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is not such a big thing after Bus fares had been raised in Calcutta some time ago by much higher amounts and had been accepted by the people without so much as a protest. But why bus fares alone? Railway fares "had been raised by 12½ per cent when it was known and admitted that the higher fares were not necessary to meet the cost of operation of the railways or to earn normal depreciation and fixed interest charges. There had been no protest, no public demonstrations or no outburst of violence on the part of the same unruly Calcutta mob. Assuming that it is the trouble-makers who are behind all this, they had not succeeded in making the issue of high railway fares into one of mass agitation, for focussing discontent. Indeed, the intensity and the volume of agitation raised by what is by all counts a trifling affair of a quarter anna leave no room for doubt that it has to be accepted as a political gesture and it is essential for the future governance of the State and the handling of its problems on the right lines' that the political significance of the happenings should be correctly assessed and that its moral should not be missed.

Democratic governments have learned how to read the barometer of public opinion, watch the direction of public feelings and look out for the danger signals. All this works because there are possibilities of a shift in party strength within the legislature and of a realignment of forces within the party, not to speak of the ultimate check of a fresh election and appeal to the country. An attempt to translate all these in terms of what amounts in practice to a single party legislature will be enough to show that the functions of a popular government, more specifically that of making its actions responsive to popular wishes, do not follow as a matter of course from the popular form of that government. On the contrary, in a situation like this, the form may not only, be deceptive but may give rise to untold evils, if much is made of it and it is exploited as a trump card. Moral infallibility, righteousness to downright tyranny . . . , the abominations are of everyday experience, ranging from well meaning and high falutin purpose to inadequate performance, inefficiency, corruption and what not. Similarly in its relations to the public, the behaviour pattern of governments which are popular only in

from but not in function ranges from arrogant hauteur and mock heroics to supine subservience or abject surrender, Decisions proclaimed to be irrevocable are reversed and heroics are followed by surrender. Whether stone throwing or fast unto death works the trick is immaterial. That the trick works is an eloquent commentary on the emptiness of the form.

Every time an assembly of more than five is prohibited by the promulgation of Section 144 in Calcutta, public meetings fill to overflowing and the attendance is greater than ever before. There has been no exception this time either. This alone speaks for the hold that the popular government has on the people as much as anything else, like the success of the general strike and so on and so forth. The Government has always been in a blue funk and its show of strength to cover its fear, far from frightening and demoralising the people, provokes defiance and more intensive demonstrations. To what limits of impotent fury the Government has been driven was demonstrated by the police attack on the newspaper

men in Calcutta which has at last brought home to people all over India its ineptitude and utter helplessness. The Bengal press, by and large, has lost its morale but even to popular papers cannot help publishing photographs and using streamer headlines. For, however impolitic it may be to displease the Government, to lose circulation would be a great deal worse.

The tragedy of it is not that some have lost their lives and public peace is disturbed but that the bulk of the population of Calcutta should still go about their normal business as if nothing had happened, instead, of getting together and devising ways and means for securing a better government. Surely there are less objectionable and more effective means still open to them to exert their will and to get the government of their choice by organising for the purpose and working in an orderly, systematic and sustained manner. If the people of Bengal fail today, they will continue to have the government which they deserve rather than the one which they want.

United Nations Must Act

IF it was a deliberate strategy of the Communists to establish that Washington and the UN Command in Korea were speaking with two voices, it seems to have succeeded. Many must have expressed surprise at Communist disclosures of happenings in the recent secret truce negotiations at Pan Mun Jon. This was deliberate, as Syngman Rhee's latest stand on Korean armistice confirms. It would be uncharitable to endorse the implied Communist insinuation that Washington has egged Rhee on to create new obstacles to truce in Korea. But the conclusion seems inescapable that the UN Command's truce negotiations with the Communists have diverged in some essential aspects from the promises made by President Eisenhower's envoy to Rhee. This is the ostensible reason advanced by Syngman Rhee for his decision not to observe the implementation of the armistice.

This is not altogether a fabrication by Syngman Rhee, who seems to have succeeded in convincing even those who deplore his actions that his stand is motivated by his strong sense of nationalism. Sophisticated explanations have been advanced that Rhee's attitude to the

Korean armistice is a deplorable reflection of aggressive nationalism which is a pronounced characteristic of Asia and the Middle East today. To digress from the general to the particular, Rhee's belated sense of nationalism is supposed to be reflected in his opposition to the entry of troops and representatives of India and of the Communist members of the Repatriation Commission into the territory of the sovereign Republic of Korea. It is not known whether Rhee has any objection to any such entry of Swedish and Swiss representatives. But this only emphasises, Rhee's apologists underline, Rhee's strong anti-Communist bias.

To such arguments, the only reply is that they are irrelevant to the immediate Korean issue involved. What is more pertinent is the question whether President Eisenhower's truce envoy had agreed that India and Communist representatives of the Repatriation Commission should be admitted only to the neutral, demilitarised zone. Rhee's Foreign Minister says that this has been accepted by Mr Robertson. One of the reasons why, Rhee now threatens to obstruct the truce is that this promise has been broken by the UN Command. This by itself, is a

minor issue. Considering all the circumstances it is perhaps, better for the Repatriation Commission to be in custody of the prisoners-of-war in the neutral, demilitarised zone. But the basic problem is about the transfer of war prisoners to the neutral zone. Since the release of war prisoners by the Rhee Government, this issue has become rather academic. Even so, the problem of the transfer of the remaining war prisoners may create issues which may cause friction.

But the more serious problem relates to the time-limit on the political conference which is to follow an armistice in Korea. On July 21, the American Secretary of State denied in a Press conference in Washington that Syngman Rhee had insisted on such a time-limit. Next day, Mr John Foster Dulles issued an authorised statement which admits that Rhee has "reserved his Government's position in the event of a collapse of the political talks which would follow an armistice". It is clear that Rhee is justified in taking objection to the UN Command's departure from the undertaking given by President Eisenhower's envoy, on behalf of America, on this issue. As far as it is possible for any disinterested observer to discuss the confused and bewildered development of events in Korea, it seems that there are differences between Mr Robertson's promises to Rhee and the UN Command's agreement with the Communists on the terms of truce. It was the deliberate intention of the Communist diplomacy in advertising the proceedings of the secret truce sessions in establishing these differences. This is not denied entirely in President Eisenhower's diplomatic admission that "misunderstandings" exist between the UN Command and the Communists on the one hand, and the Rhee Government on the other.

This unfortunate development may furnish technical justification to Rhee's latest threat to wreck the Korean truce. He may not translate his threat into action. But Rhee's ultimate aim and the American Secretary of State's tacit endorsement of that objective are emphatic reminders of the obstacles that will have to be surmounted before peace can return to Korea. It may be conceded that Rhee is not a together without justification in demanding a time-limit to the political conference. Even as prisoners cannot be kept in permanent captivity, the future of Korea cannot be left to the uncertain outcome of the political conference.

It is not unlikely that the political Conference may not reach an agreement.

There are reasons why the political conference may not come to any agreement. But is that any reason for Rhee to announce that, in such an event, he reserves the right to resume military operations to achieve his avowed objective of unifying Korea? Rhee has ample guarantees against any possible violation of South Korea's territorial integrity. In the recent Washington Conference Britain, France and America have agreed that, in the event of renewed aggression in Korea by the Communists, they shall, to quote Mr Dulles, "vigorously act to restore peace and security". Moreover, immediately after the conclusion of an armistice, America has promised to initiate a programme of rehabilitation and to negotiate a security pact with South Korea.

America has given a further undertaking to Rhee that, after the conclusion of an armistice, her Secretary of State will meet him "with a view to concerting our policies at the political conference . . . , and thus assuring the maximum chance that the conference will achieve a unification of Korea". Rhee is as much entitled as the Communists to demand the establishment of a united, sovereign Korea. He is as much guilty as the Communists in threatening military operation to achieve this aim. This much is common agreement among all the member-States of the United Nations. But it is now widely appreciated that Korea cannot be unified without a settlement of the wider Far Eastern problems. Mr Dulles seems to agree that these Far Eastern problems are legitimate issues for discussion by the political conference which is to follow the conclusion of an armistice in Korea. But he is on record that Washington does not accept that Red China's admission to the United Nations is an issue which must be included in

the agenda or the conference.

At this juncture, there are two intriguing possibilities in Korea. Despite Syngman Rhee's renewed intransigence it may be assumed that America will succeed in cajoling Rhee to accept the projected truce agreement. In the event of America's failure to do so, the responsibility must clearly devolve on the United Nations to compel Rhee to accept its decisions. There are more urgent reasons for re-convening the General Assembly to discuss the Korean situation. In anticipation of recent developments Shri Jawaharlal Nehru proposed such a meeting of the United Nations some time ago. Mr Attlee has now endorsed this demand of the Prime Minister for similar reasons. No doubt America has borne nineteen-twentieths of the war burden in Korea. But this does not deprive the United Nations of its responsibility in Korea. It is useless to anticipate the items that the Communists would insist on inclusion in the agenda for the political conference. But it is certain that the political conference will have to discuss the wider, political problems in the Far East. Most of America's NATO allies agree that, with the end of the war in Korea, Red China should be admitted to the United Nations. America has mental reservations on both these vital issues. It is only reasonable to suggest that the political conference will not be allowed to degenerate under the dominance of America. All the influential member-States must be represented in this conference. It must be held under the auspices of the United Nations so that the aims of this world organisation are not allowed to go by default. It is time, more than time, that the General Assembly of the United Nations must meet to consider the situation in Korea. Thus alone can the attempts of Rhee, and of the reactionary elements in America, to sabotage the Korean truce be effectively foiled.

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