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According to some arm-chair critics and "progressive" politicians, a few of them belonging to Congress, darkness has descended upon Uttar Pradesh for three very good reasons, viz., postponement of take-over of sugar mills by one year and promulgation of two ordinances, one relating to preventive detention and the other to compulsory students' Unions. Some of these gentlemen have also raised an objection to Government's decision to take over the Medical College of Lucknow. Excepting the question of sugar mills I will like to make a reply to the rest of the objections today:

The Preventive Detention Act was originally enacted by the Government of India in 1950 and was intended to remain in force only till April 1, 1951. In the interest of public security, however, its life was continuously extended till, with the last lease granted in 1966, it expired on December 31, 1969. In reply to a query made by the Government of India in August, 1969, the State Government had impressed upon them the need for extending the life of the Act for yet another term of three years. Three months later, however, Government of India informed us that it was not certain whether the life of the Act would be extended beyond 1969, but suggested that "the State Government may urgently undertake a review of the



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problems likely to arise on the lapse of the Preventive Detention Act and consider such measures as may be necessary to meet the situation."

According to information available with the State Government, the Government of Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra had, simultaneously with the expiry of the said Act, promulgated Ordinances to provide for preventive detention. Similarly, the Government of Madhya Pradesh had also issued an Ordinance amending the Madhya Pradesh Public Security Act to provide for preventive detention. The States of Orissa and Rajasthan too have since made laws on the subject and the Orissa Act is reported to have been extended to the Union Territory of Manipur in May last.

It will be noted that, with the exception of Orissa, all these Governments are Congress Governments. The State Government of U.P., therefore, is in very good company, indeed. This legislation or its extension has all along been opposed by Communists and their fellow travellers or by those who, however patriotic, are living in a world of their own fantasy-for removed from reality. It is not aimed at curbing the legitimate political activities of any party, but only at intercepting and keeping under detention those about whose dangerous and subversive intentions the State Government has no doubt-those who want to make it impossible for normal Government based on law to function. Any appeal to Government in the sacred name of civil liberties comes with ill grace from those

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under the heaven of whose conception civil liberties would be non-existent. Commending the Preventive Detention Bill to the acceptance of the Lok Sabha, the late. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru than whom there was no greater defender of civil liberties, had declared: "I do submit that subject to such minor amendments or variations as the House may accept, the main approach in the Bill is not only right but fully democratic."

It may be news to our critics that till date only ~~only~~ one District Magistrate has thought it fit to take recourse to this measure in respect of four persons, but his decision has yet to be confirmed by the State Government. So that the people of Uttar Pradesh are not living in any darkness of slavery, but in the light of full freedom and security. The attempt of certain parties to seize private and public property and thus create disorder has failed though it might have served to gladden the hearts of the enemies of the country whose forces are massed on our frontiers.

As regards the Ordinance against compulsory students' Union: Thanks to the good sense of our boys, the prophets of doom who had forecast a reign of terror and police shootings, have been proved to be utterly in the wrong. Hardly 90 students out of some one lakh and fifty thousand studying in degree colleges and the Universities of the State showed their resentment against the Ordinance by contravening law, and had to be put behind the bars. All these institutions,

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however, are functioning normally. Perhaps, two generation of our Vice-Chancellors assembled in a Conference, once in 1964 and then 1968, and the Kothari Commission consisting of eminent educationaists, who had expressed themselves against the compulsory nature of these Unions, knew more about students and their welfare than politicians whose one single aim was to seize upon every possible pretext with a view to embarrassing the present State Government if they could. To most of these politicians, the interest of our young generation or the ultimate interest of the country was secondary. I can only hope and pray that, with our students taking seriously to their studies, Uttar Pradesh which has lagged so far behind, will now have been put on an upward keel and will soon make the grade.



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