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CEYLON GOES LEFT

IF wishes were horses, newspapers would be soothsayers. Mrs Srimavo Bandaranaike's landslide victory in the Ceylon elections has saddened the hearts of ladies and gentlemen of leisure and privilege here, there, everywhere. After Srimavo was ousted from power in 1965, much effort had been put in to turn Ceylon into a Jamaica of the Indian Ocean. Private foreign investments were welcomed with open arms, tourist facilities were accorded the highest priority, the World Bank's advisers were treated as divine emissaries, the general environment was sought to be spruced up so that the island in the sun could give the impression of infinite indolence. Planters and press barons, export-import hucksters and plush hoteliers, all congregated inside the United National Party, which has been unabashedly for a government of the rich, by the rich and for the rich.

They had assumed that this could go on for ever. Newspapers assiduously built an image of the UNP just short of super-perfect, oozing in charm and sympathy for the common man: American-owned oil companies whose equity Srimavo tried to take over during her tenure last time, gladly pitched in, poll analysts were hired to dish out tendentious forecasts about how the Ceylonese have made up their minds never again to trudge the leftist path: a barrage of propaganda was unleashed to warn the voters of the plight that awaits them in case they, absent-mindedly turn to the United Front in preference to Dudley Senanayake; stories about the alleged chaos which has overtaken Kerala and West Bengal since they opted for the Left were run for days on end, and some obliging army general was allowed to divulge a cock-and-bull story regarding an imminent Guevara-type push.

But none of this has worked; the electorate simply brushed aside the presumptuousness of the newspapers; the election mandate for Mrs Bandaranaike is indeed massive. In Ceylon's relatively placid political waters, yesterday's rhetoric always sound somewhat ridiculous in the light of the morrow, and even the so-called Left is more liberal than fire-spoutingly radical. The victors may make a mess of their victory. But they will have to halt the process of mortgaging the economy to the foreign interests. Trade with China, which was rudely interrupted when Srimavo was ejected in 1965, is likely to be actively pursued once more,

and this despite the presence of Moscow-leaning communists in Mrs Bandaranaike's coalition. The recognition of the revolutionary government in South Vietnam, of the emigre Cambodian regime headed by Prince Sihanouk, and of the German Democratic Republic ought to come any day. Much more than anything else, the verdict in Ceylon reflects the current temper in Asia: the dominance of the Americans cannot be put up with; whatever the material inducements the America-liners might hold out, the people at large—leave aside the leaders—would opt for maintaining their own integrity and dignity.

The election results in Ceylon cannot but also dampen the enthusiasm of the professional Green Revolutionwallahs. On coming to power in 1965, Mr Senanayake, in an ideological pique, had slashed the import of rice from China. Rations were necessarily halved, and market prices for rice soared. This was supposed to be marvellous news for the 'so-called' progressive farmers, who could reap a bonanza from out of the high rice prices. Some increase in paddy output has followed, but, predictably, the benefit has been reaped exclusively by the rich farmers. Now the whole thing has recoiled in the elections: with their ration halved, the lower peasantry were being forced to buy rice at exorbitant prices from the big traders and producers. This policy-induced perversity in income distribution has now dragged the UNP down to disaster; the poor have refused to vote for their exploiters.

The role of the Indian community during the elections has been generally reprehensible. Indian business groups were of course expected to align with Mr Senanayake, which they did. But even the majority groupings amongst the Indian plantation workers were induced to take a rigid anti-United Front line, and they were goaded into this decision by Indian politicians and newspapers across the Strait. Having made the bed, they have now little option not to lie in it. Some imaginative ges-

tures on the part of the Government of India could, even at this stage, help restore amity in relations between the two nations. Ceylon has been pleading off and on for a common strategy with India for tea exports and for a pooling of foreign exchange earnings from tea sales. This is an eminently sensible policy, particularly since strong competitors have suddenly appeared on the world tea market. Although some kind of agreed marketing strategy has been discussed every now and then, India, mighty India, considers it infra dig to pool earnings from the foreign sales of tea with puny Ceylon. But this is not a matter of flimsy dignity in the short run; much more severe issues are involved. To add Ceylon too to the list of mine sworn enemies may add lustre to the sense of dignity of puffed up bureaucrats, but does not further the national interests. To lose steadily the market for tea by being over-greedy does not make sense either. Air India does not dither in pooling its earnings with Qantas and BOAC; what is legitimate for earnings from air traffic should not be less so for earnings from tea. Unless, of course, somebody decides to point out the basic difference: BOAC and Qantas, after all, are owned and operated by our previous masters, whereas we ourselves had colonised Ceylon in the past. We, the master race, cannot possibly share our coffers with the inferior ones.

Cambodian Score

When asked a few days ago whether the joint operations by the Americans and South Vietnamese would hold back the communists for six months or even a year, Thieu replied: "Oh, more than that, more than that. They can still infiltrate from the north, but it will not be enough to sustain the momentum of the war." By the end of last week it should have been clear that the aggression by Washington and Saigon had bought them very little

time indeed. The communists who were supposed to have fled into Cambodia's extreme north or even into Laos were found to be in control of the Mekong and vital towns on its banks right down to Kompong Cham; they had cut the highway between this major centre and Phnom Penh, thereby establishing control over the vast territory east of the Mekong virtually all the way up from Phnom Penh. There was a bigger shock for Saigon last Sunday when it was learnt that Dalat, the important provincial capital in South Vietnam, had fallen, though for a brief period, to the Vietcong. A South Vietnamese General also admitted that there had been a strong resurgence of communist activity along the Vietnamese-Cambodian border. Hadn't we heard that the communists' border sanctuaries had all been smashed and they would not be able to mount any major strikes for a very long while?

Scepticism about such claims had begun to grow by early last week even among many supporters of U.S. policy in Indo-China. According to the command in Saigon, more than 8,500 communist troops had been killed, but it was also known that few major engagements had been fought. Not even a smaller body-count would have made sense unless the count was mainly of civilian killed by indiscriminate American bombing and artillery fire. As for the seizure of communist arms catches about which so much has been heard, it is now known that most of the rifles captured are SKS models which were replaced by the AK-47 type two years ago. It is claimed that all the guns captured could equip 33 communist battalions, but the 126 Vietcong battalions said to be deployed in the lower half of South Vietnam are already fully equipped. The ammunition captured is mostly for anti-aircraft use; the communists who have melfed away from the so-called border sanctuaries in south-eastern Cambodia seem to have carried away all the small-arms ammunition needed for their immediate purposes. And the mysterious Communist Central Office for South Vietnam has turned

out to be a maddening mirage. The invading American forces say that it is located outside the 35-km limit set for them by Nixon (probably hoping to find a ready excuse for crossing this limit), while the Cambodians believe that it is located in Laos. According to the latest theory in Washington, COSVN is really a staff of some 2,400 people widely dispersed and highly mobile—too mobile to please the pursuing Americans.

So what is the score now? The communists appear to have withdrawn from their "sanctuaries" in the Fishhook, Parrot's Beak and some other areas in south-eastern Cambodia; but even American estimates show that no more than 5% of some 7,400 square miles of border territory has so far been searched. And the rains are coming. In any case, some 10,000 communists, together with pro-Sihanouk forces, are still active further south in and around Kampot province, threatening the highways to Phnom Penh and poised to take the earliest opportunity of regaining full access to the seaports. North of Phnom Penh, thousands of these combined forces are keeping up heavy pressure on towns only a few miles from the capital. Further north, they are in control of the whole of the Mekong and all Cambodian territory on the east of the river. Most important of all, more than 10,000 of the liberation forces have so far drifted into western Cambodia, slipping past Phnom Penh in small bands ever since the American-South Vietnamese invasion began.

Until the invasion, the communists are said to have only used some supply routes through Cambodia and some jungle areas on the border as bases, without disturbing either the Cambodian administration or the daily lives of Cambodian citizens. The invasion has forced them to extend firm military control, in close alliance with the pro-Sihanouk forces, over a large area and also to fight against any threat to this control. It is now clear that American bombing will continue even after June 30, though bad weather may force Nixon to withdraw his troops earlier. Of

course the South Vietnamese will stay on. But the skies are overcast and whatever troops remain will not welcome the rains like Rabindranath. The liberation forces will give them little time for nostalgia.

The Hysterical Split

It might have been customary to say that history alone can tell whether the split in the AITUC was a historic moment. But modesty does not forbid one to imagine right now that it is not. Of course, it can be as safely predicted that the new Centre of Indian Trade Unions will not meet the fate of the Red Trade Union of the thirties; because it has a sufficient mass base for sustenance. It will be perhaps as fortuitous to imagine that the AITUC will gradually acquire the properties of INTUC. But these qualifications do not make the new CITU a harbinger of revolution. There has been nothing in the character of the trade union movement led by the Marxists that can inspire one to hope that the CITU will develop the spontaneous labour movement into a conscious political struggle, unless one considers Maidan rallies or street processions political phenomena par excellence. Not that Maidan rallies are easy to arrange. The workers are so unconscious of their strength that it is a strenuous task to rally them round economism even. But all talk of the Indian proletariat leading the Indian peasantry for a revolutionary upheaval has been sheer talk—till now.

What will be the result of the split? The division on the labour front, theoretically speaking, should be a loss for the workers because the capitalists will be now in a more advantageous position to play CITU against AITUC and thus win favourable terms in any management labour dispute. This is however a mere hypothesis. The split may not mean further accretion of strength for the capitalists because they have been so long, as a matter of fact, playing the CPM faction against the

CPI faction of the AITUC. The split has been there, since 1964; today it has become only formal. There have been cases in plenty where co-operation between the two factions was virtually absent; the sole beneficiary were the capitalists. The latest example from West Bengal is the behaviour of the Birlas.

On the other hand, workers have shown that they can fight in a body, even if they belong to different unions, when the demands are economic in nature. The four successful strikes in the jute, cotton textile, engineering and tea industries during the last UF regime in West Bengal were clear instances. So to say that the split means depletion of strength on the labour front would be groundless. In fact, the split should be welcome if only for the possibility that both wings of the former AITUC will try to outbid each other in militancy. That would be the net gain, for whatever it is worth.

What preceded the formalisation of the split was too ugly to inspire much enthusiasm for either side. The CPI leaders are threatening to expose the Marxist leaders; they say that they would expose the shady deals the Marxist trade unionists have allegedly gone into and thereby betrayed the workers. If they have really something to tell workers about such treacherous acts, why did they keep mum so long?

The Marxist leaders too are making themselves look foolish by attacking the two-pillar policy, the principle of tripartite conferences or wage boards, which, as they allege now, were all Dangeite monstrosities. Weren't they themselves a party to the acceptance of all these policies and principles in the past? Can they just wash their hands off now by simply saying that they were steam-rollered into acceptance because they were the minority? The mutual recriminations that preceded the split in the AITUC leave behind utterly bad smell. The split seems to be more hysterical than historical.

The only surprising thing about the whole business is that it took so long for the AITUC to fall. What-

ever the Marxists may say now, it does not appear to be true that they have broken off because of the class-collaborationist policy of the CPI. If it were, they should have parted ways as early as 1964. Some say that the CPI role in unseating the Marxists from power in West Bengal and Kerala has stung the Marxists too cruelly and led to the AITUC split.

Playing Up To Centre

After more than two months of President's rule Governor Dhavan has thought it necessary to prorogue the West Bengal Assembly. During the period the members of the Assembly were entitled to certain fringe benefits, apart from the monthly salary they will continue to draw till the Assembly is not dissolved. The prorogation has ended the legal fiction that the budget session of the Assembly was continuing, though there was no ministry to steer the budget and the budget itself had, in the mean time, been passed by Parliament. This is yet another proof of the pliability of parliamentary democracy, of how it can be adjusted to every need and whim of the ruling party. With the constitutional provision requiring the Assembly to meet within six months of prorogation suspended, the House can continue in its present state indefinitely, that is, as long as President's rule lasts. The prorogation means that the Centre has given up hopes of a sudden formation of a new ministry which might be required to demonstrate its majority in the Assembly at notice. At the same time, it means that all hopes of an eventual formation of a mini-front ministry are not lost; that is why the Assembly has been kept in the fridge and not dissolved, though dissolution would have led to some economy and spared the legislators the humiliation of being so many sinecurists.

The prorogation is a gesture to the parties, especially those which are still opposed to a mid-term poll, that the Centre's patience is not ex-

hausted and they can go about the business of ministry-making unhurriedly. The Governor has already put his finger in this pie. His recent meetings with Mr Jyoti Basu and Mr Ajoy Mukherjee were said to be for exploring the possibility of a new ministry. If they repeated to the Governor the declared policies of their parties Mr Dhavan should forthwith recommend dissolution of the Assembly to the President. The CPM has been asking for a mid-term poll ever since it became clear to the party that in the present Assembly it will never be able to acquire a majority even if it agreed to all kinds of humiliating compromises and difficult somersaults. On the other hand, if the recent municipal election at New Barrackpore is any indication, its position, is still unassailable in its areas of influence. It has trounced with ease its rivals, including a combination of its former partners in the United Front, in all the 19 constituencies. Apparently, the concerted campaign of the right and the left has had no impact on the people, though the campaigners themselves as well as the Central Intelligence are said to be of the view that there has been a heavy erosion of CPM's influence in the last few months. It is natural for the CPM to want an immediate election because the situation is still in its favour and delay takes it nowhere near office.

For the same reason its opponents want the election to be deferred, though they have thought up different pleas for it. The CPI and the SUC want some more time to work for restoration of the original 14-party Front, pretending naively that they are not yet disillusioned. In the last two months they have worked for disunity and not unity, and, as the eighty-party resolution shows clearly, they want to carry on this work in the hope that the CPM will be so shorn of its popularity as a result that it will be forced to beg for readmission to the fold on bended knees. If the CPM is really reduced to this state, the CPI will be the last party to give it a berth in the ministry. The Forward Bloc has adopted

a more straightforward course, though it continued to associate itself with the theory of revival. Left to itself, the party will go in for a mid-term poll as soon as possible because it thinks that in the present context talk of revival of the original UF is unrealistic. The Bangla Congress has no use for those who want to waste time on efforts, genuine or fake, for restoration. It is not in favour of early election either for the situation is not yet congenial for a free and fair poll. The difference between the CPI and the Bangla Congress is that the former wants to put the CPM in its place by a concerted political campaign while the latter wants this campaign to be backed by police action. The CPI, for obvious reasons, cannot be a whole-hogger like the Bangla Congress but its twin charges of police inaction against anti-socials and abundance of anti-socials in the CPM can be pieced together to approximate the Bangla Congress view. Both want President's rule to continue for some time perhaps in the hope that the coup they could not pull off in March may yet materialise somehow. If their expectation is belied, they will lose nothing. For after a few months the general election of 1972 will be so near that there will be no point in holding the Assembly elections before that. As the chances of the mini-front ministry are dim at present, the CPI, the Bangla Congress and their allies are trying to play up to the Centre's plan to hold West Bengal under President's rule till the fifth general election.

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Sams And Phantoms

Israeli leaders have been pressing Washington for 25 additional F-4 Phantoms and 100 A-4 Skyhawks. They claim that the balance of power in the Middle East has decidedly changed in favour of Egypt after Moscow installed some 22 SAM-3 missile sites in Cairo, Cairo West, Alexandria, the Aswan Dam and Baltim, and now that Russian pilots are flying operational missions. (President Nasser has told the foreign press that the Russians are both manning SAM-3 missiles and flying MIG aircraft.) The balance of power which Israel wants to maintain will permanently deprive the Arabs of the territory which they lost during the six-day war in 1967, and also make them highly vulnerable to deep Israeli air raids. Aware that in terms of manpower and artillery strength (near the Suez Canal zone) they are outnumbered and outgunned, the Israeli tactic has been to avoid land engagements and rely on bombing attacks. This has paid rich dividends; the Arabs find that expeditions across the Canal without due air cover are very costly. Nevertheless, the monthly Israeli casualty rate rose to 29 last year which Tel Aviv considered too high a price for the occupation of Sinai. It thought that more of deep penetration bombing would turn Egypt's attention to the defence of the hinterland. But the Israeli strategy provided sufficient justification for the Russians to move in with sophisticated weapons and men as the Arabs were found wanting to operate them. It cannot be said that there has been any decisive change in the military balance as a result, although there is a shift in the power relationship. The Israeli lamentation is due to a fear of losing a total, or near total, air supremacy.

On the Arab side, the question that is agitating many minds is whe-

ther the Soviet Union is preparing the UAR for fighting the right type of war. Will Israel feel tempted to launch a pre-emptive strike before Russia has constructed the targeted 62 missile sites by September? There is caution on both sides. Notwithstanding an illustrated report published in *Aviation Week and Space Technology* showing the construction of 15 concrete shelter sites for Russian missiles spaced at $7\frac{1}{2}$ -mile intervals along the western bank of the Suez Canal, neither the Western powers nor Israel would confirm it. No one expects Russia to move in an area where Israel enjoys air superiority. On the other hand, the Israeli reluctance to confront the Russians is known. Dayan would not have hesitated to attack the Golan heights at the end of the June war if some Russian advisers were not there.

Nasser's objective is to make the occupation of Sinai so costly that Israel will agree to a negotiated withdrawal. But until the fundamental problem of the Palestinians is solved there cannot be any peace in the Middle East. It is not unexpected, considering the state character of most Arab countries, that the Palestinians get little more than verbal support from them. Beirut is said to be bent on disciplining the commandos. But it is anybody's guess whether the fragile Lebanese State could survive the hostility of the commandos. Russia does not find them pliable. They want to make the Arab-Israeli war the starting point for social revolution. They are for a protracted war while Russia is arming the UAR for a conventional one. Russia's primary interest is to control the Suez Canal which is important for her growing Mediterranean and Indian Ocean fleets. But why is America not yet obliging Israel with additional Phantoms and Skyhawks? Is it due to Russia's perfect behaviour at the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks in Vienna and low profile in Cambodia? Is there a bilateral understanding that the Russians can strike a militant posture or two in the Middle East if they are sensible enough to play it cool in Indo-China?

'Information Gap'

A correspondent writes :

There is no end to the American capacity of self-deception. For every crime the Pentagon commits there would be a thousand and one arguments to cover it up, rationalise or explain it away. The Americans are the most freedom-loving, anti-colonial, generous and kind people on earth. So Hiroshima must have been a mistake, the Bay of Pigs a result of the information gap and My Lai an aberration. True, last month American B-52s razed the Cambodian town of Snoul to the ground but hadn't the inhabitants of the town displayed an unseemly loyalty for the undemocratic 'Red Prince'? True, Nixon's kids out there looted the shops that survived the American bombing but had those things been left there, they would have given a new lease of life to the communists and their supporters.

If these arguments do not convince you, you are a damned fellow-traveller. There are still more arguments. Nixon's decision to invade Cambodia might be a gamble but, having fallen into an information gap, he was not in a position to know it. The fault lies with his close associates who misled the 'loner' but lion-hearted President into committing the blunder. He ordered the invasion in good faith that his boys would flush out "major base-camps training-sites, logistics facilities, weapons and ammunition factories, airstrips and prisoner-of-war compounds". Nixon was also in the dark about the attitude of the students towards the war in Vietnam. Had he foreseen their reaction the good President would have desisted from the step he took and instead allowed Cambodia to slip from the hand of General Lon Nol.

This is no kidding. The day before Nixon announced his decision to invade Cambodia he met eight university presidents and, as one senior *New York Times* columnist regrets, "None of the presidents was asked or permitted to speak about student attitudes, at a time when it might

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have saved Mr Nixon and the nation their present grief." So deficient in knowledge was Mr Nixon, it has been 'revealed' now, that he did not even recognise the name of Walter J. Hickel, his Secretary of the Interior who wrote him a letter saying that "youth in its protest must be heard." Hickel could be spotted by Nixon and his White House aides only after the letter was released to the press and the press established his identity.

So knowledge is the commodity in short supply in the White House. Had Nixon just known that communist guerillas do not require any

'Red Pentagon', bristling with electronic devices, to conduct their war, that President Ho and General Giap used a thatched hut to conduct Dien Bien Phu, that guerillas can appear and disappear at will, he would not have led the invasion of Cambodia. Had he only been informed that students were against the war he could have turned down the Pentagon's evil counsel for war and emerge as an apostle of peace. Had he only known how painful is death by napalm he would have immediately forbidden its use. So what you have got to do is to rescue the President from his information gap. Knowledge, more knowledge.

phous approach to the problem. The ruling Congress cannot gang up with the Muslim League against the Marxists in Kerala or surrender to the Jana Sanghi demand for a ban on Naxalites and still talk of a joint front against communalism. Just as the CPI cannot have a joint front with the Muslim League in Kerala and talk of boycotting the National Integration Council if the Jana Sangh were to find a place in it. There was near consensus on banning communal organisations like the RSS and the Shiv Sena but the Government just cannot do it for certain reasons.

There was a divergent approach to the Naxalite problem. Bijoy Singh Nahar and Mr Siddhartha Sankar Ray wanted a military hunt of the West Bengal Naxalites as the precondition for building the Congress-R in the State. In another context, Mr Tarun Kanti Ghosh told the leadership that unless the CPI(M)'s violence in West Bengal was checked, Mrs Gandhi's party would have no place in the State. The nature of the action against political extremism in West Bengal, one presumes, would depend on the urgency Mrs Gandhi attaches to building her party and not any political or ideological opposition to the Marxists and the Naxalites.

In all likelihood the Government would attempt an amendment to the Unlawful Activities Act to enlarge its scope to cover the groups and parties which believe in violence. Mr Chandrajeet Yadav, a Young Turk of sorts and the CPI Trojan Horse inside the Congress-R, insisted that such an amendment should be undertaken only after the consent of the major political parties had been obtained. Whether the two establishment communist parties would back the move remains to be seen.

It certainly should add to Mr Dange's joy, that it is not only the AITUC that is splitting but the INTUC would split soon. The Syndicate dominates the INTUC and the question of the Congress-R forming its own front organisation (which in effect means splitting the

View from Delhi

Socialism Downhill

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

RISING expectations fed on counterfeit socialist slogans inevitably lead to rising frustrations. The Young Turks who had the Morarji Desais and S. K. Patils for targets while learning their elementary lessons in sharp shooting cannot be blamed if they turned on the Prime Minister and her coterie at the mini-AICC session last week. The Young Turks found new supporters in Mr Dinesh Singh and Mr C. Subramaniam and this is exactly what Mrs Indira Gandhi could not have bargained for, what with the elaborate screening of the list of invitees to the pointless 'three-day' exercise. Socialism has been hurtling downhill these five months since Bombay and yet the only answer to all the pungent criticism was that the Congress programmes cannot be implemented without an informed and dedicated cadre. In the past, Mrs Gandhi had always blamed the party for the Government's debacle with the socialist programmes. The party has now been cleaned up of the anti-socialists and one could not understand, for instance, what stood in the way of the promised follow-up measures on

bank nationalisation. The delay certainly was not for want of an active and informed cadre in the party. The excuse trotted out, that the Government was preoccupied with the budget session, was hardly convincing because if the Prime Minister had devoted half the time she had spent during the 12 weeks on political intriguing and toppling manoeuvres, the follow-up measures could have been devised in good time.

Old ghosts like bogus membership haunted the mini-AICC session. Mr H. N. Bahuguna claimed that bossism had been laid to rest in the new party and yet bogus membership was a function of bossism. The leadership talked incoherently about the relative merits of a mass-based party and a cadre-based party and the wiser ones suggested integration of the two concepts as though they were different concepts.

As was to be expected, much of the discussion related to the RSS-Naxalite syndrome and revealed political imbecility at its worst. The leadership's talk of a political front against communalism with other secular parties is based on an amor-

INTUC) was seriously suggested by Mr K. T. Kosalram from Tamil Nadu and some others though the saintly Mr Nanda was opposing such plans. The logic of a party split ordains a split in the front organisations. If the CPI split of 1964 did not lead to an immediate split in the AITUC, the CPI(M)'s lack of confidence was to blame.

The Cabinet reshuffle, confidently predicted on the eve of every Parliament session and again at the end of every Parliament session, may not come off for another two weeks. There are at least 80 aspirants for the few jobs going and the Pradesh bosses are a decisive factor in any major reshuffle. Mr Siddhartha Sankar Ray claims to have advised Mrs Gandhi to take Mr Asoke Sen as the Law Minister but Mr Asoke Sen is believed to be insisting on an economic ministry.

The clash between Mr Dinesh Singh (who called the party a "soulless" one) and Mrs Gandhi at the mini-AICC has added credence to reports that he is the man most likely to be relieved of External Affairs in the coming reshuffle. There is another story going round the circuit. Mr Dinesh Singh wanted Mr Kewal Singh to head the Indian delegation to the annual Indo-Soviet talks, this time in Moscow. But Mrs Gandhi chose Mr T. N. Kaul without so much as consulting Mr Dinesh Singh.

Right in the middle of the Moscow talks, the Government planted the story of Soviet Sukhai-7 bombers for Pakistan. India is among the countries which have already got the Sukhais. Iraq got them much earlier. If Pakistan gets a few of these planes, there is no reason for India to squirm and squeal.

But the Foreign Office seems to have calculated that a well-timed story on this in the Indian Press would give our delegation some leverage with the Soviets during the talks. India's protests against arms for Pakistan might become a little more vocal in the months to come but that would make no difference to Soviet policy.

—May 31, 1970

Assam : A Second Warning

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

THE Assam Government is ruthless in its operations against the Naxalites. Even near-octogenarians have been arrested. The arrested are tortured and implicated in got-up cases. Scores of houses are being raided for Naxalite literature and journals. With nightfall unknown passers-by and tourists are sometimes dragged into police stations and interrogated for clues to the whereabouts of 'Naxalite fugitives'. Fantastic stories are being manufactured by politicians and the Press in order to scare people about the Naxalites 'who are out to sell the country to Red China.' All brave talk about fighting the Naxalites 'politically' has now been substituted by attempts to terrorise the people into silence. But the stark fact is that the more the Government practises fascist nonsense the more it is pushing people to the side of the Naxalites.

It is no surprise that the Assam Government has launched this offensive. At a time when it is enjoying a respite from any major power struggle within the ruling Congress, when it is somewhat free from the anxiety of any real opposition from the so-called leftist parties, the Naxalites pose a danger to the ruling class. The Government has now openly given us to understand that it does not fear so much even the Naga-Mizo armed rebellion as it does Mao's thoughts. So one can quite comfortably conclude that it is Mao's thoughts which are flowing into Assam, not arms, however hard the government may try to create such an impression.

In preparing the ground for launching the drive more ruthlessly than it has been doing over the past few weeks, it has been wise enough to refer to the conditions prevalent in Assam, conditions which are responsible for giving rise to the Naxalbari

movement. It has suddenly come to realise that lakhs of young men are still unemployed in the State, that scores of people are dying of starvation each week in Goalpara district alone (of course, the reasons for these are never explained). At the same time it also warns that all these 'unfortunate' conditions should not be viewed as justifying a dangerous movement like Naxalbari. It wants the situation to be tackled by 'democratic' means. It has also given a clarion call to the 'leftist' parties to educate people in 'democratic principles' and to help it fight out the Naxalite menace. The opposition leader in the Assam Legislative Assembly has been assured by the Chief Minister that all repressive measures now let loose will be strictly limited to the Naxalites. And what this time places the government in a more advantageous position is that it has been able to forge a covert alliance with the 'leftist' parties so far as the anti-Naxalite drive is concerned.

Even the most passive onlookers of Assam politics feel that the Government has gone too far in dealing with the Naxalites. To suppress popular movements the ruling class in Assam has always adopted a brutal course, from genocide to the present massive police and military action, in the name of 'law and order'. Moreover, isn't Assam a frontier State, with neighbours 'always trying to grab it?' No leftist party in the State has yet tried to call the bluff. On the contrary, some political parties outside the ruling Congress are also trying to draw political sustenance by subscribing to the Government propaganda, though in a different way. When the so-called leftist parties are almost dead in this State, except for occasional wrangles over certain self-perpetuating political issues, no wonder that the Naxalbari movement has been gaining ground with every passing day.

The Assam Government knows quite well that police and military forces are not enough to put down the movement. The way it has been giving 'close' details of

Naxalite activities on the floor of the Assembly indicates that it has some other sinister design in mind. It has already employed Jana Sangh agents to foment communal tension in Goalpara district where thousands of starving peasants have been struggling hard against feudal overlordship over the past few years. However hard the agents provocateurs may try to wreck communal harmony, both the Hindu and Muslim peasants have learnt through all these years who are their real enemies. Since the trick is not working in Goalpara, the Government has now turned its attention to misleading people into believing that some 'outsiders' are hell-bent on spreading the Naxalbari flame in Assam. Everybody knows who are these 'outsiders' the Government often refers to. Government sources have also kept saying that people belonging to a particular community living in Assam are providing shelter to these 'outsiders'. And the brazen way in which the Government propaganda machinery has been playing up the 'issue' suggests that it will not stop until a major communal flare up has engulfed the Brahmaputra Valley. Once communal frenzy erupts in the Brahmaputra Valley it will not remain confined there. The present APHLC leaders of what has today come to be known as Meghalaya will also take full advantage of the situation as a step towards suppressing the hill people's discontents now boiling under the lid.

But whatever foul means the Government may adopt to crush the Naxalites, people in Assam, who have travelled far enough along the serpentine course of Assam politics since 1960, still hope that 1970 will not be the same as 1960.

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Frankly Speaking

SANJOY

ONE has to admire our conscientious police force. It has, after a winter of hibernation under the UF, returned to activity and is facing a Herculean or Sisyphean task. Thirty or forty thousand warrants are to be executed. Quite a few of the recalcitrants are armed and do not hesitate to retaliate. Intelligence people are being waylaid and assaulted, the police hospital is kept rather busy. The capture of an English girl by the Bihar police and joint interrogation may not be enough consolation.

The police know or should know why they are being attacked. The treatment they mete out to most of the arrested is barbarous. Meet some of those who had to be released on bail and they will tell you what is happening. The details are sickening. The Berhampore incident last week brought to light the torture of an arrested government employee. If one thinks that the arrests have, in most cases, anything to do with specific charges, one is living in a world of his own.

Among the arrested, Naxalites fall into a specific category. They are all part of a conspiracy to overthrow the regime by violent means and therefore no means is bad enough against them. However, they can take it. They and their supporters disdain to whine. They say that they will pay back the police in their own coin, that they are determined to teach the armed thugs let loose on the State by Mr Chavan and the local bosses, a good lesson.

There is no public concern yet over police atrocities. Our approach is partisan. There is protest in party papers against the treatment of people belonging to or having sympathies for a particular party, not against police atrocities in general. This is one of the effects of the revolutionary rule of the UF! A Naxalite, released on bail, was wondering why there is

not even liberalism in this country. There was an air of liberalism before the opposition parties had a taste of power. Power, even the crumbs of power, do make pragmatists of our revolutionaries. If the UF could shoot down ten women in a state like West Bengal and get away with it, it cannot, once out of power, start a united movement against police repression and sadism. Repression, if not naked, will be there when some form of 'popular' government is again formed.

So far as the Naxalites are concerned, they suffer from another disadvantage. After a raid on an educational institution, it is now given out that they have burnt a picture, not of Gandhi alone, but also pictures of Ramakrishna or Vivekananda or Netaji or Rabindranath. About Gandhiji, most Bengalis do not bother much. Not because they believe in violence, but because of the way the Mahatma treated Subhas Bose. That memory still rankles. That is why, perhaps, pictures of Bengali heroes are being mentioned in the press, whether at all they were burnt or not. And in view of this 'vandalism' the petty bourgeoisie is not worked up over the swarms of arrested men and the reports of torture.

It will be some time perhaps before the story of who is doing what in Calcutta becomes a little clearer. The attack on the Gandhi Centre in Jadavpur University may have caught on and the Naxalite leaders perhaps did not want to dampen their youthful and restless adherents. The price has been heavy. In course of days other elements might have entered the fray to damn the Naxalites. For, one should recall, Charu Majumdar had urged the students, a few days before *Deshabrati* fell on evil days, to go to villages and work among the landless. A programme of action for cities was not outlined.

* *
A few words about *Deshabrati*, the Bengali weekly of the CP(ML). It has not been banned by the government. What has happened is that some 20 compositors, loyal and hard working, were arrested and all the types seized. Warrants against the compositors are pending—from Midnapore, from perhaps Bihar and Assam, perhaps also from France where a number of bombs explode now and then. So how can the police release them, even on bail? This tactic is interesting: it shows the difference between the style of working of the Congress(R) and that of the Cong-O if it had come to power (the sequence of tense is rather confused in this sentence, but so is our politics). The Cong-O would have gone in for an outright ban, whereas the Congress(R) maintains a fiction of legality. The net result, however, is the same. An abridged *Deshabrati* is now coming out as an underground weekly.

* *
There is much to be said for an underground organisation. Legal parties breed quite a few bodies and sub-bodies where windbags grow eloquent over every issue. You have national councils or central committees, politbureaus, provincial committees and what not, which are in the habit of meeting much too often and passing much too long resolutions. Each resolution gets longer as the previous resolves remain unimplemented. Don't the politicians realise how silly they sound after every deliberation? Lack of action leads their papers to indulge in flabby sentimentality.

* *
The police repression in the countryside is immense. You get some details, couched in emotional terms, in the party organs. These and the leaders have been threatening some action, some movement, to stop the repression, but not much is being done. However, the villagers themselves, here and there, seem to be taking some defensive action in 24-

Parganas. Last week, one was told that 'warrant execution squads' sometimes have to face crowds carrying arms in their drive against 'dacoits and other anti-social elements'. These 'dacoits' seem to be popular both with men and womenfolk. "In the Basanti area the cry 'Dakat, dakat' was sometimes raised by villagers to warn miscreants of an approaching police party. At Sonarpur, women who were on the side of the criminals blew conchshells and sounded cymbals whenever a police party arrived in the area.... In areas where police parties are being attacked by armed mobs, larger forces are being sent to conduct intensive raids."

How interesting they are—the women who are on the side of 'criminals' and villagers who are enamoured of 'dacoits'! They are any day much better than the Muslim-killing mobs of Maharashtra or Gujarat. There is still hope for West Bengal.

Sartre and Greene

The news agency which reported some of the sharpest and most prolonged clashes with the police since the events of May-June 1968 in the Latin Quarter of Paris on May 28 did not initially explain why the clashes occurred. Two days earlier there were calls by the 'extreme left' for demonstrations against the trial of two former editors of the *Cause du Peuple*, the newspaper of the Proletarian Left, on charges of incitement to rebellion and murder. They have now been sentenced to prison terms, leading to fresh clashes. After their arrest, Jean-Paul Sartre had become editor of the paper. The government did not arrest Sartre but banned the paper and has decided to dissolve the left organisation. On May 26, before the dissolution order, some 3,000 supporters of the leftist movements held a meeting in the Latin Quarter, with Sartre in the chair, "the first time since May 1968 that the left wing movements wanted to put up a united resistance," as Sartre said. The most applauded speaker was Alain Geismar, former secretary-general of the left-wing teachers union who spoke of "revisionist terror,

fascist employees and the CRS (the special riot police)." The words sound much too familiar.

Graham Greene, the novelist, who lives in France, has resigned from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in protest against American involvement in Vietnam. He has approached all the other foreign members to try to organise a mass resignation.

Meanwhile, cocktail parties and other functions organised by the Americans in India continue to be as crowded as ever. Sweet are the uses of neutrality.

Calcutta Diary

GYAN KAPUR

OUR democracy is more or less a gift of the British with its Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha like a double-barrelled gun which fails to fire or misfires at all the wrong moments. To say this is not to show any disrespect to the worthy men and women who sat for months on end to frame the Constitution which is found wanting, not by the hotheads of the left, but by others of different hues also.

But man does not live on parliamentary democracy alone and so we have all been ingesting large doses of American wheat, and imports still continue, notwithstanding the Green Revolution. As doctors and nutritionists and even the common man know very well, we are in a large measure what we eat. So, it should be no surprise that bit by bit we may demonstrate some qualities of the wonderful American people.

If we ignore the fact that the Americans still maintain the two-party system whereas we believe in having as many parties as possible, the standards in public life in our country have gone down or up, according to one's way of looking at things, to those in the USA. There is little they will not do to gain their ends. The difference lies only in this that while some will sell their souls for

money, others would do it only for getting into the ministry. As a result reading about the doings of these men is becoming a weariness of the flesh.

From far-off Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh, however, comes a bit of news which is refreshingly straightforward and without the hypocrisy to which most of our public men have become addicted, like the hippies to ganja or LSD. The post of Sarpanch, a village official, it appears, fell vacant and there were a number of candidates as usual for this office of honour. But the villagers have had enough of elections, i.e. sending up someone whose only contribution to public welfare might amount to making some speeches. So with their sense of realism and probably feeling that one man was as good as another, they decided to cash in for the good of the village. As a result the post was auctioned off to the highest bidder who paid Rs. 8,100 and also undertook to pay the arrear taxes amounting to Rs. 3,000.

This small incident opens up a host of interesting possibilities. Why not bring up in the open all the negotiations for party tickets, the contributions to party funds for the honour of running for this or that election? What a tidy sum could be had, if for example, the Mayor's job in Calcutta were to be auctioned, though it is doubtful if any takers could be found if asked to pay off the arrear taxes also. Municipalities in and around Calcutta which are perpetually in the red could solve some of their difficulties if they could sell of their chairmanship to the highest bidder. Even now there are many who may be willing to pay for this doubtful honour.

Why stop there? In many parts of the country there are medical, engineering and other colleges where some seats are sold for sums of Rs 10,000 and above, while others are filled on merit. Why not have some seats in the assemblies and parliament and a few posts of ministers and even governors reserved for

the highest bidders, in cash, while others can remain for those who bid the highest in promises? We may thus have a happy synthesis of socialism and capitalism, our own contribution to a system of government which we could claim is truly Indian.

The influence of the Hindu joint family is all pervasive and the attitudes it gives birth to spill over into the political field. Mr Ajoy Mukherjee, twice Chief Minister of West Bengal, was much nearer the truth when he described the dissension within the UF as quarrels between husband and wife. Pious Hindus believe marriages are made in heaven and even if they go in for divorce, it is only with a guilty conscience.

No quarrel is so bitter as between different members of a joint family. Long after the breaking point has been reached, the partnership continues and when ultimately it breaks, the members go on wishing a plague on each other. Nothing gives them a greater pleasure than seeing

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the other being done down, even if they are reduced to beggars themselves in the process.

Whether it was a marriage or a joint family, anyway the UF has broken up. But it seems they cannot get each other out of their systems still. The present spate of polemics in which the two groups of the former front are calling each other names from the insect world such as spider and leech, has something infantile about it and would be laughable if they were not fraught with tragic consequences for the common people. A marriage may break on the rocks once. But when the partners decide to unite again and break again, their

mutual recriminations do appear a bore to the others.

While this goes on, the police are stepping up their offensive against the common people. According to the CPM's own reports the police and their henchmen, the goondas, have not hesitated even to molest women, particularly in Kaliachak in Malda. But all that came out of such outrages, it appears, were some processions by women which ultimately filed petitions to the local authorities and dispersed. Even in law I believe it is no crime to use force to save the honour of women. But perhaps those who want to do it in practice would be called 'extremists'.

The Struggle For Mozambique

H. D.

THE basic characteristic of a colonial country is an economy subservient to the colonial power serving as a source of raw material and market for the produce of the mother country. But African colonialism has certain other distinguishing features. The first is the white settlement in the colony and the second is forced labour—or libertos as they call it in Mozambique—a modern version of slaves.

Among the colonies in Africa Mozambique has the largest population. Official sources put the figure in 1961-61 at 6,592,994. Agriculture is the primary occupation. Here the colonial exploitation is maximum and follows a racial pattern. The natives are allowed to produce cotton and rice only, while the settlers grow more profitable crops on plantations and estate farms with the help of forced labour at cheap rates. The colonial authority is apathetic to the native farmers. The native land has been farmed out to foreign interests who have the exclusive right to exploit the natural as well as human resources within the area. Land was also distributed to the white and other overseas settlers. As a result the Mozambicans are forced to till the marginal lands where

nature is niggardly. Opportunities for wage-work are few. But even here wages are low; wage-differentials are high and the basis of wage payment is racism. A white lorry driver can earn 3000 esqudos while his dark-skinned counterpart cannot get more than 300 esqudos.

Besides this, the authorities have exploited the labour force of Mozambique. The natives have been drafted by force or persuasion—mostly by force—to work on the plantations. A large portion of this labour force is exported to South Africa to work in the gold mines of Transvaal or to Rhodesia. This traffic has brought huge foreign exchange to the Portuguese exchequer. Lately a small industrial sector has grown up with the help of foreign industrial powers. But it is still in its gristle and has mainly concentrated on extraction of minerals and small processing and manufacturing industries. A big bourgeoisie in the form we find in countries like India is still non-existent in Mozambique.

The society is divided into three distinct social-economic groups. At the centre there is a western minority—about 2.5 per cent—flocking in the few centres of industry and com-

merce. The second group—about 3.5 per cent—lives on the fringe of those centres and forms the nucleus of the growing proletariat class of Mozambique. The remaining population—about 94 per cent—consists of the peasantry eking out a meagre subsistence living from farming and as forced labour on the plantations. The first category includes further sub-groups like whites, orientals, Mullattos and Assimulattos (Africans). The contradiction between the first group and the other two is that between the rulers and the ruled though contradiction is also inherent among the sub-groups within the first group in the form of racial discrimination between whites and non-whites. Recently there has been a marked increase in the number of settlers due to the growing economic crisis in Portugal and this has introduced a new contradiction between the whites in the colony and those in Portugal. The settlers do often outbid the original rulers in the practice of fascism.

To preserve this structure Portuguese colonialism has evolved an extensive legal, political and educational superstructure. The labour code of 1962 has of course freed the former slaves. But it contains certain elements of discrimination and in practical life the natives have hardly any freedom. Far more effective than this is the education system in Mozambique. It is dominated by the church and composed of two categories—the government school for the ruling classes only and the Roman Catholic mission school for the natives. The schooling system is expensive and its aim is not to train the Africans.

This is the economics of exploitation in Mozambique. It is based on violence, racialism and exploitation. But it had one notable effect. It destroyed the traditional power structure and gave rise to a national consciousness. Under the colonial regime, the people could easily differentiate the white exploiters and their native collaborators from the exploited and their psychological rejection of the ruling class was spontaneous and open. But in the absence of a

rational political basis this hostility toward the exploiters mainly expressed itself in the native culture in the early stages of colonial domination.

Resistance

The first organised resistance appeared in the 20s of this century in the form of three organisations—Associação Africana, Instituto Nagrofilo and Associação Naturais de Moçambique. These were dominated by educated middle-class elements and had a limited programme. As a result they could be easily suppressed or controlled by the Portuguese authority. This was followed by a period of lull. It is only after the Second World War that a new wave of insurgency appeared. But this too was basically a middle-class uprising confined within a limited section of the people and like the previous one was suppressed easily by the fascist power.

In between, the urban proletariat of Moçambique was gradually growing. Their discontent exploded in 1947 and produced a number of strikes in 1947 and then in 1956 and 1962-63. The reaction of the Portuguese authority was sharp and ruthless and most of the strikes ended in blood-bath.

The resistance movement up to this period suffered from certain weaknesses. The most glaring defect of these movements was that it was limited to the intellectuals and urban proletariat who together formed only a microscopic minority of the population. This lack of mass basis seriously weakened the movement and it could be easily suppressed. Further it adopted a limited programme and was generally peaceful.

The reaction of the authorities, however, was always violent. The situation reached its climax in Muedo where the local authority fired on a peaceful demonstration killing a large number of people. After this incident the leaders became disillusioned about peaceful movement. They met at Dar-as-Salaam on June 25, 1962 and reached the conclusion that the stage of peaceful resistance was over and accepted the demand for armed struggle. They met again in

September and formed the Mozambican National Liberation Front or FRELIMO. It was the First Congress and it took a number of decisions of far-reaching importance. Their aims can be summarised as: consolidation and mobilisation; preparation for war; education and diplomacy. Thus the Congress marked the first major step towards organisational and theoretical preparation for armed struggle. The objective situation was ideal and the people were ready. As it always happens it was the leaders who underestimated the people and were hesitant. After months of planning and preparation—and this was by no means done easily—FRELIMO finally brought the struggle to the open in September 1965 when a Portuguese post in Muedo was attacked. Since then it has achieved significant victories and has liberated the northern part of Moçambique from colonial domination.

These successes in the field and the establishment of liberated zones created new problems for FRELIMO. To review the situation, the Second Congress was called in Niassa in July 1968. In the period between the two Congresses a climactic change has taken place in Moçambique and the liberation movement reached a new and higher stage. These were reflected in the resolutions of the Second Congress. The Congress declared that it seeks to establish a "free and united Moçambique" through a protracted armed struggle carried on consciously by the people. Further, it pointed out that this war would be political and its direction would be determined by the party. Finally it viewed this struggle as a part of the world liberation movement which aims "at total liquidation of colonialism and imperialism, and the construction of a new society free from exploitation of man by man."

These are the facts about the liberation war in Moçambique as narrated by Dr Mondlane (later assassinated) in his book, *The Struggle for Moçambique*. The outcome of this confrontation is bound to affect the liberation movements in other parts of Africa.

On Lenin—VI

MONITOR

WE discussed earlier why the proletariat is the most revolutionary class and hence must be the leading force of the revolution. In order to lead the revolution, however, the proletariat must be fully conscious of its own strength, must be fully conscious of itself as the leading force of the revolution. How does this consciousness arise in the proletariat? Is it spontaneous? The answer is both yes and no.

In a strict sense spontaneity "represents nothing more nor less than consciousness in an 'embryonic form'".¹ For instance, the workers' strikes in Russia in the sixties and seventies of the last century were accompanied by the 'spontaneous' destruction of machinery in the factories. But even these primitive 'riots' had an element of consciousness in that the working class was aware of the necessity of changing the status quo. The strike movement in the same country in the nineties, which spread over the whole land, was also 'spontaneous' but with a big difference. It was more organized, definite demands were put forward, the time for strike was carefully chosen, and thus it "revealed greater flashes of consciousness" compared to the earlier movements. While the earlier 'riots' were simply uprisings of the oppressed, the systematic strikes that took place later "represented the class struggle in embryo, but only in embryo." They represented the awakening among the workers of their antagonism with the employers. To that extent they represented 'trade-union consciousness' among the workers. But it was not yet 'social democratic [that is, communist] consciousness' in the sense that the workers were not yet aware of the irreconcilable antagonism of their interests to the whole of the existing social order.

As a matter of fact the working-

¹ *What is to be done* (1902), ch. II, sec. A.

class cannot gain this social democratic consciousness' all by itself. It can only be brought to the working class from without. "The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e. it may realise the necessity of combining in unions, for fighting against the employers and for striving to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc. The theory of Socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories that were elaborated by the educated representatives of the propertied class, the 'intellectuals'. Marx and Engels themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia."²

Political consciousness—in the social democratic or communist sense—can come to the working class only from without because such consciousness is the result of a doctrine, of a theory, of knowledge. This knowledge the masses of workers cannot acquire all by themselves in a capitalist society, nor does the communist consciousness spontaneously arise from the class struggles of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. In this connection Lenin quoted the following "profoundly true" utterances of Karl Kautsky (still a Marxist in 1902): "Socialist consciousness is represented (by some) as a necessary and direct result of the proletarian class struggle. But this is absolutely untrue. Of course Socialism as a theory has its roots in modern economic relationships just as the class struggle of the proletariat has, and just as the latter emerges from the struggle against the capitalist-created poverty and misery of the masses. But Socialism and the class struggle arise side by side and not one out of the other; each arises under different conditions. Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on a basis of profound scientific knowledge. Indeed, modern economic science is as much a condition for socialist production, as say, modern technology and the proletariat can create neither the one nor

the other, no matter how much it may desire to do so; both arise out of the modern social process. The vehicles of science are not the proletariat but the *bourgeois intelligentsia*. It was in the minds of some members of this stratum that modern socialism originated."³ It does not of course mean, as Lenin was careful to add, that workers have no part in creating socialist ideology. But they take part not as workers, but as socialist theoreticians as Proudhons and Weitlings; in other words, they take part only to the extent that they are able, more or less, to acquire the knowledge of their age and advance that knowledge.⁴

The relation between spontaneity and consciousness is, in fact, not profound and has wider implications than appears on the surface. In the first place, it is evident that those who deny or underrate the element of conscious knowledge being acquired by the proletariat and hold that socialist ideology arises spontaneously within the working class itself without there being any need of it being brought to the proletariat from without underrate, at the same time, the necessity of imparting the socialist theory to the working class and, ultimately, deny the importance of theory itself for the advanced class in its struggle for a higher social order. But it cannot be insisted upon too strongly—Lenin pointed out, citing Plekhanov's earlier statement—that "without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." In fact "the role of the vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory."⁵ Lenin mentioned Engels' remarks on the importance of theory as given in the latter's prefatory note to the *Peasant War in Germany*. Engels had remarked that the German workers had a great advantage over those of the rest of Europe—"they belonged to the most theoretical people of Europe." Engels added

that without German philosophy which preceded it, particularly that of Hegel, German scientific socialism [that is, Marxism would never have come into being and without a sense of theory among the workers this scientific socialism would never have passed so entirely into their flesh and blood as had been the case. "It is in particular the duty of the leaders to gain an ever clearer insight into all theoretical questions, to force themselves more and more from the influence of traditional phrases inherited from the old world outlook, and constantly to keep in mind that Socialism, since it has become a science, must be pursued as a science, i.e., it must be studied".⁶ To belittle the revolutionary theory for the working class, to turn away from socialist ideology in the slightest degree means to strengthen the bourgeois ideology, since the only choice is: either the bourgeois or the socialist ideology. There can be no talk of an independent ideology being developed by the masses of the workers themselves in the process of their movement. Hence all worship of spontaneity in the working class movement, all belittling of the role of socialist theory "means, quite irrespective of whether the belittler wants to or not, strengthening the influence of the bourgeois ideology over the workers.... Spontaneous development of the working class movement leads to its becoming subordinate to the bourgeois ideology, for the spontaneous working class movement is trade unionism, and trade unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie".⁷

Economism

The worship of spontaneity and the belittling of the role of (Social-Democratic) political consciousness in the working class movement leads, in the second place, to the concentration on the economic, that is, trade union struggles of the proletariat and the neglect of its political struggle. This constitutes the essence of

² Kautsky's italics.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ch. II, sec. B, footnote.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ch. I, sec. D. Lenin's emphasis.

⁶ Cited, *ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, ch. I, sec. B. Lenin's emphasis.

³ *Ibid.*

what is known as 'economism'.⁸ The 'Economists', in their own way, follow the notorious proposition of the revisionist Bernstein: "The movement is everything, the goal is nothing." According to them a rise in wages today is worth more than the fight for Socialism that is to arrive at some future date. "A kopek added to a rouble is worth more than Socialism and politics." The trade union struggle is all-important because "the trade union struggle is a struggle for the welfare of the workers and their children, and not a struggle for some kind of Socialism that will be realized only in the very remote future." Such are the arguments of the 'Economists'.

Thus the 'Economists' want the working class to confine its movement to the day-to-day struggle for its economic improvement within capitalism, thereby trying only to improve the conditions of sale of the labour power of the proletariat—for that is what the 'purely' economic struggles of the proletariat amount to—instead of asking the proletariat to wage political struggle to abolish capitalism and thereby the wages-system itself. Marx had already warned the working class that it "ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these every-day struggles (against capital). They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerilla fights incessantly springing up from the never-ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market. They ought to under-

stand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the material conditions and the social forces necessary for an economical reconstruction of society. Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!" they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword 'Abolition of the wages system!'"⁹ Hence the Communists (or Social Democrats) lead the struggle of the working class not only for better terms for the sale of labour power, but also for the abolition of the social system which compels the propertyless to sell themselves to the rich. "Social Democracy represents the working class not in the latter's relation to only a given group of employees, but in relation to all classes of modern society, to the state as an organized political force. Hence, it follows that Social Democrats not only must not confine themselves entirely to the economic struggle; they must not even allow the organization of economic exposures to become the predominant part of their activities. We must actively take up the political education of the working class and the developments of its political consciousness".¹⁰

Sometimes the 'Economists' try to cover up their reactionary position by some phrases that seem, at first sight, terribly Marxist. They would maintain that because "politics follows economics" economic struggle would dominate political struggle. Or they would hold that because according to Marx and Engels the economic interests of various classes play a decisive role in history the working class struggle for the defence of its economic interests must be of first rate importance in its struggle for emancipation. But "the fact that economic interests play a decisive role does not in the least imply that the economic (i.e. trade union) struggle is of prime importance, for the most

essential, the 'decisive' interests of classes can be satisfied only by radical political changes in general. In particular the fundamental economic interests of the proletariat can be satisfied only by a political revolution that will replace the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie by the dictatorship of the proletariat."¹¹

Equally false and no less pompous is the 'Economists' phrase of "lending the economic struggle itself a political character". Economic struggle of the proletariat, by definition, is a partial struggle, conducted within particular trades by particular groups of workers—because the conditions of labour differ from trade to trade—for improving the terms of the sale of their labour power, for better conditions of life and labour. "Lending the economic struggle itself a political character" would therefore mean striving to secure satisfaction for these trade demands, the improvement of conditions of labour in each separate trade by means of legislative and administrative reforms. "This is exactly what the trade unions do and have always done." But the revolutionary Social Democracy while fighting for reforms always "subordinates the struggle for reforms to the revolutionary struggle for liberty and for Socialism, as the part is subordinate to the whole."¹²

All this, of course, does not amount to a denigration of the economic struggles of the working class. There are, indeed, 'Marxists' who underestimate and sometimes even completely deny the value of economic struggles and work in the trade unions, thereby ignoring the importance of mass agitational and organizational work. But trade unions are "centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital",¹³ and strike movement has even great educational value for the proletariat. "Every strike gives rise to a discussion of the evils from which the work-

⁸ 'Economism' was the doctrine of the 'Economists', a group within the Russian Social Democratic movement at the end of the 19th century who stood for the complete separation of economics from politics, wanted the working class to confine its class struggle only to economic or trade union struggle and held that the working class could have no independent politics of its own.

⁹ Marx—*Wages, Price and Profit* (1865), ch. XIV. Marx's emphasis.

¹⁰ Lenin—*What is to be done*, ch. III, sec. A.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, ch. II, sec. C, foot note, Lenin's emphasis.

¹² *Ibid.*, ch. III, sec. A.

¹³ Marx—*Wages, Price and Profit*, ch. XIV.

ing class is suffering and helps the workers to appraise them, to understand where the oppression of the capitalists comes in...and to learn how to fight against oppression."¹⁴ Indeed Marxists must participate in "all the spontaneous manifestations of the struggle of the working class, in all the conflicts between the workers and the capitalists over the working days, wages, conditions of labour, etc. Our task is to merge our activities with the practical everyday questions of working class life".¹⁵

Some 'Marxists' even go so far as to oppose the preparation of armed uprising to leading the trade union struggle of the proletariat and affirm the primacy of the first while relegating the second to a secondary position. This is "untrue theoretically and incorrect as tactics." It is an untrue theoretical comparison of two tasks, as if they were equal. "Armed uprising is a method of political struggle at a given moment. The trade union struggle is one of the manifestations of the whole labour movement which is continuous, obligatory and always necessary under capitalism."¹⁶ Engels, in the text mentioned above, already spoke of the proletarian struggle "being conducted from three sides, the theoretical, the political and the practical-economic in harmony, in co-ordination and in a planned way." It follows that there are three basic forms of proletarian struggle: economic, political and theoretical—that is, the trade union, the political and the theoretical-ideological struggles. "How is it possible to compare one of the basic forms of struggle (the trade union form) with the method of another basic form at a given moment?"¹⁷

Indeed, just as the communists must know the limitations of trade unions—namely, that trade union

struggle can never, under capitalism, transcend the bourgeois production relations—in the same way they must also be able to correctly evaluate its importance. They must remember that the trade unions were a tremendous progressive step for the working class at the beginning of the development of capitalism inasmuch as they represented a transition from the disunity and helplessness of the workers to the rudiments of class organization. "The development of the proletariat did not, and could not, proceed anywhere in the world otherwise than through the trade unions, through reciprocal action between them and the party of the working class". It is true that at a certain stage—particularly at the stage when the highest form of proletarian class organization, that is, the revolutionary party of the proletariat began to arise—the trade unions began to reveal certain reactionary features, e.g. a certain craft-narrowness, a certain non-political tendency, etc. This is specially true in the advanced capitalist countries where "the craft-union, narrowminded, selfish, unfeeling, covetous, petty-bourgeois 'labour aristocracy', imperialistically-minded and bribed and corrupted by imperialism" represents a strong stratum.¹⁸ But from this it does not at all follow that the communists must not work in the trade unions. What, in fact, does follow is that they must wage a merciless war against the opportunist and social-chauvinist leaders, against the 'labour lieutenants of the capitalist class', until they have been thoroughly exposed and discredited before the masses of the workers and driven out of the unions. "We wage the struggle against the 'labour aristocracy' in the name of the masses of the workers and in order to win them to our side...To forget this most elementary and self-evident truth would be stupid". It is an "unpardonable blunder" to think that "because of the reactionary and counter-revolutionary character of the

heads of the trade unions we must leave the trade unions! that we must refuse to work in them! that we must create new and artificial forms of labour organization!"¹⁹

(To be concluded)

¹⁹ *Ibid.* Lenin's emphasis.

Book Review

THE RENAISSANCE TO MILITANT NATIONALISM IN INDIA

By Sankar Ghose

Allied Publishers, 1969

Calcutta

IN his essay, 'Values and Casualties in History' (1928), Meinecke wrote, 'Whole ages and generations can draw nourishment from the cultural values of a particular period in the past which is specifically related to them. Late cultures, as a rule, normally require props like this.' Is it because the nineteenth century Indian Renaissance has come to be regarded as such a 'prop' that it is drawing such a large number of scholars and students and inspiring substantial volumes? Dr Sankar Ghosh continues the story up to the emergence of Gandhi and states in the preface to his book that some of the conflicts which originated in the early days of the national movement 'still remain unabated'. 'A study of the past', he firmly asserts, 'helps in understanding and then in changing the present.'

Perhaps. But should not such a study define its scope precisely? Should it not be sure of the ground it treads, the terms it uses? Dr Ghosh makes no attempt to clarify his use of the term 'renaissance' which apparently embraces certain social and religious movements of the nineteenth century only. In fact, he regards these movements as something which 'gave rise to the Renaissance'. It is commonly held, however, that the Renaissance was a change to Western rationalism which served as the cradle of nineteenth century reforms. The other term, 'Militant Nationalism' has been used by the

¹⁴ Lenin—*Draft and Explanation of the Programme of the Social-Democratic Party* (1895-96).

¹⁵ *Tasks of the Russian Social Democrats* (1897).

¹⁶ Letter to S. I. Gusev (September, 1905).

¹⁷ *Ibid.* Lenin's emphasis.

¹⁸ *Left-wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder* (1919), ch. VI. Lenin's emphasis.

author to cover a wide field of the Indian movement of resistance to British imperialism.

Throughout the book, the author consistently maintains that 'much that is vital in Eastern culture to-day is either a response to or reaction from Western civilisation'. Such a stand presupposes the need to clarify the attitude of the Indians to Western civilisation. Did Western civilisation mean the same thing to reformers and revivalists? Or was the adverse reaction of the revivalists caused by a misunderstanding of the West? To Dr Ghosh, who refrains from answering these fundamental questions, the Western impact remains merely an external stimulus to which the later events can be easily attributed.

In dealing with Indian political ideas and movements from the birth of the Renaissance to the emergence of Gandhi, Dr Ghosh divides his subject under these sub-headings: The Indian Renaissance, Constitutionalism and Liberalism. The challenge of militant nationalism and The Home Rule Movement. The first chapter includes the impact of personalities like Rammohun Roy, Derozio, Keshab Sen and Annie Besant. He also gives an account of the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Society. He devotes considerable space to a number of anecdotes. The sections on revivalism and the impact of the West on Islam fail to clarify the original confusion: what is the nature of the Western impact? A new question is also found to turn up: how far was this 'impact' felt by the Indian people? Was it felt at all, or did it remain wholly confined among the upper strata? On this also, Dr Ghosh maintains an absolute silence, while he goes on heaping personalities on personalities, quotations on quotations (most of them too well known to be repeated), events on uncoordinated events. This lack of correlation between historical events and later developments makes the chapter singularly pointless. It serves merely as a narration. If the opening chapter is

accepted as a study of the background, it fails to create a perspective.

The next three chapters state the political developments that shaped the Indian struggle for independence and the growing awareness of the middle classes towards political reform. While offering valuable information not easily available in the Indian archives, the author has failed to utilise them and formulate an assessment of the events that does not ignore the economic impetus. He also places the contributions of the different social strata, especially the educated middle class, beyond the focus.

Method of Narration

Even if the general reader lets the mode of treatment pass without serious objection, the method of narration will not go unchallenged. For a historian whose chief aim is to stimulate an interest in the subject, Dr Ghosh has serious weaknesses. He devotes chapter after chapter to the same point, running the wind out of it with quotations and anecdotes having little bearing on the subject. It is interesting to be told that Annie Besant had claimed that Agastya, the Pauranic Rishi, visited her quite often in her dreams (pp 47-48). But what, in the name of Agastya, has this got to do with militant nationalism in India? Or is it merely a comic relief? Most of the other anecdotes, being well known, fail to serve even as relief.

The fullest expression of this prolix style is found in the section, 'Ethical Religion and Political Activism'. In order to analyse the popular concept regarding the religious passivity of Indians and how it was utilised to formulate certain inspirations, the author runs the whole gamut from the Vedas to Vivekananda. In the process, he connects Rammohun Roy with the 'humanistic tradition of Ramanuja and Ramananda' (p. 109). It was only by accident, we assume, that Ramchandra of Ayodhya and Ramtanu of Young Bengal were omitted.

And, finally, the factual errors are

too glaring to be ignored. Ramkrishna, according to the author, was 'a great Hindu saint in direct line of saints such as Chandidas and Chaitanya' (p. 48). Students of Bengali literature are already overburdened with the problems of Adi Chandidas, Baru Chandidas, Dwija Chandidas and Dina Chandidas; here is a new one on them—the problem of Saint Chandidas.

Ratnabali Chatterjee

Letters

Jadavpur

Mr Buddhadev Sengupta in his letter (May 23) questions the authenticity of a part of my article "In and Around Jadavpur" (May 16). My statement that "the CRP and EFR protect the party offices of the CP(M) and also the residential homes of individual CP(M) leaders" could have been verified if one went to the Palar Bazar area in Haltu where the local committee office of the party is situated. Even today (May 25) CRP pickets are there in front of the residences of Mr Bikesh Guha, the local CP(M) MLA, Mr Pranab Sen, the Secretary of the local committee, Mr Kanti Ganguly, a multi-purpose worker of the party, and many others.

Nowhere in my article did I say that "Chavan's police and paramilitary forces have been deployedto protect...activists and sympathisers." As a matter of fact, the numerical and lethal strength of the CP(M) in the entire area does not warrant such protection. On the contrary, CP(ML) workers are being hounded by their opponents i.e. police and the CP(M) Inu Mitras in the entire Bijoy Garh colony, Jadavpur old colony, Bagha Jatin colony and the Kazipara areas under Jadavpur P.S.

In only some areas of Haltu, CP(M) does not enjoy the same privilege as above, because in these areas the CP(ML) is a bit strong. Nevertheless, on the morning of

May, 9 in the Rajapur and Kamarpara areas of Haltu some anti-social elements under the leadership of some CP(M) leaders attacked Naxal hide-outs. The police immediately followed up the attacks only to get hold of Naxals coming out to resist the attacks.

At about 2 p.m. the same day a multi-purpose worker of the CP(M) made a murderous assault on an important CP(ML) leader on the Garfa Main Road in Haltu. It is reported that some people of Belgharia fame were imported into the locality to crush CP(ML) workers there.

At about 7 p.m. on the same day, I myself visited the Paler Bazar area and found an assembly of bomb-throwing CP(M) people just below the local committee office of the party. I saw the EFR contingent on the other side of the road looking here and here and doing nothing. This may not be connivance, but is certainly calculated indifference on the part of the police.

Perhaps, the event of the 10th morning to which Mr Sengupta refers is a sequel to the series of the 9th. I am not sure. But I am certain that this is a continuous process helped by both the sides. It is a fantasy that anywhere in Calcutta CP(ML) leaders can move freely under the very nose of the police. Whom Mr Sengupta thinks to be CP(ML) leaders I do not know, but I have not seen them in the locality for the past 3 months, while very often I meet CP(M) heroes moving boisterously here and there.

B. BOSE
Calcutta

The moving account in 'In and Around Jadavpur' is true to the letter. I am a resident of Jadavpur and in my middle life, some of my closest relatives are associated with left parties. Of them the oldest one, with long political suffering, belongs to the CPI, but he is almost resigned. The youngest, a little impetuous, is a Naxalite. The other one is a left CPI militant in an employees

union and abounds with worldly wisdom. The last two are first cousins.

When Naxalbari politics made them face each other as 'enemies', their quarrels disturbed our family peace. What is however alarming is the fact that the left CPI has now introduced a notorious man to kill the young Naxalites and the Jadavpur PSOC is lending his helping hand to them—let the extremists kill each other! Our hearts are sore. Is this what we bargained for?

A CITIZEN
Jadavpur

Apropos Buddhadeb Sengupta's contention (May 23) that "the picture is really different" from B. Bose's "In and around Jadavpur", the so-called national dailies make it clear that the skirmishes originated with the abduction and killing of one young Naxalite. To date out of 7 killed six reportedly belong to the CP(ML) and one to the CPM. Therefore it is difficult to accept that CPM activists are required to "play hide and seek" for escaping "annihilation".

"Inu Mitras" always take shelter with the group in power.

WRITWIK CHATTERJEE
Calcutta

Rosa Luxemburg

I have been reading with interest the articles on Lenin in *Frontier*. There are references to Rosa Luxemburg in these articles, but only references. I think her friendly criticism of Lenin's Bolshevism should be considered more seriously and, like Lenin, she also must be freed from the opportunistic clutches of social democrats.

Rosa Luxemburg in 1918 argued that Bolshevik elitism would lead to a state of society in which the bureaucracy alone would remain an active element in social life. A true social revolution, according to her, requires a spiritual transformation of the masses degenerated by centu-

ries of bourgeois class rule (a comparison with Mao Tse-tung's views may bring interesting results). Writing in 1904 she predicted that Lenin's organisational concepts would enslave a young labour movement to an intellectual elite hungry for power...and turn it into an automaton manipulated by a central committee. In the Bolshevik elitist doctrine of 1918 she saw a disparagement of the creative, spontaneous, self-correcting force of mass action which alone, she argued, could solve the thousand problems of social reconstruction and produce the spiritual transformation that is the essence of a true social revolution. According to her, democratic procedures and socialist revolution must coincide.

No doubt, Rosa Luxemburg did not fully understand the pre-revolutionary Russian situation and her criticism was to a very large extent influenced by the conditions in Germany: in Germany the 'professionals' (Lenin emphasised the role of the professional revolutionaries) were careerist trade union bureaucrats. Here she confused between the situation in Russia and that in Germany. She also did not understand that Lenin's Bolshevism was the only way to achieve revolution in a backward country like Russia. Yet her criticism had validity. In 1924 Lenin died and no revolution had since succeeded in Western Europe. Though she died before Stalin's triumph, her prediction of a state of society in which the bureaucracy alone would remain an active element became a fact under Stalin's rule, despite his great achievements of heavy industrialisation and rapid modernisation. No serious student of socialism and revolution can deny this.

So Rosa Luxemburg's criticism remains valid in the longer perspective of history. Moreover, according to Marx, bureaucracy is institutional incarnation of political alienation. In 1868 Marx saw in the bureaucratic traditions of the German working class a main difficulty which might frustrate the revolutionary working class movement in Germany (Mao's

call to bombard the headquarters, his intense fight against the emergence of bureaucracy is in this sense very much Marxist. In this country already a bureaucratic set up is very much present in our trade unions, particularly in our left parties). Marx insisted that bureaucratic structures do not automatically reflect prevailing social power relations but pervert and disfigure them. Hence the emergence of bureaucracy under Stalin was a serious and anti-Marxist phenomenon. Rosa Luxemburg's criticism may not be applicable to Lenin himself but surely to Stalin's Leninism and the Russian history of the 1930s and 40s. But Stalin had some excuses. How can one defend the presence of the crude bureaucracy in the Khrushchev and post-Khrushchev period?

From this the second vital question arises. What is the relation between Lenin and Stalin—more clearly, between Lenin's ideas and Stalin's Leninism? There was a metamorphosis of Lenin's ideas in the hands of Stalin; Stalin transformed the dynamic ideas of Lenin into a dogma. It is a point to be studied seriously, as Stalin did everything by quoting Lenin. Was Stalinism a logical development of Lenin's theses? Or was it a deviation from Lenin? Or was it the unavoidable result of the Nazi and cold-war period? Or was it due to the power struggle inside Russia between Stalin and his enemies? These questions must be answered, but should be discussed not from the point of view of so-called anti-Stalinism, which is nothing but sheer opportunism and revisionism. We must keep in mind that Stalin was a far greater personality than Khrushchev and his friends, than Brezhnev, Kosygin and Co.

ARJUN BANDYOPADHYAY
Naihati

The Atomic Hoax

With the Chinese fast going ahead with their space research and nuclear programmes, there is once more a plethora of debate, and discussions in-

and outside Parliament on the advisability of India not only going nuclear within a short period of time our defence expenditures. The latest to join in the chorus is the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission Dr Vikram Sarabhai. On May 28 he came out with a long press statement that the Atomic Energy Commission, in addition to building the two power stations at Kalpakkam and Kotah, and apart from the already commissioned power station at Tarapore, would complete four more power stations by the end of the yet-to-be finalised fourth plan. And to make his statement more impressive he added that a space research programme is also in progress and that by 1980 India would send up a satellite of 1200 kg. However, his statement ended with the sad note that the Centre has only sanctioned Rs 263.93 crores instead of Rs 398.1 crores as demanded by AEC.

All these tall claims of Sarabhai and Co, which is what AEC has turned out to be since the death of Dr Bhabha, fall flat if the AEC's past performance, as evident from the operation, maintenance and construction of the power plants now either in operational or constructional stage, is taken into consideration. AEC is the only public sector organisation which has been given a staggering amount of money, both in Indian currency and foreign exchange, without ever having its expenditure checked by the A.G. of India (Audit) or to face the Parliamentary Committee's enquiry on public sector undertakings. Curiously enough, no account has been furnished by AEC of how the money has been spent during the past ten years without producing any fruitful indigenous work. Quite a large number of technical and scientific personnel were sent and are being sent to the USA and Canada each year; also, top officers often go abroad under some pretext or other. Politics, groupism and intrigues are driving out, in fact have already driven out quite a large number of qualified technical and scientific per-

sonnel from AEC. Let alone the tall talk of constructing four more nuclear power stations within the fourth five year plan, even the commissioning of the plants at Kalpakkam and Kotah would remain a chimera so long as AEC is not subjected to a scrutiny by an unbiased technical committee. The spending spree of public money by AEC's highly paid officials for some imaginary and hypothetical official duties should be stopped once for all.

S. V. RANADE, S. V. GHATE, N. L. UPADHAYA, HARI KRISHNA
Bombay

Tarun Opera's Lenin

G. Dasgupta in his (Tarun Opera's Lenin, May 23) makes certain observations with which not many will disagree. I saw the jatra in Delhi where, in spite of a lot of publicity, it could not attract a big crowd. The role of Trotsky was greatly distorted and the script showed utter lack of knowledge of Lenin's works. Lenin was portrayed more as a romantic hero than one who led the Russian Revolution. The only laudable feature was the excellent acting of Shanti Gopal. After seeing the jatra one feels that themes like the present one deserve a better treatment, if in nothing else at least in the script. Lenin astonishingly combined theoretical writings on Marxism with revolutionary activities and one expects an earnest effort in presenting that Lenin. It is high time we learnt that serious plays or jatras do not mean slogan shouting and caricature and that what is to be discarded is the casual treatment of a serious and interesting theme.

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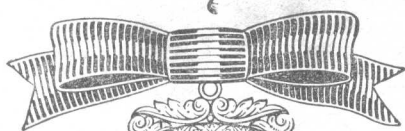
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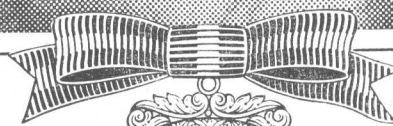
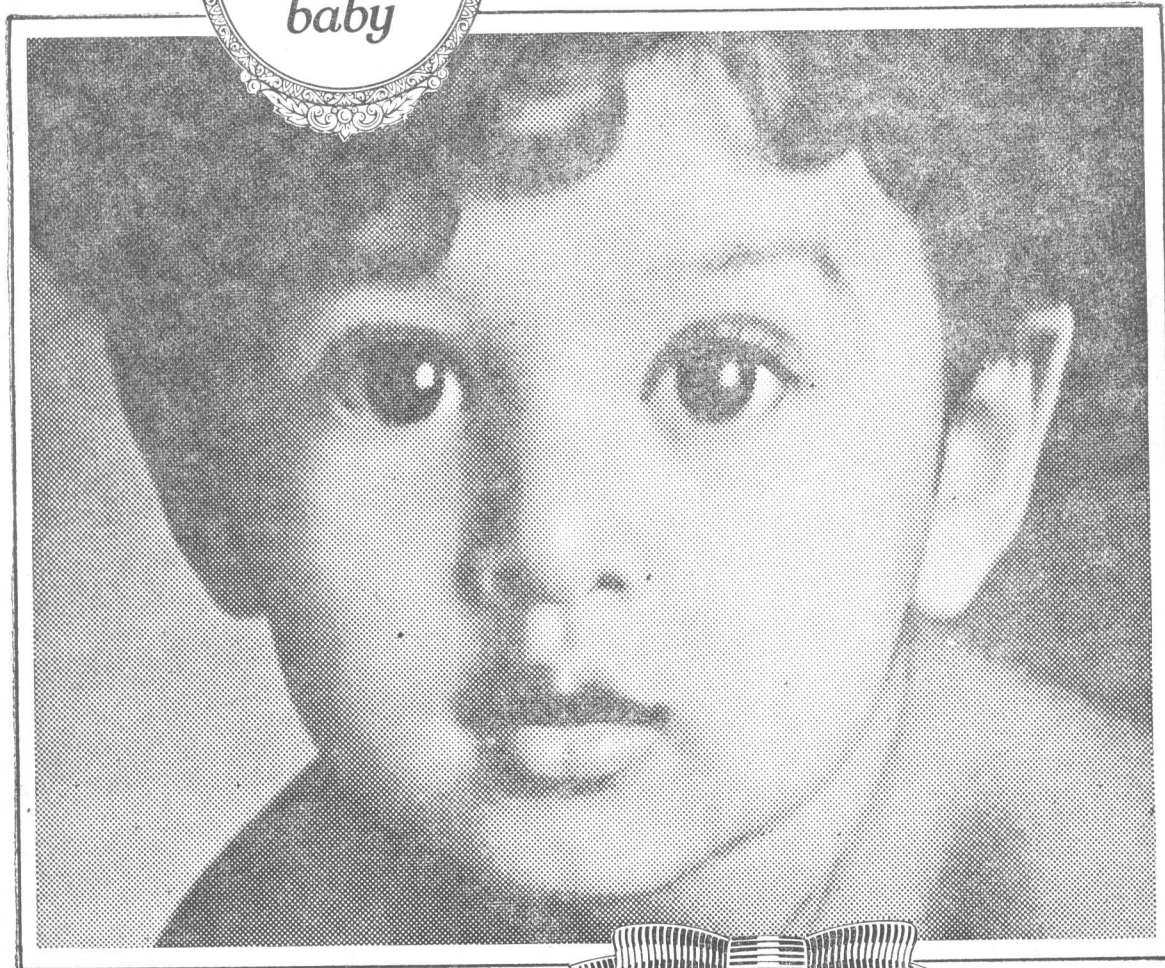
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