

frontier

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BATTLE OF DATES

THE six-party combination led by the CPM and the eight-party combination led by the CPI seem alike not only in name but in programme also. In their case a quantitative change does not make for a qualitative change. They are inheritors also of the blind hatred of the two communist parties for each other which is urging them on to a policy of mutual strife and debilitation to the delight of the non-left. It has been known all along that the *raison d'être* of the two combinations is the antagonism between the CPM and the CPI. If their relations were different, even the UF would not have fallen; for, by itself, the Bangla Congress is no longer a major factor in West Bengal politics. It ceased to be so after the betrayal of 1967 and has, since then, kept up a pretence of a worthwhile existence by leaning on one crutch or another. If the Bangla Congress finds a berth in the eight-party combination, it will be accommodated for the sole reason that one more voice will be added to the strident chorus against the CPM. Mr Ajoy Mukherjee's so-called condition for joining the eight-party combination is meaningless, for the alliance cannot take to any other course. It lives on hatred of the CPM which reciprocates the attitude with equal venom. All other considerations are secondary to both, though they are trying to put attractive labels on their antagonism and pass their private war as a struggle waged in the interest of the people. Their concern for the jobless in closed factories, the evicted bargadar in the fields, and the hapless victims of police repression is a make-believe; they are chanting fiery slogans and formulating elaborate demands to conceal their preparations for what each hopes will be a knock-out win over the other.

There could be no second reason for the two Bangla bandhs called by the two alliances later this month. Bandhs have been called so frequently in the past with so little effect that they have lost much of their value even as a forceful gesture of protest. West Bengal has travelled a long way since 1966; two dismal regimes of the UF intervene, and the people know that however magnificently they may rally behind the left parties on the occasion of either a bandh or a general election, they cannot prevent the parties from falling apart. Their participation in bandhs has now become apolitical; some do it out of fear, others merely for an extra holiday. Those who lose a day's wages as a result console them-

selves that the price has not been heavier. But never before have two bandhs—at the time of going to press no postponement or cancellation has been announced by the EPC—been called in the course of a single week; nor have bandhs been called before for a matching of strength between two hostile groups of left-parties—a hostility which can be reduced ultimately to the rivalry between the CPM and the CPI. Even the bandh called by the CPM on March 17 in protest against Mr Ajoy Mukherjee's resignation does not provide an exact parallel; the CPI had not then called a counter-bandh, but the half-joined battle had cost 35 lives.

From the ridiculous manoeuvres over the dates of the two bandhs it is clear that the sponsors are not looking forward to peaceful observance of these. When the six-party alliance announced its decision to call a bandh in July, the eight-party alliance had scoffed at the proposal; a bandh was a distant possibility in its programme, to be held, if necessary, some time in August. But the eight parties had second thoughts when the rival group decided tentatively to stage the bandh on July 20. Not to be outdone, they decided in a hurry to call one on July 16. The six parties have countered by advancing the date of their bandh to July 14, a historic date, though a siege of Fort William is not on the agenda. Obviously, there is a race between the two groups to call a bandh earlier than the other. Are both convinced that the other will oppose actively, and perhaps violently, the bandh called by it and the sponsors of the first bandh will have an alibi to retaliate during the second? The issue at stake is on which group will devolve the responsibility for spilling the first drop of blood. If the parties were really earnest in using the bandhs to wrest some of their legitimate demands from the Centre, totally different considerations would have gone into their timing. The instant-bandhs are designed to wreck each other; that is why no preparation seems to be necessary for them.

Land Grab Festival

The CPI is out to prove that it is not what its critics make it out to be, namely, a parliamentary party. Despite its belief that the ruling class will be progressively forced to shake off its reactionary character through mass movements, it does think that sometimes extra-parliamentary activities are also necessary. The land grab movement initiated on July 1 is one such proof to establish the fact that its activities are not wholly restricted within parliamentary policies.

Even though there is something extraordinarily hollow about the present land grab movement of the CPI, there is no denying that the CPI has imbibed militancy, to some extent, in West Bengal. There have been several armed clashes between the jotedars and the CPI-led peasants and some land forcibly occupied. If this be an indication that the Naxalites and the tactics of the CPM had caused an indent on the CPI composition, the land grab movement should be welcome. But keeping in mind the character of the CPI leadership, it will be hard to become enthusiastic overmuch.

The idea that a land occupation movement could start simultaneously all over India on a particular date to reach a fixed target is, the CPI ad men should realise, poor dramatics. The idea presumes that the jotedar-peasant relationship is uniform all over India, that the CPI has got its organisational structure streamlined throughout the country, that the peasants have reached uniform revolutionary consciousness through the length and breadth of the sprawling peasant societies in the country. The presumptions are totally ludicrous.

No doubt, the peasants in West Bengal have partially shaken off their traditional torpor, and the CPI has had some role to play in transforming their character. Even then, the CPI claim that half of the three lakh acres of surplus and vested land were occupied by the CPI-led peasants during the two UF regimes re-

mains to be substantiated. What, however, about the rest of the country? The CPI leaders were themselves surprised by the stern threat given by Mr Karunanidhi because the land grab movement was supposed to be a token movement in Tamil Nadu where the CPI has no mentionable base. The same applies in U.P., Gujarat, Mysore and Rajasthan where the programme to grab the estates of the Birlas, Morarji Desais and the princes was entirely symbolic. The fact that the Rajasthan Government arrested half a dozen peasants in Rajasthan was immensely flattering to the CPI. In West Bengal too the movement started on July 1 and the next fine morning the CPI woke up to find that 50,000 bighas had been captured. There was something incredibly magical about this land grab machine!

The Naxalites may not take in good humour the CPI notion that its land grab movement is a mass and national extension of the Naxalbari struggle. The Naxalites believe in armed struggle and people's war because the present political structure of India does not warrant softpedalling. Armed struggle or people's war is however wholly an anathema to the CPI religion. The CPI may believe that it is living up to the core of Marxism that violence is necessary only when violence is employed to repress the revolutionaries. The CPI may believe that the ruling class is not employing, generally speaking, violent methods to repress the communists and therefore peaceful transition to socialism is possible. In fact, the CPI land-grabbers believe that, barring a few cases, the jotedars will voluntarily surrender their land and the power ensuing from land. Mr Biswanath Mukherjee is on record that since July 1, jotedars are on their own surrendering their land to the CPI land-grabbers! There is certainly no connection between this faith and the Naxalite philosophy.

The CPI land grab movement, again, primarily rests on the belief that the government will be persuaded to restore land to the tillers, to fix new land ceilings and to stop evic-

tion of sharecroppers. Its programmatic aims are categorically stated to be such. This CPI belief about the transformation of the bourgeois-landlord combine, which is amenable to persuasion, goes wholly against the Naxalite understanding of the State machinery, as it operates now in India.

Doves And Hawks

Late last month Senator Fulbright was annoyed no end to discover that Nixon is an extremely non-aggressive and peaceable man. To the bewilderment of Fulbright it was Nixon's own crony, Senator Dole, who sponsored a move the Senate doves had planned long in advance—the repeal of the Tonkin Gulf resolution which authorised the President “to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the U.S. and prevent further aggression”. After this voluntary renunciation of the Tonkin Gulf resolution—a Congressional blank cheque for unlimited military commitment in Asia—by the administration, the other dovish move, the Church-Cooper amendment to clip the President's war-making wings, lost much of its bite. Of course, there has never been any fundamental divergence between the American doves and hawks on the question of maintaining the American empire. This time too the backers of the Church-Cooper amendment very reasonably cut out the original clause of the amendment that ruled out the use of the American air force in Cambodia after July 1. They might be doves but they could not simply overlook the danger General Lon Nol's regime would face once left without the protective screen of American bombs. No wonder the hawks and doves alike in the Senate voted enthusiastically for the amendment.

Senators of all hues agree that in the present era the best means of preserving the American empire at minimum cost is to take a back

seat and let the local mercenaries do the business for them. Apart from footing the bill, Washington's contribution to the defence of the ‘free world’ would be bombs dropped from a safe altitude. And this is exactly what Nixon has prescribed for Cambodia. In his recent White Paper he has given a stirring call to the Asian nations to send men and materiel for the defence of Cambodia while he has assigned to the U.S. the role of “interdictory bombing”.

Already 34,000 South Vietnamese troops are digging in in Cambodia for a long stay. A new air base has been built inside Cambodia along the South Vietnamese border to serve as operational headquarters. Neak Luong on the Mekong is being developed into a full-fledged aero-naval base for the South Vietnamese troops. The first such base in South Vietnam built by Americans was Cam Ranh and now most appropriately their South Vietnamese minions have renamed Neak Luong Cam Ranh II. The other faithful American lackeys, the Thais, have also joined the fray in Cambodia. That all these sundry mercenaries owe everything from boot laces to bullets to the Americans would shock only those who take the Church-Cooper amendment too seriously.

True, the amendment prohibits the use of American money for financing mercenaries in Cambodia. But resourceful Nixon has enough means at his command to achieve exactly the same without dishonouring the amendment in the least. Thai troops, for example, can claim to be operating not with American but SEATO support. General Lon Nol too has done his bit of providing cannon fodder by ordering a general mobilisation. Washington meanwhile has rushed \$7.9 million worth of weapons and munitions to Phnom Penh. All seem well set for trying out the Nixon doctrine of Asians fighting Asians. The only minor change in the scenario is the bargaining that is going on in Phnom Penh between the leader of the Australian mercenaries and General Nol for their service in Cambodia.

With the blessing of the Senate doves the Pentagon also reserves the right of “interdictory bombing” which means free use of gas, napalm, phosphorous bombs and rockets against Cambodian villages which are under the control of the National United Front. When asked if such measures would not endanger the lives of Cambodian civilians a Pentagon spokesman assured that it would be “less than the danger of being overwhelmed by the Vietcong.” Americans, moreover, are kind enough to give advance warning to the villagers. As one Reuter despatch from Saigon says, “the American forces have warned Cambodian rice-field workers that they are in danger of being hit if they run for cover or look suspicious when U.S. helicopters fly over them.” No such warning, however, could be given for B-52 raids from an altitude of 30,000 feet. In such cases Cambodian peasants living in liberated villages will have to pay with their lives for the evil company they keep.

But if the Cambodian peasants refuse to be impressed by the ‘Vietnamisation’ of Cambodia and the Nixon doctrine for Asia then, as General Lon Nol has hinted, the Americans may have to return to take full charge of the genocide.

Moves In Mid-East

A close look at the peace proposals emanating from Washington and Moscow or the TV interview of President Nasser by Harvard Law Professor Roger Fisher will show that everyone is approximating to a position in an effort to solve the Middle East crisis “peaceably”. The flurry of activities in major world capitals followed the recent clashes between a section of the Jordanian army and the Palestinian commandos when the Hashemite monarch Hussein had to fire two of his relatives, Army Commander Sherif Nasser Ben Jamil and a divisional commander, Zaid Ben Shaker. In another apparent concession to the commandos, the former Foreign

Minister, Abdel Monem Rifai, has been made the head of a new Government which includes several members favourably disposed to the Palestinian movement. In the situation as it now prevails in Amman, Hussein's survival depends on the wish of the commandos. Both Dr Habbash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Mr Hawatmeh of the Democratic Front said they would not take measures aimed at dethroning Hussein if the King would disband Jordan's special forces. But certain army officers are waiting on the fence to swoop down on the guerillas, for they believe that the present regime dominated by the Bedouin Arabs will not survive long in the face of rising extremist violence. Moreover, the PFLP—an independent revolutionary political party ideologically based on Marxism-Leninism—has made it clear that co-operation with the enemies of socialism is not on its cards. Neither could it think of agreements between the resistance movement and Arab governments that restricted the area and scope of operations. Unlike the Al Fatah whose aims are to unite the Palestinians, wherever they may live, inculcate a sense of pride among them and continue the guerilla struggle until a secular Palestine State is recreated, the PFLP has a more broad-based programme. Besides fighting the political, economic and military apparatus of Israel, which represents the interests and the reactionary politics of imperialism, it proposes to revolutionise the structure of Palestinian society in Jordan as well as in the occupied West Bank. Mr Arafat was caught on the wrong foot when he pressed for an agreement with King Hussein while the PFLP members were busy cutting the Jordanian army to size. A foreign diplomat in Amman said that the "good doctor was the big winner in the clashes." It should be noted that while the commando organizations have a common objective in the liberation of Palestine, there remain important differences in their attitudes to Arab States, imperialism and the Russian involvement in the

Middle East.

After some weeks of prevarication, the U.S. Administration has made a public announcement that it would replace the lost Israeli aircraft. This is as good as supplying the additional Skyhawks and Phantoms wanted by Tel Aviv. The decision has been couched in a language so as not to spawn anti-American demonstrations in Arab States. The Nixon Administration has taken a "liberal view" of the Russian meddling in the Middle East; it rejects the notion that the Russians want to "crush Israel" or seize control of the Suez

Canal by force. The main planks of the American peace proposals are a cease-fire, a fire-free zone in the Suez area, acceptance of the 1967 Security Council resolution by both sides, and resumption of Dr Jarring's toing and froing mission. As if to lower the strategic temperature in the Middle East, Russia says that her new peace plan would take effect before total Israeli withdrawal. She also undertakes to guarantee the territorial integrity of Israel, in the hope that Arab Governments would be able to curb Palestinian activities. But this is wishful thinking.

View from Delhi

The New Kitchen

FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ONE might be justified in dismissing Mrs Indira Gandhi's conflicting statements on the possibility of ahead-of-schedule Lok Sabha elections as a dummy manoeuvre to force the rightist parties to declare their strategy prematurely or a mere pressure tactic to hold her own party together following the Cabinet reshuffle. But Mr C. Achutha Menon's deft move to isolate the Marxists in Kerala by seeking fresh elections to the State Assembly suggests a well-planned link up of the CPI-Congress(R) strategies as part of the grand plan for a so-called left of centre coalition at the Centre. It should suit Mrs Gandhi fine to have Assembly elections in as many States as possible to synchronise with the expected Lok Sabha elections. The West Bengal Assembly can be dissolved at will and the ministries in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar toppled to make fresh elections inevitable there.

Mrs Gandhi's strategy however would depend on many imponderables. First, she has to secure the merger of the BKD into her party if she has to win in Uttar Pradesh. The strategy for her party has to be worked out first. Her attacks on the Jana

Sangh appear designed to prevent a Congress(O)-Jana Sangh electoral alliance. On the whole Mrs Gandhi might succeed in preventing a general anti-Congress united front of all the opposition parties. Anti-Congressism should not be allowed to assert itself as the sole motive force behind the election strategy of the opposition parties. If she is sure of this, she can afford to gamble.

There appears to be a concerted move by the Moscow lobby to hustle her into early Lok Sabha elections at the end of which she would be compelled to seek a formal coalition with some of the left parties. All the kite-flying about the possibility of such elections was done on her behalf by the lobby. Her own Patna address to party workers was meant to be the sounding board, to assess party reaction to an early poll. Her formal dependence on the CPI (which hopes to do better with the Congress-R support) would become inevitable once this Lok Sabha is dissolved. This is what Moscow would like to see happen with the age of national democratic front governments (the result of the 20th CPSU Congress revisionism) ushered in in the Third World.

In the view of many, the recent drastic reshuffle of the portfolios to get for herself a new-look kitchen pre-sages early elections. But one fails to see the logical connection here. At best, Mrs Gandhi is trying to build her own image and in the process consciously denigrate her potential rivals. The supremacy of the Prime Minister, allegedly demonstrated by her decision to switch portfolios (Mr Chavan dared not oppose and Mr Dinesh Singh quietly gave in) is as significant as her inability to drop some of the dead wood. All the Birla men in the Council of Ministers continue to be there.

Mr Chavan has suffered the denigration in stoic silence. At the Delhi AICC his humiliation was complete when he was not a participant in the two major debates involving his ministry, communalism and the political situation. Mrs Gandhi perhaps had decided that she was going to do the tilting at 'right reaction and left adventurism' and not Mr Chavan. Similarly, Mr Dinesh Singh was sidelined in the foreign policy debate and it was to be Mr Swaran Singh's show.

The point has come when Mrs Gandhi cannot do anything dramatic on the economic front. She has tagged her name to the two major measures to come—the privy purse bill (a Chavan baby to begin with) and urban property ceilings. It would be a thankless job for Mr Chavan to implement the economic programme and get all the blame for the tardiness. On her part, Mrs Gandhi would be content to concentrate the vast powers of the Home Ministry in her own hands. Mr Jagjivan Ram did not get the Deputy Prime Ministership he wanted. Defence is poor consolation

because a political lightweight like Mr Swaran Singh could hold it for years without any controversy. The Jagjivan Ram-Chavan fight for the Number 2 position has been kept alive and Mrs Gandhi is very safe for the moment. Short of dropping Mr Chavan from the Cabinet, offering him Finance (which hitherto has been the Prime Minister's part-time job) is what she could have done and she did it. Easing Mr Chavan out, it was thought at one time, would lead to a civil war in Maharashtra. But the myth has dissolved and the Chhatrapati has been cut to size.

The nation now awaits Mrs Gandhi to sally forth to fight "right reaction" and "left communalism" when she can find a few moments between the endless politicking. Her anxiety about the Jana Sangh reflects an anxiety to win the Hindi belt which is a must if she has to head a coalition.

With a power adjustment-cum-coalition with the CPI, the DMK and the BKD (and possibly the Bangla Congress) now certain, Mrs Gandhi might well attempt to fight the CPI (M). The Delhi resolution deliberately uses the phrase left adventurism because it can be stretched to cover the Marxists. In fact some speakers even wanted the reference to the Naxalites deleted so that the Naxalites are not the only target of the Government.

The polarisation among the Young Turks is complete. The Chavan group of Young Turks (former PSP men and non-cryptos generally) are nowhere in the picture and the plums naturally go to the Moscow lobby Young Turks. Mr Dange can pat himself on the back over this achievement and the national democratic front is coming at least. His "Delhi Chalo!" slogan of 1967 is credible at last but it would be interesting to see who (Mr Dange or Mr Bhupesh Gupta) would be the Deputy Prime Minister in the grand coalition. Or both, Soviet style, and a few more Deputy PMs thrown in, for a Jyoti Basu or a Namboodiripad who might yet recant and return to the fold.

Kerala

Power Without Responsibility

RAMJI

IT had all the trappings of a coup. Obviously, the hot line between Indira Gandhi and the Kerala Governor and the Chief Minister Achutha Menon worked to such effect that in a twinkling they were able to spring a surprise on both the public and the legislators of Kerala. Now everything is safe and secure for Menon and his Cabinet gang and with power securely in their hands they are able to lay down some arbitrary rules of democracy and get away with it all. In 1959, the Governor dismissed a Ministry under E.M.S., which had enjoyed a majority and dissolved the Assembly. Now it is the other way round. On the individual advice of a Chief Minister, who did not even consult his colleagues in the mini-front Ministry, the Governor went ahead in a lightning move and dissolved the Assembly, without caring to check up whether the Chief Minister was acting in good faith or whether he had any title to give such a recommendation. It was plain as pikestaff that the Chief Minister gave this advice in order to wriggle out of an internal crisis in the mini-front; the uncompromising hostility between the PSP and ISP groups. Either the one or the other was about to leave the front. In addition, four MLAs of the CPI itself had decided to leave the front. These would have reduced the Ministry to a minority.

After the dissolution of the Assembly Mr Menon has again started to indulge in tall and glib promises. But it is difficult to understand how he can make his writ run. Without an Assembly and without representing anybody except the rump of leaders in the Cabinet, it is not mandatory on the part of the Governor to accept any advice from a Ministry without a legislature to back it up. Quickly enough, the Governor

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CORRECTION

Primila Lewis's article in the last issue should have been entitled 'Conspiracy Against Southern Africa'.

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has made it clear to the Ministry that it is not possible for it to issue any fresh ordinances and that even the existing ordinances are in danger of lapsing, since it is not possible to get these ratified by an elected Assembly. The Ministry now finds itself thoroughly impotent, being reduced to the level of mere advisers to the Governor. Mr Achutha Menon has quoted the Indian Constitution to cover his shameless technique of clinging on to power after the dissolution of the Assembly. Nowhere in the Indian Constitution has it been laid down that a ministry could continue for six months in power after the dissolution of the Assembly.

The shameless rigmarole in Kerala for which the CPI is mainly responsible, has been concocted to keep the mini-front parties intact. The CPI, without this position in apparent power, would have no leverage with the other parties of the mini-front.

The CPI by remaining in power wants to bargain with other parties from a position of strength, in the matter of seat division and other con-

nected arrangements for the front to face the elections. Already, the mini-front is facing a graver crisis than the one which the CPI staved off with the dismissal of the Assembly. The Kerala Congress, the RSP, the ISP and the Indicate Congress itself, have expressed opinions against the continuance of the Ministry. The trump card of the CPI is obviously its likemindedness and close affinity with the Indicate Congress. On the day the Assembly was dismissed, a top CPI leader came to Cochin for confabs with the Indicate Congress President. The CPI plans to team up with the Indicate Congress. This is regarded with great disfavour by the Kerala Congress and the RSP and in the forthcoming Coordination Committee of the mini-front, which has now become an election committee, this issue is likely to cause disruption.

Mr Menon has promised that he would not remain in power the moment the date of the election is finalised and announced. When he ascended the gaddi he had announ-

ced that if the Ministry had to depend on the support of the Congress, he would resign immediately. It was proved over and over again that the Ministry was abjectly dependent on the Congress, both wings of it. Yet, Menon continued, and continued to claim that he was not obliged to the Congress. And to cap it all, his party worked hard for the victory of the Congress candidate in the Nilanbur by-election.

The indications are that, in spite of opposition even by the mini-front parties, the Menon Ministry will continue to cling to office. The Ministry is now busy dispensing positions and patronage to its favourites. Beyond this the Ministry is incapable of doing anything. But, apart from the image garnered through their present position, the Ministers are well placed to subvert the official machinery to suit the interests of their parties during the coming elections. This, above all, seems to be the rationale behind their shameless antics.



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Is The White Star Waning ?

° RABI SAHU

THEY say India is a land of contrasts. Indeed, this contrast is thrown into sharp relief when one looks at the political landscape of two neighbouring States on the East coast. While extremists are active in West Bengal, neighbouring Orissa boasts of being the only State in India with a princely party in power and the only prince-turned-Chief-Minister in India. The Chief Minister, in his turn, boasts that his is the only coalition ministry in India which has been functioning smoothly since its formation in 1967.

True, the Swatantra-Jana Congress coalition was—and apparently is—functioning smoothly. But a close look reveals that there is already a big fly in the ointment. Dr Harekrishna Mahatab, the Jana Congress king-maker and the enigmatic machiavellian, is no more on good terms with his 'Prince'. Maharajah Singh Deo is playing the big-brotherly role (which his party's majority in the coalition entitles him to do) and this has given Dr Mahatab an embarrassing time, he being pretty senior to Singh Deo in many respects. Mahatab's dream of becoming 'the philosopher and guide' to the coalition Ministry was frustrated and instead of being given the chance to ride the crest of the wave, soon after the Government came to function he found himself in the trough. Hence his discontent and concoction of pretexts for a back-out. In the past, he has tried many times either to break the coalition or to land the Swatantra partner in embarrassing situations. But his designs have been foiled by the joint effort of the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister, Mr Pradhan, who is incidentally the president of Mahatab's party. Till now Mahatab has been operating in his characteristic manner, on the back-

stage. But the bait thrown by Prime Minister Indira (through Nandini Satpathy and Jagjivanji) has proved quite irresistible for him and he has now 'almost' decided to announce his back-out.

Among the English show-biz people there is a superstition that a bad dress rehearsal means a good first-night performance. But Mahatab's dress rehearsal, staged three months back, was not only bad but a pitiable one. Nine Jana Congress MLAs belonging to his group and headed by the party whip wrote an open letter to the party chief threatening to resign from the party as the coalition Ministry had frustrated their socialist dreams. After 24 hours the party whip had second thoughts and he withdrew his support to these dissenters. The rest of the runaways formed a new party. It took three weeks for second thoughts to dawn upon these prodigal sons and they again joined the Jana Congress. This was followed by a bit of hectic 'Aya Ram Gaya Ram' business and after a short spell Orissa politics again assumed its dull, monotonous calm.

Thus ended the dress rehearsal. If Dr Mahatab is still prepared to believe in the English superstition, he can remain cocksure of a box-office hit in his coming first-night performance, for which the stage is being set by two of his leading followers, viz., the present Education Minister and the party whip. On the other hand, Pabitra Mohan Pradhan now owes more allegiance to his Swatantra boss in the Ministry than to his party guru. Till now his main conscience-keeper has been Shri Surendra Patnaik, an important member of the Jana Congress and the present Revenue Minister. But the rumour goes that Shri Patnaik has gone over to Mahatab's fold. If it proves true, then it is highly probable that Mr Pradhan, who is famous for his almost moronic dependence on others for light, cannot remain far behind. Thus there is every chance that the Jana Congress may break with the Swatantra partners. The former may then either merge in

Indira's Congress or may form an alliance with her party. Suppose, the obstinate bachelor, Mr Pradhan, is determined not to break the matrimonial vow which his party took on that sacred Swatantra-Jana Congress wedlock night, then bidding adieu to him and his handful of cronies, Mahatab with his followers may fall in line with the Congress(R) or form a new party—say Jana Congress(O) which will lend support to the Congress(R) inside and outside the Assembly. Whether the Jana Congress leaves the coalition en bloc or just a section of it does so, the Swatantra has to seek alliance with some more parties to remain in power. Only two parties are likely to respond to the SOS of Swatantra—Congress(O) and the newly formed Utkal Congress. But Biju Patnaik has flatly denied that his Utkal Congress will have any truck with the Swatantra. In any case the party or the parties ready to enter into a new coalition with the Swatantra will prove very lean crutches for the latter to rely on and form a new Ministry.

From whatever angle he may observe, any ordinary star-gazer can forecast that the star shining over the Swatantra is an ominous one. With a not very alluring balance-sheet of performance during the three years of its rule and with pauperised partners to depend on, the end of its heyday in its only power pasture in this country is in sight.

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Sarvodaya Versus Naxal

N. K. SINGH

THE Sarvodaya leader, Mr Jaya Prakash Narayan, has declared a crusade against the Naxalites of the Mushahari region of Muzaffarpur District. He has taken a vow that "either my bones would crumble or I shall succeed in my mission"—of curbing the Naxalites.

Mr Narayan arrived in Muzaffarpur cancelling all his tour programmes when he heard that two prominent Sarvodaya workers of Muzaffarpur had received letters threatening that they would be done to death. Mr Narayan decided to meet the Naxalite challenge by intensifying the Bhoodan movement and has selected the Mushahari region, the Naxalite stronghold in Bihar, to start his movement.

The Naxalites did not kill the Sarvodaya workers but instead threw an open challenge to J. P. by shooting Parikshan Singh, a landlord—the 18th murder in their enemy annihilation programme—on June 6 at Mushahari, where just a few hours earlier the Sarvodaya leader had discussed with "prominent" persons of the locality how to counter the Red influence.

According to reports, Mr Narayan wants to bring about radical changes in the village society by removing social and economic disparities by persuading the village community to unite and work for the uplift of all by common consent. Under his programme one-twentieth of the village land (what about the remaining land?) is to be donated and distributed among the landless, who are also to be given homestead land; Bhoodan land is to be restored to evicted Kisans, and other difficulties of the poor and downtrodden "and all forms of exploitation" are to be removed.

This is the programme. But what is J. P. actually saying and doing at Mushahari under the protective umbrella of the armed police, helped by

all the loyal lackeys of landlords? Leaders of all hues are making air dashes to Muzaffarpur nowadays to assure J. P. of their help in his mission.

According to a political worker, who had the honour to attend one of the Bhoodan meetings of J. P., the Sarvodaya leader declared: "You know, how the communists are converted. Those belonging to Hindu families are given beef to eat and Muslims are persuaded to eat pork. (The veteran ex-socialist leader knows how to make his impact on the religious rural folks).

Mushahari Story

Mushahari, the most troubled spot in Bihar, has its own story. The Mushahari peasant struggle—now more than two years old—is considered by the Naxalites as "the turning point in the political situation in Bihar".

The story began in early April 1968 when the ejected sharecroppers of Gangapur, under the Mushahari police station, seized some land. At this, the landlord of Narishingspur organized an attack on the peasants by a gang of 300 armed men. The landlord himself came on an elephant. After a battle which lasted four hours and in which firearms were used by the landlord's men his hired goondas had to flee. A police camp was soon established in the area and several cases were instituted against the peasants. Soon enough, the 'private army' of the landlord under the protective umbrella of the police entered the houses of peasants and in broad daylight committed all sorts of atrocities: raped their womenfolk, beat them up indiscriminately, smashed their huts and plundered their properties.

Class hatred does not die. Peasant guerillas took their revenge in July 1969 when they raided the house of the landlord of Narishingspur, shot him dead and seized his property. Two other persons were killed and 12 injured in this raid. Actually the CPI(ML)'s party committee had blacklisted the landlord long ago and was all the time preparing for an

attack. He was charged with playing the chief role in hunting down revolutionaries during last year's struggle, helping the police in tracing the underground leaders and being instrumental in burning dozens of huts of poor peasants, looting the property of peasants and subjecting them to inhuman torture.

This was the first action in Bihar conducted by the CPI(ML) under their "enemy-annihilation programme". Since then, armed guerilla struggle has spread in seven thanas of Muzaffarpur. Its flames have reached the contiguous areas of Darbhanga and Champaran districts. And now almost the whole of Bihar—specially Purnea, Saharsa, South Monghyr, Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Pakiamau, Singbhum and Shahabad districts—is being churned by revolutionary peasant struggles. In the meantime, the Mushahari struggle has itself reached a new level, i.e., the level of a guerilla zone. To date, about 18 landlords—most of whom had been charged with an anti-people role during the repression of 1968-1969—have been killed in the region. Rajkishore Singh, leader of the struggle, is absconding; an eye-catching award has been announced for his head.

The Mushahari struggle was conducted with the help of traditional weapons during its first stage i.e. before reaching the level of a guerilla zone. Armed with these weapons the peasantry has been fighting hard and repelling the attacks made repeatedly by the State and the landlords.

The Naxalite claim that Mushahari is one of the few places in India where a successful guerilla warfare is being conducted despite savage repression cannot be ignored. The cadres, the party and the people have to face inhuman brutalities. Over 600 peasants have been arrested. Those arrested are invariably beaten up in the lock-ups and forced to sign so-called confessions. Even distant relatives of Naxalite cadres are arrested and charged with murder and dacoity. The properties of many have been seized. Anti-Naxalite cells have been

set up along with a network of spies. Contingents of the Border Security Force, CRP, combatant sections of the BMP, armed Home Guards and Magistrates have been posted in Naxalite-infested areas. Dozens of police camps have been set up and patrolling is intensive. Encirclement and suppression campaigns are on. Besides indiscriminately arming hundreds of landlords, the Government is helping them to organise gangsters' teams to attack peasants and Naxalite cadres. Alluring awards have been declared for the heads of guerrillas.

J. P. can carry on his movement in Mushahari because landlords are donating their land very willingly. But it is not due to any overnight change of heart; the credit goes to Red terror. An example will make this point clear. During his movement J. P. went to a landlord for land donation. He was told: "First, please leave my home or I may be killed by the Naxalites. You can have as much land as you want but please leave".

A leaflet issued on behalf of Mr S. N. Singh, Secretary, Bihar State Committee of the CPI (ML), declares that Mr Narayan is nothing but "a tested and tried agent of the reactionary ruling class. He is a loyal lackey of the landlords, who have now requisitioned his services at Mushahari". Where was he when the police shot dead peasants including children and pregnant women in Naxalbari, when peasants were burnt alive along with their huts by the landlords in Andhra, when Comrade P. Krishnamoorthy, Nirmala Krishnamoorthy and other comrades of Srikakulam were shot dead by the police while under custody, when the police arrested and killed the leaders of the peasantry in Punjab, when the Bihar police raped peasant women in Mushahari, beat up people indiscriminately, smashed their huts and plundered their properties, when the landlords of the Mushahari region with active support of the police dragged and kicked men and women, old and young, in Gangapur and other villages of the region?—asks the statement.

London

The British Election

ANAND KUMAR

PEOPLE get the government they deserve—this is perhaps the kindest thing that could be said about this British election. After weeks of strong opinion poll results for Labour, the Tories have suddenly been voted in with a majority of over 30 seats in the Commons.

This election has seen the tragic defeat, (by a freak swing of 11%) of Jennie Lee, the widow of Bevan, to whom present-day Britain owes a great deal, especially in the field of social services and culture. On the other hand, Enoch Powell, whose emotionalism and irresponsibility have already reached proverbial proportions, romped in with an increased majority. Then, there is the Protestant hate-monger from Ulster, Ian Paisley; and "Mad Mitch" Mitchell who commanded the Argylls in South Yemen, and who is known only for his chauvinism and devotion to his regiment which he is determined to revive.

At the same time, the left-wing actor, Andrew Faulds, and Bernadette Devlin have both been elected. Why, if the opinion polls are to be believed, did the voters come to the polls as flippantly as the flappers of the twenties—and possibly as disastrously?

The pundits who were all prepared for a Labour victory were thrown completely off balance. And during the night, while the computer continued to predict a Tory victory all over the country, they abandoned all their hypotheses and were forced to admit they could not understand what had happened.

As a result, the wildest speculations raged as marginals fell left, right and centre: Powellism, housewives, the latest trade figures and even the

World Cup defeat! Significantly, one aspect was not touched upon: the lack of political awareness in the British electorate. Or as one defeated Labour candidate put it: "It is a squalid victory and a defeat for common sense."

This is clear from the relatively little enthusiasm shown by the electorate in going to the polls. In spite of ideal conditions (good weather and a summer election), the percentage of people voting was down by over three percent. And this at a time when Labour had brought home a five-hundred-million-pound surplus of trade, no mean feat in comparison with the record of postwar British governments.

However, it is clear that they had miscalculated in one important respect: they believed that giving the people the promise of bread tomorrow and circuses today was somehow a substitute for the political education of the British electorate.

Mr Wilson has obviously been the victim of the trap prepared for him by the mass media, whose controllers have perfected the method of creating an image which is live without being directed towards any concrete end. True, Mr Wilson was as dynamic as any brand of soap, and housewives, being less used to politics than soap, decided to choose a new brand for a change.

Labour's election campaign did nothing to change this image. Not only was an early election thrust on the country, but Mr Wilson decided to make it a straight American-style personality contest in which the political issues involved were marginal if not irrelevant. While he certainly stemmed the tide in his own constituency, he could hardly have deluded himself into believing that his aura could protect the whole party!

There was no attempt at either creating an overall understanding of the situation, at least a discussion of it, and the British electorate was left

to sink or swim. And sink it did. For it appears that the perfunctory and not too well-founded accusations of Mr Heath against the Labour Government carried the day.

However, if this were all, the matter would be laughed at and mercifully forgotten till the next election. But it is not so. A considerable number of Tory candidates are avowed supporters of racism and have even campaigned and won on a racist platform. But in view of the murder of an Asian and the shot-gun attacks on West Indian youths by fascists this should not be taken too lightly. Not only did the police show a definite disinclination to act, but a statement was made by a high police official to the effect that they would rather immigrants (the term is commonly applied only to people from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean) were beaten up once in a while than organize their self-defence.

Nor is Mr Heath's statement from the steps of his Downing Street residence: "There is much to be done here and overseas", a comforting one. The Tories are certainly going to take up the sale of arms to South Africa and reconsider the sanctions against the rebel Smith regime. Also, any renewal of British activity in South-East Asia should be looked upon with suspicion. The British electorate have chosen unwisely. The world must not be forced to pay for it.

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Sexual Revolution Sex Explosion And Woman Power

ASHOK RUDRA

ONE has heard of the sexual revolution and the sex-explosion which are of course not the same thing, but we shall talk about them later. Woman Power is a brand new journalistic phrase, standing for a phenomenon that has not yet been talked about a great deal, which one hopes—or one fears, depending on one's point of view—will in the years to come become one of the most important developments on the stage of world revolution. News of this new movement comes from the same country that is already the arena of two other powerful movements: Student Power and Black Power. Revolution—we mean a socialist revolution leading to communism—we mean a *total permanent revolution* changing all aspects of what are called the human conditions—cannot of course succeed in one country. We know already too much how little it can succeed in one country or in any group of countries tied together by bonds of "limited sovereignty". But there cannot be a world revolution without the downfall of American capitalism. And American capitalism has grown from strength to strength ever since the end of the Second World War—effectively aided in this historical process by the policy of co-existence pursued by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and its loyal followers in the West, the communist parties of France and Italy. The prospects for world revolution looked sombre for a time: the working class movement in Europe limiting itself more and more to mere parliamentarism and economism, the so-called socialist societies of Eastern Europe trying pathetically to become the same "consumption societies" which the youth of developed capitalist countries are rebelling against. Things however started to change dramatically—for the better—from the middle of the sixties. If the defeat of American Imperialism in the jun-

gles of Indo-China was the biggest blow it ever received from outside, it has simultaneously been subject to unprecedented assaults from inside. These assaults have been mounted by the two social powers that have emerged within the United States—Black Power and Student Power. The Negro militants—whether the Black Muslims, the Panthers or any others—and the militant students, who are at the vanguard of the anti-war movement which, according to many commentators is dividing the American society more deeply and more irrevocably than at any time since the Civil War—are shaking its very foundations. All those who look forward to the world revolution and therefore to the collapse of the American social system as of now cannot but draw hope from all signs of these two movements gaining strength. And they likewise cannot but feel encouraged to see a third force emerging as an enemy of American society as it is today—a capitalist dominated society of course, but also, like all other societies, a male dominated one.

For Marx, the struggle for the emancipation of man did not consist only of the struggle of the proletariat for the abolition of private property; for him, the slavery of women in a man's world was an essential aspect of the problem of man's alienation. The communist movement ever since Marx has however paid very little attention to the feminist cause. In the Soviet Union, immediately after the revolution, there was a brief period of sex-explosion. It was quickly contained and one doubts whether it led to any genuine sexual revolution. Though in many economic fields the Soviet woman today enjoys an equality with men far beyond anything known in any capitalist country, the way the thought controllers of that society have been drilling into the Soviet man and woman the importance of stable mar-

riages for the construction of socialism, one wonders how much of a genuine emancipation of women there could have been. After all there cannot be a real emancipation of women as long as there has not been a genuine sexual revolution which in its turn presupposes the abolition of marriage as an institution in its present form. Abolition is perhaps not the right word: just as man cannot be free (of class domination) as long as the State does not wither away, woman cannot be free (of male domination) as long as marriage does not wither away. Now far from marriage withering away in the Soviet Union, everything is being done to bring the institution back to its pristine bourgeois form, complete with all the frills and ceremonies, bells and candles, that go with a church wedding. In countries of the West, the working class movement has always had among its various demands some items with regard to equality of service conditions for men and women, but achievements in this regard are incomparably small compared to the success of the movement in obtaining wage increases for the worker. This latter has of course reduced the material hardship of the working man's wife, for she can now afford ever so many gadgets—refrigerators, working machines, and such other blessings as organised holidays for mass-scale sun bathing etc.

But if the fact that the worker goes in his own car to the capitalist-owned factory does not make him a free man, the benefit of the cooking range does not any more make his wife a free woman. Besides, in all these other aspects of woman's emancipation, the working class movement's contribution has been nil. As a matter of fact, the movement has not even done much to provide women with greater opportunity to be active outside the bedroom and the kitchen.

Lowest Paid Job

Bedroom and the kitchen: these remain the only places where women have a place in this man's world. In

the USA only 1% of the engineers, 2% of managers, 3% of advocates and 7% of doctors are women. Of course one sees working women all over the place: waitresses and shop assistants and air hostesses. But these are the lowest paid jobs: just as the Black population of America occupy all the lowest paid jobs. Incidentally, the average American woman's salary is 25% lower, according to an American feminist statement, than the black man's average salary. This is not so much a reflection on the discrimination in salary for the same work, as an indication of the difference in the work opportunities open to men and women. What sort of emancipation is that of women who can reach, beyond the bedroom and the kitchen, only up to the seat of the bus conductress or the sales girl in a department store?

But the statistics of female workers' occupations provide no measure of the state of alienation of woman-kind in the most developed of the capitalist countries. For the deepest degradation of women in the modern world lies not in any lack of constitutional provisions for the safeguard of their special interests or guarantees of non-discrimination; it lies in the attitude of man and woman towards each other, the horrifying and disgusting thing about the man-woman relation is that despite the ugly and degrading nature of these attitudes, a woman must of necessity live in the closest intimacy with a man, such is the peculiar interdependence which defines and identifies the two sexes.

Many people will think that this is a highly exaggerated picture of the reality. After all, in what ways does the modern woman lack freedom more than men? Modern husbands do not beat their wives, they do not force them to do all the drudgery—see all those gadgets: is she not also employed ever so often? As to sex, does she not participate equally in the sex explosion? See the number of women who have premarital sex and extra-marital sex, who divorce and remarry. So, where is her special disadvantage? This is not only

the opinion of modern men; many modern women also tend to think so. One of the results of being a slave is not to know that one is a slave.

Let us not talk about the housewife of the working class household. Her world is indeed the bedroom, the kitchen and the backyard to hang washings and gossip with the next-door neighbour. Let us not talk about the woman of high society, whose world is the drawing room, whose main activity consists in being a perfect hostess to her husband's friends, colleagues and business acquaintances, whose main duty in life is to be pretty and attractive and charming, whose diversion consists in being admired by men. Let us talk about the most enlightened section of modern society, let us talk about that part of the society which contains the most educated, the most liberal, the most humanistic of men; the society of university teachers. What is the position of women in this society? Take any book written by an American professor and the answer is given there in the most unmistakable terms. It is to be found in the section devoted to acknowledgement; after thanking all colleagues and co-research workers for their direct and indirect help, often thanking even the typists Mrs X and Miss Y for the excellent job of typing they have done, the concluding sentence almost inevitably runs in some such words: "Last but not least, I must thank my wife who looked after me so well and bore with me with such patience while I was engaged in writing the book." There cannot be any misunderstanding as to what it says: it is for the man to do research, to solve the mysteries of nature and life, to contribute to human knowledge. It is for the woman to look after him well, to be patient with him while he is engaged in this arduous task. It is not just the Professor's wish that this be the arrangement. That is exactly what the professors' wives do. Their only role in life is to faithfully follow about the Professor in all his different movements from university to university, set up home for him, look after

the children, take care of his mails, cater to his creature comforts: in other words arrange everything so that the Professor can pursue his noble profession under the best of conditions. What then is she? A nurse, a housekeeper, a cook, a maid servant, a secretary, a bed-mate—each of which, taken by itself, is a pretty low paid and not very highly respected profession.

Listen also to the professors' jokes: it is a commonplace joke among them that they prefer the company of dumb blondes to that of intelligent women reading books. Intelligence or scholarly habits in a woman are regarded as disqualifications. This is true of the ordinary male of course, but professors are no exceptions. Listen to his sexy jokes: they do not involve women, only female anatomy, parts of a sex-machine. Listen to his conversation: he will seriously pronounce upon women being weak and how women actually like being dominated by men, and how women really get their deepest satisfaction in staying at home and rearing children. The don is very surprised if his wife also wants to work: "But why do you want to work? Do I not give you enough money and do I ask you any questions? Will it not be bad for the children if they are left to themselves?" Very few men seem to understand why women may find an independent occupation important even when not needing money.

When the most enlightened persons in modern society hold such views, it is not surprising that the women who manage to succeed in finding self-expression in some field rarely lead a normal married life. Not only film stars: musicians, dancers, writers, university teachers—all such women reveal a high propensity for being alone or going through irregular marriage-divorce patterns.

One of the most important and hopeful aspects of the neo-feminist movement is that, unlike the working class movement, it does not confine itself within the narrow limits of legalism and economism. The suffragate movement of the first quarter

of this century won women certain legal rights. The birth control movement—and now the movement for free abortion—has made women considerably free from the linkage between sex and motherhood. The new feminist movement is directed at broadening and deepening these legalistic and economic gains; but also at the entire atmosphere of vitiated ideas and attitudes, that envelop the man-woman relation.

New Movement

The new feminist movement in the United States is being led on the one hand by the National Organisation of Woman, established in 1966 by Betty Friedan, the author of the book on the "feminine mystique"—this is the "reformist" wing of the movement. The N.O.W.'s attempt is to improve the conditions of women by exerting pressure through institutional channels. But there is another wing—a more "radical" one, a more extremist one. It is the Women's Liberation Front, a federation of Women's Liberation Groups. There seems to be already 50 such groups in New York, 35 in San Francisco, 30 in Chicago, 25 in Boston. Membership of these groups is largely drawn from the young ex-students who have participated in the movements against the Vietnam war or against the segregation of Negroes. Radical in outlook, militant in temperament, experienced in facing the police, these girls go in for shock tactics reminiscent of the rampages of the Calcutta Naxalite boys or the French Maoists (who recently fought pitched battles with the police for two days in the Latin Quarter of Paris). A few examples of some of their recent activities will give an idea about their methods and targets.

These young Amazons—somebody has given them the name of "guerilleres" the feminine of guerillero—invaded a "bridal fair", a fair organised by dealers of household gadgets for the newly engaged young women; they interrupted a beauty competition for the election of "Miss America", carrying slogans like "A more important struggle is going

on in America than who wins tonight: The struggle for Women's Liberation, Black Liberation and Vietnamese Liberation" and "Miss America makes money for Revlon: Revlon makes bullet casings for war;" they invaded a bar that refuses to serve women; they boycotted Colgate Palmolive products because they ill-treat their female employees; they gheraoed a young man who proposed to bring out a pornographic magazine; they marched with posters showing a female nude body marked out into different zones and written over with names from the butcher's vocabulary, like "Rump" "Loin" "Rib" etc.—a most accurate pictorial description of the way the average male thinks of the woman—a lump of delicious flesh, a sex-object. A group calling itself Red Stockings has been indulging in similar activities in Denmark: in one of its demonstrations women marched with huge false bosoms made up of balloons and carrying such slogans as "I was nothing before; now I am Married," "The arms of Men are Women's refuge", "I feel very sexy in my Maidenform". But the activities do not limit themselves to such innocent clowning: the guerilleres are taking training for physical self-defence in case of rioting and one of them actually took a pistol shot at a male adversary.

As can be seen from the above, much of the wrath of these girls is directed against the concepts of their being sex objects and also concretely against the dictators of the fashion world—the manufacturers of ladies' garments and perfumes and the women's journals. However small the beginning might be, the importance of this awakening cannot be over-estimated. For one of the most glaring aspects of the Western woman's alienation is her total servitude to the fashion dictators. The average Western woman shapes and dresses both the inside and the outside of her self to an incredible extent according to the constant suggestions poured out in the innumerable women's journals, in their advertisements, in their various advices to women re-

garding how to make their homes comfortable and husbands happy and in syrupy "romance" stories. Some people are always getting shocked at something yet more daring in women's attire. It is not the way women are made to dress or make up that is shocking. After all, the fashion designers are skilled in their arts and the women's fashions rarely lack in taste. The greater degree of undress cannot be objected to on aesthetic grounds, as they can be in India (the Indian woman has never taken care of her figure: as a result the modern Indian woman's penchant for revealing more and more of her belly has the disastrous effect of making men of finer sensibilities turn away their eyes from the sight of those folds and folds of flesh. One shudders to think of what would happen if Indian women were to go in for topless dress or Indian films were allowed to show our filmstars in the nude, who look so horrible even now when they romp about in bathing costumes or some such scanty dress). In the West, women take a lot of trouble over their figures and young girls reveal through their revealing dresses really beautiful curves and shapes. So one cannot take objection on aesthetic grounds. What however is shocking is the way the entire population of women are made to fluctuate between mini and maxi and midi at the swing of the baton of the Fashion Kings. If publicity is one of the most pernicious poisons that pollute the air in the West, nowhere is it more pernicious than in its success in making millions of women treat themselves as pretty objects to be constantly polished and exhibited.

Sad And Ironical

It is sad and ironical that while this glimmer of an awakening appears in the West, the exact opposite beginning takes place in the "socialist" East. Polish people considered it a "liberation" for themselves when in 1956 they could start to have beauty contests. The Czechs are running an international airline and they put advertisements in the western press

showing the inevitable smiling face of the air hostess; the Rumanians are advertising in the western press their seaside resorts with their swimming pools, casinos, night clubs.

It is because this feminist movement has only just begun, it is because modern women who are conscious of their essentially degraded position are as yet so few in the West, that the so-called sexual revolution has not been consummated, it has resulted only in a sex-explosion. One often hears of there having been a sexual revolution during the present century thanks to Freud (incidentally American feminists are violently anti-Freud and consider him a male reactionary) and Havelock Ellis and the adoption by the masses of birth control techniques and now of legalised abortion. The revolution, it is claimed, has consisted in man and woman's liberation from the tyranny of an ideological monster of their own creation: the fear of sex, the concept of sex being sinful and dirty. But has there been such a revolution? Has the Western man really become free or even nearly free of the horror and hatred and fear and violence and mystique that seem to go inseparably with his sex-behaviour and sex thought? If there has already been a revolution then why do we not see Western men and women peaceably taking to sex as just another pleasant aspect of life, as one has the impression the people of South-East Asia manage to do? Why is there such an obsession about sex, such a phobia, such a mania, such over-seriousness? Why is there this so-called sex-explosion?

The characterisation 'sex-explosion' is not that of a critical outsider: the present writer does not count himself among those phoney Indian writers and Western Indologists who claim for the Hindu society a more sane, a more healthy acceptance of sex. The term 'sex-explosion' is a coinage of Western journalism. Western observers themselves are wondering at the pace with which sexuality seems to be engulfing all aspects of life in the West. This is going to be the nudest summer in England, somebody com-

ments in the *Sunday Observer*; one has never had it so much, so freely or so frequently, observes another. The nude has invaded the world of publicity as never before. And then of course there is the inevitable nude in every film that gets shot and the inevitable scenes of men and women making love.

We need not dwell too much on all the different fall-outs of this sex-explosion: swimming in the nude, free sex amongst adolescents,—these are of course old hat by now. Then there are sex a la trois (three persons of mixed sex living together), small parties where husbands and wives exchange sex partners for the evening, big parties which are meant to end up in sex-orgies—these too are now quite commonplace. Of late there have been pornographic exhibitions: pornography is very much "in" at the moment. Something new, something trying to be even more shocking is always coming up. Reaction to all these among those who are not caught in the explosion is often one of shock. But there can be another reaction: boredom. Sex after all, is a bore. It can certainly be a pleasant experience, but surely it cannot but be very tiresome after a while whatever be the cuisine and the menu one can think of. After all it is all so finite, so bounded a field of experience. In how many different ways can one caress a sex partner? Well, Vatsayana figured it out all two thousand years back. One can have sexual intercourse in a maximum of—*is it 64?*—different ways. So for kissing, so for other aspects of physical sex. And as to the poor girl trying to be attractive by revealing herself, there is a strict upper bound to what she can reveal. In any aspect of sex, there is a strict limit, very soon reached. Whereas what man thirsts after is the infinite: and the quest for the infinite takes him not only to religion. Scientific research, mathematics, music, arts—these are fields where there are no limits ever to be reached. How can one place the experience of sex anywhere next to experiences in any of these fields? And how can one talk about a sexual

revolultion as long as one is a prisoner, rotating in a narrow circle around the experience of physical sex?

Obsession

And not only the average young man and woman. What is really impressive, indicating the deep roots of the sexual malaise of the Western man, is that this obsession seems to have equal hold over their leaders of thought. Take any serious novel, take any serious film. It seems that for the Western intellectual the meaning of life has to be searched exclusively or predominantly in his sexual life. Look at the stages through which the "sexual revolution" in the 20th century American and European literature has passed. To begin with, one searched the meaning of life in extra-marital liaisons: then came homosexuality and many great authors were imprisoned on charges of immorality. Then came the subject of rape: daring consisted in describing scenes of rape. Then I believe it was lesbianism. Whenever that failed to shock, one started with incest. Incest is still continuing to be a major theme in Western literature—I mean serious literature. One feels worried now for the Western writer—what will he take up next? Will he be able to think up for himself some new theme? Or should we Indians help them out by supplying them with some of our treasures of Tantrik literature?

Take the cinema—the best cinema I mean. Take the best European directors—people like Ingmar Bergman or Fellini or whoever you want to name from among the avant garde movement. They are all concerned with serious problems of life. But there will be the inevitable love-making scenes, the inevitable shots of the heroine in the nude. The objection here is not aesthetic; and of course not moral. Actresses who are so shot in the nude are indeed beautiful to look at. And the nude female form is one of the most beautiful objects on which human eyes can feast. I am one in this respect with Nirad C. Chaudhuri and I share with him his admiration for the

reclining Venus of Velasquez and also the habit of going straight to it the first thing on stepping into the National Gallery of London. But it is not enjoyment of this particular form of beauty that the film directors aim to give you. For, to enjoy the beauty of the nude form, one should be able to take one's time to look at it, to look at it from different angles, as one can do with paintings, or go round them as one can do with a piece of sculpture. Or with an artist's model in flesh and blood. But in the films one is not allowed to look like that. The nude is in action, she takes off her dress to put on another or to enter the bath tub or to go into bed with a lover. As these scenes are not meant as presentation of the nude form for its own sake, the objection against them is that they are non-essential, artistically. One of the principles of art is to cut out all non-essentials, whereas these scenes are introduced gratuitously. Satyajit Ray says somewhere that he does not know of any story that would call for a nude scene for its effective narration, and this is one matter in which I would agree with him.

It is all agreed that books of films should not be burned or censored because of the four-letter words they use or the love scenes they depict. But what to think of these intellectual stalwarts who seem to be under a compulsion to use four-letter words and show nudes on the scene? Do they not get bored?

It is after all not surprising that the sexual revolution should fail to get consummated, that it would remain only as a sex explosion. How can there be a genuine emancipation of men and women from the bondage of sex as long as there is not an emancipation of women not only on the social plane but also with the man's world of ideas? Sex can be a free activity only between two free persons. Can there be a really free relation as long as one of the persons is only an object? What kind of free love can there be after all in the present world where men and women have economically such different status? The woman, if she is not living with

her husband, has to be kept by her lover; if she is not kept that means she is some body's wife whom she is deceiving. There can hardly be an extra-marital sex relation between a man and a woman where a male is not giving money and a female receiving it.

Sexual revolution and the new feminist movement are therefore complementary. Sex can cease to be dirty only when it is a communication and joy between two partners who are really equal in every respect—not only economically, not only legally, but also in the world of ideas and attitudes. On the other hand the new feminists cannot possibly attain this objective of womans' self-realisation if the taboos and guilt feeling associated with sex were not shattered to bits in a large explosion, the one that is taking place.

One would therefore like to watch the progress of this new feminist movement with hope. Militancy would call for much inventiveness on the part of the guerilleres—they can hardly borrow much from the history of working-class struggle. Women no doubt constitute a social class. They are scattered among the enemy ranks in the most disadvantageous fashion—a single woman with a single man, tied together with bonds of emotion and family. There cannot be a polarisation of men and women as there can be of workers and capitalists. With woman brain-washed over thousands of years, brain-washed day in and day out by the partner with whom she lives in intimate physical proximity, what form will take this war of the sexes which is a precondition of the success of world revolution?

A Hindi Play

BY A DRAMA CRITIC

ANAMIKA has done it again. By bringing to the Calcutta stage Mohan Rakesh's well-known Hindi-play *Adhe-Adhure* it has proved to be the one single group, who, given a

play, can be left alone to bring about a faithful reproduction. The play under review is exuberant in the use of words, and as such, one might undergo that uneasy feeling that instead of sitting through an hour and a half on a steel chair one might as well have read and enjoyed it at home. This will undoubtedly be underplaying the playwright's sensibility, his knowledge of the theatre and the use of dramatic theory to highlight essential moments in the play (the suspension of action following the exit of the boss). And if credit is to be given to the element that redeemed the play—that of extending it from a mere reading text to one in which the conflict and juxtaposition of words bring out in relief human drama, then it is to the production that it should go.

The conflict in a middle-class family, its tensions and problems tied down in an intricate network of insurmountable passions, forms the basis of the drama and the claustrophobic setting serves as the most suitable backdrop against which this play could be enacted. Difficult to breathe in or walk about in, the setting externalises the characters' inner world, and for a change it was a pleasure to see controlled movements on a stage such as the one in the basement at Kala Mandir. The gestures were so well executed in collaboration with the spoken dialogue, together with brilliant and knowing use of pauses, that this refreshingly alive production appears to be born out of spontaneity and true-to-life improvisation.

The play is in two parts. The first establishes and makes known the ground on which is built up the second portion and it loses no time in coming straight to the point except for the monologue at the start. The latter, bordering more on philosophic questions, serve as a forewarning to what towards the end is a rather blunt and unnatural lecture on the psychological and philosophic aspects of the 'complete' or 'incomplete' man. The social awareness in the former coherent and sustaining part of the play is the result of such

keen observation, that if the author had given free rein to his characters to evolve into the climax, the violent change of note and colour would not have been so perceptible. The individual perspective intervened and the prolonged feelings generated in the former part were abruptly cut short, leaving the characters serving the whims and fancies of the playwright. It is thus small wonder that the boy's role was left uncharacterised and Kalyan Chatterji's feverishly delightful role was a bit more than what should have sufficed for the role, and I am not speaking in the derogatory sense of the term 'a bit more'. By enacting the role as such, he helped to restrain the important social bearing the role would have carried, and thus helped to maintain the unity of the production in its thematic composition.

Overall acting was splendid, specially Pratibha Agarwal's in the role of the mother. She was vibrantly alive and the gestures were so relevant that one would really have, however much one could expertly conjure the playwright's imaginary world in his or her mind, to think of a more fitting performance in a role as complex and trying as her's. Abha Jalan as the young girl was an interesting study in spontaneity—her seemingly innocent looks in contrast to a corrupt and distorted purity—was bubbling with human warmth and spirit—and excellent performance indeed. Krishen Kumar in a variety of roles executed each with skill and understanding. Yama Agarwal as the elder girl could have relied more on gestures than on looks, though somehow she too gave a near convincing portrait of her role. In this last statement I find further support to my claim that Rakesh is one of the few poets of the drama we have in the country. The lighting was rather inadequate, and its plasticity could have been creatively utilised to strengthen emotional and dramatic points. And to Shyamanand Jalan go the direction honours of uniting the various elements to make this Anamika presentation a must for all theatre-goers.

Mayar Khela

By A DRAMA CRITIC

A presentation of Tagore's dance-drama *Mayar Khela* (The Play of Illusion) can be free from sceptical eyes in that nobody can brand it a violation of the original as conceived of by the poet. Tagore himself had staged the drama a number of times, and each production was as different as the one that preceded it. Formerly composed as a musical-drama, the piece in question, a much later product, was the result of an experiment with art forms. Cutting down drastically the number of songs with words, the poet himself was entering the realm of expressive movements and gestures. This was further taken along the trodden path by the Surangama production presented at Rabindra Sadan under the direction of Sailaja Ranjan Majumdar.

Reliance on dance as an entity complete in itself further enabled the production to try to elevate feelings, emotions and experiences to a level higher than that of the lyric-poem. The plasticity inherent in the art of dancing, its flexible transmutations of space and mass, endow it with a quality suitable for transmitting an effective portrayal of this piece of not-dramatic dance-drama. The paradox becomes apparent when, on the one hand we have this visual delight—the dance, and on the other the aural aspect and, what is more, the process of comprehension involved, of the songs. And maybe just because of this, the most involving and stirring moments of the play were visible when the gestures were not correlated to the words of the songs; or rather when a ballet-like structure was on the point of being evolved. Under able and bold direction, songs were cut short, fused and moulded together in a manner that left a lot to what the production was essentially about—a dance drama.

With such a daring conception, it was strange to find that the unit should have gone in for stage decor visible as decorative drawing-room

pieces pinned on to the side screens. They destroy the very illusions that the drama sets out to create, undermine the eloquent language given birth to by Tagore and the possibilities of the expressiveness of the medium of gestures, and add whatsoever nothing of artistic value. The same could be said regarding the technique of keeping on the back-stage and visible to the spectator the entire assembly of both vocal and instrumental artistes. And if both were consciously employed to destroy stage illusion, all for the purpose of creating that very same illusion, then the paradox is indeed taken to its final form, though I doubt whether such notions had operated in the mind of the director. My suspicions are corroborated by the very creative and intensely subjective use of lighting, in particular when Amar departs on his futile mission leaving behind his lover Shanta and later on in the occasional and highly imaginative use of spot-lighting. The dancing troupe gives a polished performance and I should be doing myself injustice if I do not add a word of praise for an excellent characterisation of Shanta. Costumes were well designed to suit the play; and to the director is due all that was good (and bad), together with a faithful rendering of the songs that went to make Surangama's *Mayar Khela* an enjoyable experience.

Diabolically Yours

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

DIABOLICALLY Yours is Julien Duvivier's last bout before his accidental death in a car crash. Surprisingly enough, the film is built around an automobile accident and the subsequent amnesia of the hero, played by Alan Delon. But this loss of memory is a bit uncommon, quite unlike the *Random Harvest*-type, where the past incidents are cleanly swept off the character's mind. Here the whole thing is a little ambiguous, a queer mixture of play-acting and

a feeling of double identity. Unfortunately the psychological complexities of the theme have not been woven into the framework of the script, which follows the pattern of straightforward narrative, that too, somewhat loosely knit. There are attempts at achieving a kind of macabre poetry and Henri Dacae's superb photography with its atmospheric lighting is a real asset in this sphere, but the effect is always nil, due to the overall confusion of the total scheme.

Clippings

Sartre : What Is Truth ?

....I was present at the trial of Roland Castro, one of those who decided to occupy the offices of the CNPF (the French National Employers' Confederation) after five (African) immigrants died (in overcrowded Paris lodgings last winter), and I was able to see for myself the rough but effective methods the court used to prevent the defendant, his counsel and his witnesses from getting to the heart of the matter. The occupation of the CNPF offices, the genuine but secret motive behind the charge, was never once mentioned. As far as the court was concerned, the only thing that mattered was whether Castro, who had attempted to escape from the van into which the police had packed the demonstrators, was guilty of assaulting the police. As a result, any testimony regarding the motives for the occupation or on the violence meted out by the police, as they clubbed the unarmed and unresisting demonstrators, was systematically refused....We were all aware of the grim humour of the trial. We were asked to tell the whole truth: we swore to do so. And we immediately discovered that there was some misunderstanding. What the court was demanding was the whole truth about one brief instant, without reference either to what went before or to what followed it: the one instant in which Castro, fleeing from

the police was recaptured. Did he resist or did he not? What was he doing in the police van, why did he try to flee, and what were the reasons for his illegal presence at the CNPF offices?—none of these matters concerned the court.

...To us, the whole truth means the truth in its entirety. And that means first of all the truth about a social order which forces workers recruited abroad to live in sordid conditions and sometimes to die a horrible death; which rejects workers once they reach old age and condemns them to ignoble misery; which compels millions of wage-earners to sell their labour to arbitrarily imposed and often unbearable production rates at the risk of losing their jobs, and turns the factory into a convict hulk...

The whole truth. It is the permanent oppression which provokes a backlash of popular violence. May 1968 was no isolated flare-up. Betrayed but not beaten, the insurrection left a deep mark on the workers, and particularly on the young. What the authorities are trying to hide is the fact that the militants they sentence are not simply stray trouble-makers and that, in deliberately choosing to act illegally—which is quite simply to reject middle-class concepts of legality—they are expressing the violence of the entire French people.

...There is no point in being indignant: the bourgeoisie is in danger and it is defending itself. But those who want the whole truth must insist on it in the courtroom itself. (*Le Monde*)

Jean-Paul Sartre and writer Simone de Beauvoir were held by police, then released on June 26 an hour and a half after being picked up on a Paris street corner for distributing a leftwing newspaper. Mr Sartre, has taken over as publisher of the newspaper, *La Cause du Peuple*, organ of a Maoist movement which has been banned by the Interior Ministry. "I was handing out a newspaper that has nothing banned or illicit about it," Mr Sartre told newsmen as he was arrested near the offices of *L'Huma-*

nite, the official newspaper of the French Communist Party. "If we were arrested in front of *L'Humanite's* headquarters it's because we wanted it that way", he said. Mr Sartre took over as publisher of the newspaper when the two men who previously held the post were sentenced to prison terms on state security charges. (*International Herald Tribune*).

Restive Police

The French Government is again having trouble with the police. The force is acutely discontented not only over pay and working conditions but also over the repressive role that it is being made to play as part of the campaign against extremists and students. The problem of the universities would not be solved by the presence of the police in front of their buildings, said a resolution adopted (by the Federation of Police Unions): "but by suitable reforms, which the Government and Parliament must undertake".

The F.A.S.P. expressed disquiet about the present trend of Government policy respecting public order and about the new "anti-smasher" law. "We consider existing legislation adequate to deal with private or public agitation and damage to property", the resolution said. (*The Times*)

Working For A Thaw

The Government of India seems to have decided to make minor gestures to facilitate the process of a possible thaw in Sino-Indian relations following the reported expression of cordial sentiments towards India by Mr Mao Tse-tung at the May Day reception in Peking.

...The first of these is likely to be the progressive reduction and ultimate removal of the police guard at the gates of the Chinese Embassy (in New Delhi)...There are indications that the police post, now located directly in front of the embassy gates, may be moved some distance away with a reduced strength. (*The Statesman*)

Arms In Cambodia

The U.S. Command in Saigon... issued a breakdown of the origin of war material captured so far in Cambodia, showing that 60 per cent of the ammunition examined came from China. Twenty-five per cent of the arms and only five per cent of the ammunition came from the Soviet Union...The remaining 15 per cent of the weapons were manufactured in Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, the United States, France and Britain. Another ten per cent of the ammunition came from France and the U.S. and five per cent from Rumania, North Vietnam and Czechoslovakia: (*Hindustan Times*)

Liquidation

In West Bengal the number of liquidated class enemies (jotedars and moneylenders), agents, police, military and informers has exceeded 100. According to our preliminary estimates, among the 104 killed are over 80 jotedars and moneylenders.

...Not open, but sudden attacks; not frenzied attacks by the many, but by a few, with ordinary weapons, acting according to a plan, not caring a damn about death; not attacks from a safe distance with the intention to run away but daring attacks from very close quarters, with willingness to die...such attacks transform men into something new. (*Deshbrati*)

Mass Arrests

Out of the 18,000 arrest warrants issued in South 24-Parganas (West Bengal) 6,000 warrants have already been executed, according to the Additional S.P. He said on June 27 that many of those arrested were wanted in connexion with the violent inter-party clashes during the U.F. regime. Some of the others were criminals. (*The Statesman*)

The (West Bengal State) Committee (of the CPM) noted...On an incomplete estimate 6,572 party comrades and supporters, including workers, peasants and other sections of the people, have been arrested. It is also reported that the police have involved not less than 60,000

people in various framed-up cases. Brutal tortures and beatings by the police are taking place. (*People's Democracy*).

Police For PM

It took 48 hours of round the clock labour and rehearsal by 2,000 policemen, 16 gazetted police officers, four SPs, several Sub-Divisional Magistrates, one DIG and special attention of the Deputy Commissioner and the Municipal Commissioner before the stage was finally set for Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's 60-minute speech in Chandni Chowk on June 22.

...Intelligence officers questioned shopkeepers about the number of employees, whether any of them possessed gun licences, etc.

Policemen manned every housetop and even the Town Hall had its share of policemen staring from the roof. The common people to whom Mrs Gandhi addressed her speech were kept several hundred yards away from the rostrum. The cost of the meeting, if the loss of business due to the two-hour closure of the Capital's biggest shopping centre is also taken into account, runs into several lakhs of rupees. (*Hindustan Times*).

No Day-Dreaming

On the 23rd of June 1963 fresh hilsa sold at 3.00 and 3.50 a kg. Eggs were sold 3.00 p a pair. What about the prices now? Eggs per pair sell as 60 p. You know hilsa prices—10.00 to 16.00 for the affluent and 7.00 to 8.00 for the less fortunate. (*Hindusthan Standard*).

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CPM Ambiguity

People's Democracy (CPM weekly) recently carried an article on the AICC(R)'s Delhi session, condemning the Central Government for unleashing ruthless police repression on the Naxalites, especially in Srikakulam. Indeed, I cannot but congratulate the CPM for this. At the same time, however, I cannot but recollect a statement made a month or two back by a top boss of the CPM's West Bengal unit blaming the police for complete inaction against the Naxalites. The statement also expressed concern at the so-called police-Naxalite unholy alliance and questioned the utility of spending so much money on the intelligence bureau of the government, which, it claimed, was miserably inefficient.

Besides, it appears contradictory to me to call the Naxalites anti-social and left-adventurists at the same time. At best they can be either of the two but never both. If they are anti-social the police must take all necessary measures and we do not want to see the CPM pleading for some anti-social elements. On the other hand, if they are left adventurists, they are definitely political elements—may be right or wrong—and naturally must be fought politically at least by the CPM. The CPM must immediately put an end to this sort of ambiguity.

PARTHA SARATHI ROY
Baruipur, 24-Parganas

Mao On CPSU

With two quotations, for Mr S. C. Saha (June 27) the conclusion was simple and easy. In his hurry he missed the word 'many' and the import of the term 'political principles' in Mao's address to the Congress. The whole approach betrays scrappy knowledge, the result of depending exclusively on quotations. Had he read the report of the CC of the CPC to the Eighth National Congress in September 1956 in full and the famous essay, "More on the histo-

rical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat' published in Peking Peoples' Daily in December, 1956 he would have noticed that the CPC was opposed to the revisionist view of the 20th Congress of the CPSU. On 'parliamentary road' and on Stalin right from the very beginning. Paucity of space do not allow me to quote them. As Soviet revisionism was in its infancy and the leaders of the CPSU had not yet provoked open polemics, the CPC refrained from making public criticism and retained the formality. Behind the facade of formality, however, there was sharp debate in 1957. Why they had not insisted then on making the dispute public disregarding the wishes of the CPSU and the fraternal parties, is of course open to criticism. And the CPC has made self-criticism saying—If comrades now make the criticism that we were wrong in giving this consideration to the leaders of the CPSU we are quite ready to accept this criticism. (CPC replies to the 14th June, 1963 letter of the CPSU). All these are known to the students of the Sino-Soviet dispute.

A READER
24-Parganas

Communalism

Mr N. K. Singh deserves congratulation for his factual analysis (June 27) of the communal rioting at Chaibasa. He has exposed the RSS and Jana Sangh. While these communal organisations are responsible for the killing of Muslims, there are elements withing the Ruling Congress who patronise the communal forces by various means. So far Government has not adopted any practical measure to curb these activities. The Nazis in Germany launched a massive hate-Jew campaign before they captured state power. India being a country of diverse cultures and creeds, the fascists of this land find it easy to incite communal violence. At this hour, disunity of the left wing and democratic forces would cause immeasurable harm to the entire democratic movement. A divided left camp would not be able to stand against

the fascist onslaught. To combat the growing menace of communalism and fascism these forces should patch up their differences and build up a mighty defence comprising broader sections of the people.

PRABIR KR MUKERJEE
Belgharia, Calcutta

Summer Institute

People interested in education are perhaps aware that the English Summer Institute, sponsored by the University Grants Commission, for the college teachers of West Bengal has already come into being and that classes are being conducted by the English Department of Calcutta University in the Asutosh Hall. The UGC often makes liberal grants on diverse heads for the cause of education. The idea of a summer institute is, for all intents and purposes, a good one, calculated to benefit the teaching profession and to improve the tone of teaching. But one may put a very pertinent question to the granting and disbursing authorities—is the benefit of the scheme actually reaching a good section of the college teachers for whom it is meant? The fact is that only a small proportion of the teachers attached mainly to the older and better organised colleges of the metropolis is reaping the benefit of the scheme. The teachers of non-vocal, newly-formed institutions round about Calcutta and in the mofussil areas are not proportionately represented in the team of the fortunate participants. Certainly one cannot suggest that the former do not need any amelioration. Equity demands that the full benefit of such schemes should filter down to all strata of the teaching profession, scattered all over the country, far and near. Our country is poor and luxury for the few should not be permitted. In these spheres stringent economy is a virtue, and wastage almost a sin. The greatest good of the greatest number should be the criterion, without of course, efficiency being impaired.

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