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On Other Pages

COMMENTS	..	2
<i>View From Delhi</i>		
CHINA IN BULL SHOP		
FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT	..	4
NIXON'S LAST CHANCE		
A. K. ESSACK	..	5
<i>Letter From Thailand</i>		
ALL THAT GLITTERS		
FROM A CORRESPONDENT	..	6
GUERRILLAS OF LATIN AMERICA—III		
LAJPAT RAI	..	7
<i>Andhra Pradesh</i>		
THE DEATH SENTENCE		
FROM A CORRESPONDENT	..	10
GANDHI IN SOUTH AFRICA		
M. S. PRABHAKAR	..	12
<i>Book Review</i>		
FOOTPRINTS OF LIBERTY	..	13
CURBING MOVIE IMPORTS		
BY A CORRESPONDENT	..	14
LEGEND AND REALITY		
MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY	..	15
<i>Clippings</i>		
POWER EQUATIONS ON PAKISTAN	..	15
LETTERS	..	17

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'THE GOOD AMERICAN'

MANY things happen on earth that are not dreamt of in our ideology—was the first reaction of quite a few to last week's announcement from Washington and Peking. There had been hints of Sino-American contacts through intermediaries; Nixon had stated that he would like to visit China, and the Chinese were not unwilling to receive him. But that the visit might be announced so soon was unexpected.

It is a victory for the Chinese if one remembers the Himalayan hostility of the U.S. administration towards Peking ever since the communists swept into power in late 1949: the armed confrontation in Korea, the complete absence of diplomatic and trade relations, the presence of the 7th Fleet, the U.S. presence in Taiwan, the war in Indochina, the campaign in the UN and all the rest. That Tricky Dicky had to ask Peking to invite him is, however, a tribute, most of all, to the magnificent fighting power of the Indochinese people who have proved that U.S. imperialism after all is a paper tiger. For Nixon, in asking for the visit, is not acting from a position of strength. As a direct outcome of the Vietnam war and the growing Chinese power many elements have started conspiring against him at home and abroad and he has had to make a gesture. Johnson wanted to go down in history as a great peacemaker but had to quit in ignominy. Nixon has some such ambition—the Americans are ambitious—and trade-oriented—if not anything.

A Nixon visit to China—if it comes off—would not mean that an era of peace would be beginning. There can be no peace until imperialism is routed. There are great stumbling blocks between the two countries. It is not known whether the U.S. would remove forces from Taiwan and leave it as an internal affair of the Chinese Republic; whether there would be total withdrawal from South Vietnam. But the visit to China would encourage the forces against imperialism which is being proved to be a paper tiger. Or will it weaken them?

The question is being raised whether the Chinese, in course of time, would become as soft as the Russians and let the status quo continue. For, what began between the Russians and the Americans by way of relaxation of tension and co-existence, has led to collaboration in favour of the status quo. But there is no evidence that the Chinese would let down the Indochinese and the revolutionaries elsewhere, provided, of course, the

revolutionaries themselves do not begin to read too much into the latest development. At home it is to be hoped that some of them would not assess Nixon (as they have Yahya Khan) as another Norodom Sihanouk fighting for the peace forces against the Pentagon and Russian social-imperialism.

It must be admitted, however, that certain recent changes in the Chinese way of reacting to international events have puzzled and sometimes disheartened their admirers. Are the changes a swing away from some of the severe excesses of the Cultural Revolution during which embassies were attacked, protocol forgotten and extreme actions indulged in, at the instigation of what are now being called a group of ultra-leftists? Perhaps, as a reaction, the Chinese, or a moderate group of them, are now being over-modest in their communications even with people like Yahya Khan and Mrs Bandaranaike even when they are busy finishing off as many "of a handful of people" as possible. These over-modest, expostulatory notes have bewildered many firebrands who do not want to associate pragmatic flexibility with Maoism. But the Chinese know when they should talk about conditions for normalisation of relations and not lay down conditions precedent. The fact that Nixon has been as much a ruthless butcher as his predecessors matters little in realpolitik. The visit would do no harm if it is not forgotten that though the USA the biggest and most ruthless imperialist power, has been forced to make a gesture, the fight must continue against all that it stands for, that a relaxation of vigilance must not follow partial relaxation of tension. By the way, it is curious that access to nuclear strength makes a nation rather anxious for relaxation of tension and play for time to perfect the dreaded arsenal.

At home, the Government of India, despite the bland and foolish statement of Sardar Swaran Singh, has been caught on the wrong foot. People have been asking New Delhi to try

to improve relations with Peking, but the Government, which was very keen on nursing 'two enemies' to get more aid from the USA and Russia, would not listen. Now it looks extremely foolish. And the fact that Kissinger flew to Peking from West Pakistan and returned for talks with Yahya Khan will upset the calculations of those who have been urging a war to settle the refugee problem. Many things now will be in the melting pot in this strange world.

CPI Predicament

The overwhelming victory of Mrs Gandhi's Congress at the last mid-term poll has landed the CPI in a quandary. The Prime Minister is no longer in need of a leftist crutch of any variety, and she has lost no time in forgetting that uncertain and humiliating period in her political career when she had to humour the left to keep herself in power. She has declared her total independence by enacting the Maintenance of Internal Security Act, ignoring the combined opposition of the left and the right. The new measure is far more stringent than the Preventive Detention Act whose life she could not extend in 1969 because of the leftist threat to withhold support. She had to be a "progressive" much against her will, and she has avenged herself at the first opportunity with an act of perfidy. By her defiance she has announced that she is no longer the damsel in distress to whose aid the gallant left had rushed two years ago.

Some of the left parties have already taken the cue. When the CPM became convinced after some months of prevarication that the Prime Minister's preference was for the other Communist party, it reverted to its old posture of anti-Congressism which has paid it high dividends in the mid-term poll in West Bengal. It has now emerged as the spearhead of the anti-Congress left. The SSP, which had cast its lot with the Organisation

Congress, and the PSP, which had joined hands with the Prime Minister's Congress, have now combined in a new Socialist party pledged to steer clear of both the Congresses. The CPI is the only important party of the left which still clings efficiently to its pre-poll policy of collaboration with the Prime Minister in spite of the recent deliberate rebuffs.

But the party is under strain, its cadres are assailed with the doubt if its self-chosen role as a weak and dispensable ally of the Prime Minister's Congress will not decimate it further. The recent decision of the Bihar unit, which, incidentally, has the largest number of CPI representatives of all assemblies, to withdraw support from the coalition led by the Prime Minister's Congress is a pointer. Perhaps the State unit feels that since a mid-term poll is unavoidable next year it should better revert to the policy which had earned the party its present position in the Assembly. The reported readiness of the party to reconsider the stand after the plunge has been taken is perhaps an indication that the all-India leaders of the party are not yet disenchanted. The possibility of a similar situation developing in West Bengal has been nipped by the resignation of the Democratic Coalition Ministry. The leftist allies of the defunct coalition are, however, split on the question of sticking together to form an electoral alliance under the leadership of the Prime Minister's Congress to defeat the CPM in the next election. The CPI leaders are touting for this alliance. In Kerala the party has lost none of its keenness for formal inclusion of the Prime Minister's Congress in the coalition. Obviously, the dominant leadership of the party still favours collaboration. That is why, despite Mr Dange's suggestion, the move for united action on the trade union front has been rejected by the party. Its vacillation is unlikely to end till it has made the overdue reappraisal of its policy in the light of the last poll results.

The Sick State

New Delhi's solicitude for the weal of this State seems boundless and its bounties in one form or other are coming in an endless stream. Special grants-in-aid, CMDA, crash programme for rural development, special industrial plans—the list can be made infinitely elastic. The latest on the agenda is the special status allotted to West Bengal in the industrial licensing programme, as announced by Mr Moinul Haq Chaudhury, the Union Minister for Industrial Development, at a meeting of financial writers.

The Minister was forthright enough to list the problems facing the State: businessmen are indifferent and even fleeing from it; the number of applicants for licences to set up new plants is reported to be less than 10 per cent of the total applicants. But in spite of this frankness, the Minister was confusing cause with effect when he chose to pick up labour unrest and absence of law and order as lying at the root of all the trouble. He, however, conceded that West Bengal's industry, being centred around the engineering industry, had a setback 'because of the recession following a changed pattern of demand'. But he did not deal with the causes of such a distortion of the demand structure. It is the cutback in the plan in the wake of the industrial slump in the sixties that led to this uncalled-for change in demand and doomed the industry and the State. Added to this was the need to stifle the high-tide of the Left movement at that time which prompted the Centre not to go for any measure to link the plan with the world market to boost the economy.

For decades West Bengal has been a major donor to the exchequer. But it has always received a smaller share of the national coffer, against it. And here the statisticians have been the arch bunglers. Though West Bengal has one of the highest per capita incomes among the States, if Calcutta and the contiguous indus-

trial belts are taken out the rest of the State constitutes one of the least developed regions in the country. Further, the approved investment for new units in the State has been for years much less than elsewhere (West Bengal, during 1959-66, got only Rs 100 crores in new investment as against Rs 171 crores in Maharashtra though West Bengal's per capita income was about two-thirds of Maharashtra's during the same period.)

The outcome has been economic chaos and revolt in the socio-political life. To meet the situation the Centre on the one hand keeps dangling the carrot of economic reforms and on the other lets loose its uniformed hordes. Thereby it is only completing the circle of anarchism that precedes all social convulsions.

Minority Of One

The background of most of the members of the Committee on Differential Interest Rates is such that the majority recommendation was not expected to be anything but very conservative. But the only note of dissent by the Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India provides a programme for eliminating the historical perversity in the loaning system of Indian banks. The majority report that a new dimension to the distribution of credit has already been brought about through the practice of offering loans at preferred rates for exports and to the co-operative societies is fallacious. The income distribution effect of the existing differentials in interest rates can be formed only when the magnitude of present differentials, the end use of the funds flowing to the co-operative societies and the economic position of those who wangle the loans meant for small-scale industries are taken into account. Banks have allowed reduction in interest rates on loans given to borrowers having intimate association with them; the preferred treatment they are still getting has

only aggravated inequalities in the distribution of incomes and assets. The majority of the Committee feels that the objective criterion for the identification of borrowers to be given the advantage of interest differential is the size of the loan. But it itself admits that such a criterion has its limitations. The note of dissent does not accept that the size of a loan should be the principal determinant of eligibility. In many cases small industries have been promoted by large houses to by-pass the constraints of the Industrial Development and Regulation Act. If size becomes the prime consideration, people with "organisation, acumen and ingenuity" to present themselves as small farmers, industrialists or traders will be easily able to corner all available funds; the genuinely needy parties will have to seek loans from the unorganised sector at rates of interest at multiple of what the institutional agencies charge. According to the Chief Economic Adviser, it should be possible to evolve more objective criteria for reviewing the economic condition of the parties seeking loans; the problem is not one of lack of objective criteria for identifying the economically under-privileged but one of administration. The majority does not recommend too wide a range of differential; their preference is for rates of interest ranging from 8½ per cent to 10 per cent for the weaker borrowers and a maximum of 12 or 13 per cent for the rest. As the interest rates charged by banks for the overwhelming proportion of their advances are already in the range of 8 per cent to 12 per cent, the majority recommendation amounts to maintenance of the status quo. While both the parties agree that a reduction in the interest rate charged to some borrowers must not adversely affect the overall earnings of banks the minority of one differs from the majority view that the overall earnings of banks can be fortified by equating the lowest rate of lending to the ratio that the cost of raising and using funds bears to total banking resources. The Adviser's plea is that

differential rates should be so wide ranging that the lowest is a nominal 1 per cent while the highest is as much as 20 per cent. It would help weak sections of the community if their credit requirements are met by institutional agencies to a greater extent than now. There has been credit expansion to small industry and agriculture after the nationalisation of 14 major commercial banks, but it is not difficult to guess what kind of small industrialists and farmers have benefited. Bankers would rather welcome a small cut in interest rates than give loans to farmers with very small holdings.

View from Delhi

China In Bull Shop

FROM A POLITICAL
CORRESPONDENT

CHINA'S diplomatic coup opens for India options it has never had since the 1962 war. Here is one rare chance to restore Sino-Indian relations to the high noon of the Bandung days by rectifying our diplomatic stance. But New Delhi's response to the breakthrough in Sino-U.S. relations is one of despair mingled with confusion. The Government's private reaction, one presumes, roughly corresponds to the CPI's and the Moscow lobby's—that it is an opportunist anti-Soviet detente and therefore an anti-Indian detente.

Everyone in the cocktail circuit is now trying to put on that "I always wanted a dialogue with China" look. But it had suited the ruling classes all these years to keep up an anti-China frenzy and use it as a cushion for administrative and policy complacency. Every political argument, be it the demand for a separate Telengana State or opposition to preventive detention laws, was met by invoking the China bogey. Even the growing dependence on Soviet military and economic aid was rationalised in the

name of meeting the Chinese challenge. Since the 1962 military conflict, the Sino-Indian border dispute has remained frozen and India has lost her options vis-a-vis the super-powers gradually.

Some 18 months ago, it was clear that the cultural revolution was tapering off and Chinese foreign policy was entering the phase of a peace offensive. The first hint that China would like to normalise relations with India came with the statement from Peking in December 1969 that China wanted to normalise relations with all the countries which believed in peaceful co-existence. Within a month or so Peking declared its willingness to resume talks in Warsaw between the Chinese and the U.S. Ambassador. During this period, there was a clear hint to India that Peking would like New Delhi to play the role Islamabad has now played in helping a breakthrough in Sino-U.S. relations. No less a person than the Prime Minister was opposed to any positive response to Peking's hint. This is exactly what the Soviet Union would have expected of India at that point. There is little doubt that China cannot project an image of a country serious about its "peaceful co-existence" drive without a settlement with India. But New Delhi let the opportunity slip by even while it was making much of folktales like "Mao smiled at our man in Peking."

The Sino-U.S. development has eclipsed Bangladesh. In the chanceries in New Delhi they talk about China and not about Bangladesh. Pakistan has not only been lobbying support for raising the Bangladesh issue in some form in the United Nations but has also been trying to convince other countries that the refugee problem has been exaggerated by India. The New Delhi correspondent of an American paper cabled his office for permission to be away for three days in the refugee camps on the border. Quick came the reply asking him to stay put in New Delhi because his paper thought all the talk of refugees was so much Indian propaganda.

The Bangladesh issue no doubt complicates things for India if it wants to open a dialogue with China now. The political leadership has to thank itself for it. The first party to oppose a dialogue may not be the Jana Sangh or the Swatantra party but the CPI. Those who support the demand for a dialogue see in it the best chance of ending India's dependence on the Soviet Union.

By opening such a dialogue India can regain a great deal of leverage with the Soviet Union because it is clear now that the Soviet Union needs India's support in one form or the other. If India fails now, the last option would have been foreclosed and its dependence on the Soviet Union would grow. The Moscow lobby has been selling the line that India should shed all inhibitions and strengthen itself militarily. Does it mean more Soviet arms or India going nuclear with Soviet blessings? Has such an understanding been reached already?

If India fails now, the Sino-Indian dispute would remain frozen at a high level and unwittingly or otherwise New Delhi would be lending credence to Peking's charge that India's non-alignment is a cover for its double-alignment.

The new phase in Sino-U.S. relations will no doubt checkmate Soviet influence on the sub-continent. The Soviet Union might be inclined to take a friendlier attitude to the Bangladesh issue and both India and the Soviet Union might recognise the Mujibnagar regime. The issue, however, is of mere academic interest. By the time these lines appear in print, a total of 25,000 Mukti Fouz guerillas might have gone into action and if the harassment of the Pakistani army becomes serious, there would be frequent clashes on the India-Bangladesh border and these might escalate into a conflict. There might be large-scale Pakistani guerilla infiltration into Kashmir.

China cannot project for itself the image of a country committed to peaceful co-existence if it excludes India from the emerging pattern of

JULY 24, 1971

things. But if India wants to muffle this chance, nobody can save New Delhi from its predicament.

New Delhi has lost all diplomatic initiative over China and the numerous lobbies which had helped or abetted the official anti-China campaign would be interested in perpetuating the old line and ensure that the Sino-Indian dispute is kept alive. What the Soviet Union wants is an Asian confrontation, of India and China, as a counter-weight to a Sino-Soviet confrontation. The United States overtures to China are clear proof that the U.S. would rather like a Sino-Soviet confrontation in Asia. If the rigidities in India's foreign policy continue, India will find itself on the Soviet side in a Sino-Soviet confrontation. Bangladesh might provide the South Block with a ready alibi for it.

A week before the dramatic Peking developments, the theory of an imminent Chinese intervention in the event of an Indo-Pakistani conflict was revived here under inspiration from the proper quarters. This was to counter the growing conviction among many that China was less hostile to India over Bangladesh than it was in 1965 over the Indo-Pakistani military conflict.

There is no realisation yet among the government leadership that India stands diplomatically isolated from Asia and the world and the only alternative to dependence on the Soviet Union would be to find its place in a world that is getting restructured fast.

July 18, 1971

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Nixon's Last Chance

A. K. ESSACK

THIS is Nixon's last chance. The offer made by Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, chief of the delegation of the PRG, on July 1 offers an honourable way out for the U.S. President. Even if he does not save his face completely he will certainly save the lives of thousands of American soldiers who are in no state to fight. These human wrecks saturated and riding heaven high on drugs have lost the will to fight, are war weary and homesick.

The PRG delegation has met the one public reservation that Nixon has given for the prolongation of the war. The July 1 statement says that should the U.S. set a terminal date for its troop withdrawal from South Vietnam in 1971 it will see that all prisoners, civilian and military including American air pilots, will be released so that they could return quickly to their homes. The statement is clear and categorical: "The two operations will begin on the same date and end on the same date".

Unlike Nixon's Pentagon advisers, the PRG and their brethren up north can be trusted to keep their word.

The world is sick of this war. In fact if there is one thread that today unites certain big American monopolies, the war hawks of yesterday, American Senators and Congressmen, rebellious youths and students and the militant Afro-Americans with the vast masses of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe it is that Nixon fix the final date of withdrawal.

One would have thought after the crushing defeat at Highway 9 in Laos early this year that Nixon would speed up the operations. But such are his delusions that every defeat he regards as a victory. And disturbing reports have filtered through that he was planning an escalation while withdrawing American troops through his Vietnamisation policy. According to the *Christian Science Monitor* of April 1 Nixon told selected corres-

pondents attending a confidential briefing that he had in mind five to ten years of continued war and hinted that U.S. presence in South Vietnam could remain at 50,000 level indefinitely. And on the same date Senator Eagleton reported in *New York Review of Books* that two U.S. Generals, Waynard and Wiley, had said that plans which they were operating called for a residual American force to stay indefinitely and for a protracted period of massive American air power including American helicopters, based in Thailand and various places in Indochina.

In other words Nixon's strategy for the withdrawal of U.S. troops means the intensification of war through Vietnamisation. That is why at the Paris peace talks his representatives are advocating negotiations from a position of strength, completely oblivious that since the Tet offensive the Americans have met a series of disastrous military defeats. The celebrated victory of the liberation forces at Highway 9 was crowned by another in the Bolovens Plateau, America's strategic enclave in southern Laos linking Thailand, Cambodia and South Vietnam. For a year it was occupied by Thai troops. A sure sign of the retreat of the bandits is the announcement by the Thai Government that half of its 12,000 troops will be pulled out by the end of July. This was after their defeat on the Plateau. In northern Laos, the rout of the CIA puppet troops has led to the encirclement of the capital Luang Prabang. In South Vietnam the continuous bombardment of American bases continues uninterrupted and the Americans are being forced out of their strategic enclaves. The most recent to fall to the liberation forces has been Camp Fuller, south of the demilitarised zone. The same fate has overtaken the artillery base No 6. However it is in Cam-

bodia that the liberation forces have scored spectacular victories. The liberation army there is young but it has proved its growing maturity in a series of battles. The most noteworthy victory has been at Snoul in May along Highway 7. Here after swift and unexpected thrusts the puppet army was completely encircled and faced annihilation. Another Dien Bien Phu was in the offing. The Americans flew in 600 missions in two days to save the beleaguered puppet troops. But that did not save the 8th Task Force and an armoured regiment from being badly mauled. Today the much needed war supplies cannot reach Phnom Penh, the capital, because Highway 4 connecting it with Sihanoukville, the only port, has been taken over by the liberation forces. And the main battle rages along Highway 1 connecting the capital with South Vietnam and here too the picture is gloomy. The capital faces starvation because there is shortage of rice. All that is left is air power and here too the superiority will not last long.

The big monopolists of the super-corporations, particularly of the Eastern establishment, realise the situation. The war was fought to advance the interests of these few exploiters; but they realise that if after 25 years they have failed, they cannot succeed now. Side by side with the military offensives, the Indochinese have also launched carefully thought-out and highly successful political and diplomatic offensives that have isolated Nixon from his own allies and supporters. They have carried the battle right into Nixon's own territory and turned great numbers of the American population against him. Who would have thought that in 1971,

American Senators, Congressmen, the hawks of yesterday and pillars of the American establishment would be rubbing shoulders with rebellious students, militant Afro-Americans, GI veterans, and soldiers in a march on the American Capitol, calling on Nixon to end the Vietnam war? It is this massive anti-war upsurge sweeping America that has caused a crisis in the inner core of the American establishment. The Eastern establishment headed by the Rockefellers, Morgans, and Lehmans has come out publicly against Nixon, for private pressures have failed. This then is the significance of the exposure by the *New York Times* of the Pentagon papers. This was a carefully planned operation to stop Nixon from further idiotic and rash adventures. The dollar too has been felled. The war in Indochina has been responsible for America fast losing world hegemony. A loser has few friends, Nixon has come to learn the hard way.

Madame Binh's Seven Point proposal goes beyond the military settlement. It also calls for a political settlement, for the formation of a three-segment government of national concord that will assume its functions during the period between the restoration of peace and the holding of general elections. The three segments will consist of representatives of the PRG, members of the administration who are pledged to uphold peace, neutrality, independence and democracy and all religious, political and social forces including those living abroad. The seven-point is within the framework of the 10-point overall solution, 8-point clarification and the three-point proposals.

Indochina is the spearhead of the colonial revolution and is dealing heavy blows at imperialism. It has shown that it is possible for a weak and small country to defeat a large country, the world's most powerful, provided it is fighting a just cause and is armed with a philosophy that is scientific, placing all power in the hands of the people.

Letter From Thailand

All That Glitters

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

THAILAND, meaning "land of the free", had never been colonised in the classic sense. By playing upon the rivalries of the contending colonial powers and willingly placing herself under their "protection" Thailand maintained the fiction of political independence. And to preserve this "independence" the military-feudal oligarchy of the country turned towards the leaders of the 'Free World' when in the postwar years national liberation movements all over South-East Asia started threatening the vestiges of feudalism and colonialism. The Americans did not disappoint them. Massive doses of U.S. capital and military hardware that have since been pumped into the country ensured a cushy existence for the ruling group. With more than half a dozen U.S. airbases dotting the country and half a million American troops defending or training how to defend "freedom" General Thanom Kittikachorn and General Praphas Charusathira could devote themselves to artistic pursuits like erecting a Democracy Monument on Rajdamnern Avenue. The fact that the Americans chose Bangkok as the headquarters of SEATO and frilled it with a huge establishment of JUSMAAG (Joint US Military Assistance Advisory Group) was immensely gratifying and comforting to the generals, never very sure of the loyalty of the people. The Americans meanwhile took care to perpetuate a colonial-type economy, keeping Thailand as a supplier of primary materials and superimposing on it a glittering Bangkok. A capital modelled on a modern Western city not only satisfies the vanity of the nouveau riche and feudal rulers, it also provides a bit of 'home' atmosphere to the Americans operating in the region.

Bangkok that way is perhaps the classic instance of what Paul Sweezy

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termed centre-periphery contradiction. Bangkok is glittering because the rest of the country has been kept in darkness. Wealth pumped out of the periphery—in fact the whole of the countryside—goes to make for the splendour and prosperity of the centre. The foreign exchange earned by rice-farmers and workers in rubber plantations and tin mines are being spent for importing shiny foreign cars, refrigerators and TV sets for less than one per cent of the population. In this kind of idyllic 'democratic' situation one naturally needs dedicating a monument to democracy.

But the skimpy backyard is getting restive. The most oppressed and exploited of all, the Meo hill tribes have raised the standard of rebellion against Bangkok in the northern part of the country. They have wiped out government officials and army outposts and established a liberated zone over a wide tract of territory. Not only Thai officials, in an ambush late last year Meo guerillas killed three senior American officials touring the area. Desperate generals ordered more severe military suppression and napalm treatment but to no avail. Bangkok held Peking responsible for infiltrating agents and the deterioration in the security situation but in their unguarded moments officials admitted how the crushing poverty of the people was fuelling the rebellion.

After the Governor of Chiang Rai province and two other senior police

and military officials were ambushed in September last year it was suggested that "cheated Meo tribesmen may have committed the murder." A number of Meos cutting timber in Treng district were asked to pay a bribe of 20,000 bahts to officials in exchange for timber cutting rights but shortly thereafter they were arrested for illegally cutting timber from Government-owned forest. Officials in Bangkok would talk in great detail how the Government is hell-bent on improving their standard of living but in a single inadvertent statement they would let out the real story. Recently when some Meo guerillas in Chiang Rai reportedly offered to surrender the new Governor was understandably cautious. His predecessor was ambushed when he went to receive one such "surrender". What is, however, more interesting is that he said, it has to be established "whether these men are terrorists or merely *starving villagers who wish to be fed.*"

The situation is almost identical in other areas of insurgency in the north-east and south. One American "peace corps" worker who had worked more than a year among peasants in the north-east giving lessons on poultry-farming told this correspondent what a huge gulf of distrust and hostility separated the people from the officials. Those who were supposed to be working for welfare of the local people had to move around

armed. He was distressed to find how irrigation and road-building projects taken up by the Government alienated rather than helped the population by resorting to forced labour. "This country", he said, "simply can't be ruled from Bangkok".

The four southern provinces of Thailand do not appear to consider Bangkok to be their government. Fighting under the banner of the "Patani Liberation Front" Muslim rebels in the south have kept the Thai Army on the run. One operation after another launched by the Communist Suppression Operation Command (CSOC) have failed to curb what Bangkok calls "externally supported" banditry in the south.

The Communist Party of Thailand which is leading the guerilla war against Bangkok has been able to set up a command network in the north and north-east. But it is yet to develop contacts with the struggle in the south, largely secessionist and tinted with religion. Central Thailand is still peaceful but with bottoms falling out of the rice-market and the sharply deteriorating position of the rice-farmers it may not take much to find sparks of rebellion in this region too. Then it would be a total war by the countryside on the city—an encirclement of the paradise of the Generals by the oppressed and exploited all over.

Guerillas Of Latin America—III

LAJPAT RAI

A whole library of books has already been written about the guerilla campaign in Bolivia in which Che Guevara lost his life. Sifting this mass of literature written by sympathisers and supporters as well as detractors of the movement one recalls the heroic story of about fifty men who shook an entire continent, rocked a government, deprived the imperialists and their servants of sleep

and paid for their immortality with their lives. One can also read in this literature a tale of hesitations, indecisions and of betrayal of the Bolivian guerillas by those who cover themselves with such titles as communists, revolutionaries, vanguard and the like.

The Bolivian campaign of 1967 was a deliberate attempt to begin the continental revolution. Since 1960 the idea had germinated in the mind

of Che Guevara who had discussed it with a number of Latin American revolutionaries visiting Cuba. From the start, Che emphasized that the struggle should be continental in its dimensions. It must spread from Argentina (Che's homeland) up through the Andes to Bolivia and Peru and across the tropical jungles to Paraguay and Brazil. From there, it could join up with the movements

already established in Colombia and Venezuela.

By 1964 when first serious thoughts were given to the campaign, conditions looked promising. Jorge Masetti's guerillas had entered the Argentine province of La Salta, a military coup in Brazil had overthrown the Government of President Goulart whose brother-in-law—a left-winger, Lionel Brizola in exile in Uruguay, was canvassing the possibility of beginning a guerilla campaign against the gang of colonels who had taken over the country. In Peru Luis de la Puente, Lobaton and Ricardo Gadea (Che's brother-in-law) were trying to rejuvenate the guerilla movement of Hugo Blanco which had suffered reverses. In Bolivia in November 1964 the nationalist regime of Paz Estansoro was overthrown by Generals Rene Barrientos and Alfredo Ovando. The possibility of revolt against this group of military dictators, completely isolated from the people and ruling by the mailed fist, did not seem wholly unrealistic.

Sometime between May and July 1966, the basic strategy was changed. It was decided that Bolivia rather than Argentina was the country that had the best condition.¹ Consequently Bolivia was to become the headquarters of the continental revolution. The struggle was to spread from Bolivia to Peru and fan out towards Argentina and Brazil.

In January 1966, the Tricontinental Conference was held in Havana. It was attended by communist parties and revolutionary organisations of Asia, Africa and Latin America. This opportunity was utilized to discuss the matter with Mario Monje, the Secretary of the Bolivian CP who seemed to be all for the scheme and "promised full help, especially in providing men".² Monje was given \$25,000 for the purpose of promoting the Bolivian revolution. He also had an interview with Fidel Castro who, according to his (Mon-

je's) own testimony, told him about Che's projected arrival in Bolivia and requested him to "choose four trusted comrades to protect him (the visitor) on his way."³ Monje agreed to this request. Fidel also told the secretary of the Bolivian party that enrolment of Bolivians in the campaign was of "vital importance" as the "Bolivian revolution should be run by Bolivians".⁴ Monje promised Fidel to provide at least 20 men in the beginning.

In 1966, two Cubans, Pombo and Tuna, arrived in La Paz. They held discussions with four members of the Bolivian Communist Party allotted by Monje at the request of Fidel. Two of them were the now famous brothers, Coco and Inti Peredo. All the four were in favour of launching a guerilla war, but they very quickly revealed to the Cubans the lack of enthusiasm for the scheme on the part of the Party leadership.⁵

A week later, Monje's apparent enthusiasm had completely evaporated. When Ricardo (another Cuban sent to La Paz for organizing in company with four Bolivians provided by Monje, the Bolivian aspect of the projected scheme) asked him for the 20 men he had promised Monje replied "what twenty" and added that "he was having trouble with the rest of the Central Committee, which was putting pressure on him not to enter the armed struggle feeling that the recent elections (in July) had been a success because the Communist Party had secured 32,000 votes, about double what the party had previously obtained".⁶

Pombo comments: "From the little progress we were making one could see there was something in the air, a great deal of uncertainty about the decision to join the struggle. In fact it is a dead issue (with the CP); we face the problem that there is little enthusiasm. We are doing

all the organizing and they are not helping us at all".⁷

On August 19, there was a further meeting between Monje and Ricardo. Far from producing the 20 men, Monje threatened to withdraw the four who were actually working with the Cubans. Again the chief problem seemed to be, not so much Monje himself, but the Central Committee of the revisionist Communist Party of Bolivia, which was openly hostile to the very idea of guerilla struggle.

At the same time, as the discussions were going on with the orthodox communists, the Cuban emissaries were also in touch with the organizers of the Peruvian foco whose representative in La Paz was Julio Pacheco, known as Sanchez. The Cubans had also discussions with Moises Guevara, the miner leader from Ururo, as well as with pro-Chinese groups. In September Regis Debray arrived in La Paz as Che's emissary. This annoyed the communists further. Monje demanded to see Ricardo and told him that he (Monje) did not like the contacts that Debray appeared to be making with pre-Chinese splinter groups. The Cuban took the opportunity to point out a few things to the communists. Pombo wrote in his diary

"(1) They (the communists) have shown no confidence in guerilla warfare. (2) They have made no effort to organize themselves; ... (3) We asked them what they had done to date: they replied 'Nothing', We told them we could not sit around 20 years waiting for them".⁸

In November 1966 Che arrived in Bolivia. Already a farm at Nanchahuazu had been purchased and other technical jobs completed with the help of Ricardo, Pombo and in La Paz with the indispensable assistance of Tamara Bunke, known as 'Tania'. She had been established in La Paz for a considerable time, and seemed to have played an important role in organizing the preliminary stages of the Bolivian foco. The

1. Pombo's Diary

2. Ibid.

3. Letter from Mario Monje to the CC of the Bolivian CP, July 1968.

4. Ibid.

5. Pombo's Diary.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

Peruvian foco sent in 13 young men as promised. They were to receive training during the campaign. The Cuban complement consisted of 17 trained guerillas, some of them the veterans of Sierra Maestra. To find Bolivians proved to be more difficult and was one of Che's constant pre-occupations in the early months. Without the Bolivians the foco was dangerously reliant on the 'outsiders' from the very start, a situation Che wanted to avoid at all costs. Che refers to this again and again in his Diary. "The Bolivians are good, but too few in number".⁹ And again, "The incorporation of Bolivian fighters has proved harder to accomplish than the rest of our programme."¹⁰ Part of the reason for the failure to recruit Bolivians was the fact that Guevara was relying on no major political organization in towns. There were in fact cadres of the Communist Party ready and waiting to join the guerillas, but they could not move until they got the go-ahead from Monje. This could not be obtained until after there had been political discussions between Monje and Guevara.

The details of this much discussed meeting between Che Guevara and Mario Monje at Nanchahuazu are now available from various sources including the two leaders themselves. According to Guevara, Monje insisted on three points: (a) He would resign from party leadership, obtain its neutrality and bring cadres for the struggle; (b) he would be the political and military leader of the struggle so long as the revolution takes place in Bolivia; (c) he would handle relations with Latin American parties and will persuade them to support the guerilla movement. Che's reply to these points were: (a) Resigning from the party should depend on Monje's own judgment. Che thought it would be a mistake; (b) orthodox communist parties would never support guerilla actions. For them to support guerilla warfare was tantamount to supporting insurrection in

their own parties. But he had no objection to Monje's trying; (c) Che was to be the military and political leader and there could be no discussion on it.

"Here the discussion ended and we talked in a vicious circle."¹¹

Monje has given two accounts of his meeting with Che. The second—a long one—was published in the Chilean journal *Punto Final*.^{*} It makes strange reading in many ways. The orthodox communist leader had nothing better to tell Che except the old stuff of uneven development under capitalism, each country's communist party (orthodox) to decide which form or forms of struggle to employ, military leadership to be subordinated to political leadership, unity of the world communist movement must be preserved, all forms of struggle—from elections to guerilla actions (sic.) to be employed simultaneously etc. etc. On February 24, 1968 Pombo, one of the three surviving Cuban guerillas, gave an interview to Edgardo Dammonio, a correspondent of the Inter-Press Service at Santiago.

Question: "Did you know the conversation between Mario Monje, the secretary of the Bolivian Communist Party, and Che Guevara"?

Answer: "Che told us: Monje insisted on three things. First, that the Bolivian pro-Chinese wing was not to be allowed to participate in the guerilla effort, Second, that the military and political leadership was to be from the Communist Party. Third, that there should be a waiting period, and that aid of all Latin American parties should be sought.

"Che disagreed on these three points. And in one of them he would not give an inch. Monje did not agree. As a leader of the Party he made a speech to all of us on December 31 before he left. He promised that after explaining his position to the Party he would come

11. Ibid.

* Las Divergencias del P.C. Bolivianos con Che Guevara.

back to join us. It is known that he never returned".

The rest of the story of Che's Bolivian campaign is too well known to be recounted here. Once the first guerilla actions took place, Mario Monje and Humberto Ramirez on behalf of the Secretariat issued a statement of "solidarity" with the guerillas, but confirmed that the political line of the party had not been altered in any degree by the outbreak of guerilla struggle in the south east of the country.

Che Guevara is no more. But the guerilla movements of Latin America live. They have had a setback, but the struggle continues in the jungles of Venezuela, Colombia and Guatemala. In 1967 Nicaragua—that vast estate of dictator Somoza, saw the first terrorist actions led by FSLN (Frente Sandista de Liberacion Nacional). And in the so-called Switzerland of Latin America Uruguay, the Tupamaros—the spiritual descendants of the great rebel Inca Tupac Amaru, are already sowing terror in the hearts of the enemies of the people. In Mexico where a terrified government gunned down hundreds of students under the eyes of foreign journalists in the city before the Olympic games in October 1968, the scene is surely set for further revolutionary outbursts.

In Argentina, the birthplace of Che Guevara, even the followers of Peron—the Peronistas—have taken to arms under their Army of National Liberation. In Brazil, that country of military dictators where Carlos Marighella's name is now spoken alongside Che's we hear of the first skirmishes of the National Liberation Action guerillas with the army and police. Marighella's *Code for Armed Action in Urban Centres* is now read along with Che's *War of the Guerillas*.

True, the guerilla movements of the past ten years have failed to produce successful revolutions. But what about the communist parties of the continent, some of which opened their shops fifty years ago? The guerilla movements have at least succeeded in one great thing. They have created conditions for the revolution. For, as

9. 10. Che's Diary.

10. Ibid.

Debray has put it so graphically, "Illiterate peasants suffocated by centuries of 'social peace' under feudal regimes, assassinated by the latifundista's private police at the first sign of revolt, cannot be awakened or acquire political consciousness by a process of thought, reflection and reading. They will reach this stage only by daily contact with men who share their work...Thrown into a revolu-

tionary war they acquire political experience of resistance to repression and also of a limited agrarian reform in a liberated zone; the conquest from the enemy of a small area of fertile land belonging to the latifundista is better propaganda for agrarian reform than a hundred illustrated pamphlets on Ukrainian Sovkhozes." (Concluded. Parts I and II appeared on July 3 and 10 respectively).

made by the accused, their lordships added that a perusal of the statements recorded in this case, running to over 767 pages of printed matter, revealed that there had been a total distortion of the procedural provisions of the law intended to enable the accused to explain any circumstances appearing in the evidence against them. The opportunity for making the statements was used not for the purpose for which the law allowed or any elucidation of the fact disclosed by the evidence, but for the exposition of the political philosophy or creed or plan of action of the accused. It was manifest that statements of such a nature were totally outside the pale of law.

In this connection it will be interesting to make note of another judgment delivered earlier in another murder case.

This judgment, in the Nellore Naxalite Case, was delivered by a division bench of the Andhra Pradesh High Court consisting of Mr Justice O. Chinnapa Reddy and Mr Justice A. D. V. Reddy.

In this case the three accused, who were alleged to be Naxalites, had been convicted by the Sessions Judge, Nellore, on a charge of having murdered Mr Nellore Venkata Reddy at his house at Maddurapalli in Venkatagiri Police Station limits in Nellore District in May 1970.

The Sessions Judge, Nellore, sentenced Mr Intha Ramana Reddi and Mr Puli Srinivasulu to death and Mr Ramaraju for life.

The first two had refused to appeal against the judgment as they had "no faith or confidence in the present system or procedure". They had also not taken advantage of the facility to defend themselves before the Magistrate who committed the case to the sessions and the Sessions Judge or the High Court. However, Mr Sankepalli Ramaraju, who was sentenced for life, filed the appeal in the High Court through his counsel.

The division bench took the unusual step of recalling and examining the material witnesses in the High Court. (Normally examination of wit-

Andhra Pradesh

The Death Sentence

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

A division bench of the Andhra Pradesh High Court confirmed recently the death sentence passed on the Marxist-Leninist party leader and lawyer of Orissa, Mr Nagabhushanam Patnaik, by the Additional Sessions Judge, Visakhapatnam. The division bench was disposing of the appeals filed by the accused against their conviction and also by the State against the acquittal of some of the accused.

It was alleged by the prosecution that all the accused formed into an unlawful assembly and murdered Mr Posalapati Appala Narasimha Raju in May 1969. The Additional Sessions Judge, Visakhapatnam, who tried the case, convicted and sentenced Messrs Nagabhushanam Patnaik, Nagella Sekher alias Chitti Babu, Gatta Paidaiiah and M. Lakshmana to death. He convicted and sentenced Mr Choudhary Tejeswara Rao, another top Marxist-Leninist party leader, and seven other accused to life imprisonment, and acquitted six other accused.

The division bench, however, modified the death sentence passed on Mr Nagella Sekhar alias Chitti Babu and Mr Lakshmana to life imprisonment. M. Lakshminarayana Rao alias Narayana was acquitted.

Their lordships observed that the determination of the sentence und-

oubtedly called for an assessment of the record of the offender with reference to his education, home life, sobriety, social adjustment, his emotional and mental condition and the prospects of rehabilitation and the possibility of his return to a normal life in the community.

Their lordships said: "The appellants, in our opinion, urge as extenuation for their act that their political philosophy is borne out of a passionate desire for a better or equitable order of society and that their act is the outcome of that creed".

The ancient concept of regarding as abhorrent the killing of people for the achievement of political objectives had no place in the present context, their lordships said. But the view that political necessity or conviction, as conceived by the offender, went in extenuation of the act of killing was a doctrine fraught with dangerous consequences.

"We cannot endorse the view that where a murderer asserts that 'the dictates of his conscience' impelled him to kill another person, a case is ipso facto made out for the lesser sentence. Human life can no more be sacrificed at the altar of one's political ideals than it can be at the altar of religion. There is as little justification for the one as for the other".

Commenting on the statements

nesses does not take place in the High Court). But Mr Justice O. Chinnapa Reddy and Mr Justice A. D. V. Reddi who constituted the division bench took this decision in view of the fact that they "are presented with a difficult problem and faced with a strange situation, quite unprecedented, arising out of an unusual attitude adopted by the accused who, quite unmindful of the serious charge of murder against them, refused to participate in the proceedings before the lower court and persist in their refusal in this court also. In the committal court as well as in the Court of Sessions, when examined by the presiding officers, the accused plainly and bluntly stated that they 'had no faith in the law courts of the land,' as according to them they 'were established to protect the interests of the landlords, capitalists and the like'."

The division bench also observed that the "Sessions Judge had adopted a negative and passive attitude at the trial. It was as if he was a spectator and not a participant in the trial. In a case where the charge was of capital nature and where the accused are undefended, be it by choice, one would expect the presiding judge to evince an active interest and participate in the trial by putting questions to witnesses in order to ascertain the truth." The bench held that the Sessions Judge had not done so.

Their lordships said that every criminal trial was "a voyage of discovery in which truth is the quest. It is the duty of a presiding judge to explore every avenue open to him in order to discover the truth. In a case which required watchfulness and alacrity on the part of the presiding judge there was but a mechanical recording of evidence".

The High Court referred to Article 21 of the Constitution, which said, "no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law."

In conclusion, the division bench held that in the circumstances of the

case it did not think it would be justified in quashing the conviction and ordering a retrial. "We think that the interests of justice will be adequately served if, in exercise of our power under Section 375 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, we recall and examine the material witnesses ourselves by putting necessary questions. On such an examination the accused will naturally have a right to even examine the witnesses if they choose and the prosecution will have a right to re-examine the witnesses."

The division bench therefore summoned nine witnesses and examined them.

At one stage, Mr Justice O. Chinnapa Reddy asked the accused whether they would like to cross-examine the witnesses. The accused, Mr Ramana Reddy, said that "since these law courts are intended to protect the interests of the landlords and the capitalist classes we do not have faith in them."

After the examination of witnesses was over Mr Ramana Reddy made a lengthy statement on their political stand.

Their lordships in their judgment reduced the death sentence on Mr Intha Ramana Reddy and Mr Puli Srinivasulu to one of imprisonment for life. The life sentence passed on Mr Sankepalli Ramaraju was confirmed.

Their lordships in their judgment said: "Both of them (Mr Ramana Reddy and Mr Srinivasulu) professed to be Naxalites. They appear to labour under the sincere belief that organised violence in rural areas directed against rich landlords labelled by them as the enemies of the people, will soon lead to insurrection and revolution and thereafter, to the abolition of all inequality and to the happiness, prosperity and peace of all the people of India. While it is true on the one hand that the accused killed an innocent person who had done them no harm, it must also be borne in mind, on the other hand, that they did not act out of any personal motive, but out of what they conceived to be a public motive.

They had no personal animosity against the deceased and they sought no personal gain."

"The means of murder employed by the accused as a step to achieve their ultimate goal was certainly blameworthy, but it cannot be said that their motive, according to their conception, was a low or mean motive. While it is necessary to recognise that the dictates of conscience which led to injury to others may also merit severe punishment sometimes, it is also necessary to recognise that people acting out of genuine and passionate motives, according to their conscience, do not merit extreme punishment. In that view we think that the sentences of death passed on accused 1 (Mr Ramana Reddy) and 2 (Mr Srinivasulu) must be set aside. Instead we sentence each of them to suffer imprisonment for life."

Save Patnaik & Others

Soon after the delivery of the judgment by the Additional Sessions Judge, Visakhapatnam, sentencing Mr Nagabhushanam Patnaik and three others to death, the Sarvodaya leader, Mr Jaya Prakash Narayan appealed to the President to condone the death sentences. He also appealed to the Prime Minister and leaders of opposition parties to give serious thought to the whole issue of capital punishment and agree to exempt political offenders from the ambit of death sentences. Perhaps, he said, they (Mr Patnaik and others) would be the first political offenders in independent India to be sentenced to death. He was not prepared to "lump them together with ordinary criminals".

Leaders of many political parties and organisations are coming forward with appeals to the President to commute the death sentence passed on Mr Patnaik. They include 20 MLAs of Orissa, among whom are Messrs Hare Krishna Mahtab, former Chief Minister of Orissa, Prasanna Kumar Das, PSP leader, Vinayak Acharya, Congress leader, and Gangadhar Payake, CPI leader. Two CPM MLAs have also joined the appeal.

Gandhi In South Africa

M. S. PRABHAKAR

SOME years ago, an American sportswriter complimented the South African golfer Gary Player on his excellent golf. Gary Player is reportedly to have responded to the compliment with the comment that for a country with about a couple of million people, South Africa had produced quite a few notable golfers. The comment was widely reported, highlighting the 'thinking' of a person fairly representative of the white minority in South Africa; in their minds, the rest of the over ten million black Africans who live there are not even people. For the white South African, South Africa is a country with just about a couple of million people, all white.

I was reminded of Gary Player recently, when, during a stay of some weeks in a remote village in the northeast of Assam, I discovered the village library, a cupboard half-filled with mouldy and tattered books, mostly old magazines and textbooks and propaganda material distributed by the Americans and the Russians. Most of the material was in Assamese but there were a few books in English as well, and among the latter was a book on Gandhi. I put off reading this book till I had finished reading everything else; actually, the book* on Gandhi turned out to be the most interesting of the lot.

The Rev Doke is throughout the book full of sanctimony, unctious. He is nothing if not reverential in his attitude towards his hero, whom, in some particularly inspired moments, he compares to Jesus, though as a good Christian, he recognizes that Gandhi is, in the final analysis, a pagan, an idolator. But his Christian charity, like that of his pagan hero,

*M. K. Gandhi: *An Indian Patriot in South Africa*

By Joseph J. Doke.

First edition, 1909, published by the *London Indian Chronicle*.

is reserved for 'civilized' people. The indignation of the good man, evident throughout the book, is roused by the disgraceful treatment accorded to the "civilized subjects of His Majesty" (p. viii). The Rev Doke makes no secret of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the people of the country—the black Africans—do not come under the category of 'civilized'. They are the *kaffirs*, the *natives*, who are barely mentioned in the course of the book. They are there only as part of the landscape, but the people who matter are the whites, the descendants of Dutch and English colonists, and the Indians. Speaking about Gandhi's services in the Zulu war (for the Mahatma volunteered to help the Empire in both its engagements against the Boers and the Zulus, even though the Zulu uprising was against white oppression), the Rev. Doke says that though their (the Indian volunteers') duties were to carry the wounded (the wounded English soldiers, presumably), "early in the campaign other duties were pressed upon them." And, horror of horrors, the civilized Indians were employed to nurse those Zulus who had been lashed. The Rev. Doke goes on, in praise of the Mahatma and his volunteer corps, thus: "It was a month of hard, self-sacrificing toil. Nor was it a light thing for these Indians to do this work. They were members of a sensitive and cultured race, with the elements of an ancient civilization going to make up their characters—men from whose fathers the world had received portions of its finest literature, and examples of its greatest thought. It was no trifle for such men to become voluntary nurses to men not yet emerged from the most degraded state. But distinctions of this kind are hardly appreciated in South Africa. Indians are coloured, and are accordingly classed with aboriginal natives" (p. 112). The whole

struggle of the Mahatma was of course directed towards making the white ruling class recognize and appreciate such a distinction.

There is unconscious comedy too, in the horror the Reverend feels when he thinks of the consequences of classing the civilized Indian with the aboriginal native, especially in prison. "An Indian is classed as a native, and a passive resister, as a criminal, while a criminal native must suffer the utmost degradation that the law provides. So the batteries of the Reef crush the criminal savage and the conscientious Indian without distinction. We have heard that Mr Gandhi's experiences during that night were extremely shocking... As a native prisoner of the criminal class, he was locked into a cell with native and Chinese convicts, men more degraded than it is easy to imagine, accustomed to vices which cannot be named. This refined Indian gentleman was obliged to keep himself awake all night to resist possible assaults upon himself, such as he saw perpetrated around him. That night can never be forgotten" (pp. 151-2). Could it be, that here, on that dark night in the Fort prison of Johannesburg, we have the seeds of the Mahatma's *Brahmacharyya*?

One might think that this civilized superiority of the Indian over the aboriginal native was a distinction perceived only by a rather simple-minded baptist clergyman; but there is plenty of evidence to show that the Mahatma too, shared this attitude. Gandhi's 'struggle' in South Africa was certainly not against the colonial exploitation of the black majority by a white minority; it was exclusively directed against the restrictions put upon the Indian business community, restrictions which, however degrading, might have been borne, but for the fact that they tended to hamper the secondary exploitation that the Indian business community specialized in. Gandhi wanted a nice division of the exploitation process: You whites carry on at the higher level; we Indians will carry on at the middle and the lower levels. Says

JULY 24, 1971

the Rev. Doke: "Mr Gandhi is a dreamer. He dreams of an Indian community in South Africa, welded together by common interests and common ideals, educated, moral, worthy of that ancient civilization to which it is heir; remaining essentially Indian, but so acting that South Africa will eventually be proud of its Eastern citizens, and accord them, as of right, those privileges which every British subject should enjoy" (p. 104). It may be noted that the aboriginal natives do not come under the category of 'British subjects', since they are not even people. Do the whites fear that Indians might swamp South Africa in vast numbers? The Rev. Doke assures the white minority that "Mr Gandhi and his compatriots have never attempted to 'flood the country with Asiatics'." He presents the *reasonable* fears of the white minority thus, "there is a feeling, too, that the white man, who has fought for the country, and has spent blood and treasure to maintain his ascendancy, is engaged in laying the foundation of a great empire, and there is no intention, so far as these colonists are concerned, of putting a faulty brick into the building. They have no wish to turn out the Indians who are at present domiciled here, but they think it wise to make it impossible for the children of the East to reap the benefits of their travail. These are the thoughts which influence a large proportion of our people. Mr Gandhi's reply completely recognizes the moderate temper of these views. He points out that the white colonists and the resident Indians are practically at one" (pp. 126-7). The Rev. Doke goes on: "Neither has any intention of throwing open the gates of South Africa to an unrestricted immigration from the East... 'Let us have,' he [Mr Gandhi] urges, 'a few of our best men to teach us, to advise and shepherd us, and to minister to our spiritual needs, that we may not sink to the level of aboriginal natives, but rise to be, in every sense, worthy citizens of the empire.'" (p. 128).

Such were the emotional and the

ideological foundations of Gandhi's struggle in South Africa. Is it any wonder that his memory evokes no warm response from the black people of Africa? Gary Player was certainly reactionary in his thinking when he said that there were about a couple of million people in South Africa; for, long before him, Mahatma Gandhi, in his progressive way, had maintained that South Africa consisted of other people besides the whites, to wit, the Indian business community.

Book Review

FOOTPRINTS OF LIBERTY: Speeches and Writings of Tulsi Chandra Goswami.

Tulsi-Bina Trust—Sole Distributors: Orient Longman limited. Calcutta 1971. Price Rs 28.00.

IN the late twenties and the early thirties, Tulsi Goswami flashed like a meteor in India's political firmament and faded away. Son of Raja Kishorilal Goswami of Serampore, Tulsi Chandra was educated in Oxford. As President of the Oxford Majlis, he showed abilities that later made him one of India's foremost parliamentarians of his time.

Tulsi Goswami, on his return to India in 1923, entered politics as a lieutenant of C. R. Das and at the age of twenty-five, became the Deputy Leader of the Swarajya Party in the Central Legislative Assembly when Motilal Nehru was the Party's leader in the Assembly. The next five years were the most crowded and glorious years of Goswami's political life. Within and outside the Legislative Assembly, he fought against the British repressive measures, went abroad to champion the cause of India's swaraj, led the Indian delegation to the Empire Parliamentary Conference in Ottawa in 1928, and charmed and impressed everybody by his forensic brilliance.

After the death of C. R. Das in 1925, the Swarajya Party disintegrated in 1928. From 1929 to 1931, Tulsi Goswami was in England. On

his return to India, he tried to reorganise the All India Swarajya Party in 1933 and showed some of his old fire in fighting the Communal Award of 1936. It was at his instance that Tagore and Sarat Chandra made their rare appearance in politics by presiding over a number of protest meetings against the Award. In 1937, he was elected to the Bengal Legislative Assembly where, however, he did not find scope for the free play of his special gifts. In 1943, after a good deal of deliberation, he joined the short-lived Bengal Coalition Ministry with the Muslim League and became the Finance Minister. His political career came to an end with his defeat by a communist candidate in a Calcutta industrial constituency in the general elections of 1952. Shortly afterwards, he had a stroke from which he never recovered until his death on 3rd January 1957.

What was remarkable about Goswami was that few politicians in India, at least among those who came after him, had such deep and abiding scholarly interests that ranged from classics to mathematics, from

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history to philosophy. Prof Satyen Bose, in his brief and loving foreword, refers to Goswami's rich collection of books that included abstruse treatises on mathematical logic and philosophy of mathematics, and adds that they bore the mark of his careful reading. It is difficult to disagree with Prof Bose when he says that it is sad that "a gifted man like him, born with the (the) promise of making some permanent contribution to the world of culture, frittered away in the political tension of his time... an unavoidable curse of an alien rule".

Footprints of Liberty contains a representative selection from the speeches and writings of Tulsi Goswami and has been compiled by his daughter. The contents are divided into a number of sections: speeches delivered and articles written during his student days in Oxford; speeches given in the legislatures and in public; articles and commentaries contributed to newspapers and periodicals and homages to eminent persons. The concluding chapter contains brief reminiscences by Tulsi Goswami's contemporaries who knew him from his student days.

Tulsi Goswami's speech on 'Mesopotamia' at Oxford and his earliest articles, written when he had just turned twenty, such as 'Reflections on Kautilya's Arthashastra', bring out the diversity of his intellectual interests, his maturity and wide reading in a number of languages. His speeches in the legislatures though devoted to the contingent issues of the day, have worn well. They show the care he took to go into the details of the issues he took up and a rare facility of expression. His speech in the Central Legislative Assembly in 1926 on the hunger strike in Mandalay Jail created a sensation all over the country by its disclosures. His public speeches cover economic, political and cultural issues and the ones on official language and journalism show his remarkable grasp of the essentials of the subjects. The section containing Tulsi Goswami's articles in news-

papers and periodicals are of much interest. The compiler, however, could have done well to include one or two editorials from the many he contributed to *Forward*, which paper he also largely financed to found and run.

The concluding section of the book contains the reminiscences of Goswami's friends. These include, in addition to the Foreword by Prof. Satyen Bose already mentioned, contributions from K.P.S. Menon, Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Dilip Kumar Roy (who writes in Bengali), Prof. Nirmal Bhattacharya and others.

The book is well produced and contains a number of old and interesting photographs. But the proofs should have been more carefully read: Prof Satyen Bose's brief Foreword contains no less than four printing errors in the first two pages.

G. R. P.

Curbing Movie Imports

BY A CORRESPONDENT

THE Centre's refusal to renew the agreement for import of films from the USA is not prompted so much by a desire to break the American stranglehold as by its plain inability to cajole and wheedle them to come to face-saving terms with it, within the present framework. The Bombay film traders' lobby along with the Soviet lobby apparently have pressurised the Government into taking the decision when the occasion arose after the expiry on June 30 of the 1967 agreement. The Government has made it a prestige issue because, despite persistent imploring since 1961 when the first agreement was concluded, not one Indian film was released in the USA commercially while around 200 films were imported every year. The Government had had no say either in the selection of films for public consumption here. As regards the Bombay banias ever

enamoured of American movies for their plagiaristic proclivities, their recent demand for a ban arose because they thought they were being deprived of their pound of flesh in foreign exchange.

Meanwhile American money has piled up to the tune of nearly Rs 5½ crores. The Centre refused repatriation of box-office takings barring a 12½% concession to cover print cost and laboratory charges which the half-a-dozen American operators succeeded in extracting. A chain of houses owned by these companies in the larger cities was a 'thrown in' item. Add to it the contracts these companies entered into with nearly 100 houses all over the country reserving 25 weeks booking in favour of films supplied by them and the staggering inroad into a very vital sector with the direct connivance of the Government and the film trade would become clear.

Future imports through the State Trading Corporation have become the prerogative of the Foreign Trade Ministry presided over by the devout socialist, Mr L. N. Mishra. He has his finger in the other pie—import of books and periodicals, for which, however, he has mercifully declared his intention to form an advisory committee with men drawn from the Education Ministry and of course the book trade. (The much vaunted Culture Department is nowhere in the picture thanks perhaps to the itch of the debonair Minister for new pastures in his home State). It is not clear whether the STC itself or its subsidiary, the Indian Motion Picture Export Corporation, will be entrusted with the task. The IMPEC at the moment confines itself to sales promotion of Indian films in West Asia, East Africa, part of South-East Asia and East Europe. It has not been able to make a dent in those countries where the film industry is developed and people are exposed to better class of films. The fare it peddles is authentic Bombay vintage and only in recent weeks did one hear of an unknown quantity called 'quality' from its chief. But these films do

earn foreign exchange and this lulls their producers and the IMPEC into complacency, as does their commercial success within the country itself.

The Government decision has prompted Mr Tariq, the former Kashmir Minister who now heads the IMPEC, to demand that his outfit get the benefit of importing films too. Apparently to placate the film traders he has gone on record to suggest that film export should not be brought completely under the purview of the Government. However, under the changed circumstances his demand seems unexceptionable if only it could prevent further fragmentation of the agencies responsible for doing things in the same sphere. But even now when an occasion has been provided more by circumstances than deliberate choice, the Government has cold feet in making policy decisions. Whether this is failure or disinclination is anybody's guess. The Film Finance Corporation was set up and given money from a kitty that was hardly full. No steps were taken to give it adequate adjuncts in the shape of distribution and exhibition machinery. The voluble Mr Gujral's move for a Film Council bringing all aspects of moviemaking under its umbrella met with stiff resistance from the trade and the Government dropped it like a hot potato. The different agencies of the Information Ministry function in splendid isolation and sometimes as a sop to the inquisitive public dialogues are started such as the one between the IMPEC chief and the FFC chief on the need to have a chain of auditoria for screening films imported by the former and produced by the latter. There has been little progress towards self-sufficiency in raw stock. The modest beginning of manufacture of positive film in the public sector is more a gimmick than actual progress. In respect of other sophisticated equipment like projector, camera etc the dependence on other countries is pathetic. With the spread of TV matters will become worse, exposing our weakness and making us more vulnerable to foreign countries. The

Government and industry are wholly responsible for this unwholesome reliance—import is a more profitable proposition to the personnel responsible for policy making than perhaps indigenous manufacture of even ordinary equipment.

Other factors are closely involved. What about the quality of films to be imported? If a blanket ban is imposed on import of films or for that matter books and periodicals, it will be the responsibility of the Government to see that we get to know the best from abroad. Safeguards are imperative. Too often the bureaucracy tends to think that it is infallible and elected Ministers and MPs consider themselves inviolate, sacrosanct and armed with privileges denied to lesser mortals.

The problems are numerous. IMPEC, for example also imported films which never found any taker for them. How to remedy this? Mr Tariq talked of 'quality control' of films for export to compete with films from other countries. His quality consciousness is a sudden development because he has not been too concerned with promotion of quality films as long as the trashy stuff earned a little foreign exchange. But over the past few years Bombay extravaganza has run into difficulties partly because of smuggling of prints from laboratories and the exporters finding themselves competing with underground material of their own making.

If we intend to import only the best films we should be prepared also to export only the best. And there is no reason to believe that these will be unprofitable. When import of films is nationalised there is no reason to leave a gap in the export arena.

Legend And Reality

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

THE Legend of Lylah Clare by Robert Aldrich is a rehash of the old pattern, the much familiar story of Hollywood looking at itself. Kim Novak appears as Elsa Brink-

man, a suburban girl aspiring to movie fame and rechristened as Elsa Campbell after she is signed up for the part of Lylah Clare, a famous actress, the legend of the yesteryear.

The director is Louis Zarkan, husband of Lylah, and this contract means much to him as a real comeback after a long spell of inactivity. This episode bears a slight resemblance to Miss Novak's own rise to stardom. In the film, Elsa Campbell gradually begins to live her role as Lylah, a little too much possibly, till she becomes almost possessed by the personality of the character she is called upon to portray, sharing Lylah's life, love and her ultimate tragedy. The trouble with Aldrich is that while he makes a promising start by scratching into the very heart of the show business, uncovering its charming and gory details, beautifully analysing the neurotic minds which operate behind and in front of the camera, finally he loses his detachment and allows himself to be overpowered by the material he handles. What we get in the end is Hollywood in big doses. Kim Novak has nothing much to display excepting her pendulous books and Peter Finch as the temperamental film director throws up the image of an undersized Sternberg. In fact, the whole nature of the thing is excellently summed in one line of dialogue in the film, the remark of the studio chief who keeps on barking to his subordinates, "We make movies, not films" and that is exactly what Aldrich has done for the audience. A movie, not a film.

Clipping

Power Equation On Pakistan

...Nationalism is obviously the most important issue in Bengal today. However, it has been used to build a mass movement primarily of the urban bourgeoisie, who thus far have not been able to compete with the West Pakistani ruling groups on the

terms set by the latter. This bourgeoisie has received active support from the urban working classes, who are often employed by West Pakistani bosses and know themselves to be exploited. The peasant masses, however, are not directly abused by West Pakistanis, but are, on the contrary, sharply aware of exploitation by indigenous entrepreneurs. For the peasant, therefore, the issue is not independence, or even autonomy but social revolution in the countryside. Because there is no effective Socialist movement, the peasant vote has gone along with that of the urban bourgeoisie. But that class, led by the Awami League, has embraced nationalism purely as a way to Bengali control over Bengal's resources—which, given the programmes and leadership of the League, means replacing West Pakistani ruling groups with the aspiring urban classes of Bengal. A true emancipation of the peasantry is not on the League's agenda.

Consequently, the Bengali leaders, who must have anticipated the West Pakistani response to the cry for autonomy, did not prepare the peasantry to resist. The masses were used to lend electoral legitimacy to the programmes of the urban leaders, but they were not given in return the means to defend themselves against the genocidal tactics of the army. Thus, while excusing in no way the behaviour of the West Pakistani ruling classes, one must question the wisdom, even the motives, of the Awami League.

Its leadership had no illusions about the army or the excesses to which it would resort. Under the circumstances, it had a choice between arming the masses or bending to the will of the army just enough to avoid massacre. To have done neither, to have flung an unarmed populace into a predictable inferno, was unforgivable. The illusion was kept up that an autonomous East Bengal, even an independent Bangla Desh could be acquired through negotiations and electoral politics, and without the direct, militant participation of the people. The unpleasant probability

is that the peasantry was never prepared for an armed struggle, precisely because to give it that role would have profoundly changed the character of the movement and committed East Bengal to a social revolution in the countryside, instead of mere autonomy with increased leeway for the Bengali middle classes.

The United States, which is not otherwise known for its support of liberation struggles, has been sympathetic to the drive for autonomy, and this benevolence may be related to the national-bourgeois character of the Awami League leadership, as well as to American interests in that area of the world. The twin monopolies over industrial capital and military hardware that give West Pakistan domination in Bengal are the direct results of American aid. During the 1950s, West Pakistan played a significant role in the encirclement of the Soviet Union (it was from Peshawar, an American base in northwest Pakistan, that the notorious U-2 took off). America developed interest in East Bengal only during the 1960s, concurrent with the *detente* with the Soviet Union, the growing American involvement in Indian military affairs subsequent to the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962, and the expansion of America's war in Southeast Asia. This interest is obviously stimulated by East Bengal's proximity to China, South-east Asia and, of course, India.

Pakistan's foreign policy is largely determined by its ongoing territorial feuds with India. So, when American military aid was made available to India at the time of the Sino-Indian conflict, Pakistan retaliated by developing some ties with China—despite the fact that American aid kept flowing into Pakistan as well: it now adds up to almost \$5 billion. When, a little later, the United States held itself aloof from the Indo-Pakistani conflict of 1965, suspending military aid to both countries, Pakistan began accepting arms from China. Soon thereafter, the Awami League announced its six-point program. Washington, quite satisfied with the Awami League leadership, let it be known

that the more autonomous East Bengal became, the easier it would be for the United States to assist it on separate and more favourable terms. Now that the Nixon Administration has made unmistakable its determination that the United States will continue to be a dominating force in Vietnam, the Americans must be well aware that a friendly, independent Bangla Desh could provide bases from which to bomb or at least intimidate China. From some such calculations, American diplomats have been rather benign toward the Awami League leadership. However, with \$5 billion sunk in West Pakistan and the relationship with the West Pakistani capitalist class still flourishing, the United States cannot take a clear-cut pro-Bengali position. One must therefore expect that the United States will continue the ambiguous policy it has been maintaining.

The Chinese, who supported the "unity" of Pakistan and warned against foreign interference, seemed to be taking a pre-emptive position, one that was perhaps determined largely by the U.S. interest in East Bengal. At the time, the struggle for Bangla Desh was led by pro-American groups and there was a real possibility that India, if not America directly, would intervene. The Chinese position was designed, or so it seems, to forestall a pro-Western intervention, and to let the contradiction between the West Pakistani ruling groups and the socially advanced classes of Bengal be resolved through a massacre of the Bengali leadership, producing a revolutionary situation (in Maoist terms) in which the eventual confrontation would be between an occupation army and the progressively armed masses. Then, in the course of a protracted struggle, the leadership of the movement would pass from the urban elite to the peasant guerillas.

If that interpretation of Chinese motivation is correct—and I cannot be certain that it is—it would seem likely that the position is tentative and subject to change as the character of the struggle changes. Inas-

much as it ignores the suffering of the Bengalis and does not condemn the brutality of West Pakistani troops, China's attitude is reprehensible; it can be understood, however, within the context of Maoist ideology and the threat the Chinese feel from any disturbance to the balance of power on the sub-continent.

The ongoing problem is as follows: East Bengal has been exploited and brutalized by the ruling groups of West Pakistan. The question of nationalism is therefore altogether valid. However, it is not at all likely that autonomy, or even the creation of an independent Bengali state, could begin to cope with the hunger, the misery, the oppression of the deeply injured Bengalis. One is far from convinced that the urban, middle-class Awami League, now outlawed and gone for the most part underground, can exert the force necessary to achieve not only political independence but a genuine social revolution in the countryside.

So far, the Bengali peasantry has not emerged as a genuinely revolutionary class, in the sense of being conscious of its distinct interests and developing both the leadership and the programmes to realize their fulfilment. For the moment, however, the terror practised by the West Pakistani troops has forced a revolutionary potential upon this peasantry. It is likely that the alienation of the rural Bengali is now absolute and that, for a relatively short time, he may be imbued with a will for armed struggle. The same genocidal troop tactics have bestowed a revolutionary aura upon the banished leadership of the Awami League. It is possible, therefore, that the revolutionary peasant mass may accept the League as a revolutionary vanguard. In that case, we may yet see the peasantry fighting for essentially urban, middle-class goals. It can even happen that a Bengali state will be created by the efforts and sacrifices of the peasantry—who will then be ruled by a socially advanced, urban middle class. The question is not whether a Bengali state should come into being; it

must. The question is, what sort of state?

Within East Bengal, the cry of secession was first raised by Maulana Bhasani, the perennial peasant leader who, after the tidal wave hit Bengal and the West Pakistani rulers failed to provide even the semblance of adequate relief, demanded independence in November 1970—almost four months before the more moderate leaders of the Awami League got around to escalating their demand beyond autonomy. The factionalism of the Bengali Left, and the superior organization of the Awami League, made it possible for Mujib to steal Bhasani's thunder. In addition, Bhasani made the mistake of boycotting the elections, instead of using them as a sort of referendum on the independence issue. This error gave the Awami League a near consensus and thus an unchallengeable electoral legitimacy.

Now that electoral politics have proved a disaster, Bhasani is likely to regain prestige. He will then surely point out that the elections should never have been taken seriously, that from the start the struggle should have been a peasant fight for independence and social revolution in the countryside. The more radical elements within the Awami League, restrained in the past by the moderate politics of Mujib, are also likely to gather more force and following.

Meanwhile, refugee camps in India, overcrowded with poor, angry peasants will probably become recruitment centers for a liberation army. As the Bengalis shift from electoral illusions to armed struggle, the composition of the leadership is bound to change drastically. There is already fervent talk of launching guerilla warfare, but it is unlikely that a strong, coherent well-trained guerilla movement capable of effectively confronting West Pakistan's army can arise soon. If it is launched too hurriedly, it can only provoke a new massacre and deepened despair in the Bengali masses.

Some of the Bengali problems may be solved by the bankruptcy and

chaos within West Pakistan itself. In the short run, however, the army is likely to step aside in favour of a quisling administration that will have the appearance of civilian rule. With this arrangement made, West Pakistan will probably get enough financing to stave off disintegration. In that case, Bengal will either have to give up its aspirations for independence or prepare for a long struggle.

If the civilian leadership of West Pakistan had had the wisdom to support the drive for Bengal's autonomy and to condemn the army's brutal enterprise, some bridges might still have remained between the two parts of the country. Instead, Bhutto, the self-professed-leftist, blessed the army for "doing its duty" to preserve unity "in the name of the country and the Almighty." Bhutto was a loyal servant of Ayub for seven years; he is a feudal landlord with formidable connections among the industrialists. Since entering civilian politics, he has picked up the slogan of "Islamic socialism" (when pressed to define this "socialism" more concretely, he is known to have cited Britain's Wilson and Germany's Brandt as his models). At one point, it looked as though he would be a well-meaning, aristocratic left-winger of a Fabian sort, a kind of Nehru. Instead, he has demonstrated a fondness for military solutions and some tendencies toward National Socialism. Under his leadership, West Pakistani civilian politics have drifted as far away from even an understanding of Bengali aspirations as the army has been from the start. (Aizaz Ahmed in *The Nation*, June USA).

Letters

Birbhum

Your two recent reports from Birbhum contradict each other on certain points. While it is perfectly natural for impressions to differ from observer to observer, your second report (by A. B., July 10) is marred

by slander of the CPI(ML). Supporters of certain parties proclaim loudly that the Naxalites are helped by the police, that they indulge in anti-social activities, that they are nothing but anti-socials, that they act in collusion with the Congress. That you printed this second report after the first cannot but give rise to much confusion amongst your readers, as to where you stand.

As a resident of the Birbhum district and an observer of the upsurge of Naxalite activities from close quarters, I think the two reports fail to highlight the mass popularity the CPI(ML) is enjoying. One can understand why supporters of other parties talk and write bitterly about the CPI(ML); none of them are known to be able to initiate in this district any activities whatsoever. Newspapers talk of the scare of the general public, but ask any rickshaw-wallah or coolie about the Naxalites and they are likely to tell you, "They are the poor-man's party. They risk their lives for our sake." Ask a lower middle-class man or woman whether he or she is afraid of the Naxalites and you will often get the reply, "we have nothing to fear. We are poor."

Such stories as the CPI(ML) extracting money from rich people and protecting them in return will not be generally believed by the man in the street in the district. This practice is indulged in by supporters of all other parties in many other parts of West Bengal, but the Naxalites are known, at least in Birbhum, for their purism. There are, no doubt, blackmailers who are extracting money by using the name of the Party and there are dacoits, plain and simple. But most local people seem to know that the Party cadres never resort to such activities. The cadres have done a great deal to keep their image clean by not only putting up posters and issuing pamphlets but also by taking punitive actions against the culprits. Recently peasant cadres of Surul village gunned down two well-known dacoits of a neighbouring village who had for a very long time terrorised the people of the surrounding areas.

This action has done a great deal to spread the popularity of the party among ordinary people.

A significant feature of the 'Red Army' actions mentioned in the first report (June 26) is the class composition of the units. These are usually composed of 10 to 20 people, among whom the organising cadres of middle class origin do not exceed 2 or 3. The rest are mainly of landless peasant origin. The guns snatched in the district have reportedly been distributed among these landless peasant cadres. The firing squads that carry out the killings in these village raids are also composed of these people. The middle-class cadres still use the knife in preference to the gun; but the landless peasants seem to be trigger-happy.

Yet another feature of these actions is that the annihilations are done after a trial conducted in public. In many cases, after the trial some were let off with humiliations, while the death sentence was pronounced against others. The raiders may come from outside, but very often the trials have been witnessed by hundreds of villagers, who at least passively participated in the trial.

These penal actions of the 'Red Army' are often accompanied by confiscation and distribution of property. The mode of distribution is left to the discretion of a committee of local landless peasants.

It is true that there is an atmosphere of scare, but newspaper reports can easily exaggerate. It is not that shops (other than liquor shops) are closing down, that business (other than of pawnbroking) is coming to a standstill. Many reporters "report" about Birbhum without caring to foul their feet in the soil of the district; otherwise how can the reporter of one of our most important English dailies write that five schools at Santiniketan have been burnt, whereas there exists only one school there? Also absent in Birbhum is the type of scare that affects residents of Baranagore, Dum Dum, Sinthi etc where one can risk being killed for the mere offence of entering an area

not of one's residence. One of the healthiest aspects of the conditions in Birbhum is the almost total absence of inter-party killings and murderous clashes between young people of neighbouring areas.

A READER
Suri

Thanks are due to the correspondent who has given a detailed report on Naxalite activities in Birbhum. (June 26, 1971). But unfortunately he has failed (willingly or unwillingly) to present these activities in their totality and their implications. It is untrue that these activities cover the whole of Birbhum district. They are mainly limited to Suri, Bolpur, Surul, Ilambazar and Rampurhat areas.

The 'growing support' for the Naxalites mainly comes from the students. The CPI(ML) group is still isolated from its natural ally, the peasantry who cannot even understand the main purpose behind the activities of the Naxalites. I talked with some of the peasants near Bolpur and they said they were afraid of three things: the police, dacoits and the Naxalites.

Because of this isolation misunderstanding was growing about the Naxalites. For example, on June 29, near Ruppur village (Bolpur P.S.) two young men were brutally killed. One of them Arun Roy Chowdhuri once belonged to the CPI(ML) group but broke away from it in 1969 and owed his allegiance to Asit Sen. He had been arrested two months ago and came out of jail on bail only recently. The other man Sader Ali, was an ordinary peasant. Though there is no reason to suppose that they were killed by the CPI(ML), the belief has gained ground that this is their act. They should try to remove the misunderstanding. As your own correspondent has rightly written, "it is not the topography of the country but that of the human mind... which is the foremost precondition of success for a true Marxist party."

A COMMON MAN
Santiniketan

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