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On Other Pages

COMMENT	2
MASS UPSURGE IN ANDHRA K. V. R.	4
ANDHRA PRADESH: ANALYSIS OF A SPLIT FROM A CORRESPONDENT	5
SHADOWS OVER DELHI HIT N. K. SINGH	9
A FALSE BROTHER MONI GUHA	10
<i>Book Review</i>	
GENOCIDE IN BANGLADESH	12
HUSAIN RETROSPECTIVE SANDIP SARKAR	15
ALL IN A NIGHT'S WORK MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY	16
LETTERS	16

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WAR PRISONERS

THE issue of Pakistani prisoners of war is beginning to disturb an influential section of the Indian Press, if not the authorities. The prisoners, some of whom are getting killed now and then, have been much too long on the hospitable Indian soil; the duration of their stay is a record. The Indian Government has ignored the General Assembly resolution which, according to a wide range of interpreters, was linked to the question of admission of Bangladesh to the UN. The prisoners are costing about one crore of rupees every month, besides causing administrative and diplomatic inconveniences.

Whatever the international conventions about prisoners of war may be, New Delhi and Dacca insist that the question of release will be taken up after Pakistan recognises Bangladesh. How can Bangladesh be ignored?—it is asked with wide-eyed wonder. Isn't it a fact that the Pakistani army surrendered to a joint command? As for recognition, President Bhutto wants a meeting with Sheikh Mujib—a meeting which he says the Sheikh agreed to before his release. But the Sheikh won't meet him before recognition. And all of them are peaceloving, honourable men whose sole proclaimed passion is relaxation of tension on the sub-continent.

The Sheikh wants to try some prisoners for war crimes. Mr Bhutto has now let it be known that some Bengalis held in Pakistan will be tried for espionage and other crimes. The number of Bengalis there is now said to be about 200,000 instead of the 400,000 or so of earlier estimates. About 28,000 belong or belonged to the armed forces. It is also said that if and when a final settlement is negotiated between Pakistan and Bangladesh, the Sheikh will take up the question of about 400,000 or 500,000 non-Bengali Muslims in Bangladesh. The figure quoted used to be 1.5 million when the big trouble started in March 1971. Family planning seems to have succeeded (extremely well in Bangladesh after liberation.

It is a labyrinth, dark, humid and nauseating. But, as some newspapers have started suggesting (this paper made a similar, brief suggestion long ago), there is a way out if the Sheikh relents a bit—the Sheikh has to be pampered. If the Bangladesh Government is efficient, it should have by now a firm list of the prisoners it wants to try. Let them be detained. The rest can go home. As for justice being done to the accused, there should not be much squeamishness on either side of the

border. Our treatment of thousands of political prisoners has not made us famous for our sense of justice. But war crimes are not the real issue. The issue is one of exerting the maximum pressure on Islamabad. Such pressure, however, is beginning to be counter-productive. The Red Cross

reports, the frequent shooting down of unarmed men legitimately trying to escape, will have a cumulative propaganda effect against New Delhi. The Sheikh, in Dacca, is not being blamed for these killings. He can keep on thundering and have the best of both worlds.

No Respite In Andhra

President's rule in Andhra Pradesh has not brought back students to schools and colleges, government employees to offices, transport operators to drivers' seats or recalcitrant Congress legislators to the party. 'Lawlessness' and the accompanying disorders remain unabated, curfews clamped on towns and cities have been extended to as many as eighteen hours a day. The idea that was sought to be established was that all these chaotic conditions owed themselves to the Telengana leadership, headed by Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao, to the biased or incompetent administration led by Mr Rao and his Telengana chums. Now that President's rule has proved as ineffective as the previous government, Mr Rao can legitimately claim that he has been made a scapegoat of the Centre's lack of understanding of the situation, as Mr Brahmananda Reddi, his predecessor, did when he was made to quit following the Telengana agitation. But both have missed the bus; there is little hope of their restoration to power. Both of them failed to impress upon the Centre that separation of Andhra was the only way out or in other words the merger of Telengana with Andhra some sixteen years ago was a wrong step.

It is time for the Centre to realise that all sections of the middle class in Andhra are in favour of bifurcation of the State and since the Centre is not interested in people below the middle class, it will do it much good to take the unpalatable decision to split the State. Mrs

Gandhi will of course lose some of her face, after all her determined indifference to the agitation for separation—but let us say, hard luck, Prime Minister, and let it rest at that. Her Pancha Sutra has failed but so what; didn't her famous father's more glamorous Pancha Sheel equally fail?

The Mulki Rules and the Pancha Sutra have alienated the most vociferous section of the Andhra Pradesh petty bourgeoisie. The Andhra students, consequent on these two principles, are being largely denied seats in colleges, youths have less prospects for jobs, engineers, nurses, doctors, gazetted and non-gazetted employees have less favourable con-

ditions of service. The Andhra people have fled from the Telengana region, and the Telengana people from the Andhra region. As it has been pointed out already in major newspapers, these people have been encouraged by powerful lobbies in the State. The grain merchants are unhappy with the previous Government's decision to nationalise wholesale trade in foodgrains; the transport operators with the gradual takeover of road transport; the prosperous landlords with the land ceiling measures. They are all out to fish as much as they can in troubled waters and the separatist sentiments have been quite handy to exploit. The Mulki Rules have almost made the two regions of the State inaccessible to the Mulkis and non-Mulkis respectively. All that the Centre has to do now is to give the fact an official recognition. That is not to say that Andhra and Telengana will live happily ever hereafter; separation or non-separation is not the basic problem of the people in the State. But the Congress can expect some respite, temporarily, if it can make amends for its continued bungling in Andhra affairs.

Back In The Duma

The Revolutionary Socialist Party has decided to take part in the West Bengal Assembly, so long boycotted by the ULF on the ground that the 1972 elections were rigged and hence the government was not legal. Seventeen other elected members of the front—15 CPM and one each from the SUC and the Workers' Party as well as a leftist-backed Independent, will continue to stay out. Since parliamentary democracy is a matter of numbers, the presence of 3 or 20 makes little difference in a House of 280 or so.

The RSP thinks that the phase of bourgeois democracy is over and semi-fascist or fascist trends are dominant. So, one should resort to the Leninist tactic of revolutionary

utilisation of existing bourgeois forms like the Assembly in the interests of a mass and class struggle. Besides, the ULF is already participating in certain committees on labour, land and education set up by the illegitimate government.

Lenin, we know, can be quoted out of context for many things under the sun. How will the three musketeers of the RSP in the West Bengal Duma help supplement the mass struggle? And where is the mass struggle? The ULF has had quite a few party meetings and rallies since September at which it talked of the coming, militant mass struggle against rising prices, unemployment and eviction of sharecroppers in the countryside. The CPM, which has not been

Sadat's Vengeance ..

able to re-enter its erstwhile strongholds, is finding it difficult to operate on a wider scale because it has chosen the familiar, path. The working class is on the defensive; large numbers of trade unionists have gone over to the other camp. The peasantry, too, though hard-hit, does not seem to be fighting back. The degree of apathy, at least on the surface, is demoralising. There is a plaintive note in the air, which is not a sign of the masses preparing to go into action. Though high prices have made life miserable, one sees thousands of half-fed men and women wherever there is some sort of free amusement or festival. It appears that after their experiences during the last five or six years when even two spells of UF regime were helpless against market and other forces, they think that high prices cannot be blamed on the rulers, they are as natural as extreme heat or cold.

It may be argued that in this situation anything handy should be used for whatever effect, that what the three RSP men will do in the Assembly is as much relevant as the talk about a coming militant mass movement. Mr Promode Das Gupta is of the opinion that the masses are so mature these days that they do not believe in spontaneity; instead they march with deliberate, firm steps to a Maidan meeting, defying potential death or injury at the hands of Congress hooligans. Such is our revolutionary maturity some 50 years or so after the formation of the Communist Party! With such leaders, even a perfect trigger will refuse to click in the most excellent situation.

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The man who has contributed most to the politicisation of the Egyptian students is President Anwar el-Sadat. The continued stalemate in Arab-Israeli relations and Sadat's promises invariably turning into nothing have forced the once apolitical students to question the credibility of the Government. The students have now come to represent a cross-section of the opinion of the people. Only a few years ago, the students in general took little interest in politics which was the exclusive concern of Nasser and the men around him. But the national humiliation of the 1967 war marked a watershed in the evolution of political consciousness of students. Nasser was still the national leader but for the first time he was compelled by circumstances to do a lot of explaining to the people. The death of the Rais should have established a collective leadership but Sadat did not take much time to neutralise those with whom he was to share power. In the process the leftists who had more credibility with the people were thrown in the political cold. Since then Sadat has somehow manipulated to remain in power by promising to make 1971 the year of decision, expelling Russian military personnel and dismissing the hawkish War Minister, Mohammed Sadek. It now so happens that any promise that Sadat makes gives rise to anger. He has proved himself thoroughly incapable of any military or diplomatic initiative sufficient to force the hands of the Israelis. The arrests of student activists, including some highly popular leaders, which came in the wake of Sadat's announcement in Parliament that "the only real guarantee of freedom is more freedom", added to the national discontent. But what was the demand of the students that infuriated the President? They wanted a national debate on the 1967 debacle and also on the political, economic and so-

cial measures to be taken to end the sequel to the Israeli aggression. It has to be remembered that the students along with the common people are mainly bearing the brunt of the economic crisis and the constant national alert. The students have also objected to the rightist shift in policy in the post-Nasser days and questioned the special privileges that a particular class of people enjoys. Sadat considers such a proposal for debate a challenge to his fragile authority. This explains the recent spate of arrests. Last month Cairo had seen the most violent confrontation between students and the gendarmerie whose impact was felt throughout West Asia.

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Mass Upsurge In Andhra

K. V. R.

WHERE they fail to see the hand of the CIA in any popular agitation, the governments of the land invariably see the hand of Naxalites, and the inept Government of Andhra Pradesh is no exception. It was reported that the Naxalites in A.P. were behind the removal of fish-ponds in one place or two. What could be more welcome to the authorities than finding yet another scapegoat? It only shows how help'less the Chief Minister was in the face of a mass upsurge which neither he nor his patroness at Delhi could stem and stop.

Whatever be the motives of the so-called "vested interests" (the Swatantra and the Jana Sanoh) which initiated the current agitation in the Andhra area for bifurcation of the State, it is undeniable that it is now a mass movement.

The Brahmananda Reddi clique, which was thrown out as soon as it lost the favour of Mrs Indira Gandhi, could have wished for nothing else in order to discredit and dethrone her latest protegee who was also the weakest and yet the most foolhardy, viz., Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao. When the NGOs, young men and students in their thousands threw themselves behind it, the agitation and its driving force were no longer what they originally had been. At every step, it was the latter who began dictating and deciding in fact, while the 'leaders' were busy meeting each other, issuing statements and step by step assuming a more hostile posture towards the PM and her party machine. The Congress party in the State is now in shambles.

The CPI is interested in out-Indira-ing Indira in the matter of maintaining the integration of the State at any cost (even of self-annihilation) and so has isolated itself from the 'mainstream' at the State level. Its rival, the CPI(M), with its much-vaunted 2:1 formula, also has set its

face against the Jai Andhra movement, for exactly the same reasons. In effect, both the legal communist parties have condemned themselves to a hopeless position. But they are crying themselves hoarse (a cry in the wilderness!) about a non-existent unity between the two regions of the State. The ruling clique in the ruling party and its revisionist tail and the more pragmatic, if a bit cleverer, CPI(M), are all trying to throw the blame entirely on the 'vested interests' and raising a fascist bogey, in order to cover up their own political bankruptcy. The vested interests are there. But the youth also is there. The employees are there. The 'intel'ectuals' are there. It is no longer a crisis in the ruling party. It is now a crisis in the ruling class itself. It may not be a revolutionary situation. But it is, without doubt, a very favourable situation for leftist parties to exploit or at least recruit zealous following and to give a definite twist to this upsurge. What is lacking is exactly such a leftist party. It is not enough if the cry "fascist" is raised indiscriminately against the agitators. You can't simply daub them all with tar.

What is unambiguously fascist is the *zulum* of the CRP and the military. The Five-Point Formula of the Prime Minister and the Mulki Rules Bill were both stillborn. They were rejected outright on both sides of the State. Instead of bowing to the popular verdict, the Government brought in its last weapon—the *danda*—from its armoury. What West Bengal suffered, the Andhra region is now suffering. Ahmedabad is repeating itself all over in all major towns of this region. Curfew has become the order of the day. The funniest part of it is, it was resorted to when darkness set in over the land owing to the powermen's brief strike. Another funny thing is, the rifle is fastened to the waist of the CRP men with a

glittering iron chain. Firings, lathi-charges, bayonetting and beating are all in order.

More than this, it is the morale of the agitators that is really surprising. Barricades and road-blocks went up, almost spontaneously. At Vijayawada, there was street fighting in the dark. At Narasaraopet, three army vans were forced to go by another route in the face of stiff popular opposition. At Anantpur, the CRP men got the shock of their lives what with the mortars and pestles of angry women!

All this is rich grist to any but a rusty mill which is what the two CPIs, jointly or individually, are. College and primary teachers, rickshawpullers, RTC workers, powermen—these are not 'fascists' I hope,—have all or mostly all have now come out in favour of bifurcation, which might not really offer any solution to their real problems. But can there be a more ostrich-like attitude than to stand religiously and dogmatically by a non-existent thing? Revolutionary opportunism is, after all, no sin, especially for a 'Communist' Party in whose terminology it goes under the blessed name of 'tactics'. The Revolutionary Writers' Association has asked the bulk of the Jai Andhra agitators, i.e., the middle-class elements, the youth and the students, not to rest on their oars with mere bifurcation but to carry on the fight with greater determination until it is merged into a protracted armed struggle for the overthrow, not of a clique or a government, but of the State power itself. It may be a distant cry but it is the right cry.

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Andhra Pradesh : Analysis Of A Split

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

MR K. P. Satyamurthy, a top Naxalite leader and a close follower of the late Charu Mazumdar, who was stated to have been striving for a rapprochement between all the revolutionary groups in the State, including the revolutionary communist group led by Mr Chandra Pulla Reddy, the moderate Marxist-Leninist group of Mr Satyanarayan Sinha of Bihar, and his own group of Marxist-Leninist Party which adheres to the Charu Mazumdar line, was arrested in Hyderabad on the night of November 29 in a "dramatic swoop" as he was emerging from his city 'hide-out'—a house, the Deputy Inspector General of Police (CID and Railways) told reporters.

It is stated that Mr Satyamurthy had met Charu Mazumdar just before the latter's arrest last July and had lengthy discussions. The DIG told reporters that Mr Satyamurthy carried a reward of Rs 25,000 on his head and had been underground since 1969.

The DIG also said Mr Chandra Pulla Reddy, the leader of the Andhra Pradesh Revolutionary Communist Party, carries a reward of Rs 100,000 on his head.

Though the police sources are reluctant to say anything about the differences between the two groups of the State Revolutionary Communist Party led by Mr Tarimela Nagi Reddi, and Mr Chandra Pulla Reddy, party circles told this correspondent that while efforts were being made to bring about a rapprochement between all the revolutionary groups in the State, their Party (The Revolutionary Communist Party of Andhra Pradesh) was on the verge of a split.

It may be recalled here that Mr Chandra Pulla Reddy was expelled from the CPM in 1968 along with Messrs T. Nagi Reddi, Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao and Kolla Venkaiah, the Secretariat members of the CPM State unit. The four leaders

formed in September 1968 the Andhra Pradesh Co-ordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries with Mr Nagi Reddi as its convener. Mr Kolla Venkaiah who differed with the State Co-ordination Committee on certain 'issues' left the Committee and associated himself with the Marxist-Leninist Party.

The APCCCR, which joined the All India Co-ordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries headed by Charu Mazumdar, in October, 1968 was disaffiliated by AICCCR in February 1969. The Andhra Pradesh Co-ordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries held a State Convention in April 1969 and adopted an "Immediate Programme" to carry out revolutionary activities in the State. After the April Convention the State Co-ordination Committee called itself Andhra Pradesh Communist Committee of Revolutionaries.

Soon after the formation of the State Co-ordination Committee Mr Chandra Pulla Reddy was deputed by the Committee to the Telengana Agency (forest) area to build up the revolutionary movement there.

In December, 1969 Mr T. Nagi Reddi and eight others were arrested in Madras and subsequently state-wide arrests were made and the Government of Andhra Pradesh charged them with conspiring to overthrow the legally established Government through violent means. The Special Court, constituted to try the accused sentenced 23 persons including Mr T. Nagi Reddi and Mr D. Venkateswara Rao to four years rigorous imprisonment while acquitting 24 others. Now all the convicted are on bail and have filed an appeal in the Andhra Pradesh High Court.

In Madras 6 out of 9 Provincial Committee members of the APCCCR were arrested including the Provincial Committee Secretary Mr D. Venkates-

wara Rao and two secretariat members, T. Nagi Reddi and Mr M. Karayana Swamy. Mr Chandra Pulla Reddi, another secretariat member, and Mr P. Ramanarasaiah, Provincial Committee member, evaded the police trap.

The polemics in the Party started mainly in the last part of 1970 particularly between the Jail Committee and the Provincial Committee outside. Though on the surface it may look that the differences between the jail leaders and the Provincial Committee started on the correct implementation of the "Immediate Programme", in fact it had several other reasons.

It may be recalled here that the members, realising that it was not possible for them to effectively function as PC and lead the party and the people's movement from inside jail, resolved to dissolve the PC and ceased to function as PC. They asked the Party outside to form a new Provincial Committee to shoulder the responsibilities of the party and the people's movement. Accordingly a new PC (with the remaining two members of the old PC and one new member) was proposed and the proposal was unanimously approved in two separate meetings, one being the joint meeting of the forest area and of all the armed squads, and the other of representatives of the district committee of the plains area. The new PC came into existence in July, 1970. For a few months close co-ordination between the newly formed PC and the arrested leaders was maintained. But by the end of 1970 the jail leaders began to circulate their own documents without consulting with the PC and belittling the armed struggle in the Telengana Agency Area. The jail leaders in their document "Left Deviation" accused the PC that it had violated the line enunciated in the "Immediate

Programme". Volumes of documents were issued by both sides, defending each their stand.

The Revolutionary Communist Committee of Andhra Pradesh outside in a document "Defeat the Party splitting activities and capitulationist policies of T. Nagi Reddi and Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao", says: All the comradely efforts to reconciles with the jail leaders proved futile and the whole ideological discussion with them was of no avail. The jail leaders who are now on bail are openly criticising in public the revolutionary movement in the Telengana Agency Area and have denounced it when the enemy was employing every means, political and military, to suppress the armed struggle and at a time when the situation demands the utmost unity in the party to strengthen the revolutionary people's movement in the state. They tried to show confusion, doubts and a sense of no-confidence in the minds of Party members and people about the future development of the people's armed struggle. "With fabricated baseless charges and utter lies about the armed struggle and about the Provincial Committee leadership who were in the thick of the movement, the two leaders wrote documents and distributed them from jail on their own without the knowledge of the PC and without any discussions in the party at any level. In gross violation of principles of party organisation and party discipline, they established a rival PC inside jail and tried to form rival committees in the State and thus are trying to split the party and the people's movement."

The document further alleged that the jail leaders never objected to the political line and to the principles of armed struggle followed by the PC though all the documents on political and ideological issues and on problems facing the armed struggle prepared by it were sent to them. Moreover, the jail leaders "upheld the armed struggle of the agency areas of Warangal, Khammam

and Karimnagar Districts in their document distributed in June, 1970, "Present Situation—Our Tasks" and described the agency movement as a "struggle being waged in self-defence of the cadre and to defend the people's movement", and also wrote in that document that "the movement had the people's support and it did score many successes and that it was surging forward", the present document claimed.

Points of Difference

The document at length explained the points of difference between the PC and the jail leaders.

About the split in the Indian ruling classes into pro-American and pro-Russian groups, the document said that India is a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country subjected to neo-colonial exploitation by imperialists, especially by U.S. imperialists and Soviet social-imperialists. The Indian big bourgeoisie and big landlord classes were split into pro-American and pro-Russian groups and the two groups were locked in a dogfight for power. While political parties like the Syndicate Congress, Jana Sangh and Swatantra represented mainly the pro-American group, the private sector in India, the Indira Congress and her friends represent mainly the pro-Russian group, the public sector. The Indian ruling classes were split on policies to be followed and were beset with internal contradictions and as a result were getting weakened. While it was the stand of the PC, Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao held that there were no differences among the Indian ruling classes on policies and they were not split into pro-American and pro-Russian groups. The jail leaders further argued that the Indira Congress itself did represent the whole of the Indian ruling classes—the big bourgeoisie and big landlords—and safeguards the interests of both American imperialism and Russian imperialism and thus they came to the conclusion that the Indira Government was an

independent power, the document alleged.

In this connection the document quoted the views of the Chinese Communist Party and said that the views of the PC were in accordance with those of the CPC while those of Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao went against the CPC's views.

Due to the policies of exploitation pursued by the Congress for the last 25 years, the country is in the grip of serious economic and political crises, the people of various classes are fighting against the policies of exploitation of the ruling classes; in different parts of the country armed peasant struggles have broken out under the leadership of Communist Revolutionaries. As a result of people's struggles developing throughout India the ruling Congress party was split into two; the ruling classes and their political parties are facing a serious political crisis and the political situation in the country is unstable. This instability is a permanent one. The document said that the PC was of the opinion that a permanent political instability prevailed in the country.

Contrary to this political estimation, Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao argue that after the spectacular election victory of the Indira Congress, there exist no groups or split in the ruling classes and that their differences have disappeared. They also argue that the instability which existed before the parliamentary elections of 1971, has changed into stability. The PC argued that the successes of the Indira Congress in the elections to Parliament and State Assemblies (by false promises, by using military and police forces and by making most opportunistic agreements with other political parties) did not alter the instability among the ruling classes. The conditions which created the permanent political instability did not disappear with the election victory of Indira Gandhi. The so-called stability is only a temporary phase within the framework of the per-

JANUARY 27, 1973

manent political instability and this will not continue long.

On the assessment of the revolutionary situation also the two groups give different accounts. While the PC saw an excellent revolutionary situation and its development day by day and felt that the "present revolutionary situation" nationally and internationally was more favourable than the situation at the time of the Telengana armed struggle (1946-51), Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao said that the existing revolutionary situation was not more favourable "for armed struggle" than in that period.

When to Start?

Though no auspicious day can be fixed to start armed struggle, the Revolutionary Communist Committee in its "Immediate Programme" fixed 'Muhurat' for the start of such struggle. "With the onset of the rainy season i.e. in the month of June we can start the armed struggle... Rainy season provides the favourable climate for resistance movement", the Immediate Programme stated. This fixing of 'muhurat' was ridiculed by the CPI(ML) and the PC later could note the mistake they committed. Nagi Reddi and D. Venkateswara Rao in their document "Left Deviation" tried to defend the fixing of the date, saying that when they formulated the Immediate Programme there was an exodus of party members into the Marxist-Leninist Party and to stop it and give confidence to the rank and file of the party they had to fix a time! But later Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao accused the Agency leadership for starting the armed struggle in the name of self-defence 'before the

people were prepared for occupation and distribution of the land of landlords'. The PC contested this line of thinking and explained that the landlords and the government would not sit with hands tied till the people were prepared to seize their lands. But at the same time the PC did not forget the importance of the preparedness of the people to come forward to occupy the landlords' lands. The document explained in the following lines the PC's stand on the issue:

When the people launch mass struggles on their own issues against feudal exploitation, the landlords and the reactionary government come down heavily on the movement using the armed police to suppress it. In such a case if the people in defence of their movement, are prepared to resist the armed repression of the government with arms, the communist revolutionaries should lead such a struggle; and must strive to develop the movement which had started on partial demands into agrarian revolution. If and when people are not prepared to resist the brutal armed suppression and repression, to which the people's movement is subjected in the process of its development, we must adopt necessary tactics for self-defence of the cadre and the mass movement to develop the movement into agrarian revolution. We have to decide upon the forms of struggle for self-defence taking into consideration the degree of the preparedness of the people for armed struggle, their support, geographical conditions (contiguity) of the area concerned etc.

In the forest areas of Warangal, Khammam and Karimnagar districts, when mass struggles were developing against feudal and other exploiting classes, the reactionary Congress Government unleashed heavy police repression to suppress the people's movement. In order to safeguard this movement and its gains and so save the cadre, the people and the party were forced to take up arms in self-defence.

So, armed squads were formed. The party and the armed squads have put forward before themselves the main task of mobilisation of people for armed revolution.

The document mentions propagation of revolutionary politics of people's war, mass mobilisation on their immediate issues, necessary actions against the enemies of the people who actively oppose and work against the development of the movement and self-defence against the police, as the main principles that guide armed struggle at the given phase.

The document criticised Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao for the change in their attitude towards the Marxist-Leninist Party from non-antagonistic to antagonistic. The April Convention of the State Revolutionary Communist Committee decided to conduct political and ideological struggle against the "left sectarian" and "adventurist" policies of the Charu Mazumdar group on the one hand and on the other to treat them as revolutionaries and to resolve differences with them by fraternal discussions on ideological and political issues. It was also decided to maintain non-antagonistic relations with them, the document added. The PC also claimed that its approach in accordance with the decisions taken at the April convention, had yielded certain results and many people belonging to the CPI(ML) were in the process of rethinking and some of them had joined their party. But the jail leaders argued that the Charu Mazumdar group should not be treated as revolutionaries and no attempt should be made for unity with them. The aim should be to defeat them, the document alleged.

The PC felt that all legal opportunities, legal mass movements and mass organisations should be utilised for the development of people's armed struggle. Civil liberties movement was also a part of the mass movement and it should help to strengthen the mass movements and armed struggle. It should expose

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JANUARY 27, 1973

and condemn the brutal repression of the government and should rouse the masses to demand the restoration of all civil liberties, including the release of the leaders. The PC said that it should not have any truck with revisionists and neo-revisionists even in the name of civil liberties movement. But Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao wanted to unite not only with the old and neo-revisionists but even with the reactionary elements in the name of fighting for civil liberties. They also wanted to make the release of arrested leaders the central issue of the civil liberties movement, the document said.

Barrel of a Gun

The document severely criticised Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao for commenting on Mao's strategic slogan "political power grows out of the barrel of the gun" as simply a 'figuratively given slogan'. "Where is the difference between these comrades and the neo-revisionist party leader Basavapunnaiah, who joked that "not only power but smoke also comes from the barrel of the gun?", the document questioned.

The document also stated that immediately after the April convention (1969) Nagi Reddi brought before the then PC his request that he be allowed to get arrested because he could not lead underground life and because he had no confidence in himself to lead armed struggle. The April convention had decided that party membership should be given only to those 'who are prepared to go underground'. Nagi Reddi refused to honour the Party decision and remained legal till he got arrested while he was in a hotel in Anantapura, his native district, in September 1969 under the Preventive Detention Act.

The document criticised Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao, the secretary, for not taking steps to organise a secret underground party machinery and for not making any efforts to send the leading comrades in the plain areas underground. He was

arrested in Madras eight months after the April convention without setting up any secret party machinery.

"One is surprised to know that in the eight months before their arrest in Madras the two leaders never cared to visit the forest area where the armed struggle was going on and did not help the movement in any way."

"Even after putting forth these arguments and openly disowning the armed struggle in the Telengana Agency Area, it is ridiculous for them to try to convince the cadre and the people that they are for armed struggle. It is also ridiculous for them to say that they are for armed struggle when they advocate unity with the revisionists and neo-revisionists but refuses any unity with other revolutionary groups which are leading armed struggle."

The document claimed that the movement which was started with one taluk had extended to nine taluks in the forest area of Khammam, Warangal and Karimnagar districts and in hundreds of villages people occupied more than 100,000 acres of Reserve and other kinds of land. In most of the forest area, the people have 'done away' with 'setti' (free labour), corruption and bribery of forest officials, contractors and patels (village officers) and freed themselves from the feudal exploitation of exorbitant rates of interest and Nagu (debt in the form of grain). People in the forest area are freely enjoying and utilising the forest produce.

"As a result of continuous propaganda of revolutionary politics and mass mobilisation of their immediate issues, political consciousness of the people is growing. People see armed struggle as the only way for their liberation from the age-old and inhuman exploitation. That is why a large number of Girijan and other youth, men and women, are volunteering to join the armed squads. People's village committees are being organised. The people are doing everything to support and safeguard the armed struggle, brav-

ing the fascist method of suppression, inhuman torture and raping of women by the police of the reactionary government."

The government has burnt down several villages in the interior of the forest area 'to wean away' the people from the extremist influence' and set villages in the pattern of Vietnamese 'hamlets'.

The document explained the steps that the PC had taken to safeguard party unity. It had proposed to circulate their documents. It had also proposed to hold a State plenum of the party to discuss and resolve the political and ideological issues and on the basis of the discussions and decisions to elect a new PC. But Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao turned down these proposals, the PC document added.

It further alleged that the two leaders had formed a rival PC inside the jail with the arrested members of the old PC (except one secretariat member who criticised them for anti-party activities and capitulationist policies and extended his support to the Agency area armed struggle and the PC) which they themselves had dissolved. "The two leaders gave a call to form rival party committees in the State and thus caused a split in the party."

The PC solemnly declared that they would fight till the end and carry forward the armed agrarian revolution until the realisation of the great hopes of 'our martyr comrades'—the establishment of New Democracy—and the PC would steadfastly adhere to and follow Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-tung Thought and implement the people's war path.

Our agent at Varanasi

MANNALAL DAS

D-35/321A Jangambari

JANUARY 27, 1973

Shadow Over Delhi IIT

N. K. SINGH

TIME virtually is running out for Delhi's prestigious Indian Institute of Technology, where with every passing day the academic and administrative atmosphere is slipping from bad to worse. There have been wide-spread trouble on the campus—one of the family of five which cater to the special technological needs of the country—during the past three months. The Institute, which is supposed to be among the best in Asia, has been vitiated by demonstrations, gheraos, strikes and intimidation of individuals. At present it looks like a mini-battleground with two jeepsful of policemen stationed inside the campus and two truckloads of Central Reserve Police force posted at the outer gates.

All this because the IIT Employees Union has chosen to march on the warpath in support of its two main demands: implementation of the departmental promotion rules and reinstatement of a professor of economics who was sacked on December last by the authorities because of alleged participation in "political activities and unacademic conduct."

But unlike other campuses in the country, the IIT's is not a simple case of militants on the warpath. There is something beneath the surface. The disease is of an incipient, creeping kind of paralysis, seeping into all levels of administration and the teaching faculty. The Rashtriya Swavamsevak Santh gestapo is active in Delhi IIT through its political academics.

Both the teaching and non-teaching employees' unions—the IIT Employees Union and the Pradyogik Adhyapak Samiti—are dominated by the RSS and Jana Sangh. The PAS was launched under the blessings of the former Chief Executive Councilor of Delhi and its President is a JS-RSS activist. The same clique provides leadership and motivation to the union of non-teaching staff. Though the

PAS disclaims any former links with the IIT Employees Union, two of the Samiti members advise the Union and even participate in their deliberations.

The RSS group tried to hold a shakha on the campus, but the response from the students was far from encouraging. Now the shakha is held just outside the campus where its compound ends and a residential colony begins. About 30 Class III and IV employees participate in it. A faculty member is said to be their sanchalak.

Though the Employees Union claims allegiance of about 1,200 Class III and IV employees out of a total of 1,400, it is not the only union on the campus. There is another association of Class III and IV employees, many of whom do not agree with the methods of the IITEU. The Pradyogik Adhyapak Samiti, too, has only a slender minority support among the 197 odd faculty members. Among the students a few owe allegiance to the RSS, but they do not count for much. However, owing to its well-knit organisation, the small RSS group has held the entire campus to ransom.

Politics has added a touch of extremism to the trade union activities on the campus and vice versa. It seems that a parallel administration is being run in the IIT by the RSS storm-troopers.

Shadow of Terror

The Employees Union has been acting almost like a Gestapo force threatening all those it does not like with dire consequences. Senior members of the faculty live in terror. They often receive 'poison calls' from anonymous callers, making death and assassination threats. Recently, one of them tried to stand up to it and next day his wife was told on telephone that acid would be thrown at her face if she did not persuade her spouse to mend his ways. Faculty

members' houses are often surrounded, abusive and filthy language is used on the occasion, and even family members are not spared.

The Board of Governors was gheraoed on July 22 while it was in session. Even a duty magistrate on a round of the area was stated to have been threatened by some PAS office-bearers with dire consequences if he intervened. One of them said that there were MPs who patronised the Samiti.

To cap it all, it has been alleged that the men have a few supporters even among the higher administrative echelons of the Institute. The other day one of the registrars was assaulted in his office by unruly elements. His complaint went before the Senate of IIT. The way efforts were made to dismiss the complaint adds a rather sinister dimension to the whole affair. When the Senate was seized of the matter the Director of the IIT and another faculty member stated that the complaint was false. Other members protested and said an enquiry should be made. The Director then took the enquiry in his own hands. It was probably not liked by the Chairman of the Board of Governors. So the Director passed on the enquiry to the other Senate member who agreed with his view expressed earlier. Once again the Chairman had to intervene and specifically instruct that the enquiry should not be conducted by any single individual. At this a two-member committee was appointed which reported that a prima facie case exists in the complaint.

Another instance of the influence that the Employees Union wields with the authorities is an action against a gardener in the Institute who refused to be a member of the Union. The Director wrote to the Assistant Resident Engineer that the particular gardener should be removed. The engineer reported that the gardener was a good workman and he was needed. At this the A.R.E. was requested to take some minimum action. Thereupon the gardener was suspended for two days. It did not

require any written procedure because he was a temporary hand.

The professor for whose reinstatement the Employees Union has been agitating is Mr Subramaniam Swamy, the Jana Sangh economist of 'Swadeshi Plan' fame. He writes regularly in RSS-JS papers, *Motherland* and *Organiser*, expounding and extolling the economic, foreign and defence policies of the Jana Sangh. He participates in the Working Committee and Council meetings in the capacity of a permanent invitee and delivers speeches as one of the party leaders. All this in an institution which has apparently no place for politics.

Recent reports of vastly stepped up CIA activities in the country may be

a case of shadows being mistaken for spectres, but outsiders are led to wonder why an academic from the School of International studies of Missouri University is residing on the campus when he has come to India for research in Hindi philology. The Central Hindi Institute has its headquarters at Agra and only a branch establishment in New Delhi.

It is also reported that American foundations have been funnelling grants from PL-480 funds to selected nominees for various projects. One of the pedagogues was on a 22,000-dollar year-long stint with the NASA.

Recently four active members of the IIT Pradyogik Adhyapak Samiti got lucrative assignments in the USA.

A False Brother

MONI GUHA

MR Arun Majumdar's paper on "Mode of Production in the USSR" (December 16 and 23) "establishes" that the Soviet economy throughout the last fifty years was never a socialist one. It was on the contrary, state-capitalist and instead of weakening state-capitalism, the four five-year plans strengthened it and the "nature of difficulties as they were in the Soviet Union was more akin to those prevalent in the capitalist world", "and it was these difficulties which prepared the ideological premise of the now famous 1965 economic reforms".

Mr Majumdar begins his paper by attempting to create an impression that the public ownership of the means of production is not a "prime requisite for a socialist mode of production". He establishes that the "prime requisite" for a socialist economy is to implement his "discovery" of the basic economic law of socialism, i.e., implementation of the theory of "surplus value". We shall, of course, come to that point, but meanwhile let us say that Mr Majumdar's "discovery" is not a unique one. Proudhon, once advo-

cated that socialism was possible without socialising private property and without doing away with commodities and Marx, in a letter to Weydemeyer wrote that "Proudhonist socialism... wants to leave private property in existence but to organise the exchange of private properties... wants commodities but not money (Marx's italics)". Then Marx warned Weydemeyer and all communists: "Above all things communism must rid itself of this 'false brother'." (Marx-Engels Correspondence, Letter no. 43, p. 105, Indian edition, NBA, 1945).

To justify his argument Mr Majumdar further writes that the pattern of ownership of the means of production has no relation or connection with the basic economic law of society. He writes, "In no economic formation the basic economic laws have a pattern of ownership of the means of production as the nucleus around which they operate". In a back-note, No. 4, he tries to justify it by saying that "the basic economic law under feudalism does operate even when the means of production i.e., land units, are un-

der community or tribal ownership", (emphasis added). Queerly enough, in the same breath, he says, "But as we all know, such community ownership of the means of production in course of its maturity yields place to private ownership of the means of production". The question is: does the basic economic law under feudalism operate when land units are under community or tribal ownership or when the community or tribal ownership yields place to private ownership of the feudal lords? His observation is based on complete ignorance of dialectics. The mode of production never exists in a pure form. It is an abstraction and summing up of the decisive properties of social production. It is always subject to change through the development of productive forces, which at a certain stage of development undermines the existing mode of production and first creates shoots of a new mode of production and then in this process the shoots take full form and dominate. Mr Majumdar should know that land units under community or tribal ownership and under private ownership of the feudal lords mean neither the same property relations nor the same mode of production nor does the same basic economic law operate in different property relations and mode of production. To Mr Majumdar "yes" is always "yes" and "no" is always "no" and there is neither the process of change nor the transformation from quantity into quality.

Evidently, Mr Majumdar confuses the pattern of ownership of the means of production with the basic economic law and that is why he asks, "If neither the balanced proportionate development nor the law of social ownership of the means of production constitute the basic economic law of the socialist mode of production, then can we say that Stalin's formulation of the basic economic law of socialism is correct?" He here invents a "law of social ownership". Unfortunately, social ownership is not in itself a law, but the material basis which, toge-

ther with property relations, generates the basic economic law of the socialist mode of production. It appears that Mr Majumdar is not in a mood to agree with this. That is why he himself "discovers" the concrete basic economic law of socialism refuting and replacing the "vague" formulation of Stalin. What is the basic economic law of socialism according to him? He says, "While the purpose of the capitalist reproduction is the expansion of exchange value the very process of realisation of the law of surplus exchange value under the capitalist mode of production generates within its womb the law of surplus use-value i.e., the law which determines the essence of the socialist mode of production." (emphasis added). Thus, according to him, this surplus use value is the basic economic law of socialism. It is now as certain as noon-day that Mr Majumdar is not only completely ignorant of dialectics but also completely ignorant of history and especially the economic history of the development of human civilisation. Without useful labour there cannot be any society and this useful labour is the use-value. Again without surplus use-value there cannot be any march to human civilisation. The prime question for the social scientists is how to use this surplus use-value which labour produces in all social formations. Surplus use-value is not the characteristic of a particular society, but a "nature-imposed" thing without which there would have been "no life". Marx said, "So far therefore as labour is the creator of use value, is useful labour,

it is a necessary condition, independent of all forms of society, for the existence of the human race; it is an eternal nature-imposed necessity, without which there can be no material exchange between man and nature, and therefore no life." (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 50, Modern Library, New York). This is so far as use-value is concerned. What about the surplus use-value for reproduction? Marx said, "Variable capital is therefore only a particular form of appearance of the fund for providing the necessaries of life, or the labour fund which the labourer requires for the maintenance of himself and his family, and which, whatever be the system of social production he must produce and reproduce." (emphasis added, *ibid*, p. 573). Marx explained it further in one of his letter to Kugelmann: "The unfortunate fellow does not see that, even if there were no chapter on value in my book, the analysis of the real relationships which I give would contain the proof and demonstration of real value relation... Every child knows that a country which ceased to work, I will not say for a year, but for a few weeks, would die. Every child knows too that the mass of products corresponding to the different needs require different and quantitatively determined masses of total labour of society. That this necessity of distributing social labour in definite proportions cannot be done away with by the particular form (Marx's italics) of social production, but can only change the form it assumes, (Marx's italics) is self-evident. No natural law can be done away with. What can change, in changing historical circumstances, is the form (Marx's italics) in which these laws operate. And the form in which this proportional division of labour operates, in a state of society where the interconnection of social labour is manifested in the private exchange (Marx's italics) of the individual products of labour, is precisely the exchange value (Marx's italics) of these products." (Marx-Engels Cor-

respondence, Letter no. 109, pp. 218-19).

Perhaps it is now clear that creation of surplus use value is a "natural law" associated with useful social labour without which human society cannot "exchange" with nature. It assumes different forms in different economic formations. How, then, can it be the basic economic law of socialism, which Mr Majumdar so painstakingly discovers after refuting Stalin's basic economic law of socialism? This social fund of surplus use value under socialism is increased enormously in extended reproduction. The surplus use value becomes the surplus useful labour, the commodity becomes the product, the fixed and commodity capital become the instruments of labour. The social labour fund increases enormously in extended reproduction in socialist society and "through the continuous expansion and perfection of socialist production on the basis of higher techniques" the society as a whole "secures the maximum satisfaction"! (Stalin, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*). That is why it is the basic economic law.

Other questions raised in Mr Majumdar's paper will possibly be covered by my article "Economic roots of restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union", written long before the publication of the paper under reference and likely to be published in *Frontier*.

For FRONTIER contact

S. P. CHATTERJEE

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GENOCIDE IN BANGLADESH

By Kalyan Chaudhuri

Orient Longman, Price Rs 30.00

THE world knows that on March 25, 1971 General Yahya's army in what then was called East Pakistan went berserk against the Bengali community there. What has baffled the world since, is not so much the scale of the operation but its efficient and final cause.

Mr Kalyan Chaudhuri's book is "the story of the nine months of horror in East Pakistan... the story of the mass flight and mass slaughter". Chapters III to VI take us through the details of the horror committed by the army. In Chapter II he takes up the story at the point where confrontation between the Awami League and the Yahya regime led to the final act of horror. He traces the history of East-West conflict in Pakistan in some detail and attempts to explain the bloody aftermath as a culmination of this long-drawn conflict. But as he leaves aside the complex inter-relation of class forces, he cannot see this conflict as anything but an outcome of racial and cultural divergence. True, he speaks of "colonial" exploitation of East Pakistan by West, but again, without analysing the class alignments within Pakistan as a whole, inside each of its two wings and as between the two wings taken separately. Thus, Mr Chaudhuri's book fails to tackle the moot question of the cause and purpose of the army crack down. He does not exactly skirt the issue but so hedges himself in raising it that his account of the circumstances leading to the "genocide" and its possible motivation cannot go beyond generalities. It even runs into several inconsistencies. Once or twice he reverses himself and says things which go against his own conclusions.

Let us begin by spelling out the issues: what brought things to a head before the crackdown and what were the motives of the chief protagonists in the drama, namely Yahya and

Mujib? In a sense, both these matters are so riddling that it takes some scholarly research and supreme power of interpretation to get to grips with them. Perhaps we are too close to the events and too apt to be biased in our judgment to attempt objectivity. Still, let us try and make out the issues, as best we can, from Mr Chaudhuri's own account of the events leading to the tragedy.

Mr Chaudhuri recalls the fact that though winning the General Election on Yahya's terms, which were quite explicit in setting bounds to the makers of the new constitution (Bhashani was shrewd enough to reject these terms and boycott the election), Mujib insisted on his six-point charter of demands at the parleys that followed his victory at the polls. He took his victory as a public referendum in favour of his demands. At this stage, Mr Chaudhuri does not flinch from calling Mujib "obdurate", and rightly I think, but instead of pushing home this point he goes back upon himself a few pages further on, and sees nothing but "reasonableness" in Mujib's dealings. From this point onward, he puts the boot on the other leg and has to tailor up his logic to this end. He thinks that Yahya had always reckoned on holding the reins even after the installation of a civil government, given the improbability of any single party ascendancy. With Mujib's party in single majority, he could have no such balancing feat to perform and hence his attempt to keep Mujib out of power at any cost. But had Yahya such tricks up his sleeve, couldn't he play his hand much better by rigging the process or outcome of the elections?

It is quite clear that an election takes place according to certain constitutional or other preconditions. A party in seeking election *ipso facto* accepts these conditions, and if its electoral promises exceed the terms under which the election is won there is an imbroglio which can be resolved in only two ways. Either the promises have to be trimmed or carried out in defiance of the restraints—at the risk of a violent re-

volution. There is no doubt Mujib's demands were fraught with such a risk and he took it. From the angle of Yahya and the Pakistani ruling class, they were a signal for the break-up of Pakistan as a single unit of political dominance and economic exploitation. Nowhere in Yahya's promise to cede power to civil authority was it implied that he would stand for such disintegration.

If, therefore, Mujib and his Awami League had such a showdown in mind from the beginning, they ought to have been prepared for an armed struggle at the end of the road. In the event of such readiness to face the music we could buy the theory that the election was a feeler to the people to sound them about their possible response to the secessionist revolt. As Mr Chaudhuri himself admits, the army's crackdown took everybody by surprise. In that case, we cannot see why Mujib should have pressed on with his demands to the bloody end. It is wholly unnecessary to go into the intricate negotiations which made Yahya concede certain demands in the Awami League charter while rejecting others. Enough that the parleys were stymied by the irreducibly opposed claims of the negotiators, one side demanding complete autonomy and the other side denying it for fear or under pretext of national disintegration. The negotiations were coming unstuck one after another and yet, Mujib was returning to the conference table in order to square the circle. It beats one that Mujib was talking with Yahya even after his civil disobedience movement had created a parallel authority in the province and provoked the military regime to the utmost. Did he expect to reach his end with his non-violent bluff? Why did he force issues without the preparation to meet the army when it struck?

It seems Mujib had reckoned without his host, the army. He had thrown down the gauntlet with his massive electoral victory and hoped to buff and buster his way to power. But when the crunch came, he was at the end of his tether. His last-minute

call to the people to take up arms made matters worse. It panicked the army and turned the full blast of its fury against the common people who, in any case, could have no arms to take up. Mr Chaudhuri concedes that Mujib evaded his responsibility by going into army custody instead of going underground and leading the revolt he had inspired. But how many of Mujib's associates joined the underground resistance for what that was worth? Didn't most of them run away to India when the chips were down?

The fact therefore stands out that Mujib and his Awami League, the whole of the Bengali middle class leadership that is, roused the loyalties of the common people of East Pakistan by playing on their hatred of the West Pakistani ruling class as their principal exploiters and oppressors. The rich and influential sections of the Bengali Muslims had always resented the unjust dominance of West Pakistanis in their political economic and cultural life. It was easy for them to enlist popular support in favour of their demands for ending this dominance, for the common people were groaning under the same West Pakistani rule. The Bengali middle class leadership however gave their movement an intensely racial and linguistic character, with some very broad and vague promises of social amelioration thrown in, to encourage popular participation. Even so, their demands were revolutionary and threatened the unity of Pakistan. They could not be achieved within a constitutional framework, least of all under the blessing of an army dictatorship.

There is no doubt an armed struggle involving the toiling masses would be necessary to fulfil the demands as they stood. But such popular participation would again pre-suppose a popular social objective, not mere nationalistic or linguistic independence. The success of the resistance would depend ultimately on the success of social and economic changes at the grass roots. At the beginning of his book, Mr Chaudhuri

suggests that popular resistance would have sooner or later thrown off the army regime. But he never makes the sociological formulation that justifies our faith in the people. He often speaks of preparation for armed struggle by which he only means weapons and logistics. He does not seem to understand what a people's war essentially is. Mujib and his Awami League failed not because they had not procured arms but because they would not involve the toiling masses in a radical social revolution. The revolution failed from its limited objective. It was the failure of the class that led it.

The class had its own privileges to safeguard—the privileges it had enjoyed under the military regime and is still enjoying in independent Bangladesh. It could not involve the masses in its nationalistic rebellion for fear of being swept away in the tide of social revolution. And hence it needed foreign intervention to help it out when things went wrong, even

as it is now needing foreign aid to buttress its class rule. Mujib and his Awami League had never bargained for an armed struggle, they had it thrust upon them. And then they flunked it, leaving the common people to the tender mercies of a rampaging army. And it was the common people—the poor and the lowly who bore the brunt of the scourge. They were seized with terror and could only pray to Allah for succour. Mr Chaudhuri tells the tale of their misery in full measure, and his account leaves no doubt that they were helpless victims of military oppression, like victims of communal riots. But Mr Chaudhuri does not pose the question whether Mujib and his Awami League, who exposed the people to this fate, are not to share a major part of the guilt.

Mr Chaudhuri seems all praise for India's active intervention which put an end to this misery. The Bengalis of East Pakistan had reason to be grateful to India for this help. But

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even without pronouncing on the legality of Indian intervention (the U. N. General Assembly resolution has done it), it can safely be said that the Indian action not only put an end to the oppressive regime in East Pakistan, but also put the cowardly and opportunist Bengali middle class in power. This put an end to any possible social revolution as well—for the time being. The ruling classes on both sides of the border may have played for high stakes, but they have played their game well.

The last of the two questions we started with relates to the motive and purpose of the military action. Why did the Pakistani authority turn such avenging fury against a whole population that formed a majority of its subjects? Can any government do this to its own people and yet hope to rule over it? It was not a mere case of putting down a minority community or political opposition consisting in its active elements only of a fraction of the total inhabitants in a country. It looked like being an

indiscriminate operation of a punitive nature directed against the Bengali population as a whole. Mr Chaudhuri considers this question from two aspects. First, as to the feasibility of such an operation over a prolonged period, he thinks that but for Indian intervention, there is no reason why the Pakistani junta would not have got away with it. But would not the authorities have risked a violent revolution if it continued with such oppression too long? Then, as to the motive of the army action, Mr Chaudhuri repeats the incredible story that Yahya had wanted to kill off or drive out the Bengalis in such numbers as to reduce them to a minority. But the simple arithmetic is that, even after the decimation of three million Bengalis and expulsion of another ten million across the border—these are Mr Chaudhuri's figures—there remained a clear sixty-two million Bengalis against fifty million West Pakistanis. And after the first fell swoop, even Mr Chaudhuri fails to report any carnage or expulsion on a scale re-

quired to make an impact on the population ratio. The army had certainly let up in its fury.

Mr Chaudhuri's explanation of the motive does not wash. The army's simple object was to cow down the secessionist rebels and force the Bengali Muslims to accept civil government on Yahya's terms. That Mujib was not killed but kept alive only shows that Yahya was ready to use him as a bargaining counter in future negotiations.

Mr Chaudhuri traces the origin of troubles in Indo-Pak relations to the Muslim League's two nation theory that led to partition, and thinks that the emergence of Bangladesh is a rebuttal of that theory and beginning of the end of those troubles. But doesn't Bangladesh rest on a three-nation theory, and with further break-up of Pakistan, as we are so keen to foresee, aren't we really moving towards a multi-nation theory? Yes, so far as Pakistan is concerned—and all the better so, perhaps!

G. H.



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Husain Retrospective

SANDIP SARKAR

THE Birla Academy arranged a retrospective exhibition of the works of H. F. Husain to celebrate its sixth anniversary on January 9. Mrinal Sen presided and all the culture-vultures of Calcutta descended to witness the opening and to praise Husain. The officers of the Academy gave long-winded speeches in very bad English. Husain said something in Urdu which nobody could hear. The management provided cokes while the richly dressed ladies and men wearing costly suits moved on to the gallery upstairs. One saw that most of the assembled crowd consisted mainly of businessmen or executives—people who hardly care to come to any exhibition—with a sprinkling of painters and a few critics. The Calcutta art-lovers—people who regularly visit exhibitions but cannot afford to buy any painting—looked a bit crestfallen and uneasy in this august company.

Critics have praised Husain's paintings for so long, newspapers and journals have advertised him in such glowing terms that the crowd tiptoed to the gallery hesitantly, like a newly wed bride walking to her bridal chamber. Two galleries on the 4th and 5th floors house sixty-eight paintings and drawings—works of Husain from 1947 to the present. Most of these paintings belong either to various museums or private collectors. There are some paintings for sale but the rate seems exorbitant—Rs 30,000 each. No Indian artist before Husain has dared to demand such a price for a painting in this city.

In spite of the shameless blaring of trumpets and clanging of cymbals Husain's exhibition is dull and disappointing. He has painted in various techniques, borrowed from Picasso, Matisse, the Fauvists and cubists and has mixed this concoction with Indian folk and Rajasthani styles. He has struggled to become the Indian Picasso, but has failed to discover his own self. Sometimes

perhaps a canvas or parts of a canvas show a spark of something, but as this is not repeated more frequently, it seems that these instances are just lucky accidents. Husain paints with one eye on the buyer. He wants to satisfy different tastes of the new rich and foreign tourists. He knows how to guile them with certain effects, how to cajole and coax them with a movement of the brush, with sweet motifs and elegant compositions. Exotic visions that escapists love to dream of, are done with a great flourish. The variety of subjects Husain has handled reminds one of the medley of episodes in a Hindi film.

Husain does not have anything to communicate—he does not rouse one to action, thought or contemplation. His paintings leave one cold. One remembers sadly the faces of serious young starving painters and neglected giants, and begins cursing this land.

This exhibition will remain open up to February 4.

A Prodigy That Grew

Suvaprasanna Bhattacharya, unlike most child prodigies, did not fade away prematurely as an artist. Assuredly a pat from Jawaharlal and a kiss from President Voroshilov has not spoiled him. Although born in a very devout Brahmin family he has managed to steer clear of worn-out customs and disgusting superstitions. Yet his disciplined life of austerity and simplicity perhaps speaks of his severe Brahmanical upbringing. Perhaps this is why he has found it easy to assimilate, in a very Indian fashion, certain Christian themes without much violence to himself or his intellect—the themes of suffering (e.g. No. 5 'Lament'), resurrection (No. 3), crucifixion (No. 8), 'Illusion' (No. 10) and 'Man and Space-1' (No. 12) are paintings

that haunt. His drawings are frightening.

It is intriguing to know that Suvaprasanna was born in 1947 and hence he can be taken as a post-independence product. He grew up in a somewhat different intellectual climate with values, expectations and frustrations different from those of the previous generation of artists. Pre-independence national myths of a golden past and a prosperous future proved mere inventions of fertile imagination. It was possibly a note of protest in Suvaprasanna's paintings that attracted Mrinal Sen's notice and forced Sen to use a powerful painting by Suvaprasanna as a frozen shot in *Calcutta 71*.

The recent exhibition at the Birla Academy has confirmed once more the estimation of Suvaprasanna as a very promising artist. There is a

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touch of surrealism in his paintings and drawings. He depicts people who have had their souls stolen, who have been molested and dishonoured. At times their hopelessness and lack of faith gives one an idea of the inner loneliness of the artist. One only hopes that he will get over this morbid mental state.

Talukdar's Sculpture

The USIS auditorium exhibited twelve sculpture pieces by Manik Talukdar from January 12 to 18. Talukdar is a brilliant sculptor who possibly does not want to be involved in politics. Yet the question remains whether an artist should be allowed to close his eyes to immediate issues and remain ignorant of what is involved. Talukdar no doubt knows about the Vietnam war, the My Lai massacre and the previous and recent bombings carried out by the Americans. Even the recent halting of bombings does not atone for the previous Americans atrocities.

I am ready to believe that Talukdar has not thought of these things. I know first hand the plight of artists in this city. An artist has to work in some dreary job to make a living and then buy materials for his art. The sculptor's materials are even more expensive than the painter's. Then there is hardly any market for selling a work of art in Calcutta. In such a situation if someone offers a hall free of charge, it is very difficult for an artist to refuse. Moreover, there might be friendly promises of finding out probable buyers for his works. The bait is hard to resist. Even then the artist should avoid cultural organisations belonging to super-Powers.

After passing from the Indian College of Art, Talukdar, along with other young artists, found the Canvas Art Circle. Although very young (born 1944) he has participated in various group shows in Calcutta and other Indian cities. In 1971 he held a one-man show in the Birla Academy. He has received a scholarship to continue post-diploma studies in sculpture in Santiniketan.

In the USIS exhibition there were twelve exhibits done in plastic, aluminium, wood and bronze. From the very conception of an idea through to the stage of design and execution Talukdar shows a mastery rare for his age. There is so much grace and joy in his work that it immediately disarms the viewer. He has experimented with mass and form. There is a tactile quality, a certain sensitivity of handling. Personally I like his work in wood and bronze. No. 7, No. 8 (Fold in the wood) and No. 9 (vertical wood) have depth of feeling. No. 10 (Bird in bronze) is very subtle. No. 11 (Torso in bronze) and No. 12 (Head in bronze), although brilliant in quality, strongly remind one of similar works by Sarbari Raychoudhury.

As Talukdar is a very mature artist, one might pertinently ask why he is so markedly international in his approach, and why there is nothing in his works to indicate awareness of Indian sculptural tradition?

All In A Night's Work

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

In *What's Up Doc?* Peter Bogdanovich has tried his hand at a crazy comedy blending the elements of slapstick of the silent days, the verbal wit of the Marx Brothers' films and the spoof on cinema and espionage thrillers. The past influences are all there, but in most cases the director has been successful in assimilating these into an original style. The centre of the story is a San Francisco hotel and there is an odd assortment of queer characters, a scholar in musicology with his nagging class-conscious fiancée, an old lady with a bagful of jewels, an international crook with stolen documents and a secret service man who is on his trail. And there is Barbara Streisand, a fugitive from the rigours of her school and she has a crush on the young musicologist. The fun develops out of a

mix-up of overnight bags, everyone picking up the wrong ones. The musicologist has got the lady's jewels, the secret papers go to the weeping lady and the jewel-thieves stare agape at the heap of rocks (the property of the musicologist) which the hard labours of a long night have earned for them. There are moments of gentle hilarity with rib-cracking repartees in the sequences when Miss Streisand weaves the web of her romance around the reluctant musicologist and the screen explodes with the spirit of boisterous comedy in the custard-pie episodes and the climactic chase across the streets of San Francisco (particularly funny is the dexterously-handled scene when one car bumps into a Chinese procession and carries off the head of the paper-dragon and the camera follows it in big close-ups) leading up to the breezy scene in the court room when all the characters are hauled up before a dyspeptic judge. Ryan O'Neal's performance as the absent-minded scholar is rather routine, but this is more than made up by Miss Streisand's portrayal as the delinquent teenager with an impish charm, who is at home in every situation, from hanging on the hotel balustrade to goading an unwilling lover into a passionate kiss.

Letters

A Just Struggle

The agitation over the Mulki issue is gradually assuming the form of a great struggle against the Government. As a consequence of the bankrupt economic and political policies of the Government of India, the people are turning to the path of revolts with growing awareness. Popular resentment might have led to, in the initial stage, spontaneous outbursts and struggles of a sectional nature as a result of regional imbalances and unemployment. But in the process it is taking on a more serious character of anti-government

struggle. The semi-fascist government of Mrs Indira Gandhi is despatching the CRP and military to the Telugu land in order to turn it into a military camp. It is seeking to safeguard the "integrity" of the State by turning the land into a graveyard. Hundreds have been indiscriminately slaughtered and thousands wounded just in order to keep the two regions of the Telugu land in an artificially forced union, against the wishes of the people. And at the same time regional ill-will is deliberately being whipped up. The ruling classes are bent upon beating down the popular upsurge in order to ensure its own power and to impose by force the Five Point Formula.

The Revolutionary Writers Association appreciate the fighting spirit of the people who are carrying on the struggle against the barbaric acts of the Government in conditions of terror. It appeals to the people to thwart the selfish designs of wicked political leaders and turn the present movement to the path of protracted armed struggle in order to achieve socialism.

Revolutionary Writers Association
Emergency Executive Committee,
Hyderabad

Periyar And Kamaraj

I read carefully the letter entitled 'Periyar and Kamaraj' (December 30, 1972), by a correspondent from Tamil Nadu in reply to an earlier letter. He forgets that after having picked up the Arya-Dravida question from the researches of scholars, the Periyar has used this weapon to tell the South Indians to rise and shake off the subjugation by the North. In that process, if the Periyar felt that this subjugation could not be wiped out simply by transfer of power by the British to the Indian masters (who mostly belonged to the north). He was perfectly right in his demand for a separate homeland for south Indians. Unification of nationalities in a country demands equality. Lenin

gave full guarantee to all the nationalities of the USSR. It is a fact that the present Union Government has usurped all powers and has reduced all the nationalities (Kashmiris, Nagas, Mizos, Assamese, Bengalis, Tamils, Keralans, Punjabis etc.) to nonentities. It is a pity that the communist movement in the country never raised the question of nationalities and hence could not make use of this powerful weapon to capture power. Recently when Maulana Bhashani raised the question of unification of the Bengali nationality, which has been artificially divided by the irony of history, the revisionists of West Bengal could not give a correct reply and evaded the whole issue.

It is the Brahmins of the South who had all along acted and still continue to act as the agents of the northern subjugators. In the name of caste hierarchy they usurped power and pelf and made the life of non-Brahmins completely subhuman. The role of the Justice Party in the early decades of this century and later that of the DK/DMK was directed towards this phenomenon. Strangely enough, the correspondent does not speak even a single word in condemnation of the inhuman acts of Brahmin landlords and now capitalists. Can any movement start and grow in vacuum? Why is the gentleman silent about that aspect?

I hold no brief for the Periyar. I simply say that his early role was progressive and there would have been tremendous change if the communists had utilized that situation. Basically a non-Marxist the Periyar could not be expected to take the Tamil masses to the goal of socialism, though he had the potentiality. Similar was the role of the DMK leadership. When they attained the so-called seat of power in Madras, they started amassing wealth. In that respect, no distinction can be made between the Congress leadership there and the DMK leadership. And yet we can clearly see the undercurrent of delight at the imminent fall of the DMK Government in the

writings and statements of the Tamil Brahmins.

The correspondent characterises the Periyar as one having a "fundamentally religious approach". This is distortion of facts. When he struck the images of Ram in Salem in 1971 with a chappal, he did it with the idea of attacking religion which was still the weapon of the Brahmin priests in the South. He feels, although erroneously, that as long as people believe in gods and goddesses the Brahmins, the agents of the subjugators, can stage a comeback.

The correspondent himself contradicts his earlier statement (where he claimed that tailors, barbers etc. belonging to the DMK fold, flourished under DMK rule), when he says that the Periyar's movement really helped the high-caste Hindus to enrich themselves. Karunanidhi, son of a barber, and the like cannot be called high-caste Hindus by any stretch of imagination. It is true that the DK/DMK movement has mostly helped those who are placed higher than the Harijans in the caste hierarchy. But in that respect their role cannot be distinguished from that of the Congress governments there. Harijans remain where they were. This is one of the instances where we see no relevance of the Periyar. But at the same time one fact cannot be brushed aside. It is the impact of his movement which forced the Brahmins in Tamil Nadu to be on the defensive and, once relegated to that position, some of them have now started questioning the validity of the caste system. They have even gone to the extent of shedding crocodile tears for the Harijans. No Brahmin leader had ever in history sympathised with lower castes. Those who dared to do so were excommunicated and thus ceased to be Brahmins.

There are some other passages which the correspondent now contradicts in his letter. At places he has used intemperate language (cf. "non-Brahmin fools"—*Frontier* dated November 27, 1972, page 8). The

question of Brahmins and non-Brahmins seems to be the uppermost in his mind. He forgets that the awakened readers of *Frontier* are not interested in such controversies.

SANGH SEN SINGH
New Delhi

The Detenus

A report was published in *Basumati* on January 6 regarding a conspiracy to create a disturbance inside Presidency Jail, Calcutta. No contradiction from the jail authorities or the State Government has yet appeared in the Press.

Anybody having any knowledge of the conditions inside the jails will surely agree that the prisoners, specially prisoners having no anti-social background, cannot live there for more than two weeks without losing their mental equilibrium.

Ordinary criminals are kept (specially in the Darriah Ward of Presidency Jail) with Naxalites having a fair amount of education. When the Naxalites are sick they get very little medical attendance. When seriously ill they are not transferred to any hospital outside but are treated in the jail hospital which is worse than a veterinary hospital.

No one can blame the undertrial Naxalite prisoners, whose trial has been unnecessarily delayed, if their tempers are frayed.

R. P. SINHA
Calcutta

Salt Of The Earth

The Bidhan Nagar farce was not without its points of fun. For most Congressmen it was a welcome transition from the Salt Lake to the Eden Stadium. The scramble for tickets must have been much less strenuous than the Salt Lake scramble for coffee, food, seats and such local attractions as were. The realistic observer would have looked for and received "entertainment".

The President of this great Party

made some penetrating (and most revealing) observations on his party's view of "class struggle". They do not have any rancour or hate (against the exploiting classes). When "social tension" becomes acute they "will not be found at the side of the richer classes". They believe in non-violence (of the oppressed). Indeed, it is painfully embarrassing for the Party to use such terms as "struggle", "exploitation" etc—alien words flowing from "imported" ideas.

There seems to be some dramatic justice in the evolution and rise of the "Swadeshi" radical—the unique product of unreason and backwardness combining all the guile and viciousness of tribal politics, and its pitting against the professional modern political radical. The powerful prototype of this breed made the fiercest oratory of this session. He identified himself totally with his mass—illiterate, upcountry, "weaker class", and castigated (what amounted to) the entire society. Any social refinement—an education, a job—any positive feature of this society was a fruit of injustice illegitimately obtained. We may recall that this radical does not believe in nationalisation and similar measures which are fancies of the elite with imported ideas. It is perhaps ridiculous to look for his logic. Suffice it to say he is a rebel and that is all that counts in these radical days.

D. P. Dhar, hailed in many quarters for his intellectual prowess, champion of many a vodka-caviare trail, gave fine proof of his mettle in his approach to the ticklish food problem. Even the U.S. has to subsidise agriculture. For our poor society the burden is heavy. Indeed, the subsidies of the U.S. administration in the interest of the capitalist kulak in a condition of super-production with its PL-480 politics and else and that of the GOI with its ties with rural interests at every level in an agricultural economy, its bureaucratic costly plus pricing policy and corrupt machinery are to be equated from a purely fiscal angle.

The BBC reported that the Con-

gress had passed a resolution condemning the recent American bombings as "the most horrible tragedy in recorded human history". The press did not highlight this. One wonders whether this was collaboration, contempt or collusion (with the CIA and such).

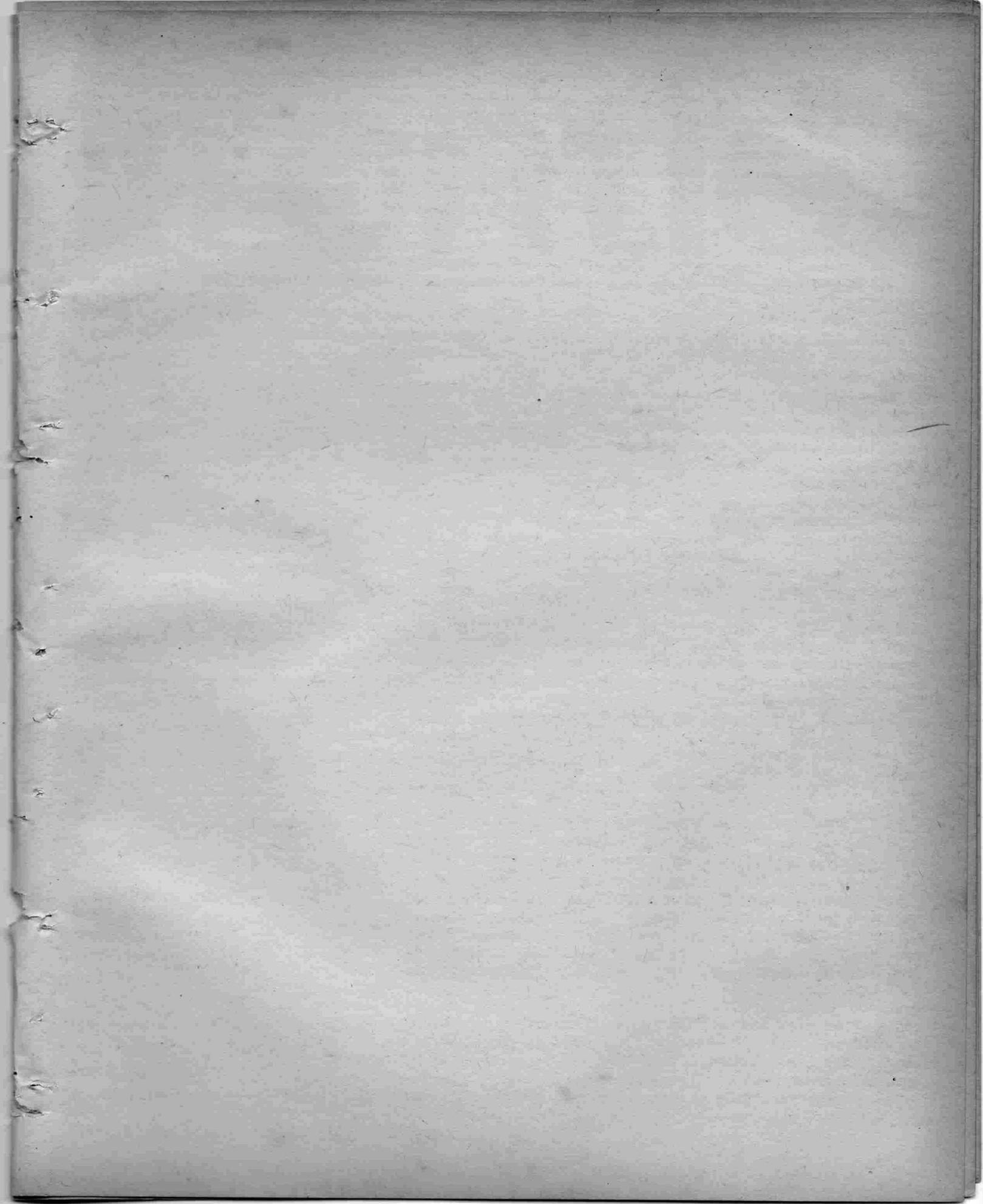
T. R. RAMALINGAM
Calcutta

In A Punjab Jail

During the Bangladesh crisis, I happened to criticise the government's policy regarding East Pakistan. A beautiful cock-and-bull story was concocted, branding me a Naxalite leader responsible for several murders in the district. I was gracefully put into the jail under the Internal Security Act and my jail term of one year was approved by the Advisory Board. What I saw there in the jail was of course not surprising but very painful. Prisoners and undertrials were gagged with wooden pegs and beaten mercilessly by an Assistant Superintendent of jail. Many were made to starve till they bowed down before the official. All kinds of drugs including wine and opium were smuggled into the jail by this officer and sold to the addicted prisoners. It was a gruesome picture of a primitive state of affairs in the "greatest democracy in the world". I was released after about eight months. I reported the matter to the higher authorities and consequently an enquiry was conducted by an Assistant Inspector General of Prisons, Punjab, against the said officer. But no action has yet been taken.

VED PARKASH GUPTA
Bhatinda (Punjab)

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On Other Pages

COMMENT ..	2
MASS UPSURGE IN ANDHRA K. V. R. ..	4
ANDHRA PRADESH: ANALYSIS OF A SPLIT FROM A CORRESPONDENT ...	5
SHADOWS OVER DELHI IIT N. K. SINGH ..	9
A FALSE BROTHER MONI GUHA ..	10
<i>Book Review</i>	
GENOCIDE IN BANGLADESH ..	12
HUSAIN RETROSPECTIVE SANDIP SARKAR ..	15
ALL IN A NIGHT'S WORK MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY ..	16
LETTERS ..	16

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WAR PRISONERS

THE issue of Pakistani prisoners of war is beginning to disturb an influential section of the Indian Press, if not the authorities. The prisoners, some of whom are getting killed now and then, have been much too long on the hospitable Indian soil; the duration of their stay is a record. The Indian Government has ignored the General Assembly resolution which, according to a wide range of interpreters, was linked to the question of admission of Bangladesh to the UN. The prisoners are costing about one crore of rupees every month, besides causing administrative and diplomatic inconveniences.

Whatever the international conventions about prisoners of war may be, New Delhi and Dacca insist that the question of release will be taken up after Pakistan recognises Bangladesh. How can Bangladesh be ignored?—it is asked with wide-eyed wonder. Isn't it a fact that the Pakistani army surrendered to a joint command? As for recognition, President Bhutto wants a meeting with Sheikh Mujib—a meeting which he says the Sheikh agreed to before his release. But the Sheikh won't meet him before recognition. And all of them are peaceloving, honourable men whose sole proclaimed passion is relaxation of tension on the sub-continent.

The Sheikh wants to try some prisoners for war crimes. Mr Bhutto has now let it be known that some Bengalis held in Pakistan will be tried for espionage and other crimes. The number of Bengalis there is now said to be about 200,000 instead of the 400,000 or so of earlier estimates. About 28,000 belong or belonged to the armed forces. It is also said that if and when a final settlement is negotiated between Pakistan and Bangladesh, the Sheikh will take up the question of about 400,000 or 500,000 non-Bengali Muslims in Bangladesh. The figure quoted used to be 1.5 million when the big trouble started in March 1971. Family planning seems to have succeeded (extremely well in Bangladesh after liberation.

It is a labyrinth, dark, humid and nauseating. But, as some newspapers have started suggesting (this paper made a similar, brief suggestion long ago), there is a way out if the Sheikh relents a bit—the Sheikh has to be pampered. If the Bangladesh Government is efficient, it should have by now a firm list of the prisoners it wants to try. Let them be detained. The rest can go home. As for justice being done to the accused, there should not be much squeamishness on either side of the

border. Our treatment of thousands of political prisoners has not made us famous for our sense of justice. But war crimes are not the real issue. The issue is one of exerting the maximum pressure on Islamabad. Such pressure, however, is beginning to be counter-productive. The Red Cross

reports, the frequent shooting down of unarmed men legitimately trying to escape, will have a cumulative propaganda effect against New Delhi. The Sheikh, in Dacca, is not being blamed for these killings. He can keep on thundering and have the best of both worlds.

No Respite In Andhra

President's rule in Andhra Pradesh has not brought back students to schools and colleges, government employees to offices, transport operators to drivers' seats or recalcitrant Congress legislators to the party. 'Lawlessness' and the accompanying disorders remain unabated, curfews clamped on towns and cities have been extended to as many as eighteen hours a day. The idea that was sought to be established was that all these chaotic conditions owed themselves to the Telengana leadership, headed by Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao, to the biased or incompetent administration led by Mr Rao and his Telengana chums. Now that President's rule has proved as ineffective as the previous government, Mr Rao can legitimately claim that he has been made a scapegoat of the Centre's lack of understanding of the situation, as Mr Brahmananda Reddi, his predecessor, did when he was made to quit following the Telengana agitation. But both have missed the bus; there is little hope of their restoration to power. Both of them failed to impress upon the Centre that separation of Andhra was the only way out or in other words the merger of Telengana with Andhra some sixteen years ago was a wrong step.

It is time for the Centre to realise that all sections of the middle class in Andhra are in favour of bifurcation of the State and since the Centre is not interested in people below the middle class, it will do it much good to take the unpalatable decision to split the State. Mrs

Gandhi will of course lose some of her face, after all her determined indifference to the agitation for separation—but let us say, hard luck, Prime Minister, and let it rest at that. Her Pancha Sutra has failed but so what; didn't her famous father's more glamorous Pancha Sheel equally fail?

The Mulki Rules and the Pancha Sutra have alienated the most vociferous section of the Andhra Pradesh petty bourgeoisie. The Andhra students, consequent on these two principles, are being largely denied seats in colleges, youths have less prospects for jobs, engineers, nurses, doctors, gazetted and non-gazetted employees have less favourable con-

ditions of service. The Andhra people have fled from the Telengana region, and the Telengana people from the Andhra region. As it has been pointed out already in major newspapers, these people have been encouraged by powerful lobbies in the State. The grain merchants are unhappy with the previous Government's decision to nationalise wholesale trade in foodgrains; the transport operators with the gradual takeover of road transport; the prosperous landlords with the land ceiling measures. They are all out to fish as much as they can in troubled waters and the separatist sentiments have been quite handy to exploit. The Mulki Rules have almost made the two regions of the State inaccessible to the Mulkis and non-Mulkis respectively. All that the Centre has to do now is to give the fact an official recognition. That is not to say that Andhra and Telengana will live happily ever hereafter; separation or non-separation is not the basic problem of the people in the State. But the Congress can expect some respite, temporarily, if it can make amends for its continued bungling in Andhra affairs.

Back In The Duma

The Revolutionary Socialist Party has decided to take part in the West Bengal Assembly, so long boycotted by the ULF on the ground that the 1972 elections were rigged and hence the government was not legal. Seventeen other elected members of the front—15 CPM and one each from the SUC and the Workers' Party as well as a leftist-backed Independent, will continue to stay out. Since parliamentary democracy is a matter of numbers, the presence of 3 or 20 makes little difference in a House of 280 or so.

The RSP thinks that the phase of bourgeois democracy is over and semi-fascist or fascist trends are dominant. So, one should resort to the Leninist tactic of revolutionary

utilisation of existing bourgeois forms like the Assembly in the interests of a mass and class struggle. Besides, the ULF is already participating in certain committees on labour, land and education set up by the illegitimate government.

Lenin, we know, can be quoted out of context for many things under the sun. How will the three musketeers of the RSP in the West Bengal Duma help supplement the mass struggle? And where is the mass struggle? The ULF has had quite a few party meetings and rallies since September at which it talked of the coming, militant mass struggle against rising prices, unemployment and eviction of sharecroppers in the countryside. The CPM, which has not been

Sadat's Vengeance . .

able to re-enter its erstwhile strongholds, is finding it difficult to operate on a wider scale because it has chosen the familiar path. The working class is on the defensive; large numbers of trade unionists have gone over to the other camp. The peasantry, too, though hard-hit, does not seem to be fighting back. The degree of apathy, at least on the surface, is demoralising. There is a plaintive note in the air, which is not a sign of the masses preparing to go into action. Though high prices have made life miserable, one sees thousands of half-fed men and women wherever there is some sort of free amusement or festival. It appears that after their experiences during the last five or six years when even two spells of UF regime were helpless against market and other forces, they think that high prices cannot be blamed on the rulers, they are as natural as extreme heat or cold.

It may be argued that in this situation anything handy should be used for whatever effect, that what the three RSP men will do in the Assembly is as much relevant as the talk about a coming militant mass movement. Mr Promode Das Gupta is of the opinion that the masses are so mature these days that they do not believe in spontaneity; instead they march with deliberate, firm steps to a Maidan meeting, defying potential death or injury at the hands of Congress hooligans. Such is our revolutionary maturity some 50 years or so after the formation of the Communist Party! With such leaders, even a perfect trigger will refuse to click in the most excellent situation.

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JANUARY 27, 1973

The man who has contributed most to the politicisation of the Egyptian students is President Anwar el-Sadat. The continued stalemate in Arab-Israeli relations and Sadat's promises invariably turning into nothing have forced the once apolitical students to question the credibility of the Government. The students have now come to represent a cross-section of the opinion of the people. Only a few years ago, the students in general took little interest in politics which was the exclusive concern of Nasser and the men around him. But the national humiliation of the 1967 war marked a watershed in the evolution of political consciousness of students. Nasser was still the national leader but for the first time he was compelled by circumstances to do a lot of explaining to the people. The death of the Rais should have established a collective leadership but Sadat did not take much time to neutralise those with whom he was to share power. In the process the leftists who had more credibility with the people were thrown in the political cold. Since then Sadat has somehow manipulated to remain in power by promising to make 1971 the year of decision, expelling Russian military personnel and dismissing the hawkish War Minister, Mohammed Sadek. It now so happens that any promise that Sadat makes gives rise to anger. He has proved himself thoroughly incapable of any military or diplomatic initiative sufficient to force the hands of the Israelis. The arrests of student activists, including some highly popular leaders, which came in the wake of Sadat's announcement in Parliament that "the only real guarantee of freedom is more freedom", added to the national discontent. But what was the demand of the students that infuriated the President? They wanted a national debate on the 1967 debacle and also on the political, economic and so-

cial measures to be taken to end the sequel to the Israeli aggression. It has to be remembered that the students along with the common people are mainly bearing the brunt of the economic crisis and the constant national alert. The students have also objected to the rightist shift in policy in the post-Nasser days and questioned the special privileges that a particular class of people enjoys. Sadat considers such a proposal for debate a challenge to his fragile authority. This explains the recent spate of arrests. Last month Cairo had seen the most violent confrontation between students and the gendarmerie whose impact was felt throughout West Asia.

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Mass Upsurge In Andhra

K. V. R.

WHERE they fail to see the hand of the CIA in any popular agitation, the governments of the land invariably see the hand of Naxalites, and the inept Government of Andhra Pradesh is no exception. It was reported that the Naxalites in A.P. were behind the removal of fish-ponds in one place or two. What could be more welcome to the authorities than finding yet another scapegoat? It only shows how helpless the Chief Minister was in the face of a mass upsurge which neither he nor his patroness at Delhi could stem and stop.

Whatever be the motives of the so-called "vested interests" (the Swatantra and the Jana Sangh) which initiated the current agitation in the Andhra area for bifurcation of the State, it is undeniable that it is now a mass movement.

The Brahmananda Reddi clique, which was thrown out as soon as it lost the favour of Mrs Indira Gandhi, could have wished for nothing else in order to discredit and dethrone her latest protegee who was also the weakest and yet the most foolhardy, viz., Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao. When the NGOs, young men and students in their thousands threw themselves behind it, the agitation and its driving force were no longer what they originally had been. At every step, it was the latter who began dictating and deciding in fact, while the 'leaders' were busy meeting each other, issuing statements and step by step assuming a more hostile posture towards the PM and her party machine. The Congress party in the State is now in shambles.

The CPI is interested in out-Indira-ing Indira in the matter of maintaining the integration of the State at any cost (even of self-annihilation) and so has isolated itself from the 'mainstream' at the State level. Its rival, the CPI(M), with its much-vaunted 2:1 formula, also has set its

face against the Jai Andhra movement, for exactly the same reasons. In effect, both the legal communist parties have condemned themselves to a hopeless position. But they are crying themselves hoarse (a cry in the wilderness!) about a non-existent unity between the two regions of the State. The ruling clique in the ruling party and its revisionist tail and the more pragmatic, if a bit cleverer, CPI(M), are all trying to throw the blame entirely on the 'vested interests' and raising a fascist bogey, in order to cover up their own political bankruptcy. The vested interests are there. But the youth also is there. The employees are there. The 'intel'lectuals' are there. It is no longer a crisis in the ruling party. It is now a crisis in the ruling class itself. It may not be a revolutionary situation. But it is, without doubt, a very favourable situation for leftist parties to exploit or at least recruit zealous following and to give a definite twist to this upsurge. What is lacking is exactly such a leftist party. It is not enough if the cry "fascist" is raised indiscriminately against the agitators. You can't simply daub them all with tar.

What is unambiguously fascist is the *zulum* of the CRP and the military. The Five-Point Formula of the Prime Minister and the Mulki Rules Bill were both stillborn. They were rejected outright on both sides of the State. Instead of bowing to the popular verdict, the Government brought in its last weapon—the *danda*—from its armoury. What West Bengal suffered, the Andhra region is now suffering. Ahmedabad is repeating itself all over in all major towns of this region. Curfew has become the order of the day. The funniest part of it is, it was resorted to when darkness set in over the land owing to the powermen's brief strike. Another funny thing is, the rifle is fastened to the waist of the CRP men with a

glittering iron chain. Firings, lathi-charges, bayonetting and beating are all in order.

More than this, it is the morale of the agitators that is really surprising. Barricades and road-blocks went up, almost spontaneously. At Vijayawada, there was street fighting in the dark. At Narasaraopet, three army vans were forced to go by another route in the face of stiff popular opposition. At Anantpur, the CRP men got the shock of their lives what with the mortars and pestles of angry women!

All this is rich grist to any but a rusty mill which is what the two CPIs, jointly or individually, are. College and primary teachers, rickshawpullers, RTC workers, powermen—these are not 'fascists' I hope,—have all or mostly all have now come out in favour of bifurcation, which might not really offer any solution to their real problems. But can there be a more ostrich-like attitude than to stand religiously and dogmatically by a non-existent thing? Revolutionary opportunism is, after all, no sin, especially for a 'Communist' Party in whose terminology it goes under the blessed name of 'tactics'. The Revolutionary Writers' Association has asked the bulk of the Jai Andhra agitators, i.e., the middle-class elements, the youth and the students, not to rest on their oars with mere bifurcation but to carry on the fight with greater determination until it is merged into a protracted armed struggle for the overthrow, not of a clique or a government, but of the State power itself. It may be a distant cry but it is the right cry.

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Andhra Pradesh : Analysis Of A Split

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

MR K. P. Satyamurthy, a top Naxalite leader and a close follower of the late Charu Mazumdar, who was stated to have been striving for a rapprochement between all the revolutionary groups in the State, including the revolutionary communist group led by Mr Chandra Pulla Reddy, the moderate Marxist-Leninist group of Mr Satyanarayan Sinha of Bihar, and his own group of Marxist-Leninist Party which adheres to the Charu Mazumdar line, was arrested in Hyderabad on the night of November 29 in a "dramatic swoop" as he was emerging from his city 'hide-out'—a house, the Deputy Inspector General of Police (CID and Railways) told reporters.

It is stated that Mr Satyamurthy had met Charu Mazumdar just before the latter's arrest last July and had lengthy discussions. The DIG told reporters that Mr Satyamurthy carried a reward of Rs 25,000 on his head and had been underground since 1969.

The DIG also said Mr Chandra Pulla Reddy, the leader of the Andhra Pradesh Revolutionary Communist Party, carries a reward of Rs 100,000 on his head.

Though the police sources are reluctant to say anything about the differences between the two groups of the State Revolutionary Communist Party led by Mr Tarimela Nagi Reddi, and Mr Chandra Pulla Reddy, party circles told this correspondent that while efforts were being made to bring about a rapprochement between all the revolutionary groups in the State, their Party (The Revolutionary Communist Party of Andhra Pradesh) was on the verge of a split.

It may be recalled here that Mr Chandra Pulla Reddy was expelled from the CPM in 1968 along with Messrs T. Nagi Reddi, Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao and Kolla Venkaiah, the Secretariat members of the CPM State unit. The four leaders

formed in September 1968 the Andhra Pradesh Co-ordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries with Mr Nagi Reddi as its convener. Mr Kolla Venkaiah who differed with the State Co-ordination Committee on certain 'issues' left the Committee and associated himself with the Marxist-Leninist Party.

The APCCCR, which joined the All India Co-ordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries headed by Charu Mazumdar, in October, 1968 was disaffiliated by AICCCR in February 1969. The Andhra Pradesh Co-ordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries held a State Convention in April 1969 and adopted an "Immediate Programme" to carry out revolutionary activities in the State. After the April Convention the State Co-ordination Committee called itself Andhra Pradesh Communist Committee of Revolutionaries.

Soon after the formation of the State Co-ordination Committee Mr Chandra Pulla Reddy was deputed by the Committee to the Telengana Agency (forest) area to build up the revolutionary movement there.

In December, 1969 Mr T. Nagi Reddi and eight others were arrested in Madras and subsequently state-wide arrests were made and the Government of Andhra Pradesh charged them with conspiring to overthrow the legally established Government through violent means. The Special Court, constituted to try the accused sentenced 23 persons including Mr T. Nagi Reddi and Mr D. Venkateswara Rao to four years rigorous imprisonment while acquitting 24 others. Now all the convicted are on bail and have filed an appeal in the Andhra Pradesh High Court.

In Madras 6 out of 9 Provincial Committee members of the APCCCR were arrested including the Provincial Committee Secretary Mr D. Venkates-

wara Rao and two secretariat members, T. Nagi Reddi and Mr M. Karayana Swamy. Mr Chandra Pulla Reddi, another secretariat member, and Mr P. Ramanarasaiah, Provincial Committee member, evaded the police trap.

The polemics in the Party started mainly in the last part of 1970 particularly between the Jail Committee and the Provincial Committee outside. Though on the surface it may look that the differences between the jail leaders and the Provincial Committee started on the correct implementation of the "Immediate Programme", in fact it had several other reasons.

It may be recalled here that the members, realising that it was not possible for them to effectively function as PC and lead the party and the people's movement from inside jail, resolved to dissolve the PC and ceased to function as PC. They asked the Party outside to form a new Provincial Committee to shoulder the responsibilities of the party and the people's movement. Accordingly a new PC (with the remaining two members of the old PC and one new member) was proposed and the proposal was unanimously approved in two separate meetings, one being the joint meeting of the forest area and of all the armed squads, and the other of representatives of the district committee of the plains area. The new PC came into existence in July, 1970. For a few months close co-ordination between the newly formed PC and the arrested leaders was maintained. But by the end of 1970 the jail leaders began to circulate their own documents without consulting with the PC and belittling the armed struggle in the Telengana Agency Area. The jail leaders in their document "Left Deviation" accused the PC that it had violated the line enunciated in the "Immediate

Programme". Volumes of documents were issued by both sides, defending each their stand.

The Revolutionary Communist Committee of Andhra Pradesh outside in a document "Defeat the Party splitting activities and capitulationist policies of T. Nagi Reddi and Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao", says: All the comradely efforts to reconciles with the jail leaders proved futile and the whole ideological discussion with them was of no avail. The jail leaders who are now on bail are openly criticising in public the revolutionary movement in the Telengana Agency Area and have denounced it when the enemy was employing every means, political and military, to suppress the armed struggle and at a time when the situation demands the utmost unity in the party to strengthen the revolutionary people's movement in the state. They tried to show confusion, doubts and a sense of no-confidence in the minds of Party members and people about the future development of the people's armed struggle. "With fabricated baseless charges and utter lies about the armed struggle and about the Provincial Committee leadership who were in the thick of the movement, the two leaders wrote documents and distributed them from jail on their own without the knowledge of the PC and without any discussions in the party at any level. In gross violation of principles of party organisation and party discipline, they established a rival PC inside jail and tried to form rival committees in the State and thus are trying to split the party and the people's movement."

The document further alleged that the jail leaders never objected to the political line and to the principles of armed struggle followed by the PC though all the documents on political and ideological issues and on problems facing the armed struggle prepared by it were sent to them. Moreover, the jail leaders "upheld the armed struggle of the agency areas of Warangal, Khammam

and Karimnagar Districts in their document distributed in June, 1970, "Present Situation—Our Tasks" and described the agency movement as a "struggle being waged in self-defence of the cadre and to defend the people's movement", and also wrote in that document that "the movement had the people's support and it did score many successes and that it was surging forward", the present document claimed.

Points of Difference

The document at length explained the points of difference between the PC and the jail leaders.

About the split in the Indian ruling classes into pro-American and pro-Russian groups, the document said that India is a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country subjected to neo-colonial exploitation by imperialists, especially by U.S. imperialists and Soviet social-imperialists. The Indian big bourgeoisie and big landlord classes were split into pro-American and pro-Russian groups and the two groups were locked in a dogfight for power. While political parties like the Syndicate Congress, Jana Sangh and Swatantra represented mainly the pro-American group, the private sector in India, the Indira Congress and her friends represent mainly the pro-Russian group, the public sector. The Indian ruling classes were split on policies to be followed and were beset with internal contradictions and as a result were getting weakened. While it was the stand of the PC, Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao held that there were no differences among the Indian ruling classes on policies and they were not split into pro-American and pro-Russian groups. The jail leaders further argued that the Indira Congress itself did represent the whole of the Indian ruling classes—the big bourgeoisie and big landlords—and safeguards the interests of both American imperialism and Russian imperialism and thus they came to the conclusion that the Indira Government was an

independent power, the document alleged.

In this connection the document quoted the views of the Chinese Communist Party and said that the views of the PC were in accordance with those of the CPC while those of Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao went against the CPC's views.

Due to the policies of exploitation pursued by the Congress for the last 25 years, the country is in the grip of serious economic and political crises, the people of various classes are fighting against the policies of exploitation of the ruling classes; in different parts of the country armed peasant struggles have broken out under the leadership of Communist Revolutionaries. As a result of people's struggles developing throughout India the ruling Congress party was split into two; the ruling classes and their political parties are facing a serious political crisis and the political situation in the country is unstable. This instability is a permanent one. The document said that the PC was of the opinion that a permanent political instability prevailed in the country.

Contrary to this political estimation, Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao argue that after the spectacular election victory of the Indira Congress, there exist no groups or split in the ruling classes and that their differences have disappeared. They also argue that the instability which existed before the parliamentary elections of 1971, has changed into stability. The PC argued that the successes of the Indira Congress in the elections to Parliament and State Assemblies (by false promises, by using military and police forces and by making most opportunistic agreements with other political parties) did not alter the instability among the ruling classes. The conditions which created the permanent political instability did not disappear with the election victory of Indira Gandhi. The so-called stability is only a temporary phase within the framework of the per-

JANUARY 27, 1973

manent political instability and this will not continue long.

On the assessment of the revolutionary situation also the two groups give different accounts. While the PC saw an excellent revolutionary situation and its development day by day and felt that the "present revolutionary situation" nationally and internationally was more favourable than the situation at the time of the Telengana armed struggle (1946-51), Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao said that the existing revolutionary situation was not more favourable "for armed struggle" than in that period.

When to Start?

Though no auspicious day can be fixed to start armed struggle, the Revolutionary Communist Committee in its "Immediate Programme" fixed 'Muhurat' for the start of such struggle. "With the onset of the rainy season i.e. in the month of June we can start the armed struggle... Rainy season provides the favourable climate for resistance movement", the Immediate Programme stated. This fixing of 'muhurat' was ridiculed by the CPI (ML) and the PC later could note the mistake they committed. Nagi Reddi and D. Venkateswara Rao in their document "Left Deviation" tried to defend the fixing of the date, saying that when they formulated the Immediate Programme there was an exodus of party members into the Marxist-Leninist Party and to stop it and give confidence to the rank and file of the party they had to fix a time! But later Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao accused the Agency leadership for starting the armed struggle in the name of self-defence 'before the

people were prepared for occupation and distribution of the land of landlords'. The PC contested this line of thinking and explained that the landlords and the government would not sit with hands tied till the people were prepared to seize their lands. But at the same time the PC did not forget the importance of the preparedness of the people to come forward to occupy the landlords' lands. The document explained in the following lines the PC's stand on the issue:

When the people launch mass struggles on their own issues against feudal exploitation, the landlords and the reactionary government come down heavily on the movement using the armed police to suppress it. In such a case if the people in defence of their movement, are prepared to resist the armed repression of the government with arms, the communist revolutionaries should lead such a struggle; and must strive to develop the movement which had started on partial demands into agrarian revolution. If and when people are not prepared to resist the brutal armed suppression and repression to which the people's movement is subjected in the process of its development, we must adopt necessary tactics for self-defence of the cadre and the mass movement to develop the movement into agrarian revolution. We have to decide upon the forms of struggle for self-defence taking into consideration the degree of the preparedness of the people for armed struggle, their support, geographical conditions (contiguity) of the area concerned etc.

In the forest areas of Warangal, Khammam and Karimnagar districts, when mass struggles were developing against feudal and other exploiting classes, the reactionary Congress Government unleashed heavy police repression to suppress the people's movement. In order to safeguard this movement and its gains and so save the cadre, the people and the party were forced to take up arms in self-defence.

So, armed squads were formed. The party and the armed squads have put forward before themselves the main task of mobilisation of people for armed revolution.

The document mentions propagation of revolutionary politics of people's war, mass mobilisation on their immediate issues, necessary actions against the enemies of the people who actively oppose and work against the development of the movement and self-defence against the police, as the main principles that guide armed struggle at the given phase.

The document criticised Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao for the change in their attitude towards the Marxist-Leninist Party from non-antagonistic to antagonistic. The April Convention of the State Revolutionary Communist Committee decided to conduct political and ideological struggle against the "left sectarian" and "adventurist" policies of the Charu Mazumdar group on the one hand and on the other to treat them as revolutionaries and to resolve differences with them by fraternal discussions on ideological and political issues. It was also decided to maintain non-antagonistic relations with them, the document added. The PC also claimed that its approach in accordance with the decisions taken at the April convention, had yielded certain results and many people belonging to the CPI (ML) were in the process of rethinking and some of them had joined their party. But the jail leaders argued that the Charu Mazumdar group should not be treated as revolutionaries and no attempt should be made for unity with them. The aim should be to defeat them, the document alleged.

The PC felt that all legal opportunities, legal mass movements and mass organisations should be utilised for the development of people's armed struggle. Civil liberties movement was also a part of the mass movement and it should help to strengthen the mass movements and armed struggle. It should expose

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JANUARY 27, 1973

and condemn the brutal repression of the government and should rouse the masses to demand the restoration of all civil liberties, including the release of the leaders. The PC said that it should not have any truck with revisionists and neo-revisionists even in the name of civil liberties movement. But Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao wanted to unite not only with the old and neo-revisionists but even with the reactionary elements in the name of fighting for civil liberties. They also wanted to make the release of arrested leaders the central issue of the civil liberties movement, the document said.

Barrel of a Gun

The document severely criticised Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao for commenting on Mao's strategic slogan "political power grows out of the barrel of the gun" as simply a 'figuratively given slogan'. "Where is the difference between these comrades and the neo-revisionist party leader Basavapunniah, who joked that "not only power but smoke also comes from the barrel of the gun?", the document questioned.

The document also stated that immediately after the April convention (1969) Nagi Reddi brought before the then PC his request that he be allowed to get arrested because he could not lead underground life and because he had no confidence in himself to lead armed struggle. The April convention had decided that party membership should be given only to those 'who are prepared to go underground'. Nagi Reddi refused to honour the Party decision and remained legal till he got arrested while he was in a hotel in Anantapura, his native district, in September 1969 under the Preventive Detention Act.

The document criticised Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao, the secretary, for not taking steps to organise a secret underground party machinery and for not making any efforts to send the leading comrades in the plain areas underground. He was

arrested in Madras eight months after the April convention without setting up any secret party machinery.

"One is surprised to know that in the eight months before their arrest in Madras the two leaders never cared to visit the forest area where the armed struggle was going on and did not help the movement in any way."

"Even after putting forth these arguments and openly disowning the armed struggle in the Telengana Agency Area, it is ridiculous for them to try to convince the cadre and the people that they are for armed struggle. It is also ridiculous for them to say that they are for armed struggle when they advocate unity with the revisionists and neo-revisionists but refuses any unity with other revolutionary groups which are leading armed struggle."

The document claimed that the movement which was started with one taluk had extended to nine taluks in the forest area of Khammam, Warangal and Karimnagar districts and in hundreds of villages people occupied more than 100,000 acres of Reserve and other kinds of land. In most of the forest area, the people have 'done away' with 'setti' (free labour), corruption and bribery of forest officials, contractors and patels (village officers) and freed themselves from the feudal exploitation of exorbitant rates of interest and Nagu (debt in the form of grain). People in the forest area are freely enjoying and utilising the forest produce.

"As a result of continuous propaganda of revolutionary politics and mass mobilisation of their immediate issues, political consciousness of the people is growing. People see armed struggle as the only way for their liberation from the age-old and inhuman exploitation. That is why a large number of Girijan and other youth, men and women, are volunteering to join the armed squads. People's village committees are being organised. The people are doing everything to support and safeguard the armed struggle, brav-

ing the fascist method of suppression, inhuman torture and raping of women by the police of the reactionary government."

The government has burnt down several villages in the interior of the forest area 'to wean away' the people from the extremist influence' and set villages in the pattern of Vietnamese 'hamlets'.

The document explained the steps that the PC had taken to safeguard party unity. It had proposed to circulate their documents. It had also proposed to hold a State plenum of the party to discuss and resolve the political and ideological issues and on the basis of the discussions and decisions to elect a new PC. But Nagi Reddi and Venkateswara Rao turned down these proposals, the PC document added.

It further alleged that the two leaders had formed a rival PC inside the jail with the arrested members of the old PC (except one secretariat member who criticised them for anti-party activities and capitulationist policies and extended his support to the Agency area armed struggle and the PC) which they themselves had dissolved. "The two leaders gave a call to form rival party committees in the State and thus caused a split in the party."

The PC solemnly declared that they would fight till the end and carry forward the armed agrarian revolution until the realisation of the great hopes of 'our martyr comrades'—the establishment of New Democracy—and the PC would steadfastly adhere to and follow Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-tung Thought and implement the people's war path.

Our agent at Varanasi

MANNALAL DAS

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Shadow Over Delhi IIT

N. K. SINGH

TIME virtually is running out for Delhi's prestigious Indian Institute of Technology, where with every passing day the academic and administrative atmosphere is slipping from bad to worse. There have been wide-spread trouble on the campus—one of the family of five which cater to the special technological needs of the country—during the past three months. The Institute, which is supposed to be among the best in Asia, has been vitiated by demonstrations, gheraos, strikes and intimidation of individuals. At present it looks like a mini-battleground with two jeepsful of policemen stationed inside the campus and two truckloads of Central Reserve Police force posted at the outer gates.

All this because the IIT Employees Union has chosen to march on the warpath in support of its two main demands: implementation of the departmental promotion rules and reinstatement of a professor of economics who was sacked on December last by the authorities because of alleged participation in "political activities and unacademic conduct."

But unlike other campuses in the country, the IIT's is not a simple case of militants on the warpath. There is something beneath the surface. The disease is of an incipient, creeping kind of paralysis, seeping into all levels of administration and the teaching faculty. The Rashtriya Swavamshevik Sanah gestapo is active in Delhi IIT through its political academics.

Both the teaching and non-teaching employees' unions—the IIT Employees Union and the Pradyogik Adhyapak Samiti—are dominated by the RSS and Jana Sangh. The PAS was launched under the blessings of the former Chief Executive Councilor of Delhi and its President is a JS-RSS activist. The same clique provides leadership and motivation to the union of non-teaching staff. Though the

PAS disclaims any former links with the IIT Employees Union, two of the Samiti members advise the Union and even participate in their deliberations.

The RSS group tried to hold a shakha on the campus, but the response from the students was far from encouraging. Now the shakha is held just outside the campus where its compound ends and a residential colony begins. About 30 Class III and IV employees participate in it. A faculty member is said to be their sanchalak.

Though the Employees Union claims allegiance of about 1,200 Class III and IV employees out of a total of 1,400, it is not the only union on the campus. There is another association of Class III and IV employees, many of whom do not agree with the methods of the IITEU. The Pradyogik Adhyapak Samiti, too, has only a slender minority support among the 197 odd faculty members. Among the students a few owe allegiance to the RSS, but they do not count for much. However, owing to its well-knit organisation, the small RSS group has held the entire campus to ransom.

Politics has added a touch of extremism to the trade union activities on the campus and vice versa. It seems that a parallel administration is being run in the IIT by the RSS storm-troopers.

Shadow of Terror

The Employees Union has been acting almost like a Gestapo force threatening all those it does not like with dire consequences. Senior members of the faculty live in terror. They often receive 'poison calls' from anonymous callers, making death and assassination threats. Recently, one of them tried to stand up to it and next day his wife was told on telephone that acid would be thrown at her face if she did not persuade her spouse to mend his ways. Faculty

members' houses are often surrounded, abusive and filthy language is used on the occasion, and even family members are not spared.

The Board of Governors was gheraoed on July 22 while it was in session. Even a duty magistrate on a round of the area was stated to have been threatened by some PAS office-bearers with dire consequences if he intervened. One of them said that there were MPs who patronised the Samiti.

To cap it all, it has been alleged that the men have a few supporters even among the higher administrative echelons of the Institute. The other day one of the registrars was assaulted in his office by unruly elements. His complaint went before the Senate of IIT. The way efforts were made to dismiss the complaint adds a rather sinister dimension to the whole affair. When the Senate was seized of the matter the Director of the IIT and another faculty member stated that the complaint was false. Other members protested and said an enquiry should be made. The Director then took the enquiry in his own hands. It was probably not liked by the Chairman of the Board of Governors. So the Director passed on the enquiry to the other Senate member who agreed with his view expressed earlier. Once again the Chairman had to intervene and specifically instruct that the enquiry should not be conducted by any single individual. At this a two-member committee was appointed which reported that a prima facie case exists in the complaint.

Another instance of the influence that the Employees Union wields with the authorities is an action against a gardener in the Institute who refused to be a member of the Union. The Director wrote to the Assistant Resident Engineer that the particular gardener should be removed. The engineer reported that the gardener was a good workman and he was needed. At this the A.R.E. was requested to take some minimum action. Thereupon the gardener was suspended for two days. It did not

require any written procedure because he was a temporary hand.

The professor for whose reinstatement the Employees Union has been agitating is Mr Subramaniam Swamy, the Jana Sangh economist of 'Swadeshi Plan' fame. He writes regularly in RSS-JS papers, *Motherland* and *Organiser*, expounding and extolling the economic, foreign and defence policies of the Jana Sangh. He participates in the Working Committee and Council meetings in the capacity of a permanent invitee and delivers speeches as one of the party leaders. All this in an institution which has apparently no place for politics.

Recent reports of vastly stepped up CIA activities in the country may be

a case of shadows being mistaken for spectres, but outsiders are led to wonder why an academic from the School of International Studies of Missouri University is residing on the campus when he has come to India for research in Hindi philology. The Central Hindi Institute has its headquarters at Agra and only a branch establishment in New Delhi.

It is also reported that American foundations have been funnelling grants from PL-480 funds to selected nominees for various projects. One of the pedagogues was on a 22,000-dollar year-long stint with the NASA.

Recently four active members of the IIT Pradyogik Adhyapak Samiti got lucrative assignments in the USA.

A False Brother

MONI GUHA

MR Arun Majumdar's paper on "Mode of Production in the USSR" (December 16 and 23) "establishes" that the Soviet economy throughout the last fifty years was never a socialist one. It was on the contrary, state-capitalist and instead of weakening state-capitalism, the four five-year plans strengthened it and the "nature of difficulties as they were in the Soviet Union was more akin to those prevalent in the capitalist world", "and it was these difficulties which prepared the ideological premise of the now famous 1965 economic reforms".

Mr Majumdar begins his paper by attempting to create an impression that the public ownership of the means of production is not a "prime requisite for a socialist mode of production". He establishes that the "prime requisite" for a socialist economy is to implement "his discovery" of the basic economic law of socialism, i.e., implementation of the theory of "surplus value". We shall, of course, come to that point, but meanwhile let us say that Mr Majumdar's "discovery" is not a unique one. Proudhon, once advo-

cated that socialism was possible without socialising private property and without doing away with commodities and Marx, in a letter to Wedemeyer wrote that "Proudhonist socialism... wants to leave private property in existence but to organise the exchange of private properties... wants commodities but not money (Marx's italics)". Then Marx warned Wedemeyer and all communists: "Above all things communism must rid itself of this 'false brother'." (Marx-Engels Correspondence, Letter no. 43, p. 105, Indian edition, NBA, 1945).

To justify his argument Mr Majumdar further writes that the pattern of ownership of the means of production has no relation or connection with the basic economic law of society. He writes, "In no economic formation the basic economic laws have a pattern of ownership of the means of production as the nucleus around which they operate". In a back-note, No. 4, he tries to justify it by saying that "the basic economic law under feudalism does operate even when the means of production i.e., land units, are un-

der community or tribal ownership", (emphasis added). Queerly enough, in the same breath, he says, "But as we all know, such community ownership of the means of production in course of its maturity yields place to private ownership of the means of production". The question is: does the basic economic law under feudalism operate when land units are under community or tribal ownership or when the community or tribal ownership yields place to private ownership of the feudal lords? His observation is based on complete ignorance of dialectics. The mode of production never exists in a pure form. It is an abstraction and summing up of the decisive properties of social production. It is always subject to change through the development of productive forces, which at a certain stage of development undermines the existing mode of production and first creates shoots of a new mode of production and then in this process the shoots take full form and dominate. Mr Majumdar should know that land units under community or tribal ownership and under private ownership of the feudal lords mean neither the same property relations nor the same mode of production nor does the same basic economic law operate in different property relations and mode of production. To Mr Majumdar "yes" is always "yes" and "no" is always "no" and there is neither the process of change nor the transformation from quantity into quality.

Evidently, Mr Majumdar confuses the pattern of ownership of the means of production with the basic economic law and that is why he asks, "If neither the balanced proportionate development nor the law of social ownership of the means of production constitute the basic economic law of the socialist mode of production, then can we say that Stalin's formulation of the basic economic law of socialism is correct?" He here invents a "law of social ownership". Unfortunately, social ownership is not in itself a law, but the material basis which, toge-

ther with property relations, generates the basic economic law of the socialist mode of production. It appears that Mr Majumdar is not in a mood to agree with this. That is why he himself "discovers" the concrete basic economic law of socialism refuting and replacing the "vague" formulation of Stalin. What is the basic economic law of socialism according to him? He says, "While the purpose of the capitalist reproduction is the expansion of exchange value the very process of realisation of the law of surplus exchange value under the capitalist mode of production generates within its womb the law of surplus use-value i.e., the law which determines the essence of the socialist mode of production." (emphasis added). Thus, according to him, this surplus use value is the basic economic law of socialism. It is now as certain as noon-day that Mr Majumdar is not only completely ignorant of dialectics but also completely ignorant of history and especially the economic history of the development of human civilisation. Without useful labour there cannot be any society and this useful labour is the use-value. Again without surplus use-value there cannot be any march to human civilisation. The prime question for the social scientists is how to use this surplus use-value which labour produces in all social formations. Surplus use-value is not the characteristic of a particular society, but a "nature-imposed" thing without which there would have been "no life". Marx said, "So far therefore as labour is the creator of use value, is useful labour,

it is a necessary condition, *independent of all forms of society*, for the existence of the human race; it is an *eternal nature-imposed necessity*, without which there can be no material exchange between man and nature, and therefore no life." (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 50, Modern Library, New York). This is so far as use-value is concerned. What about the surplus use-value for reproduction? Marx said, "Variable capital is therefore only a *particular form of appearance of the fund* for providing the necessaries of life, or *the labour fund* which the labourer requires for the maintenance of himself and his family, and which, *whatever be the system of social production* he must produce and reproduce." (emphasis added, *ibid*, p. 573). Marx explained it further in one of his letter to Kugelmann: "The unfortunate fellow does not see that, even if there were no chapter on value in my book, the analysis of the real relationships which I give would contain the proof and demonstration of real value relation... Every child knows that a country which ceased to work, I will not say for a year, but for a few weeks, would die. Every child knows too that the mass of products corresponding to the different needs require different and quantitatively determined masses of total labour of society. That this necessity of distributing social labour in definite proportions cannot be done away with by the *particular form* (Marx's italics) of social production, but can only change the *form it assumes*, (Marx's italics) is self-evident. *No natural law can be done away with*. What can change, in changing historical circumstances, is the *form* (Marx's italics) in which these laws operate. And the form in which this proportional division of labour operates, in a state of society where the interconnection of social labour is manifested in the *private exchange* (Marx's italics) of the individual products of labour, is precisely the *exchange value* (Marx's italics) of these products." (Marx-Engels Cor-

respondence, Letter no. 109, pp. 218-19).

Perhaps it is now clear that creation of surplus use-value is a "natural law" associated with useful social labour without which human society cannot "exchange" with nature. It assumes different forms in different economic formations. How, then, can it be the basic economic law of socialism, which Mr Majumdar so painstakingly discovers after refuting Stalin's basic economic law of socialism? This social fund of surplus use value under socialism is increased enormously in extended reproduction. The surplus use value becomes the surplus useful labour, the commodity becomes the product, the fixed and commodity capital become the instruments of labour. The social labour fund increases enormously in extended reproduction in socialist society and "through the continuous expansion and perfection of socialist production on the basis of higher techniques" the society as a whole "secures the maximum satisfaction"! (Stalin, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*). That is why it is the basic economic law.

Other questions raised in Mr Majumdar's paper will possibly be covered by my article "Economic roots of restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union", written long before the publication of the paper under reference and likely to be published in *Frontier*.

For FRONTIER contact

S. P. CHATTERJEE

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JANUARY 27, 1973

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Book Review

GENOCIDE IN BANGLADESH

By Kalyan Chaudhuri

Orient Longman, Price Rs 30.00

THE world knows that on March 25, 1971 General Yahya's army in what then was called East Pakistan went berserk against the Bengali community there. What has baffled the world since, is not so much the scale of the operation but its efficient and final cause.

Mr Kalyan Chaudhuri's book is "the story of the nine months of horror in East Pakistan...the story of the mass flight and mass slaughter". Chapters III to VI take us through the details of the horror committed by the army. In Chapter II he takes up the story at the point where confrontation between the Awami League and the Yahya regime led to the final act of horror. He traces the history of East-West conflict in Pakistan in some detail and attempts to explain the bloody aftermath as a culmination of this long-drawn conflict. But as he leaves aside the complex inter-relation of class forces, he cannot see this conflict as anything but an outcome of racial and cultural divergence. True, he speaks of "colonial" exploitation of East Pakistan by West, but again, without analysing the class alignments within Pakistan as a whole, inside each of its two wings and as between the two wings taken separately. Thus, Mr Chaudhuri's book fails to tackle the moot question of the cause and purpose of the army crack down. He does not exactly skirt the issue but so hedges himself in raising it that his account of the circumstances leading to the "genocide" and its possible motivation cannot go beyond generalities. It even runs into several inconsistencies. Once or twice he reverses himself and says things which go against his own conclusions.

Let us begin by spelling out the issues: what brought things to a head before the crackdown and what were the motives of the chief protagonists in the drama, namely Yahya and

Mujib? In a sense, both these matters are so riddling that it takes some scholarly research and supreme power of interpretation to get to grips with them. Perhaps we are too close to the events and too apt to be biased in our judgment to attempt objectivity. Still, let us try and make out the issues, as best we can, from Mr Chaudhuri's own account of the events leading to the tragedy.

Mr Chaudhuri recalls the fact that though winning the General Election on Yahya's terms, which were quite explicit in setting bounds to the makers of the new constitution (Bhashani was shrewd enough to reject these terms and boycott the election), Mujib insisted on his six-point charter of demands at the parleys that followed his victory at the polls. He took his victory as a public referendum in favour of his demands. At this stage, Mr Chaudhuri does not flinch from calling Mujib "obdurate", and rightly I think, but instead of pushing home this point he goes back upon himself a few pages further on, and sees nothing but "reasonableness" in Mujib's dealings. From this point onward, he puts the boot on the other leg and has to tailor up his logic to this end. He thinks that Yahya had always reckoned on holding the reins even after the installation of a civil government, given the improbability of any single party ascendancy. With Mujib's party in single majority, he could have no such balancing feat to perform and hence his attempt to keep Mujib out of power at any cost. But had Yahya such tricks up his sleeve, couldn't he play his hand much better by rigging the process or outcome of the elections?

It is quite clear that an election takes place according to certain constitutional or other preconditions. A party in seeking election *ipso facto* accepts these conditions, and if its electoral promises exceed the terms under which the election is won there is an imbroglio which can be resolved in only two ways. Either the promises have to be trimmed or carried out in defiance of the restraints—at the risk of a violent re-

volution. There is no doubt Mujib's demands were fraught with such a risk and he took it. From the angle of Yahya and the Pakistani ruling class, they were a signal for the break-up of Pakistan as a single unit of political dominance and economic exploitation. Nowhere in Yahya's promise to cede power to civil authority was it implied that he would stand for such disintegration.

If, therefore, Mujib and his Awami League had such a showdown in mind from the beginning, they ought to have been prepared for an armed struggle at the end of the road. In the event of such readiness to face the music we could buy the theory that the election was a feeler to the people to sound them about their possible response to the secessionist revolt. As Mr Chaudhuri himself admits, the army's crackdown took everybody by surprise. In that case, we cannot see why Mujib should have pressed on with his demands to the bloody end. It is wholly unnecessary to go into the intricate negotiations which made Yahya concede certain demands in the Awami League charter while rejecting others. Enough that the parleys were stymied by the irreducibly opposed claims of the negotiators, one side demanding complete autonomy and the other side denying it for fear or under pretext of national disintegration. The negotiations were coming unstuck one after another and yet, Mujib was returning to the conference table in order to square the circle. It beats one that Mujib was talking with Yahya even after his civil disobedience movement had created a parallel authority in the province and provoked the military regime to the utmost. Did he expect to reach his end with his non-violent bluff? Why did he force issues without the preparation to meet the army when it struck?

It seems Mujib had reckoned without his host, the army. He had thrown down the gauntlet with his massive electoral victory and hoped to buff and buster his way to power. But when the crunch came, he was at the end of his tether. His last-minute

call to the people to take up arms made matters worse. It panicked the army and turned the full blast of its fury against the common people who, in any case, could have no arms to take up. Mr Chaudhuri concedes that Mujib evaded his responsibility by going into army custody instead of going underground and leading the revolt he had inspired. But how many of Mujib's associates joined the underground resistance for what that was worth? Didn't most of them run away to India when the chips were down?

The fact therefore stands out that Mujib and his Awami League, the whole of the Bengali middle class leadership that is, roused the loyalties of the common people of East Pakistan by playing on their hatred of the West Pakistani ruling class as their principal exploiters and oppressors. The rich and influential sections of the Bengali Muslims had always resented the unjust dominance of West Pakistanis in their political economic and cultural life. It was easy for them to enlist popular support in favour of their demands for ending this dominance, for the common people were groaning under the same West Pakistani rule. The Bengali middle class leadership however gave their movement an intensely racial and linguistic character, with some very broad and vague promises of social amelioration thrown in, to encourage popular participation. Even so, their demands were revolutionary and threatened the unity of Pakistan. They could not be achieved within a constitutional framework, least of all under the blessing of an army dictatorship.

There is no doubt an armed struggle involving the toiling masses would be necessary to fulfil the demands as they stood. But such popular participation would again pre-suppose a popular social objective, not mere nationalistic or linguistic independence. The success of the resistance would depend ultimately on the success of social and economic changes at the grass roots. At the beginning of his book, Mr Chaudhuri

suggests that popular resistance would have sooner or later thrown off the army regime. But he never makes the sociological formulation that justifies our faith in the people. He often speaks of preparation for armed struggle by which he only means weapons and logistics. He does not seem to understand what a people's war essentially is. Mujib and his Awami League failed not because they had not procured arms but because they would not involve the toiling masses in a radical social revolution. The revolution failed from its limited objective. It was the failure of the class that led it.

The class had its own privileges to safeguard—the privileges it had enjoyed under the military regime and is still enjoying in independent Bangladesh. It could not involve the masses in its notionalistic rebellion for fear of being swept away in the tide of social revolution. And hence it needed foreign intervention to help it out when things went wrong, even

as it is now needing foreign aid to buttress its class rule. Mujib and his Awami League had never bargained for an armed struggle, they had it thrust upon them. And then they funk'd it, leaving the common people to the tender mercies of a rampaging army. And it was the common people—the poor and the lowly who bore the brunt of the scourge. They were seized with terror and could only pray to Allah for succour. Mr Chaudhuri tells the tale of their misery in full measure, and his account leaves no doubt that they were helpless victims of military oppression, like victims of communal riots. But Mr Chaudhuri does not pose the question whether Mujib and his Awami League, who exposed the people to this fate, are not to share a major part of the guilt.

Mr Chaudhuri seems all praise for India's active intervention which put an end to this misery. The Bengalis of East Pakistan had reason to be grateful to India for this help. But

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even without pronouncing on the legality of Indian intervention (the U. N. General Assembly resolution has done it), it can safely be said that the Indian action not only put an end to the oppressive regime in East Pakistan, but also put the cowardly and opportunist Bengali middle class in power. This put an end to any possible social revolution as well—for the time being. The ruling classes on both sides of the border may have played for high stakes, but they have played their game well.

The last of the two questions we started with relates to the motive and purpose of the military action. Why did the Pakistani authority turn such avenging fury against a whole population that formed a majority of its subjects? Can any government do this to its own people and yet hope to rule over it? It was not a mere case of putting down a minority community or political opposition consisting in its active elements only of a fraction of the total inhabitants in a country. It looked like being an

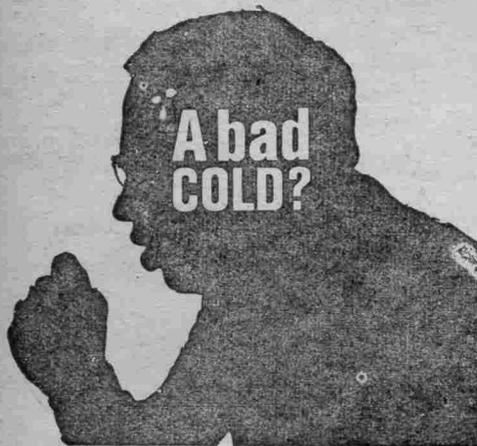
indiscriminate operation of a punitive nature directed against the Bengali population as a whole. Mr Chaudhuri considers this question from two aspects. First, as to the feasibility of such an operation over a prolonged period, he thinks that but for Indian intervention, there is no reason why the Pakistani junta would not have got away with it. But would not the authorities have risked a violent revolution if it continued with such oppression too long? Then, as to the motive of the army action, Mr Chaudhuri repeats the incredible story that Yahya had wanted to kill off or drive out the Bengalis in such numbers as to reduce them to a minority. But the simple arithmetic is that, even after the decimation of three million Bengalis and expulsion of another ten million across the border—these are Mr Chaudhuri's figures—there remained a clear sixty-two million Bengalis against fifty million West Pakistanis. And after the first fell swoop, even Mr Chaudhuri fails to report any carnage or expulsion on a scale re-

quired to make an impact on the population ratio. The army had certainly let up in its fury.

Mr Chaudhuri's explanation of the motive does not wash. The army's simple object was to cow down the secessionist rebels and force the Bengali Muslims to accept civil government on Yahya's terms. That Mujib was not killed but kept alive only shows that Yahya was ready to use him as a bargaining counter in future negotiations.

Mr Chaudhuri traces the origin of troubles in Indo-Pak relations to the Muslim League's two nation theory that led to partition, and thinks that the emergence of Bangladesh is a rebuttal of that theory and beginning of the end of those troubles. But doesn't Bangladesh rest on a three-nation theory, and with further break-up of Pakistan, as we are so keen to foresee, aren't we really moving towards a multi-nation theory? Yes, so far as Pakistan is concerned—and all the better so, perhaps!

G. H.



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Husain Retrospective

SANDIP SARKAR

THE Birla Academy arranged a retrospective exhibition of the works of H. F. Husain to celebrate its sixth anniversary on January 9. Mrinal Sen presided and all the culture-vultures of Calcutta descended to witness the opening and to praise Husain. The officers of the Academy gave long-winded speeches in very bad English. Husain said something in Urdu which nobody could hear. The management provided cokes while the richly dressed ladies and men wearing costly suits moved on to the gallery upstairs. One saw that most of the assembled crowd consisted mainly of businessmen or executives—people who hardly care to come to any exhibition—with a sprinkling of painters and a few critics. The Calcutta art-lovers—people who regularly visit exhibitions but cannot afford to buy any painting—looked a bit crestfallen and uneasy in this august company.

Critics have praised Husain's paintings for so long, newspapers and journals have advertised him in such glowing terms that the crowd tiptoed to the gallery hesitantly, like a newly wed bride walking to her bridal chamber. Two galleries on the 4th and 5th floors house sixty-eight paintings and drawings—works of Husain from 1947 to the present. Most of these paintings belong either to various museums or private collectors. There are some paintings for sale but the rate seems exorbitant—Rs 30,000 each. No Indian artist before Husain has dared to demand such a price for a painting in this city.

In spite of the shameless blaring of trumpets and clanging of cymbals Husain's exhibition is dull and disappointing. He has painted in various techniques, borrowed from Picasso, Matisse, the Fauvists and cubists and has mixed this concoction with Indian folk and Rajasthani styles. He has struggled to become the Indian Picasso, but has failed to discover his own self. Sometimes

perhaps a canvas or parts of a canvas show a spark of something, but as this is not repeated more frequently, it seems that these instances are just lucky accidents. Husain paints with one eye on the buyer. He wants to satisfy different tastes of the new rich and foreign tourists. He knows how to guile them with certain effects, how to cajole and coax them with a movement of the brush, with sweet motifs and elegant compositions. Exotic visions that escapists love to dream of, are done with a great flourish. The variety of subjects Husain has handled reminds one of the medley of episodes in a Hindi film.

Husain does not have anything to communicate—he does not rouse one to action, thought or contemplation. His paintings leave one cold. One remembers sadly the faces of serious young starving painters and neglected giants, and begins cursing this land.

This exhibition will remain open up to February 4.

A Prodigy That Grew

Suvaprasanna Bhattacharya, unlike most child prodigies, did not fade away prematurely as an artist. Assuredly a pat from Jawaharlal and a kiss from President Voroshilov has not spoiled him. Although born in a very devout Brahmin family he has managed to steer clear of worn-out customs and disgusting superstitions. Yet his disciplined life of austerity and simplicity perhaps speaks of his severe Brahmanical upbringing. Perhaps this is why he has found it easy to assimilate, in a very Indian fashion, certain Christian themes without much violence to himself or his intellect—the themes of suffering (e.g. No. 5 'Lament'), resurrection (No. 3), crucifixion (No. 8), 'Illusion' (No. 10) and 'Man and Space-1' (No. 12) are paintings

that haunt. His drawings are frightening.

It is intriguing to know that Suvaprasanna was born in 1947 and hence he can be taken as a post-independence product. He grew up in a somewhat different intellectual climate with values, expectations and frustrations different from those of the previous generation of artists. Pre-independence national myths of a golden past and a prosperous future proved mere inventions of fertile imagination. It was possibly a note of protest in Suvaprasanna's paintings that attracted Mrinal Sen's notice and forced Sen to use a powerful painting by Suvaprasanna as a frozen shot in *Calcutta 71*.

The recent exhibition at the Birla Academy has confirmed once more the estimation of Suvaprasanna as a very promising artist. There is a

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touch of surrealism in his paintings and drawings. He depicts people who have had their souls stolen, who have been molested and dishonoured. At times their hopelessness and lack of faith gives one an idea of the inner loneliness of the artist. One only hopes that he will get over this morbid mental state.

Talukdar's Sculpture

The USIS auditorium exhibited twelve sculpture pieces by Manik Talukdar from January 12 to 18. Talukdar is a brilliant sculptor who possibly does not want to be involved in politics. Yet the question remains whether an artist should be allowed to close his eyes to immediate issues and remain ignorant of what is involved. Talukdar no doubt knows about the Vietnam war, the My Lai massacre and the previous and recent bombings carried out by the Americans. Even the recent halting of bombings does not atone for the previous Americans atrocities.

I am ready to believe that Talukdar has not thought of these things. I know first hand the plight of artists in this city. An artist has to work in some dreary job to make a living and then buy materials for his art. The sculptor's materials are even more expensive than the painter's. Then there is hardly any market for selling a work of art in Calcutta. In such a situation if someone offers a hall free of charge, it is very difficult for an artist to refuse. Moreover, there might be friendly promises of finding out probable buyers for his works. The bait is hard to resist. Even then the artist should avoid cultural organisations belonging to super-Powers.

After passing from the Indian College of Art, Talukdar, along with other young artists, found the Canvas Art Circle. Although very young (born 1944) he has participated in various group shows in Calcutta and other Indian cities. In 1971 he held a one-man show in the Birla Academy. He has received a scholarship to continue post-diploma studies in sculpture in Santiniketan.

In the USIS exhibition there were twelve exhibits done in plastic, aluminium, wood and bronze. From the very conception of an idea through to the stage of design and execution Talukdar shows a mastery rare for his age. There is so much grace and joy in his work that it immediately disarms the viewer. He has experimented with mass and form. There is a tactile quality, a certain sensitivity of handling. Personally I like his work in wood and bronze. No. 7, No. 8 (Fold in the wood) and No. 9 (vertical wood) have depth of feeling. No. 10 (Bird in bronze) is very subtle. No. 11 (Torso in bronze) and No. 12 (Head in bronze), although brilliant in quality, strongly remind one of similar works by Sarbari Raychoudhury.

As Talukdar is a very mature artist, one might pertinently ask why he is so markedly international in his approach, and why there is nothing in his works to indicate awareness of Indian sculptural tradition?

All In A Night's Work

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

In *What's Up Doc?* Peter Bogdanovich has tried his hand at a crazy comedy blending the elements of slapstick of the silent days, the verbal wit of the Marx Brothers' films and the spoof on cinema and espionage thrillers. The past influences are all there, but in most cases the director has been successful in assimilating these into an original style. The centre of the story is a San Francisco hotel and there is an odd assortment of queer characters, a scholar in musicology with his nagging class-conscious fiancée, an old lady with a bagful of jewels, an international crook with stolen documents and a secret service man who is on his trail. And there is Barbara Streisand, a fugitive from the rigours of her school and she has a crush on the young musicologist. The fun develops out of a

mix-up of overnight bags, everyone picking up the wrong ones. The musicologist has got the lady's jewels, the secret papers go to the weeping lady and the jewel-thieves stare agape at the heap of rocks (the property of the musicologist) which the hard labours of a long night have earned for them. There are moments of gentle hilarity with rib-cracking repartees in the sequences when Miss Streisand weaves the web of her romance around the reluctant musicologist and the screen explodes with the spirit of boisterous comedy in the custard-pie episodes and the climactic chase across the streets of San Francisco (particularly funny is the dexterously-handled scene when one car bumps into a Chinese procession and carries off the head of the paper-dragon and the camera follows it in big close-ups) leading up to the breezy scene in the court room when all the characters are hauled up before a dyspeptic judge. Ryan O'Neal's performance as the absent-minded scholar is rather routine, but this is more than made up by Miss Streisand's portrayal as the delinquent teenager with an impish charm, who is at home in every situation, from hanging on the hotel balustrade to goading an unwilling lover into a passionate kiss.

Letters

A Just Struggle

The agitation over the Mulki issue is gradually assuming the form of a great struggle against the Government. As a consequence of the bankrupt economic and political policies of the Government of India, the people are turning to the path of revolts with growing awareness. Popular resentment might have led to, in the initial stage, spontaneous outbursts and struggles of a sectional nature as a result of regional imbalances and unemployment. But in the process it is taking on a more serious character of anti-government

struggle. The semi-fascist government of Mrs Indira Gandhi is despatching the CRP and military to the Telugu land in order to turn it into a military camp. It is seeking to safeguard the "integrity" of the State by turning the land into a graveyard. Hundreds have been indiscriminately slaughtered and thousands wounded just in order to keep the two regions of the Telugu land in an artificially forced union, against the wishes of the people. And at the same time regional ill-will is deliberately being whipped up. The ruling classes are bent upon beating down the popular upsurge in order to ensure its own power and to impose by force the Five Point Formula.

The Revolutionarily Writers Association appreciate the fighting spirit of the people who are carrying on the struggle against the barbaric acts of the Government in conditions of terror. It appeals to the people to thwart the selfish designs of wicked political leaders and turn the present movement to the path of protracted armed struggle in order to achieve socialism.

Revolutionary Writers Association
Emergency Executive Committee,
Hyderabad

Periyar And Kamaraj

I read carefully the letter entitled 'Periyar and Kamaraj' (December 30, 1972), by a correspondent from Tamil Nadu in reply to an earlier letter. He forgets that after having picked up the Arya-Dravida question from the researches of scholars, the Periyar has used this weapon to tell the South Indians to rise and shake off the subjugation by the North. In that process, if the Periyar felt that this subjugation could not be wiped out simply by transfer of power by the British to the Indian masters (who mostly belonged to the north). He was perfectly right in his demand for a separate homeland for south Indians. Unification of nationalities in a country demands equality. Lenin

gave full guarantee to all the nationalities of the USSR. It is a fact that the present Union Government has usurped all powers and has reduced all the nationalities (Kashmiris, Nagas, Mizos, Assamese, Bengalis, Tamils, Keralans, Punjabis etc.) to nonentities. It is a pity that the communist movement in the country never raised the question of nationalities and hence could not make use of this powerful weapon to capture power. Recently when Maulana Bhashani raised the question of unification of the Bengali nationality, which has been artificially divided by the irony of history, the revisionists of West Bengal could not give a correct reply and evaded the whole issue.

It is the Brahmins of the South who had all along acted and still continue to act as the agents of the northern subjugators. In the name of caste hierarchy they usurped power and pelf and made the life of non-Brahmins completely subhuman. The role of the Justice Party in the early decades of this century and later that of the DK/DMK was directed towards this phenomenon. Strangely enough, the correspondent does not speak even a single word in condemnation of the inhuman acts of Brahmin landlords and now capitalists. Can any movement start and grow in vacuum? Why is the gentleman silent about that aspect?

I hold no brief for the Periyar. I simply say that his early role was progressive and there would have been tremendous change if the communists had utilized that situation. Basically a non-Marxist the Periyar could not be expected to take the Tamil masses to the goal of socialism, though he had the potentiality. Similar was the role of the DMK leadership. When they attained the so-called seat of power in Madras, they started amassing wealth. In that respect, no distinction can be made between the Congress leadership there and the DMK leadership. And yet we can clearly see the undercurrent of delight at the imminent fall of the DMK Government in the

writings and statements of the Tamil Brahmins.

The correspondent characterises the Periyar as one having a "fundamentally religious approach". This is distortion of facts. When he struck the images of Ram in Salem in 1971 with a chappal, he did it with the idea of attacking religion which was still the weapon of the Brahmin priests in the South. He feels, although erroneously, that as long as people believe in gods and goddesses the Brahmins, the agents of the subjugators, can stage a comeback.

The correspondent himself contradicts his earlier statement (where he claimed that tailors, barbers etc. belonging to the DMK fold, flourished under DMK rule), when he says that the Periyar's movement really helped the high-caste Hindus to enrich themselves. Karunanidhi, son of a barber, and the like cannot be called high-caste Hindus by any stretch of imagination. It is true that the DK/DMK movement has mostly helped those who are placed higher than the Harijans in the caste hierarchy. But in that respect their role cannot be distinguished from that of the Congress governments there. Harijans remain where they were. This is one of the instances where we see no relevance of the Periyar. But at the same time one fact cannot be brushed aside. It is the impact of his movement which forced the Brahmins in Tamil Nadu to be on the defensive and, once relegated to that position, some of them have now started questioning the validity of the caste system. They have even gone to the extent of shedding crocodile tears for the Harijans. No Brahmin leader had ever in history sympathised with lower castes. Those who dared to do so were excommunicated and thus ceased to be Brahmins.

There are some other passages which the correspondent now contradicts in his letter. At places he has used intemperate language (cf. "non-Brahmin fools"—*Frontier* dated November 27, 1972, page 8). The

question of Brahmins and non-Brahmins seems to be the uppermost in his mind. He forgets that the awakened readers of *Frontier* are not interested in such controversies.

SANGH SEN SINGH
New Delhi

The Detenus

A report was published in *Basumati* on January 6 regarding a conspiracy to create a disturbance inside Presidency Jail, Calcutta. No contradiction from the jail authorities or the State Government has yet appeared in the Press.

Anybody having any knowledge of the conditions inside the jails will surely agree that the prisoners, specially prisoners having no anti-social background, cannot live there for more than two weeks without losing their mental equilibrium.

Ordinary criminals are kept (specially in the Darriah Ward of Presidency Jail) with Naxalites having a fair amount of education. When the Naxalites are sick they get very little medical attendance. When seriously ill they are not transferred to any hospital outside but are treated in the jail hospital which is worse than a veterinary hospital.

No one can blame the undertrial Naxalite prisoners, whose trial has been unnecessarily delayed, if their tempers are frayed.

R. P. SINHA
Calcutta

Salt Of The Earth

The Bidhan Nagar farce was not without its points of fun. For most Congressmen it was a welcome transition from the Salt Lake to the Eden Stadium. The scramble for tickets must have been much less strenuous than the Salt Lake scramble for coffee, food, seats and such local attractions as were. The realistic observer would have looked for and received "entertainment".

The President of this great Party

made some penetrating (and most revealing) observations on his party's view of "class struggle". They do not have any rancour or hate (against the exploiting classes). When "social tension" becomes acute they "will not be found at the side of the richer classes". They believe in non-violence (of the oppressed). Indeed, it is painfully embarrassing for the Party to use such terms as "struggle", "exploitation" etc—alien words flowing from "imported" ideas.

There seems to be some dramatic justice in the evolution and rise of the "Swadeshi" radical—the unique product of unreason and backwardness combining all the guile and viciousness of tribal politics, and its pitting against the professional modern political radical. The powerful prototype of this breed made the fiercest oratory of this session. He identified himself totally with his mass—illiterate, upcountry, "weaker class", and castigated (what amounted to) the entire society. Any social refinement—an education, a job—any positive feature of this society was a fruit of injustice illegitimately obtained. We may recall that this radical does not believe in nationalisation and similar measures which are fancies of the elite with imported ideas. It is perhaps ridiculous to look for his logic. Suffice it to say he is a rebel and that is all that counts in these radical days.

D. P. Dhar, hailed in many quarters for his intellectual prowess, champion of many a vodka-caviare trail, gave fine proof of his mettle in his approach to the ticklish food problem. Even the U.S. has to subsidise agriculture. For our poor society the burden is heavy. Indeed, the subsidies of the U.S administration in the interest of the capitalist kulak in a condition of super-production with its PL-480 politics and else and that of the GOI with its ties with rural interests at every level in an agricultural economy, its bureaucratic costly plus pricing policy and corrupt machinery are to be equated from a purely fiscal angle.

The BBC reported that the Con-

gress had passed a resolution condemning the recent American bombings as "the most horrible tragedy in recorded human history". The press did not highlight this. One wonders whether this was collaboration, contempt or collusion (with the CIA and such).

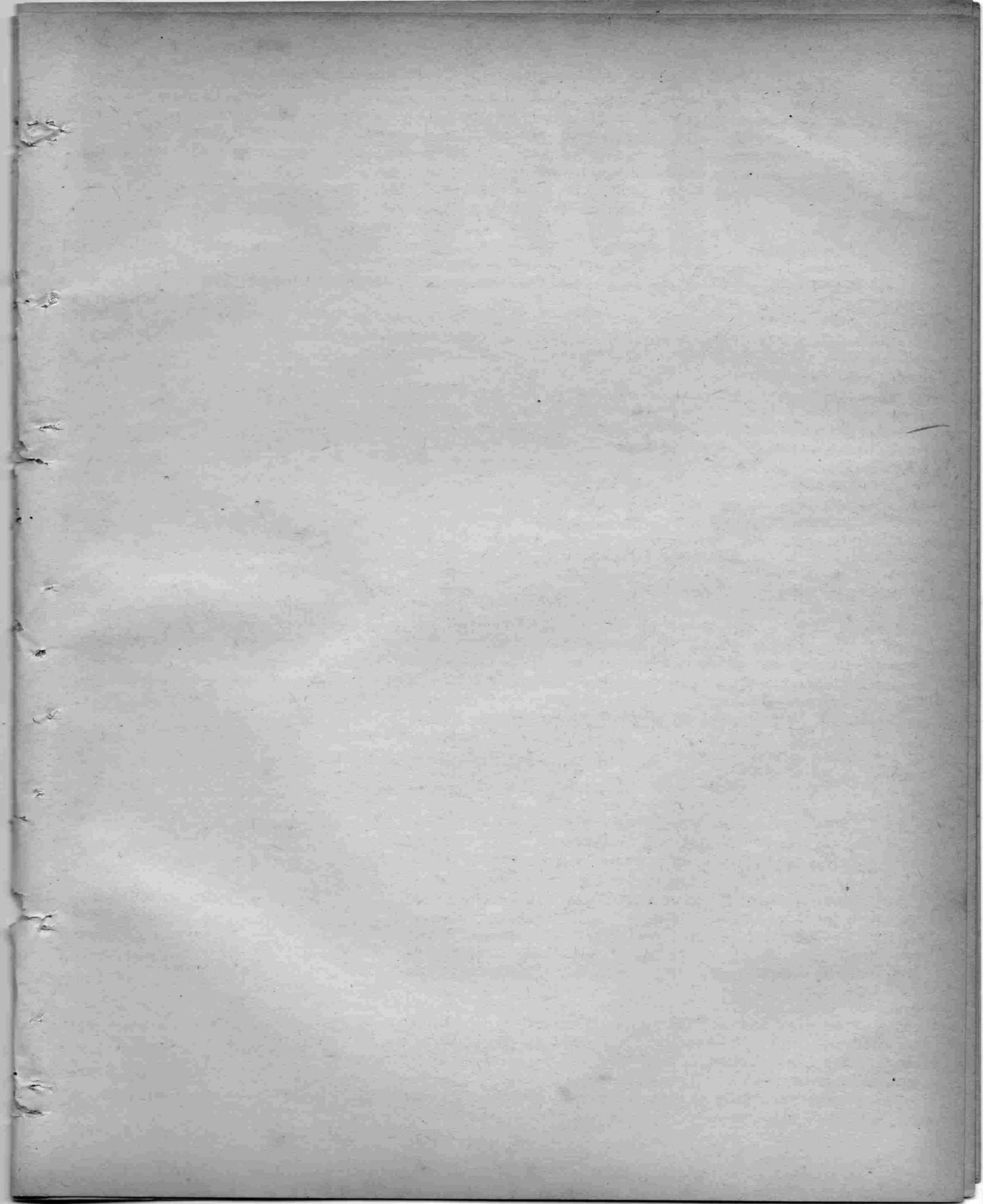
T. R. RAMALINGAM
Calcutta

In A Punjab Jail

During the Bangladesh crisis, I happened to criticise the government's policy regarding East Pakistan. A beautiful cock-and-bull story was concocted, branding me a Naxalite leader responsible for several murders in the district. I was gracefully put into the jail under the Internal Security Act and my jail term of one year was approved by the Advisory Board. What I saw there in the jail was of course not surprising but very painful. Prisoners and undertrials were gagged with wooden pegs and beaten mercilessly by an Assistant Superintendent of jail. Many were made to starve till they bowed down before the official. All kinds of drugs including wine and opium were smuggled into the jail by this officer and sold to the addicted prisoners. It was a gruesome picture of a primitive state of affairs in the "greatest democracy in the world". I was released after about eight months. I reported the matter to the higher authorities and consequently an enquiry was conducted by an Assistant Inspector General of Prisons, Punjab, against the said officer. But no action has yet been taken.

VED PARKASH GUPTA
Bhatinda (Punjab)

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