WANTED NEW PLANNERS

Some profound lessons are to be learnt from the recent fiasco of the Fourth Five Year Plan. It would be dangerous to think of the crisis as being limited in its significance. Certainly no Government can permit decisions taken at the highest level to be frustrated or distorted by motivated bureaucrats as seems to have happened in connection with the Fourth Plan.

The episode, however, points to the more basic question of who makes policy in Pakistan. The last decade demonstrated that economic policy, at least, was made by a small group housed in the upper reaches of the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs. The nature of the Ayub system effectively insulated this elite from popular pressures so that policies could be made by people who were neither responsible nor responsive to public opinion. They could, therfore, go on to tailor their policies to serve narrow regional and class interests rather than truly national goals.

Prolonged association with power built up an claborate network of relationships for this group with foreign powers and international agencies. Since the policies promoted by this group tended to further the global and ideological desgins of these powers it became possible to establish mutual ties of personal loyaltywhich transcended changes of government and leaders.

It was not surprising, therefore, to find that this elite survived the changes that came in the wake of Ayub's exit and stayed on to preserve continuity in the policies which they had evolved during the Ayub years. Their well preserved international links gave them a highly effective bargaining counter to justify their retention when other collaborators in the old order were being consigned to oblivion.

It is now only logical that after ten months of a new Government, this group should still have so large a say in major economic policy making.

Having ensured that their policies remained untouched in substance they now wish to have them enshrined in the economy as a long-term legacy to whomsoever may inherit power in the economy as a long-term legacy to whomsoever may inherit power in the future. The basic goals of disparate regional development, the sanctity of the capitalist and landlord, were aimed to be incorporated into their Fourth Plan.

To see this through successfully in the face of incrasingly articulated public resistnace and a growing consciousness of their role even within the administration, it was mandatory to get their philosophy sanctifed within an approved Plan document. This strategy received in initial setback at the Economic Co-ordination o Committee meeting when hitherto docile subordinates chose to argue back. Being unable to make their views prevail in terms of facts and logic, they sought to carry out their designs under a veil of secrecy in the hope of presenting the administration and the country with a fait accomli.

To make their design more palatable the fiction of a flexible plan had to be fabricated. This really sought to impose certain expenditure patterns on the regions and social groups which would inreality be difficult to undo after the lapse of six months when they expect popular forces to fully assert themselves. Then the tyranny of the ongoing project compounded by obligated foreign aid would reduce 'flexibility' to a fiction.

Mercifully this grand design was frustrated and their frantic last ditch attempts to protect their goals exposed. One may, however, have no fear that they will remain active in conjuring up new schemes and mobilising fresh support for their grand design. It is, therefore, important to urge that when their machinations now lie fully exposed to the world, the nation ought no longer to tolerate their presence in the most sensitive areas of policy. The stakes are now too high to permit what are now agreed social and regionla goals to be frustrated by a small and irresponsibile power group who stand discredited and exposed before the people.


forum

Wanted New Planners

forum
Vol. I, No. 13
16 February, 1970

discusses

this saturday

Meeting India's Challenge		4
Between the Lines	Linesman	5
Fourth Plan Fiasco	R. Sobhan	6
Showdown on the Punjab Capus		8
Pakistan's Crazy Exchange Rate	FRU	10
Books		
A Non-Conformist Speaks	S. Islam Chowdhury	12
In the News	Ali Bakht	13
Behind the Headlines	Renegade	14
Readers' Forum		15
Education		
Merry-Go-Round	B. Wajihur Rahman	16

next saturday

A.R. KHAN
TOWARDS A JUST SOCIETY

Editor
Hameeda Hossain
Executive Editor
Rehman Sobhan

Published and printed by Dr. Kamal Hossain for Forum Publications Ltd., 41, Hatkhola Road, Dacca 2, East Pakistan, at The East Pakistan Press (The National Publishers Ltd.), Bangshal Road, Dacca, East Pakistan.

Subscription rates

Surface mail:	
Pakistan & Asia	**Rs. 15.00**
All other countries	**Rs. 25.00**
Air Mail:	
West Pakistan	**Rs. 20.00**
Middle East	**Rs. 42.00**
Africa, Far East & Europe	**Rs. 62.00**
Canada & U.S.A.	**Rs. 95.00**