

## Unrest In The Campus

by : Sundeep Khanna

The appointment of Dr. K. N. Raj as the Vice Chancellor of Delhi University has lulled all the controversy that had erupted a few months back. The poster war which had begun following the news of his selection, is also over. One does not know whether the trouble makers have accepted his appointment in good faith or not. However, the selection of Dr. Sarup Singh, Head of the English Department as the Pro Vice-Chancellor, is not without its significance.

Over the past three years there has been considerable talk of student unrest. A careful analysis of the various agitations reveals a different story. Although, the university had to be closed down twice in the current session and once last year, yet one can say that it was not because of genuine student unrest. Student unrest should properly be understood to mean agitations connected with the academic problems of the University. In the current session, the university had to be closed because of the students-D.T.U, employees clashes, and in the last session it was because of the controversy over those students of the first year class, who had failed but had been promoted in four colleges. None of the two issues concerned the student community as a whole and neither had much relevance to academic life.

Then, what explains the poster war and the talk of unrest? Authoritative sources

successful. The Delhi University Teachers Association was set up but it could not serve its purpose beyond a certain point because of the very small proportion of teachers taking part in it. Gradually the membership of this body has increased and every year, in the beginning massive campaigns are launched to enrol new members and all sorts of tactics are employed. In the process teachers cannot but avoid taking classes at times. Mentally and physically they remain devoted to politics all the year round.

As a result of persistent efforts, a number of students have also joined the teachers. Because of active participation and propaganda, the number of students is on the increase, though it continues to be very small. The forms which are being utilized for this purpose are the Marxist Discussion Groups and various other names which are assumed from time to time, like "Anti-Imperialist League", "Society to Resist U. S. Imperialist Penetration in Delhi University, Democratic Forum" "Forum of young Democrats", "Teachers Action Committee" etc. etc. The important activities of such forms include the celebration of Vietnam Day, Workers, Peasants and Students Unity Day, Anti-Communal Riots Day, Anti Minority suppression Day etc. Call had also been given for meetings on Bank Nationalization, Whither India, Downfall of United Front in Kerala, split in congress, Syndicate Politics, Yuvani etc. Posters had also been issued against certain teachers, managing committees and the R.S.S.

week two or three posters are issued, warning somebody, asking for something and provoking something new (The selection and appointment of Dr. K. N. Raj was a very hotly contested issue). Early in the morning a student goes to the university in the hope of learning something new and thoughtful. But by the time he enters the classroom, his mind is no more fresh. Enough impact has been made by the various posters, sometimes troubling him as to what will happen? or will there be some violence? or sometimes he just gets fed up with everything around which he considers to be 'sheer nonsense.' The non-serious students, however, tend to ignore all this 'enlightening' material. The most interesting aspect of the whole game is that the students and teachers who are associated with the slogans of the type... "In 1965 alone the west earned 562 crores of profit from Asia, Africa and Latin America, Down with capitalists, Naxa'bari's revolutionary way is our only way, overthrow the oppressive landlord and capitalist dominated and foreign controlled ruling class, Beware of Fascist dogs, K. N. Raj means the Raj of students, teachers and employees, have no base or hold among the great majority of the students. Not more than 5% of the students are interested in all that keeps on happening. And these 'actives' operate in a void sitting all the day in various coffee houses whether the university is functioning or closed. One does not know how they talk of exploitation, when they come in cars, usually with American cigarettes and cigars. By the way, that seems

Then, what explains the poster war and the talk of unrest? Authoritative sources have informally indicated that certain sections of teachers are behind this. Lately, the movement for democratisation has also come in for a good deal of comment. What precisely it means and how it is understood by the students and teachers, it is difficult to say. However, it is true that some years ago, a microscopic section of the teaching community felt having been left out from the process of decision-making. Such a type of feeling was a natural by-product of the confusion consequent upon the flood of numerous schemes of examinations and courses of study. Even now there is a glut of schemes and working groups. By itself the small section could not have done anything. In the normal course, nobody in the university would bother, so they had to get down to develop a wider base. The efforts were only partially

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To counter such propaganda certain other organizations have been formed, inspired by teachers who may be having pro Jana Sangh and R.S.S. leanings. These hold meetings and issue posters on Rabat fiasco, Sheikh Abdullah's communalism, national language, Arab League activities, Rape of Czechoslovakia, economic and cultural exploitation of masses etc. Both the sides can, of course, issue warnings on unemployment and Naxalbari ways. The fictitious organizations of this type also have the backing of political parties.

The formation of two groups of students and teachers, with the great bulk of both remaining passive observers, has vitiated the academic atmosphere of the university. Their source of money is not known to anybody. Every

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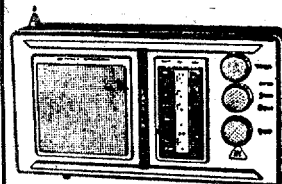
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to be one of the ways of winning over some 'side-kicks' in the beginning.

The two noble ideas of democratization and student participation have been made issues of politics, one section keeps on shouting about these while other talks of Indira Gandhi's Communists Leaning. Nobody has got a definite idea as to what is meant by these two concepts. Some think that the students should be represented in the Academic Council but the fact remains that one or two representatives in these bodies cannot make a difference. In Hindu College and at some other places the idea of a Joint Consultative Committee consisting of students and teachers representatives, has been put into practice but the Delhi University Students' Union Leaders think that it is an attempt to by pass them. To some teachers democratization implies greater participation for teachers, but they are represented even now in various bodies. The fact remains that the ideas of participation and democratization have been put forward more forcefully by teachers than by the students. The interested teachers are, in fact, surprised at the refusal of students at large to co-operate.

The fact that Dr. K. N. Raj's case was taken up by one side has caused many eyebrows to be raised as to the prospects of more trouble in the university. But the appointment of Dr. Sarup Singh as the pro Vice-Chancellor, particularly when he was maligned by one of the groups in the last session, comes as a ray of hope to those who want to be serious about their studies. It remains to be seen how far these hopes can materialize.

Tail piece : This is the third time that a person has been picked up from the Delhi School of Economics to become the Vice Chancellor. They are Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao, B. N. Ganguli and now Dr. K. N. Raj.