

Ballots and Bullets

V. B. Karnik

BALLOTS and bullets are such contradictory courses of action that no political party can seriously think of adopting them at one and the same time. Ballots affirm faith in democracy and insistence on the use of peaceful democratic methods for bringing about desired economic, political and social changes. Bullets, on the other hand, proclaim contempt for democracy and herald violent and armed conflict with the existing social order. The two cannot go together and a party which proposes to combine them is either deceiving itself or seeking to deceive others.

Communists are not fools or innocents who will deceive themselves. They are out to deceive others. Communism forbids faith in democracy which it equates with the rule of the bourgeoisie and use of democratic means except as a tactic. It believes in the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat after the violent overthrow of the existing order. Ballots have no place in the communist programme of action except as a temporary expedient to hoodwink the people. They do succeed in hoodwinking the people on many occasions. They are accepted as democrats, and people realise only later and, some times when it is too late, that their democratic professions were only a smoke-screen to hide their real intention of destroying democracy and democratic institutions.

In view of the communist habit of hiding their real intention, it is a bit puzzling why Mr. Rajeswara Rao, the General Secretary of the Communist Party (Right) thought it necessary to make at its ninth Congress held in Cochin a few days back a public declaration that the party will combine ballots with bullets. It seems that the contradictions that have developed in the party compelled the General Secretary to make the unusual declaration. The party is at present on the horns of a dilemma. Under instructions from its mentors in Moscow it is following for the last few years a rightist course. The adoption of that course led to a split which deprived the party of a large mass of members and more particularly of its active workers. The loss of membership is continuing since then and it has seriously damaged the fortunes of the party in the

two States of West Bengal and Kerala where at one time it was fairly strong. In both States it is the leftist wing which is more strong and is constantly attracting more and more members to its fold. It is to stop this erosion of membership and to refurbish his party's image as a revolutionary organisation that Mr. Rajeswara Rao made the declaration. How far the declaration will impress the members and persuade them not to leave the party is a matter which need not be considered here. It is, however, clear that the Communist Party cannot ride two horses at one and the same time. It cannot at one and the same time follow a parliamentary course and also work for the violent overthrow of the Parliament and all other democratic institutions. It cannot at one and the same time play with ballots and bullets. It must be compelled to make a choice. It can exist as an indigenous democratic and constitutional organisation or as a foreign-inspired unlawful conspiracy against democracy and against freedom.

Mr. Rajeswara Rao's declaration should serve as a warning to all democrats and more particularly to Congressmen some of whom appear to be too keen and anxious to secure the friendship and cooperation of the Communist Party (Right). In politics there need be no untouchability; and, if friendship with Right Communists is useful for isolating and defeating Left Communists, it can be welcomed as a useful tactic. But one must know the real character of one's temporary allies. There is for some time now a more or less undeclared alliance between the Congress and the Communist Party (Right). The two are working together in the coalition Ministry in Kerala. Some former members of the party are holding high positions in the Government and the Congress organization. So far, the alliance has not harmed the Congress. Since the mid-term poll, it is in a dominating position and can make the Communist Party (Right) dance to its tune.

However, even a mighty organisation can be undermined and destroyed if sufficient care is not taken to counteract the disruptive activities of so-called friends like the Communists. It is clear from the proceedings of the ninth congress that, apart from the threat to combine bullets with ballots, the party has planned to develop "mass revolutionary actions of toiling peasants" and work actively for a "democratic revolution". The "democratic revolution" will demand the replacement of the present Congress government by a "left and democratic" government. According to the Communist Party, "des-

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Nixon-Denying His Country's History

A. G. Mulgaokar

THE news of President Nixon's arms deals and more arms deals to General Yahya Khan continues to flow. It was good therefore to read in the *Times of India* the letter of Mr. Chester Bowles and the forthright views of Mr. Galbraith on the situation consequent on General Yahya Khan's actions in Bangla Desh in the last few months. Having some idea of the views of Mr. Keating, the present American Ambassador, on the subject, we can have no doubt that the Indian viewpoint is being powerfully placed before the American President, the Government and public. It was good to know from Mr. Bowles' letter that there is greater understanding today of India's difficulties among the American press, Congress, and people than at any time.

Is it realised, particularly in his own country, that President Nixon in supporting General Yahya Khan and propping up his administration is denying his own country's glorious history? The American Colonies revolted, crying "no taxation without representation", under circumstances not different from those under which the people of Bangla Desh have raised their standard of revolt. Similarly, a hundred years later, the Federal Government fought the South not so much on the issue of secession, which really was secondary, but on the issue of slavery. This again is what the people of Bangla Desh have raised their standard of revolt against. And yet again in our own times, after the last war, the American Government of the day was not the less forward than its allies in leading the main war-criminals of the Hitlerian gang to justice and the scaffold. President Nixon today, on the other hand, is playing the reverse role and standing forth not as the champion of national liberty but national enslavement.

In the welter of controversy that has been raging in the press and on the platform whether to recognise the independent Bangla Desh movement or not a much simpler question seems to have been overlooked: this is whether to grant that government belligerency rights in the first instance? This was the first step taken during the Spanish Civil War by countries "friendly" to General Franco's side. In International Law, while it is short of recognition, it enables the side granted these rights to purchase arms in the international market and permit such sales to be made by countries willing to do so. Why does not India take this elementary step openly?

Doubtless in this context the Indo-Soviet Treaty has attracted wide attention and even wider speculation. To many it means one thing and to an equally large number it means another thing but it is worthwhile recalling the terms from the part of another treaty. The

Anglo-Polish Treaty of Mutual Assistance thirty years ago was intended to give Poland an active ally in the event of a German attack. It was hoped that it may even act as a deterrent. If the Indo-Soviet Treaty is intended to serve both these ends let us bear in mind the terms of the earlier treaty. What the Indo-Soviet Treaty stands for exactly must be considered in the light of the terms of the Anglo-Polish Treaty.

Mujib's trial is another matter with which world opinion must concern itself because it is both a farce and fraud. Martial law is a "lawless law" according to the highest puristic view. There can be no martial law in areas where municipal (ordinary) courts are functioning which presumably they are in West Pakistan and a martial law tribunal cannot in any case function outside the area of martial law. By both these tests the verdict in Mujib's trial will be a nullity. Should a sentence of death be imposed and carried out everyone connected with the trial from the brave General Yahya Khan down to those simple guards who carry out the sentence will be guilty of stark murder. And yet General Yahya Khan is no doubt a man of valour, witness his deeds in Bangla Desh and his performance on the French television. But is he man enough to know that chivalry must invariably accompany bravery?

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pite the split, the Congress led by Indira Gandhi continues to be a heterogeneous party". As distinguished from Left Communists, it grants the existence in the Congress of left elements but will not be satisfied unless there is another split and the rightists and the centrists elements are thrown out. The party is determined to do its best to bring about that split.

This is enough indication of what the Communists propose to do. Situated as they are, with their strength depleted all over the country, they may not be able to do anything. Their idea of establishing "a government of the left and democratic forces" at the Centre may not be anything more than "a day-dream" as Mr. Namboodiripad, the leader of the Left Communist, has stated. With little backing in the countryside, they may not also succeed in organising "mass revolutionary actions of toiling peasants." Their efforts to force a split in the Congress may be equally unavailing. The Communists may not succeed in attaining their aims, but while working for them they will create for the Congress and the Government many problems of law and order. It will be found, then, that friendly relations with a party which combines bullets with ballots is more a liability than an asset.

Is Parliament Redundant for Socialism?

“Atreya”

WE are witnessing some apparently paradoxical situations in which in direct proportion to the comfortable majority enjoyed by the ruling Congress Party in Parliament, the desire to by-pass Parliament and make it merely a rubber-stamping and “endorsing body” increases. Normally one should assume that the stronger a party finds itself in any Parliament or legislative body, the more stakes it would develop for democratic behaviour in such things as accountability, consultations and so on in its legislative programmes.

Contrary to such expectations, what we are now witnessing is a cynical contempt of Parliament by the Executive arm of the Central Government as represented by Cabinet Ministers. In the styles of the Queen of Hearts in *Alice in Wonderland* who constantly orders “Off with his Head”, we continuously hear of Ordinances to initiate various activities. In other words, after structuring a parliament after the mid-term elections that carried overwhelmingly large majority of members of the Ruling Party to an extent even the Prime Minister could not have dreamt of, we see a preference in ruling styles that is certainly not democratic, but closely akin to what many developing countries have designed in such names as “basic democracy”, “guided democracy” etc, to rationalise dictatorial or deterministic regimes.

One can certainly appreciate the need for emergency provisions in the operations of the complex machinery of democracy. But such provisions are for real emergencies and rarely resorted to for meeting frivolous situations as we have been attempting to do. Let us look at some of the “emergency” issues for which Ordinances have either been actually used or sought to be used. The introduction of the Family Pension Scheme for workers was one of the “emergency” issues. Ordinance is now sought to be used for amending the Payment of Bonus Act. It was through Ordinances that extra levies are being imposed to produce Rs. 70 crores on account of the influx of Bangla Desh refugees.

The question that ought to concern Members of Parliament very much is the role that exists for them actually and potentially in a democratic set up. They have to ask themselves whether they are elected on behalf of large constituents in the country to be merely the rubber stamps of decisions and actions taken by the Government under artificially generated emergency conditions over trifles. They could analyse the substantive issues governed by the Ordinances so far and ask the question whether these issues were of really such a nature as to necessitate the Ordinance type of emergency procedure. The Family Pension Scheme

which a disturbingly small percentage of industrial workers, the intended beneficiaries, have opted for could have certainly waited for the constitution of the new Parliament. Similarly the amendment of the Bonus Act can certainly wait for the regular session of Parliament. In the same way, the Finance Minister could have waited for the Winter session of Parliament to push through new levies through a supplementary Budget.

But the almost vulgar haste and frequency with which Mrs. Gandhi's lieutenants talk about Ordinances for every trifle, indicate a pathological terror they seem to have for the democratic process of accountability, adjustment and compromise. Their behaviour is very suspicious because, even with everything loaded in their favour, they prefer a style of authoritarianism rather than accountability. This is probably because they are not sure of the rationale of their substantive issues and prefer to ram their whimsicalities down the throats of everyone including the members of Parliament who are just taken for granted.

On this question of the increasing penchant for Ordinances, one member of Parliament naively and innocently asked the question “What is wrong in an Ordinance so long as it is subsequently ratified by Parliament?” It did not occur to the Honourable Member of Parliament that there is a world of difference between ratification of a “fait accompli” because it has already been accomplished and very few would have the courage to make a nuisance of themselves over an accomplished fact. It is, however, a different matter for a piece of legislation freshly introduced in Parliament. Notwithstanding the pressures of the party whip, there will be some desire to project a fresh mind to the legislation and seek methods to refine it through amendments and so on.

The most shameful aspect of the ordinance style is not exactly what the rulers do. It is the unanimity with which the so-called bastions of democracy in society, namely, the trade unions have sought the ordinance method of prescribing what should be done over labour demands. Forgetting the fact that by seeking the State to determine through the Ordinance method such substantive union business as wages and working conditions, they are making the unions themselves redundant. Indian union leaders, irrespective of their ideological belonging, have pleaded for Ordinances for higher bonus, standardising gratuity and so on. This is the surest way to the death of unionism because industrial workers will soon realise that they do not need the instrumentality of trade unions at all if the State were to prescribe what the wages have to

be, what the bonus or gratuity has to be. The contemporary politicians must be chuckling in their sleeves when union leaders join in a chorus to demand from the all-powerful State, prescriptions through Ordinances. This is reminiscent of village scenes where the unfortunate sacrificial goat that is being led up the temple altar is pathetically found licking the blunt side of the cutlass that will be chopping its head. The INTUC has been the most vociferous supporter of the ordinance method.

It is high time all political thinkers identified their political beliefs, especially those who claim to stand for democratic principles. There is no use accusing rulers of discarding democratic obligations when there is such a frantic stampede among so-called democrats to throttle democratic processes for the sake of very marginal stakes.

The ordinance method is a confession by the executive branch of the state of its incapacity in the skills of management of a democratic society, by motivating the people in the society in creative exercises even while looking after the problems of equity and justice. With such incompetence, strangling of the democratic processes will not generate efficiency, but will generate oppression to prevent protests against inefficiency and injustice.

When the parliament members are made redundant

by the ordinance style, the executive branch of the Government can play the role of watchdog of democracy only in the manner of a fox safeguarding the chicken yard! It is high time our Members of Parliament, especially the so-called progressive Young Turks who have always claimed to be the conscience and watchdog of everything progressive, woke up to this situation and contribute to the preservation of democratic freedoms. The irony about democratic freedom is that it cannot be rationed out only to some and denied to others.

There is a gravely mistaken assumption that often the short-circuiting of parliamentary procedures is necessary for quick development. Facts of history strongly refute this naïve belief. The alibi of quick development that is cited to crush democratic accountability does not result at all in quick development, but just in crushing of democratic rights. It is like demanding a signed blank cheque, promising "honestly" to fill up the "necessary" amount.

With a "committed" Parliament, there is no justification for Ordinances. The late Pandit Nehru, facing a tougher opposition, did not show any temptation for the short cut of Ordinances to get things done. The present trend is disturbing and should be discouraged if some semblance of democratic standards is to be preserved.

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Bangla Desh

Adam Adil

THE tension between India and Pakistan is mounting as a result of the threats of war so blatantly given out by President Yahya Khan. He even went to the extent of hurling personal insult at the Prime Minister although Mrs. Indira Gandhi has maintained an attitude of dignity and composure in her utterances regarding Pakistan and the reign of terror unleashed by Pakistani military junta in Bangla Desh. To say the least, President Yahya Khan lacks sophistication which is so necessary in the Head of a State, which is desirous of maintaining good relationship with its neighbours.

To-day, India has nearly nine million refugees on hand to feed, shelter and look after in other ways. The number of refugees is growing by 30,000 a day due to the increasing atrocities in Bangla Desh by the Pakistani army. The refugees may swell to 12 million by the end of the year. India provided Rs. 200 crores in the Budget for expenditure on refugees. In addition, the President of India has promulgated Ordinances for raising additional taxation of Rs. 70 crores for the same purpose. It is estimated that nearly Rs. 3 crores in being spent on the refugees daily. This is an enormous amount of money which India can ill afford. If this state of affairs continues Indian economy will be seriously affected. As *Time* magazine puts it, "the cost to the Indian government for the fiscal year ending next March 31, may run as high as 830 million dollars". According to the *Times of India* "the cost of providing even a modicum of relief to the 9 million refugees will push up the budgetary deficit this year to Rs. 600 crores or more." Hence refugees must go back. But can they go back unless peaceful conditions prevail in Bangla Desh either as a result of political settlement—which is a remote possibility—or the liberation of Bangla Desh with its independence and sovereignty guaranteed by the international community and with secular democracy firmly established there. Mukti Bahini is fighting bravely, but it would be difficult for it to continue long without regular supply of arms and ammunitions from friendly countries. Today for all practical purposes Mukti Bahini is depending upon its own local resources and on arms and ammunitions snatched away from the Pakistani army whenever the latter loses a battle with the freedom fighters.

The most surprising factor in the present Indo-Pakistan relationship is the attitude of the U.S. Government. Apart from the fact that the U.S. Government aid for the refugees in India is meagre (just 83.2 million dollars so far), it is "sending another sort of aid to the sub-continent as well" as Senator Edward Kennedy puts it. According to the Senator, "in spite of a State department freeze on new military aid shipments to Pakistan, the Pentagon has signed a new

defence contract totalling nearly ten million dollars with the Pakistan government within the past few months". Senator Kennedy also revealed "that U.S. firms have received State Department licences to ship to Pakistan arms and ammunitions purchased from the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe." If the U.S. Government just stops its aid to Pakistan, it will at once help to ease the tension between the two countries as well as put an end to the war hysteria in Pakistan. As a matter of fact, the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty had greatly deterred Pakistan in its threatening postures towards India. But American help has once again encouraged it to indulge in its familiar war cry. However, Mr. Jagjivan Ram's warning that India shall not vacate any territory of Pakistan occupied by India as a result of war should help to bring Pakistan to its senses and deter it from embarking upon any dangerous adventure.

One thing is quite obvious that it is impossible for Pakistan to win a war against India. Firstly, India is fully prepared to meet the challenge and, if war is forced upon her, India will carry the war deep within the Pakistani territory. Secondly, Pakistani economy is on the verge of collapse in the wake of the destruction in Bangla Desh from which Pakistan used to earn considerable foreign exchange. Thirdly, Yahya Khan's earlier hope that "Pakistan was not alone" has been greatly affected due to the total lack of interest China has recently shown at the events in the Indian sub-continent.

The Pakistani war cry is obviously intended to divert the attention of the Pakistani people from the political and economic morass Pakistan is in consequent to the near separation of East Bengal from West Pakistan. Prior to March last, East Bengalees desired only greater autonomy for their part of the country. But to-day, with Shaikh Mujibur Rehman facing death penalty and the increasing violence of the Pakistani army, they are in no mood to compromise. They demand nothing less than an independent and sovereign Bangla Desh. The appointment of an East Bengalee civilian as the Governor, and the nomination of a few more East Bengalees by him as Ministers, has made no change in the situation.

President Yahya Khan has announced that the National Assembly would be convened in December after the bye-elections in East Bengal are held to fill the Assembly seats, which were declared vacant owing to the forced disqualification of Awami League members. Since Mujib's Awami League is banned none of its members will be able to contest on its ticket. The result would be that only puppets would be put

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World Liberals on Bangla Desh and Threats to Press Freedom

TWO resolutions of particular interest to India were among those adopted at the Congress of the Liberal International which met recently in Zurich under the presidentship of Mr. Gaston Thorn, Foreign Minister of Luxemburg. The first of these was on East Bengal and the other was on threats to the freedom of the press in India and Asia.

Among those present at the Congress were Mr. Walter Scheel, Vice Chancellor of West Germany; Mr. Geertsema, Vice Premier of the Netherlands; Mr. Jeremy Thorpe, leader of the British Liberal Party; Mr. G. Malagodi, leader of the Italian Liberal Party; and Mr. M. K. Masani, a Patron of the Liberal International.

The resolution on East Bengal reads as follows:

"The Congress of the Liberal International, grieved by the tragic events in East Pakistan and disturbed by the resultant tensions along its frontiers with India, appeals to the Secretary-General of the United Nations to bring the matter to the attention of the Security Council under Article 99 of the Charter.

"The Congress feels that the sufferings of the people of East Bengal and of the millions of refugees who have fled from the appalling conditions there are a matter of international concern calling for massive practical assistance for the relief of the refugees.

"The Congress deplores the attitude of those countries which continue to give weapons and military supplies to Pakistan, thereby delaying and discouraging the creation of conditions that would enable the refugees to return to East Bengal.

"The Congress calls for the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman or his open trial before a civilian tribunal with full facilities for legal defence.

"And, finally, the Congress appeals to the Government of Pakistan to convene the Pakistan National Assembly as elected and composed in December 1970."

As originally introduced by the British delegation, this resolution consisted only of the first paragraph but Mr. Masani persuaded the Congress to accept an amendment adding the other four paragraphs which call for massive international assistance for the relief of refugees in India, deplore the action of those countries which continue to give weapons and military supplies to Pakistan, call for the release of Shaikh Mujibur Rahman or his open trial before a civilian tribunal and appeal to the Government of Pakistan to convene the Pakistan National Assembly as elected and constituted in December 1970.

The other resolution on threats to the Freedom of the Press in India and Asia reads as follows:

"The Liberal International notes with concern reports coming in from various parts of Asia about the deterior-

ation in the conditions in which the press has to function.

"The press in India has enjoyed freedom and a high reputation and has had an inspiring effect on the press in other parts of Asia. It is therefore a matter of particular concern that the General Assembly of the Press Foundation of Asia—at its recent meeting at Bali—had to adopt a resolution regarding certain disquieting reports from India of a move to amend the law in such a manner as to force the owners of the better established newspapers to divest themselves of their ownership and for the managements to be removed, with the likely result of the papers passing under the control of the ruling party and other political parties acting through trade unions of employees.

"The Liberal International expresses the hope that nothing will be done which destroys the freedom and mars the high reputation of the Indian Press."

Mr. W. Bretscher of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, a veteran Swiss Journalist, described the proposed amendments to the Indian Companies Act as "the most vicious and underhand scheme for the destruction of a free press of which I have heard in fifty years in journalistic activity. This project is also the height of hypocrisy because, under the pretext of combating abuse of the freedom of the press, it tends to reduce the press to a miserable tool in the hands of irresponsible people."

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up and get elected. This is how President Yahya Khan hopes to give semblance of democracy to the bye-election in East Bengal. But the people have seen through the game. There is a strong possibility of violence if the fake bye-elections are held. The Mukti Bahini has already declared that it would treat the candidates as "collaborators" with the tyranny of the Pakistani army in East Bengal.

It is clear that the situation in Bangla Desh as well as Indo-Pak relationship have reached saturation point. Unless the United Nations and the Super Powers act in time to restrain Pakistan in its designs in Bangla Desh and force it to respect the aspirations of the people there and thus bring about a lasting political settlement of the Bangla Desh issue even by going to the extent of granting freedom to that part of the world, the situation in the Indian sub-continent is not likely to improve. India has already declared that it will be willing to cooperate in the just and legitimate solution of the Bangla Desh problem. Indian leaders cannot be but sincere in their professions as, otherwise, India has to feed millions of refugees. India would welcome nothing more than the refugees going back to their hearths and homes, live there in peace, and work out their own destiny.

United Europe

Hippopotamus

THE idea of a union of the countries of Europe, in one form or another, is not the child of the last twenty-five years. As early as 1923 a detailed plan was put forward by the Austrian Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi to set up an all-European body with the final aim of a "United States of Europe". Similar ideas have been publicized before and after Coudenhove-Kalergi, but it was not until after the inhumane slaughter and devastation of the Second World War that the idea of European integration gained enough impetus to be transferred into the field of practical politics.

Ironically, it was no one else but Sir W. Churchill who asked the Europeans to come together on September 19, 1946 in his famous "Zurich-Appeal". Ironical as England was not to join the original community in later years.

In 1948 the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) was set up by sixteen nations to carry out a joint European recovery programme. In order to achieve "a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles, which are their common heritage, and facilitating their economic and social progress", ten countries signed the Statute of the Council of Europe in 1949. Seven more countries have joined since, amongst them the Federal Republic of Germany and Austria, the losers of World War II.

But really substantial momentum was gathered only with the proposal of R. Schuman to pool the French and German steel industries. The result was the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which was set up in 1951 with the same six member countries which, six years later, signed the now famous Treaty of Rome on March 25, 1957, giving birth to the European Economic Community (EEC.)

Those six countries, France, Italy, the Benelux countries and the Federal Republic, were the only ones in the Council of Europe who were prepared to give up certain sovereign rights to a supranational body, thus fulfilling the essential condition for real integration.

Europe was still divided in three blocs: the Common-Market countries, the European Free Trade Union countries (EFTA, which came into being in 1960) and the Comecon countries behind the Iron Curtain. The developments in the Common Market proved the dreams of its founding fathers to be right. The Europe of the Six ceased to be merely a geographical expression. Not only a rapid increase of wealth could be observed, but also the disappearance of many a barrier between the countries for the benefit of the common man.

Therefore, it was no surprise that other countries

applied for either full membership or for association.

The successful outcome of the Brussels negotiations a few weeks ago could be the starting point for an even brighter future for Europe—then the Europe of Ten—provided that the pro-marketeers prevail in England on October 28.

Europe has changed for the better within the last fourteen years. And it could improve with England and—later on—Denmark, Norway and Ireland joining in, without any country having to give up its sovereignty, cultural heritage or commitment towards other interests (e.g. England and the Commonwealth).

De Gaulle's boycott of community sessions in 1965/66 has taught the Six that they dare not damage the legitimate interests of any one member without shattering the whole construction.

But compromises have to be found, and these compromises are at the expense of community members as well as at the economic expense of other countries, especially countries of the Third World. The first group of compromises can be left aside, since the member countries submit to them voluntarily. No one is forced to join the community. Much more important are the ones of the second group, since third countries have no choice but to accept, at the most to bargain for more favourable conditions.

For over a century, international trade has been based on the principle of non-discrimination and reciprocity in applying the "most favoured-nation" clause, which was codified at the Havana Conference in 1947. The EEC has gone beyond that by granting generalized tariff preferences to the developing countries (the generalized scheme of preferences—GSP). This GSP is firstly non-reciprocal in as much as the developing countries are not expected to grant corresponding reductions in their own customs duties. The GSP is furthermore non-discriminatory, since it is valid for all developing countries. And finally, it is generalized, since the advantages are granted by all countries. The preferential treatment applies to semi-manufactured and manufactured products.

Britain's entry into the Common Market will however pose some serious problems for many countries, e.g. the Commonwealth countries, since they lose the "Commonwealth preferences" (duty-free entry of certain goods into the U.K.), which must be eliminated completely by 1978 at the latest. But to ask for an even more generous treatment than the GSP would not be wise for the Commonwealth countries. They should rather spend their energy on improving their competitive strength. Hongkong, Nationalist China, Singapore and South Korea have shown that tariffs are not necessarily as important an obstacle to exports as many

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Transformation Of Congress In W.Bengal

K. K. Sinha

WITH a hindsight view it is clear that the split in the Congress before the March 1971 elections and the emergence of the new Congress led by Smt. Indira Gandhi was a major factor in the victory of the Congress(R) in West Bengal. This would not have been possible at least in this State, if the Congress had retained its old image. With its past image it had secured 55 seats in a house of 280 in 1969. In March 1971 it secured 105 seats. It was a big jump. Only the CPM was ahead with a marginal lead of 6. Even this lead could have been easily counteracted if the Congress(R) had not adjusted itself with some other smaller parties like Bangla Congress.

A radical posture in West Bengal was needed to counter the aggressive advance that was being made by the CPM and that posture was provided by Smt. Gandhi. The people here had realised that coalitions are no good and one dominant party was necessary not only to stabilise the Government but to execute policies vigorously. Thus CPM and the Congress(R) emerged as the competing dominant parties in the field.

But the victory of the Congress(R) was Smt. Gandhi's creation, as the Congress(R) was a new organisation and even its internal balance at that time had not stabilised. Now that some months have passed since the 1971 elections and no elected government seems possible any more till the next elections are held, how is the organisational-political position of the Congress(R) in this State?

Still there are a large number of Congress workers and Congress sympathisers in the State spread out in the districts, and there is growing realisation that there is only one Congress now and that is led by Smt. Indira Gandhi. This sentiment was well expressed by Shri P. C. Sen, the former Chief Minister and elder statesman, soon after the last elections. This sentiment was too true to be then appreciated by those who had just been busy licking their wounds. But gradually this is being realised and the Old Congress is practically dead, although some of its capable workers are bravely clinging to the drowning ship.

The main driving force in the new Congress is the youth and students wing, known as the Chhatra Parishad and Youth Congress. Perhaps the Kerala model gave them this new style of organisation and functioning. The other elements in the Congress are the breakaway traditional Congressmen such as Sri Bijoy Singh Nahar and Tarun Kanti Ghosh. They are older in age and their style of work is hardly different from the past. It is well-known that Smt. Gandhi capitalised on this slogan of "youth", and this has certainly captured the imagination of the younger ele-

ments. Perhaps, the difference is more psychological than ideological or programmatic. Perhaps there is an element of fashion in it. There seems to be a vague generation gap which is not clearly explainable in words. Smt. Gandhi was perceptive enough to recognise this difference and was capable enough to use it politically to launch an assault on the older generation of Congressmen in the main.

This older generation of Congressmen even in the Congress(R) is now on the defensive, after having tried to parry the blows for some time. And, seeing the winds of change, some of them are giving up their defensive postures too and are surrendering themselves to the new leadership of youth. Shri Tarun Kanti Ghosh may be classed in that category. Shri Abdul Sattar who is the President of the Ad Hoc Congress Committee can also be counted to come along this line. Some of them are coming fast and some are dragging their feet. Slowly most of them are realising that their "era" is over and the new generation is taking over. Perhaps these younger elements would be more considerate and ease the impact of their blow. It is this gradualness that they are now expecting from the new generation rather plaintively. Of course, there is another middle group of Congress workers mostly in the districts (such as say Jainul Abedin, Santosh Roy, Arun Maitra, Abu Barkat) who are neither "young" nor "old" and who are experienced political workers and they have gone along with the youthful leaders, but their background is separate from that of the Chhatra Parishad and Yuva Congress. These Congress workers were either illtreated by the Old Congress or they have come over to the new Congress after the split.

The Chhatra Parishad and the Yuva Congress have consistently pressed for an agitational approach and organizational effectivity. They grew out of the self-defence efforts of the youths against the onslaughts of the CPM during the hey days of the UF. It should be noted that none of these two organisations are affiliated with the Congress. The Chhatra Parishad has now grown from a strength of about 17000 in 1969 to over a lakh today. Similarly the Yuva Congress has passed the 70,000 figure. Both of them have thrown up new dynamic leadership. For example, Subrata Mukherjee is the President of Chhatra Parishad and is ably supported by Kumud Bhattacharya, the General Secretary, Nurul Islam from Kalna, district Burdwan, Shiladitya Bhattacharya from West Dinajpur. The all-India President of Yuva Congress is Priya Ranjan Das

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Review

Chavan and the Troubled Decade

T. V. Kunhi Krishnan, Somaiya Publications, Bombay 14.
Rs. 32.

YASHWANTRAO CHAVAN, the Finance Minister of the country, is a unique personality. Born in a poor peasant family, he has risen to many high positions and even the highest in the land, the Prime Ministership, is not beyond his reach. In the "troubled decade" about which the book speaks, his name was mentioned at the time of the two successions, but he did not press his claim. At the time of the split in the Congress the position was offered to him, but he wisely rejected the offer as it would have required him to go along with people and policies that he did not like. It was this act of high statesmanship which secured for him the following tribute from Mr. C. Subramaniam, who is now the Planning Minister and was then one of the close collaborators of Mrs. Gandhi, the Prime Minister. Mr. Subramaniam said, as reported in the book, "I should pay a tribute to Chavan that he subordinated his own personal interest and prestige to national interest in spite of the offer of prime ministership to him, in case Mrs. Gandhi was made to step down."

Chavan has attained this position in the country without any foster-father to back him or push him forward. He became the most prominent leader of the Congress in Maharashtra and later its Chief Minister on the basis of the support and love and esteem that he won in the State through his own work. The able manner in which he handled the affairs of Maharashtra persuaded Nehru to make him the Defence Minister. His spectacular rise "to dizzy heights in Delhi" from No. 12 to No. 2 in the Cabinet was also due to his efficient and loyal discharge of the duties entrusted to him first as Defence Minister, later as Home Minister and in recent times as Finance Minister. Mr. Kunhi Krishnan has given a detailed account of the manner in which Chavan fulfilled the obligations of those offices to the satisfaction of the Prime Minister, the Parliament and the country.

After this long record of unstinted service, there should have been no question about Chavan's future. His place in the top leadership of the Congress and the Government should have been secure, more particularly when, as should be clear from the statements recorded by Mr. Kunhi Krishnan, there is no ideological or programmatic difference between him and the Prime Minister. But, if recent press reports are to be believed, there appears to be some uncertainty on the point. It is to be hoped that the reports are not true and "that Mr. Kunhi Krishnan is correct in his estimate that Chavan is today firmly entrenched as the principal deputy to the Prime Minister." It is greatly in the

interest of the country that the alliance between the Prime Minister and "the principal deputy" should continue and grow closer and stronger.

In the tragic drama of the split in the Congress which began with the meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Board which nominated Sanjiva Reddi as the Congress candidate for the office of the President, Chavan committed, as it is admitted in the book, a mistake by allowing the issue to be decided by voting. He should have insisted on the postponement of the meeting or at least of the voting. Information published later in such books as Rajinder Puri's *A Crisis of Conscience* shows that the Prime Minister had sufficient grounds to suspect a plot in the old Congress leaders' insistence on nominating Reddi. As Home Minister, Chavan should have had that information. He could have then understood the Prime Minister's reluctance to accept the choice of the old leaders. Any way, it was not proper to outvote the Prime Minister on an issue like the choice of a candidate for the President's post. Chavan made good his initial mistake of supporting Reddi by his subsequent full-throated support to the Prime Minister. But the suspicion that was aroused by his initial act appears to be still lingering in the Prime Minister's camp.

The Prime Minister was to a large extent responsible for the conflict that developed. It could have been avoided if she had taken Chavan and others into confidence and told them of her choice well ahead of time. Mr. Kunhi Krishnan has described the position as follows: "In Bangalore also she could have had her way. She failed, because she had deliberately cut off her lines of communication with most of her colleagues in the CPB and also because she under-estimated the strength of the syndicate's move to isolate her. She did not reveal her mind nor did she seek the support of CPB members for her candidates till a few hours before the meeting."

That practice of keeping her counsel to herself and of not sharing it even with close collaborators like Chavan appears to have continued even after the split. That is the impression that one gets from the account in the book of the post-split events. Particularly after the mid-term poll, the Prime Minister has acquired for herself a predominant position in the Congress as well as in the Government. That has put an end to collective thinking as well as collective decision. All decisions are taken by one person, may be, in consultation with a few advisers. Mr. Kunhi Krishnan mentions advisers at some places but does not name them. This is not the atmosphere in which a person like Chavan can give his best to the Government and the country.

The attempt that Chavan made to avoid the split in the Congress earned for him the distrust of both groups. That is always the fate of wellmeaning peacemakers. But he need not have made the attempt if, as stated by Mr. Kunhi Krishnan, "he distrusted the syndicate and knew that its members were interested

in power as an end in itself and not as an instrument for social change" and if, as stated by him, "the Congress(O) leaders did not have the people's support. They were, in fact, some sort of a reactionary group, backward-looking people, hide-bound." The split in that case was desirable. And as later events have proved, the Congress gained rather than lost as a result of that event.

It is difficult to understand why Mr. Kunhi Krishnan has chosen to weave the story of "the troubled decade" with the story of Chavan's rise to eminence in Delhi. The argument that "his (Chavan's) life and work serve as a binding thread to put together the story of the decade" does not sound convincing. The book as a whole tells more about the decade and its troubles than about Chavan, though the story is interspersed with many quotations from Chavan giving his views on the issues that cropped up. The quotations will be useful to a future biographer and it must be said to the credit of Mr. Kunhi Krishnan that he has awakened enough interest in the life and work of Chavan for students of political affairs to look out for a detailed narrative of his rise from a poor peasant boy to one of the topmost positions in the country.

The book is well-written and well-produced.

S.D.

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politicians want to make us believe. The richer nations are not so interested in cheap goods. Expert salesmanship, marketing and improvement of quality are factors that count and bring profits.

But all those economic issues are secondary problems. Of major importance is the fact that the economic union will be followed sooner or later by an attractive political union which could end the centuries of hatred, murder and humiliation on the continent.

The frustrating part of the whole story is that there seems to be no easy way for the Eastern European countries to come closer towards the Community, or vice versa.

Where the solution is to be found however, was clearly pointed out by the Norwegian Storting Nobel Committee, by awarding the Nobel Peace Prize for 1971 to the West German Federal Chancellor Willy Brandt for his policy "to stretch out his hands in reconciliation towards former enemy countries."

Let us hope and look forward to and strive—with the words of the late President J. F. Kennedy—for "a Europe united and strong, speaking with a common voice, acting with a common will, a world power capable of meeting world problems as a full and equal partner", which could be "a nucleus for the eventual union of all free men."

MOCK AIR RAID

"Saadi"

FOR one full week the Directorate of Civil Defences and the Home Guards told us through press, radio, banners and posters that there would be mock air raid exercises on Sunday, 3rd October. They even announced the spots where these exercises would be held. We were told that sirens would sound at the "approach of enemy bombers", there would be complete black out, "enemy bombs" would fall on buildings, there would be a chain of casualties, then all clear signal will be given. Fire Brigades and ambulances would rush to the spots, enter the "bombed" buildings and take out the "dead" and the "injured" and "rush them to hospitals". We were told all this would happen in a matter of minutes.

We all became enthusiastic that the Directorate of Civil Defence and the Home Guards have risen to the occasion after all. There was a real threat of Pakistani aggression; how can we keep quiet? If war starts, there may be bombardments, destruction, casualties and what not. Hence we must organise out civil defences; we must safeguard against every kind of threat, we as citizens, must be prepared for every eventuality. So we blessed the Directorate of Civil Defence and the Home Guards and patiently waited for the day when we would learn how to effectively cooperate in our civil defence.

One of the spots announced for the air raid exercises was where the Dhanraj Mahal and Readymoney building are situated at Apollo Bunder. My family and I reached the spot half an hour earlier with a view to occupy a vantage point to watch the exercise. There was already quite a huge crowd—men, women and children jostling against one another to see what was coming. Constantly loud-speakers blared about the grand performance we were going to witness. There was complete police bandobast and home guards were on the watch! The announcer on the loud-speaker said, "Attention, attention please. The sirens will sound, lights will go off, enemy planes have been sighted, they are approaching. After the "all clear" signal, fire-brigade and ambulances will rush and take the "dead" and "injured" to hospitals. "Be careful and watch!"

We watched. After five minutes sirens sounded. Lights went off. "Bombs" fell, they sounded more like crackers. People rushed hither and thither; they laughed at the funny way the "bombs" fell and sounded.

After a few minutes, there was "all clear" signal. Lights were on. The crowd waited and waited, fire brigades and ambulances did not rush in. Fifteen, twenty, thirty minutes passed, nothing happened. At the stroke of about the 35th minute an ambulance

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CONGRESS IN WEST BENGAL—Continued from page 8
Munshi supported by Sudip Banerjee, Lakhikanta Bose, Pradip Bhattacharya, Ananda Mohan Biswas.

Their pattern of activity during the brief regime of the Democratic Coalition Government, of which Congress(R) was the major constituent, clearly shows that the Chhatra Parishad and the Yuva Congress propose to maintain continuous pressure on any regime that is in power, with public agitation, verging on popular issues, particularly those affecting the lives of the urban poor.

The Congress (R) however has still to build up its own organisation. Its success was most spectacular in North Bengal and Central district and local units are still to be set up and many newer areas have to be covered. Today youths and students are pouring in hundreds and thousands. But the problem is to train them up and give them political work under strict supervision. The leadership of the youths is too small in number and too inexperienced to take up this huge work when field activity is taking too much of its time.

Another kind of pressure that is growing on the new leadership is that the large number of enthusiastic supporters from among the unemployed and the urban poor are pressing for employment and some of them are even reported to be exerting pressure on local people to collect unauthorised donations. Fortunately the Yuva Congress and Chhatra Parishad leadership are taking strong disciplinary action against such ventures.

This youthful leadership has recently ventured into the trade union field too. Lakhi Bose, Ram Piyari Ram have gone into action and there is, of course, the veteran Kali Mukherjee. K. K. Shukla of the older group has linked up with them. Ananda Mukherjee of Durgapur Steel INTUC is also thinking of joining the new Congress. Debanshu Mukherjee is looking after the trade union cell. Some other veteran trade union leaders are also contemplating joining the Congress(R).

Thus, the new Congress is really getting renovated having rescued the old name from the old leaders. New leaders are coming forward, a new dynamism prevails, a new confidence is in the air. The older generation of Congressmen tried to arrest this wave and after some cold war internal politics they have given way, although some of them feel that it is time to lie low. The present Ad Hoc Committee appears to reflect the relation of forces within the party with the balance in favour of the new leadership. But this is a transitional arrangement. The party is undergoing a total transformation in terms of style, activity, membership, wholetimers, financial backing etc. and only after some time an election among members would indicate the true balance.

Minorities in Russia

THE story of the Russian treatment of their Crimean Tatar and Volga German minorities is documented in the latest report published by the Minority Rights Group, the independent research and information trust.

This year is the 50th anniversary of Lenin's grant to the Tatars of their autonomous republic, which was revoked by Stalin and has not been restored. Until Gen. Grigorenko and some other Russians took up their cause and publicly campaigned for the restoration of the Crimean Tatars' rights, little was heard about the plight of the Tatars.

During the Second World War, Stalin deported en bloc to Central Asia seven Soviet nationalities (totalling some 1.5 million people) either to prevent, or as a punishment for, alleged wholesale collaboration with the Germans—although many of them had fought with distinction in the Russian army.

Mr. Khrushchev, in his famous speech at the 20th party congress in 1956, included these deportations in his catalogue of Stalin's crimes. In 1957, Soviet decrees were passed reconstituting the autonomous territories of five of the seven nationalities. But, for Crimean Tatars and Volga Germans there was no such restitution and has not been since.

Despite prosecutions, says the report, the Crimean Tatars who now number about 3,00,000 have not ceased to campaign for equality of rights with the other nationalities of the USSR which Lenin had granted them. While protesting their loyalty to communism, they claim that the manner in which they were deported to Uzezekistan (near Afghanistan) resulted in the death of thousands of them during and after the journey.

The surviving Volga Germans (who had been sent beyond the Urals) were eventually "politically rehabilitated" in 1964 and the Crimean Tatars in September 1967. But the report alleges that neither group has been allowed what both principally want: Repatriation to their homes and the restoration of their autonomy.

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came. A few people jumped out of it and started smoking! Yet ten minutes passed and no sign of fire brigades. Spectators were fed up. All sorts of remarks were made. The crowd started dispersing. Then we suddenly heard the sound of the fire brigade. Two fire brigades came. They showed no sign of hurry, no sense of rushing to bring out the casualties. By this time the crowd was so tired that it just walked off. What happened later is just a mystery. Was it a serious mock air-raid exercise or just a farce, we wondered.

Reports revealed that similar were the experiences at other spots.

With Many Voices

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

The Soviet Union is no longer a have-not nation, nor is it a revolutionary State.
—Girija K. Mookerjee, *Indian Express*, October 8.

A professionalised management of private industry is not incompatible with socialism.
—*The Statesman*, October 6.

If you wish to call a bureaucratic economy a socialist economy just because ownership is vested in the nation I have no quarrel. But that is not my conception of socialist economy.
—Jayaprakash Narayan, *Hindusthan Standard*, October 10.

The tragedy of Indian radicalism is that those who are the victims of the worst forms of exploitation have chosen to remain aloof from the mainstream of our class struggle.
—*Janata*, October 3.

The Congress (R) must learn the hard way that conformity is not the same thing as commitment, dissent is different from defiance and those who refuse to submit to regimentation are not necessarily raising the banner of revolt.
—G. K. Reddy, *The Hindu*, October 12.

The Arab world today takes us for granted and believes that we neither need any quid pro quo, nor merit a reciprocal beau geste.
—Asoka Mehta, *The Statesman*, October 12.

To the Editor,
FREEDOM FIRST,
C/o Democratic Research Service,
127, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Bombay 1.

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The world trend is toward peace—not war.
—David Lawrence, *U.S. News & World Report*, October 18.

This epitomizes the real fight that it was—Politicians versus Bureaucrats. Mr. Ganguli was but a symbol.
—*The Current*, October 23.

The Fourth Plan is dead and however clever the Government might be in argument or in manipulation of figures or in coining slogans, this fact cannot remain hidden.
—*Janata*, October 17.

The Communists already have started working for engineering another split among Congressmen with the help of their 'progressive' friends.
—*Thought*, October 16.

There was a legitimate feeling that the Soviet Union wanted to be on two boats—friendly with India without offending Pakistan.
—E. M. S. Namboodiripad, *Indian Express*, October 13.

The discrepancies between the Soviet stand after Mrs. Gandhi went to Moscow and the Soviet stand after Kosygin's visit to Algiers go far beyond diplomatic flexibility.
—*March of the Nation*, October 23.

How many more times does it need to be said that these refugees (Bangla Desh) should be seen as the responsibility of the world community of nations, and not just of India?
—*Swiss Press Review and News Report*, October 18.

The difference of course is that our Government has in effect handed over our country to the Soviet, while the British Government is bent on keeping Britain free and independent.
—*Opinion*, October 12

During its two spells in office the CPM did all it could to contaminate the administration politically.
—Sivadas Banerjee, *Times of India*, October 27.