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NEW AGE

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A REPEAT PERFORMANCE

Last week it was in the Rajya Sabha, this week it was in the Lok Sabha. The same political drama played by the same Prime Minister for the same political purpose and as before without substance. It hurt some honest Congress M.P.s, who expected that the P. M. would turn his guns at those who had challenged his foreign policy in the same debate. The Prime Minister however won a glowing tribute from Goenka's Indian Express which chuckled saying, "The Communist Party of India stands thrice condemned". This Right wing tribune also picked up courage to throw "A Challenge" at the Communist M. P.s in the following words, "Mr Nehru has thrown a challenge to the Communists to prove themselves to be nationalists and patriotic." And how? By disowning their Party and its organ!

BY THE PRIME MINISTER

THE Prime Minister's own words were, "The weekly organ, I believe, of the Communist Party, which is called New Age, has carried on a consistent, a blatant, a pernicious, and a false propoganda. And I use my words deliberately."

Slander Is The Weapon

Comrade Hiren Mukerji duly replied, "I do not mind that advertisement which the Prime Minister gives to New Age in this House, but I do wish to say that if the Prime Minister can point out to anything anti-national stated there, ways and means are open to him as head of the Government to take action." The Prime Minister's only reply was, "No, No, we are not a court of law here to go into this."

Any neutral person will ask—why then raise it in the House? And, after some thought he can himself answer that the Lok Sabha instead of being treated as the nation's Parliament, where serious issues are discussed on the basis of known or proven facts and in terms of principles, is being transformed into a political cockpit, where the knife of slander is the weapon and the Press helps to make the public outside the wide circle of spectators.

It is noteworthy that the Prime Minister called his above sentence, which is a general statement of his political opinion about New Age and has not been substantiated by him with a single fact or instance, as "I have given a specific instance." He did not quote a single article or a single sentence from New Age which in his opinion could bear out his own characterisation. To put it very mildly indeed, this is neither an honest argument nor the method of a clean debate.

The challenge of New Age stands. Let him make his points against us in the nation's Press or on the

***** by *****
* P. C. JOSHI *

public platform or in a court of law. We have nothing to fear. And we assure him that we will not treat him the way he treats us!

Once again the Prime Minister did not stop with New Age, but went on to slander our comrades in the Kangra District, Himachal Pradesh, in the Lahaul Valley, in Garhwal and in Almorah District: "It is some kind of insidious propoganda being carried on in these border districts which are peculiarly delicate."

The police and the local administration in these remote border outposts are far more hostile to the Communists than in the more advanced plains districts below. And yet not a single Communist in the areas and districts mentioned by the Prime Minister has been arrested for any activities against the law of the land or the interest of the nation.

In Border Areas

New Age will come out with more and more revelations on the subject, by and by. For the time being, I will only quote from the Sarhadi, a Hindi weekly edited by Narendra Singh Bhandari, Congress MLA from the Kedarnath Constituency, right up on the Garhwal-Tibet border.

It is an anti-Communist rag which concentrates its fire against the Indian Communists and its central theme is the "danger from China" across the border. It ought to know much more than Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, sunk in files in the New Delhi Secretariat, about what the Communists in the border area are doing.

On its front page, it reports: "When some newspapers and responsible political circles began saying that the activities and propoganda of

BUNKUM and all that

IN the course of his Assam debate speech in the Lok Sabha, Prime Minister Nehru said:

"In his minute of dissent, Dr. Gour talks about democracy and students. I shall be very respectful to Dr. Gour, but what he says there—I say so with all respect—is just bunkum; nothing else than bunkum. I hope it is parliamentary. But still here, to talk in this context about democracy and students, really has no meaning. We want students to develop, to become big, to grow and serve their country and serve themselves and serve others and be ambitious, if you like. But to call this business of building up caucuses, to hold that everything is democracy in action—the students, etc., has no meaning from either the students' point of view or the democratic point of view."

What had Dr. Raj Bahadur Gour said in his Minute of Dissent to the Parliamentary Delegation's report? Here is the relevant extract:

"I cannot agree with the approach of the majority report with regard to the students nor can I lend my support to the recommendations it has made in this connection.

"It is true that sizable sections of the students were in the forefront of the language agitation and a section of their leadership gave the movement an aggressive anti-Bengali slant. Some may have even been mixed up with the disturbances. Quite clearly they were under the spell of the chauvinistic elements and became for the time being tools in their hands.

"It must be remembered that the chauvinistic elements outside played on the grievances of the students, real or imaginary, and drew the young and suscep-

tible minds into the turmoil.

"The solution, in my view, does not lie in curbing the legitimate, democratic rights of the student community or in harshly dealing with them. The students have to be corrected and freed from chauvinistic and disruptive influences. This can be done precisely by promoting democratic consciousness and activity among the student community. Leading progressive personalities in the field of education and culture and in other spheres of public life can play a beneficial role in this respect.

"It has been our common experience that the more the democratic consciousness among the students, the greater their democratic activities, the less is the chance for the chauvinistic and reactionary elements to mislead them.

"I must repeat that I am strongly opposed to any curb on legitimate, democratic student activities."

A perusal of these paragraphs would make one thing clear—at no place does Dr. Gour say that what has happened in Assam is the democratic activities of students—in fact he says they became tools in the hands of chauvinistic elements; all that he says is that the corrective lies not in the curbing of legitimate democratic rights but in promoting their democratic consciousness to free them from chauvinistic and disruptive influences.

The bourgeois Press which printed Nehru's remarks on Dr. Gour's Minute of Dissent never cared to print the Minute of Dissent itself. But the Prime Minister should have shown a little more respect to the Members of Parliament who had the Minute of Dissent in front of them.

the Communists in the hilly districts of Uttar Pradesh are increasing, at that time with full responsibility we stated that it was incorrect. There are no Communists in the region and the couple or so of Communists that are there, are doing no such propoganda that harms the country. The Chief Minister of the State, Dr. Sampurnanand had also stated that it was not true that in the hill districts such literature is being distributed which incite the local populace.

"Despite this some weekly papers that are published from the hills and some local officials go on repeating the baseless and unwarranted story about such propoganda. We consider this unfortunate for we know that there is a lot in Nazi Propaganda Minister Dr. Goebbels' statement that if a lie is repeated over and over again, it can be passed off as truth.

"If we go on calling the simple folk who have no connection with politics Communists, then one day they will

become Communists. No patriot will like to create such a state of affairs." (Sarhadi, July 25)

We present the above as only our first real story for the Prime Minister and his Secretariat to read, chew and think again.

Who Is To Decide?

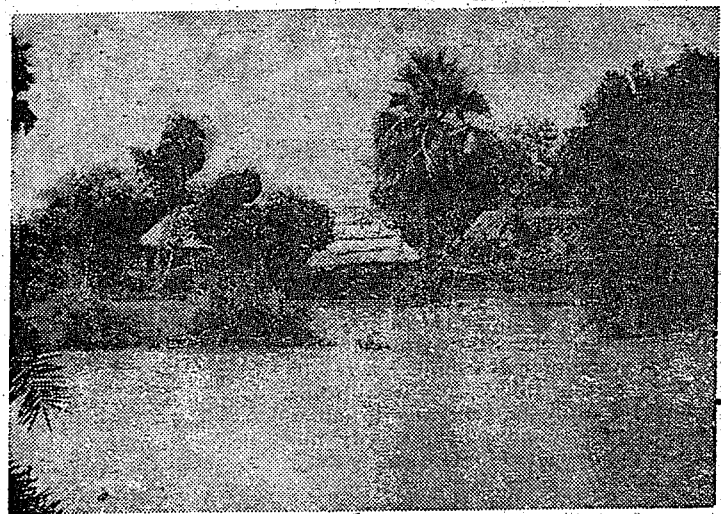
In his concluding diatribe, the Prime Minister assured the Lok Sabha that his vicious attacks against us had "nothing to do with Communism. It has to do with nationalism, and India's freedom and India's integrity."

Fresh with the experience of the Assam Assembly by-election and the Calcutta Southwest Parliamentary by-election which we fought on this very issue, Hiren Mukerji politely stated that "elections will decide."

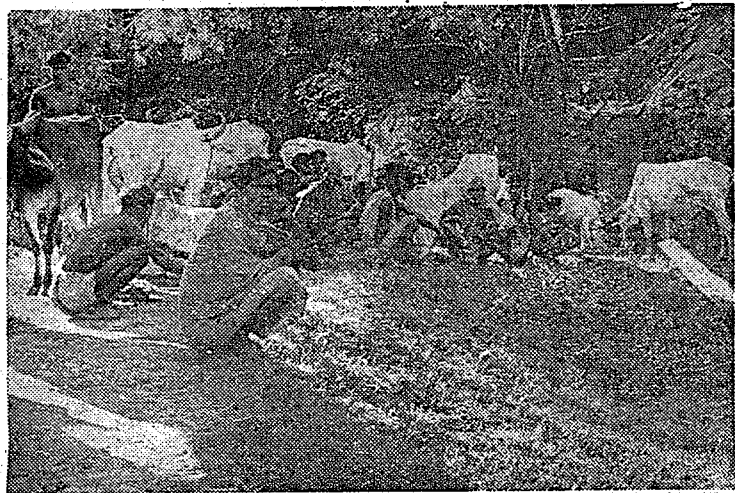
However this did not assuage the Prime Minister. He

* SEE OVERLEAF

Lily

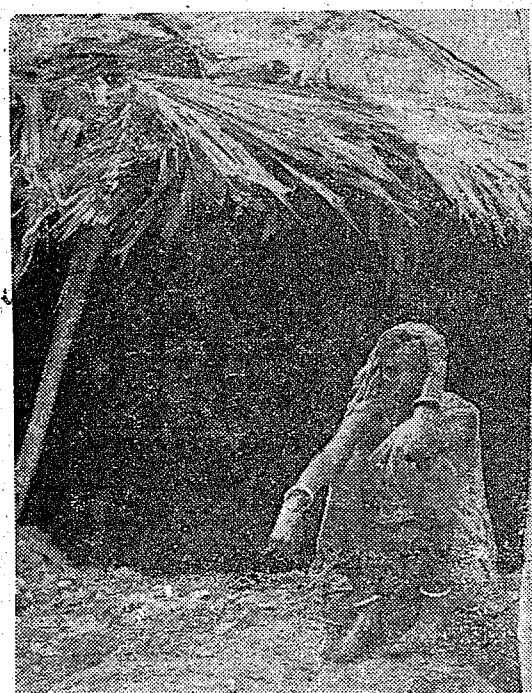


LEFT (TOP): A village under water. ABOVE: After it has been completely washed away. LEFT: All that could be saved from the entire village.



ORISSA UNDER WATER

Not for a hundred years has Orissa had such devastating floods. The Government itself has estimated the losses at Rs. 80 crores—unofficial sources put it at over a hundred crores. About a hundred persons have died, hundreds of villages have been washed away or seriously damaged, lakhs of houses have collapsed or been made unsafe, nearly 30 lakh acres of land lie submerged under water. Thousands of cattle have been swept away, fifteen to twenty thousand people are still living on hill-tops and tree-tops, millions of people have been affected. No photograph can truly present this devastation in all its horror. Still we give here a few pictures of the heart-rending tragedy that struck Orissa along with the flood waters from the three rivers of the State.



LEFT: The poor woman sits with her hand on her head—everything she owned has been swept away by the raging waters.



RIGHT: This was a high-way canal. The flood waters have rushed in and washed it away.



BELOW: A view of the Brahmani in floods.

