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GROPING IN THE DARK

WHAT the Government of India proposes to do about Bangladesh is as clear as the monsoon sky. There are clouds of rumours and occasional sombre flashes: foreign relief workers have been asked to quit; many private houses have been taken over for the army or the Mukti Bahini at Kalyani and other places; people somehow think that some thing is going to happen on August 14—the day Krishna was born which also happens to be the day Pakistan came into existence 24 years ago. There are army movements along the border, matched by Pakistani concentrations. And all the time political leaders are pressing for recognition of the Bangladesh Government which, by the way, has issued some stamps. But it seems Mrs Gandhi is still sticking to arms aid minus recognition; a position which the rulers of Islamabad find obnoxious as the Mukti Bahini strikes become more daring.

Let us not ignore the motivation—despite the Indian patronage and participation—driving the members of the Bahini into difficult armed action against the West Pakistan army. They have suffered immensely. Thousands of homeless young people are determined to avenge the wrong done to their families. Whether among these younger elements politics is in command in the face of the strict screening is another matter. There are rumours that men of the Bahini are not much enamoured these days of the Awami League, which, they suspect, will opt for a compromise in the long run. If the reported disillusionment is true and if it spreads, that will mean some sort of politicisation which might take the Bahini beyond the narrow limits of fervent nationalism. But the greater the politicisation the more difficult it will be for them to get adequate arms aid; the presence of masses of armed foreigners whose loyalties may change will pose a problem to the 'friendly' government.

Reports are also coming in from the interior of East Bengal of sporadic armed action and sabotage. The tendency of the Indian Press is to ascribe it all to the Mukti Bahini, just as all political activities in the recent past were credited to the great Mujib and the Awami League. Officers of the Mukti Bahini, at least some of them, do not react with gusto to guerilla activities by other groups; they still think that they will decide the final issue. However, some liberation groups are said to be pooling their resources and have set up a co-ordination committee. Their programme

is long but contains very little to suggest that they will follow a radical line in the villages on the question of land distribution and ending of usury. For the sake of co-operating with the kulaks of the Awami League, they have toned down their programmes and thus their own effectiveness too. At the moment guerilla warfare, involving the peasants, is not in sight. The spirit and practices of the armed commando are ruling.

But other things must be happening that are not yet known to us but are portentous enough to disturb the Americans. The Americans—was it Kissinger?—have told Mrs Gandhi that their latest arms supplies are meant to tackle the 'extremists'. The Americans are also sending back to East Bengal their USAID man, who is an

expert in counter-insurgency, to study the 'state of the police force'. Something is cooking. The quick supply of U.S. coasters is another signal.

The trouble with people on the Indian sub-continent is that they want quick results when guns go into action. The concept of protracted warfare is, as yet, alien to us. Our impatience is also conditioned by the talk of six months, nine months, 12 months. Of course, it is legitimate for New Delhi to feel that time is running out and for the people to despair in the face of the massive influx of refugees. But if one could get used to the idea of protracted struggle, the emerging forces in East Bengal could be watched without flurry. However, Yahya Khan and Indira Gandhi, both of whom are in a hurry, cannot stand still.

A Stock-Taking

The Presidential regime in West Bengal is not in a hurry. It has already spent more than a month in administrative face-lift, but the face remains as much of a cadaver as ever. Some changes at the top are said to be in the offing. Mr Dhavan, it seems, is quitting at last; he has survived many reports of impending removal from Raj Bhavan in Calcutta, but his sudden loss of ebullience perhaps indicates that random speculations have at last hit the target and he is busy packing up. His reported successor was a nondescript in the Central bureaucracy whose only qualification for elevation to governorship is said to be his enormous capacity for self-effacement and surrender to ministerial will. In the emerging set-up in West Bengal, an unobtrusive governor may be a necessity to avoid clashes with an overbearing minister. But the question remains to whom the new Governor will pay fealty—to the Minister in charge of West Bengal affairs or to the Minister of State for Home Affairs. Both are in the Prime Minister's confidence, and if they go mad

—one over acquisition of authority and the other over loss of it—whose writ will run with the Governor? At a lower level, the changes proposed are a mere reshuffle of the old pack; an official discredited in one capacity cannot acquit himself well in another.

The only administrative decision of any consequence so far seems to have been to induct the army in the event of any difficulty. Army help is being sought not only for failure of law and order, but also for power failure. Civil administration is being handed over, slowly but steadily, to the army. The situation in Bangladesh has come as a handy pretext; it is being used to cover up the inefficiency and lack of will of the regime. Even the evacuees have been forgotten. Newspapers are tired of publishing pictures of walking skeletons, emaciated children, and families setting up abode in concrete pipes. Their existence is forgotten except when foreign relief workers are ordered to quit within forty-eight hours or a plane ferrying between Dum Dum and Mana crashlands. As though this is not enough, the

Government of India is reported to be considering the question of amending the Constitution so that Emergency can be proclaimed in a part of the country. If the proposal goes through, there is no doubt that Emergency will at once be declared in West Bengal, imposing an indefinite moratorium on all political activities in the State.

Curiously, the left parties seem to be utterly indifferent to this prospect. The CPI(M), which alone can, on its own, give a rude jolt to the regime, appears to have decided to go into hibernation. It is busy working out an agreement with the regime under which it will barter its right of political agitation for early election. Even if the attempt fails, the party will operate under a self-imposed limitation so that nothing may come in the way of its participating in the next election whenever held. Other parties have already sold their souls to the Congress(R). They have chosen the method of insinuation, not of confrontation; they do not mind the actions of the Congress(R) as long as the party continues to borrow from their vocabulary. With the army and the police looking after the administration and the rival left parties looking after one another, the Congress(R) has now a free field. The party is back to its old love; factional feuds have been revived. Some are shuttling between Calcutta and New Delhi in a bid to oust the president of the State unit; the president is determined that if he has to go down he will take some luminaries of the rival faction with him. With the political leaders occupied with feathering their own nests, the people are left out in the cold.

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Crack-Down In Sudan

The way the ruling Sudanese leaders eliminated their principal adversaries after the bloodless but abortive coup of July 19 was nothing short of instant murder. Col al-Nur and Major Hamadallah, on their way home from London—the former to take over as President—were taken off a BOAC plane forced down at Benghazi at the orders of the devout Muslim-Socialist leader of Libya, Col Gaddafi, and executed after brief interrogation. Nimeiry had been shown some mercy by the rebels—he was deprived not of his life but of food and water for hours—but he did not show the slightest mercy to men who had once helped him to power. He is now determined to crush the Communist Party. The Secretary-General of the party has been executed along with Shafei Ahmed al-Sheikh, Vice-Chairman of the WFTU, and scores of other leading members will have to face trial and perhaps the firing squad. Maybe in this way President Nimeiry hopes to be a real 'blood' brother of the impetuous, young, anti-communist but socialist leader of Libya and join the federation; Gaddafi, it is reported, was most reluctant to have Sudan in the federation because the Sudanese Cabinet had connections with the Marxists. Islamic socialism is indeed a strange and dangerous concoction; thanks to it, in many parts of the Arab world the so-called ruling revolutionaries, whether they follow the non-capitalist path or not, can be vultures of the same beak when it comes to pecking out opponents. Sudan's relations with Russia have been fouled; President Nimeiry, after accusing Britain, the USA and Iraq of helping the coup leaders started throwing dark hints about the Soviet Union, China etc. while concentrating on the local Communists. Does he think that Sudan was Ceylon in reverse—all the powers conspiring against it with no one but Libya and the UAR ready to help? Such a combination

of motley powers, for or against, is a rarity and President Nimeiry is not all that important, though he thinks he is unique. Before ordering the execution of Col al-Nur, he is said to have asked him, in order to prove that he is not a dictator: "Can you deny Babakr, that I have been going down to the people, walking in the streets at all hours and talking to butchers and green-grocers?" Col al-Nur did not reply. Perhaps he remembered only the butchers.

Meanwhile, in the UAR, Aly Sabry and others will soon be tried for high treason. All this accompanies the resounding talk about a major offensive against Israel and when the reactionaries have won in Jordan. When Nasser ordered a cease-fire last year, King Hussein was able to withdraw some of his crack units from the front and use them to maul and decimate the guerillas, a task in which he has now succeeded. The reverses of the guerillas who had also annoyed Nasser began with the partial acceptance of the Rogers Plan. The Arab leaders, of course, protest against the massacre of the guerillas—Col Gaddafi, at the mini-summit in Tripoli last week, spoke of collective military intervention in Jordan. But

surely he knows that it is easier to take off two men from an airliner and send them to their death, than to meddle in Jordan whose ruler is patronised both by the USA and Israel, as was evident during the September crisis last year.

The guerillas have not lost all hope, however, though they cannot operate from Jordan. Algeria has decided to send heavy armament to one or two of their regular formations in Syria. It is reported that light tanks, half track personnel carriers, 75 mm artillery pieces and 82 mm trench mortars and two batteries of 155 mm howitzers, will be supplied to these formations, of which the most important is the Yarmuk Brigade, a conventional force of 3000 or so men based in Syria and made up of Palestinians trained in Algerian camps. Whether the Syrian Government would like the presence of such heavily armed units is another matter. Also, one does not know what use the moderate, vacillating Yasser Arafat and his Al Fatah will make of the fresh aid in view of the still unresolved differences with Dr Habbash, the doctrinaire leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, who holds the view that a genuine war against Israel involves a war against some of the existing Arab regimes.

Oil Bussiness

Even before the echo of the wordy duel on oil prices in February died down, the three foreign oil companies in the country have made another unilateral move. As disclosed by the Petroleum Ministry, Burma-Shell and Caltex want to raise the prices of imported crude oil by 5 p.c. per barrel and Esso by 4 p.c. Even this marginal price rise would hit hard India's continually thinning foreign exchange purse and upset its financial calculations. This small change could increase the burden to as high as Rs 36 crores in 1971, Rs 41 crores in 1972, Rs 80 crores

in 1973, Rs 99 crores in 1974 and Rs 106 crores in 1975.

The Teheran Agreement which forbade any price rise after June has not deterred these companies. The decision was taken under the plea that world prices had gone up further since the Teheran days. Japan's emergence as bulk purchaser in the world oil market is offered as another explanation. Whether these claims are tenable or not it is for the Government of India to check up. Itself a dealer in the market it is in a position to do the job.

But quite apart from the justifica-

bility or otherwise of the price rise, the highhanded manner in which the decision was taken smacks of shady deals in the entire oil game. It is another reminder of the power that these oil concerns have, thanks to their lobbies in the South Block. Though the Government has repeatedly vowed not to give in to foreign browbeating it has always succumbed to pressure. This time it has threatened the oil tycoons with nationalisation or scrapping of past agreements or equity participation, but it is yet to be seen how it behaves in reality. In fact the Government's inability to set a time-limit to its proposed move is indication of its helplessness when it comes to action-taking. Even the reported take-over

of import of lubricating oil (100,000 tons) does not allay the doubt.

Notwithstanding the reported findings of new oil reserves, India is not rich in this strategic mineral. Of her total needs of 18 million tons of crude oil, she lifts only 6 million tons from her oilwells and imports the balance. Repeated efforts by the Government to explore new wells have been negated by technical limitations and the West's complicity. Though Moscow had initially shown some interest in doing the job for India, it became apparent that it is keener to oust the Western interests than to do any real good to the country. Gone are the days when Moscow flirted with the ONGC. Now it

is sitting pretty and the exploration business has run into bog. The refinery situation is even bleaker. Here the public sector accounts for only about 50 per cent of the total oil demand. The balance is refined in the private sector where the three foreign interests—Caltex, Burmah-Shell and Esso—dominate. How much they have sent home by way of profit repatriation, royalty payment and wage payments is anybody's guess. The sheer existence of such powerful foreign interests in such vital sectors is inimical to the country's progress. But they have already firmly dug in their heels despite the occasional hectoring voices of the MPs. They have come to stay.

Individual Terrorism And Marxism ✓

ASHIM MITRA

THE revolutionary upsurge of the working class and peasant movements since 1966, the sharpening of the political crisis in the country, the economic crisis that is deepening without any chance of any redress, the wavering and confusion among the left leadership—all this compelled the class conscious worker and peasant and the revolutionary student to make intensive study of the problem of armed struggle. The aged right and left CPI leaders had not the pluck and the fibre to wage a civil war. Most of their cadres were suffering from ideological disintegration and wandering about like lost sheep. This was the situation in which the Naxalites began to take armed guerrilla action with the aim of breaking the legendary Asiatic torpor and establishing base areas for a protracted war and of procuring arms to defend it.

The left press says that these actions are premature, they disorganise mass movements, they are terrorist acts and therefore against the tenets of Marxism-Leninism. The Naxalites deny that they are terrorists.

Of course actions have been taken against individuals, but they are not an end in themselves, they are part of the larger armed struggle to be developed step by step.

Armed struggle is central to the whole idea of Marxism-Leninism. To Lenin it was an object of passionate absorption. He said, "An oppressed class which does not strive to learn to use arms, to obtain arms, deserves to be treated as slaves". When Plekhanov, after the failure of 1905, categorically said, 'they should not have taken up arms' Lenin angrily retorted that, on the contrary, they should have taken to arms more resolutely, energetically and aggressively. "Those who do not prepare for armed uprising must be ruthlessly cast out of the ranks of the supporters of the revolution and sent back to the ranks of its enemies, traitors and cowards."

In a remarkable theoretical defence of guerilla fighting Lenin said armed struggle pursues two different goals... "in the first place the goal of the killing of individual persons, higher officials, and subalterns in

police and army; second, the confiscation of funds both from the government and from private persons." The common opinion of this struggle of 1906, he described, was that it was anarchism, Blanquism, the old terrorism etc. But he contemptuously treated them as 'trite labels'. Killing of individual persons is not ipso facto a terrorist act. Acts of individuals isolated from the masses, having no direct bearing on mass movement and insurrection, not ennobled by the enlightening and organising idea of socialism, in other words without politics in command, are inexpedient and harmful. Referring to a political assassination in Vienna Lenin wrote to Franz Koritschoner on October 25, 1916, "As regards the political assessment of the act, we maintain, of course, our old conviction confirmed by decades of experiences that individual terrorist acts are inexpedient methods of political struggle.

"Killing is no murder", wrote our old *Iskra* about terrorist acts. We are not at all opposed to political killing but as revolutionary tactics individual

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attacks are inexpedient and harmful. Only the mass movement can be considered genuine political struggle. *Only in direct immediate connection with the mass movement can and must individual terrorist acts be of value.* In Russia the terrorists (against whom we always struggled) carried out a number of individual attacks, but in December 1905, when matters almost reached the stage of a mass movement insurrection when it was necessary to help the masses to use violence then just at that moment the 'terrorists' were missing. That is where terrorists make their mistakes."

Mass Movement

Left CPI readers will harp on mass movement; but Lenin understood it differently. In a letter to Inessa Armand dated February 3, 1917 he wrote: "The slogan of a 'mass movement' is not bad, but it is not completely correct. Because it forgets the revolution, the conquest of power, the dictatorship of the proletariat. N.B. this! or more correctly: the support and development (at once) of every kind of revolutionary mass movement, with the object of bringing near the revolution. Individual terrorist acts are not immoral as such (mark the word inexpedient), rather necessary in a particular juncture to help the masses to use violence."

In the exciting weeks and months after Bloody Sunday Lenin had spent days in the library in Geneva studying military tactics (what did Ranadive, Jyoti Basu, Promode Dasgupta and Konar do in the exciting days of 1966? They came out of jail, threatened those comrades persisting in the general strike slogan with expulsion, and sat down to work out election strategy and tactics). He had sent from Switzerland endless streams of instructions with the most detailed practical directions: "Give every company short and simple bomb formulae. They must begin their military training immediately in direct connexion with practical fighting action. Some

will immediately kill a spy or blow up a police station, others will organise an attack on a bank, in order to confiscate funds for the uprising..." A few days later he wrote on weapons: "Rifles, revolvers, bombs, knives, brass knuckles, clubs, rags soaked in oil to start fire with, rope or rope ladders, shovels for building barricades, dynamite cartridges, barbed wire tacks against cavalry..." There were further precepts concerning passwords, the value of mobility and surprise, use of women, children, and old people, duties of unarmed contingents who might disarm a lone policeman or climb and shower troops with stones, acid, boiling water.

These were the features of partisan warfare in 1905-1906. Naxalites claim to be attempting precisely these things in the conditions obtaining after 1966 to unleash the initiative of the masses for a violent struggle in the days to come. "Partisan warfare", Lenin said, "is an inevitable form of struggle at a time when the mass movement has actually reached the point of insurrection and when fairly large intervals occur between the big engagements in the civil war." Were not the unprecedented violent food struggle of 1966, the general strikes that swept West Bengal and India, the Congress debacle in the 1967 elections, the minority left CPI victory in Kerala and West Bengal, sure signs that the mass movement had reached the point of armed struggle? Was not the recent armed confrontation between CPM led peasants at Alladpur and Congress hoodlums a sure index that we are in the midst of civil war? This phenomenon is not perceptible in the case of India as a whole, but it exists.

Disorganising

The argument that Naxalite activities disorganise the mass movement must be regarded critically. Every new form of struggle accompanied as it is by new dangers and new sacrifices inevitably disorganises organisations which are unprepared for this new form of struggle. Lenin

again said: "It is not partisan actions which disorganise the movement, but the weakness of a party which is incapable of taking such action under its control. Being incapable of understanding what historical conditions give rise to this struggle, we are incapable of neutralising its noxious aspects." He continued: "...What we have said about disorganisation also applies to demoralisation. It is not partisan warfare which demoralises but unorganised, irregular, non-party partisan acts. We shall not rid ourselves of least bit of this most unquestionable demoralisation by condemning and cursing partisan actions, for condemnation and curses are absolutely incapable of putting a stop to a phenomenon which has been engendered by profound economic and political causes. It may be objected that if we are incapable of putting a stop to an abnormal and demoralising phenomenon this is no reason why the party should adopt abnormal and demoralising methods of struggle. But such an objection would be a purely bourgeois-liberal and not a Marxist objection because a Marxist cannot regard civil war, or partisan warfare, which is one of its forms, as abnormal and demoralising in general. A Marxist stands by class struggle and not social peace... Any moral condemnation of civil war would be absolutely impermissible from the standpoint of Marxism." (Partisan warfare). In 1906 a large number of actions were taken by the vagabond elements of the population, the lumpen proletariat and anarchist groups but Lenin never condemned them from a high moral standpoint, on the contrary he went into the essence of the problem and noted its significance: they were the product of powerful economic and political causes. It was not in anybody's power to eliminate these causes or to eliminate the struggle.

Weakness and unpreparedness, both political and technical, are not lacking in the Naxalite movement. But when one sees a Marxist not displaying regret over this unpreparedness but

rather a proud smugness and self-exalted tendency to repeat phrases learnt by rote about anarchism and terrorism one is hurt by the degradation of the most revolutionary doctrine in the world. Even if what the young Naxalites are doing is rubbish, 'worthless', a Marxist would take them for symptoms—all sections of Indian society are disintegrating and that revolution might break out in the near future. When Plekhanov published his 'Our Differences' Engels wrote to express his approval of the contents but his dislike of the intolerant attacks on the revolutionary wing of the Narodniki, 'the only people who are doing anything in Russia at present'. He was pleased that the Russian Social Democrats accepted so much of his and Marx's doctrine, but he never ceased to disapprove of their relegating the courageous and revolutionary Narodniks to the lake of fire and brimstone, 'with other reactionaries'. Stalin urged the workers to be on guard against economic terror, then (1906-1907) very much prevalent in Georgia for it would recoil upon organised labour. But when the local 'liberal' newspaper—the mouthpiece of the oil magnates, began to preach morals he retorted with an angry philippic on the wretched condition of the oil proletariat which accounted for their despair and violence. He scorned a Menshevik suggestion that socialists should up to a point cooperate with authority in preventing economic terror. By its own means and in its own interests the proletariat should curb despair and sporadic violence, Stalin concluded, but it would never denounce the culprits to the authority. Here people who celebrate Engels' birthday, people who call themselves 'Stalinists' are doing the exact opposite. History knows no example of such meanness.

The bourgeoisie and their servants accuse Naxalites of resorting to terror. The bourgeoisie have forgotten their 1649, and 1793. Terror was just and legitimate when the bourgeoisie resorted to it for their own benefit against feudalism. Terror becomes monstrous and criminal when the

workers and poor peasants dare to use it against the bourgeoisie and the feudalists. Terror is just and legitimate when used for substituting one exploited minority for another exploiting minority. Terror becomes monstrous and criminal when it begins to be used for overthrowing every exploiting minority, to be used in the interests of the vast majority. Terror is just and legitimate against the Naxalites but is monstrous and criminal when the Naxalites return it.

Not that the Naxalites are not com-

mitting grave mistakes—the so-called cultural revolution, the reckless tactics in a number of cases are wasteful of human life and energy. These must be corrected through merciless criticism and self-criticism. All the difficult dilemmas of partisan warfare which Russia, China, Cuba, Algeria, Vietnam, the European resistance in the Second World War had to grapple are there. But people should understand that mistakes are being committed in course of revolutionary work.

Bihar

Naxalites In Mithila

N. K. SINGH

A room on an upper floor of a West Bengal university. It is the headquarters of North Bihar Naxalites. The watchman of the building is also an active member of the group. To enter you have to produce a plastic coupon with code words. The experienced, searching eyes of the watchman examine you. The plastic coupon then goes into that particular room. There it is examined, very minutely. It is O.K. The watchman again appears at the gate—this time to fetch the handbag brought by the arrival. The handbag is opened in the room. A smaller one, fully sealed, comes out of it. The seal, after being carefully examined, is broken open. The secret documents, dealing with Naxalite activities in various districts of North Bihar, are taken out and studied... The poor visitor is still waiting at the gate. When the documents are studied carefully and the identity of the visitor is fully established, the watchman again goes, this time to fetch him. The "boss" present in the room talks with the visitor at first in the secret Naxalite jargon which gradually turns into day-to-day language. After necessary negotiations, papers dealing with future plans and a large amount of money

are kept in the handbag and re-sealed.

The passage, reported by the Special Representative of a leading Patna daily, depicts very clearly the anxiety and fear which have gripped the ruling classes. The paper, giving out the true flavour of yellow journalism in a semi-colonial and semi-feudal set-up, is owned by the Darbhanga Raj, one of the richest feudal houses in Bihar.

Mithila is not in existence in G.O.I. records and has become a thing of the past. With a common language and culture, geographically speaking, in the north, running parallel with the Indo-Nepal boundary, it covers the area from Jaynagar of Darbhanga district to Yoghani of Purnea district. In the south it extends up to the northern bank of the Ganges. The region covers three districts and parts of two districts—Darbhanga, Purnea, Saharsa, North Monghyr and North Bhagalpur.

With about two dozen murders, one dozen attempted murders and hundreds of cases of bomb explosions to their "credit," the Naxalites have created a region of terror in Mithila. The threat they pose is of a serious nature in view of the 350 km open border with the kingdom of Nepal. Danger is also being apprehended from

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the 35 km long border between Purnea district and Naxalite-infested West Bengal. Then there is the East Pakistan border to worry about. As expected, the Nepal border is very much helpful to the border-area Naxalites. It is said that there is an understanding between the Nepali Maoists and Indian Naxalites and both help each other in providing shelter etc.

In Mithila, the Naxalites are particularly active in Darbhanga district, which is taken as one of the four most troubled spots in Bihar, the other three being, Mushahari in Muzaffarpur district, Surajgarha in south Monghyr and the tribal zone of Chotanagpur. Besides Darbhanga the Naxalites are active in Purnea and the Begusarai-Barauni industrial belt of North Monghyr. Recently they have stepped up their activities in Katihar, the headquarters of Purnea district.

Darbhanga is one of the most backward regions of this backward country. People are, by and large, among the poorest and economically the most depressed. Any outsider roaming in this poverty-stricken district may be astonished to find that there are hardly any good buildings in the rural areas of Darbhanga: 99.99 per cent of the people live in huts. On the agrarian side it is the same old story of land concentration in the hands of a handful while the bulk of the population are either share-croppers or landless labourers. Eviction of share-croppers is a very common thing. Agrarian clashes are nothing new for Darbhanga, where during every harvesting season many of the poor and landless peasants used to be killed by the hired goondas of landlords and big landowners.

But this monopoly of violence has been broken. In 1968, the main activities of the Naxalites were confined to a few crop-looting cases in the traditional communist style: planting red flags etc. on the land and organising mass movements against the zamindars etc.

The first victim of the Naxalite 'enemy-annihilation programme was a

landlord-cum-advocate of Darbhanga town. He was killed on October 2, 1969. Since then at least a dozen 'class enemies' including landlords, 'prominent' citizens and businessmen have been annihilated. About half a dozen persons were injured in various raids by Naxalite guerillas. Many cases of bomb explosions have also been reported. About 150 people, most of them doctors, businessmen, zamindars and even policemen have received threatening letters allegedly written by the Naxalites.

"Anti-Doctor"

A special feature of Naxalite activities in Darbhanga is their 'anti-doctor' movement. It is common knowledge that the doctors are among the worst exploiters in rural areas. With them, money comes first. Hence, the 'anti-doctor' movement.

Mr Sukhdeo Rai, the alleged master-mind behind all these actions, was arrested in April. A large crowd gathered to see the arrested leader, who had been absconding for about a year and for whose arrest the Government had announced a reward of Rs 1,000. His photographs were published in the Patna dailies. The arrest, which was a big shot in the arm for the police, was the result of a month-long special drive in the Jaynagar and Samastipur areas of Darbhanga district to round up the Naxalites.

Till early June about 125 persons had been rounded up in various parts of the district on charges of murder, loot, dacoity etc. Alluring rewards for the arrest of many Naxalites have been declared and photographs of the alleged absconders were (and are) published in Bihar newspapers. Extra military forces have been deployed in the disturbed areas of Darbhanga district, too.

It is said that the Darbhanga Naxalites have a special feature—inclusion of so-called 'criminal' groups in their ranks. Most of these groups were formed in the pre-Independence days to fight the British. Their activities were confined to dacoities of a political nature. After independence the groups were dissolved but

most of the members reportedly joined the Naxalites.

On the economic scene the situation in flood-torn Purnea district is more or less the same. Economic disparities, as expected, are very high. There are 'farmers' keeping helicopters and thousands of acres of land. Hence, modern farming of a mechanized nature in Purnea. As a result there is large-scale unemployment among the rural proletariat.

Therefore it was not surprising when a Syndicate leader 'informed' the press that the Naxals have their own government in some parts of Purnea district where the administration appears to have no grip. They have also set up a 'people's court' which tries and punishes the 'offenders'. Expressing his anxiety, the Syndicate leader said that if the Government was unable to deal with the Naxalites they should hand over the areas to the army for some time.

Why so much fuss when the Naxalites are less active in Purnea? About five murders (mainly of zamindars), the same number of attempted murders, one dozen cases of bomb explosions and a number of threatening letters to millowners, cinema proprietors, businessmen and political leaders are not a very alarming phenomenon in today's India. But the reason for the anxiety of the ruling classes can be traced to the important geographical situation of Purnea. In the north there is the open Nepal border, in the east West Bengal. The Indo-Pak border is also hardly 10 miles away. Naxalbari is very near. Thus situated on the tri-junction of Nepal, East Pakistan and West Bengal, Purnea occupies a very important place on the Indian map. If Purnea is lost, India will remain virtually cut off from its entire north-eastern frontier.

Naxalites are said to have a strong organisation among the railway and jute-mill workers of Katihar, the headquarters of Purnea district. They have also a good number of student sympathisers in Katihar and Kishan-ganj, a town bordering West Bengal.

In the past few months about one dozen cases of bomb throwing, on cinema halls, police stations and the divisional office of the NF Railway have been reported from Katihar, in which about half a dozen persons were injured.

The mounting Naxalite activities in Katihar compelled the 'order and law' authorities to call a high-level discussion.

The conference was attended by the Commissioner and DIG, Bhagalpur Range, besides district officers. Security measures were tightened in the area. Weapons were supplied to the police personnel and new methods of carrying rifles by policemen were introduced in Katihar town and its neighbouring areas. All police officers up to the rank of assistant sub-inspector were provided with spears. Traffic constables were withdrawn from several places and deployed for patrolling duties. Armed police were posted at all sensitive points in the town.

An intensive "anti-goonda drive" was launched in the town resulting in a good number of arrests. But to what purpose? A largely attended public meeting jointly sponsored by the Congress (R), PSP, SSP, CPI and CPI(M) protested against what it described as "indiscriminate arrests of railway employees, mill workers and students by the police in the name of curbing the Naxalites." It was further alleged that the arrested men were beaten up and tortured in the police lock-up.

Purnea is very near to Naxalbari and the "spring thunder" was heard soon enough here. Often the law and order machinery has to be geared up and the three borders (East Bengal, Nepal and West Bengal) are sealed following reports of the CPI(ML) leader Charu Mazumdar intruding into Purnea—sometimes to escape CRP bullets in West Bengal and sometimes to "train guerilla cadres" in Bihar. It seems the Naxal leader has taken a fancy to this district (at least in the eyes of the administration).

But the actual influence of Charu

Mazumdar and Naxalbari was seen in November last when Naxalite guerrillas attacked the Magurjan police picket on the trijunction of Purnea, West Dinajpur and Darjeeling and snatched away six rifles and some ammunition. This raid occupies a very important place in the CPI(ML) strategy. Charu Mazumdar described it as being of much significance, for the successful attack was carried out even after all the intellectual and old leaders of that area had been arrested. According to the Naxal leader this incident gave the peasant armed struggle the character of a liberation war.

There are many Naxalite groups active in Bihar. One of these, led by Mr B. K. Azad, was active in and around the Khagaria sub-division of North Monghyr. This group is now virtually defunct. Even when it was in existence, its activities were confined to crop-looting.

The CPI(ML) is active in the important Begusarai-Barauni industrial belt. Some of the important industries located in the area include the Barauni Thermal Power Station, the Barauni Oil Refinery, a factory of the Fertiliser Corporation of India, and the Garahara Yard (the biggest in Asia).

About six landlords and businessmen have been killed and many injured by the Naxalites. Besides, numerous cases of bomb-throwing on libraries, schools, colleges, railway stations and factories have been reported.

Perhaps this was why the District Magistrate of Monghyr declared that almost entire North Monghyr is in the grip of Naxalites and the question of law and order is posing a serious problem for the administration.

From Saharsa only two or three cases of bomb explosions of a minor nature have been reported. Though no such incident has yet been reported from North Bhagalpur, the Naxalites are said to have a good influence among the rural proletariat of the area.

Who says that peaceful revolution

is not possible? Harinandan Thakur, an old Congress worker of Darbhanga, died the other day of a heart attack. He had received a threatening letter from the Naxalites a few hours ago. No bloodshed and yet a revolution accomplished.

(This article was written in early July.)

CPI Gimmicks

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

THE Dangeites have always been good at gimmicks. And they did it again—in Bihar. However, the recent drama enacted in the state capital was not taken seriously by anybody, including the CPI members themselves.

The first act of the drama, described as "a competition in phoney radicalism" included letters exchanged between the Bihar unit of the CPI and the Congress (R) regarding the "controversy" over two "radical" bills on the reduction of land ceiling and fixing a ceiling on urban property. The Congressites were a party to it in the first act as much as their communist comrade-in-arms. But the second act was written, directed, acted and produced by the party bosses at Ajoy Bhavan, the Bihar headquarters of the Dangeites: the party decided to withdraw its support from the Congress (R)-led progressive Vidhayak Dal Ministry following a Cabinet decision to scrap the Dutta Inquiry Commission. But alas! nobody took the CPI gimmicks seriously. Soon enough Mr N. K. Krishnan of the CPI Central Committee announced that the party was yet to take a final decision about its stand in Bihar. Though the final act of the drama is yet to come, it can well be forecast that the CPI would be back in the fold of the Congress (R)-led alliance.

Why these gimmicks? The 1972 elections are not too far off. However, it is not just that.

In their "war of statements" Mr Jagannath Sarkar, the Secretary of the Bihar CPI, and the State Congress (R)

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boss, Mr Ram Lakhan Singh Yadav, were emphatic about their 'radical' postures and their readiness to implement measures of radical reform without delay. Mr Yadav sought to convey the impression that the measures would by this time have been implemented but for the fact that the CPI leader. Mr Sunil Mukherjee's suggestion for referring the matter to a select committee of the legislature. It has been pointed out that the CPI reluctance about the bills—particularly that regarding the imposition of a ceiling on urban property—is caused by pressure from its rich urban members. In Patna alone, for instance, a very staunch supporter of the CPI owns a number of houses worth over crores of rupees.

But the feudals and urban bourgeoisie supposed to be affected by the ceiling laws had no reason to lose their sleep. First of all, the bills in their present form are not likely to stand the test in a court of law unless the Constitution is amended. And perhaps that is why even the diehard rightists accepted the idea of adopting the two measures before the Assembly was adjourned.

The second fact from which the kulaks could draw more satisfaction is that the so-called laws are likely to remain unimplemented like the old ones. Bihar has known a law on land ceiling for years now. It has remained unimplemented. How, then, is the new law—which is to be more 'radical' in nature—going to be enforced?

Again, it has not been explained satisfactorily by the official champions of 'radicalism' why a measure that could have been enacted and implemented much more easily—the imposition of a progressive rate of agricultural taxation—does not figure much in their talks. Similarly

the imposition of a land revenue with a progressively higher rate of incidence for larger holdings would have achieved part of the objective, i.e. reduction of inequality. Since, however these measures *would be* effective there is no discussion on them in the public competition for 'radicalism'. The House was ultimately adjourned sine die and the two bills could not be passed. The CPI accused the Congress(R) leaders of surrendering to the vested interests in their party; the Indicate—while making excuses on the ground of a strike by the Assembly staff—accused the communists of trying to dictate terms.

While all this controversy was going on, the CPI announced withdrawal of its support from the PVD Ministry under quite a different pretext—scrapping of the Dutta Commission of Enquiry into charges of misuse of Bharat Sevak Samaj funds by the Union Minister of Foreign Trade, Mr L. N. Mishra and a former Bihar Minister. Had the CPI been genuinely agitated over the Commission's fate, how could the party secretary say, as he did, that "the CPI is even now prepared to support all progressive measures of the Government while firmly resisting all its anti-people measures?" Even the CPI leaders themselves admitted later on that withdrawal of the inquiry—a "politically motivated" step of the erstwhile SVD Ministry—was not such a powerful irritant to the party as to justify its breakaway from the PVD.

Then what was the real cause behind the CPI drama?

When the Shastri Government agreed to promulgate ordinances for the implementation of the ceiling measures, the CPI bosses were in a quandary. For, they had to keep up their militant postures for the benefit of their restive cadres. So they made a pretext of the Dutta Commission.

Even after announcing withdrawal of support, the CPI has not yet been able to make up its mind about its political stand. One of the reasons is undoubtedly the fear about the

fate of the CPI-led ministry in Kerala which is wholly dependent on the goodwill of the ruling Congress. The Congress(R) may not be magnanimous enough to bolster up a CPI ministry in one State after being snubbed by it in another. Unless the Bihar Dangeites are greater radicals than they have appeared to be so long, one will not be surprised to find them back in the fold of the Congress(R) alliance—for which Mr Sarkar's statement provides an escape clause.

However, this small drama revealed many things. One of them was that the present PVD Ministry does not live on the mercy of the CPI. The Congress(R)-led Ministry has many supporters in the 'reserve' quota, who may rush in to help if needed. These 'reserve' quota members are better known as habitual defectors. Many of the mini-parties including the arch-reactionary Janta Party, the Sumbrui faction of the Jharkhand Party, the Jharkhand, Shoshit Dal etc. who were in the erstwhile SVD Ministry offered their support to the Chief Minister, Mr Bhola Paswan Shastri, when the life of the Bihar Assembly was supposedly threatened by the CPI gimmicks. The plea these defectors use now-a-days for supporting this or that Government is their "opposition to President's rule."

Meanwhile, there are rumours of a mid-term poll along with the Vidhan Sabha election in other States next year for installing a "stable" government. In view of the dog-fight within the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee, the Paswan-headed ninth Government in Bihar since the last general election is not regarded as "stable" by New Delhi.

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Book Review

ROMANCE AND REALISM

By Christopher Caudwell

Ed. by Samuel Hynes. Princeton University Press. Price \$6.

CHRISTOPHER Caudwell was the pseudonym of Christopher Sprigg, who was killed in action on February 12, 1937 in the defence of Madrid in the Spanish Civil War at the age of 29. In December 1936 he drove an ambulance to Spain and there joined the International Brigade. A fellow-brigadier thus reported his death: John's sector was holding a position on a hill crest. They got it rather badly from all ways: first artillery, then aeroplanes, then three enemy machine-guns. The Moors then attacked the hill in large numbers. As there were only a few of our fellows left, including John, who had been doing great work with his machine-gun, the company commander gave the order to retire. . . . I enquired of all our chaps for him for the next seven days. . . . but no one had seen him again. It was obvious he never managed to get off the hill.

It should be remembered that Caudwell began to read Marxist classics only in 1934. Before that he wrote crime fiction and on flying and apparently was nonpolitical, with no connection with university or so-called left intellectuals of the 1930s. It was in 1934 that the change began. Towards the end of 1935 he joined the Poplar Branch of the Communist Party and worked there until December 1936. He entered the party not as an intellectual but as a rank and file member committed to ordinary party work—bill posting, slogan chalking and speaking at street corners. So far as evidence goes he never mixed with the party intelligentsia or fashionable fellow travellers. These facts of his life should be emphasized specially in the context of the developments in the Third World. The intellectual with a machine-gun which Caudwell was before his death is a significant image. To our thinking poetry, literature, art

are still incompatible with revolutionary activities. Those who are sincere in party activities (that is, who do the work which Caudwell did) or revolutionary deed often take a naive, crude, almost foolish attitude towards art and literature. They do not think of these as social activity, they do not value these spheres of activity as Caudwell did. To Caudwell who died for a revolutionary cause, "art is one of the conditions of man's realisation of himself and in its turn is one of the realities of man." He never asked the foolish question whether Shakespeare or Milton waged liberation war or not. (Lenin asked the boys to read Pushkin and in his prison days in Siberia he used to read Heine; none of them was revolutionary in the ordinary sense.) So to those who lived a revolutionary life art and literature were an invaluable part of life. Mao wrote poems. Ho Chi Minh too.

Caudwell's acceptance of Marxism was not a result of fashionable left orientation as it was in the case of Auden, Spender and others. He said, "seriously I think my weakness has been the lack of an integrated weltanschauung. I mean one that includes my emotional, scientific and artistic needs". This weltanschauung Caudwell got in Marxism. That means his transformation was conscious. He reminds us of Lenin: Communism becomes an empty phrase, a mere facade and the communist a mere bluffer, if he has not worked over in his consciousness the whole inheritance of human knowledge.

On the other hand, Caudwell's tragic but great death (as also of others like Ralph Fox)—the image of an intellectual with a machine-gun—proves that a gifted thinker may be an active communist, a rank and file member of the party. Indeed he shows the difference between intellectual workers and intellectuals: intellectuals are like professional revolutionaries who always believe in significant acceptance and rejection. Caudwell wanted to oppose significantly and heroically. He knew he

might die in Spain and like professional revolutionaries he left behind an example and his ideas, in his case, in the form of works in publishable drafts, with instructions for dealing with them if he was killed. In short, he could unite theory and practice. Caudwell accepted Marxism as the philosophy of praxis like Antonio Gramsci. In his life there was no dichotomy between thought and action and as a literary critic he knew there were no simple opposites: romanticist-realist, or subjective-objective.

Dying Culture

Hynes' introduction to *Romance and Realism* is well written. He sees Caudwell's works as historical documents which belong to the 1930s. The end of prosperity, the shadow of war, the loss of belief—these were in the minds of the young men in England as they entered the thirties. To Caudwell it was a dying culture. He wanted to get rid of it and sought

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a new universalised system, an integrated weltanschauung. To Hynes Caudwell's conversion to Marxism was like a conversion to a new religion. But Caudwell's acceptance of Marxism was through a conscious, intellectual as well as emotional process. It was not a conversion to a new religious faith.

The first extended commentary on Caudwell was a series of critiques by British Marxists which appeared in the *Modern Quarterly* in 1951. Caudwell faced serious attacks: his theory showed the influence of bourgeois psychology and biology, he was guilty of false antithesis; he was constructing a theory of pure poetry, a bourgeois attempt; his idea of poetry's dream work was a romantic idea. According to Maurice Cornforth—it is certainly not Marxism. To J. D. Bernal Caudwell was mechanistic: he lacked historical sense. Even Georg Lukacs, whose references to Caudwell were often admiring and respectful, noted the magical theory of inspiration, the idea of lyrics as a withdrawal from the world, the subjective theory of rhythm in his works with criticism. No doubt some of Caudwell's arguments seem mechanistic, though it has to be remembered that he had to write in a hurry. But the main point is Caudwell's ef-

fort at synthesis. To him poetry and literature were not the simple mechanical reflection of society. It is a social activity, but there is a dialectical relation between the subject and object. As a Marxist Caudwell could not deny the fact that poetry is primarily subjective experience, the inner world of feelings: art adapts the psyche to the environment. Caudwell rejecting the bourgeois dichotomy of man and society, subject and object, categorically says, "the needed combination will then express socially his personal reaction to reality". These three words amply show that Caudwell does not follow any mechanistic line. His interest in psychoanalysis is relevant in this sense—the impact of psychological analysis on literary study is beyond dispute. The sociologically oriented psychology like the works of Erik Erikson or Erich Fromm opens new vistas of literary criticism. Of course it is a fact that Caudwell was led to some irrational things but in the 1930s he had no alternative but to take help from Freudian psychoanalysis. In this sense his limitation was the limitation of the period. But his bold attempt to integrate the developments in the different branches of knowledge with Marxism must be appreciated; at the same time his rejection of vulgar Marxism in the realm of literary study is still worth studying.

Romance and Realism is an elaboration of the arguments already put forward in chapters V and VI of *Illusion and Reality*. Caudwell discusses English literature since Shakespeare always in terms of relationship—literature and history, literature and science, literature and economics. In a sense Hynes is right when he says that it is a sociology of literature. But unlike most others Caudwell considers not only the content of literature but also the form. Indeed the development of the relationship between literary form and social change is the most important aspect of this essay. For example, we may quote his comment on Milton: The Puritans had fought and died for complete liberty and freedom of conscience—for petty

bourgeois freedom from monopoly. This was expressed most clearly in Milton. His verse was in form more revolutionary than Shakespeare's. Shakespeare's verse developed by a quick but continuous tradition, from Marlowe's verse. Milton moves from *Lycidas* to *Paradise Lost* in one leap. It is Latinist, sonorous, full of studied inversions. This does not seem to us revolutionary; but it must not be forgotten that he was revolting against the easy fluent glitter of the court, the sweetness and corrupt simplicity of the courtiers still living in the world of Elizabethan absolutism. Milton's theme is even more revolutionary than his style. *Paradise Lost* matured in his mind first as a simple petty bourgeois fall, the natural man of Rousseau, born free but everywhere in chains. One does not have to be a Marxist to see in Milton's god the foolish arbitrary Stuart and in Satan the noble and reasonable bourgeois revolutionary. Milton drew in Satan the type of the unsuccessful revolutionary, the ultimate tragedy of the petty bourgeois coup d'état. The experience of autocratic rule once more and betrayal of the big bourgeoisie obsessed Milton. In *Paradise Regained* he is still revolutionary, but without the hope of solution; it is in spiritual and defeatist terms that he now visualizes his revolutionary victory. The term, petty bourgeois, may be objectionable to some, but the main arguments of Caudwell are full of historical as well as literary sense. Recent historical research also confirms it. Samuel Hynes sees imbalance in the treatment of Caudwell as Caudwell gives much attention to Kipling while George Eliot is dismissed in a paragraph. But Caudwell's main theme is the study of bourgeois literature—throughout the history of bourgeois literature there is an emergence of opposites. He traces the history from the springtime of bourgeois revolution, that is from Shakespeare. In this history naturally George Eliot is not very significant as Dickens in modern times or James Joyce was, Kipling was the product

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of the colonial era of British capitalism—he represented the duped servants of the big bourgeoisie. (T. S. Eliot's attention to Kipling is also to be remembered). In this sense Kipling is much more important to Caudwell than George Eliot though we know from F. R. Leavis and others that George Eliot is among the great English novelists.

Romance and Realism is full of

brilliant comments which need elaboration. Even to academic literary critics the comments on Hardy, Galsworthy or the Auden group are illuminating. But personally I miss here the greater potentialities of the latter part of *Illusion and Reality* where Caudwell made a heroic effort to build up a Marxist aesthetics, and also the basis for a Marxist linguistic study.

Arjun Bandyopadhyay

Recorded But Not Heard

H. CHAKRABORTY

THE system of royalty was not unknown in Europe but Tagore was the first Indian to compel a British firm to pay for their unlawful ignorance with regard to the recording and publication of his songs. Happily for both the dispute was not taken to court but amicably settled, the Indian dictating the terms to the company.

More important in this connection is 5th October, 1926 when the company approached the poet with a request to record his voice under its crest for commercial circulation. Under an agreement Tagore consented to sing about a dozen songs and to do half a dozen recitations. Some of these were never published for reasons best known to the Company. For example, the songs *ama'a dhavala pala legeche* (BD 1234), *aji jhader raie* (BD 1225), *kakhan vasanta gela* (BD 1236), *ganera surera asana khani* (BD 1239), *tumi jeona akhani* (BD 1233) *nai be ele samai yadi* (BD 1238), *bhala bese sakhi* (BD 1242) were either not published at all or withdrawn from circulation. To many today these songs in Tagore's own voice will be simple news. Tagore's records under all the crests have been good (if not best) sellers yet why these songs were neglected was never made known to the public. In after years the poet's position was

not such that he could nag like an ordinary record-singer over his own recordings. So he was obliged to keep silent and depend upon the good sense of the company. It is still a mystery why the company refrained from exploiting the commercial potential of the songs just mentioned.

Tagore did not keep good health in 1926. His was not a trained voice as Mr R. P. Goswami's. Naturally at the age of 65 he was a little out of breath and, consequently, out of tonality. But the HMV records give a clear indication of his musical intention and sensibility. His tenor voice was not as rich as in his youth but so far as the songs are concerned it was full of depth and feeling. His singing is far from mechanical repetition of the notations. The most notable feature of these songs (as also of the other labels) is that at the time of singing Tagore was guided by the traditions of European and Bengali songs, particularly of Kirtan and Baul; he did not take any instrumental accompaniment. In fact most of the songs he sang without any accompaniment whatsoever. Secondly, he sang the songs according to their metrical divisions although no percussion was used. Avoiding the percussion confirms the practice of European vocal art because, as aser-

ted by the late Krishnadhan Banerjee, European music does not depend on elaborate drumming as Indian music does, since the former is full of rhythm while, for keeping timed correctly, the latter, which is less rhythmical, is entirely dependent on elaborate drumming. It may give rise to a storm of protests, still fact is fact. And it is obvious that Tagore was conscious of it. Otherwise his aversion to the great Indian drum—the *tabala*—cannot be accounted for. The glaring evidence for this contention is his singing of *amare ke nibi bhai* which was not sung in a free verse style yet no percussion was taken.

That singing is not a mechanical recitation of written notation, rather an expression of feelings and emotions through the vocal pitches is better exemplified by *tabu mane rekho* (H1). Tagore was 71 when this record was taken but the gracefulness of feeling and the dramatic susceptibility of the kirtan-style of verbal intonation are highlighted in it. This is how the artist transcends the limitations even of a lyrical song.

Most of the discs do not record any instrumental accompaniment, not even a drone—in the best traditions of Bengali kirtan and Western vocals. It is on record that before beginning his song Tagore required only to hear his correct pitch on any instrument, Indian or Western. It was the practice in the West in Tagore's time to sing to the accompaniment of either the piano or the violin or the organ; the guitar was not so much in vogue in those days. This explains his preference for the plain-song practice without accompaniment of any sort.

The Western ideal of vocal song is determined by the concept of the predominance of the voice. It is related to the pitches. But Indian music is not so much concerned with pitch as with the microtonal inflexions of the seven notes of the *gamut*. Therefore the Western vocalists tune their voice to a definite pitch and do not need any droning instrument while the Indian vocalists tune their

(at least used to till the advent of the harmonium or the tuning fork) droning instrument, the *tambura*, to any frequency number of the *gamut* that suits their vocal range for the time being. The Indian accompanying instrument follows the song while the Western one walks side by side or leads but does not follow it.

Function of Music

These differences in approach of the two systems cogitated the mind of Tagore ever since his early youth and culminated in an abiding musical preference till his last days. Music was to him, as to any other Western composer of his time, not a pastime for exhibiting virtuosity of pure music but a powerful medium of artistic expression; it was a means to give shape to his own concept of contemporary human reality. In this respect Tagore music is basically and essentially different from any other school or style of Indian music—classic, romantic or folk, and akin to Western lyrical music. Take for example, the song *sarva kharva tare dahe* (the flames of wrath burn all pettiness) composed on his receiving the news of the death of Jatin Das after a 63-day fast in the Lahore Jail. The poet was busy rehearsing his newly composed dance-drama, *Tapati*, when the cruel telegram came. The class was dissolved and the stunned poet retired to his seclusion in the Uttarayan. The night gave release to his emotional conflict and next day after the catharsis, the tranquil poet asked the students to pick up the new song. The heroic battle and self-sacrifice of the young man in the Lahore jail had moved the poet so much that even in the midst of India's helplessness before the almighty imperial power he sent out a clarion call to his countrymen saying that those who were perpetrating petty cruelty were doomed to certain failure; that life would triumph over death in the long run. This is (as ever has been) the function of abiding music—not to give sensuous pleasure but to enthuse and inspire the

community towards a better and more perfect striving for life. Our love of nature and love of eroticism are all contributory to this general love of life and the continuous struggle to achieve it.

Naturally Tagore's ideal of music was basically different from those of Mr Radhikaprosad Goswami and Manadasundari Dasi. Tagore was concerned with the problems of contemporary Indian life while the latter had nothing of the sort—they were content with the decadent musical ideas of the Mughal Court; the happenings of contemporary India scarcely worried them. True they took kindly to singing the pseudo-classical compositions of Tagore (without ever realising their real purpose) but that was long after the *sahib-log* of Europe had recognised the worth of the unacademic composer.

Although Tagore's song-records are not fine specimens of trained singing, yet their value regarding his intentions as to how he would like to have his songs sung is clear. He has given enough indication about the mode of singing his songs, the kind and number of accompanying instruments to be taken and the manner in which the rhythms of the songs are to be maintained. Of course in his days Tagore would hardly get a *tabaliya* who would keep the time without reducing the tempo and time to a pseudo-classical *jujutsu*. This is why he did not take a percussionist in his records because a sedate *tabaliya* is still a rarity. But this does not mean that percussion is banned in Tagore music; where there is regular division of rhythm, time and tempo there is scope for drumming provided it is not of the classical nature and provided it synchronises with the spirit of the lyric.

It would not perhaps be too much to expect that the songs that were recorded but not published for various reasons would now be released to the public for its judgment and guidance.

Clippings

How Green Is The Valley ?

...Green Revolutions are nothing new. The Incas selected the best corn seeds from each harvest to plant in the next growing season; as a result corn evolved from a grass with a tiny kernel to what we have today. We have records of a Sung emperor of 11th century China who introduced a rapid-maturing rice from Indochina which could be harvested 100, instead of 180 days after sowing. Later rices were developed which matured within 30 or 40 days.

...The seeds which are the basis of today's Green Revolution were developed by research funded by the Ford and Rockefeller foundations. While this research was motivated by humanitarian concern, it is a fact that among the beneficiaries of the Green Revolution are American oil and petrochemical companies, whose fertilizers and pesticides are needed in heavy doses to make the new seeds grow, and, to a lesser extent, the Ford Motor Company, whose tractor exports have been boosted.

US corporations are not the only beneficiaries, or even the major ones. A new set of farmers is emerging in the developing nations to reap the harvest of the Green Revolution: retired military officers and civil servants, doctors, lawyers and businessmen, for many of whom farming is a tax dodge (another sign of the Americanization of farming). Landlords get their share too. Land values are soaring three-, four- and even five-fold in the Punjab and the Purnea district of Bihar, where the new agriculture is in vogue. Rents too are on the rise. In India, rent on the land is climbing from the more usual (though illegal) 50 percent of the harvest to as high as 70 percent. Traditional rights of the peasants are being weakened; it becomes more profitable for the landlord to evict his tenants and employ wage laborers

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with new machinery in their place. One study by the Pakistan Planning Commission shows that mechanization of agriculture reduces the need for labor by 50 percent. The commission estimates that by 1985 four million farmers in West Pakistan will be evicted.

Peasants evicted from their land have no place to go, no jobs waiting for them. The International Labor Organisation estimates that even with industrial growth rates of seven to nine percent a year (a rate which almost no developing nations have achieved), capital requirements in industry are so heavy and the number of new workers per dollar of capital so small, that the industrial sector will have a hard time absorbing the increase in workers created by population growth alone, not to mention displacement from the farms. Robert McNamara told the Columbia University Conference on International Economic Development in February 1970 that "just as the censuses of the 1950s helped alert us to the scale of the population explosion, the urban and employment crises of the sixties are alerting us to the scale of social displacement and general uprootedness of population which are exploding not only in numbers but in movement as well."

The Green Revolution has other effects on the poor. The governments of many developing nations have artificially supported food prices to encourage farmers to produce more. These price supports cost money: either the government must buy food at a subsidized price and sell it for a loss, or it must require food to be sold at a high price to consumers. In countries like India and Pakistan, where agriculture accounts for about half of the gross national product, great amounts of money are used to underwrite farm subsidies. In Pakistan, for instance, \$100 million a year goes to support the price of wheat. The high cost of these subsidies—most of which go to the largest landowners—leaves less money for social services such as housing, health and education, the kind of expendi-

tures that help uprooted peasants coming to the cities looking for work.

Subsidies are needed to support the Green Revolution because cultivation of the new varieties is more expensive per acre than the crop they replaced.

...The higher cost of growing the new varieties has led to an enormous expansion of the need for farm credit. But farm credit, at a reasonable rate of interest, is just what the poor peasants can't get. Besides the social problems already mentioned, the Green Revolution will tend to increase regional disparities, since the new seeds work their miracles only where the land is well irrigated. In East Pakistan, where there is little water control, the new rices are too short to be grown during the monsoon floods; as a result the Green Revolution has passed East Pakistan by, while it has taken root in West Pakistan. Robert Critchfield, writing in *The New Republic* in 1969, reported hearing "serious talk from both Indians and Pakistanis at the FAO of the possibility that Pakistan's growing economic disparity might lead to a break-off of East Pakistan and its formation with India's West Bengal of a new independent, leftist, and possibly ungovernable republic."

Ironically, the country which might best be able to utilize the technology of the Green Revolution is Communist China. China has a great deal of irrigated land; its economy can adapt to the Green Revolution without social displacement because it isn't based upon prices, subsidies and rents. Nor is unemployment a serious problem in China. But for the rest of the world, the Green Revolution is limited to an area the size of a postage stamp on a globe, to use the expression of a Ford Foundation official; there just isn't very much irrigated land. And in some places the amount of irrigated land is decreasing. In West Pakistan, it is estimated that an acre of land is lost every five minutes to water-logging and salinity.

Of course, new lands can be irriga-

ted through construction of dams and aqueducts, but such projects are expensive and few developing nations can afford them without massive outside aid. So the postage stamp is not likely to get very much bigger in the near future, and perhaps it is just as well. Peasants, though poor, are better off on the land than jammed into jobless, unsanitary cities. Old crop varieties, which have been naturally selected over the years for resistance to pests and disease, are less likely to succumb to blight. The new miracle seeds, on the other hand, are like a trigger for widespread crop disaster. Vast contiguous areas are planted with only one type of seed, often with no assurance that it is blight resistant. (The new wheat grown in Asia, for example, was selected to be resistant to rusts prevalent in Mexico, where the wheat was developed; no one knows whether it is resistant to rusts on the other side of the globe.) Ireland's bitter experience, as well as the present corn blight in the United States, point out the danger of planting experimental breeds in vast quantity.

People are starving, and something must be done but is the Green Revolution the answer? India loses large percentages of its harvest because of inadequate storage facilities; in 1968, the Indian Food and Agricultural Ministry estimated that ten percent of the harvest was eaten by rats. This can be remedied without driving people off the land. Yields in many parts of Asia are low because much of the land is infertile. Fertility can be restored and yields increased, but this can be done in such a way that the natural diversity of crops is preserved, and the status of poor farmers is improved. For this purpose land reform is more important than the breeding of seeds that require large-scale, mechanised cultivation. Norman Borlaug says, "Plant breeding is like poker. If you've got a bad hand, throw it in. If you've got a good one, don't be afraid to bet." Dr Borlaug and his friends are betting a lot of other people's lives, and I'm not

quite sure they know what is in the cards. (Michael Perelman in *The New Republic, USA*. Mr Perelman teaches economics at Chicago State College in California.)

Who Is Who ?

Recently the police searched a printing press in central Calcutta and came to know that *Deshabrati*, the clandestine organ of the Naxalites, was being printed there. The police arrested a man on the spot while the paper was being printed. The proprietor of the press is the brother of a Congress leader. Mr Nahar, as the former Deputy Chief Minister, did not allow the Special Branch to look into the matter. Will Mr Nahar let us know on whose instructions the former worker of the press was released on bail a week ago? Unfortunately, however, Bijay Babu is no longer the Deputy Chief Minister. So, the Special Branch of Calcutta Police has again detained the worker. (*Deshabrati*, Bengali weekly of the CPM, July 30. Italics added.)

Not many days ago, the police seized a few thousand copies of "Deshabrati", the official organ of the CPI (ML) from a printing press in central Calcutta and arrested the proprietor on suspicion. But the news was given little publicity in the newspapers on the following day. The proprietor happened to be a local Congress worker... The case is being pursued in a very perfunctory manner on the instructions of Sri Bijoy Singh Nahar. The proprietor is now out on bail. (*People's Democracy*, English weekly of the CPM August 1. Italics added.)

NOTICE

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Business Manager
Frontier

Letters

Politics Of Violence

The all-party conference convened to end the politics of violence in West Bengal started with a childish assumption that violence could be ended at the sweet will of some self-styled leaders. It is incredible to see the transformation of these leaders who until the other day were screaming for blood. They are the same leaders who, in their haste to grab power, methodically preached violence to the rank and file and offered them protection against jail and punishment. The violence preached by them has very logically backlashed and now like a bunch of fearful children they seek the security and warmth of Writers Building. Let them do a bit of heart-searching and ask themselves what control they have on the rank and file of their own parties. The leaders, as far as we can see, have merely an alliance of convenience with party members and I hope they are not infantile enough to imagine that the contract goes any deeper. A generation initiated in violence is very unlikely to change its creed overnight to become docile and peace loving. Moreover, what about people who are direct victims of the politics of violence and have become sworn enemies of these parties?

The same applies to the Government. There has been a complete alienation of the police from the main stream of life in this State. The police are a symbol of hate and fear with any peace-loving citizen. The police, on their part, have spared no pains to subject the innocent public to utter humiliation if not downright insult whenever the chance permitted. They, along with the Central Reserve Force, have created nothing short of a reign of terror in the State. There have been ruthless attacks in jails and homes, killing and maiming of scores of young boys. There has been wanton killing

on the streets where more often than not the victims were innocent. Assuming the Government is keen on ending violence, who is there to enforce a code of conduct on this trigger-happy lot? Mr Siddhartha Sankar Ray should not be so naive as to imagine that the well-intentioned top brass at Lalbazar has any effective control over the police at the operational level.

I quite realise that I have been negative so far. Here are some suggestions which may lend some validity to the efforts. Let there be a time-limit fixed for 'operation peace'. The leaders should stop behaving like newly wedded brides and come out with open statements, condemning violence, to be followed by a threat of dire disciplinary action against any party member guilty of violation. If within the time set blood still keeps trickling in, the leaders should voluntarily make way for a new leadership which may be more competent to cope with the situation. But will our power-loving leaders dare to take such drastic measures?

The Government should be as drastic with the police. The police should be warned that human life is not to be toyed with and any excess or indulgence without provocation will have a direct consequence. There must be effective control on the State police and the CRP at every level. As a gesture to regain public confidence the Government may start by initiating enquiries into the recent jail killings and making the findings public. Another measure may improve the situation in no small degree. The entire State police should work by rotation. They should not be allowed to stay at a place long enough to establish dubious connections with local hoodlums and party gangs. They should be kept on the move.

These are just a few hastily drawn suggestions which may be improved upon but there is no getting away from the fact that no amount of usual squabbles and mud slinging will help to ease the situation. There is no remote control method that could be applied from the rotunda to

end the politics of violence in West Bengal.

ANISH GHATAK
Berhampore (West Bengal)

'Dialogue'

Mr Pant most surprisingly hinted in Parliament a few days ago at a dialogue with the Naxalites. Mr Promode Das Gupta, just to confirm the CPM allegation that the Naxalites are agents of the Government, quoted Mr Pant's statement. This childish way of confirmation is nothing but foolery. We the common people still remember Nanda's white paper in 1962, though Mr Das Gupta has perhaps forgotten it; he should forget it as he has forgotten the history of class struggle. He and his party still go on harping on the same tune like a long-playing record and accuse the Naxalites as agents of the Government. In this regard I should like to point out a few things:

If the Naxalites are agents of the Government why are they being killed by the police so mercilessly? Mr Das Gupta may say that his party cadres too have been killed. But most of them have been killed not by the police but in inter-party clashes.

No semi-fascist government spares its real opponents. It always liquidates or proscribes them. Many CPI (ML) leaders and workers in Andhra, Punjab, Bihar and West Bengal have been killed by the police. Others are facing brutal torture inside jails or are wanted by the police on charges of conspiracy against the State. But why, under the same conditions, are the CPI(M) leaders still enjoying police protection and occasional pleasant comforts with the ruling bosses instead of inviting the wrath of the Government?

Think of the jail killings. A fight for tooth-paste and good soap inside jails would ingratiate the fighters with the ruling authorities but true liberation fighters would never be spared by the ruling hounds.

MONOTOSH DAS GUPTA
Barrackpore

Birbhum

These days a common man is the most mythical being because no man can claim to be without a class-outlook. But 'A Common Man' of Santiniketan in his letter (July 24) made a futile exercise in commonness just to steal credibility for his really fictitious accounts of the CPI(ML) activities in Birbhum. Of course, his predecessor was A.B. (July 10).

Fortunately for all of us, facts are different from and in fact stranger than fiction. If one cannot see facts eye to eye, fiction is his refuge. In case of A.B., fiction ended in melodrama. He started with a picture of horror around the Suri morgue and then got busy calculating the benami land-holdings of the annihilated jotedars (84 in number). This was followed up by accounts of murders, brutal and inexplicable, rifle-snatching, collusion between Congress and Naxals, Naxalite dacoities, levy from the rich, etc. At the end of the panorama, A.B. revealed that 'Naxals are teenagers, many in fact in their early teens'

'A common man' of Santiniketan had many uncommon features. He knew the area of clandestine ML activities, the class composition of ML cadres. He took the trouble of going to 'some of the peasants near Bolpur' to secure the information that people were afraid of both police and Naxals. This is very uncommon because the same piece of information was supplied by the journalists of *Jugantar*, *Amrita Bazar*, *Ananda Bazar* and *The Statesman* almost a month and a half back. The most uncommon thing is that 'A Common Man' sought to incite inter-party tension by creating a misunderstanding that the CPI (ML) cadres might have murdered the RYSF leader, Mr Arun Roy Chowdhury, and another RYSF cadre. At the height of commonness, he forgot that the CPI(ML) is never reluctant to announce its annihilation achievements. Not only that, Mr Common Man did know that on April 16 RYSF boys were brutally

assaulted by some anti-communist, anti-Naxal gangsters, one of whom the CPI(ML) subsequently sought to kill in the Sriniketan area. Those gangsters—once the storm-troopers of the Visva-Bharati authority—sought to kill the RYSF leading cadres including Mr Roy Chowdhury. Even the few supporters of the RYSF in Ruppur village believe that the murder might have been the result of police-jotedar connivance. The 'Common Man' who was in the know of many things, should have known these things.

The general people—people belonging to the peasantry and low-income groups—welcome the ML activities not so much for the ML slogan of armed revolution, but for the fact that everywhere, in villages or towns, anti-social hoodlums, various types of exploiters and repressive authorities are frightened after the beginning of CPI(ML) activities. In other words, somehow the CPI(ML) activities have broadly been identified with the immediate interests of urban and rural poor. This is particularly true of Birbhum.

At what stage the CPI(ML) organisation is now in, what the class composition of its cadres is or whether the party has made any headway in the armed confrontation with the ruling classes—all these questions cannot be answered by a passive on-looker unless he wants to vulgarise facts. Even the privileged people of Santiniketan (belonging to the so-called bhadrakalok class) sometimes sympathise with the activists because they have been making a dangerous journey to achieve something.

A MAN OF SANTINEKETAN

My article in your journal (July 10) appears to have irked 'a reader' of Suri (July 24). He thinks that the report was from a non-resident. Unfortunately, I am very much a resident of Birbhum and have had the privilege of observing the 'upsurge' of Naxalite activity from equally close quarters.

At the very outset, the gentle

reader of Suri has accused me of failure to highlight the mass popularity the CPI(ML) is enjoying in the district. Absence of articulate and effective opposition there is, but mass popularity? No. Opposition is absent more from fear of surprise murderous assaults than from popularity.

As for public trials preceding the killing of class enemies, a leaflet issued by the Suri Organising Committee of the CPI(ML) assumes responsibility for 10 murders out of 21 committed in Suri P.S. None of these annihilations was preceded by any public trial.

The reader seems not to have revised his letter before sending the same for publication. In para 2 of the letter he says that there is no scare of the Naxalites but newspapers talk of it. He, however, starts the last para with the sentence 'It is true that there is an atmosphere of scare'.

I reiterate that not a single rich businessman of the district meriting annihilation by Naxalite standards has been touched.

What have all these annihilations and scare led to? Birbhum is now experiencing an incipient military rule. The 'Red army' is nowhere to be found but the common people are suffering; combing, interrogation, merciless beating and other forms of repressive measures—these are the direct results of the state of 'revolution' that was reigning supreme in the district. There is no liberation army now to save the common man from army brutalities. How can the feeling be suppressed that these Naxalites, by their individual annihilation programme, acted as agents of the ruling class so that the coercive State could find an alibi to come down on the common man and thus delay the stage of real revolution, the pseudo-revolution going on in the name of Naxalism having destroyed the potential revolutionaries?

A. B.
Suri

"The Good American"

There are many things on earth which you cannot dream of in your ideology because you are completely saturated with a belief in the infallibility of Mao. The proposed honeymoon of Nixon and Chou in the coming spring has demolished two of the fundamental postulates of the 'General Line' pursued by China about peaceful co-existence, and the main contradiction of the present era. Blind and barren anti-Sovietism has led China into this curious quandary.

Peaceful co-existence is Lenin's unique contribution to the arsenal of Marxist ideology. After the October Revolution, Lenin advanced the theory of different States with different social systems coexisting together. Trotsky, resolutely setting his face against the theory of co-existence, put forward the theory of permanent revolution.

Mao, in the footsteps of Trotsky, advanced a similar thesis and alleged Soviet collaboration with and capitulation to the U.S. because of the Russians' consistent adherence to the theory of co-existence. Thus Mao in his general line repudiated the Soviet line and deviated from the formulations of 1960. He gave a clarion call for splitting the communist parties in the world.

Now, Mao, 'the ardent champion of world revolution,' is disarming the revolutionary forces in Bangladesh and arming the arch-reactionary Yahya Khan. This curiously enough, you link with the 'pragmatic flexibility' of Maoism. Maoism cannot get away with it simply on the plea of expediency or 'pragmatic flexibility'. Revolutionary opportunism indeed!

CHARBAK KAR
Calcutta

Psychology Superfluous ?

The letter 'Mao And Psychology' (Frontier, June 26) is nonsense. Is psychology not only a science, but the most intricate of all sciences? If Mao made any adverse remark

about psychology it could not but be in the context of Freudian psychology.

The Freudian school preaches that human nature will eternally be the same. That means that people should accept every malady as inevitable fate. This is against even Darwin's Evolution Theory. But the Pavlovian theory inspires many with the hope that by changing the internal and external (social) environments man's mind, character and nature can be remoulded. It is from this idea that Pavlov replaced the word 'frustration' in the sense it is used by Freudians—by the word "alienation" from society. This re-emphasises the validity of the materialist part of Darwinism. In all socialist countries with or without quotations, (including China), large sums are allocated for Pavlovian psychological research; in the capitalist world too Pavlov Institutes have been cropping up.

Just after the October Revolution, Pavlov wrote to Lenin asking what was the use of revolution if as a result scientists do not get their research material. Pavlov was referring to non-availability of animals required for his research. Lenin responded immediately and personally arranged supply of the animals. In his speech at the 24th Anniversary of the Revolution (Nov. 6, 1941) after the Hitlerite aggression, Stalin asked the Soviet people to be inspired by the great deeds of "...Plekhanov and Lenin...Pushkin and Tolstoy...Gorky and Chekhov, Sechenov and Pavlov...Suvorov and Kutuzov..."

Shortly before his death Pavlov wrote to the CC of the Party expressing his gratitude for its constant care and concern for his research and bequeathing all his research papers to the Party.

Psychology is yet far from being an exact science because mental processes are unimaginably intricate. But the ice has been broken.

TARUN CHATTERJEE
Calcutta

AUGUST 7, 1971

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