

frontier

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GAMBLERS AT DURGAPUR

AS expected, the cursory visit to Durgapur by the Union Steel Minister has not put the moribund steel plant back to life. In his parliamentary career of nearly two decades, Mr Bhagat never had a setback; in the running feud between rival groups in the ruling party, he has always managed to be on the winning side. For him to take a firm stand and reverse the vindictive policy of the steel plant management was not possible. From the brief report of his press conference at Durgapur it is clear that he saw nothing and heard what he wanted to hear. With Mr Chandy on one side and Maj-Gen. Wadhera on the other, he could have only a one-sided version of the situation, a justification of the vast concentration camp into which the steel town has been converted. Individual workers may be small fry for him; it may not be in for a Union Minister to talk to them. But had he cared to talk to some of the officers without his self-appointed aides-de-camp around, he might have got a different picture. They would have told him why in Hindustan Steel's other unit at Durgapur, the Alloy Steel Plant, production was going up steadily while in DSP production seemed to have stabilised at 60 per cent of installed capacity, why the behaviour patterns of two brothers, one working in DSP and the other in ASP, varied so widely.

Mr Bhagat has upheld last month's lock-out in the steel melting shop declared in the wake of an alleged illegal strike by the workers. The so-called illegal strike and the violent demonstrations preceding it, if true, were not unprecedented. The plant has passed through situations far worse, but lock-outs were not declared. This time a situation was created deliberately so that the workers were forced to stand up in protest and provide the authorities with a pretext to declare a lock-out. From a trivial origin the trouble developed into a big flare-up to end which the authorities had to swallow their pride and yield on every point. In the name of enforcing discipline the authorities refused to pay 60 paise to an employee and precipitated a crisis which resulted in a loss of production of several crores of rupees. The cussedness is studied for the authorities, are impelled by political considerations. The two unions in DSP are controlled by the CPM and the Congress(O); in spite of their bitter rivalries and constant endeavour to run down each other, the management cannot play the normal managerial game of setting one against the other,

for the influence of either is galling to it. The management wants to destroy both so that out of their ruins may be born a union acceptable to it. It is not a mere coincidence that a CPI-dominated union has chosen this moment to seek registration. In the steel melting shop workers belonging to both the unions were suspended; the inevitable result was a combined protest by the workers in which the leaders of the two unions had to acquiesce. The inter-union rivalries were forgotten, and the united might of the workers brought down the management to its knees, though the serving general now in charge of the steel plant had threatened the workers two days ago with a massive lay-off.

The steel plant at Durgapur may have some chronic, even congenital, ailments. The workers' allegations about the inherent deficiencies of the project and the plant and the accumulated toll of a decade of indifferent maintenance have been upheld by the Pandey Committee. But they are only marginally responsible for the current trouble. Durgapur is unquiet because the unconditional withdrawal of the general strike in August has gone to the management's head. It is bent on killing the personality of the steel plant worker, humbling him on the flimsiest pretext. Rights enjoyed by the workers since the inception of the plant are now being denied to them. The Employees' Union has alleged that 42 workers have been dismissed, 38 suspended and about 7,500 charge-sheeted since the August strike. Even in the township an abnormal situation is being perpetuated through police repression and restrictive orders. Meetings and processions are tending to become a memory now and a curfew is in force for more than three months. Instead of relaxing the restrictions gradually, the authorities are making them more stringent. The curfew hours have just been extended from dusk to dawn. For the top brass living in spacious bungalows guarded round the clock by rifle-bearing security

men the curfew does not exist; but for the ordinary worker and his family it is a constant irritant and a threat that they may be hauled up any time for real or imagined violation of the order. Normal work in the steel plant will not be resumed till the authorities have restored normalcy within the plant and outside. But they are determined to play at high stakes. To gain a political end they are ready to close down the Rs 300-crore plant. They are gambling with the future not only

of Durgapur, but also of West Bengal for none will invest in this State if the Government of India itself talks repeatedly of closing down the steel plant and imposes a moratorium on its projected expansion in the fourth-plan period. It seems the Prime Minister's retort at a certain meeting in Calcutta some time ago that West Bengal was only a small part of India has percolated to lower levels. West Bengal may languish so that the rest of the country may lead a life ordained by her party.

What Is The Truth ?

Resentment against newspapers over the way they are reporting happenings in Calcutta is growing, particularly in localities where people see who does what to whom. A time may come when these newspapers will have to answer for their over-reliance on stories dished out by Lal Bazar. It is, of course, not possible for the comfort-loving, establishment-minded reporters to probe every incident, but they can and should try to investigate some cases in depth. They should do it, if not for the sake of objectivity, at least to avoid a repetition of 1966.

Take the Rifle Road incident in which a young man, standing outside his house, was seized by some six or seven armed, plainclothes men and shot dead on Saturday morning. There are eyewitnesses. The killed was a Naxalite who had so far taken no part in any violent 'action'. The Sunday newspapers called him a wagon breaker—doesn't the Police Commissioner want every man killed by his men to be called an anti-social element? It is true that in congested bustees where living conditions are terrible, political workers and men without moorings exist side by side, and the former try to politicise and win over some of the latter. It is these elements who are often the targets of police attack, and not actual wagon breakers whose activities are profitable to the police. Against them, no action is taken, because

any action will damage what one may call the police economy which is based on utter corruption.

Instances of the way people are being killed by the police litter the newspapers everyday. It is known that the night offensive of the police is but a ploy to force out wanted men and kill them. Tell the papers that they threw or were about to throw bombs or whip out daggers—and everything is alright. The Home Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Mr Vengal Rao, must be getting damned envious. Even when his forces have jungles to operate in, in the battle of annihilation, the stories of encounters fatal for the Naxalites do not always go down well. But in Calcutta the police murderers are taken as paragons of truth. But, as we said before, resentment is growing in the affected localities.

It is the inter-party jealousies, attacks and murders which are obscuring the nature of the confrontation. But even here, people who read more than one newspaper get confused. The brutal attack on Mrs K. G. Bose, for instance. Two newspapers said she was attacked on her way to the school. The Swatantra paper came out with the version that the attackers cut her hair in the class-room and then stabbed her. *Ganashakti*, the CPM evening daily, attributed the outrage to 'miscreants'. Mr K. G. Bose talked of a combination of Naxalite, Forward Bloc and

anti-social elements. The same evening the CPM Politbureau blamed the Naxalites and the police. Since it was the first attack on a woman, one expects a thorough study of the incident which should also include the extent of the injury and the motivations behind it. If the evil is bared and not buried in partisan verbiage, the chances of its recurrence will be less.

But in view of more sweeping allegations, the situation is getting more confused. Mr Sundarayya has referred to CIA and CBI hands behind the Naxalite 'gangsterism', as well as the complicity of Forward Bloc, SUC and the CPI, thus lending an international aspect to the inter-party warfare. But ordinary people are puzzled by the facts of life in Calcutta—assassination of police by Naxalites and murders of Naxalites by the police. The definition of conspiracy will have to be changed, perhaps. Could it be a love-hate relationship? Anyway, it will not be easy for reporters to enquire into the CIA collusion, particularly after ex-President Ayub's disclosure that he too was ousted by the CIA which was in control of his Intelligence Department and which had been operating through student extremists and some ex-military officers. It is time to sympathise with Ayub Khan and Mr Sundarayya. But at the same time we would ask of Mr Sundarayya one question; it is tragic that more than 100 members and supporters of the CPM, some of them first-rate workers, have been killed since the UF Government fell. But how many men have died at the hands of members and supporters of the CPM in the same period?

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Japanese Sub-Imperialism

The publication of a white paper on Japanese "defence" late last month in Tokyo hardly took anybody by surprise. The growing militarisation of Japan over the years, especially since last year, has been unmistakable and official rationalisation of all this was not also lacking. That the Japanese jingoists took so long to come out publicly with as authoritative a statement as a white paper was due not to any lack of initiative on their part but simply out of fear of an adverse public reaction. Now, thanks to their propaganda machinery which could to some extent convince the public about the necessity of developing military muscles commensurate with Japan's economic muscles, and the bankruptcy of the mandarin communists, the Government feels bold enough to release the white paper about their rosy military dream. To hell with Japan's "peace constitution". Japan, the white paper unabashedly states, should become a "medium-rank" military power. That of course Japan has been trying to achieve for quite some time without admitting as much.

The Japanese fascists who were never reconciled to their loss of empire did not for a moment give up their dream of a new "Greater Co-prosperity Sphere". As early as 1958 top Japanese officials were brazenly talking about carving out North Korea. "We should rise up and push the 38th Parallel beyond the Yalu river. Otherwise, we will lose face before our ancestors and elders. This is a duty of Japan's diplomacy." In 1960 the then Premier Nobusuke Kishi told the Diet that "the sphere of self-defence of Japan should be extended to South Korea and Taiwan". In simple terms the Japanese imperialists were seeking a place under the American sun—a few closed preserves for exploitation and dominance. By the Sato-Nixon joint communique which recognised South Korea and Taiwan to be part of the Japanese security system Washington put its stamp of

approval on Japanese sub-imperialism.

Militarisation of Japan and emergence of imperialism however stemmed as much from the inner logic of Japanese capitalism as from the encouragement of Washington. In their drive for industrial expansion Japanese oligopolists now find in armament production the only profitable field that promises unlimited scope. Vietnam is not surely going to be the last of wars in Asia and the Americans are not unwilling to let Japan in at the kill. Moreover by taking upon itself the responsibility of keeping South Korea and Taiwan within the orbit of the "free world" the Japanese armament industry can be assured of a steady demand. Safety of the huge amount of Japanese capital invested in those areas as well as in South-east Asia is after all their business. It is a neat arrangement of guns earning and defending the yen. To soften up the American resistance to giving know-how for defence production Tokyo has flung open its doors to foreign capital for investment in consumer production, banking, insurance and stock market. It was not just a coincidence that this liberalisation was announced close on the heels of the Japanese Defence Agency's Director Nakasone's swing to Washington, and on the eve of the publication of the white paper. Japan's itch to become a military power perfectly suits the Nixon strategy of fighting Asians with Asians. It is imperative for Nixon to reduce his ruinously expensive military machine and if the Japanese willingly take up the role of America's gendarme in Asia nothing like it.

The Japanese white paper, however, has tried to paint Japanese militarisation as being as harmless as possible. Japan, it has been assured, will not have weapons that 'pose a threat to other countries'—strategic bombers, long-range missiles and aircraft-carriers. What the white paper did not mention is that so long as the U.S.-Japan Security treaty is in force and

the Seventh Fleet and Polaris submarines are in Asian waters Japan just need not bother, or perhaps will not be allowed to bother about those types of weapons. More significantly, while disclaiming the intention of acquiring nuclear weapons the white paper nonetheless describes tactical

nuclear weapons as defensive". And it is perhaps not without reason that ever since his return from Washington Nakasone has started a campaign for building a joint uranium facility with US. help—an essential stepping stone to the production of nuclear weapons.

Another 90 Days

The renewal of cease-fire for another ninety days in the Middle East, which means de facto suspension of hostilities, is more in favour of the Israelis than the Arabs, for they remain in continued occupation of the annexed territories without paying any price for it. Before the first cease-fire was declared in August, not a few Israeli army men fell victim to the Egyptian artillery barrage and sporadic commando raids. This was, however, nothing compared to the massacre inflicted by the Israeli air force on the Egyp-

tian civilian centres. Nobody was so foolhardy as to believe that the Jarring negotiating mission would produce a miracle, but it broke down before it had initiated any meaningful discussion, thanks to the unilateral withdrawal by Israel. The charge against Egypt was that it has introduced Russian missiles in the standstill zone as well as constructed concrete structures for their emplacement in violation of a cease-fire provision. Besides Egypt's retort that this was trumped up, there was actually no such provision. It has now

been revealed that the provision was conceived by Washington and Tel Aviv without the knowledge of Egypt. Backed by her most powerful ally, Israel was able to get what she wanted—an unconditional cease-fire.

The Afro-Asian resolution passed by over two-thirds majority in the UN General Assembly has obliged the UAR to extend the cease-fire. It has only recommended the resurrection of the Jarring mission. The Egyptians cannot, however, grumble. For the resolution was sponsored by it. A few weeks before the first truce period was over, they made the extension conditional on Israel returning to peace talks. But as days were running out without Israel in any mood to concede on this score, the Sadat administration dropped hints that even without agreement on resumption of talks there could be another spell of truce. If Gunnar Jarring does have no occasion to return to New York from his present assignment in Moscow as Swedish Ambassador during the truce period, will Egypt resume its war of attrition with Israel? The collective leadership that is now ruling the UAR has preferred to remain vague. Sadat's unreal militancy is directed towards keeping that section of the army in check which is becoming impatient over the Israeli occupation of Sinai. At the same time, the moderate elements in the administration are showing concern over the rising prices of daily necessities and have prevailed on Sadat for not doing anything which may invite Israeli attack. It is admitted that Egypt with its present military preparation cannot drive the occupying force out of Sinai. Moreover, doubts about the efficiency of the Russian missile system, which has not been tried out before, have increased after the inflow of sophisticated American anti-missile equipment into Israel.



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NOVEMBER 14, 1970

The Facade Of A Liberal University

K. S. KARAT

IN the tumult of student protests, the events in the USA and France have often overshadowed a more modest but similar trend in Britain. No doubt there are differences in the conditions under which such movements have grown in individual Western countries, but there is a degree of interaction, and British universities have increasingly begun to reflect the painful contradictions between capitalist society as a whole and its constituent parts. Nothing illustrates this predicament better than the issue of 'political files' that erupted in many British universities at the beginning of this year. The book reviewed* is a direct outcome of these incidents and as such provides an excellent insight into the working of higher education in a capitalist society and the linkage between universities and industrial big business.

Warwick University Ltd. was written in a week's time by a group of students and staff and edited by E. P. Thompson, a well-known left-wing historian at Warwick. Coming so close to the events that took place, the book is well documented, spiritedly argued and avoids any form of journalistic excess. The background to the Warwick incident began with the occupation by a group of students of the Registry buildings in support of their demand for a students' union building. The occupation led, quite inadvertently, to the opening of some university files which by the serious nature of their content, changed the whole issue at stake in the student demonstration. The files showed unmistakable evidence of the maintenance of records on the political activities of left-wing students and staff. The second fact that emerged from the correspondence discovered were the at-

temps by industrialists and big business executives to influence the academic and administrative policies of the university, based on their financial support to the institution. Finally it made clear the practical attempts of the ruling classes of Britain to canalise the energies of higher education purely for the goals of 'profit maximisation' and turning out management and production oriented graduates. Basic to all these above points is the philosophy underlying monopoly capital, that requires all students to be treated as 'products' who have to fulfill certain roles in society and who have to gain the requisite mentality before undertaking the tasks necessary for a technological society.

The occupation at Warwick took place in February 1970. A few weeks before this, at the University of Edinburgh where I was studying, events similar to those related in the book happened. I was involved in them and it may be useful to recount the affair as it supplements the narrative in *Warwick University Ltd.* A group of socialist students occupied the University's Appointments Board Office to protest against the University's complicity with apartheid in South Africa. This complicity took the form of investment of university funds in South Africa and the practice of allowing firms with direct connections with South African business, to come to the University to recruit candidates for jobs. In the course of the occupation the students found certain files, whose contents, showed remarkable similarities to those in Warwick. The Appointments Board was following a policy bordering on racialism and social discrimination of working class students. One of the personal remarks made on the files by the Appointments Officer in the case of a Punjabi student was, (he) "shows all the characteristics of his race" and an applicant with a working class background was described condescendingly as "cheerfully proletarian".

Many such excerpts were photocopied and distributed within the University and led to further protests. However the incident did not hit the national press with such prominence as the subsequent more startling disclosures at Warwick.

Startling Disclosures

At Warwick, the files provided concrete proof of a student being rejected because his headmaster had referred to his participation in the radical Students Action Union. The most disturbing of all disclosures was the tabs kept on Dr Montgomery, a distinguished visiting professor on labour history from America. His activities like giving advice to a group of striking Pakistani workers and attendance of union meetings in and around Warwick, was unfavourably reacted to by the business patrons of the University. The files revealed the correspondence between Mr Gilbert Hunt, Managing Director of Rootes Motor Co., and the Vice-Chancellor. Hunt ruefully remarks to the Vice-Chancellor in a letter, "nothing was said by him (Dr Montgomery) which would involve prosecution under the 1919 Aliens Restriction Act"! Mr Hunt was collecting information with the help of labour spies on Dr Montgomery in the hope of getting something objectionable enough to deport him. Another correspondent, this time a Vice-Chancellor, in a letter to the Warwick Vice-Chancellor refers to the 'growing student menaces' and a businessman complains about 'long haired louts' polluting the campus.

The disclosures were taken by the students to E. P. Thompson who circulated copies among the press and members of staff. This led to a court-injunction on the part of the University—a clumsy effort to suppress the publication and discussion of the files. An attempt which even drew a rebuke from an editorial in

*Warwick University Ltd.
Edited by E. P. Thompson.
Penguin Education Special, 1970.

The Times! The book however does not content itself with making these sensational materials public (in the Documents section) but is an integrated attempt to analyse the basic relationship of Warwick 'The Business University', with industry and the implications this has for higher education in Britain.

The first thing that stands out regarding Warwick is the degree of control by industry. The power structure comprises the big-wigs of the Midlands industrial belt. The Governing Council of the University is packed with men like the Managing Director of Rootes (the infamous Mr Hunt himself), the chairman of Hawker-Siddley, a director of Courtalds, and of the nine co-opted members, eight are influential businessmen and the ninth is the Bishop of Coventry. Among the eight are represented directors of Barclays Bank, Jaguar Cars, British Leyland, Rugby Portland Cement and one Mr J. R. Mead (director of 42 Midlands companies). This staggering list may not be representative of other British universities, because the inception of Warwick was actually initiated by the Midlands industrialists. Though an extreme case, it is yet symptomatic of the intrusion of the corporate sector into the 'academic sanctuaries'—a concept fondly cherished in the best British liberal tradition.

The book provides a very readable account of the sequence of events leading to the opening of the files. A study of administrative decisions, especially in the case of the Students Union building, reflects the subordination of academic sovereignty to interests in the industrial sphere. Capitalism is only interested in getting its returns for the investment put in, and indifferent to student facilities and welfare. With a Barclays Bank Professor of Management Information Systems; a Pressed Steel Fisher Professor of Industrial Relations and a Volkswagen senior lecturer in politics, the emphasis is on efficient administration at the expense of democratic principles. The revelations in the files also disclose the

dangerous trend towards labour espionage and the convergence of interest and action between University authorities, businessmen and conservative school headmasters and aldermen. A holy crusade joined to put down 'the growing student menaces'.

Public Outcry

The sequel to the Warwick affair not mentioned in the book was widespread resentment and public outcry. There were occupations in Manchester, Oxford and Leeds and protests in most British universities. In the initial shock of the assault, the University bureaucracies were on the defensive. But repression followed, true to British style, legal and refined. In Edinburgh fifty-six of us were sentenced to one year rustication (suspended on good behaviour) and a fine of £40 for post-graduates and £20 for undergraduates was imposed. Such a severe sentence led to a bigger occupation of the Administration Buildings and in the course of time the University authorities with a subtle hypocrisy matching the old imperial tradition, offered secretly to advance 'non-repayable' loans to the disciplined students, so that the whole matter could be hushed up. An inquiry was instituted into the working of the Appointments Board and only the timely intervention of the final examination ended the matter. Retaliation was more severe in Leeds where one of the students was expelled. In Warwick itself, the University did not dare to institute disciplinary hearings after the damaging evidence unearthed by the demonstrators.

In an excellent summing up Thompson makes a balanced post-mortem of the whole affair. Warwick was neither a prelude to revolution nor a 'liberal issue'. We cannot but agree with Thompson's criticism of the 'red molers'—the ultra-revolutionaries—who see in every student protest the cataclysmic portent of confrontation and herald of revolution. What the Warwick incident provided the students of Britain was a concrete living experience of the truth behind the bourgeois mystifica-

tion surrounding university education. There is without doubt an element of liberalism in British universities, but this is too often used to cloak the fundamental nature of university education and the process of socialisation to suit a mass consumer-oriented society. The Warwick students got an excellent opportunity to mould a movement, discipline their forces and mobilise their efforts to discredit the predominant role of the University to serve as the handmaiden of monopoly capitalism (Warwick University Ltd. is itself a constructive outcome of such efforts). In doing so, an alliance was forged between the traditional guardians of academic freedom, the liberals, and the left-wing students. It was precisely this alliance that the Trotskyites attacked. An attack brilliantly torpedoed by Thompson. The correct appraisal by Thompson lay in perceiving the nature of students as a social group and the possibilities of their radical protest. Their vulnerability lies in that most British students are dependent on local education authority grants, and it is contradictory for the ultras to denounce all liberal and democratic safeguards as bourgeois illusions, but at the same time their lifeline is maintained by the grants obtained from public funds. Thompson does not spare his so-called liberal academic colleagues either, the ones of the species '*academicus superciliosus*'. The perspective that arises from the whole question of student radicalism is that it has great potential, but it must be tempered by a sound understanding of revolution, something which I feel can be prescribed only by Marxism-Leninism.

What emerges as the underlying theme is the increasing contradiction between the goals of 'production' in a university and the socialisation of students in a working community. While in many respects students resemble the broad mass of victimised sections within the capitalist system, the mistake often made by student radicals and their ideologues like the Tariq Ali and Blackburns, is their confusion in relating it to the revolutionary role of the workers in the West.

This situation may be inherent in the stage of Western capitalism that we are witnessing and I would not like to deal with this controversial question at this point. What the Warwick affair has shown is that there is significant scope for a student community to expose and discredit the ruling ideology. In Britain particularly, with its historical evolution into a bourgeois democracy, the liberal academic university is an essential part of the superstructure. In breaching this (and the attack is increasingly coming from the top with the necessity to regiment and repress), the students are opening new avenues of attack on the general capitalist order through the specific educational structure.

Relevance to India

How does all this relate to Indian universities and students? Our universities are supposedly modelled after the British pattern (though it will require the ghost of Charles Wood to recognise the model now). Definitely there are significant differences in the subjective conditions prevailing in India. University education is less guarded by liberal tenets and more prone to open identification with the ruling class structure. Mere academic exposés will not be sufficient. Students are required to stimulate direct action not to *expose* but to *demolish*. This however, has to be accomplished and will be successful only if the identification of revolutionary students with the basic worker/peasant classes leads to a total onslaught. Any other venture within the limited framework of student politics or petty-bourgeois adventurism is both meaningless and futile in India.

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Letter from London

Hostages Of Capitalism

ANAND KUMAR

ON Sunday, August 9, the British Government openly demonstrated, once more, what it intended to do with 'immigrants' in Britain. What they mean by this term is evident from break-down of figures of 'long-term visitors' entering the country in 1969. There were 11,602 Australians, 3,475 New Zealanders, 332 Indians, 139 Pakistanis and 90 Jamaicans. The racial bias, reflecting Britain's dependence on apartheid and on war in the 'Third World', comes out forcefully in these figures.

This is underlined by the pronouncement of Sir Roy Harrod in *The Times* (August 17) that such a huge surplus in the balance of payments as the Labour Party had brought in was dangerous to the economy except "in wartime or on other occasions when the total demand for goods and services is running above the supply potential of the economy". Therefore, with the chaos of a price rise which the Tories have admitted they cannot control, the prospect of war abroad is not at all unpleasant.

But there is one problem, a problem France has faced before, during the Algerian war, that of oppressing and murdering people abroad who form sizable minorities at home. Therefore, before the killing starts, these people will have either to be destroyed or cowed down to accept their oppression.

The events of August 9 can only be interpreted in this light. A demonstration of about 200 'immigrants' had gathered at Notting Hill (an area famous for its race riots a few years back) to protest against police brutality. The demonstrators, after having marched peacefully for over an hour, were surrounded by police and set upon with wooden truncheons and dogs. They defended themselves bravely and reformed in

order to continue their protest in an orderly fashion when they were attacked again and brutalised so that there was no prospect of the march going on peacefully, although by now the police greatly outnumbered the demonstrators. Defenceless men, women and children were beaten up and at one point, an official police car was seen driving into a group of stragglers, with a uniformed policeman shouting racist abuse at them. Considering Britain's interests in racism, such an over-reaction was to be expected.

The next day no one was left in doubt. The media had stepped in to falsify what had happened. There was no accident in their presentation as the papers followed a predictable pattern. The *Daily Express* falsified the route of the march so that it would appear that violence took place almost immediately as the march started. The *Daily Telegraph* spoke of people wearing green shirts and green armbands, obviously trying to link this up with the Irish Republican Army, and the *Evening News* actually published two copies, one for Central London and one for Notting Hill where the more wild fabrications of the press would not be believed. Even Mr Maudling ordered an inquiry, not into police brutality to people of African and Asian origin, but into organisations of the people who had taken part in the demonstration.

It is clear that British racism treats any attempt by Africans and Asians to organise themselves against the systematic violence that is practised against them here as dangerous. And it is, but only in relation to their designs abroad.

In keeping with the violence intended by the British Government, laws are being framed to restrict both the entry and movement of

Africans and Asians in Britain. And those who are already here are being pushed into accepting their second class status by a preview of the increased police repression this will involve, as there is really no way of telling newcomers from old Afro-Asian residents. The only measures possible are restriction on movement and some form of pass-laws. And to create a favourable climate for such brutal legislation, there has been enormous publicity given to the case of the 40 Indians who were found in a cellar (at a period when illegal immigration into England has declined considerably) and rumours were spread that women were being smuggled in. This will now be used to harass families, especially orthodox ones, already here. It would only require a telephone call (real or imaginary) saying that 'immigrants' have been seen at a particular place, for men and women residents to be subjected to the humiliating questioning which any Afro-Asian entering Britain is subject to.

Futile Hope

In this way Britain hopes to destroy any chance of immigrants being able to disrupt the heartland of imperialism while it goes on its unreasonable spree of disruption and violence abroad. But this is a futile hope. Immigrants are a direct result of the crippling of the economy of the Third World by the imperialist powers. They are mostly skilled workers unable to find jobs at home. (India, Pakistan and the Caribbean, in the case of Britain, as well as West Africa, but to a lesser degree). Their struggle and the struggle of the oppressed people against imperialism are the same. They may appear defenceless in

Britain, but as the advance guard of the anti-imperialist struggle in the heart of imperialism, they see the masses of Asia and Africa behind them. And the revolutionary parties of these areas should not overlook this fact. Nor should they overlook the danger of a forced mass-exodus to swell the ranks of reactionaries (especially as in the case of the Kenya Asians) at home. The experience of the Zionist Israel and obscurantist Liberia should always be before our eyes as an example of what homecoming sufferers of racism can do. This is especially true of mercantile communities like the Jews. Thus, when an attempt is

made by Britain to send Kenya Asians back to Asia, we know it will be attempting the age-old ploy that has bedevilled the politics of the Middle East since 1918. Let the East African businessmen remain where their money is: Britain. On the other hand, we must not underestimate the importance of immigrant communities defending themselves against the increasing repression in Britain itself. They may be hostages of capitalism, but they are also our safeguard against a decaying enemy now preparing to do all it can to preserve the madness it has managed to prop up so long through systematic genocide and bloodshed.

Mrinal Sen's "Interview"

A. M. DAS

OF late several film-makers in this part of the country have been advertising their intention to grapple with reality at last, unwittingly admitting they have been in an escapist wilderness so long. We have been intrigued by these declarations, because to face reality as it is today—to speak of guerilla warfare and police terror—one requires spinal chord made of other stuff than dough. The first of the films billed as a grapple with present-day reality turned out to be a horror called *Sagina Mahato*, where Tapan Sinha, in his characteristic (and abysmal) ignorance, decides to investigate the very roots of the Communist Party of India, and arrives at the conclusion, that a group of young men and women from the city, who smile benignly at drunken orgies, went and foisted the party on the railway workers. The workers, he says quite unashamedly, are alcoholics of a pristine and innocent variety, and understand nothing but hunger; they begin to snore if you talk to them about the French Revolution. Nay more, he proceeds to damn the "adventurist" "splinter group" which believes in guerilla war, and presents

it as the blind instrument of a single power-mad tyrant—probably Mr Sinha's idea of Charu Mazumdar. Yes, *Sagina Mahato* grapples (commercially) with present-day reality, but on behalf of the ruling class. It slanders the working class, the entire communist movement in India, and the present-day communist revolutionaries.

Satyajit Ray's *Pratidwandi* explodes in anger in the scene where the unemployed lose patience at last and revolt. But the entire scheme of the film is a studied retreat from violence. We have a hero who sees skeletons where human beings are. He wants to hear—of all things—birdsongs, and naturally is too sensitive a plant for the brutal goings-on of the revolutionaries in Calcutta today. He runs away to his birds (isn't there anybody in Balurghat to burst a cracker or two?). Furthermore, out there in his hermitage, Siddhartha contemplates Death, the inevitable end of all endeavour. The rest is silence. Why then bother about partisans, guerillas, Mao Tse-tung and other horrors? The coward is the wisest man, because the bravest will also die. Siddhartha is Mr

CORRECTION

Frontier, October, 31, 1970, page 12, col.2 lines 10-11 (from below), please read "changing in the image of the capitalist..." Line 3 (from below) should read "changing spontaneously in the..."

Ray's degenerating allurements to our revolutionary youth to abandon struggle. Thus, once more, reality has been grappled with, but this reality helps the ruling class.

It is not enough therefore to boast of "fearless" grapples with reality. The question arises: what reality? There are at least two realities inherent in every situation, depending on what class you wish to serve.

Mrinal Sen's *Interview*, one is thrilled to note, grapples with that other reality, the reality which inspires struggle, exudes hatred of the ruling class and destroys the audience's sepulchral peace of mind. It is a positive statement of our time, and it analyses the middle-class protagonist with the ruthlessness of a Marxist. There is no sentimental pampering here, no attempt to rationalise the vices of the middle class which render Siddhartha "lovably" impotent. Mrinal Sen pursues his hero through a day of brisk activities with a cold-eyed, impersonal camera, and strips him of his disguises. The petty-bourgeois heroes we usually see drip from head to foot with the creator's sympathy, because our creators come from the same class and wallow in it. Mrinal Sen's *Interview* rises above it and speaks from another viewpoint, and therefore analyses social relations.

From the outset, Ranjit's efforts to get a "better" job are consciously (and artistically) related to his sycophantic attempts to belong to the master-class. We see him in his press, proof-reading an article on the rise of communist revolutionaries in India today; but this is not good enough for him, and his mother and sister. He must be rich, he must move to a better flat. And the suit that he must wear for his interview is a visible symbol of his desire to ape his "betters". The dress-symbol of *Bhuvan Shome* returns here in

reverse; Bhuvan Shome in the attire of a peasant was stripped of his snobbery; Ranjit's suit will make him a snob. But you cannot do it. You end up being a clown, the laughing-stock of the rich. You have to stumble down the straits with a tie but no shirt. You forget your suit in a bus, because you are not used to one. You rush about begging your well-to-do friends to help you, and you suffer the final humiliation of asking your girl-friend to borrow a suit for you. Even his dreams of marriage and married life are tainted with a vaguely disturbing lust for gold. So, finally, he meets his adored "betters", who, in alien dress, question him in an alien language, and decide they do not want him.

But Ranjit would never admit to himself why he has been doing all this. They never admit it. They always tell you, it was a better job and that is all there is to it. But Mrinal Sen will not let him get away with it and in the final sequence tears Ranjit's mask off and he is face to face with himself. When he attacks the dress-maker's model, there is still an element of jealousy in it, and a quick montage of the guerillas of Vietnam, Africa and India, further serves to emphasize Ranjit's pettiness. But he cleanses himself with anger; he will not betray his class again, nor will he run away to birds.

Roots of Anger

Mrinal Sen thus probes the roots of anger. There is a fashion among certain "progressives" to "sympathise (from a distance) with young men who throw bombs, and to say: naturally they are angry, they have no jobs, no opportunities. In other words, these "progressives" suggest that revolution can be halted by distributing jobs, that young revolutionaries are merely frustrated individuals, that their struggle has no philosophy or conviction behind it. Mrinal Sen refuses to indulge this kind of calumny. Ranjit's fury in the last sequence is not born of frustration, but of final and irrevocable conviction that this system is rotten. Ranjit argues from the suit to the system, and his anger is no longer a

personal emotion, but the fury of an entire people. He becomes representative.

The brilliant montage of Calcutta's millions who struggle to keep alive has already marked Ranjit's hankering for a place in the rich man's milieu as odd and unseemly. The final sequence with shots of Ranjit's white hands, of his meeting with himself installed in fantasy in his office, seals the doom of Ranjit's flight from himself and his class. K. K. Mahajan's camera-work, uniformly good, reaches brilliance in this last sequence, where Ranjit gropes in the dark for the truth. But of course cutting remains Mrinal Sen's most powerful stock-in-trade, and the ferocity of pace of urban life is captured throughout by some superb cuts and intercuts. One could only wish that the Calcutta montage had not become so wildly jerky towards the end; it was unnecessary. On the other hand, the cuts to the slick computers while Ranjit is being interviewed capture the tragedy of man when machine becomes not his instrument, but his rival.

The feel of a middle-class home is so genuine in the film, the contents of the mother's old chest being its principal component—and the characters so familiar, the police-officer, the men in the tram, in the bus, in the bazaar, the thief, the unemployed youth—that one feels that the odd scene in the tram where, all on a sudden, Mrinal Sen tries "alienation" or something, where the actors step out of character and tell us uninteresting things, was dull, unnecessary and gimmick-like. Especially when a passenger declares that the film is about him and people like him, we wanted to ask Mrinal Sen why he was so unsure of himself. The whole film had already, in brilliant cinematic language, told us exactly that. In fact the astounding prelude shots of imperial statues coming off the pedestal, hauled away with guy-ropes, lying helpless on the floor of a truck—already create an atmosphere of old values shattered by time, and gimmicks become superfluous.

A profound study of the mother is

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Frontier

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given by Karuna Banerjee and of the sister by Mamata Chatterjee. The two between them walk away with most of the acting honours, with Shekhar Chatterjee making a convincing Uncle-who-made-good. But we have serious complaints against both Ranjit Mullick and Bulbul Mukherjee, whose incompetence almost threatened Mrinal Sen's entire intention. Especially Ranjit with an infuriating smile and insincere recitation, seriously damaged the everyday feel of the home scenes.

And of course the present reviewer has always considered Mr Vijaya Raghava Rao to be lacking in sense

of film music. He makes his patterns run parallel to the visual to a degree of infantilism in *Interview*: Punjabi theme for the Punjabi taxi-driver, chords for the model in the shop-window because the model looks like an Englishman, classical hymns for the Buddhas in the museum, ad nauseam.

However, *interview* is a film of such depth, power and audacity, that these defects fail to arrest its impact and one comes out of the house silently greeting Mrinal Sen, if not as the best director we have today, then certainly as the only courageous one.

God's Way

BY A DRAMATIC CRITIC

ARCHIBALD MacLeish's *J.B.*, presented by The Amateurs, is a morality play which is a modern version of the Biblical story of Job. Its presentation by Elia Kazan on Broadway in the end-fifties was considered a shot in the arm for verse drama, which was then languishing after a spell of glory a decade back when *The Cocktail Party* had been staged.

The prologue is provided by two ex-actors Zuss and Nickles, now circus vendors, who play God and Satan. *J.B.*, the modern counterpart of Job, is a successful man of the world who suffers a series of personal tragedies "to see God" and His ways. He is gradually stripped of his possessions. His children are killed and his wife leaves him. He demands to know his guilt (he is a believer and no doubter). Three comforters descend on the scene and make him swallow their respective viewpoints. In the end when his wife rejoins him he realises that "what love does is to affirm".

The first part of the play is concerned with the calamities which befall *J.B.* and the second with supposedly philosophical queries and hortatory explanations. Nickles who agrees to play Satan and lays wager that his stand will be vindicated sounds sardonic in his verbal duel with Zuss playing God. The conflict between God and Satan seems to come off more convincingly than the trappings of personal drama of the modern American Job. The weakness of the play becomes more apparent in the second part when drama gives way to mere words in debate. Even competent production, with its austere set, and some good performance, is hardly sufficient to lift a pedestrian play to something of substance.

Suryatapasya

The protagonists' tiring habit of talking all the time the language of pamphlets and posters spoils the intended effect of bringing direct politics onto the stage in Sabyasachi's

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production of *Suryatapasya*. A play about a struggling lower-middle class family, it has a principal character, trying frantically to integrate his artistic self into his politics. The middle-class family portrayed on the stage seems terribly unreal due to the melodramatic turns and twists of the play. The trite story-material and a flamboyant acting style, the backwash of the conservative theatrical tradition, have robbed the production of any feeling of contemporaneity. It is as if we are witnessing *Prافulla* laced up with lockouts and strikes. The director is not well-equipped in his presentation of the basic theme and the technical qualities are purely primitive. The lighting lacks any sense of depth and balance, the decor is unimpressive, and the greatest bane is the silly background music, a coarse blending of Tagore songs and the cacophonous whining of a mad orchestra.

Book Review

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ASIAN PERSPECTIVE

By Shigeru Ishikawa

Kinokuniya Bookstore Co. Ltd., Tokyo, Japan.

WHATEVER else they may back, evidently there is no dearth of advice for the countries of Asia on how to achieve economic development. American pundits in particular have gone into the matter with the usual gusto and unravelled the secret: considering the natural resource endowments, population and area as well as current international economic relations facing the Asian countries, these should by and large follow the Japanese path.

Professor Ishikawa in his book has boldly questioned this widely held proposition. He has pointedly faced the question: is the Japanese experience of economic development beginning with the Meiji Restoration (1868) relevant as a lesson to the contemporary developing countries in Asia? Closely associated is his additional query: What was, after all,

the Japanese experience?

The latecomers have the advantage of drawing conclusions from the historical experiences of other countries, and thereby learning the lesson free of cost, as it were. But drawing relevant conclusions is not an easy task; witness the superfluous, infantile generalisations of the "take-off"-waller Rostow. Ishikawa, however, has not attempted to establish any sweeping, universal law of development; his ambition is comparatively modest, but the findings are highly interesting even though at places his analytical method is somewhat dubious.

In Chapter 1, Ishikawa discusses the initial conditions of the contemporary developing countries of Asia, which are much worse than those of the presently developed countries of the West, and also Japan in their corresponding phase. The per capita income is extremely low, the population pressure on land enormous, the pattern of income distribution highly unequal, and so on. Apart from these common characteristics, there are of course specific variations from country to country in terms of area, structure of the manufacturing industry, etc. On the whole, the resemblance with the Meiji Japan, however, is only superficial.

Chapter 2 provides a thought-provoking discussion about the roles of various inputs such as irrigation and fertilisers in agricultural development. When the productivity of land is low, claims the author, it is investment in flood control, irrigation and drainage, rather than in fertilisers, which is crucially important. Sophisticated inputs like fertilisers and improved seeds assume critical importance only at the next stage when the productivity of land has already reached a relatively high level. This empirical observation has been derived (although somewhat unconvincingly) on the basis of an analysis of cross-country, cross-section, and time-series data.

Meiji Japan, by contrast, achieved its phenomenal growth in land productivity apparently through major reliance on fertilisers; and there was very little investment in irrigation, drainage, and flood control during this

period. Ishikawa points out that in fact this growth was made possible because exactly these basic investment projects—irrigation, drainage and flood-control—had already been extensively done during the preceding Tokugawa period. The agricultural investment in Meiji Japan, therefore, is indeed misleading as an example for the present-day Asian countries where the productivity of land is still at an abysmally low level.

Before passing on to industry the author takes up another interesting issue, namely, the flow of resources between the farm and the non-farm sectors. Historians have almost unanimously concluded that the industrial development in Meiji Japan was financed by the outflow of resources from agriculture into industry. The FAO experts at a meeting in Tokyo even stressed the relevance of this aspect of Japanese development for the developing countries of Asia.

First of all, Ishikawa expresses doubt about the statistical validity of this alleged resource transfer from agriculture in Meiji Japan. In any event, he shows that in contemporary Asian countries—particularly India, China, and also Japan—just the opposite trend is very much in evidence.

Finally, as for industry, again Meiji Japan is hardly relevant for the Asia of today. The international economic relations in the meantime have undergone profound changes. Unlike Meiji Japan, the developing countries of Asia today can hardly count upon exports of raw silk for the American women's stocking, and of cotton fabrics for the poor people in the neighbouring countries. Gone also are the days of the nineteenth century when capitalism had not yet reached its highest and last stage, namely, imperialism, as a predominant factor in world trade.

The major thrust of this book is rather negative at first glance: it explodes some of the myths fondly cherished by many in regard to the image of Meiji Japan, and its relevance to day in Asia. But then, that by itself is no small achievement.

Ranjan Sengupta

"HOOOLIGANISM

***DEFEATS
ITS OWN PURPOSE"***

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose



Clippings

The Wanted Man

At a top level and secret meeting the other day, the new Commissioner of Police, Mr Ranjit Gupta, has suggested a novel and horrible method to re-establish peace in Calcutta and at the same time remove the anarchic situation in the police organisation. It is not known whether this has received official approval, but the plan has already been put into operation. . . .

The method is very simple. Mr Ranjit Gupta has drawn up a list of 65 people responsible for the disorders in the city. Each one of them will be killed, in different ways—in public, or by police shots in secrecy, in police custody or by beating up outside it. Reliable agents of the police will be employed, in addition to the regular police.

...According to later reports, the assassination list...has now gone up to 135. It will grow, because different police stations in Calcutta are sending up more names.

* *
The exact figure of "Naxalites" arrested in Calcutta and neighbouring areas is not yet known...The majority of them are 15 to 25 years old. Some of them have passed out of school, some have not, some are in college. The police have brought charges of murder...loot and rape against them...There are few who have not been hung up and beaten... They are comrades who cannot stand up without support. You will meet many young men in police or jail custody who shriek when they defecate in latrines. The reason—rulers or thin iron rods have been forced into their anus to create permanent sores...Take Dilip and Narayan Sarkar. They cannot walk properly...they always bleed. They cannot wear pants or dhotis...

As for boys who, the police think, can throw bombs, the latter do their utmost to cripple their hands and fingers. Many have had their wrists broken...Then you have cases of pins

inserted under nails; sometimes the human beasts strip people and make them sit on lighted heaters. The lower limbs of Sahadeb, of Kasba, have been scorched after he was made to sit on a lighted heater...Many arrested have gone mad...for instance, Mihir Sarkar or Kelebabu of Sainthia. Thanks to repeated electric shocks, his mind does not function properly; he faints off and on, gets excited at the most ordinary conversation, and takes everyone for a Detective Department man and becomes delirious. (*Darpan*).

* *
Circles close to the (West Bengal) Governor's Advisers have no doubt that police-baiting and action against Naxalites followed one another in a vicious cycle. The administration has, in its own way, made inquiries into allegations of police torture and of people dying in police lock-ups or in police vans.

In most cases the findings have been that the allegations of torture were "without any basis". It was, however, not denied that the inquiries were carried out by "fairly senior" police officials.

Writers Building sources pointed out...that there was no alternative to accepting the police version. They said that deaths of arrested persons in police vans, when they were being taken to thanas, were a "very recent phenomenon" and "had seldom happened before." In most of these cases the police version was that the arrested people had tried to escape and were killed in duels with police.

These sources also said that the Government had received allegations that because of cries of youths in thana lock-ups at night, people living nearby could not sleep. (*The Statesman*).

Sundarayya Smells CIA

The CPI(M) general secretary, Mr P. Sundarayya, thinks that the Naxalite movement is degenerating into a counter-revolutionary agitation which should be fought if democracy and revolution are to be safeguarded... Mr Sundarayya alleged that "there

are reliable reports that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency is taking a hand in the gangster warfare" started by the Naxalites who were "actively joining hands with the goondas and anti-social elements" and that the Central Bureau of Intelligence of the Government of India was working closely with the CIA. He alleged that the police under the guidance of the Union Home Ministry under Mrs Indira Gandhi, "is conniving at and encouraging murderous attacks by the Naxalites and other anti-social gangs organized by sections of Forward Bloc and the SUC against the leaders of the trade unions and kisan movement and against the leading cadre of our party and democratic movement". Mr Sundarayya said he supported even the CPI to be behind the recent attack on the Calcutta Mayor, Mr Prasanta Sur.

Offer To Vietcong

America's Black Panther Organisation has offered volunteers to fight against U.S. forces in Vietnam... The Black Panther offer came in a letter addressed to the Vietcong National Liberation Front. The letter said the American Negro party "hereby offers an undetermined number of troops" to assist the Communist side. The letter described the U.S. Government as the common enemy of both the Vietnamese people and those represented by Black Panthers. It added: "There is no fascist or reactionary Government in the world today that could stand without the support of U.S. imperialism." This aspect of Washington's role according to the letter made the problem international and "we offer these troops in recognition of the necessity for international alliance to deal with the problem". (T.J.S. George in *Hindustan Times*).

* *
The Central Parliamentary Board of the Swatantra Party, which met here (New Delhi)...decided to support the Government's move to revive the Preventive Detention Act in West Bengal.

Mr M. R. Masani, chairman,...

explained he would like to see the Communist parties banned—more particularly, the Naxalites, who were indulging in violence in West Bengal. Since the Government was not taking steps to outlaw the Naxalites his party had decided to support other measures to tackle the menace, he said.

The Jana Sangh Working Committee...asked the Government to declare an all-out war on the Naxalites. If need be, the committee said in a strongly-worded resolution, violence should be met with violence. Explaining, Dr Mahavir, one of the party's main spokesmen, told reporters that the party would have no objection to imposition of martial law if that was considered to be the only way of meeting the violent Naxalite challenge. (All three extracts from *The Statesman*, November 8).

The former Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mr Ajoy Mukherjee, at a meeting at Tufanganj...discussed the erroneous Naxalite movement. He said that the present education system was no doubt wrong, but the Naxalites were destroying it in a barbarous way without making any arrangement for an alternative system...He made a fervent appeal to guardians and youths to shake off their fear and hesitation and stand boldly against any possible Naxalite disturbance in the ensuing school and college examinations.

...The CPI leader, Mr Biswanath Mukherjee, addressing a public meeting in Jalpaiguri...bitterly criticised Naxalites and said that terrorism could not bring in revolution, which would encourage only counter-revolutionary activities. Revolution would come through mass movement but not in the way adopted by Naxalites, he added. (*Hindusthan Standard*).

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Letters

Woman Power

With reference to Mr Ashok Rudra's comment on Woman Power (September 5), I am glad to note that he does not seem to have basic differences with me on the position of women in the West. Nonetheless, I find that he faults me for cynicism, a charge to which I plead guilty, particularly in my reaction to 'protest' in the West, specifically in the U.S. It was far from my intention to sneer at the peace movement in the U.S. or belittle its role in forcing the U.S. administration to recognise its defeat in Vietnam (though eminently conservative interests too are anxious for a scaling down of the war from entirely different motives of course); but what I find difficult to sympathise with is the more theatrical elements among them, which are not the same as those dubbed 'extremists' by the bourgeois press. It is when a gesture becomes a substitute for action that one has to draw the line. As for Mr Rudra's assertion about the common political affiliations of the college wreckers and the guerillas of Sriakulam, I can only say that, common political affiliations notwithstanding, there are differences between them and Mr Rudra should surely be aware of the internal debates going on among the revolutionary communist groups on the current tactical line. Sometimes, some colleges need to be wrecked; the recent bombing of the Army Math Research Centre at the University of Wisconsin is a case in point; it was not an act of irresponsible destruction; on the contrary, the target was carefully chosen since it was this institute that had developed the radiator detector that had tracked down Che Guevara's unit and led to his capture and murder. Such selective violence, purely political in nature even when directed against an educational institution, is yet to be practised by our urban revolutionaries.

To come to Mr Rudra's remarks

about his real differences with me. I made it clear in my earlier communication that as far as the Indian woman is concerned, I would support all moves towards the removal of the exploitation that is inherent in the relationship between man and woman in our society. But Mr Rudra only repeats my question posed at the end of my letter, without answering it. I quite agree that many of our so-called progressives do maintain tyrannical attitudes towards their womenfolk. Hypocrisy is not the exclusive prerogative of either the progressive or the reactionary. But real liberation is going to come about only through a genuine participation in a real revolution. I cited the cases of Vietnam and Cuba, not because I can claim to have studied in detail the feminist problem in the set-up of these countries, but because, in their struggle for national liberation—a real struggle and not shadow-boxing—they have passed through fire. The woman who had to work in the field with a gun slung on her back, alert for the sight of an enemy aeroplane is not going to take any male chauvinism lying down.

I am surprised to find that Mr Rudra apparently believes that the "participation of women in the non-cooperation movement under Gandhi" is more or less the same as a national liberation movement. (Perhaps I do him an injustice here). How could the women—largely from the middle and upper middle classes—get over their built-in feelings of being Sati Savitris by merely being part of Gandhi's retinue? It should not in the least have surprised Mr Rudra that ex-Congresswomen of Gandhi (or for that matter the ex-communist housewives) continue to be model Hindu wives, because their whole experience of 'national struggle' (the 'privations' suffered by the Nehru family, including the female members of it, is a fair instance—vide Motilal Nehru's letter to, and from Sir Harcourt Butler, May-June 1920) was designed to strengthen their status as Sati Savitris.

Actually, the differences between Mr Rudra and myself are minimal,

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and we seem to differ in our emphases. I would agree with him on his views on the condition of women in India; but I would still be cautious about taking the woman power movements in the West, seriously. But I do feel it is a little odd that we should be so solemnly discussing the problem of women's liberation in the West. To be quite candid, I am not particularly bothered about the terrible privation the Western woman labours under. As Malcom used to say, I have my own dead to mourn.

M. S. PRABHAKAR
Gauhati

Backing The CPM

By no means the least amusing aspect of the middle-class intellectuals of our time is the tendency 'to swim with the stream' and the erosion of the capacity to stand alone, if necessary, or for the sake of conviction. This is observable among even the most intelligent of the petty-bourgeoisie. They waver at every turn of events. They are ardent supporters of Red China and of armed revolution in 1966, admirers of the young Naxalites at one stage, praise the 'United Front coalition governments' at another, hate the Naxalites (or deplore their adventurism) and turn away from them in fear in the following year. In their eyes, what cannot be seen on the surface does not exist. What is not majority is not real, such are the premises of many of your letter-writers. These are also the premises of A.M.'s arguments (September 19) in defence of the CPM. He asks, if everybody who matters is against the CPM, snipes at it, wants to do it in, how come it is still able not only to maintain but to add to its strength with almost a frightening efficiency? If a correct political line is the reason for the rapid growth of a party, what form of yardstick would A.M. use to explain the growth, 'with almost a frightening efficiency', of the Jana Sangh in Northern India? If the support of the majority alone is the

sheet anchor to judge a party then Prafulla Sen who after murdering a hundred peasants in one evening in 1959 swept the polls in the following general election with overwhelming peasant votes, must have been correct and the communist minority who opposed the Congress must have been wrong. It is as simple as that. The idea that following this logic the CPM, still an insignificant minority in most of the states, forfeits the right to exist in those states does not so much as enter his head. Sometimes it seems that he is aware of the crying limitation of his own argument and he tosses, and qualifies his arguments, in another context, by adding the words 'at least in the context of this State'. The fact is, conditions of class struggle create circumstances and relationships that sometimes make it possible for a grotesque mediocrity to play a hero's part. The 'popularity' and 'growth' of the CPM at the particular juncture can only be explained by studying deeply the conditions of class struggle now prevailing in West Bengal. The proletariat appearing as an appendage of the petty bourgeoisie is not rare in history. A.M. scoffs at the sceptics who doubted the future of the CPM. But did he not count a lot of chickens rather quickly—before the Kerala elections?

A.M. writes that the strategy (of the CPM) consists of continuous blending of the hot and the cold. Here is an example of the application of this formula. The CPM weekly *Deshbhaish* dated August 21, thundered: "On this memorable day (i.e. August 31) stained with martyrs' blood lakhs and lakhs of people from villages will march to Calcutta; then they will take up the programme of immobilising the activities of the illegal government." In a matter of ten days the CPM muted its voice. The secretariat of its Provincial Committee issued a statement virtually disowning the earlier threat, saying, "Our plan was that on Martyrs' Day several lakh workers and peasants would assemble in Calcutta for an

hour's demonstration" (*Ganashakti*, August 31.)

The example is clear. On the petty bourgeoisie Engels wrote that the history of all the political movements since 1830 in Germany as well as in France and England, invariably showed this class talking big, making loud protestations, and sometimes even using extreme phrases, so long as they saw no danger: nervous, cautious and conciliatory as soon as the smallest danger approached.

This petty bourgeois tactic is now declared as working class tactic - By this exposition of the CPM's strategy and tactics A.M. supplied the best corroboration, startling in its exactness of the view which he intended to refute. He of course goes on to repeat all the good old words about combating Indira Gandhi, about war on the Swatantra, monopoly capitalism etc. All this honey however was spoiled by a spoonful of tar by the small sentence that after all, even in the last General Election 40 per cent voted for the Congress, a large number among them peasants and workers, thus re-emphasizing the need to win over majority in election before 'starting revolution', an attitude that is Kautskyism both in its playing the wag and pure revisionism. In denouncing Herr Kautsky who attacked Lenin by comparing him 'to an impatient midwife who uses violence to make a pregnant woman give birth in the fifth month instead of the ninth', (but can the tail really wag the dog? asked A.M. smartly) and made the well-known statement, "...the aim of our political struggle remains, as hitherto, the conquest of state power by winning a majority in parliament and by converting parliament into the master of the government," Lenin declared—"Only scoundrels or simpletons can think that the proletariat must win the majority in elections carried out under the yoke of the bourgeoisie, under the yoke of wage-slavery, and that it should win power afterwards. This is the height of folly or hypocrisy; it is substituting voting, under the old system and with the old po-

wer, for class struggle and revolution." (Greetings to the Italian, French and German Communists).

Lenin said, "The proletariat cannot be victorious unless it wins over to its side the majority of the population. But to limit or condition this to the gathering of a majority of votes at elections while the bourgeoisie remains dominant is the most utter stupidity or simply swindling with the workers" (Elections of the Constituent Assembly and the Dictatorship of the proletariat).

How did Lenin look at elections? To sum up, the substance and main-spring of the Social Democratic election platform can be expressed in three words: *for the revolution*. (The Election Platform—1911).

The CPM would say that it too values elections primarily as a means for the political enlightenment of the people, but it is swathed in circumlocution—'meanwhile if voted to power we would give modest relief to the people'. Is this not pure and simple reformism? Can they give modest relief? Lenin said: This democratic solution, if all the land is transferred to the peasants without compensation, does not and cannot in the least encroach on the foundation of capitalist society—the power of money, commodity production, and the domination of the market (Campaign for Election to the Fourth Duma—1911).

A.M. tries to disguise reformist arguments, theories and platforms with catchphrases and catchwords which create the impression of being Marxist and revolutionary. The statement concerning the role of the individual at the expense of that of the collective with its emphasis on individual terrorism if it happens without politics in command, (—but did the Naxalbari peasant revolt in 1967 belong to this category? Not even Konar made such a charge against it) is absolutely true, but it is only half the truth. Marxists cannot confine themselves to merely condemning 'individual terrorism', to a reference to the 'necessity' of action on the part of the masses. They must first go to the root of the causes

that give rise to this phenomenon and themselves initiate action. In initiating action the role of the individual and of individual groups cannot be minimised. "It is well known", Lenin wrote, "that such contradictions are solved in practice by breaking the vicious circle, by bringing about a change in the mood of the masses, by the heroic initiative of individual groups which in the background of such a change in the mood of the masses often play a decisive role."

The Naxalites are trying to do precisely this. Theirs is the difficult problem of the pioneers—how to organise the first armed bases for a protracted war. 'Ten days that shook the world' tactics that still dominate, perhaps unconsciously the thinking of a large section of well meaning democrats is out of question in the present context. Guerilla warfare alone can develop the initiative and instil courage in the masses against a strong adversary. More than two hundred years ago Marx and Engels saw its great possibilities in India. Engels made the point while reporting. The First War of Independence 1857-59 in the *New York Daily Tribune*, May 25, 1858. 'But in the best of cases, a long and harassing guerilla warfare is before them—not an enviable thing for Europeans under an Indian sun'.

To the Naxalites the first task is to undermine the traditional authorities—the village moneylender and the police, preach revolutionary violence and form guerilla nucleus relying on their own efforts and resources with the well-known motto Lenin adopted from Napoleon—Learn warfare through warfare. The task is undoubtedly extremely difficult, more so due to active opposition from the CPM in collaboration with the police and promises no immediate success. But a start has been made, of course not without its attending childishness and blunders. But when some people, pretending to be Marxists and armed-revolutionwallas as against the vegetarian Right Communists poke fun at it, putting salt on the injuries without trying to understand

the underlying motive, it becomes intolerable. What Engels thought of police-people battles may be recalled with profit. In connection with the agitation then going on in Germany he wrote to J. P. Becker (February 14, 1884): "There is a lot of rotten stuff among the so-called leaders but I have unqualified confidence in our masses, and what they lack in revolutionary tradition they are gaining more and more from the little war with the police."

The tragi-comedy of A.M. is his failure to notice that his assertions are simply a rehash of Promode Dasgupta's ideas, a rehash of Menshevik ideas. That is why he has landed himself in a most comical and false position.

SANJIB MITRA
Calcutta

Police Firings

Very innocently the Administration has protested that there has been no and cannot be a blanket ban on judicial enquiries into police firings. They have only suspended the routine executive enquiries to improve 'effectiveness' of the firings (in the 'public interest', of course).

I have an uncomfortable thought that, besides the *carte blanche* the decision amounts to in the immediate run (one hears an unofficial shoot-at-sight has been declared—and the sudden 'effectiveness' of recent firings confirm this possibility), the absence of executive enquiries may sabotage any future judicial enquiry that may be ordered by a popular

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government (to which the 'Russo-phile, progressive Police Commissioner and officers may have to bow) in future. There may be no police records! And the enquiring paragons of justice cannot surely give a verdict against a defenceless defendant!

R.A.K.
Calcutta

A Murder

I am shocked to learn from the local newspaper (*The Tribune*) of the murder of Sri Kalyan Sen by some suspected Naxalites. He was known to me from his student days and particularly when we were attached to Munshiganj Haraganga College (district Dacca, now in East Pakistan, year 1946). He was amiable, jovial and always friendly and very much social. The only folly in his life was to accept a job in the Police Department. The offer came to him all of a sudden when he was already an employee in the Employment Exchange. As he was not inclined to go into the Police Department he invited the suggestions of his friends. I told him to accept the job for the time being and look out for a change in the future. He had mostly to function in the office and nothing to do as a policeman.

It was a strange coincidence that when the local daily brought me the news I was reading a book about Che Guevara in which there was the following excerpts from Che: "We are simply adjusting ourselves to the predictions of the scientific Marx as

we travel this road of rebellion, struggling against the old structure of power supporting ourselves in the people for the destruction of this structure and having the happiness of this people as the basis of our struggle."

How can one reconcile secret agents, ambush, conspiracy, leading to murders and the tyranny of devastating civil life with the predictions of 'Scientific Marx'?

NAVOJIT MUKHERJEE
Jullunder, Punjab

Know-How For Hotels

Reduction of foreign collaboration and restriction of its services to fields requiring the imperative "sophisticated technical know-how" are, we are told by Ministers and their bureaucratic entourage, the professed aim and content of the Fourth Plan, formulated by the neo-socialistic Congress (R). But now even "hoteliering" requires foreign collaboration. The house of Tatas, the friend-in-need of our neo-socialist Prime Minister, as much as Birlas and other monopolists, have been permitted to go in for technical collaboration with the American firm, Inter-Continental Hotels Corporation, a full subsidiary of Pan American Airways, for the extension work of the Tata-owned Taj Hotel at Bombay (*The Statesman*, October 26). The term "technical" is a multi-edged weapon. "Hoteliering" too requires a technique. For India, yankee type technique, to satisfy the appetite of the visiting 'experts' of the Western countries and America along with their collaborating Indian entrepreneurs—the monopolists, industrialists, the kulaks, rajas, and landlords—turned neo-industrialists—has been found best suited to the occasion. Predictably, the State must come to help. Public sector units like the Industrial Credit Corporation of India, Unit Trust of India, the Investment Corporation of India, will help the moneybags with Rs 25 lakhs in equity shares and Rs 25 lakhs in preference shares (*The Statesman*, October 26), so that the

honourable visitors, and our neo-capitalists, bureaucrats and the 'managerial class', with buxom well-fed ladies in arms, can dine, dance and gambol in rooftop Chinese restaurant, coffee shop, snack bars, discotheque club, shopping centre, swimming pool, etc. Is this State capitalism? Or neo-colonialism? Or neo-socialism?

Terms like neo-colonialists, neo-socialists are very often being used. But does one know that amongst us there is a class who may be called neo-revolutionaries. They are in the midst of us, at the centre of this great city in the house of the Swantantra party mouthpiece, *The Statesman*. Overnight, one might as well say, this paper has become revolutionary. In its Sunday supplements you read articles on revolutionary leaders like Sm Bina Das, who made splendid contribution to the nationalist cause. Revoking their memory and deeds is a good thing but a little delving would show that the chief purpose of these articles is not to pay tribute to them or to their methods and deeds but to belittle the urge and aspirations of the people of West Bengal to usher in genuine socialism, driving out the pseudo-socialism practised by the rulers for the last twenty-three years of Congress rule. It is quite one thing to remember the dead, and old noble sons and daughters of the country, it is quite another to use them, especially those who are decrepit, as tools to prop up the dilapidated establishment. As a friend remarked, 'A requiem for the living, and long live the dead and

A. C. G.
Budge Budge, 24-Parganas

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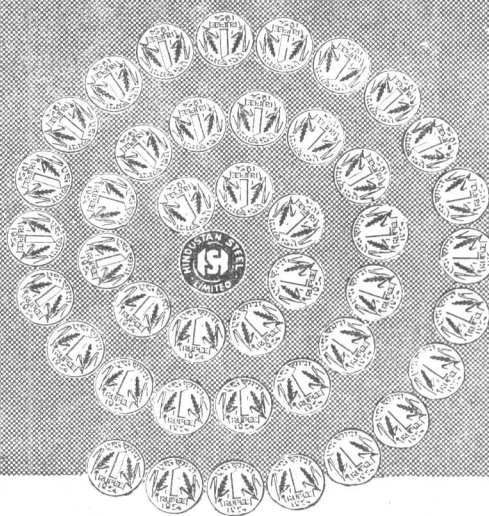
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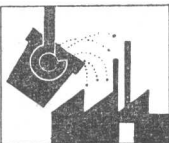
ECONOMIC MULTIPLIER



Highlights of Hindustan Steel's role as a multiplier of economic activity in the development of India.

INDUSTRIES

Hindustan Steel has so far supplied over 20 million tonnes of steel and 7.7 million tonnes of pig iron to Indian industry. This has initiated the growth of several engineering and other industries which use iron and steel. The equipment and machinery produced by these engineering industries have made the growth of various other industries possible. With this rapid industrial development, a steady and increased supply of raw materials also became essential. To meet this demand, still other industries sprang up—industries engaged in mining, transportation, production of industrial raw materials, etc. Together, these have added to the nation's wealth and contributed several million rupees to the exchequer in the form of taxes and duties.



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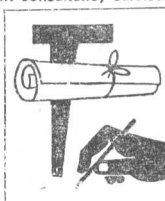


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Hindustan Steel has introduced many new steel

products and steel-making processes. With the establishment and expansion of Hindustan Steel the nation has gained new experience, developed new skills and competent consultancy services.

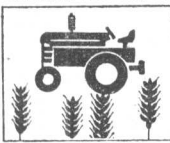
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