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## MR K. COMES AGAIN

THE Ministry of External Affairs will expectedly crow over the fact that Mr Kosygin lunched here, meaning Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi, on his way back from Pakistan. What he told Mrs Indira Gandhi is, of course, unknown, especially after the official account which is rarely meant to enlighten anyone. Matters of mutual interest are always discussed on such occasions; and nobody knows what the matters are. In Karachi, however, the communiqué spoke of the need for India and Pakistan "normalizing" relations so that less money goes for defence and more for development. Few can quarrel with so pious a sentiment. It is unlikely, however, that the Soviet Premier flew so many thousands of kilometres to preach so obvious a sermon. What else could he have up his sleeve?

There have been reports meanwhile that President Ayub Khan got rather less change out of Mr K than India had feared. This is where the curtain of ignorance comes down, for we have never been told which country has got how much of what from the United States or the Soviet Union. The least informed people in the world about Indian defence are the people of India. It is yet possible that President Ayub's manoeuvre has not quite paid off. Islamabad's continuing friendship with China may not be the best chit for Soviet aid. The Kremlin may also have calculated that Mr K's stop-over in Delhi would prop up Mrs G. who probably needs such external aid for surviving her friends and well-wishers.

We might know a little more about what has been going on between Russia on the one hand and India and Pakistan on the other if such illiterate phrases as "normalization of relations" were not so much in use. What, pray, are "normal" relations between India and Pakistan? The centuries-old Hindu-Muslim strife is not dissolved by being called something else. Genteel vagueness on the subject yet creates tensions in Allahabad and Karimganj, to say nothing of other places; and the senseless agitation over the Rann of Kutch can hardly improve matters. Perhaps, after all, Mr Kosygin is "normalizing" relations between India and Pakistan by distributing his august presence more or less equally to the two countries which should be ashamed of themselves that for twenty years they have failed to sort out any of their problems without benefit

...ce-fire has been ...  
...of July—perhaps in spite of Mr  
...K. Nehru's somewhat assertive  
...peech. The example of many  
...European countries getting together to  
...preserve their independence must  
...have seemed gibberish to his audience.  
...What has Europe got to do with it?  
...No more comprehensible may have  
...been the reference to small countries  
...losing their independence by seeking  
...aid from big countries, an obvious re-  
...ference to China which has become an  
...obsession in Delhi. What, the under-  
...ground representatives may have won-  
...dered, has China got to do with it?  
...In relation to Nagaland, is not India  
...nearly as big a country as China?  
...Was Governor Nehru suggesting that  
...by seeking India's protection Nagaland  
...might lose its independence? The  
...Governor also used the word "coun-  
...try" more than once in relation to  
...Nagaland, as though it might be a  
...different entity from India; this may  
...or may not be actionable but it does  
...show that thinking on Nagaland is  
...not very clear in many quarters.

### Disastrous Obsession

It was apparent at Dimapur re-  
cently, when representatives of the  
Naga underground met those of Assam  
at a conference inaugurated by none  
other than the Governor, Mr B. K.  
Nehru, that the Nagas are divided.  
Perhaps only less divided than the  
Government of India, which is saying  
something. The nature of the assur-  
ances demanded by Mr Nehru or his  
spokesmen on the subject of aid from  
China for a sovereign Nagaland out-  
side the Indian Union is far from clear.  
Perhaps only less clear than the nature  
of the assurances given by the Naga  
underground on the same score. Yet  
the conference, the first of its kind,  
may have been useful to the extent  
that it offered both sides an opportu-  
nity to understand each other. Whether  
the opportunity was taken by  
either will be known only in the weeks  
and months to come. Dimapur will  
have served more than its tentative  
purpose if some sort of a line of com-  
munication has been established be-  
tween Shillong, meaning Delhi, and  
the underground. Delhi's ignorance  
of realities has long been matched only  
by the underground's lack of knowl-  
edge of what India can or cannot do  
with Nagaland.

The gain yet remains that the-

...ma... party's enemy number 1 that a  
...but the BKD's current philander and a  
...with various political parties and a leader-  
...descript groups to create a third best Beng  
...can only delight the Congress. Renegade  
...of the three former Chief Ministers of  
...who gave the party some respectability parti  
...at its birth saw anything wrong with Na  
...drawing upon the Communists to ally with  
...themselves in power. Only among to f  
...the three had been out of office in Bengal  
...one reason or another did the old Forwa  
...declare a jihad on Communists, these p  
...its anti-Communism is daily gaining  
...stridence. Politics in Bihar and West  
...Pradesh have many common strands—  
...casteism, communalism and about the m  
...fanaticism are not politically leaders of o  
...able factors there, and a party's ignora  
...count on some immediate gains; he n  
...chooses to ally itself with such about accom  
...rants. The situation in West Bengal  
...is different, and that is the reason, doubt th  
...the State BKD has appealed to the  
...Indi... leadership for exemption in the ci  
...the... Communist programme BKD nation  
...out... tioning its motive and on to its  
...pose. What assurance—it shall reason  
...have been an explanation—Mr party's real  
...Mukherjee gave the United Front  
...not been fully disclosed; but pub... unit to  
...ed reports indicate that he bank... mid-term  
...the political realism—a euphemism to fight  
...opportunism in this instance—of all ineffectu  
...all-India leadership and hopes that the BKD nation  
...will agree to the State unit's requirements Mr.

A little less of diplomacy, at Dima-  
pur almost viceregal in the hands of  
Mr Nehru, and a little more of hones-  
ty may yet do both sides a lot of good.  
The men of the underground ought  
to know that if they could have seized  
sovereignty they would have done so  
long ago without so much as by-your-  
leave from Delhi. On the other hand,  
Delhi ought to know that its military  
effort in Nagaland was not a great  
success for over ten years. Force did  
not succeed in subduing the fiercely  
freedom-loving Nagas. In the cir-  
cumstances, both sides are wise to ac-  
cept the cease-fire as an opportunity  
to sort things out in other ways. The  
British knew that the Naga area could  
not be administered like other parts  
of India; Delhi needs to realise that  
Kohima is not Kanpur.

### A Fraudulent Move

The Gandhian pretensions of the  
Bharatiya Kranti Dal do not  
seem to be in any conflict with the  
continuous double-talk of its leaders.  
If Mr Mahamaya Prasad Sinha is to be  
taken seriously, the Congress still re-

...ma... party's enemy number 1 that a  
...but the BKD's current philander and a  
...with various political parties and a leader-  
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...all-India leadership and hopes that the BKD nation  
...will agree to the State unit's requirements Mr.  
Mr Mukherjee may have his own reasons about  
reason for entertaining such a bid for his cla  
but the activities of the BKD leave Congress-  
ship do not sustain it. While he did these were  
assuring the UF here of abiding by the poli-  
ty of the West Bengal unit, the national execu-  
national executive was negotiating a return to its  
New Delhi with the PSP for a party of chief  
collaboration. The negotiation envisaged that  
resulted in a national joint action committee  
mittee for "coordination in all matters re-  
between the two parties". The decision be the  
in West Bengal has decided to quit Bengal. Mr  
UF and try to create a "non-Communist"  
ress, non-Communist" bloc. Relying upon  
are dissidents no doubt, but the group in its pe-  
cial group has the full backing of collaboration.  
party's all-India leaders. The appointment of the Congress  
ment of a joint action committee so-called third  
only mean that the BKD will name for a p  
executive is arranging a BKD which will hold  
liaison in the State, completely independent of the Congress.



Interests converge  
flow of PL460 aid  
trade have to be  
keep it "a stable and  
firm" as Mrs Indira Gandhi  
Despite massive Soviet  
orders to help Indian and British-run  
industries, the recession in Calcutta's  
engineering units would linger on for  
another four months. All the same  
the private sector has acquired a vital  
stake in the stability of the Govern-  
ment in New Delhi.

Whenever the Prime Minister's  
morale is drooping, it needs bolstering  
through a safari or the visit of some  
foreign dignitary. In January, the  
Foreign Office circulated stories of an  
impending Kosygin visit for the Re-  
public Day celebrations. When there  
was no Soviet response and not even  
the suggestion of a date, it went into  
tantrums because if Mr Kosygin visit-  
ed Pakistan before he thought of  
India, Mrs Gandhi's morale would  
have been shattered. She had been  
to Moscow four times as Prime Minis-  
ter with no prospect of a reciprocal  
gesture. Mr Kosygin did come, after  
all. But three months later, when he  
visited Iran and then Pakistan, the  
Foreign Office was in tantrums again.  
After the rebuff to its attempt to  
stage the Vietnam talks in New Delhi,  
the Foreign Office badly needed to  
ground an overflying Kosygin to res-  
tore Mrs Gandhi's world-leader image.  
Mr K's political refuelling halt  
turned out to be another picnic to help  
Mrs G regain a little of her lost con-  
fidence.

In his anxiety to establish his  
country's "Asian presence" in the sub-  
continent, Mr Kosygin has had to do  
quite a bit of tight-rope walking.  
India has apprehensions that the  
Soviet Union might decide to supply  
military hardware to Pakistan. But  
Pakistan has always thought that the  
Soviet Union was violating the Tash-

kent agreement by aiding India's de-  
fence potential. There has been an  
outcry in the Pakistani Press about  
the Soviet sale of 100 to 150 SU (khai-  
7 fighter bombers (of an advanced  
model which even the East European  
countries have not been able to get)  
to India, several hundred air-to-air  
and ground-to-air missiles, five freight-  
er or destroyer escorts and six sub-  
marines. India has acknowledged  
buying submarines and not other  
hardware reported to have been sold.  
This was the major point of talks at  
Rawalpindi and President Ayub Khan  
knew that there was little chance of  
the Soviet Union stopping supplies to  
India and therefore Pakistan could  
get some too. By all accounts, he  
was not convinced about the explana-  
tion offered by Mr Kosygin, who can-  
not afford to alienate Pakistan by  
supporting India whole hog. What  
he expects of President Ayub Khan is  
not very clear but there is little doubt  
that Mr Kosygin would like an early  
settlement on Kashmir. There has  
been no let-up in Soviet pressure for  
such a settlement. The British pull-  
out from the east of Suez calls for a  
new role by the Soviet navy in the  
Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea  
after 1971. Soviet strategy in South  
Asia is undergoing a major change  
and it would hardly be surprising if  
Soviet arms reach Pakistan via Iran.

The biggest Pakistani gain from  
Mr Kosygin's visit is the promise of  
aid for two major projects—a steel  
plant in the western wing and an at-  
omic power plant for East Pakistan.  
When India wanted to go in for nu-  
clear power stations, the Soviet res-  
ponse was far from encouraging. After  
a good deal of knocking about, Cana-  
dian aid could be got for India's pro-  
jects. Even when the Kalpakkam  
project was in doubt for want of colla-  
borators, there was no Soviet interest  
in it. But the new solicitude for  
Pakistan's atomic power plants must  
have intrigued New Delhi.

The United States was once charg-  
ed with starting an arms race in the  
sub-continent. But the Soviet Union  
might be playing the same game be-  
tween India and Pakistan, before find-  
ing itself the role of a gendarme.

### SSP Crisis

Dr Lohia was an uncompromising  
iconoclast and would have loved to  
destroy the SSP just as he loved to  
destroy the Congress. An internal  
logic is working itself out in the  
of a serious crisis overtaking the

The decision of the Kerala unit to  
quit the party is added proof that  
SSP, like the Jana Sangh, is a  
of Hindi chauvinism with no roots  
outside the cow country. The  
to carry a strong non-Hindi  
Kerala along inhibited the leader  
Hindi chauvinism a little but  
now on it would be under no  
sion to take note of the Muslim  
ceptibilities in Malabar or the  
Hindi sentiment in the South.

The SSP has had no ideological  
all-India vision. Its perspective  
shrunk further with the defecting  
the Kerala unit. After Dr Lohia's  
death the leadership tussle was  
ly between the Maharashtra  
(Mr S. M. Joshi, Mr Madhu  
and Mr George Fernandes) and  
Hindi wing (represented by Mr  
Narain), and the Kerala unit  
playing the balancing role.  
Hindi wing does not consider  
leaders from Maharashtra suffi-  
Bharati. In Maharashtra it is a  
of middle-class office-goers  
factory workers. But a section  
Bombay wants to jump on the  
Sena bandwagon after discov-  
great revolutionary potential in  
storm-trooper brigade. Which  
it should be, because the SSP has  
ways claimed to combine eco-  
radicalism with nationalism (as  
did in his National Socialist Party  
Mr George Fernandes, who does  
belong to Maharashtra though he  
functioned in Bombay and drew  
support from the non-Maharashtra  
is perhaps the only leader oppos-  
any clandestine or open under-  
with the Shiv Sena. He has been  
Shiv Sena's target already. In the  
cow country, the SSP has manipu-  
the Kayasth, Yadav and Cham-  
caste loyalties and in Uttar Pradesh  
is the party of the Thakur land.  
There is very little socialism about  
party and its majority communists  
can always pass for nationalism.

# Calcutta Dia

CHARAN GUPTA

THE country has been taken over by racketeers which is why anything goes, including the hoax that is flourishing in the name of the New Agricultural Strategy, in caps. With blessings from the Americans—who can be counted in their scores in Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi—the strategy has by now been refined into a show which should really get known as the New Great Thievery, in caps. The philosophy of the strategy, information from Delhi suggests, is unsweet and simple: forget about the small peasants and landless cultivators, forget the problems of the holdings belonging to 95 per cent or more of the cultivating community, concentrate on the rich, lush farmers at the very top, pamper them, shower them with credit, provide them with fertiliser, evolve an irrigation programme which will ensure that the bulk of the water would be made available to the VIP farmers, spend precious foreign exchange to get the tractors and power tillers, pesticides and insecticides for them, do not impose any tax on them, do not irritate them by talking of any producer levy, guarantee them prices which are three or four times the internal prices, and, hey presto, there will be an agricultural revolution in the country.

The 'Strategy' is now in the third year of its execution. During the first two years, while money and resources were being bestowed upon the Enlightened, Privileged Ones, no noteworthy results were forthcoming in terms of rising production. The blame for the misfortune was then placed on bad weather, even though everybody was agreed that the very purpose of the Strategy was to free Indian agriculture from the vagaries of nature. Following the hoary principle of 'heads-I-win tails-you-lose', it is only in the current year, when there have been excellent rains, that we are inundated by claims about the Great Agricultural Revolution which has already supposedly overtaken us. There is little

effort to an-  
this year's crop n-  
of the bounty of nat-  
portion is causally re-  
'heroic' efforts launched by  
peasants. Even a rooky statu-  
could have told our politicians an-  
civil servants that to infer a revolu-  
tion on the basis of a single year's  
observation is to exhibit crass illiteracy. Where the newspapers write what they are asked to write, a revolution can be manufactured overnight. You keep on repeating the same cliché a couple of dozen times and a fact gets formally 'born' in this country; having been born, it then passes into theology.

The money and inputs have of course been provided by the Government to enable the big farmers to initiate the so-called Revolution. This transfer of resources is made possible by the extra burden on the taxpayers, who have been systematically squeezed over the last few years. The credit for the Revolution however does not go to the taxpayers; it goes to the top peasants who have been propitiated and subsidised beyond redemption. Since these gentlemen-farmers call the political tune, the input subsidy is further supplemented by offering them inordinately high prices for their products, which worsen the plight of the overwhelming mass of the population, raise industrial costs and make it utterly impossible to make any headway in export trade. The rich peasants always gain: in the drought years, we have to offer them high prices because this is what market forces dictate; but even in a good year such as the present one, the politicians would argue that we must continue to pay the farmers the prices which prevailed in the 'famine' years so as not to disturb their 'state of expectations'. We must be gingerly, we must pay homage to our kulaks whatever the season. In Parliament and elsewhere, righteous indignation boils over at the slightest suggestion for a lowering of

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are people in prices, their blood provide us we have to road? The goes by de- is the temerity to en amongst the agri- s, at least 50 per cent are archasers of foodgrains. By ing prices high, you scarcely help them, in fact you ensure that they would very soon get squeezed out of agriculture, and some of their land would pass into the hands of the gentlemen-farmers, who have now also been blessed by a special tax rebate by Mr Morarji Desai. The rich peasants can still deliver a big chunk of the vote in the countryside, and they are backed by American economic theory; so others might abide the question, they are free to continue the pillage.

The Americans don't surprise me. They have, after all, an unerring instinct to patronise the most reactionary class forces in whichever country they go. In the present instance they also happen to be wrong in their economics, for the theory of the New Agricultural Strategy slurs over several basic issues of the Indian economy. The rest of the world has, for quite some time, become aware of the fact that the Americans often go astray in their prognoses and prescriptions, but such knowledge is not yet permitted to permeate into this country. (Even as Johnson throws in the sponge, we decide to send 'observers' to Singapore to join the johnnies from the puppet administrations of South Korea, South Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand for discussion of 'problems of Asian economic development'.) Here there has been a wholesale acceptance of the American line that for ushering in an agricultural revolution, all you have to do is to subsidise your rich peasants and offer them high prices. As the academics would say, the proposition ignores the structural problem. Things might still turn out to be all right with the 'Strategy' in such States as Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra and

Madhya Pradesh, where big holdings—owned by a few—constitute the major proportion of the total cultivable area. They however do not comprise the entire country. If one shifts attention to the eastern States—West Bengal, Assam, Orissa and Bihar—and to Kerala, the picture is altogether different: but for aberrations in the years of exceptionally good rains—when more acreage came under cultivation—agriculture has remained more or less stagnant in these States. The regional unevenness is easily explained. Where fragmentation has extended fairly deep and a considerable proportion of the cultivable area is under holdings of less than five acres in size, the American theory of growth-through-pampering-the few fails to work. The organizational problems multiply, the identification of the rich peasants who could be depended upon to deliver the goods becomes difficult. One or two top farmers, with proper political connections, still extract a bonanza from out of the distribution of subsidised inputs, but the impact on agricultural productivity is minimal. The short-term temptation of disposing of the inputs at fancy prices often gets the better of the desire to experiment with scientific agriculture.

A racket is a racket is a racket. The New Agricultural Strategy suits the civil servants because it suits the politicians, who are all for more bounty for themselves and their near and dear ones. In season and out of season, year in and year out, subsidies are being doled out and agricultural prices are being jacked up. I shall not talk of the built-in inequity in the distribution of seeds, irrigation water, fertilisers and pesticides in the countryside, where the extent of the scandal baulks imagination. Let me only refer to what is happening with cooperative credit. Cooperative credit societies were originally set up to offer protection to the small peasants from the exploitation of the moneylenders; they have now been turned into a major instrument of exploitation in the rural areas. The small peasants cannot offer any collateral, and cannot therefore get any money from the societies.

Most of the available credit is hoarded by the big farmers who have hoisted over the cooperative movement, stock and barrel. Credit, offered at 4 per cent interest at the suggestion of the Reserve Bank of India, rises to the level of 12 per cent by the time it reaches the villages after passing through the sieve of the cooperative societies; the margin is pocketed by the gentlemen-farmers who manage them. The story does not quite end there. Instances are not lacking where the credit from the societies in fact goes to replenish the coffers of the wealthy lenders, who in turn loan it to the indigent small farmers and agricultural workers at fantastic rates ranging from 50 per cent or even more.

It is natural that the Congress, the Swatantra Party and the Janata Party would keep quiet over this when they are in power, since it is so conducive to their own class interests. But what is the opening to the great heroes of the Left whose social conscience is reflected in their bubbling all the time? There is a number of learned discourses, Frontiers and central committee meetings analysing the precise character of the present state of the Indian economy. But one and a half gentlemen of the Left step out into the world of abstractions and face the realities of everyday happening, the interest. Neither in Parliament, the State Assemblies, not a square inch emitted from the Left party against the way the New Agricultural Strategy is working. West Bengal forty members in the Lok Sabha majority of them allegedly of persuasion. None of them has heard to speak on the evils of the cultural programme in so far as it affected the State's particular interest nor have they protested against further tilting of the economic balance against the small peasants and landless workers. They have demurred at the high procurement prices; they have not demanded a position of heavy taxes on the rich farmers either. Even at the national level, their entire energy is expended in trying to avert some of the consequences of the New Strategy; the

## Czechoslovakia 1948

BIBEK ROY  
[B. ROY]

WHILE the XX Congress of the CPSU was proclaiming the possibility of a "pacific and parliamentary road to socialism" Mikoyan came forward to cite the example of Czechoslovakia. In the familiar arsenal of Western cold-war propaganda about Soviet expansionism, the so-called Czech coup still looms large<sup>1</sup>. It may be of some interest then to recount and analyse the events that took place just twenty years ago.

To put those events in their proper perspective one may note some of the key elements of the socio-economic panorama of that country. Already before the war it was highly industrialized, comparable to France and Germany<sup>2</sup>. Of the total working population only 26% were in agriculture whereas 38% were engaged in industry and mining; the remaining 27% were in trade and distribution, administration, etc. In terms of national income the relative contribution of agriculture was even less, for the productivity (in terms of net output) of agricultural labour was less than one-half of that in industry. Even inside the industrial sector there was a preponderance of the more advanced industries. Thus by far the largest number of workers was to be found in engineering and other metal industries, while textiles came a poor second; next came mining, glass and ceramics, food-processing and so on. The foreign trade pattern provided a similar picture. The 1938 export figures showed the manufacturing sector contributing 72% of the total, while raw materials and semi-manufactures accounted for 20% and food products for 8% only; the corresponding breakdown for imports was 30%, 57% and 13% respectively.

Like other industrially advanced countries Czechoslovakia had its fair share of monopolies in various branches of production as well as a close link between industrial and financial capital. The banking scene was dominated by the Big Four in Prague, one

of whom had a controlling interest in 50 large industrial firms spread all over the economy. Foreign capital as such did not have a major role. In agriculture the big landholders dominated the scene. According to the last pre-war census of land holdings taken in 1930-31, 44% of the farms were below 2 hectares, the next two groups of 2-5 and 5-10 hectares accounting for 27% and 16%; as for the total acreage under cultivation nearly one-half of the total area was cultivated by the top 1% of the farms, while the bottom 61% had a bare 16% of the land at its disposal. Obviously the overwhelming majority of the countryside was made up of the poor peasants and the landless labourers.

While the country as a whole was quite prosperous, there was a world of difference between the Czechs and the Slovaks; the latter were economically very backward and had an equally backward social set-up. The Slovak patriots used to think that their region was deliberately starved of industry because the capitalists mostly happened to be Czechs. There was a large measure of truth in this, but this is typical of capitalism practically everywhere.

The pre-war political set-up could be broadly characterized as bourgeois democratic. Parliament functioned as in other Western countries; Communists and left-wing Social Democrats had a large following but the majority was with the bourgeois and peasant parties that scrupulously left the leftists out of power. President Benes was resolutely anti-Hitler and had a security pact with the West as well as the USSR, although as a lifelong liberal he always preferred a closer relationship with the former.

### After Munich

The great betrayal at Munich and subsequent Nazi occupation completely altered the political contours. (That the government collapsed very easily before the Nazi giant is perfectly understandable, but remarkable indeed was the number of collaborators.) A puppet regime was set up in Slovakia that thrived on the popular anti-Czech sentiments. Most of the

able credit is... attempt, organised or otherwise, to... Strategy itself.

... movement... Credit, offer... at the sou... of India, rises... ent by the... ges after... of the coop... is pocketed... who manage... ot quite... lacking when... eties in fact... lers of the m... m loan it... ers and agric... e rates rang... a more.

\* Partly this phenomenon reflects the... of thinking among the forces... the Left. Fatalism of a queer sort... nken over; since Marx-Lenin... Man Tse-tung have already... lled out the manner in which alie... tion will progress in society and the... tal point will be reached, where is... the need for supplementary thinking?... the time be better spent on anno... the old texts, or, alternately, on... eeping in trim the organisation which... ll take over once the revolution... nes about, as it is bound to come... about.

\* Partly the Leftists in this State have... been caught in a trap of their... own making. Given the United Front,

they have now to carry the cross of... social-enemies-turned-political allies.

How do you speak harsh words about... strategy which benefits some of your... personal bedfellows; the latter would... immediately cry foul. The United

Front has thus been a great leveller:... it muzzles your politico-economic ethos... the ethos of a jotedar who hap... pous to be your colleague on the Front,

and whose basic qualification is per... haps that Mr Atulya Ghosh does not... like his looks—or perhaps that he on... his part did not like Mr P. C. Sen's

mocking producer levy in November... 1965. It is such an easy criterion... for being labelled a 'progressive' in... this State these days.

for FRONTIER readers in

West India can contact

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Czech capitalists worked their factories at the behest of the German masters. There was at first little resistance to the invaders, but this came almost exclusively from the Communists. The recently deposed President Novotny was one of those active among the workers and was duly dispatched along with fellow comrades to the Mathausen concentration camp (which he ultimately fled). Only towards the end of the war after the Soviets had shown the way, resistance was organised on a big enough scale. "People's Committees" were put up mainly by the Communists, towards the end of 1944; these formed the nucleus of Red power in the countryside as well as in towns. The country was finally liberated by the Soviet Red Army but it withdrew completely by the end of 1945. The Soviets thus acquired an immense popularity with the Czechs who, according to an anti-Communist historian, developed an "uncritical admiration for all things Russian".

Immediately after liberation a National Front Government was formed by all the anti-Nazi parties like the CP, the Social Democrats, the National Socialists of President Benes, the Catholic People's Party and the Slovak Democrats. The common call was for "national concord". However, there was countrywide chaos and confusion as in most war-devastated countries. It came to an end in October 1945 with the unanimous adoption of the famous Kosice Programme that had three main features, namely, partial nationalization, agrarian reforms and a two-year rehabilitation plan. The agrarian reforms were essentially moderate in character, giving land to the tiller without compensation to the big landholders many of whom were either Germans foisted by the occupying Power or else collaborators. On the other hand, the programme of land reforms, specially the resettlement of Czech peasants on the erstwhile German farms in the Sudetanland was brilliantly successful in turning the peasantry into a militant force devoted to socialism and full of gratitude to the CP.

In industry, too, the properties of

all Germans and collaborators were confiscated; most of the pre-war Jewish owners had been earlier killed off under Hitler and their properties came to be vested in the State. In addition, all firms beyond a certain size and all those of "national importance" were nationalized. The maximum permissible size of a privately owned undertaking was laid down separately for each industry; this ceiling in terms of labour force varied between 150 and 500. According to contemporary reports, the Workers' Councils in different industries played a very crucial role in this context. Communists and Social Democrats worked very closely, while the less radical parties were all too eager to salvage what they could for the private and the cooperative sectors. Klement Gottwald then the leader of the CP, declared that their object was "not to proceed by steps but at one stroke". However, private industry was still left with large and decisive sectors. In all only 58% of the industrial labour force came under the State sector; in basic industries this ratio varied between 50% and 100%, while for consumer goods it ranged between 15% and 50%. This state of affairs continued more or less intact right up to February 1948.

That this programme had full popular backing was underlined in the parliamentary elections of May 1946. The Marxist parties came out victorious with over 50% votes (of which the CP alone had 38%) and 152 of the 300 seats. Gottwald now took up the premiership, (giving up party secretaryship to Rudolf Slansky), but the National Front continued with Benes as President. A new optimism filled the air: they began to talk of Czechoslovakia as a bridge between the Socialist East and the Capitalist West. Benes was happy at this "transition from pure liberalism to a system when the socialist elements have a considerable, if not a dominating, voice". Gottwald waxed eloquent about this "democracy of a new type".

#### Winds of Change

Within a year and half things began to change. In July 1947 the

entire Czech Cabinet accepted both the Marshall Aid Plan proposed by the USA, without consulting the Ministers. Then President Benes wrote to the Ministers (possibly without the consent of his own Cabinet) expressing his desire to have a political and military pact with France. In the meanwhile but important things were happening on the side that left their long and deep shadows over events inside Czechoslovakia.

The Western Powers had all prepared their battleguns well for the Cold War. Unable to dislodge the Communists in Yugoslavia, the British Army crushed the Communist-led anti-Greek Resistance Movement by the beginning of 1946 with the active aid of Greek fascists and reactionaries. Then Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech formally inaugurating the Cold War was delivered in March 1946. Yet the Soviet side came to the Yalta Conference on 10 March full of hope, according to an American eye-witness, that all outstanding postwar issues could be settled amicably with the Western Allies. On March 12 burst the bombshell of the notorious Truman Doctrine for the containment of Communism in Europe and asserting American supremacy. Moscow reacted and the conference ended in an impasse. The American riposte came in May in the form of the Marshall Plan whose express purpose was to do "freedom", including such "free games as those in Greece and Turkey against subversion. During the month the socialist Premier Ramon kicked the French Communists (the largest party with nearly 50% votes) out of the Cabinet, and a month later his Home Minister Moche let loose police terror on mining Communist miners in Northern France. In Italy Togliatti's CP with a similar fate in an almost identical situation.

Against this background it was wonder that Stalin advised the Czechs against accepting the Marshall Aid entering into any pact with an American Communist France that had already turned into an American ally. The Czech Cabinet agreed

contradicted by trends in CP membership which rose from 11 lakhs in May 1946 to 13 lakhs in November 1947 and 20 lakhs in May 1948<sup>6</sup>. During this time the entire population of the country was less than 12 million.

#### The Final Act

The Revolution was finally triggered off in mid-February as Nosek dismissed 8 police commissioners. On February 17 non-Marxist Ministers tried to force Nosek to withdraw, but the latter persisted with the help of fellow Communist and all Social Democratic Ministers. The Cabinet meeting ended inconclusively: it did not support, as some people alleged, the non-Marxist Ministers. The latter resigned in protest in an obvious attempt to put the Marxists in the dock. Benes at first did not accept the resignation, hoping for a compromise, nor would the resigning Ministers budge. Many thought that a compromise was inevitable when Premier Gottwald would be forced to resign. But these calculations completely misfired. The CP cadres were put on alert on February 19 and two days later armed detachments of workers paraded the streets of Prague. Popular demonstrations in support of Premier Gottwald and the CP-Social Democrat alliance were held throughout the country. The masses were so enraged that none of the resigning Ministers dared address a single public meeting. On February 24 effective power was finally seized by the masses led by the CP and Fierlinger's faction of the Social Democrats. Radio and telephone stations, the Press agency and the ministries were occupied by them. Innumerable popular action committee's were set up at different levels. All these were eventually legalized by the decrees of President Benes who finally shook off his bourgeois liberal inhibitions. Then on 25 February Benes accepted the resignation of the twelve non-Marxist Ministers and installed a new Cabinet again under the Premiership of Gottwald, which still included 4 members from Social Democrats and 4 from the Catholics and National Socialists. Jan Masaryk, an outstanding non-

Marxist democrat, became the Foreign Minister. A People's Democracy was thus born.

#### Conclusions

We have tried to be as objective as possible in telling our story. Some of the relatively minor details are still open to debate, but the main outlines are not. First, there can be no doubt that the Czech Revolution was not a palace coup as represented by most Western scholars, journalists and politicians. The masses "below" played a very active, if not determining, role in carrying out their goals. Secondly, and this follows from the first, this was a genuinely "indigenous" development in which the USSR had no overriding say. Even anti-Communist historians like Seton Watson and Brzezinski accept so much: during the critical days there were no Soviet troop manoeuvres on Czechoslovakia's borders and absolutely no plans for a Red Army invasion in case the Communists found themselves in a soup. And yet the same historians blow up the importance of Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Zorin's presence in Prague during the critical February days. He must have discussed the situation with Czech comrades and may well have given a green signal. But there is no scrap of evidence that he threatened the non-Marxist parties or leaders with dire consequences in case of non-compliance. Hence Western attempts to utilise the Czech case as a justification for their crusade against Soviet "imperialism" turns out to be one of the shoddiest hypocrisies of the Cold War era<sup>7</sup>.

If the Western myths can be exploded easily, it is much more difficult to draw unambiguous conclusions from the Czech experience that are relevant to the modern controversy among the Communists. First of all, the USSR as a Socialist State did ensure that when class struggle reached an acute stage in a non-socialist country, there were no foreign interventions. If, during the summer months of 1947, the USSR had quietly acquiesced in Czechoslovakia's acceptance of Marshall Aid or in Benes' proposal for a pact with France, the scales

accepted these suggestions unanimously. These three events greatly poisoned the atmosphere. Three non-Marxist Ministers claimed to have received packages containing explosives, although only one was apprehended in time. An investigation carried out by the Ministry of Justice (one of the above Ministers) found a Communist Deputy Minister, the latter was promptly relieved of his parliamentary immunity and sent to jail. They were joined by a large number of other Communists sent to jail. They were charged with organizing arms caches in Moravia. Immediately afterwards the Army was unravelled implicating the Social Democrats and Benes' Nationalists. On 15 September a new Czech Republic was unearthed. The Communist Minister of Slovakia reconvened the regional Cabinet, the trade unions threatened a general strike against the plotters and control over the Slovak police passed into the hands of the CP and Social Democrats. In the Czech Republic the Communist Minister Nosek had already carried out some important changes in administrative personnel, weeding out the reactionaries; at the same time the CP Secretary Slansky and the union leader Zopocky had been organizing workers' militia with the backing of the Central Trade Union Council where the CP commanded a substantial minority. The army too had been "injected" with a few radical elements. All these changes took place in broad daylight with the full knowledge of all parties, which merely witnessed the new equilibrium of class forces.

The CP received a big jolt in November 1947. The Social Democratic Party Congress defeated its pro-Communist President Fierlinger and installed a new leader who would have preferred to maintain a distance with the CP.

According to a recent article, a CP-conducted opinion poll in January 1948 revealed that CP votes might decline by 8% as against the May 1946 performance<sup>8</sup>. But this was never published. Moreover, it is

might have been tipped irrevocably against the Czech Marxists. Of course, the Yalta Agreement had already allowed for a "90% Soviet influence" over Czechoslovakia but the Western Allies, ever since the death of Roosevelt, were busy upsetting the old agreements wherever they could. In any case, Stalin's courage appears all the greater for the USSR was at that time economically, politically as well as manpower-wise immensely weaker than the USA.<sup>8</sup> In our own times Fidel Castro has been asking the Soviet leaders for precisely this much: while the guerillas are fighting a heroic battle against a particularly obnoxious Latin American regime, don't try and bolster up that government with trade, aid and what not. One may quibble over whether or not that particular country is at the threshold of revolution, but the underlying logic can hardly be gainsaid. A revolutionary movement must always be conceded the benefit of the doubt.

Next we may turn to the more difficult question—the possibility of a parliamentary road to socialism. Frankly, the Czech case does not provide a vindication of either extreme. At the decisive moments the armed masses clinched the issue. If the masses were not armed, if the workers' militia had not come out into the streets, if, finally, the CP suffered from the virus of pacifism or strict constitutionalism the Czech Communists might have eventually found themselves in the same sort of straight-jacket as their Italian or French comrades. On the other hand, the ultimate victory was inconceivable (assuming again that the Soviets were in no mood for physical intervention) without long months of preparation both in and out of the parliamentary set-up. If the Communists had refused to participate in "bourgeois" elections and in the subsequent bourgeois-democratic or parliamentary type of government, the anti-socialist elements would have kept complete control over the Army and the administration. Under one pretext or another, the people's committees might have been

dissolved by fiat from above, the workers' militia could not have come into existence or survived for any length of time. If people like General Svoboda, the newly elected Czech President, did not exist among the upper echelons of the Army, if they had not counterbalanced the other Army officers with their typical bourgeois background, a civil war might have erupted with all its attendant uncertainties. Then the fact that the Marxist parties had a clear majority (wafer-thin, perhaps, but with no waverers) in Parliament was of immense importance in a country where the people, except for the war years, were accustomed to exercise their franchise regularly for over two decades. Without this parliamentary majority the resignation of the non-Marxist Ministers would have created a precarious constitutional situation and the CP might have yielded to the former's blackmailing tactics. One may then safely conclude that in the Czech case armed preparations and parliamentary forms of struggle were blended so harmoniously that these became mutually complementary rather than contradictory. Perhaps, it may be said, it was too ideal a situation with too many "specifics" to be of general and universal significance. But is it not true of all revolutions in all times?

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> *Le Monde Hebdomadaire*, No. 1010/1968.
- <sup>2</sup> N. Spulber, *The Economics of Communist Eastern Europe*, New York, 1957. J. M. Michal, *Central Planning in Czechoslovakia*, California, 1960.
- <sup>3</sup> H. Selon Watson, *The Pattern of Communist Revolution*, London, 1953.
- <sup>4</sup> *The Manchester Guardian*, 30 Oct. 1945.
- <sup>5</sup> See note 1.
- <sup>6</sup> Z. K. Brzezinski, *The Soviet Block: Unity and Conflict*, Cambridge, Mass., 1960.
- <sup>7</sup> D. Horowitz, *From Yalta to Vietnam*, Penguin Books, 1967.
- <sup>8</sup> I. Deutscher, *Ironies of History*, London, 1966.

## On Napalm

M. S. PRABHAKAR

AMONG the many atrocities are being committed by the United States against the people of Vietnam is the extensive use of napalm on vast tracts of land, ostensibly to burn up foliage or kill the "congress", but in actual fact to maim and kill the civilian population of Vietnam. What is this napalm? It is not another ordinary weapon in the American arsenal. America, of course, at its command all sorts of gruesome weapons in Vietnam, but even in the company of lazy-dogs, pineapple-guava bombs, napalm stands out. The words of a U.S. peace activist: "It is a grotesque weapon made of jellied gasoline which, when dumped upon human beings or animals, literally liquifies the flesh."<sup>1</sup> It is a purely anti-personnel weapon (it can be used to blast roads and bridges, for instance), and it is designed to "stick to the skin and burn." It is not that one gets a wound and bleeds; one is literally converted into liquid. There have been accounts of non-combatants whose whole skin got burned and peeled off, but yet who did not die, and who had to sleep with their eyes covered with a shade because there were no eyelids. Thus Anthony Carthew of the *London Sun*: "I have also seen a napalm victim. This man had caught the full ferocity of a napalm bomb's fire. His body had been awash with the stuff. From his scalp to the soles of his feet, his skin was peeling as if from an obstinate suntan. Yet he survived. That, perhaps, the most horrible thing about napalm and white phosphorous: that the body is virtually drowned in flame, but the victim tends to live." (Quoted in *The Minority of One*, June 1966.) And if one is sceptical about this account because it appears in a leftist journal, one may perhaps read the more genteel *Ladies Home Journal* (January 1967) which carried an account of the effects of napalm from Martha Gellhorn, the well-known correspondent: "We alone possess

## Napalm

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... use this weapon (napalm) in Vietnam. Burns are deadly to their depth and extent. If 30% of the entire thickness of the skin is burned, the victim dies within 24 to 48 hours, unless he receives skilled, constant care. . . .

I went to Saigon, I had heard that napalm melts the flesh, I thought that's nonsense, because I put a roast in the oven and the meat melts but the meat stays there. I went and saw these children who had been burned by napalm, and it is absolute. The chemical reaction of this does melt the flesh, and the faces melt down their faces onto their necks and it sits there and grows there. These children can't turn their heads because they were so thick with flesh. . . . When gangrene sets in, they cut off their hands or fingers or their feet; the only thing they cannot cut off is their head." Pretty?

From these accounts it is clear that napalm is in no sense a defensive weapon, not even a weapon of conventional offence. It is only extreme callousness that makes no distinction between my weapons, and tries to rationalize American use of napalm in Vietnam by piously maintaining that "all war is bad, all killing is bad". As was pointed out in a letter in the *New Statesman* some months ago, a man who uses the bayonet has a sense of being personally involved, and he cannot imagine himself as being without personal responsibility for his action. But a pilot flying a B-52 bomber miles and miles above the clouds can, with easy conscience, release the 500 pound bombs, and if deep below him, Hoang Tan Hung, a forty-five-year-old rice-grower and merchant from Quang Ngai province in South Vietnam (a witness at the Stockholm war crimes tribunal) is covered with flames, it is something the bombing crew is not even aware of.

In the words of the "Emergency Report on the Manufacture and Uses of Napalm" compiled by the research staff of the Stanford Committee for Peace in Vietnam, napalm is a "highly inflammable substance made by adding thickeners to aviation gas. It has the appearance of bee's honey and the consistency of a sticky jelly. . . . designed and used as an incendiary bomb." (Quoted in *Ramparts*, August 1966). Formerly, ordinary gasoline was used as an incendiary; but this was found not quite suitable as it dispersed too rapidly once it was dropped. So an efficient thickening agent has been devised—viz, polysterene, which produces a more adhesive-type of napalm. This new type of napalm, designated Napalm-B, consists of 50% polysterene, 25% gasoline, and 25% benzine. Reporting that a contract worth \$11 million had been entered into between the U.S. Airforce and the United Technology Centre (a division of the United Aircraft Corporation—the aircraft companies in the U.S. have been one of the major beneficiaries of the Vietnam war), *The New York Times* described this new type of napalm thus: "The contract called for a new and more efficient type of napalm. This would be made up of 50% polysterene and 25% each of benzine and

gasoline. Napalm is a petroleum product suspended in a jelly-like substance that causes it to stick and burn anything it touches." (*New York Times*, May 21, 1966). All the components are highly inflammable, but it is polysterene that gives napalm its grotesque distinction—the capacity to stick and burn. It is polysterene that is 'new' in this weapon, polysterene which is eminently suited to serve the functions of a thickener and adhesive. According to the *Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter* (January 17, 1966), "As a semi-solid, polysterene adheres readily to almost any surface on which napalm-B is spread."

## Who Makes It

Who manufactures this monstrosity? And who manufactures polysterene, the chief component of napalm, the ingredient which gives napalm its gruesome quality? The chief manufacturer and supplier of napalm to the U. S. Defence department is Dow Chemical Company, a giant industrial corporation of the U.S. (ranked 50th among 500 of the largest industrial corporations of the U.S. in 1966, with sales of \$1,309,685,000 and a net income of \$121,691,000 in that year alone). Dow of course is a big industrial corporation with a variety of manufacturing interests, but napalm is not the least of its profitable manufactures. According to *Time* newsmagazine (3rd November 1967), Dow had supplied the U.S. Government with \$5,170,000 worth of napalm, presumably in 1966 alone.

Let us now take a close look at some figures regarding the total amount of napalm manufactured, and the amount of polysterene required for that manufacture. As was noted above, polysterene forms 50% of the final product—napalm. According to *Chemical and Engineering News* (18th July 1966), the total capacity of the U.S. to produce polysterene internally is 1.56 billion pounds. Of this, Dow itself produces 450 million pounds of polysterene a year at five different production locations within the U.S. (*Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter*, 9th May, 1966). Polysterene, of course, is a very versatile organic material and has

carried the napalm from well-known alone posses

many other uses apart from being a component of napalm. It is widely used in the packaging industry, for instance, and Dow itself has a monopoly of the manufacture of Saran wrap, extensively used in the U.S. to pack meat. But it is clear that a substantial quantity of polystyrene manufactured in the U.S. goes to the making of napalm. The question is, how much? And whether all the necessary polystyrene is met by internal production? The last question might appear crazy, for after all the U.S. produces 1.56 billion pounds of polystyrene, but it wouldn't seem so crazy if we bear in mind the fantastic demands of other consumer-oriented industries within the U.S. for polystyrene, which has a multitude of uses.

*The Chemical and Engineering News* (18th July 1966) reported that 25 million pounds of polystyrene a month will be used in the production of napalm (which means that roughly 50 million pounds of napalm is to be produced every month, or 600 million pounds every year. Only part of this is of course used in Vietnam, but vast stocks are kept ready for use elsewhere too: to help one ally to bomb an oil-tanker which has run aground and has polluted populated beaches; to help other allies to use it against peasant guerillas in Africa and Latin America). But that apart, it would mean that over 300 million pounds of polystyrene (nearly 20% of the total production capacity in the U.S.) is diverted towards the manufacture of napalm. Of course, Dow itself could, theoretically meet all this requirement from its own production of polystyrene (which is 450 million pounds annually, as was noted above); but it is unlikely that Dow would allow almost two-thirds of its polystyrene production to be diverted to the manufacture of napalm. As was noted earlier, Dow has extremely diversified interests, and polystyrene itself has many, many uses. Particularly in an industrially advanced nation, one could visualize almost limitless possibilities for such a versatile material like polystyrene. So, it is unlikely that Dow would divert the major portion of its polystyrene production towards the

manufacture of napalm, however profitable it might be, for the simple reason that the demands for polystyrene from other industries would be too great to resist. But this does not mean that the needs of the U.S. Defence Department are not going to be met. And it is here that the worldwide interests of Dow attain some significance. Not all the business of Dow emanates from its smalltown mid-western headquarters at Midland, Michigan (population 27,779). Dow has subsidiaries all over the world, and almost everywhere these subsidiaries are found, some one or more of the components of napalm are produced. Thus, for example, Dow has a substantial interest in C.S.R.C.-Dow Ltd. Australia; the plant there manufactures polystyrene and other chemicals. (*Moody's Industrial Manual*, June 1967). Plasticime S. A. operates a multi-million dollar plant at Rubecourt, near Paris, for the manufacture of polystyrene and Saran wrap, and Dow Chemical A. G. (a subsidiary of Dow) controls part of it. (*Ibid.*) Coming closer home, Dow has a 25% interest in a Bombay firm called Polychem Ltd. which too produces polystyrene. (*Ibid.*, p. 2726).

This firm was considered important enough to merit inclusion in the *Report of the Monopolies Enquiry Commission* (1965). It manufactures styrene and polystyrene moulding powder, and it is the only company producing these commodities in the country (at least, it was, when the report of the MES came out). According to the *MECR*, the firm produced 5383.4 tonnes of polystyrene moulding powder (i.e., over 12 million pounds), and only 57.4 tonnes of polystyrene sheets in 1964. I have not been able to get the production figures of this firm for the years 1965-66 and 1966-67, but the country's production of polystyrene for the calendar year 1965 was 13,512 metric tonnes and for 1966, it was 14,136 metric tonnes (*Journal of Industry and Trade*, October 1967). Since Polychem Ltd. did have a monopoly over the manufacture of polystyrene as recently as 1965, it is likely that a large part of polystyrene produced in

the country is still the product of the firm. The firm is also prospering; company reports columns of *Capital* (August 10, 1967, p. 10) and *Eastern Economist* (August 1967, pp. 273-75) speak glowingly of the company's progress, with sales rising up by 18% in the year ending March 1967 over the previous year (sales: 3.21 crores in 1965-66, Rs. 3.79 crores in 1966-67). The gross assets of the company (in 1966) were estimated at less than five crores, which means that it is able to sell products worth more than 75% of its total assets every year—an astounding turnover of the capital. But one curious fact emerges out of a study of the company's production figures: its two major items produced vary widely in their total quantity of production. In 1964, it produced 5282.4 tonnes of polystyrene moulding powder (which, as the name implies, is in powder form, and can be fabricated for a wide range of purposes, from making buckets (perhaps) serving as a base for napalm), and only 57.4 tonnes of polystyrene sheets (which, again, as the name implies, is more in the nature of a semi-finished product, suitable for versatile, but restricted uses, mainly for the manufacture of consumer articles, other kinds of plastics, as hardening agent &c). So one wonders how much of the remarkably large amount of polystyrene moulding powder produced by the firm is put to use. Of course, it is entirely possible that all the polystyrene moulding powder is used internally in the manufacture of various secondary plastics; but the fact that Dow Chemical Company has a substantial share in the firm (25%) makes one suspicious. After all, Dow has always used all its subsidiaries to further its own interests (in this case, the interests of the U.S. Defence Department). It is also significant that the U.S. napalm production programme, according to *Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter* (January 17, 1966), has been thrown a little out of gear (and developments since then in Vietnam and in the U.S. do not suggest any great streamlining of the American war effort!) because of a shortage of the civilian product of polystyrene. (Not to speak of

the product of real shortage of benzine, which also prospering with toluene, the U.S. import columns of in large quantities, the figures for 0, 1967, P. first two months alone of 1966 *omist* (August 291,060 gallons of the former, speak glowing 2,75,320 gallons of the latter Press, with sales *Paint and Drug Reporter*, May the year ending 1966. This journal also says that the previous in 1965-67 a shortage of polysterene, but in 1966-67) not say how the shortage is company (in I found a guess that a probable is than five er would be the various subsidia- is able to sell ce of Dow Chemical Company, the than 75% of a producer to polysterene in the or—an astom- ) The links between the Indian tal. But one and Dow, and the possibility of of a study of surreptitious supply of polysterene on figures duced in India, either directly to duced vary sh U.S. or more probably, through ity of product some-honoured method of export to 5282.4 tonne actual port for re-export to one powder (Wh the nopalni-producing plants of is in po need to be investigated. bricated for

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## The Press

### Dissolution In U.P.

COMMENTATOR

LAST week the Uttar Pradesh Assembly, suspended by a Presidential proclamation on February 25, was dissolved on the recommendation of the State Governor that the people's mandate be sought afresh as a way out of the current political instability in the State. The mid-term poll may be held in November, though the Governor is reported to be in favour of February. A deputation of SVD leaders pleaded unsuccessfully with the President for a two-day postponement of the dissolution so that they might parade their supporters before the Governor to prove their majority. The Cabinet decision to dissolve the Assembly was taken before the meeting, though the announcement came later. Left parties in the Lok Sabha and the Jana Sangh staged a walk-out in protest against the dissolution without giving the SVD the time it had asked for.

The Centre is likely to refer to arbitration the disputes between the Congress Governments of Maharashtra and Mysore over the Narmada and Krishna waters. Both the State Governments are reported to be tired of protracted negotiations and have told the Centre that arbitration provides the only solution. The Union Home Minister has told the Congress party in Parliament that minority governments had no sanction of the electorate. This is reported to have encouraged the Congress legislators in Punjab who are keen to withdraw their support from the minority Government of Mr Lachhman Singh Gill. A move to form a Congress ministry in the State has been set afoot. The Union Law Ministry is of the opinion that any amendment of the law to disqualify a legislator on the ground of defection or floor-crossing would violate his fundamental right of freedom of speech, expression and association guaranteed by the Constitution. The Ministry suggests instead that the offer

and acceptance of monetary gratification or an office of profit as a consideration for political defections and floor-crossings should be declared as an offence. A 24-hour curfew was imposed on some areas of Allahabad town following recrudescence of communal trouble. Six people were killed.

Foreign correspondents of Indian papers have become busy over the Soviet Premier's visit to Pakistan. Reports from London, Washington, and Moscow suggest that President Ayub Khan will try to dissuade Mr Kosygin from giving further military assistance to India. More than one correspondent has reported that to strike a deal the Pakistan President may offer to revoke the agreement under which the U.S. has established an electronic intelligence base near Peshwar. The U.S. is seeking renewal of the lease for the base for another ten years. The search for a venue for Vietnam talks continues. The U.S. has rejected Phnom-Penh or Warsaw and North Vietnam has not agreed to Vientiane, Rangoon, Djakarta or New Delhi. The U.N. Secretary-General is reported to have suggested some possible sites to the U.S. and North Vietnam. Hanoi has accused the U.S. of delaying the proposed cease-fire talks; Mr Johnson has warned that the U.S. is growing impatient with the North Vietnamese propaganda over a site for preliminary peace talks. A wave of riots is sweeping over West Germany following an attempt to assassinate a left-wing student leader. The police used truncheons and water cannons to disperse student demonstrators in West Berlin. A news photographer was fatally wounded in the riots. Among the students-arrested was the son of the West German Foreign Minister, Mr Willy Brandt.

The dissolution of the U.P. Assembly has been described by *The Hindustan Times* as an unavoidable step but the paper has questioned the procedure adopted. It says that the justification for dissolution advanced now was equally tenable seven weeks ago when the Governor thought that a mid-term poll was too serious a step to take immediately as it would in-

volve turmoil, expense and distraction. Having waited so long, not much harm would have been done if the SVD was given a chance to establish its claim that its majority was unaffected. If the Governor's calculations were correct—as they appear to have been—the SVD Government would not have survived long, but its defeat would have taken place within the sight of the State's elected representatives. The Governor, then, would not only have been right but would have been seen to be right if he either invited the Congress opposition to try to form a government or decided to recommend a dissolution. The procedure that has been followed has provided an opportunity to the SVD and the Governor's other critics to describe his advice as arbitrary. After the initial hesitation a few more weeks of uncertainty would not have been too heavy a price to pay for maintaining the best traditions of parliamentary democracy.

The support of *The Times of India* is unreserved, for it is obvious that when the Congress and the SVD each claims to enjoy a majority in the House there cannot be anything like a "reorientation of political affiliations" leading to the formation of a stable ministry. There is little doubt that the Congress bases its claim on the shifting loyalties of defectors. Its hopes of collecting a majority are pinned to the prospects of retaining the support of some 21 members who have crossed over from the other side. Its earlier adventure in this field when Mr C. B. Gupta, having obtained a majority with similar non-descript support, was not able to hold it together for even a month should have been a warning against a repetition of the experiment. At all events the Governor could not have ignored that warning. The Governor has to be something more than a calculating machine; he has to see not only whether a party claiming the right to form a ministry has a majority now but also whether it will be able to hold it for a reasonable length of time. From that point of view he had really no choice. Neither the Congress nor the SVD can disguise the fact that a

handful of defectors will be in a position to hold them both to ransom.

*Patriot* says the correct thing for the Governor would have been in the first instance to accept the advice given by Mr Charan Singh to dissolve the Assembly. There is every reason for the people to believe that he and the Central Government rejected the advice because the Congress in U.P. does not have the necessary self-confidence to assume that a mid-term election would be advantageous to it. Secondly, in view of the dissensions in the SVD, Mr. C. B. Gupta had convinced himself that given time he would be able to arrange for a sufficient number of defections and fabricate a majority. If the Governor and the Central Government have now decided to risk a general election it is not because the Congress has grown more self-confident. It is, on the other hand, an admission that whatever Mr C. B. Gupta and other leaders of the party may do they are not likely to be able to gather around themselves a large enough majority. The legislature was suspended to give Mr Gupta the opportunity he demanded. When it was found that he could not make use of the opportunity, dissolution of the Assembly has been resorted to in despair. This does not redound to the dignity or the constitutional good sense of the Central Government or its agent in Lucknow.

#### "Unrealism"

The decision of the West Bengal PSP to quit the United Front and the vacillation of the BKD over this question have been matters of comment for most newspapers. Hitting out at the BKD for its "unrealism" *The Statesman* says that at the national level the party harbours ambitions which are unrelated to its strength; at the West Bengal level it follows tactics which can do no good either to its own or to the political future of the State. Asking Mr Ajoy Mukherjee and his associates to avoid a game of hide and seek somewhere between the UF and a "third force" the paper says that Mr Mukherjee is adding little to his options or to his reputation for decisiveness by his ambiguous behaviour.

There may be little to choose between his leaving the UF and remaining in it, but dithering alternately between the two courses will make him a smaller man than he has already become on account of his vacillations last autumn. Mr Mukherjee may believe that by calculated ambiguity he will be able to bargain for the attainment of a greater number of constituencies to his party. But the position in the UF and influence of the politics of the State will depend so much on the nominal quality of leadership it is able to play. If it was reduced to dependence upon the Communist Party the UF Government while it lasts the reason was not that it was in numbers but that it was in leadership; its present tactics that it has not become richer.

*The Hindustan Times* has the West Bengal PSP's decision to drop out of the UF as an occasion to plead for an alliance of all non-Communist parties, including the Congress. It says that at Raiganj Mr Kamath was at pains to develop the theme of the PSP's political realism to both the Communist Party and the Congress. This would be that he is thinking in terms of a front for the mid-term elections. The effect such a third front will have away the votes from the Congress is more logical for the PSP to arrive to an understanding with all the list and democratic parties, including the Congress. The break-up of the UF will not by itself solve the term question of political stability in West Bengal. The projected alliance of non-Communist and Congress parties is unlikely to be a sufficient organisation or enthusiasm. Only if the present moves lead to a broad coalition of all non-Communist elements, including the Congress, it provide the people of West Bengal with a viable and adequate political alternative. Mr Kamath, Mr Sen, Mr Ashutosh Ghosh and others must realise that one positive move in this direction will be more effective than all the rhetoric they have used in so far.

CHINA: THE PEOPLE'S MIDDLE  
ROAD AND THE U.S.A.

John K. Fairbank.  
Harvard University Press. Price: \$3.95

ONE of the striking phenomena in the publishing world of postwar America, particularly after the birth of Communist China, has been the influence of China experts like bamboo te will after the rains. This growing nominalism of China-watchers have caused but upon a plot in books on China. is able to have served to increased to misunderstanding and confusion if not Communist hatred. A very few of them while it has undertaken serious research in it it was these history and politics. Prof Fairbank is the doyen of these Old tactics. His *The United States and China, Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*, and *East Asia with its decline* are serious contributions to Chinese history, not without all manner of bias.

The present volume is a collection of articles published between 1960 and 1965. They have been grouped, according to theme, in three sections. The first section, 'China's Past', has been well summarised in the first section of one of the articles 'A Nation's History'. This is a comparison of modern China with the old and looking, what is called a favourite pastime of the historians. They often go very dangerously to the theory of history repeating itself. Though Prof Fairbank admits that "the content of the new orthodoxy of Communist China" is a far cry indeed from the comparatively static doctrines of Confucian self-discipline with an immutable social order (p. 42), he nevertheless finds such similarity between the dynastic and party rule. "The combination of the military, the civil administration and the Communist Party makes a tripod comparable to the tripod of the old, the civil bureaucracy and the military under the dynastic regimes" (p. 20) But the mass organizations, he adds, now form a fourth leg. One wonders if this reliance on the masses

does not altogether change the basis of administration, making the analogy meaningless. However no people have been more history-conscious than the Chinese and even the staunchest of the Leninists will find it hard to quarrel with Prof Fairbank when he says that China's present policy comes out of her history and "not just from Lenin's book."

Prof Fairbank attempts in the second section a sort of compromise formula about Taiwan. It would have been best, no doubt, if China could be freed of the Communist scourge. But since Chairman Mao is not likely to oblige him, he has to remain content with the tiny 'free world' of Taiwan. "As a simple moral issue", he says, "we cannot abandon thirteen million Taiwan Chinese to the lower living standard, reprisals and remolding process which they would inevitably suffer under Chinese Communism" (p. 56). In another place, however, he states with much candour the reason why the USA needs Taiwan. "We need access to a Chinese area that is non-Communist, where intelligence work, military programs, language training and academic research can all be carried on" (p. 74). Which of these factors weighs more on U.S. policy is a question not very difficult to answer.

Prof Fairbank would like to recognize the reality of Communist China and at the same time keep the hold on Taiwan. This lands him in a dilemma. For, neither Mao nor Chiang would have 'Two Chinas'. So his prescription is no second China in Taiwan but an 'autonomous' Taiwan with 'dual representation' at the U.N. together with Communist China—like Outer Mongolia. This 'autonomy' however, should be backed by the Seventh Fleet. This scheme forms the first step in his package programme for bringing China within the fold of civilisation. "(1) Sooner or later, human survival will require an effective arms-control agreement with Soviet Russia, which (2) will require Peking's adherence, which (3) will require Peking's admission to the international order of United Nations, which (4) will require Taiwan's being acknowledged an in-

dependent State..." (p. 54). The plan as such sounds perfectly alright except, of course, the solution—the dubious autonomy for Taiwan.

One of the arguments justifying the scheme of 'autonomy' is ingenuous. "While the people in Taiwan are Chinese, so are most of the people of Singapore and even of Hongkong. The Chinese race is numerous and need not be all under one roof..." (p. 70) What he conveniently forgets to mention is that Taiwan is not just another place inhabited by the Chinese people but it has been since A.D. 607 a Chinese province. The Chinese suzerainty over Taiwan has been recognized by his Government in, to mention only one, the Cairo Declaration of 1943. If his argument is valid, what about erecting an independent state of Florida?

Policy of Containment

In the third section Prof Fairbank concerns himself with the problem 'How to Deal with the Chinese Revolution'. He thinks that the present policy of "containment is only half a policy". It should be balanced, dialectically, "by non containment", that is a programme of peaceful intercourse. He knows that the Chinese are not amenable to "pure sweetness and light" and so suggests that the military containment should be combined with "a more sophisticated diplomatic program to undermine China's militancy by getting her more involved in formal international contact of all kinds and on every level." (p. 129). Whether the Chinese will lend themselves to the horse-play is a different matter, but the proposal is sufficient to upset a good number of senators.

His writing at some places seems to be an essay in shocked innocence. He writes, "We are generally conscious of having long befriended China and recently been kicked in the teeth for it." Yet he must know better than many people what wrong his Government has done to the Chinese people since the days of 'hitch-hiking imperialism'. They spent six billion dollars just to prop up the oppressive Kuomintang regime.

His articles also contain contradic-

tory statements and sentiments. On page 69 he defines Chinese totalitarianism as "a system based somewhat less on faith, hope and charity than on organized fear, suspicion and hatred." On page 27 he speaks of Communist dependence on the morale of the party members and cadres and Chinese people as a whole. "Mao's government is effective through moral suasion and manipulation." Or on page 41, "every village now participates in the political life that was formally reserved for the ruling class. Peasant passivity has given way to activism by all citizens." Are these contradictions the result of absentmindedness or is he in two minds?

The present volume though providing much food for thought, leaves one unsatisfied. Modern China cannot possibly be adequately understood or explained while refusing to understand Marxism.

C. PRASAD

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## Five Artists

BY AN ART CRITIC

**P**ARITOSH Sen, Prabhas Sen, Sarbari Roy Chowdhury, Bijon Chowdhury and Mohim Roodro are having an exhibition of paintings and sculpture at the Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Southern Avenue, Calcutta. It is an interesting exhibition where all the exhibitors painstakingly strive towards artistic fulfilment. The display, more close to that of a gallery than a usual exhibition, is tasteful.

Paritosh Sen has changed and matured considerably since his last solo exhibition, where he appeared to be groping for form without quite being able to find it. Here he has something definite to say and he makes his statement in a language unlettered by doubt. His "Triptych", for example, is free and forceful, and he proudly proclaims his belief that the finer elements in man cannot be subdued or subjugated. All his works here are moving.

Prabhas Sen, whose sculpture is a meaningful document on everyday life, is intense and lyrical without being sugary. "The Autocrat", reminiscent of the King in *Red Oleanders*, has the proud stance of the tyrant. The piece is the sculptor's expression of rebellion against oppression. His "Towards Sun" has freedom and plasticity, and is equally well seen from any angle.

Bijon Chowdhury, who has a number of drawings and paintings, tells of trivial happenings of great importance. His drawings are charged with emotion, and his spontaneous lines have a vibrating appeal. The imagery of his paintings, like in "Illusion and Reality", tells of a mature and emotionally integrated mind. His "Black Christ" has sympathy written all over.

Sarbari Roy Chowdhury's sculpture, irrespective of its size, has a quality that one associates with bigness, and this, despite the fact that most of his exhibits are quite small. They are

balanced in form, alive in texture, articulate in emotional content.

Mohim Roodro, in his paintings favours the abstract form. They close a thoughtful mind that has in a lot of hard work to arrive at aesthetic destination. The forms and colours are well organised and conception is potent. His drawings show that he has a definite objective and prove him to be a good draughtsman.

The exhibition will remain open to May 1, excluding Tuesdays.

### A Deft Debutante

Usha Karmarkar's first solo exhibition at the South Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts had 14 exhibits, all oils.

This artist is not circumscribed by any rigid norm. Instead, she has a full vein to her artistic manifestation, adapting her style to suit the subject. The result is a pleasant diversity in her work, both in form and in theme. It is obvious that she has taken pains to give expression to her feelings through line and colour, without losing her spontaneity. In fact, some of her exhibits had all the charm and naïveté of primitive painting.

She chooses her colours with discretion and coordinates her forms with a felicity. A typical example is "Stellar Movement", in which a narrow space effectively divided. "Cosmogony" was a systematized and ordered canvas. "Townscape No. 2" had a regulated abandon which was very pleasant. The composition of "Moon Boats" was powerful.

Mrs Karmarkar handles oil colours with deftness.

### Oils Again

Sajal Roy showed 17 oil colours at his recent exhibition at the Birla Academy of Art and Culture. They could be divided into two groups, one being more formal than the other. Curiously enough, what appeared to belong to the earlier period belonged in fact, to the artist's later phase. A refreshing fact about Mr Roy is that although he has imagination, his exhibits are, at the same time, planted firmly

the ground, and he is alive to the emotions and passions of everyday life. He is forthright in his statements and direct in his phrases. At times there is, undoubtedly, an element of harshness, but that can probably be explained by the impassioned nature of expression. On the other hand, there was at least one canvas that we thought was rather sentimental. This was "The Red Room". Among the pictures that we saw most were "Melancholy Dream". It is simple, powerful and integrated. The Gallery Mona Lisa, Lansdowne Road, recently saw an exhibition of graphic designs by Nanda Kundu. There have been done in a technique which has been developed by the artist. It does not use the traditional surfaces (like wood, linoleum or copper) but the surfaces of water for the production of the designs on to paper. As they cannot be duplicated, water colour being what it is, he calls them, not surprisingly, monoprints. Some of the designs exhibit interesting patterns and in these very much of it is left to chance. It is how far the credit goes to the artist is a matter that can be debated.

## Reactions

I have just finished reading *Frontier*. I was approaching it with great expectations. It is fine but a little tame. What are you worrying about—the establishment, old and new, or the medical Charlatanism in science and accommodation in politics are to be deplored. Write when you must. Do whatever you want to do, but with a clarity of purpose. I am not, however, ruling out caution, tactics, and shrewdness.

Subodh Rai Choudhury  
Calcutta

When one launches a paper one is bound by a particular social aim and defines the political character of the publication for which it is meant. As a result, the ways and art of writing, the choice of subjects and its total integral nature would be limited by these factors from only initially. Because

the task of all politico-cultural papers is to carry its readership towards maturity, to remould them, so to say, so that they can transform themselves into a 'real' force in the camp of progress. It is not enough to expose in a vaguely delightful way the evils of the present, (though this task is certainly not to be minimised). Telling the real truth in a pleasant way is also an art which is commendable under particular circumstances. But side by side with exposure of the filth one must strike a note of unmistakable optimism, must hint at the ways to clear that age-old filth. That is exactly what the Gorkovian literature, including its publicist articles, did on the eve of the October storm. There is no place for pessimism or cynicism in your *Frontier*. But unfortunately the article on Gorky ends with a pessimistic conclusion, quite uncalled for. Even then, I appreciate the author's realisation that "truth now seems in danger of being drowned in hire purchase happiness and promises of high consumption benefit even in the socialist sector of the world".

The editorail, 'Pause in Vietnam?' serves the purpose it is written for, because it emphasises the inevitable conclusion that "all men and arms that dollar can buy cannot win the war", as shown in Korea and Cuba. Also Johnson's 'pause' can well be a preparation for new, fiercer attacks for which regrouping of his battered forces is no less necessary than new reserves. And you have very rightly pointed out that the basic principled stand of the DRV has not been budged from an inch. A tactical compromise without principles makes one lose the final perspective and thus the final strategic objective. Your editorial has dealt with these problems and correctly pointed to the fact for your over-enthusiastic and impatient readers that the time for another Dien Bieu Phu has not yet arrived.

Charan Gupta's (Calcutta Diary) style is captivating and his opinions are candid. I think most of your readers read and relish his columns. But sometimes he seems to betray a lack of political grounding. For instance, his apprehension about a pos-

sible breach in the CPM. Splits in the ranks of revolutionary parties are bad, but not always. Sometimes a split helps to hasten the process of maturity. So splits should be analysed before hailing or condemning them. When it is a question of a rotting stagnant situation created by a leadership which for various reasons is incapable of heading the hard struggle and wants to mark time on the plea of "immature objective situation", I think a split is welcome just as we welcomed the splitting of the CPI after 1962.

I would like you to open a forum on Latin America, Africa and Asia about which our people know practically nothing.

A READER  
Calcutta

Whoever wants to help the vacillating must stop vacillating himself. That is my immediate reaction on reading your first article 'With no Regrets' (April 20). You still seem to cherish illusions about the scope and possibility of the United Front Government, but I have none. Though unlike the majority of the left-minded middle-class I had no hopes of far-reaching reforms through the instrumentality of the United Front Ministry, I nevertheless believed that it was possible to utilise the policy of office acceptance to the fullest extent and advance the cause of Indian Socialism. I believed that through office acceptance the United Front Ministry would be able to demonstrate to the people of India from their own administrative experience that there was little scope for reform and relief within the limits of the Constitution, with the existing class relations and bureaucratic State machine remaining as they are. The experience would prepare the Communists and the countrymen at large psychologically for the final and determined assault on the citadel of reaction both in the city and countryside. But to my utter disappointment I found that the Communists in particular completely gave way, turned the party of revolution into a glorified Labour Party and acquiesced in everything Ajoy Mukherjee and Prafulla Ghosh

did. To take one example, Jyoti Basu and Konar refused to institute a judicial enquiry into the police firing at Naxalbari, although in the election manifesto they unequivocally promised "Legal Provision for Judicial Enquiry in all cases of police firing and complaints about atrocities" (Page-44). Right under the nose of the redoubtable Labour Minister, Subodh Banerjee, the only "MARXIST", thousands of workers were rendered jobless. And last but not least there was that unprecedented rice swindle. Never before was the economic crisis so acute, compulsion of economics so telling and what is more, people so helpless. Who could foresee that Engels would be so prophetically correct when he warned Turati in a letter dated January 26, 1894 that participation by the Communist in a Republican Government would completely paralyse the revolutionary action of the working class they were supposed to represent.

There was a universal systematic and persistent sabotage of every kind of control, supervision and of all government attempts to institute them. And one must be incredibly naive not to understand, one must be an utter hypocrite to pretend not to understand where this sabotage came from and by what means it was being carried on. For this sabotage by the bankers, capitalists and jotedars, this *frustration* of every kind of control was being adapted to the existence of 'progressive united front government' institutions. The capitalist and jotedars have realised perfectly the truth which all believers in Marxism recognise in word, but which Ranadives and Rajeswar Raos tried to forget as soon as their friends secured jobs as ministers.

To my utter regret I now find that instead of clarifying the minds of the

workers, instead of explaining to the masses the incompatibility of relief and present-day capitalism they are befogging them with the promise of 'modest relief' instead of preaching the inevitability of revolution and instead of asking people to be bold and courageous, they are instilling fear by citing the example of the Indonesian massacre, instead of freeing the masses from bourgeois influence, they are strengthening that influence. They now find themselves in the unenviable position of the apologists of bourgeois rule.

It is time to reconsider our position and start afresh. Whoever speaks now of the United Front in the old way is behind the times. The conception of united front changes with time and so does not get us a step further. In my opinion what should be said is this: the toiling masses too require a united front for the seizure of political power, but it serves them as a means. But if we want to make the united front an end in itself we are sure to be consigned to the dustbin of history. We are told: the masses have grown used to the name, the masses have come to love 'their' United Front. And that the Congress would come back. But it is a false alternative and an argument that disregards the desirability, possibility and inevitability of the genuine and third alternative, the tasks of the immediate morrow in the revolution. It is an argument of routine, an argument of inertia. But we are out to rebuild India, rebuild the world.

The left democratic obligations of the working class of India are now coming to the forefront with particular force.

Only the lazy do not swear by left-

ism and socialism these days. The more urgently, therefore, it becomes the duty of the working peasantry and the revolutionary ligenstia to draw a clear, precise definite distinction between left deed and leftism in words.

Probodh Chandra  
Dankuni, Ho

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