

# frontier

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## STRONGER ARM IN NAGALAND

THE Government of India's decision to declare unlawful the Naga National Council and its associate organisations, including the putative government and the army of the hostiles, is in line with New Delhi's growing intolerance of nonconformism in all its manifestations. It has not batted an eyelid in reversing the policy of the past eight years of trying for a conciliation from a position of strength, of negotiating at unobtrusive gun-point. Both sides may have a share of the blame if the policy has not been a grand success; but it cannot be denied that whatever improvement there has been in the Nagaland situation is entirely due to the policy that is now being dismissed as unproductive. The State is once again poised on the threshold of an interminable chain of violence and counter-violence which may not only disrupt the uneasy peace in the State, but also have wider repercussions. The hardened attitude of the Government has put the doves among the hostiles at a disadvantage and placed the hawks on top.

The immediate reason for the Government's decision is said to be the cowardly attempt to assassinate the Nagaland Chief Minister. The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Mr K. C. Pant, himself has said in Parliament that the underground are now isolated and small groups of fanatic individuals are trying to obstruct the development and prosperity of Nagaland, maybe the attempt on the life of the Chief Minister was made by one such group. But to tar everyone associated with the Naga National Council for the fault of a handful is a travesty of justice. Not all of them are hostiles; certainly not those of the so-called Naga Federal Government who were in the peace observers team, which has now been dissolved by the team's convener, Dr M. Aram, obviously because it would have lost its representative character and, therefore, effectiveness with the elimination of its members belonging to the outlawed organisation. All contacts with the hostiles have now been snapped, and even the moderates among them are left with no alternative but to toe the militant line of the others.

What the policy of the Nagaland Government will be has been made clear by the Chief Minister who has declared that the Opposition MLAs who always advocated the cause of the underground will be tried under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act if they failed to change their stand.

Maybe there are not many in the country outside the extreme elements among the hostiles who support the secessionist demand for an independent sovereign Nagaland. But there are certainly a large number of people who want a conciliatory approach to be brought to bear on the Naga problem, who feel a military solution will be self-defeating. If that is an offence, many eminent people are guilty of it, including Mr Jayaprakash Narayan. It seems the Nagaland Chief Minister is bent on utilising the hardened attitude of the

Centre to stifle all opposition to him; the MLAs will be arrested and the army will be asked to tackle the average citizen. The Government should have learnt by this time that terror cannot stabilise peace; it merely erodes the tenuous hold of the Government. The result of the new policy will be no different, even if the Government's assumption that with the creation of Bangladesh the hostiles have been considerably weakened by the loss of their friendly hinterland is correct.

contribution to the liberation of Bangladesh. India may be the biggest enemy of Bangladesh, but bigger is Russia; for reasons which are possibly beyond the understanding of the Maulana. His love for China is something like Bhutto's love for China—for reasons not ideological but entirely personal or factional. The Maulana is damaging socialist values for the sake of immediate diplomatic gains. He may and should be able to form a united front of leftists in the critical days facing Bangladesh, but his propaganda is not right. The situation is so bad there that stories need not be concocted to expose the Awami League. People of Kerala and West Bengal have with great hardship learnt that lies and fantasy cannot keep a United Front alive for long.

## Politics And Fantasy

*A correspondent writes:*

Because of his age or maybe because of his nature Maulana Bhasani is prone to mix up reality with illusion, politics with fantasy. The statements and promises he has been making recently do not lend any weight to his political stance; on the contrary, they will deprive him of the credibility or whatever little of it he might still possess. He has promised that he will secure the recognition of Bangladesh by China within 12 days if Mujib accompanies him on a trip to Peking. As if the issue of recognition were a personal matter between Mao, Bhasani and Mujib. China has made it clear that Bangladesh should not be made a member of the United Nations before she agrees to abide by the UN resolutions. If the Maulana believes that Mujib has to be taken to Mao for a clearer explanation of the Chinese stand, he must be living in a fool's paradise. Mujib knows well what the issue is. It is not a simple question of repatriation of the prisoners of war—it is the patronage of the Russian bear.

The Maulana could have been more of a help if he could stick to facts. China alleges that Bangladesh harbours the Indian army even now Bhasani says that 42,000 Indian soldiers have entered recently to control a situation arising out of

a severe clash between the Bangladesh Army and the Bangladesh Navy in Chittagong. Besides, the administration of the Bangladesh armed forces is completely controlled by Indian officers. Not that the Indian Government is incapable of doing such things. But the Maulana has made the charges in quite a cavalier fashion. He also says that thousands, if not lakhs of Indians, are entering Bangladesh without passports every week now—presumably to overburden the Bangladesh economy. They are being given shelter by the Hindus of Bangladesh, who are by implication acting as fifth columnists by helping the infiltrating Indians. The charge, if it was substantiated, could have been a serious one. Unsubstantiated, it makes the Hindus of Bangladesh more vulnerable to communalists.

The Maulana believes that India is the biggest enemy of Bangladesh. The charge is not made by him alone. But the fact is, nobody would take the Maulana seriously because he took shelter in India when Bangladesh was burning. It may be argued that his personal presence was not absolutely necessary for his men in their fight against the Pak army. But the fact nonetheless remains, he eulogised Indira Gandhi when he was in India and prayed to Allah for her long life because of her 'glorious'

## Sugar For Speculation

This not the first time that the sugar policy has not been announced in time and the immediate impact of the policy announcement for the 1972-73 season has been a further spurt in the open market price of the commodity which was already ruling at a very high level. Whether sugar remains under control or not, the unscrupulous millowners and traders know how to manipulate the situation so that the consumer could be fleeced with impunity. Although there is a thing like monthly release of sugar, the spate of speculative buying during the closing months of a sugar season has become a regular feature. Speculators never find it difficult to corner a sizable portion of supplies for creating an artificial scarcity. Perhaps the amount of money the sugar interests put in the coffer of the ruling Congress during the last elections allows them this liberty. The sugar lobby is today so powerful, with the Minister for Food and Agriculture being indulgent to it, that the consumer can hardly look forward to the day when there will be enough sugar for him

at a reasonable price. Since there is no organisation to protect the interest of consumers and the Government will not do anything except making some harmless noise, the common man looks on helplessly. What else can he do but follow the Prime Minister's prescription of doing without sugar? Yes, he must know that there are things like tea or coffee without sugar and that's à la mode.

Industry circles have generally welcomed the new sugar policy; but they would have been happier if the quantum of sugar for free sale had remained at 36.5 per cent. But the mills know well how to make up any shortfall in total realisation by bringing some pressure on the vulnerable price line. The other two features of the new policy that need to be mentioned are the fixation of the minimum sugarcane price at Rs. 8 a quintal linked to a recovery of 8.5 per cent, compared with Rs. 7.37 a quintal linked to a recovery of 9.4 per cent at present and the reversion to the uniform levy price for the whole country. The Agricultural Prices Commission apart, the mills are in favour of a higher minimum price for sugarcane to stop any large-scale diversion to gur and khandsari manufacturers. What is, however, puzzling is the shelving of the recommendation of the Cabinet sub-committee for a minimum price of Rs. 8.50 a quintal linked to a recovery of 9 per cent. In any case the decision to increase the cane price has come too late, since in most cases the decision has already been taken whether to grow sugarcane or any other crop. It is known that the Government accepted the differential price formula under pressure from north Indian mills. The Government did not seem to have considered the consequences that its policy might have. There was always the fear that the more efficient mills in the west and south might cut down their production to get the benefits north Indian mills had been offered. If in the process of working out a uniform

price the Government now fixes a higher price, that will mean an additional burden for the consumer. Speculators who thrive on the lacunae

of the distribution system have, however, no worries; the new policy is not going to introduce a foolproof distribution machinery.

## New Wave

The proliferation of papers, and more papers, on West Bengal's economic woes and their solution goes on. Last week, the State Ministers and the planning people produced two more papers on the State plan. One of them is a blueprint to rejuvenate the dying Fourth Plan in a changed form. And the other is a further exercise to modernise the State's economy during the next quinquennial period.

In a sense these new plans reveal the new economic thinking of the new rulers. A sudden realisation that the State's agriculture should be reorganised seems to have dawned on the national and State leaders. The axe is supposed to fall on the old kulaks and a new agricultural-industrialist class is to be raised in their place. Power, water and marketing facilities will be provided to these new rich at the State's initiative and at its cost. Legislation on land ceiling will be there of course. But it will be to aid this new class and hoodwink the vast masses of the poor farmers and the landless. It will also be a damper on left agitators.

To mobilise the agricultural surplus and then to use it for expanding the industrial capital is the gist of this new economic policy. Though the new wave has visited this State only recently, it has already deluded Punjab, Haryana and other States of north and north-west India. But to what effect, we all know. Similar promises are being made to the farmers of West Bengal by the ruling party and its planners. They have been promised more jobs and a better diet; and perhaps a lighted home too. But there are certain other questions which the planners do not answer. What about, for instance, the eviction of the sharecroppers?

Primary reports indicate that they are finding it increasingly hard to renew their tilling rights and are swelling the labourers' ranks. Then there are such delicate issues like the wage level, the labourers' bargaining strength and the corroding influence of prices. Neither the Ministers nor their planners could shed much light on these points, except toss up some vague promises and hinting at vaguer means to realise them.

Land ownership will be left intact and collectivisation has been discounted, though a few more pieces of legislation have been suggested. Maybe, one or two laws will be carried through, which will allow greater State infringement and further restrain landowners' rights. But if Punjab and other northern States are any indicators, such legislative measures might just readjust the present land relations, but it cannot solve the agrarian problem. Bourgeoisification may light up a few more rich homes, the country at large will continue to be in darkness.

## Rethinking

*A correspondent writes:*

Reports that Charu Mazumdar had revised the tactical line of the CPI (ML) before he was arrested on July 16 seem to be corroborated by the latest issue of the party's English journal, *Liberation*, which bears the date of 10 August. The issue, as bulky as it used to be when police vigilance was less severe, which must be regarded as an achievement considering the circumstances in which it has been published, gives an idea of the line Mazumdar evolved in the

weeks before his arrest.

Anyone who had occasion to go through earlier issues of *Liberation* cannot but be struck by the absence of frequent reference and emphasis on the programme of annihilation of the class enemies in the latest issue. Not that the programme has been given up. But it seems the emphasis has now shifted to establishing the party within the class, to build it among the broad worker-peasant masses. Starvation deaths and unrest among workers and students have been given an importance so long denied to them. The party feels that in the present situation it should unite with the broadest sections of the people on the basis of united struggle against Congress rule. Though armed peasant struggle still remains in command, the programme of "united struggle" and the decision to work with those with whom the party has differences without, of course, making any compromise, seems significant.

There is also a new emphasis on the role of the working class in the party's programme. It proposes to build up secret party organisations of the working class in every factory to unite the broad worker, peasant and toiling people in all kinds of movement. As the awakening of the working class is taking the form of an explosion, the party wants to make the leadership of the working class firmer and to conduct the struggle by becoming integrated with the workers and poor and landless peasants.

Incidentally, certain articles in the issue refer, for the first time again, to the existence of a people's liberation army in certain parts of West Bengal.

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## Tamil Nadu

### The Simpson Workers

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

**A**FTER a lapse of about two months, the Simpson issue was once again raised in the press thanks to the exploitation by the management. It is hard to imagine how the workers, about 12,000, managed to survive after the closure of Simpson units from June 15. No one took the statistics of how many workers pledged their brass vessels, small gold ornaments, including the sacred mangala sutra of their wives, in Marwari shops.

It was stated in the press that the various Simpson units had re-opened from August 23. But the news about large attendance must have been collected from the office of the Commissioner of Police. Actually, the attendance was thin because the management had sacked 439 workers before re-opening. Now a majority of the workers are on hunger-strike over this issue.

The English dailies in Madras had created an illusion about the Simpson management. The conspiracy of the management is beyond words. It did not bother about the starvation of the poor workers. Starvation of the employees is always a gain to the employers in India. The main aim of the Simpson management was to sack all the progressive elements in the union and this was achieved.

The second news item on the same day was about the release of Mr Kuchelar, the President of the Simpson Workers Union. He was released on bail by the order of Madras High Court on the 22nd on certain conditions: He should not address any public meeting or workers' meeting. (Because he used to "instigate violence in a planned way" if the workers were attacked by the agents of the employers). He should live in Vellore as an exile and should present himself at the Vellore Police

Station daily at 11 a.m.

A big reception was given to Mr Kuchelar on the eve of his release from the Central Jail, Madras. About 3,000 workers attended the reception. The workers raised slogans like "Long Live Revolutionary Leader Kuchelar", "Long Live Workers' Unity" and "Long Live Revolution".

Apart from Mr Kuchelar there were about 249 workers in jail on false charges. Further, about 184 workers of Addison & Co. (another unit of Simpson) were suspended and six were dismissed without valid reasons. After sacking 439 workers, the Simpson management was ready to open the various units with the consent of both the Central and the State Government. Strong protests were made by the group leaders of Kuchelar, who control about 90% of the Simpson workers. Mr Kottur Gopal, the defeated president of the Simpson union but a leading trade union leader of the DMK, wanted about 400 Kuchelar elements to be sacked. Mr Sivasalem, the managing director of Simpson, fulfilled this desire. Neither Mr Mohan Kumaramangalam nor Mr Karunanidhi is interested in the fate of the Simpson workers. Strangely, on the Simpson issue, INTUC, AITUC and HMS are lending support to the DMK, though in the platform they cry differently.

It is not certain how long the workers of Simpson will be able to agitate without the presence of Mr Kuchelar. Two workers of Simpson went on hunger-strike from August 28. This is likely to develop into a fast unto death unless their demands are conceded. They demand withdrawal of the suspension orders on 439 workers and cancellation of the shifting of some of the units from Madras to Salem and Coonoor.

The local leaders of the Congress (R) expressed surprise at the statement made by Mr Khadilkar, the Union Labour Minister, congratulating Mr Sivasalem, the managing director of Simpson, for reopening the factories on the 23rd instant. The

progressive youths of the Congress(R) condemned Mr Khadilkar for siding with the DMK in the Simpson affair.

The Governor of Tamil Nadu, Mr K. K. Shah, is now very busy collecting petitions from anti-DMK parties. He is reported to have received about 100 petitions in August, including one from the Simpson Workers Union under the guidance of the CPM. The DMK leaders used abusive languages over the Governor's action at the DMK meet in Madurai. This ultimately led to clashes between the DMK and the anti-DMK parties in the State. Regarding the abolition of Governorships in all the States, the CPM agrees with the DMK. At the same time the DMK does not understand how the CPM can joint with the anti-DMK front by submitting a petition to the Governor over the Simpson issue.

It is reported that Mr Kamaraj and Mrs Indira Gandhi will be jointly addressing a public meeting on September 6 on the occasion of laying the foundation stone for the new broad gauge line at Kanyakumari. If true, this will strengthen the unity between the Congress (O) and the Congress (R) in the State. According to a top level source from the Congress (R), this unity will help the toppling operations in Tamil Nadu.

But how far will this unity serve the thousands of workers who are hungry and are exploited by the industrialists and cotton interests? The combination of the two Congresses is most likely to take the side of the exploiters and this will not prevent the same leaders to shed crocodile tears for Simpson employees and handloom workers in the State.

#### Deaths in Madras

According to a press communiqué, 14 children aged between six months and four years have died in the Children's Hospital, Madras. The first death occurred on July 17. These deaths are due to the administration of a spurious drug by

private doctors. At a critical stage, the Children's Hospital admitted these victims with kidney failure. It was only during the last six days of August that the doctors at the Children's Hospital began to suspect the medicine, a batch or batches of a formulation called PIPMOL drops and PIPMOL-C as the possible cause. The report of the King Institute Laboratory reveals that a wrong chemical, DI Ethylene, was used as the base, which usually makes up the bulk of a liquid medicine, in place of the correct chemical. DI Ethylene alcohol is a toxic chemical; a tablespoonful of this, given three times a day, could cause the death of a little child. Even in small doses, the chemical collects in the body and could lead to kidney failure. The medicine is manufactured by a local company and newly introduced on the market. It contains Paracytamol, commonly used to control fever and favoured by doctors because it is less toxic than aspirin.

What is the real situation? In the first place, a doubt arises that there might have been hundreds of deaths—the press counted only the deaths in a single hospital. The communiqué stated that none survived after consumption of the spurious drug i.e. Pipmol drops. Therefore, the deaths should be counted from the total sales of the drug plus the free distribution of samples to the doctors. It is also doubtful whether all the cases have been admitted to the Children's Hospital. What about the deaths in the houses and the countryside? The Government has not yet taken any serious action. None of the doctors who prescribed the spurious drug have been subjected to an enquiry. The Government is content after seizing the stocks from the various chemists and druggists. It has not even arrested the manufacturers of the spurious drug, viz. M/s Pan Indian Pharmaceuticals, Madras, who are responsible for the deaths of many infants in Madras.

August 31, 1972

## Sri Lanka

### Five Skeletons

FROM A COLOMBO  
CORRESPONDENT

ON June 21, the *Daily News*, a Colombo English paper, carried a short article entitled 'Brutal Killings: Five Skeletons Exhumed'. This notice has brought to light once again the brutal actions of the police since the insurrection of April 1971. Last year this journal reported another case of a female 'insurgent' raped and publicly murdered by army officers in the sacred (Hindu) town of Kataragama, in the south of Ceylon.

Last year on April 14 when a 24-hour curfew was imposed in Ceylon, a complaint was recorded at Matara Police Station by a resident stating that his brother and some friends had been murdered by the police. In spite of numerous complaints made to the Inspector General of Police and various Members of Parliament and Cabinet Ministers the case was hushed up. After fourteen months, however, an enquiry has begun.

These killings took place at the height of the repressive legislation imposed by the coalition government of Mrs Bandaranaike. The Emergency Regulations, amongst other things, suspended the normal law and rights of enquiry and gave the armed forces and the police the right to kill, burn and bury. Many young people—girls and boys—were forcibly taken away from their homes. Many such cases have been recorded. They were often forced to dig their own graves and then shot on the premises of the police station.

The five skeletons were exhumed on June 21 in Tangalle by order of the local Magistrate. The Judicial Medical Officer's report clearly stated that "all five skeletons from Walasmulla buried and unearthed from under the billing tree in the Walasmulla police station contain fractures

indicating possible gunshot injuries before death".

We understand from reliable sources that the youths who were shot were not taken on suspicion of insurgent activity. In fact there were no attacks recorded in this area throughout this period. The young boys were rounded up by the police. The police then made threats to the

parents demanding large sums of money. If the ransom was paid in a given time, they would be released. Amongst those captured a few parents who could afford to pay had their boys released. The story of the Walasmulla police shooting came to light on the evidence of one such boy who escaped death. The rest were shot into graves that they were order-

ed to dig.

It is high time the government withdrew the emergency law giving wide powers to the police and armed services in Sri Lanka. The threat to the lives of innocent people comes not from insurgents but from the very force that is expected to maintain law and order in this bourgeois society.

## American Troops Heading For Thailand

KARRIM ESSACK

**W**ITH great fanfare and beating of drums, Nixon recently announced that he had ordered a further withdrawal of troops from Vietnam.

The thing he did not tell the world is whether the troops were going back home or somewhere else. The truth is that the troops would be heading for Thailand.

In 1966 correspondents said rather hesitantly that there were about 15,000 U.S. troops in Thailand. Today these very reporters are saying rather categorically that there are more U.S. troops in Thailand than in Vietnam.

American imperialism, far from withdrawing, is very much determined to stay and safeguard its interests in South-East Asia. Even if one set of dominoes falls in Indochina, it has bolstered its other sets in Thailand and the Philippines. Nixon's so-called withdrawal is just fake. His withdrawal is just a shift in location. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the National Liberation Forces in South Vietnam, instead of being bombed from bases like Da Nang, have now to contend against planes from U.S. air bases like Phanom, Khorat, Utao and Ubon in Thailand.

It was said that after the fall of Ngo Diem, the puppet President of South Vietnam, U.S. advisers swarmed into Thailand. Correspondents then reported that "there are five big U.S. air bases in central

and north-east Thailand, and more are being constructed".

That was understandable, for, by 1966, Thailand had already become the headquarters of the South East Asia Treaty Organisation consisting of the United States, Britain, France, Thailand, Philippines, Pakistan, Australia and New Zealand.

A report said that as early as 1957 a permanent military planning office was set up in Bangkok. Its work included the development of defensive (?) plans, the planning of military exercises, the standardisation of service procedures, and specialist meetings dealing with intelligence, "counter-subversion", logistics, communications and cartography. The Asian members received considerable military and civil training assistance.

Recently more bases have been built at Tukli, Kurai. A giant base has been constructed at Nam Phong. U.S. aircraft have moved into these bases after the Americans evacuated their huge bases in South Vietnam. The air build-up has been formidable. Early this year there were only 450 U.S. planes. Within six months the number has shot up to 750. The number of B52s has doubled within the last two months. Today 70 per cent of U.S. aircraft on the mainland are based in Thailand.

The Americans, however, operate far away from the Thai capital. The headquarters of American military personnel is at Udon. It is here

that the "military assistance for Laos" is lodged. It is also the jumping ground for helicopters for the puppet army of Laos. Thus the aerial warfare against Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos is being conducted from Thailand.

Apart from military hardware that has poured in, the U.S. Congress voted a sum of \$600 million recently because Thailand is regarded as an excellent region for capitalist exploitation.

The Chase Manhattan Bank, owned by the liberal Rockefeller, said: "Thailand promises to be an excellent investment and sales area for Americans if the rebel insurgency could be contained".

The other monopolists had the same idea. From 1960 to 1969 American investment increased from \$25 million to \$195 million.

Thailand has a population of 34 million. But only half of them are Thais. The rest are Meos, Laos, Vietnamese and Chinese. The latter are in the south bordering Malaya.

In 1968, the Royal Thai Army consisted of 80,000 troops. This number has increased through U.S.

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efforts at "modernisation". It is further strengthened by the presence of more than 50,000 U.S. troops.

### "Rebels"

Yet the Thai Government is weaker than it was a few years ago because it is faced with guerilla troops with units numbering more than a 100.

The enemies admit that these "rebels" are well armed, though paradoxically the main suppliers are the Americans. The arms supplied to Thai puppet troops have a habit of making their way to the guerillas. Their weapons include rocket launchers, mortars, and plastic mines which cannot be detected by mine-sweepers.

The north-east is a vast area where about a third of the Thais live. It was in this region that guerillas launched their first armed struggle in 1965. At that time it was essentially a movement of the landless peasants who were mercilessly being expropriated by the bourgeoisie from Bangkok.

Other peasants, if not evicted, were turned into tribute-paying serfs of the speculators. The military strategy of the Thai Liberation Front is to gain political power by way of armed struggle and its immediate task has been the political mobilisation of the masses.

The second area has been in the north which has a common border with Laos and Burma. Here the struggle has been conducted by the Meo and the Lao people. The region is Nam province. Only the main roads are said to be safe, but only recently 14 air-cavalry men were liquidated. A significant develop-

ment has been the forging of unity between the Meo and the Lao people.

The third area is in the south. The guerilla movement is still led by the veteran Chin Peng. The area borders Malaysia and counter-insurgency experts like Thompson have completely failed here. Only recently the guerillas, mounting motor-bikes, invaded the provincial capital and scattered leaflets right on to the doorsteps of the provincial governor.

The guerillas continue to elude the puppet troops. A correspondent of the London-based *Times* wrote recently: "One communist camp, the Marxist-Leninist College, was located, bombed, mortared and strafed and taken by troops. But it was empty".

In April this year, the Prime Minister of Thailand who was leader of the armed forces, overthrew a puppet civilian government and launched large-scale attacks in the three provinces of Pittsan lock, Lōēy and Phetchabun.

In a desperate attempt at another "mopping up" operation he threw in thousands of troops, as well as policemen and "defence volunteer units". But this ended in dismal failure with his forces losing 40 aircraft, 10 military vehicles and 820 troops being either killed or wounded.

The Voice of the People of Thailand in a broadcast said that in the space of six months the Patriotic forces:

Wiped out 2,266 enemy troops, destroyed 67 enemy aircraft, put out of action or captured 65 enemy armoured cars, captured 30 enemy strongholds, and captured large quantities of military material and weapons.

It has been frequently said that should Indochina fall, Thailand is bound to be the U.S. second line of defence. But the scale of the people's war is growing and this domino is already beginning to shake violently with the march of the liberation forces.

Thailand could well become the Vietnam of tomorrow.

## Letter From Chiang Mai

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

EVERYTHING is very quiet in this provincial town, 700 kilometres north of Bangkok. With its heat, traffic jam and dust Bangkok in fact seems even further away from Chiang Mai, cradled into cool, green mountains. It is hard to imagine that a few kilometres from here the mountains are not really very "cool". It is the beginning of what the Thai Government calls "sensitive zone" where the guerillas of the Thai Patriotic Front are giving it a hell of a time. A large part of Chiang Mai and almost the whole of Chiang Rai province in the further north have in fact been abandoned after a huge army operation was routed by the insurgents last year. Publicly government officials claim that the situation indeed has "improved" since last year because there are not many incidents involving the insurgents. But other knowledgeable people say this claim is "self-deception". As one local observer said, "the communists are in fact very much in the control of villages. The local officials for their own safety have entered into a quiet understanding with them. The communists meanwhile are entrenching themselves and extending their activities to newer areas." And this perhaps explains the apparent calm, interpreted as "improvement" by the officials. When I asked an official to take me to one such "improved" village, he replied with an embarrassed smile, "it would be too risky for you."

The Government which has tried all possible means including the use of artillery and napalm to bring what it calls "CTS" (Communist Terrorists) to their heels has of late been trying some other methods—tested and refined in Laos. This is a slightly modified version of the infamous American policy of "urbanization" in reply to a village-based peasant guerilla war. Dry up the water in which the guerilla "fish"

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SEPTEMBER 9, 1972

swims, destroy the villages so that the surviving population migrates towards the urban area. The guerillas would be left to fend for themselves. This policy has been applied with apparent success in Laos where the entire Plain of Jars has turned into a desert resembling the moon after two years of intensive bombing. Since towns like Vientiane or Chieng Mai are unlikely to support the load to be caused by such "urbanization", the refugees "generated" by such bombing had better be herded in camps. And this is what has been done in Laos and is now being attempted by the Thai Government with the expert advice of USOM (US Operation Mission). Hill tribes from areas still accessible to the Government are being forced to migrate to three camps erected around Chieng Mai. The State Welfare Department provided the "refugees" with some role while the latter can profitably use their time by producing works of handicraft for sale to European tourists in Chieng Mai. Rifle-toting Border Petrol Police can see to it that they do not get affected by the communist virus.

The other important arm of the Thai counter-insurgency is the 93rd Division of the Kuomintang army that operates in the upper reaches of Chieng Rai and north Burma. In 1949, after Generalissimo Chiang Kai-sek escaped to Taiwan, this division took refuge in the mountains of Burma and Thailand and since then has been earning a living by cultivating opium, the demand for which has skyrocketed since the landing of U.S. marines in Vietnam. The Thai Government has struck a deal with the KMT: they would be allowed to operate without hindrance and produce their opium if they can regularly hunt some communist heads. Weapons are no problem. As one informant said, regularly supplied by U.S. air-drops the 93rd Division of the KMT is one of the most sophisticated of the "irregular" forces in South-East Asia.

Although a major base for Ame-

rican military activity, the Americans in the town of Chieng Mai itself are very quiet. You'll find them strolling in the market with striped trousers and open-neck sports-shirt taking pictures of kids and yellow-robed monks and in the evening walking with Thai prostitutes with arms around their waist. In a notice in an unobtrusive corner of the reception desk of the Prince Hotel the U.S. military command advises the

American military personnel in town not to wear uniform, never to drive a car or a motor-bike within the town limits, and behave as "gentle ambassadors" of the U.S. In the afternoon, standing at the edge of Chieng Mai airport I found two camouflaged DC-3s landing one after the other. Returning perhaps from one of America's clandestine missions. They were unmarked, like many other things in Chieng Mai.

## A Retrograde Step

OBSERVER

ONCE again, Al-Fatah is revealing its reactionary aims. This time the ground of its reaction is not Jordan, but Lebanon. In September 1970 leaders of Al-Fatah, unfortunately the largest Palestinian commando group, failed to acknowledge the fact that a reactionary, monopolist and tyrannical regime like that of Jordan and a progressive and nationalist movement like the Palestinian revolution could never meet. Yet Arafat pursued throughout the policy of non-interference with the regime and "co-existence-clash, co-existence-clash" towards it. In spite of a series of attempts on the part of the King to liquidate the Palestinian guerilla movement, starting with the "Taher Dablan" murder of November 1968, followed by the abortive attempts of February 1969 and June 1970, Al-Fatah insisted on that dangerous policy and it was reflected in the leftist commando organisations because of the majority it enjoys. The inevitable end of September 1970, the liquidation and dismissal of the Palestinian commandos by the monstrous Jordanian army, was thus partly due to Al-Fatah.

Al-Fatah is a purely nationalist movement, socially conservative, and with no plans of fighting either imperialism or Arab reaction. Though in May 1970 the PFLP made it clear to the other organisations that the

Jordanian regime was contemplating an abortive attack on the commandos in the first week of June, Al-Fatah turned a deaf ear to that. When the prediction came true, it was the PFLP which moved fast and foiled the attempt, thus acquiring more prestige and support among the Palestinian and Arab masses.

Al-Fatah has also revealed its immaturity militarily. It objected throughout to the PFLP's plan of purging the reactionary regime and replacing it by a progressive one to serve the objective of the revolution, and stood against the latter, adhering to a policy respected only by itself and unobserved by the regime. And when it became clear to Al-Fatah that the regime was contemplating a deadly blow in September 1970, it mobilised its militia in Amman and stood hands tied up. It could not realise that if a military confrontation was deemed inevitable, it was wise for any revolution to fight the enemy according to its, and not the enemy's strategy, and whenever possible, to deprive the enemy of its initiative. Instead, Al-Fatah mobilised its militia and waited. Eventually, when the army showed up, the commandos had it on their heads and the confrontation was as planned by the army. The end was a severe blow to the revolution.

Now Al-Fatah is committing a simi-

SEPTEMBER 9, 1972

lar blunder in Lebanon. In a statement following the signing of an agreement to put an end to the commando activities from south Lebanon, Arafat and the Lebanese Premier Salam announced that any attempt on the part of any group to break the agreement would be tackled individually by both the Lebanese army and Al-Fatah. A number of questions arise:

Why at all this agreement? Why at this juncture? Does it have any reasonable background? Does it have anything to do with the last Israeli attack against Lebanon? It is evident that this attempt is planned against the leftist organisations (PFLP, PDFLP and Arab Liberation Front). If the Israeli attack is considered to be a sequel to the last Lydda airport operation performed by the three Japanese commandos of the Red Star army, it was made clear by the PFLP that those people performed the operation without treading on any Arab land, and inspired by their commitment to the global revolution against imperialism and Zionism, of which the Palestinian revolution is but a phase. Why at all this agreement of "paralysing the commando activity" when it is the leading awareness at the Arab level regarding the liberation movements against imperialism and Zionism on Arab soil? In what way do the commando activities endanger Lebanese security? Why should the guerilla movement be held responsible for Israeli raids against Lebanon, when these raids had started in the early fifties? Lebanese villages like Alkhiyam suffered Israeli attacks in the early sixties, at a time when commando operations had not yet been launched. The Israeli designs of occupying the whole south Lebanon up to the Litani river in Al Biqa district were recorded long back in Zionist official documents, soon after the creation of Israel.

But now the Lebanese government is adopting the Jordanian logic of a few years back. And if Al-Fatah's designs for liquidating the leftist commando groups again become

clear on the Lebanese front, the role of the Lebanese government is not to be overlooked. It is said that the Lebanese army is being equipped with light weapons for 'strengthening Lebanese defences against Israel'. Ought not the Palestinians realise that light weapons cannot be effective against the Israeli army, against the most sophisticated arsenal in the Middle East? Haven't Al-Fatah logicians realised that these weapons are meant for another purpose? Haven't they learnt from the Jordanian logic and the revolution's experiences on Jordanian soil?

Well, it is time for the Palestinians to realise that their revolution has reached a very critical stage. It is time Al-Fatah fighters realised that they should no more trust Arab governments which dealt them a severe blow by accepting the Rogers plan and let them down in Jordan when they were being liquidated. Progressive elements among Al-Fatah commandos should join hands with the leftist organisations and have serious links with the masses, the ultimate and true basis and hope of the revolution and place their leaders in their proper places.

## The Myth Of Nkrumah

ANIRUDHA GUPTA

**E**VEN as the body of Nkrumah was laid in peace in the small town of Nkroful, where sixty-two years ago he was born, a sense of guilt and shame overcame many Ghanaians. Weeping, breast-beating mourners blamed themselves for having wronged the man who had led them to independence; youths and workers went about collecting funds to raise a new monument to the "Osagyefo", and the old and the middle-aged sang songs they had learnt by rote during the heyday of the CPP. The popular mood was neatly expressed by *The Echo*: "In our usual reckless emotionalism... we did not only vilify Nkrumah, we called him a demon and sought to wipe away any traces of him".

The surge of pro-Nkrumah sentiment alarmed the leaders of Ghana's second army regime: as men who had connived at and benefited from his downfall they could neither welcome nor ignore the sentiment for fear of arousing all-round antipathy. Hence they struck a compromise: bowing to popular pressure they had negotiated with the Guinean Government for the return of Nkrumah's body to Ghana and, though refusing to accord a State funeral, they nevertheless

ordered flags to be flown at half-mast in Accra. As if to prove their impartiality they went one step further to issue a statement which said: "Nkrumah's place in history is assured as the principal architect of Ghana's independence which hastened the pace of liberation movements in Africa".

In the recent history of coups, civil disorder, and mass expulsion this is perhaps a unique event in Africa. In publicly acknowledging Nkrumah's greatness, Ghana's military rulers have departed from the routine practice of condemning civilian rule as undependable and corrupt. The departure is all the more remarkable as it signifies, howsoever weakly, the army's subscription to the brand of militant nationalism Nkrumah had preached. Perhaps the posture became necessary in order to show that Ghana's new leaders wanted a real break from Dr Busia's policy of selling the country to the foreigners. But the more important point is that in responding to popular opinion Colonel Achaempong's regime accepted the fact that popular will still plays a role in Africa. This has to be emphasized, especially in view of the scepticism that has grown in recent years about the inconsequential

nature of African politics. Also, Nkrumah's return to Ghana raises the hope that the ideals he upheld may once more enthuse and arouse the spirit of the upcoming generations. Is it possible that, after an interregnum of a decade, Africa will pick up the lost thread of its nationalist past and begin anew the task initiated at Ghana's independence in 1957? The task remains exactly what Nkrumah had described *viz*: "Ghana's independence will be incomplete unless it is linked up with the liberation of other territories in Africa".

The essential appeal of Nkrumah lies in the fact that he was a pan-Africanist first, and nationalist only by accident. In his *Autobiography* Nkrumah described himself as "a son of Africa", and his political opinions, as expressed in his writings, always took a transnational character. This is so because Nkrumah belonged to a generation which learnt to think and act in terms of an oppressed race which had no root in any country. Africa in those days consisted of a variety of territorial units in the possession of different colonial powers. With the exception of a few independent States such as Ethiopia, Liberia, and some States in the north, Black Africa represented a cultural homogeneity in the sense that all its peoples suffered the indignities and injustice of alien rule. For the generation of Nkrumah, therefore, it was natural to think and plan its future in the context of a whole continent rather than in terms of the existing colonial territories. At the 1945 pan-Africanist conference held in Manchester, Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta worked as assistant secretaries in collaboration with representatives from the Americas, West Indies, and the French-speaking territories. Immediately after the conference, Nkrumah set about organizing a West African conference to cut across the language barrier that existed between the French and the English-speaking Africans. He was so committed to the task that he visited Paris to establish contacts with the African leaders and groups.

What were Nkrumah's political

ideas at this time? It does not appear that he had any, except that he was driven by an inner impulse to launch a broad inter-territorial movement for the political advancement of Africans. It also does not appear that Nkrumah was aware of the numerous obstacles to be faced in starting such a movement. What would be the immediate interests of Africans once political power was transferred to them in each territory? Would not the achievement of independence bring about the divisive forces by pushing into the background those that bound them into a fraternity? These were questions Nkrumah never put to himself. Indeed Nkrumah's approach to politics was a product of two contradictory stands he upheld simultaneously *i.e.*, on the one hand, he called for the immediate transfer of power to the Africans and, on the other hand, he argued that separate achievement of independence would result in the proliferation of effete and 'neo-colonial' States. What was to be the way out then? Not the establishment of a continental State, as he passionately desired; for that was the ultimate which could be achieved only by a workable compromise between the two strands he advocated.

Why did Nkrumah ignore this contradiction or was he, as his critics argue, really insincere? One writer alleges that Nkrumah regretted the fact that he headed a small country like Ghana and that he would have enjoyed pursuing his grand scheme had he been the ruler of Nigeria! This is a mean and unkind allegation. Contrary to the currently held opinion that Nkrumah used force and coercion to bring the African leaders to his way of thinking, I believe that he never asserted his own undoubtedly superior qualities of an organizer to achieve his ends. The dilemma of Nkrumah was that he wanted to unleash a popular movement by acting as head of a government. But this position had its own pitfall: a popular movement cannot be organized from the top; just as a government which mouths revolution-

nary slogans cannot be expected to win the confidence of established authorities in other countries.

### Two Paths

The dilemma was clearly illustrated when, a year after independence, Accra became the venue of two important conferences—first, the conference of independent African States and, second, the all-African people's conference. Writing about these conferences much later, Nkrumah noted that they were held in order to accelerate the pace of unity movement in Africa. Yet, he failed to notice the fact that the two conferences indicated two very divergent paths for Africa to take. The first conference was held in order to provide a forum to the independent African States to come closer, and exchange views and arrive at a consensus regarding the outstanding issues facing them. The second conference represented a gathering of the nationalist organizations all over Africa to devise ways and means to fight colonial rule on a continental basis. In brief, the first underlined the sovereignty of States as separate territorial units, whereas the second viewed political advancement of Africans in terms of a race. Had Nkrumah understood these facts he would have proceeded on his pan-Africanist schemes with greater consistency. As it turned out, he went on giving aid to such organizations as were labelled subversive by other governments while he did not cease consorting with many heads of States whom he called, in a different context, 'agents of imperialism'.

The tragedy of Nkrumah lies in his failure to strike a synthesis between thought and action. His political thinking lacks the vigour and precision of George Padmore or Fanon, while his record as the ruler of Ghana possesses none of those finer shades of personal devotion to detail which characterizes Julius Nyerere's leadership in Tanzania. I find, therefore, any comparison between him and Lenin, as Ali Mazrui makes in his essay on Nkrumah, the 'Leninist

Czar', as quite unsupportable. As the architect of the Bolshevik revolution Lenin too faced the problem of promoting world proletarian revolution without undermining the basis of the first workers' state in Russia. To strike a balance between these two goals, he too made several compromises (which supplied fodder to his critics to call him an 'opportunist'), but every such compromise represented an exhaustive analysis of the subjective and objective factors in a given situation, against the background of the world communist movement. Nkrumah, on the other hand, made compromises without caring much about their possible consequences. In the end, his revolutionary stance became more a matter of style rather than a means to achieve concrete results.

Indeed, one finds in Nkrumah a singular lack of enthusiasm to subject his own ideas and actions to a thorough-going scrutiny. Throughout his years in exile, he never asked himself the one fundamental question which was in the mind of everybody else viz; "Why did the revolution he initiated in Ghana fail so miserably"? There was no attempt at self-analysis; and the explanation he gives in his book, *Dark Days in Ghana*, is disappointing, if not banal. All that he has to say about the 1966 coup is that the 'agents of imperialism' seized power during his absence in Peking. But how does one explain the fact that the chief architects of the coup—Harley, Katoka and Africa—were men he had himself promoted sometime before his own ouster? It is said that Nkrumah's first reaction to the news of the coup was one of minor annoyance: "Harley will take care of the lot"—was all that he said. Yet, once the coup became an established fact, Nkrumah had no hesitation to describe Harley and others as 'neo-colonialists'. If one were to take the logic further, would not one be right to suggest that, according to Nkrumah, the entire State apparatus in Ghana and those who manned it turned 'imperialist agents'

as soon as he was removed from power?

At another point Nkrumah dwells on the difficulties he faced in recruiting the personnel of his administration. He writes: "I could have dismissed many of the higher police officers about whose loyalty I had doubts. But whom could I have put in their place"?

But, this line of argument takes one nowhere. All that it implies is that at independence a nationalist leader accepts and, in the process, gets defeated by those very elements which had been loyal to the erstwhile colonial rule. This is, to say the least, a defeatist argument and the only way to rebut it is to shout, "Please don't accept such independence then".

#### Violent Revolution

In his later writings, Nkrumah expresses the view that only a violent revolution can bring about a total restructuring of post-colonial Africa. This should indicate that, in the end, he had become critical of mass political agitation on constitutional lines which he had once employed to win Ghana's freedom. Even though this attitude reflects the mark of Fanon's ideas, it does not appear that Nkrumah made any serious attempt to work out the implications of violence in contemporary Africa. His ideology still consisted, as always, of aphorisms. For instance, in defining a neo-colonial State as late as 1969, he makes the following point:

"A State can be said to be a neo-colonialist or a client State if it is independent *de jure* and dependent *de facto*. It is a State where the political power lies in the conservative forces of the former colony and where the economic power remains under the control of international finance capital".

According to this definition, one can bracket all the independent States of Africa, including Nkrumah's own, as 'neo-colonialist', or else one fails to understand on what criterion

should Ghana under Nkrumah, which too had become increasingly dependent on international finance capital, be distinguished from others?

Yet, having said all this, it would not do to dismiss Nkrumah and his ideas. While acknowledging the fact that his political thinking lacked consistency, one should also note that his personality exercised an influence on the African mind which can be almost termed as mystic. Among the post-independence leaders of Africa, Nkrumah alone had a larger number of admirers outside rather than inside Ghana. It is not easy to explain this factor. The loyalty and obedience of Ghanaians to him during his years in authority (1957-65) may be treated as sham; but how can one explain the large measure of support he received from other Africans on whom he could exercise no control? Again, as a ruler, he had far too many imperfections which eventually caused his downfall; yet, how is it that the average Ghanaians became impatient with Nkrumah's successors and wistfully hoped for his return? As an intellectual he stands nowhere near either Sekou Toure or Nyerere, and his record as a man of action may fall short of that of many others, yet it was his very imperfections perhaps which made him dearer to the African heart. This is not surprising, for the long span of Nkrumah's life also mirrors the various stages of Africa's advance from colonial servitude to independence, from darkness to light, from adolescence to adulthood. During such stages it is but natural that errors and contradictions should take place. Kwame, which means the child born on a Saturday, may rest in peace for the myth that 'Nkrumah never dies, will certainly outlive his death!'

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## Tebhaga Recalled

N. S.

THE great Calcutta Killing and Noakhali riots of 1946 were immediately followed by a different kind of outburst in agrarian Bengal. A traditionally submerged and inoffensive community of sharecroppers suddenly captured the paddy to support their demand for two-thirds share instead of half. This demand was legitimate and violence was adopted to alter the custom. The struggle quickly spread to north Bengal districts and some pockets in Mymensingh, Midnapore, 24-Parganas, Jessore and Khulna. A big movement for the reduction of land rents (from 50 per cent of the produce to one-third) was set in motion. Concurrently with this the Hajong peasants in north Mymensingh refused to pay *tanka* until it was converted into money-rent. A wide part of Bengal was in the vortex of unrest. Yet this was not a revolution, but simply a revolt of the rent-paying tenants against the tyranny of the rural lords, the jotedars. This was in short the genesis of the Tebhaga movement.

Tebhaga brought to focus the changed dimension in agrarian Bengal. During the century and a half following the Permanent Settlement in Bengal a new class of rural landowners had emerged who settled in the infrastructure as interceptors of social surplus. In Dinajpur and Rangpur, Francis Buchanan-Hamilton once observed, landowners were new men who came from the merchants, manufacturers and government employees; or as O'Malley tells us, land was slipping into the control of land-jobbers, lawyers, traders etc. (L.S.S. O'Malley, *Modern India and the West*). In many cases the landowners were Bengali *bhadralok* who emerged out of urbanization but could not snap their rural connections. While feeble

scope of employment kept them somewhat attached to land, their own outlook, imparted by the new education, made them non-residential farmers so that their estates came to be managed by local agents who supplied another new element in the hitherto heterogeneous complex of intermediate interceptors. The reclamation of land and the appropriation of its profits by the landlords was an essential adjunct to the process of the creation and consolidation of this new class of landholders in rural Bengal.

Parallel to this another tendency was apparent in the rural world. As land slipped into the grip of new landowners, the position of the tenant-cultivator was going down. Representing nearly the lowest wing in the village community, the main function of the tenant-cultivator was to cultivate the land of the jotedar and to part with a share of the produce as rent to the landlords. The *barga* in West Bengal, *adhi* in North Bengal, *kishani* in Birbhum, *tanka* in Mymensingh were different derivatives from a single iniquitous system of produce-rent. A bargadar provided all means and expense of cultivation, supplied his labour, bartered 50 p.c. of the gross produce to the landowners as rent and in return enjoyed very little security of work. Every event of natural calamity which gave the landlord unique opportunities to turn into a hoarder-cum-trader was exploited to expropriate the owner-cultivator. Such degradation of the peasants in the rural scale of living was very marked during the first three decades of the present century. During the years of depression between 1928 and 1940 owner-cultivators lost their occupancy right and land was put up to *bhag* cultivation. The Report of the Land Revenue Commission, 1940

had to concede this fact: "The rapid increase in the number of bargadars is one of the most disquieting features of the present times; and it is an indication of the extent to which the hereditary raiyats are losing their status and being depressed to a lower standard of living. It is true that the successive provisions of the Tenancy Acts have endowed the raiyats with the practical ownership of the land. But a large and increasing proportion of the actual cultivators have no part of the elements of ownership, no protection against excessive rents, and no security of tenure". Thus the consolidation of a new kind of monopoly and affluence was matched by a rapid pauperization of a wide mass of humanity. The accumulated discontent of the bargadars burst into the Tebhaga struggle of 1946-47.

The foregoing analysis comes from the pen of one who, starting as a professional politician in his youth, became sublimated in later years and now lives in a kind of repose in the congenial company of professional historians. His study of the Tebhaga movement\* has obvious merits. He was one of its participants and organisers in Dinajpur. In his tract he combines his experience with the skill of a professional historian. He is somewhat neutral and his politician-character is singularly absent in his writing. This is remarkable because he has made no attempt to inflict on his readers the stupid drudgery of a self-composed biography which often passes off as sophisticated autobiography and with the sort of which Indian readers have of late become increasingly familiar.

### Wider Perspective

Secondly, the Tebhaga movement, instead of being studied as an isolated phenomenon, has been projected on the wider compass of contemporary history. Towards that end it

\*Agrarian Struggle in Bengal 1946-47

By Sunil Sen  
People's Publishing House. Price  
Rs. 15.

has given us important spotlights on the activities of the Congress, the behaviour of the Muslim League and the Communist Party and finally the attitude of the middle class and the government towards the important question of land reform. Bengal of 1946-47 has been scanned thoroughly and events over which a kind of translucent mist gathered over years of ignorance and propaganda have been brought to a new focus. These events include the election of 1946 (in which only three communists were elected to the assembly: Jyoti Basu, Ratanlal Brahma and Rupnarayan Ray), the February 1946 upheaval in Calcutta on the occasion of Rashid Ali Day, the activities of the Congress and the Communist Party in the context of the Bombay upheaval (21-23 February 1946), the gradual onset of communal frenzy, the call for the Tebhaga struggle by the Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha (September 1946), the revolt of the Hajongs in Mymensingh (December 1946), the coming of the Bengal Bargadars Temporary Regulation Bill (January 1947), Gandhiji's famous village tour in riot-stricken Noakhali (January 1947), the Tramway Workers' strike (21 January 1947), observance of Vietnam Day by the Bengal Provincial Students' Federation (21 January, 1947), reactions to Attlee's declaration about Indian independence in the House of Commons on 20th February 1947, the call for strike given by the Port Trust employees (6 February 1947) and the Bengal Provincial Trade Union Congress (28 March 1947), the introduction of the State Acquisition and Tenancy Bill April 1947 (it was designed to abolish the zamindari system) and the reaction of the Congress and the Communist Party to it, the succession of Wavell by Mountbatten (24 March 1947) and finally the transfer of power and the coming of Indian independence. The implication of these events and their historical inter-relatedness only form the texture in which the author weaves his story of rural Bengal in the decisive years of 1946-47. To

that end he has ransacked all the evidence of contemporary newspapers, interviewed people who were connected with the events and combines the knowledge gained thereby with his own observations. On the whole, he has surveyed an uncharted field.

Yet all these are merely outer aspects of his study. More important is his own attitude. It is shaped by a set of twin factors, positive and negative. He was actively connected with the Tebhaga movement and as such has personal knowledge about the leaders, their activities, their vacillations as well as the inner working of the mind of the peasants and the extent of their participation. On the other hand he has no acquaintance with original records. He admits in the preface that most of the records are lost. Intelligence records he has carefully shunned. As a result he adopted the invariable technique of interviewing people who have knowledge about the movement. But here he is handicapped because he could not cultivate people who belong to parties other than his (the author belongs to the CPI). Even with his own personal knowledge he could have given a transcendental character to his book if he had not delimited his scope to mere narration of events, however lucid it might be.

Four chapters of the book (chapters 3 to 6) which describe the movement from the beginning to the end, give a connected account of the unfolding of incidents. The first two chapters provide the antecedents and being outside the scope of his work admit very little opportunity for original analysis. Thus six chapters out of seven slip before the author could crush his readers with the novelty of an interpretative exposition of the movement in which he himself was a participant. Conscious and sensitive because he is a Marxist, he annexes another chapter, an 'epilogue', which like the superfluous and bogus foreword (written by Bhawani Sen) in the beginning appears to be a sore appendage to the main body of his text. In the epilogue he poses several questions: "What

was the significance of this agrarian struggle? How did the various categories of peasants react to it? What part did Muslim, Rajbansi and tribal peasants play in it? Was armed struggle feasible in the given situation?" Barring the last, all questions are simple and innocuous. More sound questions have been evaded: Was the movement confined to economic or given a political status? Why was it that the middle class could not be mobilized although the members of the provincial Kisan Sabha came mostly from this class? Why did not the leaders of Burdwan like Hare Krishna Konar and Benoy Choudhury shepherd their peasant following into the Tebhaga movement? Why did the Communist Party, with its spokesman Jyoti Basu in the Assembly, showed vacillations? Why was it that a liaison could not be built up between the peasants' movement and the working class movements in the towns and cities? About the armed struggle the author writes that it was not feasible for three reasons: (i) the Tebhaga and Tanka struggles were essentially 'partial struggles'; (ii) the struggle originated from a confused background; (iii) the contemporary nationalist situation which had changed after Attlee's declaration on 20th February 1947 did not permit an armed movement. The national leadership had accepted the British plan of transfer of power and the Communist Party's call of "final struggle for power" could not lead the agrarian struggle "over the head of the national leadership".

#### Partial Struggle

As to the first question of partial struggle one can say that it could be made all embracing if it were given a wider political content that could absorb greater sections of the people. The Kisan Sabha had no wide political ideology and in the absence of it the peasants were denied the benefits of mobility and co-ordination. Once the struggle was proved to be geared only to its original demand for reduction of rent, its scope was localised

in economism, initiative for wider movement became useless, and participation by wider sections of the people was out of the question. The movement being confined within one single zone of action, namely capturing paddy and stacking it in the bargadar's khamar, the bourgeois State knew its site of combat and when its ferocity descended the movement collapsed. We may refer to Mao Tse-tung to elucidate this point: "Once the peasants have their organisation, the first thing they do is to smash the political prestige and power of the landlord class and especially of the local tyrants and evil gentry, that is, to pull down landlord authority and build up peasant authority in rural society. This is a most serious and vital struggle...without victory in this struggle, no victory is possible in the economic struggle to reduce rent and interest, to secure land and other means of production, and so on" (Investigation of Peasant Movement in Hunan: Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. I, Peking 1967, P. 35). Mao Tse-tung did not deny the importance of 'hitting the landlords economically' (ibid P. 39) but that comes only after 'hitting the landlords politically' (ibid P. 35). Tebhaga ignored the first, went for the second and failed in the long run.

The problem of confused origin of the movement as posed by the author, appears to be absolutely meaningless. No movement begins at a clear-cut, well-defined point. When it starts, it moves through a crooked path of failure and success and tends towards perfection through the accumulation of experience and knowledge. But to ensure this, two things are essential—, a correct ideology to keep the movement a well-directed one and a system of armed self-defence which would give confidence to the participants and stimulate their stamina to fight. But both were absent in the Tebhaga movement. While the absence of ideology failed to unite people, the absence of armed self-defence thwarted the formation of peasants' militia and resistance became weak. As a result the movement could not make

any advance.

The national leadership was in no mood to approve of an armed struggle. This is a wrong hypothesis. If the national leadership was against anything it was class battle and not armed struggle. The national movement always wanted to gloss over class conflicts because that would offset the gains of the Indian bourgeoisie that was going to set up its own rule once the British abdicated in its favour\*. The Tebhaga leaders who could not get rid of their urban, middle-class orientations failed to galvanise the movement into a revolutionary orbit where the movement would modify the milieu without being conditioned by the milieu itself. The militancy and spontaneity of the peasants were two great plus points of the movement, but political ideology being absent their sustenance was lost and the pressure of the State steadily cramped the daring spirit of the peasants.

#### Two Stages

Every revolutionary movement must pass from the "take-off" stage to the stage of advance. In the first stage the movement concerns itself with economic and other immediate problems. In the second stage it tries to resolve the great political question of how to crush the power of the State. In the first stage a movement is an insurrection, in the second a revolution. The first stage is the stage of preparation, the second, of action. For the transition from one stage to another two things are needed—politics and party. "Politics directs the gun" (Mao Tse-tung); "The Party is the founder, the organizer, and the educator of the army" (General Giap). The Tebhaga movement could boast of none and hence could not overcome the first stage. Packed with urban romantics the Kisan Sabha was too frail to lead peasant movements. Their romanticism could provoke an outburst of energy but when the power of the

\* (See *Marxism and the National Question*: Works of J. V. Stalin Vol. 2, 1907—1913; Moscow 1953).

State descended in full fury on dismayed peasants, the confidence in the power of the 'lathi' (baton or bamboo stick) dwindled. At the end Tebhaga failed. The call for Tebhaga was drowned under the cry of a reeling humanity. Nothing was left for posterity except a legacy of failure. One more leaf was added to the fatuous tale of man's misdirected enthusiasm.

#### REMAKING CHINA POLICY

Richard Moorsteen and Morton Abramowitz

Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1971 (In India—Oxford University Press, Bombay). Price \$5.95.

SINCE the beginning of China's "ping pong diplomacy" in April 1971, taking policy decisions about Sino-U.S. relations has become a major headache for the framers of U.S. foreign policy. Several research schemes are being sponsored by different government or other interested agencies. The book under review is the fruit of one such research scheme undertaken by two seasoned bureaucrats and China specialists under the U.S. Government. It is a series of policy recommendations which the U.S. Government is urged to follow to further its interests in its relations with the Peoples' Republic of China in all its aspects. As a corollary, U.S. relations with other interested governments are also discussed. The authors claim that all the conclusions are their personal conclusions having no relation with the government or any other agency sponsoring their research scheme. But the book gives an insight into the process of how important policy decisions are taken by the U.S. Government.

The authors have divided the book into two parts. The first is again subdivided into seven chapters dealing with different aspects, like Taiwan, Sino-U.S. relations in respect of Japan and Korea, South-East Asia, Sino-Soviet dispute and some special

problems in Sino-U.S. relations. The last two chapters in this part are devoted to the aim of U.S. policy towards China and to the pace at which the former should move towards these aims.

Part II consists of four chapters devoted to the method of improving U.S. decision-making with respect to her relations with China.

An appendix is also there, consisting of 12 selected documents in support of some comments made by the authors.

According to the authors, the Taiwan question and the question of Chinese representation in the UN are central in Sino-U.S. relations. The authors favour extreme caution and slow pace of movement in these as well as other related issues. In other words, they want to maintain the status quo without destroying the possibility of a change of policy in the future. For example, they seem to favour "One China but not now", or "the future of Taiwan is yet to be determined" policy. Their argument is that as China is not capable right now of liberating Taiwan and as the future is not sealed for ever for China she must look forward to the future for solving the Taiwan question in her favour. On the other hand, the U.S. is not doing anything to actually change the present status of Taiwan. So, Taiwan also has nothing to be annoyed at. Thus, chances of a Sino-U.S. conflict will be minimised at least on this issue. Such a cautious approach and maintenance of the status quo are advocated in all matters of mutual interest.

The authors lay great stress on improving the U.S. decision-making process. They suggest further systematic research into possible reactions in different Chinese circles as well as in other interested capitals to any U.S. move and organisational improvement to ensure better co-ordination of research work by China experts and the government policy-planning authorities. Where probing is not possible by normal research or intelligence work, the same can be done by taking some

tentative and exploratory initial policy moves.

It is better to remember that the book was written for members and leaders of the ruling classes in the USA by two members of the same class. Naturally, terms like 'our interest' or 'U.S. interest' always mean the interest of the ruling classes and not the interest of the majority of the people of that country. That will explain why, according to the authors, "better relation with China is important for U.S. but not paramount in Asia". Relation with Japan is much more important for them. (It has not been explained why and how.) But unable to wish China away the U.S. can at least try to establish a workable relationship with her to minimise the chances of conflict with a nation of 700 million people.

T.C.

## An Artist Honoured

BY OUR MUSIC CRITIC

**MUKTAGACHA** is a small municipal town in the district of Mymensingh in Bangladesh. It had several houses of the Acharyas, the local landed gentry headed by the late Raja Jagatkishore, a great patron of classical music. The durbar maintained by him was graced by the presence of such eminent musicians of all-India fame as Chanchan Choubey, Purvat Singh, Viru Mishra and the wizard of the tabla Pandit Moulviram who was the chief exponent of the second Banaras school of percussion music.

The long stay of Pandit Moulviram in that part of undivided Bengal gave rise to a new school of tabla technique which was distinct from the traditional *Dacca baz* introduced by Suppan Khan and later developed by Gourmahan Basak, Prasanna kumar Banik etc. Of the numerous students of Moulviram the late Bipin Roy, Mr Keshab Banerjee of Murapara, and Mr Ramkrishna Ray deserve special

mention. Of them the last is still a performing musician. His seventy-first birthday was recently solemnised at the Ballygunje Shiksha Sadan.

The function was followed by a well-drawn musical programme initiated by alap and dhamar in Bageshri sung by a girl student (aged 9) of Mr T. L. Rana who was accompanied on the pakhwaz by Mr Ramkrishna Ray. Mr Ray also accompanied Mr Ganen Chakraborty's khyal in pat—Khambavati, an abstruse raga of the Durga variety combining pat-Bihag, Khamaj and Durga. Mr Ray's technique of tabla playing is much different from the prevalent commercial one of Calcutta. It is the now-extinct Sath-Sangat (synchronising accompaniment). It lays more stress on *bols* produced on the *gab* (the black portion of the tabla) than on the *kani* (side). Mr Chakraborty elaborated the raga after the Agra system of development and with it combined the layakari of the Shyam Chowrashiya school. His singing would have been more effective if he could demonstrate as much melody as complex tone-combination and time sequence. He also sang a thumri in Pilu and a Mirabai Bhajan.

Mr Tarak Chatterji's Khyal in Puriyadhanashri set to slow Ektal and quick Trital was unostentatious but melodious. His Bhajan also was appreciated. Mr Sadhankrishna Ray gave him good support on the tabla.

Mrs Arati Bagchi sang her khyal in Malkoush set to slow Jhumra and was ably supported on the tabla by Mr Pankaj Chakraborty, a disciple of Mr Keshab Banerjee, another disciple of the late Moulviram. Mrs Bagchi elaborated the raga according to the principles of the Patiala gharana to which she belongs. Her mode of raga development was both melodious and full of tonal mastery. This was the best singing of the session. She concluded her programme with a captivating thumri. Mr Indu Chakraborty assisted her on the harmonium.

The last vocal programme was presented by Mr Vijoy Chakraborty who initiated his singing with a slow khyal in Kedar set to Ektal followed

by a quick tempo song in the same time measure. He sang another small khyal set to Trital in Sohini. He concluded his recital with a kajri. He was accompanied by Mr Mahadev Chakraborty on the tabla.

The session was concluded by Mr Vasant Rai who played Jhinj hoti on the sarod. He displayed a commendable command over alap, jod and jhala. The gat also was interesting.

was an experiment by Lt-Col H. V. Gupte, Director, Song and Drama Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting at Amritsar on 23 November, 1969 in connection with Guru Nanak's 500th birth anniversary celebrations. It continued for five months. Earlier, a similar but smaller spectacle was produced at Jalianwallahbag to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the tragic incident. The third and most spectacular Light and Sound was produced at Srinagar in October, 1970 to depict the cultural and political history of Kashmir. It was to counteract the 'anti-nationals' there.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting decided to produce a similar spectacle in Calcutta. It was proposed that Mr Sambhu Mitra should write the script. But Mr Mitra declined because he had no idea of how to stage the show. He was then taken to Srinagar so that he could form an idea. He wrote the script and got a handsome remuneration. The proposal for staging the spectacle was however dropped because Calcutta was undergoing a fearful political tension at that time.

On 26 January this year another spectacle was staged by the Song and Drama Division at the Old Fort in Delhi and it ran for a month. Mr Siddhartha Sankar Ray was much impressed by the show and asked the Secretary of the Information Ministry to organise a similar spectacle in Calcutta. Negotiations started but the elections intervened. After the election, the proposal was revived. The Song and Drama Division wrote to the Secretary of the Chief Minister, West Bengal, about it. The entire cost of the spectacle was to be borne by the Song and Drama Division. A script was prepared on the theme of the freedom struggle with emphasis on Bengal's role in it. The Song and Drama Division also intimated that the spectacle should not be staged during the rainy season. But Mr Sambhu Mitra hurriedly approached the Chief Minister and suggested that he should produce the

## Letters

### The Eagle Over Bangladesh

This is apropos Mr Kalyan Chaudhuri's article 'The Eagle over Bangladesh' (August 19, 1972). A "Marxist" in India is supposed to be automatically (1) anti-American; (2) pro-Russian; and (3) a Nehruite. If he is anti-Russian he is automatically termed a CIA agent. This is the accepted norm up to the CPM grade. If he is a bit more revolutionary he is willing to wink at the Naxalites' "senseless" violence. Thus far and no further.

What is the reality of the changing politics in the world?

(1) Imperialism is fast collapsing under the organised and unorganised onslaughts of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

(2) The only strong force which wants this imperialist collapse is China, though with her limited resources she is not in a position to give all the help that the revolution all over the world needs. Moreover, she has to face two enemies at a time.

(3) Russia with her might could have helped the revolution but unfortunately the land of Lenin has become the greatest enemy of world revolution by encircling China—the greatest revolutionary force—with the help of such rotten capitalists like Indira Gandhi. Russia, frightened at the might of the Americans, has volunteered to become their second in command to suppress all revolutionary upheavals in the world. At the same time, though collaborating they contend also for more spheres of influence like any other imperialist country of yester years. So the conflict between the Russians and

the Americans has to be understood not as class conflict, but as a conflict between two modern imperialists. On the other hand the conflict between China and Russia or China and America is a class conflict. The so-called understanding between China and America, even if it is true, is in correct Marxist style of exploiting the contradictions between enemies.

If you accept that the USA and the USSR belong to the same camp, then the Chinese position is automatically clear to any Marxist with a scientific outlook. So, for a real revolutionary whether Bangladesh is ruled by Russian and Indian stooges together or by American stooges is immaterial. In fact one should prefer American stooges, because they can be easily exposed, while, as the Russians still wear the communist garb, it is very difficult to expose them. So Mr Chaudhuri only confuses the situation for the benefit of the Russians, who are more dangerous to the revolution than the Americans.

M. N. D. NAIR  
Trivandrum

### More Sound Than Light

How much credit is due to Mr Sambhu Mitra for the spectacle of Light and Sound, which he directed recently in Calcutta? I am not concerned with the artistic, historical or political part of the whole thing. Kindly let me tell you how the thing came to Calcutta.

The first spectacle of this kind

show all by himself on August 15. He followed the script of the Song and Drama Division almost entirely. The spectacle was staged. The rain washed out the thing which cost the West Bengal Government more than Rs. 10 lakhs.

Mr Mitra has nowhere acknowledged that he borrowed the whole thing from Lt-Col Gupte or the Song and Drama Division. To top it all, I find Mr Mitra claiming that the 'Tryst with Destiny' as he calls the spectacle in Calcutta, was all his creation and a unique creation in the field of theatre.

Will Mr Mitra favour us with a reply?

ONE WHO KNOWS  
Calcutta

### Paradise Lost ?

With regard to Mr Tarun Sen Gupta's letter opposing the views propounded by Mr Kanchan Kumar, who would not acknowledge the fact that the writer of such provoking plays like *Vietnām*, *Mānusher Adhikār*, *Kāk Dwiper Mā*, *Nayā Itihās*, to mention only a few, is, alas! no more a political guide and sympathiser of the cause of the proletarians. At this crucial moment, the intellectuals will have to side either with the public or with the upholders of the present status quo. There is no third way. This is as well known to Mr Utpal Dutt as to any reader of Marxism.

HIRANYA CHOUDHURY  
Cotton College, Gauhati

### Crisis In Art

Thanks to Ranjan Kumar Banerjee for his article "Crisis in Modern Art" (August 5, 1972). But it is too mild and will not shock the modern painters who are playing a luxurious game in the name of art. They escape from their own time, from the true social content and social form and take refuge in absurdity or suffer from nostalgia. Jamini Roy escaped to

the Kalighat pat form, gave it a sophisticated look but lost his link with the times. There is a tendency in this age of capitalism to praise the traditional art form, because decadent capitalism is suspicious about any new art form as it might accelerate its doom. Therefore it goes on to praise absurd and decorative art forms and hides carefully the art with a true social and necessarily progressive form and content.

The situation is worst here because of our semi-colonial and semi-feudal state character. Most of the painters here are either Sunday painters or painters of a comprador nature. That some show some talent is merely accidental. Considering the total output since 1940, significant work is rare.

Before modern India could create some place for itself our painters tried to revive the Kangra, Mughal and Ajanta styles with a pretence of generating patriotic feeling. But actually they could neither grasp the real essence, that is the social content of the paintings, nor reach anywhere near the national cause. Thus we never had any art trend which could create a positive sensation in the society or in the laboratory. Still our celebrated official painters paint from 'Art made easy'. In the art colleges these painters are the screws and nuts of the painter-making machine. And today the Baroda Art College has the latest machinery.

S. P. KARCHAUDHURI  
Varanasi

### "Bad Woman"

I have read that in 18th century Europe bad women were stripped naked and paraded in the bazaars by the authorities. On 28.8.72 in Bhatinda a "bad woman with blackened face, hands tied at the back and shoes on the neck (thanks to the police—she was not stripped naked), with six or seven uniformed policemen, was paraded in the main bazaars of the city. Many wondered where we were living and what we were.

VED PARKASH GUPTA  
Bhatinda

### Indian Bourgeoisie

The State is a product, of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. According to Engels, it also attempts to set itself above society and alienates itself more and more from it.

What then, in material terms, is the State?

It is the administration, the army, the police and parliament and legislatures.

In India also, the State controls enterprises, it controls finance capital and enters into joint ventures with private capital.

This has given rise to the theory of State capitalism, without much clarity as to what this form of capitalism exactly is.

Is it a progressive step in fact to nationalise industries or take over control of finance capital?

Primarily, the question can only be answered with reference to the epoch.

The epoch is one of decline of imperialism—the highest stage of capitalism. As such, the takeover by the State of certain additional functions means in effect propping up a moribund system, both internally and externally.

Thus the State primarily deludes and crushes the movement of the people, and props up imperialism abroad.

The State can primarily represent only one class. It merely accommodates the interests of other classes. Thus in India, the State is a State of the big bourgeoisie.

It is primarily the linkage with imperialism that prevented the Indian bourgeoisie from demolishing feudalism.

Today it finds further capital accumulation and increased production impossible in the urban sector, and is therefore forced to take up certain anti-feudal measures.

However, what primarily has differentiated the Indian bourgeoisie from the Chinese comprador class is the organisation of the State in its own interests.

Wherever these interests coincide

with those of imperialism, the bourgeoisie serves as an agent of imperialism in the exploitation of the people of India. Whenever there is a clash of interests the bourgeoisie has a national characteristic.

The coinciding of interests occurs with regard to people's movements—particularly, agitations by the urban working class and the poor and landless peasants.

With these struggles in mind the bourgeoisie is an ally of imperialism.

With reference to capital accumulation and stepping up production the bourgeoisie though not directly hostile at every point, is in conflict with imperialism.

The main reason for this ambiguity of interests is the general decline of imperialism, and its approaching third general crisis.

Social-imperialism is in fact a propping up of imperialism by a class of bureaucrats in the Soviet Union. It is an intermediary imperialism and would cease to exist if imperialist countries turned socialist.

Unlike a comprador bureaucrat class, however, the Russian bureaucrats in this period of decline of imperialism are able to look after their own interests by contending with imperialism for control of the world.

The method of control, unlike those of imperialism, is through the conversion of backward countries into satellite economies.

Thus, even though one recognises that the conquest of the world by Soviet social-imperialism would be impossible to sustain, this does not mean that it has not to be fought.

The question of participation in parliament as a tactic is rather difficult to answer.

It can only be answered negatively, if one, looks at the State as primarily serving the interests of imperialism in the period of its decline by weakening the people's unity and struggle in the face of possible imperialist aggression. It cannot be answered negatively on the plea of semi-feudalism.

If then one takes up the stand that the State has to be totally op-

posed, then the character of the Indian revolution becomes primarily socialist in nature, the main conflict being with the dominant ruling class—the 'comprador' (?) big bourgeoisie.

But if it is a democratic revolution participation in this 'pigsty' of bourgeois parliament is necessary.

SUDHIR SONATKAR  
Calcutta

### Maduraism ?

One could dismiss Mr Jangi's letter commenting on your Vietnam leader (29-7-72)—more concerned with Peking than with Hanoi—as obscurantist bilge were it not that such blindness is rampant.

Apologists for the Soviet Union argue that direct confrontation would only meet U.S. aims in providing an alibi, at least for and during the immediate confrontation, unite the American people under the flag of war, ensure an eventual settlement without loss of face (in the interests of 'world peace' etc.) and thus rob Hanoi of a political victory. Can this logic be immediately dismissed? It is further argued that uncertainty about China stemming from suspicions of a Sino-U.S. accord in the context of: internal compulsions of the Chinese economy which needs high technology inputs now, traditional Sino-centrism, hatred of Russia, Chinese nation-state behaviour, low key revolutionism and high emphasis on normal state relations, and obvious Sino-U.S. identity of interests in reducing Soviet power...all these have been a strong deterrent in the formulation of Soviet strategy. These arguments need only as much salt of faith as the Peking dish.

It appears that nation-state pulls and pressures have proved stronger than professed or fancied supranational commitments. In the final analysis, the 'facts' that stand are 'people' and 'problems'. All else seem creatures of the mind.

T. R. RAMALINGAM  
Calcutta

### 'Fat Communist'

Will Mr Moin Ejaz please note that Sahir Ludhianvi is no longer a revolutionary Urdu poet (*Frontier*, 2.9.72)? He has become a fat communist and supports the social-imperialism followed by the social 'elites' of the USSR. Revolutionary writers and poets in Urdu are yet to emerge in India. There may be a few who are, at present, afraid to write or say something openly.

For the last few years, I have been reading your magazine regularly and wish you to know my appreciation of it. I admire its intellectual independence and creative intelligence. It defends the oppressed people. Above all, it is not blind to certain flaws and inherent brutalities of religion, nationalism and ideology, if they are followed rigidly. Has not the most remarkable revolutionary of our time said that dogmas are worse than cowdung? Life is bound to prove more compelling than dogmas.

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