

The riots themselves show the Government in the worst possible light, of course. The Pan-African Congress had taken special pains to emphasise its intention of keeping the defiance of the pass laws, completely non-violent and peaceful. Volunteers lined up before the police stations in their townships and reported that they were carrying no pusses, and offered to be arrested. The Government, however, was frightened by the very magnitude of the crowds gathered outside the police stations. Quite early in the morning the volunteers in the township of Sharpeville, outside Johannesburg, numbered as many as 20,000; and the authorities were probably right if they feared that the number would grow much larger unless immediately checked. It was evidently for this reason that the decision to disperse the crowd was taken. Later events show that the decision, *once* taken, was implemented brutally. As if tear-gas and batons were not enough to discourage the crowd from growing any larger, sabre jets were pressed into service. They flew overhead and dipped on the crowds to scatter them with fright. But even that was not considered enough. Rifle

shots were fired at the Crowd without any apparent provocation. This killed a leader of the demonstrators and infuriated the Africans, who (naturally under the circumstances) forgot all about the Congress injunction about non-violence, and started retaliating with stones and sticks. When the police and the troops brought out sten guns, the demonstrators mustered the few arms they had and shot back. But how terribly unequal the fight was is, clear from the fact that while not a single policeman or soldier lost his life, 72 African men, women and children were mowed down and perhaps another 200 were injured.

The performance of savage force was repealed a few hours later at Langa, outside Cape Town, where a very much smaller crowd had gathered to court peaceful arrest. Some more Africans were killed and injured here.

Nothing that the South African Government can say will convince the outside world that this inhuman massacre of unarmed men was either justified or unavoidable. Two inquiries have, under pressure from the Opposition, been ordered by the

Government. But what will these investigations seek to show? That the crowd had attacked first and the police merely retaliated in self-defence? That the trouble would have developed much further if the police had not acted at once in the way it did? Even if the inquiries show that the first stone came from the demonstrators, nothing will have been proved of any material value. Not only does it still remain defensible that a stone-throwing crowd should have been mowed down by gunfire, it is also immaterial who was immediately to blame for the tragedy. In a situation where explosive material is lying all around and where the air is thick with inflammable emotions, it is futile to try and discover exactly who flung the match which set oil the fire. The real culprits are the ones who loaded the atmosphere with explosiveness. The roots of Monday's tragic happenings lie deep in the *apartheid* policy of the South African Government. If Dr Verwoerd and his associates (or should one say accomplices) are really interested in investigating the cause of this week's riots, let them lay bare the anatomy of *apartheid*.

To Which Gods?

WHEN visiting a temple, none of the deities, big or small, whose images lie scattered about in the court-yard of the temple, or which line up the temple path, can be ignored. Kach has to be propitiated according to his or her respective status or place in the pantheon. For some, the choicest offerings, flowers dipped in *saudal pa Me*, handful of rice well soaked in water, coconuts, sweets. Deities lower down in the hierarchy have to do with less but even a single grain of rice will do. Our gods are compassionate and long suffering, as long as they are taken notice of, with a token offering, be it only a single grain of rice.

To which gods did they offer oblations, when the highest body in the land met in Delhi to discuss, the Third-Five-Year War Man? Did they instal some strange new gods in the place of the old, trusted ones? There was nothing dramatic like that, though the public had been led to believe something of the sort. In fact agriculture gets first priority and

larger allocation. To quote from the IMB handout "... In its discussion of priorities for the Third Plan, the Council agreed that the first priority should be given to agriculture. There had also to be necessarily considerable emphasis on the development of basic industries, especially steel, machine-building, fuel and power, on which the capacity of the economy to develop in future largely depended." Basic industries, especially steel, are not new. But the emphasis on machine building, fuel and power is, despite a lower than expected target for steel. And this we have all along been told would be the key to the Third Plan, the highest priority. The Council has ruled that out.

To repeat, if one looks at the allocations, one does not see much of a change unless one is prepared to read something like that into the combined allocation for power, industry and transport which is higher than in the Second Plan. The hard core of the Third Plan is supposed

to be its steel-machinery-power-complex. This part of the Plan is also believed to have been carefully studied, properly coordinated and generally handled on a high level of technical competence. But none of the gods has been neglected. Pandit Nehru defined the basic object of planning as that of pulling out the country from 'the rut of traditional ways of production and distribution' and held up scientific planning using modern technology as the only means for it.

Besides science, the other gods also got their offerings. Panditji also covered the human factor in progress and applauded institutional changes like the revival (*sic*) of the Panchayats system; others stressed equality of incomes, utilisation of idle labour and balanced regional development. There were not only the priorities of planning, the pre-conditions of a large Plan were not left out — the necessity of holding the price line and of putting a ceiling on non-develop-

ment including Defence expenditure; the need for maximum returns from public enterprises and for keeping down costs of construction; and finally, the necessity of high levels of administrative efficiency and determined efforts to raise standards in administration.

Having thus pacified all the gods, what are we expected to get — an increase of national income at the compound rate of 5 per cent per annum, provided the savings-income ratio can be stepped up from 8 per cent at which it has remained more or less stagnant to 12 per cent by the end of the Third Plan. If past experience is any guide, this would be a formidable task, indeed. It would be surprising if it rose beyond 10 per cent and attained an average higher than 9 per cent during the Third Plan. Along with a rather high capital-output ratio, which would be reasonable to assume in view of the capital intensity of the steel-machinery-power complex, the rate of growth of national income is not likely to exceed 3 per cent, attained in the first two Plans. Making allowance for growth of population, this can promise an increase of only 1 to 1.5 per cent in the per capita income per annum in the Third Plan period. This is not very exciting, so far as the arithmetic of it goes.

True, the arithmetic of it is not the most important part but, behind this arithmetic, there is logic but that logic cannot be deduced from the financial aggregates which alone are available at the moment. The neglect of primary education and urban housing, the preference for highly capital intensive railways over road transport, these cannot only be sensed from the broad financial magnitudes. The sort of choice that has to be made between alternative investment patterns or techniques, one does not get to know about them from the bare press summaries. In how much detail the projects and their requirements of various inputs have been worked out, how the investment is proposed to be phased so that no bottlenecks appear in the year to year execution, the summaries do not indicate whether all these have been taken care of or not.

The experience of the early years of the present Plan has at least taught us one lesson — the folly of forgetting that we, too, have to live in a disturbed, changing and deve-

loping world, and of believing that a Plan, however carefully drawn up, can ever work smoothly without running up against unforeseen and unpredictable developments in the price situation at home or abroad, or in regard to external assistance and so on. It would be comforting to know that the Plan is being drawn up in such a way

this time that it can be altered, if need be, in the light of the changing situation. This requires that we should formulate not one but at least two or three different Plans, so that it may be possible to switch over from one to the other. During the Second Plan, such alternatives had to be found haphazardly; would this experience be repeated?



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