

# frontier

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## HAWKS AND DOVES

THE Prime Minister has recently told a Western interviewer that she does not believe in God, for she needs no crutch. She will not claim, therefore, that some supra-natural power has enabled her to forecast that within a month or two, the Bangladesh problem will be solved and the evacuees will be able to return home. Her hope must be based on a hard calculation of probabilities. And all-out war should not be one of them, though an undeclared war is going on; for none but a bigoted revivalist believes that the Bangladesh problem can be resolved within a few weeks by a total war between India and Pakistan. The unmitigated hawks will be depressed, but there will be cause for genuine rejoicing if the Prime Minister's forecast comes true. For a quick settlement of the Bangladesh problem is possible only by mutual consent of the contending parties. She has not disclosed how this settlement will be brought about or whether any move has been initiated to persuade General Yahya Khan to give up his inflexibility. It is not the General alone who will have to shift his posture. The Awami League and its associates will also be asked to give up their demand for independence if a settlement by consent is to be reached.

The anxiety for an early settlement is understandable. It is doubtful if all the evacuees who have come away will return to Bangladesh unless they are forced to. Maybe a larger number will decide to go back if Bangladesh becomes independent, but, in any event, India will have to face the problem of rehabilitating those who will prefer to stay back. The Prime Minister's tour must have convinced her that not a single country, not even the Soviet Union, will stand by India openly if she supports the demand for immediate independence of Bangladesh. The marginal benefit that India may immediately derive from independence will be more than offset by the frowns that this stand will cause. Besides, despite the mounting guerilla activities, Bangladesh cannot win independence on its own in a few months. The recent spurt may be largely due to the fact that the bulk of the Pakistan army has been deployed on the border, and the responsibility for internal security has been made over to the para-military forces. Not all the guerillas are Mujib's men, and those that are may change colour if the ordeal they are passing through is prolonged. What attitude to the Government of India will be taken

by the new leadership that will emerge is not known. Sheikh Mujib is a known quantity, and India can go merrily out of her way to assist the Awami League because a Government headed by Mujib will be friendly to this country. She cannot be equally enthusiastic over a development that may put someone else on top in Bangladesh.

All statements made by the Prime Minister in connection with Bangladesh during the current session of Parliament fit into this attitude. She has not reacted sharply, though her colleague, Mr Swaran Singh, has, to the reported move by the U.S. President to send a team to study the Bangladesh problem. The Prime Minister has no objection to the visit if the team studies the problem "in depth" and not merely the aspect concerning guerilla activities. Clearly, the Prime Minister wants to convince the team that everything that has happened or is happening in Bangladesh is consequential to the military action launched by President Yahya Khan. Her reply to the U.N. Secretary-General is also noticeably accommodating. She has offered India's co-operation if U. Thant really tries for a political settlement acceptable to the Awami League. If Mujib is released and a dialogue is opened, India's influence may be exercised in favour of a settlement that falls short of independence. But the plan may be upset if the situation escalates. Border incidents are increasing, and in some, casualties have been quite heavy. The abolition of the visa system for diplomatic personnel in either country, the return of the new Indian High Commissioner to New Delhi for consultations immediately after he has presented his credentials, the transfer of the Pakistan High Commissioner in New Delhi, the declaration of an emergency in Pakistan all these point to an even more rapidly worsening situation. President Yahya Khan is under pressure—just ask General Manekshaw how much—but the pressure may be self-defeating.

## Losing Plenty

Slowly, slowly lose plenty. That's what the people of Ceylon are experiencing. Following the April uprising, Colombo discovered that the programme of State subsidy though draining away considerable resources was not going to win friends or influence people, particularly among the revolutionaries and the educated youth. Cutting the subsidies started with the hike in public transport fares in July. For any Government in Ceylon subsidies are a very sensitive issue. It will be remembered how Sirimavo Bandaranaike spreadeagled Mr Dudley Senanayake's United National Party at the last general elections on the rice subsidy cutback issue. The United Front Government, however, does not want to congratulate itself any more on its welfare measures which are not only most elaborate in Asia but are also of envy to many affluent Western countries. But as the nature of the issue does not permit the authorities to discontinue the subsidies by a stroke of the pen, a campaign has been launched to make the people aware of the country's true economic conditions. Ceylon's indebtedness to foreign countries and international agencies has been widely publicised. Now Mr N. M. Perera, the Trotskyite Finance Minister, has presented what is claimed to be the most austere budget of independent Ceylon. What has been at the back of his mind is to save money in every possible way so that investible funds—which are in short supply like in any other developing country—are available for increasing the growth rate and employment. Mr Perera's budget proposals make some brave noises like restricting conspicuous consumption and limiting net income to Rs. 2,000 a month. But the opulent know well the tricks of circumventing any Governmental restrictions. So it is the poor who are going to suffer. The move to raise the price of the second measure of rice from 75 cents to Re. 1 and reduce the sugar ration has already been

dropped to keep coalescing elements together. But there is now a 5 per cent fee on outpatients at government hospitals; prices of wheat, bread and free sugar have been raised and internal postal services now cost more. The Government is facing resource constraint both on the domestic and external fronts. The capacity to earn foreign exchange has been badly affected owing to the continuing fall in prices of the country's principal exports—all non-traditional items. The Master Economic Plan running over 1972-76 will have to be worked out on the basis of a reduced flow of foreign aid. In an effort to create 750,000 new jobs and raise the income level of more than 50 per cent of the population now earning less than Rs 200 a month, the growth rate is projected to rise from 4.8 per cent to 6.3 per cent. Self-sufficiency in rice and subsidiary food crops is sought to be attained through improved productivity. The plan also lays emphasis on district development councils for harnessing local energies. But it is one thing to produce an apparently sound plan and quite another to see it through.

## Vultures In The Sky

Over the last two years, US. fighter-bombers, going up the air from bases in Thailand and the aircraft carrier *Repulse*, have swooped down on North Vietnam 1,890 times of which 322 are credited to the logbook of the B52s. The detonated high explosives totalled 152,000 tons—bombs ranging from 100 kg to taller-than-man 1.5 tonners. The 'pellet' bombs, ultimately found "insufficiently effective," had to yield place to juicy "Cranges"—made of cold steel exploding into a shower of deadly fragments. During raids on the Vin Phu province another lethal gadget—containing a mixture of thermite, napalm and phosphorus—was used

mutilating and lacerating the limbs of residents including children. The B52 and Sabre jets have long been hitting with missiles and bombs Hanoi and Haiphong power stations, dams, schools and residential areas. They destroyed the hospitals in Hoa and Nam Dinh. "Out of the 36 principal cities in the DRV", Lan, Vice-Chairman of the Inquiry Commission into U.S. War Crimes in Vietnam, has noted that 9 were completely destroyed turning them into heaps of debris punctured by yawning holes. He mentioned the cities, Dong Hoi, Viet Tri and Thai Nguyen as being the most affected.

Last month alone B-52s accompanied by hundreds of tactical aircraft invaded 70 times DRV air space. The carrier *Oriskany* was plying nearby. Another aircraft carrier, the *Constellation*, is heading for Vietnam. On the average the aircraft have been dropping annually some 400,000 tons of H.E. bombs on Vietnam, 300,000 tons on Laos and 90,000 on Cambodia.

Melvin Laird's visits to Indochina invariably have been preludes to some new plans. Following has 'reconnaissance' in Laos this year, U.S.-Saigon armoured columns pounded the lower Laos region. His recent trip is no exception in spite of the labours for establishing normal state relations between the U.S. and China which have been preconditioned by Peking with two basic demands: abandonment of the "two-Chinas" plot; and complete military withdrawal within a specified time, of U.S. forces from the Indochina peninsula as well as Taiwan.

But the continuing dangerous trends of events in Indochina contradict these two preconditions. After Laird's latest sojourn in Laos, U.S.-Saigon troops have taken up positions in a large concentration on the Laos-Vietnam border in the vicinity of Route No. 9 and they are reinforced and replenished hurriedly. Similar manoeuvres of South Vietnamese troops are taking place along the other side of the Cambodian border.

Mr Laird has not learnt his lessons

from the chain of debacles the U.S.-Saigon forces have had to face this year. Meanwhile preparation is afoot for a world conference of protest against the war in Indochina dated for February 11-13 next year.

## Coup In Thailand

*A correspondent writes :*

Has there really been an army coup in Thailand? There was already army rule in Thailand. But on November 17 the Prime Minister and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, took along General Prapas and Mr Pote Sarasin and met the titular monarch Phoumibal. Thanom declared dissolution of the three-year-old parliament and rolled out U.S.-brand M41 tanks on the streets of Bangkok. The whole army, including a vast number of paratroopers was deployed to augment the firepower of the ever-present armed police force. It was a quick and tame affair. After all, the opposition members of the dissolved parliament, including a handful of social democrats, could not possibly resist as they have no army to challenge the Thanom-Prapas-Sarasin band.

Immediately afterwards, Thanom announced a 9-man coterie. In the next 48 hours it was enlarged to contain 4 'civilians' and 22 generals, air marshals and admirals from the Armed Forces. The chief 'civilian', Pote Sarasin, has an 'illustrious' past—Ambassador to the U.S., Secretary General of SEATO, a short-term experience as a deputy prime minister and continued association with big business. Sarasin, in short, is the chief spokesman of the Thai compradors. The only person conspicuous by his absence is the Foreign Minister (ever since 1959), Thanat Khomman. However, he has been named the special envoy to the meeting of the foreign ministers of the ASEAN countries (viz. Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) to

discuss about the 'neutrality' of the concerned countries.

Of late Thanat had been losing his popularity with the military and Cabinet leaders, because he was in favour of early establishment of friendly relations with China. Thanom, or for that matter the rest of them, are not averse to the idea but they want to "wait" till China stops supporting the revolutionary armed struggle in the country. A couple of months ago Thanat had commented that "some of our leaders say Peking continues to supply the communist activities in Thailand...I hope things will change". This enraged the military and Cabinet leaders so much that they even asked for his expulsion. In the U.N., Thanat voted not in favour of the historic resolution moved by Albania and 22 other countries but in support of the U.S. resolution. In short the difference between Thanat and others is marginal: Thanat believes in 'one China, one Taiwan', while for Thanom-Prapas it is still Taiwan.

The purpose behind dissolving parliament and the constitution (which did not permit even trade union rights to the Thai workers) came out loud and clear during the press conference of the newly formed coterie named as National Executive Council. Thanom announced that they had to suppress the communists because they are "a danger to the Nation, Religion and the King"; that the NEC would take speedy and drastic action against the "communist terrorists"; that action would also be taken to prevent left politicians from subverting university students, labourers and farmers". (*The Bangkok Post*, November 20, 1971).

These objectives have been carried out brutally during the past six years. The so-called opposition never really opposed the murderous onslaught on the Thai people. The ruling party had a comfortable majority—123 seats in the 219-member parliament. Why then the dissolution of the three-year-old constitution and parliament?

In Thanom's words, "budget bills were approved as late as six months

after the fiscal year had started". The MPs of the Budget Scrutiny Committee had been too inquisitive to enquire into the details of the "secret funds" catered for in the current defence budget. The MPs never got any reply—no opposition ever gets it in any parliament. Besides, the MPs were no longer able to dupe the armed struggle of the Thai people. On March 3 this year, two MPs from the North-Eastern region were summoned to Bangkok for refusing to move among their own constituents and popularise a dam construction project of the government. These two MPs finally admitted that their refusal was on the grounds of "personal reason"—a euphemism for fear of the communist party led armed forces that control the district, which lies a mere 500 miles from Bangkok. To make it worse, of late quite a few opposition MPs have been advocating increased reforms and propaganda work for creating illusions among the fighting Thai people. For that plenty of funds are required, which the Thai rulers do not have. On the contrary, the latest budget indicates extra-military expenditure at the cost of reforms or development. Many MPs opposed the budget but in vain. No ruling class can afford the luxury of wearing a parliamentary mask, once it is threatened by a people up-in-arms.

But Thanom too has been loud-mouthed about speedy development. The areas he has in his mind are the northern, the north-eastern and the southern regions, the most backward areas of generally impoverished Thailand, where 80% people are engaged in agriculture. In the arid north-eastern plains there are 20,000 villages, which hold one-third of the total population of 35 million. Another 8 million live in the mountainous north. People in these two regions are extremely poor. However, with U.S. 'aid' Thai rulers have been trying to administer three wonder drugs to these people: Accelerated Rural Development (ARD) dealing with current problems, Royal Irriga-

tion Department (RID) dealing with future plans and the self-explanatory Communist Suppression Operations Command (CSOC). 80% of the ARD budget is devoted to construction of village access roads, which in fact helps CSOC and land speculation by the friends and relatives of 'knowledgeable' government circles. RID is engaged in big projects involving huge funds and yet bigger scandals and corruption. Sometime back a scandal over cement purchases and land clearing operations for Lam Pao dam shattered the RID ranks. The CSOC's failure is best illustrated by the alarm raised by Bangkok newspapers that hundreds of people can be mobilised in no time by a call from the Thai PLA. At the press conference Thanom himself admitted widespread presence of communist-led people's armed forces in the north, the north-east, the south and on the central plains of Thailand.

It is in the north that the People's Liberation Army (PLA), regional forces, guerillas and the militiamen have consolidated themselves most and built revolutionary base areas. Last year alone they killed 1,500 U.S.-aided enemy troops, shot down or destroyed more than 50 aircraft and rendered more than 20 military vehicles inactive. They also have a ten-point policy, which has given a clarion call to the Thai people for struggle against U.S. imperialist aggression and for national salvation. This armed struggle is characteristically a protracted war for encircling the cities from the countryside.

There has also been a marked upsurge in mass struggle all over the country. From the beginning of 1970 and till April this year, there have been 180 strikes by 30,000 workers. In practically the same period there have been 390 protest struggles by 244,000 peasants. During the first half of this year, more than 10,000 students have taken part in strikes, rallies and demonstrations. On July 23 more than one thousand people held an anti-U.S. imperialism demonstration in the heart of Bangkok.

The peasants are also engaged in anti-U.S. imperialism struggle, inasmuch as they are protesting against seizure of their farmlands for the purpose of building U.S. military bases from where U.S. planes go out to bomb and strafe the three countries of Indochina, and for housing various clandestine anti-Thai-people U.S. organisations. The dock workers of Sattahip went on strike, refusing to load and unload war materiel designed for use against Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand. The students are engaged in mounting protests against a U.S.-type educational system. During the November 19 press conference Thanom went on record to admit that "just before and just after the admission of China to the United Nations, there had been a rash of strikes and demonstrations by students and greater subversion by farmers".

Coups are nothing new in Thailand since 1932, when the monarchy was rendered titular and monarchical rule was replaced by constitutional rule. But the events of November 17 were of a new type and order. On this occasion the ruling class was forced to wash off its make up and stand brazenly with their loaded guns, to suppress the armed struggle for national liberation. There is an adage that enraged desperados often lose their heads and chop the very branch they sit on.

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NOVEMBER 27, 1971

# The Waiting Game

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

IT looks a mere question of who will lose nerve first. Mrs Indira Gandhi told a party meeting that the Bangladesh issue would be solved in a month or two "or even sooner", according to one of the party secretaries who briefed newsmen officially. But within a couple of hours, this version was "clarified" and the country was asked to believe that she never set any time-limit. By all accounts, the mediators abroad have been given the time-limit: 25 November and perhaps a two-day grace period and thereafter India would be free to act as she wants. Top leaders of the Mujibnagar government were here to discuss the draft of a treaty to be signed in the event of recognition by India. The treaty would make for the induction of India's defence forces into Bangladesh territory and the more optimistic among the "knowledgeable" crowd hopes everything will be over by early December so that Tajuddin Ahmed and his colleagues can be back home in Dacca for Christmas.

One school even believes that General Yahya Kahya Khan will lose Bangladesh through negotiation, and without a war. But no professional soldier would like to lose to an irregular force like the Mukti Bahini whatever its ramifications. And politics in Islamabad ordains that they lose to a Hindu India rather than to Muslim East Bengal. In the event of a conflict, the Pakistani push would be in Jammu and Kashmir in a bid to grab as much territory as possible before a cease-fire is imposed by the super-powers.

New Delhi is now more than convinced that China will not intervene militarily in the event of a conflict. But the patronising talk of a "change" in China's attitude is sickening because it implies that India was always "holier than thou" and if any change in attitude was called for, it was in

China's. Last week, the mysterious Mr D. P. Dhar sneaked underground once again but none wanted to risk writing that he had gone on one of his famous missions, to Peking this time. The alibi is being prepared for sending a high-level Indian delegation to Peking to present India's stand on Bangladesh. China was the only major country India had ignored while Ministers or delegations were sent to countries which do not really count or which are known to be positively hostile to India. To checkmate Pakistan's diplomacy in Peking, the high priests in the Foreign Office are planning a parody of a diplomatic coup. If the plan succeeds, a delegation should be going in the next few days. This perhaps could delay any unilateral action on Bangladesh because the Chinese attitude is still a factor to be reckoned with in the United Nations.

Thus Mrs Gandhi's dilemma sharpens in the coming week. She cannot plead for any more time and an up or down decision has to be taken and the nation cannot be taken for a ride any longer in the name of Bangladesh and the imaginary emergency.

The Lok Sabha debate on the West Bengal situation was an unexciting affair but underlined the CPI's hypocrisy. During the zero hour that day, not until the Marxists had held up proceedings for full 30 minutes, did Mr Indrajit Gupta feel compelled to voice feeble support to the demand for a debate. Being a party incapable of violence and committed to peaceful transition through Mrs Gandhi, the party could sound virtuous between the two parties to the running battle in West Bengal and express dishonest sympathy for the Naxalites. The CPI(M) charge of a Naxalite-Congress collusion was as hypocritical. Earlier in the day, Prof Hiren Mukherji insinuated that

the Congress and CPI(M) together were on the rampage at Baranagar-Cossipore. But the fact that emerged was that the anti-social elements who were once with the CPI(M) have now decided to take the protection of the Congress and Mr Priyaranjan Das Munshi, who is being groomed for something big in the government, is now a mini-Bangabandhu with his own private army. The Ministerial spokesman reeled off lists of the sophisticated weapons seized from CPI(M) offices while the partymen protested without conviction. However, one fact went unmentioned. The Chhatra Parishad storm-troopers are armed with modern weapons from a certain East European country which perhaps would recognise the Bangladesh government even before the Soviet Union does. The CPI(M) knows about these arms but dare not level any charge for tactical reasons. Or it perhaps feared that the source of its own arms would become an issue if any allegation was made about the source of the Chhatra Parishad arms.

The CPI(M) should have known when it abetted the onslaught on the CPI(ML) in West Bengal that the definition of left adventurism in the Government's vocabulary would undergo a change sooner or later and the term would be reinterpreted to cover their party. When Mr Dias went to Calcutta, one heard a lot in New Delhi about Mrs Gandhi's plan to get tough with the CPI(M) in a matter of days. The CPI(M) was blissfully unaware of the "fascist" character of Mrs Gandhi's party when it voted with the government on every crucial issue between mid-1969 and 1970 end, the toppling of the Kerala ministry notwithstanding.

November 21, 1971

# New Delhi And The Bandung Spirit : A Reappraisal

PREMEN ADDY

WHATEVER Mr Nixon's forthcoming visit to Peking may or may not achieve, it seems to have jolted India's leaders into recognising, however belatedly, that the glacial bipolar age of American and Russian dominance is in thaw. The dramatic impact of China's rise as a major power, Washington's debacle in Indo-China and the deepening social crisis at home, the confusion, restiveness and a general loss of confidence in the U.S.—these are but some of the symptoms of this change.

Elsewhere, what was once regarded as the socialist camp is today a sorry spectacle of mistrust and dissension. Their ideological differences notwithstanding, China, Albania, Rumania and Yugoslavia are united in their suspicion of Soviet designs, suspicions that were deepened by the tragedy of Czechoslovakia, and which Moscow's subsequent behaviour has done nothing to allay.

With the Great Powers and their erstwhile allies engaged in a frantic game of music chairs, New Delhi, if Press reports are to be believed, has been making its own tentative if somewhat feeble gestures towards China. If indeed it is now renounced that India's foreign policy has been well nigh frozen for the past decade, the responsibility for this lies mainly with our ostrich-like Establishment; for every attempt hitherto to question the wisdom of our relations with Peking has been brushed aside with an air of injured innocence. However, with the odour of sanctity dissolving under the overwhelming pressures of political reality, the time is now ripe to air once more the whole vexed question of Sino-Indian relations. For never again must one be treated to the spectacle of an untrammelled and crazed chauvinism, such as one saw in 1962 and in the years that followed.

Here, America has a few reward-

ing lessons to offer. The large number of documents and memoirs—of which the Pentagon Papers are the most recent sample—that is becoming available to the public is exposing the dishonesty and deceit of a whole succession of American Presidents. And nothing is more calculated to create an alert and informed people. One of the byproducts of America's self-doubt has been the creation of an organization—the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars—by young radical students, whose deep commitment has not compromised their high academic standards, and whose publications have hence done much to arouse their own fraternity within the academic establishment, and the larger public outside to the danger of their Government's policy in Indochina. Is it too much to hope for something similar in India? Sapru House (The Indian Institute of International Affairs) publications are generally pretty dismal and inadequate. Not so long ago, one of its fellows—a man with an Allahabad background—wrote a book on Sino-American relations which he promptly dedicated to Chiang Kai-shek, Harry Truman, and Dean Acheson.

Dare one hope that works of genuine scholarship pertaining to the Sino-Indian boundary question be allowed to circulate freely within the country? The ban on the books by Alastair Lamb, whose treatment at the hands of the Government of India's academic minions and civil servants brings to mind the late Senator McCarthy's witch-hunt against Professor Owen Lattimore, should be lifted immediately. Mr Neville Maxwell too has put us more deeply in his debt than we are at present ready to admit.

Time was when Jaya Prakash Narayan could issue a ringing call for a grand alliance of every conceivable

nation, from Pakistan to Russia, to free Tibet from China's grasp. But with the growing evidence of Moscow's double-faced policy on Bangladesh, of which the recent Soviet-Algerian communique is further proof, and in view of Yahya Khan's continuing outrages, such voices are today invariably muted. Nevertheless, the protective cloud of sanctity can always be conjured out of the blue. Mr Henry Austin, Secretary of the Congress, is reported to have remarked that if China rejected "the big power tendency and accepted the Bandung principles", a treaty similar to the one signed with the Soviet Union could be drawn up between New Delhi and Peking. Yet on probing further, one has cause to wonder whether it was indeed China's deviation from the Bandung spirit that resulted in the worsening drift in Sino-Indian relations. Consider for example, the following revelation by Col Fletcher Prouty who helped organise America's Special Operations Force: "...we knew the Chinese were eventually going to come up to Tibet so we started recruiting a resistance force among the natives. Up to 42,000 Tibetans were put under arms. We flew groups of tribesmen from Tibet to Saipan and from there to the Rocky Mountains in Colorado, where the atmosphere is similar to the Himalayas, for combat training. In six weeks they are back in Tibet, and a fairly good ground force was built up." An operation of this scale and magnitude must surely have had the tacit connivance, to say the very least, of the Indian Government. T. D. Allman in *The Guardian* (October 4, 1971) came out with the most recent confirmation: "The American proclivity for violating Communist China's frontiers—while branding Peking as an international bandit—is one of the main forms of western inscrutability that

has always complicated China's relations with America.

"Since 1949, the U.S... at one time or another has used Indian, Burmese, Laotian, Thai, and perhaps Nepalese and Pakistani territory as staging areas for clandestine operations inside China...

"According to knowledgeable sources, the Central Intelligence Agency provided logistic support for the Dalai Lama's escape from Tibet, using STOL (Short take-off and landing) aircraft based in India and also supported tribal revolts in Tibet, as well as a string of 'Forward bases' in the Indian state of Assam".

And just how inglorious has been the role of the Indian and Western Press was succinctly described by Walter Crocker, a former Australian High Commissioner in New Delhi in a short biography of Nehru: "The behaviour of the press, not only in India but specially in the U.S., the U.K. and other Western countries, during the various Sino-Indian conflicts and especially during and just after Dalai Lama's flight was an eye opener even to diplomats familiar with the unreliability of much, and the unscrupulousness of some newspaper reporting." Contrast this with the comparative silence of our press on the recent events in Ceylon and on New Delhi's blatant interference there. Though undertaken at Mrs Bandaramaie's request it was nevertheless an intervention which ran counter to the much vaunted spirit of Bandung so eagerly flaunted by our leaders.

The Indian Left has, one feels, been remiss both in failing to draw sufficient public attention to the atrocities of the Colombo Government and also to highlight the sinister implications of the intervention by India and other interested powers for the socialist movements in southern Asia. For such questions to be passed over in silence now could mean that a heavier price might have to be paid later.

## A Broader Front in S. Vietnam ?

C. PRASAD

A NEW dawn of sunshine", said Nguyen Van Thieu after being sworn in as second-term President, "has shone over the country". Thanks to his indefatigable energy no means was left untried to ensure a faultless dawn. Saigon, already turned into an armed camp during the Presidential "elections", became virtually a fort on the eve of the swearing-in. While helicopter gunships circled above, some 50,000 troops and police lined up the streets and occupied apartments near by. After systematic house-to-house search residents were warned that anybody appearing at the window during the ceremony would be shot.

The oath-taking ceremony was, however, nothing compared to the effort put on a national scale for ensuring the South Vietnamese people the democratic right of voting for Thieu. Asked as to how people living in Vietcong-controlled areas could vote so massively, one polling official promptly said, "We just round them up and bring them to the polling booth." But since the 'round up' method was fraught with danger, inventing a few million voters and arming them with ballot papers was generally more favoured. The only problem with this method is to imagine enough number of names. Short of imagination polling officials would turn to the Americans with the result of making White House officials vote. Recently South Vietnamese Senator Vu Van Mau, leader of the An Quang Buddhist group, produced registration cards bearing the names of the U.S. Secretary of Treasury, John Connally, and the Governor of California, Mr Ronald Reagan. The cards were duly stamped to indicate that they had gone through the polling booth. Such being the scale of operation the officials cannot be blamed for inefficiency if in the final tally Thieu scored 106% of the votes cast. As the story circulating in Saigon suggests, the U.S. Am-

bassador, Mr Bunker, popularly known as "Governor General of South Vietnam", was very annoyed with this evidence of ultra-popularity and ordered the release of the final figure as 94.4%. In an ideal democracy at least some people must be in the opposition.

Going by official statistics the sun also seems to be shining on Saigon's military situation. The "Phoenix programme" to assassinate Vietcong cadres and sympathizers (in Pentagonese "to root out the VC infrastructure), launched in 1968, is billed to be a tremendous success. Since the beginning of the programme up to October 83,899 Vietcong are supposed to have been "neutralised"; of them 20,936 have been killed, 40,880 imprisoned and 22,083 persuaded to change sides. While putting out such macabre statistics officials casually admit that the number assassinated might well include quite a number of innocent villagers. Despite the gory tales of success, however, the name of the operation has proved to be ironic. Programmed My Lai notwithstanding, new fighters seem to be springing up from the ashes to deal blows at the enemy. The rate of recruitment to the NLF appears to be higher than that of the assassinations conducted under the "Phoenix programme". Military observers would privately tell you how deceptive is the apparent lull in Vietnam. After the precipitate American withdrawal from Khe Sanh and the debacle of the Laos invasion last February nobody believes it would be ever possible, especially after the withdrawal of the major part of American troops, to have a modicum of control over the Military Regions I and II. The Vietcong for example, are so deeply entrenched in the A Shau valley that massive B-52 raids have not been able to dislodge them.

The Pentagon is apparently happy with the "statistical security" calculated by computers in Saigon (or are

these being used to justify pull-out without loss of face?). The whole of South Vietnam has been neatly divided into zones of four categories according to "security" and "socio-economic situation"—the poorest and most insecure zone being that under Vietcong control. Based on data furnished by local pacification chiefs the U.S. command has calculated that 76.3% of the South Vietnamese people now live in AB hamlets where "law enforcement" is "adequate" and socio-economic condition "good"; 18.6% in C hamlets where there is "marginal to adequate security" and "fair" socio-economic situation; 4% in DE hamlets with "inadequate" security and "poor" socio-economic condition. Only 0.4% of the people are in V hamlets—completely under the sway of the Vietcong. Confronted with such formidable statistics nobody should have any shred of doubt about the viability of the Thieu regime once the Americans go home. But the few journalists who have tried to check these statistical estimates with the reality in the provinces do not share the optimism of Saigon. There is a growing suspicion that at grassroots level Saigon officials and troops have been quietly coming to terms with the reality—that is Vietcong control. War weariness, growing disenchantment with the Americans who have used them as cannon-fodder (as dramatically demonstrated during the Laos invasion) and the shuddering prospect of being one day left alone have thoroughly demoralised Thieu's ranks. His increasing isolation from the social classes which had so far supported the war effort and the widening chasm within the armed forces are encouraging the process of secret accommodation. No wonder there has been a drop in the number of clashes or a contact with the "enemy" in the last few months in South Vietnam's coun-

tryside. As one reporter cryptically noted, in Thua Thien the PSDF (People's Self Defence Forces) created by Saigon "will take on the guerilla forces if they locate them outside the hamlet but not if those forces are already inside the hamlet. Since the PSDF rarely patrols outside these hamlets, one must surmise that the encounters are rare—as is true of other parts of South Vietnam." The number of encounters with the Vietcong, nevertheless, remains an important index in computing the security grade of the village!

#### Reunification

Nixon has hailed the big "headway" Saigon has made in democracy and other officials have compared Thieu with George Washington but the Pentagon computers have not yet reeled out statistics about "security" in South Vietnamese cities. The way the students, Buddhist monks, even erstwhile anti-communist Catholics and Senators are demonstrating against the American occupation and Thieu's fascist rule and are often fighting in the streets, assassinating Americans and burning American vehicles leaves really little scope for covering them up with statistics. Things that are happening now in Vietnam would have been unthinkable barely a year ago. There was a time when merely a demand for peace, not to speak of reunification, would have promptly landed one in jail. But now in the face of the severest repression thousands of people are demonstrating for an end to the war, to the American presence and for reunification. Students and some opposition newspapers even launched a campaign to raise funds to help the floodstricken brothers of North Vietnam. Still more unnerving is the bitter anti-American sentiment of the youth and the disabled war veterans. They have decided to kill any American invader they can lay their hands on. "The idea", as one student leader explained to a *New York Times* correspondent, "is to put pressure on the American people, for we know they cannot tolerate American

casualties...What we are doing is not against individuals. We are fighting a system and we want Americans to put pressure on Nixon to get the people out of here." As the oft-confiscated Saigon daily *Tin Sang*, edited by the Catholic Deputy, Ngo Con Duc, wrote, "Their (students') patriotism, translated in courageous deeds, has somehow alleviated our people's humiliation...As it (the U.S.) has come here uninvited, there is every likelihood that it is not going to withdraw unless we kick it out. To kick the U.S. out means to pick out not only the GIs but also every American imperialist who is lording it over in this land—be him a soldier-murderer or any other American pursuing his imperialistic undertaking". The Pentagon cannot draw any comfort from the fact that a few hundred students have been arrested and *Tin Sang* has been seized more than 100 times, for not only is the students' movement growing stronger and more unified every day but the assertion of Western journalists that the snowballing opposition in the cities is non-communist makes them look potentially more dangerous. Is the situation maturing for the alliance of non-communist democratic forces in cities, so long outside the NLF, with the NLF? The unity of nine political parties, 22 groups and all religious sects achieved against the election fraud is not particularly a good omen for the Americans. It is perhaps not without significance that the NLF has chosen this moment to broadcast its appeal for a broader united front. "More than at any other time, let us widen our united front, fight more stubbornly and efficiently against the fiendish enemy. Closely coordinating, and persevering in their actions, the townsfolk in South Vietnam will certainly carry the day."

Our agent at Varanasi

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# Algeria's Fight

A. K. ESSACK

THE People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Africa's northern revolutionary base area, is now a force to be reckoned with by any imperial power which is planning a reconquest of Africa. Algeria is one of the few African countries which won its independence by way of an armed struggle with guerilla warfare as its military strategy. It is not surprising then that it would give wholehearted support to liberation movements not only in Africa, but also in Palestine and Indochina.

Algeria is one of the few countries in the Arab world whose commitment to the Palestinian cause is total and unconditional. The Russians, for instance are fond of quoting Lenin extensively, but it is countries like Algeria and Tanzania which have put into practice Lenin's thesis that socialist countries should as a matter of principle support unconditionally revolutionary national movements fighting against imperialism. In supporting the Palestinian armed revolutionary struggle Algeria maintains that it is for the Palestinian people to decide the future of their country and therefore it is against foisting on the people a political solution.

While outwardly professing to support the Palestinian struggle, certain Arab States have set in motion a machinery to liquidate it. The role of the hatchet man to behead the Fedayeen resistance movement has been allotted to King Hussein of Jordan. He has acted ruthlessly. However, in the hour of agony and trial, while some Arab governments denounced the atrocities of his hordes, the Algerian President dispatched military hardware: heavy armaments suitable for conventional armies such as light Russian tanks, half-track personnel carriers, 100 75-mm artillery and two batteries of 155-mm howitzers. They have contributed enough battle kits, including uniforms, field telephones, rifles and machine-guns to fit fifteen

50-men battalions. All told Algeria has trained 200 Palestinian officers, 800 non-commissioned men, 250 experts in explosives and a complete squadron of fighter pilots. It is part of the Yarmuk brigade.

Algeria's support for revolutionary national movements as well as for independent progressive African States is but a reflection of the struggle it has waged against imperialism and its agents inside the country. The struggle was conducted on two major fronts—against oil monopolies, particularly French, and for the agrarian revolution. On February 24 this year the Algerian President, tired of French delaying tactics, decided to nationalise the oil and gas pipelines and take 51% on the country's oil production. This meant taking control of two-thirds of Algeria's oil production which amounts to 30 million tons annually. The French Government and the French monopoly concern, the CFP, refused to accept this, for it meant, according to its spokesman, "capture without indemnification of other half of the assets". The French decided in retaliation to pull out its technicians, refusing to buy Algeria's wine, harassing the 650,000 Algerians in France and putting pressure on all the other oil companies not to buy Algerian oil.

Algeria refused to be intimidated. Its spokesman said, "The only result if they persist in the game of double or quits (they had demanded a fantastic figure of 700 million dollars) is to lose everything in Algeria." The French caved in and an agreement was signed on June 30. Algeria's right to take control of the commanding heights of her economy was acknowledged.

On July 14 Algeria implemented its charter to the peasantry. Specifically what this meant was confiscation of the land of all absentee landlords and taking over all farms over 50 hectares.

Absentee landlords were defined as those who earned a reasonable livelihood other than on land. The land was given to the tiller and the guiding principles were ; (1) The tiller must have insufficient or no land; (2) He must be loyal to the principles of the Revolution. However the peasant had to give an undertaking that he would belong to a cooperative in the region, for, side by side with the break-up of large estates, there is provision for the consolidation of small landholdings.

Over 16 million hectares is expected to be affected and when land is distributed along the principles laid down by the Charter it will bring about a qualitative change in the position of the peasantry which in turn will transform the Algerian society itself. This is what the planners have also in mind. Its spokesman said that this act was aimed "not at reform but Revolution".

This is not the first time that Algeria has taken over landed estates. In 1963 it took over all the farms left by the French colons and has operated these along cooperative lines. Today this sector accounts for almost 25% of the total output.

Side by side with this there is also a move to make Algeria's economy internally integrated. At present 450,000 hectares have been set aside for the cultivation of vine, "a symbol of the poisonous heritage of the colonial era, for this was a product which could neither be consumed nor sold in Algeria". Now 25,000 hectares of vineyards are going to be destroyed and other commodities grown. This would move Algeria away from a one-crop economy and loosen its economic ties with France.

Algeria's support for the Palestinians, its support for African States when threatened by aggression, its support for liberation movements show a new development in African politics indicating a new political maturity. Sentimental unity now is giving way to a newer and a higher form of unity, that of political and class unity.

## Book Review

### DIMITROV ON UNITED FRONT

Rs 8.00

### CEYLON. ISLAND THAT CHANGED

By Sadhan Mukherjee.

People's Publishing House Rs 12.

THESE books form 'loving twins'. One is the theory, the other supposed to be practice, a model for the Indians to emulate, the writer of the book on Ceylon seems to suggest. The first is the reprint of three short, valuable pieces—reports, speech and resolutions from Georgi Dimitrov to the Communist International. A year or two ago the same contents without abridgement were brought out by a Calcutta publisher in paperback at almost one-fourth the price quoted here. The other is a slim treatise, but is really an extended, short introduction to Ceylon. As a subject matter Ceylon is of undoubted importance in this part of the world since the United Front theory as understood by some people is being tested there. But a book which seeks to cover the subject in 135 pages naturally runs the risk of being superficial. In fact, it is extremely superficial, though the look can hardly be faulted as a brief guide or an elementary introduction.

*Dimitrov On United Front* is an important book more often named than read, more often read than studied and in practice it is stretched and twisted to express ideas and do things for which it was not intended. The brief report has been made briefer by the publishers. The excisions are significant. Not a single reference to Stalin, not one quotation from Stalin with which the original abounded, is there in this edition except a solitary one on the last page recorded in the resolution itself. As if aware that all this might leave a bad taste the publishers tell the reader that the book is 'slightly abridged'. Not slightly, but slyly abridged—one would say it is almost forgery. This

is how history is made. Lenin asked the communist historians to base their historical writing on 'exact and indisputable' facts, but communists, be they right or left, have not only learned to serve the powers that be, they have also developed a keen sense of the direction of impending change and an ability to gauge its limits as well as the potentialities which it unfolds.

United front tactics are basic to the communist movement. Even after the seizure of power its relevance does not cease because the communists must learn to work with a vast body of non-communists. The tactics can be traced to the *Communist Manifesto* which says—In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, the socialists always represent the interests of the movement as a whole...they fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class but in the movement of the present they also represent and take care of the future of that movement. Consequently the place of a communist is by the side of those who are fighting for the immediate achievement of an advance which is at the same time in the interests of the working class. The communists however must not confuse what is a mere stage with the final aim of the advance, the conquest of political power by the proletariat. On the other hand, if they do not make a united front and want to start straight off with the final act of revolution, they would be in a miserably bad way, as Engels pointed out to Bebel in 1882.

In the note to Chapter 10 of his pamphlet *The Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, Lenin named the forces which came out against the old social order against absolutism, feudalism and serfdom. They were (1) liberal big bourgeoisie; (2) the radical petty bourgeoisie and (3) the proletariat. The first fights for constitutional monarchy, the second for the democratic republic, the third for the social

revolution. In the process one class after another, except the proletariat, falls back after making certain advances and the proletariat shed the friends appropriate to each rung as soon as that rung had been negotiated.

However in the name of united front, in order to secure immediate interests, the party of the proletariat must not succumb to the temptations of the moment, forgetting the basic task. They should not normally (not absolutely) participate in a ministry in a bourgeois-landlord state because that is likely to paralyse the revolutionary action of the working class. In a letter to Turati dated January 26, 1894 Engels explained these tactics brilliantly. "But if it comes to this, we must be conscious of the fact, and openly proclaim it, that we are only taking part as an "independent party" which is allied for the moment with Radicals and Republicans, but is inwardly essentially different from them, that we indulge in absolutely no illusions as to the result of the struggle in case of victory, that this result not only cannot satisfy us but will only be a recently attained stage to us, a new basis of operations for further conquests; that from the very moment of victory our paths will separate; that from the same day onwards we shall form a new *opposition* to the new government; *not a reactionary* but a *progressive opposition*, an opposition of the most extreme left, which will press on to new conquests beyond the ground already won."

#### Special Line

The instruction is clear, but as usual it is honoured more in the breach. United Front tactics advocated by Dimitrov, however, were not a mere continuation of these tactics. Within the old general strategy of democratic revolution by force, it was a special tactical line in a period when 'in a more or less developed form fascist tendencies and the germs of a fascist movement are to be found almost everywhere'. Why was it that fascism could triumph and how, asked Dimitrov and answered that

fascism was able to come to power primarily because the working class, owing to the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie pursued by the social democratic leaders proved to be split, politically and organisationally disarmed in face of the onslaught of the bourgeoisie. And the communist parties, on the other hand, apart from and in opposition to the social democrats, were not strong enough to rouse the masses and to lead them in a decisive struggle against fascism.

When revolution is on the rise, there is one tactic; when counter-revolution has triumphed there is another. Different conditions call for different tactics—to realise but one aim—to prepare anew for a democratic revolution by force. Normally, as Lenin said, "the experience of alliances, agreements and blocs with the social reformist liberals in the West and with the liberal reformists (Constitutional Democrats) in the Russian revolution convincingly showed that these agreements only blunt the consciousness of the masses, that they do not enhance but weaken the actual significance of their struggle by linking the fighters with elements who are less capable of fighting and who are most vacillating and treacherous." (Marxism and Revisionism). In his article, Imperialism And The Split in Socialism, Lenin wrote—"Your advocacy of 'unity' with the opportunists, with the Legiens and Davids, the Plekhanovs, the Chkhenkelis and Petrasovs etc is objectively a defence of the enslavement of the workers by the imperialist bourgeoisie with the aid of its best agents in the labour movement."

In 1935 after fascism came to power in Italy and Germany Dimitrov called for different tactics—unity with the social democrats, with the Anarchists, support for a genuine anti-fascist government, even to join such a government, if needed, to repulse the immediate danger of fascism and to pave the way for the destruction of capitalism itself which is the root cause of all evils.

How these tactics should be worked out and under what circumstances

have been detailed by Dimitrov and they are very important. The present-day quasi-Dimitrovites who love to take the name of Dimitrov, to borrow only his 'title' to cover up their renegacy, forget to mention these specific tactical instructions on united front. Before we go into them, let us understand the difference between the tactical lines advocated by Lenin and Dimitrov. Dimitrov explained these in the following way: The attitude to bourgeois democracy is not the same under all conditions. For instance, at the time of the October Revolution the Russian Bolsheviks were in a life and death struggle against all those political parties which under the slogan of the defence of bourgeois democracy, opposed the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship. The Bolsheviks fought these parties because the banner of bourgeois democracy had at that time become the standard around which all counter-revolutionary forces mobilized to challenge the victory of the proletariat. The situation is quite different in the capitalist countries at present. Now the fascist counter-revolution is attacking bourgeois democracy in an effort to establish the most barbaric regime of exploitation and suppression of the working masses. Now the working masses in a number of capitalist countries are faced with the necessity of making a definite choice, and of making it today, not between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois democracy, but between bourgeois democracy and fascism. Besides, we have now a situation which differs from that which existed, for example in the epoch of capitalist stabilization. At that time the fascist danger was not as acute as it is today." (Unity of the working class against fascism).

"Can we repeat these arguments apart from the condition of the fundamental premise? Since the accursed counter-revolution had triumphed then and was on the rise the main duty, then, was defence against counter-revolution and the actual elimination of everything that contradicted the sovereignty of the people. Since fascism has driven us into this accu-

sed position let us work even there, even in the fascist trade unions for the benefit of revolution. Let us prepare the condition for a new rise of revolution and until it takes place and in order that it may take place, let us work more persistently. Let us unite with Social Democrats and Anarchists on limited objectives and refrain from advancing slogans which have meaning only in different conditions"—this is the burden of the argument, Dimitrov made. However, we must not be prisoner of our own methods. Dimitrov said, "We must tirelessly prepare the working class for a rapid change in forms and methods of struggle when there is change in the situation. . . We must go further and prepare the transition from the defensive to the offensive against capital." In other words united front initially develops as a defensive tactic but it must go into offensive at the appropriate time. Not only will the communists join hands with other leftists on particular issues, they 'while remaining the irreconcilable foes of every bourgeois government and supporters of a soviet Government will be prepared *not in words but in deeds*." But Dimitrov said, "It must further be borne in mind that in general, joint action with ( the Social Democratic parties and organisations requires from communists serious and substantiated criticism of Social Democracy as the ideology and practice of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and untiring comradely explanations for the Social Democratic workers of the programme and slogans of communism. In countries having Social Democratic governments this task is of particular importance in the struggle for united front." There may come a time when the communists should join the government. Dimitrov was not speaking here of governments which might be formed after the victory of the proletarian revolution, but of the possible formation of a united front government *on the eve* of and before the victory of Soviet revolution.

**Of Struggle**

What kind of government? And in what situation could there be any question of such a government? Dimitrov answered—It is primarily a government of struggle against fascism and reaction. It must be a government arising as the result of the united front movement and in no way restricting the activity of the communist party and the mass organisations of the working class but, on the contrary, taking resolute measures against the counter-revolutionary financial magnates and their fascist agents.

Under what objective conditions will it be possible to form such a government? Under conditions of political crisis, answered Dimitrov. According to him, the following prerequisites deserve the greatest attention in this connection. First, the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie must already be sufficiently disorganised and paralysed, so that the bourgeoisie cannot prevent the formation of a government of struggle against fascism and reaction.

Second, the widest masses of working people, particularly the mass trade unions, must be in a state of vehement revolt against fascism and reaction, though not ready to rise in insurrection so as to fight under Communist Party leadership for the achievement of Soviet power.

Third, the differentiation and radicalization in the ranks of Social Democracy and other parties participating in the united front must already have reached the point where a considerable proportion of them demands ruthless measures against the fascists and other reactionaries, struggles together with communists against fascism and openly comes out against that reactionary section of their own party which is hostile to communism.

Dimitrov also noted the mistakes that arose or might arise in course of united front work "The first series of mistakes arose from the fact that the question of a workers' government was not clearly and firmly bound up with the existence of a political crisis. Owing to this, the

Right opportunists were able to interpret matters as though we should strive for the formation of a workers' government, supported by the Communist Party, in any, so to speak, normal situation". "The second series of errors arose from the fact that the question of a workers' government was not bound up with the development of a militant mass united front movement of the proletariat. Thus the Right opportunists were able to distort the question, reducing it to the unprincipled tactics of forming blocs with Social Democratic parties on the basis of purely parliamentary arrangements (P.P.H. translation has made it 'combinations').

"The third series of mistakes which came to light during our former debates touched precisely on the practical policy of the workers' government. The Right opportunists considered that a 'workers' government ought to keep 'within the framework of bourgeois democracy' and consequently ought not to take any steps going beyond this framework. The ultra-lefts, on the other hand, in practice refused to make any attempt to form a united front government". The ultra-left mistakes consist mainly in their nothing doing before armed insurrection attitude.

**Mistakes**

Dimitrov illustrated the mistakes which are predominantly Right in nature by a concrete example. "In 1923 Saxony and Thuringia presented a clear picture of a Right opportunist 'workers' government' in action. The entry of the Communists into the Government of Saxony jointly with the Left Social Democrats (Zeigner group) was no mistake in itself; on the contrary, the revolutionary situation in Germany fully justified this step. But in taking part in the government, the communists should have used their positions primarily for the purpose of arming the proletariat. This they did not do... They behaved in general like ordinary parliamentary ministers within the framework of bourgeois democracy"

Dimitrov pointed out what a united front government should not do. Then

he came to the question of what a united front government should do: "Comrades, we demand an entirely different policy from any united front government. We demand that it should carry out definite and fundamental revolutionary demands required by the situation. For instance, control of production, control of the banks, disbanding of the police and its replacement by an armed workers' militia etc."

**Comparisons**

If one compares and contrasts the forms and content of a united front government envisaged by Dimitrov, or for that matter, by the Communist International, with those planned and executed by the Jyoti Basu-Namboodiripad government, or the Sirimavo Bandaranaike government one will note that they have nothing in common except the name.

"Bring down prices" (Ceylon), "Modest relief" in India—is what they undertake as immediate tasks (and even these they cannot achieve). Instead of disbanding the police they strengthen the very instrument of class oppression in every possible way. The Sixth Congress of the Communist International warned the communists against any tendency toward an opportunist adaptation to the conditions of capitalist stabilization and against any infection with reformist and legalist illusions. Yet this is precisely what the right and left communists are engaged in doing however much it may be phrased in Marxist terms. The difference follows from the basic assumption. Communists should not join any government in a normal situation, according to Dimitrov. They can join only when there is political crisis: so that they can take advantage of the situation to push the crisis further towards revolution and seizure of power. That is why arming the proletariat becomes the primary task. But the primary task that the United Front Government in West Bengal undertook to do in 1967 was to disband the armed peasants of Naxalbari and later, when the Home Ministry was under Jyoti Basu, to

shoot the armed peasants of Gopiballavpur. Instead of giving jobs to the unemployed youth Sirimavo Bandaranaike in the company of the right communists and Trotskyites of Ceylon shot the rebellious youth. The peculiar character of social democracy of the CPM is epitomised in the fact that government power is demanded to bring more money from the Centre as if that will solve the problem, as if the Centre-State relations and not class relations are the root of all our miseries. It is epitomised in the fact that they want government power as a means not of doing away with two extremes, capital and wage labour, but of weakening their antagonism and transforming it into harmony. United front governments have now become the instrument of class collaboration. Ceylon convincingly proves this, whether the rebels were right or not. Today it is a model of what not to do. As a model Dimitrov singled out the Chinese Communist Party for praise. The revisionists refer to unity with Chiang in order to justify their own opportunist alliance. But that was an armed unified front, a front not for election but for armed struggle against the enemy, a front in which the CPC did not give up its autonomy and army.

*Dimitrov on United Front* is particularly relevant today. Surpassing in its cynicism and hypocrisy all other varieties of reaction preceding, the Indian Government's socialism has a striking similarity with Hitler's national socialism. As Dimitrov pointed out, speculating on the profound disillusionment of the masses in bourgeois-democratic governments, fascism hypocritically denounces corruption. It is in the interests of the most reactionary circles of the bourgeoisie that fascism intercepts the disappointed masses who desert the old bourgeoisie. Fascism comes to power as a party of attack on the revolutionary movement of unrest. Yet it stages its accession to power as a "revolutionary" movement against the bourgeoisie on behalf of the "whole nation" and for

the "salvation" of the whole nation.

Doesn't all this have a much too familiar ring? Indira Gandhi fights corruption; she intercepts the masses; she revives the terrorist suppression act of 1932 and organises, through her henchmen, the brutal and savage killing of Naxalites and others. But she also smiles and even 'praises' the Naxalites, giving a new dimension to cynicism. Hitler promised fair wages to the workers, a brilliant future for the youths, security of existence to office workers, petty officials and intellectuals, end of debt bondage and land to the peasants, destruction of the omnipotence of the trusts and wiping out profiteering by bank capital. So does New Delhi and with the same result—greater inequality, deeper despair and uncertainty, and starvation.

The Indian Government is directly dependent on international fascism—56 p.c. of the aid it receives comes from the USA. What, however, intensifies the tragedy is that the left parties not only fall victims to the leftist and chauvinist demagoguery of Indira Gandhi, a section of them even embellishes her image. But life is a hard task master and the mass of the people will learn and, freeing themselves from despair and left adventurism on the one hand and the pernicious neo-revisionism of the left CPI on the other, forge a united front under the leadership of those who have been tempered in the course of revolutionary struggle against local and international fascism and their running dogs.

HARENDRANATH MONDAL

## 'Eric' Theatre : A Diversion

ASISH KUMAR LAHIRI

*MOTHER Courage and her Children* is coming to be accepted universally as one of the important plays of the last quarter century", says Eric Bentley. It is indeed so; but in the midst of the war-psychosis we are living through

the play acquires a more than general relevance. Keeping this relevance in mind, when one tries to get a grasp of what Brecht has to say in the play and what Bentley wishes it to mean, as expounded in his introduction, one at once is struck by something that appears to be fishy.

But it would perhaps be a sin not to begin with the confession that the writer of the article does not, in any way, pretend to be a connoisseur of drama, far less of Brechtian drama. The whole purpose of this article is to give vent to a suspicion that has crept into the mind of an honest Brecht-reader, so as to draw the attention of pundits to what appears to be an extremely significant distortion of interpretation.

"'Pessimistic' or 'intrinsic' as he may be," writes Bentley, "Brecht has put his finger on what Sir Herbert Read has shrewdly called 'the problem of our age'". This problem is 'rather why people who have no personal conviction... allow themselves to suffer, for indefinite or undefined causes...' So this is the focal plane of *Mother Courage*.

One would not be quite off the mark if one understands that when Brecht makes a 'problem' his subject-matter, he also takes pains to provide a solution. We might, for example, consider *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, which begins with a problem and ends with a solution. *Mother Courage* obviously has not got any problem to solve, since what it deals with is not a problem but a point of view. It analyses war as to its subjects and objects, its nominatives and verbs. Bentley, however, looks for the right thing in the wrong place and, no wonder, he does not find "Marxist optimism" in it. Nor is it pessimism in the general sense of the term. According to him, "Mother Courage doesn't present a stoical appearance but I think she does embody a genuine stoicism". So, in the end this is what it resolves into: "Can-

not Mother Courage say, with the same good right as the aristocratic Rilke 'who talks of victories? To see it through is everything'?"

If *Mother Courage* does not talk of victories it is simply because what she is interested in is not fighting out a war to an end but to make brisk business in the event of a war. The crux of the matter lies here, in this matter-of-fact-ness.

"Though her name is an irony, and she is, in the first instance, a coward," Bentley observes, "she also, in the last analysis needs courage... and this courage is there—inside her—when she looks for it". The particular individual called Mother Courage is thus, first a coward and then she finds her latent courage. But is not the duality of her social position with relation to the war that is at the root of this cowardice and this courageousness? On the one hand, she finds in war those conditions which provide her with good business, and yet on the other hand, she does not belong to the privileged classes and, has therefore, to bear the brunt of war. That is why she feels sorry to part with 'her' children and still somewhat serenely carries on with her business. If this selfish serenity is termed genuine stoicism, then the bosses in the Pentagon are stoicism incarnate!

What Brecht puts forth is, on the contrary, the simple truth, that in order to achieve their own narrow selfish, ambitious aims, the ruling classes, always, without exception, resort to fraud—holy, moral, high-faultin fraud. Those who are dying of hunger are asked to sacrifice the last bit of bread. And all for these great and noble ideas, concerning religion, motherland and what not. But behind these tall talk lurk the eyes of greedy exploitation, crude and mischievous. Not that people as a rule allow themselves to be carried away, but who cares for them, what do they count for? It is not they, after all, who decide to fight.

Has this not been our experience throughout? Have we not seen defiant savagery perpetrating heinous crimes

upon the people, ostensibly for the purpose of presenting them with democracy? And are we not, at this very moment, observing the same thing, though inchoate?

It is in this context that the attempts of Bentley and his tribe to transfix the pivotal point of Brechtian drama from the social to the individual, thereby confusing the real issue, acquire a sinister significance—of showing cowardice or courage as mere strings on the individual lyre and not as parts of the whole orchestra; a significance, which deserves to be discussed in detail by pundits.

## Two Cheers

BY A FILM CRITIC

**H**RISIKESH Mukherjee's *Guddi* has a clever script and also surefire material—Eastman colour, Vasant Desai's music and an ingenious presentation of the glamorous male stars of Bombay film-dom in a row, the latter for disenchanting a love-lorn belle whose infatuation for her screen idol, Dharmendra, stands in the way of her marriage with an eligible groom. The magic spell cast by the denizen of the entertainment world on the teenage schoolgirl leads to refusal by the tomboyish heroine (Jaya Bhaduri) of the love proffered by the hero (Samit Bhanja). The girl's uncle (Utpal Datta), a bachelor professor of psychology, arranges to show her the real life of the dream hero—the boring chores, the shooting schedule and the nagging agony that the fantasy may be shortlived.

The director shows this in a superficial sweep but it helps to tear the veil that shrouds their meretricious living cutting them down to lifesize ordinary mortals. In the process a galaxy of stars, oldtimers rubbing shoulders with more recent arrivals, make their guest appearance. Asok

Kumar, Dilip Kumar, Pran and Rajesh Khanna have their brief stints acting out their typical roles. Significantly, no female stars, ancient or ultra modern, make their appearance, which is an excellent subject for the bachelor professor of psychology to delve in. Dealing with other facets of the filmworld, the story writer complains about betrayal of his story by the director who distorts his stuff. The famished technician faints on the floor and the faded fate of a silent film hero becomes apparent in his desperate bid to eke out a pittance. The small-town boy, the heroine's neighbour who never dreams of anything short of a role opposite Meena-kumari, lands on the role of an extra in full view of the girl.

All these happen in quick procession to edify the girl, and one suspects, the audience, about the hazards of him as a living. The characters elicit sympathy and one gets a little sad. The director sometime tends towards sentimental trivialities, performances are funny, often excellent, down to the last extra. At the end fantasy evaporates and the boy gets her gal.

This is indeed a one-dimensional portrayal of the screen world but the director's purpose is served both in finding a denouement, peripherally presenting his own milieu, and in succeeding to be somewhat different in his attempt in the context of the stultifying atmosphere of film making on the west coast.

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Mr SUBHAS BOSE,

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## The Roots Of Violence

Officially Bihar is now quiet. The "forces of disruption" have been quelled... Three months ago, on July 20, or thereabouts, one division of the Indian Army returned to its barracks. It had been called out to "assist the administration" in quelling Naxalite disturbances. It had combed the forests and the fields. 'Operation Naxalite' had been successful. The months before had been full of terror. An estimated 200 people had died—most of them peasants. Among them were some landlords who had always charged the peasants exorbitant rates of interest. The police had killed and were killed in turn. Students who had given up brilliant careers to "serve the revolution" paid with their lives for their ideals. The law and order machinery of three States—Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa acted unitedly to crush the challenge to the social system. The magnitude of the challenge is a matter on which opinions differ, but the gun-snatching Musahari, Hazaribagh jail-breaks were portents which could not be ignored.

Calm has been restored, but the peace of centuries lies disturbed. In certain areas landlords have left their lands fallow fearing another outbreak of violence over the division of the harvest. Nobody really believes the situation will ever be the same again.

...The future? The poor peasant was clad in a *lungi* and the dirty vest. With a confidence born out of his ideals he quoted from Mao Tse-tung's report of an investigation into the peasant movement in Hunan: "In a very short time—several hundred million peasants will rise like a tornado or tempest, a force so extraordinarily swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to suppress it. They will break through all the trammels that now bind them and dash forward along the road to liberation..." The "poor peasant" was a record

holder from one of India's foremost colleges. He had declined offers of lucrative jobs in private firms to try to translate his ideals into reality. He had worked as a labourer in the fields of landlords, eaten with other labourers, worked and slept with them. They did not know he was a Saheb.

"We are prepared" landlords in districts towns declared. They had hired retainers and bought arms from the towns. The good old days were over. They knew they would have to fight to preserve their privileges and they were getting ready for the battle.

One does not know, nor can one guess, when the "revolution" will come. The Naxalites are optimistic while the State is confident that it has been able to crush the movement. Yet between the young farmer and the zamindar there is a vast gulf.

... (In Purnea) nearly half the total cultivable land in the district is owned by a dozen families... The bigger landlords own 30,000 to 40,000 bighas or even more. Legal difficulties are got over through *benami*-transactions. From the two largest land-owning families have come members of legislative assemblies and even a former Minister. Until a few years ago when a physical disability put an end to his activities, one of the landlords would take women of his choice from among the villages he owned. No man dared resist for fear of reprisals. If a villager married a pretty girl from a neighbouring village, the landlord would "invite" the bride for the first night. From the second night onwards she was her husband's property. Not believing that this could happen 20 years after independence, we asked a senior official about it. Without batting an eyelid he replied: "you are shocked because we have middle class morality... the families of the girls he slept with were always compensated."

... Today it (Purnea) is the rice bowl of Bihar. The Kosi has been tamed and the green revolution has increased production manifold. Land is gold. The irony is that the majority of the people in Purnea do not eat

rice. They cannot afford to...

Ranchi resembles Calcutta in many ways, especially in its atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. Almost at every corner one bumps into an armed policeman keeping vigil... The number of "outsiders," people who have come in from the overpopulated plain to seek employment in the industrial belt in the Chota Nagpur Plateau, constitute the majority... The base is the Adivasi, who has been overwhelmed by the people from the densely-populated plains. Pushed back from their own homeland, they are now the biggest single group. The irony of Adivasi existence is that while their huts and homes have been cleared to make way for industrialisation they find they are given the last preference in the matter of employment in public sector ventures.

... What is of interest, however, is the fact that a cursory study of the extremist cadre (in Jamshedpur) showed that they came from what can be called the lumpen proletariat. Some cadres were from unskilled or semi-skilled labourer families with a large number of children. They had studied up to middle or high school and found themselves unemployed.

Santhal Parganas: The average Santhal village hut has no windows. There is no opening except the door or missing portions of the roof... The land that they own now is among the most unproductive... In reality one cannot believe the gravity of the conditions even if one sees them. In the interior, the poorer sections still live on rats and insects.

... The *bania* charges 200 per cent interest per month and holds the Adivasi in bondage for generations. The land has gone to the *bania* and in large tracts not far away from the district headquarters of Dumka many generations have been tied down to free labour as "interest on the loans" which their forefathers might have taken.

In view of the need to prevent such exploitation, specially as regards the harvest, the Government built *golakhana*s (store-houses) "for the peasants". Almost all of them have been

converted into the *bania's godowns*. He has only emerged stronger at Government expense.

In 1971 the Adivasis took action against a moneylender under the leadership of the local unit of the CPI (ML). His annihilation was for the ideologist "annihilation of the class enemy"... The killing achieved what the Government has not been able to do. The rate of interest immediately dropped to 36 per cent per month. (From *Hindustan Times*).

## A CONTRADICTION

Uttam Kumar has denied the report, published in *Bangladesh* and reproduced in *Frontier* of November 20, that he saw the killing of Saroj Dutt.

## Letters

### Renaissance

Generally two kinds of limitation are seen in our writings on the awakening of Bengal in the 19th century: first, ignorance of recent literature on the Italian (and European) Renaissance in which we saw the prototype of the "Bengal Renaissance"; second: complete lack of sense of space and time. The awakening in 19th century Bengal was more or less a response to the challenge of the West. In a sense it was an adjustment on the part of the English-educated bhadrolok of a classic colony with the British rule and culture. Practically, barring a few like Madhusudan Dutt, no important personality was conscious of the Renaissance of Europe. Victorian England, and at best some principles of the French Revolution via England made a deep impact on them. The Italian Renaissance of the 14/15th century had no fundamental similarity with the 19th century Bengali adjustment,

though the comparison has been made repeatedly by academic pundits as well as Marxist writers. According to Jadunath Sarkar, it was truly a renaissance, wider, deeper and more revolutionary than that of Europe after the fall of Constantinople. On the other hand Amit Sen thinks that the role played by Bengal in the modern awakening of India is comparable to the position occupied by Italy in the story of the Italian Renaissance. It is almost unbelievable that a scholar like J. N. Sarkar could write such rubbish, but it is also lamentable that the Marxist Amit Sen also is not free from bad analogy and false comparison.

Anybody who has read recent literature on the Renaissance in Europe, particularly the Italian Renaissance, knows that the picture drawn by Burckhardt has been modified and changed to a large extent. Now the Renaissance is not thought of as a dawn after medieval darkness or a sudden break in the history of Europe. It had its roots also in medieval thought and society. Moreover, it is now statistically and quantitatively proved that the Renaissance as a period was not prosperous. In this respect Von Martin's, *Sociology of the Renaissance* (published in 1932) or Cheyney's *The Dawn of New Era* (1936) is far from helpful. The writings of Pieri, Lopez and others establish the fact that the whole Renaissance period, particularly that of the High Renaissance, was a period of economic crisis. The impact of the recession was felt most heavily in Italy: "the essential phases of Renaissance economy were first a depression, then stabilization at a lower level than the highest medieval summit." (R. S. Lopez) This economic crisis also influenced the culture of the period. Its value rose at the very moment the value of land fell. In this respect the case of Medici is important. Even the famous capitalist-spirit of the Renaissance (See Sombart) was not a fact: at least according to Chabod, the souls of big businessmen continued to be

oppressed by cares of a kind unknown to the capitalist of the modern age. Even the famous humanism of the Renaissance is being considered from a new angle, according to which this humanism was far from a progressive force. But I want to emphasize the economic aspect because some writers now offer a critique of the Bengal Renaissance on economic grounds. (It should also be remembered here that the trading caste was not looked down upon in all the periods of the history of India—the staunchest lay followers of the Buddha were the traders. As Kosambi points out, Buddhism was to a large extent the religion of this rising trading caste).

On the other hand, except some apparent similarities the awakening of Bengal in the 19th century had nothing in common with the Renaissance in Europe, a complex and long-drawn movement. Here such basic facts as the shift of the centre of gravity of economic and social life from country to city or the disintegration of feudalism were absent. Indeed if we want to understand fully the significance and limitations of the awakening of Bengal in the 19th century, we should compare it with similar phenomena in other colonial or semi-colonial countries, for example, the May Fourth Movement in China. To the liberal authors it was a Chinese renaissance. Interestingly the same mistake was made: a recognition of similarity between the current China movement and the Renaissance in Europe. To them (as to the champions of the Bengal Renaissance concept in our case), the movement had promoted a new literature in the living language of the people, it was a movement of reason versus tradition, humanism versus its suppression etc. According to some, the May Fourth Movement was also a movement like the European Renaissance in favour of a capitalistic society against medieval. Like the 'Bengal Renaissance the May Fourth Movement also had some superficial similarities with the European Renaissance' semi-medieval economic

and social conditions (again the question may arise, medieval in what sense?), the vernacular problem, the need to emancipate the individual from the bond of tradition, to study heritage with new methodology etc. But Chow Tse-tung in his *The May Fourth Movement* correctly points out that the comparison is not historical. There were fundamental dissimilarities. The point is, in China as well as India the comparison between a movement there and the European Renaissance has been made by Western-educated writers.

ARJUN BANDYOPADHYAY

Naihati

### Big And Small States

It is natural that "A Critic" from Hyderabad (September 18) appreciates my letter on the events in Pakistan. But he has made a few critical remarks too. The view that tiny States can keep themselves really free from the influence of super-powers has long been negated by historical experience after the rise of imperialism. Take for instance the tiny "neutral" Switzerland. Was it really neutral between the two power blocs? It had been a nest for intelligence agents of numerous countries and a buffer state between the two systems. Secondly, "there is nothing neutral (i.e. without the property to react) in the world", as Chou En-lai so aptly put. Suppose Sheikh Abdullah's proposition of "Independent Kashmir" or the Sarat Bose-Suhrawardy one of an independent united Bengal became realities *under capitalism*. Could these States have remained uninvolved and neutral in the super-power games involving India and Pakistan? Impossible. So will be the fate of an independent East Bengal—a truncated part of a single nationality. And does "Critic" believe that New Delhi and Moscow are so just and pious that they are really eager for the welfare of the people of East

Bengal—a part of another state, when the former has imposed a fascistic rule within its own domain, West Bengal, and both, along with the Western imperialist powers, intervened with arms in favour of the Ceylon Government to crush the popular revolt there? And why did Moscow brand Biafra "separatist" and hurl the same charge against Southern Sudan's struggle for the right of self-determination? It kept rather quiet when the communists of Indonesia were massacred with the help of exclusively Russian weapons but cried out over the execution of Mahgoub, the ex-general secretary of the pro-Moscow Sudanese Communist Party who, as one of Novosti's article admits, had himself given his consent to armed suppression of the Southern Sudanese "separatists". Do these facts not show that at the present moment new, small States engineered by the bourgeoisie are bound to be pawns in the super-powers' global chessboard? When a political party of a constituent unit of a multinational state is unable to wrest even autonomy within that state how can it skip over it milder demand and raise it to the qualitatively higher level of total independence, i.e. secession? It was Lenin who advised that while accepting the right to secede, communists of constituent nationalities should not encourage secession. Fight for the unity of the toilers of all the constituent units on a much bigger scale firstly for their autonomy and lastly for the overthrow of the multinational bureaucratic bourgeois state machinery. Secession deprives them of this opportunity to unite on the proletarian internationalist platform of class struggle with the people of their brother units. Doesn't the toiling class of the eastern wing of Pakistan want autonomy and justice be won by the nationalities of the western wing including the Punjab toilers? Why fight only for their own liberation?

As the fear of Hindu domination is quite alive among the Pakistani Muslims, they are bound to be apa-

thetic to secession of East Bengal which they fear will be the beginning of disintegration of their Muslim State, to be followed by its incorporation into Hindu India. This fear prevails particularly in the western wing. But the demand for autonomy precludes this fear and is likely to win over the nationalities of the western wing leading not only to their rallying in support of the eastern wing but to the voicing of the same demand themselves. During this process the toilers of the whole of Pakistan could be militantly united against their ruling classes (semi-colonial servitors of imperialism) for their final overthrow. Thus the struggle could deal a stunning blow against imperialism opening up the way to people's democracy.

A Critic's reference to Albania, Vietnam etc is totally irrelevant because these States jettisoned themselves long ago from the orbit of imperialism. Moreover they are not alone. The pre-Khrushchev Red Army guarded Albania from incorporation by Yugoslavia and rendered it sufficient economic assistance. As for Vietnam etc, China, Albania, the KPDR and all the revolutionary peoples of the world are supporting them. Moreover the three fronts (Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia) have been united into a single anti-imperialist front in spite of the differences in their social systems.

Let us see what Lenin advises in his *Theses on the National and Colonial questions* (1920) :—

"In the sphere of internal state relations... firstly... it is necessary to unite... the proletarians and then the whole mass of working population in the struggle against the bourgeoisie. Without the latter condition... the recognition of... rights to state separation are but a mendacious sign-board..."

"... all communist parties must assist the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement in the countries, and... the duty of rendering the most active assistance rests primarily upon the workers of the country upon which the backward nation is depen-

dent colonially and financially... (i.e. people of W. Punjab).

"...It is necessary to combat pan-Islamism... which strives... to strengthen the position of the Khans, landlords, mullahs, etc..." (Bhutto, Mian Mumtaz Daultana etc).

"...It is necessary constantly to... expose among the broadest masses of the toilers... particularly of the backward countries, the deception systematically practised by imperialists... in creating, under the guise of politically independent states, states... wholly dependent upon them, economically, financially and militarily..." (This is true not only for the semi-colonies—India and Pakistan—but more so for the colony of the semi-colony, that is East Pakistan).

Not one of the above tasks has been accomplished in East Bengal.

The movement switched on by the Awami League leadership inspired by Bengali chauvinism disunites rather than unites the anti-imperialist front of South Asia in general and Pakistan in particular and in such a case where "the part contradicts the whole, it must be rejected." (Lenin, *Marx-Engels-Marxism*, Eng. Ed. (P. 199).

ANALYST  
Calcutta

### Betray And Bray

Communist or leftist betrayal of national struggles for freedom is nothing new. This coffee-quaffing species opposed Castro and called him an adventurer and the Cuban revolution premature. The Algerian Communist Party 'was for a long time confined within a reformist position of the French Union type', and even after November 1954 it denounced the FLN as terrorists and provocateurs. How Camus treated the Algerians to a sweet-sister speech and opposed fund-raising for the innocent families of political prisoners is recent history. How the French Left was caught napping a few years ago and how it backslided on and balked the student revolt which shook France to the roots is a lesson in betrayal. The

Japan Communist Party has consistently stabbed the Hantai Domei struggling against the imperialist-industrialist onslaught against Japanese agriculture. Indian leftists always sought refuge in cant, and in order to cover their confusion, inaction and lack of scruples, blabbered the slogans minted some time in Moscow and some time in Peking. Whatever was good for Russia or China was good for the world, India, B.Desh too, according to these opportunistic servitors of imperialism and militarism.

We can recall to advantage the Indian communists supporting with all vehemence at their command the Muslim League campaign for an independent Pakistan Yesterday it was medieval obscurantism and blind bigotry that they lauded and lent a helping hand to, today it is the death-machine of a military-industrial-bureaucrat complex at Islamabad that they discover to be 'revolutionary' because Mao's benign smile beams on the oafish oligarchs of Pindi.

Those who never analysed the class character of the Muslim League before or after 1947 are today bursting with erudition of a pseudo-Marxist variety in giving an expose of the class composition of the Awami League of B. Desh. They could never see that West Pakistan belonged to the Middle East and medievalism whereas East Bengal belongs to South-East Asia and secular and militant modernism. That Pakistan was an empire and not a nation, that E. Bengal was a colony of Pindi and not an integral part of Pakistan.

Farland, the American Ambassador, had sought from Mujib, in the early part of this year, assent to a U.S. military base at Manpura on the coast of Bay of Bengal. Mujib had been promised independent B. Desh as a quid pro quo under American hegemony. He refused to oblige the Yankees. Farland again sought an interview with the Sheikh while Kissinger was in Pindi. The Sheikh turned down the demand. But this neither suited the Eagle nor the Dragon which explains their wrath

against the Awami League. Both Peking and the Pentagon seek easy and free access to the Bay of Bengal down Sikkim and the tribal belts of India, Burma and Pakistan, and, hence, have promoted in this corridor missionary and mandarin subversion so that a sovereign tribal State or several independent States are established to serve their ambitions.

By the way, who are 'the fighting people of Pakistan' whom China is supporting? The hordes of rapist Khans in B. Desh or/and the jehad-doped rabble in W. Pakistant crying for a 'crush India' war?

I. K. SHUKLA  
Imphal

### Nationalities

It is interesting to note that 'The CPI(M) works for the preservation of the unity of the Indian Union on the basis of real equality and autonomy for various nationalities...' [CC proposal for incorporation in the Party Programme]. Only a few days back Mr Promode Das Gupta had 'clarified' that the discussion over nationalities etc. was a routine academic one; that in today's situation it is not a central part of people's aspirations, struggles etc; that enemies of the Party are finding it a pandy weapon for slander. How does one explain these turnabouts!

Students of historical materialism will readily appreciate that of many sets of contradictions the major ones, particularly the principal one, shall be identified and the CP shall formulate its programme etc accordingly.

Who but narrow chauvinist comprador counter-revolutionary deviationist disruptionist peti-bourgeois anarchist forces can identify so-called 'national' aspirations as a major, not to talk of principal factor in today's India.

These barrister infested communists are shrewd enough to evade the penalties of the law through incorporating polemical niceties in the text.

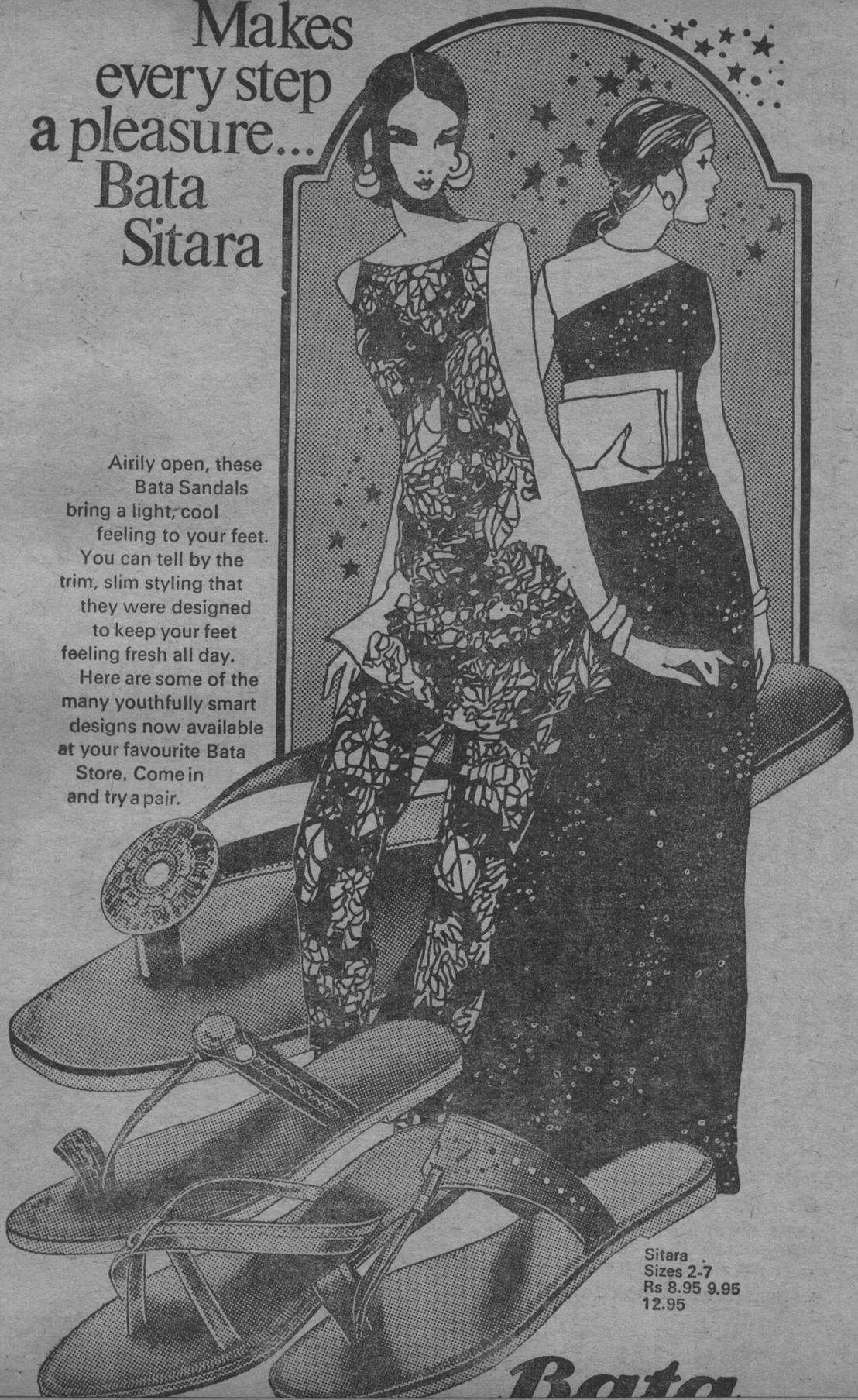
SUJOY GUHA  
Calcutta

NOVEMBER 27, 1971

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## *Milk co-operatives as an instrument for adult education*



# What happens when a village woman in Kaira peers at buffalo semen through a microscope?

In Kaira, batches of women – most of them illiterate – visit the artificial insemination centre every day. They learn the mysteries of conception and birth in scientific terms, from the technicians employed by their milk co-operative. Can they help relating these facts to themselves? When their technicians speak of the nutrition needs of buffaloes and calves, their thoughts turn to themselves and their children.

A new view of their own life begins to form, and the frontiers of knowledge widen. When true education begins, superstition breaks down.

## **Amul has shown the way.**