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GIANTS CLASH

THERE are ways of looking at a border clash. It may be due to the rash judgment of local troops and commanders groping in the fog. But even then the capitals of the clashing parties would have to stick to the version sent by their men on the spot and a war of nerves would ensue.

Or a border clash may be engineered by cool calculation of some profit at home and abroad. Both Peking and Moscow see in the Ussuri river clash the outline of a deliberate plan. So it can be taken that the incident was not due to the folly of local commanders. If so, what about the motives?

In the published reports the Russians have not replied categorically to the Chinese contention that the areas near the island, called Damansky by the Russians and Chenpao by the Chinese, has been Chinese territory beyond dispute for years. The Russians' silence on this point is not without significance, just as their instant outcry over the incident was not. The Russians are not famed for their desire to serve the news while it is hot. Their hurry and loud protest in this case make them somewhat suspect.

The Kremlin thinks that the Chinese staged the incident on the eve of their Ninth Party Congress to queer the pitch for an anti-Russian line. Also that the timing had something to do with the so-called crisis over West Berlin. Ever since the Cultural Revolution started there has been a ceaseless propaganda against the Russian revisionists and Peking does not need a bloody clash to bolster it further. On the other hand it may be argued that the West Berlin crisis was from the very beginning phoney and the Russians, whose bluff was about to be called, needed a distraction to save face and to let the Americans know how earnest they were in their policy of containing China, never mind Czechoslovakia. Marshal Grechko has driven the point home in New Delhi and lovers of Tibet are again very active.

There is another thing. Whatever might have happened in China during the sweep of the Cultural Revolution, the Kremlin perhaps still thinks that there are elements there favourable to it who may raise their heads at the appropriate hour and the time to stir them up was on the eve of the Ninth Congress. Did the Russians not invade Czechoslovakia on the eve of the projected Party Congress there? The results were not entirely according to their expectations, but the Russians these days are slow to learn.

One may, if one chooses not to be a scaremonger, even now revert to the belief that the Ussuri clash was accidental, but an accident which assumed so big a proportion that motives are being sought to explain it in geopolitical terms.

However, it would be vain to hope that such incidents would not be repeated elsewhere. The Sino-Soviet border is much too long, and the tensions generated by mass demonstrations are dangerous. The Russians are touchy about their Far Eastern territory which they have developed over the past fifty years. There might have been a border adjustment there in the first fine flush of the Bolshevik Revolution had there been a strong China. Russia then was ready in a revolutionary way to end unjust agreements and annexations on her Western European frontiers. But then, even as early as that Lenin had said that the Far East was a different matter.

Rather Have The Raja

If one were to judge public performance alone, Mr Nijalingappa's has certainly been the most obnoxious over the Bihar episode. But let's go back a little. When the Congress emerged with 118 seats in a House of 318, hopes were raised both in Patna and New Delhi that the party might not be unable to manoeuvre itself into office once again in Bihar. Some of its stated policies would have to be abandoned, but that was not going to daunt the Congress leaders, either at the Centre or in the State. So the redoubtable Mr Chavan went to Bihar personally to devise the manoeuvre and select the personnel. Apparently he could find no more reassuring a man to lead the Congress Legislature Party than the old and unknown Mr Harihar Singh. But he derived assurance from other quarters, including the Swatantra Party and the Janata Party of the Raja of Ramgarh. Evidently, neither Mr Chavan nor the rest of the Central Congress leadership had any difficulty in recognizing these parties as "like-minded".

Mr Kamakhya Narain Singh of Ramgarh enjoys a notoriety which is exceptional even in Bihar's murky politics. It is not entirely, not even primarily, a question of his breathtakingly fickle political loyalties; allegations, openly made in Bihar and not unknown elsewhere, about his financial affairs are extremely unsavoury, and these are not unconnected with his political career. All allegations are not necessarily true, there is also the matter of specific court strictures. On top of all this, the Raja has let down the Bihar Congress in the past, as he has done others. But the Congress would forget all this; the compulsion is clear. Only with the Raja's support can it claim a majority, the breakdown being Congress 118, Janata 13, Jharkhand 12, Soshit Dal 6, Swatantra 3, 4 Independents and 4 members of the BKD—making up a total of 162. Apparently all these people are more "like-minded" than the Loktantrik Congress, formed by people who were until recently in the Congress Party, or the PSP. Anyway, the plain fact is that the Congress cannot get back into power without the help of the thirteen led by the Raja, and it would rather have the Raja than stay out of power.

Mr Chavan is now quoted as saying that he would have preferred the Congress Party in Bihar remaining out of office to its forming a Government with Mr Kamakhya Narain Singh in the Cabinet. But this virtuous posture lacks credibility after Mr Chavan's own role in creating a coalition with various groups including the Janata Party. Surely he did not expect the Raja of Ramgarh to support the Congress without a place in the Cabinet; indeed, the Raja's inclusion may well have been a part of the deal from the beginning. When some people began to protest in Delhi, Mr Chavan probably thought it useful for his own political image to change his stand. Another Raja, it is believed, then got into the act and persuaded the Congress Working Committee to agree to Mr Kamakhya Narain Singh's inclusion. The tie between Ramgarh and Kalakankar is

more than feudal; with a direct matrimonial link between the two families, it is hardly surprising that the Prince of Kalakankar who now conducts our foreign affairs should have lent a helping hand. What is surprising is that the Prime Minister should plead ignorance and say that she was not consulted. Are we to believe that communication between the progressive Prime Minister and the progressive Prince is beginning to fail?

Anyway, Mr Nijalingappa has taken full responsibility, and would rather have Ramgarh in the Bihar Cabinet than Mr Subramaniam in the Congress Working Committee. Few Congress Presidents have shown such brazen disregard or any kind of principle. The Working Committee is divided and most of its leading members are bitter. But had Mr Nijalingappa any sense of shame he would have resigned immediately after the mid-term elections. Had he not urged that the communists should be outlawed? Yet the people of West Bengal put the communists back into power—and strictly through the instruments of parliamentary democracy by which he and other Congress leaders swear. Since the people of Bihar have not voted the Congress into power, he wants the party to grab power there by intrigue and worse—which it cannot even attempt in West Bengal. How long it can remain in power by such tactics is, of course, another matter.

These Defectors !

While Mr J. P. Narain and other goody-goody souls deliberate on moral and other possible types of suasion to check defection, the Congress party has stolen a reverse march in Bihar. No doubt Mr Chavan will moralise in Parliament on when a defector is not a defector—namely, when he defects to the Congress. But a white cap and the mouthing of hypocritical crap are unlikely to act any longer as a deterrent: if there are gains to be had in defect-

ing to the Congress, some people would assume that parallel gains would be forthcoming from defections from the Congress too. Not even Mr Chavan will be in a position to prove that there is any serious asymmetry here.

Unless of course he resorts to the Preventive Detention Act to arrest those who would dare to leave the Congress. The formula is breathtakingly simple in its application: those who stay with the Congress obtain the loaves and fishes of office, those who defect from the Congress are thrown to prison. Variants of this formula have been tried with success in several Latin American countries, all bastions of democracy in the fight against totalitarian communism, and all recipients of generous American aid. Nor is the idea altogether foreign to Congress tradition. In 1965, in Calcutta, seven Left Communist Councillors were put behind bars to ensure a Congress majority in the Corporation, which then proceeded to elect some impeccable Congressmen as Aldermen. Now the practice can be extended. After all, if people fail to vote for the Congress, and the strategy of the Dharma Viras has run its course, there will be very little residual remedies left to ensure the safety of parliamentary democracy in this country.

Especially the Congress will have to worry about 1972. Unless, apropos the notions of Mr Atulya Ghosh, the Government employees could be made to re-defect to the Congress, the party will be way short of an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha in the next parliamentary elections. For example if one goes by the pattern of voting last month, the Congress would get exactly 2 out of the 36 Lok Sabha seats from West Bengal. Even a coalition with such soul-brother parties as the Swatantra and the Jana Sangh might not then offer any durable solution to the problem. All logical minds—and going by the evidence of the way the Constitution, ever since November 21, 1967, has been interpreted to suit partisan ends, all Congress leaders are first-rate logicians—might then veer towards

accepting the ine inevitability of the Preventive Detention Act for preserving the great democracy which India of the Congress party is. Better still, the communist parties could be banned overnight, as is being persistently demanded by the Balraj Madhoks and the Minoo Masanis.

None of this, alas, is malicious speculation. The ground is being prepared for a magnificent coup. A casual remark by Mr Harekrishna Konar about the desirability of more frequent exchanges between the people of West Bengal and those in East Pakistan has been blown up beyond

all proportions. Foreign newspapers have been fed with imaginative fare regarding the possible link-up between the current upsurge in East Pakistan and a prospective "urban revolution" in Calcutta. Editors nearer home are encouraged to cook up still more lurid stories. No, the Congress has learned nothing from the experience in West Bengal, 1967-69. The queen's men may occasionally quarrel amongst themselves, but they do present a united front where the main objective is concerned: they would bury the country first rather than honour the verdict of the people.

Sound And Fury

The so-called crisis over the UF Government's "ultimatum" to the Centre that the Governor, Mr Dharma Vira, should be recalled from West Bengal before the meeting of the State legislature on March 6 turned out a damp squib. Not only did the Centre reject the State Government's request unceremoniously, but the Governor also openly defied the UF Ministry by not reading out certain portions of the address prepared by the Cabinet at the joint session of the legislature. The reaction of the United Front to this double humiliation has been unworthy of the massive mandate it was given by the people in the mid-term poll. In offering only a "dignified protest" to the authoritarianism of the man who has been foisted on the State by the Centre to carry out its designs the Front has failed its millions of supporters. It is poor recompense indeed that the events have shown once again that the Congress Government at the Centre does not hesitate to flout the Constitution whenever that suits its purpose. The Centre's proclivities are too well known to need further evidence.

It is difficult to understand why the UF deliberately created the crisis-atmosphere. The fanfare with which it was announced that the State Government had served an ultimatum

on the Centre should have been better avoided when the UF knew that it was going to retreat ultimately. Mr Promode Das Gupta, secretary of the biggest constituent of the Front, went one better in suggesting that the legislators stage a gherao if the Governor refused to read out the address as prepared by the Council of Ministers. The suggestion was not even considered by the Cabinet or the Front Committee, though it was fully utilised as a gambit in the game of brinkmanship. What the Cabinet decided instead was that the UF legislators should not stand when the Governor would pass them by, as if such timid, almost reluctant, gestures of protest could register on the Governor or those in New Delhi whose tool he is. Even the customary motion of thanks was moved and will be passed. The face-saving attempted in the motion by declaring the omission by the Governor as "unlawful" will perhaps be blown out of all proportions and paraded as a triumph for the UF. But that will convince few. In the motion a straightforward condemnation of the Governor's omission has been carefully avoided; the omission is merely noted while the members "beg to offer" their thanks to the Governor "for the speech he has been pleased to deliver". No harm would have been done if the motion of thanks had not been moved at all;

"after all this is India, not England", as Mr Jyoti Basu would say; and there would have been many occasions to criticise the dismissal of the first UF Ministry.

The Centre's non-cooperation and obstructiveness are not unexpected. In their common programme the UF parties warned the people that West Bengal would have to face serious difficulties from the Centre in all matters in which New Delhi had a say. Five Ministers, including the Chief and the Deputy Chief, have already been to Delhi. The Centre has been generous enough to agree to supply during the current year about one-third of the food grains the State had asked for. On other demands the Ministers have drawn blank, unless one is prepared to accept the Centre's intention to recall Mr Dharma Vira in its own time as a victory for the UF. There is no reason to hope that a different fate awaits the Ministers who are in the queue for the plane to Delhi. If the UF chooses to remain satisfied, as it did over the Dharma Vira episode, with scoring minor points in constitutional niceties, the confrontation will be meaningless for the people. The Centre has as much stake in the Constitution as the State, if not greater, and to the extent the Centre violates the Constitution it releases the States from their obligation to abide by it. Unilateral abidance by the Constitution will not enable the UF Government to solve West Bengal's problems, and it is poor comfort for the famished and the unemployed to be told that their Government sets greater store by the Constitution than does the Centre. Mr Chavan has spotted this weakness of the UF leaders and goes on harping that the mandate of the UF is to govern constitutionally. The UF Government is walking into his trap by its constant declaration of loyalty to the Constitution. This constitutionalism does not go with the UF's pledge to change the Constitution, and until the UF Government gets over this, it cannot expect to win any of its battles with the Centre.

Import Of March 9

A correspondent writes :

For a man of Calcutta, living on rumours and gossip about the strength of the CPM, a Maidan meeting of the CPM used to be an enthralling experience. To be very frank, it used to be enthralling not because the white-collar man could squat along with suburban factory workers or peasants from distant villages but because he could feel the magic of numbers. But after February 9, after the vindication of the CPM's organisational power, the magic was lost because the point had been already proved. And so it was hard to stifle a question on March 9 at the Brigade Parade Ground, when Mr Promode Das Gupta said that peasants had come from distant places like Purulia and Midnapore to join the meeting. What for? The leaders had nothing new to tell them, no outline of tasks in the changed situation and so the energy and money spent for the meeting seemed to be for nothing. It appeared somewhat incongruous to arrange a massive gathering only to say that the Congress was still entrenched at the Centre and the Naxalites were frothing near the Presidency College.

But then, the question itself probably betrays the narrow angle of vision of the Calcutta man. Calcutta may have grown a spiritual vacuity for a man of Calcutta, but for a peasant, coming all the way to celebrate the election victory, it must have been invigorating. He could see that he belonged to a really strong party and it would be foolish not to appreciate that such an experience could be for him a thing to cherish.

The CPM leaders on March 9 spoke about short-term and long-term goals. Since they did not say anything clear about the latter, it would be irrelevant now to doubt if the CPM cadres would lose their militancy because of the party's joining the UF. But about their short-term goals, four distinct questions do arise and must be resolved.

Number one : their understanding

of the West Bengal bureaucracy. It would be his task, Mr Jyoti Basu said, to bring the recalcitrant officers under control. If he failed in that, he was sure, he said, that he would be able to screen good officers from bad. It had been so long assumed that the bureaucracy is of a homogeneous nature and by its very character cannot but be anti-people. To say that this ICS secretary, who is under the control of the Centre, is bad and that WBJCS BDO is good because he is young, enlightened, coming from the poor strata or under the control of the UF Government, is certainly novel. If Mr Basu succeeds in his mission, a shibboleth will be demolished.

Number two : the CPM assurance that it would make West Bengal capitalists shed their anti-labour policy by compelling them not to retrench workers, declare lock-outs or reduce bonus. Formerly the assumption was that capitalists exploit labour not because it was some diabolic fun but the exploitation was necessary to save their own interests. It would be worthwhile to watch how the CPM threat operates. It would be more interesting because Mr Jyoti Basu said he would make the Centre give orders, licences etc. so that industry might thrive in West Bengal. If he succeeds, without helping in the process the capitalists to stand on a sounder footing—a course running ultimately against the mass interest—he would demolish another shibboleth. Otherwise he would have to explain how he, a communist leader, was not an ally of the Congress in reinforcing the capitalist structure.

Number three : Mr. Basu said that he would join the anti-Congress State Governments in his fight with the Centre. How he does that without undergoing vicious class collaboration would be interesting to watch. Joining the left democrats to form the UF is one thing, joining the Akali-Sangh or the Orissa Ministry is seemingly quite another.

Number four : the CPM understanding of the Naxalites. The moot question is not whether the Naxalites

have any substantial following but whether the political line they preach is correct or not. Mere abuse or sarcasm, a bourgeois habit, does not make the CPM more honestly revolutionary. Even then it is a gross lie to say that the Naxalites thrive only on the UF ground. The number of

arrests the Naxalites underwent during the Congress rule, the protest march against McNamara's visit or the agitation against the rise of tram-fares may not prove anything substantial but they do show that the Naxalites do not depend wholly on UF police protection.

Trojan Horses

L'affaire Soames has damned many a continental Power and Great Britain as American Trojan horses. The infructuous piece of secret diplomacy which involved President de Gaulle and Christopher Soames, British Ambassador to Paris, and took place just before President Nixon's European swing had licked the myth of supra-nationalism and pan-European enterprise. What was there so special to de Gaulle's conversation with Soames, whose revelation to the West German Chancellor, Kurt Georg Kiesinger, could further worsen the strained Anglo-French relations? It appears from various conflicting reports that de Gaulle had suggested to Soames the mutation of the European Economic Community into a loosely knit free trade area, including Britain, provided her special relationship with America ended. The General is also said to have suggested the formation of a four-power political "directorate" consisting of France, the U.K., West Germany and Italy. The first suggestion is neither surprising nor novel. De Gaulle had said many times in the past that if any one insisted on including Britain and the other candidates in the community (which would completely change the structure of the EEC), France would consider the idea. Incidentally, the General will have nothing to regret if the ECM disappears, since he was not instrumental in its creation. The ECM was there when he was returned to power in 1958. But in no case will he forgo the benefits that France is getting from it. This explains why the provision for the "exchange of agricultural products" was included in the General's suggestion to Mr Soames.

Among all the European leaders, de Gaulle could rightly discover that Kennedy's Grand Design was to establish America and Britain's entry into the ECM was only the first step as a huge American commercial operation. As early as 1962, de Gaulle also hinted at the possibility of a European atomic force, based on

From Russia With Love

There has been a steady erosion of the wall the US had built to isolate the Peoples' Republic of China. Since 1950 no fewer than five NATO powers, not to speak of others, have recognised the Peking regime. In late January this year the Italian Foreign Minister, Pietro Nenni, announced his Government's decision to recognize Peking. Close on his heels the Canadian Minister for External Affairs, Mr Mitchell Sharp, announced the opening of negotiations with China with a view to according her diplomatic recognition. It could not possibly be otherwise. Hope of trading with a prospering China of 700 million had the better of their anti-communist allergy. Washington has lost no time in announcing that the US is "very much concerned" by the latest Canadian move. And Taipei has also been advised to stick to Canada even if China sets up an embassy there. But Chiang Kai-shek is reportedly planning a prior retreat to avoid the humiliation he suffered in Paris five years ago when President de Gaulle dropped Taipei for Peking.

But the old Generalissimo can draw comfort from the fact that though he has been receiving very shabby treatment from his old friends things are happily different with the new. In November last Chiang invited a Soviet journalist, Vitaly Yevgenyevitch Louis, better known as Victor Louis, to visit Taiwan. On his way back to Moscow Mr Louis went to Phnom-Penh where he told *Washington Post's* Stanley Karnow about his trip to what he called the "Republic of China".

He reportedly prided himself as the "first Soviet citizen in 19 years" to have visited Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's bastion. Mr Louis' story was confirmed in Taipei where a senior official disclosed that the Soviet visitor had seen Defence Minister Chiang Ching-kuo, the Generalissimo's elder son and heir apparent. *Tass* dutifully denounced the story as fabrication. But early last month an Associated Press dispatch from Moscow quoted Mr Louis in an interview that he had indeed been to Taiwan. The island retreat, he told AP, is a "nice, pleasant" place and "not a military camp." Asked if this trip was a Soviet feeler to the "Nationalists", Louis replied, "Let people interpret it whatever way they want." Then he added cryptically that his welcome to Taiwan was a "good sign".

Meanwhile other "good signs" have begun to appear in Taiwan. The anti-Soviet posters that dotted Taiwan's landscape are gradually disappearing. Chiang's propagandists have reportedly been instructed to soft-pedal the criticism of Moscow. Gone are the days when Moscow called the Chiang clique "fascist jackals" and the Generalissimo regarded the Russians as "treacherous aggressors" who were behind the Chinese communists.

The latest development of Soviet foreign policy need not come as a surprise. The Soviet Union's antagonism to China merely made her interests coincidental with Taipei's. How gratifying it would have been for the late Mr John Foster Dulles, had he been alive, to find his best students in Moscow!

the French and British deterrents and not under U.S. hegemony. In this context, the Kennedy-Macmillan Polaris deal (Nassau agreement) was naturally very contemptuous of it. But the General's consternation sprang from America's refusal to communicate to France the technical data on the submarines and warheads which were made available to the U.K.

What de Gaulle envisaged for Britain has proved to be true. During the period 1957-1967, the American stake in British industry has increased from 4½ per cent to 7½ per cent. America now controls a large part of the total foreign interest in British industry worth over £2 billion. By 1980 American control of British industry will rise to 20 per cent. What was beyond de Gaulle's comprehension was that the American stake in industries of the EEC countries would rise eight times in the decade ended 1966, compared with two and a half times in Britain. President de Gaulle, surprisingly, has not said a single word about the community countries eventually becoming American satrapies. De Gaulle, whom Sartre once called a "rebellious slave", is now giving up his rebel posture. The General's relations with President Nixon have deepened "both as regards the statesman and the individual" after they were closetted for ten hours at the Elysee Palace and Grand Trianon at Versailles.

It still remains unanswered who proposed the "Directorate" — de Gaulle or Soames. Although the French officials made a determined bid to put the onus on Britain, it is not unlikely that de Gaulle needed the U.K. to keep Bonn in check. Another relevant point is whether to de Gaulle big countries count more than the smaller ones. In any case, if the French Parliament had in mind to demonstrate the insincerity of Britain's Common Market aspirations, that has been foiled by her over-eagerness to reveal the whole affair to her allies as, according to the British Foreign Secretary, Michael Stewart, their "vital interests were involved".

View From Delhi

China Shop Again

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE anti-China chorus, subdued for some time, is full-throated once again. The Sino-Soviet border clash has restored sunshine to the hearts of the "I told you so" gentlemen who traffick in public credulity. The Soviet Embassy could not have produced a hand-out that would put across its version on the clash better than All India Radio's "spotlight" script. It is not just the convergence of Indian and Soviet interests vis-a-vis China and the near-identical border problems both the countries have with China.

The visit of Marshal Grechko, Soviet Defence Minister, roughly coincided with the clash. This might be an accident and nothing more. But there is certainly a pattern to it. The Sino-Indian border clash took place when Berlin was turning out to be a flash-point. It is perhaps a strange coincidence that whenever the Soviet Union gets cold feet and is unable to confront the United States in Cuba or Berlin, there is a clash on the Chinese border.

New Delhi's bright analysis, subtly put across to Marshal Grechko, could not have impressed him much. It was discovered that the Chinese "engineered" the clash on the eve of their Ninth Party Congress. But the Soviet Defence Minister's observation must have made the official theorists look a little sheepish because he disclosed that the clashes had been occurring for some time now.

From the Soviet point of view, the clash would serve a major purpose. It covered up its climb-down on Berlin and achieved something by way of impressing the United States and India that it was not time yet for a dialogue with China. Though the Sino-U.S. talks have been officially cancelled, contacts at various points are continuing and the Soviet Union could not have welcomed them. The United

States will lose less than the Soviet Union would by seeking an overall settlement with China. It is in the Soviet interest to block a settlement. Once the United States reaches an accord, much of the anti-China hysteria in some of the South-East Asian countries conditioned by the American response would have disappeared. The Soviet Union stands to lose a lot in the bargain.

As was expected China figured prominently with Marshal Grechko's talks in New Delhi and it is on the cards that Soviet military aid to India would be stepped up. All the veiled support to the Soviet case pledged by Indian agencies, including some of the political parties, will bring its dividends. Those who were anti-communists in general now profess a new solicitude for the Soviet Union against China, which indeed is as hypocritical as the role of a certain class of intellectuals. Anti-communism has learnt to draw the Chinese arguments against the Soviet brand of communism to debunk communism in general.

There is ill-concealed delight in New Delhi at the Sino-Soviet border clash because this provides some justification for all the policies which only a few weeks ago were admitted to be deficient.

Governors' Powers

Nearer home the preoccupation is with the controversy over the powers of the Governors. The confrontation in Calcutta turned out to be a tame affair and early on Thursday (March 6) it was taken for granted in New Delhi that ground rules for the confrontation had been agreed upon. Let the Governor skip the objected paragraphs and let the United Front legislators shout in protest. Mrs Indira Gandhi's persuasive logic against a confrontation on what she

regarded as a "peripheral issue" seems to have clicked. The CPI(M)'s public stance was one thing. But the stand of certain prominent Politburo members who were maintaining contact with the Prime Minister during those days appears to be vastly different. The Cabinet did not decide anything formally because the Prime Minister was indisposed. But all the parleys went on and things happened to the Prime Minister's expectation.

In the Rajya Sabha, Mr Y. B. Chavan maintained that he had no "official" information about what had happened on Thursday in the West Bengal legislature. As a parliamentary gimmick it was alright and served the purpose. He did not have to answer any question on the constitutional implications arising out of the Governor's action. From the tone of Mr Chavan's answers one had to conclude that the Centre has no attitude of its own to such happenings. But it is no secret that the text of the address was flown to New Delhi and the Home Ministry scrutinised it and found some passages objectionable. Mr Dharma Vira was advised accordingly and the advice is regarded as "informal", perhaps like informal rationing.

All the talk of someone or other being inducted as the Governor of West Bengal—the list includes General Kumarmangalam, Air Marshal Arjan Singh and Mr V. K. Krishna Menon—is absurd because no Governor could be inducted in that fashion immediately. Mr Dharma Vira has been appointed for five years and he has only asked for a change and not retirement. No non-Congress State would welcome him as Governor and he has necessarily to go to a Congress State. And it is equally certain that the Centre would try to foist a Congressman or a civilian on West Bengal. If it is a simple swapping of places, Mr Gopala Reddy from Uttar Pradesh could be the logical replacement for Mr Dharma Vira. But if it is a chain transfer, the process of consultation will take time.

The dangerous precedent created by Mr Dharma Vira might be to the

Centre's advantage for the moment. But some day, the Congress would have to regret all the precedents created by stretching the interpretation of the Governor's powers to absurd proportions. Indirectly, the Congress is recognising the Swatantra contention that the President in the Indian Constitution is not only the constitutional head but also the executive head.

An upshot of the West Bengal legislature episode is the strengthening of Mrs Gandhi's own position because Mr Chavan's stock has gone plummeting down. Mr Dharma Vira could have been transferred without much fuss as soon as the mid-term election results became known. The plan for a chain of transfers should have been got ready long ago. If Mr Chavan thought his prestige was all that mattered, he has clearly lost. The United Front has wrested an assurance that the Governor would be replaced.

Birla Debate

The debate on the Birla company affairs in the Rajya Sabha amounts to a censure of Mr Morarji Desai and this again puts Mrs Gandhi on top. It looks as though the Birlas would not mind an inquiry commission so much but those high up in the Government would. The Young Turks led the attack on the Government and in the Congress Parliamentary Party executive, a strong lobby assailed Mr Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed for agreeing to the debate on the Birla affairs. In the view of this lobby the very fact the debate was to be held amounted to a censure of the Government. The alignments inside the party are revealing. The so-called ginger group Congressmen, whom the Right Communists describe as leftists, were against any inquiry. The Prime Minister herself was against an inquiry. And Mr Morarji Desai, who was not friendly to the Birlas until he became the Deputy Prime Minister, found it necessary to intervene in the debate to save the Government.

The silly anti-climax to the week came with the resignation of Mr C. Subramaniam from the Congress Working Committee. It is still not

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known if Mr Nijalingappa consulted the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Home Minister before giving his consent to the induction of the Raja of Ramgarh into the Bihar Ministry. It is quite possible that he had consulted all the three but they are now trying to look as if it was entirely the Congress President's decision. Mr Nijalingappa has reason to be sore with the Central leadership on many issues. The Maharashtra-

Mysore border issue was quietly put off at the Working Committee because the Maharashtra leadership had wanted it so. The Prime Minister's supporters in the party are out to damn the Congress President, fixing the responsibility for the mid-term debacle on him. In any case, Mr Nijalingappa has played enough politics, but rather unsuccessfully and should be happy to pack up, back to Bangalore.

March 9, 1969

Letter from America

The Same Old Game

ROBI CHAKRAVORTI

PRESIDENT Nixon and his military advisers are playing the same old game on Vietnam. In my despatch (*Frontier*, February 15), I submitted some clues to the Vietnam negotiations in Paris. Since then, other clues have come to light. They indicate that the American military establishment in Saigon deliberately escalated the war against the communists since the bombing halt and the initiation of the peace talks. The Nixon Administration seems to be lured by the same mirage that had haunted the Johnson Administration, namely "a position of strength". Dulles is dead. Long live Dulles!

An Associated Press despatch from Paris on the Ky-Nixon meeting reported that the Saigon delegation in Paris now "feels assured the United States is not overhasty to reach a quick agreement." The report said that Nixon has reportedly given Ky the feeling that Nixon is more willing to play for time in the peace talks than his predecessor.

This fits in with other reports of Nixon's strategy for the Paris talks. Joseph Harsch of the *Christian Science Monitor* speculated some time back that Nixon's formula for Vietnam "should emerge sometime in July or August." The speculation is that Nixon, like his predecessor, wants a better military position in Vietnam so

that he can deliver the "enemy" a tough ultimatum in the Paris talks.

It is because Nixon wants a position of strength that the American army has quietly escalated the war in South Vietnam although bombing raids on the North had been stopped and negotiations are going on in Paris. *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, the two most highly respected newspapers, have written editorials exposing and criticizing American escalation of the war while Paris talks are going on. *The Washington Post* said that after the bombing halt, North Vietnam pulled troops "back from lowlands into the mountains; they have, in fact, disengaged their troops." According to experts, the *Post* said, "the basic decision was political, not military; it was a conscious act of *de facto* de-escalation. If that is what was, the American response to it was all wrong."

A *New York Times* editorial gave a factual account of American escalation in warfare in response to the communist de-escalation, following the bombing halt. In an editorial entitled "Endangering the Peace Talks", on December 14, the *Times* wrote: "Since the bombing halt, the enemy has initiated only one battalion-sized assault. By comparison last month American troops mounted 63 batta-

lion operations and South Vietnam staged 664 such campaigns." The purpose, the editorial said, was "to extend South Vietnamese Government control over disputed areas and territory long controlled by the Vietcong." The editorial warned that such an effort "to upset the balance in Vietnam in advance of a settlement in Paris is bound to produce a reaction sooner or later."

The *Times'* warning proved prophetic. The recent communist offensive is merely a response to the American escalation in South Vietnam, following the bombing halt which had lost its military efficacy any way even in the estimates of such well-plumed hawks as former Secretary of Defence McNamara.

I.F. Stone was enterprising enough to check on the *New York Times'* figures and to his surprise found that "the tempo of offensive operations from our side had gone up about 25% in December over November." The December figures on battalion-sized operations from the American side available from the Pentagon were higher than the *Times'* which were based on November operations. In December, Americans and their "allies" mounted 956 battalion-sized operations as against 727 in November.

The Pentagon was, however, mum over figures of "enemy-initiated actions of battalion size," Stone reports. These figures were on the "classified" list. Stone rightly pointed out that "obviously the totals on enemy attacks do not keep any information from the enemy he does not already know. This is political not military censorship, designed not to confuse the enemy but to hide what is going on from the American public. We hope some members of Congress will insist that these figures be released."

Even if some members of Congress are moved by Stone's pleading, it is doubtful whether the Nixon Administration or his hawkish supporters in Congress and outside will be convinced of the Administration's double-talk. Where the American flag and American boys are concerned in a war with the dark forces of godless

communism, an average American can indulge in double-think, with liberal assistance from the mass media.

In spite of all the PR talk of "new directions" and the "new team" in Paris talks, Nixon seems to be playing the same old game and listening to the same hawkish advice that a little longer wait would yield greater military bonanza. According to I.F. Stone, the U.S. military seem to be making their plans on the assumption that there will be no settlement in Paris. They plan a prolonged American occupation, though on a reduced scale. As this correspondent pointed out in an earlier despatch (February 15), the U.S. army can tighten its military organization in Vietnam without substantially reducing its punch. According to a report in the *U.S. News and World Report*, the Pentagon foresees a reduction of U.S. forces in Vietnam to 200,000 men by the end of 1971. This level is the "basis for a long-haul, low-cost effort in Vietnam that could continue indefinitely." Nixon, on his return from Europe, however, flatly denied any

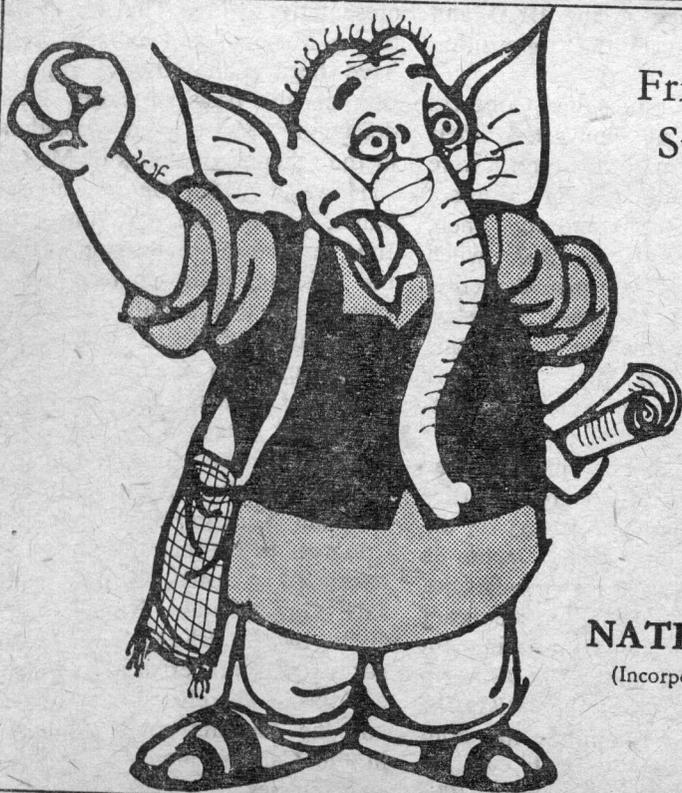
plan for troop withdrawal "at this time or in the near future.

Tristram Coffin, the author of the Penguin study, *The Armed Society* wrote in a recent article in *The Nation* magazine that Nixon reportedly expects a military victory in Vietnam within a year or two. His job, as he sees it, is twofold: "to razzle and dazzle" the populace so that they would not complain about casualty figures (American casualty figures have doubled in recent weeks) and to get the war over at least six months before launching his campaign for re-election. Meanwhile, he expects that the American military position in Vietnam will improve so much by summer that he can call the tune at Paris.

Nixon also continues to talk of "a variety of approaches" at the Paris negotiations and several "options" that he still has to meet the worsening military situation in Vietnam. In his Press conference following his return from Europe, he talked a great deal on Vietnam but most of it can be described as verbalized nonsense. He

described the present communist offensive in terms of "frequency, intensity and targets", and "magnitude" giving an air of scientific analysis. In frequency, he said the present offensive is the same as the earlier Tet offensive, but in intensity it was less; the targets are mainly military, but also includes civilian objects.

He did not mention what *Washington Post*, *New York Times* and I.F. Stone have been exposing, namely that the higher casualty rates are a direct consequence of escalation of the war from the American side to which the communists have apparently chosen now to respond. It is a sad reflection on the quality of the American Press corps in Washington that none dared raise this question during the Press conference, not even the correspondents of the *Post* and the *Times* in which allegations of American escalation of war following the bombing halt had been reported in cold clear print. Nor were these allegations mentioned in course of reports and analyses by stalwarts of television network news.



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Uttar Pradesh Move And Counter Moves

C. K. ARORA

SMARTING under the insult he had to swallow on being outmanoeuvred, Mr Charan Singh along with his Bhartiya Kranti Dal rump is out to topple the Congress Ministry headed by Mr C. B. Gupta. The first session of the State Assembly beginning from March 17 will give him an opportunity to force a showdown.

Bitter division over selection of candidates for the ministerial appointments and long-standing dissensions in the Congress would be a great asset to the Jat leader in his "Operation Wreck." The hero of sugarcane growers, Mr Genda Singh, the Shia leader, Mr Ali Zaheer, and the Thakur leader, Mr Hukum Singh, are sore over their exclusion from the newly-installed 18-man Cabinet. Though the drop-outs are yet to evolve their joint strategy, none of them make a secret of their aversion for the gang-up between Mr Gupta and the U.P. party chief, Mr Kamalpathi Tripathi.

But for a tactical mistake by Mr Charan Singh, Mr Gupta's march back to power would not have been so simple. Immediately after the announcement of the election results of 420 of the 425 Assembly seats, Mr Charan Singh said: "I will like to sit in the opposition benches." He also ruled out coalition. "An SVD like that of 1967 will not work," he added. But this was just a gimmick prompted by his habit to strike moral postures. Clandestinely, his men were more than active in trying to capture the Government. He relied on a handful of trusted lieutenants including a financier of Meerut, but he made a mistake in not taking other small fry in his party into confidence. They became restive and even panicky at the prospect of occupying only the opposition benches.

The BKD showed signs of cracking up. Overnight it became vulnerable to defections. Mr Charan Singh summoned a meeting of the State executive

of the BKD on February 22 and made a volte face. A cleverly-worded resolution was adopted. Mr Charan Singh himself handed over the resolution to the Press with full liberty to interpret it whatever way it liked.

The resolution said "This meeting of the executive requests Mr Charan Singh to put aside his own views and hold talks with the leaders of the non-Congress parties and Independents with a view to finding out whether they can come together and function as one united team." Besides, a three-member committee was set up to assist the leader in his search for partners for the proposed united team.

Leaders of the non-Congress parties who are more anti-BKD than against the Congress now because of the former Chief Minister's consistent tirade against them during the election campaign, declined to meet the members of the BKD committee. They insisted that instead of relying on others, Mr Charan Singh should himself come out in the open and explain what he had in mind. Members of the BKD committee were not the people who mattered in the BKD. "Mr Charan Singh is the BKD and vice versa", so feel the opposition leaders in U.P.

But by this time the Congress bosses in U.P. had converted their minority into a majority and were busy finalising the list of Cabinet members. Mr Gupta and his men, wiser by the events of 1967 when Mr Charan Singh's surprise defection had toppled the Congress Ministry, did not leave anything to chance this time. Neither did they take Mr Charan Singh by his Press commitments.

Mr Charan Singh, judging the hostility of the non-Congress parties and the meticulous preparation on the part of the Congress to instal its Ministry, called a Press conference during his visit to Delhi on February 24 and issued a statement ruling out the formation of any SVD Government. The efforts of the BKD, he pointed out, were to unite the non-Congress to work unitedly in the House against the Congress. The

first bid to power, was thus, frustrated.

Efforts are now continuing on the part of the BKD to unite the non-Congress parties. Only then will it be possible to topple the Ministry in a House where Congress strength is only 209 out of 423. But unless the opposition gives the impression of a united team, at least apparently, walk-outs from the Congress are not possible. However, the Congress is busy lining up the support of independents to boost its strength.

Mr Gupta has to do a good deal of tight rope-walking to keep himself in power. With Mr Charan Singh's tremendous manoeuvring capacity and the discord in the ruling party, the going is bound to be tough for the State Congress boss. If he continues in office for an unexpectedly longer period, it will pin him down to U.P. all the time. It is here that the mini-Rajas and their chieftain, Mr Dinesh Singh, see a silver lining.

Mrs Gandhi, to whom they all owe allegiance, will have a comparatively easy time at the Centre.

The 16-member Cabinet chosen by Mr Gupta has five Brahmins, five Harijans and backward class representatives, three Thakurs, a Kayastha, a Muslim and a bania. Efforts have been made to give representation on the basis of castes to avoid defection. Merit is no consideration in the schemes of things of Mr Gupta.

However, Mr Gupta, himself a bania, has for the first time successfully resisted the temptation of packing his ministry with men of his own caste. He is the only bania in the 16-member Ministry.

Among other factors that weighed with Mr Gupta in the selection of the ministerial team is the upper caste backlash in the election. The Caste Hindus, particularly the Brahmins and the Thakurs, rallied behind the Congress to counter the resurgence of backward castes—Kurmis, Ahirs, Jats, Gujjars and Rajputs—brought about by the BKD. The Congress got a good number of seats as a result of this. Therefore, the Brahmins and the Thakurs got the lion's share in the Cabinet along with the backward classes.

Periscope On Polls

INDUKANTA SHUKLA

WITH the Congress clambering as the major legislature party UP is headed towards stasis, which in Mrs Gandhi's fond parlance, is stability. This changes the political prospect of the State from wonky to turbid. BKD, carved in the Congress image—its protests to the contrary notwithstanding—is avowedly a party of reaction. So UP has voted for regress, justifying the pre-poll survey of the election carnival in UP made by this writer in the January 18 issue of *Frontier*.

Parties mushroomed before the elections. There was one bearing a stentorian name: Vedvadi Karmavadi Parishad; 205 from eleven parties lost; there was a wave of murderous violence which was only equalled, but not excelled, even by Bihar; over 1,700 candidates lost their deposits, among them leading lights; one saw the deployment of nearly one lakh of the uniformed ubiquity, the police, under various descriptions. The erratic voting pattern was apparent from the Lucknow City East which returned Congress in 1952 and 1962; the PSP in 1957; the JS in 1967; and the BKD now. Propitiating the giant of the moment?

Anti-Congressism has not waned. It has indeed gone up as the decrease in its votes bears out. The Congress is jubilant not so much over its pyrrhic victory as over the discomfiture of the opposition at its failure to forge ahead as an alternative. The splitting of votes among the BKD, the JS and the SSP helped it to this fluke victory.

The second place (98 seats, 1967, JS) was snatched by the BKD miraculously easily with its 99 seats. The Congress can comfort itself with the thought that the State by and large voted the Congress daddy and its kid, the mini-deviant, BKD, which has no ideological divide with it so that one may dissolve into the other as and when circumstances are auspicious. And it is no surprise. Nothing else

will so satisfactorily explain the growth of this party from a fledgling into a giant all within a mere nine months! People are wondering how it mustered transport and till on a scale no whit inferior to those of the Congress.

That the JS has been deflated and ditched is indisputable. Its calculations went awry. In terms of seats it lost by more than 50% (98 in 1967, 48 now). All its columns fell, all its castles floundered. Gangaram, leader of the JS assembly party in the SVD, was defeated in Kanpur. Its chief whip, Pratap Narain Tiwari lost in Gonda which he had chosen as a safer constituency than his home one of Balrampur! It lost its pockets, Bahraich, Lakhimpur, Kheri, Hardoi and Sitapur to the Congress.

The BKD's tally of Meerut, Agra, Rohilkhand and the whole of Muradabad and Muzaffarnagar was very impressive. Sixty-one of its 98 seats are in Western UP. Charan Singh's pledge—a la Nanda—in one of his election speeches to end corruption in 15 days was meant to inveigle the people, and it did, to quite an extent.

The SSP did a bit better than the JS—it lost only by 25%. Of its 44 seats in 1967 it saved 33. Its strongholds, Azamgarh, Etawah, Gorakhpur were deeply undercut. Its leader, Ugra Sen, lost. But a compensation gift was Pratapgarh which came to it after patient cultivation over years. This is Raja Dinesh Singh's native (home) Town. But the exodus of Jats, Ahirs, Kurmis to the BKD in which they find a rallying point has undermined the SSP. By the way, these communities may be technically backward but are neither depressed nor scheduled. Numerous as they are, they have among them a sizeable portion of the well-to-do.

The CPI dropped from its 14 seats in 1967 to 5 now. It received a drubbing in its territory itself—Ballia, Ghazipur, Varanasi, Azamgarh. Its tarrying in the SVD Government after the Kalagarh incident proved its undoing. Some of its followers switched on to the BKD and the Congress. It lacks energy, it lacks cadres. So it limps.

That frightening conglomerate—Backward Classes and Minorities Federation—secured five seats and scattered ample mischief to the explicit advantage of Muslim communalism and its Hindu counterpart. Mr Mubarak Mazdoor, its nominee, added nuisance to K. D. Malaviya's debacle in the Phulpur parliamentary constituency which became news in many ways. The Congress (its one section), as also the CIA, in league with the cartels, sabotaged the electioneering there to the abounding shame of Congressites who believe themselves to be democrats.

That the people did drive home a few points is deducible from the following:

- (1) Out of 425 sitting members 207 lost.
- (2) Out of 156 Congress members 82 lost.
- (3) Out of 17 original defectors 9 lost.
- (4) New faces in the Assembly over 150.
- (5) If the leftists suffered serious setbacks, from 70 seats in 1967 to 41 now, the popular verdict was even more emphatic against the rightists who have been pushed down from 109 seats in 1967 to 53 now.

The Swatantra is nearly in the wilderness. Its high priests in UP have joined the BKD or the Congress, particularly in Avadh. The PSP was never much of a force, and is routed, deservedly. Defection (resignation) of its leader, Triloki Singh, to the Congress shattered it out of shape.

With the JS trounced and the Swatantra shrunk to invisibility, and in face of the popular vote having registered itself against the Congress, it is perhaps time for the progressive parties to club together, evolve a programme, establish rapport with the masses, educate them, not by speeches but by service, and with them in the vanguard, inflict in 1974 a crushing defeat on the unprincipled assortment of parties whose major concern has been the legislature and not the people.

India Since Independence

PARESH CHATTOPADHYAY

CHARLES Bettelheim, Professor of Economic Science at the School of Advanced Studies, the Sorbonne, is well known to the economists and, more particularly, to the left-wing intellectuals of India. A distinguished Marxist, he has made significant contributions to economic development and planning by his theoretical studies as well as by his valuable counsels to the various governments of the Third World—socialist and non-socialist—on the subject. Though he lives and teaches in an advanced capitalist country he has an intimate knowledge of the socialist world as well as the non-socialist sector of the Third World. (The book under review*, originally written by him in French and now brought up to date in the somewhat abridged English edition, is also no armchair exercise by an academician but a serious study by one who has known India—the living India—fairly intimately for a long time in various capacities.

There have been attempts, from time to time, by Indian writers to analyse the Indian situation from a Marxist point of view. But these have been more or less fragmentary, more descriptive than analytical, dealing with the parts rather than the whole. As regards our 'Marxist' economists, they, by and large, have fought shy of using class analysis—the essence of Marxism—in their inquiries to the extent that it is often difficult to distinguish their 'technical' studies—otherwise valuable—from those of the bourgeois scholars. Professor Bettelheim's is perhaps the first serious attempt to apply a rigorous class analysis to discover the "law of motion" of the contemporary Indian economy and Indian polity. Though the work in its English ver-

sion has lost some of the flavour and sharpness of the French original, besides a part of the content, even here one can see that the author has touched on a vast range of problems with an astonishing amount of scholarship, utilising all the important sources—specially on the Indian economy—published in English. Within the limited space at our disposal we cannot give more than the barest outline of what we consider to be the most important aspects of this very rich work, adding some of our comments towards the end.

The book is divided into two parts. The first deals with the situation in India on the morrow of Independence. Here the author gives a succinct account of the social and economic structure that was prevailing just after 1947. He qualifies the rural structure as 'semi-feudal' on the following grounds: the absence of a labour market in a large part of the rural sector, the personal subservience of the immediate producer to the landowner, the excessive importance of land rent, the underdeveloped marketing system resulting in little social division of labour, a low rate of accumulation and the use of produce mainly to satisfy immediate needs. On the morrow of Independence agricultural labourers constituted 38 per cent of the total agricultural working force. According to the author's estimate, income per capita of agricultural labourers was roughly two-fifths of the national income per capita—and this in a country where the national income per capita is one of the lowest in the world. About half of all agricultural labourers were wage earners. As regards the industrial structure the author points out that only 2 per cent of the total working force of the country was employed in the organized industries and produced a little more than 6 per cent of the national income. But despite the weakness of India's industry, one of its principal characteristics in the

period under consideration was the relative strength and concentration of its capitalist sector. This is shown in the first place by the share of national income going to the capitalist sector. For instance, the non-agricultural bourgeoisie constituting 0.5 per cent of the non-agricultural population [people with taxable income exceeding Rs. 10,000 per annum being included in the category of the 'bourgeoisie'] received about 28 per cent of the national income going to that sector in 1953-54. In agriculture roughly one-quarter of the income came from the capitalist sector, that is, from the families employing workers with no other income than their wages. We must also note the extreme concentration of income in the capitalist sector itself. Of those subject to income tax on declared earnings of over Rs. 10,000 per annum only 3.8 per cent had an income of over Rs. 70,000. Yet this 3.8 per cent earned 28 per cent of the total income declared by persons with a taxable income of more than Rs. 10,000. The Indian bourgeoisie's power, however, was limited by the extent of ownership and control exercised by foreign capital over a large part of the key sectors of the economy. The author estimates that at the end of 1953 foreign bourgeoisie had a share of about 50 per cent of the capital invested in big industry, mining, plantations, banking and big business. One should also note the degree of industrial concentration in India at this time. According to the 1947 industrial census which included only factories employing at least 20 workers, 7 per cent of the factories employing more than 1,000 workers grouped more than 67 per cent of the workers. Professor Bettelheim quotes an Indian author to the effect that industrial concentration in India reached a much higher degree than in industrially developed countries. This industrial concentration provided the material basis of an even greater economic and financial concentration among the Indian bourgeoisie. An important question related to the relative strength of the Indian bourgeoisie and the weakness of India's indus-

* Charles Bettelheim—*India Independent*. MacGibbon and Kee Ltd., London, 1968. Price : 84 shillings.

trial structure on the morrow of Independence is that of the place of the urban sector and the strength of the urban proletariat at that time. According to the first post-independence census, the urban population constituted 17.3 per cent of India's total population, towns with over 100,000 inhabitants containing more than two-fifths of the total urban population. Of the total urban working force 55 per cent consisted of wage earners. In the big cities this proportion rose to 75 per cent. Two-thirds of the working class were engaged in large-scale industry, mining, construction, transport and communication. Despite India's relatively weak industrial base her urban proletariat was mainly industrial. Finally we must note an important aspect of Indian capitalism—increasing financial and commercial overgrowth of capital. This resulted from the fact that the capital held by some of the most powerful groups of the bourgeoisie was accumulated in a form that was tied up for only a short while. "One consequence", writes the author, "is that the surplus created by the workers is to a large extent transferred outside the industry". This financial and commercial overgrowth is linked to the semi-colonial and semi-feudal character of the Indian economy. This resulted in 'the predominance of the non-productive over productive capital formation'.

Planning

This was roughly the position before planning got under way. What changes have been wrought on the situation since then? Professor Bettelheim carefully avoids two extremes. He agrees neither with those who speak of 'revolutionary' changes having taken place in India nor with those who hold that nothing has been changing here. He maintains that though there is "definitely no economic and social revolution in progress" and India as a whole is not developing rapidly, "there have been nevertheless quick changes in some fields: in industrial production, in the utilization of national income, in political attitude, in urban development, and

even in certain aspects of the agrarian problems". It is, however, the direct intervention of the State in the economy that has been responsible for most of these changes. Given the backward state of the economy what should have been done after Independence to carry India along the path of economic progress? It goes without saying that the big bourgeoisie who, by and large, led the national movement against the British rule could not opt for what constituted the only real answer to the problem—the socialist path of economic development. Their answer was State capitalism which could, by intervening in the spheres where private capital was weak or wanting, speed up development while increasing profits and at the same time shake off foreign capital's hold on the economy, thereby leaving the whole field free for their exclusive exploitation. State capitalism manifests itself in different ways—economic regulations, the creation of a specific public sector and, above all, the Five Year Plans. The author points out at the outset that in India there is no planning in the true sense, as there can be none in a basically capitalist economy if by planning is meant not only the preparation of plans but also their compulsory execution. From the available figures of public spending for development during the planning period it is seen that development spending constitutes a very small portion of the national income: 4 per cent, 7 per cent and 10 per cent for the first three Plans respectively. If foreign aid is taken into account they become 3.6 per cent, 5.7 per cent and 6.4 per cent respectively. The reason for this decreasing rate is not lack of resources but, given the existing property relations, the inability of the ruling classes to mobilize them for economic development. If we take total investment as a percentage of national income we get the following: 8 per cent at the end of the First Plan, 10 per cent at the end of the Second Plan and 12 per cent during the Third Plan. At the same time we should also note that foreign aid constituted 3 per cent, 25 per cent

and about 40 per cent of the total accumulation during the three Plans.

Coming to the specific sectors we see, as regards agriculture, that its structure did not basically change at the end of the Third Five Year Plan. Seventy per cent of the total working population were engaged in agriculture and earned 50 per cent of the national income. After Independence the ruling classes of India could not obviously keep the old colonial agrarian structure intact. Moreover, for their own interests, they wanted a rise in agricultural production. Therefore they wanted to implement certain minimum agrarian reforms which, at the same time, could not be allowed to go so far as to threaten their vital class interests in the countryside. These reforms aimed at reducing, to a limited extent, the semi-feudal production relations in the rural areas by giving rise to a class of rural bourgeoisie which could serve as a prop to the urban bourgeoisie who otherwise "would remain terribly isolated in hostile surroundings". The author enumerates three effects of these reforms: first, they have not suppressed big property but have limited it and have substituted a system of *usus*, *abuses* and *fructus* for a feudal system; secondly, the legislation has given the richer peasants an opportunity to become landed proprietors and paved the way for rural capitalism; thirdly, it has increased the agriculturists' legal security by curtailing the excessive power of feudal landlords. These factors are to a certain extent favourable to an expansion of capitalist agricultural production. The so-called legal security referred to above has not, however, prevented the landlords from evicting millions of peasants from land. The author cites Professor Dantewala to the effect that in the decade following Independence more peasants were evicted from their lands than during the last hundred years of the colonial regime. The most important changes in agriculture, according to the author, have been in production relations. "The two types still exist—feudal or semi-feudal (characterized by rent paid in

work or in kind, or by rent in money paid by a personal producer and not by a capitalist farmer) and capitalist (characterized by the use of hired labour and by market production). But capitalist relations have gained ground: there has been an extension of paid wages (and thus an accumulation of variable capital), an extension of techniques requiring greater productive investment (better tools and use of fertilizers on a large scale)". However, the progress towards capitalism in agriculture is slow.

Contradictions

Coming to industry Professor Bettelheim shows that the policy of industrialization pursued by the State since the transfer of power has served, on the whole, the bourgeoisie in general and the big bourgeoisie in particular. Overall industrial production increased by about 140 per cent during the first three Plans. Undoubtedly there has been a fairly rapid rate of industrial development on a relatively large scale. But not without contradictions. Structurally speaking the modern industrial sector still accounted for only about 10.3 per cent of the national income at the end of the Third Plan as compared with 6.3 per cent in 1948-49. The development itself has been extremely uneven. Some industries like machine tools, chemicals and fertilizers experienced rapid development. Others like electricity, metallurgical and equipment industries advanced slowly. A definitely negative aspect was the creation and development of industrial enterprises catering only for the consumption of the richer sections and at the same time the slowing down of industries producing mass consumption goods. That the progress of industry strengthened the bourgeoisie is shown by the fact that during the first two Plans gross profits in most industries increased more than threefold while the nominal earnings of workers increased by about 50 per cent. The particularly rapid expansion of large companies confirms that the big bourgeoisie has reaped the greatest advantage from

this development. For instance, Tata and Birla not only retain the leading positions they held before Independence but have in fact become still more powerful. Between 1951 and 1958 the capital stock controlled by the four big groups (Tata, Birla, Burn, Dalmia-Jain) rose from 22 to 26 per cent of the total capital of non-governmental companies. Significantly there has also been increasing merger of bank capital with industrial capital. In 1963, for example, 188 directors of the 20 biggest banks (holding 75 per cent of bank capital) possessed 1,640 directorships of enterprises. Even the nationalization of the Reserve Bank of India and the Imperial Bank of India as well as some insurance companies has strengthened rather than diminished the influence of the Indian big bourgeoisie by, for example, eliminating foreign capital's control of the Imperial Bank and the insurance companies. We should also note that the State power has up till now been more or less successful in avoiding major clashes within the bourgeoisie by its economic policies of bestowing favours on all the strata of the capitalist class (though undoubtedly favouring the big more than the small bourgeoisie). For example some agrarian measures have been taken to hasten the development of rural capitalism; the State Bank and the State controlled financial institutions have helped the smaller enterprises, and the development of credit co-operatives, State trading etc. has helped the development of agricultural capitalism as well as small industrial capitalism.

All this does not of course mean that foreign capital has lost much ground to Indian capital. Generally speaking the planning period is characterized by a closer collaboration between domestic and foreign capital as manifested, for example, in numerous financial, credit and technical agreements. As regards foreign investment its rate of increase, from 1953 to 1958, was the same as that of aggregate capital invested by joint stock companies, suggesting that the quantitative relation between

Indian and foreign capital did not change. As regards India's foreign debt it increased by 300 per cent between 1948 and 1959. The movement continued during the Third Plan. India's industrial production itself has developed in such a way and under such conditions that simply to maintain the present output level more imports are required than India can pay for by her exports if she is to fulfil her external financial obligations.

Socio-Economic Changes

Professor Bettelheim has an interesting chapter on the effects of the post-independence socio-economic changes on the country's social and political affairs. There he discusses mainly two things—the growing working class struggles through trade unions and strike actions and the relative strength and programmes of the different political parties. The author terminates his study by drawing some broad conclusions. First, the growing disproportions within the Indian economy have resulted in increasing collaboration of Indian capital with foreign capital and the gradual loss of the country's independence. In future there will be more interference by foreign capital in India's economic affairs. "India will be more and more reliant on the United States and obliged to follow the American policy". Secondly, despite the fact that semi-feudal production relations are still predominant over much of the country, the agrarian reforms have accelerated the development of rural and even agricultural capitalism though the movement is undoubtedly slow. Thirdly, whatever economic progress India has achieved—specially in the field of industry—has been possible only under specially favourable conditions not likely to be repeated in most of the underdeveloped countries—vast size of the land with immense resources, a relatively strong bourgeoisie and working class with a number of developed industries at the start of the planning period, the high quality of the professional and technical personnel, the relative political

stability, the help offered by the Western imperialist as well as the European socialist countries. India has indeed shown, by her *negative* example, that the underdeveloped countries have only one way of ensuring rapid economic development—changing the existing property relations and taking the socialist road.

In fine let us add that Professor Bettelheim's brilliant summing up of India's post-independence developments remains somewhat incomplete in the absence of any mention in the book of some significant developments that have come to the fore in recent years.

First, there has been increasing export of surplus capital by Indian monopoly capitalists, specially in the countries of Asia and Africa, thus showing the growing strength as well as the exploiting character of the Indian big bourgeoisie. Exact figures are difficult to come by but we have an idea of the so-called overseas ventures where the Government of India has allowed the participation of Indian capitalists. In nine countries of Asia and eight of Africa the Government has allowed participation in a vast range of industries such as cotton, jute and woollen textile mills, engineering industries, sugar, manufacture of trucks and tractors, steel mill, pharmaceutical plant, sewing machines, chemicals etc. About forty groups of industrialists are to participate in these ventures, the lion's share, not unexpectedly, going to the Birlas. The second development is the changed perspective of the Soviet aid to India. In the context of its global strategy of isolating China: the USSR, persisting in championing the myth of India's 'non-alignment', is in fact trying to strengthen the position of the Indian ruling classes by its economic and political aid even at the expense of the emerging revolutionary forces within India. The third development is the widespread struggle of the peasantry against the landlords which in some cases has not remained within the confines of 'economism'—in the sense, for example, of redistribution of land—but has raised basic *political* questions. This is specially the case with

the heroic struggle of the peasantry in the Darjeeling district of Bengal and Srikakulam district in Andhra. This, as is well known, has caused a further radicalization and split in the Indian communist movement, the dominant section of the leadership—both 'right' and 'left'—denouncing the struggles as petty-bourgeois adventurism while a section of the ranks—still a minority—hailing them as the harbinger of revolution. The fourth development is the struggle of the minority nationalities in Kashmir, Nagaland and Mizoland against the Indian ruling classes which have not hesitated, through their State machinery, to exercise the worst armed repression against them. The attitude of indifference, if not of tacit approval, of the communist leadership—both 'right' and 'left'—to this repressive policy has also been conspicuous.

The above comments do not, however, in any way detract from the value of Professor Bettelheim's remarkable book. Its only serious defect is its prohibitive price and we hope a cheaper edition would come out to enable the left in India to study this important work.

Reporting Holi !

N. K. SINGH

THIS journalist, listening to his radio on the night of Holi, fell into a dream and heard various foreign radio stations on the subject of Holi).

VOICE OF AMERICA : The poor Indian people celebrate every year a festival named Holi. They celebrate it to show their anger against communism and they paint the mouth of local communists black. Actually this festival was invented against communism by the peacelovers of India. The story behind the festival :

There was an old king named Hiranyakashyipu. His son (poor little chap), while in school, became a member of the Student's Federation. The noble king told him many times to break off his relation with the

communists. But like all the other communists, he was also brainwashed, so he did not listen to him. Had he eaten some PL480 wheat he would not have turned into a communist, so believe the scientists of the States. The king tried to punish him many times. But his son was rather like the Negro of the States whom the US Government cannot subdue. According to the report of James Bond 007, the secret agent of our friendly nation UK., the Russians were behind the lad. We sent a copy of this report to the Indian Government (free) and suggested they send a protest note to the USSR. In the long run the king had to burn alive Prahlad, his own son, for the sake of his country. The peace-loving people of India celebrate this day every year as their national festival because this was the day when they became entirely safe from the communist monster.

This year also, like all other years, the people everywhere showed their anger against the communists. They threw not only black colour and red dust but also mud on them.

RADIO PAKISTAN : We have come to know from some reliable sources that in India on the occasion of Holi, the Hindus mixed with colour the blood of the minorities whom they killed. The minorities have protested against this action.

President Ayub Khan, in his special Holi broadcast to the nation, has said that Pakistan is a secular State where people also celebrate, Holi. He gave the burning example of the military and police in Pakistan who have been playing Holi for the last few months.

BBC : This year also India wasted several million rupees during the Holi festival. In this costly festival, grown-ups behave like children and they ruin their clothes by pouring colour on them. (For the information of Londoners we want to make it clear that laundry rates are rather cheap in India. It is doubtful whether they would have played Holi if the laundry were not so cheap).

It is quite clear that all this is just a wastage of money as well as human labour. But how can India manage to spend so much only on colours ? It seems that she is still rich and her

claim that the British regime ruined her is false. When the UK was ruling India (on purely a voluntary basis) it had never let her waste so much on Holi. Even in 1942, the last days of the Imperial regime, Holi in India was not celebrated. Anyway, for the sake of our old relations we want to serve India again for her progress and prosperity.

With good wishes from the people of England.

RADIO PEACE & PROGRESS : Our friendly nation India has celebrated her revolutionary festival Holi during the past few days. In this revolutionary festival, people showed their love for Marxism-Leninism by wearing red clothes. The rich and the poor both celebrated it. This thing shows that communism can come just through peaceful means, and China's contention that there should be a class struggle is entirely wrong.

Thanks to the victory of the Communist Party in Bengal, the proletariat was more happy this year and they had been making preparations for Holi. Under the leadership of the Communist Party of India, a meeting has been arranged to show their love for the USSR and communism. They call it in Hindi, "Mahamurkha Sammelan". As all the translators have gone to Czechoslovakia to save Socialism, we cannot produce its English term.

One of the CIA agents went to a place called Barsana in India and there with the help of American dollars he managed to beat some militant communist workers with the help of some of the reactionary women in the name of old customs. The Indian Government has sent a protest note to the imperialist US government against this action.

Holi shows that soon the people of India will begin to vote for the Communist Party.

Wife Taming : Two Variations

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

HOW should one react to a new film-maker's work if the film fails to come up to one's expectation? Should he skirt the real issues by non-committal phrases or by an indulgent pat on the back, or should he vent his real feelings in a mood of constructive criticism without being spiteful?

This is just the problem with *Natun Pata*, the first film directed by Dinan Gupta, a more-than-competent cameraman who has played quite an important role in the evolution of a modern school of cinematography in West Bengal. The director has courage, sincerity and an urge to do something new. But even with all these, the film remains the sum total of certain negative qualities, without becoming a positive artistic achievement. Most of the major vices are absent; no stars, no song, no box-office formula as such, no gross comedy. But while the absence of all these things seems alright, the critic gropes to find the presence of some ingredients of a good film, but ultimately he ends in despair. The scenario dealing with the transition of a tomboy from adolescence to womanhood is just a compendium of ill-digested influences. The plot-structure is flawed by the lack of dramatic ups and downs (mind you, the film-maker is not in for any sort of de-dramatisation though!) and the whole scenic treatment is over-literary. The visual interpretation of the bitter-sweet days of the heroine's wild adolescence and her difficult and complex journey to blooming youth after her marriage is poor and half-hearted. Much time has been wasted on trifles and no attempt has been made to analyse in visual terms the girl's mental make-up and her relationship with her husband, the gradual growth of a rapport between the tamer and the tamed, so that the whole thing ultimately becomes a pointless, patched-up and hasty affair.

With all her vile tongue and her

rough tempers, Shakespeare's Katherina is a likeable shrew and Elizabeth Taylor in Franco Zeifferelli's adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew* lends a kind of buxom elegance to this fair lady of Padua. The film itself looks like a top-class visual tapestry, teeming with life, gusto and rhythm. It is surprising and yet true that almost all the successful screen adaptations of Shakespeare have come from outside the bard's own land. The reason for this odd phenomenon may be the fact that the non-British film-makers generally work under less restricted conditions. They are less fearful of the pundits watching the purity of Shakespeare's words. The British film-makers in their obsession with words have often let the visual warmth go by default, with the result that at best their films are just competent translations, not original works of art. But the non-English film-makers treat Shakespeare as the basic raw material (as Shakespeare dealt with his own plots) and with a penetrating mind unearth the visual poetry lying underneath the wordy description. Zeifferelli has done so and his film on the "lusty wench" of Padua is an independent artistic creation. The scenes of Petruchio's wooing Katherina on the roof or the wedding in the Church have a ballet-like grandeur. The whole process of the taming and the episodes of Bianca with her three suitors literally choke one with laughter. Oswald Morris' colour photography has a kind of peculiar charm, making even the painted backdrops breathe with life. Zeifferelli has been able to extract from the Burton-Taylor couple their best performance to date and even to infuse a tongue-in-cheek quality in the rendering of Katherina's sermon on the duties of women in the final scene.

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Salute To Gutenberg

By AN ART CRITIC

THE Art of Printing transforms the World.' An exhibition held at the Calcutta Information Centre was one of the most fascinating of its kind ever seen in Calcutta. With the help of only fifty exhibits, it depicted the entire history of writing from about 2000 B.C., and the history of printing from block books and The Gutenberg Bible to the modern paperback. The exhibition was organised by the Government of GDR to mark the five-hundredth death anniversary of Johannes Gutenberg (1400-1468), the inventor of printing.

The exhibits comprised illustrations from illuminated manuscripts, enlarged in black and white, of monks copying holy books in the Scriptorium, lively old woodcuts and superb metal engravings from early books, reproductions of title pages and pages from great printed books, including the first and the greatest of them all, The Gutenberg Bible (1452-1455). And in the midst of it all, there was the picture of the man who started it all, Gutenberg, the Mainz goldsmith, a magnificent portrait, done by A. Thevet, in 1584, over a century after his death.

Flower Studies

H. Sarvaiya, a young Bombay Bombay advocate, held an exhibition of what he called his 'impressionist flower studies', at the Academy from March 3 to 9. Looking at the pictures it seemed that the artist used the word 'impressionist' to suggest that some of his flowers were not to be found in nature. There were, however, flowers that were readily recognisable: roses, dahlias and sun-flowers, for instance. All these paintings showed professional competence in the handling of oils. Some had interesting textural effects being drawn with colours straight from the tube or with the spatula. While the drawing was good, it was colour that made Sarvaiya's flowers bloom with a vibrant glow.

Advertising Artists

Nine Artists from Clarion-McCann held a group show at the Academy from March 3 to 9. In a brief but rather muddled note the artists described their sally into the domain of fine arts as a sort of 'busman's holiday'. It is indeed commendable that they have despite their hectic preoccupation with layouts and illustrations for advertisement, found time to paint less contingent themes such as portraits, flowers and landscapes. Of the forty paintings displayed, those of Shyamal Bose and Prabir Sen Gupta stood out. The former's paintings in pale yellow and the latter's four small collages were attractive. Among the others, Benode Karmakar exhibited a lovely flower study and Tapas Datta a beautiful landscape showing two figures in a rain. Of the two pieces of sculptures by Amal Ghosh, the larger one entitled 'Affection', an unusual study on the Mother and Child theme, was pleasing.

Abstractions

Hiran Mitra, who is holding his 'exposition' of paintings, water colours and sketches at the Birla Academy until March 16, is uncompromisingly non-figurative. The ground colour of his paintings change. But whether it is red and orange, blue, yellow, grey or what have you, a large number of paintings have snake-like lines and lines that resemble bits of twisted wire scattered to create patterns. In some others, circles and geometric shapes replace fluid lines.

The aim of the artist is presumably to evoke a pleasing vibration in the minds of the beholder through a riot of colours as in the gigantic "Explosive Man", easily one of the largest canvases seen in many a morn, "The First Cry," "Approaching lines I and II," "Animated space" and so on. But Mitra also seems a tireless user of words to explain his strings of existence, the 'expression of—Intention in the Paintings', and his scientific thinking in art. As to whether these help to gain a deeper grasp of his paintings is, of course, doubtful.

Letters

What The UF Can Do

I take this opportunity to congratulate the people of West Bengal on their victory. I am looking up to the UF Government and wish it every success.

West Bengal is different from Kerala in one major respect. It is about the most industrialised State in India and as such the most advanced. This offers the UF Government a big opportunity. Briefly, it can completely overhaul the industrial units owned wholly or substantially by the State Government, de-bureaucratise them and initiate a productivity drive offering the workers the major share of the increased earnings. Very off-hand I can say that it will not be impossible to double the production within two years. The earnings of workers will also increase accordingly.

In the private sector, the unions (most of which must be led and guided by the major parties in the UF) should offer responsive cooperation to those industrialists who are prepared to launch a productivity drive to benefit both the workers and industrialists. Both sides must act in good faith. After all the communists talked of "alliance with the national bourgeoisie" and of a national democracy based on cooperation between the proletariat, the peasantry, intellectuals, the petty bourgeoisie, medium capitalists and the healthier, non-monopolist and non-collaborationist elements among the comparatively big capitalists. The time to put this into practice has come.

The fear that a Marxist will become less of a Marxist if he cooperates with capitalists must be overcome. A Marxist must and does realise that capitalism plays a significant role in taking us towards socialism. Then there are capitalists and capitalists. None of them may be ideal but there are many who genuinely desire to raise the living standards of workers and share profits with them. Such capitalists must be given a fair deal. In fact, they must be pointed

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out as an example to others. The workers must extend their hand of cooperation to such industrialists. There is no need to dig up the past too much.

When the UF Government has successfully started the productivity drive in State-owned units and improved the atmosphere in the private sector, it should go in for a rapid advance towards socialism by opening new industries in the public sector and also by acquiring those units which do not conform to the progressive norms laid down for capitalist enterprises in a State of conscious and awakened people, that is West Bengal.

A. R. SHERVANI
Allahabad

"Off Balance"

I have been following your paper since its inception and had developed great esteem for its fearless and challenging criticism, when necessary, of all the political parties. But since the total victory of the UF in the mid-term poll, the balance so long maintained by your paper has been lost. Your unabashed and all-out praise for the UF, particularly its foremost constituent, the CPI(M), is almost embarrassing. If the UF can be called a party, as Mr Ajoy Mukherjee claims it to be, then your paper can be described as its official organ.

Why this sudden metamorphosis ?

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Is it for any immediate quid pro quo or do you sincerely believe that the UF, a conglomeration of so many diverse parties with different antagonistic ideologies forming an opportunistic alliance to capture the Ministry, can really bring about a basic change or deliver the goods ?

You have a sneering attitude to the Communist Revolutionaries for giving the 'boycott' call and you dare them not to be so "snooty about the people", particularly when they have been "unable to spell out an alternative programme", I will not enter into a controversy about the programme, which I believe they have (unlike the 32-point vote-catching election programme) but which you think they don't, but as for people, note what Lenin has to say: "You must not sink to the level of the masses, to the backward strata of the class. That is incontestable. You must tell them the bitter truth. You must call their bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices—prejudices. But at the same time, you must soberly follow the actual state of class consciousness and preparedness of the whole class (not only its communist vanguard) of all the working people (not only of their advanced elements". (*Left-wing Communism*).

This is exactly what the Communist Revolutionaries are doing and it is in this context that the political implications of the 'boycott' slogan should be understood.

R. GHOSH
Calcutta

September Strike

The UF Ministry in West Bengal has decided to withdraw the cases against Central Government employees involved in the one-day token strike of September 19 last year. Kerala took the first step and Punjab is considering the same course. What about Assam? The Union Government's announcement of January 4 that all those whose part in the strike was confined to absence from duty would be taken back even if they were arrested, prosecuted or convicted. But out of 82 victimised in the office of the Accountant General, Assam and Nagaland, only 3 have been taken back. Some are accused of having instigated others. But who instigated whom in the office of the Accountant General, where more than 98 per cent of the staff went on strike? It is also on record that in Shillong there was no picketing, no acts of violence. The ordinance and orders of the Union Home Ministry laid down that departmental authorities could take action against those arrested by the police or involved in cases. But the A.G., Assam and Nagaland, terminated the services of 24 persons and placed 42 others under suspension though they were not involved in any police case. The families of some 79 persons are facing starvation. It is high time democratic forces raised their voice against the existing situation.

AN EMPLOYEE
Shillong

Congress MPs

In view of the huge majority of the UF in the West Bengal Assembly it is quite likely that the people may like to recall those MPs who do not belong to the UF. I wonder how the Congress MPs from West Bengal can carry the people's conviction when their party has become an insignificant minority in the State Legislature ?

A. RAMA CHARI
Calcutta

Combine Ticket

As the Calcutta Tramways and most of the Calcutta bus services are, for quite some time, being run by the West Bengal Government, it should be possible to introduce a combined monthly ticket system for both. As for allocation of the revenue earned combined between the two services, an agreed formula should not be too difficult to work out.

A combined monthly ticket would be welcomed by both passengers and conductors as also the administrators of the transport systems.

A. DATTA, N. K. GHOSH
Calcutta

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