

Social Control Over Politicians

M. R. Pai

POLITICS can be described as India's biggest and most flourishing industry today. Democratic societies need politicians, who are primarily devoted to public service, in order to give to the community the necessary self-discipline to avoid the imposed discipline of dictatorship. But, when politicians forget this basic principle and make a living out of politics, then they can be described as professional politicians.

It is said that a statesman looks to the next generation, whereas a politician looks only to the next election: A professional politician in India looks to the next defection. The very fact that about 10 per cent of legislators defected their parties within about a year of the fourth general elections and forced by-elections in three States is an insult to the electorate and an indication of the magnitude of politics as an industry.

If Indian democracy is to survive, it is high time that social controls are imposed over politicians. To do so, it is necessary to find out how politicians operate.

In the first place, while most of them condemn businessmen as creators of an acquisitive society, the politicians have set up for themselves a perquisitive society.

The perquisites (free benefits and amenities at taxpayers' cost) are staggering. A Union Cabinet Minister draws a monthly salary of Rs. 2,250, but an estimate by Comptroller and Auditor-General put the perquisites enjoyed by him at Rs. 17,000. To list a few: free bungalow, free furnishings, free garden tools, and seeds, and four gardeners; free car (generally, limousines from the State Trading Corporation, meant for tourist trade), free petrol for travel, free air travel, and free foreign trips (without botheration of "P" form); free phone and any number of free local and trunk calls; Central Health Scheme benefits at a nominal cost of Rs. 12/-; free electricity and water. Although there is an informal ceiling of Rs. 200/- per month on this item, a recent report said over half the ministers exceeded this. The Home Minister, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, topped the list with Rs. 550/- (when the "anachronistic" privy purses of princes are abolished by him, the prince who draws the lowest amount of Rs. 190/- will help the national exchequer to pay the

Home Minister's water and electricity bill for about 10 days). Even electric bulbs costing Rs. 2/- are replaced by C.P.W.D.!

In socialist Norway, by contrast, the minister gets Rs. 6,500/- per month and free travel only for official business. No house or other perquisites are given.

Our Members of Parliament have not lagged behind. Recently a bill has been introduced in Parliament to enlarge emoluments and amenities to M.P.s. The benefits at present are: Monthly salary of Rs. 500/-; Rs. 31/- a day for attending session (and with a sleight of rules, by signing the muster once, attendance is ensured for 14 days!); free phone and 3,600 free calls a year; free first class travel all over the Indian Railways, plus free air travel for each session (once again, an M.P. can draw the air fare, although he travels for the session by rail—how flattered would be the company directors who are accused of attending many board meetings in one trip and drawing travel allowance from all firms to find themselves in such eminent company!). Then there is Central Health Scheme benefit on nominal payment, subsidised furnishings and housing. A press report gave the following comparison of rent charged to M.P.s and market rent for different types of quarters: Rs. 61/- — Rs. 350/-; Rs. 81/- — Rs. 400/-; Rs. 150/- — Rs. 750/- and Rs. 300/- — Rs. 2,500/-.

The latest bill seeks increase in allowance to Rs. 50/- per day, free house, furnishings, phone, water and electricity, postage, railway pass for servants and free "other amenities" (what this omnibus phrase means only time can tell). Stenographical assistance is also sought.

M.L.A.s, and elected representatives at a lower level have also built up a sizable nest of perquisites.

The second way in which politics has become a industry is by converting the Public Sector into a Society for Rehabilitation of the Politically Crippled. Ministers who lose elections are dumped on this Sector. The Heavy Engineering Corporation at Ranchi is one of the most mismanaged government concerns where one would expect a technocrat or top business executive to be put in charge to handle the Rs. 250 crore investment. It is distressing and disgraceful that a discredited politician has been appointed its Chairman. A judicial inquiry has held Mr. K. D. Malaviya guilty of impropriety in his conduct as a Central Minister, and yet he has been appointed Chief of this project, an appointment which would demoralise the technical staff which can never expect to come

to the top. Likewise, appointments are known to be made in Public Sector not on the basis of qualifications, but relationship to professional politicians.

The third avenue for livelihood for politicians is "cooperatives". The genuine, voluntary cooperative movement built up by dedicated men like the late Vaikuntlal Mehta exists only in very few cases. The major area of cooperation is covered by bogus organisations. One can substantiate, by documentation, the charge that cooperatives have become a means of transferring public funds into private pockets of professional politicians who control them. The cooperative credit societies' "overdues", according to a Reserve Bank of India report, have increased to Rs. 144 crores in 1965-66. In previous years they were Rs. 112 crores and Rs. 92 crores respectively. "Overdues" are one aspect. The other is the pocketing of ill-gotten gains through trading on monopoly basis or in scarcity items. For instance, monopoly procurement of foodgrains entrusted to cooperatives results in denying a fair price to the farmer and in charging an exorbitant price to the consumers. For instance, cooperatives in Andhra bought maize at Rs. 70 per quintal and sold it at Rs. 130 per quintal.

Yet another field where professional politicians live on the sweat of citizens is trade unions. Trade unions should be an integral part of democracy provided it is run by either internal leadership or dedicated outside leadership. Today workers are led by professional politicians in many instances. These leaders misuse the trade unions for political purposes such as "bandhs" or personal aggrandisement. Mr. George Fernandes, a Bombay Union leader, in the course of evidence in the High Court, admitted what has known to be the prevalent pattern in many trade unions, particularly those controlled by communists. He said that his unions had collected funds for his elections.

That there is diversion of funds collected from poor workers to the pockets of professional politicians who lead them, and their parties, is amply confirmed by figures of unions not submitting annual returns; this, in spite of the fact, a large number of them are not subject to statutory audit. In 1951-52, of 4,623 registered unions, 2,067 did not file returns; in 1956-57, of 8,554, 4,155 did not; and in 1964-65, of 12,801, as many as 6,801 did not for obvious reasons.

Having exhausted these potentialities, the professional politicians have now turned their greedy eyes on the productive private sector to live off as parasites.

Social control of commercial banks, for instance, is nothing but politicalisation of this industry in some ways. Under the guise of experts, politicians, without experience of banking or the commercial world, are

getting on the boards of commercial banks eventually to play ducks and drakes with funds belonging to depositors (who, strangely enough, were not even consulted on the changes!)

If democracy is to survive in India, it is high time that restraints are placed on politicians. Some social controls are outlined below:

(1) All perquisites should be abolished. High salaries, commensurate with responsibilities, should be paid to Ministers, M.P.s, M.L.A.s etc. Let them pay taxes on these salaries, and buy everything at market price as rest of the citizens do. There will be resistance from many of them in implementing any such suggestion because they advocate ceiling on income on private citizens while enjoying all benefits without cash income through perquisites. For purpose of public consumption, they accept only modest salaries!

(2) All of them should be made to publish annually a statement of their wealth and income.

(3) Elected representatives should be forbidden contact with administration. Once this is done, all trafficking in licences, permits etc. will stop.

(4) Public Sector should be purged of political appointees. All units should publish annually names of relations of Ministers, M.P.s and M.L.A.s.

(5) Government loans should not be given to cooperatives of which M.P.s, M.L.A.s and other elected representatives are office-bearers.

(6) Cooperatives should be denied monopoly trading, but encouraged to compete with other channels of trade.

(7) Name of office-bearers of defaulting cooperatives should be published annually.

(8) The Indian Trade Union Act should be amended to ban outsiders from any form of association with trade unions, to begin with, where they are unions of white collar workers.

(9) Statutory audit of all unions, and levy of fines on unions defaulting in filing returns are also essential steps.

(10) Size of Ministries should be restricted to about 10 or 12. This will discourage defections for the sake of office.

While these are some specific measures of social control, and can be enlarged upon, the best control is introduction of competition in politics. People of means who can enter politics should do so and drive out professional politicians. Ultimately, as Graham Wallas said, power abhors vacuum. It is the vacuum created by failure of constructive politicians that has led to the emergence of a class of professional politicians.

The Viet Nam Peace Talks

"Atreya"

AFTER the dramatic announcement by President Johnson on the 31st of March that he was not a contender for the Presidential nomination and he was ordering cessation of bombing of North Viet Nam, quite a lot of political and ideological mileage which his opponents sought to derive over the Viet-Nam war in U.S.A. and outside became impossible. In the rough-house game of open politics in the United States in a Presidential election year, the United States was also a profitable arena for the *Tet* offensive as much as South Viet-Nam was, in the calculations of the Communists. President Johnson needed to come out with a dramatic counter attack to deal more with the critics at home in United States than the North Viet-Nameese Communists.

The stopping of bombing of North Viet Nam necessitated a positive response from Hanoi for initiating talks with the United States, especially after dropping of more than hints in the past that if bombing is stopped there *will* be talks. Though agreeing to the opening of talks, the North Viet Nameese sulked about the venue for talks. They obstinately insisted on the Cambodian capital and Warsaw as the only venues acceptable to them, while the United States preferred a choice of 30 alternatives including one of ship-board confabulations aboard an Indonesian warship offered by the Indonesians. Finally, the North Viet-Nameese accepted Paris as the venue and talks have started between the United States and the North Viet-Nameese delegation.

What are the prospects that could be envisaged during the current talks in Paris? With what motivations do the respective parties view the talks? Answers to these questions will indicate whether the talks will have any worthwhile results or not.

The Viet Nam war has been fought on various fronts. It has multiple dimensions. A major dimension of the war has been the successful psychological warfare North Viet Nam has been able to conduct against the United States to a degree in the United States itself. In this success, it has been aided and abetted by persons who have been traditionally but unconsciously the sappers and miners of Marxists, viz. the so-called liberals. The liberal clique in the United States, moved not so much by values of liberalism and ideals of liberals but by a sentimental distaste of a "non-intellectual" President like Lyndon Johnson, were out to use any weapon to embarrass the "hick" from Texas. An ugly example of this motivation was eloquently demonstrated when Governor Romney made his bid for Republican Party nomination for the President's candidacy

earlier. After fully supporting the Administration's policies on Viet-Nam and the operative parts, and personally satisfying about them during personal visits to South Viet Nam, in the heat of the Presidential campaign Governor Romney accused the Army officers in Viet Nam of "brainwashing" him. This one statement was probably the main cause of Romney being soundly defeated in his efforts to get the Presidential nomination.

American politicians, in the Presidential election year, seem to feel that the stresses and strains caused by the Viet-Nam war on U.S. economy could be the area of intensive political campaigning, to get the prizes of various offices including the Presidentship. In this process, the so-called "liberal" wing of the Democratic Party has decided to make a bid for political conquest on the basis of denigrating President Johnson and his policies on Viet Nam. The leader of the group is Robert Kennedy and backing him as representing their own species are such eminent liberals as John Kenneth Galbraith, Arthur Schlesinger, Walter Lippman etc. Claiming to have a greater intellectual perception about history and Viet-Nam's placement in the historical context, the liberal fringe has been mounting a guerrilla warfare that has successfully supplemented President Ho's own in South Viet Nam in a determined bid to take over South Viet Nam.

Some of the arguments advanced by the liberals, especially Galbraith have been strongly rebutted and disproved by equally eminent liberals in U.S. For instance Leon H. Keyserling has listed the numerous fallacies of Galbraith's assumptions on Viet Nam through which he has denounced the present policies. He questions the validity of Galbraith's central theme that the Viet Nam conflict is an isolated and limited one in which nationalism is the basic issue. Galbraith's facile alibis for arriving at this central theme are also successfully exposed. Galbraith makes much of Soviet-Chinese split within the world of Communism and insists that this imparts fundamentally new dimension to all international questions. Leon Keyserling points out that there is nothing immutable in the nature of relationship between states that can impart a "fundamental factor" which was not perceived by anyone. The Sino-Soviet rift is in no way different from Soviet-German hostility from 1933 to 1940, sudden Soviet-German friendship with Hitler and again hostility.

Sure enough, all these changes have their dimensions and policy-makers take into account such dimensions. Galbraith and his colleagues seem to be deliberately romanticising these developments to impart to them

extravagantly larger dimensions to suit their prejudices against the Johnson administration.

What are the mainsprings of North Viet Nameese experiences, becomes the next area of analysis to find an answer to the question posed concerning the directions of the Peace Talks in Paris. Was the "Tet offensive" by the Viet Cong a spectacular success that brought the Americans and South Viet Nameese to their heel and made them come to the peace table? After the Peace talks had started, another attempt has been made by the Viet Cong to terrorise and even capture Saigon in a spectacular gesture. Both the attempts did maul the Americans and South Vietnamese considerably, but both attempts failed. The failure is emphasised by the enormous brutality and cruelty unleashed by the Viet Cong on persons not involved in the fighting. Such terror does not seem to be the sign of strength, the image of confidence that the Viet Cong and North Viet Nam seem to be projecting.

A more authentic evidence of the impact of the war on Hanoi is available in the Decree recently enacted by Hanoi against what it terms as "Counterrevolution". A series of terroristic and draconian measures have been enacted by Hanoi against the people of North Viet Nam clearly indicating that the bloodthirsty war unleashed by Hanoi on South with motives of aggrandisement is not any longer supported by the people and therefore the war is now carried by the Hanoi regime against the people of North Viet Nam themselves, notwithstanding all the masquerade of "uncle" President Ho Chi Minh wears in photographs with sweet-looking children for the consumption of gullible liberals all over the world. North Viet Nam is realising that its leaders are no longer allowed to get away with murder of non-Communist people under the guise of "war of liberation and nationalism" which some liberals are willing to swallow enthusiastically. It is becoming increasingly clear that if the imperialist United States is backing an unpopular war in Viet Nam, so is the "socialist" Soviet Union in the matter of the adventures of its North Viet Nameese allies.

An interesting development is the comment in *Izvestia* in an article by B. Zaneguin that China is trying to prevent a political solution of the Viet Nameese problem in order to keep a "screen" between American troops and China itself, and to give China time to develop her nuclear arsenal. The article carries a furious attack on the United States and accuses China of setting obstacles to efforts to step up the blows aimed at the "American aggressors."

All these indicate that North Viet Nam and its allies resent having to pay a heavy price for their

ambitions of conquest of South Viet Nam now and later the whole of South-East Asia.

It is quite possible that after the conquest takes place, there might be a "fall-out among the thieves". After the people have been ruthlessly subjugated and destroyed, the oppressors falling out among themselves brings very poor consolation to the victims. Yet the present Sino-Soviet rift is avidly clutched at as a consoling factor by liberals like Galbraith, Reuther and Robert Kennedy in the United States.

The Paris peace talks are likely to produce tangible and worthwhile results towards promotion of peace only if the United States is firm in its basic purpose that motivated its intervention in Viet Nam in the first place, viz. to make it clear to the neo-Imperialists that their ambitions of easy conquest will not be allowed to materialise. If however there is a temptation to play to the noisy gallery of the "nervous nellys" in a Presidential Election year, and such nervousness leads to the so-called "easy retrieval" of the American commitment by packing off from Viet Nam and leaving on the basis of superficial assurances, all the sacrifice that the American boys, South Viet-Nameese, and their allies made in Viet Nam to preserve the integrity of the Republic of South Viet Nam will have been in vain.

The Communists would probably like to "cut down their losses" as much as the Americans, South Viet Nameese and their allies when they faced for the first time a formidable contest to their hitherto unquestioned sweep across South Viet Nam. All indications seem to confirm this factor. In such a situation, if they are easily bailed out, this can be indeed a tragedy. The next few months will indicate how firm will the United States be in its basic purposes, and how successfully it will meet both North Viet Nameese and Viet Cong pressures as well as pressures from the doves in its own backyard.

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Price: 50 p.

Published by
DEMOCRATIC RESEARCH SERVICE
127, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 1

Notes

Assam Reorganization

IT is a pity that the Government of India are not yet able to make up their mind on the issue of the reorganisation of the State of Assam. Reports were current that the decision was to be announced soon. The Central Parliamentary Board of the Congress, however, appears to have decided otherwise. The whole matter is going to be examined again, which means that the decision will not be made for several weeks, if not months.

Delay is always dangerous. It is particularly so in matters in which emotions and interests are heavily involved. Once a decision is made it is usually accepted with, may be, expressions of dissent and protest. But, if it is delayed, both sides get more hardened in their attitudes and postures and it becomes more difficult to secure the acceptance of any compromise solution. A solution that might have proved satisfactory if given in time may not evoke the same response if delayed too long.

The reorganisation of Assam is, no doubt, a very ticklish and difficult problem. Assam is a border State open to hostile activity from practically all sides. Considerations of the defence and security of the country must play a big part in any arrangement that may be evolved. Moreover it is not a homogeneous well-knit area. It consists of two parts, the plains and the hills. The difference between the two parts is not merely geographical and economic; it is much more ethnic and cultural. They were brought together and kept together as one administrative unit by the British rulers as they extended and consolidated their rule over the country. There was no well-thought-out plan behind it nor any particular concern for the interests of the people more particularly of the hill areas.

However, the people of the plains have now developed a vested interest in that arrangement. They would like the arrangement to continue as it is in their interest to have a large area to rule over. This natural desire can be easily buttressed by arguments based on considerations of national defence, the backwardness of hill areas, and the anxiety to secure their economic progress. Any change in the present arrangement is regarded by them as dismemberment of their State. Their opposition to and resentment against any talk of reorganisation need not therefore surprise anybody.

But what are far more important and vital are the desires and aspirations of the people of the hill areas. There can be no doubt about their dissatisfaction with the present arrangement. They have given expression

to it in an unmistakable manner in a variety of ways including elections to various elected bodies. They feel and feel very strongly that they will not be able to make any advance as long as they are ruled by the people of the plains. The present arrangement, they feel, vests the ruling power in the hands of the people of the plains.

The demands of the people of the hill areas were considered by many committees and commissions and various suggestions were made from time to time. There was the Pataskar formula and then the recommendations of the Asoka Mehta Committee. The people of hill areas did not find them satisfactory. The people of the plains also opposed them in the beginning, though opinion is now veering in the direction of the acceptance of the Asoka Mehta Committee's recommendations. The people of the hills will not be now satisfied by mere grant of autonomy, howsoever extensive it may be. They demand now separation from Assam and an autonomous State of their own.

In spite of the opposition of the people of the plains, an autonomous State could have been formed if the hill area was a compact area. It is, however, a disjointed area and that creates a number of problems. That has made it difficult to find a solution. But a solution will have to be found, and as quickly as possible. It will have to be essentially in conformity with the desires and aspirations of the people of the hills. Considerations of national security will have to be kept in mind; but national security will not be advanced by making the people of the border area hostile by denying the fulfilment of their legitimate aspirations.

The people of the plains may not immediately like any reorganisation that may be effected. In course of time, they will, however, come to realise that it is in the larger interests of the country as a whole and will then agree to accept it. Some initial opposition organised by politicians of all political parties may be expected. The Central Government must prepare themselves to deal with it effectively. It will be, however, the height of irresponsibility to delay decision merely because it is likely to be opposed by some.

Anti-Congressism

ANTI-CONGRESSISM has had its run for over a year. It has by now sufficiently exposed itself as a barren political policy and as an unstable foundation for any concerted political activity. Anti-Congressism brings together all manner of political parties and groups, each with its own philosophy and programme. In this medley it is only the comparatively strong and determined who gain and the net result is the strengthening of the forces of reaction and totalitarians. The democratic and progressive parties and groups who join the medley with honest motives end with their lines thinned and flags tattered.

The people were lured for sometime by Anti-Congressism. They were so much disgusted with the Congress that they cast their votes against it without bothering too much about the shape and character of the alternative. What happened during the last year has, however, taught them some lessons. They have lost their enthusiasm and attraction for Anti-Congressism.

The result of the mid-term poll in Haryana clearly illustrates this fact. Earlier there were municipal elections in Kerala which went decisively against the United Front Government based on the platform of Anti-Congressism. The by-elections to Parliament and State Assemblies have showed the same trend. The people are no longer satisfied with a mere negative slogan; they want something positive. They are not prepared to vote against something unless they are sure that what they vote for is better than what they vote against.

This change in the mood of the people has placed a new responsibility on the shoulders of those who desire to displace the Congress. Mere propaganda against the Congress will not now appeal to the people. A positive alternative to the Congress must be placed before them and it must appear to them both practical as well as credible. Will non-Congress progressive and democratic parties accept that responsibility?

Training for Democracy

THE Leslie Sawhny Programme of Training for Democracy established a few months back has just completed its second study camp. The camp was held in Lonavla near Poona for a batch of about thirty students from Bombay. The first camp was held in Orissa for a group of political workers. The Programme intends holding half a dozen camps of a similar kind before the end of the year.

Political parties hold from time to time study camps for their members. This is the first time that a non-party organisation has been set up to impart training to political workers and others. Its services are available to all democratic parties. It is to be hoped that they will be utilised by a good number of them.

There is little realisation in the country of the need of training for public work. Public workers, more particularly, political leaders are supposed to be born and not made. This is a grave fallacy which causes a lot of harm in a democracy. People's affairs are managed by persons who have little knowledge and training about the manner and method of conducting them. Public workers belonging to democratic parties or believing in democracy suffer from this disability more than those belonging to authoritarian parties. The latter have their own ways of indoctrination and the issuing of instructions.

The Leslie Sawhny Programme is established with

the intention of supplying this long-felt need. The Programme proposes to combine theoretical education with practical training. It will not carry on any indoctrination; nor will it carry on propaganda for any political party. It will seek to inculcate the values of democracy and stimulate the desire to develop democratic politics.

The training at the study camp in Lonavla was carried on in that spirit. A number of persons prominent in the academic field and in public affairs helped in imparting the training. It is to be hoped that the students who attended the camp will in course of time develop as responsible leaders of the democratic movement.

Without Comment

The Special Representative of the Statesman gives the following information about visits of Indian communists to Russia and other communist countries:

It may be a coincidence but a fact, nevertheless, that on an average 75 Communist leaders from India make annual pilgrimages to the Soviet Union and to other European Communist capitals.

It might, again, only be a coincidence but nearly half of them usually go there for what is described as "rest and treatment". Rare indeed is the case in which any foreign exchange has at all been asked for by these leaders. The obvious conclusion is that the expenses are borne in their entirety by the hosts.

Some of the leaders have been regular visitors to these countries, figuring in the list almost every year. A few have made several visits in one year. Take Mr. Dange, for example. In 1965, he was in Moscow first for medical treatment; he was back there some time later that year, followed by visits to Poland and, shortly thereafter, to Czechoslovakia. Mr. S. G. Sardesai was a close second with a visit to Moscow in April and another in October to Prague.

The next year Mr. Dange was back both in Moscow and Prague, on one occasion accompanied by Mr. Rajeshwar Rao, Mr. Achuta Menon, Mr. Bhupesh Gupta, Mr. N. K. Krishnan, Mr. Bhowani Sen, Mr. Datta Deshmukh and Mr. Yogendra Sharma.

The Soviet Union is the obvious first choice of the leaders. For instance, of the 70 CPI leaders who visited these countries in 1965 as many as 55 opted for Moscow. 18 of them for "rest and treatment". Two years later 43 of the 65 went to Moscow (27 for "rest and treatment"). In 1966 as many as 65 of the 81 went to Moscow (30 of them for "rest and treatment").

While most visits are short and of three-to-four-week duration, some may last more than a year involving anything from the study of Russian language to a course in trade unionism.

Portugal At War

Chris Cook

PORTUGAL today is a nation at war: her enemy is the advancing tide of African nationalism that has set both Angola and Mozambique aflame. It is war; undeclared, perhaps, but nonetheless stark and bitter. An estimated 165,000 Portuguese troops are determinedly defending her colonial possessions in Africa. A crippling 42 per cent of her total budget in 1966 was spent preserving the first—and last—of Europe's old colonial empires. It is a war now being fought on three fronts. From the hot tropical terrain of Mozambique, across the cooler uplands of the high plateaus of Angola and on again to the thick rain-forests of Portuguese Guinea, Portuguese troops are engaged in action.

These last colonial campaigns must surely rank as Africa's forgotten war. Yet the outcome of the struggle in Mozambique and Angola is of crucial importance, not merely for Portugal, but for the future peace of the whole of Africa south of the Zambesi. For white South Africa, Mozambique is of vital significance, both as a trade outlet that absorbed £10 million of her exports last year, and, most important of all, as a strategic link in the defence of white supremacy in southern Africa. If the twin pillars of Angola and Mozambique fall to the nationalists, the edifice of European power will not collapse—but it becomes yet another degree more untenable.

What then is the background to the liberation struggles in these so-called 'provinces' of metropolitan Portugal? What is the position of the guerrilla movement today? And what is the likely outcome of all the bloodshed and suffering?

Angola was the birthplace of the revolt. A vast and beautiful land, largest of all Portugal's colonial possessions and nearly six times the size of Britain, Angola is a country of coffee plantations and savannah, of high plateaus criss-crossed by mountain ranges. To the south lie the encroaching sands of the Kalahari Desert. Her total population is a mere 4½ million. Despite many Portuguese attempts to encourage European settlers, a mere 220,000 of this population is white. Of these, 55,000 are concentrated in Angola's capital, Luanda, a city of oil refineries and railway workshops. Since 1483, when the first caravel commanded by Diogo Cao sailed into the mouth of the Congo River, Portugal has laid claim to rule the thousand-mile coastline that Angola possesses. Not until the heyday of late Victorian imperialism, when the brutal campaigns of Henrique Condeiro extended the blessing of enlightened Portuguese rule as far as the Bie Plateau, did this nominal sovereignty become effective in the remote interior.

What is the truth in Portugal's oft-repeated claims

to have developed this vast territory? The benefits of Portuguese rule, like those of Belgium in the neighbouring Congo, have often been conspicuous only by their absence. Ten years ago, a UNESCO survey of elementary education found 95 per cent of all children between the ages of five and fourteen received no schooling at all. Such schools as existed, instead of teaching much-needed technical or agricultural skills, taught little else beside the glory of Salazar and Portugal. Perhaps these figures need not surprise us; several parts of rural Portugal itself had an illiteracy rate of 40 per cent only a decade ago. Higher education has likewise seen great neglect; there was no university in Angola until four years ago.

In fairness to Portugal, considerable economic development has taken place. A recent example is the ambitious Catumbela hydroelectric project that began operation in January 1965; the Matala scheme along the Kunene River will provide power for South-West Africa as well as for Angola—another manifestation of the growing links between Portugal and South Africa. For understandable reasons much South African effort is being given to the development of Angolan oilfields. By herself Portugal has meagre resources to spare in Africa, but other nations like West Germany have invested in such projects as the new railway from the rich iron ore deposits of Cassinga.

In March 1961 the guerrilla revolt burst upon Angola; it came with a force and vengeance that caught Portugal sadly off guard. Within a year some 350 once-prosperous coffee plantations lay as desolate, burnt-out shells across the Angolan countryside. Worst hit of all have been the provinces along the border with the Congo—it is from Kinshasa that directions and supplies are received. The guerrilla campaign has all the horrors of a second Mau Mau or Algeria. Portuguese reprisals have often been effective; always they have been vicious. How many unrecorded Sharpevilles there have been we may never know, but Portuguese techniques have more in common with those used in Abyssinia than with what would be expected of a NATO ally. An indication of the suffering involved comes from the people who as always suffer most—the refugees. An estimated total of 325,000 is believed to have fled to the Congo; all of this staggering number are homeless and unwanted.

Perhaps the most lamentable fact of the present tragic situation is the hopeless division among the African ranks—the chief rivals being Holden Roberto's UPLA and Neto's MPLA. The names and initials are unimportant, it is the divisions between them that are seemingly irreconcilable. And so the war continues: while the Portuguese armies remain, the progress of

the nationalists is slow. On the longer term, however, this is a war that Portugal cannot win.

Across in Mozambique, this grim pattern is repeated. Some 40,000 Portuguese regular troops, concentrated chiefly along the border with Tanzania, are engaged in defending a territory the size of Britain and France combined, against an African uprising that is once again divided. Directed this time from Dar-es-Salaam, Dr Mondlane's Front for the Liberation of Mozambique has achieved little permanent success. Portugal was better prepared. Mass arrests, including eminent poets like Valente, repression and curfews have followed the revolt. The irony of these wars is that what few resources Portugal possesses are squandered on the weapons of war, while vast areas of Mozambique along the shores of Lake Malawi cry out for the simplest development. Portugal is fighting a desperate struggle to defend the Portuguese way of life—in a land that a decade ago boasted a mere 66,000 Europeans, once again heavily concentrated in the two towns of Beira and Lourenco Marques.

Portugal's determination to survive is grim indeed. Even in the tiny territory of Portuguese Guinea, adjacent to Senegal in West Africa, where revolt broke out early in 1963, some 30,000 troops are defending a land that is only twice the size of Wales—and with a

population hardly reaching a half-million. Led by Amilcar Cabral, the nationalists control many of the areas to the south of the Corubal River. Portuguese rule is effective only around the garrisons, and in the vicinity of the capital, Bissau. There have been persistent and reliable reports that Fulah villages have been subject to napalm attack by the upholders of European civilization. With easy retreats for the nationalists in Senegal and Guinea, the Portuguese rule over the colony will probably not be fully restored.

What of the struggle elsewhere? How long can Portugal continue to pour so much money into her military effort? The cost to Portugal in terms of manpower shortage for her own nascent industries alone is heavy. Perhaps only Salazar knows the answer to some of these questions. The outlook for Africa and Portugal is grim; there can be no solution while Portuguese policies remain as they are. Inside Portugal there can be little room for optimism. Here is a land ruled by an ageing dictator, where real political freedom has been unknown for forty years. Here is a poor land, burdened by a protracted war that she cannot win.

Salazar may firmly believe in his duty to uphold Portugal's mission in Africa. The tragedy is that this mission is both wrong and harmful—for Portugal and for Africa.

—Courtesy, *Socialist Commentary*



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TATA ENTERPRISES

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Winds Of Change In Eastern Europe

Adam Adil

A DECADE ago, the Communist empire was considered impregnable. Immediately after the termination of the Second World War, Stalin extended his hegemony over the whole of Eastern Europe. The communists had successfully undermined all the democratic political parties in Eastern Europe. The tactics they adopted were known as "salami" tactics. At first the communists would enter into an alignment with democratic parties, even form coalition government with them (as it happened in Hungary), so manipulate sinews of power as to capture it completely, reduce the democratic parties to impotence and ultimately destroy them and even physically eliminate their leaders. Before, the rest of the world could realise what was happening the whole of Eastern Europe was at the feet of Stalin.

Obviously, for nearly two decades, Poland, East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and indeed Albania, suffered tyrannical totalitarian regimes. The economies of these countries were geared to the needs of Soviet economy, with the result the economic growth of these countries was stunted and the people had to put up with low standard of life. The leaders of the local communist parties who ruled over these countries at the dictates of the Moscow rulers tried to follow in the footsteps of Stalin and liquidated thousands of people, who either resented or resisted the communist regimes. For instance, Imre Nagy and hundreds of intellectuals and freedom fighters were shot in Hungary. Slansky and his comrades were executed in Czechoslovakia, freedom loving workers in Poznan and East Berlin were ruthlessly crushed. Even Gomulka in Poland could not escape Stalin's wrath. He was imprisoned by Stalin's followers at the orders of the "great" dictator.

But now it seems that the long black night which had enveloped the whole of Eastern Europe is coming to an end and the foundations of the communist regimes in this part of the world are on the verge of cracking. It is true that communist parties in Eastern European countries are still strongly entrenched. But they are now suffering from internal pressures, and have begun to get out of the state of total subservience to Moscow. Again people in general, especially the student communities in these countries are demonstratively adopting anti-government and anti-communist postures. They are openly giving vent to their discontentment against the regimes. They are not only agitating for the satisfaction of their demands but are even indulging in violent acts, even to the extent of storming the university campuses, and burning public

properties. Such a situation would have been impossible a decade ago.

Politically too, there is emerging a marked change over the map of eastern Europe. In Czechoslovakia, which was once bastion of Stalinism is now experiencing a sort of thaw in the structure of its political regimentation. The new Communist Party boss, Alexander Dubcek has sought to loosen the party strangle-hold over the Czechoslovakian people. The Czech intellectuals are enjoying freedom of expression which was denied to them so far. The communist party functionaries can even afford to be critical of the party or the governmental policies. The workers have ceased to be subservient to the party. In the first week of April, Czechoslovakia even had the first workers' strike under communism. The people are not being required to spy over one another—as it normally happens under communism. Czechoslovakia has even decided to permit new economic thinking. Professor Ota Sik, and his colleagues had strongly pleaded for economic reforms in Czechoslovakia even earlier than Evsei Libermann, whose theories in the Soviet Union almost bordered on those obtained in capitalist countries. With the result it will not be surprising if private enterprise, at least to a certain extent, is permitted in Czechoslovakia and other eastern European countries. (In the Soviet Union, under the influence of Evsei Libermann, private industrial ventures to a limited extent and incentives bonuses to workers for higher productions are now being permitted—which would have been unthinkable under Stalin).

Similarly, Rumania is showing signs of firm defiance of Moscow in relation to her internal and external policies both at the political and economic levels. The Communist Party of Rumania has chartered an independent course of action even with regard to international meet of the communist parties, which Moscow has been assiduously working for quite a few years. Moscow has become a helpless spectator of drift in Rumanian policies.

In Poland, however, the reverse is happening. Gomulka, who had suffered under Stalin, is actually stiffening his resistance to political reform. Yet the student as well as academic community in Poland are restive and asserting themselves formidably against the State policies. They represent the forces of liberalism. Student demonstrations have become common occurrences in Poland. Recently, the Government in order to meet the student agitation, closed down eight academic departments at Warsaw University. The

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Trends In Recent Elections

R. Muthuswamy

THE recent Municipal elections in Kerala and U.P. had a special significance only in the context that they represented the first popular verdict after the general elections in States where United Front ministries had been formed. In Kerala, Congress has made impressive inroads into the strongholds of the Communist Party—both wings. In spite of the claim of the Communists that Municipal elections had no 'political significance' the fact remains that in this country both Municipal and Local Board elections are still contested on the basis of the party system, as it happens in England. The reverses of the Labour Party in the Municipal elections in England represent a clear pointer to the fact that the electorate disapproves of the various measures taken by the Labour Government in meeting the economic ills of the United Kingdom. The results of the Municipal elections were not easily brushed aside by the Labour Party as only representing the results on civic issues and the electorate represented urban elements only. This analogy holds good for India which has deliberately chosen the British pattern both institutionally and constitutionally in the matter of elections.

In Kerala the United Front in spite of its frequent internal rumblings kept up the veneer of unity in its election strategy for Municipal elections. Yet the Congress and its ally the Kerala Congress were able to capture 17 out of 24 Municipalities and in Calicut, a Municipal Corporation, which was in the hands of the Civic Front, a communist combination, the United Front had to suffer some ignominious defeat. In 5 Municipalities in the Palghat area, which were considered to be the impregnable citadel of the Right Communist Party, the Congress has been able to achieve a spectacular success. One Communist sympathising weekly put the failure of the United Front to 'over-confidence' as was the case with the Congress in the last elections in certain constituencies. However the fact remains that except for the Muslim League, which has proved that it has not lost any of its prestige in any of its pockets, the other constituents of the United Front had incurred the displeasure of the electorate atleast in the urban areas. The United Front's performance during its rule of nearly 15 months was one of public airing of its own inevitable internecine quarrels arising out of diametrically opposite ideological commitments. When the major constituent, CPI(M) tried to inject its ideological commitment gradually into the administration, this caused grave uneasiness in the minds of the other constituents. Starting from the controversy created by the Japanese deal

of the Industries Minister and ending with the latest open crusade advocated by the Left Communists against the Union Government, there has been sharp differences among the constituents of the United Front. It had definitely an impact on the people, who realised that the very structure of any United Front, which is nothing more than a conglomeration of ideologically divergent groups, cannot provide the cohesion necessary for carrying on efficient and stable administration but on the other hand it can produce incalculable damage to the very fabric of administration, let alone parliamentary democracy.

The same pattern was noticeable in the Municipal elections of Uttar Pradesh. In this state the United Front ministry which was formed after a major defection from the ruling Congress party, could not last long when one of the constituents, the SSP, threatened direct action and agitation against the Government to coerce it to introduce certain agrarian reforms. When the honest Chief Minister found that the United Front could not work under such conditions, he resigned and ultimately President's rule had to be imposed. The popular resentment over the floor crossings and the consequent maladministration reflected in the results of the Municipal elections. In the Capital, Lucknow, Jana Sangh which was a major constituent of the United Front was a casualty and Congress was able to capture this Municipality. Similarly in other centres Congress was able to make inroads. The fact that Congress with all its shortcomings was the only All India party which avoided political alliances in the matter of elections did probably weigh heavily in its favour. United Front alliance may be a good instrument to defeat a common enemy but when it comes to delivering goods a United Front requires greater ideological and structural homogeneity than the concept of 'the enemy of my enemy is a friend'.

In Rajasthan we witnessed the spectacular Congress victory in Pousa Constituency, which was a citadel of the Swatantra Party, where a local thesli level Congress leader defeated the Maharajkumar of Jaipur and in the Assembly election in the same area, the ex-President of Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee, Mr. Paliwal, who resigned from the Congress only 15 days prior to the election was routed. This again proves the aversion of the electorate against opportunistic defection and alliance. Unfortunately the Swatantra Party with all its wherewithals and an all India nature has not been able to escape the temptations of opportunistic alliances and is paying heavily for this folly now.

In Haryana the mid-term elections had given the Congress an absolute majority. The defectors by and large had been routed, though there were some exceptions. The most important reason for the victory of the Congress seems to be due to its presenting an integrated organization and did not fall for the temptation to take back into its fold those defectors who were responsible for the disintegration of the first Congress Government, in spite of the fact that these defectors amounted to something organizationally and their antagonism may still cost the party some damage. Surprisingly when the Congress High Command took this firm decision, the prodigal sons fell in line and accepted discipline with good grace. This decision had rumblings in faraway Madhya Pradesh too where some defectors from the Congress have formed a United Front ministry and who are still not sure of their present grounds. For some time there were persistent reports that the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh was anxious to return to the Congress fold so that in case of a mid-term election, he is assured of his seat in the Congress bandwagon. Somehow things did not work that way and there has been a temporary patching up in Madhya Pradesh. In Haryana the gradual disenchantment of the electorate with the Jana Sangh indicates that it is no more possible for any political party to get mileage out of agitational approaches. So long as the question of 'Punjabi Suba' was in the balance and it was possible to have an agitational approach on the problem of a Hindi speaking Suba, Jana Sangh was a potent force but once the problem was decided, it lost its attraction to public imagination, as it has nothing more constructive to offer. The Jana Sangh clichés and slogans have become hackneyed and no wonder the people are losing their charm for this party gradually. Before the election there was a general feeling that the elections would be decided on caste and regional considerations. After all this is only a matter of strategy and two can play the same game by pitting one from the same caste against another. Congress appears to have adopted this strategy much to its advantage. The results in Haryana have proved that defections in future are going to be costly, if not to the individuals, to the organizations and the parties.

The latest news from Krishnagar in West Bengal also reveals a similar pattern. This area was considered to be the stronghold of Mr. Ajoy Mukherjee, who was the Chief Minister in the United Front Government. The parliamentary constituency in this area had eluded the Congress twice in the past; yet we now see that the same Congress candidate who was defeated in the General election in 1967 was able to win very comfortably with a very large margin over the combined votes secured by the two opponents. The inherent merit of the same candidate could not have improved

by any stretch of imagination in the meantime but the obvious reason for the success of the Congress candidate in this constituency is greatly due to the disenchantment with the very poor performance of the United Front Government during its short tenure.

To sum up, the recent elections have brought to the fore that the people who had now an opportunity to witness the performances of both Congress and non-Congress Governments during the period of last 15 months have realised that a party with an all India character but which would prefer to stand or fall on its own feet is preferred to a United Front consisting of divergent parties, and if defectors are taken back in any party, this would be a costly affair. The people are more concerned with performances than ideological stances and as they have now been able to evaluate the performances of the different claimants, they are in a position to take a more realistic appraisal of the situation and vote intelligently. This is a further education in parliamentary democracy which the recent elections have provided.

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government also fired six professors. Gomulka dubbed the students and the professors as "enemies of the people". But the students have remained irrepressible. They have not only demanded the reinstatement of the fired professors but have threatened further action if the government does not relent.

While the Polish government has decided to go all out against the agitation of the students and professors, the latter have found a new ally in Poland's Roman Catholic Episcopate, which has protested against Government's "brutal use of force" against students and intellectuals.

All this indicates that Eastern Europe is facing not only the shake-up of political structures but also deep symptoms of social turmoil. Soviet Union is acutely conscious of these trends in her satellite countries and she has not taken kindly to them. Only the other day, *Pravda* warned against the liberalising trends in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Ambassador in Prague openly sympathised with Novotny, and others who were overthrown by Dubcek. Obviously, Soviet Union's attitudes were not liked by Czechoslovakia and she made no secret of her reaction. In order to mend matters, Soviet Premier Kosygin had to undertake a journey to Czechoslovakia ostensibly for health reasons!

The change which is emerging in Eastern Europe does not, however, suggest that communism has ceased to be a dominant political force in those countries. Once entrenched, communism does not easily disappear. But it is possible that the change in Eastern Europe may well mark the beginning of the ultimate end of communism in those countries. With that hope, the change in Eastern Europe is a welcome sign.

With Many Voices

"The deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world."

—Tennyson.

We still go on behaving like Brahmins and treating other nations like Harijans.

—M. R. Masani, *Himmat*, April 12.

Because Britain is ending its military commitments east and south of Suez, that does not end her interest in places beyond Europe.

—*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, May 2.

In today's situation, non-alignment as an international grouping has lost much of its validity.

—*Weekend Review*, May 4.

Dictatorship has an easy entrance but a difficult exit.

—George Papandreou, ex-Premier of Greece,
Manchester Guardian Weekly, May 9.

We want Marks and Spencer, not Marx and Engels.

—Alexander Dubcek, Secretary, Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, *The Economist*, May 11.

For the time being, all notions about high productivity, capital-intensive industries and exports will have to be given a go-by if the country is to be saved.

—S. R. Vasavada, *Times of India*, May 13.

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Base-building, Soviet style, involves saturating countries like Egypt, Syria, Iraq with modern Soviet arms, equipment for airfields, ports, repair facilities, small armies of Soviet technicians. Such penetration goes deep.

—*U.S. News & World Report*, May 13.

China can be measured by no normal yardstick.

—Frank Moraes, *The Indian Express*, May 13.

Mongolia has now become completely and utterly a Soviet revisionist colony.

—Radio Peking quoted in *Current*, May 18.

State financial control turns every good institution into a party tool as the State works and rules for party advancement at every step and every stage.

—C. Rajagopalachari, *Swarajya*, May 18.

To the old question, 'How inane can a human being be', the last week has supplied a new answer, 'As inane as Morarji Desai'.

—*Opinion*, May 21.

Mr. Namboodiripad stands for forced labour, totalitarianism and complete regimentation.

—R. N. Singh Deo, Orissa Chief Minister,
Indian Express, May 22.

It would be foolish to assume that people will be satisfied for much longer with a system which confines their political role to the marking of a ballot paper with a single cross once every five years.

—Anthony Wedgwood Benn, Minister for Technology, U.K. *The Times of India*, May 29.