

(and districts within States) were made much before the 1961 Census data became available. It should be noted here that the study under discussion is an off-shoot of the various techno-economic surveys conducted by the NCAER during the past few years. This fact was mentioned in the introduction to the study.

As for Krishnamurty's comments on inter-State comparisons, it may be noted that the object of the study is to find out inter-regional differences in the *volume* of goods and services produced and not differences in the *money value* of production of goods and services. For this purpose the output mix of different regions should be, conceptually, evaluated at the same set of prices and factor costs. This was done to the extent possible, except for agriculture for which State average prices (instead of all-India average prices) were used; this is a limitation. Incidentally, this also answers Krishnamurty's criticism of the use of all-India averages for the net value added and net earnings per worker. To

repeat, the object of this study is a comparison of inter-State and inter-district differences in the volume of goods and services produced and not the estimation of income for the States or districts.

As for the proportion of income from the services sector in Madhya Pradesh, the range of 0-44 is a printing mistake; it should be 11-44. This is clear from Table 15 on p 22.

Finally, may I assure Krishnamurty that the NCAER is fully aware of all the latest data thrown up by various official and non-official studies?

I R K SARMA

New Delhi,
January 15.

J Krishnamurty writes : While granting that either the NCAER or the 1961 Census figures can perhaps be used as a population estimate, I cannot but reiterate my earlier contention that the use of NCAER estimates does make a difference to the working force figures. To assume that the ratio of working force to population in

each State remained constant between 1951 and 1955-56 is to ignore the evidence provided by the 1961 Census. [Compare column 4 of the Table 11-B (1951) on page 404 and column 4 of Table 12-li (1961) on page 410 of "Census of India, 1961, Paper No 1, 1962". The changes in the ratio of working force to population in the different States is clearly shown in these tables.] With the 1961 Census data it is possible to have interpolations of State working force figures for 1955-56 without making the assumption of a constant working-force-to-population ratio.

As regards the use of All-India averages for net earnings per worker and net value added, it is too obvious to need any emphasis that productivity in any sector, including the services sector, may vary considerably from State to State and may at times vary inversely to the numbers employed. I do not see how it is possible to measure services produced without introducing some system of valuation, and the distortion caused by using All-India estimates is not just monetary.

Letter from Calcutta

Fire-Balls in the Air

VERMILION days, as Flibbertigibbet called them last week, have mercifully ended and the peaceful citizen can once again go about most Calcutta streets without fear. But anxiety and nervousness persist with thousands of Muslims, dislodged from their bustess, huddled together in temporary camps. Their modest hovels have either gone up in flames or, if they still stand, are still too unsafe to return to.

In his communication to General Ayub Khan, Dr Radhakrishnan emphatically denied that the rioting was part of a design to drive Muslims out of India. While this is certainly true at the State and the national level, no one living in Calcutta last week could have been unaware that dislodgement was a principal aim of the rioting in the city. This explains the predominance of arson and loot which, in retrospect, seems to have been made easier by police-organised evacuation of minorities to safer areas. The sinister hand of bustee landlords

behind the organised arson is now officially conceded, as evident from the ordinance issued to prevent vacated homes being taken over by them.

As Chief Minister P C Sen frankly admits, rioting was severest in the eastern parts of the city, former predominantly Muslim areas from which many were driven away in the disturbances of the early '50s and their homes taken over by Hindus quick to seize the opportunity. This time the aim seems to have been to get rid of the rest, more by terrorising than by actual killing. Militant East Bengal refugees, whom despair has made desperate, seem to have taken a hand in this campaign of terror in some areas. But by themselves, they could not have raised the campaign to the scale and frenzy that it reached but for the encouragement and support of bustee landlords, many of them pillars of their local communities whose backing helped to checkmate men of good sense who might otherwise

have asserted themselves. Names most frequently mentioned in this connection include a well-known Bengali businessman who also happens to be a leading light of the West Bengal Congress and a Marwan tycoon. At the meeting of representative citizens which Shri Gulzarilal Nanda convened immediately he arrived, the INTUC leader, Shrimati Maitrayee Bose, referred darkly to opposition from "unexpected" quarters when she tried to organise peace squads in the dock area to forestall the rioting. Although refusing to disclose names in public, she said these had been supplied to both Nanda and P C Sen.

It is now admitted (even by Nanda although not in so many words) that the police failed to provide full protection to the minority in the early stages of the flare-up before they were overwhelmed by the frankenstein. Several explanations have been advanced for the

failure of the police during those crucial hours, among them the lack of a clear-cut political directive (which was admittedly missing until Nanda's arrival and his call for the "sternest" measures). One eminent leftist, a member of the central peace committee, privately ventured the opinion that the large proportion of men from East Bengal in the Calcutta police force accounted for the lack of firmness in dealing with a situation arising from the Khulna — Jessore disturbances. While these factors did play a part, could it be that the influence of the bustee landlords, men of great substance, also contributed to dithering at both the political and the administrative levels ?

Once the mobsters found the police unwilling or unable to take a firm line, all hell was let loose. Describing the *modus operandi* of arson, Chief Minister P C Sen referred to "halls of fire" flying through the air — jute waste, soaked in kerosene and petrol, stuffed into glass or metal containers to which a long taper, lighted at one end, was attached. One of these fire balls fell close to where the Chief Minister, flanked by the I G of Police and the Chief Secretary, was standing in course of a tour through the city during the grim week end. They saw where it was coming from and ordered a military patrol to open fire at the roof top. One man fell to a bullet who when brought before the Chief Minister looked undistinguishable from any other middle class *bhadra lok*. It was such allies of the professional *goonda* that made a difficult situation almost uncontrollable.

Who are these allies ? This question is difficult to answer because there is no single, uniform pattern throughout the city. There are at the city's outskirts, where the trouble started, large concentrations of East Bengal refugees some of whom may have wished to "avenge" Khulna and Jessore, and perhaps earlier incidents stored up in their memory. Their attacks against Muslims in their particular localities may have been a spontaneous and unorganised outburst of passion but this is unlikely to be the whole truth. A call for a *hartal* had already been given by the Hindu Mahasabha-Jan Sangh coalition to protest against Khulna and Jessore.

One of these doughty champions of *Hindu Rashtra* had the effrontery to chide Nanda to his face for affirming that every Muslim life was sacred to India because the Home Minister had failed to add in the same statement, made at the height of rioting, that Hindu lives both here and in Pakistan were also equally sacred. The moment this was said, voices from all over the hall jam-packed with Calcutta's leading citizens (and some not so leading) broke into an uproar demanding that the champion be silenced — a reassuring token of the sanity and good sense of the great majority.

The Real Culprits

While Hindu parties must obviously bear a part of the blame, their provocative propaganda against Pakistan — actuated less perhaps by concern for East Bengal Hindus than a desire to do the Congress down — only created a favourable climate in which other miscreants flourished. These parties themselves are not powerful enough in Calcutta to do much on their own. As Flibbertigibbet said last week. Calcutta has an army of toughs and hoodlums always waiting to turn any such situation to their own advantage. But, despite the links that some of them have with powerful politicians, they can be dealt with or at least temporarily put out of action by large-scale arrests that the Calcutta Police is not incapable of carrying out.

In the judgement of some who know Calcutta's law and order problems at first hand, the professional *goonda* is getting outdistanced by his voluntary allies — a large mass of never do wells, either deliberately idle or unemployed, who find it both financially and emotionally rewarding to become *mohalla* (one would say, *para*, in Bengal) chieftains. They hang around hole-in-the-wall tea shops, or failing that one of the larger *pan* shops of their locality, and have absolutely nothing to do except hatch up various schemes of devilry. They are readily available for bearing the local dead to the river-side cremation ground. They are also the leading figures of all local *pujas*, not hesitating to use threats to extort subscriptions.

These idle young men symptomatise the failure of West Bengal's

economy to expand rapidly enough to absorb them. They are thus the creation of a deep malaise in the State's body politic, and their number must multiply unless a new dynamism is found. But until that happens — if it ever does — these idle men will take out their frustrations by whatever means come handy. Today it is the Muslims, tomorrow it could be the tram company and the day after the Punjabis or Marwaris or any one else for that matter.

These are then the real culprits of last week, acting partly of their own volition and partly at the instigation of various vested interests who stood to gain from rioting. If Calcutta has returned so quickly to near normal, it is because the activists had exhausted their energies and were prepared to retire from the battleground. No police power can check them when they are on the rampage because they have the guerilla's advantage of choosing their own time and terrain. The good sense of fellow citizens could be an effective curb provided some one gave the lead. There are few in the Congress equipped to do so because either their own hands are not clean or they are too old and tired to take on this challenge.

The one heartening feature brought out last week was the fact that the average citizen is waiting for such a lead. He mustered strong to join the peace march and has rallied to the support of the welfare organisations. In coffee houses and tea shops, as in large and highly popular Bengali dailies, wrath was chiefly directed against the *goonda* and police collusion almost to the exclusion of Khulna and Jessore. This degree of sanity still remains, but will it outlast the continuing provocations from across the border. With Dacca and Narayangunge in the grip of massive disorder, this test is now at hand both for the ordinary citizen and for his leaders in Government. Should they fail the test, it is not the Muslims alone who will have to pay the penalty. A revival of communal frenzy could alter the shape of Indian politics far more decisively than NEFA reverses of 1962, particularly now that Nehru's illness has made the present power structure shaky,