

cabinet was formed the Brahmin lobby was once again ignored. And not even all those who were included were pleased with their respective portfolios. The state Youth Congress chief Sanjay Singh's refusal to be included in the cabinet was seen as a setback for the new chief minister.

The dissatisfaction in the CLP surfaced soon after Sanjay Gandhi's death. When the CLP met to discuss the nomination of the speaker, the chief minister's choice of Basudev Singh was strongly opposed by his opponents, who wanted Shripat Mishra as the speaker. As he was no more sure about central backing, the chief minister had eventually to give in. In the last two months the central leadership of the Congress (I) has also been toying with proposals to reorganise the Pradesh Congress Committees of the various states. Under the 'one member, one post' principle, Dharambir Singh, who is an MP, may have to step down from his post as president of the UP Congress (I) and this may further reduce the power of the Youth Congress (I) as well as

weaken the already shaky government of V P Singh.

In UP itself there have been many incidents and developments which can be conveniently used against V P Singh. The decision to send the BSF to the areas affected in the recent riots, knowing fully well the minority community's distrust of their deployment, has been attacked. Other issues which have provided grist to V P Singh's opponents' mills are: the disastrous floods, the Baghat atrocity and the repetition of similar incidents elsewhere in UP; the failure of the administration to defuse communal tension, etc.

There are good reasons, therefore, to believe that the offer to resign was a pre-emptive act on the part of the chief minister. Given the fact that the Centre has opposed all moves within the state parties to topple the new chief ministers, V P Singh must have been certain that Indira Gandhi would reject his offer. This would deflate any future move from within the state CLP and the state party against him, at least for some time.

far off the mark (for a change) when it put the blame for Moradabad on 'the failure of bourgeois policies'.

Hyderabad, K BALAGOPAL.
September 12.

II

I HAVE just read Krishna Gandhi's "Anatomy of the Moradabad Riots" in your issue of September 6, 1980. There are some factual errors which need to be corrected for a better appreciation of the actual happenings.

(1) The police force deployed *ab initio* included the PAG and the total strength near the Idgah was nearly 300; PAC's deployment was unusual for Id-ul-Fitr. The CM has said that the Intelligence had some advance information and, therefore, perhaps precautionary measures were taken.

(2) No policeman was lynched at the Idgah.

(3) The ADM's death may well have taken place in the stampede.

(4) Nothing that happened *outside* — the initial altercation and the brick-battling by a small section at the fringe — can justify the firing at the congregation *inside* the Idgah, nor the excessive and uncontrolled barrage killing hundreds of persons,

I may add that the government had not yet revealed how many rounds were fired by the PAC at the Idgah.

The story of police having been fired at from inside the Idgah is a sheer concoction for the following reasons: (i) no firearms were seen coming into the Idgah; (ii) no spent cartridges were found at the Idgah; (iii) no policeman received any bullet or pellet injury; (iv) no building opposite the Idgah has any bullet mark; (v) no firearms were left behind, despite the stampede; and (vi) if the agents provocateurs came armed with firearms, why should they have begun with brick-battling?

The Muslims say that the brick-batters were Valmik dressed as Muslims and that the pigs had been let loose by them, both as parts of a conspiracy masterminded by someone else. They point their finger at the supporters of the BJP candidate who had also lost. This gains support from the continuing economic conflict between the traders and the artisans. The circumstantial evidence is that the attendance of Hindu gentry at the Idgah was very thin as compared to the last few years — a fact noticed by Agarwal, President of the Aman Sabha — with virtually no BJP/RSS leader or worker present. New Delhi, SYED SHAHABUDDIN, MP
September 14,

LETTERS TO EDITOR

Moradabad Riots

ROMESH THAPAR (August 30) uses as a cover unexceptionable statements like "Hindu communalism cannot be fought unless there is a simultaneous battle against Muslim communalism" to tout the same explanations for the Moradabad incidents as are being paraded by a strangely unanimous press and politicians: Arab money, pro-Pakistan forces and the Assam agitation. But what remains unexplained is why either the Arabs or Pakistan would wish to destabilise the present government the Arabs have never had a better friend than Indira Gandhi; in any case the politico-economic compulsions that make India pro-Arab are so strong that even Deoras' own man Vajpayee could do nothing about it. As for Zia-Ul-Haq, he is not so idiotic as to antagonise Brezhnev's favourite, is he? Or, according to an alternative possibility, would he not regard two Babrak Karmals as one too many? And the least credible 'explanation' is that the UP Muslim communalists wish to stop the deportation of what the AASU calls the 'Bangladeshis'. Either Thapar is lacking in minimal political sophistication, or he takes the gentlemen who control the "well-funded Muslim Jamaats" to be

extraordinarily stupid. Doesn't he know, and don't they know, that a largely Hindu police force and army, let loose on them under the protection of some PO Act or Disturbed Areas Act, will finish off not only such ambitions as they might have but also their own precious selves? If they don't they can ask the 'extremists' of the Disturbed Areas of Andhra Pradesh or Mizoram.

It is nobody's case that communalism is merely the handiwork of the RSS. Muslim communalists no doubt exist and so do 'secular' politicians hungry for 'bloc' votes. But the basic problem is that a disproportionately large number of Indian Muslims are packed into the so-called informal sector — a dog-cat-dog world where profit rates are low, exploitation is intense, technology is backward, incomes and wages are abysmally low, living conditions are sub-human and social relations are semi-feudal. Such a world is a happy hunting ground for communalists, Muslim, Hindu and 'secular'; and if anybody is to be blamed for this it is the Indian ruling classes which have been unable to solve even the basic problems of the Indian poor. So, contrary to Romesh Thapar's snide remarks, the CPI was not