

# frontier

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GENERAL Giap has said that even if Hanoi and Haiphong are razed to the ground the Vietnamese will fight on. About this there cannot be the slightest doubt. But Mr Nixon, who has brought to the international field all the trickery, knavery and brutality of domestic politics, thinks otherwise: if, after the blockade of North Vietnamese ports, and the massive summer bombing, Hanoi could agree to the retention of Thieu and drop the demand for a coalition government, the fiercest non-nuclear attacks this wicked world has known could, perhaps, force Hanoi and the PRG into further concessions—the withdrawal of all NVA forces in exchange for the release of innumerable Vietnamese prisoners, tacit acceptance of the sovereignty of the Thieu regime all over South Vietnam—two Vietnams—, and the induction of thousands of foreign troops under the guise of international supervision of the cease-fire. Mr Nixon behaves like a crazy maniac, but there is method in his madness. It is clear now that and intransigent Thieu was part of his scenario drafted in early October. His cunning succeeded in duping all, including the big powers.

Hanoi and the NLF will fight on without making such fundamental concessions. There may be surprises in store on the ground in South Vietnam. Public opinion is rising again, both in the USA and outside, against the extermination bombing. The fact that some eight embassies have suffered, a big, fine hospital has been destroyed and a few P.O.W. camps hit in Hanoi has proved even to lovers of the 'free world' how indiscriminate American bombing is and has been all the time. Even Australia and New Zealand, now under new regimes, have protested. But public opinion is not likely to deter Mr Nixon, the man of the year, the maniac who has visited Peking and Moscow, the typical American given a huge mandate by his countrymen to wage local wars. Action, not words, is called for. Where, for example, are the dockers of yesteryears who refused to handle ships of countries indulging in aggression and genocide?

Both Moscow and Peking have pledged further support to Hanoi. But the Russians, who are getting massive quantities of grain from the USA and are looking to it for technology, further trade and an agreement on nuclear weapons, will not supply offensive weapons to North Vietnam to avoid confrontation. China, going all out in her own way to help Hanoi, may have to wait long for further normalisation of relations with the USA;

Vietnam was given priority in that process, but Mr Nixon thinks it is not that urgent. In the meantime, it would be good not to hear of socialist doctors touring America while hospitals are being reduced to rubble in Vietnam by the Americans. As it is, vast masses of even intelligent and impatient people have formed the wrong impression that in the face of Nixon's rage international communism is a paper tiger. They forget that the aggressor has always the initial advantage, and that an aggressor like America will get a longer rope than most.

## Thailand's Yenan

Northern Thailand is fast becoming Thailand's Yenan. For Bangkok this densely wooded region remains inaccessible. But the Thai guerillas can approach it easily from Laos—intelligence has confirmed frequent movement of men and material through the numerous jungle trails in the region. Adding to Bangkok's discomfiture China has completed an all-weather motorable road in Northern Laos, nosing at Thailand's north-eastern border. This means that the Thai communists, who are already getting American-made arms from Laos, will now have the service of the Chinese arsenal. Reportedly the Thai Communist Party has set up its base near Pak Beng, the southern transit point of this road, which is close to the Pua district of Thailand. Whether the communists have their headquarters in this jungle or not, hard evidence suggests that they are firmly saddled in Northern Thailand.

The main base of the communists is among the hill tribes of Northern Thailand where they have worked patiently to carve out their hideouts. Thanks to their natural adaptability to hard jungle life and knowledge of local terrain, Meos, T'ins and Yaos of North Thailand were ideal communist recruits. And

scepticism about their ability to take to politics and integrate with the plains people has been dispelled by some recent incidents. One dead Meo guerilla beside the corpse of his ethnic Thai comrade has muted those who were doubting their intellectual ability to grasp the difficult politics of people's war. To free this sea from communist fish, the communist suppression operation command is now sweeping through the northern jungles. Meos, Yaos and T'ins are being herded in camps glorified as rehabilitation hamlets and umpteen number of welfare schemes are on board for their benefit. But like their counterparts elsewhere, the CSOC projects have backfired and more disillusioned Meo young people have gone to the jungle rather than come back. On the other hand, the CSOC effort to engage the hill tribes in transport services has estranged the plainsmen who eye it as

an attempt to encroach upon their jobs.

However, Bangkok's complacency was jolted most by the recent attacks on its airbases by the communist sappers, particularly the one on the Udorn bases, which has left deep scars. Thailand has never figured overtly in the Indochina conflict other than providing air bases to the Americans. But its status has changed after the latest phase in the Vietnam war and after President Nixon's decision to shift his air command to Thailand. Naturally it has also drawn the communist guerillas. As a move to neutralise the Chinese influence in this complex situation Bangkok is wooing Peking. But there has been little to inspire Bangkok's confidence. The heavy concentration of ack-ack guns along the road from Yenan has confirmed Chinese assertions of support for people fighting for freedom.

## The Genius Of The Congress

Thanks to the Congress Socialist Forum, we now know what the genius of the Congress really is. Bureaucracy as it is today in India, mixed economy, slogan mongering, etc are all alien to the genius and tradition of the Congress. The true direction of the Congress is towards world socialism, and towards that goal it has been moving inexorably. Or at last for the last five years. The Forum is proud of its achievements during the last five years. That is to say, it is proud of Mrs Gandhi's accession to, and handling of, power.

What is this Congress Socialist Forum, that was near-unanimous at its national convention on Christmas eve in abolishing the private sector in India? For our help, the Forum has defined itself clearly: it is not a group, it is not a faction, it is not a power-group, it is not involved with power-politics (no matter, at the convention there was pandemonium on the composition of the steering committee, which, some held, was mani-

pulated to suit the vested interests). It is the guiding angel of the Congress. It is shocked that after 25 years of Independence, half the country lives below the poverty line; and the sense of shock was properly conveyed by the Union Labour Minister. It is shocked by the cornering of the nation's wealth by the monopoly houses and the shock was conveyed by the Company Affairs Minister. Punjab's Chief Minister was there to register his opinion that the private sector of the country was cating up the public sector. Mr K. D. Malaviya, the fallen Minister, was thunderous against the Indian bureaucracy.

After this, what? The Forum is confident that it will not allow the orthodox elements of the Congress to pull it backwards, to convert it into a party of the status quo. The plenary session of the Congress at the Salt Lake is now a venue of the battle between the right and left of the party. Let us wait.

Or let us not wait. We, who have been seeing this inner battle of the Congress, may not be even curious to know whether this was a mock battle or in the real battle the radicals were cut down to their size. Simply because the radicals of the Congress have taken a self-defeating stance. They have, as they profess, accepted the policies and programmes of the party and within that accepted framework criticise this or that by policy. They are endeavouring to say that they are fighting against some tactics but agree on the strategy; but in reality what they consider the tactics are in reality the strategy. Would they care to know that bureaucratic administration of the country is not a mere tactic but the whole strategy of the party?

But let that not worry us. For the time being we are prepared to accept in good humour (what else can we possibly do when even a Congress high official in Calcutta can be beaten up in his own office by another official's followers) the chiselled language of the forum-wallahs. What can be more satisfying than the description of the administrative machinery as hierarchical, undemocratic, unimaginative, unresponsive, irresponsible, heartless, routine-bound, status-quo, status-obsessed and uncommitted? Driven up by the momentum of the language, the resolution said that the posts of Secretaries should be abolished. That will be a pity. They were so very handy in writing out the resolutions.

## Danger Signal

Self-sufficiency has become the latest magic word in our growing plan literature. It has been vested with a sweet connotation signifying nothing. And at a time when individual ministers are all for seeking reprieve for their increasingly obvious failure to make any impact, it has become an overworked expression. Official spokesmen have been promising self-sufficiency in this or that

item in the course of a few years when even commonsense, not to speak of expert study, indicates otherwise. Thus it has been talked about that in about three, four or five years, the country will be able to meet its entire requirements of steel and fertilisers and so many other essential commodities from its own production. One would like to believe that the spokesmen are not merely seeing pie in the sky or have been carried away by contingent optimism. Some of them have tried to back up their claims by some sort of wobbly homework, but the slips tend to show all the same. For the benighted industries the future, at least the immediate future, does not appear to be any more bright than the present.

A case in point is the fertiliser industry. It has for long years been an ideal practice arena for all sorts of guided, and more often misguided, ideologues in the administration. Long debates have been held on how far foreign participation might be allowed in the industry, who should be in charge of distribution, how the prices of the products are to be settled and so on. As a result, the industry has virtually been left without a plan. The five year plans have been laying down targets, but nobody seems to have taken any note of how far they have been achieved or why the shortfall has arisen or how such shortfall can affect agricultural prospects. Planning has become a mockery, and today when the country has been jolted out of that smug feeling that all is good with agriculture, long delayed notice is being taken of the state of things in the industry. The Fertiliser Association of India representing both the public and private sectors of the industry has estimated that the country would need Rs 1700 crores of additional investment in fertilisers if it is to meet its demand from local production by the terminal year of the fifth plan. Otherwise, the Association worked out, in that year there would be a gap of about 5.6 million tonnes in nitrogenous and phosphatic fertilisers taken together. That war-

ning seemed to have its effect and the Planning Minister, Mr Dhar, has now stressed the importance of meeting this gap by increased capacity. The danger signal has been hoisted, and it is now New Delhi's turn to fall head over heels in wooing investors both within and outside the country with all sorts of inducements and concessions to be described euphemistically in official handouts as incentives for a crash programme. That is the way of Indian socialism.

## Politics And Education

The West Bengal Chief Minister, Mr Siddhartha Sankar Ray, a man of versatile talents, has spoken at length on painting, music, theatre, poetry and education. His latest exercise in the vein has been to lecture the lecturers on how best to serve their students. To several hundred college teachers squatting at Esplanade on December 19 in protest against the sudden dismissal of a number of their colleagues in a college at Kamarpukur, he promised legislation to prevent such arbitrary action by college authorities in future. In return for this promise he, however, subjected the teachers to a sermon on the evils of politics in educational institutions. He enjoined them to keep off all political activities, brook no politicians in their midst, and attend to their business of teaching more single-mindedly.

Of course, Mr Ray had to admit that it was his own party, Congress, that introduced "politics" in the academic world. Perhaps he does not want it there any more, now that it has served his turn so admirably. Indeed one wonders what would have happened to Mr Ray and his party in the State if the brand of politics that the Chhatra Parishad, the Congress student organisation, introduced in schools, colleges and universities had been prohibited before the last general election. The large proportion of student represen-

tation among the new legislators was once flaunted as a claim to the Congress party's rejuvenescence. There are some active politicians in the Congress who are teachers by profession—one of them a well-known Central Minister, perhaps with a lien on his post in the university. The role played by this teacher-politician in raising the student militia that has banned all politics from educational institutions except its own, is no secret.

But are Congress politicians including Mr Ray himself leaving the educational institutions alone even now? Perhaps Mr Ray's meaning was that he would have teachers avoid all politics other than his own. Like Mrs Gandhi's committed officials, he too wants committed teachers, only their commitment must be to the Congress ideology. Mr Ray could not have meant that none but politicians should be politicians, for them he himself, a barrister by trade and training, must return to his old job. And if lawyers are also to eschew politics to ensure proper operation of the law, Mr Ray will be hard put to defend as a lawyer much of what he has done as a politician.

Mr Ray had, however, the most important things to say when he asked teachers to work on Sundays and holidays to finish the course before exams. He said if he had to face exams before the lectures were completed, he would become a Naxalite. But how about the people becoming Naxalites if Mr Ray and his Ministers cannot complete the Garibi Hatao or Bekari Hatao programme at the end of their term? Perhaps Mr Ray's police can take care of that. Meanwhile the "Naxalites" of Mr Ray's variety have done their work for him. The students are no longer complaining about course, syllabus or questions. They do not care to attend lectures even, let alone bother whether these are finished or not. Thus we have not only a "quiet West Bengal", as Mr Ray has declared, but quiet examinations too. The reason is that

students are allowed to crib freely. This is an achievement of the Chhatra Parisad, not the Naxalites, nor even the leftist students. And if teachers and university officials are unable or unwilling to penalise such large-scale malpractice at exams, it is because of political interference from the only quarter able to make it today.

The way the teachers' representa-

tives meekly submitted to Mr Ray's admonitions, like erring schoolboys after a caning, shows how intimidated the teaching profession is by Mr Ray's politics. But the teachers who lost their jobs for no fault of their own can only console themselves with the (vain?) thought that in future such arbitrary dismissals will become impossible thanks to the promised legislation.

## Paradoxes

D. G. SATARKAR

**T**HE poor Russians are really having too many problems on their hands. What is worse is that most of them are a creation of Asians. Fancy, for instance, a loyally aligned Government of India wanting to normalise relations with the Americans. Not that it makes any substantial difference to anything in India or to the Indo-Soviet alignment. But Mr Bhupesh Gupta has unnecessarily to cry himself hoarse in Parliament. It was useful, one should grant, to see the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. poised against each other in our part of the world; and in this confrontation brave little progressives of the Congress well-supported by the CPI stood firm on the Soviet side. It was not long ago that the CPI intellectuals had foreseen the alignment with the Soviets as being "a shield against the penetration of U.S. imperialism". It is not exactly nice that Swaran Singh has to go ahead with a love-call to the Americans thus exposing that alignment, non-alignment and bi-alignment are, like Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, but three appearances of one indivisible reality. It may well be so but the exposure could have as well come a little later.

Or imagine the CPM's attitude to the Soviet Union. Just as the Soviets were about to forget the fact that the 'unrecognised' party had once thought otherwise about the Moscow Socialists, it had the temerity to put them and

the Chinese on par; thus pronouncing the Brahmanical wisdom that the truth usually, lies somewhere in the middle where incidentally the party finds itself. It was customary wisdom in good old days that you cannot be partially right and partially wrong. That the domestic policies could be very revolutionary and somehow the foreign polity could be rather chauvinistic was a dichotomy typical of a reactionary or a liberal. For the Marxists no such dichotomy existed. The CPM finally found the way out of the dilemma. But in so doing it had to tar the CPSU with a Chinese brush. Asians are inscrutable indeed, the Brahmins more so!

And look at those Japs. They maintain the extraordinary thesis that the Kuriles ought to be ruled from Tokyo which is thousands of miles away rather than from Moscow which happens to be so close. But if the hapless Russians only gently warned them of this ridiculous position they suddenly become very uncooperative. Who would develop Siberia better than the Japanese? Yet they can't see reason. The Russians are, of course, forced to take a position that 'Tsarist expansion' is a counter-revolutionary reactionary phraseology. 'Part of the Socialist Fatherland' is a much simpler and nice-sounding revolutionary phrase. The Japanese, however, have not yet understood it.

But then they are not half as un-

reasonable as those Chinese. The Russians must be wondering that in spite of such a small force of 49 divisions on the Sino-Soviet border the Chinese cannot accept the simple fact that they continue to violate the sacred Soviet fatherland! They invaded the poorly defended Kazakhstan and killed the proletarian shepherds. The Russian soldiers, few as they were, fought bravely and managed to take a Chinese prisoner. And look, what happened! The Chinese had the audacity to deny the incident altogether and to disown the prisoner the Soviets had taken. Now it is possible that in those faraway central Asian lands one cannot always tell an eastern Kazakh from a Western Uighur. But surely when the Soviets said that their captive was a Chinese that should have settled the matter. But then the Chinese will never learn.

In any event, Brezhnev has now warned the Chinese that they should not raise "absurd" territorial claims. It does not matter if they have not done so; for asking for a new boundary treaty itself is 'absurd'. The treaties between the Tsars and China have been reasonable and equal. To think otherwise is really adventurism. Sure enough, Lenin thought so. But that is another matter altogether. Does China want to discuss Lenin or discuss the border problem? Keep Lenin out of this.

It is extraordinary that the Russians have to deal with so many calamities at the same time. What a pity, further, that they cannot blame any one of them on 'U.S. Imperialism.' So *Izvestia* has accused the Chinese of instigating and supporting the Japanese on the issue of the Kuriles. They could not implicate the U.S. imperialism in some of these problems for they have got to talk to them. They cannot formulate the theory of Sino-American collusion for the simple reason that apart from the Indians nobody would have any particular interest in buying it. Besides, there are other real collusions too.

That all this should happen in the 55th anniversary year of the USSR!

Fancy facing all this music instead of listening to the international! It must surely be the CIA's handiwork; yet they cannot openly say so. What a shame it would be if a progressive minister can talk in the Indian Parliament about the CIA without naming it, while his Soviet patrons could not achieve the feat. Indeed the Russians need the sympathy of all

during this extraordinary winter. Let us hope S. A. Dange gave it in abundance to them when he was there for the anniversary. From one revolutionary to another, what could be more appropriate than tea and sympathy! It is time the progressives of the world united and stood behind the only real socialist power in this hour of crisis.

## The Grand Volte Face

A.P.M.

**T**HERE is jubilation in industrial circles. The Government is finally going to do away with all the nonsense of restrictions on expansion of big business. Mr D. P. Dhar, India's newest Planning Minister, is said to be working day and night to finalise the dramatic volte face. Ram Rajya is round the corner.

Yes, as a smiling industrialist informed newsmen the other day, the woebegone days will be over soon. New Delhi appears to have concluded (to some people in the know, the conclusion seems to have taken an inordinately long time) that without bigger business the economy would not look up. Bureaucrats look over-eager to confess that the experiment with monopoly and restrictive trade practices curbs has failed. The Monopolies Commission and the body which listens to cases involving the restrictive trade practices part of the MRTP Act may not be liquidated at the moment. Put the little value they may have gained through uncomfortable minority reports will have eroded further as New Delhi appears impatient with how to decide the fate of its own little toy. Mrs Gandhi is understood to have instructed her colleagues and government officials to work hard and quick to determine how the sagging morale of the industrialists can be administered a good boost. According to at least one version, Mr Dhar may electrify the coming AICC session in Calcutta

with surprising statements on the economy and the best methods to rectify them. Resourceful Calcutta firms are reportedly receiving feverish telex messages from their contact men in New Delhi in this regard.

In a sense, it will be a good thing if the restrictions on expansion of big business are withdrawn. New Delhi has always behaved curiously in respect of them. It has never felt easy since the days the Dutt Committee laid down the necessity of placing restrictions on the unleashed ambitions of big business to eat up all possible areas of growth and profit. Its uneasiness grew when the Monopolies Commission and the body dealing with restrictive trade practices were set up. Fortunately, right from its inception, the Chairman and one member of the Commission betrayed a haste to clear all cases placed before it. The third member of the Commission who mysteriously kept up submitting dissenting notes every time a case came up, provided enough cause for ministerial discomfort till it became necessary for the Government to deny in Parliament that the Commission was behaving like a split personality. All this was indicative of the larger truth that nobody in government circles really liked the setting up of the Commission. The Dutt Committee Report on licensing was an unfortunate event. Why continue the tragedy?

A myth prevails that the govern-

ment of the day is compelled to resort to radical economic measures from time to time (for everybody is agreed that governmental radicalism is not a continuing process, dies temporarily and is revived at moments of party peril) because party radicals assume strong support among members and it becomes necessary to indicate conciliatory postures. There are reports that this myth has been generated over the years deliberately by the party in which both the party establishment and the declared radicals have gladly participated. According to one source, Mr Dhar's speech on India's economic volte face may be countered by Mr Chandra Sekhar's sizzling criticism. At least one correspondent in Calcutta possesses at the moment a genuine copy of Mr Chandra Sekhar's speech-to-be-delivered. It is quite possible that Mrs Gandhi has already received a certified copy as well; at least, according to the people who know, this has been the practice all along. The aim is obviously to avoid taking avoidable risks. The leadership admits the necessity of seemingly radical criticisms at times; what it abhors is the occasional tendency to keep up criticising after the momentary necessity has passed off.

Thus, the coming volte face is expected to help various people in diverse manners. The people (the sections which know that our Government has been trying valiantly for the last few years to fight the growing menace of big business) would be somewhat surprised to learn that the economic policies pursued so long are at last going to be given up. That this is a curious happening will be underlined by Mr Chandra Sekhar's and other radicals' criticisms. But if a resolution on the line of Mr Dhar's speech carried by a majority of the delegates present that will finally persuade them that the volte face must be in order. During this transitional period the press will be full of confusing acclaims on the wisdom the Government will have

been showing by withdrawing restrictions on big business. Doubtless company PROs will be taking out happy pressmen to sumptuous lunches.

The withdrawal of restrictions on expansion of big business will signify more than ever before the private sector's supremacy in determining the course of the Indian economy. Ever since the restrictions were put on the larger business houses, industry after industry had exhibited unmistakable signs of

anaemia. It cannot be said that the Government did not talk tough to the erring industries. But evidence soon piled up that talking tough to the big industries was no effective way to correct erring behaviour. This lesson has been particularly driven home well in the case of cement and paper industries. The coming volte face (the process may take several months to complete) will be an admission of failure on the part of the Government in this respect.

December 19, 1972

## The Real Lesson Of Asia 72

S. GOPAL

**I**NDIA in 1972 remains a backward and dependent capitalist economy, despite the claims of the ruling class about 'self-sufficiency', 'self-reliance', 'industrial progress' and so on. While ASIA 72 was designed to make these claims plausible, it in fact showed their hollowness.

Is the India Tobacco Company with 75% of its shares in foreign possession, a representative of India's 'self-reliance'? Yet at the fair, apart from this company we found foreign firms like Philips, Indian Oxygen, Guest Keen Williams, Chloride India, Remington Rand, Automotive Tyre Industry of India (Dunlop, Firestone) etc.—all of which control a major portion of the market in their spheres of operation. The major industrial houses openly displayed their dependence on imperialism. The Tatas made an exhibition of their collaboration with Fisons, Robins Fraser, Finlay, Mcneill and Barry, Merlin Glerin and so on, and displayed machinery built in collaboration with Daimler Benz and a host of American concerns. The Mahindras displayed their collaboration with Cummins, Owen, etc. and exhibited International Harvester Tractors, Willys Jeeps etc. Escorts displayed Ford machinery, TVS had its licence to products from Bosch-

Lucas and the Kirloskars were exhibiting machinery produced through collaboration with General Electric Corporation, Siemens etc. These few examples have not been torn out of context; they illustrate the general trend of semi-comprador integration with imperialism which one observed in the pavilions of the industrial houses.

Apart from senselessly displaying drab drawing-room furniture and crockery, the State pavilions presented their 'industrial development' by putting on show the manufactures of foreign concerns, collaboration companies and so on. Take, for example, the Andhra Pavilion where you find Coromandel Fertilisers and the Indian Tobacco Company; Coromandel, which started production in 1967, was set up by a Standard Oil subsidiary, Chevron Chemical Co., by International Minerals and Chemical Corp., the world's largest independent producer of fertilisers, and EID Parry Ltd. of Madras: this joint venture was financed partly out of long-term loans from the Exim Bank and U.S. AID. In the Tamilnadu pavilion one came across Ashok Leyland, Standard Motors and other such firms. The public sector's dependence on foreign aid and technology was also on display: e.g. in oil

exploration dependence on Mitsubishi, a firm which took Mrs Gandhi's March 1971 victory as a sign of relative stability for foreign investors (see *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 1971); in oil refining on Esso and Lubo America, in fertilisers on Amoco USA, in design and engineering on Bechtel Corporation, USA, in steel on various German, Soviet and British concerns. Blue Boards proclaiming "Built with the economic and technical assistance of the USSR" were frequently found in the public sector pavilions. The welcome insignia of the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporations—"From the heart of India to the hearths of world industry"—trumpeted the sell-out of basic raw materials, while imports of large quantities of refined metal like copper and zinc presented a dismal picture of India's backward technology. The pavilion of the Central Water and Power Commission advertised, Crompton Parkinson switch gears, General Electric and English Electric co-fittings, Aveling Bradford cranes, Jessop road rollers.

In ASIA 72 the attitude of other countries towards trade with India was obvious in the cheap and unsophisticated machinery designed for the markets of the underdeveloped world. East Europe and the Soviet Union appreciate Indian capitalism's need to develop infrastructures and have concentrated their efforts on capturing this market through their selling agents.

Apart from its market function the fair has been a tremendous psychological victory for western imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism. The construction of bizarre structures, neon lighting and other cheap gimmicks played on the imagination and suppressed any national understanding. To the fetishism of commodities is now added the fetishism of the unequal exchange of commodities. As long as India remains capitalist, it will continue to be impoverished by this unequal exchange, to be drawn further into internation-

al debt servitude, to become more and more dependent on imperialist finance and technology; and there will be millions more without

jobs, proper homes, education, suffering from malnutrition or starvation, while the Indian bourgeoisie prepares itself for ASIA 82.

## The Only Way Out

RAMADHAR

**A**N outsider's assessment of the situation in Manipur may be interesting but his invocation of the Central authority to curb secessionist tendencies cannot be a very happy solution of the problem he deals with.

Mr I. K. Shukla, an Associate Professor at Manipur of the J. N. University, advocated this in an article in a Delhi journal. In the course of his article, for which he was wrongly arrested, he questions the very foundations of the organization of our society. He would like to change it lock, stock and barrel. Those who care for decencies of life will feel a sympathetic echo in their hearts for what Mr Shukla has to say about effecting a total change in our social, political, economic and cultural structure. Precisely for this reason, there is contradiction when he diagnoses secessionist leanings in Manipur but wants to get them suppressed by the Central authority in New Delhi. As it is, basically it is the ruling clique at the Centre which promotes values which in turn promote disintegration in every walk of the life of the people. Mere verbal assertion to maintain the unity of the country should not delude one into believing that the Centre is interested in national unity and welfare of the people.

If our basic values were correct the question of secessionist tendencies would automatically not be there. All are agreed that the basic problem of poverty breeds all kinds of parochial and narrow tendencies (according to Shaw it brings degradation) concerning regions, languages, castes, communities or religions. Every problem has the economic content

at its roots. The vested interests have no way of perpetuating themselves other than by using these levers of mass sensitivity. And it is they who fool the common people into espousing their unjust cause under the garb or cover of defending popular interests or liberties.

Manipur presents a spectacle not different from this general pattern. Therefore, even against the secessionist tendencies there, the only solution that could be evoked in this context is revolution. The Central Government, which is a reactionary Government wedded to the cause of perpetuating the interests of the ruling classes, is hardly the agency whose authority could be invoked to curb people who express themselves in favour of cutting themselves adrift from the mother country. In the first instance it is wrong to assume that exploited sections of any region, who constitute at least ninety per cent of the population of that area, can really be secessionist. They are misled by a handful of people into raising such a demand. Central intervention in such a situation is hardly going to help matters in favour of the interests of the people. In any case, it is not for true friends of the people, like Mr Shukla, to ask for intervention of a super-reactionary agency to suppress a smaller unit in the name of preserving the integrity of the country. A true radical must address his appeal only to the people, delve deep into the malaise and prescribe a solution which gives no succour to the oppressors of the people. If we cannot work for revolution, the alternative certainly is not to peddle reactionary wares under the garb of radicalism. Any attempt to

try to redress a wrong within the basic and larger framework of an exploitative and repressive social system will only strengthen it, a process which in the end serves only to reinforce counter-revolution.

A kind of self-delusion over which we exult emanates from an exclusiveness of what goes by the name of culture, itself an end-product of the modern class society. All cultures bear the stamp of the classes they are meant to serve. When they undergo changes, either major or minor, they seek to strengthen the class interests they represent. The heavy dose of Westernization willingly accepted into our already lopsided and abnormal bourgeois-cum-feudal cultural values, has reduced to shambles what goes by the name of universality and catholicity of Indian culture. That is why when a Bengali goes to Assam he creates a little island of Bengali exclusiveness in the name of Bengali culture. The same happens when Marwaris, Punjabis, U.P. men etc. go to Bengal and other parts of the country. It is the exclusiveness of their so-called cultures, languages and way of life, reinforced by political divisions fostered by vested interests around each linguistic-cultural group, which does not let them get identified with the people of other Indian States where they go and settle down. This, or a state of affairs akin to this, was probably witnessed by Mr I. K. Shukla in Manipur where he happens to stay at present. We are also witnessing a repetition of this phenomenon in Assam today where nauseating language riots have taken a heavy toll of the innocent Bengali minority. Language riots, like communal riots, are a social malaise, a reflection of the decadence of the present socio-political system in the country propped up by reactionary vested interests and their hangers-on who tirelessly trumpet their love for culture and linguistic rights. These, as a matter of fact, are not the result of any parochial tendencies of the common people who are only the victims of their ignorance, superstitions and

sense of insecurity blown out of all proportion by the self-seeking defenders of culture and linguistic rights. The problems of regional loyalties, linguism, casteism, communalism etc. are invariably the handiwork of small exploiting minorities who manipulate them to buttress their narrow interests at the expense of the vast exploited majority. As a result the exploited sections are misled into identifying themselves with the wrong cause without understanding the basic absurdity of the problems so created. Therefore unless we analyse the process minutely and carefully we will always arrive at wrong conclusions and would want a larger violence to suppress smaller violence which never leads to any solution. Thus we are face to face with a disastrous spectacle in the form of ultra-regional loyalties where people of one part are not safe in another part of the country. This is an extremely hopeless situation. Unless we go into the root of the problem and analyse it from the bottom upwards we will not be able to understand the true nature of the mischief at work and attempt a solution which is at once correct, practical and scientific.

The same parochial outlook of cultures etc. is also at the root of our problems confronting the overseas Indians. The same islands of culture with a vulgar superiority (or inferiority?) complex keep them apart from the people of the country they have chosen to live with for livelihood. It is not suggested that this is the peculiarity of our own people alone. The same is true of almost all countries. This does not mean that the local people of the country they live in are not to blame. They too share the blame to a certain extent. But again the root cause is the class division of their respective societies. That is why the problem of bringing about a total change is not confined to us alone. It is a worldwide problem wherever exploitation exists. Therefore people in all places have to opt for a solution which in the present-day

conditions can be nothing short of a revolution.

A reconstructed society, after revolution, will automatically though consciously, eliminate all these tendencies which are threatening a sort of total disintegration of our national life. In this context, a small example cited by Edgar Snow may not be out of place here:

"They were a heterogeneous lot, but more truly 'national' in composition than ordinary Chinese armies, usually carefully segregated according to provinces. Their different provincial backgrounds and dialects did not seem to divide them, but became the subject of constant good-natured raillery. I never saw a serious quarrel among them. In fact, during all my travel in the Red districts, I was not to see a single fist fight between Red soldiers, and among young men. I thought that remarkable.

"Though tragedy had touched the lives of nearly all of them, they were perhaps too young for it to have depressed them much. They seemed to me fairly happy, and perhaps the first consciously happy group of Chinese proletarians I had seen. Passive contentment was the common phenomenon in China, but the higher emotion of happiness, which implies a feeling of positiveness about existence, was rare indeed.

"They sang nearly all day on the road, and their supply of songs was endless. Their singing was not done at a command, but was spontaneous, and they sang well. Whenever the spirit moved him, or he thought of an appropriate song, one of them would suddenly burst forth, and commanders and men joined in.

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For Frontier contact

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DECEMBER 30, 1972

They sang at night, too, and learned new folk tunes from the peasants, who brought out their Shensi guitars.

"What discipline they had seemed almost entirely self-imposed. When we passed wild apricot trees on the hills there was an abrupt dispersal until everyone had filled his pockets, and somebody always brought me back a handful. Then, leaving the trees looking as if a great wind had struck through them, they moved back into order and quick-timed to make up for the loss. But when we passed private orchards, nobody touched the fruit in them, and the grain and vegetables we ate in the villages were paid for in full." (*Red Star Over China*).

Looking in retrospect, cultural exclusiveness or secessionist tendencies cannot be fought or suppressed by force or administrative action any more than cultural amalgamation or national unity can be fostered or superimposed by force or coercion. The Central authority, itself the fountainhead of all disruptive and disintegrating tendencies in the country, is least entitled to or capable of generating national unity or the flowering of our national culture. People and people alone, when they take the destiny of this country into their own hands, will be able to fulfil this historic national task and achieve real and broad-based national and linguistic unity in the country.

tween peasants who live close to towns and are involved in town markets and urban affairs and those living in more remote villages. Distinctions of property and involvement in property, in relation to markets, in relation to systems of communication, all seem important to him when he observes real populations "on the ground". The all-embracing term peasantry does not inform us that the above differences influence vitally the genesis and course of a revolutionary movement. Eric Wolf also differentiates between peasants and cultivators: the former's aims and aspirations remain limited within the narrow range of their social relationships but cultivators participate in the market. Wolf is aware of the importance of groups which mediate between the peasants and the larger society—they are landlords, merchants, political bosses, priests etc. Eric Wolf's comparative study of the peasant wars of the twentieth century is much more important because here is an anthropologist who, with others, initiated the "teach-in" movement at the University of Michigan on the Vietnam war, who undertakes tasks not only for academic specialists; it is an obligation of citizenship. So his study is significant and interesting to scholars as well as to those who believe in action and who are eager not only to interpret but also to change the world. Here we find a wide perspective: comparative case studies of peasant wars of Mexico, Russia, China, Vietnam, Algeria and Cuba.

In all the six cases we see the tension between past and continuity, rejection and adjustment generated by the spread and diffusion of the cultural system of North Atlantic capitalism whose ideology is that land, labour and wealth are commodities; development of the market system in the pre-capitalist or non-capitalist countries brought about the change in the society itself; particularly selling of land as commodity offended the "ethical sense". Capitalism cut through

## Book Review

### Peasant Wars Of The Twentieth Century

ARJUN BANDYOPADHYAY

IN the preface to the English edition of *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*,\* Eric R. Wolf significantly writes, "It was not very long ago that the exchanges of gunfire between colonizers and natives were heard only at a vast distance from the centres of the industrializing world, but for some time now the sound of shots has been drawing closer. Frontier and centre are now rapidly becoming one, and battles once fought in distant lands are now fought increasingly in our own streets and in our consciousness." As an anthropologist he laments: "The Study of Man has long lost the pristine unity it once enjoyed when political economy still held sway;... what we need, perhaps, is a return after this experience of separation and specialization, to the realization of a common

human endeavour, and to accomplish this, I believe, we need above all a return to history." Eric Wolf asks: Why should an anthropologist write on this subject? In the accounts of economists, sociologists, political scientists or social psychologists he misses the dimensions which he considers decisive. An anthropologist, like Eric Wolf, knows that there are differences in behaviour and outlook between tenants and proprietors, between poor and rich peasants, between cultivators who are also craftsmen and those who only plow and harvest, between men who are responsible for agricultural operations on a holding they rent or own and wage labourers who do their work under supervision of others in return for money. He also knows that one must distinguish between peasants who are beginning to send their sons and daughters to the factories and those who continue to labour within the boundaries of their parochial little worlds. He also knows that one must distinguish be-

\* *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*.

By Eric Wolf.

Faber and Faber. £3.00.

the integument of custom, severing people from their social matrix and transformed them into economic actors, independent of prior social commitments to kin and neighbour. Market behaviour overshadowed all existential problems of subsistence. No doubt man was liberated as an economic agent, but this very liberation from accustomed social fabric was also the beginning of alienation. With it came an ecological crisis: no accession of the peasants in pasture or communal lands, and at the same time population, due to various reasons, increased rapidly. Naturally pressure on land increased resulting in an imbalance. This situation could not last long. The peasants sought defences against it.

Due to the impact of market behaviour the traditional power holders like tribal chief, mandarin, landed nobleman etc. lost their weight; in their place came the entrepreneur, credit merchant, intellectual, professional etc. The social weight of the peasantry and the artisans decreased, the miners, the railroad and industrial workers gained in relative proportion. In the language of Eric Wolf, the manager of fixed social resources yielded to the managers of "free floating" resources. However this process was not evenpaced; in some regions the old still prevailed, and in some regions the new forces triumphed. The old was not yet overcome, the new not yet victorious. This simultaneous presence of the old and new created new tensions for society as a whole. The situation called for a dictatorial solution which would stand above the contending parties and interests. At the same time the new power holders, the mediators between the State and the village faced uncertainty as economic transformation took precedence over social order. They were in a precarious situation, they had no control over the process. These groups were unable to mobilize the masses as they were the prime beneficiaries of the process and retreated from the

existential problems of the population into the productive protection of administrative machinery. They soon faced competition from comprador merchants, labour bosses etc. On the other hand, other groups, answering new requirements emerged: the petty officials of the State bureaucracy, the professionals, the school teachers etc. They were not involved with production, and had literacy-based skills which had also high status in traditional society, though the non-traditional sources of their knowledge made their communication process much wider. They also began to face unemployment, had to supplement their professional work with other sources of endeavour. They were "marginalmen"—creation of the new process, but no holders of power for whom political movements provided a "home". Increasingly these intellectuals became restive and needed a constituency. It was ultimately provided by the industrial workers and the dissatisfied peasantry.

#### Political Action

Yet the fusion between the "rootless intellectuals" and rural supporters was not effected early. Direct political participation on the part of the peasants was difficult though they often recognized passively the wrongs in their life. Unlike industrial workers, peasant's work is done alone; the tyranny of work weighs heavily on a peasant. Ties of extended kinship and mutual aid, control of land etc. are also important factors—rich and poor peasants may be kinsfolk. In fact they were excluded always in the past in the decision making outside their direct periphery. This deprives them of the knowledge needed to articulate their interests with appropriate forms of action. According to Eric Wolf the poor peasants or the landless labourers who depend on a landlord for the largest part of livelihood or totality of it, have no tactical power—they are unable to pursue the course of rebellion unless some external power challenges the power which

constrains them—the Russian army in 1917 and the Chinese Red Army are examples of such power. Only the landowning middle peasantry and the peasantry located in a peripheral area outside the domain of landlord control have some internal leverage in spite of the facts that as a stratum the middle peasantry are culturally most conservative. They are most vulnerable to economic changes wrought by commercialism and are most exposed to the influences from the developing proletariat; they send their children to work in town. Thus they play the role of a bridge between the rural areas and urban unrest and political ideas. Peasant utopia is the free village but the peasantry as a class are not acquainted with the operation of a state as a complex machinery. To them the State is a negative quantity: an evil, to be replaced by their homemade social order. Peasants in rebellion are natural anarchists. Eric Wolf's case studies bear out the Marxist principle; without outside leadership the peasants cannot make a revolution.

In his studies Eric Wolf shows that the peasants also encounter other groups, most often the intelligentsia-in-arms, ready to benefit from the prevailing disorder in order to impose on it a new order of its own. Two organisations make their appearance: military and the para-military organized around a certain vision of what the new society is to be. In Mexico and Algeria the first appeared and in Russia, Vietnam and China, the second. In the latter cases the political parties of the middle-class revolutionaries engineered the seizure of power. Of course, there were differences. In Russia where the Communist Party seized power after the uprisings of the workers in the cities. The peasantry staged uprisings independently and in course of uprising they consolidated and spread their traditional organization in the countryside (this characteristic of the process of revolution in Russia helps us to explain the Stalin era). In China and Viet-

nam the two were not separate; the peasant population organized simultaneously as the revolutionary warfare proceeded. In Russia the peasant could become an effective member of the new order only by passing through the fire of industrialization; in China the relation of the peasant to the citizen army was immediate and concrete. But there was a similarity between the case of Russia and that of China: in both the market was abrogated. But where the army controlled the rebellions as in Mexico and Algeria the principle of market continued to operate fully. However, in all cases peasants play the role of an agent of forces larger than themselves. Their uprising was for redressing the wrong of their life but these wrongs were the manifestations of great social dislocations. When the war ends the society itself changes and the peasantry with it.

#### Tragic

Eric Wolf significantly writes that the peasant's role is thus essentially tragic. Yet, it is full of hope. For the first time in millennia humankind is moving towards a solution of the age-old problems of hunger and disease and everywhere ancient monopolies of power and received wisdom are yielding to human effort to widen participation and knowledge. The peasants confront tragedy but hope is on its side; doubly tragic are their adversaries who would deny that hope to both the peasantry and themselves. This is also America's dilemma today: to act in aid of human hope or to crush it, not only for the world's sake but for her own.

We have tried to summarize the conclusions drawn by Eric Wolf. Naturally we have to omit many interesting features pointed out by him, as for example the social characteristics of the top leadership of the Communist Party of China. Socially it resembled that of the Kuo Min Tang: both were drawn from the upper layer of the Chinese population with the difference that

the characteristic communist leader was the son of a landlord or rich peasant whereas Kuomintang leaders come from the family of merchants or urban people. The latter came from the coastal towns, the former from central China.

Though Wolf concentrates on the peasant wars of six countries, his conclusions have some universal significance in the Third World. For example, the history of India, particularly of the modern period, may be read afresh in the light of these conclusions, though the situation here has not been identical with that in any of the six countries. The peasant rebellions of nineteenth and twentieth century India may be studied from the standpoint of Eric Wolf; absence of any external factors and middle-class revolutionary party were at least partly responsible for the failure of those peasant wars. Indeed, in a sense, failure of the Indian middle classes is a very important factor for

generating a new force amongst the peasants; middle-class intellectuals here had been rootless from the beginning but they always wanted solutions within the limits of their classes; they never tried to build up a revolutionary party like the Russian or the Chinese party with a military or para-military character. They even failed to build up a system of alliance on a class basis with other classes of more or less identical interests. This failure to build a Gramscian hegemony on the part of the middle class is the root cause of the present-day crisis. Eric Wolf's analysis of mediators, new power holders also helps us to estimate the role of our nineteenth century personalities like Rammohan, Vidyasagar and others. And finally, for the activists, Eric Wolf's comments on middle peasants are really thought-provoking. Particularly those who find revolutionary potentialities only in poor or landless peasants must take note.

## A Forgotten Revolt

HITEN GHOSH

IN the midst of the dreary morality and degraded immorality of the average Bengali stage productions, the play, *1799*, by the dramatic troupe of the Minerva Theatre, Calcutta, is a really important, moving and memorable experience. The dramatist, Mr Asit Basu, who also directs the play, has written a good piece that combines both literary and theatrical qualities. His dialogues, plot and characterization show skill in handling the genre as well as a sound theatrical sense. He can illuminate the past with a meaning which is highly relevant to our own time. And yet he does not allow this significance to get either lost sight of or over-emphasized. There is a perfect economy in treatment of the theme, through the unfolding of a forgotten revolt of the masses. The play shows a peasant revolt of the past as con-

taining the seeds of the revolutions of our own time, and the frustrations of our present history as a continuation of our past failures.

*1799* is a modern interpretation of the revolt of the Chuars, a low-caste community of peasants inhabiting the district of Midnapore. They fought the East India Company and its native agents against their oppression and rapine. History denigrates these brave rebels as obstinate and anti-social barbarians who refused the benefits of the Company's rule in Bengal. Hence the word *choar* in Bengali, meaning a low, obstinate ruffian. The present play depicts them as prototypes of the modern revolutionary, an uncompromising and nonconformist class of proletarians who rejected the foreigners' claim to superior values or their "historical role" as an unwitting

instrument of progress. Already they are struggling towards a classless society. Thus the play is not a mere rehearsal of the events of past history capped by a neat mechanical interpretation of "historical necessity", but history in a new dimension where past, present and future are a continuum of man's eternal struggle for happiness on earth. This is what gives the play a timeless and universal character.

The Chuars are shown as a peasant army fighting a bigger and better-equipped force with guerilla tactics. They harass the enemy, hold them at bay, attack and defeat them by surprise, retreat and lie low when outnumbered or at a disadvantage. They are more humane in their treatment of the prisoners of war. Some of them are at first overcome by a sense of guilt when the native sepoys and agents of the Company have to be murdered, but soon steel themselves against vain remorse by thinking of the atrocities committed by these sepoys and agents of the Company. All these things are so skilfully woven into the fabric of the play that one is struck by the achievement of the playwright in making history come alive and meaningful. The method, however, leaves one clearly discernible flaw. Gobardhan Dikpati, the leader of the Chuars, explains to the feudal lord, Durjan Sing, who hates the foreigners more than he fears the Chuars, that the unity of interest between the Chuars and the feudal lord will end if, after the defeat of the foreigners, the prince should refuse to relinquish his special rights and privileges. He and his like would then be forced to do so in the next phase of revolution. The conflict which this revelation should have produced in the prince's mind is not shown.

But the total effect of the production is so moving that one easily forgives lapses of this kind. The characters are individualized and yet follow the general pattern of their conception and hence achieve unity in their diversity. The words flow with a natural ease and eco-

nomy, suitable to each character, and yet poetic and rich in symbolism. The combination of realism and stylization is present both in speech and action. Rhymes, jingles, songs and dances add to this effect of fusion of poetry and reality. The music by songs are not only well done, but they form part of the story and theme.

When the common people occupy the stage, it becomes a centre of throbbing energy, alive with talks, rumours, tales of loss and pain suffered in the past and of battles not long ago, rites and ceremonies of their festivals, expression of hopes for the future, and hatred of their enemies—the Company and the gentry. The scene is often suddenly turned into a tableau, everybody falling silent and frozen in action, to reveal a change of mood or a new turn of events. Then it again breaks into lively talks and gestures throbbing with determination to act. The close interior scenes are also managed with skill and the last sequence of a violent upheaval with stage-effects is impressive. All the actors and actresses perform their roles well, but special mention should be made of Sucheta Ray as Kamala, Ranjit Ojha as Sutradhar, and Gourisankar Lal and Subroto Nandi as Kunja and Pethu respectively. Netai Mukherji as Gobardhan is, however a little less successful, especially because of the importance of his role. He is rather self-conscious and stiff and often sounds a little stilted. Although there can be no question of reproducing the dialect of the Chuars, a suggestion of the raciness of the local folk tongue could be imported into their conversation with good effect. The language is sometimes too rich and cultured for these people to use. The play is nevertheless an impressive work produced with balance and verve, and deserves a generous reception from the public.

## Electra's Redemption

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

SHIVENDRA Sinha's *Phir Bhi* definitely stands out as something above average to come from Bombay if we take into consideration the director's bold choice of off-beat material as opposed to the puerile content of commonplace Hindi films. The story (based on a short piece entitled *Talaash* by Kamaleswar, one of the avant garde Hindi writers noted for his perceptive analysis of intricate psychological issues) has two main characters, Suman, a telephone-girl in Bombay, and her widowed mother, Manjari, who teaches biology in a girl's college. Sumi is observed with the memory of her father, a man of strong personality, and the influence is so powerful that she does not allow any other man into her life. One day she stumbles into the shocking truth of her mother's affair with another man. She is terribly disturbed, but decides to let her mother have her own way and to go about in search of

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her individual identity. But her mother is torn between two fires, her allegiance to the traditional moral values and her newly acquired relationship. Gradually her daughter gets the first taste of romance when Mahendra a young officer of Bombay Telephones, falls for her. The mother, finally, feels too inhibited and shaken to continue her affair any longer and breaks off the relationship. Thus at the end both the protagonists reach their individual resolutions, the daughter through the fulfilment of her normal desires and the mother through silent suffering.

The original story has a multi-level character with complex overtones, which is not always retained in the film version. This would not have been a fault by itself had the director been able to achieve some new dimensions in his own interpretations. The idea of father-fixation has been stretched to such a ridiculous limit that far from being a charming guardian-angel, the father appears as a wicked wizard exercising his spell over his daughter to ward off the marauding males. The treatment here is also a medley of over-used visual gimmicks. The motivations are also weak in the mother's story and because Manjari's relationship with her lover has not been given a proper build-up, her final decision which has a definite bearing on the film's denouement, comes as a loosely contrived device. The director's television training is evident in his use of characters addressing the audience, but unfortunately this technique misfires and the repetitive nattering into the camera and the tedious bookish dialogues insult our intelligence. These major flaws in construction and treatment ruin the film which starts off with possibilities and despite its nearly total fiasco has certain moments of brilliance, such as the beautiful opening with telling details of the morning atmosphere, the poetic evocation of the rains and of course, the superbly-executed solarisation in the sequence of Suman's love-making in her dream.

DECEMBER 30, 1972

## Clippings

### Report On Bombing

Dr Ramiro Pereira, a Cuban neuro-surgeon, who was in North Vietnam, tells the following story:

"On August 12, several bombs were dropped near Hamrong Bridge. The bombing was aimed at a number of families that had been evacuated to a spot near the highway. Practically every member of one of the families was wounded in the attack. The first victim they brought to us was a child with a shell fragment in his liver. A few minutes later, they brought in another also seriously wounded, an emergency case. Dr Osvaldo del Sol got to work on him immediately. The mother of the children was with them. She, too, was wounded—in the face, near one of her eyes, and she had three shell fragments on the buttocks and part of one of her legs. One of her fingers was fractured. When Dr Aurelio Alvarez, orthopedist, was about to operate on her, she said to him, 'No, doctor, I'm all right; it's my children.' We were deeply impressed by the woman's courage. We saved the children.

"The same day, we saw a mother... Her child had been wounded and, naturally, she was greatly upset and worried until we began to operate on him. When the operation was over and she realized that the child was more or less on his way to recovery, she came over to us and only then did she say that she felt a sharp pain on her chest. We examined her and found out that she had several shell fragments in her chest. Such cases not only demonstrate their tremendous endurance in the face of physical aggression but also that when it comes to important matters, whether it be the case of a son or daughter or their homeland, the Vietnamese simply ignore their personal problems."

Another Cuban doctor reports:

"We underwent an experience that

is the most impressive thing I have ever seen from the medical point of view. That day we had been operating all afternoon. I went out about 5 p.m. and I saw that they were bringing in a boy who was about 10 years old that had been wounded. They put him in a bed and when I started to look him over I realized he had a hole in his abdomen through which a piece of the intestines was hanging out. However, the boy was quite calm.

"We opened him up but by then night was upon us and we didn't have any lights. They brought us a flashlight and we continued working with it. Then they brought us a portable lamp and things got better. But the lamp attracted crickets and three of them flew into the boy's abdomen. Del Sol was operating and I was taking out the crickets and putting my hands over the wound so the moths wouldn't get in. He had three holes in the intestines which we closed up. When Del Sol was closing up I had to cover the wound with my hands to keep the moths out. While all this was going on the planes flew over and started bombing and we had to turn off the lamp and use the flashlight until we had finished.

"Well, we thought, this boy was wounded more than 12 hours ago, he has lost a lot of blood and since he was operated under such difficult conditions he doesn't have much of a chance. But he pulled through, we saved him and the wound didn't even get infected. We jumped for joy!"

Dr Maninidra Rodriguez, general surgeon, reports:

"The awareness that the Vietnamese have about why they are wounded and who wounded them is really something.

"In Thanh Hoa I saw a 12- or 13-year-old child that died. The noteworthy thing is that when his mother learned of his death she didn't start crying like we do when we lose a child. She grieved over the son that the Yankees had murdered. She said: 'Oh Nixon, you killed my son!'

"This was a woman from a rural area and that was her only son. The

interesting thing is that she had also been wounded; she had a fragment from an anti-personnel bomb in the chest and she didn't say anything about her wound, she just said 'Oh, Nixon, you killed my son'!

"None of us, or the Vietnamese doctors that work with us, could bring himself to operate on her. While she was in that state of suffering over the death of her son, she didn't let anybody touch her.

"That was probably the most difficult moment we had to go through in Vietnam. Especially the doctor that operated that case. I think it can't compare with what we went through 24 hours later. While we were operating the planes flew over and we heard the bombing and the artillery, but it can't compare, it wasn't as difficult from the emotional point of view for us as that moment of grief, hate, responsibility and clear awareness of the situation, all that summed up in the cries of the woman who amidst her grief knew why her son had died. We will never forget her."

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## At The Service of Evil

Dr Octavio del Sol: "Here, the average of war wounded runs quite high. In addition to the wounds caused by shells, the victims also have wounds caused by the expansion bombs. We have seen many of these cases.

"On August 14, for example, we received 37 wounded, and more than half of them were suffering from wounds caused by shock waves. Large wounds of this type make treatment quite difficult, because they involve several organs, apart from the wounds caused by shells in one or several organs.

"Most of the wounded we operate on have wounds in the kidney, liver and intestines. The Yankees employ several types of bombs—demolition, expansion and armor-piercing—and the ones loaded with buckshots, which cause multiple wounds, and every one of these wounds can be fatal.

"We know what Yankee genocide means. In Cuba we used to read about genocide and ecocide, but when you are here you get the full impact of the horrible thing. You see an anti-tank bomb and you read the inscription on it. 'Anti-tank bomb.' Here is a bomb that generates a temperature of 1000 degrees Fahrenheit through friction and is made to perforate the armor of a tank. But the Yankees used it against the civilian population, and I mean the civilians who have taken refuge in the shelters. The bomb's job is to destroy shelters.

The Yankees also have the habit of dropping a demolition bomb, and when everybody flees to avoid being crushed by the falling buildings, they

let go with another fragmentation bomb, a 'pineapple' bomb or one like this anti-tank bomb.

All this demonstrates that they have put their brains at the service of evil. And when you look at these wounded children... I'm telling you that it is almost impossible to put into words the way you feel when you see a Vietnamese child, mother or worker suffering wounds that are beyond description.

"We'll never forget a 12-year-old girl, in Haiphong, who had been wounded on the head, the chest and the abdomen. The child belonged to a family that lives in a hamlet of some 30 huts that was attacked—you won't believe this—with eight anti-personnel bombs, among others, at three in the morning. In a voice filled with pain, the little girl kept saying to me. 'Nixon hurt me here, and here, and here.' She died. However, on making the autopsy, we found that her death had been caused by a lesion in the lungs as a result of shock waves. Her lungs were practically torn to pieces. The little girl was another victim of the brains at the service of evil."

Dr Jose Linares, surgeon: "The bomb the Yankees use the most in Haiphong is the anti-tank bomb, that penetrates as far as 30 inches. They use it as an anti-personnel bomb. They had originally designed it to penetrate three feet into a tank, and now they're using it against civilians. They also make wide use of an expansion bomb that is much more powerful than the others of the same type that they used here in the past.

"The anti-tank bomb also bursts

## Corrections

In Arun Mazumdar's "Mode of Production in the U.S.S.R.", please read in:—*Part I—December 16, 1972*, page 9, column 2, para 3, line 6th—"..... management could not" in place of "would not"; page 10, column 1, para 1, line 31st—"Z" in place of "X"; column 2, para 1, line 12th—insert "of the current period", after 'the direct behaviour of constant capital...'; column 2, para 1, line 29th—"purpose of such activity is the creation" in place of "purpose of such activity in the creation"; column 3, para 3, line 11th—insert 'or capitalism' after 'feudalism', and before 'although socialism in contrast...'

*Part II—December 23, 1972*, page 8, column 2, para 1, line 16th—"..... farms through innumerable" not '.... farms though innumerable'; column 3, para 1, lines 23rd and 24th—".... although during the same period even the sectors'... in place of '.... although during the same period only the sectors'...'; page 9, column 2, para 1, line 31st—"or is lowered only by say 1/3 times...."

into fragments—some of them so tiny that it's impossible for the X-rays to detect them. To make things worse, you have to hunt for these fragments among the perforation wounds, because they're needle-shaped. They're about the size of a grain of rice and they perforate the intestines and it's very difficult to locate them. You have to hunt for them and take them out one by one without leaving any, because one of them is enough to cause death."

Dr Ezequiel Bueno, orthopedist: "We have treated many cases involving arms or legs torn off. This complete dismembering is caused by the shock waves and also by large fragments. There are cases in which the shock waves turn bones and flesh

into a mess and it becomes necessary to amputate."

Dr Linares: "The purpose behind this war against the civilians is to frighten the Vietnamese—and that's one thing the Yankees will never succeed in doing. The Vietnamese tell you that they'll carry on their war for national salvation to the very end, and, regardless of all their bombs and all they do to these people, the Yankees will never succeed in breaking the people's spirit or their determination to fight. We see it happen every day. The Vietnamese have their reasons for fighting. Their homeland has been attacked and, therefore, nobody, nothing can intimidate them." (From *Granma*, Havana).

## Defend Prisoners

Several thousand young men are in custody of the police on political grounds; several have been killed as political opponents. Many have been butchered inside prisons in the country.

The young detainees are denied the privilege or the right to defend themselves in a court of law.

The public is aware of the fact that to defend oneself one must know what are the charges for which one has been detained. Even if, in some cases, one knows the charges, one is unable to defend oneself because it involves considerable expenditure and preparation, which are beyond one's reach.

To meet the various difficulties of these young men a Legal Aid Committee was formed in August. The committee plans to arrange for their defence in courts of law.

We appeal to the public in general on behalf of the Legal Aid Committee to render all possible help for the defence of these young men, including donations.

We also appeal to the legal pro-

fession to render legal help in courts of law.

Let us not forget that today these young men have fallen victims of political rivalry, but it may happen to any of us in no distant future.

Cheques (drawn in favour of Bina Banerjee) may be sent to either of the addresses given below; money orders, cash and communications to the office (2).

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2. Jayasree Rana  
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11, Old Post Office Street  
Third Floor,  
Calcutta-1.  
Sd. Srimati Bina Banerjee.  
President, 'Legal Aid Com-  
mittee', Srimati Jayasree Rana,  
Secretary, Legal Aid Com-  
mittee.

## Letters

### Political Prisoners

I join the writers and intellectuals of West Bengal in their concern for the political prisoners and support their demand that they either be tried on specific charges or released soon. Not only are innocent people being arrested on suspicion and false charges, but also the ruling clique is brazenly resorting to abuse of state power by interning its critics and opponents as also the independents who refuse to sell their souls for a mess of pottage.

Among the signatories are some friends. I request them to stretch the sights further. Authoritarian trends, Big Brother surveillance, gagging of dissenters, fascist rigging of polls, manipulated majority at the hustings, cynical violation and perversion of the laws, indefinite internment of opponents and dissenters—are eroding fast the democratic free-

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doms of the Indian citizens and invading their privacy and self-respect all too frequently. It is time the intellectuals came out of their cocoon and banded together to fight and frustrate the diabolical designs of the reactionaries. A broad-based front is the need of the hour.

Having myself been inside an Indian jail and meted out the favoured treatment in it and the police lock-up, I support any call for their replacement by something less primitive and less criminal.

I. K. SHUKLA  
Imphal, Manipur

### Address

It is reliably learnt that Kanu Sanyal, (CP-ML) sent a writ petition against the illegality of warrants pending against him to Calcutta High Court on October 10 through the Superintendent, Central Jail, Visakhapatnam. But it was returned to him on October 20 on the plea that the address of Calcutta High Court could not be traced. On November 20 he again sent it to the High Court only to be returned more or less on the same plea. It is amazing that the address of the High Court cannot be traced.

A DEMOCRAT  
Visakhapatnam

### Austerity

Mr Siddhartha Sankar Ray seems to have forgotten what the word "austerity" means while referring to the forthcoming Salt Lake session of his Party. Visva-Bharati style architecture and decor, trade fairs, "Halls of Presidents", "prabhat pheris", colourful pageants (for the Congress President) can by no stretch of imagination be fitted within the austere limits of the Concise Oxford Dictionary which reads—"strict, severely simple, harsh in flavour...". The CM who is apparently known as "Guru" these days perhaps intends to do an MGR in reverse—from politics to films.

But then Calcutta and conformity do not even rhyme.

T. R. RAMALINGAM  
Calcutta

### Periar And Kamaraj

While accusing me of making Kamaraj a hero, Ka Kha Ga from New Delhi is saying the same about Periar (9-11-1972). He seems to be swayed by the impression created in the bourgeois press which depicted Periar as a great man without explaining for whom he stands. Periar demanded a separate Dravidasthan when the Muslim League demanded Pakistan. He wants to divide all Indians with the yardstick of Aryan-Dravidian differentials. After 2000 years of racial and caste mixtures, Periar is now making attempts to pick out "pure Dravidians" from the Aryan-Dravida mixture. It is doubtful whether he himself can claim to be pure Dravidian. The mystic word "Dravida" is borrowed from Tagore's national song. It is doubtful whether any race existed as Dravida as propagated by E.V.R. Some Western historians wrote some scholarly work on this wonderful subject which formed a basis for political groups later. The net result of the rise of the DK and DMK is the abolition of Sanskrit from the curriculum and professors of Indian history in Tamilnadu are unable to do any further research in their subject for their lack of knowledge in Sanskrit. Conversely, they were encouraged to write the feudal glory of past Tamils without relating it to Indian history.

Secondly, Periar celebrated August 15, 1947 as a day of mourning and expressed the view that England should rule India. In this regard, Kamaraj acted at least like a national bourgeois.

It is true that E.V.R. does not claim to be a Marxist. He claims himself to be a rationalist. As an iconoclast he has organised shows but these were meant to raise funds for his trust. In spite of these shows,

Tamil Nadu now stands first in the matter of "Bhakti Movement". Even small stones in the street corners of Madras city and other big towns have attained the status of temple gods. E.V.R. is not opposing the DMK which renovates hundreds of temples every year; Rs. 13.5 lakhs worth of a diamond crown adored the Madurai Meenakshi under DMK rule. (The trustee of the Madurai temple is a leading non-Brahmin kulak, Sir P. T. Rajan, a former leader of the Justice Party and a friend of E.V.R. and Karunanidhi).

In Salem E.V.R. encouraged the Bhakti cult because of his fundamentally religious approach. He can exist so long as gods and Bhakti exist. I consider both the DK and DMK to be on the same plane. The DK without the DMK has no existence. The leaders of the DK and their relatives have already merged with the Rs. 200-crore empire built by the Coimbatore Naidus (Laxmi mills group-engineering industries). DMK men are trailing behind Mr Malalingam (the rich man of the south) who has also built a Rs. 200-crore empire. In short, Periar's movement really helped the high-caste Hindus to enrich themselves at the expense of nearly 22% of Tamil Harijans who are mostly landless labourers and who have never heard of Periar or EVR.

There is no denying that Mr Kamaraj belongs to the group of reactionaries. I merely said that mass sentiments favoured Kamaraj at the time of my report. But Ka Kha Ga is very hasty in his remark that Kamaraj helped only his community of Nadars. The Nadars are a backward community in Tamil Nadu. Even now the majority of Nadars of Tamil Nadu are poor compared to the Telugu-speaking Naickers-Naidus. Among the backwards communities, the Nadars are mostly enterprising and hard working. Tapping toddy is their main occupation. They have also entered the grain and groceries trade. There are Nadar leaders in the DMK also.

K Kha Ga need not imagine that

DECEMBER 30, 1972

Periar is a Mao of the South because some English weeklies of North India attempted to invest all his empty shows with meaning. Periar will not understand the ABC of Marxism-Leninism to bring about a real cultural revolution. His rationalism is an echo of Gandhism. The real killers of Brahminism are the exponents of Saiva Siddhanthas.

A CORRESPONDENT  
Tamil Nadu

## Two Cheers

Rabindra Sadan authorities celebrated the centenary of Bengali public theatre on December 7 with the performance of Dinabandhu Mitra's *Nil-darpan*. On that day I attended the show and had the misfortune to witness gymnastics in the name of drama.

The *Nil-darpan* that was staged seemed to be more a creation of Bijan Bhattacharyya than that of the creator himself. The play, conspicuously, was not well-rehearsed and naturally, it lacked teamwork. Golok Basu and Nabin Madhab left no impressions. Torap showed acrobatics on the stage in order to cover up his poor knowledge of histrionics. Rebati moved about the stage with dancing steps. Padi-Mayrani failed to provoke hatred. She seemed to have taken up herself the task of turning 'Rogue Sahib' into a nobleman instead. Most of the female artistes spoke Bengali with Oxonian accent. The only exception was Smt Arati Maitra, who did the role of Aduri in the right manner and all along stood out when she appeared in the company of others. If I would write anything of how 'Sabitry' was, I should quote a few lines from the historic letter written by "A Spectator" to the Editor, *Indian Mirror*, about the performance of *Nil-darpan* by the National Theatre on December 21, 1872. This letter appeared in the *Indian Mirror* on December 27, 1872 (Vide pp. 95-96 *Bangiya-Natyashalar Itihas* by Brojendra Nath Bandyopadhyaya, 4th edition); and

it is believed that the writer of the letter was Girish Chandra Ghosh himself. The lines read: "...To say what Sabitry was, would require a better knowledge of Comparative Anatomy than my humble self has pretensions to. It was impossible to conceal disgust at the idiot's part she played..." Girish Ghosh may have said all those things for deriving some malicious pleasure but I borrow the lines as I think them very apt to express my opinion about Sabitry's characterization on the day. The performances of Wood-Sahib, Sadhu-charan and the ryots were, to some extent, better.

Bijan Bhattacharyya, the father of "Naba Natya Andolan" (Neo-Drama Movement), should not have danced to the piping of the Rabindra Sadan management by distributing the female parts among the sophisticated lacking in the acumen for acting.

A brochure brought out by Rabindra Sadan on this occasion carries a short article with reference to *Nil-darpan* by Bijan Bhattacharyya. This article is a thought-provoking one.

All said and done, for Bijan Bhattacharyya two cheers only!

KUNAL CH. MITRA  
Calcutta

## Protest

Though I liked D. D. Singh's article "The Joint Sector" (November 25) I was pained to read his remark, "look at the ingenuity of a Sirdar Chief Minister". This, in a way, shows the tragedy of Marxism in India. I hold no brief for that Chief Minister. But the way Mr Singh has used these words "The ingenuity of a Sirdar Chief Minister" shows the particular line of his thought. I and many of my friends who, fortunately or unfortunately, were born in Sikh families, strongly protest against his remark which is derogatory to this brave minority community—the toiling masses of which have always been in the forefront of all revolutionary struggles. If Mr Singh is sincere

enough, he must apologise in the pages of *Frontier*. Otherwise my allegation against him will stand—that instead of being a consistent Maoist as he tries to claim, he is a hidden communal Arya Samajist and thus an agent of the reactionaries in the ranks of the revolutionaries.

NAVNEET  
Chandigarh

## Kalinagar

While thanking Mr Hiten Ghosh for his criticism of *Kalinagar*, I would like to draw attention to his misconception about the form and to certain inaccurate observations about the contents of the drama. He assumes the drama to be Bechtian and then chides the author. But the form of the drama is not on the Brechtian Model. Father it has got some affinity with Moreno's therapeutic drama, where a role-playing method is followed without any attempt to separate 'the outer frame' from 'the inner play', till the end of the session. Here Dr Bhadra, until he appears at the end to stop the role-playing, is a role-player; and as a role-player he makes his survey and commentary. There would have been no confusion on the part of Mr Ghosh had he not made an apriori assumption that led to this misconception.

Now to his observations about the contents.

In the second para, he wonders 'who the benevolent doctor may be—so eager to restore their unity—'. The doctor is no other than Dr Bhadra, who has devised the setting of a nursing home where attempts on the life of the patients are staged. If two erstwhile comrades are found to be engaged in murderous attempts, would it be 'simple-minded—day-dre-

## CORRECTION

The author of "Sambhu Mitra, The Magician" (December 23) is Hiten Ghosh, not Hiren Gohain.

aming' on the part of the doctor if he attempts to understand them or to change them by citing illustrations from the past? No, Dr Bhadra is not suffering from 'euphoria', nor does he believe in a 'utopia'. He simply wants to understand the genesis of dissension and disunity. Aggression and violence cannot be explained fully by politics and economics. Hence this modest attempt to understand it through role-playing. Had Mr Ghosh attentively followed the dialogue, he could not have come to the conclusion that Dr Bhadra (or, the dramatist) has any political design of any particular brand. That Mr Ghosh was not very attentive is quite apparent from his fanciful remark about Pralhad, whom he takes to be the doctor himself. Pralhad's identity is clear and undisguised in the drama.

Now to the last para, where the critic sermonizes. 'While the great poets of the past could face the truth about the fate of their civilization, with its inhuman basis,—the author of *Kalinagari* can only hide behind comfortable lies and produce a fake and facile solution'. Lies, if there be any, are in the critic's observation. He has not cared to remember that *Kalinagari* is destroyed in the drama with its old structures, morals and values. Only after the total annihilation of the present generation from inherent contradictions in their civilization, a new generation comes in for construction of a new society. This is what the author has envisaged. Mr Ghosh thinks that 'the catastrophe threatening *Kalinagari* makes sense only if we push it to its logical conclusion'. The logical conclusion according to him is 'the doom as part of history of class societies'. But

the doom or destruction of the 'very basis of disaster in man's social history' and the ushering in of 'the era of human brotherhood, freedom and equality' are not spontaneous processes. Men take part in it and accelerate or inhibit the process. The advent of a Hiranayakashipu or a Hitler is not inevitable, it may be averted. This is what the author ventured to submit in the drama, so far as I have understood it. I don't think Marx would have objected to such a visualization.

Lastly, I think Mr Ghosh specializes in acrimony and vituperations and for this he has to taint his object of attack sometimes with imaginary colours not to be found in the original. The readers who are acquainted with the original play will not find his criticism either entertaining or enjoyable.

A PARTICIPANT  
Calcutta

The members of the troupe may congratulate themselves on their own understanding of the play. I do not grudge them their superior intelligence, but only wish they could get their meaning across the footlights without the exegensis given above. I would leave the theatre-loving public to judge between the rival interpretations if it were not that the play might never reach it. I may as well confess that I was so bored during the performance that my attention often flagged, but I do not think that I could have missed its true meaning. I also admit that I have never heard of such a thing as therapeutic drama unless all drama is therapeutic in the old, Aristotelian sense. To treat a revolutionary theme in the manner of a therapeutic research is the height of philistinism in relation both to art and to revolution.

H. G.  
Calcutta

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With mechanisation of farming displacing people from agriculture, it is imperative that villages should offer alternative opportunities for employment. The traditional farmer is under-employed in any case. Dairying offers a part solution to both problems.

\*This survey was conducted by the Department of Economics, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar. The computed income included remittances from relatives in Africa.

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