

tial strata like the kulaks". Sarada Mitra is clearly saying that the bourgeois parties other than Congress are representatives of 'group' or 'sectional' interests while the Congress was the only 'national' bourgeois party.

This formulation is in keeping with others like "fully-fledged national bourgeoisie" which appear in the introduction to the debates. Does it mean that it is no longer a question of a progressive section of the national bourgeoisie? The bourgeoisie in India is a "fully-fledged national bourgeoisie". This would perhaps mean that the national democratic revolution in India is over under the leadership of Nehru and Indira Gandhi. On, alternatively, just as land reforms seem to be doing the same job as the 'agrarian revolution', Sarada Mitra's description of the ruling party in New Delhi as 'truly

national' has done away with the need for a-national democratic revolution.

It would seem the message is clear. Support Indira Gandhi and her like in South and East Asia. Marcos, Indira Gandhi, Lee Kuan-yew are the "democratic capitalists" and would obviously need the support of the working class. Because if you do not support capitalism from below, capitalism from above will be imposed on you.

'There was perhaps one unintentional sceptic in the gathering. Satinjaya Sudiman of Indonesia asked if one could perhaps "speak of a transition of the democratic type of capitalism into its opposite and vice-versa". From the report of the discussion, it appears that nobody quite answered the question. Glery Shirokov and Sarada Mitra must have ignored it. We shall cross the bridge when we come to it, they must have reckoned.

II

READING Sumanta Banerjee's brilliant expose of CPI(M) humbug (March 6) it struck me that Indira Gandhi has been peculiarly well blessed by a proletarian Providence with the most convenient communist opponents imaginable. There was a time when she used to protest a lot to prove her anti-imperialism, but it is noteworthy that she no longer does so. Why should she, when she has such helpful enemies?

The pro-Soviet communists are forced to call her anti-imperialist because she is Brezhnev's favourite. The CPI has always said so, and the CPI(M), after some initial spluttering has finally fallen in line — rather oddly, just at the time when the Indian economy is being opened up to imperialist capital without apology, explanation or populist camouflage of the kind Indira Gandhi had effectively employed in the past. But then it is a characteristic of vulgar Marxism that even as it indulges in economic determinism when that is suitable, it is equally capable of ignoring the economic base of politics when that happens to be suitable.

The pro-Deng sections of the communists (a sizeable section of the erstwhile naxalites) are equally certain that she is anti-US. Since Deng has told them that Soviet social-imperialism constitutes the biggest threat to world peace proletarian internationalism calls for identifying her as the leader of the 'pro-Soviet sections of the ruling class' (whoever these enigmatic gentlemen might be), who are bent on converting India into a Soviet neo-colony; only, true to brahminical scholasticism, they are unable to agree on whether the country has already attained, is on the verge of attaining, or is about to soon attain, that state of disgrace. If some of us find these positions as difficult to distinguish as Advaita and Visishtadvaita, that is no doubt because we are not good enough vedantins. But they are all agreed that this makes her anti-US, IMF loan or no IMF loan; indeed, for these peculiar Marxists, (as for the CPI(M) and CPI) Indira Gandhi's stand on Kampuchea is more important than the IMF loan and all that it implies.

When Indira Gandhi dies (as no doubt even anti-imperialists will) I think the most apt epitaph for her will be; she was anti-imperialist in spite of herself.

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LETTERS TO EDITOR

Fient in the East, Attack in the West

I
SUMANTA BANERJEE (March 6) has aptly pointed out the hiatus between the CPI(M)'s declared support for Indira Gandhi's efforts to whip up anti-Pakistan war hysteria on the one hand and the officially announced lofty resolve to fight authoritarianism as represented by the person of the self-same Indira Gandhi on the other at its Vijaywada Congress. He has also rightly criticised the CPI(M)'s surrender to jingoism. But he has however failed to grasp the fundamental essence of the present day CPI(M) politics.

Banerjee wants us to believe that the "facade of militant anti-authoritarianism and anti-imperialism has to be occasionally knocked together" by the CPI(M) leadership in order to sustain the radical expectations, of the ranks and cover up its reformist practice. He has obviously failed to note that the CPI(M)'s voluble anti-imperialism and insincere anti-authoritarianism are in the main only the formal depressions of its basic reformism not just stratagems to cover it up.

Likewise he has interpreted the CPI(M)'s efforts to develop proximity to the Soviet Union in terms of its attempts to find out increasing areas of agreement with the Indira Gandhi government. Here also he is slightly out of focus. His attempt to paint

the West Bengal unit's objection to the role played in bringing down the Janata government in revolutionary colour is also similarly ill-conceived.

In reality both the anti-authoritarianism and the anti-imperialism as preached and practised by the CPI(M) leadership stem from its desperate and impossible desire to go on sharing governmental power within the fragile democratic constitutional framework of a crisis-ridden backward capitalism. As it is compelled, in spite of all its fanciful day dreamings, to take note of the fairly fragile character of our democratic polity it has got to rely on and try to develop mass resistance though only on a very restrained scale and with the equally narrow objective of clinging to governmental power. So the call for anti-authoritarianism. But even then it is incapable of relating authoritarian tendencies of the Indian State to its class composition and economic base. For then it will have to totally discard the rationale behind its reformist politics and move ahead towards complete overthrowing of the capitalist state structure both in words and in practice. So authoritarianism is equated, in the grand Stalinist style, with the person of Indira Gandhi. But its opportunism forbids it even from following this formulation in a consistent manner.