

frontier

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CAESAR'S WIFE ?

TWENTY years in office have inured Congress leaders to callousness towards public criticism, however justified. Not only are they determined to make hay while the Congress sun shines but have even the effrontery to sermon the people on probity and rectitude. It is, therefore, too much to expect that either the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Morarji Desai, or the Congress President, Mr S. Nijalingappa, will be abashed by the recent disclosures in Parliament. In the forthright manner for which he is famed Mr Desai has refused to see any unusuality in his son continuing to get a princely sum—maybe not from the point of view of Congress leaders—from a private firm even after he had ceased to be in its employ. Nor does he, as a votary of Gandhian truth, think it unusual to tell Parliament that his son had "severed connection with business" though at that time the son was drawing "a little over Rs. 4,000 per month" from the firm.

That the matter has not been sent to the Privileges Committee of Parliament exonerates none. Even if the Speaker had held otherwise, any breach of privilege could form only a small part of the guilt. In somewhat similar circumstances a former Finance Minister had wailed in Parliament with unaccustomed modesty that he had become a pauper in the service of the country and the members should not grudge if he gave his sons his name, for that was the only legacy he was in a position to bequeath. Normally, this is unexceptionable, but suspicion grows if an indifferent son suddenly acquires a reputation for efficiency and what not in the shady world of business as soon as his father becomes a minister. Mr Desai may be a doting father and have any opinion about his son; but the people will require much more than his word for it to believe that a firm whose business practices have compelled even the Congress Government to initiate some form of enquiry should have retained a former employee "on a monthly remuneration of Rs. 2,050 only" if he did not happen to be the Deputy Prime Minister's son. Mr Desai himself has admitted that his son was getting this amount not for any work but for the "valuable service rendered" when he was an employee of the firm and also for not disclosing anything about the transactions done during his period in office. Was it because Mr Desai's son could squeal that he was paid by the firm for three whole

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years? But the Deputy Prime Minister's high sense of copybook morality appears to be flexible enough not to regard it as such. And, who knows how many close relatives of Ministers and other dignitaries are getting paid by private firms for their "valuable service"?

It is not the sons alone who are prospering. Mr Nijalingappa has taken care to see that the sons-in-law do not feel neglected. His son-in-law, a junior IAS officer, has been appointed the Mysore Government's trade agent in London in supersession of the claims of his senior colleagues. Mr Nijalingappa is not a member of Parliament and could not, therefore, enlighten the House on how brilliant the son-in-law is. From published reports it is not clear whether the appointment was made when the father-in-law was the Chief Minister of Mysore; there may be undisclosed reasons why the Congress President closed shop as chief minister only after public protest against his holding the two posts simultaneously had become too strident to be ignored. The present Chief Minister is Mr Nijalingappa's chosen man, and it will not be any extenuation if the appointment was not made in the father-in-law's time. Significantly, the Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr B. R. Bhagat, could say nothing in Parliament in support of the appointment. A way out may be to abolish the post, as Mr Bhagat has hinted; this will undo one mischief only but not eliminate jobbery. On the other hand, Mr Nijalingappa may be encouraged in continuing to exercise his "political prerogative" to secure benefits for himself and men of his choice by the stout defence by Mr Bhagat of the granting of a diplomatic passport to him for visiting Japan. The invitation had come from a private organisation in Tokyo when Mr Nijalingappa was Mysore's Chief Minister and he has availed himself of it when he ceased to be so. As the invitation was not renewed after he became the Congress President, Mr Nijalingappa, in all probability, visited Japan as a self-invited guest. The traditional Japanese courtesy may have overlooked this irregu-

larly; but the Government of India took an additional precaution by issuing him a diplomatic passport and granting him an undisclosed amount of foreign exchange to give this intrusion upon Japanese hospitality a phony respectability. Perhaps the Govern-

Irrespective of how things turn out in Vietnam, the dangerous years are only beginning for the American nation. The Republican National Convention is assembling over this weekend. According to most present indications, the shop-worn Richard Nixon will triumph at the Convention; all the Rockefeller zeal—backed by all the Rockefeller money—will be of no avail; the delegates will not change their mind at this, the eleventh hour. The Democratic Convention too is scheduled to meet later in the month in Chicago. There too, it seems the Establishment wallas will succeed in bulldozing Hubert Humphrey's candidacy for President, and Eugene McCarthy's long, heroic trek since November will come to nought. Barring a series of miracles between now and the end of the month, the American nation will, therefore, be left with a Hobson's choice: Paleface I will be nominated to give battle to Paleface II. Cliche will compete with cliche, and the history and the excitement of the last few months will be reduced to total irrelevance. Of course, from the sidelines, George Wallace, the racist from Alabama, doubling up as the Champion of States' rights, will provide divertissement of a sort in November, but that will merely aggravate the darkness of the choice.

And yet the electorate is leaving no doubt at all as to where its predilections lie. For opinion polls show their verdict: amongst the Republicans, the people would prefer Rockefeller to Nixon, and amongst the Democrats, in the people's preference McCarthy far outdistances the incumbent Vice-President. This is thus a strange

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Strange Election

election indeed, one in which sentiments of the electorate matter least. For both parties, the delegates at the Conventions scarcely represent the rank and file of the supporters. Tammany Hall-type bosses will doctor the composition of the delegations and nullify the wishes of the late at the grassroots. For a party which has made a fetish of social democratic values, this is then a tragic denouement; popular will not the least bearing upon the election of the principal Presidential testants.

So come January, even if Lyndon B. Johnson will have departed, the chances are that the American will land up with either Richard Nixon or Hubert Horatio Humphrey. We are not worried about international implications of the emptied choice of this nature: what about the domestic scene of the United States itself? Following the bitter experience with the Presidential nominations, the younger generation of American men and women may come round to the view that the process is for the perpetuation of a socracy. There is no way of finding which way they might then Vietnam will, of course, continue corrupt, the Negroes will, of course, increasingly cross over to Black but, on top of all this, there is a very considerable chunk of white American youth who will the barricade. It will then be and-go for the American society as the old cliché has it, as thou so thou reapeth.

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No Progress In Paris

What exactly is going on, or can we expect, at the Paris talks on Vietnam? Those who are inclined to see both sides for the stalemate should do well to recall that the talks were arranged specifically to discuss an unconditional end to the American bombing of North Vietnam. But the Americans have made it clear that this is not the subject they want to discuss. They go on harping on "reciprocal restraint", as if this had at any time been used upon as an item for consideration during the current talks. Quite apart from this unashamed violation of the basis on which the talks were arranged, the American demand could be objectionable at any time. The underlying suggestion that the North Vietnamese side has shown any significant restraint has nothing to do with the territorial exemption from bombing ordered by President Johnson has been marginal and has not more than offset by the intensification of the raids on unexempted areas as well as the ferocity of the onslaught on the people of South Vietnam in a hopeless bid to punish the Ho Chi Minh. Besides, there can never be any question of reciprocity between aggressor and his victim; by accepting the principle of "reciprocal restraint" the North Vietnamese and the Americans can only place themselves on the same footing as the aggressors. It is, of course, naive to believe in even a show of "restraint" by the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong would induce the Americans to scale down the war. Washington has gone upon all its undertakings, including the bombing, and there is little reason to hope that the bombing would be stopped even if its demand for "reciprocal restraint" were met. As Mr Xuan Thuy recently said: "Although there have been no rocket attacks on Saigon for several weeks, the Americans maintain their effectiveness." Washington will also go on finding excuses for not stopping or scaling down its attacks. During Mr Clark Clifford's recent visit to South Vietnam, there were reports suggesting the possibility of a

moderate shift in American policy, but any hopes that might have been raised were blighted by Mr. Johnson's bellicose statement after his talks with Mr Nguyen Van Thieu at Honolulu. And Mr Johnson stepped up his bellicosity by his warning last week that the U.S. attacks could be further stepped up. Hanoi's response to this threat of further escalation has been characteristic of its resolve. "No matter what weapons they use against us," said the North Vietnamese Party journal *Nhan Dan*, "nothing can save them". Perhaps "they" too realize this to some extent, and the increasing signs of confusion in American policy, despite Mr Johnson's tough postures, could be partly due to this realization.

Now Thailand?

Only a few months back American officials in Bangkok were radiating confidence. All the talk about Thailand becoming a 'second Vietnam' was laughed off. The Thais, they asserted, were not likely to take Mao's path. A hard-headed realist in Thailand, however, warned in June last year, "I've served in both Vietnam and Thailand and I'll tell you that things look far worse here today than they did in Saigon in 1960." By their recent attack on the huge air base of Udorn, guerrillas of the Thailand Patriotic Front vindicated the pessimist official while shattering the smug confidence of the others.

With this onslaught on the Udorn air base the guerilla war in Thailand, already two years old, attained a new height. In Vietnam in 1960 guerillas of the National Liberation Front engaged only in small-scale hit-and-run attacks and ambush of army patrols. Commando raids deep into heavily defended air bases like Udorn were at that time out of the question. During the recent raid the Thai guerillas penetrated deep into the base and damaged aircraft worth several million dollars with a minimum loss of their own.

More than the loss in terms of aircraft and soldiers the blow at Udorn has upset the strategic calculation of

American special war experts. Contrary to the belief initially fostered, the half-a-dozen U.S. air bases in Thailand have not been built simply to cater to the needs of the Vietnam war. They were conceived as dependable operational centres against outbreak of guerilla war in some future date. Their argument ran like this: When in February 1965 American marines landed in Vietnam the only existing air bases of importance were Saigon and Bien Hoa. During the next one and half year the Americans were engaged in building and defending the huge bases of Chu Lai, An Khe and Cam Ranh and remodelling those of Da Nang and Phu Bai. This period gave the Vietnamese communists an invaluable breathing space during which they could build up their forces undisturbed. In short the Americans in Vietnam suffered because landing of troops was not preceded by establishment of bases. Hence the reverse process was followed in Thailand. Giant air bases at Udorn, Nakhon Phanom, Ubon, Korat and Takhli and the aero-naval complex at U Tapao were established before the guerilla war assumed menacing proportions. But belying all this calculation, guerilla warfare has spread to 29 of Thailand's 71 changwats, or provinces. The presence of 600 aircraft and 43,000 U.S. troops, brutal repression and napalm bombing have failed to suppress the people's struggle. The raid at Udorn only dramatically underscores this failure.

But there is perhaps no end to the inventive genius of the Thai rulers when it is a question of deluding oneself. Immediately after the raid the Thai Army discovered that the raiding guerillas were all Vietnamese commissioned by Ho Chi Minh. How this startling fact was revealed was not however stated. Possibly the blood of the dead guerillas was of the Vietnamese group! Neither was it clear how a band of Vietnamese guerillas could get into Thailand crossing straightaway the State of Laos with all its elaborate border defence. It must have been a clear case of hop over Laos, step at Pu Pan hills, and jump at Udorn! The comical side apart,

this charge against North Vietnam is breathtakingly audacious, coming as it does from a country from where 80% of the US bombers start their marauding missions against North Vietnam.

Nothing Like Culture

Not many within this country may have heard of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, though it was recently reported that the Council had succeeded in steadily stepping up its expenditure over the past few years. That not much is known about its work is not, of course, necessarily a measure of its performance; the relations it seeks to promote are, after all, with other lands and peoples. And that, too, at such an indeterminate level as the cultural. That is perhaps why there is not much evidence of the Council's exertions in the wider world either. But we could be wrong, or perhaps do not know where to look; there must be something the Council spends its money on. According to the latest Press report, the ICCR's activities include the publication of journals, financing of cultural delegations and organization of cultural exchanges

by the award of scholarships. There are so many delegations and exchange scholars—cultural and other—constantly sweeping across all parts of the globe that it is difficult to be sure which or who is financed by whom. The ICCR cannot be blamed for this confusion. As for its journals, most copies are distributed free in the woe-ful absence of buyers and are, like most other free literature, perhaps put to uses other than reading, let alone preservation. It is therefore hardly likely that one would come across any of these in libraries or private studies.

All this, we suppose, is in aid of "projecting" India's cultural image abroad. The Ministries of External Affairs and of Information and Broadcasting are feverishly engaged in this projection game; the Council, which is presumably a creation of the Ministry of Education (or of the late unlamented Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs?), lends a helping hand. Should one consider such duplication wasteful, if not the whole exercise unnecessary, one had better brush up one's Parkinson. Besides, culture has possibilities other than a Parkinsonian proliferation of jobs. If you are in a position to offer free trips to India to some carefully selected people in other countries, you can legitimately expect in return occasional invitations to visit theirs. And if the people you invite are also powerful in the cultural racket, you too may hope to be recognized by them as a man of culture. Why, you might even become known as a man of learning. There's nothing easier than to go and lecture a foreign audience on Indian culture; if you choose aspects (real or imaginary) of this amorphous subject your audience has never heard of you will be known as a man of great scholarship, and if you confine yourself to vague generalities you will be admired for your philosophical vision and wisdom. Culture has rewards which are sometimes denied even in politics. It is, therefore, idle to expect that investment in bodies like the ICCR will be reduced—not so long as a few are in a position to make investments with funds provided by all and keep the returns to themselves.

View from Delhi

The Dangerous Est

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

IN this our capital of umpteenth rackets, the Fourth Estate among the bigger vested interests jute and cement strings together the requirements of the cold war intended to make it so. We call it Unreal Estate or the Dangerous Estate. The contours of the strike in the newspaper industry the one-day token strike on July 29. The only significant section that legged on July 29 was the super-min caste called the Special Correspondents, including those of the Establishment. Special correspondence in New Delhi was once a means for ventriloquism. Now it means the slimy contactman licences and permits, the stooge parting with vital information in return for duty-free whisky or honorary PROs for the Government in return for fringe benefits like subsidised flat or an AIR assignment. The caste that used the working journalists' movement and its leverage the Press barons to climb to the top now looks shocked at the undertalk of wage boards and token At no time were the Press so jittery as they were last week the strike going strong in New Bombay and Calcutta. It may have ended in a resounding but for journalists and non-journalists but the Right Communist leader of the working journalists has been trying to make politics out of the issue, just because the union of non-journalist employees happened to be led by Mr S. Y. Kolhalkar of CPI(M).

During the Lok Sabha discussion on the strike, Mr N. Dandekar of Swatantra Party saw in it a conspiracy by the Communists to cut out the news from Czechoslovakia. One wished it were true. It has been one of the tragedies of the working journalists' movement that Soviet



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in the form of junkets abroad conditioned the election process at the national level to put the Moscovites in key positions. Any executive, however fairly elected, had almost no thought of nominating a few fellow-traveling Communists or fellow-travelers to make the leadership a little factor to the patron saints. I wonder when the talks reached a final stage here last week, the journalists' representatives are reported to have suggested to the Press barons that they could raise the price of the newspaper to be able to pay higher wages. The familiar proprietor's argument about his incapacity to pay even minimum wages found support in the quarter least expected to support it. Thereupon the Press barons began getting tough and the trend of negotiations went against the employees. The journalist leadership might have reason to regret its achievement by the way it set back it secured for the non-socialist employees. But it was a game alright.

The employers are now out for the kill. The pattern has been decided and it seems it would be a series of black-outs in the name of settlement at the unit level. How long can the journalist staff hold on with the smallists' leadership selling them down the river?

From what Mr Jaisukhlal Hathi said in Parliament, the Government decided that the demands of the journalists were fair. But he did not summon the courage to act on it. It is for the simple reason that they cannot antagonise the Press barons who claim that they are united for the time and would not be black-balled by anybody now.

Convergence

As forecast in these columns, the Karmachar team did ask for an inventory of the Soviet arms supplies to India, though New Delhi has been denying that it was asked or given. Mr B. R. Bhagat's contention that details of such talks cannot be disclosed might be technically valid. But to be sure, the Americans can get the figure directly from the Soviets if it were

needed for calculating the quantum of aid cut for India. Everything points to a convergence of super-Power interests on the sub-continent and to that extent the manoeuvrability of both India and Pakistan is lost. The total value of the aid the two countries on the sub-continent would get from the two super-Powers together would not be variable whatever the permutations and combinations in our foreign policy. The talk of manoeuvrability is therefore meaningless.

* * *

A commentary appearing in *Pravda* is significant. The Soviet commentator's attack on the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party is not over their attempt to undermine Indo-Soviet friendship but their designs against India's policy of non-alignment. India's foreign policy, as practised, appears most acceptable to the Soviet Government and even Mr Dange who wanted it followed a little more sincerely would seem to be wrong. What is more significant is the commentator's reluctance to attack the PSP and the SSP who were as critical of the Soviet arms sale to Pakistan as the two rightist parties. There appears to be a studied effort to gloss over the anti-Sovietism of the two socialist parties. There is also a deliberate attempt to overlook the CPI(M)'s position against any socialist country giving arms to any country except to fight imperialism.

* * *

Mr Y. B. Chavan's cryptic statement in Parliament that the Nagi Reddy communists and their plans to form a third communist party are being watched is by itself insignificant and can be dismissed as the routine answer to a routine question.

But Mr Nagi Reddy's call on August 2 for a return to the Telengana line and hint of return to armed struggle puts Mr Chavan's remark in perspective.

Mr Nagi Reddy's contention is that the all-India leadership of the CPI called off the Telengana struggle without consulting the party cadres. All that is a bit of forgotten history now. Even the Andhra communist leadership was stamped into calling off

the armed struggle all because the all-India leadership had to suborn its own strategy to Moscow's interests. Cold war replaced class struggle in Moscow's armoury and that culminated in the betrayal of a movement in India.

To recall a bit of history, the Andhra communists have been the custodians of what has now come to be recognised as the Maoist line even before the People's Republic of China came into being. The Telengana struggle had begun in 1946, even before India's independence, during P. C. Joshi's period of "right reformism" and continued through Mr B. T. Ranadive's period of "left sectarianism". So when Moscow directed suspension of the struggle the CPI's leadership had an unpleasant task to perform. A resolution of the Central Committee in May 1951 said that while the party had to make suggestions on tactics it could not decide on or call off the people's struggle, that the decision was up to the people of Telengana, and that the party wanted to protect them and their hard-won gains. It was apologetic in its tone. "At the same time the CC wishes to state that it is prepared to solve the problem by negotiations and settlement and intends to preserve and protect the interests of the peasantry and the people and to restore peaceful conditions in the area". On October 22, 1951 a statement on behalf of the Central Committee and the Andhra Pradesh Committee said they had decided "to advise the Telengana peasantry and the fighting partisans to stop all partisan actions and to mobilise the entire people for an effective participation in the ensuing general election to rout the Congress at the poll."

August 4, 1968

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Second Reading

I. AKHTAR

The former U. K. Conservative Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas Home, told a party rally on Saturday, his party would try to restore Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf and Singapore if returned to power.

Sir Alec Douglas Home called on Friday night for a new Western defence pact, including Japan, to help preserve peace in South-East Asia against any threat from China.

—The Times of India, Monday, July 22, 1968

THUS spake Sir Alec Douglas Home, the not so gallant knight of the Vanishing British Empire. It is becoming clearer with every passing day that the diehard racists and neo-imperialists are itching for a full-scale come-back to their former colonies. In some cases, paradoxically, their interests in the exploitation of the natural resources of these has increased manifold after their pull-out. The national bourgeoisie, which has taken over the right to exercise the direct political power, is closely collaborating with the former rulers of the colonies.

Sir Alec Douglas Home's concern for the preservation of peace in South-East Asia is very touching. It is bound to strike some very sympathetic chords in many Asian breasts. It is not irrelevant to tell here that Sir Alec's party is opposed to the use of force against the illegal white regime of Rhodesia, where a white minority has usurped power and imposed a fascist rule on the majority of the indigenous black population. But this inequity has not in the slightest injured the conception of "democracy" in the minds of men like Wilson and Douglas Home. Nor do men like Douglas Home see a threat to peace in this more than blatant situation.

The racists in order to carry on their exploitation of the resources of South-

East Asia have now invented a threat from China. The American Secretary of State, Mr Dean Rusk, in the words of Walter Lippmann, "in his celebrated press conference" of October 12, 1967 had let the white cat out of the bag. Mr Rusk had clarified that America's real purpose in the Vietnamese war is to prevent a billion Red Chinese armed with nuclear weapons from dominating the other billion Asians.

In this perspective, it would be foolish to overlook the recent talks in New Delhi conducted by the high-powered U.S. delegation under the leadership of Mr Nicholas Katzenbach, the U.S. Under-Secretary of State. The delegation which by its composition looked liked quite an army, had high-level or "low-level" periodic exchanges of views "agreed upon by India and the U.S. to promote a better understanding of the two countries' approaches to various world problems."

Among the members of the top-level delegation at least three members caught the eye; Mr Edward Hamilton of America's National Security Council, Mr Helmut Sonnenfeldt, director of the office of research, Soviet Affairs; Mr Harold Jacobson, director of the office of intelligence and research, Asian affairs.

If you still do not feel perturbed and no bell rings in your mind, you are surely some kind of nut. Yes, "non-alignment" has turned out to be a great hoax, for now it means nothing but equal subservience to the Big Powers. In the long run or perhaps, in the short run, where this ballyhooed and hypocritical policy of non-alignment will lead the country and its poverty-stricken and problem-ridden people is not difficult to visualise. Capitalism, when in difficulties, always tries to solve its problems by war.

The Johnsons, the Rusks, the Douglas Homes, the Wilsons may, after all, be partly right in their assumption that the whole wide world is peopled by gullible fools, or, at least, some parts of the world seem to be peopled by crafty fools! And fools, as the saying goes, rush in where even angels fear to tread. And crafty fools rush in at double speed.

Storm Over Lagoons

RAMJI

THE Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee is shouting itself hoarse over the assignment of a hundred-acre ppanse of lagoon called Veluthulli about a dozen miles to the south of Cochin port. This issue has been bed as a "life and death issue for Kerala" by the KPCC President himself and a satyagraha by Congress volunteers before the Aleppy District Collector's Office is on. Apart from this, with the help of the party, a campaign against the United Government is being sought to be whipped up on lines similar to the prelude of the 'liberation struggle' of 1958. And behind the scenes, the tactics of the Congress leaders no doubt that this to them is a life-and-death political struggle.

The Congress agitators assert that if the lagoon is reclaimed the livelihood of thousands of fisherman who have been dependent on the generations would be gone and they would be plunged into less penury, and that this crime against the poor fishermen has been perpetrated by the Marxist Minister, K. R. Gouri, to pander to the of a handful of elements in her spot check-up are:

The Veluthulli locality, Kayal is an inlet from a vast numl of backwaters. During normal it is very shallow, the depth never ing more than one and a half It is by no means a fishing ground any magnitude though one across stray fish there, as in any or in any overflow of water. In area there are 53 families of fish Most of the menfolk are employ of the Dock Labour Board in The You Port. The women and children profitable occupation in the port industry, working in the section of shrimp processing There are only 31 people there whom fishing is a part-time occupa The assignment of the inlet prevent them from carrying on a few hundred yards away from

the backwaters stretch in a vast expanse.

At the assignment, Taluq office show that Congressmen have most. The break-up is : Congress 10; Muslim League 7; Left Communists 5; Right Communists 4 and one each for followers of other parties like the RSP, KSSP etc. Further the assignees include members from all communities and not just the community of the Minister alone, as alleged.

The assignment was supervised by a party popular committee in the Congress, however, refused to participate.

Drainage of shallow backwaters for agricultural purposes has been the accepted policy of all governments in Kerala. During Congress rule under Mr R. Shankar, stretches of lands ranging from 100 to 2,000 acres were assigned to individuals. Then, the beneficiaries used to be Congressmen or Congress supporters and money elements at that—who tried to secure vast acres of such lands which have great potential for reclamation, especially of the rich cash crop coconut.

It is interesting to note that Mr. M. M. Master, a Kerala Congress leader is one worthy who secured acres under such assignments in the past. Another retired captain in the military, who sought to corner a large number of acres under this assignment scheme, did not get any land as he was neither landless nor poor. He is in the fray now against the Government. In the past, under the Congress Government, such assignments of lands to the landless and poor were to be thin guises for big vested interests to corner government land.

This has not worked now. The Youth Congress launched a mass action campaign against the Government. Failing to get local volunteers they brought volunteers from far and near and tried to break the police cordon that had been flung on the shores of the lagoon. The local people were not interested in being the scapegoats of a political game. The mercenaries came in cars and buses and tried to force their way through

the police cordon onto the lagoon in order to uproot the markings that had been set up to define the boundaries of each assignee. The police chased them off. Only the minimum force was employed and there was no injury, no broken bones, no lathi charge. Yet it is evident that the Congress and its newspapers prepared their story in advance. Front-page space was reserved for this by the leading papers. And there was great disappointment that no firing had taken place. The KPCC president, then at Calicut and in touch with a newspaper office, became offended when the reporters from Ernakulam refused to state that there had been firing. Yet he gave out a statement that Youth Congress leaders had been beaten black and blue and were in hospital. The "hospitalised" Youth Congress president could be seen going about hale and active in Ernakulam the next morning. Yet the Youth Congress high command in Delhi passed resolutions condemning police atrocities in Veluthuli. Lying statements based on pure fabrications and threats of popular action came out in a torrent from the KPCC president and others. The KPCC met in Ernakulam and formally took over command of the 'struggle' from its Youth Congress wing. The satyagraha before the Aleppy Collectorate began.

And that supreme Gandhian and ex-rice dealer. Mr T. O. Bawa, the Pradesh Congress president, in one of his series of statements has claimed that advocate Sadasivan Pillay, who took part in the demonstration before the Aleppy Collectorate, has been so beaten up by the police that he is on the point of death—an attempted murder by the police of the Communist Ministry. Doctors from Trivandrum, experts, who checked up have certified that Mr Pillay has serious ailments but his condition is in no way due to physical assault. This is no proof for the Congress president or the party. Like Veluthulli, Pillay is another step in the escalation of the liberation struggle. And if Mr Pillay does not die he would be doing the greatest disservice to democracy and freedom.

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The Fireman

By A CORRESPONDENT

THE recent firemen's strike on the South Central Railways has not made the public any wiser about the problem. The reaction of the common man to the strike was not friendly, and the pointed announcements by the Government of India about food supplies to Kerala being disrupted by the strike, created the impression that firemen were playing with the lives of ordinary people. The general reporting in the Press too was confined to the demand of the firemen for a maximum duty period of 12 hours, without really going into what this demand means vis-a-vis the present arrangement. Also, there was quite a lot of gratuitous comment on the necessity of immediate resumption of duties, the dislocation, the inconvenience to the general public, the loss to the railway exchequer &c. As the problem itself was not stated, the people have had no idea how genuine the grievance of the firemen is, and the relevance of the actual conditions of their service to the whole problem of safety on the railways.

The period of rest that the engine crew can get is at present based on the total hours of "running duty" they perform. For instance, after 10 hours of running duty, the driver is expected to tell the traffic control that he and his firemen should be relieved when they complete the twelve hours. But the "running duty" hours are counted from the time the train leaves the yard and till it reaches the destination yard. The time taken in preparing the engine in the shed (it would take hours to steam up during the whole of which period the firemen are constantly at work on the engine), and later in the yard before the train actually leaves, and at the destination point in taking the engine from the yard to the shed—this period often exceeding four to five hours—is not counted as period on duty for the purposes of rest. A train might have taken only twelve hours on the run between two yards or junction points, but nearly four to five extra

hours might have been spent by the crew on the engine. For example, if a train is scheduled to leave station A at 0.45 hours, the engine has to leave the shed at 00.00 hours. The crew should report at the shed at 23.15 hours. After the engine comes to the line, it may take another one and a half hours to start, owing to delay in forming the train and creating vacuum. The crew would therefore have spent three hours on duty even before the train started. But though they have been working since the moment they 'signed on', the actual reckoning of their duty period starts only from this point. Again, after reaching the destination, about 30 minutes will be taken in taking the engine to the shed, and another 30 in looking the engine over for running repairs. So the effective time spent on duty in this case (assuming that the actual run had taken only twelve hours, there being no other usual delays) is as much as 16 hours. As the crew is entitled to a rest of 8 hours after 12 hours of running duty, they will actually get 8 hours' rest after working for about 16 to 18 hours. The situation is even worse with goods trains, for, as a matter of practice on the Indian Railways, the crew of these trains invariably work for about 17 hours continuously before they get a spell of 8 hours' rest. What the firemen demanded was that the period of 12 hours duty should be counted from the time they sign on to the time they sign off (and not, as at present, from the time the train actually starts, or the engine moves from the yard).

Hard Work

The general public is almost always unaware of the crew of a train, except of course when there is an accident, when the blame is put squarely on their shoulders. It is odd that almost always the drivers are blamed for their carelessness (or more recently, for their callousness), though invariably they are the first to get killed in railway accidents. The fireman's job, though not

as conspicuous as the driver's, is a very strenuous and highly skilled one. In other words, in spite of appearances to the contrary, the fireman is not just to shovel coal into the boiler. Not merely is he continuously at work stoking the engine with practical rest in between, he is also constantly watching the steam pressure, and when the fire needs to be stoked, an eye on the supply of coal to the engine (for conserving which he gets a bonus), and all the while working arduously under extremely hot conditions. Since firemen in the course of time evolve into engine drivers, it is quite normal for a fireman to be the driver in sighting the signals. The 'rest' of eight hours that they get after about seventeen hours of duty can hardly be called 'rest', as it is often spent in out-station running rooms. These running rooms are, beyond imagination, poorly furnished and as different sets of crews come in at odd hours, one can never get the type of rest that one gets before the next spell of duty. The result is fatigue, an important contributing factor to accidents of the type we have had in recent months, when the drivers passed the danger signals and crashed into stationary engines. The hours of duty of the drivers are reckoned in the same manner as those of the firemen, and it is this lack of unity and class consciousness that kept them out of the recent strike. The role played by the National Federation vis-a-vis the 'unreconstructed' Dakshina Railway Employees' Union only shows how 'progressive' the authorities are not averse to making deals with rival union in the process. It would be stupid to blame the Railway Administration for precipitating the strike or for exploiting these inter-union rivalries that was only to be expected. A disturbing feature of the recent strike has been the deploying of units of the Territorial Army to carry on the duties of the striking firemen. As is well known, the railway staff are recruited in large number for service in the Territorial Army, the underlying idea being that they would be available to assume jobs in an emergency.

Calcutta Diary

GYAN KAPUR

ONE of the results of the much vaunted policy of a mixed economy in India has been commercialization of Government departments. Take the Department of Information and Broadcasting. Listeners to the Vividh Bharati programme in Calcutta were quite agreeably surprised to find after the recent changes in wavelengths that the station was now comparatively quite strong and a fairly good reception was possible. For years since its inception the Vividh Bharati station in Calcutta had been a very weak station. Even Peking Radio, without benefit of American or other Western know-how, was quite clear despite all that distance. But with Vividh Bharati during a car trip it was possible to get a strong signal near Dum Dum but as we proceeded down south, it became less and less strong and ultimately it faded out completely near the Lakes.

That the Government of India has ultimately decided to do some justice to the Vividh Bharati station is all to the good. But what is sad is the reason behind the change. Immediately after the change comes the news that from October commercial services are going to be introduced. Obviously the advertisers have told the Government that they are not going to give any business unless the station comes on clear and strong. What could not be done for years has come about quite easily now just to cater to the needs of business. So much for the people and the professed Congress aim of a socialistic pattern of society.

Along with the mythical circular railway, a better water supply and drainage system and a host of other things, Calcutta will have to do without television for some time more, according to reports. This is not something for which the average Calcutta citizen is going to lose his sleep. Like the small car, television is not within the means of any but the elite of society. However, the reason for giving Calcutta and the other big cities the

go-by for the present in preference to Srinagar is what is noteworthy. Television in New Delhi of course was inevitable, granted our present rulers. With all the foreign embassies and visiting dignitaries it was a question of 'face.' The reason for having it in Srinagar is quite another. This is to pander to the tastes of foreign tourists and may be their counterparts in India. No doubt the programmes will be oriented to this end, forgetting that no country has built up its tourist attraction by trying to give the foreigner what he is used to at home. What most tourists hunger for is a taste of something different and truly representative of the country they visit.

All in all, however, it may be a good thing if the scheme for bringing television to Calcutta is dropped, provided the amount of Rs. 1 crore earmarked for this is allotted for easing some of the problems of the citizens. But, perhaps that is a fond hope.

* *

There is such a thing as Tashkent and another called the Code of Conduct for All India Radio talks. But judging from the commentaries broadcast from the Calcutta station of All India Radio these are only for non-officials, paid employees of Government not being bound by any restraints. Otherwise it would be difficult to explain things.

The Pakistani Government with the lemon-growing General Ayub Khan at its head is hardly composed of saints but there is no reason why we should go out of our way to provide grist to their mills. The attempts to link India with the so-called conspiracy of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and others are laughable if not for any other reason than for the fact that such an active policy is beyond our present rulers. But in their attempts to show that India is keen to disintegrate Pakistan, unfortunately we are ourselves providing the material, thus helping the rulers

unit of the Territorial Army, is pressed into service; cannot be recalled simply, even though in this emergency they were employed as virtual breakers. Any self-respecting employee would henceforward from volunteering for service in any future strike his ser- might be requisitioned against his comrades. The chances are that there would be a slackening off of en- in the TA, and if, in the case of an emergency, the railway au- find even units of the Terri- Army inadequate to man the they will have only their strategy to thank.

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AUGUST 10, 1968

of Pakistan with false excuses for crushing the democratic movements. In this the Calcutta station of All India Radio is playing a big part.

Day in and day out a news commentator of the station harps on the essential unity of the two Bengals and their people. What purpose is to be served by such propaganda is difficult to understand. Once we have accepted the formation of Pakistan as a separate entity whether we like it or not, they are entitled to be what they like. When different States in India are themselves vociferous over their right to live their own lives, this is bound to sound as malicious. Moreover, East Bengal and West Bengal always had essential differences which can have only been enhanced beyond all measure now.

In all this Tagore and the Pakistani rulers' campaign against his songs and writings have become a handy tool. Resentment at anything showing disrespect to Tagore will no doubt be instinctive in West Bengal and India too. But it is worse than useless to be carried away by our emotions in this respect. We should not forget that this is an ideological war which only the people of Pakistan, particularly East Pakistan, must fight. And from what we know they have been and are still fighting staunchly. Why can we not let them fight it out with their rulers? It may be worth remembering at this stage that Tagore, venerated now, had to struggle hard to gain recognition and acceptance of his ideas, and slanders against him found a ready ear in certain sections of Bengali society. And our own record in looking after national figures is not very bright. Tagore at least should be kept out of the cold war with Pakistan.

* *

And now it is the turn of the Corporation officers to join in the mutual mud-slinging game that is the Calcutta Corporation. The officers have charged the councillors who control the Corporation of 'systematically and deliberately, trying to make the officers a scapegoat for all the evils and short-

comings'. While Corporation officials are not all that blameless as they are trying to make out, they do have a plausible case. The mess is the creation of the councillors and to put all the blame on the officers is just to evade responsibility. The suggestion of the officers that the policy-makers should either take up responsibility directly or be stopped from making 'irrelevant, incorrect verbose and politically motivated statements' is not likely to be acceptable to those concerned. If that were done, the Corporation would lose its raison d'être. But by now the officers should know it.

* *

Killed by kindness is not just an empty phrase. According to tradition, certain wealthy gentlemen who believed that piety would come to them if they could sacrifice a few Brahmins, enticed the poor victims by offering more and more money for eating a little more, ultimately leading to their doom.

In Mizoland where what is happening is anybody's guess, three children died, some more were injured, a house was destroyed and a Church damaged, all by food dropped out of kindness by the Indian Air Force. According to the report, the Commissioner of Cachar immediately rushed to the place to evacuate the injured and visit the bereaved family. The Rs. 64,000 question which remains unanswered is this: If the place, Darlawng, could be so easily reached by helicopter why in the first instance was it necessary to drop the food from the helicopter instead of its landing and handing over the supplies? Or is it that the food that killed was really meant for some other place? Or is the Air Force just having practice drops?

* *

Irked by the management's failure to meet their just demands and the growing nepotism, some workers in a chemical factory have framed their own "Laws of Success" and mailed them to the directors and executives. Already these pamphlets have become

something of a collector's piece. There are some of the "Laws of Success"

Try to gain access to the directors' homes and run errands for their wives.

(If you are a relative of any of the directors this is of course unnecessary).

Flout all instructions and orders. Thereby the directors and executives will think you have initiative.

If you are a junior executive manage to get hold of a car in your own name anyhow. Go out during office hours and have a few drinks. You won't have to go far. The AAEI is very near. There you will find all the directors and executives.

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Press
The Lingerin Dispute

COMMENTATOR

ONLY a professional speculator will dare to wager on whether the newspaper strike will have ended when the lines appear in print. The horse-race in New Delhi has made it abundantly clear that the Union Labour Minister has decided to remain for the moment an onlooker in the struggle between newspaper employers and non-journalist employees. Mr. Morarji has promised Parliament to enter the arena later on; which means he will be quite comfortable for some time in his ringside seat. In the last few days the question of implementation of the recommendations of the wage board for non-journalists has been pushed to the background and the issue has come to the fore. It means the employers do not mind the effect to the wage board award, not fully, at least on a scale much higher than what they had previously imposed. If this gesture was made in time, the strike would perhaps have been avoided. But that would have gained the employers their objective.

For understandable reasons the newspaper employers have a more militant attitude towards the All-India Federation of Working Journalists. They are prepared to negotiate with the journalists at the national level. They have done so in the past, and even now when the current dispute over the award of the journal wage board is resolved, the settlement will be on the national level. But they are not prepared to extend the gesture to non-journalists and are insisting on negotiations at unit levels; their argument is that the financial capacities of the newspapers vary, and what may be within the means of one unit may be beyond another's. But the argument, if not captious, would hold against the journalists and it is reasonable to assume that if the newspapers are in a position to implement the pay scales of

journalists on the national level, they can have no insurmountable difficulty in following a similar course in the case of non-journalists. The non-journalists have demanded nothing more than that. In insisting on a settlement on the national level they have displayed a rare sense of solidarity; for in the biggest units the employees would possibly have gained more through unit-level negotiations, though that would have been the death of the Federation.

It is curious that the interest of the reader, who has already been seriously affected by the strike and is likely to be more so, is not being mentioned at all. For the time being he has been forced to take leave of his personal preference and subscribe a paper which he would have gone without if he were free to exercise his option. There is now a strike in *The Hindu* also, and the only big paper to remain unaffected is Calcutta's *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. Now that it has to cater for the combined readership of three papers in the eastern region it is unable to give adequate attention to its contents. It is wholly absorbed in the task of printing as many copies as possible, all its attention being directed towards retaining a part of the emergency circulation. It has started publishing "facts" about itself and reports of surveys conducted by unnamed agencies, which is perhaps natural in the circumstances. The story can be no different in other regions also, though one would hope that papers in other centres are being more circumspect in consolidating the advantage that chance has thrown in their way.

Whoever wins in the present tussle there is no doubt that the additional burden that will devolve on newspapers is going to be passed on to readers and advertisers. The Bombay edition of *The Times of India* has already been priced at 20 paise and even before the present dispute had come to a head some other papers were toying with the idea of following suit. All papers raised their advertisement rates about a year ago, and it is reported that there is a proposal to raise the rates further. The reservations which some of the units might have had

about these proposals appear to have been eroded by the current crisis. It is only a question of time when newspaper prices and advertisement rates are going to be enhanced.

It is not difficult for big newspapers to enforce a joint decision to raise their prices. The readers may resent it but they cannot go without their papers. But raising the advertisement rates is a more difficult task. The Government is still the single largest advertiser, and the newspaper proprietors would have to secure its consent before they decide to enforce the decision. The recent meeting between employers' representatives and the Union Information Minister is significant. It is quite likely that a deal will be struck so that the employees may be satisfied but the employers may not be the poorer for it.

"Cabinet Differences"

No event of any significance can be complete now without a story of differences in the Union Cabinet over how the situation has to be met. The newspaper strike is no exception. It is stated that Mr. Morarji Desai and Mr. Chavan are in favour of an immediate settlement, though they are not quite clear on how the Government should go about it. On the other hand, Mrs. Indira Gandhi would like the dispute to linger, not because she has excessive sympathy for either of the disputing parties but for the simple reason that the strike has boosted the sale of the newly started Delhi edition of *National Herald*, which proudly proclaims that it was founded by Jawaharlal Nehru. The strike has eliminated all competition, and if it continues the paper will have an opportunity to build up some circulation.

Among the few papers that are still being published, *Patriot* has thought the strike worth an editorial. The paper is reported to have implemented the awards of the two wage boards. In any event, it would not have been affected by the strike as it does not belong to the top three classes of newspapers. The paper says that the strike is an opportunity for the Government to take a second look at the newspaper industry and start initiating

moves to free a section of the Press from the hold of a group of monopolists who have corrupted it for the last two decades and make it a weapon to defend its petty interests. The exclusion of newspapers with less revenue from the strike proves that the workers are not unreasonable and realise the difficulties that some of the managements experience owing to continuing rise in the costs of production. Such rise can be compensated and all managements be in a position to pay their employees fair wages without running periodically into difficulties only if some reorganisation of the whole industry is attempted. As the industrial giants who own most of the newspapers in the first three groups will not do this voluntarily, the Government itself should do it, asserting that the Press is a factor in our democratic public life that cannot be entirely left to the mercy of monopolists. The difficulties faced by the newspapers with lower revenues do not arise through lack of readership. Two important reasons that make them vulnerable are the Government's newsprint policy and its total indifference to how it is utilised by the richest section of the newspaper industry. A newsprint policy which does not impose certain proportions of space used for advertisement and reading respectively has helped the industrialist houses that own these papers to make them sources of considerable profit while they are also used to blackmail or cajole selected enemies or friends in the Government and at influential levels of political life. The exposure of malpractices in the case of two of the newspaper-owning industrialists is enough excuse for the Government to go into the structure of the Press and try to find out ways and means to make it a vehicle of democracy rather than one more source of national corruption.

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Revolution : Peking, Paris

By A CORRESPONDENT

ONE result of the widespread student movement that engulfed the West, particularly the spring thunder over Paris, is that some Western observers are now taking a second look at the Chinese Cultural Revolution, so long castigated as 'power-struggle', 'civil war', 'war of succession' and what not. Paul Johnson, editor of *New Statesman*, cryptically noted that after the events of Paris 'Mao's madness' seemed to be common sense: Cultural Revolution, in the sense used by the Chinese, can, however, take place only after the establishment of a new social order. So any comparison between the Chinese Cultural Revolution and the May upsurge in Paris is bound to be misleading. But the term Cultural Revolution is being used frequently to express the desire for doing away with the old institutions, particularly in the realm of education. In this sense the attempt of the French students to overthrow outmoded institutions and survivals of the feudal past was 'cultural revolution' of a sort. And above all, between the revolutions of Peking and Paris several features—the leading role of the students, the student-worker alliance, the anti-bureaucratic aspect of the struggle and finally the exposure of the whole education system to revolutionary criticism—are strikingly common. These have inspired Robert Guillain, the famous Far Eastern expert, to compare and contrast the two in an article in *Le Monde* (weekly edition, June 6-12, 1968). The main contention of the article is :

The first big problem that confronted the Maoist Cultural Revolution was to continue production while making revolution. At a moment when the events of France show, on certain points, striking similarities with the Chinese experience, it is interesting to stress that in the final reckoning the Chinese workers have made their revolution without ever interfering with their work for long.

Born towards the end of 1965 the

Cultural Revolution in fact took with the appearance of the Red Guards, that is, the 'revolutionary students who were the "detonator" of the movement. In a second phase, as in France, it embraced the working class and threw the Maoist "revolutionary rebels" into action in factories and offices. It also posed the Cultural Revolution the problem of production.

Towards the beginning of 1967 workers joined the movement but was not effected without a period of serious unrest in the enterprises. The Chinese economy was in peril. The galloping increase in population of the country cannot allow its development to be slowed down. But even at the height of the storm the people who unleashed the storm retained control over the forces: they threw into the movement. At the same time, in their action they showed that they had foreseen the situation and had some recipe for the occasion.

On August 8 Mao Tse-tung made the Central Committee adopt the famous Sixteen-Point decision in which he planned to some extent the revolution to come and that with an astonishing prescience of the situation that unfolded itself. Article 14 said in substance there might be attempts to halt the revolution under the pretext of safeguarding production, but that is inadmissible. In a reverse sense it was an imperious necessity to see that the revolutionary upsurge does not lead to lowering of either production or quality.

When the moment arrived in 1967 these views had to be presented to the workers in a short formula, a formula that might seem elementary to us but it is in this that Mao also showed his genius, knowing that he speaks to a simple folk, sensitive to the power of slogans which give to their action a hundredfold strength. The formula was: "grasp revolution in one hand and production in the other". Since then the huge propaganda

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China has been ceaselessly explaining to the workers. These two arms, revolution and production, cannot go without the other, they said. A revolution which neglects production amounts to suicide. But production has a better friend, if one may say so, than a well-led revolution, because, as pointed out in the Sixteen Points of August 1966, it liberates at a time the workers and the productive forces of the country.

Of course, the Cultural Revolution did not pass through many other troubles, and production fell to some extent under the impact of the political storm. But it cannot be said to have caused the economic crisis. There has never been serious or durable shortage of work in factories or offices. This sector, of course, witnessed some disorder, but no disaster.

Similarities

Between the Chinese Cultural Revolution and the "revolution" in France there are thus resemblances but also dissimilarities, the first of which is that "rebels" have not safeguarded production. The major difference, however, consists in the fact that since beginning the Cultural Revolution, despite some unforeseen interruptions, did not forget where it had intended to go. More precisely, the workers and other forces in the movement were always "teleguided" by people who knew where they intended to go and who had behind them a long experience in dealing with the masses. This could not be said about the French today. In China the massive force of the student youth is a guided force and guided by the Party itself.

In order to translate the Chinese into French it should be presupposed that the French Red Guards—the rebel students—in their struggle had found an ally and leader at the head of the state—General de Gaulle himself. Moreover one should imagine a "de Gaulle-Mao" who, on finding that the regime established by himself is not certainly satisfying, is resolved to smash everything in order to transform and renovate it

all. And in order to do so it is he who invents the Cohn-Bendits and the group of *enrages*, wishing thereby to have a new and explosive arm. They could also be held together and directed in the work of destruction and construction.

A Mitterand or a Mendes-France who would be able to gain the confidence of the youth in the movement and lead it would equally fit in well with Mao's model.

Where did the Cultural Revolution of Peking begin? Like that of the French, at the university. For the Chinese Revolution (especially at the outset), is truly cultural, that is, led by the desire to change the culture, the civilisation. How did it all come about in Peking University? It is strikingly similar to what happened at the Sorbonne. A noisy, unending and confusing debate begins, unfolding universal ideas and opinions of the youth. There is general and merciless criticism of the entire established order. The wall magazines and wall posters, in addition, bring about a sort of sudden liberation of the Press. This liberty of thought is given, only to be canalised gradually by the experienced leaders among the student mass towards an obligatory conclusion given in advance: the exclusive supremacy of the thought of Mao Tse-tung.

The great debate on the reform of society concentrated at the same time on the particular problems of student life. Suppression of the existing system of examination, overthrow of the out-dated syllabus, dismissal or rectification of a number of professors who are nothing but mandarins, admission of the children of workers and peasants in greater numbers to higher education—these were the main demands, little different from those advanced by the French students. To the conservative people who are afraid of seeing examinations suspended and vacation prolonged, the Chinese students reply that the lost lessons are compensated by one great lesson of politics and revolution.

Gradually the effervescence spread from the Chinese universities to the entire nation. The "great criticism" engulfed the whole of China. A gui-

deline was given by Mao at the beginning of the battle which he launched against the ossified party apparatus led by and incarnated in Liu Shao-chi. The slogan which Mao threw at the people in Peking was "concern yourselves with the affairs of the State". The masses which had so long obeyed orders were now called upon by the old revolutionary to politicise themselves to the utmost and take part in the public life.

Who were the adversaries criticised in the course of the Cultural Revolution? In the first place it was the Communist Party which was accused of following the revisionist path and being ossified and led by people who became quasi-bourgeois conservatives. In the second place it was the trade unions.

Students and Workers

What was the result when the Chinese students wanted to carry the revolution into the factory to seek allies among the workers? It was almost the same that happened with the French students in the Renault factory. At the beginning workers kept them apart and the trade union—the only and official trade union of China—was the first to shut the doors of the factories. It was much later and after some struggle that a section came out to form a "rebel" group against the mandarins of the party and the union, and joined with the students. The trade unionists were criticised by the Maoists for their "economism". They were interested solely or principally in material demands while considering political struggle secondary and even unnecessary.

In this great upheaval one of the major difficulties faced by the Maoists, the agitating minority who attempted to instal a new revolutionary order, was the constant disunity which raged within their ranks. However, some would ask, is not "spontaneity" of the masses a phenomenon which can be beneficial in course of time? No, the Maoists reply that the thesis of "revolutionary spontaneity" is of revisionist nature. The masses can take the correct path when they are guided

by the only correct theory—the thought of Mao Tse-tung.

The liberty that is allowed in the Cultural Revolution is the liberty within socialism. This is why an immense campaign is organised for the diffusion of the "little red book" and the thought it contains. At the same time there followed long and arduous work for the unification of the dispersed factions. The first step consisted in amalgamating all the "revolutionary rebel" groups into a single organisation. The second step was to form a "Triple Alliance" with two other revolutionary forces: army and old cadres of the party, at least those who had abandoned the revisionist path and rallied behind Mao in the actual struggle.

The young people—the Red Guards

and revolutionary workers—finally found themselves in the company of the old whom they had attacked—the old cadres who rallied round Mao later on. And the co-existence was not always easy. But the "Triple Alliance" had brought on their side the most powerful and least affected group of the country—the army. This undoubtedly is a provisional arrangement but one that will at least last till a new party is rehabilitated.

In all this, even if the French are not more Chinese than one thinks, at least China is finally nearer to the French than it appeared. In any case the Chinese Cultural Revolution of Peking, which so often appeared to the French to be an enigma, at last seems much more intelligible in the light of the events in France.

Book Review

Sierra Maestra To Bolivia

KAJAL SEN

THE triumphal entry of Fidel Castro and his comrades of the Sierra Maestra into Havana in early 1959 and the establishment of a socialist State in Cuba have been one of the most important events in the last ten years. Important, not only because they constituted a severe challenge to American imperialism which had till then the entire Latin America ruled by puppet rulers, under its thumb but also because the triumph of the Cuban rebel army brought new hopes to freedom fighters elsewhere, particularly in South-East Asia, in Vietnam.

The Cuban revolution has also raised many questions, the most important of which is perhaps the role traditional Communist parties can perform in the task of liberating a country. Should one continue with the democratic struggles, wait for the objective conditions to ripen and then launch the final assault or are objective conditions in underdeveloped and semi-colonial countries already favourable for an armed uprising? The Cuban revolu-

tion by causing these questions to be raised has made a definite contribution to the various liberation movements.

The questions invariably bring up the name and ideas of a man who had very definite views on the subject, Ernesto Che Guevara, the Argentine-born doctor who joined Castro in Mexico, boarded the 'Granma', landed with other Cuban freedom fighters in Cuba, fought against the Batista regime for three years in the Sierra Maestra, became a Minister in the revolutionary Government of Castro and then relinquished everything in mid-1965 to conduct liberation movements in other South American countries. For the next two years one heard little of Che and his activities were shrouded in mystery—speculations were rife about his whereabouts and a Calcutta daily even reported that he was in Vietnam—until October 1967 when he was captured in Bolivia by Barrientos' troops and executed. In a remarkable broadcast to the nation in Havana, Fidel Castro himself confirmed his

death and the world learnt of his plans to liberate Bolivia and there the entire South American continent through guerilla warfare in Cuba.

Two books* by Che have been published since then which give a graphic account of the days in Sierra Maestra, and of those in Bolivian jungles between November 1966 and October 7, 1967—before he was captured. Introduced to both the books are by Fidel Castro. While the former speaks of a social movement the Diary ends abruptly at the movement just about to crystallise. Of course one has no reason to read the American Press comments; the diary tells the tale of a blunder. The Diary might yet prove to have recorded the initial days of a successful movement, provided, as Che himself had said, "this our battle cry to some receptive ear, that another stretch out to take up weapons and that other men come forward to sing out the funeral dirge with the sound of machine guns and new combat and victory".

That of course is yet to be. For time being and for future revolutionaries to take lessons the two books there to tell of the hard life of a guerilla. Apart from physical exertions which often also affect mental health the guerilla has also to face dangers, mainly defections. In *Reminiscences*, Che lays down the cardinal principles which a man should strictly adhere to: he should be suspicious of all, should never sleep under a roof and should always be on the move until a zone has been liberated.

Being in the nature of a report and not always exciting, the book would not be interesting to those who expect tales of daring deeds and adventure. The interest pertains to centres round the way the movement was conducted, the relation between the guerilla and the people around

* *Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War* (George Allen & Unwin, 42 sh.) and the *Diary in Bolivia* (National Book Agency (P) Ltd., Rs.5).

the role of urban democratic
and, in the Diary, the role of
Communist parties.

Communist Opposition

To the Indian reader the latter point
will be of particular interest.
Throughout his stay in Bolivia, Che
fought the constant opposition
to his plans by the Bolivian
Communist party chief, Mario Monje,
and his group. Monje, as Secretary
of the party, always tried to capture
himself the political and military
leadership of the movement though he
had very little experience of either.
Despite repeated differences, Monje
was in the extent of creating a division
in the party and repeatedly thwarted
Che's attempts to recruit more and
more guerrillas—in fact at no time did
he have more than 50 people with him.
In the introduction to the Diary Castro
severely castigates Monje and his friends
for having "not even surpassed the
nationalist level of the aboriginal
parties conquered by European colo-
nists at the time of the conquest".
Guevara complains throughout
the Diary of the lack of contact with
the Bolivian capital of La Paz and the
people there from whom he expected
support. His exasperation with the
Bolivian Communist parties becomes evi-
dent when referring to a Budapest daily
which had criticized him and had
asked the Chilean party Che says,
"I would like to take power if
I could unmask cowards and lackeys
of this kind and rub their noses in
their own dirty tricks". (The point
of interest to the Indian reader should
be a comparison of the role played
by the Communist parties there and at home
in the Marxist Communist Party
in its qualms in continuing to stay in
government which had ruthlessly
suppressed a movement led by its own
people and which till today has ex-
ecuted large numbers merely for criti-
cizing the leadership's action in dealing
with the Naxalbari situation.)

One cannot think of the Bolivian
case of Che Guevara and not be re-
minded of Regis Debray who is at
present serving a 30-year term in La
Pres. Surprisingly enough Che does
not mention much of Debray except occa-

sional references to his case. An
irritated note can also be dis-
cerned in one statement, when
he says, "the statements made by
Debray and Pelado are not good;
especially in that they have made a
confession about the intercontinental
purpose of the guerrilla, something
they did not have to do". Of course
this alone should not make one believe
the American Press reports that it was
Debray who had, on being tortured by
Bolivian troops, given out Che's hide-
out.

Both in the *Reminiscences of the
Cuban Revolutionary War* and the
Diary one gets a clear idea of the
courage and determination of the man.
A doctor by profession he took up
arms in the midst of battles in the
Sierra Maestra, rising to the ranks of
Major in the rebel army. His suffer-
ing in those difficult days was all the
more intense because of the severe
asthma which pestered him throughout
his life. Yet never for a moment in
the Diary does he sound desperate.
On the contrary he always praises
his comrades and records in detail their
birth dates. In this context one can-
not help recalling his words, "the true
revolutionary is moved by strong feel-
ings of love", and his letter to his
parents written shortly before he left
Cuba: "I have loved you very much,
only I haven't known how to express
my fondness. I am extremely rigid in
my actions and I think that sometimes
you didn't understand me", and then,
"Now a will which I have polished with
delight is going to sustain some shaky
legs and some weary lungs. I will do
it".

The sudden departure of Guevara
from Cuba had caused many to suggest
serious differences of opinion with
Castro. There might have been some
truth in that it might have been that
the revolutionary Che found it difficult
to adjust himself to the task of consoli-
dation which often brings in its wake
compromises which one has to make.
In a letter to Fidel Castro before leav-
ing Cuba Che says, "My only serious
failing was not having trusted more in
you from the first moments of the Si-
erra Maestra and not having understood
quickly enough your qualities as a

leader and a revolutionary". Continu-
ing he says, "Rarely has a statesman
been more brilliant than you in those
days (the days of the Caribbean
crisis)".

Yet the question remains: was Che
Guevara merely an adventurer, a
romanticist? Critics, among them un-
fortunately many communists, seem to
believe that nothing succeeds like suc-
cess. The going was good in Cuba.
Since his capture and execution in
Bolivia many have suggested that his
approach was wrong. In reply one
can only quote Che who was himself
conscious of the criticisms: "Many will
call me an adventurer—and that I am
only of a different sort—one of those
who risks his skin to prove his plati-
tudes". And that, one feels, is
important.

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O'Neill In Bengali

RUDRAPRASAD SEN GUPTA

ADAPTATION is a generally more acceptable method than translation if one wants to produce a foreign play in Bengali. There are, however, plays which may not bear adaptation at all and in such cases, one has to produce a translation. *Emperor Jones* according to Mr Kamal Majumdar, director of the Children's Opera Group who produced it is one such play. One can accept this view provided Mr Majumdar solves certain inherent problems regarding the production of Bengali translations. The spectator may willingly suspend his disbelief when he sees a white man or a Negro made up and dressed in their own manner, speaking Bengali. But the bone of contention remains—unless the language in so ordered and arranged that the characters speak it easily, understandably and unjarringly. In this play, that problem has remained unsolved. The syntax largely alienates us, the slurred, aspirated and heavily accentuated delivery of the literally translated lines always prevents the formation of images that words are expected to do. This foreign mode of delivering the native language largely impairs vocal acting as well as the total impact of the production. Now about certain other baffling aspects of the production. Why, for example, are the two characters made to look so young and boyish? Shouldn't the director have altogether done away with the idea of make-up and used masks instead? But since he does not object to the convention of making up the characters, why does he flout the specific direction of the text and present us with a Smithers and a Jones as two teen-agers? Again the scope of music could be far greater in this play; the vital role of the gradually mounting tomtom-beating has been utterly neglected.

These attitudinal and productional lapses in *Emperor Jones* may certainly alienate an average playgoer and make him indifferent to some features of the performance. The utter dis-

regard of naturalistic techniques of production is one such point. This defiance informs the total production, particularly the decor, the choreography and the physical acting. Which helps one to realize that the Bengalis, traditionally rich in imaginative understanding, are losing much of their theatrical receptivity owing to the supremacy of naturalism. Mr Majumdar, in the tackling of his decor, seems to be conscious of this predicament and tries to atone for his fellow-practitioners by building up a palace with just a banner and a chair and by suggesting a forest with the help of a creeper-tied stool. In the choreography, operatic delicacy and precision have been observed. And the emphasis on physical acting is laudable. Considering that there are a good many actors in this country who do not know what to do with their hands, the actors in *Emperor Jones* make a good job with their physique. With sustained ballet-like movements, mimetic actions and gestural metaphors, the players succeed in serving many movements of fascination.

To come back to the original point. The case for *Emperor Jones* in Bengali is vitiated ab initio. A play literally translated into Bengali from English can never yield the fullest meaning, nor can it ever be a perfect production even if Kamal Mazumdar, who did such a job with *Laksmianer Shaktishel*, is the director.

Maria And Bathsheba

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

IN *Viva Maria* Louis Malle has gone back to his *Zazie* tradition of filmmaking in a mood of inspired mayhem, packing the film with inventive gags and pleasing fancies. It is the story of two Marias, one an Irish anarchist and another a dancer in the road-show who, after their accidental meeting, are involved in revolutionary adventures in Mexican Ruritania. Together they encounter the striptease-hungry mob, one-night suitors, patriotic masses, monstrous dictators and a

devilish clergy and together they and their admirers, win over the and defeat the villains. They are halves of a single personality, complementing the other. Maria (Jeanne Moreau) whispers the cooings of love into her partner's while Maria II (Brigitte Bardot) fuse her revolutionary fervour with the lighthearted comedienne. A step into Malle's world, the dance acts and the revolution become of a road-show on a grand scale where art and life intermingle. The maddening and Dacia's Eastman photography, with its beautiful definition of landscapes and its clever effects creating the multiple images of two Marias, is outstanding. The message is never thrust upon the spectators, it gently touches their hearts the tender melody of a Chabrier hymn.

Schlesinger's adaptation of Hardy's *Far From The Madding Crowd* is the portrait of Bathsheba, a woman with stormy passions creating havoc in the lives of men who fall for her. She breaks the shell of misogyny. William Boldwood, is attracted by carnal lust in Sergeant Troy and finally calmed by the unselfishness of Gabriel, a love, as Hardy does it, "which many waters cannot nor floods drown..." Schlesinger tries hard to capture the tempo of Hardy's original but in his blind devotion to the literary source, he betrays his allegiance to his own medium. The result is a highly literary film, faithful to the core, but never lively enough to sparkle on its own merit. Schlesinger attempts to convey the emphasis on the relationship between man and nature in a most lumbering way and in his film nature mounts the extreme long-shorts of vanity over which the camera continues almost non-stop gliding. The director fails to find the proper visual valents to the novelist's poetic imagery and Hardy's famous pathetic fallacy becomes mere childish sentimentality. We have the image of raindrops falling on Fanny's coffin or raging storm in the mirror of surging passion. Bathsheba wading through sea leaves as the symbol of desertion.

is not at all praiseworthy. So to get a strong foothold in the minds of the enlightened public, *Frontier* should bring the literary section into prominence

SAMARESH CH. BASU
Calcutta

The Diary

The vivid description in the Calcutta Diary of August 3 of the lot of a Bengali girl of a typical middle-class family uprooted from East Bengal is as touching as it is true. Each of us, as Charan Gupta wishes, should ungrudgingly fulfil our social obligations. Occasional "airing of part-time sentiments" won't do; what is urgently needed today is to do something material so that a poor, decaying family may be properly rehabilitated and the girl given due social recognition.

Writings like this "Diary" and "Bengali Love: Made in England" (by Mr N. Majumder, May 25) provide the oases in the desert of politics in *Frontier*.

PRANAB SANKAR ROY
Barasat

The Split

"A reader" in his letter (July 13) has used the usual Communist jargon without telling much. Polemics need not be shunned nor splits feared but then quoting too often and too much from the scriptures does not lead us anywhere. The Indian Communists of all sorts are adept in digging up quotations in defence of their reformist or sectarian theories. The problems of the Indian revolution are complex and it is indeed peculiar that Communists in this country always find a simple remedy for all of these. Most strange is the volte face of the CPI(M). They have now become the latest champions of the Khrushchevian theory of peaceful transition to socialism through bourgeois parliaments. Still more amazing is their issuing a certificate to Kosygin and Co to the effect that, though revisionists, they still continue to be Communists. Poor Kautsky!

On the other hand a section of the Indian Communists does not consider any other way but the Chinese to build up armed struggle in the villages and then to encircle and occupy the cities. The proletariat is far more numerous in India, communications much better developed, the bureaucracy and the ruling class are more efficient and intelligent and, above all, the Indians do not have a Mao Tse-tung. Here middle-class people and the students are likely to play a more important role. The Indian revolution may therefore be a combination of both the Russian and the Chinese way.

"A reader" has betrayed his emotion while writing about the Naxalbari movement. The strange fact is that almost everyone—whether the Union Government or the Naxalites or the Chinese—exaggerated the happenings in Naxalbari. It was no political armed struggle but only a primary economic struggle of the peasants. As long as the Government hesitated to use full police measures there was talk of armed struggle but the moment police (and not the army) went into action the movement petered out in no time. Naxalbari is not even glorious in its defeat.

It is no use blaming the CPI(M). It was apparent to everybody and much more to the Naxalites that the CPI(M) had strayed away from the path of armed struggle. Let us question ourselves as to how much we have contributed to the success of the Naxalbari movement.

I think that Telengana and not Naxalbari should be the beacon light for the Communists in this country.

ANOTHER READER
Howrah.

To any communist who does not believe in looking at the world through the coloured glass of Revisionism, the splitting up of a Communist Party dominated by bourgeois mentality comes as an inevitable historic process at a time when the economic crisis all round the country poses a threat of revolutionary upsurge among the people.

Your correspondent (July 6) seems to be sorry for the further break in

Doctors

I am dismayed to read the tirade against the doctors in the Calcutta Diary of August 27. If the medical profession is as unprincipled as described by Mr. N. Majumder, would it improve itself by selling its ranks by uneducated and unskilled people? Presumably, Mr. N. Majumder is not against the profession but against their educational backwardness. I am quite sure that if called upon to improve the purity of tap water, he would prescribe its dilution with clean water.

He grudges the doctor his commission but is silent about the 15% pay for private practice. He points to legal abortion by qualified doctors; selfishly he would prefer it being done by unqualified abortionists. He is not quite concerned about the would-be Schlesiener's safety. Such is spite.

P. BHATTACHARYYA (Mrs)
Kenduadihi, Bankura

Boring

Mr. N. Bhattacharya's article (July 27), politics is undoubtedly boring to some, especially to the young, but it is extremely stimulating to some man of the present age who cannot live a day without it.

Mr. Bhattacharya refers to the needs of a "complete man". In a sense a "complete man" is a rare phenomenon. The needs of such a man may always be useful to the incomplete man whose number is legion.

L. K. BANERJI
Varanasi

Your weekly deals only with political matters, without paying the least attention to the cultural side. This

the "only radical party of the left", which may, as he has apprehended, put the struggle of the masses years and decades behind. He should have remembered that the history of the Communist Party in India has been a history of covering up the real struggle of the Indian people by the petty bourgeois motivations of the leadership and that the split in 1964 came across a debating table and not from any mass struggle, thus helping to dupe the rank and file by radical jargon. The present split has emerged from the battlefield of Naxalbari and not from the Burdwan Plenum of the CP (M).

TARUN SEN GUPTA
Calcutta.

Student Indiscipline

After the terrific broadsides from experts, dons and impassioned champions of 'Student Discipline', have you space for a still small voice from an ordinary guardian (petty clerk) about the MBBS examination and the recent unwelcome incidents in the Vice-Chancellor's office? Anybody knowing anything about the educational world of West Bengal is aware that headmasters and principals often submit incorrect reports (rather, they have to) to the Inspectors of schools and colleges about the state of affairs in their institutions in regard to the progress of study courses, payment of salaries to the staff etc. Nor is the occasion rare when the University has not completed the courses of the post-graduate classes.

If the students combine love and study, or politics and study in unequal proportion, so does the intellectual establishment of the University—politics (their own brand) and research, jobbery and teaching. The unconditional obedience of the child requires unconditional faultlessness in the teacher. Can a teacher who impersonates not only a living colleague but even a dead one in the Senate election claim respect. To seek in the early political activities of the students the root of all student indiscipline is to take symptoms for causes. This apart, any condemnation of political activity, even of early activity, is hypocrisy and

obscurantism. When people say: It is too early for you to engage in politics, do not let anybody influence you, they really mean, do not anybody influence you except me and my party. Every historical book, every history of literature reflects the world outlook of its author and it exerts influence on the reader. Therefore it is quite possible to influence an unenlightened youth with the aid of these so-called texts. That is the worst kind of influence.

Secondly, do the professors condemn violence in general or the particular one in the Vice-Chancellor's office? Where were they when unprecedented violence was perpetrated inside the college campus at Uttarpara on their fellow teachers? Some people get very upset when they set a muddle-headed crowd bandying together and making irresponsible noises about matters which are properly the province of the Government, of the authorities. In which case, I fear, they must brace themselves for yet another decade of irritation—as long as the present intolerable conditions persist in this part of the 'free world'. To be frank, I blame neither the students nor the teachers; we are all victims of a vicious circle. What is distasteful is the air one puts on when humble self-criticism is called for.

Our chance to influence our country for good, our chance to raise our standard of life, our chance to debarbarise our society, all these depend upon our making an explosion: an explosion of wrath against the inhuman conditions we live in, against the present inadequate attention and education the teachers and children of our country are getting.

P. C. DUTTA
Dankuni, Hooghly.

Revisionism

Monitor's study of the current controversy between Marxism and revisionism is confined to politics alone, which is a pity. The revisionists, who have their own philosophical understanding put greater stress on the "relative" side of dialectics, i.e., the identity of opposites,

than on the "absolute" side, i.e., breaking of one into two and blunts the consciousness of the ruling class leaving it unaware of its historical responsibility as an enemy and progressive force. For the revisionists uphold the politics of collaboration, talk about the state of the entire people, and total "continuity" between the basis and superstructure in a socialist society when the fight between moribund capitalism and nascent socialism still continues in a fiercer form. In the field of literature, too, they give up socialist realism and do away with party culture in the name of the "world's best tradition", they import the most reactionary trends of alien class culture, and the process of pollution may be direct and subtle.

The revisionist attack on Marxism is an all-round phenomenon and not enough to search and trace differences to political issues alone.

SATADRU CHAKRAVARTY
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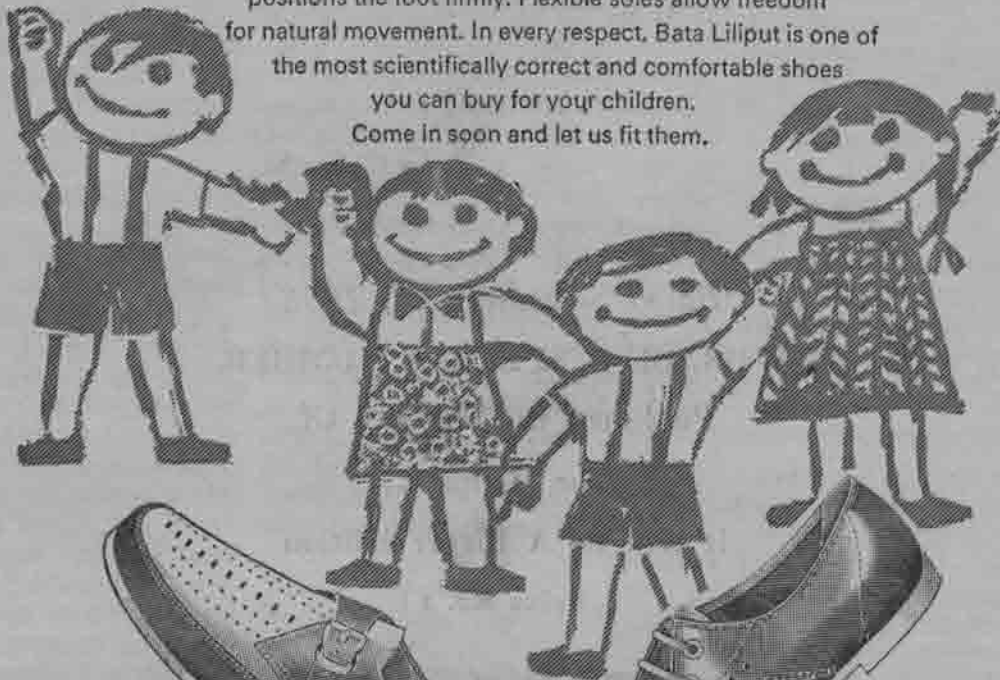
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