

catchphrase, as you may think, or the description of a power struggle. It is a reality: a barrier runs across the middle of *our* continent. The most obvious example of the barrier is the famous Berlin wall. The world by now is, or ought to be, sick and tired of reading reports of statesmen who have been trotted up to say how inhuman it is. But for us, you see, it is inhuman. It is not a stick to beat the Russians with. It divides families and divides a nation: our families and our nation. We don't want to beat anyone with it: we just want it taken down.

### France and the General

And the general in Paris. The general has already done profound harm to Europe by pointing out (he was right) that the British people were not really ready to join Europe, just when Macmillan was quietly leading them in, on the hope, which British history justified, that, once inside, they would open

their eyes and discover that Europe was not nearly as terrible as they had feared. Since then, the general has repeatedly made plain his contempt for Europe. He may in fact intend to break the Common Market up, though that is doubtful. He is certainly trading on the feeling for Europe of other nations which he himself does not share, for the purely selfish advantage of France.

This may seem to you a rather good thing, though it is not very likely to lead to a more liberal Europe, any more than the rejection of Britain did. To the United States, the general, with his quaint ideas of grandeur and his embryonic nuclear force, is an infernal nuisance, to be humoured, cajoled or bullied as seems best. But to the Europeans, he may be a tragedy. Whether or not he breaks up the trading arrangement which is at present the only significant mould of formal European unity, the time may come when other European countries are tempted to kick his shins as hard

as he has kicked theirs. That would be momentarily satisfying, but it would be a disaster. One cannot kick the general without kicking, France; France which remains the keystone of Europe.

There. You were promised opinions. You have a fact: the way a certain kind of European thinks. A European (not identical with your correspondent, though not unlike) perhaps unsympathetic, perhaps blind to some realities of the world — we have focussed his gaze rather narrowly on his own problems; but a European who requires to be understood and reckoned with, whether you like him or not. Europe can become a wonderful thing, or it can indeed become an inward-looking, rich, white men's club. The latter catastrophe is far more likely to happen if the developing nations treat Europe with the same incomprehension that Europe, historically, has shown toward them.

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### Capital View

## The Government or Oar Government

Romesh Thapar

THE fact that the ruling middle class in the Capital celebrates Christmas with more gusto than the Christians is not the only pointer to the sharp isolation of Government from the people as we enter 1964. Whether it is in economic affairs or foreign policy formulation, or the trouble in Srinagar over the stealing of the Prophet's hair from a shrine, we are being made increasingly aware that policy-making in this sixteenth year of freedom has become the exclusive preserve of individuals and groups (and conspirators!) who enjoy the patronage of this or that leader. Small wonder that everywhere the people speak of *the* government, not *our* government.

It used to be asserted, not so long ago, that the extent of India's democracy depended on how democratic Prime Minister Nehru wished to be. Supreme power was vested in him, and he could alter, modify or repudiate any governmental fiat. He maintained a massive daily correspondence, worked some 17 hours of the 24, kept in constant touch with

opinion at the grass-roots, and despite occasional lapses was able to preserve a remarkably humane image of the democratic autocrat. This is no longer true.

### Nehru's Power Waning

Jawaharlal's power is passing, somewhat visibly, to ambitious colleagues at the Centre, to equally ambitious burvaucrats, and to certain Chief Ministers who had the foresight to build their independent mass bases. Of course, the 'old man', as they now call him, still appears to be the master, but that is only because the Congress Party is so adept at preserving a convenient political image required to screen the crude battle for power which has been joined.

Finance Minister T T Krishna-maehari has jockeyed himself into a position from which his is the dominant voice in the cabinet — that body which once upon a time he used to describe contemptuously as Nehru's yes-men, Nehru's durbar. The voice dominates because it is able with some skill to theorise on

matters economic which are little understood by the others. The impression has been created that economic paralysis has occurred as a result of doctrinaire planning, that a gifted Finance Minister has done a great deal of 'fundamental' thinking; that he is removing the cobwebs, restoring confidence, stimulating the economy. Who cares if prices continue to rise and industrial unrest looms.

So thorough has been the brainwashing that even those who knew that the fault lies in implementation and not in planning are silent because they have convinced themselves that they would be dismissed as cranks were they to challenge the palliatives offered by the Finance Minister. Significantly, if T T K were to leave the Finance Ministry tomorrow, no one would understand the pattern of his fiscal policies. In other words, they would have to start all over again!

### T T K's Technique

The rot threatens the Planning Commission itself. It is losing faith

in its work. So far, the new Deputy Chairman has failed to rally the planners. He warns them against demoralisation, but betrays his own state of mind when he seeks some kind of dramatic break-through. Only when he realises that no such break-throughs are possible, that India's economic and social problems demand patient, dogged, long-term treatment, that implementation is half-hearted, inadequate, contradictory, and that the Planning Commission must work towards a ruthless reviewing of the progress of projects irrespective of whose reputation is damaged or destroyed in the process, will the gloom lift. But, then, T T K is always around to warn against a simple, straightforward answer to our problems.

The knowledgeable are only too conscious of the political technique of boldly exaggerating the gloom and then, after a respectable time-lapse, of introducing the silver-lining. The assumption is that when T T K rises in Parliament to deliver his budget speech, he will claim that India has turned the corner. A lessening of the tax burden, a booming stock market, a cheering Lok Sabha, together with plenty of journalists to draw parallels between the recovery pattern in India, in Germany, France and Japan — and we will have discovered our very own miracle-maker.

It matters little that we would be where we are at the moment, only the stage will be set for T T K to push through his other pet schemes like the entry of private foreign capital into sectors which constitute the 'commanding heights'. And, what's more, the US Seventh Fleet will be around to 'strengthen confidence' in the viability of India's economy!

### Bureaucracy Happy

Senior bureaucrats, now being suitably re-allocated to ensure the control of the Ministry of Finance over the Government of India, are happy over this turn of events. They, too, possess the middle class mind and are fearful of ruthless reviews of plans and projects which are bound to expose the bureaucratic stranglehold on speedy and effective implementation. In contrast, there is deep despair among the best man-

agers of the public sector, several of whom have indicated their desire to resign from their posts because of continuous obstruction from their boards of directors or from the Finance Ministry which is present at every level of decision-making.

The bureaucracy is also getting durbar-oriented. Ministers are quietly purging their departments of civil servants who are not absolutely loyal to them. And loyalty very often is a matter of belonging to the same linguistic region or caste affiliation. In certain ministries, which are not being 'led' very actively, the bureaucrats have again become the sole arbiters of policy. This is particularly true of the Ministry for External Affairs. Indeed, even our light-weight ambassadors now refuse to accept transfers which they do not approve of and are able successfully to 'lobby' for themselves among the bureaucrats in command at Delhi.

### Confused Foreign Policy

A cursory sampling of our foreign policy at the moment would convince the dullest that rather puerile pragmatists are in the saddle. The Voice of America deal, the joint air-exercises, the reactions to the US Seventh Fleet's planned movement into the Indian Ocean are explosive mistakes, and are generally known. But take a look at what else goes on.

Confused, incoherent briefings convinced our press that President Nasser and Mrs Bandaranaike—two good friends of ours — were about to surrender to the charms of Chou En-lai and Ayub Khan. Was such a posture designed to hide our embarrassment over the parallel visit of the King of Jordan to our country? Most doubtful, for this would suggest some degree of sensitivity.

Where was this sensitivity when we began a recent exchange of notes with Peking and emerged from the dialogue, it is reported, somewhat startled by the fact that we had unwittingly extended support to Malaysia, a development which we are still trying to understand, particularly its repercussions in South-East Asia? We will soon be busy salvaging our relations with Indonesia, trying to explain away our commitments on Malaysia,

The recent meetings of our diplomatic representatives in Asia and Africa seem to have left the mud-dles unresolved. We move from event to event, very often forgetting that we are placing a heavy strain on the goodwill we have among the non-aligned; we know that only in unity with them can we hope to influence international opinion. Understandably, the demand continues to strengthen for the appointment of a full-Hedged Foreign Minister.

### Debate on Socialism

The political pattern which has evolved over the last few months, and more markedly since the Kamaraj Plan, has succeeded in making government at the Centre and in the States look like something manipulated by a small warring coterie of leaders. Even the policy issues they raise have only peripheral relevance to the realities of the Indian scene. It is against this background that the debate on democratic socialism is taking place within the Congress Party, a debate which is likely to release new trends at the Bhubhadeshwar Session. K D Malaviya is no longer a lone voice. His programme, sought to be turned into directive principles, is now supported by a number of provincial committees of the party. And he is in no mood to compromise.

Much, of course, will depend on whether Jawaharlal Nehru permits the controversy to develop. This would contribute to health, clarify ideas, and perhaps purge the ruling party of those who do not subscribe to its programme. However, polarisation is something which Nehru fights shy of. Hence, the confidence in certain conservative Congress circles that he will snuff out the debate and produce the compromise formula which will mean all things to all people.

By the time these lines appear in print, the story will be out. We will know whether plan perspectives are to be implemented and ruthlessly reviewed at regular intervals, whether we are to move forward into socialism or to retreat or to mark time, whether 'the government' is to become 'our government'. After a long period of slumber, there has been a stirring in the ruling party. Will this stirring influence events in 1964?