

NOW

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No Unity—What Next? ● Poll Prospects In West Bengal
The Cabinet Reshuffle ● Back In The Security Council
More About The Cow March And After ● This Is
Gato's Republic All Right ● The Lessons Of Manila

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WHAT NEXT ?

LET there be unity and there will be light, so thought most people. Now that there is no left unity over seats, prospects are better for the Congress. In the tense, bloody days of the March-April upheaval, in the war of nerves over the 48-hour September bandh, the popular belief was that it would be easy for the parties, forged together in mass action, to come to an electoral understanding. But after the September bandh, in the mellow weather of the Pujas, the fighting spirit gave way to hard bargaining over seats, resulting in a grave setback and a widespread sense of frustration last week. In this country where even parties calling themselves revolutionary are unable to keep up the stamina of extra-parliamentary action beyond a limited period, perhaps because of their obsession with seats in the Duma, such setbacks are inevitable. Is the food situation, the general economic situation in West Bengal, any better than it was on the eve of the last bandh? The Government is going all out to placate the profiteers and blackmarketeers in the food trade; modified rationing is a bleak failure; milo has come to Calcutta; the prospects of the coming months as well as the actual conditions in Bankura, West Dinajpur and Malda are shocking. But among the militant left all the recent preoccupation has been the coming election, and there is little attempt to mobilise the mass discontent against the Congress.

The fact has to be faced: whereas the Congress can reach the remotest village because it is in the seat of power, the left parties are yet to operate at the grass-roots level. Talk about the Kisan Sabha is phoney. In West Bengal, as elsewhere, the mass explosions against the Congress administration ever since Mrs Gandhi took over have been so sudden that the left was caught unawares. Even the Left CPI, the most purposeful and organised unit, has not had the time to mobilise these forces into a disciplined fighting front in village and town.

For a few days at least, people will want to know why left unity talks led nowhere. The main factor, of course, is the split between the Left and the Right CPI. A little more humility and understanding on the part of the latter could have made things easier. After all, it had all the field to itself when the Left CPI leaders were in jail, it had all the time to practise peaceful co-existence and co-operation with the 'progressives' in the country. But the very fact that it did not mind being assessed as the *third* opposition party—after the Left CPI and Bangla Congress, a new organisation whose strength is yet untested—shows that it knows where it suits it to be humble. But when the main tactic is to weaken the most organised left party, the result could have been foreseen. Those who are not interested in ideological cleavages as well as those who are, those who have got sick of the snakes-and-ladders negotiations about seats—the counting of chickens before they are hatched—will be glad to know in February where the Right and Left CPI stand. One Kerala (1965) is not enough. As for the new Kerala spirit of accommodation, conditions in West Bengal, it seems, are not yet ripe for the Namboodiripad way.

It would be silly to deny that the Congress now has a better chance

of scraping through. Parties which cannot agree on seats can never form an alternative government, so says the Congress gramophone. But the cynical should know that it is easier to agree on seats in the Cabinet than on ways to win the elections. It would not be very difficult to form an alternative government—for a time at least—once the Congress is reduced to a minority. After the Congress, what? Anarchy? What else but camouflaged anarchy prevails these days? The overriding slogan even today should be—The Old Gang Must Go. The leftist parties, after a brief and inevitable period of mud-slinging, of apportioning blame for the breakdown of their talks, should try to maintain the area of agreement already achieved and again train their guns on the main target. And if there is a deadlock after the elections and there is President's Rule, the next elections should be decisive. For, then the voters would know how strong is the strongest opposition party and whether its strength will allow it to deliver the goods.

Meanwhile, for reasons other than electoral, the need for an alert front is urgent. As the elections draw nearer, other forces are rearing their heads, spear-headed by ruthless groups using religion as the country liquor of the people. The Delhi march of November 7 was a warning. Metiabruz is another, and the Left must beware.

Not So Easy

As already stated, there will be elation in Congress circles over the failure of the left parties in West Bengal to come to an electoral understanding. Seldom do Congress leaders miss an opportunity to boast that theirs is the only party in the country capable of setting up candidates for all the seats in the Central and State legislatures. By harping on the massiveness of their party they try to impress the electorate and instil, at the same time, courage in the faint-hearted in the party of whom there must be many. Though bulk alone does not qualify a party for power, it cannot be denied that it gives the Congress some undisputed advantage over the Opposition. Defeat of the Congress may not be an end in itself to every voter, and the circumspet may like to know what

the alternative is. A united left front would have provided an answer to this question; it could have secured the support of not only those who in their disgust at the Congress regime refuse to look beyond the immediate, but also the wary. It would have eliminated the splitting of non-Congress votes and the possibility of the Congress returning to power with minority support.

Now all this may not be, unless the unexpected happens and all left parties come together. Efforts are on for two sets of alliances, one led by the Left Communists and the other by the Bangla Congress. It will not be enough for the current negotiations to succeed; contests between the two will have to be avoided. This is perhaps an impossible proposition, for otherwise the 13-party negotiations would not have collapsed. Nevertheless, the trends that lay hidden in the results of the last general election indicate that the Congress cannot hope for a walk-over next year. Nothing has been done by the party or the Government run by it in the intervening years to reverse the trends. On the contrary, there are many reasons why the process of disenchantment must have been accelerated.

It is true that in the last general election the Congress secured five more seats in the State Assembly than it did in 1957, but in parliamentary election its tally was one less. Its share of the total votes polled in 1962 was almost the same as in 1957, and the increase was only a fraction of the gains it made between the first and the second general election. Only in six of the sixteen districts in the State could it gain more seats than in 1957; it suffered reverses in nine, in four of them severely, and in one district its position remained unaltered. The overall Congress gain of five seats in the State Assembly was at the cost of the PSP which lost fifteen seats to the Congress and gained five from it; this means that other Opposition parties together with Independents wrested more seats from the Congress than they conceded to it.

On the other hand, in spite of all propaganda to the contrary, the Communist Party bettered its position in 1962. It increased its representation from six to nine in the Lok Sabha and from fortysix to fifty in the State Assembly. It secured a larger number of seats in eight districts and

polled more votes in fifteen of the sixteen districts of the State. The solitary exception was Birbhum but even there the decline was from 13.4 per cent of total votes to 11.1 per cent, which is by no means a substantial loss. Though the party secured eight Calcutta seats against ten in the previous election, in terms of votes it improved its position considerably by polling 34.5 per cent of the total votes cast against 26.6 per cent in 1957.

The poll results make it obvious that the Congress gains in Calcutta in the last election were not at the cost of its principal opponent. Both registered substantial gains in the city. It is true the Communist Party was not split at that time; but the intra-party dispute was already acute and the forces that some would like to believe have undermined the Communist movement were already at play. Figures do not bear out that the Communists secured more votes in 1962 simply because they had put up more candidates. There was a drop in the number of votes polled per contested seat by the Congress also. The general decline should be traced to the fall in the number of total votes polled; only 55.3 per cent of the electorate exercised their franchise in the last election, though in 1957 this figure was as high as 68.2 per cent.

Organisationally also the Congress is not what it was in 1962. However much the Congress leaders may try to minimise the importance of the breakaway party, the Bangla Congress will claim a share of traditionally Congress votes, at least in some districts. There cannot be any doubt about the popularity of the party in Midnapur where the Congress captured twenty-seven out of thirty-two seats in the State Assembly in the last election. Another district which emerged as a Congress stronghold in 1962 is 24-Parganas where the party bagged thirty-three out of forty-two seats—thirteen seats more than in the previous election. There also the Bangla Congress has become a force to reckon with along with some other Opposition parties. The Congress prospects for an absolute majority will dim considerably even if in these two districts alone the Bangla Congress can win some seats and help the Congress to lose some more. In this the party need not be entirely on its own; it may be assisted by the factionalism that lurks under the placid

NOW

surface of the Congress organisation in the State.

Neither can the Congress be too sure of the votes of Muslims who constitute 19 per cent of the total population of the State. This is not merely because some of the prominent leaders of the community have parted company with the Congress, but also because of the changed mood of the community. Among the four districts in which the Communist Party could not much improve its position in the last general election are Murshidabad, Malda and Birbhum where Muslims constitute a sizable portion of the electorate. The first is the only district in the State where Muslims are in a majority. It seems Muslim voters in areas with a large Muslim population have so long generally tended to vote either for non-party candidates of their community or for candidates of the ruling party. A shift in the voting behaviour of Muslims may affect the performance of the Congress in the seven districts which have a large concentration of Muslim population.

The Congress is not unaware of these possibilities. If it were so, there would perhaps not have been so much talk of gratuitous and test relief on a grand scale in the remaining months of the current financial year. The State Government has already spent Rs 6 crores on this year's relief work, though the average annual expenditure on this account is only Rs. 5 crores. With New Delhi's generosity it proposes to spend another Rs 15 crores in the pre-election months, though the lean period of the year should be over in another few weeks. Significantly, the districts which are said to be the worst victims of drought are also the districts where the Congress will win or lose the general election. Nobody will grudge if the really distressed get some relief; nor is West Bengal's the only Government which has planned massive relief on election-eve. But relief in the next few months is likely to have strings, and in a poor country this can very well subvert free election. Such a subterfuge would not have been thought necessary had the Congress been really sure of a resounding victory.

A Game Of Chess

Mrs Gandhi has been able to pull off at least one surprise. Nowhere in

the spate of speculation over impending changes in her team was Mr Chagla boldly tipped as Foreign Minister. But there he is. Though he is not reported to be popular in the Arab world, his appointment will go down well with the West, which is what matters most to New Delhi at the moment. Mr Chagla, with his untiring tongue, will also come in handy as a secular angel defending Kashmir if the issue is raised again at the Security Council. At home, those who thought that Mrs Gandhi had become obscurantist over cow-slaughter will be asked to think over the fact that a Muslim has been given a key post.

With Mr Fakhruddin Ahmed as Education Minister, Urdu should gain on the eve of the elections, though it would remain to be seen whether the States would enforce any new policy when it is announced. The appointment should also please those who have just formed a rival Muslim League in Kerala—an end towards which Mr Ahmed worked some time ago. Whether education as a whole would profit from the new incumbent whose record in his home State was nothing to gloat over is another matter.

About one thing most people would agree—defence will not improve.

More important than the changes announced are those which Mrs Gandhi was not able to make, though she was in a hurry. The Syndicate provided a checkmate and Mrs Gandhi had to change her mind in the course of a day. Mr Subramaniam and Mr Mehta, having failed to pull off their breakfast coup, may now face mounting criticism. Mr Patil is known for his restless energy. Mr Morarji Desai is still waiting for his chance. It would not be surprising if the game of chess is taken up again.

A Sense Of Security

There was, it must be admitted, a certain agreeable degree of sophistication in South Block's studied affectation of a total lack of surprise over India, after all, being elected to the Security Council for a two-year term as a non-permanent member. Syria was the other contender, Pakistan having discreetly withdrawn earlier. The story is told of Winston Churchill that when remonstrated for his unwarranted savagery about Clem Attlee who, it was said, was a modest

man, the greater man barked: "Yes, he is a modest man—with a great deal to be modest about". Such must be most people's reaction to the External Affairs Ministry's admirable restraint in celebrating India's second entry into the Security Council in 21 years. In spite of the recent expansion of membership, for which India worked hard, there is still a certain exclusiveness about the Security Council; and to get into the club is perhaps for a nation somewhat like what it may be for a newly rich railway or defence contractor into the Bengal Club in Calcutta or the IDG in Delhi. The new entrant stands endless rounds of drinks to all and sundry with the money he has in one way and another earned; the drinks the Indian delegation will stand at Turtle Bay will have to be paid for by the Indian tax-payer who (a) has not got his weekly ration and (b) when he has he cannot pay for. These circumstances warrant no orgy of jubilation.

It is for Parliament now to find out just what it cost India to secure the credit card of the Diners' Club called the Security Council. It is bad enough that India got the least of the majorities among the five members trying to get in; only 82 against the many more secured, out of the 119 cast, by the other candidates such as Canada, Brazil, Ethiopia and Denmark; but the "squeaking home by a bare margin of two votes over the two-thirds majority", as one correspondent has put it, needs to be spelt out in terms of rupees and paise, especially because most of the expenditure must have been in foreign currency and perhaps since June's devaluation. How many delegations went abroad to canvass support for India's candidature? The purely monetary answer extracted, Parliament should go on to ask how much Arab goodwill may have been lost in the process of opposing Syria, which secured no fewer than 42 votes. It seems altogether too facile to conclude that Paris manipulated the votes of former French colonial territories against India, although this is a possibility neither to be ruled out nor handed to South Block as a compliment. The present ambassador in Paris could tell South Block just what went wrong with the Indian mission in the French capital for years and others could say what is wrong now.

The cost of successful election to the Security Council ascertained, it should be somebody's business to ask just what India expects to get out of her inclusion in the Security Council. The Indian case on Kashmir or Goa or any other thing has never gone unheard in the Security Council because she was not a member of that club; her delegates have spoken there endlessly and fainted there intermittently. It has now to be shown to the poor people of India how the extra cost of representation on the Security Council is going to benefit them, politically or economically. Quite frankly, the Indian people are a trifle tired of South Block's prestige or image; they feel securer when there is something to eat.

Trains Of Thought

What happened near Siliguri on the 11th morning may never be known in detail, thanks to ham-handed security measures introduced at relatively junior but effective levels. It has still been out that an army special train was involved in the accident with the final number of fatal casualties still unknown. Those who remember that Mr Lal Bahadur Shastri's highminded resignation after a railway accident five years ago was really inspired by Mr Nehru's hard-headed calculation that Mr Shastri's services were needed by the Congress for its election campaign will not be unduly sorry that Mr S. K. Patil still sticks to office, although it is a virtual certainty that, during the months before the election, Mr Patil too will conduct something like a whistle-stop campaign. What makes the Siliguri accident worthy of special notice is not only the fact that it was an army special but also the strong evidence that the cause was an act of sabotage. The spot of the accident adjoins several disaffected areas where hills people live and is not very from the frontier with East Pakistan.

For some parties, however, the tragedy of so many deaths was promptly transcended by the aforementioned association of hill tribes and the neighbouring country. The cry has already gone up that all efforts for peace in the hill areas are futile, that Pakistan is the root of all evil. Thinking in the Ministry of Railways has lately followed only one track—deterrent punishment including death and a bigger police force

directly under Rail Bhavan. It requires nothing more than common sense to realise that thousands of miles of railway track cannot possibly be policed, that not even murderers are deterred by the fear of the gallows. The only protection for the vulnerable railways is the good will of the people around; and it will not be denied that New Delhi's slow-moving endeavours to win over the alienated people of the hills are hamstrung by elements within the Government which are political as well as administrative. A most misconceived militancy seizes the Government of India, and some people outside, whenever there are attempts to understand the causes of dissatisfaction in the hill areas.

Mrs Indira Gandhi wisely handles the negotiations with the Nagas herself; but progress to date has been negligible. The underground holds on to its largely theoretical demand for sovereignty; but it has also to be admitted that no fresh idea has come from New Delhi, which seems singularly destitute of the two qualities such human problems as those of the Nagas need: sympathy and imagination. Railway accidents are sad; sadder when caused by human hands with heartless deliberation; but they can hardly be allowed to put a policy of humanity off the track.

Food Shortage

Brag in haste, and repent at leisure. One would have thought that by now Mr Subramaniam would have learned that caution has its own rewards; obviously he has not. In one moment of American enthusiasm in August, the Food and Agriculture Minister confidently predicted foodgrains production of the order of 95 million tons for the current year. The scarcity of rain during the last two months has taken care of the soothsaying. On Mr Subramaniam's own admission, there has been a major failure of the *Kharif* crop in Bihar and in eastern and central Uttar Pradesh, and conditions are fairly severe in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat. The inadequate rainfall in September has affected areas in Maharashtra, Orissa and West Bengal as well. Because of lack of moisture in the soil at the time of sowing, the *rabi* crop too is likely to be poor, especially in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. It

seems the expectation as of now is of a total harvest adding up to only 80 million tons, a full 15 million tons short of Mr Subramaniam's original prognostication and precisely what was already the output of foodgrains as early as 1960-61. No amount of semantic exercise can hide the fact that agricultural productivity continues to be petrified at an ominously low level.

One cannot have it both ways. The Minister, for whom the very mention of the USA evokes tears of gratitude, cannot claim that the so-called new agricultural strategy, doubly blessed by the Ford Foundation and the U.S. Agency for International Development, is working miracles in the countryside, and at the same time lay the blame for poor harvest on the failure of rainfall. It is the purpose of strategy to ensure the growth of agriculture irrespective of rainfall. This has been the *raison d'être* for selecting a highly stratified 10 per cent of the total cultivable area for the Intensive Agricultural Development Programme. Fields and farmers have been chosen carefully, there has been no letting up in the supply of fertilizers and high-yielding seeds and water and pesticide and insecticide and formidable American advice about how the conditions of Iowa can be repeated for India.

But to no avail. Something is getting messed up in the process. It could be the advice rendered is wrong and misplaced. It could even be that class relations being what they are in agriculture, vested interests are seeing to it that resources get lost midway down the line. The deficiency is as much in Mr Subramaniam's understanding as in that of his American mentors, who have assured the growth in farm output can occur even on the base of the existing class relations. But the top farmers controlling the bulk of the land are few in number. They are so few that even if agriculture does not grow they would not have to starve; on the contrary, a failure to raise output allows them an additional marketing margin.

What will Mr Subramaniam do now? How will he rush food to the deficit areas, if the food is not there in the first place? The State Chief Ministers have set themselves up as feudal barons, and the Union Government, in a fit of silliness which defies comprehension, has further

compounded the felony by introducing the single-State food zones. However much Mr Subramaniam may coax, no Chief Minister, even if he reigns in one of the so-called surplus States, will agree to release food, unless on his own terms. These terms may be so exorbitant that both Mrs Gandhi and her Food Minister might decide that it would be cheaper to sell out to the Americans. This is, in fact, the process of history: as the barons kept on nibbling at each other, the King lost the Battle of Agincourt. And it is freely alleged that sometimes the King lost the battle according to a prior arrangement with the enemy.

Private Buses

Private buses have reappeared on Calcutta roads and people are largely happy. The conductors don't do an atrocious habit but they help passengers get off in one piece, pick up lone passengers even if they are a few feet away from bus-stops, they never stand immobile at the gate to collect fare at their convenience, never pass wry comments and never cheat on tickets.

Not many tears are being shed over the CSTC. But to say that the CSTC is losing Rs. 30,000 a day solely because passengers and conductors are cheats is outrageously funny. The crux of the matter is, the CSTC is made to incur losses so that the whole business can be wound up and passed on to private enterprise. Half of the total fleet is dumped on various depots on the plea that spare-parts are not available for repairs. If it were really so, how could the number of buses be doubled during the Puja days? The workshops have become hotbeds of shady dealings, but is it very difficult to mop up a few pilferers? The CSTC cannot construct or repair buses because of the lack of foreign exchange, which is not available for a low priority item like public transport. How do the private entrepreneurs manage then? The Government can invoke DIR for milk control but not for requisitioning private buses because nobody has yet been choked off in a bus.

Nationalisation is not Mr P. C. Sen's fetish. He wants to "offer maximum convenience to the public" in the shape of tinbox buses and if in the process some moneyed men

are given a chance to mint some more money before the election, he should be certainly blessed by the Party. The timing of the reappearance has been very clever. It will remove the ground from under the feet of the CSTC Union workers who are getting militant over their demands. By the time they go on strike, if they are as good as their threats, the transport system will not collapse, thanks to

Delhi Letter

The Cow Stampede

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

WITH the "save cow" rampage claiming its first political heifer in Mr Nanda, the crypto-sadhu, the dilettantes in Mrs Indira Gandhi's mediocre menagerie took her for a ride by talking her into attempting a Cabinet shake-up. The situation is rather comical now, with all the trappings of one of those African "coups within a coup". Or an anti-coup coup (like the anti-missile missile the Russians talk of.) Mrs Gandhi's slick entourage now knows that a Prime Minister who stays in office under someone's sufferance can be politically manhandled by any of the major factions in the Congress. The image-builders who put all of the gloss on Mrs Gandhi's wonderful capacity for taking decisions, now go about New Delhi as if they never claimed such virtues for her.

The cow lobby in New Delhi is as motley as the seven lakhs that marched down Parliament Street on November 7, bringing an ugly reality in our national life to the very doorstep of Parliament. It was an atavistic throw-back under the focus of TV cameras for the world to see. Medieval obscurantism walked the Capital's main street, reminding a foreign correspondent standing next to me of the Munich Beer Hall putsch. The cow lobby is mixed up with the bomb lobby, with the Israel lobby and the Hindi lobby. This is the time when all the barriers merge. Seth Govind Das and Kamalanayan Bajaj, both of them Congress MPs, are part of the cow lobby and no responsible Congress leader had a word of denunciation for their role on November 7.

the 750 private buses that will be running. Already there is a split in the union over the strike of October 14, and efforts to form another union are afoot. People who could not care less for what happens to the CSTC will be understandably "annoyed" with one more strike by its workers and probably this will give the green signal for the winding up of the CSTC lock, stock and barrel.

It would be a long time before the odd bits of information are pieced together to tell the full-story of the November 7 orgy and the November 9 high drama that virtually finished Mrs Gandhi's term as Prime Minister. The astrologers tell us that her Raj Yoga ended on November 14 and Mr Morarji Desai's begins.

But, to begin with the beginning, it is hard to say for certain if the CIA's hand was behind the November 7 rampage. Where did all the money come from and how come the Delhi Administration did not think of rounding up the bad characters as they did on the eve of the September 1 Right Communist march? At the end of the day's orgy, when newsmen began grilling Mr A. N. Jha, the Lieutenant Governor, it did become clear that the Government was not sure whether the RSS whose storm-troopers led the attacks, was part of the cow agitation or not. It was admitted that only 4,500 policemen were on duty when seven lakh people turned up for the rally. Earlier, Mr Nanda said in Parliament that he had heard the tape recording of Swami Rameshwaranand's speech inciting the mob to stage a "gherao" on Parliament. It beats one how AIR, which is under the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, sent the tape so promptly (in an hour or less) to the Home Minister. The tape had not been broadcast by AIR and Mr Nanda cannot claim to have heard it on the air. The propriety of AIR being used as the intelligence arm of the Home Ministry is another matter.

The fact is the Delhi CIR as well

as the Delhi Administration is controlled by Jan Sanghis at the lower and middle levels. This column was the first to lay bare the late Mr Lal Bahadur Shastri's sneaking admiration for the Jan Sangh and his solicitude for the Hindu communal forces. Mr Nanda's Bharat Sadhu Samaj was behind the agitation and the Government fights shy of admitting it. Mr Nanda's involvement in the cow is also well known. Cow protection comes under the Food and Agriculture Ministry. But some time ago, without so much as informing Mr Subramaniam about it, Mr Nanda addressed letters to the Chief Ministers on the cow-slaughter ban.

Against Nanda

The anti-Nanda campaign has been building up for quite some time now. Mr Patil has been openly leading the political guerilla warfare. There have been signature campaigns, whisper campaigns and veiled threats. At the height of Parliament's furore over the Sunil Das case, Mr Nanda looked like going. But overnight, he seemed to have had a "life" and he declared in the Rajya Sabha that no one would be allowed to escape the law in the case. Which the big names in the Congress mixed up with the case would not forgive.

When Mr Nanda came under fire in the Congress Parliamentary Party executive and later at the Cabinet meeting, Mrs Gandhi did not have a word to say in his defence. Paradoxically, the cow savers were responsible for the exit of their only patron saint in the Cabinet.

The Prime Minister's gutless handling of the resignation raises important issues. In the atmosphere of chicanery and intrigue that prevails in the Congress, personalities are equated with policies. But to date, no Prime Minister has had the courage to own up responsibility as leader of a collective cabinet. In 1962, when some Congressmen resigned in Bombay against Mr Menon's Congress candidature from North Bombay, Mr Nehru thundered from the Chowpatty sands against those who attacked his colleagues when they did not have the courage to attack him. "If you do not like the colleagues I have chosen, I say go to hell..." he declared. But when the anti-Menon lobby began gunning for him, Mr Nehru instead of accepting responsibility, jettisoned Mr Menon. Mr

Nehru's handling of the Malaviya affair was no more redeeming. Nor Mr Shastri's lack of grace in dealing with TTK's resignation.

Perhaps the Prime Minister did not bargain for the kind of letter Mr Nanda wrote. She has been heading a caboodle and not a Cabinet. Was it the all-powerful L. P. Singh (who according to Mr Bhupesh Gupta has links with the CIA) who decided on the round-up of Left Communists in the past? What is the source of Mr L. P. Singh's strength and why did Mrs Gandhi insist on his staying as the Home Secretary? Mrs Gandhi told Parliament on Thursday that the procedure was that a cabinet sub-committee should decide the transfers. The Prime Minister, the Home Minister and the "concerned" Minister constituted such sub-committees. Here the Home Minister was the concerned Minister and when he and the Prime Minister disagreed on Mr Singh's stay as Home Secretary, surely there must be some other procedure to sort things out. And when did this procedure come into being? In Pandit G. B. Pant's days, the Home Ministry handled all transfers of Secretaries.

November 9

And now to the drama of November 9. Mr Chavan had returned from Bombay on November 8 and Mrs Gandhi sounded him through other colleagues. The story is that Mr Chavan did not really indicate his consent in a direct manner. He just told the Prime Minister to make up her mind first. Mr Patil barged into the Prime Minister's house to tell her that he would not stand such nonsense. In the meantime, the Prime Minister had asked both Mr Sachin Chaudhuri and Mr Manubhai Shah to resign. Mr Atulya Ghosh, who heard this through a friend, told the Prime Minister that this just cannot happen. The Syndicate began pushing the Prime Minister around. The next morning, Mr Atulya Ghosh got in touch with Mr Nijalingappa of Mysore to persuade him to shoot a telegram to the Prime Minister expressing his misgivings about handing over Home to Mr Chavan.

As long as it was a lone Mr Patil stalling Mr Chavan becoming Home Minister, it looked a simple affair to the political nondescripts who engineered the reshuffle move—Mr Asoka Mehta and Mr Subramaniam. But

the moment Mr Patil could get Mr Atulya Ghosh cracking down on the issue of dropping Mr Sachin Chaudhuri, the Prime Minister looked licked. The Central Hall was buzzing with rumours of the shake-up to come in the afternoon. But the drama was yet to be over.

The Syndicate bared its fist and the Prime Minister's advisers got cold feet. Even Mr Chavan's switch to Home, which was taken for granted, looked impossible at 1 p.m. Mr Nijalingappa's telegram proved decisive here. Mrs Gandhi tried to work out a formula. A cabinet sub-committee which would include Mr Patil along with Mr Chavan would ensure that Mr Chavan did justice to Mysore on the border issue and the Goa issue. Mr Patil told the Prime Minister that he would not like to be involved in such things while Mr Chavan said he was not interested in the Home portfolio with all the strings attached. So it was off. With it the elaborate plan engineered by the "Indicate" to put the Syndicate in its place was fired. The Prime Minister did not appear to have a will of her own. She was acting independently of Mr Kamaraj and the Congress President was laughing in his mini-sleeves over the muddle. The drama ended in a resounding victory for the Syndicate. It looked like if the Syndicate kept up its pressure for a week, it could secure the Prime Minister's ouster. The Prime Minister had to come to terms with the Syndicate. Mr Kamaraj was nowhere in the new political calculus. The members of the "Indicate" scurried to mice. The Prime Minister had been cut to size.

Operation Salvage began the next day. Here was a Prime Minister no more enviable a position than the poor Mr Sadasiva Tripathy was a few weeks ago or Mr B. P. Chaliha was recently. She could not effect a single change. What happened to the brave talk of "going to the people over devaluation? One certainly cannot go to the people when it comes to an unconcealed scramble for power."

The "Indicate" had to talk to the Syndicate and get Mr Patil to reconcile himself to Mr Chavan's take-over. The terms are not known still but when they fall out again in 1967 during the Prime Minister's election, the truth would be out.

Written Off

But what is Mrs Gandhi's political future? Many observers have written her off already. But not her courtiers. There has been a surreptitious attempt at rallying the Chief Ministers behind her. There is already an understanding with some of them—that they would have the decisive say in choice of Congress candidates for the Assembly seats and she would have a say in the choice of Lok Sabha candidates. The lists are to be so manipulated that she would have a sizable hard-core following to stake the claim for re-election. The Syndicate's room of manoeuvrability would be less in 1967 with the prospect of Congress defeat in several areas. Against Mr Morarji Desai, if Mr Kamaraj feels he has no chance of winning, Mrs Gandhi has to be the only alternative. This is Mrs Gandhi's own calculation.

But what of Mr Kamaraj's future? This is the "up or down" chance for him to become the Prime Minister. Much depends on his winning the Madras State. If Congress scrapes through with only a fifteen or twenty seat margin in the Madras Assembly, Mr Kamaraj would have lost his right as arbiter in New Delhi. For Mr Morarji Desai, too, 1967 would be the last chance. His astrologers have told him his Raj Yoga has begun (they have told him this so many times in the past).

So no one in the Government thinks of the country. Everyone thinks of himself. Mr Nanda has prepared dossiers through the CBI on so many of them. The Government has been paralysed for a week now, with every Minister jittery at the thought of a sack or a transfer. The day after she took over as Home Minister, Mrs Gandhi tried to prove her firmness by sending out letters to the Chief Ministers on how to tackle the law and order situation. The same bureaucracy moulds the Home Ministry's policies. In the context of Mr Nanda's paper missile, does not the controversy over the Left Communist sabotage strategy and the story that appeared in *The Statesman*, sourcing it to the Home Ministry, acquire a new dimension? Mr Nanda denied it of course. But then, Mr Nanda did not know of so many things happening in his own Ministry. All his denials of the kind in the past would appear suspect in retrospect.

November 13, 1966

Calcutta Diary

CHARAN GUPTA

THIS is Plato's Republic all right, where some places and people are more equal than others. Last week's episodes in New Delhi are amenable to umpteen interpretations, but, writing as I do from Calcutta, there is one aspect that fascinates me most of all. It is the spatial ego-centrism of our rules entrenched in New Delhi. Not much sympathy is needed for Mr Nanda, but he is partly right: nasty incidents of the type which took place on Parliament Street are happening with an almost monotonic regularity all over the country, but the party organisation has not bothered to demand the scalp of any Chief Minister or State Home Minister. (Mr Nanda fell because Messrs Ghosh and Patil had been gunning for him for some time for their own private reasons, and, in course of a couple of hours' swift manoeuvre, they successfully used the pretext of the disturbances to ease him out.)

If it were not Mr Nanda, the denouement would have been different. But it is perhaps equally true that if the locale were not New Delhi, much of the high drama would have never taken place. Things took a much worse turn in Calcutta last March; compared to that, the afternoon rampage in New Delhi was a minor happening. Destruction of property has been no less in Andhra in course of the recent letting up of emotions over the location of the fifth public sector steel plant. But those are events which occur from time to time in the distant outposts of the empire, and can therefore be taken in their stride. The equanimity of the rulers gets disturbed only when something unpleasant takes place in their immediate vicinity. The *emirs* and *umrao* cannot stand the stench of violence within the portals of their protected city. To the small coterie of politicians and civil servants who decide on our destiny, the country is shrunk: India, so far as they are concerned, is New Delhi. More polemic has been expended at the meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party on the tragedy of the thirty-odd cars, belonging to high civil servants and parked on Parliament Street, which were burnt down

during the disturbances on November 7, than on the reports of scores of starvation deaths in Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh. It is a commentary on the attitude that New Delhi's environment breeds. As the economists would say, so far as New Delhi's relative values are concerned, the "shadow" price of a civil servant's car is at least one thousand times that of the life of a poor peasant woman in the district of Gaya.

Dr Rammanohar Lohia's contortions leave me cold most of the time, but he once made a most incisive remark about New Delhi's upstart growth. If we add up all government expenditure on construction in the entire country since 1947, we will discover—Mr Lohia claimed—that 15 to 20 per cent of the aggregate has been spent on expanding and manicuring the capital—adding new roads, redoing old ones, building potential structures, patronising architectural and civil engineering innovations and so on, in a pattern of quasi-infinite variety. The city's population, in contrast, would not even make up $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the country's total, and tax revenue paid by Delhi's citizens is unlikely to exceed 3 per cent of what is collected from the whole nation. Those who reside in Delhi are the most effective of all pressure groups operating in the country today. Wishes are horses with them, again because this is Plato's Republic. Dum Dum handles almost four times as much national and international traffic as Palam does. The Palam airport has been expanded in course of a brief two years, new facilities have been added, and it has a bristlingly new look about it. Dum Dum, in contrast, continues to bear the look of a *mofussil* railway station, musty and dilapidated. Both airports are the charge of the Union Department of Civil Aviation.

Socialism spillet over in this land of ours, the abiding principle still being that some men are more equal than others. I have before me the Medical Attendance Rules of a Calcutta institute which is sponsored by the Union Government and which

has to conform to that government's rules and regulations. These rules for medical attendance therefore must be identical with the provisions under the Union Government's Contributory Health Scheme. Under these benign rules, reimbursement of consultation fees charged by doctors will be Rs. 2 for an employee whose monthly salary is only up to Rs. 150, where the salary is more than Rs. 150 but less than Rs. 500 the reimbursible fee is Rs. 4. Then comes a jump. If an employee earns more than Rs. 500, he can call in a doctor and Government will reimburse him to the extent of Rs. 16. There is even much greater fun in the range of compensation that can be claimed for injections. For an intravenous injection, those earning less than Rs. 150 are entitled to spend only Rs. 2, for the middle income range, an injection costing up to Rs. 3 will be allowed; those earning more than Rs. 500 can however spend on an injection as much as Rs. 5. In regard to intramuscular injections, the proletarians under Rs. 500 must not spend more than Rs. 2, but you will be permitted to spend Rs. 3 in case you earn more than Rs. 500. The same principles of stratified socialism are repeated for the disbursement of expenses for hospitalisation. The hierarchy of how much an employee or a member of his family may incur in a hospital is laid down with precision: Rs. 4 per day for the lowest category, Rs. 8 for the middle category, and Rs. 12 for the above Rs. 500 bourgeoisie.

This is the structure Mr Nehru built in course of seventeen years' of socialist labour—the same Mr Nehru who would simultaneously concentrate his moral passion for the redress of international rights and wrongs. In the great Indian Republic, which, according to the claim of the incumbent Prime Minister, is determined never to sway from the path of socialism, it is taken for granted that the lives of the poor do not matter as much as the lives of the rich. It does not really matter if, at Rs. 200, the only injection you are able to obtain consists of water and no life-giving substance. It does not really matter whether you stay alive or be dead: after all, let us not fudge the main issue, *you are poor*. It is an unfortunate circumstance to be in in the India of the Congress party.

I am told a similar spirit of socialism is reflected in the budgetary allocation for the building of quarters for government servants. Money will be sanctioned to build quarters of the appropriate specifications, corresponding to 90 per cent of the sanctioned posts in the Class I category; for example, if in a particular government office there are ten sanctioned posts for Class I officers, the number of quarters suitable to the status of such officers that will be made available to this office would be nine. The assumption is that, at any given moment, the tenth position will remain vacant. But, as one descends down the salary ladder, not only does the quality of housing deteriorate, but the *proportion* of quarters made available to the members of sanctioned posts continues to shrink. If my information is correct, for employees in the Class IV category—peons, *jamadars*, messenger boys, *farashes*—quarters are built to satisfy the housing needs of only 30 per cent of the sanctioned staff. I was provided with an explanation why this has to be so. The Class IV employees earn such low salaries that they find it a strain to pay even the relatively low rent which the Government charges for the quarters; to lower the burden of rent, these people therefore often sublet the quarters. The bosses in New Delhi were scandalised: such malpractice with the utilisation of government quarters could not be allowed. The decision was therefore taken to cut down the proportion of built quarters for Class IV staff. The logic, I have to admit, is impeccable. A simple extension of this reasoning would be to stop distributing food to the low-income categories—they are often too poor to afford the food, and sometimes they indulge in the malpractice of sharing this food with others. These others may be starving too, but, again, I am afraid that is not the main issue.

An acquaintance of mine, who in his wisdom has recently taken a government job, was recounting his first lesson in the arithmetic of New Delhi's hierarchy. As he was ushered in, the Section Officer immediately showed up, greeted him with a deep salute, and made the famous pronouncement, "Sir, you are entitled to 225 square feet or two windows, *whichever is less*".

Letter From America

The Message Of Manila

ROBI CHAKRAVORTI

WHAT kind of conference was held in Manila where, *Life* magazine wrote glowingly, Johnson was a listener, not a talker?

An attempt to answer the question is an interesting intellectual exercise for people who are puzzled by the tremendous hullabaloo raised by Johnson's trip to Asia, ostensibly pegged to the Manila conference. Goldwater, for instance, tried this intellectual exercise in course of a television appearance. With a disarming display of Socratic ignorance, he asked whether the Manila conference could be called a peace conference since the other side was not there.

If it was not a peace conference, the question may be asked whether it was a war conference. Here, too, the answer seems to be in the negative. The brunt of the Vietnam war is borne in the U.S., which, after all, had initiated it before "allies" were roped in. Whatever direct assistance South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand and America's white Asian allies are lending to the American war effort in South Vietnam is at best marginal. If there is any significance to it, it is at most symbolical. The basic strategy and the operation of the war is decided by the American military staff. The Manila conference cannot, therefore, be called a war conference either.

I. F. Stone in a forthright commentary on the Manila conference ripped the facade off what he called "this magnificent Madison Avenue charade". He argued that the only purpose of the conference was "to get Mr Johnson's picture with all those Asian potentates". The schedule of the trip is indicative. Of 17 days allotted to the trip, he says, barely two were devoted to the conference itself. "There was hardly time to read, much less debate, the 3,000 words of the triple pronouncement prefabricated for it: The Goals of Freedom, The Communique, the Declaration on Peace and Progress in Asia and the Pacific".

Stone, it seems to me, is underestimating the importance of the Manila conference in the context of what is happening in Asia today. He called the leaders assembled in Manila "peripheral pygmies poised on the edges of a giant continent in eruption" orchestrated by a Texan as the voice of New Asia. His ideological anger prevents him from seeing that it is precisely in this orchestration that the meaning of the Manila conference lies.

The Manila conference, to begin with, replaces SEATO for all practical purposes. How long the Manila Powers as a group will remain effective is another matter; but, for the time being, they will constitute the hub around which the spokes of American economic, military and political power will revolve. One has to have a national-geographic pivot for the operation of a policy as it gets more and more militant, and Manila Powers fulfil this purpose.

The Absentees

To understand the significance of the Manila conference, it is instructive also to take into account the Asian Powers who were absent there, and their present status in world affairs in terms of raw strength. India, Burma, Pakistan, Ceylon and Japan lack raw strength to influence American policies, for one reason or another. And, Indonesia is not what she used to be before.

These facts constitute perhaps the most significant aspect of the Manila conference. The bloc of Asian countries which is committed neither to America nor to China is suffering from impotence as a result of which America and China are struggling to find a balance of power in Asia without any mediating influence. America has moved in strongly into South-East Asia using "peripheral pygmies" as aides and there is virtually no power to countervail this rising influence of the United States in Asian affairs. If this influence takes the form of "politics by other means" (to quote Clausewitz's famous definition of war), there is no way of sobering the United States up. The weights are being distributed on two ends of the scale and impotent Asian countries outside China who were absent in the Manila conference are proving useless as "dead" weights.

The Manila conference, therefore,

should not be dismissed as a mere propaganda device of President Johnson with his eyes set on winning the mid-November elections. This may well have been a motivation behind the trip to Manila and other Asian countries. What is of greater importance is that the trip signals that America is moving boldly into the

Asian continent, and those who know the turbulent history of the Far East will find familiar echoes in Johnson's emphasis on "partnership among equals" and keeping the Pacific area free from dominance by power. To the uneasy Chinese, in particular, these statements must appear loaded with sinister historical meanings.

Law And Politics Of Non-Proliferation

RAHMATULLAH KHAN

THE sarcastic comment that if international law is, in some ways, at the vanishing point of law, the law of war is, perhaps even more conspicuously, at the vanishing point of international law, appears startlingly true of nuclear weapons. After a few brave legalistic attempts to tame the monstrous weapons (like those of Dr Nagendra Singh and Professor Schwarzenberger) jurists and publicists gave up the battle long ago. The crux of the debate in the early fifties in the American Society of International Law and other learned bodies was that any attempt to revise the rules of war would be an exercise in futility the moment it affects the concept and instrumentalities of "total war". The laws of war were considered effective only on the humanitarian fringe. Evidence of this in State practice can be found if one juxtaposes the accomplished Geneva Red Cross Conventions with the frustrating sessions in the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Commission.

International Law has no means to control the arms race. The nature of the "obligations" imposed upon States in this field are tenuous. The UN has no power to dictate armament agreements to nations. In fact, in this respect the League of Nations was better equipped. Article 1 of the UN Charter authorizes the General Assembly to "consider... principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments, and make recommendations..." Article 26 empowers the Security Council to formulate plans for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments "to be submitted to the

Members". The Security Council was to do this with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee proposed to be established under Article 47. The Committee was still-born.

It requires utmost ingenuity and considerable hair-splitting to read into the above provisions any obligation of a binding nature. These provisions and the resolutions passed thereunder by the General Assembly (the Irish resolution of December 4, 1961 through the latest on November 19, 1965) are of a hortatory character. Not being a brooding omnipresence in the sky pointing its finger at errant States, and not having at its disposal a super-State machinery to dictate terms, international law can only provide mild restraints on the negative side, and on the positive side provide a forum or venue—the UN conferences and treaty techniques, etc. States alone can help themselves in the most perilous of all inter-State relations, i.e., disarmament and arms control.

The problem of non-proliferation, therefore, has to be met on the plane of power realities in international relations. True to the realist doctrine of Morgenthau, States tend to acquire and consolidate power. Those which have the power want to retain it, to the exclusion of others; and those which do not have it wish to acquire it. Viewed in this context the attitude of States to the question of non-proliferation falls into proper perspective.

Proliferation of nuclear weapons can take place either by dissemination from the haves to the have-nots or through the have-nots acquiring an independent nuclear capacity by

themselves. So any measure to stop the spread must tackle the issue on both levels.

It is not difficult for the haves not to disseminate nuclear weapons or the technical know-how. In fact, such an understanding already exists at the International Atomic Energy Agency, and in a number of bilateral agreements between the US, the UK, Canada and the USSR on the one hand and recipient States of fissionable material on the other. It is in the nature of power realities that a nuclear Power would like to stay nuclear to the exclusion of others. The calculated haste with which the US shelved its project of a multilateral force for NATO at the not unexpected Soviet protests shows how hard the nuclear Powers feel about sharing their power even with the closest allies.

If further evidence is needed the strained relations of the US and France might be cited. President de Gaulle's bitterness towards the US could be traced, *inter alia*, to the American postwar gesture of sharing nuclear secrets with the UK, rejecting similar suggestions from France. So jealous do nations feel about advancement in this field that the Americans were caught making photographic reconnaissance flights over French atomic installations at Pierrelatte. As for the Soviet side, the Sino-Soviet schism could well be attributed, among other things, to the Chinese difficulties with the USSR over nuclear dissemination. The record is thus clear on this count. The nuclear Powers, especially the US, the UK, and the USSR, would be too willing to sign a treaty of non-dissemination. The trouble begins when they want to get the non-nuclear nations sign a declaration of self-abnegation.

Non-Nuclear Nations

The non-nuclear nations, especially the near-nuclear ones, will not bind themselves for all time to come not to acquire nuclear weapons. It must be said at the outset, however, that it is not at all certain that the bomb means power. France and Britain are not super Powers despite their bombs. China is (or at least has the potentialities of becoming one), though it may have only a handful of bombs, and though it may have a long way to go to perfect a delivery system. Greatness in international relations is measured not by the bomb

alone. Also, if the score and odd near-nuclear countries are not producing the bomb, it is not because there is a legal constraint in the Test Ban Treaty—the signatories can always test underground with a little bit of extra cost or get out of the treaty on a three-month notice. It is because of domestic compulsions—political, economic, moral etc.—and priorities. Countries like Switzerland, Indonesia, South Africa, or for that matter, any small nation which faces no immediate threat but goes nuclear for prestige considerations alone would be a cartoonist's delight. The bomb has meaning only in the hands of a threatened nation and, of course, an expansionist power.

A near-nuclear Power that has reasonable grounds to feel threatened would hardly commit itself to a non-proliferation treaty in the absence of effective guarantees for its national security and territorial integrity. The non-aligned Powers have special difficulties in accepting guarantees from one bloc. India, for instance, would like to have a joint guarantee from the US, the UK, and the USSR. Despite the new-found optimism of Lord Chalfont, Dean Rusk and Andrei Gromyko, it would be interesting to watch how the US Senate is going to be convinced about the need to underwrite the security of far-flung countries, especially when it involves committing its nuclear might. The picture looks far from rosy when one remembers that the same US Senate had refused ratification of the League of Nations Covenant; defeated a motion in 1950 to commit US power to check aggression anywhere, any time, upon the recommendation of a UN organ; and launches the severest criticism generally on any pretensions of the American administration assuming the role of a global, ideological policeman. The best bet is that the US administration will try to pacify the Senate by vague and ineffective promises, which the non-aligned and near-nuclear Powers would not countenance.

Another difficulty is the nuclear freeze. It is meaningless, the non-nuclear nations feel, to promote measures to prohibit the spread of nuclear weapons unless these are followed by "tangible steps to halt the nuclear arms race and to limit, reduce, and eliminate the stocks of nuclear weapons and the means of their de-

livery". The haves, thus, are called upon to limit, reduce, and eliminate their stock-piles. Their attitude has been predictably negative on this.

A further complicating factor is the insistence of non-aligned Powers on the principle of universality. By the very nature of it a non-universal non-proliferation treaty would put the signatories at a great disadvantage vis-a-vis the non-signatories.

The trouble with the proposed non-proliferation treaty is that this and other steps, like nuclear-free zones etc., are supposed to create the right atmosphere for a broader agreement on 'total and complete' disarmament. But each such step itself depends in turn on favourable conditions prevailing in the world. The Test Ban Treaty, described by President Kennedy as the first step on a thousand-mile journey towards peace, was signed only in the fortuitous circumstances of a split in the Sino-Soviet axis, the fear in the US and the USSR of nuclear brinkmanship generated by the Cuban confrontation, the possibility of trade in wheat and other commodities between the US and the Soviet Union etc. The right conditions for each step, therefore, have to be carefully created.

Numerous steps in the direction of lessening world tension have to be taken by the super nuclear Powers before a non-proliferation agreement could be signed with the necessary corollary of underwriting a joint or other guarantee to non-nuclear nations. It is not that the Powers do not have a list of such steps towards East-West detente, but that pastorate pursuits of wrong goals in areas like Vietnam are holding up such efforts. In the absence of the multifarious little steps that contribute to the creation of conditions for peace, all talk of gigantic leaps sounds like new myths.

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Vacancy In Delhi

COMMENTATOR

NO tears have been shed over the exit of Mr Gulzarilal Nanda from the Home Ministry and the Union Cabinet. On the contrary, there is a distinct note of jubilation in some papers that he is out. They have sought to create an impression that his departure would end the disturbed state of the Union, glossing over the fact that cliques in the Congress High Command rather than his own deficiencies have secured Mr Nanda's downfall. The Calcutta papers practically ignored the Home Minister's point of view till his letter to the Prime Minister and statement had been released to the Press. Delhi papers were more charitable; simultaneously with the resignation story they reported that Mr Nanda had taken exception to the Union Home Ministry being blamed for the single incident in the Capital, though no action had been taken against the Chief Ministers of those States where much more serious incidents had occurred. One of the Delhi papers reported that at the Cabinet meeting to review the situation created by the disturbances near Parliament House two Ministers, Mr Jagjvan Ram and Mr Chagla, protested against the manner in which Mr Nanda was forced to resign. The same paper said that supporters of a State Congress boss who attacked Mr Nanda at the meeting of the Congress parliamentary party executive boasted in Parliament lobbies that the anti-Nanda campaign could still be called off if he agreed to withdraw cases against some people who were arrested recently for anti-national activities. It is not difficult to identify the Congress party boss as Mr Atulya Ghosh; why he was not named by the paper is difficult to understand.

The near-unanimity of views of the three Calcutta papers on Mr Nanda's exit may or may not be related to Mr Ghosh's deep involvement in the matter; but the coincidence sticks out. Not one word in attenuation has been thought necessary, and the editorials give an impression that an old score had been settled at last. For once *Hindusthan Standard* has

been bold enough to "state bluntly" that the outgoing Home Minister "has sown as he has reaped" and that his performance in the Home Ministry is "a dismal one, to say it mildly". The militant morcha led by holy men was only the last chapter in "a continuous tale of bungling and blunder". From the political witch-hunt to the moral crusade Mr Nanda's record is uniformly one of disastrous failures. He succeeded neither in ensuring purity in the administration nor in putting a check on growing lawlessness in various parts of the country. The paper has detected a lack of "grace and tragic grandeur" in Mr Nanda's departure, for "it would seem that he was made to quit", though technically and formally it is true to say that Mr Nanda has tendered his resignation. The paper, however, acknowledges that the ills of the Home Ministry will not vanish just with the exit of Mr Nanda. His successor will have to clean up a lot of mess. Forgetting that only a while ago it had accused Mr Nanda of political witch-hunt, it goes on to suggest what should be done to equip the Home Ministry for these critical times when "subversive elements are at work" in various parts of the country.

Strangely, *Amrita Bazar Patrika* also has formed an impression that Mr Nanda's resignation was not "wholly voluntary" and the exit of the late Mr Lal Bahadur Shastri from the Cabinet as Railway Minister was more graceful. The paper has no doubt that Mr Nanda and senior officials of the Home Ministry left many things undone. They were caught napping by the sudden outburst of senseless violence on a frightful scale, though weeks, if not months, of preparation seem to have gone into the massive anti-cow-slaughter demonstration. Therefore, Mr Nanda's statement that he had done nothing that would warrant his resignation "is hardly likely to influence public opinion in his favour". The paper has supported the demand for a high-level probe into the New Delhi incidents so that all facts about the de-

monstration and its organisers may be brought out. It has no doubt that there are master minds not only in the CPI (Left) but in many parties who are hell-bent to discredit and destroy ultimately Indian democracy.

The Statesman, which carried prominently on the front page a news agency dispatch that Mr Atulya Ghosh initiated the move for removal of Mr Nanda says he is out from Home not a day too soon. Most would consider the event belated but meet. It was possible hitherto to overlook his weakness for the minor vices of Hindu obscurantism, but lately they were invading his political calculation. That made them too dangerous for a government which must of necessity be secular. Nor were they compensated by administrative brilliance. His long tenure in the Cabinet, longer than of most of his colleagues, was largely undistinguished; in Home it was very nearly disastrous. The paper is in favour of a substantial alterations in the Cabinet of a most outmoded design, for special circumstances call for special dispensations, and few since independence have been more special than the present. Mrs Gandhi needs a far better team than she has now if New Delhi has to give a strong and clear lead to the country. If it indeed be elections that are worrying the Congress, deflating its will to face a little surgery, then the events in the capital should prove to it very clearly that the elections are a reason for, not against, a few drastic changes at the Centre.

The Times of India says what is in question is not simply a matter of efficiency but of a policy for which Mr Nanda alone was not responsible. In spirit and character the disorders in Delhi were not basically different from those that have occurred elsewhere in the country. This is not a justification of Mr Nanda's position but a recognition of what his departure from the Cabinet may unfortunately obscure—that violence in Delhi was the result of a policy which none of Mr Nanda's colleagues, including the Prime Minister, saw any reason to alter or improve. This was a policy of generally regarding those who protest or agitate for one reason or another with the utmost sympathy even if they are guilty of violating the law. Mr Nanda cannot be alone in deploring the

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Prime Minister's silence when her Home Minister was assailed by critics both outside and within the party. A Prime Minister who is "conveniently rendered speechless" when one of her colleagues becomes the victim of a policy which she silently accepted in the past is hardly inspiring. The belated discovery that a particular policy is not yielding results cannot and should not be covered up by arranging for the exit of one Minister or another. There is still nothing to indicate that the disastrous policy of treating grievance-mongers with misplaced solicitude will be appropriately changed.

Patriot's View

Patriot is the only paper which has criticised, though not directly, the Prime Minister's acceptance of the resignation of Mr Nanda. It says that before the resignation was accepted, an assurance should have been given to the people that the Government will review the policies it has been pursuing and its relationship with the bureaucracy. Without such an assurance and changes in personnel at all levels of Government as would make the implementation of the assurances possible, Mr Nanda's resignation will be an empty gesture at best or one more scalp for the cunning factionist witch-hunters within the ruling party at the worst. The present situation cannot be amended through juggling with Cabinet Ministers none of whom in truth has either the moral stature or the intellectual competence to inspire the people. Mr Nanda's resignation will not change the attitude of the people to the Government. That will become possible only if the bureaucrats who are more responsible than the Home Minister for the developments in Delhi are removed, new conventions are established at the political level of Government, and finally, an honest review of economic and social policies undertaken. Mr Nanda's resignation will serve no long-term purpose unless along with him go Ministers who have failed more blatantly than he and those officials who claim that they knew what was going to happen but did not or could not do anything to prevent the calculated and planned attacks. Mr Nanda may have been the Home Minister; but the responsibility for what happened in New Delhi and for the long months of miserable failure of policies which

preceded it must be squarely accepted by the whole Government.

All papers have criticised the Prime Minister for her failure to seize the opportunity to reorganise her Cabinet with Mr Nanda's departure. Not that they have approved of the changes she had contemplated; in fact, almost all papers have opposed them. Nevertheless, they have found in the wavering and ultimate surrender a weakness which does not make for good governance. The caustic comments in *The Hindustan Times* amount practically to an expression of no-confidence in the Prime Minister; other papers are not so curt, but there is no doubt that the Prime Minister has got the worst Press in her political career over the developments following Mr Nanda's resignation. Anyone in the Prime Minister's position, *The Hindustan Times* says, will get a lot of advice and intelligence, good and bad. It is for the Prime Minister to decide what to act upon and what to discard. If the Prime Minister continues to repose

confidence in men unworthy of her trust, it is not a matter in which to console her misfortune but to question "whether she possesses the qualities of judgment and decision that are the first requisites of high political office". These are harsh things to say but the country is passing through times of great difficulty. The Prime Minister has many qualities. She is an extraordinarily decent human being. She has a warm heart and an instinctive sympathy with the problems and the hardships of the common citizen. She has a hold on the people's imagination unsurpassed by any other public figure. Earlier in her term of office, she won much admiration for her capacity to decide and act. But she has steadily lost confidence since the announcement of devaluation. Though the paper believes that she still has it in her to inspire and command, to give unity and purpose, it feels the warning must be uttered that the country is not very many mistakes away from a convulsion.

The Empire Of The Babus

SUMANTA BANERJEE

IF Bankim Chandra Chatterjee or Kipling were alive today, they would have had hardly been able to make out the old Bengali babu among the squatting teachers or in the daily processions of the Dalhousie white-collar in Calcutta streets.

The word 'babu', of course, had a variety of meanings for Bankim and Kipling. The former used it to describe the idle rich of his age, the half-baked, semi-educated banians to the English firms and the plumed dandy. To the latter, the babu was one of the millions of clerks, produced by Macaulay's policy to feed the insatiable bureaucracy of Government offices and British commercial firms, about whom yarns old enough to be chestnuts are still bandied about in ex-civil servants' clubs by Kipling's successors.

Bits of all these various associations, more than a hundred years old, are bound to peer out from our changed exteriors, if we scratch ourselves—the modern babus. For all our postures of rebellion, our capacity to act is still limited by the legacy

handed down to us by the old babus. We have inherited the desires of the Ghoshes, Boses and Mullicks of old Calcutta to lavish money on marriage or funeral ceremonies and the vices of the pen-pusher of Kipling's days—the cringing hypocrisy, the calumniousness, unctuous fawning and susceptibility to both taking and giving bribes.

One does not usually associate rebelliousness with such tendencies. Yet the Bengali babu has always been known as the most "revolutionary" creature, at the forefront of all movements on a variety of demands ranging from more dearness allowance to the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam. A dispassionate probe, however, would disentangle the paradox.

Perhaps nowhere more than in Bengal, the chronic combat between middle-class desires and capacities has been for ages the essence of all the so-called revolutionary movements here. The babu's wages lag behind the prices of essential commodities, but he is torn between the

obligation to maintain the expensive family tradition and the desire to climb into a higher class. It makes him a rebel, and at the same time forces him to fearfully clutch at the last iota of his possessions.

The forms resorted to by him to express his disgruntlement are also typical of the babu. He indeed joins street processions, shouts slogans and courts arrest. But all these gestures retain only the glamour of the past, when they were effective to some extent and involved great personal risks. Today they are just empty shells and have even assumed some sort of respectability. Golok Bose, the rentier in Dinabandhu Mitra's *Neel-Darpan*, committed suicide to escape the humiliations and tortures of a prison life. To his modern descendants, the prison is a safe position from where he can enjoy postures of rebellion at a comfortable distance. Thanks to the growth of mass action and trade unionism, the babu has the protection of the collective when he joins a procession or a strike. The same babu whose voice swells the chorus of revolutionary slogans, whose hands from an anonymous mass hurl stones at the police, refuses to raise even a mild protest against the grossest injustice when he is alone.

Ten Avatars

When alone, the revolutionary veneer wears off and the babu affords to sink back into his usual role of the "petty bureaucrat." How little the babu has changed in this respect during the last hundred years will be evident from a comparison of his present status with that described by Bankim in his well-known satirical piece on 'Babu', where he is represented as a sort of Vishnu in the incarnation of ten 'avatars',—clerk, teacher, Brahmo, banian, physician, lawyer, magistrate, landowner, editor and the unemployed. "Like Vishnu", Bankim adds, "in different incarnations they will kill the powerful Asuras. In the form of the clerk, the babu will kill his menial; the teacher's victim will be his pupil; the station master will kill the ticketless passenger; the Brahmo will starve the Hindu priest depending on alms; the banian will cheat the English merchant; the physician will slaughter the patient; the lawyer will bleed white his client; the magistrate will pin to the wall the seeker of justice; the landowner will cow down his sub-

ject; the editor will have the gentleman at his mercy and the unemployed will angle the fish in the pond."

With slight variations, the description might fit well the modern babu. For every babu, whether he is behind the counters in post offices or banks, or lectures from a dais in a school or a college, rules over a "petty empire" where he is omnipotent. The clerk behind a counter feels a sense of power when the queue before it grows longer and longer. Everyone in the queue, however important he might be, for the time being at least, has to depend on this clerk, who shows his power by moving at a leisurely pace, often leaving his counter to chat with a colleague of his or by abruptly closing the counter with more than half of the queue yet to be attended to.

The same clerk, when he boards a bus on his way home from office is reduced to a humble subject to the conductor, whose temporary empire is the State bus. The conductor feels a perverse pleasure, especially during the rush hours, in harassing the office babus. He rings the bell whenever he wants to, ordering the bus to rush away at high speed, leaving a helpless crowd grumbling at the stop. Inside the bus, he commands the passengers. He is at liberty to stop the bus and summon to his support his powerful union and even threaten a hurricane strike if any passenger dares to irritate him.

Off duty, the State bus conductor loses his empire and like any other babu, becomes the humiliated subject of some other "petty emperor"—the post-master or the ration-shop owner or his landlord.

Teachers And Students

Even the teacher, who in our society has been for ages in a dependent position in relation to others, has an empire today where he can assert his authority by virtue of his power to ruin his pupil's career. Only recently, the principal of a Government college in Calcutta expelled a few students, most of them with brilliant academic records, because their views differed from his own.

On the other hand, today's students who will become babus tomorrow, are already showing signs of "pigmy imperialism". As individuals, meek and submissive, in a body they are conscious of their power to turn a squabble over cinema tickets into a na-

tional political issue. Pampered by political parties, they have learnt to realise their unreasonable demands like travelling without tickets in trains and buses, by resorting to forms of political movement like hunger-strike and satyagraha. While the strength of the working babu's bureaucracy lies exclusively in his official position, that of his son's browbeating is sustained solely by his membership of a gang. The gang spirit is the modern student's imperial mace. The gang can bully and blackmail the entire society; outside the gang, the student is a pathetic victim of his father or teacher's autocracy.

In his home, the babu is the patriarch. The enlightened babu with some intellectual pretension might wax eloquent about the equality of the sexes and the freedom of the individual, but would resent immediately if his wife or children depart an inch from what he lays down as rules for his family. However liberal he might be, he can never brook the sight of his son smoking a cigarette in front of him or accept without grudging his daughter's choice of a husband. In his moral judgments, the babu is still influenced by Victorian standards which shaped the views of his ancestors, who winked at the male's moral lapses and condemned the female's right to be independent.

Thus the modern Calcutta babu's world is divided into hundreds of small mutually hostile empires, which come into being for a few hours every day and vanish leaving the erstwhile emperor an embittered slave. When the latter resumes his position as a petty bureaucrat the next morning, the knowledge of the evanescence of his position makes him act with a vengeance and he feeds fat his grudge at the expense of the poor customers.

Perhaps we shall never be able to make a complete breach with our past. Even if ousted from our birthplace, we support our vanity by stories of a once prosperous home. Almost every refugee from East Pakistan claims to have owned a zemindari. Those among us, who were born and brought up in Calcutta and can lay no similar claims to Sutanuty, Gobindapur and Kali Kotta, cherish other memories, memories of 'what we could have been'. Every clerk in Dalhousie Square bears within him the debris of a poet.

But as thoughts of a glorified past

or of overrated possibilities are poor consolations, we have to seek a more concrete substitute in the power, however ephemeral and limited, granted to us by our employers. It flatters our vanity. When we impose it on a fellow being, who is temporarily depending on us, we unwittingly pay oblations to our ancestors—the petty aristocracy and the merchants of old Bengal.

When will the empire of the babus end? No one knows. It survived the two world wars, the famine of 1943, the partition and a succession of economic crises. Instead of showing signs of decline, the empire is extending its borders. The babus are overflowing into the world of the proletariat and spreading their values there. Calcutta's two main modern industries—transport and engineering—are manned by the babus. Defying Marx's prediction about the proletariat's need to lose nothing but their chains, the proletariat babus of Calcutta are eager to extend their area of attachments. With the help of Government loans, the State transport employees are fast buying land and building houses in the Jadavpur area. In another decade, with the rapid swelling of the ranks of the industrial worker in steel plants and other public sectors with the Bengali babus, the desire for power and possessions might change the entire face of the rising proletariat of West Bengal.

Perhaps like love, poetry and Hinduism, the Bengali babu is destined to become eternal. Eluding definitions and predictions, his empire might grow to engulf all the heterogeneous trends in our country and stamp its own mark on them.

Asked by Mr Arjun Arora whether the appointment of General Cariappa in the Family Planning Directorate meant that force would be used to make people observe the family planning measures, Dr Sushila Nayar replied that the retired General had no force at his command.

News-item

For NOW readers in Western India may contact

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Sampratik's Deshe Deshe

A DRAMA CRITIC

WHEN a play about a current burning issue is produced, we feel naturally inclined to appreciate it. Our tendency to appreciate grows larger when a troupe, with the credit of producing Beckett's *Waiting For Godot*, decides to stage a drama about the heroics of the Vietnam people. In fact the audience at the Minerva Theatre on November 4 was unusually sympathetic when Sampratik staged *Deshe Deshe*. Or why should people silently watch such a tame and tedious play?

The play opened with a whimper; as the curtain went up, some characters on the pretext of initiating us into the history of Vietnam squeezed out most of the interest with their tame lectures for ten minutes. After this business, when the productional arrangements were being made before the audience's eyes in Brechtian style, things were taking an interesting turn. But the moment the actual play began, the audience was once more engulfed in a dense atmosphere of tedium from which there was no escape till the play was over.

Everything seemed disproportionate, out of place and ineffective. The drama was nothing more than a loose incoherent bundle of scenes about the life of Nguyen Van Troi; because of the lack of a proper focal point, everything became rather insipid and Troi looked extraordinarily ordinary. The language sounded a cock-a-loopy odd mixture of very native *shala, shuarer baccha* and truly foreign *byaparta ashambhaber parei* (the thing is next to impossi-

ble). Most of the characters with their powdered faces and Brylecreeamed hair-styles, looked more like lovers than fighters. The music, it could be called anything like that, was hideous.

But there is always another side of the shield. The group as a whole was very much enthusiastic; and there were moments when their warm enthusiasm melted the thick layer of boredom and succeeded in touching our heart. Sankar Ghosh, in spite of his naivete, emerged as a fine actor. Sakti Banerjee, compensated for his directorial lapses by his able acting.

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THE RISE AND GROWTH OF NATIONALISM IN INDIA

[Economic policies of Indian leadership, 1880-1905]

By Bipan Chandra
Peoples' Publishing House,
New Delhi

“THE fact is, you cannot both be a conquering nation and a benevolent nation at the same time,” quotes the author approvingly from a popular newspaper published on February 12, 1893 in Bengal in the penultimate chapter of his book, while summing up the attitude of Indian leadership towards British economic policies in India. The excuse for starting with this statement is that it perhaps brings out the author's basic approach to the problem much better than many learned passages could do.

What is the nature of the economic thinking which the author wants to characterize as economic nationalism? “The most important problem, which according to them, faced the Indian people was the economic one, namely, the poverty.” Many economists may shake their heads at this point, wondering whether ‘poverty’ is an economic problem. He adds, “It was moreover a national problem i.e. a problem that embraced the interests of all sections of Indian society.” (No comments).

This being the problem, what was the solution? The author continues, “The national leaders cast the blame for this poverty not on nature or the people but on the alien rulers. They suggested certain remedies which were not accepted. This led many of them to doubt the bona fides of the rulers and to feel that if the country was not economically progressing, it was only because of ‘the presence and policy of the foreigners’ and that perhaps there could be no national economic regeneration except by their getting rid in the first instance of their European rulers.” So it appears, after all, the problem was sociological and the solution political.

The author draws attention to what he considers to be two very

important points in the nationalist economic agitation.

First, Indian leaders were concerned primarily with the problem of economic development as a whole and not with economic advance in isolated sectors.

Secondly, economic development, in turn, they believed, consisted primarily in rapid and all-out industrial development of the country.

“The core of economic growth lay not in development of foreign trade or means of transport... but in industrialization.”

It is not clear how any consistent thinker could maintain both these positions at the same time.

Workers And Kisans

Another important aspect which the author emphasises is that, while the economic thinkers were keen on India's achieving economic prosperity through rapid industrialization, they did not take up the class demands of the peasantry and the workers. They neither asked for reform of the existing system of land tenures nor espoused the cause of factory labour. The author finds justification of this approach in the fact that it would not have been prudent to divide the people at a time when the need of the hour was to unite them.

All this sometimes makes the task of understanding the approach of the economic thinkers difficult purely in economic terms, closely intermingled as it is with political objectives. The basic malaise being diagnosed as the domination of a foreign country it is understandable that certain points were overstressed e.g. the famous “Drain Theory”, with an agitational bias. The notable exception in this matter was, of course, Ranade.

The author in his analysis very often misses this point and tries to draw attention to the astuteness of economic thinking while he should have at most applauded the shrewdness of strategy.

Of course obsession with growth of industrial capital does explain some of the anachronisms. In this connection the author mentions the nationalist thinkers' disapproval of attempts to improve the condition of labourers through factory acts.

The effect, they thought, would be to raise the cost of production of Indian manufactures resulting in loss of the internal and external markets and ruin of Indian industries.

To some, including Ranade, industrialization was the most important if not the sole criterion of progress of a people. Even here to judge the programme by its effects on economic development alone would be to misread the approach of nationalist leaders. Factories and mills could write Ranade in 1890, “far more effectively than schools and colleges give a new birth to the activities of a nation.” Joshi, perhaps inspired by List, thought industrialisation was a superior type and higher stage of civilization.”

Foreign Capital?

The major obstacle in the path of industrial development was paucity of capital. But the Indian nationalist leaders were quite divided about the use of foreign capital. Bipin Chandra Pal is quoted as saying the British capital “instead of being a help is in fact the greatest hindrance to all improvements in the economic condition of the people.”

The reasons advanced do not appear to be convincing from a purely economic angle; but taking it as another instrument of foreign domination, the approach is quite understandable.

Normally we expect that if development of native industries was the primary objective it should have been associated with absolute protectionism. It was not always so. The nationalist leaders were unanimous in their approval of imposition of import duties on cotton fabrics and yarns in 1894, while the sugar import duties of 1899 found them rather divided. The countervailing import duties afforded some protection to the native sugar industry from bounty-fed beet sugar of Austria and

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Germany. "The Indian national leadership was never—not even in the beginning—unanimous in its support to countervailing import duty; and with the passage of time, the nationalist opposition to it gained strength and momentum." Controversy was carried on by them not only about the merits of the case but also within the context of wider issues around the alleged violation of the principle of free trade by the sugar duty. Such attitudes towards protective duties go ill with unqualified support for all-out industrialization. The interest of the consumers in getting cheap sugar was also stressed by some.

One other point. The opposition to rapid expansion of the railways by nationalist thinkers, because it facilitated penetration of foreign goods and the export of foodgrains and other agricultural raw materials can again cast doubt on the central thesis of the author regarding the national economic thinkers, namely, that "Industrial growth was the vantage point from which they looked at and judged nearly all contemporary economic issues...."

They were not very much worried that Indian handicrafts would be destroyed. In fact the author notes that all they wanted was to see that modern industries under Indian capitalists would grow.

Nor can much fuss be made over the export of foodgrains or agricultural produce, these being the only importable surplus that an agricultural country could guarantee. Export of commercial crops was, and is, the most valuable foreign exchange earner and if there was a surplus in foodgrains there was no reason why they could not be exported. The author, however, does not think that there was any surplus. The entire export trade of India, according to him, was forced and unnatural.

"The necessity of paying to the State or landlord excessive land revenue or rent at fixed periods and in money compelled the peasants to sell their grain and the problem of marketing it combined with need to

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maintain an export surplus forced the country to sell this grain in foreign markets." (P. 165).

The confusion between micro-economic and macro-economic aspects is glaring. The point is that Indian merchants controlled the grain trade and they found it profitable to export foodgrains. There may be conflict between individual interest and national interest. The conflict need not necessarily be between the nationalist approach and imperialistic approach. This inability to disentangle the two aspects very often mars whatever little analysis the book contains.

A. G.

Letter

Truth Will Be Out

I cannot really help praising our Government which sticks to its motto so scrupulously. The motto, you know, is "Satyameva Jayate". And hence its vigilance about all asatyas sneaking into our holy land. A few examples: look at the map of Asia on the second cover of H. M. Vinacke's *A History of the Far East in Modern Times* (Allen & Unwin, London 1962). Among all the countries only the map of India is painted black. Surely there was some untruth in the depiction of our northern border which our truth-loving Government has blackened.

Look at the coloured maps in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the Index Volume (1965 edition)—World, Political (p. 3), World Physical (p. 5), Northern Land and Seas (p. 6), Eurasia (p. 76), India (p. 78, 79), South Western Asia, China and Japan (p. 82).

On all these pages black patches hide perhaps some monstrous untruths which the pro-Chinese *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (printed in the USA) tried to sell in this land of Satya and Dharma. Is it not an equally hideous attempt to propagate Chinese untruths in the map of China prepared by the CIA (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 5, p. 602)? Fortunately, however, our authorities have taken pains to smear the untrue portions in the map.

PATRIOT
Calcutta

A Grand Puja

This has reference to a filler in your annual number. You quoted a report from a newspaper to the effect that the demand for images of goddess Durga had increased this year because the peaceful atmosphere of the country was congenial for the festival. You probably thought that the reporter was mad and the newspaper perverse. But the fact remains that the Puja was a grand affair this year. The clues to this paradox are not far to seek. Student rowdiness is nothing new in this country but of late, with every Tom, Dick and Harry babbling over it and newspapers flashing their stupid analyses, simple goondaism has assumed the glamorous nomenclature of 'juvenile delinquency' to which Western pundits are devoting expensive projects. This is all fanning the youthful perversity of the militant few. As a natural consequence, the goonda-fearing folk all over Calcutta had been made to donate to the *sarvajanan* pujas at the point of knives. Moreover, Puja this year has been an election puja; some election candidates are known to have donated even Rs. 15,000 each.

FANIBHUSAN ACHARYA
Dum Dum

"Strange Lot"

"We (Congressmen) are a strange lot. Once we are in power, we want to remain in power and die in power," says Mr S. K. Patil. Hasn't he himself proved the truth of it beyond doubt by clinging to his post in spite of a series of railway accidents, some of them quite serious, involving loss of life and property?

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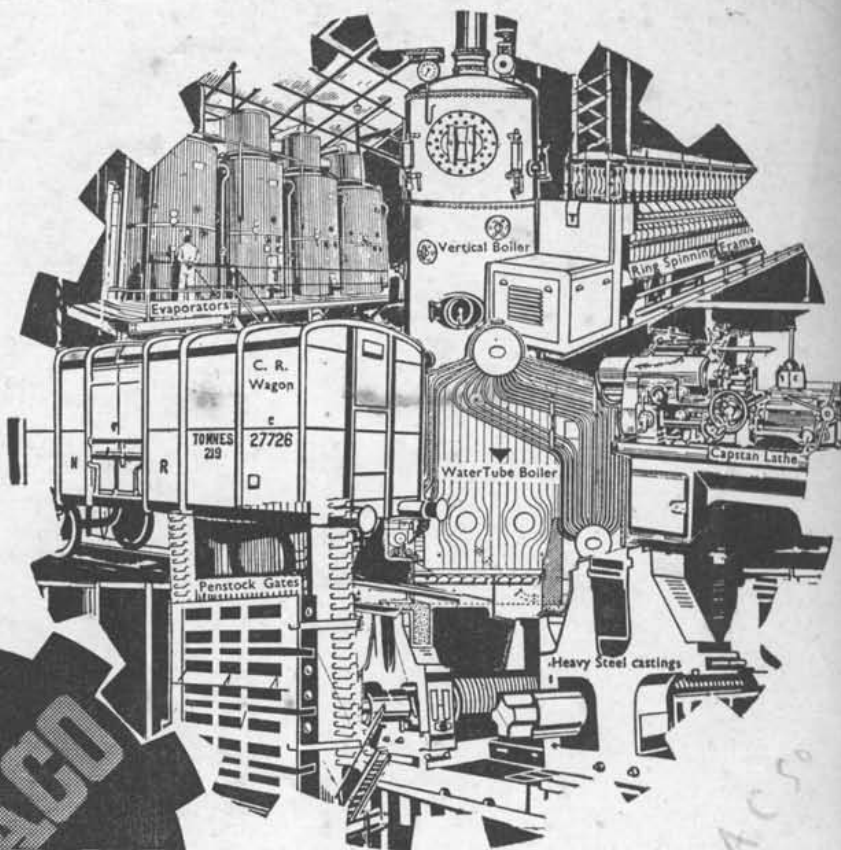
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