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END OF A CHAPTER

BETWEEN January 23, the day the Paris agreement was signed and January 27 when the cease-fire formally came into effect, the Americans carried out massive bombing of areas held by the Vietcong who were locked in battle with the South Vietnamese for more territory. Pity those who died at the last hour knowing that hostilities are about to cease but they will not live to see how the future of South Vietnam is to be shaped.

President Thieu has made it clear that the future will not be shaped in a spirit of national reconciliation and concord. He warned that the new political phase of the struggle with the communists would be as tough and dangerous as the phase of military struggle, because "peace does not mean lasting peace". Saigon Radio proclaimed that the first thing to do in a political struggle with the communists is to deal "deadly blows to their underground cadres. If they show their heads and try to start arguments, we should crack them down". So, even arguments are not to be allowed. In the past three months alone numberless people have been arrested and sent to torture camps and more will be. Under the agreement, some, perhaps the less dangerous ones, will be released, but the political battle is going to be fierce and not confined to words only.

That this grim political battle will be tough without even the direct intervention of the U.S. is, of course, a great gain for the Provisional Revolutionary Government. But the U.S. shadow will be there. The Americans did their very best to rush in their projected 1973 supplies from the time of the October deadlock turning, for example, the South Vietnamese air force into the third largest in the world; they also sought to cripple North Vietnam in their end-of-the-year terror bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong. Their assumption is that under the agreement a process of attrition of the North Vietnamese forces (some 140,000) will set in, enabling Thieu with his very big army and administrative control to rule. In this they are mistaken, as they have been in the past. The ideology, courage and magnificent discipline of the liberation forces brought the war machine of the mightiest industrial and military power to almost a halt. Thieu cannot rule by numbers and arms alone. But it would be wrong to minimise his immediate strength. He will be backed, under the guise of reconstruction aid, by the US and many other crafty powers, including the rapacious Japanese. And of American perfidy there can be no end.

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The massive economic aid that will pour into the South will all go to the areas ruled by Thieu. Hanoi and NLF have agreed to his retention, given up the demand for a provisional coalition government, accepted an enlarged international control commission and joint military commissions the strength of whose supervisors and observers will be 1160 and 3300 respectively, initially, and allowed the DMZ, which was overrun in the Easter offensive, to stay as a temporary dividing line. These make the immediate prospects bleak, but time and history are on the side of the PRG. The Vietcong, who faced the American fury both on the ground and from the air, who went through the savage experiences of defoliation, "forced urbanisation", pacification hamlets and Vietnamisation,—experiences which North Vietnam did not have to undergo—will still look to the troubled future with confidence.

What about the Big Bully? What about the war crimes committed by successive U.S. Presidents? It is likely that the world will forget the many My Lais. The Americans have enough money to spare for aid to the two Vietnams—and many other countries—and the bourgeois world will think that this monetary atonement for genocide is enough. As if aid won't help the circles that financed the war! In a period of rapid adjustments of international relations, the gruesome past will tend to be buried—if the Americans are not back again. Besides, the man responsible for the most recent and brutal crimes, Richard the Terrible, has been allowed the privilege of entertaining Chinese acrobats to tea. Petty bourgeois sentimentalism over these small matters never disturbs the faithful.

Hanoi will have fresh international thoughts. With the tremendous tasks of reconstruction ahead, it is not likely to jump into taking sides in the Sino-Soviet dispute, though on occasions like Czechoslovakia and Bangladesh Hanoi backed the Soviet Union. The speculation is, however,

that Hanoi will lean towards the Russians, though without illusions. The future course of events in Cambodia will be complicated—Prince Sihanouk is not enamoured of Moscow which has never withdrawn from Phnom Penh. The Sino-Soviet tensions will now acquire a sharper edge and Cambodia may become a bigger trouble-spot than it is now. The fact that the Americans will be much less involved directly—for the time being—in Vietnam may not be a plus point for the Kremlin. Whether it will be for Peking remains to be seen. Perhaps it will be the turn of some other small power to face the Yankee orchestra? But, meanwhile, let us all, impotent as we are in the face of the American monster, feel relieved that men, women and children and the simple things they need and value are not being blasted or burnt out every day, every hour and that it is their courage that has prevailed. They know best what is good for them.

Amilcar Cabral

What happened to Amilcar Cabral, the revolutionary leader of Portuguese Guinea, remains an enigma in this country, thanks to the indifference of our news media to Africa and its people. Only Mrs Gandhi's remarks to the visiting President of Zaïre, Mr Mobutu, and a few innocuous resolutions by some political parties told us about this tragic incident. To the average Indian, Africa's independence struggle was epitomised by Nasser's effort to wrest political power from the colonial masters. But, this socialist pharaoh aside, there were in Africa other, powerful forces that seek to find a new African identity in the general framework of the national liberation struggle against colonialism. Tanzania's Nyerere is one such. There are others who, while accepting the specificity of the African condition, do not overlook the general aspects of the revolution in

Africa. Amilcar Cabral, the Secretary of the PAIGC, belonged to the genre.

His critics found in him traits of Africanism. He was, however, fort right in his repudiation of any plea for specificity of the African liberation movement. But he did not ignore its inner contradictions. Colonialism or neo-colonialism in the decade cannot differ fundamentally, and, therefore, the struggle against it cannot be different. Like the revolutionaries in China and Vietnam, the peasants were the mainstay of Cabral's revolutionary thinking. But in the objective condition of Guinea, the peasants' identification with the revolution was not straightforward. No crystallising proletariat, no peasant masses deprived of land are there in Guinea except in special circumstances. Ethnic forces further obscured the situation. Where Fulas with their more stratified society lived, the PAIGC's call for peasant uprising was well received. But in the Balante area, a more homogeneous social set-up rendered the task of the PAIGC's operatives difficult. To Cabral's scanning eye these factors were never lost. Repeatedly he said that in Guinea "the peasantry represents the country as a whole; it controls and produces its wealth; it is materially strong. Yet we well know by experience what trouble we have had in bringing the peasantry into the struggle." On the other hand the semi-urbanised layabouts and lumpen proletariat in Bissau and other cities of Guinea provide ready recruits to the PAIGC. For years Cabral worked among them to raise first cadres who would work among the peasants and ensure their support for Guinea's liberation.

That he largely succeeded in his task is evident from the spread of the revolution itself. Within years of its inception, PAIGC's power spread throughout Guinea's countryside and Lisbon's vaunted overseas territory was reduced to a few fortified enclaves. During his England visit last year Cabral claimed

that the PAIGC had the means to intervene in the doing of the others' attributions. Ever may be murder has almost trust can revolu

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that the PAIGC controlled two-thirds of the Guinean territory and prophesied the inevitable doom of Portuguese colonialism. But before the fulfilment of his dream another destiny intervened. Some say that it is the doing of the Portuguese secret police, others attribute it to the internal dissensions of the PAIGC. Who, never may be the sinner, this heinous murder has cut short the life of the most trusted lieutenant of the African revolution.

Playing The Game

The industries had been long clamouring for clarification of the notion of 'joint sector', which Mrs Gandhi aired at FICCI in March last year. The idea was, frankly speaking, quite plain. It was a sanction to use public money for the promotion of private capital. But the idea was so very frank and disconcertingly unabashed that our industrialists wanted some veneer, probably to save the socialist face of the Prime Minister. Mr C. Subramaniam has this week declared that the concept of joint sector has been accepted and the details will be known within a week. He added that it is now the monopoly houses' term to 'play the game'.

That is a fair expectation. Mr Subimal Dut's Industrial Licensing Policy Enquiry Committee of 1969 had to admit that a large proportion of the cost of major private sector industrial projects was being met by the public sector financial institutions. If that were so, why should not the institutions get a fair share of the appreciation in the value of assets and profits of the borrowing companies? To give a gloss over the naked appropriation of public money, it has been suggested that the institutions should insist on their loans and debentures being convertible into equity at their option. Moreover, public sector officials should be represented more substantially on the board of the borrowing companies.

Now we can imagine what Mr Subramaniam meant when he said that the borrowing companies should play the game. It is common knowledge that the common man's interests matter little when the expropriators happen to be either the State or private capital—both representing the same class. However, by incessant talk and through the help of pundits of economics, an idea has been sought to be established that the public sector represents the masses whereas the private sector represents the elitists. Eventually, when the joint sector is formulated in legal terms, with its equity clause or representation on the board clause, private capital will go on clamouring against the formulation, so that the common man retains the illusion of a dichotomy between the two sectors. Meanwhile, let the LIC, IFC, IDBI, ICICI and the State industrial development corporations go on giving sound footing to private capital which by it-

self cannot build an industry requiring substantial investment.

Now that millions of young people go without jobs, anything goes if it can produce some employment opportunities. Therefore many will be forced to welcome the idea of the joint sector which will produce jobs, just to keep their body and soul together. Many will be forced to accept the funny idea that private industrial houses abound with managerial expertise and their utilisation in the joint sector will be worthwhile. Many will be duped by the idea that the joint sector will not exploit the workers because of the dominance of the public sector capital. The workings of the Industrial Development and Regulation Act, the MRTP, the Tariff Commission and the DGTD have been tailored to fit this dual economy which is dual only on the lines of Indian philosophy. Who dominates is nobody's business except our ministers' and planners'.

Not Even A Ritual

It is not clear what exactly the Indian economy would have missed had the latest meeting of the National Development Council not been there. Reports of the proceedings hardly indicate that there was even a semblance of serious debate on any point relating to the fifth plan and if any participant had any misgivings or point to make, he evidently preferred to remain discreetly silent. There were of course speeches peppered with fittingly noble exhortations and visions of greatness for the country and for the men at the helm of its affairs. But the basic tameness of the entire proceedings remained all too evident. The meeting failed—it would be better to say, it did not try—to suggest any concrete steps on how the rate of investment can be stepped up, how the public sector units can run efficiently or how the bureaucratic machinery can be toned up.

There were appropriate noises about mass participation in planning and about the importance of implementation. But as happens so often in gatherings of this type, most of the time was spent over generalities of which the country has already had enough.

Planning is an experts' job and the lesser the politicians try to meddle with it, the better it will be. But no plan can achieve its objectives, particularly in a country like India, unless it is backed by appropriate political decisions which often have to be unpopular. The approach paper to the fifth plan which was finalised by the NDC seems to recognise that however much necessary it might be to pinch the privileged classes, it would be wiser and safer to leave them alone as far as possible. On the face of it, this has been a clever move on the part of the planners, for the simple truth

is that in spite of all the talk of socialism and "garibi hatao", the privileged classes must be left alone to enjoy their privileges. The planners have thus limited the target for mobilisation of additional resources to Rs 6615 crores—a comparatively small figure in a plan of such astronomical dimensions. And most of the money has to come from the salaried fixed income group—the people uninitiated to the secret charms of black money. The price for garibi hatao is to be the euthanasia of the middle class—and inflation, shortages, educated unemployment are all part of the story. The rich remain.

French Spectacle

In this hiver froid, Paris is warm politically and otherwise, President Pompidou who is known for his suavity and political finesse is finding it difficult to control his temper. Recently he almost had a brush with the Press. The President is not enjoying a good Press lately. There is speculation about the possible reasons for his frayed temper. Some say he is much too worried over the coming parliamentary elections which the Gaullists will have to fight against a strong Socialist-Communist combination. That Pompidou was angered by the presence in Paris of Golda Meir, Olof Palme and others at the recent Socialist International was given expression to by the President himself. Others think that the restriction on smoking, imposed on the advice of physicians, is tending to disturb his equilibrium.

The West Asian crisis continues to arouse passions among the local supporters of the Arabs and the Israelis. The apartment of the Palestinian representative in Paris was blown up on December 8 and the same thing happened to the Jewish Agency when Mr Mehmoud Hamchari succumbed to injuries a month later. The French police yet do not know who are the people behind

these two incidents. Mrs Meir's presence in Paris in spite of the French Government's disapproval of the idea is interpreted by many as an attempt to influence the sizable Jewish electorate in the country. France, incidentally, has the fourth largest Jewish population in the world. Of significance to the Arabs is the battle the pro-Palestinians fought against the police in Quartier Latin.

The French have suddenly become aware that British real estate owners have a stake in 80 per cent of all new constructions under way in Paris; in fact during 1972 the British invested no less than \$82 million in French real estate. Englishmen started crossing the Channel about a decade ago to gain control of choice locations so that they can have a financial bonanza when the demand for office space rises with the increase in the EEC membership. Like many other papers *Le Figaro* is very critical of this British move but many *Figaro* journalists were not

aware till the other day that British buyers have also gained control of their majestic office building. Now some leading English clothing retailers have decided to emulate the example of the real estate owners.

The French are never enamoured of the British or their language. Still some chic English words—barbarous to the French language purists—have worked their way into French unaltered. M. Chaban-Delmas cried ça suffit some years ago and appointed a commission to find out how the purity of French could be preserved. No longer those English words for which French alternatives have been announced will be used in government business. However, some Anglo-Saxon words have not been touched but they must henceforth be pronounced in the French way. It will be interesting to watch the spectacle of the French fighting the English influence when the EEC has expanded to include Great Britain.

Postwar Planning For South Vietnam

BANNING GARRET

BACK in 1966 Lyndon Johnson commissioned David Lilienthal, the New Deal chief of the Tennessee Valley Authority and chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, to direct a study for the postwar development of Vietnam. "Dave," Mr Johnson supposedly said, "I want you to go to Vietnam and find out what should be done to rebuild that country." Nearly three years later, in the spring of 1969, Dave presented his findings—an optimistic three-volume report of the U.S. Vietnam Joint Development Group.

The liberal Lilienthal and his experts were enthusiastic about the possibilities for postwar development.

Lilienthal's report is only the first of several officially-sanctioned American plans for the economic future of a post-war Vietnam. Other planners

have followed, revising and adjusting for new realities. Lilienthal and his people assumed a quick military victory for the United States and, as a result, the need for only a ten-year input of outside economic aid. His successors saw that the war would wind on, or perhaps down, that Saigon would have continuing high levels of military expense, and that the United States would have to bear an unending burden of economic aid. Now planners are looking into schemes of multilateral aid and development for Vietnam.

Yet, for all their many differences, the American plans all share the same colonial flavour. Like the French before them, Washington planners see Vietnam simply as a source of raw material, and cheap labour, and an outlet for manufactured goods. They

disdain Vietnam on the part and dismiss self-sufficient industrialization they intensive foreigners—American of foreign short, the development stock of the soaring.

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disdain Vietnamese nationalism, even on the part of Vietnamese capitalists, and dismiss any hopes for growing self-sufficiency and import-replacing industrialization. For the limited industry they do foresee, largely labour-intensive, they urge laws favouring foreigners—primarily Japanese and American firms—and vast new sums of foreign aid. They are planning, in short, the kind of permanent underdevelopment that should send the stock of the National Liberation Front soaring.

The Joint Development Group, in their optimism about the war's end, laid out both general policies and specific programmes. South Vietnam's economy, they calculated, would grow 4-6% during a two-to-three-year reconstruction period after the war, and 5-7% during the "development" period to the end of the decade. Throughout both periods agriculture would dominate, with stress first on self-sufficiency in foodstuffs, then on exports. Industry, too, would expand at a faster rate paid for by the rapid expansion of exports to a level of over \$400 million at the end of the decade. (At present exports are about \$15 million, compared to about \$750 million in U.S. subsidized imports.)

To achieve these results, the Group cautioned, the government of South Vietnam would have to accept certain responsibilities and pursue appropriate policies: The government should divest itself of any industrial assets. It should develop the administrative, educational, and physical infrastructure, eliminate bureaucratic controls on private business, and offer tax holidays and other inducements to foreign investors. Foreign and domestic business would take responsibility for development of the economy. The South Vietnamese government could offer a moderate degree of guidance.

Foreign economic aid would be essential—the Group calls for at least \$2.5 billion in aid over the next decade. This would sustain the economy, subsidize the government, and finance the rebuilding and extension

of the physical infrastructure of roads, ports, airstrips, and communication networks. Following this massive ten-year input of dollars, again assuming quick victory, Vietnam would become independent of further foreign aid—though not, of course, of foreign investment.

Already the United States—through both military and economic aid—has financed the building of more than two billion dollars of infrastructure facilities to service the war. It has built or renovated 2,400 miles of hard-surfaced main highways; countless bridges; 600 miles of railway; 200 airstrips, five of which are capable of handling passenger jets; six ports for ocean-going vessels; and vast amounts of warehouse space. The U.S. has also expanded the telephone system and electric power capabilities, and has built an extensive network of modern microwave and teletype systems. By 1971, according to one U.S. official, the U.S. was to have built in South Vietnam "probably the best infrastructure in all of Southeast Asia."

The Joint Development Group proposed massive foreign aid to finance further extension of the military-developed infrastructure. American corporations would benefit first from construction contracts and then from using the facilities for direct investment—aid and private enterprise in symbiosis. Of the \$2.5 billion of projected foreign aid, nearly \$600 million would flow to outside (primarily American) contractors for rebuilding the South Vietnamese infrastructure, according to an estimate by Lilienthal assistant Nicholas Philip.

Green Revolution

A major part of this new construction would go to wage the Green Revolution, the growing of miracle-rice through a more capital-intensive agriculture. These miracle-grains can double, triple or even quadruple production from the same land. But, as Philip pointed out, "achievement of these dramatic increases depends

on a whole spectrum of physical and economic inputs. Precise application of water to the field is essential, and this usually depends on control exercised through major public civil development projects such as storage dams, flood control levees, irrigation and drainage canals and pumping stations." Outside contractors would build these public works. Foreign investors and bankers would provide the "greatly increased sources of credit to the farmers for seed, fertilizers, and equipment," and "new systems for distributing those inputs to the farmers," and "enlarged systems for storage and marketing of the crops." A Green Revolution indeed, especially for private investors.

The advantages to the Vietnamese themselves is another matter. Developing South Vietnam's agriculture according to Lilienthal's plan would shatter the rural society.

"The fragmentation of large holdings," the Group notes, "irrespective of the consequences on production and farm income, is undesirable. Many crops cannot be grown economically and competitively other than on a large scale, and land reforms should not be carried out so far as to make such profitable enterprise and potential employers of labour impossible. The solution to rural poverty in some areas may be found in an efficient farm labour force rather than in small tenant holdings.

Lilienthal does see obstacles to U.S. plans—particularly in the "parochialism" of the peasant: "The average Vietnamese farmer is content with subsistence farming. He wants to work his own little plot of land. But that is not practical if there is to be a big boom in rice production." The peasants' twenty-five-year struggle for land reform, though it may be "socially and politically desirable," is just not "practical." What Vietnam needs, the Group suggests, are large holdings for plantation-model agriculture or agribusiness.

With the predictable supply of credit, only the richer farmers would

able to afford the fertilizers and equipment necessary for growing the miracle gains. Poorer peasants will have to sell their land. As under the French colonialists, concentration of landholdings would increase and more and more peasants would be forced to become rural proletarians, working for foreign or domestic agribusiness, or to migrate to the cities in search of work.

One of the Lillenthal Group's agricultural programmes is already underway in the Central Highlands, home of the Montagnards. The programme seeks to create plantations for coffee, tea, and other exportable products in the highlands. But, complains the Lillenthal Group, the Montagnards who live there are incapable of "full exploitation, in the national interest, of the region's resources in soil, water, and forests." The result is massive Montagnard removal, paving the way for Vietnamese entrepreneurs.

The pattern is familiar. Hugh Manke, director of the International Voluntary Service in Vietnam, made that clear to the Kennedy Subcommittee on Refugees in April, 1971. "The activities being undertaken by the Government of Vietnam with regard to the ethnic minorities [Montagnards] in the Highland provinces," Manke testified "... are painfully reminiscent of the activities of American pioneers with regard to the Indian tribes..."

Manke recalled one particularly vivid conversation with an American captain working on relocation with the South Vietnamese Government. The Montagnards, said the captain, "have to realize that they are expendable." They are "second-rate citizens." "This is Vietnam, not Montagnard Nam." The captain figured that forced relocation and saturation bombing of the vacated areas would do the job, and that the U.S. "could solve the Montagnard problem just like we solved the Indian problem..."

So far Saigon has relocated 70% of 700,000 of the one million Montagnards, according to Gerald Hickey of the RAND Corporation.

Manke went on to explain that the Lillenthal Report "specifies that the post-war development in Vietnam depends in part, upon the development of the Highland area... [which according to the Report] can be developed much better by the Vietnamese than the indigenous population..." He noted that "ethnic Vietnamese are already farming or lumbering in some of the areas where Montagnards were removed."

Other Vietnamese entrepreneurs are preparing to move their tenants onto the land. In particular Madame Ky, the wife of the former Vice-President of South Vietnam, was in court over five square miles of Montagnard land which she bought from the State after the villagers had been removed. Their land, the now-relocated Montagnards protest, "does not belong to the state domain but it was their ancestors', who had spent much effort in clearing the forest or had bought the land from the 'Cham' King a long time ago for transferring to younger generations."

Urbanization

The Montagnards are not the only peasants already relocated. Millions of South Vietnamese have already fled from the rural areas into the cities—victims of the massive U.S. military assault against the countryside. This forced migration—the Pentagon calls it "forced urbanization"—has increased the urban population from 15% of the total population in 1965 to 60% at present.

The Pentagon's strategy is quite simple. Since Saigon can't extend its control to the villages, reasons Harvard strategist Samuel P. Huntington, the "direct application of mechanical and conventional power"—bombs, artillery, defoliation, and gunpoint round-ups—can bring the rural population to the cities. What better way to undermine the NLF's rural revolution! By urbanizing the society, the U.S. takes Vietnam out of the historical stage of its development where it is susceptible to "Maoist rural revolution." "His-

tory," Huntington says hopefully, "may pass the Viet Cong by."

Now, however, the economic developers are going the military strategists one better—they are *planning* to turn the displaced peasants into cheap urban industrial labourers.

Another obstacle is nationalism, even among Vietnamese capitalists, who resist the unlimited exploitation of Vietnam's resources by foreigners.

"Understandably, after 20 years of war, during the last few years of which large numbers of foreigners have been prominent and influential in the country, various forms of xenophobia have appeared, inspired by a sense of nationalism and pride of culture," Lillenthal notes sympathetically. "In the economic field, this has created a preference for... the public sector to assume responsibility over wide areas of economic activity and exercise tight controls over the private sector, and for direct controls rather than competitive market processes..."

But the old New Dealer is also firm. "It is clear, even now," he concludes, "that Viet Nam cannot successfully make the transition to a peaceful footing if such autarchic policies are dominant in its economy. Ultimately, they meet neither the need for efficiency in the use of resources nor the requirements of social justice."

The upshot, of course, is that for all the pride and nationalism, the government will still have to loosen bureaucratic controls on business, drop restrictions and taxes on foreign investors, and give foreign corporations special privileges. Extended tax holidays on new investments, free importation of raw materials and parts, unlimited expatriation of profits—that's the way Lillenthal defines development.

Change in Plans

The war, of course, has not gone according to plan, and decisive victory no longer seems a sound basis for future economic planning. As a result at least five different experts have updated the Lillenthal plans.

all assuming continued war or military pressure on Saigon and continuing foreign aid well into any foreseeable future.

One of the men responsible for this new thinking is Albert Williams, former White House staffer now at the RAND Corporation. Williams thinks military victory extremely unlikely, a conviction gained during the 1968 Tet offensive. But he also finds the alternative of a negotiated settlement undesirable. Any realistic negotiated settlement, believes Williams—his views apparently reflecting White House thinking—would leave the ultimate outcome of the war uncertain. The conflict would simply move to the political sphere, offering no assurance of a continued pro-U.S. government and no climate for "economic development," that is, foreign investment. Better a continued winding down of the war during the first half of the 70's, a situation which, Williams explains, "would not be very different from the present one."

The Saigon government, in this view, would operate under far greater stress than envisioned by Lilienthal. "As Vietnamization proceeds and U.S. troops completely turn over combat functions to the South Vietnamese," says Williams, the Saigon Government "can be expected to devote even more of its energies to military problems than at present. This will require more resources than the public sector can obtain domestically—from taxes and other means—and the foreign resources requirements will strain the foreign aid capacity of the United States. Thus, neither domestic nor foreign government resources are likely to be available in substantial amounts for development projects." The Saigon Government's "capabilities are severely strained by the demands of Vietnamization," he concludes. "It does not need the additional responsibilities of running industrial enterprises or administering complex controls."

Williams criticizes the Lilienthal Report for its view of aid. Their

suggestions "could probably be considered as a conventional approach for Vietnam in the environment [of Vietnamization].¹" Instead of technical assistance for major infrastructure projects, Williams argues, the U.S. should primarily provide balance of payments support. In other words, the U.S. should continue to stabilize imports (U.S. exports) and leave the Saigon Government to continue the war effort.

Williams admits that Lilienthal's goal of reduced dependence on American aid is attractive. But "for the environment of Vietnamization, the report is much too ambitious in its goal of limiting the ten-year [economic] aid total to \$2.5 billion. It seems likely that upwards of twice this amount will be required during the decade to sustain the economy while it has almost one-fourth of its total labour force tied up in national defense... There is already a tendency among some who are concerned with Vietnam aid levels to assume implicitly that economic aid requirements will or should fall as Vietnamization proceeds. Vietnamization will greatly reduce the total drain on the U.S. budget, but success will almost surely hinge on modest increases in economic aid."

Perhaps the most intriguing new look at post-war Vietnam—and one highly valued by the Department of State—is a confidential study for the Asian Development Bank by Columbia University's Emile Benoit. Benoit generally concurs with Williams and Goodman. But he predicts a *de facto* Saigon military victory by 1973, a return to low-level NLF insurgency, and continued U.S. military presence through 1975. Saigon, in Benoit's view, will have to maintain a high level of military preparedness at least until the end of the decade, and the U.S. a high level of aid at least through 1975, the end-point.

Benoit projects total aid for the six year period 1970 to 1975 alone at \$13 billion, \$4 billion of that economic aid. That would bring U.S. aid for these six years near the \$16.5 billion spent over the past de-

cade for all military aid, economic aid, and infrastructure construction. U.S. economic aid, Benoit argues, will have to go up to compensate for the decline in U.S. spending in Vietnam caused by troop withdrawals; and military aid would have to go up to implement military Vietnamization.

Benoit also calls for South Vietnam to earn foreign exchange by other means—selling cheap labour to multinational corporations to assemble imported component parts into finished goods for export to the world market. Foreign investment, backed by risk guarantees from the Saigon and U.S. governments, would shore up the Saigon regime during the critical period of American troop withdrawals. The million-man Saigon army, a huge economic burden on the country and a non-productive use of one quarter of the nation's workers, would become smaller.

Benoit summed up his report in a recent interview. He had, he said, "suggested a series of steps which must be taken to put the economy back on its feet: a build-up of other sources of aid such as the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and individual countries like Japan; a rapid expansion of exports; a large increase in rubber production (which would mean the planting of endless thousands of new rubber trees to replace those burned and blasted by the war); and a diversion of rice supplies from the 'Vietcong' back into what he called 'the economy of Vietnam'."

The last of the known revisionists of Lilienthal's earlier plan for Vietnam is Harvard economist Arthur Smithies, admitted consultant of the CIA and author of yet another secret Vietnam study, this one for the Institute for Defense Analysis.

Japan

Agreeing basically with Williams, Goodman, and Benoit, Smithies expects that the United States will have to continue granting "around \$500 million a year" in economic aid for the next decade. But, he

suggests, the Japanese should also contribute since Japanese business has benefited greatly from the war.

Smithies has expanded his multilateral approach. The State Department commissioned Smithies and Goodman to study the "Possible Role of the UN and Other International Organizations in the Economic Rehabilitation of Vietnam." While they were not scheduled to report until early 1972, the State Department description of the project outlined their perspective. "It is in the U.S. interest," explained the State Department proposal, "to reduce its bilateral involvement in South Vietnam, to maximize international assistance, and to encourage Communist (including North Vietnamese) participation in a rehabilitation programme for Vietnam..."

A more basic assumption, however, was continued U.S. control of South Vietnam, under conditions similar to those described by Williams. "Since it would be difficult if not impossible to depict a firm political scenario," the State Department wrote, "the project would, at a minimum, assume conditions in which—with or without a clear political settlement—hostilities had wound down to a level in which an internationally directed rehabilitation effort had some possibility of operating."

Would the North Vietnamese actually participate in a postwar reconstruction project for South Vietnam under a U.S.-controlled Saigon regime? The State Department thinks so, which might cast some doubt on their capacities in the field.

Smithies and Goodman were to explore five suggested multilateral arrangements for U.S. aid:

- 1) the creation of "a new ad hoc UN Relief and Rehabilitation Agency," on the model of the South Korean occupation by the U.S.;
- 2) "expanding the role of the UN Development Programme" already in South Vietnam;
- 3) "creating an international econ-

sortium or regional development mechanism";

- 4) creating a multilateral umbrella-type mechanism having responsibility and authority to coordinate bilateral and international assistance; and
- 5) utilizing financial institutions such as the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.

One way or another, the State Department hopes to create a multilateral cover for continued U.S. control of South Vietnam. An international body would make the continued U.S. occupation more palatable politically to American allies, such as the Japanese. It would also spread around the costs of continuing the war.

All of these plans are far from academic. Quick military victory no longer seems possible, but the United States assumes a continuing military presence, bolstered by a continuing invasion of economic planners. With all that in place, can the businessmen be far behind?

The opportunities abound. As U.S. planners extend the infrastructure outward from the cities to integrate the rural economy into the urban-dominated economy, investors will find a Green Revolution to foster, finance, and fertilize; and new crops to market for domestic consumption. Large-scale agribusiness will require direct investments, while natural resources such as forests and oil await exploration. And the cheap labour created by forced urbanization will provide assemblers for American TV sets, waiters for American-owned hotels, and prostitutes for American tourist bars.

Foreign aid—bilateral and multilateral—will underpin this economic assault, benefiting U.S. business in at least three ways.

First, without U.S. aid—both military and economic—the pro-U.S. government would fall and one hostile to foreign investors would be likely to come to power.

Second, aid will furnish new billions to U.S. businesses to build more Vietnamese infrastructure and to

supply more aid-subsidized imports to sustain the economy.

Third, the aid-financed infrastructure—from physical facilities to trained labourers—will make possible profits from future direct investment in Vietnam.

It's a shining future, except for the Vietnamese. Their stake in all this aid and development? After 30 years of national revolution they can give up their nationalism, their land, their culture. The fortunate will find work on a plantation or in some foreign sweat-shop. The rest, if the planners have their way, will find their place in those boring statistics on Asian unemployment, poverty, and urban decay.

(Pacific Research and World Empire Telegram, July-August 1972. Abridged).

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Hysteria Over American Departure

BY A CORRESPONDENT

A recent despatch from Singapore flashed in a leading Calcutta journal says that the ruling cliques in many of the South-East Asian countries are nervous at the prospect of the Americans leaving Indochina soon. The governments of Thailand and Singapore have explicitly, and those of Indonesia and Malaysia implicitly, stressed the need for the Americans to stay on in South-East Asia because, otherwise, they fear, their countries are likely to be swamped by the better organized forces of communism.

Not that this comes as a revelation to those who have all the time been aware of the monstrous phenomenon of neo-colonialism. But the cat that has emerged from the bag this time is so near elephant-size that it is not likely to escape the attention of even the most feeble-eyed.

What is the stark fact issuing from the nervousness of these South-East Asian regimes at the prospect of the withdrawal of the American war machine? It is that all these governments are and have always been the creatures of imperialism, that they had been set up and granted protection so that they could, under the garb of freedom and democracy, help imperialism to drain the resources and exploit their own peoples in lieu of a share in the loot, and that unless they continue to cling to imperialist protection, they are sure to be overthrown by their own aggrieved and revolutionary people. This is the fundamental character of all the "independent" governments ruling over the South-East Asian countries. Without exception they have been perpetrating cold treachery on their countrymen over decades under the smokescreen of various patriotic slogans while pandering like abject pimps to the nefarious designs of the imperialists. These regimes may operate in benignly monarchic or democratic forms or in the more rough-looking form of military juntas;

they may conveniently resort to a variety of deceptive slogans, patriotic, nationalistic, democratic or even socialistic; but their character remains the same, the character of base, cunning, pro-imperialist traitors to their own people representing all the filth denoted by the term 'comprador'. So certain and so mortally afraid are they of the revolutionary upsurge of their own people, once imperialism has taken its dirty hands off, that in the hour of peril they can even openly cling to the imperialists, praying them to stay on in their ravaged land to protect them against their own people.

In the pitiless light of these facts how does the beautifully streamlined Russian thesis appear which describes these regimes of South-East Asia as representing the national, that is patriotic and anti-imperialist, bourgeoisie of these countries? Not only is it a blatant falsehood but also a carefully concocted one. Describing a patently neo-colonial set-up as an independent national capitalist regime is apparently calculated to (i) facilitate imperialist infiltration, (ii) confuse native revolutionaries by presenting them with a completely false set of contradictions and (iii) create a congenial setting for the application of the revisionist heresy of peaceful, non-revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism. Thus the gross mischaracterisation of the puppet regimes of South-East Asia by the Russian revisionists tends ultimately to serve the same ends that the American robbers have in view—perpetuating the traitorous comprador regimes and, consequently, imperialist exploitation and of lulling or confusing or suppressing the revolutionary forces in the region. Only, Russia is doing in a covert and indirect way what America is doing more or less openly.

Lastly, the nervousness of the puppet regimes indicates the accuracy of the Maoist estimate of the nature of

the principal contradiction in South-East Asia and in fact in all the underdeveloped countries—that between imperialism (including social-imperialism) and the masses of the people. What is the principal force holding back the tide of revolution and perpetuating poverty and oppression in these underdeveloped countries? The answer is imperialism, open or covert as it may be. The panic in the South-East Asian capitals at the impending departure of the Americans is final proof of the fact that these regimes could not exist even for a few years without the direct and indirect support of imperialism. Therefore, by the Maoist estimation, the principal revolutionary task in South-East Asia must be aimed steadfastly at the resolution of the principal contradiction involved, without allowing the tangles of minor contradictions to take unscientific precedence over the former. In other words, all major revolutionary effort should be unfalteringly aimed at loosening the stranglehold of imperialism (open or covert) on the underdeveloped countries; and all other considerations, including that of opposing relatively minor local reactionaries, should be treated as secondary and by no means unduly rushed. That is why China has been making the most brilliant Leninist application of socialist diplomacy to sow confusion among the imperialist and pro-imperialist forces in the region. That is why she has been trying to come closer on the state level with many of the weaker comprador regimes in order to step up their contradictions with their imperialist masters which might eventually lead to a loosening of the imperialist control on these countries, thus indirectly serving to boost the revolutionary forces. That is why China did not support the separatist struggle in East Pakistan under the correct apprehension that the separation of the latter would, and had been designed to, strengthen the hold of imperialism (of whatever variety), through whatever agency, on the region. China supported and still supports Pakistan because she had freshly felt the pangs

of being a pawn in the imperialist game and because, though comprador herself, Pakistan was the antagonist of the bigger and more dangerous comprador-puppet State on whom the new imperialist forces solidly depended. China extended interest-free socialist aid to another minor comprador, Ceylon, in spite of her bloody suppres-

sion of the ill-conceived putsch, just to forestall or neutralize to whatever possible extent the further digging in of the imperialist claws into her economy.

The pitiful comprador panic in the South-East Asian capitals has brought these somewhat muffled facts into the dazzling light of day.

Germany: Volkswagen, Siemens, Hoescht and Thyssen Hütte.

France: Renault, CFP (petrol).

Japan: Hitachi, Mitsubishi, Yawata Iron and Steel.

Africa: De Beers (one subsidiary in Tanzania is the Williamson Diamond Mine).

It will be noted that the largest monopoly corporations are connected with oil, a raw material not found in any of these countries with the exception of the U.S. In other words it is the exploitation of the riches of the Third World countries that has built up these large monopolies. Their economic power can be seen in the fact that they today control 15% of the total world production of the GNP.

The new economic strategy involves that this percentage has to be increased, for the law of capitalist development is that they have to keep on expanding. But this can only happen in two ways. First, by intensifying exploitation in the capitalist world and the Third World countries. Second, by breaking new ground and penetrating the socialist world.

The corporations operate very discreetly and bring pressure very quietly. The behaviour of the ITT in Chile is rather an exception for its highhandedness. The corporations, however, function as States. They have annual budgets higher than most countries in Africa. They have their own network of espionage and information seeking. They have their own links with top people in the countries where they operate. Their experts are there to detect any change in the economic or political trends that could affect them.

They operate internationally. Their interests too cut across national boundaries. Thus *Newsweek* in

The Economics Of Detente

A. K. ESSACK

FOR imperialism, the 30-year-old cold war failed to achieve its principal objective, namely to alter the balance of power which went in favour of socialism in Asia and Europe after D Day. Neither the internal uprisings fomented by the CIA nor outright aggression as in Indochina was able to restore the status quo ante. In fact during this period socialism inched its way into Africa, as seen in the road taken by Tanzania, Congo, Somalia and Guinea.

The merciless slaughter and carnage and the heroic resistance of a small people against the mightiest military power in the world brought a new awareness and consciousness to whole generations of people which cut across continents and united all against U.S. imperialism, irrespective of race, colour, creed and ideology.

Detente thus represents a change in strategy. In the final analysis, the leaders of the Western world, the Churchills, Nixons and De Gaulles represent capitalism. But it is not nineteenth-century capitalism of free enterprise but capitalism of the multi-national corporations, which is both monopolistic and authoritarian in the extreme. The economic strategy of the multi-national corporations has now changed and it is this that has at last brought about a corresponding shift in the political stand of the Western governments and Japan. History thus has forced the Kissingers to play the role of creat-

ing bridges and links between the capitalist and socialist worlds.

The super-monopolists like to call themselves the "new globalists". The new toga they have donned is that of peace and goodwill. They say they are "the prime agents for economic development, international prosperity and even world peace. MacNamara, from America's Secretary of Defence who reduced Vietnam to rubble, is now President of the World Bank and is seen dishing out loans "for development". Mr Spencer, President of the 90-nation First National City Corporation, says, "We see profitable opportunity in addressing ourselves not to the demands of a privileged few, but to the urgent needs of the overwhelming many".

What are these multi-national corporations? An arbitrary classification is that they should have sales of over 800 billion shillings and should operate in at least six countries. Today 4,000 companies qualify under this. Like prehistoric monsters, these grow larger and larger in size. In the process however they grow smaller and smaller in numbers as more and more get gobbled up or lose their identity as a result of merger. We list a few of these companies.

U.S.: General Motors, Esso, Ford Motors, General Electric, IBM, Mobil Oil, ITT.

Britain: Shell, Unilever, B.P. and ICI.

A CORRECTION

In the article "A False Brother" (January 27), please read "Surplus use value" instead of "Surplus value" in line 11, para 2.

recent issue says that Singer Sewing Machines sales in 1971 reached \$90 million in the Far East; 50 million in Canada; 1.3 billion in the U.S.A.; 130 million in Latin America; 500 million in Europe and 35 million in Africa and the Middle East.

These States without ambassadors and without membership of the U.N. nevertheless establish joint projects with governments. Thus in the field of telecommunications one such monopoly said, "In starting to build a global communications satellite system, we have created novel international institutions where private corporations share ownership with 15 governments."

Since their investments are scattered all over the world, the thinking and activity of the corporations is global. The capitalist made his entry into the stage of history as the champion of the nation-State. Today he sees it as a fetter and an anachronism.

Albert Thornborough, President of the Massey Ferguson Corporation, says, "My agricultural implements with 27 plants in all countries could take transmission from Holland, engine from Italy, other components from England and build a tractor to prescribed specifications in France or other way round. We live and think internationally."

The same Spencer as quoted by *Newsweek*, says, "The political boundaries of nation-States are too narrow and constricted to define the scope and sweep of modern business."

Contradictions have developed between the national States and the multi-national corporations. Yet the wars in Indochina were conducted precisely for their interests. This year the Nixon Government is to begin investigations of these global companies to see whether they have violated the anti-trust laws. This will lead to nowhere for such actions had been initiated in the past and were dropped. The multi-national corporations swelling with millions of dollars have hired the best lawyers. But we do see the

sparring and fencing between the two, the economic and in the last analysis decisive power of the multi-national corporations and the political power of the nation-State.

While sparring and jabbing they also fight to the finish amongst themselves. The latest battle is between the IBM and Xerox for the control of the office duplicating machines. The latter was just able to hold out. However within this fight there is also unity. They are all united to penetrate the socialist countries.

In Socialist Countries

The cooperation will not be just confined to trade like the wheat deal, but also multi-national investment in socialist countries. The joint collaboration projects are expected to cover decades. The amounts involved are staggering. One project involves over 80 billion shillings (Tanzania's estimated Gross National Product is 10 billion for 1971).

The multi-national corporations are playing for high stakes, the ultimate end being survival of the capitalist system. This is how one leading paper sees it. It says that the wheat agreement between the U.S. and the USSR was really peanuts for "everything that had gone before seemed to dwindle in size when three U.S. companies disclosed the impending conclusion of the biggest deal of all—indeed the largest single foreign trade compact in U.S. history".... It added, "In an agreement which would stretch into the 21st century, Texas Eastern Transmission Corporation, Tenneco Incl., and Brown and Roots would build two pipelines costing 10 billion dollars.... when the gas pipelines begin to flow in 1980 it would account for as much as 7% of the total U.S. consumption."

The multi-national corporations are prepared to conclude deals which are unfavourable to themselves in the beginning. This is how the boss of the Singer machines sees it. "It may sound a bit platitudinous, but

you must satisfy any government that the totality of your business is to be of benefit to the country. Sometimes you must sacrifice short-term gains to convince them, but if you don't you are just not going to last." Singer has set its eyes on Poland where it held a One Company show recently.

It is idle to believe that the multi-national corporations are interested only in profits. What they are after is to annihilate the socialist base. The behaviour of the ITT in Chile reveals the political role of the multi-national corporations. (It openly tried to overthrow the Allende Government).

In this period they are challenging the socialist system because they believe that:

1. They have vast financial resources. Thus the GNP of General Motors for 1971 are 226.4 billion shillings. In comparison Nigeria, one of the largest States in Africa, had an estimated GNP for 1971 at 79.2 billion shillings.

2. They have an excellent system of espionage. This includes industrial espionage which requires up-to-date data and information of plans as well as any new scientific discovery.

3. They have skilled manpower. The latest discoveries in the field of science evolved during the Indochina war will be appropriated by them.

4. They operate internationally, while the proletarian internationalism of socialist countries operates from a national base.

5. By joint collaboration projects they tie the hands of the socialist countries. It will make it difficult for such socialist countries to criticise, let alone call for the overthrow of the world imperialist system.

The monopolies believe that they are winning the battle of the mind. It will be now difficult for such socialist countries to tell the Third World that the multi-national corporations represent exploitation of their raw materials and their people when they themselves have voluntarily opened their doors.

The socialist countries are aware that such capital influx could create imbalances in their internal economy. They know that the bosses will seek out those with bourgeois aspirations and who will defend bourgeois methods of management and structures in the economy in the name of efficiency and economy. They know the aim is to turn the country backwards along the road of capitalism. They know that when the capitalists are advocating the free movement of ideas and men from one capitalist country to a socialist or vice versa, they are really out to corrupt the socialist man.

They believe that capitalism will not succeed. A whole generation of people have been reared who know of no other life than socialism and therefore there could be no turning back. Far from dividing the socialist block, far from wrenching the East European countries from the Soviet Union, it is the NATO powers and the monopolies which will be divided more and more in this period. This new period must drive a wedge between the U.S. and the West European countries. Today the socialist block in Europe is stronger militarily than the NATO block. Some socialist countries are already beginning ideological education of their cadres so that vigilance is maintained in this period.

The small countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America will now be faced with a new onslaught against their desire for economic independence. Pressure will be intensified on countries like Tanzania, Somalia, Guinea and Congo to abandon their policy of self-reliance and socialism. The new battalions which will be let loose on them will be political theorists, economists, technicians, scientists and experts who will draw blue-prints for development of their agriculture, industry, commerce, telecommunications. In the process they will also show the superiority of their system, for the oldest socialist country far from catching up with the U.S. is now relying on its investment for its

own development. [They will use such arguments to show the superiority of the capitalist system over socialism. The multi-national corporations will use their international agencies like the World Bank, IMF, to strengthen their bonds with those leaders who have bourgeois aspirations.

The essence of the cold war was the struggle between the forces of socialism and capitalism for world supremacy. It is the same struggle that is being carried into this new phase of detente, with "lessening of tensions", peaceful co-existence, etc.

This new phase is in reality a continuation of war by other means and neither of the two antagonistic forces have any illusions. Nither should those countries which have the elimination of exploitation of man by man as their goal.

An Old Comedy

BY A DRAMA CRITIC

IT is as well that IPTA (Simantik) produced *Buro Saliker Ghare Ro* in an attempt to justify its existence as a troupe. The success of the production, however, owed more to the consummate skill of the dramatist than is usually the case with an average Bengali play. Madhusudan wrote his two short satirical pieces on the model of the Comedy of Manners, aiming his relentless barbs against the immorality of the old and new generations. The two plays are thus complementary and bring out their author's deep social awareness, an intense moral concern, and skill in handling plot, characterization and dialogues. It is not easy to perform these plays without bringing down the whole house whatever the time and place. This is yet another proof of the well-known truth that good theatre depends for its viability ultimately on good plays likely to survive their immediate occasion and impulse.

All this, however, is not to detract

from the modest competence of Simantik's performance as a whole. But for Hanif, who required a more forceful and rugged portrayal, all the roles were more or less convincing. The dialects, however, were managed very indifferently, Bhaktaprosad's accent being represented in a different way. Khaled Chaudhuri's setting of the last scene, otherwise so perfect, is spoiled by the absence of the ruined temple in the background. Stage decor and lighting are otherwise quite proper and effective, specially in conjuring the mockerie atmosphere around the old temple in the dark. Sound effects in this scene are appropriate both to the setting and to the mood of the play.

The Glittering Dross

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

NAKAL Sona (directed by Aurobindo Mukherjee) begins with a missionary zeal to right all the existing wrongs in the entertainment world. So when a turbulent audience boos out a new singer in a musical soiree, Hemanta Mukherjee appears as himself appealing for patience and understanding and a remonstrative extempore song with these words, "Hemanta Mukherjee was not made in a day!" After that the director's imagination runs amok. Following a thin, almost tenuous story about a young man's fanatic obsession with celluloid fame and his ultimate disillusionment after meeting with a tragic accident while playing the hero's dummy, the film seeks to reveal the maladies that afflict the film world. But the trouble with the style is that the dramatic episodes in the story and the documentary depiction of the studio never blend happily. The director has turned his axe only on the poor producer, letting off the bigger sharks in this rat-race and this film has not been able to become what it should have been, a scathing

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exposure of black-money rackets, a severe indictment of the distributor-exhibitor monopoly and the grinding exploitation of the workers by the studio-owners. The director has always scratched the surface, for he has neither the insight nor the guts to dig deeper, and the film has turned out to be a catalogue of effects without causes. The big stars flitting across the screen titillate the mass curiosity and all their virtues have been spelt out in bold capitals. The limits of nonsense are however reached when a director (who is described as making intelligent films) insists on "moody" lighting on his sets (Rembrandt must have turned in his grave), another reels off his instructions in bastard English with an Elliot Road accent and a popular actress is praised to the skies as being able to summon her tears without the aid of glycerine. There is also the usual childish harping on the glories of the New Theatre days and the resurrection of the Barua image, as if our films have not progressed beyond the artificial theatricality and the sentimental slush of the Barua school.

Films Division's Releases

Films Division's *Netaji* comes as a tribute to the political leader during his birth anniversary and as a tribute its intention must have been to inspire the people to follow his ideals. The other approach could have been a polemical one, the right kind of direction for a political documentary, specially about a controversial figure like Subhas Chandra Bose. But unfortunately the film has failed on both the counts. It has played safe by skirting the explosive issues and has instead aimed at a straightforward historical reconstruction of Bose's achievements with the Indian National Army. Although there is no paucity of contemporary material, the film has not been able to breathe life into the shots. After a brief prologue on Subhas Chandra's role in domestic politics and his rift with Gandhiji, the film concentrates on the organisation of the Azad

Hind Fouz and its march to India. There are three interviews, one with Dr Sisir Kumar Bose describing Subhas Bose's escape from Calcutta and the visual presentation of this episode has all the ingredients of a cheap thriller, the fluttering curtains, the clock striking midnight with ominous chimes, sound of tiptoeing footsteps along a half-lighted verandah, a car speeding out into the dark night! Real kid stuff indeed, the only thing lacking is a macabre melody. The other two interviews are with Maj General Shah Nawaz and Lakshmi Swaminathan, flat accounts of the formation of different brigades of the Fouz. And there is the "patriotic montage" of marching soldiers being intercut with shots of receding milestones. The only tangible achievement of this film is the assembly (only assembly, mind you, and not an intelligent, cinematic use) of wonderfully-preserved shots of contemporary political events and battle scenes from the Vithalbhai Jhaveri collection and the Japanese War Archive, which, we hope, will some day generate fire in the hands of a truly gifted political documentarist.

Films Division's latest hokum is the release of *Woh Kiun?*, a semi-quicki about... no, we don't know what it is about, we can only describe it. The camera rolls into a film studio where Amitava Bachhan and Jaya Bhaduri participate in a shooting. Between the takes, the interviewer asks them about marriageable age. Amitava decides for twenty-five while Jaya opts for twenty-one. Then follows some fan-magazine stills of this star-pair and the film comes to an end. Could you now tell what it is about? For whose benefit is this glamour show? Or has the Films Division now undertaken free promotional projects for the stars? Who passed this film? Was the Film Advisory Board drugged or did it lapse into a willing slumber? Isn't there some body called Public Accounts Committee which should look into this gross misuse of public funds?

Letters

Amilcar Cabral

The assassination of Amilcar Cabral, an outstanding African nationalist leader organising popular resistance against Portuguese imperialism in Portuguese Guinea, brings to an end the career of one of the most dedicated fighters against imperialism. The Guinean President commented that Cabral was assassinated 'in a cowardly and horrible manner, by the poisoned hand of imperialism and Portuguese colonialism'.

In February 1969, another great leader against Portuguese imperialism, Eduardo Mondlane of the FRELIMO, was assassinated. For the imperialists the killing of Cabral became a matter of utmost necessity after his address at the United Nations, which earned him world recognition and more sympathy and support for his cause.

The fire lit by people like Cabral does not get extinguished by individual killings. People like him do not die, as they gain immortality by their dedication. In Portuguese Guinea to which he belonged, even the most conservative estimates concede that one-half of the territory is liberated. Portugal has about 30,000 soldiers heavily armed, assisted by 15,000 African irregulars, known throughout the world for their brutalities, yet the liberation struggle leads to more and more successes and the days are not far when the whole of Portuguese Guinea will be liberated. There are thousands of Cabrals fighting Portuguese imperialism. How many of them, after all, can be killed by treachery and deception?

SUBRATA MUKHERJEE
Indiana, U.S.A.

R.S.P. And Assembly

The decision of the RSP to join the Assembly is most irrational. The boycott was more ethical than poli-

ical. A great crime against the people of Bengal was committed. Boycotting the Assembly was the least response that the situation demanded. That the Opposition benches should be vacant is quite fitting. That something more is called for and what that should be is the question rather than reviewing the initial stand. The particular situation has not changed, it cannot. Ethical stands do not permit flexibility.

The argument that the legislative forum should be utilised is unconvincing. Contesting elections should be viewed as a bid for majority, failing which the forum is of no further service. Even the non-Marxists of today's India despairingly realise that only street politics can influence the ruling caucus. The political style of the ruling party consists in legislation by ordinance, and consensus politics—a consensus of caucuses and individuals for power and privileges rather than ideas. Their steamroller majority is a monolithic voting block. All political initiatives spring from one fountainhead. Our political system in reality amounts to an elected autocracy with the parliament trappings providing an excellent scapegoat for failure and drift.

T. R. RAMALINGAM
Calcutta

Student Power ?

I disagree with the position taken by Bharati Azad in the article "A New Opposition: Student Power" (January 6). Does there really exist any new opposition, in the form of student power, to the existing political setup in India? It seems to be the other way around: students are being used in one way or other by the Indian ruling classes to confuse the struggle of the masses and preserve and consolidate their class rule. The fascist Chhatra Parishad is rid-

Our agent at Varanasi
MANNALAL DAS
D-35/321A Jangambari

ing rough over West Bengal, the students of Andhra and Telengana are breaking their heads on parochial issues, the students of Tamilnadu are busy fighting with bus conductors or are concerned about whether a particular film actor should be expelled from a certain party or not; the students of Assam are used by the bourgeoisie over communal issues, and those of Delhi University seem unable to tell reactionary from revolutionary-left leadership. Even in Punjab, where the dominant section of the student leadership understands its political role, they are unable to organise the students on political questions, except in isolated areas. The students' 'movement' in India is one of the most politically backward and organisationally disintegrated and fragmented movements in the world. Have the students of India, like some of their foreign counterparts, organised themselves in opposition to specific political programmes of the ruling class? Have they ever protested against the increasing American and Soviet penetration into India's economy? Have they ever questioned India's policies regarding neighbouring countries? Have they ever protected on a national scale against American butchery in Vietnam? The reason for the political backwardness of the Indian student movement lies in the theoretical bankruptcy and general politico-ideological backwardness of the Indian left movement. This is partly due to the latter neglecting the main question of the Indian revolution—the peasant question—and being forced back on a social base which is mainly middle class. Unless the mass of the peasantry and the working class is aroused, the student movement will not become politically mature. Instead of eulogising petty-bourgeois notions of 'student power' we should examine the student question in the context of the main question before the Indian people—the peasant question.

P. S. CHOPRA
Chandigarh

Another Appeal

I understand that over 32,000 Naxalite prisoners are languishing in jails for months and years in this country, that hundreds of our finest young men and women have been shot out of hand by the police before they could be dealt with according to law.

The Naxalite challenge calls for an answer. Police barbarities, prisons and gallows are hardly an answer to this challenge.

When we won our freedom we knew that if disparities grew, they would breed violence and violence would destroy all institutions of democracy. The Naxalites began with preaching violence to meet the violence in the system. It cannot be denied that police and the authorities, in the name of suppressing the Naxalites resorted to barbaric methods that should put us to shame.

It is our duty to create conditions so that it will not be necessary to believe that armed defence of poverty-stricken masses is the only course. Whether or not we succeed, it must not deter us from crying a halt to the methods adopted by the police in several States, and ensure a fair and speedy trial for those in jail.

In times of foreign rule it was easy to identify the foreign ruler as the enemy, but today when exploitation, instead of justice, informs our institutions on such a vast scale, the common enemy is not identified easily. We may not even agree as to who is the enemy and how exploitation can be ended. But those who staked their lives to arouse us from slumber and thought disparities could be reduced, must be treated with respect and attention. After all we stand for freedom of ideas, not only the ideas we love but even the ideas we hate. It is our duty to speak up because silence would be criminal.

R. K. GARG,
Convener, Committee for
Defence and Release of
Naxalite Prisoners,
New Delhi

a report on the **JAPANESE PEOPLE'S
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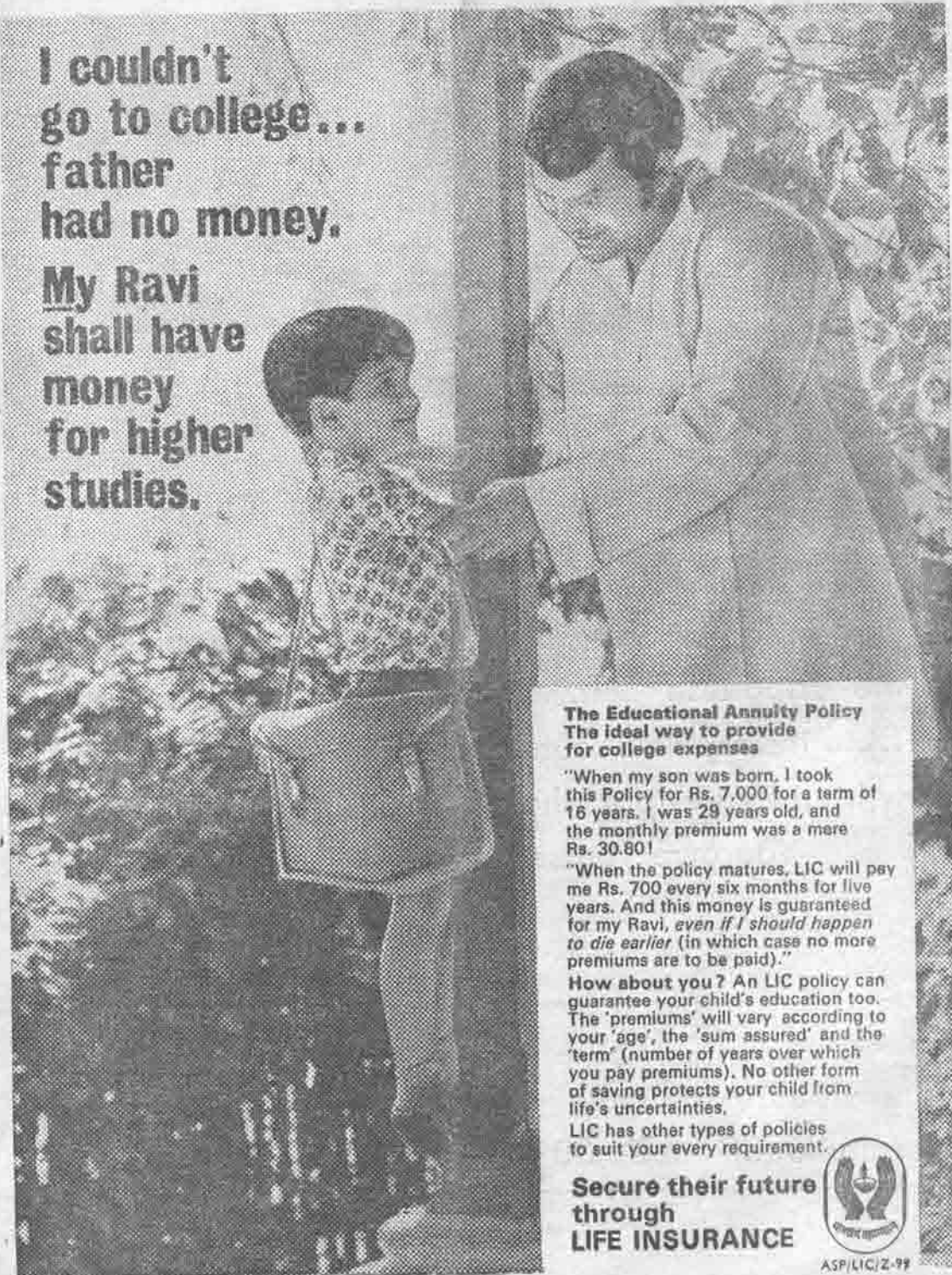
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