

# frontier

Vol. 2: No. 12

JUNE 28, 1969

PRICE 35 PAISE

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Editor : Samar Sen

PRINTED AT MODERN INDIA PRESS,  
7, RAJA SUBODH MULLICK SQUARE,  
CALCUTTA-13 AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY  
BY SAMAR SEN FROM 61, MOTT LANE,  
CALCUTTA-13

## MOSCOW TO NOWHERE

THE Russians had for long set their hearts on an international meeting of communist parties in the gorgeous St. George hall of the Kremlin. That 75 parties did get together, after many a postponement, is something for Mr Brezhnev and Mr Kosygin to crow over. They must have been more than pleased that the Rumanian Prime Minister did not walk out despite the unscheduled attack on China in violation of an earlier assurance ; that Dr Husak, the First Secretary of the Czech party, protested stoogelike against criticism of the August invasion ; that the fidelity of Cuba was made clear by the observer from Havana who made a solemn declaration that his country would stand by Russia when she "defends" socialism in another country or her borders against aggression ; that a representative of the East Pakistan Communist Party, produced from nowhere, demanded a forthright condemnation of Peking ; that Mr Dange as usual supported the Russian stand all along, including the suggestion of collective security for Asia (he thinks that it is aimed at America. Blessed are the innocent ! They will be included in the secretariat of the proposed permanent body to debate imperialism). As for the speeches made by other delegates, well, their stand was well known. It was taken for granted that the smaller the party, the more vocal it would be for the Soviets. What was singular was that some 14 parties stuck to their reservations about the document and that, for a change the Russians came to know from *Pravda* that not all the actions of their leadership are accepted in toto by fraternal parties. The document is a compromise in which Czechoslovakia and China have been left out. It has loopholes ; though it proclaims the principle of the equality of all communist parties and non-interference in their affairs, it also states that defence of socialism is the international duty of communist parties (primarily of the "first among equals"), which is an indirect affirmation of the Brezhnev doctrine of limited sovereignty. It may, for instance, very well justify Russian intervention in a bigger country where Mr Brezhnev thinks the communists have gone to the dogs.

The full text of the document is not at hand ; even when it is, it would perhaps lead to a weariness of the flesh. But diligent observers all the same would compare it with the 1957 Moscow Declaration and the resolution of the 1960 81-Party conference. Many communists with divergent approaches to the problem of war and peace, still swear by the

1960 resolution, interpreting it in their own way. The Chinese saw in it a marked departure, more marked than in the 1957 declaration, from the principles of peaceful co-existence, peaceful competition and peaceful transition to socialism proclaimed in the 1956 Congress of the CPSU. But the Russians continued to go their own way towards a rapprochement with America, the principal imperialist enemy. Peaceful co-existence led to support of the status quo everywhere; peaceful competition paved the way for collaboration; and peaceful transition to socialism has emasculated many a communist party. The latest reference, in this context, to the UF experiment in Kerala and West Bengal might have made even the waiting CPI(M) leaders in Bucharest uncomfortable. In Kerala, a vicious dogfight is on; as for West Bengal, Mr Suslov does not know that it is much easier to behead a Beria than to suspend a police official here. Fed on caviar he has forgotten that a change of Ministry is not much unless the administration is shaken up and replaced.

As for the great fight against imperialism, the Russian role should have been obvious after Camp David, Glassboro, and the over-eagerness to meet Mr Nixon, Russia now behaves like a mighty power, who is so frightened of the mightier USA—after Cuba—that she would like to carve out safe spheres of influence. Any upheaval anywhere, whether in France, Pakistan or the Middle East, disturbs her no end; everywhere she sees the Chinese red rag. She is bitter about the activists in France and Pakistan, and reviles the guerillas of the Middle East. There was a time when the Western world blamed Russia for upheavals anywhere under the sun. Now it is the habit of Russia to speak of a Chinese conspiracy wherever there is militancy. Such a reformist, conservative power can no longer be considered a bulwark of the struggle against imperialism. Sure, she cannot but help the heroic people of Vietnam—which Khrushchev once wrote off—but to her the Vietnam war is just an impe-

diment to an understanding with America. When this impediment is removed, there will be greater bonhomie with the imperialist power condemned in the latest declaration and efforts for "collective security" in Asia will be stepped up. To talk of war against America is a sin in the Soviet Union, but the Russian people are being conditioned for a bigger confrontation with the Chinese, whose nuclear might is nowhere near that of Russia or America. True, the Chinese are also being asked to be prepared for clashes with Russia, but then, war with America either is not a four-letter word to Peking.

The latest Moscow conference was preceded and accompanied by reports of clashes on the Sinkiang-Kazakhstan border. (Asians fighting Asians?) The Russians have by now mobilised a formidable force, including rocket units, in Outer Mongolia and along their border with China. It was from a position of great strength that they have condescended to offer border talks to Peking without *preconditions*, but one of the *conditions* being that the legitimacy of the old treaties (denounced by Marx, Engels and Lenin) cannot be questioned. The fight against imperialism being a routine incantation, whether the Moscow conference will act as a restraint on the Kremlin or encourage it to a more forward policy towards China is the crux of the matter. Whatever may be said, this murderous border dispute between two powers on whom hopes of a world revolution were once centred, is one of the great tragedies of our times.

### Repeat: Performance

History, some have remarked not very inventively during the past week, is repeating itself in Bihar. If so, what a history! It was almost exactly a year ago that a Government headed by Mr Bhola Paswan, the third to be formed after the 1967 elections, fell and the Governor took over in the name of the President. Last Sunday, it was Mr Paswan who

stepped in again, after the fall of a Congress-led coalition. Yet this is no neat completion of a political cycle; what is being repeated is basic instability. And the basic cause of the instability is the corruption of Bihar's political life by none other than the Congress clique which ruled the State for 20 years. Others have not been particularly disinclined to follow the example, but it is the Congress that has provided the motive force. And the Congress is not the party to learn or change—not so long as men like Mr S. K. Patil and Mr Ram Subhag Singh are in a position to place an unperson like Mr Harihar Singh at the head of a dubiously constituted coalition Government in Patna. Not so long as men like Mr K. B. Sahay and his cronies continue to control the real sources of power in the State. Not so long as Congressmen need help from men like the Raja of Ramgarh. Dr Lohia once described the Raja as politically untouchable, but surely the Congress could not practise untouchability—not in the Gandhi centenary year.

The people have not been wholly acquiescent; the Congress was voted out of power in 1967. But the party did succeed in sabotaging the first United Front Government in less than a year of its formation. Then came what was described in some circles as Mandal's Bundle, the minority Shoshit Dal Government supported by the Congress. It was predictably short-lived, but the second United Front Government, headed by Mr Bhola Paswan, did not last much longer. Curiously, the period of President's rule did nothing to stabilize the alignment of political forces; the position was even more confused after the mid-term elections. But the Congress made up its mind not to stay out of power; if Ramgarh and his relations had to be included in the Ministry, there was no harm in forgetting the past. After all, if the progressive and eminently respectable Kalakankar could form a matrimonial alliance with the house of Ramgarh, who was a political irrelevance like Mr Harihar Singh to be particularly exclusive about his Ministry? And

if Raja Kamakhya Narayan himself proved too much of an embarrassment, he could be represented by his mother and brother. But others, too, had to be pleased; the power structure in the State Congress had hardly changed and those who were persuaded to support the party exacted a heavy price. So it became a Cabinet of 33; numbers were not going to daunt an old and hitherto inconspicuous Congressman like Mr Harihar Singh.

But it was much more difficult to find work for the new appointees; so much so that two-thirds of the team functioned, if that is the correct word, without portfolios. The Chief Minister and some of his close friends and colleagues were not, however, exactly inactive. It has been alleged that they tried to interfere with the Commissions of Inquiry investigating charges of corruption against some former Ministers; perhaps this was the least that the Chief Minister could do in return for the help that he had received from the faction which, though discredited in public, was still strong enough to shape the party's choice. But the Ministers holding sinecures finally revolted; they wanted not only position but also power, which in Bihar politics means something much more material. The Government fell, ironically through the defection of the same Soshit Dal which had brought about the fall of Bihar's first United Front Government. The new Government, too, will have to depend on the support of people with remarkably fickle political loyalties. It is some relief that the Harihar Singh disgrace has been thrown out of power, but the improvement is perhaps limited. The new coalition is hardly more cohesive; things may continue to be decided by ratting, re-ratting, or threats thereof. Confusion may yet lead to another, and prolonged, spell of President's rule. It had been hoped before the mid-term elections that the leftist and other democratic forces would be able to consolidate their position after the disintegration of the Congress. This did not happen. But hope persists among certain cir-

cles that there may be still time—for purposeful and sustained work, if not for immediate success.

*A correspondent writes:*

The question is, what will happen to Bihar in the end? Paswan, followed by a spell of Presidential rule, followed by another election, followed by another impasse? If the electorate finds little to choose between the diverse political elements in the State, they will perhaps continue to vote, with minor shifts here and there, more or less in the way they have voted on the last two occasions. The ensuing instability will strengthen the hegemony of the bureaucrats, corruption will be sustained, fundamental structural changes left untended. Bihar exemplifies some of the worst social inequalities in this country, and, unsurprisingly, some of the worst economic inequalities as well, particularly in respect of tenurial arrangements for land. An under-current of Naxalite turbulence is already there, in districts such as Purnea, Saharsha Monghyr and Hazaribagh; but, given a long spell of political vacuum and consequential moratorium on economic and social progress, the movement can spread like a wild forest fire in the next few years. A modicum of primary education, which could synthesize the assorted discontents into a militant peasant movement, can work havoc with the apparently tranquil fibre of Bihar's political life.

All this may be prejudging history. And all this could happen, with the very same application of logic, to the country as a whole. But the traditional parties, for their own good, ought to study the early warning signals. Regretfully for them, life does not consist exclusively of counting and counter-acting votes cast for the ayes and noes on the floor of the Vidhan Sabha. Not even Bihar's four Ministers in the Union Cabinet can prevent the State from exploding when the time arrives. And the time may arrive sooner than in many another State, and certainly sooner than politicians and civil servants might think.

## Bank Strike

At the call of the All-India State Bank of India Supervising Staff Federation, 7,200 officers of the bank have struck work, at Bombay since June 11, at other places since June 16. The demands of the strikers are clear. In April this year, the Federation had called another strike, demanding a revision of pay. It was assured that the management would hold bilateral talks to sort out the issue and that there would be no victimisation when the strike was called off. The strike was called off but talks were not held. On the contrary, five officers were suspended, five were chargesheeted and seventeen others were served with show cause notices. Ostensibly, these employees were involved in an incident of handing over keys but the Federation considers the incident a mere eyewash. The stand of the Federation is simple. Stray employees cannot be held responsible for an act which was carried out at the instance of the Federation.

The Federation has other demands. It considers a revision of pay scales essential because of several anomalies that have cropped up. It considers the SBI service conditions outdated, it wants the officers' working hours fixed. But the Federation is ready to call off the strike only if the suspension orders and charge sheets are withdrawn. It is even prepared to tender apology on behalf of the employees suspended and chargesheeted. It has agreed to defer the other points of dispute. But the management has remained adamant; the strike must be withdrawn as a precondition for talks.

Understandably the attitude of the Federation has stiffened now. It has refused, after the dictatorial stance of the SBI Chairman became obvious, to hold talks with the management. It demands immediate intervention of the Government, not excluding arbitration.

The SBI management, instead of sitting for talks, is seeking to confuse the people over the issues. Within a span of seven days, it has released

as many as four big advertisements on an all-India basis and sidetracked the main contention. First it states that the SBI service conditions are not outdated because these were formulated after the formation of the SBI in 1955! Secondly, it has questioned the morality of the strike. It considers suspension orders and chargesheets no act of victimisation; they are mere formalities of questioning! Thirdly, it considers that the officers have flouted their solemn individual contracts of service by disobeying the management. The Federation, however, was recognised to have the sole bargaining power on behalf of the 7,200 officers. Even as late as June 17, the Chairman, in a letter to the Federation, has recognised the representative character of the Federation. But now, the management is reluctant to concede trade union rights to the Federation, although it recognises the right to freedom of association.

As the management would not withdraw the suspension orders and chargesheets, the strike continues (at the time of writing, June 25). The Central Labour Commissioner

cannot intervene because the striking officers are not workers' according to the industrial disputes acts. The Government would not intervene lest it should be forced to grant the Federation trade union rights, an act which is bound to snowball. Meanwhile the SBI, the chief financial wing of the country, covering one-third of the banking sector, remains paralysed. The Central Government, which goes furiously calculating the loss of the country whenever a general strike is called somewhere, shows no concern at the stoppage of daily turnover of capital. That the agricultural cooperatives and small-scale industries are hit hardest because of the cessation of loans does not matter in the least.

The Federation, however, enjoys the sympathy of all bankmen in the country, officers and clerks, because it has put forward a crucial point—not merely a matter of overtime wages but the trade union rights of a section of employees who are the least secure of all employees just because they happen to draw a pay between Rs 850 and Rs 1,500.

## Enter Pompidou

M Georges Pompidou's not so impressive victory in the French Presidential run-off has not brought to an end speculation about the kind of policies to be pursued by the Elysee. This is only natural; after over a decade of de Gaulle's imperious rule, which brought both glory and crises to France, it would not be an easy job for M Pompidou even with his brilliant background—a classics scholar, association with an international banker and long years of intimate involvement with the General—to decide to what extent he can break away from his Gaullist past. The mandate may be for Gaullism without de Gaulle, but with such a large percentage of absenteeism by the electorate the last word has not been said. For this, the French Communist Party would claim a large measure of credit as its Central Committee asked all

those who had voted for M Jacques Duclos in the first round not to vote for either of the remaining two reactionary candidates. The decision was unique in the sense that never before in the country's history had a major political party decided to boycott an election. As a consequence, M Pompidou, who needed many more votes, was denied the privilege of disproving the allegation of non-Gaullists that he represented a privileged minority.

Why did the Communist Party do it? Certainly, it did not become revolutionary overnight. By simple logic, it could have campaigned against M Pompidou, if not overtly for M Alain Poher. In case of a victory for M Poher, the static political balance in the country would have given way to a fluid situation, which the communists could have exploited

to improve their position. But perhaps the Kremlin held de Gaulle in great esteem for his routine lambasting of NATO and American foreign policy, notwithstanding the fact that the General kept in good humour President Nixon during his swing to Paris. They thought Pompidou would be principally a continuator of Gaullist policy which would weaken Europe and its link with America. In contrast, M Poher was pro-European and Atlantic minded.

M Pompidou was categorical in saying that the main aspects of French foreign policy would be continued, although there might be a change of style. For Europe to reach a political awareness of itself, an organization would have to be set up which would provide a platform to different European countries for evolving common policies and common political attitudes. M Pompidou admits that Britain cannot be denied admission to the Common Market for all time and she must one day form part of Europe. But Britain must satisfy some conditions, originally spelled out by de Gaulle. A negotiation between the two countries is possible, but there is no point in initiating it, according to M Pompidou, unless there is a fair chance of success. A broader Europe with its own nuclear defence system will be more independent of the USA than it is now. This would also provide a room for manoeuvrability when the two super-Powers are seeking accommodation with each other. During M Pompidou's presidential term, any fresh effort for a Franco-Soviet pact is ruled out. The war against U.S. economic imperialism, which de Gaulle is said to have waged, will be continued but M Pompidou's pro-American bias in foreign policy "would inevitably be reflected in more trustful relationship with Washington". The new President has accorded the highest priority to the country's economy. Consumer prices have been steadily rising, the wage gains of last spring have been wiped out, the franc continues to be a weak currency and there is an unfavourable trade ba-

lance. President Pompidou is thinking of floating a State bond to attract a part of the money which has raised consumption to a record level. He may well drop de Gaulle's formula of participation of workers and patrons and encourage profit sharing and distribution of earnings among workers. But this is unlikely to have any significant impact on the workers who are preparing for a trial of strength over the wage issue with M Pompidou, a tough law and order man.

## Scurrying Out

Who are the real government in South Vietnam? The papa in Washington D.C. should know it best. So what New Delhi's South Block can meanwhile do is to wait for the commandment. But the motley crowd round Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky who have so long pretended to 'govern' South Vietnam now begin to realize that to believe in what they themselves claim is suicidal. Saigon's valiant generals, diplomats and officials have started scurrying for shelter like rats leaving a sinking ship.

The fortunate few who are at present Saigon's representatives abroad could simply resign their posts and take to more peaceful, if less profitable, professions like running piggery or massage parlours in hospitable climates. Other patriots like Cao Ky might well pack off and fly to a safer haven. For the rest the going is difficult but the difficulty can be overcome. For example, a certificate of French parentage can give one French citizenship and a safe passage to swinging Paris. And French parents could be purchased on the Saigon market at a moderate price of \$2,800. The cheapest course, however, is to get oneself smuggled out of Vietnam aboard a Saigon-leaving liner. One minor hazard involved in the operation is that after pocketing \$1,100 the captain of the liner might suddenly feel very conscientious and turn over the ratted

Vietnamese to the 'authorities'. A thousand pities that the Vietnamese nationalists do not have their Taiwan where they could deposit gold bars and other booty. The gold that Thieu, Ky and Co. have amassed over the years has, alas, to be buried in vaults outside the beloved fatherland. The Riviera or the Miami Beach would certainly make lovely homes *sans* booby traps, *sans* mines. But in nostalgic moments they would always yarn for the golden days in Vietnam, which, thanks to the Yanks, has been an El Dorado. Nguyen Cao Ky might well find out many a smuggler's para-

dise but how can he forget the booming business of 'Operation Haylift'—days when he could use a whole U.S. fleet of aircraft to run opium from Laos?

Some of the Thieu-Ky boys who prefer the solitude of high places could well be invited to this hospitable land. An arrangement to house them in Dehra Dun along with the Tibetan comrades would add considerably to India's foreign exchange reserves as well as to her international prestige. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is also there to give spiritual solace to anybody who is in need of it.

## View from Delhi

# Stage-Managing Succession

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

**A**FTER the 1967 elections, the "Syndicate" has been an amorphous amalgam of political destitutes fancying itself the biggest power factor in the country. Two of its stalwarts, Mr Kamaraj and Mr S. K. Patil, managed to rehabilitate themselves politically through by-election victories while the odd-man still out is Mr Atulya Ghosh. Mr Nijalingappa, well, is the Indian version of a Nikita Khrushchev who can say anything and get away with it.

But last week witnessed the revival of the Syndicate. Before Mr Nijalingappa returned from his tour abroad (indeed a scandal eclipsed by bigger controversies), Mr Giri's election as President was taken for granted all over. He was the Prime Minister's candidate, the darling of both the communist parties, the DMK and the Akalis and who else... But the Syndicate knew this was the last chance to get even with a Prime Minister who thought her succession was a matter of dynastic right which had nothing to do with the Congress. One remembers her arrogance when the stalwarts of the Syndicate, Mr Kamaraj, Mr Patil and Mr Atulya Ghosh, who claimed to

have put her in office in 1966, were routed and she won impressively in the first ever election she contested. The Syndicate was in search of a role then, trying to give the country the impression that they were still managing the country's Prime Ministerial election. All they could do was to impose Mr Morarji Desai on the Cabinet, only to find that the bumpkin from Bulsar was the most loyal Deputy Prime Minister anybody could have got.

In January 1968, Mr Nijalingappa, roped in as Congress President by the Prime Minister in something like a khedda operation, was the Syndicate's man to stage a coup which unfortunately never came off. After that the Syndicate has been in disarray—Mr Nijalingappa nailed to the cross as the President of the Congress and Mr Sanjiva Reddy as the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the rest languishing in political wilderness after their electoral defeats.

But last week, when everybody seemed to have taken Mr Giri's election for granted, the Syndicate got cracking down to the job of confronting Mrs Gandhi. Mr Sanjiva Reddy is the kind of politician with ins-

tinct for the mass mood, the typical grass-roots leader the Syndicate should back if it had any concern for the 1972 elections when the Congress will most certainly lose majority in Parliament. The Prime Minister talked diffusely about harmony between the Prime Minister and the President but then is she sure she will be the Prime Minister and Mr Giri the President?

No doubt, Mr Giri is the kind of incorruptible politician who resigned from the Central Cabinet over the Shastri Award because he found there were too many salesmen in the Cabinet who wouldn't countenance a fair deal for labour. But that is nothing because in 1972 the Prime Minister would prefer a listless, colourless President who would look to her for guidance. The Syndicate on the other hand would like a party strongman who could play hell out of any Prime Minister of a coalition set-up, even if it be Mrs Indira Gandhi.

In the first place, Mrs Gandhi had no party mandate to go about consulting the opposition parties about Mr Giri's candidature. The Syndicate decided to bring the Prime Minister under party control and made it known that extra-party acceptability was no decisive factor in Mr Giri's favour. For, if Mr Giri was acceptable to some parties, Mr Sanjiva Reddy would be equally acceptable to some other parties.

After that it was a war of attrition. Mr Giri's opponents thought that a controversy over his candidature would force him to announce his decision not to contest the post. But Mr Giri is dead set on becoming a permanent resident of Rashtrapati Bhavan and nothing would force him to announce his retirement from the contest.

The Prime Minister's position is at stake because she is reported to have assured Mr Giri on behalf of the Congress High Command that he would be the Congress candidate. The Syndicate is out to call this bluff. After all what happens in 1972 is a matter for Congress concern and not Mrs Indira Gandhi's,

She cannot commit the party to a position. It was a different situation in 1967, when she backed Dr Zakir Husain and Mr Kamaraj backed Dr Radhakrishnan, but in the last minute, finding the going heavy, Dr Radhakrishnan chose to step down.

The Syndicate is out to play its game this time. If there is a deadlock between Mr Giri and Mr Sanjiva Reddy, by no means unacceptable to the Opposition including the communists, the Syndicate may yet spring a surprise by proposing Mr Kamaraj. In fact the talk in New Delhi is that Mr Sanjiva Reddy is only a cover candidate for Mr Kamaraj or Mr Nijalingappa who might emerge as the compromise candidate.

One of the sedulously fostered myths is that Mr Giri is a candidate of the left, in the sense the communists would back him. But suppose Mr Sanjiva Reddy or Mr Kamaraj gets the Congress nomination and the defeat of the Congress candidate would mean the defeat of Mrs Indira Gandhi, dare either of the communist parties vote against the Congress candidate? An extreme possibility is that Mr Giri might become the candidate of the opposition if he does not get the Congress nomination. The leftist solicitude for Mr Giri is not because he is an oldtime trade unionist but because he is Mrs Gandhi's candidate. The Presidential election will force a polarisation in the Congress sooner than the bosses expect and that should be welcome to everyone except the communists.

The Congress Working Committee could not clinch the Presidential election issue just as it could not arrive at any decision on Telengana. The dialogue on Telengana is continuing with the agitation leaders in no mood to relent. After all Dr Raj Bahadur Gour had to call off his fast tamely with no prospect of President's Rule in the State. The CPI ought to know by now that it has been playing the game of a certain Congress faction when it pioneered the demand for President's Rule in the State.

#### Latest Scandal

The issues remain but the Prime Minister has to go to Japan and Indonesia just as she had to go to Afghanistan amidst the Telengana crisis. The choice of correspondents to cover her tour is the latest scandal rocking New Delhi. The Government made it known to correspondent that it would cost them Rs. 15,000 and then Rs. 10,000 to cover the tour. And then it was found in the end that all that one needs is an air ticket to Tokyo after which everything else is on someone, but this time the favourites had been chosen. The Government realises to its shock that the image of the Prime Minister in Tokyo or Jakarta would depend on the number of correspondents accompanying her and the burden had to be lightened to Rs. 2,600-odd (the bare air fare to Tokyo) but even then there were no takers. Individual correspondents were talked into accompanying her though it is certain if some of them went about the assignment seriously and filed their cables in earnest (75 paise a precious word!) their papers would go bankrupt even before the correspondents landed back in India. But India's image and the Prime Minister's image are more important than all the foreign exchange needed to give those going with her enough dough to buy all the tape-recorders and transistors even at duty free rates! Meanwhile, Telengana and the Presidential elections can take care of themselves.

June 22, 1969

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JUNE 28, 1969

## The Susta Issue

N. K. SINGH

**R**OUND after round of talks. But the result is nothing. And again there will be talks sometime in the third week of July. But according to *New World*, a Nepalese journal, the next round of talks may be as fruitless as the recent one—the External Affairs Minister, Mr Dinesh Singh's visit to Nepal had failed.

As a matter of fact it is not just a boundary problem. Any regular reader of Nepalese journals can find the roots easily. No doubt, Indo-Nepal relations were very good in the past. Everything was there—cooperation, trade and commerce. There is also a geographical relation between the two countries as well as historical. Then why the change? The fact is, a section of Nepalese thinks that India is trying to impose herself on Nepal. Extremist elements are growing and a large section of students is under the influence of pro-Peking politics.

These are the factors in whose light we have to see Susta, which sparked off a series of anti-Indian demonstrations in recent months in several towns of Nepal. Susta is a forest area near Gorakhpur at a point called "U", the trijunction of Nepal, U.P. and Bihar. There had been no territorial dispute between the two countries until boundary pillars in this section were washed away by the shifting stream of the Gandak river. Both countries are agreed on the fact that boundary pillars were washed away but on other aspects of the boundary problem they have different versions.

At first an attempt was made to solve the problem at a lower level and the first round of talks was held on January 24 and 25 at Balmikinar on the Indo-Nepal border in which district-level officers participated. Then from April 27 a three-day conference was held at Balmikinar at a higher level but it was as fruitless as the previous one.

Both countries claimed ownership

of Susta. The Nepalese side wanted the boundary to be fixed in accordance with the map of 1817. The Indian side produced records and evidence regarding the boundary in the region on the basis of the Joint Boundary Commission's Report and map of 1930-31, which bears the signatures of official representatives of both sides.

The 1931 map shows distinctly the "rubicon" from place to place along the Susta section of the common boundary. India is of the view that the boundary line is clearly demarcated and she is willing to have the missing boundary pillars re-located with the help of a joint survey team. While Kathmandu says that the 1817 map gives the final demarcation (a press release of the Nepal Government said, "Nepal again and again stressed that the basis for survey and investigations for establishing the boundary in the Susta region should be the 1817 map"), New Delhi says it was left with the present boundaries by the departing British Government.

This "British made boundary" has created much trouble in the past also. The Sino-Indian boundary dispute had the same hallmark of "British made boundary". The present dispute is growing in the same way as the Sino-Indian dispute. Officials and Ministers are visiting each other's countries for a peaceful solution. Think of the 1957-60 period after which came the clash in 1962. Will the Susta issue also lead to clashes between two friendly countries?

The third round of talks was held on May 6—again without success—at the highest level between the two sides in New Delhi. The Nepal delegation was led by the Foreign Minister, Mr G. B. Rajbhandari, and the Indian team by Mr Dinesh Singh. Both sides agreed on the setting up of a joint survey team. The fourth round of 5-day talks at Kathmandu also ended on a note of controversy and brought the formal headlines—"Officials To Make Detailed Survey Of Susta Boundary."

Mr Dinesh Singh told newsmen that "there is no dispute over the boundary between India and Nepal. Our bound-

aries are well demarcated. We have no dispute at all. Only in the Susta region the boundary has to be re-located and pillars put up." How easy to say all this! But even only in the Susta region the talks "fell short of expectation". There is a possibility for the midstream of the Gandak to form the boundary, which will again change its course.

## Rifles On A Campus

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

**T**RUCKLOADS of khaki-uniformed policemen, a good number of them armed with rifles, arrive in a fighting mood on a college campus on a quiet morning when virtually its entire student population is engaged in a university examination. Many policemen march, almost in battle array, about 200 yards into the campus, fan out to cover all routes leading to the college building and start bashing whomsoever they come across. That was exactly what happened on the Regional Engineering College campus at Durgapur on the morning of June 2. It was an unprovoked attack, morally and legally unwarranted. The authorities of the college were stunned, for, not to speak of calling them, they had no knowledge even of any cause, immediate or remote, for the police to trespass on the campus. The Principal and his faculty were busy till then supervising a university examination. Within a few minutes the campus turned into a storm-centre, the police, aggressive throughout, throwing stones at the windows on every floor and motioning the students to come out. Frightened by the size of the police contingent and its rifles, none of the boys stirred out of the building. After a spell of stoning, the policemen adopted a new strategy to draw the students out of the building. They assembled at one point and began filing out as though leaving the campus. It was obviously a trick. Finding the policemen marching out, the boys rushed out of the building, some mak-

ing a dash for their halls of residence. That was exactly what the police wanted. Within a few minutes they turned round, came back running across the grass-lawns, mercilessly beating up the boys, all teenagers, who were scurrying for shelter. The next sixty minutes saw the police running amuck on the campus, shooting at unarmed people indiscriminately and bashing on heads. They broke open some doors, entered rooms on different floors, beat up people—staff and teachers—and shot through glass-panes into those rooms whose doors they found locked. Shots were fired at point-blank range even in the library hall on the first floor.

Wounded boys, among whom there are several from different parts of the country, tell of torture in instalments. Two teachers and the cashier, still laid up, speak of the inhuman attacks made on them even though they shouted they were members of the staff. Almost all teachers and members of the non-teaching staff (they stood huddled together with groups of students in small closed rooms for more than an hour, all shivering), speak of the nightmarish time they had that morning. Asked by me to give his impression of the incident a week after its occurrence, a senior Professor told me—"It was horrible. Statistics (300 injured and 1 dead) cannot convey the nature of the horror we went through that morning. It has left a scar on our minds." The enormity of the damage done in human and material terms is indescribable.

That it was a well-planned attack admits of no doubt. Certain facts should be noted: (a) the police were on the rampage for two long hours in broad daylight on a campus located near the junction of G. T. Road and Mahatma Gandhi Road: (b) the number of vehicles and the variety of weapons used by the police and the size of the contingent speak of an elaborate preparation behind it: (c) the target of the savage attack was anybody connected with the REC, whether students, teachers or non-teaching staff: (d) it was from beginning to end a

one-sided game, the riotous police making a brutal attack on an unprotected college community. If it was, as reported, a case of police revolt in the opinion of the local SDO, there was enough time for him to bring in a military unit from Panagarh, an army base on G. T. Road at a distance of only 7 miles from Durgapur. Why didn't he call in the army? How does he explain his inactivity? Why did not the SP personally order on the spot the police contingent to surrender arms if, as reported, it had acted without instruction from him? Why did the State-controlled AIR broadcast in its news-bulletins for two consecutive

days wrong facts and wrong data about the incident?

Even if the police version of rowdy conduct on the part of a group of students on the previous day on G. T. Road is accepted for argument's sake, it does not follow that they are authorized by law or have the moral right to take retaliatory action against the entire college population and that on its campus. The police may have the right to arrest offenders or use arms in self-defence if attacked, but they cannot storm an institution and launch an attack on its people when they are engaged in their routine work. That is sheer lawlessness.

## The Ninth Congress : Party And Constitution

N. R. KALPATHI

**T**HE Ninth Congress of the Communist Party of China, which began in April 1969 and continued for a little over three weeks, marked the end of one of the far-reaching events in Chinese communist history—the Cultural Revolution. China had witnessed since 1966 a mass movement on a vast scale questioning certain values, perceptions, judgments, and policies and reaffirming certain others. And undoubtedly the convening of the Ninth Congress symbolized the climax and triumph of this movement. The significant events of the Congress were the unanimous acceptance of the political report of Vice-Chairman Lin Piao, the adoption of a new party constitution and the election of the new leadership of the Communist Party of China. In order to understand the significance of these developments it is necessary to analyse the context of the decisions reached by the Congress.

Strikingly similar in form to the classical Chinese, "eight-legged essay," Lin Piao's political report is in eight sections, each section being devoted to decisions taken in a given field. The earlier parts deal with the developments in the party—the origin of the

differences—and the reasons why the Cultural Revolution was launched. The sixth part sums up the views of the Maoist leadership regarding the tasks of the future—"the consolidation and building of the party". The last two parts deal with foreign policy and the need for "greater unity to win still greater victories". However, before going into the state of the party today in the aftermath of the Ninth Congress it is perhaps necessary to outline the situation in the party on the eve of the Cultural Revolution. To begin with the beginning of the emergence of two different lines projecting two widely different perspectives thus becomes a categorical imperative. This is what exactly Lin Piao does in the earlier sections of his political report. The differences in the party date back to 1956 and to the Eighth Party Congress. Lin Piao confirms this. In 1956 Mao advocated the line that the question of who will win out, socialism or capitalism, is still to be settled, while several others pointed out that since the main transformation has been completed with respect to the system of ownership, the problem of *embourgeoisement* may not arise.

Mao, however, pointed out that class struggle in the field of ideology may continue for long and that there was no room for complacency yet. What he meant was that the dictatorship of the proletariat must continue to be vigilant and carry out the tasks of the revolution. There was an implicit repudiation of the then evolving Soviet theory of a State of all the people. This was one of the major issues in the party in the realm of ideology. Lin Piao gives considerable emphasis to Mao's statement that "the current great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is absolutely necessary and most timely for consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, preventing capitalist restoration and building socialism". He points out the degeneration of the Soviet State into a bureaucratic horror, "a dark fascist State", as a consequence of giving up the class analysis of the State and thus reiterates the need to continue and consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat.

### Two Lines

Apart from such ideological problems there were also many complex questions which led to the emergence of two almost well-defined lines in the CPC. First the tensions generated in Chinese society since 1956 when China decided to do away with the Soviet model of development, gave rise to conflicting views on several issues in the party discussions. The 'Hundred Flowers' movement and the Great Leap Forward strategy were unique experiments with multiple consequences. Further, there were certain other significant developments like the Sino-Soviet dispute and the withdrawal of Soviet aid to China which had a tremendous impact on the party in particular, and Chinese society is general. As a consequence of some of the problems noted above and some natural disasters that descended on China, her modernization plans had setbacks in the late fifties and early sixties. Hence some short-term strategies were employed to overcome the obstacles and to boost economic development. A large section of the Chinese people with remarkable determination made substantial sacrifices to accelerate the

developmental process. But some of the policies initiated by the then existing leadership contributed to the emergence of substantial social stratification. The policies that were initiated during that period filled the till of the rich peasant and the bureaucrat whose real income went up. There was, moreover, a sharp decline in the revolutionary zeal among the younger generation of party cadres. Many looked upon the party as a means to personal advancement. In short the party organisation almost went into the hands of those who were interested in the preservation of the status quo. Realising the urgency of the task, Mao put forward, as Lin Piao points out, "more comprehensively the basic line of our party for the whole historical period of socialism. In May 1963 under Mao's direction a 10-point decision was taken by the Central Committee which laid down "the principles and policies of the party for the Socialist Education Movement".

Mao, who was painfully aware of the emergence of undesirable tendencies in the party, is reported to have remarked that if the dictatorship of the proletariat were forgotten then "it would not be long, perhaps only several years or a decade at most, before a counter-revolutionary restoration on a national scale would inevitably occur, the Marxist-Leninist party would undoubtedly become a revisionist party or a fascist party and the whole of China would change its colour". The policies initiated at that time (1963) for socialist education were diluted in the process of implementation. The party bureaucracy proved more resistant to change than was expected. According to Lin Piao, Mao pointed this out in his talk in February 1967 (This talk has been mentioned for the first time in Lin Piao's report). Mao is said to have pointed out: "In the past we waged struggles in rural areas, in factories, in the cultural field and we carried out the socialist education movement. But all this failed to solve the problem because we did not find a form, a method to arouse the broad masses to expose our dark aspect openly *in an all round way and from below*". (Emphasis

added) The Cultural Revolution was then set in motion to expose and do away with "the dark aspect". The bureaucracy and the section of the leadership who perpetuated the dark aspect came in for attack by the mobilised youth, workers and poor peasants, in a uniquely Maoist fashion.

### Distrust of Bureaucracy

The Maoist action of attacking the party had two important implications: First, it revealed more convincingly than ever before Mao's deep distrust of entrenched bureaucracy. Secondly, it suggested that Mao did not believe that the party need always be the repository of all wisdom. It deserved to be attacked and criticised by the people when it showed signs of sinking into a state of apathy. That is to say, according to Mao, the farsighted section of the leadership should mobilise the people against the corrupt party apparatus in order to refurbish it and make it dynamic. However, these views of Mao are not of contemporary origin. Mao's distrust of bureaucracy dates back to the twenties and thirties when he rebelled against the policies of the party hierarchy—and rightly so. Just as Mao went to the peasants in the twenties to evolve an agreeable strategy of revolution, much in opposition to the theories of the party, in the sixties, in order to stem the slide-down of the party into the abyss of "status-quoism", Mao again went to the poorer section of the people and mobilised them against the bureaucracy. The party was not destroyed by the Maoist approach in the thirties. There is no rational argument to prove that the Maoist approach is incorrect in contemporary conditions either. Lin Piao says in defence of such an approach: "It is only by arousing the masses—to air their views freely, write big character posters and hold great debates that the renegades, enemy agents and capitalist-roaders in power... can be exposed and their plot to restore capitalism smashed". Could anyone disapprove the policy of arousing the people in defence of principles and ideals? One could perhaps go a step further and say that this is possibly the most

democratic way of achieving political and social objectives. And it must be admitted that Mao has done it, whether one agrees with his goals or not. It is also worth remembering that it was the absence of such dynamic process that has led to the degeneration of the Soviet party and to its transformation into a monstrous bureaucratic machine, devoid of ideals and vision.

Lin Piao also deals at length with the philosophy of class struggle and its implications. According to him, socialist transformation of the means of production does not mean the end of class struggle. He has closely followed the Maoist formulation that class struggle will continue to exist even after the transformation has been completed—in the realm of ideology. Hence Lin Piao quoting Mao, says: "After the enemies with the guns have been wiped out there will still be enemies without guns. If we do not raise and understand the problem in this way, we shall commit the greatest mistake." Mao made this statement in 1949 and Lin Piao reaffirms its validity in the existing situation.

Underlining the role of party members, Lin Piao castigates the cadres who are working on the principles of pyramid-climbing and self-seeking, who have erected a wall between themselves and the people, and who have perpetuated the evils of bureaucratism. Hence he avers that the leadership must see that the party members always keep to the style of being modest, prudent and free from arrogance and rashness and to the style of arduous struggle and plain living. Only thus will the party be able to lead the proletariat and the revolutionary masses in carrying the socialist revolution through to the end. However, a revolutionary party is also an organisation governed by the dialectics of inner party contradictions. Lin Piao's basic assumption is that there cannot be a real party without the struggle of the opposites, for a party will cease to be a living organisation if such an eventuality were to take place. That is to say, a monolithic party in Mao's view is in a sense an

unreal organisation. Hence in a "real" party, opposition and struggle between two lines, between two class viewpoints, between the old and the new in society, is inevitable. Thus contradiction is the very basis of the party, for it facilitates the generation of dynamism in it. This is a unique Maoist view of the party and Lin Piao provides a pride of place for it in his report.

Concerned as the Chinese leaders are with the attitude of the younger generation, it is not surprising that Lin Piao reminds them of their obligation to society. He emphasises the importance of the awareness of revolutionary tradition and history. He says, "we deeply understand that without the armed struggle of the people there would not be the Communist Party of China and there would not be the People's Republic of China today. . . comrades throughout the party must never forget this experience for which we have paid in blood." Lin Piao also points out that an incorrect understanding of the dialectics of revolution or preferring soft options to more valid and difficult ones is to be avoided by the party in order to achieve its socialist goals rapidly.

#### Leadership Pattern

As regards the pattern of the new leadership that has emerged after the Ninth Congress, it may be said that it shows both continuity and change. The Central Committee of the party, the supreme body, has been expanded and made into a larger organisation. One expected that the old convention of the presidium of the Congress would automatically be converted into the new Central Committee. But the Congress adopted a new procedure and elected 279 members—170 full and 109 alternate members—who include both the members of the Congress presidium and those who were not in it. The election of these persons has obviously been decided by the necessity of creating an anti-bureaucratic and anti-status quo organisation. In a certain sense the new leadership is similar in spirit and outlook to the one that was elected after the Seventh Congress in 1945.

It is said that the military has the lion's share in the reconstituted organs of the party. This contention is questionable. It is undoubtedly true that many members belonging to the PLA have been elected to the Central Committee. But does it mean that the PLA has taken over the CPC, or at least become paramount in the party organs? The underlying assumption in such arguments is that the party and the army are two separate entities in China as in capitalist countries. True, after 1949 in the post-liberation period when the Soviet model of the party was adopted a distinction was made between the army and the party—a distinction that was not in existence in the pre-1949 period because of the very nature of development of the CPC. This decision to go in for the Soviet model led to the growth of professionalism in the Chinese army and of ideological laxity as demonstrated by the Peng Teh-huai episode. When Lin Piao took over the affairs of the PLA after the dismissal of Peng Teh-huai, he took upon himself the task of fighting the evils of professionalism in the army. In this context it is perhaps relevant to point out that in Maoist parlance professionalism is not synonymous with competence. For it breeds an ideological outlook totally at variance with the Marxist-Leninist and Maoist view of the role of the army in a given society. The policies that Lin Piao pursued in the PLA were primarily motivated by considerations of making the PLA intensively political in content. He largely succeeded in implementing the policy of "putting politics in command". In an all-pervading movement like the Cultural Revolution it was but natural that the advanced revolutionary elements of the PLA should have played their part. These elements were no different from certain others as far as the high degree of politicization was concerned. Hence it is not the yardstick of functional-differentiation that should prevail in evaluating the pattern of leadership, but the ideological outlook of the leaders. In the Chinese conditions other factors are only secondary. If one

analyses, for instance, the composition of the Political Bureau and the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau which virtually controls the Central Committee, one can see that the leadership continues to be composed of "renaissance men" who have made a substantial contribution to the growth of the party in the years of struggle. In the Central Committee one finds a lot of fresh blood, most of the newcomers being workers and peasants.

However, at the provincial level it is the "revolutionary committees" which have been entrusted with the functions of leadership. During the Cultural Revolution many party committees came in for severe attack for their revisionist outlook and a "three-way alliance" of cadres, revolutionaries and some PLA elements took over the leadership. The situation at the provincial level was more complicated because of the fairly widespread prevalence of both "right" and "left" deviations. The Maoist leadership has time and again pointed this out. However, Lin Piao's report indicates that preparations are being made to hold party congresses at the regional levels.

#### Constitution

The adoption of a new party constitution was yet another achievement of the Ninth Congress. The old constitution has been revised in the light of the new situation, and according to Lin Piao, "the draft constitution has clearly reaffirmed that the Marxist-Leninist Mao Tse-tung Thought is the theoretical base guiding the party's thinking". At the very outset it may be said that the new constitution in a certain sense has evolved from the old, and in certain other respects has departed from it. It must also be remembered that Mao does not attach any "finality" to any constitution. A constitution in the Maoist view is not just a document expressing abstract eternal principles, but a living, vibrating testament which takes cognizance of revolutionary goals and aspirations. Hence in Mao's view there is nothing sacred about any constitution. It has to undergo revision, deletion and addition in order to keep up with ob-

jective reality. This view of the constitution would appear fully consistent when viewed in the context of Mao's theory of permanent revolution.

There is considerable difference between the new constitution and the old adopted at the Eighth Congress in 1956. A comparison of the two "General Programmes" itself proves this point. The first para in the general programme of the old constitution was as follows: "The Communist Party of China takes Marxism-Leninism as its guide to action." It had significantly omitted any reference to Mao's contribution. It added that the achievement of socialism and communism in China were the aims of the party. It made no reference to the need for vigilance against revisionism. On the other hand, the new constitution holds that the basic programme of the CPC is the complete overthrow of the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in place of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the triumph of socialism over capitalism. The ultimate aim of the party is the realisation of communism."

The foreign policy goals of communist China as seen from the general programmes of the two constitutions have again provided an interesting contrast. The militant revolutionary internationalism was in a low key in the old constitution. The new constitution says that the CPC upholds "proletarian internationalism and that it firmly unites with the genuine Marxist-Leninist parties and groups the world over and fights together with them to overthrow imperialism headed by the United States, modern revisionism with the Soviet renegade clique as its centre and the reactionaries of all countries". The general programme of the old document is ponderous and detailed while the new one is short and precise.

Further, the chapter dealing with the membership of the party in the new document is markedly different in spirit from the old. The latter stipulated that "any Chinese citizen who works and does not exploit the labour of others" could become a member of

the party. It was vague on what constituted "exploitation". The new document specifically emphasizes both class and ideological outlook. The workers, poor peasants, lower middle peasants, revolutionary army men or other revolutionary elements are the categories of persons eligible for party membership. The new document also emphasizes the need for a constant review of the state of the party, while the old document did not refer to such questions. Article 3 of the new constitution says that "special vigilance must be maintained against careerists, conspirators and double-dealers so as to prevent such bad elements usurping the leadership of the party and the State at any level and guarantee that the leadership... always remains in the hands of Marxist revolutionaries". In the chapter on the organisational principles of the party both the old and the new constitution have stressed the importance of "democratic centralism" but the "democratic content has been increased in a radical way in the new document. Article 5 points out that "if a party member holds different views with regard to the decisions or directives of the party organisations, he is allowed to reserve his views and has the right to bypass the immediate leadership and report directly to higher levels up to and including the Central Committees, and the Chairman of the Central Committee". This clause has obviously been included for the specific purpose of preventing high-handedness on the part of the party apparatus at the middle and lower levels in matters relating to the expression of dissenting views. In short this clause guarantees the effective operation of inner party democracy. Another part of Article 5 notes that democracy "is essential to create a political situation in which there are both centralism and democracy, both discipline and freedom, both unity of will and personal ease of mind and liveliness".

The Ninth Congress marks the end of a phase and the beginning of another in the history of the Chinese Revolution. Mao Tse-tung remarked in 1962 that "the next 50 to 100 years,

beginning from now, will be a great era of radical change in the social systems throughout the world, an earth-shaking era without equal in any previous historical period. Living in such an era, we must be prepared to engage

in great struggles which will have many features different in form from those of the past". The Ninth Congress has shown that the Communist Party of China is not ill-equipped for the tasks that lie ahead.

merse yourself in trivia, and you can afford yourself the luxury of forgetting about the long-term goals and of elevating the means into the ends; you can then live from day to day, hour to hour, press note to press note: a second press note to contradict the first, a third to amend the second, and continue merrily till another quasi-crisis, calling for a separate series of press notes intervenes. Be steadfast in your flippancy, and what a relief. You will no longer be exercised by the thought that that son-of-a-bitch, in the name of Mao Tse-tung's line, is actually following Guevara's—or vice versa; or that that lout doesn't know the basic difference between a comprador capitalist and a colonial capitalist; or that that ass of an analyst has confused your line with that being followed by that latent social fascist; or that this apparent confusion is in fact not an accident or an honest error, but reveals a deeply laid conspiracy between xyz and zyx....

## Calcutta Diary

CHARAN GUPTA

FAITH is fatal, but faith is also life-saving. Faith is surrogate for reason, the alternative to vision, that essential abstraction which can fill in for thought, strategy, logistics, planning. But, while it lasts, it saves you from the bother of doubts and worries: all questions are answered by one all-embracing non-logic, which also obliterates all mutual inconsistencies. I cannot therefore quite determine which aspect of faith I should prefer to pin attention on: whether to glorify its role as sweet anodyne, or to condemn it as variation of quackery incarnate. Either way there is a danger of being the victim of subjective-objectivity, or is it objective-subjectivity? But suppose you don't have to umpire in the debate on behalf of 'society', so that you can be as irresponsible as your wayward instincts would want you to be. Once placed this advantageously, you would conceivably come to some easy, quick decision. At least in my present frame of mind, I could. I would any day gift away the most precious of my paltry possessions to get back onto the bandwagon of faith. Let reason be drowned, faith uber alles.

For this is a terribly dangerous state to be in: my present predicament. I am on the brink of shedding my olden faith, spell it with a capital 'F' if you like, in certain institutions and ideas. It is not an easy thing to get rid of a faith; still, the subsequent twilight stage is very much more excruciating. Your reason has ceased to throw up signals, your emotions are all mixed up; betwixt passion and intuition, you sway

hither and thither. You start envying your previous state, when life did not exist as a process of see-saw, but was marked by a tranquil equipoise, and in the dialectics between faith and occasional growing doubts, the former would always triumph. Oh, to be back to that Wordsworthian innocence!

But since that is impossible, I can sustain myself only by concentrating on trivia. Take to trivia, nothing like trivia for a vacuum-sweep of your mind. They will allow you to forget about the current recriminations around the nominations for the Rajya Sabha seats, about who swims when at the Calcutta Swimming Club, about the police-encampment in the vicinity of the Deputy Chief Minister's residence, about the armed peasant revolution occurring daily in the suburbs or the city centre of Calcutta. A devotion to trivia will cure you of several ills simultaneously: for example, you will stop worrying whether this week you are on the payroll of the CIA or the Chinese or the Russians or the Cubans or the Pakistanis or the British or simultaneously of all of them; whether the refusal of Hanoi to entertain the Indian Foreign Secretary enhances or diminishes the role of this country as Chairman of the International Control Commission; whether Mr G. M. Sadiq will make a better Vice-President than Mr Giri as President; whether the *affaire Telengana* is the cause or the consequence of Mr Brahmananda Reddy; whether we-are-all-parliamentarians-today is, as a slogan, better than the other one, namely, we-are-all-revolutionaries-today. Im-

Maybe literature represents the trivia, or the cinema does, or the painting and the arts? Despite hope springing eternal in human breast, they do not. And certainly they should not. Literature has to be stripped for action; and this goes for the several other arts too. They have to be an extension of our daily living, a kind of continuum of the tensions that crowd into the economics and sociology of life. The same dialectics therefore are bound to sway the primal emotions in the arts. No place, very justifiably, there for my kind of trivia. The minutiae which constitute the major themes there have a certain transcendental significance. Once more, you need the kindred virtue of faith to wade through all of that. Does it not therefore follow that a faithless individual is a social heel: Abandon faith, and you abandon society. For by forsaking faith, you are trying to step outside the conventional contour of the game; you are trying to evolve a new grammar, a new vocabulary, a different set of vowels and consonants. These are things which are not done; nothing

that is not already included in the book is to be permitted. Be a deviationist, but be so only on the established channels of communications. If you feel antagonistic to A, you must joint not-A; if you feel disenchanting towards not-A, you, by golly, have to team up with A. What sort of a nut are you that you prefer to joint neither A nor not-A? By definition, therefore, you do not matter; since you don't matter, you don't exist; since you don't exist, we don't take any cognisance of you, no advertisement revenue will go your way; you will be left severely alone, to stew in your non-conformist juice.

Which is perhaps why it is safer to concentrate on non-substantive issues, those which are the basest of all trivia. Such as, let me suggest, the weather. The weather which induces a lot of perspiration. It is perspiration of the autonomous type. You don't have to sweat for it; it emerges on its own, because of the excessive humidity in the air. A function of vapour. Vapour thou art, to vapour returneth. But there is a nodal point, the precise point where quantity changes into quality. It is only when the accumulation of vapour reaches the critical nodality that downpours occur. Just as only when the accumulation of savings attains a particularly acute height, economic growth bursts out. But our trouble is one of only vapour, and no rains. Perhaps because vapour fails to reach that critical minimum. So all we are capable of, in the interim, is to break out in perspiration. No toil and trouble here, no assiduous exercise in imagination, no tortuous, self-doubting wandering along the road to Calvary. Nothing is cerebral; all credit goes to mini-muscular reflexes. The poverty of words, the words of poverty; the poetry of emotions, the emotions of poetry; the travails of dialectics, the dialectics of travails; the hair-splitting over issues, the issues of hair-splitting; the gangfights over ideology, the ideology of gangfights; the alienation over the question of short-term consolidation of gains, the

consolidation of long-term principles of alienation; the distinction between subjective-objectivity and objective-subjectivity—all are the product of, alas, trivial reflexes.

What other trivia do I discuss then? Since I am unable to decide, I perspire. Where faith has fallen through, one can only repose faith in perspiration. Do I dare then indulge in romantic poetry? Do I say:

### The Press

## The Summit

A READER

IS it essential for newspapers to comment on all events even if they cannot take any positive stand? Do they do it to underline their "essential neutrality", their main purpose of "spreading education in a disinterested fashion?" Are these comments meant to spark off controversies which sometimes can be very refreshing? Or are these carried day after day simply because some people somewhere have their jobs to keep? Impponderables all. Yet at times one cannot help asking.

These questions occurred to this correspondent last week. As could be expected the Moscow conference of communists seemed to be the principal headache of leader writers of at least four major dailies. Not that it is strange: it has been noted earlier in these columns that any conference of communists causes a frantic search for differences among them. The search was there this time also. But Moscow having a larger arena than Calcutta, the newspapers went a step forward to question the communism of Moscow and whether it could still be called the repository of Marxism-Leninism.

Valid questions no doubt. But one wonders why the Indian Press should be bothered by these. Will they in future attack Moscow for being lesser

perspiration, come soon, soon? Is perspiration the other name of revolution? Is revolutionary talk the surrogate for revolution? Is writing cynical junk a function of receiving espionage money? In each case, I wonder. There is no end of wonderment in this world. But that is once more indulging in romanticism. To indulge in romanticism is to indulge in trivia. Maybe *this* is it. Hear trivia, will travel. Speak trivia, will travel. Think trivia, will travel.

Marxists? What happened in Moscow was certainly nothing more than a jolly summer-time get-together. But the Indian Press cannot take it lightly. Accordingly the column-long editorials in the rabid anti-progressive Press, reminding Moscow that Marxism was not its sole responsibility. Indeed like little Alice one almost hoped to find next, the Swatantra and Congress dominated papers advocating the Chinese Party as being truly Marxist-Leninist. Why the Tatas and Birlas should worry about deviations from Marxism still remains the million-dollar question.

*The Statesman* finds that the Moscow conference has ended with a document which confines itself to the struggle against imperialism, a subject innocuous enough for a communist conclave. The document itself was a diluted version of what had been originally intended, as the Soviet leaders had thought discretion to be the better part of valour. There was also no attempt to include any explicit condemnation of China. In spite of all this, however, 14 parties withheld full support from the document. Not that the British and Norwegian parties amount to much in their own countries; but the Rumanian party signed the document with reservations which shows that even the Czechoslovak

example could not overawe the brave men in Bucharest. This, combined with the absence of an impressive array of communist parties from the summit, cannot be a source of comfort to the Russian leaders.

The Moscow meeting has showed that the process of fragmentation of the communist bloc is not over. The Kremlin can only draw comfort from the unflinching loyalty of the CPI leader, Mr Dange, who demanded the formation of a permanent body to carry forward the good work done in Moscow. The paper reminds Mr Dange of the fates of the Comintern and the Cominform in the context of his suggestion and finds his welcoming Mr Brezhnev's call for collective security in Asia, reminiscent of the conversion in June 1941 of the Imperialist War into People's War.

*The Times of India* says that more and more communist parties are beginning to realize that they can strike roots in their own countries only if they assert their right to think for themselves and evolve policies suited to their needs. The Soviet party is finding it difficult to take everybody along the road it has chosen for itself and so had to dodge many of the issues that confront international communism today. The emphasis on anti-imperialist struggle was just a strategy to conceal the growing division within the movement. This slogan will not deceive even the faithful at a time when the Soviet Union itself is working in close concert with the United States. (This is perhaps another victory of the Moscow conference that this big bourgeois controlled paper should even implicitly recognize the USA as an imperialist country). The paper notes that the Soviet system is no longer the only working model for the communist movement. Today there are at least four such models, the Russian, the Chinese, the Yugoslav and the Cuban. In view of this the Moscow declaration's attempts to castigate deviations from Marxism-Leninism show that the party has not learnt anything from recent history. The declarations of respect for the independence of communist parties also cannot be taken seriously when one

remembers that the Soviet party has not even shown any sign of repentance for what it did in Czechoslovakia last August.

The conference at Moscow, according to *The Hindustan Times*, was possible only because the Soviet leaders had agreed at Budapest last year that they would drop any claim to the leadership of the world communist movement. And the only achievement of the conference, the adoption of a document which outlines the programme for anti-imperialist struggle, is of little worth when one considers the Soviet imperialism in Czechoslovakia. Indeed the conference has only under leadership of the world communist movement, caused by the ideological clash between Moscow and Peking and their national interests as in the border conflict. However, it has to be admitted that differences have not only been aired but publicised as well and Moscow has at least countenanced democratic stirrings at the conference.

Mr Dange's appeal to the world communist movement for promoting communist unity in India has also been referred to in the editorial. It is possible that the appeal was directed towards Rumania with which country the CPI(M) has good relations. But it does seem strange that differences between Indian parties should be resolved not at home but through third-party intervention abroad.

*The Hindusthan Standard* finds the conference's attempts to build communist unity of no consequence. The Chinese and the Yugoslavs did not attend the conference and as such it lacked the moral authority to speak on behalf of world communism. The conference has however yielded rich dividends to Moscow; the fact that there had been no walk-outs should be demonstrative of the hold which the Soviet Union still has over the world communist movement. However, with the shadow of Czechoslovakia hanging over the conference and the Rumanians often critical, Moscow, on its part, also prudently refrained from pressing its doctrine of limited sovereignty, an attempt to sell which would have ended the meeting in confusion. Discretion after all is the

better part of valour even among those who are pledged to create a new world, the paper concludes.

#### An Inside Story

Since the Swatantra take-over *The Statesman* has never exactly enjoyed smooth sailing. In the midst of the two-month-old strike last year, the Board of Trustees was dismissed and later the editor. A managing director was appointed and for the first time the high office of the editor seemed to be not so high. The strike over, the office opened with seven journalists not getting their salaries for the two-month period even though they had not given the call for a strike. These seven were denied their wages as they had refused to write a letter to the editor saying that they do not support the strike.

A new situation developed a few months back. Playing its old game of divide and rule the management prepared a list of about 100 non-journalist employees who they said would be paid their wages for the strike period as the management thought they had always been against the strike. Immediately the union acted, stating that there should be no discrimination in the matter of payment of wages. In a rare display of obstinacy the management refused to sit with the union and discuss the issue. At about this time 22 people were retired mainly from the press section and there has been no attempt till now to fill these vacancies. The shortage of men led to inevitable delay in producing the paper, a problem which continues to remain unsolved. Changes are also said to be in the offing in the editorial department when the editor himself leaves. Whether he will be accompanied by others remains to be seen. But there is no doubt that the Swatantra Party, rejected by the people in the State, is set for an all-out offensive, at least in *The Statesman*.

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## Book Review

### AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS IN INDIA

By Kamal Kumar Ghose. Indian Publications, Calcutta. Rs. 28.00

INDIA is a land of peasants, yet of the life and problems of peasants we have got few objective studies. Maybe there is no Hammond amongst us to chronicle the hardships and sufferings of millions who force crops from the arid earth and feed us. The author of the book under review seeks to present an objective account of the life and labour of Indian peasants during the last six decades and the book unfolds the story of the exploitation they have been subjected to.

Of the total population of India, a fourth owns no land. The landless peasants work for others. Employment being seasonal, there are lean months in the year when they cannot buy food. Half a century back, the daily earnings of field workers were ludicrously low; during 1891-1911 daily wages rose from annas 2.42 to annas 4.64. Wages varied from province to province. The higher the percentage of landless peasants, the lower the wages. Two provinces—U.P. and Punjab—illustrate it. The Punjab had a lower percentage of landless peasants (14) and daily wages rose from annas 2.69 to annas 7.6 while the United Provinces where the percentage was as high as 27 recorded an increase of annas 1.29 during the period.

When the First World War broke out India was dragged into it. Indian troops were sent abroad and India was converted into a supply base. Industries expanded and profits rose high. Prices shot up and primary producers made money. During the early years of the war the wages of field workers in Eastern and Southern India rose by 9 per cent, and prices by 30 per cent. The steep rise in prices neutralised the gain and the index of real wages came down to 84 (1911=100).

During 1926-29 agricultural wages rose all over India. Then came the world depression and the Indian eco-

nomy stood on the verge of collapse. Wages fell sharply and the number of rural unemployed rose to 34 million. The distress of peasants beggared all human imagination. One could see them going separately to a brook and drink instead of eating a meal, anxious only to hide their miseries from one another. Thousands lived on wild berries and roots. They thronged the residence of Mr Jawaharlal Nehru to seek his help and guidance. Mr Nehru wrote: "The wind is blowing in the villages and through the mud huts where dwell our poverty stricken peasantry and it is likely to become a hurricane if relief does not come to them soon. All our political problems and discussions are but the background for the outstanding and overwhelming problem of India—the land system."

So to the programme of Civil Disobedience was added non-payment of rent. Peasants took part in the no-rent campaign and were subjected to brutalities by the foreign rulers. When the Civil Disobedience Movement petered out there sprang up numerous peasant organisations. The provincial organisations united to form the All India Kisan Sabha. With the formation of an all-India organisation the peasantry found an exclusive forum and the Kisan Sabha did much to expose the evils of zamindari.

Agricultural wages remained stationary till the outbreak of the Second World War. As the war continued to spread, the size of the Indian army grew and with the expansion of the Army the Defence Department started building up stocks of essential supplies. There was a sharp rise in the prices of agricultural commodities and wages also went up. During the concluding year of the war the all-India index (1916=100) of nominal wages rose to 302. The rise was the highest in the United Provinces where the index stood at 376. The rise in nominal wages, however, did not better the lot of field workers, for prices had gone up many times. The all-India index of actual wages stood at 116 when the war ended.

Though academic in approach to

the agrarian problems, the book gives the economic background of the agrarian unrest during the current century and students of socio-economic history can read it with profit.

S. SHARMA

## Bhuban Shome

PRADIPTA SEN

MRINAL Sen has finally made it; an artistically compact film, a film which would make one forget the froth seen in most of his earlier films. This is not to say that Sen has not made good film in the past, but *Bhuban Shome* is without doubt his most mature work till now. Outstandingly beautiful, this film will be a rousing experience to those who have a hunger for good cinema. The fact that it is made in Hindi makes *Bhuban Shome* the first fine Hindi film, but it is a first-rate film by any standard. What more, the film reveals the director's abundant love for the medium and his film grip on it giving him the power to use it as he likes.

A lonely, proud old man, proud of his sense of honesty and discipline, so much so that he does not hesitate to sack even his son, Bhuban Shome (Utpal Dutt) decides to take short leave from his desk-bound routine life on the railways and go on a bird shooting trip. Before he leaves he decides to punish a young ticket collector for accepting bribe.

On the shooting trip he comes into contact with, first, a boisterous Kathiawari cart driver (Sekhar Chatterjee) and later with a young village girl (Suhashini Mulay). He fails to communicate with the rugged man of the bullock cart but the stony-faced Shome's encounter with the charming, smiling, simple, vivacious girl finally breaks his brick-lined discipline and stubborn pride. Shome begins to sense and feel like any other human being.

This is all the story that Mrinal Sen has to tell. And he does it in a remarkably carefree manner, refreshingly free of conventions and often with un-

abashed love of fun, a whiff of laughter.

In the introductory passage Sen freely uses commentary and animation. It is longish but seems a deliberate opening gambit to counterpoise the longer passage through which Shome travels to discover, totally unexpectedly, a new meaning for his existence as a human being. Commentary as an adjunct and an obvious explanatory note to the visual is often unnecessary. It does credit to Sen's artistic sensibility that the commentary in this film becomes an integral part of it, linking and strengthening the often unrelated visuals. Animation again is used deliberately by the director and achieves excellent results, as for instance while cleaning his gun Shome thinks of the flight of a flock of birds. Obvious, yes. Gimmicky, yes. But sometimes even the obvious needs to be stressed and gimmick becomes a precision tool in the hands of the director.

Although the hauteur of the sahib Mr Bhuban Shome, the feared and dreaded Shome sahib and the friendless Bhuban Shome melts after contact with the innate innocence of the girl, the thawing process begins much earlier. True, he fails to communicate with the cart driver but he is the first person outside his daily confine who gives him a jolt by his unashamed joy of life and at least once he shares with this rustic the charm lent to the rural scene by the village belles walking past, delicately balancing the pitchers on their heads with a song on their lips. Then comes the supremely hilarious meeting with the *bhainsa* which proves how utterly funny and ridiculous his self-assured strongman attitude is.

#### Complete Rapport

In this middle passage Sen's rapport with his artistes and his technical collaborators—the cameraman, the editor and the music director—is complete. They all perform together with Sen to make the screen literally sparkle with life. Shome's encounter with the buffalo is brilliantly conceived. At its end Gauri (the village girl) appears as if from nowhere to quieten the animal and then bursts out in laughter at the predicament of Mr Shome.

From here on the film moves on at a more sedate pace. Sen's sense of humour in this passage is all aglow. Of technique one should mention the freeze shots showing a dishevelled, bewildered Shome running to get away from the buffalo. The slightly blurred image captures the mood of the moment beautifully. And when the animal is seen to be in reality a peaceful domestic creature the humour of the situation forcefully presents Shome's helplessness in the strange surroundings he finds himself in.

At the father's behest and also because she has taken immediate compassion for the strange sahib fumbling with his gun and missing the bird of his prey, Gauri becomes Shome's guide. And the companionship and interest that Shome has already felt for her while accepting her father's hospitality grow in size and keenness until he feels himself a new man. He goes back to Gauri, after he has already taken leave of her, to offer her the bird that fell on the ground frightened by the sound of his gun.

This whole passage is full of vignettes of cinematic excellence and is commanded overwhelmingly by the graceful natural acting of Suhashini Mulay. She speaks with her eyes, her sensitive face; every little gesture of her shows her wonder at the strange man and her sympathy for him. One may recall the moment when she quietly places her hand on Shome's shoulder to reassure the man that this time he may yet shoot down a bird. Or in their house when she emphasizes upon him the necessity of donning the native dress and carefully wraps the pugree around his head, or when she tells him how innocent the *bhainsa* is and will do him no harm.

Shome is struck by what he first thinks is her audacious simplicity. The director is aware of the fight Shome is having with himself. And Shome's cussedness is borne upon us by his persistence in getting out of Gauri the fact of her relationship with the ticket collector he means to punish.

The director slowly builds up the sympathy which finally brings about

a complete change in Shome's attitude to life.

The film has some minor blemishes. One fails to correlate the pictures of national leaders and Satyajit Ray in the introductory passage with the man that Shome then was. The commentary which brings the film to its close seems thrown in. After all was it necessary to inform us what the ticket collector feels about Shome although he has been excused?

## Raktakarabi

BY OUR DRAMA CRITIC

TAGORE was an idealist. He expressed himself in an idiom which was at once familiar while his wistfulness often expressed the yearnings of very ordinary people. He was so deeply immersed in the thoughts and feelings of his countrymen that even in his invocations he could express the spirit of his times and draw the essence out of life. His songs established such an intimacy of expression that at times one wonders if he was not addressing humanity at large. And it was his artistic integrity which very often made him assert revolutionary concepts. In fact in *Biswarjan* he openly proclaimed that his ideal had nothing to do with the gods and goddesses enshrined by priests and worshipped by ritual-ridden idolaters. His scorn and disdain for toady priesthood finds even clearer expression in *Raktakarabi* and the manner in which they ought to be treated is unmistakably indicated.

Its production by the Bangla Nat Mancha Pratistha Samity at Kalamandir recently had the stamp of professional efficiency. The acting was naturally of a very high standard, the cast having been drawn from three of our leading drama groups. Tagore's lines flowered beautifully as spoken by actors who were only too familiar with the language. It was a pity, therefore, that the visual effects were unable to "accommodate" what the ears were tuned in to.

So may the outward shows be least themselves,

The world is still deceived with ornament.

#### *Merchant of Venice*

Just because an author omits to mention the period, describe his characters and indicate the locale is no reason for a producer to present the audience with a mixture of puzzling oddities. For it was odd indeed to see the king's sanctum look like a huge gaping mouth with two red crystals for eyes—all very detailed. On the opposite, i.e., the left of the stage, a set of bleak steps descending to the front and to the right from a square platform. On this platform were placed huge rectangular slabs of marble and another set of steps led up into the wings on the left—all very sombre.

Unfortunately seated at the far end of the second row it was impossible to see the full stage. A flagpole was fixed to something that resembled a side table with a crouched human form acting as support. Behind this "standard bearer" one noticed from that sharp angle a structure with triangular protrusions reminiscent of torture chambers. There was a wide screen for a back drop. Not a single element in all this "scenery" fitted in with the other. The "mouth" gave an impression of fantasy, the steps neo-realistic austerity and the contraption between the two a lift from Bombay films—all tastes catered for. In the costumes the same confusion was repeated. The "Sardars" came from U.P., the "headman" from Bengal and the "diggers" with khaki coats and dirty dhotis could have been "peons" from Orissa. Visually everything clashed with everything else except, of course, the numbers on the back of 'the diggers' coats which indicated the means of individual identification. And this was how the "bara sardar" addressed the workmen. One felt that had there been greater cohesion between sight

and sound the total impact would have been far greater and more satisfying. What is more this lack of consideration for the visual aspect of the production was responsible for a great opportunity being missed. Had not the king been shut completely out of sight, imagine the effect: a fine screen behind which, like a caged tiger, his figure just visible, the king "struggling and fretting" in "sound and fury"—a terrifying silhouette. The main reason for this not being attempted was perhaps the lean and thin figure of the king as he appeared in the last scene. As things were, one wondered if the king was stupid expecting Nandini to be terrified of something that was so firmly locked in—perhaps he was terribly vain!

The meaning of the play as one understood was that wealth begets power; power corrupts and dehumanises; and in the end the strongman himself becomes a victim of his own stratagems. The king symbolises this state of man's existence. Nandini is the joy of life. She loves youth, song, dance and colour. She is of the people and for the people. The king does not understand Nandini nor can he possess her. And in the end when the instruments of his own power rebel he joins, perforce, the people to crush this evil and proclaim the invincibility of life.

Actually there is a great deal involved in Tagore's allegory. It touches the very fundamentals of existence. The king says that he realises the difference between Ranjan and himself—"In me there is only strength, in Ranjan there is magic". And by this distinction the king also affirms the indispensability of art. For "art is necessary in order that man should be able to recognize any change in the world", wrote Ernst Fischer.

It was sad that the end was played in near darkness. One feels that for the final assault the stage should have been brightly lit and plenty of red should have adorned the bodies of the workers so that the symbolism should have been really apt—"Raktakarabi" or the spirit of life in full bloom.

## Letters

### Nanda's Chit

For the last few months I was having an irresistible attraction to join the CPI(M), but I had apprehensions about the anti-national and violent revolutionary character of this party. Now that Mr Nanda, the ex-Home Minister who was responsible for hauling up the members of this party for anti-national activities has issued a clean chit of good behaviour and ardent nationalism to this party, all my doubts have been dispelled.

R. S. G.  
Calcutta

### China And Pakistan

Reader's rejoinder to an earlier letter of Mr J. B. Kundu on China's attitude towards the recent movement in Pakistan is a clever attempt to solve a Chinese puzzle. *Pravda's* open denunciation of the movement is bad enough but China's stoic silence is no less baffling. China's commitment to anything in India and her non-commitment to everything in Pakistan is a big puzzle. The movement of Bengalis, Pakhtoons and Baluchs for autonomy and freedom hardly finds place, far less support, in any news forum of Red China, but similar movements in Telengana, Nagaland and Kashmir earn revolutionary greetings. It seems the attitude of both Russia and China represents two sides of the same angle called "diplomacy".

NIREN DAS  
Calcutta

### Naxalites

After going through your editorials, particularly that of June 14, I am convinced that all these were the result of your over-reliance on *Deshabrati*, the CPI (ML) weekly. How do you know that 'the Naxalites are gaining ground' and that 'they are moving in villages of U.P. without

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For FRONTIER contact  
S. P. CHATTERJEE  
Statesman Office  
Steel Market  
Durgapur-4

JUNE 28, 1969

caring for the U.P. police?' *Deshabrati* has been busy exploiting the traditionally romantic Indian youth with highly exaggerated reports of Naxalite-police or Naxalite-jotedar clashes in different parts of the country and the bourgeois press has not failed to seize this opportunity of giving wide publicity to any major or minor news concerning the Naxalites. But far from gaining ground, the Naxalites are steadily losing among the students. North Bengal University, once their strongest base, is now shorn of them. It is needless to cite other examples.

A political party, with frustration as its capital, can never thrive. The younger generation may sometimes be hoodwinked by catchy slogans. But this cannot go on for ever.

DIPAK CHAUDHURI  
Malda

### Poetry, East Bengal\*

It is heartening to see Mr Indukanta Shukla taking part in a controversy on Bengali poetry (June 21). But he did not read carefully my rejoinder to Mr Rathindranath Chattopadhyay (May 31). Hence his letter is pointless. Secondly, no line of Mr Chattopadhyay's letter was pointless isolatedly. His contradictory views were pointless: specially his view on pessimism and tradition of Tagore. I am sorry to say that Mr Shukla did not understand my point.

Regarding Mr N. K. Paul's letter I should say that he understands my point and has made a balanced judgment.

ARJUN BANDYOPADHYAYA  
Naihati

Mr Arjun Bandyopadhyay has accused me of not knowing the meaning of 'tradition'. But I have read Eliot's *Sacred Wood* and been talking of tradition to my students for the last eight years. Mr Bandyopadhyay accuses me of neglecting Prof Bishnu De. Why should I do so? As re-

(\* This correspondence is closed.  
Editor).

gards other charges, Mr Indukanta Shukla of Varanasi has said the last word. It is no use repeating him.

Mr N. K. Paul (June 21) accuses me of sidetracking the real issue. Because I am the writer of the article, sidetracking cannot be my business. Moreover, the last paragraph of his letter is nothing more than a repetition of what I had written. 'Temperaments differ and every writer expects sobriety from his critics. Red-eyed critics like Mr Bandyopadhyay and Mr Paul cannot force me to say A is not A—that A is actually B.

RATHINDRA CHATTOPADHYAY  
Calcutta

It would be wrong to say, as Mr Rathin Chattopadhyay does, that the poets of East Bengal are free from 'isms', or that they are aesthetes writing 'pure poetry'. East Bengal also has her share of Marxist poets like Enamul Huq, Kaisul Huq or Abul Fazal etc. They may not dominate the poetry scene there, yet they make their presence felt. Furthermore pan-Islamism, though deeply resented by the people, is propagated by a minority of poets. East Bengal poets are not isolated in their ivory tower but voice the feelings of the people.

Mr Bandyopadhyay in his rejoinder of May 24 says that Syed Ali Ahsan is carrying on the tradition of Rabindranath through Bishnu De. But perhaps it would be more correct to say that he is carrying on the tradition of Rabindranath via Jibanananda Das. Ahsan's imageries are derived more from nature, like "Once among the leaves of many trees/the breath of the wind".

But it is hard to agree with Mr Bandyopadhyay when he declares in his letter of June 7 that Bishnu De is the most significant poet at present because he is carrying on the Tagorean tradition. One can hardly understand Mr Bandyopadhyay's logic, for Jibanananda was as much or even more steeped in the Tagorean tradition than Bishnu De. Bishnu De may be a personal favourite of Mr Bandyopadhyay but that should not unbalance his critical judgment. Finally, it is undeniable that among

the successors of Rabindranath Jibanananda was one of the greatest if not 'the' greatest Bengali poet.

ANJAN GHOSH  
Calcutta

### Service Rules

Every State Government has its own Service Rules. In West Bengal the distribution of Service Rules is usually restricted to and above the level of the divisional office. Non-gazetted government servants generally do not have access to them. Moreover the rules remain out of print for years together. So subordinate officers remain ignorant of their spheres of duty and their legal privileges. The UF Government should arrange for printing the rules without delay and for their wide circulation.

ALEEK UPADHAYA  
Nilpara

### Marxism To Grammar

What a misfortune! I have so long been engaged in a dialogue on Marxism with a school teacher or to be precise, a teacher of English grammar! But who could think so of Mr Prabodh Chandra Dutta from his first letter? Could you, Sir?

I frankly admit that I am a student of Marxism and always ready to learn from anyone who is serious about it. But I refuse to be harangued on Marxism by a teacher of English grammar, who in these columns has in fact caricatured Marxism-Leninism with his smattering of it. If you allow him to continue he will start quoting Fowler, Nesfield and perhaps P. K. De Sarkar also.

ABHEEK DAS GUPTA  
Jadavpur

Our Agency in Madras :

Mr A. KRISHNAMOORTHY,  
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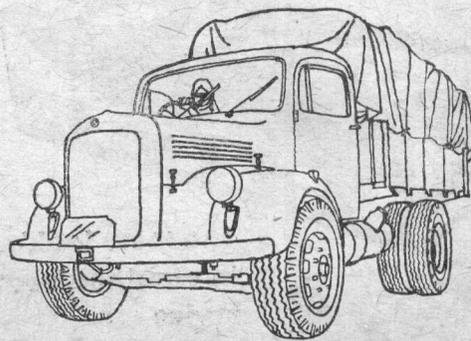
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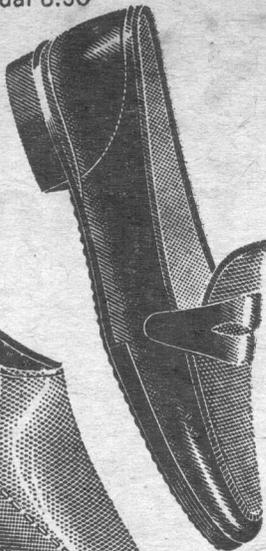
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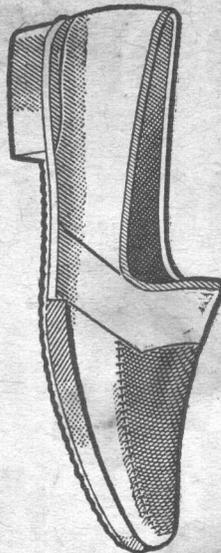
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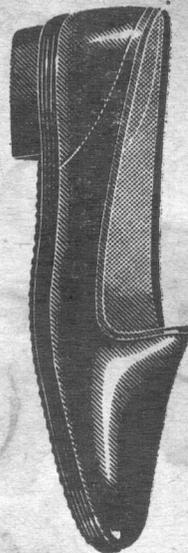
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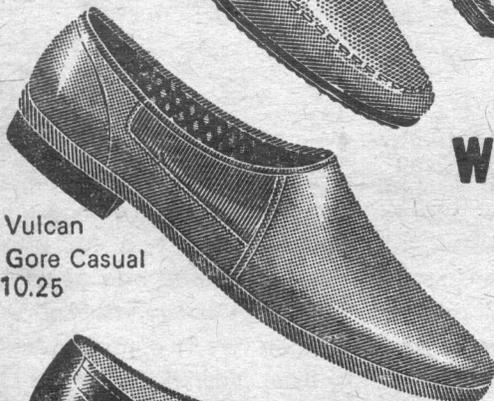
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