

It is almost laughable for advertisers to read in a serious paper *on* economic affairs that "advertisers generally follow the principle 'to him who hath shall be given' Do you seriously think advertisers "generally" consider they dispense "dan" or pursue 'egalite' among the press with no thought of economic returns? Even a less than complete study will show that most advertising money is spent on papers which offer the widest circulation for

the appropriate market for various products. The question of too much or too little is quite another one, and the Daniel who can come to precise rule-making judgments on this has *yet* to be born either in or outside a Finance Ministry or the press.

New Delhi A D MODDIE  
April 2.

[It is perfectly legitimate to discuss the place of advertising in the economics of the press without bringing in

any of the issues raised by A D Moddie in the second paragraph of his letter.

There was no suggestion in the editorial in question that advertisers dispense "dan". What was said, and this was said clearly enough, was that while the bigger circulation newspapers carry more advertising, the smaller newspapers derive proportionately more of their revenue from advertising.

— Ed]

## CAPITAL VIEW

# A State of Disarray

Romish Thapar

WE seem to be running the affairs of this country like a bunch of teenagers. Granted that we are now so surrounded by aid-givers and foreign-advisers that we are fast losing the capacity to think out our policies and programmes. Granted that we feel inhibited about taking the positions we would because of the sorry complications in which we rind ourselves. But, and this needs to be rubbed in, we do not have to present ourselves in the state of disarray which we have exhibited during the past week. This applies equally to the business of Abdullah's passport and the extradition proceedings connected with Sucha Singh in Nepal.

### P M Ordered Passport Endorsements

Take Abdullah first. The fumbling explanations of the Foreign Minister were obviously designed to fob off critics determined to get at the truth about passport endorsements and foreign exchange permits. The truth never emerged, because the critics were too busy enjoying the embarrassment of the Foreign Minister. No one mentioned the fact that the Ministry of External Affairs had given orders to the Passport office — which, incidentally is under its direct control — to endorse the passports of Abdullah and party *only* for Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom, that the endorsements for other countries came as a surprise even to the bureaucrats concerned with the case.

Apparently, the Prime Minister ordered the endorsements under the advice of the pro-Abdullah lobby in the Capital — and, what's more, he forgot to inform his Foreign Minister. This also explains the failure of the Ministry of External Affairs to brief

its ambassadors in the Arab countries, and the visible shock when Abdullah and party started agit-propping in Cairo. What is inexplicable — at least, to those who still respect Swaran Singh's 'quiet diplomacy' — is the total silence of the Foreign Minister after Abdullah had revealed his intentions. When we did move, the damage had been done.

Armed with offers of free hospitality, husbanding the Rs 35,000 given to him by the suddenly generous Reserve Bank of India, Abdullah moved on to London and Paris. Anyone studying even the scrappy reports appearing in our newspapers could have detected a new opportunist note in the speeches of this ambitious man. He was leaning heavily on Pakistani organisers in Europe and his attitudes were becoming markedly anti-Indian. Quite clearly, the Ministry of External Affairs received no warning notes from its men in London and Paris — and was content to doze.

Abdullah's arrival in Algiers also failed to stir our lotus-eaters. In these circumstances, it was only natural that we had to learn from Peking Radio that Abdullah had met Chou En-lai and was planning a visit to China. The developments which followed are recent news, but few have bothered to analyse the sloppy behaviour of the Government of India. There is satisfaction that Abdullah has been asked to return by the end of the month or forfeit his right to return. Yet, it is a moot point whether it was necessary to push matters to a point where legalistic wrangles about passports and citizenship rights start and confuse the basic issue — Abdullah's activity against the territorial integrity of India,

### Indian Unity, the Real Target

Our territorial integrity is seriously threatened. The catchy, superficial slogan of self-determination, so easily mouthed by every western neo-colonialist and communist adventurer, has been popularised for many months by an active lobby in the Capital which works for 'civilised' solutions to the problems of Kashmir and Nagaland. Now, these lobbyists have found new allies; Peking wishes to play host to both Abdullah and Phizo — and, perhaps, other self-determinists from the Himalayan Kingdoms may not be Tar behind.

If we merely enjoy the amusing spectacle of an authoritarian China chattering about self determination and do nothing to counter this nonsense, we will again find ourselves forced on to the defence — even at Algiers, where only recently a special envoy sent by our foreign office, C S Jha, was more concerned about his trip to Europe than in the crucial ramifications of the Conference. Self-determination, in Maoist hands, can become the weapon with which to crack the unity of India, the unity which it is China's strategic aim somehow to destroy.

The government of Lai Bahadur is too obsessed with the notion that only territory is sought to be seized by our unfriendly neighbours. True a territory grab is on — but unless we are clear that the ultimate objective is to weaken the central power in India, to create dissension and discord, we will not be able effectively to break the conspiracy now jointly sponsored by China and Pakistan. The strengthening of the Centre's control over the affairs of the States, particu-

larly in the sphere of internal security and the crucial problem of building an adequate technical and administrative cadre through a more rigorous standardisation of education, is the only basis for building a socialist, democratic and secular society. To permit parochial ambitions to weaken the Centre is to invite disaster.

### Rivalries in the Police

Over the last few weeks, we have not only witnessed extraordinary confusion over the implications for national unity of our language policies — including the hasty implementation of regional languages without a proper consideration of what should be done to strengthen inter-State communication during the transition — but we have been shocked by the rivalries of State police forces over the hunt for Kairon's assassins. Home Minister Nanda can no longer permit these petty rivalries to vitiate the business of maintaining law and order. He must move to re-establish firm control over these police forces which are being exploited by politicians and the like.

The hunt for Kairon's assassins has many lessons for us. It is common knowledge that there was utter lack of coordination among the four territories over which the hunt was launched — and only a very lucky break helped bring order to the chaos. Some 4,000 'bad characters' between Amritsar and Delhi were beaten up in an attempt to Ret information on the killings. All that emerged was a mass of evidence concerning a ramified network of crime in Delhi. This 'research' offended the Delhi police! The capture of one of the four suspects, who had apparently, become deranged and had talked, and the final location of the missing car and driver involved, made it possible to detail what happened and to surmise who was implicated. But the rivalries within the police set-up continued unabated.

The press reports of the alleged chase of Sucha Singh into Nepal, the highly dramatic account of the chase given to newspapermen by the senior police officer leading the chase, and the speedy disclosure by another source that this account was exaggerated, even false, together with the mess over the extradition proceedings in Nepal, have given a jolt to even normally placid citizens. There is much speculation as to what can be done to discipline these separate and

divided police forces. It would be folly for Prime Minister Lai Bahadur and Home Minister Nanda not to seize this opportunity to re-open the question of a centrally-controlled police force.

If constitutional provisions prevent such a development, and the Congress Party chieftains in the States are too strong to be challenged, then the Centre must initiate moves to build auxiliary forces directly under its control and capable of being mobilised to assert the will of the Centre. The need for such a force is felt every time there is a crisis, whether communal or linguistic, but we do not seem to learn from our experience. With child-like simplicity, we place our faith in old imperialist gimmicks like emergency and defence regula-

tions — and use them crudely only against political enemies.

When will Prime Minister Lai Bahadur realise that the whispering campaigns and the signature campaigns within the ruling party, the campaigns which he wants to squash, are a reflection of his reluctance to lead? Tinkering with issues is becoming a habit. We scratch at this or that problem, but never come to grips with it. We cannot continue for long in a state of disarray without seriously damaging the prospects of economic and political advance.

*News Item:* The Congress President has now been allotted an 'official residence' next to the AICC office on Jantar Mantar Road, through the energetic efforts of Housing Minister Khanna.

### LETTER FROM SOUTH

## New Postures in Andhra

**T**HE Budget session of the Andhra Assembly, recently concluded, has revealed certain shifts in alignments and certain new postures of the different parties, which could work out to a significant trend in the near future.

With a sizeable chunk of the opposition in jail, including some of the more redoubtable debaters like Sundaraya and Nagi Reddy, the Government had perhaps hoped for an easy time. But it was sorely disappointed and was compelled to stage a public retreat. This was on the issue of the allotment of houses in Sanjeeva Reddy Nagar—one of the Housing Board's middle-income group efforts in a suburb of Hyderabad.

No sooner had the Assembly session started than it was pointed out by the CPI spokesmen that six houses in this Nagar had been irregularly allotted at a time when the Housing Minister, Alapati Venkatramaiah, was in direct control of allotments through a committee of officials. Worse than the irregularity were the names of those who had gained by it. Among them were the wife of the Chief Minister, the wife of the Union Steel Minister and the son-in-law of the Housing Minister. Not satisfied with irregularity in allotment — most of the benefactors were not even in the middle income group—, the houses themselves began to be constructed in a lavish; right royal style. The estimated cost of construction of these

favoured buildings came to Rs 80,000 when the ceiling on such co-its had been fixed at Rs 30,000. These six villas stood out like an oasis in the general desert of ugly three-room tenements which make up the rest of Sanjeeva Reddy Nagar.

The Government was on the defensive throughout the session but on the concluding day the Chief Minister announced that the allottees were surrendering the houses. The opposition demand that these houses should be auctioned and the sum spent on the lowest income-group housing was not pressed. The demand for the resignation of the Housing Minister was not accepted. It was clear, however, that the Chief Minister was not over anxious to defend his colleague.

The significance of the surrender goes far beyond a matter of six houses. It revealed a cohesive tactic of attack by the opposition which was persisted in. It is evident that with still better planning this tactic can win better results. The point is to seize upon two or three issues only every session and doggedly pursue it. All too often the opposition, like the Indian mind, lacks stamina and is lured by the prospect of chaos. The issue also revealed that when a stir is created, the opposition is sufficiently well entrenched in the people outside the Assembly and the Congress is not particularly united under a strong man, some small concessions can be won which heighten