

CPM : Split Within A Split

N. K. SINGH

MAYBE—as has been allezed in the letters column of this journal—by over-publicizing the poll rigging story, *Frontier* is trying to console the frustrated, bewildered and disillusioned cadres of the CPM and thus helping the consolidation of its shattered house. However, the thing has failed to click in Bihar where the two rival factions within the party seem to be heading for an imminent showdown. Perhaps with this point in view, the CPM Politbureau has called a meeting of the Bihar State Party in Calcutta for May 20. Besides the five-man State Secretariat, which forms the core of the 'official' group, the other leaders summoned are: Messrs G. S. Vidyarthi, U. S. Shukla, Taqui Rahim and Chandi Prasad. Obviously, all these gentlemen belong to the 'rebel' group. The meeting will be supervised by three of the PB members: Messrs P. Sundarayya, B. T. Ranadive and Promode Das Gupta.

The differences between the two factions are so deep-seated—their roots lie deep in the ideological grounding—that the summit's utter failure may easily be forecast. The matter of the fact is that the inner fight between the two varying groups has brought the party to the brink of a virtual spilt.

Things inside the Bihar State CPM have moved very rapidly—and dramatically, too—since the last mid-term poll, in which the party lost its sole seat in the State Assembly. The defeat, though not unexpected, hastened the process of polarisation between the 'non-official extremists' and the 'official liberals' within the party, which had started long ago. (For details see my report, "Bihar: Division In CPM," in *Frontier*, February 26, 1972.)

The process of eliminating the 'ex-

tremists' from the party, which had started with the expulsion of Mr A. K. Roy in September, 1971 and led to virtual capture of the State Committee and the State Secretariat by the 'liberal' group with the consent of the party bosses in Calcutta earlier this year, culminated in April when the infuriated State Secretary walked out of a meeting of the Patna Town Committee and later dissolved it as it had become "the centre of anti-party activities." The walk-out, unprecedented in the history of the communist movement for never before had a member of a higher committee walked out of a lower committee—was provoked, it is said, by an intrepid party member who alleged that the State Secretary's blue-eyed boy, who was nominated as the party candidate in the last election from Patna West despite the protest of the entire Patna District Committee, had taken money from his Jana Sangh counterpart and collaborated with him. The accuser was willing to supply evidence in support of his grave charge. As a reward he, a member of 15 years standing, was suspended by the State Secretary.

Later, in a stormy general body meeting of the Patna Town CPM, the State Secretary was accused of being a "neo-revisionist", while he dubbed the members as "agents of Yahya Khan" for their stand on the question of the so-called Bihari Muslims in Bangladesh. The meeting ended with militant members accusing the national leadership of "Hindu communalism." Besides Patna, the other district committees opposing the 'liberal official' group are: Gaya, Champaran, Ranchi and Saharsa.

Mr S. S. Srivastava, the State Secretary, in a special interview to this correspondent, described the 'rumour' of groupism in his party as "non-

sense" and said that "groupism is incompatible with a Marxist-Leninist party." Ironically, the election review (described by Mr. Srivastava as "for inner-party consumption only") passed in the April 30-May 2 meeting of the Bihar State Committee flashed that there were "dangerous trends of groupism...and inner sabotage" within the party! So if one follows the criteria led down by the State Secretary, either this point in the election review (drafted by the Secretary himself) is wrong or else the CPM is not a Marxist-Leninist party.

The election review is an interesting document in the context of the factionalism prevalent in the party (It should be remembered that the 'liberal' group has a sway on the State Committee). The review strongly criticises the Gaya District Committee—an 'extremist' stronghold—for its failure in the election. It has also taken to task the Patna District Committee, and in an indirect reference to its Secretary's participation in the 'Bihari Bachao' convention, accuses it of "blatant opportunism" and "the member of the State Committee from the area" (obviously referring to the District Secretary, Mr. Taqui Rahim who had participated in the 'Bihari Bachao' convention) of "gross individualism."

The State Secretary confirmed the report and said that the 'Bihari Bachao' convention was attended by "one of our State Committee members, who was neither asked by the State leadership nor did he officially represent the party...He was later censored for it."

Censored or not, the Patna District Committee still holds that its stand on the 'Bihari' Muslims was correct. In fact twice did it refuse to accept the election review of the State Committee and passed a resolution to this effect. One of the points on which the Patna District Committee criticised the State leadership was that the election-ticket from the Sonapur constituency was allocated to a woman who was not even a

candidate-member of the party. Her only qualification was that she is the daughter of a 'pro-official' member of the State Secretariat.

The Patna District Committee, in

a resolution, has demanded that a fresh State conference be held and new bodies be formed. Perhaps there was a rigging of the CPM's inner-party's election too!

Indo-Nepal Relations

R. P. MULLICK

VICTORY in the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 has given India's ruling class the vicarious satisfaction of playing the super-power in a limited geopolitical perspective. The rulers seem determined to convert this ersatz role into a real one vis-a-vis Nepal. The Prime Minister of this little Himalayan neighbour has felt it; the young monarch, too. Hence the former's recent goodwill tour of India,

New Delhi took this visit in its stride. The posters, with the picture of Nepal's P.M. inset, and the welcome flourished with studiedly controlled fanfare, indicated the new mood of the Capital. It had the self-assurance of a big power. "So now, you come round to accepting the realities" was virtually the unuttered attitudinization. The tone of an elder reformer was unmistakable; the methodology of manipulating a small State's foreign policy through subtle suggestions and blunt homilies was too obvious to be missed. Closely following the Nepalese P.M.'s arrival and his rather polite words that Indo-Nepalese relations were too close to need the bindings of a treaty, the *Times of India*, reflecting New Delhi's new mood, did not stint in extending gratuitous advice as to how Nepal should conduct its international relations, especially in respect of China. It wrote: "Kathmandu on its part should take a second look at its foreign policy assumptions and decide for itself whether they need to be revised in the interest of a durable friendship with India. (April 24, 1971). The entire gamut of Indo-Nepalese relations was touched upon, showing India's magnanimous sufficiency of an errant Nepal's acceptance

of aid from China in the building of the Kathmandu-Kodari road, and the services of a few agronomist-experts (and some mineralogists too). There was a veiled hint that India does not wish to allow use of its soil by rebels acting or prone to act against the regime in Kathmandu, out of sheer friendliness, and that, Kathmandu should therefore reciprocate by playing cool towards China.

Simultaneously with this visit India's propaganda machinery was focused on its State-to-State-oriented munificence. It is well known that Nepal has had to take a large dose of foreign aid over about 20 years for structuring its developing economy on sound foundations, (approximately \$ 250 million) That India contributed the largesse of a \$ 100 million total is supposed to entitle it to the position of the greatest benefactor of Nepal, hence of one deserving to speak from a pedestal of strength. It is forgotten that China has contributed a fair share of the total aid—about \$ 35 million—and that this contribution was bereft of both interest-motive and considerations of big-Power military-political advantages. But who, in New Delhi's present gumption of a great nation carrying the burden of an Asian leader restructuring the entire power set-up in a big way, would believe that a socialist country's concept of aid was founded on entirely different norms, and that power-politics had no relevance there? It was therefore necessary to play up India's new role, developing Nepal's immeasurably potential power-resources (hydro-electric) with the altruism that India's hallowed tradition imparts.