

frontier

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LOOK AND LEARN

HOW long can Mrs Gandhi afford to have a naive Chief Minister like Mr Ajoy Mukherjee? She has been laboriously building up a smokescreen over months, by nationalising banks, seeking to clip privy purses, restricting monopolies, socialising imports, allocating funds for developing rural jobs, and so on and so forth. But naive people like Ajoy Babu are removing the screen by foolish proposals. For instance, Ajoy Babu has asked the Centre to put the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act in temporary abeyance in West Bengal so that this burdened State can attract fresh private capital and restrain its uncontrollable youth. What a proposal! As if the Monopolies Act were really a restrictive Act for the monopolists; as if the Act had not been made harmless enough with built-in leaks and holes.

Look at Mr Y. B. Chavan and learn how to act as a Minister. Mr Chavan summons all the custodians of the nationalised banks and asks why the hell, funds are not reaching the common man for whom the the nationalisation was made. That's the way. Do it and when the brave act wears thin blame it on the bureaucrats. Look at the gusto with which Mr Kumaramangalam is making fiery speeches to haul steel out of the public sector, passing the buck on to the managers. Look again at Mr Bharat Ram, the doyen of what they call the nationalist bourgeoisie. He finds nothing wrong in the idiom of nationalisation; what he recommends is appointment of a commission to advise the viability of nationalising a concern. That's the way a patriotic sucker should talk. It is a nuisance when the Government fitfully nationalises a project; it is so much easier to tackle a commission when it can be pinpointed.

Not that the industrialists, bureaucrats and social democrats are working at cross purposes; being birds of the same feather they can't. But they must appear being at loggerheads with one another. Let not the people find out the continued five-year game; keep them guessing who runs this wretched world: Brahma the parliamentarian, Vishnu the bureaucrat or Maheswar the industrialist. And to make confusion worse confounded, let people like Mr Kenneth Keating pour compliments on India, making her look like the most efficient democracy in the world, though this efficiency has cost her a debt of Rs 7,422 crores to the U.S. alone.

In his craving to help the West Bengal youth, Ajoy Babu shows his

proverbial childishness. That wouldn't do. He has to learn sophistication if he wants to stay in the gaddi. Look again at Mrs Gandhi. How smoothly she has brought about the new detention ordinance. Although the main thrust of the ordinance is against the protesting youth of the

country, she has managed to make it look like a weapon against the Pakistani fifth columnists. Of course the West Pakistan action against Mujib has been a godsend to her; there is no reason that she wouldn't have done it if there were no Bangladesh; God helps those who help themselves.

End Of The Dollar ?

The strength of a currency in commerce between nations is a function of confidence that the trading nations put in it, and it is this in-built confidence in the dollar that made it the world's currency in the postwar period. That confidence, however, was seriously jolted last week when West Germany decided to stop buying dollars and to float—unilaterally if necessary—the Deutsch Mark to correct the present unreal mark-dollar parity. Events began to overlap and a flurry just short of a crisis in the international monetary system set in.

Apparently at least the flap occurred because of the wary West Germans. But at the bottom of the 'crisis' remains the anomaly of the present monetary system. Close on three decades ago, the Big Four cooked up a system that pegged gold to the U.S. dollar at \$35 an ounce and declared that if a nation failed to live thriftily it would have to draw upon its reserves to make good the deficit. The plan clicked because of the soundness of the U.S. economy and Fort Knox's overfilled coffers. Since then, however, the situation has undergone substantive changes. To keep its commitments as the free world's watchdog, Washington had been continually dumping dollars in different parts of the world. And lately its payments on these accounts have reached astronomical proportions. (The Vietnam bill alone was \$2 billion last year). As a result the U.S. national vault is being emptied steadily. In 1950 the U.S. had \$22.8 billion worth of gold to meet the possible foreign demand of \$8.6 billion. But by 1970 the gold stock had slumped to \$11.1 billion in the face of foreign

holdings of \$43.3 billion.

Beneath this incongruity lies the innate sickness of the American economy where slowdowns in economic activity have come to co-exist with high prices. To get around this the Nixon administration has taken to an expansionary budget with a moderate dose of new money to reach the point of full employment by next year. As a corollary to this 'Keynsian therapy', this money has lined the pockets of the U.S. bankers who have used it to pay their dues abroad. Consequently this stagflation—the new trend word for stagnation

and inflation—has threatened to contaminate the European economies. But these countries, basking in their new-found affluence, have refused to oblige the Big Brother and have slammed their doors upon the invading dollar. Of course, there are dissenters in the camp. France, for example, is critical of Bonn's decision to float or to revalue the mark. But in spite of this the momentum is clearly towards the formation of a full-fledged European currency bloc that would reflect Europe's new economic stature. The 'crisis' may mark the beginning of the end of the dollar era.

What about the third world countries? With the dollar forming a significant portion of their currency and with the IMF—the chief executioner of the White House's will—standing by to tackle the intransigents it is scarcely possible for these poor nations to avoid the crisis. And despite the regrouping of forces, their lot will continue to remain unchanged. Already the rumour of devaluation is there. The usual official denial is there too.

The Rogers Mission

A foreign correspondent who was recently here to cover the happenings in Bangladesh was not a little amused at the nature of reporting in the Indian Press. He said he had become wiser by experience. He wrote in his paper after the Six-Day War in West Asia that America would have nothing to look forward to in the Arab countries for many years to come. But a few weeks ago he saw the American gentleman who looks after U.S. interests being cheered on a Cairo street. It is difficult to believe, with such conditions obtaining, that Mr Rogers's visit to Cairo besides other Middle Eastern capitals was historic, notwithstanding the fact that this happened after a gap of eighteen years. The Secretary of State had a personal stake in undertaking this safari; he has been overshadowed in foreign matters by Mr Henry Kissinger (Presidential

Adviser) though considering his official position, the initiative should have been his. With little to contribute to such areas as Indochina and Sino-American relations, Mr Rogers, the lawyer-turned-diplomat, has marked out the Middle East as his sole preserve. In contrast to his low silhouette in the American foreign policy making body, Mr Rogers has taken a position vis-a-vis the Middle East which makes it appear that the United States is even-handed in her dealings with the Arabs and the Jews. In spite of evidence to the contrary, many Arab leaders have come to believe in American 'neutrality'. On the eve of his departure for the Middle East, the Secretary of State, asked to comment on the recent delivery of arms to Israel, said that no new commitments were being made. But does this not mean that last year's arms agree-

ment with Mrs Golda Meir is going to be respected? Still the Arab leaders continue to plead with the Nixon Administration to put pressure on Tel Aviv so that it vacates occupied lands in return for recognized and secure borders.

Israel's colonization of annexed lands is going on so systematically that it is unlikely that she is contemplating any peace which would leave her without Jerusalem, the West Bank the Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, a portion of Sinai and control over Sharm-el-Sheik. A newly built highway now runs from the Golan Heights to Sharm-el-Sheik through Sudon; Tel Aviv's economic policy now covers all these areas; there are Jewish settlements in areas 'never to be returned'. Mr Rogers is supposed to have concentrated in his talks with the Arab and Israeli leaders on the reopening of the Suez Canal. He is optimistic about the Canal facilities being available again after a suspension of four years as "Egypt would like to reopen the Canal. Israel would like to have it open. The United States favours it, the Soviet Union does and so do all the nations in the area." But the Canal problem is no nearer to resolution after the Rogers visit; the Israelis were not ready to be persuaded that Anwar-el Sadat's Canal re-opening proposal contained to date the most significant Arab concession. On the contrary, it was made abundantly clear that no one was going to benefit from lengthy discussions since, as an Israeli official pointed out, "the Secretary knows our position. It has been explained to him in Cambridge English, broken English and just plain English." While the Egyptians demand that the reopening of the Canal should be a step towards a final settlement that would return to the Arabs the territories lost during the June War, the Israelis say this should have nothing to do with an eventual peace settlement. Moreover, Israel insists on freedom of action for its troops if the Egyptians cross the Canal to take up positions on the East Bank once the former have vacated it. The gap

between the Arab and Israeli positions is not easy to bridge. Although there has been no formal renewal of the cease-fire following the Secretary

of State's visit, Mr Rogers can take comfort from the fact that he has been instrumental in keeping the guns silent for nine months.

Lest We Forget

DWIJENDRA NANDI

THE heroic people of East Bengal that is Bangladesh are waging an armed struggle for their independence. The All India Congress Committee, the highest policy-making body of the Indian National Congress, at its recent Delhi session adopted a resolution endorsing the unanimously adopted resolution of the two Houses of Parliament on East Bengal and calling upon the Indian people in general and Congressmen in particular to extend their whole-hearted support to the people of East Bengal in their grim struggle for a democratic way of life.

There was a time when this premier political organisation of India, Congress, whose highest policy-making body is the AICC, under the leadership of Gandhiji declined to extend any support to those who waged armed struggle, for example the men of the Chittagong Armoury Raid Case, the heroes of the INA and the naval ratings and hundreds of others involved in conspiracy cases. The British Government in those days put hundreds of such patriotic revolutionaries to the gallows. The AICC under the leadership of Gandhiji never tried to save their lives. Even the cases of Bhagat Singh, Sukh Dev and Raj Guru could not inspire the mentor and leader of the Indian National Congress that was Gandhiji to make any move to save their lives. On the other hand, think of what Gandhiji did for Mr Morarji Desai. After being demoted by the Bombay Government for his failure to discharge his duties as Sub-Divisional Magistrate owing to his communal bias, he resigned his office and joined the Civil Disobedience Movement. Gandhiji then personally talked to the

Viceroy and wrote about him to the Home Secretary of the Government of India. This letter dated June 19, 1931 to Mr H. W. Emerson, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, is rather interesting:

"Borsad
June 19, 1931

"Dear Mr Emerson,

Here are copies of letters received by Syts. Murarji Desai and Durlabhji Desai, ex-Deputy Collectors for both of whom the Central Government had advised the Bombay Government to give pension or gratuity in lieu of pension. You will remember that this was arranged because you had suggested to Lord Irwin that it would be embarrassing for Provincial Governments to restore officials of high rank to their original position. I remember your having told me during our conversations in Simla that the Bombay Government had difficulty about giving anything to the officials concerned. But I was unprepared for the letters according to the enclosed copy. Both these gentlemen had applied not for grace but in terms of the Settlement. May I therefore ask you to advise the Bombay Government to carry out the Settlement in respect of these two officials?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi"

Forty years ago, on March 24, 1931, that is to say only 19 days after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931 was signed and just on the eve of the historic Karachi Session of the Indian National Congress, which approved this Pact, the three revolutionary

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freedom fighters—Bhagat Singh, Sukh Dev and Raj Guru of the Lahore Conspiracy Case—were hanged in Lahore Central Jail by the British imperialists. When Gandhiji was negotiating the terms of this Pact to facilitate his subsequent participation in the Second Round Table Conference in London, there were persistent demands from all corners of the country that commutation of the death sentences on these three brave men should be made a condition precedent of the settlement and Gandhiji should exert his personal influence on the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, to save their lives. Gandhiji did not seem to be very favourably inclined to take up the cause as these young patriots “were involved in violence”. However, ultimately Gandhiji condescended to raise the matter in his negotiatory talks with Lord Irwin. How and with what seriousness and sincerity he raised this issue can now be found in the words of Lord Irwin who has himself recorded the notes of his talks with Gandhiji. This record is now available in the National Archives of India. Gandhiji referred to this matter for the first time during his talks with Lord Irwin on February 18, 1931. Regarding this first reference Lord Irwin in his note of February 19, 1931 says :

“In conclusion and not connected with the above he mentioned the case of Bhagat Singh. He did not plead for commutation, although he would, being opposed to all taking of life, take that course himself. He also thought it would have an influence for peace. But he did ask for postponement in present circumstances. I contented myself with saying that, whatever might be the decision as to exact dates, I could not think there was any case for commutation which might not be made with equal force in the case of any other violent crime. The Viceroy's power of commutation was designed for use on well-known grounds on clemency, and I could not feel that they ought to be invoked on grounds that were admittedly political.”

The second occasion when Gan-

dhiji raised this issue was during their talks on March 19, 1931, that is to say five days before these patriots were hanged. Regarding this reference Lord Irwin notes :

“As he was leaving, he asked if he might mention the case of Bhagat Singh, saying that he had seen in the Press the intimation of his execution for March 24th. This was an unfortunate day, as it coincided with the arrival of the new President of the Congress at Karachi and there would be much popular excitement”.

“I told him I had considered the case with most anxious care, could find no grounds on which I could justify to my conscience commuting the sentence. As to the date, I had considered the possibility of postponement till after the Congress, but had deliberately rejected it on various grounds :

- (i) that postponement of execution merely on political grounds, when orders have been passed seemed to me improper.
- (ii) that postponement was inhuman in that it would suggest to the friends and relatives that I was considering commutation, and
- (iii) that Congress would have been able legitimately to complain that they had been tricked by Government.

“He appeared to appreciate the force of these arguments, and said no more.”

‘He’ in the above passages refers to Gandhiji, who had as many as eleven meetings with Lord Irwin between February 17, 1931 and March 19, 1931, meetings that paved the way for the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. At most of these meetings no third person was present. At the meeting of February 17, according to Lord Irwin, after some ‘general talks’, they ‘got on to practical points’. The general points that Gandhiji raised on this occasion included (a) the right of raising ‘dissolution of partnership’, (b) question of debts, (c) States’ subjects, (d) proportion of representation ; and the ‘practical points’ included (a) release of Satyagrahis, (b) Meerut prisoners, (c) Bengal detenues,

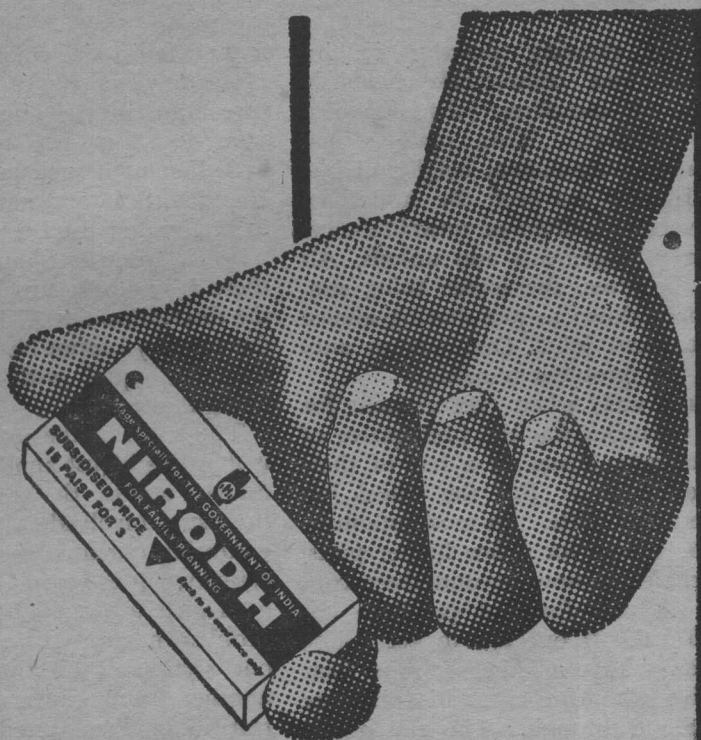
(d) land and property, (e) remission of fines, (f) restoration of Presses and securities, (g) reinstatement of officials who had resigned or been dismissed, (h) repressive ordinances, (i) inquiries into police excesses, etc. In his note Lord Irwin has described the manner in which Gandhiji raised the points relating to the Meerut prisoners and the Bengal detenues :

“2. Meerut prisoners : He argued for their discharge but not as I understand as a condition. I said that they had nothing to do with Civil Disobedience, but I was as much disturbed as he was at the protracted proceedings and would examine the case with a view to seeing whether anything could be done to accelerate the conclusion of the trial. More than that I could not say, as I could recognise no association between Communists and non-violent Satyagrahis.

“3. He raised the question of Bengal detenues, not I understand as a condition, but in order to inform me that a great many people had been locked up who in no way deserved it. I omitted to make the obvious point that each case was submitted to two Judges, but told him that, if he wished to submit any evidence of cases in which the police had dropped on the wrong man, I would pass it on to the Governor of Bengal who would look into it personally. He did not seem to attach great importance to the question.”

It may be recalled that these “Bengal detenues” were those who took to arms to liquidate British rule but were put behind bars under various black laws prevailing then. There were loud and persistent demands from various patriotic quarters that release of all these revolutionaries should be made a condition precedent for finalising the ‘truce’ that was to be effected by the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

In this context is not the noting of Lord Irwin very revealing ?



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Calcutta Diary

GYAN KAPUR

THE demand for recognition of Bangladesh goes on, with the Union Government continuing its wait-and-see policy, though what they are waiting for and hope to see is extremely hazy. The stalemate over repatriation of the Indian Mission at Dacca shows no signs of being resolved even though at one point it was announced that a plane from Kathmandu was leaving for Dacca for this purpose. Similarly, reports about two Ilyushins being ready at Moscow and even the time of their departure for Dacca were premature. As might have been guessed by the Government, nothing possibly can mature at this stage. The Indian Mission at Dacca are hostages, but in a different sense. Their continued presence is linked up with the question of recognition of Bangladesh.

As and when the Government of India recognises the Bangladesh Government, the Pakistan Government can ask it to get its Mission back from the newly recognised Government. The Government of India would look pretty silly insisting upon the Pakistan Government to arrange for repatriation of the Mission at Dacca while recognizing the Bangladesh Government as ruling over the territory and Pakistan can be trusted fully to make full use of the situation to play up the situation to India's disadvantage.

Upholders of the capitalist order are fond of saying that nothing can be gained by sharing poverty whenever they are against any measure which strikes at the privileges of the few. Governor Dhavan, who had been somewhat silent for quite some time, has once again become vocal. Just after stating in the Assembly that jobs should be for the local boys, he has now demanded job reservation for the deaf. Mr Dhavan's Government is reported to be keen on check-

ing the growing practice in industrial and commercial establishments of reserving jobs for sons and relatives. This practice has grown to phenomenal heights of late and in fact has been the subject of agreements, written or unwritten, between managements and unions. All told, however, the whole thing simply boils down to just sharing almost non-existent jobs. One way or another, the problem remains.

Time was when recruitment for new vacancies was the prerogative of the owners, bosses or a few of their trusted lackeys. But the wheel has turned full circle. In most establishments, except for a few higher posts, the choice is now beyond their control. A new form of privilege has developed. If one has to get a job, one must have a father or some near relative who can exert his privilege to see one through. The sons of the jobless, according to this practice, seem destined to be hereditary jobless. The great scarcity of jobs no doubt is the root cause. But trade unions might take a look at the whole issue. In the narrow immediate sense they perhaps gain. But all this generates tensions and practices from which it is doubtful if the movement gains anything in the long run. It would be interesting to watch the reactions of the different unions to Government's attempts to strike at the practice.

Another attempt to divide the almost non-existent jobs is, of course, the demand for reservation of jobs for the local boys. To this the various parties are more or less agreed though few go to the extent of the Shiva Sena in Bombay. Even the CPM leader, Mr Jyoti Basu, had had to say something in support of this at the time of the last UF Government, though with a large backing of industrial workers from outside the State, Mr Basu could hardly take any extreme stand on the issue. The issue is just another example of

double-think in which we as a nation, if nation we are, or even the people of the Indo-Pakistan continent delight. It does not seem incongruous to anyone to deny job opportunities to people in the country simply because they happen to belong to another State in the Union and at the same time these very people are highly indignant if such discrimination is meted out to our nationals overseas in England or the USA. These countries are foreign to our nationals and there is nothing to be surprised at the discrimination. If Indians all over the country cannot be equal, how can they be equal with citizens of a foreign country?

The truth of the matter, of course, is that this is just another red herring drawn across the trail to obfuscate the issues involved in the problem of mounting unemployment all over the country. Jobs for local boys and even girls are not going to solve the problem but only pass the buck from one section of the unfortunate to another. Unfortunately, the ball thrown by the vested interests has been picked up only too enthusiastically by various sections of the people.

The demand, starting from ensuring the right to the people of a State, has gone to absurd lengths, for who is a local boy? One belonging to the State? If the principle is accepted boys of a particular district have more right than those of other districts. Ultimately, it has come to a demand for recruitment from particular townships in the industrial belt and finally to localities where industrial establishments are situated. Between this demand and the one for preserving the rights of the old employees, there is irreconcilable conflict and naturally tensions have mounted not only against managements but between the two sets of claimants. So much so, that in many establishments, what little recruitment there is, is stalled. The owners do not win or lose in this conflict but the unity of the employees and workers certainly suffers further.

Why must we go on following traditional Hindu thinking on caste lines? Why can't a Bengali come to be

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known as a local man in Assam, Bihar, Orissa or any other State? Or a man of any State become a local man in West Bengal or other State? Why must we go on following traditional thinking in such matters? If we are sincere in our concern for the local boys in such matters, why not put it on a proper footing? The

only way to do it is to evolve a new concept of citizenship and legal sanction for the same. Why can we not have a system of double citizenship for the people of India? For all matters outside the country, the people could be citizens of India. For matters inside the States, they could be citizens of different States.

Lesson Of Highway 9

A. K. ESSACK

DIVISION amongst the Saigon puppet leaders has reached a new high point and Quisling No. 2, Ky has begun to hurl mud and dirt on Quisling No. 1 Thieu, accusing him of corruption and masterminding the debacle in southern Laos. Nixon too is being assailed not only from his own Congress for utter incompetence and adventurism, but also from the veterans of the war itself, who with wounds still fresh and unhealed have marched on to Washington to add to the torrent of protests sweeping America against the imperialist war.

The victory on Highway Nine has been hailed throughout the revolutionary world. Mao Tse-tung has sent a message to the three peoples of Indochina: "Of late the three peoples of Indochina have fought well on various battlefields, particularly on the campaign on Highway Nine; they have fought a most splendid battle of annihilation wiping out large numbers of enemy units... The victory is of strategic importance. You have brought into play the unparalleled might of people's war, attained new heights in your fighting capability and gained new experience".

This however is not a chance victory, but has been won as a result of the application of the principles of people's war, which draws its inspiration from a socialist ideology as well as applying military science. One cardinal rule of the Indochinese liberation forces has been: Know Your Enemy and Know Yourself. The

Indochinese have made it a point to understand the rules governing the thinking of the American military strategists as well as their characteristics.

The first test of the Vietnamisation of the war applied on a large scale in southern Laos involved (a) the use of ground troops by the puppet Saigon authorities; (b) air cover and support by the Americans. The air operations were not regarded as auxiliary, for the helicopters were assigned to play a strategic role of being involved in close combat. At the same time, 10,000 American troops were to wait on the eastern side of the Laotian border to intervene and reap the laurels should the operations turn out to be favourable. The Americans employed four tactics:

(1) The use of 2,300 aircraft and 800 helicopters. The Infantry, armour and aircraft were to work in close cooperation to give the ground troops the mobility they needed. Aircraft mobility was devised to counter the mobility of the liberation forces.

(2) The tactic of leapfrogging. With aircraft they could move from one area into another and with speed. In guerilla warfare there are no battlelines, no rear. The enemy is to be attacked from all sides. The leapfrogging tactic was intended to apply this very same principle of no battlelines and no rear.

(3) Have fortified camps on hilltops and in enclaves.

(4) Operate on a 20 kilometre line, with a flank of not more than

25 kilometres. The idea was to have a sweep over a wide front with tanks spearheading the attacks. The whole success of the campaign hinged on retaining decisive superiority in the air.

Despite a whole army of experts, from professors at universities to writers of manuals on counter-insurgency, imperialism has never been able to grasp fully the strategy and tactics which the people's liberation movements in Indochina have been able to pursue. Firstly they lag behind the significant changes that take place daily on both the political and military planes. A significant new development had in fact taken place in the evolution of military strategy of people's war. Giap had observed this when he wrote: "Our militia-men and guerillas, young and old, men and women have downed enemy jets and captured American pilots. Each rifle, machine gun and missile launching pad at the disposal of our brave and resourceful fighters has been brought into full play. Even rifles can successfully cope with modern jet planes." The party directive along the same lines was more specific. It said: "The entire people hit back at enemy planes taking the anti-aircraft units of the three armed forces as the nucleus". The liberation forces had proved their decisive superiority on land as was seen at Dien Bien Phu and the Tet offensive. Now the entire armed force was being mobilised to meet the new challenge from the air.

Even before the victory at Highway Nine, the people had developed great skill and resourcefulness in downing enemy planes. Thus Company No. 1 of Hong Linh unit had led the way in downing 200 aircraft, while Nan Trieu, Ha Long, and Long Dua units had to their credit over 100 planes each. These figures were before June 1969. The combat efficiency in air battles had reached such efficiency at the regional and local level that militia-men and self-defence units using rifles had been able to bring down jet planes.

The people thus were prepared when "Operation Lam Son 719" was launched. Nixon believed that the Indochinese would fight "instead of dispersing and avoiding combat". He had marshalled the best of the puppet troops including the Ranger corps. He wanted to end this campaign in a blaze of glory for himself. It ended chaotically and in disarray.

The Indochinese allowed the Saigon troops in and allowed them to occupy hills like 30, 31, 723 and 748. But before they could fortify and entrench themselves hell broke loose. Artillery and infantry units appeared as from nowhere suddenly and like waves just rolled on without pause, without rest, right towards their targets. The puppet troops called in their planes but they were met with the heaviest barrage of anti-aircraft fire yet known in the Indochina war. Helicopter after helicopter crashed and plane after plane came spinning down. In a month over 500 planes were shot down. As the "helicopter magic" evaporated there was a corresponding collapse in the hopes and morale of the puppet troops. Left to fend for themselves, they paled and trembled, for they knew what that meant—hand-to-hand combat with soldiers who have reached such perfection in this art as to strike terror into the hearts of the stoutest, bravest and most experienced of the enemy. The puppet troops just broke ranks and fled. Even today the liberation forces have not fully collected all the arms the invaders left behind.

The trials of war and years of endurance have produced soldiers whose combat experience has reached a level where one company can challenge a battalion of the enemy. At Dien Bien Phu the Vietnamese used five divisions to overcome and overrun one French division. Later one company could match a company of the enemy. The rout of the enemy at Highway Nine was by a force that was in the ratio of one company to a battalion, such is now the morale of the liberation forces.

Two new tactics were observed: Emerging from nowhere with secrecy and suddenness, the liberation forces neither rested nor reconnoitred, neither paused nor probed, but like an irresistible tidal wave crashed into the outer perimeter of the enemy. This took the enemy completely by

surprise. Secondly, instead of dispersing their strength on all the enemy forces, this tidal wave went straight for the units where the commander and his general staff were located. Once these fell—either captured or killed—the others without leadership just disintegrated.

Blacks And The Chinese Revolution—II

ORVILLE SCHELL

MANY black revolutionaries like Malcolm X, Robert Williams, Frantz Fanon, and Eldridge Cleaver do not dispute most of Mao's social analyses and tactical advice. But they go on from where he has left off. They pose the question, "Why is it that men who are oppressed cannot act?" Why are black men unable to act for their independence?" Their concern with action (practice) has led them beyond the problems of societies alone into the problem of individuals.

They have begun to deal with their own inertia in psychoanalytical terms; of course, they have not limited themselves to discussions of individual consciousness, but have placed this concern within the larger context of social revolution. They have begun to see that the problem of the individual black man's consciousness is a vital link in the reorganization of society. They have recognized through their own lives and struggle that while the problem may be social, the solutions may begin in the psychology of individual powerlessness. As Frantz Fanon wrote, "...there are inter-relationships between the consciousness and the social context" (*Black Skin*, p. 97). He goes on, "What emerges then is the need for combined action on the individual and on the group. As a psychoanalyst, I should help my patient to become conscious of his unconsciousness....but also to act in the direction of change in the social structure." (*Black Skin*, p. 100).

Fanon brings Marx and Freud together. He talks about the black man's alienation in terms of social and economic realities which have been internalized, or "epidermalized", and which lead to an inability to act, which have drastic social consequences. "I believe", he says, "that the fact of the juxtaposition of the white and black races has created a massive psycho-existential complex. I hope by analysing it to destroy it". (*Black Skin*, p. 12)

Now, let us turn back to Fanon who was black. He was raised in a colony and educated in the mother country, France. His problem was that he was a black man in a white man's world. By nature of his blackness he was a victim in his own mind of the black stereotype. Like other blacks he began with a "colonialized mentality". It is this colonialized mentality that holds him prisoner to his mind and renders him incapable of being a social actor. What is the colonialized mentality?

Fanon describes it as, "a devaluation of the self...." which leads to a weak sense of one's efficacy or instrumentality in the world around a human being. He speaks of "this lack of esteem of the self as an object worthy of love" as having grave consequences. (*Black Skin*, p. 75) A man who has been psychologically colonialized (he may be economically colonialized as well) is "outside"; this is the "abandoned" black" who has been taught that if he has any place at all it is at the bottom. He

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is the "victim" whose colonialization allows him no right or chance of protest. He is the slave whose identity and being are determined by the master, the white man. He may be exploited in many ways. But the final result is that he acquires the passive mentality of the exploited, and this syndrome continues as a cumulative experience even should the exploitation stop. The "native", as Fanon calls the colonized man from his experiences in Algeria, is depicted as an animal "insensible to ethics", as "the negation of values", "the absolute evil". (*Wretched of the Earth*, p. 34) "The native is an oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor" (*Wretched of the Earth*, p. 42). But his yearning must remain only a dream because he feels powerless to realize it in reality.

Powerlessness and weakness undermine a human being's identity or ego. As Malcolm X wrote of the American black, "(Our color) made us fall victims to this feeling of inadequacy or inferiority or helplessness, we turned to somebody else to show us the way. We didn't have confidence in other black men to show us the way.....we never thought in terms of doing things for ourselves." (*Malcolm X Speaks*, p. 169). Fanon quotes Aime Cesaire, author of *Discours sur le Colonialisme*, who wrote, "I am talking of millions of men who have been skillfully injected with fear, inferiority, complexes, trepidation, servility, despair and abasement." (*Black Skin*, p. 7.)

Race and Class

Fanon as a black testifies to the debasement and worthlessness of existence for a man so burdened. As a psychiatrist he describes the guilt which grows out of the repressed violence that a colonized black man feels, even if it is unconscious. Here he is way beyond Mao's class struggle into the struggle which takes place in a black man's mind; a mind which is torn between trying to become white, entering the white man's

world, playing by the white man's rules and becoming black, accepting "niggerdom", and tearing down that part of the white man's world which stands in the way of his self-acceptance. Race has been added to class, or it has become synonymous with class. A black pathology has been exposed beneath economic exploitation; both stand in the way of revolution and liberation.

Fanon's aim: "I propose nothing short of liberation of the man of colour from himself," (*Black Skin*, p. 8) "What I want to do," says Fanon the clinician, "is to help the black man to free himself of the arsenal of complexes that has been developed by the colonial environment" (*Black Skin*, p. 30). He makes no mistake about the reason for his therapy; so that blacks can begin "restructuring the world". Fanon is calling for a wind of do-it-yourself psychotherapy, but not so that blacks can better integrate themselves into the world (the white man's world) as they find it, but so that they can liberate their own strength and conviction to change it. "What matters is not to know the world, but to change it." (*Black Skin*, p. 17). Fanon has learned from Freud. But where Freud sees the family and Oedipus Fanon sees society and white racism. How is it possible to break out of this circle where society perpetuates a feeling of worthlessness in certain of its members?

Such men, says Fanon, must be taught "to become aware of the potentials they have forbidden themselves, of the passivity they have paraded in those situations in which what is needed is to hold oneself like a thorn to the heart of the world, to interrupt if necessary the rhythm of the world, to upset if necessary, the chain of command, but in any case, and most assuredly, to stand up to the world." (*Black Skin*, p. 78).

Here Fanon faces the problem of individual and collective black identity. How does a man gain an identity and a belief in himself? "Human reality in itself-for-itself can be achieved only through conflict and through

the risk that conflict implies." (*Black Skin*, p. 21). The real id, which is the foundation of all action, must be born through a kind of dialectical struggle with those who have denied it. It must be *taken*, not *given*. The master cannot give a slave himself. If it is to be the real freedom it must be fought for and won through struggle. "Liberation", says Adolpho Gilly, who wrote the introduction to Fanon's *A Dying Colonialism*, "cannot come as a gift, it must be seized, and by seizing, they themselves (the victims) are transformed; confidence in their own strength soars and they turn their energy and their experience to the tasks of building, governing and deciding their own lives." (*A Dying Colonialism*, p. 2).

Fanon speaks of the necessity of a "culture of struggle" among the oppressed; a culture which exhorts conflict as psycho-therapy rather than passivity and acquiescence. For it is only through the act of defiant struggle that the colonial man, the man of colour, becomes human and an actor in his own life. Struggle and conflict are essential, as Mao has pointed out, as forces in history to transform societies. But they are also essential psychological phenomena in the victory over fear. "Initially subjective, the breaches made in colonialism are the results of a victory of the colonized over their old fear and over the atmosphere of despair distilled day after day by a colonialism that has encrusted itself with the prospect of enduring forever." (*A Dying Colonialism*, p. 62-3.)

Fanon speaks of the necessity of the black man to break away from the "universal culture" of the white man into the "culture of conflict" reinforced by what he calls a "literature of conflict." As Fanon learned in the struggle against the French in North Africa, resurrection for the colonial could only come through combat with the colonialist. The lesson that Mao learned in China was less complete. Fanon analysed not only the changes in society but the chan-

ges in the psyches of the revolutionaries. He writes, "The same time that the colonized man braces himself to reject the oppression, a radical transformation takes place within him which makes any attempt to maintain the colonial system impossible and shocking." (*Black Skin*, p. 179) Fanon is speaking here of a new sort of existential revolution for men of colour wherein they themselves are defined as men and political beings through their participation. "...In the practice of revolution the people have understood that problems are resolved in the very moment that raises them." (*A Dying Colonialism*, p. 48.)

Violent Phenomenon

For Fanon, a colonized psyche can only be liberated through confrontation with its overlord. This process can rarely be a peaceful one. "...Decolonization," says Fanon, "is always a violent phenomenon...It is quite simple the replacing of certain 'species' of men by another 'species' of men...The proof of success lies in the whole social structure being changed from bottom up." (*Wretched of the Earth*, 29).

This section sounds very much like Mao's report on his visit to Hunan; violence is perhaps lamentable but necessary. But for Mao it is a social purgative. For Fanon it is that and more. It is a part of a decolonialization "...which never takes place unnoticed, for it influences *individuals* (italics added) and modifies them fundamentally. It transforms spectators crushed with their inessentiality into privileged actors with the grandiose glare of history's floodlights upon them. It brings a natural rhythm into existence, introduced by new men. But this creation owes nothing of its legitimacy to any supernatural power; the "thing" which has been colonized becomes man during the process by which it frees itself." (*Wretched of the Earth*, p. 30). The "compartmentalized world" is broken through by violent cataclysmic action which takes its lead from the oppressor or colonizer.

"Absolute evil of the native" rebounds in the native's mind as the "absolute evil of the settler". Violence from the top is suddenly met with violence from the bottom. The "peaceful" violence of the ruler is met by the disruptive violence of the ruled. Even if society itself is not changed, the black man will never be the same again. Fanon has recognized the essential role this violence plays in the transformation of a man's consciousness. There is a catharsis of pent-up repressed yearnings through violence. "At the level of individuals", Fanon writes, "violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect." (*Wretched of the Earth*, p. 73.) The consciousness of the people "is illuminated by violence."

Aime Césaire, in *Les Armes Miraculeuses*, lets his character, the Rebel, explain:

It was an evening in November... And suddenly shouts lit up the silence;

We attacked, we the slaves; we the dung, underfoot, we the animals with patient hooves.

We were running like madmen; shots ran out...We were striking. Blood sweat cooled and refreshed us. We were striking where the shouts came from, and the shouts became more strident and a great clamour arose from the East; it was the outhouse burning and the flames flickered sweetly on our cheeks.

There was an assault on the master's house.

We broke in the doors.

The master's room was wide open. The master's room was brilliantly lighted and the master was there, very calm...and our people stopped dead...it was the master...I went in. 'It's you,' he said very calmly.

It was I, even I, I told him so, the good slave, the faithful slave, the slave of slaves, and suddenly his eyes were like two cockroaches, frightened in the rainy season...I

struck and the blood spurted; that is the only baptism that I remember today. (*Les Armes Miraculeuses*, p. 137-9, Gallimard, Paris).

One is reminded here of land reform in China during the late forties as described by Jack Belden and William Hinton. The Chinese peasant was not black, but he too had learned an almost instinctual fear of challenging the landlord. Over the centuries of oppression he too had learned a deep reluctance against speaking out. When he finally did "spit out his bitternesses" against his tormentor, the landlord, they came in an avalanche and led to many thousands of brutal executions. If we are to believe Hinton and Belden, it was through these real and symbolic decapitation of the old order that the Chinese peasant was reborn by daring to strike a blow. But what is interesting is that it remained for Western observers to comment on this aspect of the Chinese revolution. Mao has edged around this problem of psychological liberation in discussing such problems as "going too far", "To right a wrong", he writes, "it is necessary to exceed the proper limits..." (Hunan Report). But even here he puts the functionality of going too far in social rather than psychological terms. One does it "in order to suppress the activities of the counter-revolutionaries in the countryside and overthrow the authority of the gentry." (Hunan Report) He believes in the masses and their ability to learn through participation. But one searches in vain for a deeper analysis of the whole problem of psychological liberation as a corollary to economic and social liberation. It is this dimension that blacks have added to Marxist-Leninist-Maoist theory. Self-exploration is coupled with social analysis. War and violence are functional for Mao if they "break out and sweep obstacles from the way". (*Red Book*, p.59.) But these obstacles are portrayed as external rather than internal. It is interesting that Mao seldom uses the term "violence" which has an individual connotation, (one man 'does violence to another

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man'). Instead he repeatedly uses the word "revolution", which has a clearly societal meaning. It is true that he talks of consciousness, but once again, he deals with it as a class phenomenon. Consciousness has this connotation for Fanon also. But as a psychiatrist he has given it an important individual meaning as well.

This question of, "Who am I as an individual?", is, of course, not one which is peculiar to the black movement alone. It is one which does seem to reflect, however, a rather individualistic Western bias. Blacks in the U.S., like students, are left to grope with this question. We all want to know, "Who we are?" beyond the too simple class definition of what it means to be black, hip or young. There is a clear tension between the

public and private, between class and individual, between social and psychological definitions. Mao has never pretended to be concerned with individual welfare except in so far as that was the final aim of social revolution in general. The blacks in the U.S., as both the most oppressed and most revolutionary segment of society, have had to confront this problem as part of their struggle. Their resolution of this contradiction has had an important impact on the nature of the black movement. And like all Western movements it has been somewhat schizophrenic. Blacks are certainly not unique in this respect. They are Americans, and individual liberation has been one of the prime concerns of almost all "movement" activists. Like Fanon they have wrestled with the problem of how to be both human

and revolutionary at the same time when they are daily confronted with the inhumanity of the system they seek to change. It is a problem that all share, but one about which whites have learned a great deal more from blacks than vice versa. As Eldridge Cleaver pointed out, "In the world revolution now under way, the initiative rests with the people of color. That growing numbers of white youth are repudiating their heritage of blood and taking people of color as their heroes and models is a tribute not only to their insight but to the resilience of the human spirit." (*Soul On Ice*). Blacks may have learned much from Mao, but they have added new insights and passed them on to the rest of us who are not content with things the way they are.

Reflections On Violence

ROBI CHAKRAVORTI

CALIFORNIA: Reports of violence should not shock a newspaper reader in the United States. Newspapers are full of such reports. You read accounts of individual acts of violence such as "mugging" on the streets or of collective acts such as the killing at My Lai. If you switch on the television set in the evening, the chances are that you will watch a Western or cop-and-robber film. Even the world of fantasy is coloured red with blood.

Accounts of violence have been my daily diet. Why did the murder of Hemanta Kumar Basu, then, shock me more than the daily acts of violence I have been exposed to? The answer is, of course, simple. I had seen him. I remember his face, his gait, his khaddar punjabi and dhoti. He was a person, a man of life and blood. I do not know who killed him. The killers are non-persons. To them, the act of killing, I suppose, was a political one. To others, it was murder and a cowardly one at that.

Four sets of factors are involved here. Let's look at them one by one. First, the act of killing. Second, the victim of the act. Third, the perpetrators of the act. Fourth, the interpretations of the act. There is no controversy over the first three factors. If there is any question about the identity of the killers, it is a legal question, not a logical one. There was a debate, however, on the interpretations of the act, and it was, I assume, a passionate one.

The debate was around two positions. Those who condemned it and those who directly or indirectly supported it. The first group said it was a senseless act. The other group, I assume, argued it was a political act, justified by a political theory, tactic and strategy. A closer look at the basic positions in the debate will throw light on the character of violence that is plaguing Calcutta and West Bengal.

An important difference in attitudes separates the mourners of the death of Hemanta Babu from his

killers and their ideological supporters. The first group, the mourners, consist of people who have an emotional and personalized approach to violence. They may accept or condone some forms of violence but are revolted by this particular act because, to them, Hemanta Babu was not an abstraction, a mere number in the lengthening roll of not-so-well-known victims of violent acts in and around Calcutta. The death of a Tom, Dick or Harry would not have aroused similar reactions among members of this group.

The other group, the one that supported the act, obviously gave no importance to such emotions and personal feelings. They killed Hemanta Babu not because of any personal grudge, I assume, but because the murder served a political end. The end is sacred; it does not matter whether the means are profane. My purpose is not to get entangled in a classic means-and-ends controversy. I want to point out the difference between an act and the meaning that

is variously put into the act. The murder of Hemanta Babu, in itself, does not make sense; it is how one interprets it that adds meaning to it. Violence, in itself, does not have any essence; its essence is its justification.

Suppose, for instance, a supporter of the murder of Hemanta Babu, discovers that the political theory, tactic and strategy, under which the act was justified are false. He must, then, cross the floor and join the ranks of those who condemn the murder. Herein lies the dilemma, the complexity and the ambivalence associated with violence. Violence, like Beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. Its value rests upon one's sense of political aesthetics at a particular point of time and space.

Looking from a distance at acts of violence committed in Calcutta and West Bengal, it seems that they fall into four types. First, specific acts of political violence justified by one's logic of social change. Second, violence as resulting from factional fight or as desperate acts for survival. Third, acts of violence committed by the agencies of the State. And, finally, acts of violence which are non-political—the action of anti-social elements who are busy stealing hay so long as the sun does not shine.

State Violence

Acts of violence committed by the State are theoretically different from other acts of violence. One obvious distinction is that the State's actions are legitimate. Legitimacy, however, has two meanings, over which a third meaning is arched like a rainbow. An act is legitimate in the procedural sense, and it must, also, give the impression of reflecting the view of the majority. If a policeman, for instance, kills a citizen in the line of duty, his action is supposed to be legitimate in these two senses of the term. There is, however, a third meaning of legitimacy which is ineffable but nonetheless potent in the minds of men. This is called natural law, a vague concept of justice and morality which is supposed to be behind legitimacy but

can, also, be over and beyond it. It is immanent and transcendental.

Devoid of philosophical language, this statement means that there is a concept of good and bad, right and wrong, behind legitimacy. In times of crisis, it may be difficult to find a consensus on the morality behind legitimacy. This partly explains why even if someone dislikes revolutionaries and are convinced that they should be put down sternly may, at the same time, feel distressed at some actions taken against them. The conflict, in such cases, would be between the letter of legitimacy and its undefinable spirit.

In the final analysis, however, legitimacy which alone can justify the State's acts of violence must rest on numbers or consensus. Revolutionary acts of violence are illegitimate in the legal sense of the term and will continue to be deemed so unless and until a consensus grows around these acts. Before a trend towards consensus sets in, revolutionaries, involved in acts of violence, must give off an illusion of universality; they must give the impression that what they are doing has ever-growing support.

From the little that I have read of revolutionaries in general and Calcutta revolutionaries in particular, it appears that at a point where the illusion of universality threatens to remain an illusion, that is, when the illusion does not promise to be a trend towards consensus, acts of violence turn into acts of terrorism. It is one thing to storm a Bastille; it is another to kill an old man on the street. If the latter type of act does not pave the way for the former, it ceases to be revolutionary. Revolutionaries have frequently confused the relationship between violence and revolution. Revolution is *preceded* by violence, *not caused* by it, as a recent study of violence pointed out. Those who killed Hemanta Babu or Gopal Sen predicate their violent acts not only on the inevitability of the collapse of the social system, but also its possible imminence which these acts would hopefully make probable.

They are free to think in any way they want. It is their privilege, and since they are killing others and dying for their thinking, we must acknowledge the awesome passion of their thinking. I would like, however, to make one point here. Suppose, they find out that their thinking does not fit reality. Their theory, I suppose, appears "scientific" to them now; but as any student of science—hard science like physics or molecular biology, not soft science like Marxism—knows, science is merely a way of looking at things and that what an eminent scientist regards as truth today may turn out to be tomorrow's fiction. Since truths arrived at under controlled conditions in laboratories are not eternally sacrosanct, how can they be so in the complex milieu of a society?

The question I am raising is different from the one raised by frustrated Communists and fellow-travellers who wept over the God that failed. I am raising the problem of the psychology of revolutionary violence which is different from the psychology of legitimate, factional or anti-social violence which I have described above. All four types of violence are flourishing in Calcutta today, but it is revolutionary violence which is supposed to have brought about, in its wake, a scalar change in the other types of violence.

I became interested in an analysis of the psychology associated with revolutionary violence for an accidental reason. At about the time I was pondering on the reports of violence from Calcutta, I happened to read a fascinating book, written by a Russian-born anarchist, which, I felt, throws some light on the psychology of revolutionary violence. It is a dim light, I admit; but a dim light is better than none.

Prison Memoirs

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, Alexander Berkman, a Russian emigré, was involved in the organization of workers at the Carnegie Steel Works in Pittsburgh. The manager of the plant, Prick, had

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succeeded in crushing the workers' union, and Berkman wanted to kill him. He had failed to organize the workers; he failed in his attempt to kill the manager, and in the process, met with his third failure—his attempt at assassination did not arouse the workers. The only positive outcome of this triple fiasco was a book, *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*. It was first published in 1912. New editions of the book have recently been published.

Berkman, like all revolutionaries believing in the use of violence, makes a clear distinction between murder and political assassination. "Human life is indeed sacred and inviolate," he wrote. "But the killing of a tyrant, of an enemy of the People, is in no way to be considered as the taking of a life... True, the Cause often calls upon the revolutionist to commit an unpleasant act; but it is the test of the true revolutionist—nay, more, his pride—to sacrifice all merely human feeling at the call of the People's cause." (Italics mine)

This part of the Memoirs is worth quoting at length, for it illustrates the feeling of a revolutionary when he commits an apparently senseless and cruel act, intoxicated by visions of an ideal. Berkman wrote:

"Could anything be nobler than to die for a grand, sublime Cause? Why, the very life of a true revolutionist has no other purpose, no significance whatsoever, save to sacrifice it on the altar of the beloved people. And what could be higher in life than to be a true revolutionist? It is to be a *man*, a complete MAN. A being who has neither personal interests nor desires above the necessities of the Cause; one who has emancipated himself from being merely human, and has risen above that, even to the height of conviction which excludes all doubt, all regret; in short, one who in the very inmost of his soul feels himself *revolutionist first, human afterwards*." (Italics mine)

Here, in a nutshell, is the psychology of a revolutionary when he plans to strike, kill, maim and destroy. This I suppose, is how the killers of

Hemanta Babu felt and thought when they hatched the plot to assassinate him.

It may sound ghoulish, but I'd often wondered how they felt when they attacked him, stabbing him through his khaddar clothes, their fingers moistened with warm blood. Here, again, Berkman gives a vivid picture of his own feelings which gives a clue. Fearful that Frick, the manager of the steel mill, might be wearing an armoured vest, Berkman shot first at his head; but Frick did not die. Struggling free of the grasp of another man in Frick's office, Berkman fired at him again, wounding him for the second time. He tried to shoot him for the third time, but his pistol misfired. He crawled towards Frick and managed to stab him with a homemade dagger in the leg and thigh. Finally, clubbed with a hammer by a carpenter, Berkman was overcome.

"An officer pulls my head back (wrote Berkman) by the hair, and my eyes meet Frick's. He stands in front of me, supported by several men. His face is ashen grey; the black beard is streaked with red, and blood is oozing from his neck. For an instant a strange feeling, as of shame, comes over me; but the next moment I am filled with anger at the sentiment, so unworthy of a revolutionist."

Berkman was not attacking a man, but a symbol. In reducing a person to a symbol and an abstraction, Berkman also denied his own humanity, his own feelings and turned himself into a symbol, an abstraction which is part of another abstraction, a Cause.

Berkman's shock came when he went to prison. When he had wanted to kill Frick, he thought—rather dreamed—that the assassination would awaken the consciousness of the working class. In the prison, he was shocked to find out that no one could understand why he had tried to kill Frick, not even the workers for whom he had committed the crime. Prisoners thought that there must have been a grudge between

Berkman and Frick, or they thought that Berkman was simply crazy.

I am certain most people in Calcutta must have viewed acts of killing such as those of Hemanta Babu and Gopal Sen in the same way. Berkman, however, agonised over the act and wrote honest memoirs. I wonder whether the killers of Hemanta Babu would ever write memoirs and if they do, how they would describe their feelings and thoughts associated with the act. We know the theories, abstractions and intellectual arguments. We know little of the psychological dimension of revolutionary acts of violence when they shade off into acts of individual terrorism.

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From Russia With Strings

M. R.

THE Khrushchevian theory of peaceful co-existence provides the ideological alibi for Soviet support to the Indian government and bourgeoisie against any revolution. Soviet-Indian relations have become the very model of peaceful co-existence. As a Soviet authority says, "Relations between Soviet Union and India have become synonymous with friendship and co-operation and eloquently prove the viability of peaceful co-existence between States having different socio-economic systems. Soviet-Indian co-operation is significant beyond bounds of national frontiers; it has become an important factor in world politics." (V. Pavlovsky, "Soviet Indian Co-operation," *International Affairs, Moscow*, January 1970, p. 46).

Soviet foreign policy interests have ordained a set of priorities. State-level friendship with the most reactionary regimes of the third world is more important than revolution. So it is no irony that one of the biggest Soviet credits for India was signed within a few days of Nehru's coup against the communist-led ministry in Kerala in 1959. It is again no irony that some of the countries friendliest to the Soviet Union have no embarrassment from the local communists because no communist party is allowed to function within these countries. Perhaps Soviet-Indian state level relations would have been on a higher plane had India outlawed communists of all hues, Ne Win or Suharto-Nasution style.

A corollary of the peaceful co-existence theory is the new-fangled Soviet bait of peaceful transition and a concept related to it—national democracy. The 1960 Moscow statement of the communist parties rationalised this facet of revisionism when it described national democracy as a form of transition to socialism in

under developed countries, especially in the non-aligned countries of the peace zone where the national bourgeoisie played an objectively progressive role and deserved political and economic aid. The CPI can legitimately claim credit for its own contribution to this essay in revisionism because it had been peddling this ware since 1956, before Moscow decided to rationalise it as a creative addition to international communist thinking.

India is thus the show-case of peaceful transition at work and the CPI cannot be bothered about answering inconvenient questions on proletarian hegemony or the superfluity of it in the national democratic front and the like. Revisionism feeds on itself. A part of the ruling class and consequently a part of the state power in the present set-up is to be carried over to the new revolutionary state. Soviet diplomatic and economic support, interacting on the forces of revolution in a country like India, is supposed to ensure non-capitalist development and a state of national democracy, and ultimately peaceful transition to socialism.

The author of the book under review* takes all this for granted and has set himself a very limited, not too difficult task—of proving that the Comecon has the necessary resources to usher in socialism without tears in India. What is in doubt is not the capacity of the Comecon but the validity of his assumption that socialist economic aid can obviate the need for a people's democratic revolution understood in the orthodox way, and that dual hegemony of the proletariat and the so-called non-

**India and European Socialist Countries (An Economic Study)*

By M. S. N. Menon

Perspective Publications, New Delhi, 1970, pp. 282, Rs. 30.

monopoly bourgeoisie can pull off the mythical national democratic state.

Indeed, India's public sector is largely a Soviet and East European creation. Socialist aid is supposed to be qualitatively different from capitalist aid. It is alright to prove the visible and invisible benefits accruing to India from socialist aid and point to the far-reaching structural changes in the Indian economy resulting from the aid. The fact however remains that alongside the increase in socialist aid, the Indian bourgeoisie has found it both necessary and possible to throw the country wide open to Western private capital. Instead of giving the Indian bourgeoisie the strength and will to resist inroads of Western private capital, socialist aid has only promoted comprador tendencies. In sum, in the last 20 years India's dependence on foreign aid as a whole has grown. The state sector has only helped the monopolist bourgeoisie to collaborate on a larger scale with foreign monopolies and imperialism and turn comprador. The author cannot help admitting that the state sector has been used by the private sector as a permanent subsidy to its growth. We must thank Khrushchev and his successors for that.

It certainly would not add to the joy of the author to be reminded that all major projects involving Soviet aid were set up under turnkey arrangements. Many of them have capacities unrelated to India's needs and have piled up huge surpluses. Exploitation of India's cheap skilled labour and natural resources seems to be the Soviet objective because some of the latest collaboration proposals are for (a) branch industries in which Indo-Soviet factories using Soviet machinery and Indian raw material would produce goods for export to the Soviet Union; (b) export industries in which Indo-Soviet collaboration produces goods exclusively for export to third countries, and (c) third country joint ventures which would utilise machinery and equipment produced in Soviet-aided Indian projects. In the place of the old imperialism which took iron, cotton, bauxite

and coal from India to the metropolitan country and exported manufactured primary products to the colony, colonial exploitation of India has taken a new form, through intricate Soviet hold over certain types of industries. This enables the Soviet Union to make profits on the sale of capital equipment, on the use of cheap labour, on the use of India as a base to capture both internal and external markets in less developed countries, and in the process gain political leverage in India. And the trade surplus can be liquidated by dumping arms on this country. A comprador relationship is possible not only between India's monopoly bourgeoisie and the Western monopolies but also between India's state sector and a socialist country. Social-imperialism is a dirty term to those who have settled to the belief that India is already going through a national democratic revolution of sorts, complete with a CPI and an ISCUS to hasten the process.

Black Widow

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

THE story of Francois Truffaut's film *The Bride Wore Black*, a widow's pledge of vendetta against five people who are responsible for the killing of her husband on their wedding day, is apparently very simple. Truffaut is not much interested in the outward mechanics of the plot-construction (in fact how does Jeanne Moreau come to know the identity of the murderers is never told in the film). He merely takes up a situation, develops it independently and goes on to explore the next one, without caring much for intermediary transitional passages, although the narrative flow is never allowed to flag. Meanwhile, many deeper issues are involved, many questions are asked, some answered and some are left hanging in the air. One important thing is the ethical justification of the woman's act of revenge. Her tragedy, it is explained during the film, is the result of an accident and these persons are not guilty of wilful

murder, as the bullet went off when one of these people were fiddling with a telescopic rifle. But Truffaut seems to suggest that it is the action and not the intent which matters ultimately and these people could be called murderers. And the responsibility is collective, even though one person clicked the trigger and Hitchcock's favourite theme of transference of guilt comes to the fore. Mentally Jeanne Moreau is dead, as she declares in a confessional, with the death of her husband and therefore human logic and human feelings would not guide her actions. She is an apparition, a spectre haunting her victims, and her placid, emotionless appearance, her robot-like movements

make her an unearthly being, a creature from outer space. On two brief occasions, however, this mask wears off, once when she plays with the child of one of her victims and when the modern painter confesses his love for her. Momentarily, the robot is dispossessed and the human being emerges with glints of love and affection. But those are temporary lapses; she hardens herself again and goes on carrying out her ruthless routine. Truffaut embellishes this grim study of remorseless revenge with brief but sharp and sensitive observations on characters and the surrounding and Coutard's mobile camera beautifully epitomises the strained, disturbed and nervy state of the characters' emotions.

Clippings

Ceylon And East Bengal

THE Peoples Liberation Front (J.V.P.) of Ceylon was founded some years ago by young people many of whom had seen the face of Soviet revisionism and the revisionist and counter-revolutionary forces of Trotskyism in their own country. They worked underground mainly in the villages, for Ceylon is basically a rural society, amongst the unemployed and under-employed. Due to the higher standard of formal education in Ceylon such work was helped by the greater frustration of high-school and college graduates. Unfortunately they remained a front with individual Marxist-Leninists but no Communist Party to guide the strategy and tactics of revolution. Now with the tremendous advances through armed combat and the arrest of Comrade San-mugathasan, veteran working class leader and founder of the Marxist Communist Party, the possibility of a revolutionary party, based on Marxism-Leninism leading what must develop into a people's war, is closer.

The J.V.P. for all its youth has done remarkable work in exposing the true nature of the Ceylon Government. When the coalition of Mrs Bandaranaike's party and revisionists

and Trotskyites won the general elections last year, all the pseudo-leftists throughout the world were shouting about the "victory of socialism". With Communists and Trotskyites in important ministries they said the imperialists would be kicked out and socialism begun. Recognition of North Korea, North Vietnam and much toing and froing to socialist lands added to the illusion. But the people knew only the reality of falling prices for cash crops like tea, rubber and the increasing burden of taxation to pay for the growing indebtedness to the World Bank. They joined J.V.P. in their thousands and direct clashes with the government in guerrilla attacks had been going on throughout last year.

The Government took fright. True to its class base it decided to crush the revolutionary forces. A state of emergency was declared and fascist measures invoked to imprison and kill. But to its surprise a handful of student rebels turned out to be so strong that the "non-aligned" Mrs Bandaranaike had to scream for help from fellow "non-aligned" Mrs Gandhi and imperialist Britain. Helicopters have come from India and

Britain (via USA) to bomb guerrilla strongholds, Russia is supplying MIG fighters. Indian frigates (originally British) are standing by etc. But the heroism and dedication of the young partisans will not be wasted. The final break with reformism has been successfully demonstrated and the future struggle of the peasants and workers of Ceylon on the road of People's War, guided by a Marxist-Leninist Party, looks promising.

East Pakistan

Here too a so-called "third world" government which in recent years had shown signs of breaking the imperialist hold by cultivating friendship with China has behaved true to its class roots. The compradores and big landlords of Pakistan have used every kind of fascist and savage measure to bring the people of East Bengal to their knees. But unfortunately the leadership of the East Bengali peasantry is not in the hands of Marxist-Leninists or any kind of front that believes in a People's Democratic Revolution. The leadership of the Awami League which won the elections is anti-communist, petty-bourgeois looking for its allies in the reactionaries of India. Illusion of electoral reform produced a stage of euphoria which was quite foolish as it left the people unguarded while adventurist confrontation-type provocations were initiated by the Awami League. India has shown itself only too anxious to intervene in furtherance of its own sub-imperialist interests.

The West Pakistani Army arrived and embarked on savage repression that can only be termed genocide. Marxist-Leninist groups have tried to put forward an alternative to the Awami League but in the present state of brutal repression and in the absence of a Party their efforts have been swamped by the reactionary alliance of India and the so-called independent government of Bengal (Bangladesh). Of course the revolutionary road will triumph, for the workers and peasants of East Bengal have a fine history of heroic struggle against British imperialism and then the Pakis-

tani puppet. But first they will have to recognise true friend from foe, recognise the class question as an integral part of the national struggle and embark on a protracted struggle based on self-reliance and the ideology of Marxism-Leninism. (*The Worker*, organ of the Communist Party of Britain Marxist-Leninist.)

Guns Without Tears

A British teaplanter... told a reporter how the (Ceylonese) rebels had obtained arms from him, a pattern followed in collecting arms also from other planters in his district. The district was controlled by the rebels for three weeks until they were cleared by air bombing.

The planter said that a group of 11 rebels, led by a man in his early twenties, had driven to his bungalow in the tea estate in a car. Their leader carried a shotgun in his hand. Six teenagers in the group wore sarongs and dark shirts, and carried swords and knives tucked into their waist bands. They all were polite.

The planter said the group's leader, "knew exactly what my salary was, what perks I got, how many rooms my house had and other details of my personal life. He said he was not envious of me but asked if I thought it fair to live in such luxury while my servants and the workers of the plantation lived in squalor.

... "Then another young man, whom I took to be second in command, spoke in English and asked me how many guns I had in the bungalow. I was beginning to say that I had not any when he pulled out a paper and read out the licence numbers of the guns in my possession and told me the exact amount of cartridges I had bought.

"He asked me politely to bring them out and said that if I refused he would reluctantly have to search the bungalow. I handed over my three shotguns and three dozen cartridges.

"My wife had been shielding the gold chain round her neck. The leader of the rebels smiled and said: 'We are not after your money or jewels.

Not yet. We have other things to finish off first.' They drove away in my car and theirs." (*The Times*).

U.S.-China Relations

The Western press is full of stories about China ending its ISOLATION. That is not what happened at all. What has happened is that the attempts of the United States to isolate China have failed.

The point about the visit of the American table tennis team is not that China received them hospitably when they asked to come but that the United States has stopped prohibiting its citizens from going and confiscating their passports if they did.

The real break in the situation has to be dated from China's solemn warning to the United States at the time of the ill-started invasion of Laos. The U.S. Government fell all over itself assuring the Chinese that they had no intention of threatening China's security at all.

One of the reasons for the U.S.'s involvement in Indo-China to begin with was as part of its China-containment policy. With the people of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos scoring victory after victory against the U.S. aggressors and with the Laotian adventure demonstrating the collapse of the whole "Vietnamisation" scheme, the U.S.'s strategy of China-containment as far as South East Asia is concerned lies in ruins.

We have only seen the first step in the U.S.'s "agonising reappraisal" of its China policy in a belated attempt to catch up with reality—a China by no means isolated and stronger and more united than ever before.—(*The Worker*).

'Feigned Satisfaction'

My hosts (Chinese) stated quite frankly that the Chinese table tennis team did not go to Nagoya to collect medals and impress everybody by its performance: "In sports as in all other fields, politics is our overriding concern."

The fact that United States players and those of several

other countries expressed a desire to visit China was seen as the tangible result of this attitude. This time Washington was unable, as in 1961, to prevent the trip from taking place, and this represented a considerable success for China.

I mentioned the new State Department policy of making limited overtures to China and added that Washington had reportedly expressed its satisfaction over recent developments. But my hosts contended that the American government only feigned satisfaction in order to save face, because it was unable to ban the visit.

"These new possibilities for renewed friendship between Chinese and American peoples are mainly due to the isolation of the imperialist Nixon government, which has run into opposition even among those who are responsible for applying its policies."

Once again taking the part of the devil's advocate, I referred to the various rumours circulating in Europe about secret Sino-American contacts, and China's ambition to be recognised as a great power, with its own sphere of influence in Asia. My hosts said they completely ignored them because of their evidently defamatory character. "Our struggle against American imperialism is unyielding," they asserted.

I then drew their attention to the fact that at one time the Soviet Union also professed such views. But this had not prevented it from changing with the times and behaving like a responsible great power. This precedent, I added had aroused certain doubts in many leftist circles about the underlying intentions of the present Chinese diplomatic offensive.

But once again my hosts categorically refuted my arguments: "We are

not a superpower and do not seek to become one. There are thousands of satellites spinning around the globe, but only two are Chinese, which shows that we are still a poor country. We reject the very concept of the superpower, and avoid participating in any meeting between the Big Five. There is no justifiable reason for a handful of countries deciding the fate of all the others."

... The Chinese may, of course, be underestimating the difficulties of their bid to influence American opinion. Peking, in any case, considers that the game is worth the candle and that the visit of the table tennis team as well as future exchanges will strengthen its own conception of Sino-American friendship as opposed to the views of Washington. The Chinese certainly hold the initiative and there is every reason to believe that they still have a few more surprises in store for Mr Nixon before the United States' 1972 presidential election campaign. (K. S. Karol in *Le Monde*).

Letters

East Bengal

The recent happenings in East Bengal and Ceylon should be an eye-opener to those so-called communists who believe in the utopia of peaceful transition to socialism. They should try to understand what bourgeois democracy is and to what extent the ruling class upholds or pretends to uphold the principles of democracy.

In East Bengal even the bourgeois leadership failed and drowned itself in the blood of the people, when it tried to achieve, by peaceful means, a status of complete autonomy, not to talk of peaceful transition to socialism. In Ceylon a coalition government with so-called communists staged a bloodbath of young men wanting to change the present establishment towards socialism. There the champions of democracy

turned to notorious fascists to maintain their class rule. Only scoundrels and simpletons can think of a peaceful transition to socialism. Those who talk about coalition governments in India or abroad should think of what Lenin said: "In these Ministries former socialists serve—whether consciously or not makes no difference—as tools with which the capitalists deceive the people" (Collected Works. Vol. 25, P. 147).

VED PARKASH GUPTA
Bhatinda

Communal reactionaries to revisionists, all are swimming in the ocean of nationalism and 'Bangla Prem'. The press of monopoly capitalists even advised the reactionary Government of India armed intervention in East Pakistan. (Statesman, 11.4.71).

The Jana Sangh, Swatantra, Congress(O), Congress(R), SSP and PSP support the armed struggle in East Pakistan and Mujibur Rahman while they are against the struggle in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Burma and Ceylon. Why? Because they want the war to be finished within a short period with the help of the Indian Government and set up an Awami League Ministry so that there may be established an anti-China American base to resist the revolutionary activities on this sub-continent. Their secret directors will be the U.S. imperialists and the Soviet revisionist renegade clique.

If this war goes on and becomes a 'protracted war' it will turn into an anti-imperialist war and its leadership will pass to the Revolutionary Communists. It is only they who can establish bases in the rural areas and launch a revolutionary struggle in a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country like Pakistan.

What will those who now take part in the anti-China dance drama conducted by the 'U.S. Imperial Eagle Orchestra' do in future if China supports an anti-imperialist people's war in Pakistan? They should re-

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member : "However rampant they may be for the moment, the parasites who depend on imperialism will soon find out that their bosses are not reliable. The whole situation will change when the tree falls and monkeys scatter." (Mao Tse-tung).

ASIM CHAKRABARTI
Calcutta

The bourgeois Government and reactionary parliamentarians of India are awfully busy round the clock in beating the drums of Freedom Struggle in Bangladesh to divert the public attention from the pressing problems of food, jobs and shelter which were emphatically assured to them on the

eve of the recent parliamentary election.

One would like to know what the reaction in Delhi and Islamabad would have been if the whole Bengali community had revolted against their respective reactionary governments for the reunification and formation of a Sovereign Republic of 'Vishal' Bangla Desh ?

M. HASHIM
Imphal, Manipur

Like the CPM, Mujibur Rahman, instead of adopting guerilla tactics, enjoyed 100% support of the "unarmed masses" through elections and rallies. There is a striking re-

semblance with CPM tactics, and the CPM is going to face the same fate as the Awami League. The same mass butchery occurred in Indonesia because of Aidit's "unarmed mass movements". So the glitter of mass movements and parliamentary successes of the CPM will evaporate the moment the Establishment decides to use the gun against the people. This can happen any day. The border line between the "progressives" and imperialists disappears when the masses talk with guns to the exploiters. We now know where Mrs Gandhi and Mrs Bandaranaike really belong.

M. N. D. NAIR
Trivandrum, Kerala

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