression and political deception. The peasant guerillas, apart from urging the people to boycott the elections, have announced the establishment of a "Supreme Command of the Thai People's Liberation Army" to "exercise unified and effective command" over all the guerillas in Thailand.

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## No Alternative Focus

FROM A POLITICAL  
CORRESPONDENT

THE term "mid-term elections" is a product of semantic confusion if not the result of some deliberate attempt to mislead the people. The Constitution does not provide for anything called a mid-term election to the State legislatures or to the Lok Sabha. All it provides is that the life of a State Assembly or Lok Sabha cannot extend beyond five years. If the British model is what India is following in this context, it would be well to remember that Britain never holds a mid-term election but fresh elections every time Parliament is dissolved. The term we are using without regard to its connotation could make for perverse interpretation of the Constitution later, just as the Governor's powers are being perversely stretched to suit the interests of those in power at the Centre.

The re-elections to some of the State legislatures were demanded as a matter of political expediency and few realised in West Bengal that the Congress which rules at the Centre still had the last word on deciding when the fresh poll should be held. Or once the legislature was dissolved, fresh elections could be put off indefinitely in the name of some emergency or the other.

Maybe it is being a little cynical. It is good that the fresh elections to four legislatures are being held after all, though the Congress realises now that it has no chance of winning any of the four States. It had lost all the four in 1967 and all these States have had at least two ministries before they came under President's Rule.

The Central Government's intelligence agencies have been making their own assessments of the election prospects of various parties and this provides the Central leadership the basis for working out the Congress party's post-election strategy.

Certain issues stand out clearly on the eve of the poll. Except in West Bengal, there is no alternative focus to the Congress. This underlines the absence of polarisation wherever politics is backward. The backwardness of politics in a vast stretch of the populous Indo-Gangetic plain makes for the perversion of parliamentary democracy which inevitably would be pushed to the brink.

The Congress slogan of stability is patently false. In West Bengal there was no instability in the sense that no ministry was defeated by an Assembly vote. This was true of the first communist ministry, in Kerala about ten years ago. The Congress could not manage a single defection in Kerala when it needed only two MLAs to topple the Ministry. In West Bengal, the Congress managed some defections and that was the cause of instability, if any. But the loss of the United Front's majority was never proved through an Assembly vote.

But in the other States, the ministries collapsed because of defections and the ministries were voted out or there was clear evidence of the loss of their majority. It might suit the Congress fine to lump West Bengal with other States and for the Government to talk of "mid-term" elections to seek a new political balance in these States. In other States, the elections were thought of as a deterrent to defections but in West Bengal, a problem was manufactured where none existed and it would be absurd for Mr Chavan or anybody to say now that fresh elections to the Assembly were thought of as a measure to deter people like Dr. P. C. Ghosh from defecting!

It would have been much more honest for the leftists as well as the Congress and the Government to say that fresh elections to the legislatures would help a polarisation of political forces. Where the left is sparse (Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar) the communists need not pretend, for instance, that they are a decisive force and would prevent a drift to the right. These States have to go rightist logically and perhaps that is good for the country in the long run,

if the States polarise into right and left and there is a confrontation soon.

In Punjab, for instance, all politics is communal and even communist politics were the appendage of Akali communal politics. What looks probable is the convergence of Sikh communalism of the Akali brand and the Sikh communalism of the Congress brand, though at the moment Akali and Jana Sangh communalism has converged for the elections. The communists find the Akalis communal suddenly after years of opportunist acquiescence with Sikh communalism. The CPI (M) has an adjustment with the Akalis and the CPI is openly working against CPI(M) candidates and campaigning for the Congress. The CPI is moving closer to forces of Hindu communalism in Punjab just as it is placating the defensive communalism of the Muslims in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

Just as Sikh communalism might be the alternate focus to the Congress in Punjab, Hindu communalism might provide the alternative focus in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. A two-party model will emerge soon in the Hindi belt whether the Jana Sangh becomes the second party immediately or not. The Swatantra Party is in the doldrums in the Hindi belt and would have to face slow extinction under the impact of the Jana Sangh's drive.

The search for a viable alternative to the Congress in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar would begin only after another spell of confusion that would follow next week's elections. If the Jana Sangh provides the alternative focus, the SSP would be swamped in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar or would have to make itself indistinguishable from the Jana Sangh. Within these States the polarisation will be between the incipient communalism of the Congress (be it Sikh communalism or Hindu communalism) and the aggressive communalism of the Jana Sangh. In the process, the parties of the left would have to become communal to some degree or the other.

What is bound to prove more interesting is the polarisation among the States. Alternative foci to the Congress have already emerged in

Gujarat, where the challenge is from the Swatantra Party, in Orissa where the nature of the challenge is the same, in Madras (where the DMK provides the alternative focus) in Kerala and West Bengal (where the challenge is from the left).

The Congress base is strong, surprisingly, only in the Deccan plateau—the three contiguous States of Maharashtra, Mysore and Andhra Pradesh.

In the Hindi belt, a two-party model might emerge and if the Congress disintegrates fairly fast, the Jana Sangh would be on the top. The coming conflict would be between the Jana Sangh and Swatantra States and the other States which the Congress has lost or would lose.

Politics at the Centre would not be the same in 1972. No party would get a clear majority in the Lok Sabha if an election is held in 1972. There would be nothing called a majority party in the country and that would hasten the process of polarisation at the Centre. The Congress logically should go with the Swatantra Party and the Jana Sangh, which means a confrontation between one set of States and another through the Centre. A Congress-Swatantra-Jana Sangh combine at the Centre would mean the exclusion of a whole range of forces of the left or the centre and that would lead to sharpening conflicts between the Centre and some of the States.

It would suit the escapists fine to go ga-ga over the coming polls as though they are a watershed in the evolution of our democracy. If anything, it is a landmark in our advance towards a political crisis which will build up shortly. It is of little direct consequence who wins power in any of the four States. A marginal victory is not very much different from a marginal defeat. The alignment of political forces would roughly be the same unless a process of polarisation begins. What complicates parliamentary functioning is the difference in the degree of polarisation. It has begun in some States and has not in others while it is in an advanced stage in some.

## “Certain Defeat”

PEBECE

HERE is a forecast: the Congress is sure to be defeated in the February 9 election in West Bengal and the United Front returned with a comfortable majority, say, a minimum of 158, in a House of 280.

There is more than one reason for the coming Congress debacle. The Congress is weaker by internal dissensions, despite contrary claims by Mr Nijalingappa, the Congress President. Several parties which can be said to have been born out of the Congress are certain to cause erosion in its votes.

Then, there is greater unity among the Left parties which for the first time since 1952 have created the image of the Front as a party in opposition to the Congress. The fact that in the 1967 election they lost 57 seats to the Congress because of in-fights should not be forgotten.

The people, pragmatic as they are, in both urban and rural areas should have realized by now that, divided as the Congress is, there is no chance of its forming a stable Government even if it returns with a majority. The example of Haryana must be fresh in their memory. And the next alternative they can think of is the United Front as none of the other dozen parties have anything to their credit to inspire confidence.

Some argue that the record of the UF's nine-month rule is not something to be enamoured of and a swing back to the Congress is likely. True, rich peasants disturbed by agrarian unrest might vote Congress this time. But to believe that they will influence other peasants is to ignore the fact that power relations in villages have undergone a radical change.

The jotedars and mahajans have no longer the same sway as in the past. According to an estimate, they do not control more than 50 seats all over the State. That the price of rice went up to Rs. 5 a kg. during the UF regime will not cut much ice with the bulk of rural voters who know the

people responsible for the price rise. In urban areas, traders, businessmen and apolitical middle-class people are no doubt dissatisfied with the unrest generated by the UF regime. They are, however, not so concentrated in particular areas as to be able to cause any big damage to the Front's poll prospects.

The employees in Government offices, mercantile firms and in factories, exposed as they are to militant trade unionism, know that “gherao”, of which much is sought to be made out by the Congress, was not a menace so far as they are concerned. They know to their cost that retrenchment, lay-off and closure of factories, leading to a chain reaction reflected in “gherao”, were the result of the general recession in the economy.

It will not be wrong to assume that there has been a polarisation of forces. Both Congress and Leftist leaders admit it. But it would be unrealistic to think that elections in this country are fought entirely on the political plane. Casteism and/or communalism which might have been dormant are again sought to be aroused by the Lok Dal of Mr Humayun Kabir, the INDF and the Progressive Muslim League, reminding one of similar combinations in pre-Independence days and the unrest they had caused.

All these parties mushroomed during the last one year or even later. But taking voters to polling booths needs elaborate machinery and experienced party workers which none of the splinter parties have. It is true that some disgruntled old Congress veterans have found a place in them and might win in the election. But they are few and their ambition to hold the key in the future formation of Government will for all practical purposes remain unfulfilled.

The Progressive Muslim League has set up about 50 candidates in several districts. Besides Murshidabad, which has a Muslim population of 55%, they have stood in areas where Muslims are substantial in number. But none of the constituencies is such that a particular community can by itself return a candidate without depending on the help of others. The

PML cannot, therefore, hope to gain much but there is no doubt that it will split votes, particularly in 24-Parganas where it has concentrated. The Lok Dal and the INDF also have fielded a good number of candidates in this district.

#### Muslim Vote

There is apparant nervousness in the Congress about the erosion these parties will cause in its camp. This is understandable—about 50 seats can be made or marred in the State by the Muslim vote.

In the last general election, the Congress got Muslim support in all districts, except in 24-Parganas and Nadia, where the Muslims constitute 25% and 23% of the population, respectively. In other districts they also form a sizeable section: in Malda 37%; in West Dinajpur 30%; in Cooch Behar 28%; and in Birbhum 26%. The Congress had secured their support in all the districts, except 24-Parganas and Nadia. So the common belief that the dissociation of the Kabir brothers from the Front will be a catastrophe for it in the elections is not borne out by facts.

One can look forward to Congress reverses if one looks back at the votes polled by it in 1962 and 1967. In 1962, it got 47.29%, while in 1967 it had polled 41%. It should register a further fall because of the division of Muslim votes and the emergence of several new parties which would also claim a share of votes which would have otherwise gone to the Congress. The Congress got 157 seats out of 252 in 1962 by securing 47.29% votes. Calculated on that basis, the party ought to have got 113 seats when it got 41% votes because of the division of opposition votes. But this time the Left votes will not be divided and as the Congress votes will be split among likeminded parties, the Congress tally of 113 is likely to go down further. Moreover, the increasing number of straight and triangular contests this time—65 and 106, respectively—against 37 and 81 in 1967, will further affect Congress prospects.

Let us study the poll prospects, dis-

trict-wise, of the Congress and the United Front.

24-Parganas has 50 seats and Midnapore district 35. The Congress got 12 each in them. There is little or no chance of its improving its position. The UF is likely to retain its 23 seats in Midnapore but may lose some of its 38 seats in 24-Parganas.

North 24-Parganas district has 16 seats, the industrial belt of Barrackpore 10 and South 24-Parganas 24. Because of the exit of Mr Humayun Kabir from the Front and the emergence of the PML, nine seats in North 24-Parganas have become uncertain for the Front. They are likely to be shared by the parties in opposition to the Front, including the Congress.

The Barrackpore belt, according to all political circles, has stabilized in favour of the United Front. There will not be much of a shift there, despite propaganda by top Congress leaders like Mrs Indira Gandhi, Mr Morarji Desai and Mr Chavan.

In South 24-Parganas, there are two sectors with 24 seats, the Diamond Harbour side, and the Canning area which comprise the industrial belt like Jadavpur, Sonarpur (Sc), Behala East, Behala West, Mahestala and Budge Budge. In the Diamond Harbour area, caste and sub-caste play a big role but the fielding of candidates with an eye to this by Congress-minded parties is likely to cause more damage to the Congress than to the Front.

A large portion of the southern belt has been exposed to movements led by communists who have solid bases there, and the industrial sector has always been their stronghold. So the status quo is likely to prevail there.

Group rivalries among Congressmen are intense in all districts except Jalpaiguri. Out of 44 seats in the five districts of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, West Dinajpur and Malda, the Congress cannot hope to gain more than 15—a fall of 10—compred to 1967, eight of them going to the Front.

In Murshidabad, the Congress is almost sure to lose at least 9 seats out of 18, because of the anti-Cong-

ress swing in the district caused by Muslim leaders like Mr Kazem Ali Mirza and Mr Sayed Baddrudjoja and the Muslim League. The Congress loss of four seats in the district is, however, likely to be made up by its gain of two seats from Nadia where it had secured only 3 out of 14 in the 1967 election.

The Congress captured nine out of 16 in Howrah and seven out of 18 in Hooghly. It will lose at least five seats in the two districts to the Front.

The in-fight among the Left parties was nowhere more pronounced than in Burdwan in the last election. Comprising the large industrial belt of Asansol, Durgapur, and Ranigunge, the district is characterized as the fort of the CPI(M), as Midnapore is the citadel of the CPI. The Marxists hope to make big gains here. The Congress had won 15 seats in 1967 but the internecine quarrel in the Congress and greater unity in the Front will make the Congress lose at least five seats.

In Bankura and Purulia, the Congress will face the biggest erosion. The organization has been broken to pieces in the districts and one group, to use local parlance, "is trying to eat the other". Moreover, the ordinary men in the two districts can ill afford to forget the massive relief the two districts had received at the hands of the UF Government. The Congress cannot hope to annex more than six in Bankura and one in Purulia against the 1967 tally of nine and four, respectively.

Birbhum is not so bad for the Congress as the other districts. It is likely to defend its six seats.

In Calcutta, the Congress secured 11 seats out of 23 in 1967. Its tally is most likely to go down by at least three.

It thus appears that it will be difficult for the Congress to retain 100 of the 127 seats it had won in 1967. The PULF (65) and the ULF (64) combined strength of 129 in the 1967 election may therefore go up to at least 157.

Sensing the danger, the Congress appears to have concentrated in some constituencies to bring about the fall

of top UF leaders, with a view to blunting the severity of the beating it looks like having at the hands of the United Front.

measures like increasing the indirect-tax margin or luxury items, etc., are not going to be of great quantitative importance in overcoming this difficulty. Such high tax-margin may even shift the regional demand from West Bengal to some other State with lower tax-rates, so that the revenue from such taxes may actually go down.

We are told that the Kerala Government indeed did face this problem vis-a-vis Madras in trying to reformulate its tax-policy. This is not to say that luxury items should be taxed lightly, but only to point out that its effect will probably be very marginal in solving the revenue problem. A somewhat more promising line to approach may lie in trying to get hold of a part of company profits. West Bengal has the distinctive feature of having an important industrial-belt and the tax-policy should be designed to tap this source. The following three schemes may be considered:

- (a) introduction and extension of pension schemes to be paid by the employer to the State Government;
- (b) A novel type of emergency-benefit, so that in cases of 'lock-outs' the employer (of big business only) will be obliged to support the workers at some specified rate. This, in other words, is nothing but an insurance scheme for workers in cases of 'lock-outs', the cost of which should be borne by the employers who are relatively big;
- (c) Another possible source of revenue is a heavy tax on the "expense accounts" of the bigger firms.

#### "Self-financing"

It is my feeling however that even a fairly ambitious tax programme in urban areas will not go all that far in solving the revenue problem faced by the State. Collection of rural taxes accruing to the State, on the other hand, raises a host of administrative and other problems. If that is so, one will have to dodge the revenue problem and go in for an economic programme which is largely "self-financing" in rural areas. I believe this to

## Outline Of An Economic Programme

AMIT BHADURI

WHAT sort of an economic programme should a left-coalition government try to carry through in West Bengal? There are obvious reasons to believe that it cannot achieve much in the near future. To start with, it will be a United Front with various shades of political opinion, some of which are not "socialist" even by the most generous interpretation of the term. Second, by coming to power through elections, they will be forced to accept the constitutional rights of the individual to private property and the rest of it, which rule out drastic economic reorganization. Third, it will have to face the continuous hostility of the Centre in a rigid federal structure and the Centre naturally will bargain from a position of strength. And finally, by the very logic of the situation, it will have to formulate economic programmes extending over not more than two to three years at the moment. Such a short time-horizon clearly rules out many of the flexibilities and choices associated with a longer-run plan.

It would be foolhardy in such a situation to formulate a programme of economic actions which promises a lot to the people. It appears to me that the relevant criterion of economic policy in this context is not so much the pure economic gains that will follow from its implementation, but also the political gains or losses which will be associated with it. For the more radical elements in the United Front Government, the political gains should not only be judged in terms of the sheer number of people supporting it, but also in terms of the "economic classes" whose interests it affects rather directly. An economic policy in favour of the landless and small peasantry is thus to be preferred to a

policy in favour of urban small-income salaried groups or even organized workers in industries, even when the latter are politically more articulate and vocal. The economic programme sketched out below should therefore be judged in terms of its economic as well as political benefits, but not in terms of either taken in isolation.

#### Two Parts . .

If we are prepared to oversimplify a little bit, the question of formulating an economic programme can be broken up into two parts: a "financial" plan and a "physical" plan, the former merely means matching revenue with expenditure in money terms, while the latter relates to a fit between the demand for resources in physical terms (item by item) and their supposed availabilities. The two aspects are thoroughly interlinked in a real-life situation, but the artificial separation is helpful for the argument.

The question of financial balance assumes considerably greater importance for the State Government compared to the Central Government, for the simple reason that the State Government cannot create new purchasing power through deficit financing while the Central Government can do it. The State Government may have limited overdraft facilities with the Reserve Bank, but that probably is a marginal factor. Thus whatever economic programme the State Government may choose, it will have to finance it completely without the creation of new purchasing power or aid from abroad and Central assistance is not likely to increase for a left-coalition ministry. Lack of finance is therefore going to be a major problem in carrying through any substantial economic policy. Usual

be possible and the economic policy suggested below (my central suggestion) may have this advantage.

One important feature characterizing Bengal agriculture is a relatively high proportion of landless labour and very small peasants, compared to many other parts of the country. It is a general feature of densely-populated backward agriculture that the rural labour force—especially the landless and the small peasants—is considerably underutilized during the agricultural slack seasons. It appears possible within the existing constitutional rights to devise a scheme to be implemented by the State Government which will engage this surplus labour in “do-it-yourself” kind of construction work in rural areas. Such construction work will be carried out by almost bare-handed men and women and would involve schemes like digging wells, constructing rural roads and houses and creating a wide network of field-channels and drainage facilities for improved irrigation. The labour force, typically employed during the slack agricultural seasons on construction works undertaken by the State, will be paid partly in money and partly in kind. The money wage-bill would be restricted by the tight financial position of the State Government. Payment in kind involves a powerful procurement policy in rural areas. The major share of the procured food will be paid as wages to workers engaged in rural construction work. Thus, it is my belief that the central feature of the procurement policy should be rural “productive consumption” (since consumption by workers in the rural areas, by the above scheme, adds wealth to the State in the form of roads, irrigation-works, houses etc.) and not “unproductive consumption” through the urban food-distribution system. This undoubtedly involves a painful choice of having to discriminate even against the lower income groups in urban areas, but the situation will probably be acceptable when the poorest and the least privileged in the society (i.e. the landless and the very small peasants) are the gainers of such a policy.

## What's Happening In Andhra ?

V. NARAYAN MURTY

TO those who are looking at the Telengana agitation from a distance, it might look like an ugly aberration of wayward student behaviour or the illogical conclusion of the principle of linguistic provinces. Some might think this is the handiwork of extremists out to create chaos and disorder, at the instance of the Chinese.

But to those observing the movement from close quarters, it is the result of growing regional imbalance within the Andhra State and is a warning to the Centre as to what it would be like if such movements start in any State neglected by it.

It would, however, be a far-fetched argument if one were to attribute such serious thinking to those who are in the forefront of this movement. The discontent arising out of highly imbalanced development between the Andhra and Telengana regions was the basic raw material which political parties like the Congress and the Jana Sangh tried to exploit. Here begins the story.

To debate whether the Gentlemen's Agreement in 1956, whatever it was, was implemented or not and whether the present movement is the result of the failure of the Government to implement it (which, of course, is a fact) would be only sidetracking the main issue before the people.

No one denies, including those who are behind this movement, that gross injustice was done to the Telengana region, in that a few thousand posts reserved for employment of Telengana people were knocked off by their counterparts in Andhra and that an amount of Rs. 30-50 crores (estimates vary) earmarked for expenditure in backward Telengana was not spent there, thus condemning that part of the State to continued backwardness. But can it be said that even if the Government had been just, the life of the masses in the area would have improved by leaps and

bounds and milk and honey flowed ? Here is the crux of the problem.

The common people living in poverty in villages, under the constant terror of the landlord-goonda-police combine, are trying to wake up and assert their right, not to land, not employment, but the right just to live. Four thousand people having been implicated in all sorts of false cases which force them up and down the courts for months together, about two dozen communists or their sympathisers having been murdered in cold blood, the landlords, strongly supported by the Congress police, have gained the upper hand temporarily and do not want to lose this control. The landless poor, particularly in Nalgonda, Khammam and Warangal districts, are determined not to take this attack lying down. It was this spirit of resistance here and elsewhere in Srikakulam district that is inspiring those living under similar oppressive conditions in other districts. The class conscious ruling class, apart from pressing the brutal police machinery into action and converting whole groups of villages into concentration camps, has let loose forces of disunity and discord to divert the peoples' attention from basic issues to emotional ones.

It was the Chief Minister and the Chief Secretary who set the ball rolling by disrupting the united NGO movement, by backing and strengthening the hands of the paper organisation of the Telengana NGOs Union as against the NGOs Association. The Chief Minister and the Chief Secretary must have patted themselves on their back for their success in disrupting the movement, but in the process, they have let loose fissiparous tendencies, resulting in the present-day demand for sacking all those Andhras employed in posts reserved for Telengana personnel, strangely enough, not by Andhra officers, but by Telengana officers

and Telengana political leaders. The demand caught on.

Simultaneously, some Telengana Congress leaders, smarting under political unemployment and not being able to distribute the spoils of political power among their followers, caught hold of the slogan of discrimination against Telengana to beat the official group, and compel the Chief Minister to part with some of the booty. Lest some might call this a far-fetched argument, it may be recalled that the same Telengana Congress leaders backed by N. Sanjiva Reddy raised the same issue of discrimination way back in 1961 against the then Chief Minister D. Sanjeeviah. But with Sanjeeviah bowing out of power and Sanjiva Reddy installed in it, they forgot all about discrimination.

#### Jana Sangh

To these self-seekers, the Jana Sangh added its own limited strength. It was an opportunity to rouse people in other towns of Telengana where it is weak and spread its party organisation. Strangely enough, the Sangh which stands for Akhand Bharat raised the slogan of a separate Telengana. This suited those unemployed Congress leaders and both together were planning to push the students into the forward lines. Sections of the ruling class, who foresaw the trouble, pressed into action their own student contingent to split the student movement and play their game.

Almost from the first day of the movement, it was two groups of students, one asking for strict implementation of safeguards and another demanding a separate Telengana, which started rousing regional passions, the former in a limited way and the latter in a naked fashion, in the State capital. Districts took up the cue. All that happened later is everybody's newspaper feed.

Today the situation is that an average Andhra in the towns hates a Telengi and vice versa. Personal attacks, hitting each other with stones, attacking each others' houses and so on are going on. People have been murdered.

It stands to the Chief Minister's credit that he successfully fooled all opposition parties, including the Marxist revolutionaries, by playing host to all of them at a conference at his residence and made them sign a joint statement, which, in essence condoned the 'lapses' on the part of the Government and put the responsibility for any future failure on all parties equally.

It goes without saying that an administration and a government which failed to implement earlier agreements backed by legislation, would undoubtedly fail to implement the present agreement as well, or if it is implemented, do so in such a way that it will keep the fire of regional hatred red-hot, around which the ruling class, facing the chill prospect of a threatening movement, would gather in an attempt to ward off any evil.

#### Uttar Pradesh

### Lucknow Is More Than Delhi

INDUKANTA SHUKLA

**T**HAT New Delhi and Lucknow wavelengths of thought are identical has been borne out once more. A news item bearing Delhi dateline says: "The committee on students' agitation appointed by the conference of Inspectors-General of Police over two years ago has expressed itself against the appointment of judicial commissions of inquiry into instances of police firing or other alleged excesses. Such commissions have a demoralizing effect on the police and its effectiveness... is reduced."

U.P., that is Aryavart, did one better. What New Delhi took over two years to find out, Lucknow took only two days. The brisk miracle was performed by a recent two-day-long conference of U.P. Vice-Chancellors. Besides the Governor, who presided over it, the Inspector-General of Police, the Chief Secretary and the Home Secre-

tary, among others, attended it. After having declared that firmness was called for, that the university campuses are no sanctuaries, and that it is the State's duty to curb violence, the Vice-Chancellors recommended the "constitution of a committee of senior district and police officials and education experts to ascertain in depth the causes of students' unrest". The proposal of a University Security Force on the lines of the one in the University of California was mooted but dropped. It was unnecessary. The police officials and Vice-Chancellors were in total rapport and assured one another all help. The 'competence' with which the police will discharge its duty is dreadful to contemplate if the recent bloody pattern in U.P. is any guide. The ominous presence of the secretaries and the I.-G. gave the conclave a conspiratorial character. The U.P. police has a notoriety all its own. It is no coincidence that in January both U.P. and New Delhi formulated an identical policy. Years ago when Mr A. N. Mulla, MP, an ex-judge, spilled the beans about the monstrous iniquity that the police is in U.P. there were righteous disclaimers and cries of consternation. All the same, U.P. seems setting the pace for the whole country as New Delhi is obviously impressed with the former's record, Lucknow is Delhi one up.

By way of comment on these goings on one would like to quote Dr Triguna Sen, who, as if in anticipation of these decisions, said in Aurangabad that the work of a Vice-Chancellor was to promote human relationship and not rusticate students. He averred that if punishing the students was the only duty of a Vice-Chancellor then we do not need an educationist but an I.-G. of Police as V.-C. One could not agree more.

Which brings me to Mr Reddi's rider that the student trouble was politically motivated with an eye on the ensuing elections. So says Mr Joshi, V.-C., BHU. I am afraid I have to agree. There is nothing to refute the loud whisper that the Congress, his job-giver, and the Sangh, his favourite, have thanked Mr Joshi for having released the huge number of students to

help their election campaigns. That perhaps explains his reluctance to reopen BHU even when Lucknow and Allahabad Universities and Kashi Vidyapith have already resumed functioning, proving him wrong.

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The revolt set in vogue by the Primary and Secondary teachers has caught on. The latter called off their 35-day-old strike more from fatigue than complete fulfilment. Now, it is the turn of over 8,000 degree college teachers. The Primary teachers were pioneers, and the Secondary teachers laid the track. The three significant points of the former's agitation are : 96 days' relay fast, now off; no teaching affected during the agitation; demand for a basic salary of Rs. 150/- and appropriate dearness allowance. Already guilty of the original sin, they have provoked the anger of the rulers by declaring their boycott of the Congress in the coming elections and by convening the national action committee of their all-India body in Delhi before January 28. In the meantime the U.P. unit will have determined its future course of action.

The All-India Education Conference at its Jaipur session urged the Centre to take over primary education throughout the country. For U.P., under Presidents' rule, it is the imperative and the Centre cannot escape its responsibility in the matter. Dr Sen in his Hyderabad speech promised all help but in the next breath passed on the bucket to the State Governments. In one of his recent speeches he said that with our 72 universities we raised an enormous structure on sand, that we did nothing for Primary and very little for Secondary education.

One fails to fit together these admissions with the announced 50% cut in the outlay on education and the proposed Hindi university in the south, number 73. That we spawned in quick succession above three score and ten should have been enough of an achievement however dubious. A moratorium for 20 years on this racket of mushrooming universities is urgently called for.

## Unity For Boycott

BADRUDDIN UMAR

**T**HE decision to boycott the coming elections has been taken by the National Awami Party (Bhashani Group and the Democratic Action Committee (DAC). This decision is not and cannot be an end in itself. It is a means to the restoration of democracy through the establishment of a constitution drafted by the true representatives of the people and ratified by the latter. The politics of boycott, therefore, is not the politics of compromise.

The unity of the various opposition parties has been formed evidently for promoting real constitutionalism in this country. This objective cannot be achieved if the opposition tries to come to any political settlement of a compromising nature with the present regime. One of the principal consequences of the boycott decision is that it has passed on political initiative from the hands of the present government to that of the people.

Before arriving at the boycott decision the opposition parties had been trying consistently for certain important amendments to the present Constitution almost in the same manner in which, during the British period, the leaders of the Congress and the League had tried to exact more and more constitutional concessions from the ruling power. In all such cases, basic political initiative always rests with the people who are supposed to grant the concessions and make the necessary constitutional amendment. It is because of this fact and the unwillingness of the present regime to make any important and significant changes in the Constitution that the politics of the opposition had so far been moving in a vicious circle. It is the boycott decision which has finally brought an end to that kind of politics and opened the way for a new struggle for a democratic constitution.

The Democratic Action Committee has formulated an eight-point programme which is supposed to be the basis of the new movement. The basic

programme of any movement must represent the basic interests of the people whom it would want to arouse during the course of the struggle. In that respect the programme of the DAC appears to be quite inadequate. The first obvious omission is the question of self-determination of people belonging to the various linguistic nationalities in Pakistan. The demands for complete autonomy for East Pakistan and the breakup of the one unit in West Pakistan are nothing but unequivocal demands for the right to economic, cultural and political self-determination of the people of Pakistan. These demands are not unreal and theoretical, but very much real and alive. Years of feudal and big bourgeois exploitation of the people since the creation of Pakistan has made them conscious of their political predicament and they have now realized that the question of self-determination is a matter of vital importance for safeguarding their interests and protecting them from the power of feudal and big bourgeois exploiters. By ignoring the question of self-determination the Democratic Action Committee has decided to lay down a powerful weapon which could be much more effective than all the eight points put together.

### Masses Ignored

There is another question of vital importance which has been totally ignored by the leaders of the Democratic Action Committee. It concerns the peasantry and the working classes, particularly the former. It does not require much intelligence to see that to make the boycott successful the peasantry will have to be necessarily aroused and mobilised. They constitute the vast majority of the voters at the primary level and the boycott has thus brought them in the forefront of the political struggle in our country. This is a fact which can neither be ignored nor denied. If that is so then any programme which is supposed to constitute the basis of the boycott must necessarily include the genuine demands of the peasantry. Surprisingly enough, like the question of self-determination, this question has also

been totally ignored by the leaders of the Democratic Action Committee. These two major omissions have created a very precarious and dangerous situation not only for the united opposition parties, but for the entire country. It has virtually rendered the much desired unity of the opposition ineffective and empty.

Another aspect of the unity is the composition of the Central Co-ordinating Committee. One is amazed to find that out of eight members of the committee two are from East and the rest from West Pakistan. Apparently this happened because six of the parties which form the DAC have their party bosses in West Pakistan. Whatever may be the reasons for deciding on such a curious composition no one can deny that it has created an imbalance in the unity set up by the eight parties. Representation, after all, is a vital matter. In the past we have seen that the Muslim League in spite of being an all-Pakistan and national organisation always ignored the interests of East Pakistan. This happened because of a lack of effective representation of East Pakistani interest as well as the general distribution of real political power between the two parts of Pakistan. An all-Pakistan party thus necessarily may not represent the interest of both provinces of Pakistan with equal effectiveness. It is, therefore, necessary not only to pay attention to the question of party representation but of provincial representation as well. In fact the latter is much more important when one considers the question of imbalance which exists at present in all spheres between the two provinces of Pakistan. The composition of the Co-ordinating Committee actually goes a long way to explain the programme of the Democratic Action Committee as well as the omission of the question of self-determination and the question of the peasantry.

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Our agent at Varanasi  
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FEBRUARY 8, 1969

The question of unity can never be considered in isolation from the question of the objectives for which the unity is needed. People today want unity of the entire opposition or at least the largest part of it not simply for the sake of unity. They want to unite for promoting their vital interests and accordingly it will not be possible to arouse and mobilise them if such interests are not represented in the basic programme of the united front.

The eight-point programme is certainly not the final word in the movement. Not only that. Even the composition of the united front cannot be final. As has been stated earlier, the boycott can never be made successful if the opposition fails to take the peasantry along with it. Whatever may be the situation in the West, it is a hard reality in the politics of East Pakistan. Without the peasantry the question of boycott is a total absurdity. The PDM leader, Nawabzada Nasrulla, declared in Karachi at the initial stage of the negotiations that he had invited all the political parties except the Bhashani Group of the NAP. Later he said that he had sent a telegram to the Maulana inviting him to join the unity talks. The Maulana has publicly declared that he had not received any such telegram and on enquiry from the post office came to know that no such telegram actually arrived there. Whatever may be the reasons for such lack of enthusiasm for the Maulana, the NAP (Bhashani Group), the Krishak Samity and the Sramik Federation along with the six-point Awami Leaguers and the other NAP (Wali Khan Group) are the principal factors in the boycott movement in East Pakistan.

Any unity for a democratic movement must take the Krishak Samity and the Sramik Federation and with that the National Awami Party (Bhashani group) into its fold and include the question of self-determination and the basic demands of the peasantry and the working classes in the extended programme of the Democratic Action Committee. (From *Holiday*, Dacca. Abridged.)

*The Press*

## Recipe For Ayub Khan

COMMENTATOR

THE agitation in Pakistan against the present regime is again making frontpage news in Indian papers. It has enabled them to divert their attention from the situation at home, especially in Andhra, which can by no means be called peaceful. The editorial columns are full of what is already pretty old hat. Most of the papers make no secret of it that their sympathies are for President Ayub Khan and the regime he heads; maybe because they are opposed to mass movement everywhere, except in communist countries. Some papers have gone to the extent of declaring that a change in Pakistan, especially if it is brought about by Mr Bhutto, would be for the worse, at least so far as India is concerned. President Ayub had not in the past much use for the advice of Indian newspapers; but that is not deterring them from suggesting how he should ride the current storm. He is being constantly reminded that his main enemy is Mr Bhutto and he should make peace with other leaders in the opposition to isolate his flamboyant former Foreign Minister. Most papers agree that it is still possible for the Pakistan President to keep himself in power, provided he makes the right moves and offers some further concessions. One paper has been able to impart the Indian angle in the Pakistani situation and advocated that President Ayub should agree to the Indian proposal for joint machinery to resolve outstanding disputes between the two countries. Perhaps the idea is that if the two countries do not have to worry over each other, they may worry together over the mass movements that are erupting in different parts of the sub-continent with increasing frequency.

*The Indian Express* does not think that the political challenge to the regime can be met by President Ayub Khan through repressive measures or

irrelevant concessions. It is true, the paper says, that the Opposition in Pakistan is composed of very disparate elements and no single party or individual is in a position to pose a serious threat to President Ayub Khan. Paradoxical as it might sound, this makes the Pakistan President's task more rather than less difficult. His difficulty is that he is now under pressure from a variety of quarters making a variety of demands. Moreover, even the disparate opposition is united at least on one demand, restoration of liberal democracy on the basis of adult franchise,—and it is the kind of demand that President Ayub Khan cannot be expected to concede easily. So far, President Ayub Khan has looked upon the developing crisis as merely a law and order problem. That the authorities should deal firmly with rioters, arsonists and violent demonstrators is understandable. No Government worth the name can act otherwise. However, it would be foolish for any Government to live in a world of make-believe. The nature of the unrest must be recognised for what it is. The truth of the matter is that the critics of the regime are neither anti-social nor anti-national. They are friends, not foes of Pakistan.

*The Hindustan Times* thinks that developments in Pakistan in the last few weeks and months have been such that the President should find it increasingly in his interest not to reject the possibility of an accommodation with India. President Ayub's reported response to Mrs Gandhi's Tashkent Day message and the tenor of certain Press reactions in Pakistan to her proposal for the establishment of joint machinery to consider all outstanding issues offer a glimmer of hope that the dialogue sought to be opened between the two countries might progress. It would be in the highest interest of both countries that the proposal for joint machinery, simultaneously with an agreement on a no-war pact, be pursued patiently. An accord on joint machinery that is seen to work constructively could be something the President might find useful in isolating the more virulent among his opponents such as Mr

Bhutto. As a candidate for the presidency, the flamboyant Mr Bhutto has become something of a problem for his more sober colleagues in the opposition; if elected he would be no less for his neighbours, like India. An accord on joint machinery will infuriate these extremists. It may be denounced even by some among President Ayub's moderate opponents. Yet this could be his life line too.

#### Anti-Ayub

*The Statesman* thinks that the agitation is directed more against President Ayub than the system he has evolved. It says that there is no doubt that the people of Pakistan want a freer atmosphere to breathe in, but more than the present system it is the personality of President Ayub that has become the rallying point of opposition attack. In the harsh but "possibly true" words of Air Marshal Asghar Khan, the President has become, rightly or wrongly, the symbol of all that is evil in Pakistani society. A declaration, like Lyndon Johnsons, that he would not seek re-election might enable the present power structure in Pakistan to produce an alternative to him and for the new man to reach an understanding with those demanding restoration of parliamentary democracy. The alternative is the grim one of pursuing his policy of repression. This may eventually succeed, but if it does not, it may bring down not only his regime but the entire edifice of basic democracy he has so assiduously built up.

In *The Times of India* Girilal Jain writes that the present upheaval in Pakistan represents a crisis of confidence in the system. It is not just a question of replacing Field-Marshal Ayub Khan with Air Marshal Asghar Khan. The latter's reputation may be unsullied but that is not enough. Pakistan needs a new political system which is in better accord with the aspirations of the growing intelligentsia than the present one. Here is the rub. For Pakistan is not ready for parliamentary democracy. It has not been able to throw up a party or parties which holds or hold the promise of providing the country with a viable

government. Political parties cannot grow so long as the ruling elite is not prepared to loosen its tight control, and it will be under no compulsion to do so unless the parties acquire a sufficiently high degree of popular support. It is hard to believe that Pakistan can break out of this vicious circle quickly or painlessly. The current unrest is only the beginning of what is bound to be a prolonged and painful process. It is more than likely, specially in the case of East Bengal and the Pathan and Baluchi areas, that political parties will secure popular support only when they are able to reflect and espouse the aspirations of the sub-nations which constitute Pakistan. Since these separate entities have not yet merged to form what can meaningfully be called the Pakistani nation, they must seek and find political expression in asserting their individuality. Twentyone years after it came into existence Pakistan remains what it was to begin with—a State in search of a nation. The so-called Islamic ideology and the fear of India were supposed to transmute it into a nation. The miracle has not taken place. Whatever else the military-bureaucratic elite may be able to achieve it cannot by its very nature weld the Pakistani "peoples" into one nation. Nation-building is a political process which cannot be completed through administrative fiat.

#### Poll Prospects

Last week a reference was made in these columns to a Delhi paper which had started running a series on the mid-term poll prospects by leaders of all-India parties. The series began with a piece by the Congress President which was followed by articles by leaders of several all-India parties. There would have been no occasion to hark back to the series but for an article by Mr Ashutosh Ghosh, leader of the Indian National Democratic Front. Since when has INDF become an all-India party and a force to reckon with is best known to the paper, but in West Bengal many will be intrigued with the ranking of the INDF with the Congress, PSP, Jana Sangh, Swatantra or the CPI(M).

The paper is *The Hindustan Times*. For those who delight in establishing cause-and-effect relationship between seemingly unrelated events some additional points are given. It is the same paper which broke the news of Mr Ghosh's decision last year to defect from the Congress; the paper is owned by the Birlas; Mr Ghosh was requested to contribute to the series by the editor of the paper, who was until a few weeks ago a top official of the Prime Minister's secretariat and as such cannot be unaware of the influence of the INDF in West Bengal, not to speak of India.

## Pavlov Institute Puts On A Play

Z. H. KHAN

THE drama staged on January 27 at Rabindra Sadan turned out to be one among many comprising a Festival of Bengali Plays. So poor was the publicity that it was no surprise to see the curtain rise to an almost empty house.

By a Quixotic Birochit (writer) *Kalmaspad Natak* as the play was called, was a real surprise package. It starts with Cervantes' famous Don and his loyal Sancho spotting enemies not among the windmills but among those who are "amil (not alike) 'mekimil' (forced to be alike) and gonjamil (hotch-potch)". This is a pointed reference to our political scene. It could as well apply to the play itself.

In the programme the first article of faith is that this group does not perform a play for the sake of the play. One, therefore, immediately realised that this was going to be a present-day Quixote and the play would live up to its declarations. Up to this point we in the pit were prepared to travel with Don Quixote. We found ourselves in deep water when three female anglers, complete with rod, sunglasses and waterproofs, all very modern, appeared and instead of hauling in the catch were dragged away by the fish.

We were more confused when

Quixote and Sancho returned to the fray and the former was de-activated by a "delayed-action" bomb.

Now the second curtain rises revealing on the left a platform with a modern-looking gadget resembling an elongated switch-board of a tape recorder. In the centre was a section of a parapet taken from either the historic Red Fort or some other Moghul marvel, while on the right was a cavernous opening from some pre-historic landscape: confusion most confounded!

Two masked figures appear—the masks were really headpieces—one representing a wolf and the other an owl; the first stood for the status quo while the other against it. Now Kalmaspad, wearing a terrifying headpiece, appears and threatens to devour them. At the critical moment the foreman (technical expert) appears and after a few verbal exchanges the three masked characters change to normal; this appeared like a rehearsal. Enter the dramatist.

Now it transpired that this was a struggling amateur group who have asked for some State aid and the author is waiting for the arrival of the inspector. This turns out to be Mrs Mukherjee who takes the stage with Reba and Tuktuk, both relatives, the first a legal adviser and drama consultant, and the latter a sort of odd-job-girl who fills in for singing, dancing and other demonstration work. Mrs Mukherjee, and it seems that only now we have arrived at the main point of the play, is a staunch supporter of the established order and dislikes politics and parties anyway, and more so when they are mixed up with art.

### Basic Absurdities

The dramatist with some pointed references to both history and mythology using very effective dialogue proves that man's basic tenets are founded on absurdities; his own play is not really a departure from such "reality". But he is prepared to write a play according to Mrs Mukherjee's specifications. These requirements are immediately demonstrated through a pre-historic interlude consisting of

a dinosaur and a she-dinosaur. Even this the dramatist would be prepared to produce in return for some of her golden bricks which she normally distributes. Of course, it is left to the actors, watching from the sidelines, to decide if they would be prepared to take part in such a venture.

The actors reply with slogans to the effect that they will not forsake ideology. This confirmed this writer's impression that the author not being sure of putting his point across had to resort to this direct method of communication.

There is a fashion these days to term some modern plays as "Absurd Drama" and the quixotic writer of *Kalmaspad Natak* has taken shelter under this convenient vogue.

The leading exponents of this form, Beckett, Ionesco, Genet and Albee, have not adopted this form purposefully. Rather it is the critics who have labelled it so. Their plays are a reflection of a definite state of mind. The conventions they break are those of Ibsen, Chekov and O'Neill who were convention breakers themselves. It is fairly safe to generalise that what is known as conventional drama was itself absurd to the extent that in the final analysis it did not stand up to reason. *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* are absurd resting as they do on "a drop of blood" and "a handkerchief". Shaw's *Arms and the Man*, *Androcoles* and *the Lion* and *Man and Superman* are all legitimately a part of this tradition.

But the difference between these conventional absurdities of the stage and today's "Drama of the Absurd" is the fact that whereas the former presented a well constructed and fairly complex situation in an attempt to dramatise life itself today's exponents are just not concerned with the rationale of the play at all. Their belief lies in frustration. They project a transient poetic image which reflects the intellectual cul-de-sac they are in and, to their minds, the absurdity that is human existence. Take Ionesco's *Amedce*. The contents reflected in the dialogue are just as absurd as the corpse's feet which grow to an enormous size before jutting out of the

room in which it has been lying for the last fifteen years.

In *Kalmaspad* (sounds suspiciously close to Karl Marxbad) the contents i.e., the dialogue do not reflect the absurd situations found in the construction of the play. Besides, the "Absurd" playwrights address highly sophisticated audiences capable of understanding (sometimes even they are unable to do so) the subtleties of this form of presentation. The audience which the author of *Kalmaspad* wishes to address has neither time for subtleties nor appreciation for its highly developed symbolism.

Despite a very competent production and a capable group of performers the hall was empty. One is tempted to infer that the reason for this was not only insufficient publicity but that the play was unsuited for the audience available.

No matter what one's individual opinion may be, the relationship between form and content must supplement and complement each other.

The case of Arthur Adamov is striking proof. As a confirmed neurotic Adamov belonged to the school of "Absurd Drama". But in a true Aristotelian manner, play writing brought about a catharsis. As the cure progressed the form and content of his work started to change. Today he is no longer an "absurd" dramatist but belongs to the camp of socialist realism in the theatre.

By all means let us stick to ideology, be it absurd or radical, but let us not cast pearls before a beadsman unless we need his prayers.

## Four Artists

BY AN ART CRITIC

FOURTEEN water colours, based on the life of the Buddha, by Arun Mukherjee, and ten oils by Subir Sen depicting the brutal realities of life were on display at a joint show at the Academy of Fine Arts from January 27 to February 2. Mukherjee's paintings, done in a montage of faces and symbols, were charming in their effect, particularly because of their lovely colours. The

prettiest of the lot were the fourth in the Meditation series, Jnani Buddha, and the Virtuous King Ashoka, resplendent in gold, black and vermilion.

Subir Sen, in keeping with his theme, was stark in his treatment and muted in his colours. His *Mother and Child*, a sombre picture in brown, blue and black, showed two huddled abstract figures, almost animal-like in stance. Other striking pictures were *Agitation and Beggar*. Compared to these, the two pictures, *In Tune and Toilet*, were almost lyrical in mood.

*Mrs Kalyani Chatterjee* (Academy—January 28 to February 2) is a difficult artist to classify. She is sometimes uncomfortably photographic, sometimes almost child-like in her naivete, sometimes markedly sophisticated, as in her *Cosmetics*, drawn in lovely pink, and *Three Bottles*, with its table cloth in many colours. But her forte is her love of nature and it is in her nature studies, such as mountains, flowers, huts, both in and around Simla and Kashmir, that she was seen at her best.

*Mrs Arpita Sen Gupta*, who showed her paintings at the Academy from February 1 to February 7, is a young, self-trained painter. Formally, some of her paintings give the impression of recognizable shapes, a landscape, a forest, a huddle of dark buildings, a patch of water, for instance. But most of them are non-figurative and several of them have that shape which emerges when one spatters jets of ink on a canvas. But easily the most striking character of Mrs Sen Gupta's paintings is their colour, especially blue, yellow, orange and green. Brilliant and vibrant, the colours hit you in the eye.

## A Documentary

BY A FILM CRITIC

SOME Calcutta cinema halls recently showed a 2-reel documentary, released by the United States Information Agency, on Vietnam, written, produced and directed by one William Bayer. The picture is duly marked as certified by the Indian Censor Board.

The film starts with a procession of mourners going to bury a young handsome soldier who died in the war. War? Whose war, against whom? The commentator sidetracks the question and sadly tells us that Vietnam is witnessing such processions every day. What is Vietnam? The commentator asks and says that Vietnam is a beautiful land with unbelievably beautiful landscapes inhabited by beautiful people. We are shown a young man and a young woman bathing nude in the river, from bang close up, as the evening glow spreads from horizon to horizon. The hills, the rivers, the paddy fields, the peasants—all make Vietnam a land of utter tranquillity.

Then why war? The commentator asks, suitably making his voice quiver. He does not know. But the Vietnamese are fighting for their precious family life, that much he knows. Family, he tells us, is the basic unit of Vietnamese life. The people there can sacrifice everything if they can make their own family happy. Large family, happy family. But the family is being slowly decimated leading to a lone orphan, stranded in the middle of a vast unending paddy field.

Why this tragedy? No clue yet from the commentator. But he points to an ambulance, its wheels moving furiously, but stuck in mud. Nuns drag the ambulance on. Such hardships are frequent, the commentator quietly and succinctly tells us, because the Vietcong is destroying the roads in Vietnam.

Life in Vietnam, however, flows on. The processions come back. Processions of sleek, fast and colourful motor-cars, processions of beaming maids going to marry, processions of sturdy fishermen. In spite of the war, it is seen in the picture, life in Vietnam is slow, quiet, happy, very oriental. The sound of war does not reach the fishermen, who sing as they cast their nets, their songs causing ripples on the river that flows on and on reflecting meticulously all the shades of the sunshine.

Any comments? Nothing except that the Indian Censor Board is either a fool, or a knave or Swatantra.

## Telangana Agitation

The agitation for safeguards for Telangana and the violence let loose against people belonging to the Andhra area who reside in the Telangana region deserve outright condemnation.

The argument that the Telangana area has been neglected and that the Andhras are impeding its progress is onesided and baseless. The whole agitation is the result of instigations by some prominent leaders of the ruling party belonging to Telangana who, disgruntled with the leadership of Mr Brahmananda Reddy, are trying to come back to power. These people have given the reactionary call for a separate Telangana State.

Telangana has been enjoying many special privileges ever since the formation of the State of Andhra Pradesh in 1956 and strictly speaking, it is the people of the Andhra area who should have grievances over the disparity between people in the different regions of the State. Even though Hyderabad is the capital of the State, no person belonging to the Andhra area can aspire, even after twelve years of the formation of Andhra Pradesh, to have his education or seek a job in Hyderabad, leave alone other Telangana districts, because of the "Mulki" rules (anyone who is a resident of the Telangana area for a minimum number of ten years is called "Mulki") which have no constitutional propriety and which have been again extended for another five years. Even though the Telangana area comprises only seven districts out of twenty in the State, an amount of Rs. 100 crores has been invested for its development. All the major industries in the State and projects like Nagarjunasagar have been developed in that area, leaving the traditionally backward districts of Rayalaseema as backward as at the time of the State formation. Besides, in the present State Cabinet of 17, Telangana Ministers number nine; in the capital city of Hyderabad more than 70 per cent of the Government

jobs are held by Telangana personnel; in the judiciary the majority of the district and sub-judges are from Telangana—the Chief Justice and more than 50 per cent of the judges. The abrupt transfer of nearly 400 non-Telangana employees will cause untold hardship. Introduction of President's rule in the State will help the State to tide over the present crisis.

LAXMI KANTH  
Hyderabad

## The Comprador

It may be of interest to your readers to know that the word 'comprador' derives from the Spanish verb 'comprar' which means 'to buy', its past participle form being 'comprado' (bought) and in the Italian language the verb is 'comprare'—past participle being 'comprato'.

Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary reads: "Comprador(e)... n. an intermediary through whom a foreign firm trades with Chinese dealers".

Mr Jyotirbikash Kundu's letter (January 11) is that exegetical and one finds oneself in a quandary as to why, despite the Chinese definition, the non-comprador bourgeoisie in India should be dubbed comprador.

A comprador is a native upstart who is picked out and apprenticed to the M-C-M circuit by his foreign master. He is a keeper of foreign stores which he popularizes in his country's market and helps his foreign master to siphon off large chunks of his country's wealth through the banks and this he does after sequestering his own share of the booty with the nodding approval of his foreign master. The role he plays all along is that of a typical flunkey as far as foreign capital is concerned and he makes the country's economic order more and more constipated. His financial interests never clash with those of the latifundia and he hobbles the country's industrial animus by aggravating the most irreconcilable crisis of the capitalist mode of production, that is, that of the relative surplus of goods stemming from the lag in effective demand which is a

matter of worried solicitude for the non-comprador bourgeoisie. Nor has he to get to grips with problems that crop up in the shape of duplication of efforts, under-utilization of installed capacity, persistent increase in the technical know-how gap, derogatory restrictive clauses in collaboration agreements etc. which the haute bourgeoisie has to encounter. Owing to supine subservience to foreign capital he does not feel ever prodded to improve his position unlike the haute bourgeoisie and plays no role in any of the three stages of revolution in a colonial or semi-colonial country. In a two-class economy his role is extremely detrimental to the interests both of wage-labour and industrial capital.

The Madurai (September 1967) document of the CPI(M) states that the comprador bourgeoisie is not totally absent in present-day India. However, the point that needs examining is whether the haute bourgeoisie can be called a mere intermediary. Dubbing him comprador seems extremely extraneous because doing so is virtually bracketing the present Indian State with countries like the Philippines, South Korea etc. where the latifundia still rule the roast in collusion with the foreign have-gots for whom they continue to keep wide open the *avenidas via las urbanas*. Calling the haute bourgeoisie comprador is jumping to the conclusion that the little industrial progress that has been made in the country must redound to the credit of foreign capital exclusively.

Dialectics does not permit prestidigitation. It abhors gerrymandering prompted by subjective heat which should under no circumstances be allowed to take liberties with objective scrutiny. Serious dialecticians should always see that wiredrawing on the role of the different species of financial wires does not bemuse the young *revolucionarios ardorosos*.

R. GURUMURTI  
Dum Dum

Paresh Chattopadhyaya in "State Capitalism in India" (January 25) has concluded, "in course of the anti-imperialist struggle the Indian bour-

geoisie who, by and large, did not constitute a 'comprador' class unlike its counterpart in pre-liberation China represented, to a large extent, the genuine political aspirations of the broad masses of the people and was allied to them". On the other hand a few weeks ago, Nishad in "The Comprador and his Capital" (December 21) said that the very origin and growth of the Indian entrepreneur in the colonial era was that of a subservient lackey, never that of an independent bourgeois; according to him the Indian bourgeoisie is basically anti-national and comprador in origin. So two writers in the same journal hold contrary views on a very important theoretical as well as practical issue.

Though it seems over-simplified Nishad's conclusion is based on solid facts, but he avoids any discussion on the origin of the comprador bourgeoisie in India, that is, he presents his data without considering the historical context. Mr Chattopadhyay's conclusion seems more balanced but it lacks facts and at the same time he also makes the same mistake. He does not discuss in detail the anti-imperialist struggle of the Indian bourgeoisie as a by-product of which it represented the political aspirations of the masses and was allied to them.

Now the question arises: what is the relation between Gandhi's Congress and the Indian bourgeoisie? What is the character of the Indian bourgeoisie? Is comprador bourgeoisie

only a phenomenon of a particular country and of a particular time? In the pre-independence period the Indian bourgeoisie had no effective control on essential sectors and the British Indian Government's policy was neither completely liberal nor completely interventionist. Their policy subserved the industrial economic interests of the British industrial bourgeoisie. A young economic historian is right when he labels it as "discriminatory interventionism". So during this period the Indian bourgeoisie had no chance to follow an independent policy. Parliamentary democracy or universal suffrage or secularism is not the result of the anti-imperialist struggle of the Indian bourgeoisie; it is a direct outcome of English education and the impact of Victorian ideas and ideals which the liberal minded educated Indians and politicians like Nehru admired much. A hiatus between primitive economic conditions and lofty, advanced political aspirations and ideas is here noticeable—it is a tragedy of a colonial country. In 1969, we find that no big bourgeois in India is combating the force of religious fanaticism or trying to stop any infringements of the Constitution or parliamentary democracy or standing against President's Rule in such an economically important province like West Bengal. The question then arises: is the character of the Indian bourgeoisie changed now? Has it lost its role of representing the broad masses? But how and why? If it had played an anti-imperialist role in the pre-independence period why is it meekly submitting to foreign capital now?

ARJUN BANDOPADHYAY  
Naihati

### WBCUTA

It was good of you to have devoted a full column (January 18) to the suffering college teachers. As a member of the WBCUTA I feel indebted to you for your support to our militant action of boycotting examinations.

It is true that we are yet to show enough enthusiasm on an issue like

the improvement of education in general. Whether the same militant action, as you have suggested, can be taken to effect a qualitative change in education must, of course, be discussed seriously by the WBCUTA. But it is not just on your part to say that we do not realise "the nature of the upheaval that the building of an under-developed country means." Only to know the way is not to go the way. College teachers are all, more or less, (for reasons not far to seek) pedagogues. We attach too much importance to minute details, formal rules. This is what we have inherited from our predecessor-teachers who too were pedagogues in this sense. Even on an issue like pay scales (where pedagogy need not intrude) we do not claim hundred per cent solidarity. How much harder it will be to claim unity on fundamental academic issues! I can only assure you that the new generation of young teachers is more mature—the college teachers in the coming decades may show no mean interest and unity "on these other campus issues as well."

AMRITAVA BANERJEE  
Calcutta

The college teachers' demand for revised pay scales is purely economic in nature. Solution of such a complex problem like improvement in the standard of education can never be accomplished by a single stroke, whether it be a change of personnel at the top or higher pay for teachers. And there is little confusion over this point even among those teachers considered sub-standard by you. But the demand for improved living conditions is universal and the college teachers' agitation should not be grudged. Even a limited but sympathetic understanding of the situation would have prevented a deviation from your professed policy, a deviation which damages your erudite performance.

A College Teacher,  
Berhampur

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