

promise of Independence, lives well and cosily, despite its apparent insecurity.

The Government has also diverted some attention by criticising the many countries that find it useful to dabble in the Congo; pot—the United Arab Republic and Algeria have been 'warned' after the recent series of bomb incidents in Leopoldville for which they were blamed. Relations are naturally strained with Brazzaville and

Burundi, since they support the rebel National Liberation Committee. Russia and China are no doubt competing to command the motley directions the Widely different bands of rebels propose to travel — there is some advantage in the politics of market competition, insofar as it neutralises the activities of all. The West, for its part, is busy shoring up Adoula. To the blindest Maoist, the tribal revolts of Congo might seem a repetition of pre-

Communist China's troubles, and as such a further test-case for the proposition that creeping ill-armed revolt can defeat the mighty machinations of the imperialists. Since Congo politicians are more adept at riding the shifting tides of international politics than of their own people, the foreign element may again prove important. Which is, again, very sad both for the peace and the viability of independent Congo.

Letter from Punjab

## Kairon Goes, but...

AT last Kairon's political sands have run out, and though he promises to continue serving the people in any capacity they want him to, his political rehabilitation should be out of the question, immediately at least. The publication of the Das Report, with the contents of which he had been officially acquainted much earlier, has considerably dampened his spirits. Earlier the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee and the Congress Assembly Party had passed resolutions eulogising Kairon, in utter disregard of the findings of Mr Justice Das. The President of Punjab Congress, Shri Bhagwat Dyal Sharma, a devoted Kaironite, declared that, "Das Commission or no Das Commission. Mr Kairon our leader. He is our friend, philosopher and general and will have to be listened to."

The general and his cohorts were evidently putting up this show of strength and issuing threats with a view to browbeating the Congress High Command into nominating someone acceptable to them as the next Chief Minister. Kairon is too much of a political realist, to have bothered about the resolutions praising him in extravagant terms. His main purpose in organising the whole show must have been to show to the High Command that he was still a power in Punjab. Without mincing words, he let it be known that only a person acceptable to his group would be allowed to function in Punjab as Chief Minister. Soon after resigning his post he announced that the Congress Party in the Assembly be allowed to exercise its 'democratic right' and that its natural choice would be Pandit Mohanlal who was 'a man of the masses'. But it soon became known that this man of Kairon had himself been implicated by the Das Commission. The Commission's Report says that "Mr Mohanlal ...

passed orders that the Government's approval be sent direct to the Municipal Committee" to allow the Chief Minister's son to build a cold storage in a prohibited area in Amritsar. As a result, Pandit Mohanlal soon dropped out of the race. Then Kairon started talking of a compromise candidate, saying, "It is my democratic right to influence the choice of my successor". Keeping in view the circumstances in which the need to appoint a successor has arisen, one need not comment on the validity of this democratic right!

### The Humble Kairon

It is not known why the central leadership kept giving Kairon so much rope even after the Das Report had been made available to it. But the decision to publish the Report seems to have been ultimately taken to cut him down to size. Immediately he was relieved of his caretaker's job. In his place, Dr Gopichand Bhargawa took over on June 21. The date is significant as exactly 12 years ago to the day, he had himself been obliged to resign as Chief Minister.

No sooner was the Das Report published than the fighter in Kairon collapsed. At once he became a picture of humility itself and, perhaps, for the first time, owned up the misdoings of his sons. Accepting the verdict of Mr Justice Das in "all humility", he said, "I publicly dissociate myself from all the activities of my sons ... It is mainly for the doings of my sons that I have come to suffer. My two sons have amassed wealth in different ways and in so doing they have sometimes (*sic!*) exploited my name and the official machinery".

He has cleverly omitted to mention his own direct role in the affair. The Das Commission has held him personally and directly guilty in at least one

case of having misused his power and influencing *for his own benefit* and in three other cases to benefit his close relatives. The latter have been enterprising themselves and have exploited his position in five other cases. To quote from the Commission's report: "Such exploitation cannot possibly be a legitimate business and the father's influence and power cannot be permitted to be traded in." But in respect of the acquisition of some properties by his sons like the Nandan Cinema and Punjab Cold Storage, the Commission has gone further and observed that even if Kairon did not himself commit the irregularities or illegalities, "he was certainly privy to their commission". Similarly, the Government purchasing the surplus lands of his relatives "adds to the gravity of the misdeeds" and the manner in which the ban on purchasing land belonging to Ministers' relatives was removed leaves the disagreeable impression of "insidious design carefully prepared and carried out." He let these things proceed with such callous disregard of public outcry that "he must be held to have connived". So this time he is not being accused of an amorphous 'constructive responsibility' for the misdoings of his sons, but of direct participation therein. As the Report says, "The allegations stared him in the face, he paid no heed to them. He cannot now plead ignorance of facts".

However, strange as it may seem to an outsider, all this was well known. The Das Report has not brought many new facts to light, but has judicially confirmed what was common knowledge in Punjab and elsewhere in this country. Consequently, the Congress High Command having refused to listen to the charges against Kairon all these years, may be in the words of *The Statesman*, the only surprised body of men in the country today.

True, there is a great deal that is sensational about the Kairon episode, and it is still too fresh an event to permit one to examine it with perfect objectivity. Yet two questions have to be answered in any case:

- (a) what consequences should follow so far as Kairon is concerned? and,
- (b) will the measures likely to be taken at the political level be sound and effective enough to serve the desired end?

Mr, Justice Das has said that it is for the authorities to consider and decide as to "what consequences (must) follow from such connivance" on Kairon's part. Shri G L Nanda has declared that "whatever has to follow will follow". That a Minister found guilty of such gross misdemeanour should be made to quit office is obvious enough. But should that be enough? Corruption cannot be controlled, much less eradicated, by adopting soft attitudes towards the guilty, however exalted their status. In fact, the rule should be: higher the status, severer the punishment. But reports have appeared that while the officials, who served as factotums at Kairon's beck and call, can and will be prosecuted under law, Kairon himself cannot be.

#### Amend the Law

There is no reason why law must remain an ass, if it has been so in the past. Why should it not be amended now? Enough dust cannot have gathered on the Santhanam Report so soon. If too much is to be made of legal formalities, we might as well stop talking of rooting out corruption. Shri Nanda has said that at least a part of his undertaking to root out corruption has been fulfilled. No, the task has just begun. The Das Enquiry was the first of its kind held in this country, and the opportunity should be used not only to remove the principal guilty from high office, but also to set healthy precedents for future incumbents to take note of.

But even if strict legal action is taken against Kairon, which is very unlikely, the political decision now in the offing seems hardly likely to be on the right lines. The Congress High Command's main purpose seems to be to win over legislators from the Kairon group and induce them to support someone else. Whoever the individual that comes to power this way, at least one thing is clear: he will have to adopt the Kairon technique to keep himself in the *gaddi*. For, the legislators are the same who kept back-

ing Kairon, knowing full well what was going on. They even passed a resolution in his favour after he had resigned under a cloud. If they have now to be won over by somebody else, he has, in plain language, to promise them suitable rewards.

From this point of view, it would appear that Kairon's exit would mean only a change of individuals, not a change in the pattern of Punjab politics. Thus Kairons may come and go,

#### Letter to Editor

## Congress Party

I HAVE read with interest Ramashray Roy's comment (*The Economic Weekly*, May 2, 1964) on my paper on "The Developing Pattern of the Congress Party". While Roy has provided some useful insights in his comment, some of his ideas seem to me to be inconsistent with political realities and appear to emphasize points not much related to my main arguments.

No student of the politics of the developing countries would assume that democracy can be realised overnight in these countries. The establishment of effective democracy in these countries involves a basic change in the structure of their societies. However, this does not preclude one from making an assessment of the forces which hinder or promote the growth of democracy. Roy seems to think that even to make a beginning in this respect would be undesirable though the Congress Party has been in power since 1947 and that the pattern of Indian politics is now somewhat discernible.

Roy rightly points out that there is a constant process of interaction between the social environment and the Congress Party and that the society is reflected in the political structure in almost all aspects of politics. But Roy misses the central point of my argument which was to point out that the Congress Party, though it reflects society, does not reflect the real interests and issues of society. This takes us to the heart of the problem of Indian politics, viz, that of leadership in politics and the structure of political communication between the leaders and society. It is strange that scholars in the field of party politics in India should becloud realities, while the parties themselves admit the weakness from which they suffer. There was a frank admission of the problem of the growing cleavage between the Congress Party and the people by a number of partymen in the recent

but Kaironism must go on. This is dangerous and though the people at the moment are so exercised over the Das report, they will soon forget all about it. It is not the British public alone that looks ridiculous in one of its occasional fits of moral indignation. 'Ridiculous' is the operative word, in the sense that indignation, in India no less than in Britain, soon cools off to let the public revert to its commoner forms of behaviour,

AICC session held at Bombay.

With regard to the emergence of local and regional leaders, the question which I posed was not whether they are good or bad; the question I had in my mind was whether they help the process of modernisation and democratisation. It is true that they have a close relationship with society which gives them strength and endows them with political agility. Though they are contributing to democracy in India in so far as democracy must ultimately reflect the social constitution, the way in which they are functioning, as Roy himself admits, "seems to be at the moment to be disruptive of national unity, modernisation and democratisation". A close study of how institutions such as the universities, administration and local self-governing bodies are coming under the patronage of local political leaders would reveal the extent to which local influences and regionalism are undermining the standards of these institutions. It is strange that Roy does not show an understanding of the obvious dangers of regionalism. I did not imply that there is a natural dichotomy between the national party leaders and the local and regional party leaders. In their functioning at least they seem to be in conflict at the moment, though their mutual dependence for power is drawing them closer and the interaction between them may reduce the dangers of regionalism and enable the national leaders to gain a sense of what is possible.

As for my use of such terms as 'politicisation' and 'debureaucratisation,' they have accepted meanings and Roy should realise that an article is hardly the place where one can clarify the meaning of terms.

C N BHALERAO

Madras,  
June 20.