

# frontier

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Editor: Samar Sen

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BY SAMAR SEN FROM 61, MOTT LANE,  
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TELEPHONE: 243202

## THE MOON AND THE MEKONG

AS the count-down went on for the third moonshot, people in New York showed more interest in cherry blossoms. It was when the project fumbled and the lives of the three astronauts were said to be in danger that interest revived. Their return has since been greeted as a saga of courage and skill.

Of course, the skill was there, of a high order, both in the spaceship and at ground control. The hour-to-hour details of the ordeal, however, were sickening if one remembered the inhuman agony inflicted by the Americans both at home and in Asia. The astronauts suffered from a lack of oxygen. What about the thousands of people gassed in their homes and tunnels by the Pentagon?

Too much is made of the courage of astronauts. Millions of people in a world crazy for sensations would apply for the marijuana of space voyage even if chances of survival were ten per cent. Whether their intelligence and physique would pass the test is another matter. A Vietcong deep down in a tunnel about to be blown up or gassed is a man of courage, a courage of a much higher quality than that of those confident of monetary rewards and publicity after a space journey. Let us not gloat over their courage. Let not all, kings and clerks, fat communists and lean proletarians go into ecstasy over the successful misadventure launched by the government of a country guilty of some of the most obnoxious crimes against mankind. It is time to think more of what is happening in Vietnam; also across the border where thousands of herded civilians are slaughtered by the lackeys of the U.S. in a silence that is nauseating.

As with My Lai, news of the Cambodian massacres of Vietnamese civilians has been systematically played down in the Indian Press. As late as last Sunday the big dailies thought fit to make the most of reports that the Vietcong had advanced within 22 miles of Phnom Penh. Quite some time earlier the Vietnamese communists had been reported to be within 34 miles of the Cambodian capital, but even Western correspondents on the spot failed to find any evidence of a massive invasion. Washington's own intelligence also suggested that the Vietcong were trying to protect, not expand, their border sanctuaries. None of this, of course, was reported in the free Indian Press. News of hundreds of

Vietnamese bodies floating down the Mekong could not be completely suppressed, but it caused little concern. Instead, screaming headlines were reserved for a reported new thrust by the Vietcong who were said to have overrun all frontier outposts. This time the communist forces from Vietnam may well have decided to impress upon General Lon Nol that he cannot get away with killing hundreds of unarmed Vietnamese men, women and children in the name of Cambodian neutrality and independence.

On April 10, about 100 Vietnamese civilians, including women and children, who had long settled on the Cambodian side of the border were held behind barbed wire in a compound at the Cambodian village of Prasaut and killed by Cambodian troops with machine-guns and automatic rifles. Although Phnom Penh claimed that these people had been caught in cross-fire during a Vietcong attack, even Western news agency correspondents reported that it was nothing but a well-planned massacre. Efforts by the Cambodian Government to play down this gruesome incident had to be given up on April 15 when hundreds of executed Vietnamese bodies, many with their hands tied behind them, were found floating down the Mekong river. Even a Cambodian police official said that he had counted 400 bodies and more could be seen stretching for over a mile up the river and disappearing round a bend. The stench swept across the waters and passengers using a ferry at a point some 40 miles south east of Phnom Penh put on gags as the boat passed through the bobbing corpses. One group of eight bodies, including a woman, was seen floating all tied together.

More Vietnamese bodies seem to have been dumped into the Mekong since. A new group was sighted on April 16, and Red Cross officials in Phnom Penh said that at least 600 Vietnamese had disappeared from a single village. Later reports showed that Vietnamese civilians had been systematically rounded up from a

number of settlements and put in concentration camps before being killed. The killing may not yet be complete, but Lon Nol's men have not done too small a job. According to Reuter and Associated Press, more than 100 detainees in a camp in Takeo province were killed on April 17. In the agencies' own language, "Cambodian soldiers fired repeatedly into huddled masses of Vietnamese inmates of the concentration camp... the soldiers fired directly into the Vietnamese who were sitting under a shed after their meagre evening meal". Surely these accounts give no more than a partial picture of the cold-blooded savagery perpetrated by the new regime since last month's coup to purge all communist influence. And even Lon Nol has not claimed—though he may yet do so—that all Vietnamese in Cambodia are communists.

Washington will have to do something about the General's dilemma. Or perhaps the CIA, which put the General in power, has already convinced Mr Nixon that nothing needs to be done except giving him open military support. Phnom Penh has asked for military aid from all quarters and has made it quite plain that the appeal is addressed primarily to Washington. There is no reason why the massacres should make Nixon squeamish. Lon Nol has learnt well from the killers at My Lai.

## Pyongyang-Peking

So persistent have been Western press reports about the deteriorating Sino-Korean relations over the last four years that many brows have now been raised at the warm reception of Chou En-lai in Pyongyang early this month. Not that all the reports were tissues of lies but there was never any reason to believe that Korean friendship was lost to China. True that since 1964 North Korea gradually took up a position of neutrality in the Sino-Soviet dispute and often adopted positions more favourable

to Moscow (the source of much needed economic and technical aid) than to Peking. Red Guard poster attacks on Premier Kim Il Sung during the height of the Cultural Revolution also momentarily clouded the Sino-Korean relations. But the course of events in Asia ever since has forcefully brought home the necessity of closing of revolutionary ranks. Neutral aloofness, Premier Kim must have realized by now, is not the surest means to fight the U.S. while Moscow is engaged in active collaboration with it.

The faith North Korea had about the revolutionary credentials of the Soviet Union has been put in serious doubt by Russian actions over the last two years. While North Korea held U.S. imperialism to ransom by seizing the intruding spy vessel *Pueblo* the Russians hurriedly released an American plane carrying troops for Vietnam which forced landed on Soviet soil. While the North Koreans shot down an intruding American plane the Russians lost no time in joining the Americans in a search operation for the survivors. The growing divergence between the stands taken by Moscow and Pyongyang was further underlined during Soviet President Podgorny's visit to North Korea in May last. Podgorny did not appear interested in any other thing than pressurizing North Korea into joining the tamasha of the international communist conference in Moscow. On the vital question of reunification of Korea the President would have nothing to do with the line of armed struggle in the south as proposed by Premier Kim or for that matter Peking. Reunification should be achieved, according to Moscow's iron rule, through a "peaceful and democratic path". Then in November came the notorious Sato-

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### CORRECTION

In last week's *Frontier*, Page 2, Para 2, the sentence 'The demonstrator' should read: 'Some of the demonstrators were armed, no doubt; the tribals just tried to' etc.

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Nixon deal in which the Japanese Premier agreed to step into the aggressive American shoes for the "defence" of Taiwan and South Korea. As *People's Daily* noted at the time and Pyongyang fully agreed, Japanese militarists were becoming the Asian gendarme "in opposition to the Chinese people, the Korean people, the Vietnamese people and all the peoples of Asia." but Moscow came out in a shameless defence of the Japanese militarists who were portrayed as meek lambs bullied by the Pentagon. "We surmise", a Radio Moscow broadcast said, that the Japanese government "will be forced to strengthen its defences" (sic) and "take on many obligations" in exchange of the return of Okinawa. "In the past 10 years", it was apologetically explained, "successful Japanese premiers have not been able to express their views on such important matters for Japan's security as the movement of U.S. forces and the use of U.S. military bases for military operations. Even if prior consultations were to be conducted, the Japanese Government would be compelled to agree because of the U.S. nuclear missiles in Okinawa which are aimed at Japan."

Moscow's plea for the helpless Japanese militarists, however, is not surprising in view of its growing friendship with Japan, based on common economic and military objectives. Japanese industrialists are being wooed by the Soviets to develop the natural and forest and mineral resources of Siberia—a region long coveted by Japanese expansionists. Japanese construction of a port at Uralg is also on the cards. By giving the Japanese military-industrial complex a stake in the region (much of which was annexed by the Tsars) Moscow plans to enlist Japanese support in "containing" China. And the North Koreans can hardly fail to notice the danger of being encircled by a Japanese dominated Siberia and South Korea (Japanese industrialists in South Korea are already the biggest tax-payer to the Seoul Government).

In the background of this growing menace of Japanese militarism,

which is planning to boost "defence" spending from \$1,600 million to \$16,000 million under dual encouragement from Moscow and Washington, has come the strengthening of bonds between Peking and Pyongyang. During the 20th anniversary celebrations of China a high-powered North Korean delegation led by Choi Yong Kun, President of the Supreme People's Assembly, visited Peking. Following this, much to the chagrin of Moscow, came the telegram from Pyongyang felicitating China for her nuclear success which is "a great blow to the U.S. imperialism's policy of nuclear blackmail." In the joint communiqué signed by Premiers Chou and Kim early this month it has been clearly stated that "one must have no illusion nor place any hope in Japanese militarism" because "Japan has already been converted into an advance base for a new war of aggression in Asia". Significantly Premier Kim has chosen to expose the treacherous Soviet game by unambiguously stating that "to ignore the danger of Japanese militarism and fraternize with the Sato government is to encourage that government in its overseas expansion, and strengthen the position of American imperialism." Was it just a coincidence that when these lines were being written Soviet Vice-Premier Vladimir Nocolov was being regally hosted by Tokyo?

## End Of Beginning

The national talent search of the Government of India to provide Governor Dhavan with a formidable team of advisers for tackling the problems of West Bengal is reported to be over. Neither the Governor nor some of his advisers can be wholly satisfied with the arrangements. Advisers are supposed to be equals, and elevation of one of them to a superior status may rankle at some hearts. The Governor may also be peeved at the appointment as principal adviser of a person who had the temerity to protest against the original allocation of responsi-

lities to the advisers. Besides, he would have been happy to have a few more advisers, a full "navaratna" perhaps, to grace the administration, though the government order announcing the appointment of advisers declared somewhat churlishly and altogether unnecessarily that the advisers would function under the "guidance, control, and supervision" of the Governor who might at his discretion "alter, modify or reverse" any decision made by an adviser "without assigning any reason". The other prickly question of appointment of a chief secretary in place of the present incumbent who has been appointed an adviser has just been settled. The controversy continued despite reported Central advice for separation of the two posts. Whether New Delhi's intervention was again necessary is not known; but it appears that if the same person could fulfil the roles of an adviser in charge of Home among other departments and the chief secretary—an arrangement the Governor was said to favour—there must have been precious little to do in either capacity.

Such dog-fights in the higher echelons of the administration are of no immediate concern to the people, though apologists of President's rule may feel depressed at this ugly parade of private considerations that move public servants. Having had a taste of Congress rule for two decades, the majority of the people can have no illusion about what is in store during the present regime. So accustomed are they to tall talk from leaders in office for the time being that some more will not make them dream; but the Centre is an incorrigible optimist in this matter, no doubt because grandiose plans and promises require no extra effort, physical or financial. Otherwise Mr Gulzarilal Nanda, the recently resurrected Railway Minister, could not have so glibly promised a tube railway to Calcutta when very modest schemes to purchase a few more buses or recommission those disabled are stalled by lack of finance. Had he been serious he would not have said 24 hours earlier that Calcutta was

going to have a surface railway. Mr Nanda is not known for clear-headedness, and he may have been a little confused by such jargon as a rapid transit system, dispersal lines, circular and semi-circular railways, and metro—most of them contribution of the Ford Foundation to Calcutta's development and very much removed from concepts which move organisations like Bharat Sevak Samaj and Bharat Sadhu Samaj. He may have been led by the nose by scheming bureaucrats who wanted him to make a new commitment to annul the earlier one. Maybe, he was acting according to design. Immediately before the mid-term poll, (the then Minister of State for Railways, Mr Parimal Ghosh, had announced a semi-circular railway for Calcutta. Had the promise not been phoney, work on the project would have commenced several months ago. As the semi-circular railway was unable to prevent a Congress debacle at the polls, a bigger and more luscious car-

rot has been dangled by Mr Nanda; this is true of all schemes of West Bengal's welfare which have suddenly started multiplying in the archives of the Planning Commission and Central Ministries.

Even if the moves for a mini-front ministry fail, President's rule cannot continue beyond 1972. It will be naive to believe that in this short spell the Congress Government at the Centre, aided by the Governor, will be able to accomplish the undone tasks of over two decades; it has neither the will nor the capacity. It may attempt an occasional tinkering with promises of more if the Congress is returned to power in the next elections. The only thing on which it will not stint is police aid to the State Government. Six battalions of the Central Reserve Police are already in the State; they have been dispersed in the districts, though officials deny that they have been deployed. Obviously, they are not here for a change of climate;

the State Government will draw on them whenever necessary, if it has not already done so. The smell of police violence is in the air. For all their petty and unprincipled quarrels, the left parties agree that an offensive on a large scale has been launched by the police, especially in the districts to dispossess the peasants of the land they had occupied in the UF regime. That they have not been able yet to unite in protest does not reduce their allegation. The recent incident near Ranaghat in which three tribal women were killed in police firing shows how ferocious the police have suddenly become. The victims were peasants who had occupied some land in the area, and it is alleged that a local jotedar had accompanied the police to the village. The administration has not yet settled down to business; when it does and sets about in earnest to undo the "wrongs" perpetrated in the UF regime, for which the Bangla Congress is clamouring daily, Rana-

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ghat will be re-enacted all over the State. The left parties cannot claim that they are surprised; they have been talking of resistance for quite a time but have not put up any so far. There is no evidence either that they are preparing for effective resistance.

## Wishful Thinking

*A correspondent writes:*

You can call the civil servants by any name, but the quality of their inefficiency will not alter. Shri Dhavan has now installed his quintet of advisers, and one of them has been designated Chief Adviser. The entire exercise has however taken more than a month; the superannuated bureaucrats have jostled and bargained among themselves, made representations to the Prime Minister, visited Delhi, sulked and sniped at would-be colleagues in public, very much in the manner of practising politicians. That such presumptuousness on the part of a bunch of super-clerks has to be put up with is an index of degeneracy of the system. The gentlemen who have now gone through their investiture and are installed as Advisers do not have a clue about how to tackle the problems of the State. They do not have a clue of the inner mechanism, of the social upheaval which is what West Bengal is today. Now that the CP(M) has been ejected from Writers' Buildings, the newspapers have stopped wailing about law and order. But even a fool knows that nothing has been solved, and nothing will be solved by this entourage of a court-jester-Governor and five salary-earners given to pomposity.

For, as the restless doings of young men around the State in the course of the past fortnight would indicate, even if a social transformation is not round the corner, West Bengal is capable of unsettling many things between now and the next few months. And it would be pitiable folly to attribute such a development to

the incorrigible romantic escapism of the Bengalis. New Delhi may have abhorrence for the left communists; the assorted middle class political parties, beginning from the Swatantra and ending with the CPI may have reasons to resent their dominance; the newspapers may suffer from a pathological dislike of the content of policy and style of operation of the CP(M); others, radically inclined, may object occasionally to the strange antics of some of the leaders of the CP(M) and their curious policies. But analysts and commentators will be only pulling wool over their own eyes by assuming that they could wish away the existence of the CP(M), or by believing that a combination of police measures and political intrigues at the level of leaders would lend to a gradual erosion of its hold over West Bengal's masses. For the sceptics, a holiday from the newspapers and a visit to the countryside, factory sites and office counters would be an education in objectivity.

Some newspapers have gone to town with the suggestion that, at the next election in this State, none of the employees of the State Government must be allowed to act as polling officers, but that the election personnel should be imported from other States. Employees in West Bengal are not 'neutral', they cannot be trusted! The logical next step would be to suggest that the voters too should be imported in entirety from other States.

That such arguments are at all seriously put forth shows the degree of bankruptcy which has gripped the ruling classes. It was great fun to watch a CPI member of the Lok Sabha move a call attention notice regarding the burning of Gandhiana in Calcutta. Burning of books is of course a curious divertissement. And yet, this may only be just the beginning. The way is being paved for pushing the rank and file of the CP(M) into the Naxalite fold. What will then burn will encompass much more than some tepidly-written Gandhi works.

## View from Delhi

### Beyond Privy Purses

FROM A POLITICAL  
CORRESPONDENT

THERE are more privy-purse-holding princes in Mrs Indira Gandhi's Parliamentary Party than in the Opposition, which means the princes are by and large a progressive, committed, socialist lot in the sense the Prime Minister would understand the term. Signature campaigns and demands for conscience are new-fangled weapons of political warfare perfected by the Prime Minister and she should have no reason to complain if the princes manage to rally roughly a third of her party in the Lok Sabha to back their campaign. It could well be that the Prime Minister wants to put off the privy purses issue for some time and has blessed the signature campaign because no government in the predicament of the one in New Delhi can afford to alienate even a group of 10 MPs on any issue. It was hardly surprising that when some Young Turks demanded the resignation of that enfant terrible of Mrs Gandhi's Council of Ministers, Mr Bhanu Prakash Singh, Mrs Gandhi tried to placate the princes' lobby by saying that Mr Bhanu Prakash Singh's views on privy purses were nothing new. Of course, Mr Bhanu Prakash Singh thinks the Young Turks are no different from Naxalites and therefore need to be curbed.

The privy purse issue is a Chavan baby. Shortly after the 1967 elections, the Young Turks pulled off a coup against the leadership by getting the privy purse demand passed as part of the party's ten-point programme. It was a snap vote on Mr Mohan Dharia's amendment and the move was clearly engineered to challenge Mrs Indira Gandhi's socialist image and to queer the pitch for Mr Morarji Desai and Mr S. K. Patil. In the bargain, Mr Chavan was to emerge as the sole socialist in the Congress leadership. For a long

time Mr Chavan was carrying on negotiations with the princes but to no purpose. Mrs Gandhi did not want Mr Chavan to get the credit and switched the job on to Mr Morarji Desai and embarrassed him in the process. Before the princes' issue could be clinched, Mrs Gandhi tried to undercut Mr Chavan in the race for a socialist image by nationalising the banks.

Mr Chavan has nothing to lose politically if he abolishes the privy purses and privileges of princes. He has the detailed plan ready. But Mrs Gandhi stands to lose a lot if the princes vote against her on some issue. So it is in her interest to create a party impasse on the privy purse issue by encouraging the princes to demand reference of the issue to the Supreme Court and use the crypto-communists in the Young Turk group to oppose the move. A deadlock in the party gives the leadership adequate justification for inaction because once it goes to the Supreme Court now, Mrs Gandhi is not obliged to have the legislation moved in this session.

Mrs Gandhi is being gheraoed by a complex cluster of problems. At least in one other major problem, Mr Chavan is the controversial figure. It is now made to appear that Mr Chavan has nothing to do with the Mysore-Maharashtra border dispute (as a Maharashtrian he could be accused as being an interested party) and that Mr V. C. Shukla is handling it. To make this folk tale credible, Mr Shukla even called select correspondents for a briefing on the problem. But Mr Chavan has a bigger stake than any other leader in this issue. From the plan to partition Belgaum in the most irrational way to a sinister blue-print for two Maharashtrian States to begin with (Goa to be surreptitiously tagged on to a part of the present Maharashtra region) so that ultimately the two States can merge to make the glorious Maharashtra of Mr Chavan's and possibly Messrs S. M. Joshi, Madhu Limaye, N. G. Goray, S. A. Dange and B. T. Ranadive's dreams come true, several alternative proposals have

been put out as trial balloons. The effort is to deprive Mr Chavan of any credit for the solution and if possible drive the Veerendra Patil government in Mysore to the wall. The Maharashtra MPs in Mrs Gandhi's party know that their support could be most strategic for her survival and the blackmail potential of their strategic strength is immense.

#### Every Move Recoiling

On the whole the initiative has passed out of Mrs Gandhi's hands now. Every move engineered by her for political ends is recoiling. Neither the princes nor the Maharashtrian MPs can be held in check now. Another facet of her failure is clear from her concessions to the DMK. The decision on the Salem steel plant is meant as a sop for the DMK and to help the image-building effort of her truncated party in Tamil Nadu. Perforce, Andhra Pradesh and Mysore also had to be given a steel plant of sorts each lest the announcement on Salem appeared politically motivated. The politics of it was obvious all the same. Mrs Gandhi would not lose the chance of tagging her name on to the steel plants and would not let the Minister in charge of steel make it. She had to intervene in the debate on the Steel Ministry's demands to make the announcement, much to the anger and frustration of Mr K. C. Pant. And the announcement was made a bare 24 hours before her departure for Madras to participate in the mela of her party.

Thus no interest group in Parliament can be taken for granted by Mrs Gandhi. Every single vote she gets in Parliament involves a political price. At no time since the party split was her leverage so little. Even an official like Mr S. Mullick of West Bengal could use his leverage as a Scheduled Caste man and try to thwart the plans of the upper caste leadership to deprive him of Chief Secretaryship!

In a chastened mood the Prime Minister talked at length against any toppling adventures, at the Working Committee meeting. The morale in

the party is so low that no toppling is possible even if she wanted the game to continue. Her strategy has reached its dead-end. The High Command cannot enforce any discipline in Orissa and Mr Biju Patnaik is riding high. Mr Subramaniam blames his defeat on a secret deal between Mr D. P. Mishra and Mr Kamaraj and alleges complicity of several Central leaders in the episode. Mr Jagjivan Ram sees no reason for quitting either the party presidentship or his Cabinet position and Mrs Gandhi is indifferent to the anomaly. Possibly because she is keen on creating the vicious precedent of someone in Government holding the top post in the party simultaneously. It is a perfect alibi for "fusion of leadership" someday when Mrs Gandhi thinks it necessary to take over the Congress Presidentship herself!

April 19, 1970

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# Leninism : Revamping Of Marxism ?—II

N. P. G.

**B**EFORE we take up more fundamental criticism of Leninism, let us, in passing, refer to some of the superficial charges made against it.

There are people who love to differentiate Marx the political thinker and student of history from Marx the revolutionary, the counsellor of the proletariat. They pay great compliments to Marx, the historian, but find fault with his preachings on revolution. This is not the occasion to discuss why they draw this line between Marx the scientist and Marx the revolutionary, neither is it the place to weigh the emphasis he put on the historical trends of the proletariat as well as on its revolutionary urges. The point is raised here because this arbitrary differentiation between Marx's allegedly dual personality leads some people to glorify Bernstein, Kautsky, Luxemburg, Bebel and others and minimise the importance of Lenin. They think that Lenin reduced Marxism to a specific road to revolution. While Bernstein and such others debated historical trends, Lenin's sole occupation was with tactics. Bernstein believed in the workers' party following the inclinations of the workers and bowing to their inherent trade unionism. Lenin believes in forcible conversion of the worker to revolutionary Marxism. Since these people do not accept Marx's revolutionary thesis but respect Marx's analysis of forces that shape the process of history, they consider Bernstein and others more Marxist than Lenin. This takes us back to the first interpretation of Lenin's relation with Marx, as referred to by Stalin. Since, however, we do not seriously take the differentiation between Marx's early and later writings, we do not propose to dwell on this aspect of criticism against Lenin more elaborately.

One major contribution that Lenin made to the theory and practice of Marxism was the enunciation of the role of the revolutionary party. He railed against spontaneity and stressed

the vital role of consciousness. He made it clear that he never expected the working class to carry out the proletarian revolution by itself; only the deliberate leadership of the party can bring in the revolution.

This the critics of Lenin find unacceptable. They contend that Marx believed that the relentless dialectics of historical materialism would sooner or later raise the proletariat to the seats of power. For Lenin however the revolution was not inevitable; it had to be forced by the deliberate action of conscious revolutionaries, against the natural flow of history. The Leninist philosophy of will thus contradicted the Marxist doctrine of inevitability.

These critics of course have failed to grasp one of the basic concepts of Marxism: dialectics. They have instead stressed economic materialism more and thus failed to understand how and why class struggles lead to revolution. While paying the utmost attention to the modes of production that shape a society, Marx never underestimated the role of consciousness. It is the dialectics of economic materialism and consciousness that leads the proletariat to the seats of power; it is not inevitable but, under the leadership of the party, the victory of the proletariat is obtainable. Leninist philosophy of will thus does not contradict Marxism.

There are critics however who are not prepared to accept the proposition that there can be an interaction between the modes of production and consciousness or in other words the substructure and superstructure. In fact some Marxists too twist Marx into saying that the economic element is the only determining factor of history. In a letter to Joseph Bloch, Engels attacked this 'Marxist' balderdash and wrote,

"According to the materialist conception of history, Marx says, the determining element... is ultimately the production and reproduction in

real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. If, therefore, somebody twists this into the statement that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms it into a meaningless, abstract and absurd phrase. The economic situation is the basis but the various elements of the superstructure... also exercise their influence upon the historical struggle and in many cases preponderate in determining their form. There is an interaction of all those elements in which, amid all the hosts of accidents... the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary... Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger writers sometimes lay more stress on the economic factor than is due to it. We had to emphasize the main principle in opposition to our adversaries, who denied it and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to allow the other elements involved in the interaction to come into their rights".

Critics of Marxism however consider that Marx and Engels were concerned with the origin of the superstructure rather than with its influence upon the development of society. In fact, they hold that Marx never defined dialectics precisely and his loose description can be twisted any way to suit convenience. Some of them admit the validity of Hegelian dialectics but consider dialectical materialism to be standing on false premises. Some again consider, that there can be no opposition between the superstructure and substructure. In their opinion, man is a being endowed with intelligence and he provides himself with the means of subsistence as well as the superstructure. The two are parts of the same process and there is no occasion to bring them into opposition or to make the one dependent on the other. However, elaboration or refutation of these views need not con-

cern us here because these will take us into the very heart of the concepts of historical materialism of Marx himself. We are not concerned here with the validity of Marxism itself but the relation of Marxism to Leninism. The quotation from Engels evidently shows that Lenin had in no way deviated from Marxism when he employed the revolutionary party to shorten and lessen the birth pangs of the new society. When Marx said that "society can neither overleap the natural phases of its evolution nor shuffle out of them by a stroke of the pen", his statement must be read in the perspective of Engels's quotation.

### Revolutionary Party

The function of the party as Lenin conceived it was to force the revolution to occur against the resistance of the old order, the impracticability of intellectuals and the formless spontaneity of the masses. Lenin had clear opinions about the formation of the party. It was to be a narrow organization, not the mass of like-minded sympathisers but the active and conscious minority. This was the specific issue over which the Russian Social Democrats began to split in 1903 into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Lenin required that the minority organization be constituted on military lines with a hierarchy of command. His democratic centralism meant democratic determination of policy and centralised execution.

The critics of Lenin hold that the Leninist concept of the party was wholly unMarxist. The rigidity of structure leads inevitably to bureaucracy and stagnation, which is against the spirit of revolution. In fact, they hold, the Leninist party had degenerated into a bureaucratic party with the passage of time.

When the Bolsheviks took power in October, the critics say, the Leninist rigour of party organization was at a low point with the party having been diluted with hundreds of thousands of new members and many leaders like Trotsky who had never committed themselves to the Bolshevik principles. A spontaneous mass upheaval, with the SRs rousing

the peasants, the enthusiasm of new but uncommitted members—forces which Lenin distrusted or discounted—were responsible, much more than organization and narrow discipline, for the Bolshevik success. It was in the years following the revolution that the organization of the party was tightened with the major imposition of discipline coming in after 1921 when the crisis of the civil war was weathered.

Rosa Luxemburg considered the Leninist concept of the party as ultra-centralist. She went to the extent of saying that the Leninist concept was a mechanical carryover of the organization principles of the Blanquist movement of conspiratorial circles onto the social democratic movement of the working class. Studying the Leninist organization she found that the central committee was the real active nucleus of the party and all other organizations were merely its executive organs. There is a sharp separation of the organised bodies of outspoken and active revolutionists from the unorganised though revolutionary active masses surrounding them. This is not informed with a positive creative spirit but with the sterile spirit of the nightwatchman. Leninist thought is patterned mainly upon the control of party activity and not upon its promotion, upon narrowing and not upon unfolding, upon the hemming and not upon the drawing together of the movement.

Luxemburg held that it is not by adding on to the discipline impressed upon it by the capitalist State—with the mere transfer of the baton from the hand of the bourgeoisie to that of a social democratic central committee—but by breaking up and uprooting the slavish spirit of discipline that the proletariat can be prepared for the new discipline, the voluntary self-discipline of social democracy.

Luxemburg challenged Lenin's theory of the dictatorship of the party. Lenin said, that according to her, the bourgeois State is an instrument of oppression of the working class; the socialist State, of the bourgeoisie. This simplified view,

she says, misses the most essential thing. Bourgeois class rule has no need of the political training and education of the entire mass of the people, at least not beyond certain narrow limits. But for the proletarian dictatorship, that is the life element. The dictatorship of the party cannot lead to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Not only Luxemburg. There have been protests, loud or muffled, organised or disorganised, against the Leninist concept of the party over the years when the structure of the party became more and more rigid after 1917. The Democratic Centralist Group led by V. V. Osinsky was an offshoot of the Left Communist movement of early 1918 which held on to the original anti-bureaucratic line. This group spoke out against the trend towards centralisation in the party, government, and industry. Their ideals were autonomy by elected boards.

Lenin, in 1920, relegated trade unions from administration to social service and an educational role. "The Workers' Opposition", the left-wing enthusiasts in the trade unions, demanded that industrial administration be made the independent responsibility of the unions themselves. Alexandra Kollontai bewailed the trend to bureaucracy and pleaded for trust in the class instinct of the proletariat.

The Kronstadt revolt, the manifestation of anarchistic radicalism, appealed to the Russian populace to carry out a third revolution against the bureaucratic dictatorship of the communists.

### Marxist Idea of the Party

Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the State can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. Marx gave few details about the structure and functioning of the dictatorship of the proletariat. We have therefore to guess what he had in his mind from his

teachings about the nature, purpose and structure of this form of government.

All governments are by nature oppressive. But during the proletarian dictatorship, the pattern of authority is reversed in favour of the oppressed majority and against the oppressor minority. It will be all the same a dictatorship and coercive. It will be the antithesis not of democracy but of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The purpose of this dictatorship is to use power for the transition to communism. To this end, it defends the proletariat against counter-revolution, root out the bourgeoisie from its positions of power, sweep away the rubble of the bourgeois State, socialise the means of production by inroads on the rights of property and educate the people in modes of behaviour suitable to the new society.

The structure of this dictatorship is however a matter of conjecture. It is of course not organised on the pattern of bourgeois democracy. Engels said, "Look at the Paris Commune. That was the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Marx and Engels admired the Commune for the five vast changes it worked in the scheme of political authority. Concentration. The Commune was a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time. Centralization. It retained exclusive responsibility for the conduct of national affairs. Popularization. The officials were paid workers' wages and subject to recall, and the standing army was replaced by armed people. Simplification. It reduced the complexities of government to an elementary pattern of institutions and a comprehensive set of rules. Proletarianization. The working class alone was politically enfranchised.

Marx's only criticism of the Commune was that it was not ruthless enough in smashing the bourgeois influence.

The Commune was of course the living negation of formal democracy. It was a government conceived as servant of the people. Marx assumed that the men chosen to carry on the dictatorship would somehow be responsible to the proletariat; he assumed too that there would be an active political life marked by free discussion.

From Marx's advice to the Communist League it may be imagined that Marx's party was a Western style workers' party. It was a democratic party because it would have mass membership and responsible leadership.

Lenin expanded Marx's embryonic idea into a theory of organization. His party was a party of narrow membership, an action-oriented organization with a high level of discipline and passionate devotion to lead the masses.

Marx's idea of the party does not suggest that the dictatorship of the proletariat might be equated with the rule of one socialist party. According to Lenin too, the dictatorship of the proletariat was to bring with it "a widening of the practical utilization of democracy by those opposed by capitalism, by the labouring classes as has yet never been seen in the whole of human history." During the period of the civil war and intervention, however, the Bolsheviks outlawed all opposition parties, socialist as well as non-socialist, and imposed a ban on factions within the Communist Party itself. The proletarian democracy failed, because critics of Leninism find in the organizational history of Bolshevism the germinal conception of a monolithic and totalitarian party. In their opinion the Leninist party was by its nature doomed to degenerate into a bureaucratic party.

The disparity between Marxist theory and Soviet practice however does not owe itself to the concept of the Leninist party. Soviet totalitarianism was not inevitable nor necessarily implicit in the Leninist concept

but was forced upon it by the decisions of Russian democrats and Western democracies. Moreover, the democratic failure was partly due to the weakness of the backward Russian economy. Large-scale economic planning was not possible with the form of democracy that obtained in the West where a vote in the popular assembly might defer urgent steps to build up a socialist plan.

The history of five years after the revolution cannot be adduced to show that the Leninist party was by its nature opposed to proletarian democracy. These were the years when time and energy were spent to stabilize the regime, to save the revolution. But essentially Lenin was exactly for what Luxemburg stood for. In perfect conformity with his own method, that a dogma must be tested in the crucible of reality, he said in the *State and Revolution*.

"By what stages, by means of what practical measures humanity will proceed to this higher aim—this we do not and cannot know. But it is important that one should realise how infinitely mendacious is the usual capitalist representation of socialism as lifeless, petrified and fixed once for all. In reality, it is only with socialism that there will commence a rapid genuine real mass advance, in which first the majority and then the whole of population will take part."

The unbridled power of the executive, the reign of terror, the theory of the infallibility of Doctrine—these were all later developments which were not inherent in the Leninist concept. Luxemburg's admonitions were well-meaning but divorced from stern reality; she had not the experiences of an administrator. Lenin himself was aware that the government and party were in those years in conflict with the people. The party had to override trade unions, dismiss their recalcitrant leaders, break or obviate popular resistance and prevent the free formation of opinion inside the Soviets. Only thus, Lenin held, could the revolution be saved. These practices

would give his government a breathing space. The dictatorship could then gradually revert to proletarian democracy. Educating the masses, transforming their sense of values, making them socialist men and making them involved in the dictatorship of the proletariat—it is a long process and Lenin's views on cultural revolution were all geared to this end.

### Proletarian Revolution

Lenin's critics have observed that he was prepared to admit, as he did in commenting on the memoirs of the Menshevik Sukhanov, that Russia lacked the conditions for socialism but he saw no reason why the communist government could not proceed to create them. Here again, the critics say, Lenin put primacy of politics over economics and therefore deviated from Marxism. The answer to this charge is, as we have seen earlier, simple: politics and economics are no fixed categories of formal logic but changing, interacting categories in dialectics. Since this is the charge most anti-Lenin scholars resort to so that they can prove that Leninism was not Marxism, let us elucidate the criticism at greater length.

The Menshevik wing of Russian Social Democracy saw the arrival of socialism in Russia as the climax of a long process of development. Its response to the challenge of industrial backwardness was to preach the postponement of the socialist revolution until industrial backwardness had been overcome. Influenced by orthodox Western Marxism and depressed by the weakness of the Russian industrial proletariat, it concluded that a socialist Russia was a matter of distant future and that the immediate task was to clear the way for a bourgeois revolution, to help the bourgeoisie carry out its own historic responsibilities. It was therefore prepared to conclude alliances with liberal bourgeois forces who opposed the autocracy and to join them for such limited objectives as universal suffrage, constitutional li-

berties and enlightened social legislation.

This attitude was directly opposed by the theory of permanent revolution developed by Parvus and accepted by Lenin and later, with a twist, by Trotsky. This theory put the picture of industrial backwardness in a different perspective. The backwardness was a political asset rather than a liability. As a result of backwardness and the large role played by State capitalism, the Russian middle stratum was weak and incapable of doing the job of its analogues in Western Europe. Therefore the bourgeois revolution in Russia could be made only by the proletariat. Once the proletariat was in power, its responsibility was to hold on to power and keep the revolution going in permanence until socialism was established both at home and abroad. The Russian revolution would ignite a series of socialist revolutions in the West. This permanent revolution would offset the resistance which would develop. This was a new law of combined development. The two revolutions—bourgeois-democratic and proletarian-socialist—would be combined and telescoped into one. The working class would assert its hegemony from the outset and leap directly from industrial backwardness into socialism. Implicit in the theory was a commitment to the theory of minority dictatorship for Russia—the dictatorship of the proletariat.

### Two Tactics

Lenin started on the Menshevik lines. This was unambiguously stated in his *Two Tactics*. He recognised the necessity of bourgeois democracy. But at the same time he emphasized the necessity of the proletariat taking the leadership. Here he differed from the Mensheviks. And his departure from Trotsky lay in his stress on the alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry. His two tactics envisaged two stages: first, the alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry to complete the democratic revolution; and, second, an alliance of the proletariat and the poor

peasants to initiate the socialist revolution.

The 1917 revolutions confirmed the suspicions of Lenin's critics that the post-revolution Russian structure was an expression of industrialism in its developmental phase—not the successor of capitalism but a parallel structure. Their line of thought is as follows.

The revolution which had created the Kerensky government was, by Marxian standards, a bourgeois revolution because it took power from the old nobility and gave it to the middle strata. It is a settled principle of Marxism that any revolution, bourgeois or proletarian, occurs not through a sporadic application of force but must be prepared by proper political and economic development. It follows that the bourgeois revolution must be completed before the proletarian revolution can be properly begun. It was this settled principle that Lenin set aside as antiquated. He relegated the conception that a time of preparation must elapse between the bourgeois and the proletarian revolutions to the archives of Bolshevik pre-revolutionary antiques. The 1917 October Revolution was, according to him, a proletarian revolution in conformity with living Marxism.

Lenin's critics however would not agree. Nothing, according to them, in Marxism is better settled than the proposition that a revolutionary ideology can be created only by the training of the proletariat in capitalist industry. The theory that politics depends upon the relations of production implies this. According to Marx, no nation can overleap the natural phases of evolution. According to Engels, force can do no more than supplement a revolutionary situation prepared by economic development. In 1915, the critics say, Lenin too had believed that a socialist revolution in Russia was impossible, though he hoped for a democratic republic there and for socialist countries in more advanced countries. Even, in 1917, before coming to Russia, he thought of a

Russian expedient which might fail but which might succeed until the situation could be saved by its becoming prologue to the world socialist revolution. His subsequent change of position was an inspiration of the moment.

Lenin justified his stand by his theory of capitalist imperialism. According to this theory, the chances of a revolution in any single country depend upon the international situation as well as upon its internal situation. The strain of war might well break capitalism at its weakest point and this need not of necessity be in those countries where capitalism itself is most highly developed. This might be true but critics say that this leaves nothing of the Marxist idea that societies pass through a normal series of industrial stages and that their political history or ideology follows their economic development. Bukharin, they say, monstrously twisted Marxism when he sought to explain the anomaly by saying that in periods of revolution the course of development goes from ideology to technology, thus reversing the normal order.

In fact, the critics hold that Lenin brought the revolution into line with what Russian conditions permitted. All his subsequent compromises showed that this was no proletarian revolution. The peace of Brest Litovsk, instead of proclaiming an international civil war, war communism, abandonment of egalitarianism and collective decision making, elimination of trade unions from industrial management, abolition of factions within the Communist Party, enunciation of NEP with concessions to individual profit motive, the slogans 'All Power to Soviets', 'End to War', and 'Land to Tillers'—all these proved that Lenin ushered in no proletarian revolution. The Thermidorian reaction contradicted the basic Marxist proposition regarding the dependence of the political superstructure on the economic substructure.

#### Answer to the Charges

Let us now see how far these attacks on Leninism are valid.

APRIL 25, 1970

There can be no doubt that Lenin had to make a series of compromises after the October Revolution. But none of the compromises were sought to be explained away as a part of the proletarian system. These were compromises resorted to in order to save the revolution; these were temporary measures, offering breathing spells. There is no reason for saying that all the years that Lenin lived after the revolution were a series of breathing spells. The proletarian revolution after October 1917 was the greatest experiment in the social history of the world. Only the most irresponsible disparagers could expect that the course of the revolution would follow every word of Marx literally.

Secondly, the compromises like the Brest Peace or the New Economic Policy were merely details of development and from the standpoint of world history these were small details. The critics who consider these details as the essential pattern of the post-revolution Russian structure are obviously not interested in objective evaluation of the October Revolution. The proletarian reconstruction was an arduous process, a matter of ages; it cannot be bought in by a stroke of the pen. There could have been no doubt that in Russia socialism was being built upon a pauper technical basis. With a low technical basis, Marx said, only want will be generalised and with want the struggle for necessities begins again and all the old crap must revive. That is why Marx preferred to wait for the completion of bourgeois democracy to make way for proletarian democracy. Lenin however took the bull by the horns. Naturally he had to face stubborn resistance from all the fronts, even on the front which was apparently sympathetic to him, i.e. his own followers in his own country.

The second charge against the revolution was that the theory of permanent revolution was false because the October Revolution failed to ignite socialist revolutions in the West. Unquestionably it failed. But so what? Lenin never claimed that

the proletarian revolution would be perfected during his lifetime. His was not the theory of socialism in one country. Even Stalin, who in later years made a fetish of this theory, stated in 1924 in the Foundations of Leninism,

"For the final victory of socialism, for the organisation of socialist production, the efforts of one country, especially a peasant country like ours, are not enough—for this we must have the efforts of the proletarians of several advanced countries."

Regarding the charge that the conception of a proletarian revolution in a peasant economy is an unmarxist idea, this is what Lenin said apropos N. Sukhanov's notes, "they (pedantic Marxists) have even absolutely failed to understand Marx's plain statements that in time of revolution the utmost flexibility is demanded and have even failed to notice, for instance, the statement made in his letters—I think it was in 1856—expressing the hope of combining a peasant war in Germany, which might create a revolutionary situation, with the working-class movement—they avoid this plain statement and walk round and about it like a cat around a bowl of hot porridge."

Let us round up this discussion quoting Lenin. "The task of a truly revolutionary party is not to declare the impossible renunciation of all compromises but to be able through all compromises, as far as they are unavoidable, to remain true to its principles, to its task, to its revolutionary task."

One who accepts dialectics as a law of change, conflict, interdependence, progress and revolution should not doubt the fundamentals of Leninism which creatively applied Marxism in changing history.

(A series on Lenin by Monitor will begin next week).

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For FRONTIER contact  
SANYAL BROS.  
26, Main Road Jamshedpur-1

# Events In Cambodia—III

SUBROTO SEN

**D**ESPITE Sihanouk's feudal background his patriotism, his concern, even if calculated to some extent, for the "little man" and above all his desire to maintain the territorial integrity of his country from the aggressive neighbours of South Vietnam and Thailand brought him into frequent clashes with reaction at home and abroad. All this acted as eye-openers. Through more than two decades of experience Sihanouk came to know the world but more important and by the same token much more difficult task was to change it. And here, some isolated and courageous gestures notwithstanding, he could not overcome his class limitations. That is why he often tried to neutralize the right-wing—the army, aristocracy and businessmen—by himself adopting their position and toning it down discreetly. Not that he was unaware of the true nature of the Vietnamese "threat" to Cambodia—that Vietnamese expansionism against Cambodia is a thing of the feudal past, that the aggressive posture of the puppet government in Saigon is directly motivated by the Pentagon's design to set up military bases in Cambodia and there was absolutely no chance of a revival of such a "threat" from a socialist Vietnam. Yet Sihanouk could not resist swimming with the reactionaries who clothed their anti-communist and pro-American designs with talk of "traditional threat from Vietnam." Sihanouk, whose vanity would not allow him to admit the existence of rebellion against his government (although he himself accused the administrators for corruption and the deteriorating economic situation), also found it convenient to label the rebels as 'Vietcong'. Sihanouk thus unwittingly gave his right-wing opponents a convenient stick by which he himself would be beaten and would be half-responsible for "Vietcong infiltration" into Cambodia. He did realize

his folly when, taking advantage of his absence, the right-wing clique organized the sacking of the DRV and PRG missions. He cabled from Paris denouncing the "personalities aiming to destroy irretrievably Cambodia's friendship with the socialist camp and throw our country into the arms of a capitalist imperialist power." But it was too late.

However to set the record straight it must be mentioned that notwithstanding his anti-Vietnamese stance since 1968 he has consistently and unflinchingly supported the Vietnam liberation struggle. He not only gave shelter to the Vietnamese fleeing American bombs but helped the NLF with medicines, rice and dried fish. By denying the U.S. imperialists the use of Cambodian territory he also rendered a valuable service to the Vietnamese struggle. As Wilfred Burchett pointed out, "Cambodia's role is highly appreciated in the DRV and by the NLF in the south and will be a key factor in future relations. Cambodia has an important credit account to draw on when peace is restored, as far as the Vietnamese people and their real leadership are concerned."

## "Buying Peace"

In domestic policy too his class limitation, especially his anxiety not to rock the boat too much led him occasionally to take repressive measures against the people while contenting himself with a largely verbal assault on the corrupt and oppressive officials. He also allowed himself to be guided by the army bosses, known pro-American elements, and adopt harsh measures against the student and peasant rebels of the Khmer Rouge. This was no doubt an exercise in buying peace from the reactionaries but in so doing he only weakened his position without winning them over to his centrist policy. The same desire to compromise and

survive led him to revise his position on imperialist aid and reopen contact with imperialist aid agencies. Problems of developing a backward economy like Cambodia's could be solved (while retaining independence) only by socialist means—by liberating the masses from exploitation and mobilising them with ideological motivation for the great task of socio-economic reconstruction. Failure to adopt this course led Cambodia inevitably to the easier but dangerous path of relying on foreign investment and imperialist aid. But here again Sihanouk was too patriotic and enlightened to go the whole hog with the pro-American clique of Lon Nol and Sirik Matak, who lost no opportunity to get rid of the moderate prince.

Although heralding dark days for Cambodia, the coup has nonetheless taught Sihanouk, in his own words, "a bitter but very useful lesson." The lesson is simple: the reality of class struggle cannot just be wished away as he tried to do with his concept of "Buddhist socialism" and that the imperialists and their lackeys would never step down willingly from the stage of history. As Sihanouk now admits, armed struggle is "the only road which will lead our people to victory and enable them to realize their ideals." He has also apologised to the left-wing for his "blindness and erroneous judgment" which led him to denounce them as traitors.

With the decision to form a National United Front of Kampuchea and a Liberation Army Sihanouk seems to have found at last the right means of fighting imperialism. The aim of the struggle, of necessity, is not limited to the overthrow of the lackeys of U.S. imperialism from Cambodia. It was designed "to ensure, for the first time in Cambodia's history, a new life based on social justice and a genuine people's democracy which

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## CORRECTION

Page 10, col. 3., last week's issue, the last sentence of the last one paragraph—"It is they" etc. should read: "It is they who are afraid of communists. As for me" etc.

guaranteed that all power would be exercised directly by the people or through the progressive youth and the working people on the basis of national independence and territorial integrity and under the protection of the national religion, Buddhism."

Sihanouk's latest decision has been ridiculed as a volte face and, worse, described cynically as a move to recover power with the help of communist bayonets. But the analysis of the evolution of Sihanouk's political understanding would make his latest stand very consistent with his previous positions. To have resigned to the rightist coup and retire peacefully to a safe haven would rather have been out of character. To talk about Sihanouk's use of "communist bayonets" is to ignore his genuine anti-imperialist sentiment and it is also an insult to the intelligence of the Cambodian communists.

The Cambodian left-wing forces have readily joined Sihanouk's NUFK for the simple reason that with the direct intervention of U.S. imperialism and the ouster of Sihanouk, the nature of contradiction in Cambodia has changed. Now the prin-

cipal contradiction is between U.S. imperialism and its lackeys and the Cambodian people. At this stage of the national liberation struggle the vast majority of the people, including the patriotic feudal and bourgeois elements and even Buddhist monks, may join the Front and have, in fact, done so. There should naturally be no hesitation to accept the leadership of an anti-imperialist prince who has a large following among the peasants. Moreover the fact that he has called upon the Khmer people to fight shoulder to shoulder with Vietnamese and Lao brothers against the common enemy until final victory further recommends him for support from all progressive people. It is thus quite natural that Peking, Hanoi, Pyongyang, Tirana, the NLF and Pathet Lao (but not Moscow) have come out with strong pledges of support for the NUFK and its Liberation Army.

If the coup served a useful lesson for Sihanouk the rapid success of the resistance against the junta should also prove a good lesson for the communists planning to seize power through parliamentary united fronts.

The hard core of the Cambodian resistance is now being provided by the communists who unlike their Indonesian comrades did not rely on a charismatic national leader for their victory but abandoned the parliamentary game as early as 1962 and went underground. Quite long before the right-wing struck at the leader—the mediator—the Cambodian communists started building rural bases and develop guerilla units. When the crunch finally came Cambodian Suhartos could find no communists worth the name to lay their bloody hands on. By going to the mountains, as Mao had advised Aidit as early as 1958, the communists in Cambodia have averted an Indonesia. But undaunted, the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak clique are trying to make it up by creating a Malaysia—by unleashing a racial pogrom against the ethnic Vietnamese just as the Tunku did with the Chinese and Indians. However, from the speed with which the Cambodian liberation struggle is gaining momentum the doom of the junta does not seem very far.

(Concluded)

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# Frankly Speaking

SANJOY

IT was a hell of a hot Saturday afternoon. About 2, traffic on the stretch of Lenin Sarani from the Subodh Mullick Square point to Rajbhavan came to a halt as streams of municipal employees with units from all over W Bengal, headed towards the North Gate of Rajbhavan. The first reaction of office people waiting for trams to go home was of annoyance. Why do these people always choose a main road and the office-closing hour? This writer also felt a little annoyed, but the feeling passed as the demonstrators walked past with their banners, shouting slogans. The poorest of the employees were there. Women carrying children. Some middle-class employees. They did not mind the vaporous heat and were in a jovial and fighting mood. Once again the sight of large masses of people going together brought back that old feeling of being part of the collective. Memory went back to a very famous strike by scavengers (in the early forties?) led by—was it Sakina Begum? The streets then piled up with garbage and after a few days some brave *bhadrolok* came forward to clear it. But the lathis of the scavengers scared them away.

Study the reaction of some of the *bhadrolok* to such a demonstration. There was, besides initial annoyance, a feeling of superiority to the stinking humanity, but the feeling soon gave way to hesitation as one saw better dressed middle-class employees among them. Most of the poor were non-Bengali, but the provincial feeling would not be sharp, because there is no job competition. But as the columns came on and on, there was curiosity about the party behind them. The hammer and the sickle. But whose hammer and sickle? It is very difficult to make out.

A story would not be out of place here. Some months ago, a woman

whose allegiance to the CPM is marked, rang us up a number of times from Howrah Station to find out whether the large numbers of peasants arriving by train were going to a CPM meeting. According to her, they were carrying hammer-and-sickle flags and so must be CPM supporters. When told they were going to a CPI rally, she rang off, again to make frantic enquiries after a time whether our information was correct. We told her in exasperation that, as things were, CPM supporters would not go to a rally to be addressed by Comrade Dange, would they? But we knew she was not convinced—the size of the crowd was too big for the CPI.

So, Marxist parties of various hues should do something to make distinct their separate identities. Another point. The slogans the processionists shout these days do not help. The phrases are not lengthened, as they used to be in easier days. To match the new militancy they are barked, with the result or non-result that even at a distance of five feet they are not understood and there is endless speculation about their content. There is great need for clarity, both in the flags and the slogans, leave alone ideology.

Those who believe in the politics of extremism care little for the size of a meeting or procession—if it is under revisionist auspices. Is there any virtue in numbers? Think of the immense crowds that Nehru drew. Or, for that matter, Queen Elizabeth. The size of the response does not mean that the Congress of Nehru or the UK of the Queen was, or is, ok. But this writer, being a petty bourgeois, is still enthralled by mammoth meetings, for which he would like to offer a half-apologetic justification: what a force these people could be if they are given the right objective

or if we get the right perspective from their size and mood!

But what objective would you lay down for the municipal employees marching in the intolerable heat? Tell them that a mere raise in their wages and salaries was nothing, what is wanted is seizure of power? Seizure of power by what means? This writer is convinced beyond argument that the workers and peasants would not take much time to understand that power grows out of the barrel of a gun. People who know the baton of the police or the bayonet, or the lathi, sword and spear of the jotedar, or the dagger and bomb of the hired hooligans of the industrial tycoons, the toilers who work with their own hands, should have an instinctive understanding of the efficacy of the weapons in their hands which they can equate with the barrel of a gun. It is the petty bourgeois ideologues who are armed with pens who take long to understand the precept. But the timing is most important for the application of tactics and strategy. It is perhaps—or was—necessary to take the more conscious of the workers and peasants in groups to the air-conditioned Assembly chamber, where they can see the mace and gown of the Speaker and hear people speak in strange accents. That should be enough to make them realise how alien is this city. A friend says that the peasants who camped in the Lake area on the night before the Brigade Ground rally of the CPM on March 15 marvelled that so much land went uncultivated and such large lakes had not been converted into bheris.

To return to mass meetings. This writer went to the victory meeting of the UF in 1967, but would like to think that he was not much impressed. Jyoti Basu, as it used to be his practice then, left quite a large number of sentences three-quarters finished. Somnath Lahiri was too sleek. In 1969, this writer did make some half-hearted attempt but failed to turn up at the victory rally. On March 15 he did go to the Brigade

## Nausea

RATHINDRANATH CHATTAPADHYAY

Parade Ground. The composition of the participants had changed indeed. What vast number of peasants! Jyoti Basu looked more than fit—too fit—and he did complete his sentences. But the content was more sentimental than political: that man, Ajoy Mukherjee, in whom the CPM and other parties had placed their trust for the second time, was about to betray the people again. It sounded like a quarrel in a joint family. Harekrishna Konar, whom this writer did not hear, was reported to have been more political. But did the vast crowd of peasants wade their way through the language of the city folks? Why aren't peasants and workers heard from these platforms?

Across the main road, on the roof of Tata House, Satyajit Ray was busy filming a part of his new venture. What message did he draw from the vast gathering? Quite a lot would depend on how he portrays the Naxalite in the film.

My journalist friends who had taken me to the meeting were becoming impatient. They had, quite some time before the meeting started, filed their telegrams to London about the size, the background and the significance of the rally. Speeches are rather boring and the rally was too disciplined to be interesting for newsmen. The torches would be lighted later. Time to go home, with a flicker of the primitive sense of solidarity, no matter whether the leaders were right or wrong. Two days later, however, the working classes of West Bengal did not unite for the general strike. Let us blame the deaths on the leaders and still be excited by massive rallies of workers, peasants and the petty bourgeois. A vicarious thrill, like enjoying *Battle-ship Potemkin* after dinner.

### NOTICE

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Business Manager  
Frontier

APRIL 25, 1970

I jumped from the cycle-rickshaw and ran for the train. It had already whistled and was about to start. I ran and boarded the foot-board of the most handy compartment. It was closed from inside. The train started to gather speed and I heard angry voices shouting at me, "you can't come in, it's full". "Open the door, you fools," I shouted back, "or there will be an accident and you'll have to face the consequence." An unwilling hand slowly opened the door and I got in.

They were refugees—the new migrants' as they are called—leaving Hasnabad and going to Mana camp in anticipation of plenty. Young men were smoking biris, old women were dozing and young mothers were feeding their babies. Their breasts were bare, their short saris were raised above the knees exposing unusually slender thighs, their foreheads were devoid of vermilion. They looked at me—suspicion looming large on their faces. I smiled at them, asked one to remove her baby and got a seat. I offered a Charminar to the old man who appeared to be the leader of the refugees in that particular compartment. Partly assured, the old man started talking. A series of questions. "Are you a Hindu?" "What caste do you belong to?" "Your name?" "What do you do?" Told that I was a teacher, a Brahmin too, the whole compartment felt assured.

It was my turn to question them. "What led you to leave your country?" I asked the old man. Not for the first time, of course. I had been asking the same question since the beginning of February when I saw the first group of those who were forced to turn into pigs. "Oh, all sorts of reasons," replied the old man and laughed at his 'tactful' answer. "Politics?" I asked. "Yes, yes, politics is there all right. The other day one of the leaders openly

said the Hindus are undesirable elements and nobody should show any sympathy for them." "Was that all?" I asked. "Oh, no they started raping our women and forcing us to eat cow-meat. They started grabbing our lands and would not give us any job." "Do you think that your women will be safe in India and you all will get good jobs?"

The old man was reticent. The process of disillusionment, I understood, had started. Realisation is always bitter. They had started realizing the truth. The women were angry. Those whom they had so long respected as their husbands had now betrayed them by forcing poverty, starvation and prostitution on them.

There was the scorching sun outside and a strange smell inside. Windows could not be kept open because of the sun, and the fans, as usual, were not running. The smell was becoming unbearable. I decided to talk. "Where do they want you to go? "We're going to the Mana Camp. We're now going to Sealdah and shall spend the night there. From there, we'll go to Howrah. They will take us to Mana from there". "Will they give you land and money, food and clothes?" "We don't know. We thought we would be given plots of land here in West Bengal. We heard a lot of the peasants fighting for benami lands and getting five cottahs each". I smiled. The cat was out of the bag. The indomitable Harekrishna Konar, the proud gentleman from Burdwan, had roused the hopes of even the Hindus in East Pakistan. Did somebody tell the landless Hindus in Pakistan that they would be given land and jobs in West Bengal? If somebody did, was that somebody an agent of the Pakistani Government who are afraid of the Hindu votes?

We reached Harua Road. The train would stop for ten minutes. I got down, drank water and bought some cucumber. Some young men

were laughing and talking. Brokers, I understood. They must be talking of women and the prices they would fetch. I got into the compartment and looked round. Which ones of the dark-faced women would be sold? The one sitting round the corner had round breasts—the only one in the compartment to attract notice. Yes, she will be sold. She was looking outside and trying to say something to a young man standing on the platform. The baby on her lap could not catch hold of the nipple and was crying loudly. What about the woman just in front of me? Every time I looked at her, her husband looked through the window. Was it because he wanted me to examine his wife and ask her to be my maidservant?

The train whistled and moved on. I started thinking of the last words of the Refugee Rehabilitation Minister of the UF Government. He

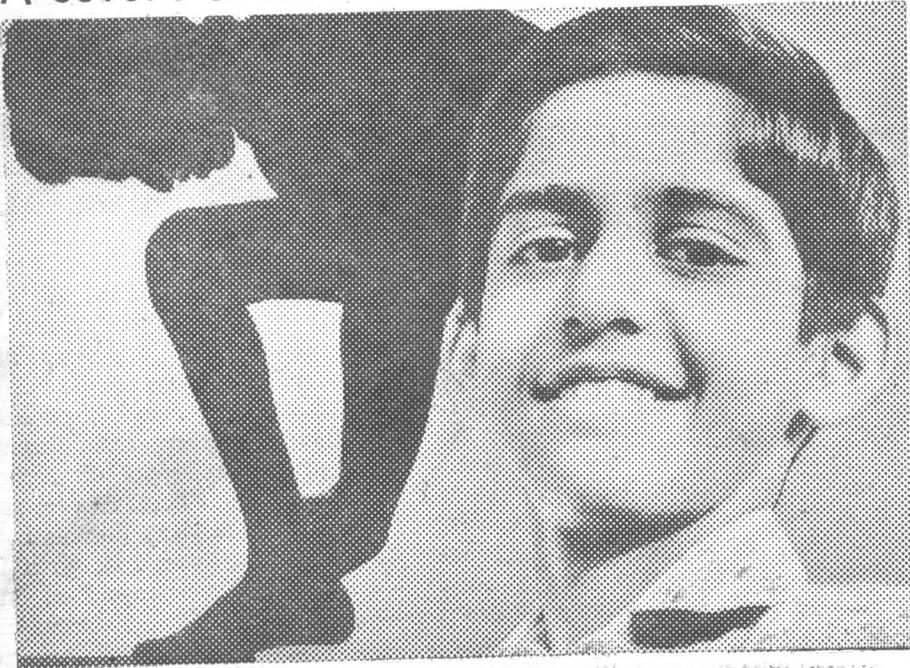
wanted to set up a transit camp at Hasnabad to provide shelter to 60,000 refugees. I also remembered the statement of the Union Minister who had assured Parliament that 20,000 tents, food and medicine had been sent to Basirhat. And yet, not a single tent could be seen anywhere in the sub-division, Cholera had become an epidemic and... The old man told me he had not touched anything but plain water for the last 48 hours.

We reached Barasat. It had taken 4 hours to cover 40 kilometres and I had missed the 15.18 train. The children around me seemed happy. Was it because they were about to see an electric train for the first time? The group of young men appeared to be happy too. How many one-hundred-rupee notes would they pocket? But the old man wept and I found the faces of women becoming darker and darker.

I looked at the walls all around me. Slogans, slogans, slogans—slogans of the CPI hailing the peasants' rally, of the Naxalites expressing apprehension that Chairman's China was in danger, of the CPM calling for a mass upsurge in case a mini-front government assumes power. Did Marx say anything about the refugees? I do not know. Perhaps not. So, why should the Marxists say anything about the refugees and for the refugees? They have so many problems of their own. Who cares for these dirty rats? The sooner they go to Mana the better. After all, they do not have voting rights.

My head reeled. I wanted to vomit, but the train came. I know, sooner or later I would have to vomit. Nausea? I did not know. Sartre might have known—he had seen and known the refugees.

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## Films From Hungary

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

**R**EALLY, we are having an overdose of film festivals. Close on the heels of the International film week, came the GDR films and now a fresh crop of films from Hungary. It is of course, good to be exposed to the influences of world cinema but as we see, the organisers of these shows have been consistently failing to display any taste or discrimination in selection. In fact, the films shown outside the government sponsorship (mostly through the film societies) have always been better, the selection being made with an eye on the real thing. We do not know who chooses the films for the government festivals, but the justified suspicion is that there must be wrong people around. The International film week was a grandiose farce. The GDR films were all miserable flops and among the seven Hungarian films, only one, *The Hopeless Ones* deserved entry in any representative film programme and that too, was shown here three years back. We hear that many more such festivals are in the offing and hope that the sponsors would take care not to repeat the past bungs.

Of the Hungarian films shown in the recent festival *The Iron Flower* depicts an ordinary love-affair set in Budapest during the thirties, between a waster and a laundress who dreams of becoming a dancer. The treatment is just run-of-the-mill.

*The Soil Under Your Feet* attempts to portray the peasants' struggle for their land, but is spoiled by a stereotyped propaganda-laden attitude. *Hello Vera* employs modern techniques with a highly mobile camera style, reminiscent of Ophuls, but turns out to be cliché-ridden, reiterating the theme of the solid security of family-life which every girl should seek.

*The Story Of My Stupidity*, the only comedy film of the session, has a delectable tinge of Gaullic wit about it and the way in which the illusion of the theatre and the realities of life have been woven into the narra-

tive through a complex texture of ingenious flashbacks, shows the director's inventiveness. *The Last Hungarian Nabobs* and *Zoltan Karpathy* are a two-part saga of the feudalised Hungary done in colour and cinema-scope with all the human emotions lost in a welter of false spectacle. *The Hopeless Ones* is also a period piece, a cruel study in human frailties. The time is the end of 1860, the place, a solid solitary fortress in the Great Hungarian Plain, the protagonists, on one side, thousands of resolute Hungarian peasants confined in the fortress and on the other, a band of terrifying, ferocious militiamen on the lookout for the peasant leader, Sander. The director treats the subject with an uncanny candour and with a mature visual style.

### Sukhdev's Safari

One does not grudge Sukhdev when he makes soap films for his living, but in his first feature film *My Love* we expected to see something of the talent he showed as a film-maker in his excellent documentaries. But barring a few childish ineffective juggler's tricks, the contribution of the film in this respect is practically nil. The story is again the Bombay fillum stuff spilling all over, a dolled-up romance between Shashi Kapoor, an Indian youth in Nairobi and Sharmila Tagore, a singer from Bombay. The first half is the flowering of the affair in the exotic African setting where we have all these and animals too and the second half is the separation and the reunion of the lovers after a hair-raising car-chase on Bombay-Poona Road. A vintage Bombay and possibly a requiem for the film-director who was Sukhdev.

## A Song To Remember

By A Music Critic

**A** recital by Dilip Kumar Roy is always something to wait for. It is true that age has robbed the maestro of his much of brilliance. Still he brings back nostalgic memories.

His songs conjure up visions of Bengal in her prime. A recent programme of his songs organised by Sura-Kavya Samsad offered us fresh opportunities of appreciation and re-appraisal. The failing voice and weak memory of the singer stood in the way of complete enjoyment no doubt, but the unheard melodies vibrated in our minds, and once we could fill in the gaps mentally. Dilip Roy emerged once again as a real musical personality. He sang four songs, including his father's famous "Dhana Dhanye Pushpe Bhora" which had a ring of genuine patriotic emotion. Two others, "Pratima Diey Ki Pujibo" and "Ekbar Gaal Bhora Ma Dakey" also by D. L. Roy were remarkable for the lyrical qualities of composition and the subtlety of the rendering. The first one was a pure devotional song with classical pattern and the second had a wonderful blending of folk elements and both these pieces reaffirmed D. L. Roy's excellence as a composer. But the gem of the evening was of course the "Brindaban Leela" bhajan with its Hindusthani *bandesh* into which the singer put his whole heart. He sang it for about forty-five minutes, slowly casting a hypnotic spell on the audience, harking back to those legendary days when gods and men were on the same wavelength.

## Letters

### Himalayan Frontiers

It is a testament to his fairness and generosity that Karunakar Gupta in reviewing Dorothy Woodman's *Himalayan Frontiers*, (March 6) concentrated his entire attention on its positive features. There is certainly a great deal in it that is historically interesting and even useful, though this is larded by slices of crude Pekingology. One such priceless offering would have us believe that in Mao Tse-tung's view there are only two civilized countries in the world—China, of course, and Albania! For the rest, Delhi's motives were always pure, as Peking's were suspect, with

the late Mr Nehru cast in the role of a vestal virgin. Elsewhere one is told that both Right and Left opposed Nehru's early attitudes on Tibet but by Left Miss Woodman implies Kripalani, Narayan and Lohia—no small indication of her understanding of Indian politics. And she is considered an expert in the field! Finally, there are the usual sneers at the late K. M. Panikkar (British liberals like their conservative counterparts detest nothing so much as an Indian with a mind of his own).

What Miss Woodman leaves out of her book is just as serious and significant as what she includes. Not a word, for instance, on the Young-husband Mission, that act of Curzonian brigandage through which British imperialism wrested its ill-gotten gains in Tibet and created thereby its guiding vision for the ICS. From this leap into historical limbo one emerges a decade later, into the sunlit years immediately preceding the Simla Conference and the MacMahon Line.

One must however be grateful to Dorothy Woodman for revealing the mechanism of the British do-gooder—1930 vintage. If she appeals to the Indian authorities to compromise, as Mr Gupta so rightly points out, it is not out of any belief that it is the right and proper thing to do but because the continuing conflict with China imposes an intolerable financial and economic burden on New Delhi with all the attendant dangers of eventual collapse. And for Britain, and that misshapen and grotesque institution called the Commonwealth, the loss of so important a client would be hard to bear.

PREMEN ADDY  
London

### Leftists' Dilemma

No Marxist-Leninist will disagree with Mr Rudra ("The Dilemma of the CPM" March 28), when he says that there cannot be any genuine revolutionary movement without the masses being organised to resist the State power which exercises tyranny

over them. But at the same time he thinks that a revolutionary party should join a bourgeois coalition ministry to encourage the formation of insurrectionary forces and prevent the State power from crushing them before they manage to create liberated zones which, in his view, is straightforward application of Marxism to present-day Indian conditions. Let us examine this point. The history of the communist movement which is over hundred years old tells us that wherever communists joined a bourgeois coalition ministry, they suffered a set-back even though the State power as a whole and not piecemeal units like Kerala and West Bengal had been under their control. The example of the French CP and the Italian CP, with thousands of armed partisans, are there for all of us to see. The recent experience of KPI is also to be noted. Why did it so happen? A bourgeois State moves by the laws of its own motion and within its procedural limits one has to abide by these laws and thus gets caught within its wheels. Marx and Engels described this position 122 years ago so succinctly in the following words: "The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." So, we see one cannot be an executive of the bourgeois superfirm, i.e., the State and a revolutionary simultaneously. So, as an executive of the State power, a Jyoti Basu is bound to hunt down the Naxalites who are attempting to form liberated zones. This is the logic of the situation.

Objective revolutionary conditions do exist in India. The international situation is also very favourable. And at this hour the CPM, instead of mobilising the masses to resist the State power and of going "to preach to the uneducated masses that the maturing revolution is necessary, to prove that it is inevitable, to explain its benefits to the people, and to prepare the proletariat and all the working and exploited people for it", has taken the path of working within a bourgeois coalition ministry compris-

ing heterogeneous parties where, in their own admission, they have to work with a "non-class outlook." So, past as well as present experience is that if a communist party joins a bourgeois coalition ministry it is not possible for it to encourage the formation of insurrectionary forces. On the other hand the party loses its revolutionary character and becomes an accomplice in the hands of the bourgeoisie. This is exactly what has happened to the CPM and so "when thrown out of power, the only thing they can do, is to wait for a return to the Assembly."

SUNANDA MAJUMDAR (Miss)  
Ranaghat, Nadia

Either you are incapable of understanding the many documents and statements of the CPI(M) and its leaders, which, to give you the benefit of the doubt, I am sure you have read, or you are becoming increasingly adept at the old bourgeois game of confusing your readers as to the real character of political parties.

The Marxists have no "lingering faith in the possibility of the ultimate redemption of the socialist PM" that makes them hurry to New Delhi at every opportunity to discuss matters with her and her close colleagues. On the contrary the Marxists use every opportunity to expose Mrs Gandhi's phoney "socialism" and to declare that there are no basic class differences between the Indicate and the Syndicate. But to ignore the fact that the two Congress wings employ different tactics in their similar game to ensure the continuation of the capitalist system in India would be adventuristic.

S. SEHGAL  
Kanpur

For FRONTIER contact

S. P. CHATTERJEE

Statesman Office

Steel Market

Durgapur-4

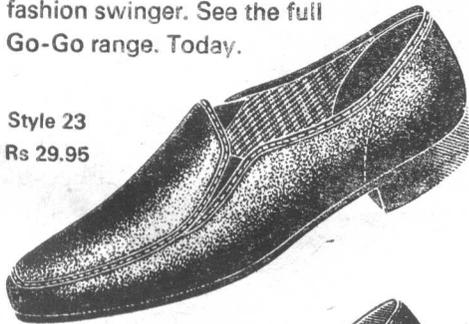
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### What about India ?

It is true that the number of tourists visiting India has greatly increased. From 1,50,000 in 1964 to almost 2,45,000 in 1969. And our earnings from tourism have gone up to Rs. 33 crores in foreign exchange. But in terms of world tourism, only one out of every thousand world travellers visited India last year. Yet we have just about everything in this country to make it the world's most attractive tourist destination. We are privileged we have India.

### What's missing here ?

We lack nothing but broad-based public participation and enough of what is known as the 'infrastructure': hotel accommodation, transport facilities and tourist amenities. For instance, the city of Bangkok alone has more hotel beds suitable for tourists than we have in India.

### And when the Jumbos come...

Jumbo Jets will soon bring past India many thousand more people than have ever come this way.

They will need clean, comfortable accommodation; at least 23,000 more hotel beds are required by 1974.

Wholesome, hygienically prepared food, more shops, restaurants, recreation facilities...all these are necessary now. Above all, a smiling, friendly welcome must await our visitors to make their visit a happy one.

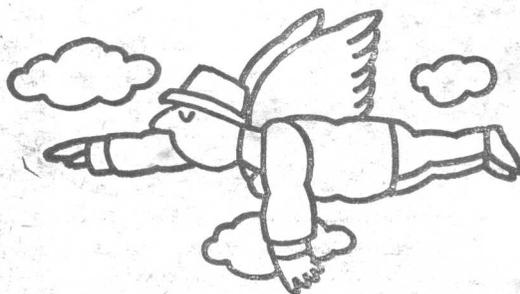
### What are we doing about it ?

The Government is taking an increasingly active part to help build more hotels, improve air and transport services, provide new and better tourist facilities.

But Government effort alone is not enough. Tourism is everybody's business. Because people benefit wherever the tourist travels. Wealth flows from affluent countries to the less affluent, and within the country from the developed areas to the less developed and from the richer strata of society to the less rich. Everyone benefits from tourism.

So, join us in our efforts. Let us give the tourist the amenities he needs and see that he goes home happy. Each happy tourist means so many more will come next year. Shouldn't be too difficult for us. Isn't ours one of the world's oldest traditions in hospitality ?

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