

frontier

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Editor : Samar Sen

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BY SAMAR SEN FROM 61, MOTT LANE,
CALCUTTA-13
TELEPHONE: 243202

BUSINESS AS USUAL

STRANGE are the ways of great powers. When Mr Nixon announced the blockade of Haiphong and other North Vietnamese ports, it was interpreted as a challenge to Russia, the principal supplier by sea of war materiel to the "international outlaws." Russia, whose activities were prominent and prompt during the East Pakistan crisis, was expected to try to break the blockade, cancel or postpone the Nixon visit or both. Knowledgeable quarters, though uneasy, tended to rule out a head-on confrontation—the USA after all is not Czechoslovakia. Besides, there is sense in not charging a mad bull, particularly when, with a great effort, in collaboration with China for a limited purpose, overland supplies could be organised to defeat the purpose of the blockade.

What, however, many people fail to understand is why the Kremlin is so keen on the Nixon visit. Dr Kissinger thinks that Vietnam should not stand in the way of Russo-American co-operation "in the interests of world peace." Mr Nixon too said many nice things about the prospects of an understanding with the great Russians when he announced the mining. But is world peace being served by the Moscow summit while a murderous war is being waged by the Americans in Vietnam? Of course, the Russians have been dreaming of Europe as a continent of peace. But there has been no threat whatsoever to peace in Europe in the recent past—leave out Prague, it was a small matter. A divided Germany poses no great danger. Bonn has now ratified the Eastern treaties. As a result of the Moscow summit there is likely to be an agreement on missiles—an accord to limit the quantity, but not curb the quality, of these weapons—so that the obscene competition may enter another stage of refinement. There may also be an agreement on economic and technological exchanges. Cultural, too. But all these things could wait. Why are the Russians so eager to accommodate the Americans, who will be encouraged by the Russian climb-down to take even more desperate steps in future? Perhaps the Russians want to be relieved of so-called European tensions to be able to strengthen even further their 'defences' along the frontiers with China, where their troop strength was raised from 30 to 40 divisions last year, and to strive for a bigger presence in South and South-East Asia.

Europe breathes peace. It is the countryside of the world that is being

tormented. The way one Big Power puts up with the other, the tormentor, is sickening. But not all people are sickened. Imagine the outcry that would have overwhelmed Peking had Kissinger gone there just before, and Nixon, after the blockade. It would have been damned difficult even for this paper to offer some rationalisation. But such an outcry against Russia is not audible at the moment. We have got used to the ways of the Big Two.

Waiting For Rains

Elections can be won by a judicious mixture of guns and gimmicks, but for running a government a different kind of skill is required. The new Congress Government of West Bengal is yet to learn this elementary truth. Had it not been so the Chief Minister, Mr Ray, would not have tried such cheap and childish stunts as to hold midnight cabinet meetings in the air-conditioned comfort of his chamber in the Secretariat to telephone to the district authorities his instructions regarding how to combat the drought. The trouble he took was a piece of clumsy show-off, for the instructions had been conveyed to the district magistrates hours ago over the wireless. Long before they were dragged out of their beds by the telephone-calls from the Chief Minister, they had perhaps seen and filed the instructions, for they could do little else. Their predicament is best explained by the official who told a group of drought-stricken people clamouring for relief that he did not know how to mitigate their distress; he was a Brahmin and all he could do was to pray to God for rains.

The Government in Calcutta, of course, holds a different view. It has started to regale the afflicted with schemes and statistics, with figures of tubewells that will soon dot the countryside. Perhaps it believes that in its magic regime this wisdom of a well-watered future can moisten parched throats and irrigate scorched

fields. A few weeks ago the Government had peremptorily dismissed all reports of drought as exaggerations by the enemies of the regime. Unable to wish the calamity away, the Government is now helping the people to dream it away. Lest it be charged with only building for the future, it has made the trite promise that the problem will be tackled on a war footing. What this hackneyed phrase means is clear to none, not even to those who mouth it on every occasion. Perhaps the Ministry thinks that the pledge has already been fulfilled as army assistance has been sought in organising relief. With the Emergency in force, the army helping the civil administration, and the Prime Minister making a helicopter trip over the affected districts, who can deny that a war on drought is being really waged!

The drought in West Bengal or, for that matter, in the whole of north India has shown how hollow is the Government's claim that the country has attained self-sufficiency in food. Agriculture still remains a gamble in rains, and the so-called green revolution is a chance product of a fortuitous run of timely and good rains for four consecutive years. The drought has already taken a toll of nearly 300 lives, the majority of them in the three States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal; but its real ravage probably remains stored for the future. The Prime Minister has announced that a Central team will visit West Bengal to study the State's need for relief assistance; it may be assumed that similar study teams will visit the other affected States also. This will take weeks, and, in the mean time, merciful rains will come. This has also been the policy of the West Bengal Government—to go on talking of relief till it is time for nature to relent. The end result of the sweatless labour in the Secretariat will be the addition of a few more grandiose schemes to the already formidable list of promises made by the Government which no one takes seriously.

Diplomatic Summer

Mrs Golda Meir's recent visit to Rumania marks the beginning of Israel's diplomatic summer. Thanks to the gullibility of the Egyptian leadership, Russian policy of exploiting the Middle East crisis to further extend its influence in the region and America's unwavering support for the Zionist cause, the Israelis have been able to slowly come out of the diplomatic quarantine imposed on them—though never very effectively—by the Arabs. Rumania is known for its determination to set its own course and its President for its ever willingness to play the role of diplomatic troubleshooter. But did not the Russians do some arm twisting when they thought that things were going a bit too far? Naturally one would find it difficult to believe that an East European country could entertain the Prime Minister of Israel without the tacit approval of the Kremlin. Both Bucharest and Moscow will anticipate that the Meir visit would set off protests in the Arab capitals but they know that they can get away with anything. Everybody has come to accept that in the short run there is little prospect of any change in the Middle East situation—the Israelis are as determined as at any time since the Six Day War to retain the annexed territories and Sadat knows that with his present military preparedness it would be a great folly to go to war. Sadat has a face to keep. That explains the undertone of belligerency in his speeches. It is not only the army which is getting impatient over the long preparation for a war which is not coming. Those who had talked privately with Sadat would not say that the leadership was in a hurry to regain the lost land. It is said to be concentrating on the long-term objective of improving economic, military and diplomatic strength. But these may be the areas where the Arabs are losing. The Russian reluctance to arm the Arabs to the extent that would establish a balance of power in the region can be explained by its desire to avoid a

situation where it would have to choose between abandoning its allies and confronting the Americans. There are no signs of economic recovery and it can be well imagined what would happen without the generous grants from the rich Arab patrons. Perhaps it is on the diplomatic front where the setback has been most severe. Short of restoring

diplomatic relations, the Kremlin has accepted a level of contact with Israel. When Moscow has gone that far how other East European countries can still maintain their wry face toward Tel Aviv? They are now trying to appear pleasing. All this makes the task of the Palestinians more difficult, but we know they did anticipate such a situation.

Rhodesia : Time To Report

The Pearce-Commission Report on the Anglo-Rhodesian settlement is just out. But even before the verdict was made public, hectic shadow-boxing was on among the groups concerned to press home their points. A five-member team of the Centre Party, one of the opposition in the Rhodesian Parliament, had scurried to London to lobby for the settlement. Some members of the African National Congress are in the city to seek a constitutional conference and scuttle the settlement. Meanwhile, the Rhodesian Prime Minister, Mr Smith, has made known his mind on the issue. He has stated categorically that his government hopes for an endorsement of the settlement terms by the Commission. But in case the verdict went awry for Pretoria he has had a contingency plan ready, though he has not elaborated upon it.

But why this eagerness on the part of the racists for the settlement? Does this indicate their sudden metamorphosis, as is being claimed by them? Or is there any hidden mechanism in it that would ensure their rule under a benevolent cloak? On paper the Smith-Health settlement was gracious enough. It provided for a majority rule for the black Africans. But it laid down a dubious process to achieve that heaven. And the timing that it had recommended was wholly imponderable under a discriminating and unscrupulous regime. The proposed agreement contained nothing to end the racial discrimination at all. All it did is to require the creation of a commission to examine it, with particular reference to the

Land Tenure Act. Naturally the black Africans rejected such a settlement overwhelmingly and they aired their disapproval, often under duress, when the Pearce Commission visited Rhodesia to test the African response regarding the settlement.

It remains to be seen how the Pearce Commission has got on with the job. Most probably it will avoid any categorical answer and hedge the verdict with suitable verbiage to protect the interest of Great Britain and possibly, of the chairman. But that would not ease the situation. A handful of racists and their gunmen have ruled for years a vast majority of the black Africans. Sanctions have been imposed. But the thing was too porous. Besides, its purpose was to make the intransigents behave rather than give back the blacks their home and freedom.

The men in Whitehall might have been tempted to carry through the proposed settlement as that would maintain the stewardship over Rhodesia. But now that the Commission has negated it, the Heath regime may find it difficult to ignore the verdict. It may choose to continue with the present policy or may even tighten up the noose around Pretoria a bit. But that is unlikely to frighten the racists as they have shown enough resilience in the past to survive under pressure and can do it again in the future. Mr Smith has little to lose in the whole game. If Pearce had said 'yes', the sanctions would have gone and his regime would have been able to bask under the sunshine of unhindered

trade and commerce with the mother country. As things are, he can still strengthen his position—and his party's—by showing his critics that his well-intentioned proposals have been flung aside by African imprudence and British timidity. Such a situation, however, will put the ANC in tenterhooks. If it fails in its mission to ensure majority rule through constitutional means, its credibility as representative of African interests will be seriously undermined and it will encourage the more radical elements. All in all, Rhodesia is in for a difficult period.

Serving The Janata

There is nothing wrong in the plan of Indian Airlines which now seeks to introduce a Janata Air Service. The fare in the proposed service will be around the first class train fare in place of the present air-conditioned train fare. The plan is to attract a larger section of the people to IA. IA refers particularly to a section of employees in private companies and Government who are entitled to first class train fare during their holidays.

So this is the section of people whom the Government considers to be the Janata. This should solve the mystery of the slogan 'Garibi Hatao'. When Mrs Gandhi says that poverty must be removed, she must be meaning that poverty must be removed from among these people. Now, every recent Government policy falls in line. Take any instance. The licensing or delicensing policy for example.

Nehru evolved the licensing system, a noble son of Gandhism that he was, to prevent investment in luxury goods. But licences were issued to produce cars, domestic airconditioners, refrigerators and chocolates. There was no anomaly. These were mass consumption goods, if one knows who constitute the mass.

Since then cosmetics, confectionary, plastic durables, terylene and nylon, rubber foam, IV sets, tape recorders,

radiograms, stereo, steel furniture, laminates, cooking ranges, washing machines, canned food, chewing gum, ad infinitum flooded the market—all made in India. The small scale was free from industrial licensing. It produced these essential janata goods, with subsidies from the Government. Then came the delicensing of industries up to Rs 25 lakhs. Then came the delicensing of industries up to Rs 1 crore.

The Young Turks are aghast that drug firms now free from licences should produce lipstick, nail polish, beauty creams, luxury talcs, hair shampoos, face creams, hair dyes and all the rest of it. They question the propriety of the public sector going in for small cars, TV sets, synthetic fibre and cameras. What sort of socialist seventies are these, they ask their conscience. Neither do they understand the rationale of the STC selling and buying luxury cars, of the Government supermarkets selling luxury goods, of AIR commercial broadcasting encouraging consumption of luxury goods, of the State Bank, IFC, IDB, LIC, ICICI giving credit to private sectors which produce luxury goods.

Let the Young Turks fight it out themselves. There are other people however who have been taken in by Mrs Gandhi who wants to jump from feudalism to socialism in her own inimitable way, through rhetoric. Her successes, which however are not too many, encourage them to think that her failures are due to circumstances and not to her intentions. They condone her loss of grip over the landed gentry, over the industrial producers, who go against the acclaimed policy of the Government. But they might as well ponder over the mystery why Mrs Gandhi does not lose grip where the loss would lead to disastrous consequences for the ruling class—in the recent election all over India in general and in the rout of Naxalites and the CPM in West Bengal in particular. It may as well be possible that she is losing the grip where she wishes or can afford to lose it.

View from Delhi

End Of A Cycle ?

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

A delayed summit has greater chances of becoming a tripartite one and that is what the Soviet Big Brother wants. The flurry of diplomatic activity in Moscow and Dacca might well lead to recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan, which is the only way the prisoners of war issue can be resolved. But Mr Swaran Singh overreached himself at his meeting with Opposition group leaders last week and when the word got round that the External Affairs Minister thinks Pakistan would recognise Bangladesh before the summit, he was in a quandary. In any case it was not proper on his part to have speculated about the Pakistani recognition of Bangladesh and having done it, to try to put the Opposition leaders who briefed the Press to embarrassment. India has nothing to lose except Soviet goodwill by not negotiating with Pakistan but Soviet diplomacy would ensure that Pakistan gets the best out of any negotiations, even at the risk of an anti-Soviet wave in Bangladesh.

With the summit far, far away, things have not changed a wee bit in New Delhi. The marathon Parliament session will end next week amidst signs of discontent among the masses. The unusual cycles of five successively good monsoons (after two drought years) is about to end. There is widespread drought in the country reminding one of the tensions on the eve of the 1967 elections. Mrs Gandhi's ability at tension-management would be put to a severe test.

* * *

The general public support to the Willingdon Nursing Home staff over the incident involving an MP is a pointer. The staff union is controlled by a Congress MP but when another Congress MP was allegedly

roughed up by the staff, the overwhelming feeling among the working people in New Delhi was that all VIPs deserved to be roughed up. There is no end to the stories of VIP misbehaviour in public hospitals. A local newspaper reported that a certain MP used to come to the hospital drunk every night and insisted on staying in the female ward where his wife was an inmate. Another VIP insisted on keeping his dog with him in the hospital room. There was another instance of two drunken sons of a Central Minister misbehaving with a lady doctor. Well, even Mrs Gandhi could not support the behaviour of the Congress MP in the Willingdon Nursing Home incident. But then it was a clear case of failure of her leadership. The MP instead of taking it up with the Health Minister or the Speaker, chose to raise it in the House and even the Communists emerged in the role of the protectors of parliamentary privilege where none was involved. If Mrs Gandhi thought the MP's conduct was deplorable, and blamed the party whips for their failure in the situation, one would be justified in pointing to the failure of the House leader herself. She was present when the issue was raised and her partymen almost sought an adjournment motion without knowing the implications of such a motion.

The thin attendance in the House and breakdown of the House often for want of quorum underlined one fact: the Congress party might have a stable majority but the decline of Parliament has begun. Even the ruling party does not take Parliament seriously. The leader does not take the Congress Parliamentary Party seriously either. She has stopped attending its meetings and the show is left to be run by the sycophantic aides. The only occasion she attend-

ed one in recent weeks was on May 17 because she had called the meeting herself to reprimand the MP involved in the Willingdon Nursing Home incident.

Election Posters

There was a rare show of unity by the Opposition on the election posters scandal but when the Speaker disallowed an adjournment motion, it gave ir tamely, The Swatantra Party spokesman, Mr P. K. Deo, said he would not press for an adjournment motion but move a no confidence motion instead. But obviously other Opposition groups were not in favour of censuring the Government on the issue and preferred, initially, to leave the matter at that. Without as much as an inquiry into the scandal, Mrs Gandhi chose to tell her Calcutta audience that the photostat of the document in question was a fake one and that it was the handiwork of the CPI(M).

Mrs Gandhi has insulated her party from all external challenges but will find it hard to control the diverse elements. Serious differences are reported in the Cabinet. Mr C. Subramaniam talks of a fifth plan without aid while Mr Y. B. Chavan is not so optimistic about it. Mr Mohan Kumaramangalam has produced a note which should earn him the gratitude of the FICCI because it holds a brief for the monopoly houses and Mr C. Subramaniam is one of the articulate critics of the note. No one, not even the Prime Minister, is really averse to getting large-scale U.S. aid and it would not be long before normal relations with Washington are restored. The Congress sub-committee on land reforms is all for a higher ceiling limit for privately irrigated land and the kulaks have thus won their point.

In sum, Mrs Gandhi seems to have realised that her radical slogans have been taken too seriously by some sections of her party and it was time to put an end to the nonsense and return to her own realities. "Destructive radicalism" is the phrase popularised by the Prime Minister and being bandied about in the Central Hall to describe the activities of the politi-

cal hippies called the Young Turks. The Congress does not have to bother about winning elections for four or five years and all is well for the moment. The bill for diffusion of newspaper ownership can be quietly shelved (for if enforced it would hand over a big Calcutta daily and a big Bombay group to the CPI(M) and

some of the Delhi papers to the Jana Sangh). The ten-page rule is punishment enough for the Big Business press which did not back the ruling party at the 1971 elections. The probation period is now over and newspaper economics will be restored to the old position.

May 22, 1972

Kerala

The Unflappable Administration

RAMJI

NOTHING on earth can shake the complacency and equanimity of the CPI-led united front regime in Kerala. Its effrontery, supported by the big press, has made it the most unflappable government ever. But, in spite of all soft-soaping and facading operations by the press and the administration, damaging facts keep popping up: i.e. damaging to those who have self-respect. The parties in power seem to have bartered this virtue for the fishes and loaves of office.

The most recent exploit of the allegedly 'clean' government is the treatment of the editor of a Malayalam periodical, *Nawab*. He had been missing for quite a few days. His brother filed a complaint before the magistrate alleging that he had been abducted by the police. A Marxist leader, Mr Azhikodan Raghavan, said in a press conference that the editor was brought to his house at dead of night by a police officer, who at first posed as his lawyer but then admitted that he was a police officer. The editor, who was in the last stages of physical exhaustion, requested Mr Raghavan to hand over to the police officer the original of a letter, a photostat copy of which he had published in his periodical. The background to this is interesting and has ominous overtones. The editor published the photostat of a letter allegedly written by the P.A. to the

Congress Home Minister, Mr Karunakaran, to the owner of a rubber estate and carrying hints of an 'unusual deal'. The Home Minister vehemently dubbed the letter a forgery. The normal and legitimate procedure for him would have been to prosecute the editor before a court or appoint a judicial tribunal to go into the allegation. But, no. In fascist style he had him arrested. He was kept in police custody for 24 hours and released. After a day he was again missing. Finally he was released on bail on May 12. Father Vadakhan has demanded an inquiry into this incident after visiting the released editor in a hospital.

One of the most effective advertisement blurbs of the CPI-led Ministry here has been the quickness and effectiveness with which it has implemented agrarian reforms in the State. The claim is that Kerala is the only State to implement such reforms fully without fear or favour, and that the credit goes to the CPI-led mini-front. But a few days ago the Chief Minister had to confess that nothing had been done during the past two and a quarter years to secure excess lands with the landlords and distribute these to the landless tillers. This confession was wrung from him when he found that the peasants and landless tillers were determined to grab excess land by force. Under the auspices of the

Marxists, the KTP and the KSP a huge rally of agricultural workers and landless tillers was staged at Cochin on May 7. An action council under Father Vadakan has announced that, on account of the Government's failure to secure excess land from the landlords, direct action will be started from May 25, the peasants and the agricultural landless would capture excess land and hand it over to the government for distribution to the landless tillers. Against this, the Chief Minister was compelled to admit that no excess land had been taken over and he has issued an appeal to the landlords to give up such land at once; otherwise the consequences would be serious. At the same time he has warned the Action Council that the government would not tolerate any disruption of law and order and that the land grab move would be put down by force. As an alternative he has suggested that they should wait for the formation of popular committees by the government, which would be vested with statutory authority to assess and secure excess land from the landlords.

The record of the moves of the CPI vis-a-vis the Agrarian Reforms Bill pioneered and piloted by the government under E.M.S. provides sufficient material to conclude that the proposed 'popular committees' would be another hollow facade behind which the landlords would be allowed to get away with their excess land. The government has already put across a colossal hoax on the people. During the first Achutha Menon Ministry big and expensive festivals were staged during which allegedly, thousands of title deeds were distributed to the landlords by the CPI Revenue Minister, K. T. Jacob. These fabulously expensive festivals have turned out to be a costly hoax.

So far the government has been able to account for only 26 acres of excess land with the landlords in the entire State! So much for its records and its record of activity, which is nil. And even when, as in Marxist strongholds, the landless forcibly oc-

cupied excess land the CPI government used the police and the instrument of law against these 'encroachers'. All along the government has been giving time and facilities to the landlords to effect benami and other transfers and take advantage of the loopholes in the bill to cling on to their excess land. The government, after two years, has now suddenly realised, in the face of an impending mass struggle, that there are loopholes in the Agrarian Reforms Act. Further, the government did nothing to get this Act included in the 9th Schedule of the Constitution.

The background to the Agrarian Reforms Act is significant. During the final stages of discussion of the bill piloted by the E.M.S. Ministry, the CPI was busy doing underground work to topple the Ministry. Though they were with the opposition clandestinely, to water down the clauses of the bill, the CPI feared popular anger and did not come out openly with their Operation Sabotage. After the bill was passed the operation was staged, E.M.S. thrown out and the CPI-led ministry came to power. Months passed and the bill remained with the President awaiting his assent and the government did nothing to hasten it. The peasants and other landless elements staged a big demonstration against this apathy and the government was compelled to prod the Centre. The Bill then received President's assent. But after that, barring the big hoax of the *melas* for distributing *pattas* (title deeds), nothing was done but the impression was advertised that the Ministry led the rest of the country in implementing land reforms. The most important provisions of the Agrarian Reforms Act were allowed to lie moribund by the so-called radical pro-people government. The provisions relating to excess of land with the landlords were completely coldstored. Now when the government has realised that it will have to face a determined mass movement, it has decided to come out with a typical red herring; 'popular committees' under government auspices.

Jamini Roy

ASOK MITRA

I can see him still in K. C. Roy's Studio at British Indian Street in 1936 as he stood with his back to the door, scanning his paintings hung on the far wall in the empty hall, a patch of the evening sun lazily hugging his ankles, then turn round with the silent, almost instant flick of an Alsatian as I entered. He was erect in the manner of a potter, like a bowstring up to the massive thorax, but stooping slightly forward at the shoulders and head, his spine making a lithe, sensuous Santalini curve. He wore glasses but, despite the deliberately put-on mild Bengali look, his eyes bored like gimlets, like Picasso's. Tagore whom I had seen before and Nehru whom I saw later had like eyes but their far-away look also spared. But Jamini Roy's eyes were unsparing, a little unnerving, which dipped only after they had sized you up. They made you feel naked for a moment, but only a moment, before the put-on gentility hooded their fire.

He was courteous as to an equal, even though I was only 19 and you could feel that his eyes followed your back and made silent note of what you were looking at and for how long. He was willing to give you as much time as you wanted and in no hurry to assist you through the exhibits. We spoke very little beyond the usual leave-taking courtesies and I departed.

A couple of days later when I returned nervously fingering seventyfive rupees in paper notes in my punjabi pocket (I did not even know that one paid and took home a painting only after an exhibition was over) to claim the painting my mind was set on, the one which looks on to this day from the opposite wall at all meals that we eat in the house, Jamini Roy gave me a curious look but said I could have it. R. H. Wilenski and Ezra Pound had no doubt moulded my taste to go in for this particular pain-

ting over which I longed with the longing of youth until I could take it home when the exhibition ended, and which I never for once handed back to him although he often asked to see it again in later years.

I was soon invited to the house in Ananda Chatterjee Lane, where I went with Bishnu Dey one Sunday morning. As he padded silently from one small room to another, setting up his paintings on the floor against the wall and window sill, he gave one time to take in his massive, erect torso, the powerful leonine neck and mane, the even more powerful and massive cranium, the Zeus-like forehead and the high aquiline nose with the finely sculpted almost snorting nostrils. With a fire that stirred about him as he stirred, he yet looked very earthy and the no-nonsense kind. It was obvious that he deferred to the delicate elegance that Tagore had imposed upon his age (there was even a fragile quality in the sentimental turns of his speech), but that he really belonged to the Dinabandhu Mitra-Kaliprasanna Sinha-Girish Chandra Ghosh set.

Through endless mornings and evenings thereafter,—one always felt remorseful later how much of the great painter's time one had wasted thoughtlessly, selfishly, particularly his who loved to work so tirelessly—Jamini Roy would go on talking of his work, his earlier years in Bankura and Calcutta, of the conflict in his mind that drove him to break with his upbringing, of his life in the theatre world of Calcutta, of his quests in each period of his creative life, his acquaintances and friends, the buffets of fortune and his struggle, of his family, his wife, his sons and daughter. And almost always it was a unique mixture of urbanity and earthiness, like Cezanne's apples, of the city and the village, of courtly elegance and nobility and a strange peasant canniness. He would put his hands on his head, he said, whenever a plane flew over his house, but he never left Ananda Chatterjee Lane throughout the war. He would love to serve Beliatore ghee and Mecha

when they arrived, but one could see he was inwardly better without them. When one referred to a person of culture and taste from Lucknow or Dacca, he insisted that he would like to see how this person fared in Calcutta for Calcutta's anonymity was where one's culture and attainments could be really tested. He believed passionately in Calcutta and yet hardly ever painted it, except the tranquil, sombre beauty of his Ananda Chatterjee Lane and the boats (not steamers) moored on the river Hooghly, with the chimneys showing in the far distance. His advice to Humphry House was a classic. Humphry House a young don from Oxford, the great authority of our time on Hopkins and Dickens, had come to serve in Presidency College in 1936, and Sudhindranath Dutt took him to Jamini Roy soon after. On the second or third visit Jamini Roy asked House how he was liking Calcutta. Very much, said House. That's a pity, sighed Jamini Roy and added, 'Let me tell you, Mr House, don't spend a day more than five years here in India. Any one from your country who spends more than five years east of Suez, is sure to get a touch of leprosy.' How true, as I was to discover again and again, even of the true scholars among the Old India hands!

For a man whom I have never seen take physical exercise in the course of 37 years Jamini Roy possessed primordial energy. One can think of only two men in our century who in sheer fecundity and creative output surpassed him, Rabindranath Tagore and Pablo Picasso. Stella Kramrisch who was visiting Delhi last March asked after Jamini Roy and startled me by averring that Jamini Roy was one of those mysteriously rare cases who in the early 1930's was struck by cancer, incontrovertibly diagnosed by Falkenstein, but just recovered all by himself without a trace. She said she could swear by anything on this matter. And yet like all elegant, courtly Bengalis, as long as I have known him, he was quite bad until the day before yester-

day but had taken a turn for the better since yesterday evening.' That he tormented himself a great deal to get each painting out of his system, as they came out tumbling on top of each other as long as he lived was plain for all to see. Towards the end, his desire to live drained suddenly empty when he realised that he could paint no more. Bishnu Dey told me the other day that Jamini Roy's wife had told him recently that she had not known her husband sleep on his right side ever, and how that little remark had brought Bishnu Babu to realise that the artist would not do it for fear of injuring the limb that painted. Bishnu Dey added how in the final years Jamini Roy would often ply him with questions of how Titian or Renoir had gone on painting with their disabled limbs. The last two years of his life were as miraculous as his earlier recovery from cancer. There were repeated attacks of double pneumonia and the doctors gave him up as lost. Each time the old frame fought with cyclopean ferocity and triumphed and the doctors returned to marvel, until it finally gave way in April at 85.

For sixty-five years of his working life, with unflinching zeal, Jamini Roy explored the problems of plastic form and colour, tirelessly seeking new and even more powerful means of expression. He endowed his complete mastery of the Indian pictorial tradition with a new richness and rare worth. This is not the occasion to enter into a discussion of his art and of what I once wrote in 1955 in *Parichaya* which was republished in my *Bharater Chitrakala* in 1956, later translated into English in *Lalit Kala Contemporary* in December 1964 and republished in my *Four Painters* in 1965. It is in them that I have tried to say what I wanted to say of Jamini Roy's pictorial quest and it would be tiresome to try to say it over again. But what needs to be said again is that Jamini Roy had nothing to do with the Kalligat *pat* or Bengali folk art. He belonged essentially to the high tradi-

tion of the Indian mural and the Indian sculptured frieze. His work has all the attributes of the mural and the monumental mural at that, each capable of being blown up to several times the original size. His painted sculptures are also monumental and generically different from the Indian miniature to which the scroll *pat* or the Kalighat *pat*—which is so glibly mentioned for wholly the wrong reasons in reference to Jamini Roy's art—is genetically allied. When,

as I observed in 1955, Jamini Roy burst the bonds of the frame of his easel painting and allowed the figure or the image to overreach the frame and even walk out of it—the frame being unable to hold all of the image within it—and which spelt instant revolution by establishing a dynamic point, which came neither from the Kalighat and Vishnupur *pats* nor the native pictorial scrolls but from his ceaseless search for a personal idiom, this dynamic point belonged really

to the world of the mural and architectural sculpture such as we see in the temple friezes of Bengal and Orissa in terracotta or stone. What one never ceases to regret is that he stopped with this magnificent and breathtaking reconstruction of the Indian mural and the Indian frieze but did not, unlike Picasso, interpret contemporary life or foresee the future. But we are grateful for what he gave.

The Patua Art Of Bengal

JAMINI ROY

WE may begin with some idea of the other art-forms prevalent in Bengal.

In Bengal there had been two distinct types of art. One of these was the familiar everyday art of the people and the other the occasional art of the festive rituals, which was art in its sophisticated form. Patua paintings may be taken as typical of the former, the icons of the festive occasions that of the latter. The difference between the two is quite clear. In the former there is no effort at decoration or ornamentation and hardly any enthusiasm for polish. But the other is consciously sophisticated, even aristocratic. It draws upon the tradition of the scriptures. And there are many differences in the form of the two.

A wrong notion prevails about what is patua art. Many are inclined to identify it with the Kalighat paintings. Not that there is no truth whatsoever in such an idea, but the truth has really a very slender basis. During the early days of the growth of Calcutta as a city, a group of village craftsmen came to settle in Kalighat and went on with their painting. They were essentially rustic artists; certain changes in their traditional work were, however, inevitable because of their contact with the urban life. They had to cater to the urban taste and had for their market the

fairs in the city and the suburbs. So their work acquired an urban bias. It ceased to be strictly patua; the language remained largely rustic but the city-life entered into the theme. The form and the content ceased to cohere and the art lost its ideal. Foreign critics have collected the popular art of Bengal mainly from Kalighat. For various reasons they could not do more than this. But it is a pity that our own critics often echo their error.

The genuinely patua work had been prevalent in Bengal long before the Englishmen came to India and the city of Calcutta came to be. As a matter of fact it was then that this art had its real vitality. It is indeed a wonder to think today of those primitive artists who, after their prolonged efforts, discovered the fundamentals of this art, its form as well as its content. They seem to have touched the elemental truth in the world of art. In course of time patua painting lapsed no doubt into some kind of mechanical repetition carried on by the village craftsmen. They were really unconscious of what they were doing.

The patuas of today hardly remember the real meaning of the folk art of Bengal. Nevertheless, those who were the first to discover it had also the genius to establish it on such a secure basis that even today its

fundamentals are not totally lost, however much mechanical might be the mode in which it is carried on.

So it will be wrong to look at patua art as but a phase of the art history of Bengal alone. It appertains to the history of art as such. You come across the same thing in prehistoric art everywhere. In other countries however, the subsequent art effort took a different course and the ancient tradition was eventually lost. But the elemental truth of art is to be found in the primitive art of any country and also in the patua art of Bengal, in which it is retained.

Art has two aspects—that which is said and the language of saying it. One is the theme and the other the technique. An analysis of patua art reveals why, in both these aspects, it can claim to be not only an inevitable phase in the history of art but precisely that phase of it which is indicative of its basic truth.

What is it that patua art wants to express? It is certainly not a meticulous copy of nature; it is as certainly a conveying the essence thereof. For it had for its aim a direct expression of the emotion aroused by the universal essence of the nature around. A tree painted by the patua is unmistakably a tree: but you can hardly call it any actual tree of our concrete experience. In

other words; it has everything that is essential for a tree, though nothing that belongs to the limitation of any individual tree. In this, the patua art of Bengal resembles the primitive art of any other country. For everywhere primitive art thrives upon the essence of the object depicted. At the same time, that which is genuinely a patua-work has its difference from the primitive art of other countries. First, the patuas of Bengal could draw their emotional nourishment from a coherent myth or belief-system. Secondly, they were also acquainted with the sophisticated art-form of the country, for it ran parallel to patua art.

Myth

Patua art did thrive on a coherent myth or belief-system. This did not happen in the case of the primitive art of other countries but failing this a fundamental problem of the artist remains unsolved. In the other primitive arts, you see perhaps the representation of the rhythm of a man or of a deer. But all these are there piecemeal. They do not cohere and form themselves into a whole. There is no belief-system within which all these could be internally related. But the world of the universal essence upon which the ancient patuas drew had for its substratum a coherent belief-system, absorbing everything within itself. The fabulous Jatayu here is no real bird of the mortal earth; but then it is essentially a bird. The Hanuman of these paintings is no real ape that you can ever come across; his birth, his activities and in fact everything relating to him has nothing to do with this mortal earth. Yet there is no mistake in recognising an ape in him. And this bird, that ape, the Rakshasas and all others—in fact everything and everybody in the patua's world—exist as internally related and as cohering to everything else. The world of the myth is not the world we live in. It is the world of universal essence. Nevertheless it is a world with its own harmony. And it was in such a world that the faith of the

patuas was crystallised.

Art needs to thrive on a belief-system such as this. This has repeatedly been felt by the artists. Here is an instance. The sophisticated art of Europe could and did for a long time thrive on the Christ-myth. And so long as this was possible there was no unrest. After Rembrandt, however, belief in such a myth was shattered by the changed social circumstances. Art abandoned faith but courted unrest. Gauguin and Van Gogh made their last desperate effort to revive the Christ-myth. But this was just impossible. The contemporary art of Europe shows a desperate effort to cling to some belief-system or other, but the modern mind would not allow any. So there is no end to unrest. The belief-system forming the substratum of the real patua-work is, therefore, significant, though of course, when the later craftsmen mechanically carried on the ancient tradition, the awareness of this elemental truth was lost in the limbo of oblivion.

This is what the patua had to say. We may now turn to consider the language in which it was expressed. The way in which they spoke of their belief-system was magnificently colloquial. It was a simple and direct language without any effort to make it delicate or subtle. At the same time, and by the side of this art of the colloquial language, there was the other form of Indian art, specimens of which are the icons, the temple sculptures, the court-painting and the images made for the festive rituals. It spoke in a pompous language and it was in fact deliberately sophisticated. And the patuas were familiar with this.

At the same time it is necessary to remember that the patuas themselves were not clearly conscious of what they were doing. We must not miss the significance of this. Even children are sometimes heard to utter elemental truth. But you will not allow them real wisdom, because you can see that these are uttered without a proper consciousness. Wisdom

MAO PAPERS

Edited by JEROME CH'EN

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ON LENIN

Notes towards a Biography

LEON TROTSKY

Translated by Tamara Deutscher

Leon Trotsky, apostle of the doctrine of permanent revolution, gathered together some notes for future biographers and for what he hoped would be his own tribute to Lenin. The projected Lenin biography was never completed, so that this work, following so closely on the events which it describes, becomes crucial to an understanding of both Lenin and Trotsky. The text includes items never before available in English.

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is acknowledged only when there is the consciousness of it. The same is true in the case of art. Primitive painting and the painting of children, by depicting the universal essence of things, do often express the elemental truth of art. Yes these are generally of no great significance, because the truth is expressed here without a consciousness of it. So also in the case of patua painting, in spite of its two important features. First, patuas did have a coherent belief system. This probably explains why primitive art, though extinct in other countries, survives among them. Secondly, in their sophisticated works of art the Indian artists left the unmistakable proof that in subtlety and precision they were not lagging behind; and this shows that the simplicity of the patuas was not because the sophisticated mode was unknown to them.

In no other country did primitive art have this two-fold advantage. That is why, in spite of unconsciously submitting to the elemental truth of

art, the primitive artists of other countries could not sustain or nourish it. With the advance of civilization, it gave place to the fascination for the brilliant and the gorgeous. The artists were dazzled by the bright rays of growing luxuries. They devoted themselves to precision and polish and thus eventually forgot the essential function of art. This is somewhat comparable to what is called in our country as being lured away from the path of meditation by the fascination for immediate magnificence (the Vibhuti of our Yoga-shastra). Painting acquired precision and polish to an almost unimaginable extent. Even birds, we are told, were deceived by the painted vines and pecked at the canvas. This is the extent of precision and exactitude that art acquired. Our Yoga-shastra speaks of being intoxicated with Vibhuti. The artists were similarly intoxicated with the craze for precision and accuracy. And then at long last, the painters of Europe

appear to have become upset: The dead limit in sophistication and accuracy was already reached. What next? The artists find no answer to this question and see no new path before them.

It is like a game of chess in which after a series of magnificent moves you find yourself checkmated. The old faith in the Christ-myth waned away while the artists failed to pin their faith on a new myth. So they look desperate. They want to break everything. Or, as in a game of chess, when checkmated, one topples over the board and insists on a replay. In the contemporary art of Europe you can see such signs of desperation. The artists could perhaps have avoided this only if they had opened the game with correct moves.

(This is based on a series of interviews in which Jamini Roy gave his views to Mr D. P. Chatterjee. The article is taken from the Jamini Roy number of *World Window*, 1963).

Green Revolution In India : Prelude To A Red One ?—III

HARI SHARMA

THE "winds of change" did eventually pass, and by the early sixties the structure of land relations in India had assumed a more or less stable form. The old *zamindari*-type landlords and the various intermediaries were certainly eliminated, at least in their earlier forms. The diverse systems of land-tenure were also changed into more uniform, simpler ones. This was certainly the case in so far as ownership rights in land were concerned. All owners were brought in direct relation to the State. However, the original intention of converting Indian agriculture into one primarily of peasant-proprietors (if this was in fact the intention) was far from achieved. Tenancy-cultivation as a form of feudalistic exploitation of the peasantry has to date continued to remain a major feature of Indian agriculture—with concomitant high

rents and insecurity of tenure. Moreover, there did not occur any significant change in the highly skewed pattern of cultivation holdings or in the size of the landless work force. The data for the year 1960-61 show that "taking the country as a whole, nearly 36 percent of the rural households did not cultivate any land or less than half an acre each. Households cultivating no land or less than 2.5 acres each constituted 57.59 percent of the rural households and between them they operated only 7 percent of the total land. On the other hand, only 2.09 percent of the households had operational holdings of more than 30 acres each, but between them they operated nearly 23 percent of the total land." (V. V. Dandekar and N. Rath, "Poverty in India—II: Policies and Programmes", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.

VI, No. 2, June 9, 1971.)

And thus the story goes: a record of dismal failure of land reforms as far as the alleviation of the condition of the masses of rural people is concerned. Yet the fifteen years of the implementation of various land legislations did unmistakably create a class of rich peasants—kulaks—who by the mid-sixties were all set to embark upon capitalistic agriculture. Mostly composed of the former *zamindars* and other landlords, but also including the top stratum of peasant proprietors as well as some of the former tenants who enjoyed superior and permanent rights, this class of rich peasants had consolidated its legal rights in land by about the middle of the 'sixties. The uncertainties of the 'fifties were gone and despite continuing clamour by some politicians and intellectuals about the in-

effectiveness of land reforms and about the need for more effective measures, this class had begun to feel firmly secure in its position.

Its sense of security was not, however, a sufficient condition, although it was a necessary one for this class to enter into capitalistic farming. Other simultaneous institutional and structural developments provided some of the remaining preconditions. Some of these developments were generated by the working of the land reforms; others occurred separately.

First, the various measures to abolish *zamindari*-type landlords and other intermediaries, while allowing them to retain large parts of their estates for "self-cultivation", also provided them with heavy compensation for their losses in land revenues, as well as outright "rehabilitation grants". Exact estimates of the total amount thus payable to these semi-feudal lords vary from one government document to another, but roughly speaking it was about Rs 6,000 million. By 1968-69, some Rs 3,200 million had already been paid to them. Although only about a half of it has been in the form of cash (the rest being in the form of government bonds), it is still a substantial amount of money to have reached the newly emerging class of rich peasants. These compensation grants undoubtedly offered at least a part of the necessary capital for later mechanization and capitalization in agriculture. Some *zamindars* also managed to retain all their land under their control while still receiving large sums as compensation. For example, according to a recently unearthed story, a *zamindar* in West Bengal who owned one thousand acres jointly with his brother managed to transfer all the land to the names of his sons and nephews and their wives, who were then shown as his "tenants". When the law came into force these sons and nephews and their wives were made the owners, who now paid land revenue directly to the government. The two *zamindar* brothers were granted Rs 700,000 by the Government as compensation

for their "loss in revenue," while they retained within the family possession all the land they originally owned.

A parallel development during the last two decades was the consolidation of land-holdings. Fragmentation of land holdings has long been a characteristic feature of Indian agriculture. Often a farmer's total land was divided into numerous and widely dispersed pieces. The British rulers tried to correct the situation, at least in some of the Provinces, by promoting exchange of plots between individual holders. But it was only in the last two decades that consolidation of dispersed holdings was accomplished on a large scale—often through special legislation making such consolidation compulsory. Without such transference of small, widely dispersed strips of land into compact units, mechanized, capitalistic farming could not possibly have emerged.

Last Phase

The last phase of land legislation dealing with ceilings on individual holdings contained elements which tended to push the owners of large holdings toward capitalistic agriculture. Debates on the question of ceilings had been going on throughout the 'fifties and by the time such legislation became effective in the early 'sixties, most large owners had already divided up their land among the members of their families. Nevertheless, the various ceilings laws specified numerous categories of farms which were to be exempt from the imposed ceiling. Included in these categories were 'mechanized farms', 'farms with heavy investments', 'efficient farms', dairy farms, orchards, plantations, 'farms in a compact block', co-operative farms, etc. The ceilings laws thus provided added incentives, as well as opportunities, to large landlords to switch over to capitalistic farming in order to avoid alienation of their lands.

"Co-operative farms", one of the exemption categories noted above, are interesting for still another reason. Ever since the Government began to

encourage co-operation in farming—particularly after the Nagpur session of the ruling Congress Party in 1959—"co-operative farming societies" became a double-edged sword in the hands of landlords and rich peasants. On the one hand, by dividing up their large holdings among relatives and then pooling the subdivisions in the form of a "co-operative farming society", they were able to avoid the possible alienation of their land. On the other hand, since they now belonged to a "co-operative farming society", they became eligible for all kinds of special treatment from the government, particularly for obtaining large, long-term loans for capital investments.

Apart from these mechanisms inherent within the land legislation, rural India, ever since the launching of five-year plans in 1951, has been subjected to a wide range of administrative and institutional changes. The Community Development programme started in 1952. Although it went through numerous vicissitudes during the following decade and a half, it succeeded in pouring a vast amount of public resources into the village to help construct new roads, schools, health and recreation centres, irrigation projects, wells, storage facilities and warehouses, soil conservation, etc. Further, the agricultural credit societies, which had been in existence for quite some time in India, were greatly expanded during this period. From 105,000 such societies in 1951, the number reached 212,000 a decade later, with a corresponding rise in the total amount of loans and advances from Rs 229 million in 1951 to Rs 2,000 million in 1961. Moreover, the same period saw significant, though relatively modest, expansion in various kinds of marketing and distribution co-operative societies. There is almost unanimous agreement among the observers of the changing rural scene in India—whether these be local or foreign, or whether State-sponsored studies or those by independent scholars—that all these new measures have mostly benefited the richest

stratum of the Indian peasantry.

Even more significant have been the developments in the economic and political articulation of the rich peasants and former landlords with the wider societal forces. As was pointed out earlier in this paper, in pre-Independence days the zamindars and other big landlords had few, if any, ties with the urban industrial bourgeoisie. The surpluses expropriated from the peasants were used essentially in conspicuous, wasteful consumption. With the expansion of industrial and commercial activities in the country as a whole this situation slowly began to change. By the early 'sixties rich peasants and landlords had already begun to invest their savings in wholesale trade in food-grains as well as in the rapidly expanding road transport system. As electric power began to reach the country-side, small-scale rice mills and wheat flour mills began to operate within the villages or in nearby towns. These were almost invariably owned by the rich peasants and landlords. As the construction industry expanded, many of the rural rich—particularly near the urban centres—started brick kilns to supply the ever-expanding demand for bricks. In areas where the new sugar refineries were opened on the principle of co-operative ownership, it was the rich peasants and landlords who constituted the major membership of these cooperatives. In this way the rural elite greatly expanded its economic activities and was no longer content with the surpluses produced by the toiling peasantry. Under these changed conditions, agriculture itself tended to turn into a profit-oriented vocation. How much of the agricultural surpluses did in fact become part of the growing industrial capital cannot accurately be ascertained, but a link between the two sectors was clearly established by the early 'sixties. That is why the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries severely criticized the agrarian policies of the 3rd Five-Year Plan, particularly the section on proposed land ceilings, while in its com-

ments on the earlier Plan, it had completely ignored the agrarian policies of the Government. Another indication of the close link between the rural elite and the growing industrial bourgeoisie can be seen from the consumption pattern of industrial goods. A recent study, based upon National Sample Survey data, has estimated that in 1960-61 the richest 10 per cent of the rural people provided a much bigger market for industrial consumer goods than did all the urban people put together.

Politically, too, the village in India has increasingly been linked with wider, national forces. With the introduction of universal adult franchise this kind of linkage could hardly be avoided. But with the institution in 1956 of the three-tier system of democratic decentralization, the elected leaders of village councils, who more often than not came from the class of landlords and rich peasants, became directly involved with local self-government at the "block"* and district levels. Over time, by the end of the 'fifties, these linkages had begun to acquire distinct ideological overtones. In various parts of the country numerous farmers' organizations emerged or were reactivated to represent the interests of the rich peasantry. It was mainly in relation to the question of ceilings on land holdings as proposed by the Nagpur session of the Congress Party in 1959 that the Swatantra Party, supported primarily by ex-Princes, landlords, and rich peasants, was founded in that year. To date this party has continued to draw its main support from these groups.

In these diverse ways, rural India has undergone major structural and institutional changes over the past two decades. It is these changes which have brought to the surface a stratum of Indian agriculturists who are much more secure in terms of

* A "block" is an administrative unit, composed of about 100 villages, which was created by the Community Development Administration in the early 'fifties.

legal rights in their vast land holdings, much more articulated—economically and politically—with the wider society, and much less committed to village-based norms of reciprocity and interdependence, than were their predecessors of twenty years ago. Feudalistic elements in Indian agriculture are still widely prevalent, as was pointed out before, but this seems to be a matter of convenience rather than of institutional necessity. The increasing trend in the 'sixties has been toward capitalistic agriculture. And it is in the context of these structural and institutional changes that the recent successes of the green revolution must be seen. If the Ford Foundation had not exported the new technology to India, the new class of Indian kulaks would sooner or later have imported it from wherever it was available.

It is, moreover, these very changes which lie at the root of the rising politicization and militancy of the weaker sections of the Indian peasantry. Objectively, their conditions were bad enough twenty years ago; over time they have become worse, both absolutely and relatively. In 1960-61, 38.03 per cent of all rural households (consisting mainly of agricultural labourers and cultivators of small holdings) lived below the extreme poverty line, based upon a very conservative estimate of a minimum of Rs 15 per capita per month in consumption expenditure (on 1960-61 prices). The percentage rose to 44.57 in 1964-65 and to 53.02 in 1967-68. In other words, more than fifty per cent of the rural population was barely managing to survive in 1967-68. This is one of the most glaring objective realities on which the green revolution has been thriving. Dozens of field studies from many parts of the country in recent years have, uniformly and convincingly, demonstrated that the gap between the rural rich and rural poor is fast widening: not only between agricultural labourers and land owners but also between small and medium farmers on the one hand and rich farmers on the other. The abso-

lute daily wage of farm labourers has undoubtedly risen considerably in recent years. But their actual condition has deteriorated, mainly because the rise in wages has been outstripped by the rise in the cost of living, but also because, in some places, there is a declining demand for wage labour resulting from increase in mechanization.

Accompanying these hard realities in the objective conditions, there has been since the early 'sixties a marked change in the subjective forces. For a whole decade (the 'fifties), the weaker sections lived under the illusion of impending structural reforms which never materialized. They saw a gradual erosion of traditional village norms, or rather, they saw themselves victimized by those very norms, since promises made in the name of these norms were never fulfilled. At the same time, they saw fake co-operatives of one kind or another constituted by the rich either to evade losses or to draw added resources from the Government. They witnessed, at close hand and helplessly, how the big landlords, deceitfully and often with the full knowledge of government officials, divided up their large estates to avoid the impending legislation on land ceilings. They saw these fellow villagers of theirs getting richer every year, with no discernible improvement in their own conditions. By the end of the decade they saw this rich rural elite firmly entrenched in its seats of economic and political power. By this time they also fully realized that they had been cheated and that there was no possible solution to their miseries within the given framework. Increasing politicization and militancy of the poorer peasantry in these conditions was hardly surprising.

This process of politicization was further helped by the changed political-climate in the country as a whole. The 'fifties in India was essentially an "apolitical" decade—with an almost total hegemony of the Congress party under Nehru's leadership, and with an almost total absence of ideology from the national political climate.

On the one hand, such "Right" forces as existed were more or less contained within the Congress party. On the other hand, the Communist Party of India remained both discredited and ineffective: discredited because of the support it had extended, against the predominant national sentiment, to the allied forces in the Second World War, and ineffective because after the abrupt withdrawal in 1951 of its support to the massive peasant uprising in Telangana. It had more or less settled, under the direction of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, for constitutionalism as a means for peaceful transition to socialism. Even the Kisan Sabha, a militant organization of the peasants, had been declared illegal by the Government in the early 'fifties. But the situation began to change at the end of the decade. The rich peasants and the big landlords crystallized their position by rallying behind the Swatantra Party, formed in 1959. At the same time, the Communist Party of India began in the late 'fifties to undergo serious internal ideological debates, mostly centered around its assessment of the Indian situation and the correct revolutionary strategy. These debates culminated in the vertical split of the Party in 1964. A large section of the movement began to be directly concerned with the peasant question. The Kisan Sabha, too, had come back to the surface and was active in many parts of the country. Ideology had made a firm entry on the political scene of India. The Indo-Chinese border conflict of 1962 and the short-lived war with Pakistan in 1965 somewhat weakened the growing polarization in rural India through the opportunities they provided to the ruling Congress party for stirring up nationalistic hysteria. But their effect did not last long, as was demonstrated by the debacle of the Congress Party in the general elections of 1967, when its hegemony was broken for the first time in twenty years. Nineteen sixty-seven was also the year of Naxalbari and since then there has been continuous growth in peasant militancy and peasant up-

risings. Even before Naxalbari, Maoist peasant rebellion had long been going on in the vast Srikakulam area of Andhra Pradesh. It was, however, the Naxalbari revolt of 1967, and the events that have followed it, including the formation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) that put the Indian peasantry on the revolutionary map of the world.

Both the green revolution and the increasingly class-oriented polarization of the Indian peasantry are thus the outcomes of a long, continuous process of major structural and institutional shifts in rural India, both phenomena coming to surface in the second half of the 'sixties. The former is only aiding the acceleration of the latter process. Metaphorically speaking, one can say that the present situation in rural India is like a watermelon, green on the outside and red inside. Whether the watermelon rots and eventually bursts open with all the redness wasted, or whether it is cut at the appropriate time depends upon effective leadership from the left, the prospects for which do not seem very promising at the moment. (Concluded)

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BANGLADESH

CALCUTTA METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

PROGRAMME FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

AN APPEAL

Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation (CMPO) estimates indicate that in the Calcutta Metropolitan Area the present primary school going population in the age group 6 to 11 stands somewhere around 8.30 lakhs. The total number of primary schools as at present is not more than 3,000. This works out to a coverage of only about 73% which is lower than the coverage available even in the rural areas of West Bengal. The deficit is again highly pronounced in the congested areas. CMPO estimates that at least 600 new primary school buildings will be required to wipe out the deficit in primary school places.

As a beginning, in the CMDA programme a project of setting up 500 new primary school buildings has been drawn up in collaboration with the Education Department. These schools will be run directly by the Education Directorate itself. The Education Department and the CMDA, however, are facing a major impediment to the project in not finding an adequate number of suitable sites for setting up these new primary schools. **THE CMDA, THEREFORE, APPEALS TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES, PHILANTHROPIC INSTITUTIONS, THE INDUSTRY AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC TO PLEASE SEND OFFERS OF LAND AND/OR BUILDINGS ACCORDING TO THE SPECIFICATION BELOW.** On an average, a properly built primary school would cost not less than Rs. 40,000/-. For 500 schools the construction cost alone would work out to Rs. 2 crores. If the price of the land is also to be included then to that extent the money available for construction would be less and consequently the total number of new schools that can be set up would also be less. We would, therefore, appeal for free gift or long term lease on a notional rent at least in respect of the new sites. In inescapable cases, however, the Authority would be prepared to offer reasonable compensation for the land and/or buildings.

The Education Department and the CMDA earnestly hope this appeal would find a positive and encouraging response from the public. The offers of land and/or buildings should generally conform to the specifications and contain the particulars as follows:

- (a) **Land:** Nearabout 4 cottahs with good access from main roads and reasonably free from water-logging.
- (b) **Buildings:** Single or double-storied with at least 6 rooms of not less than 200 sft. area each to serve as five class rooms and a teachers' room; water and sanitary facilities and electricity preferred, if available.
- (c) **General Information:**
 - i) Location of the land and/or building giving number of premises, street, ward number or name of the mouza, police station.
 - ii) Distance from the nearest main road and bus/tram route or Railway station.
 - iii) Distance from the nearest primary school now existing in the area.
 - iv) Name of the owner and particulars of the type of title/tenancy held.
 - v) Terms offered.

Offers may kindly be sent in envelopes superscribed 'Offers for primary school sites/buildings' to the Secretary, CMDA, 3A, Auckland Place, Calcutta-17 by the 31st May, 1972.

The logo of the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA), consisting of the letters 'CMDA' in a bold, stylized, sans-serif font.

Corruption

A. P. M.

SOMEWHERE in this book* there is an evocation of the blessings of "Almighty Lord Venkateswara". Elsewhere, there are repeated references to Jawaharlal Nehru's hang-them-on-the-nearest-lampost harangue and to the probability that Mrs. Gandhi's garibi hatao campaign might degenerate into a garib hatao reality. The language in which the author has chosen to write this book is not among his strong points. The book itself is a curious amalgam of injured innocence, a tendency for melodrama, a vain attempt at writing a real-life thriller and, above all, the desire to expose high corruption.

It is the latter aspect of the book which is apparently the important one. Exposure of corruption is not exactly an everyday occurrence in India though by all accounts corruption is fairly well spread in government and business. The author was an Assistant Commissioner of Commercial Taxes, West Bengal, apparently one of those men who come to learn more of shady business deals than most other people. It appears that his attempts, first to bring to book the Birlas for malpractices and then the McLeod-Davenport group of companies, finally cost him his job, along with a rather unpleasant experience of rough police handling. This ordeal has obviously left in him a crusading zeal to expose the Bajoria-Jalan group to a wider public.

An exposure of this kind should be devoid of frills; it should present its contents in precise terms. It has

*Mystery of Bajoria-Jalan House,
By N. C. Roy
Distributors:
Alpha Publishing Concern,
72, Mahatma Gandhi Road
Calcutta-9.
Rs 21.00

little room for the kind of rhetoric popular on the Maidan. The presentation should be fully and properly planned. That irritating first person singular had better be kept out of it. For, does Mr Roy really believe that the supremely cynical Indian city-dweller of 1972 will have the right amount of patience and sympathy to hear how the government machinery conspired with the Bajoria-Jalan house in order to harass him? He has since learned of far worse degradations of parliamentary democracy.

The book is by choice the story of the unequal confrontation between Mr Roy and the business house. In a correct presentation, the author would have kept himself in the background, the story of his suffering would have been briefly mentioned and the sole attention would have concentrated on a full exposure of the corruption in which the house does apparently indulge. The exposure part by itself is unsatisfactory. The shady deals of the house form the subject-matter of gossip in business circles from time to time. There is nothing startling about them. The banks which have financed the business activities of the house possibly contain files which would be much more revealing.

Even then, the author's main contention that the Bajoria-Jalan group has sucked the ex-British profitable tea and jute companies and enriched itself in the process is both reasonable and relatively established in the text. The method of analysing the annual accounts of the companies in order to illustrate his theme has not, however, acquitted itself well. The author has not elaborated on the British India Corporation, presumably because he played no part in exposing its affairs; a better planned book would have devoted more space

to them than to his own efforts at exposure for the good reason that the BIC affair is a well-known case.

It appears that the author will continue in his crusade against big business. Our best wishes for his success. But this book does not augur well.

Snakes In The Grass

By A DRAMA CRITIC

THE Theatre Workshop presented its first night show of Manoj Mitra's *Chak Bhanga Madhu* at Rangana on May 16. It is not customary to review a first night show, but a few comments may not be unwarranted, if these could help make the production more worthwhile. To start with, the backdrop with a bunch of stylised trees was a constant eyesore; it simply does not go with the realistic tone of the drama. The two women players and Bibhas Chakrabarty apart, all the other players were very stiff. Probably the stiffness will wear off in the next stagings but doubts about Ashok Mukherjee persist. Most of the time he does not know what to do with his great bulk, and his frequent Christ-like postures are incongruous (Christ, if one remembers, had no problems but the hero in the drama has). The stylised acting of Ashok, the freeze sequence, the repetition of a sequence are all probably the Theatre Workshop's hangover from its obsession with the absurd drama. However these are all remediable defects, if indeed the director admits these to be defects.

But the basic weakness of the drama lies elsewhere, for which the troupe has no responsibility though. The drama revolves on the problem of an ojha who is torn between loyalty to his profession and his hatred of a mahajan, when the mahajan is bitten by a snake. The moneylender is the scourge of the village and the villagers are jubilant over an unexpected retribution wrought by nature. But the elimination of the money-

lender is purely accidental, and it is obvious that snakebites cannot remove all moneylenders, or for that matter the system of moneylending, from our social scene. Because the context has no social dimension, the problem of the drama loses its social weight. The playwright must have been aware of this problem. By presenting the shrewd son, who persuades the ojha's daughter to cure his father, the playwright more than hinted that the son would successfully carry on the tradition of the sucker, even if the sucker were not restored to life. The system would continue whether or not the ojha applies his medicine. This being the situation, the climactic scene loses all its tension, it matters little if the mahajan is brought to life or not. The theme of social hatred and passive revenge by refusing to let off the poison waters down to the problem of an individual who feels guilty in the presence of a dying man. This guilt is again compounded by a temptation. The ojha hopes that the dying man will reward him amply and hope makes him go against the interests, though illusory, of the villagers. His acts on the basis of this temptation reduce from his character the tragic dimensions. If it were a conflict between his loyalty to the profession and hatred of the enemy, his resolution could have struck a tragic note, a note born of a villager's selfdestroying faith in the sacredness of the life of all people, including the exploiters of society.

The ojha however is punished for his naive faith in the exploiter; the moneylender, coming back to life, immediately manifests his wolfish nature. (In the realist drama, this absurd element again mars the realism. Can a dying man, within a minute of resurrection, express all that physical lust? Telescoping, a necessary evil of drama, must have its limits.) The punishment makes him a pathetic character, not a tragic one, because he committed an offence against his social brethren through personal temptation, which he ought to have conquered. But the major flaw of the play occurs right after this punish-

ment. The daughter kills the moneylender in a moment of frenzy; the men around the sucker do nothing about it. Assuming this is possible, this must be regarded as a stray and

not a typical incident. The playwright has rendered poetic justice against an historical trend and commits himself to an isolated and not representative phenomenon.

Clippings

Export And Be Damned

Tanzania's preoccupation with exporting raw materials to world markets has become excessive and has resulted in serious restraints to development, says the Minister for Economic Affairs and Development Planning, Mr Babu. (Tanzania)

A completely new approach is necessary, Mr Babu argues in an article in *The Financial Times*, which carried a special supplement... coinciding with the Independence Anniversary.

Mr Babu wrote: "After a long, bitter and disenchanting experience in the development effort, a radical school of thought is gaining ground in Africa, certainly with more enthusiasm in Tanzania, which questions concepts hitherto almost superstitiously held as sacrosanct.

"These concepts, which have been taken for granted in the past and on which the development strategies of almost all the developing countries, the World Bank, the IMF, the UN etc., are based, can be summarised as follows: growth in underdeveloped countries is hampered by inadequate growth in exports and inadequate financial resources and is made worse by population explosion in these countries.

"And solutions to these obstacles are given as: stepping up export efforts, an increase in aid from the developed countries and a rational family planning. The last meeting of the Group of 77 in Lima... re-emphasised these concepts.

"The new school of thought which is emerging does not only question their validity but contends that these concepts are in fact real obstacles to development."

Mr Babu explained that developing

countries are under-developed because of 'the distortions to their economies brought about as a result of their integration into the world market from a position of weakness, that is from the periphery.

"Their exports and imports are determined almost exclusively by the pattern of production and consumption within the metropolitan countries, that is the centre, and not by their own development needs. Consequently any 'development' effort within this distorted pattern is really development of underdevelopment.

"Any appreciable growth in exports requires a very high productive efficiency, which can only come about through price incentives. But our involvement in the world market from the periphery is in itself a disincentive, because any surplus resulting from productive efficiency is appropriated by the centre, thanks to the perpetual breakdown in the terms of exchange which always works in favour of the centre and against the periphery."

Even if the terms of exchange were to be stabilised in favour of the developing countries and the developing countries were assured of "equitable" returns, the pattern of supply and demand for primary commodities is not conducive to sustained growth, said the Minister.

Mr Babu said: 'Export of manufactured goods from the developing countries will always remain a platform dream, good for oratory but impossible to achieve. No developed country will risk unemployment and balance of payment crises in their own countries in order to help the developing countries develop.

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"The whole of the developed world, and Japan especially, registered high economic growth rates at the expense of the Third World whose raw material exploitation is largely responsible for such growth".

He added "Further, because of our excessive involvement in the world markets, and the consequential external, rather than internal orientation of the economy, over 80 per cent of the population has been left in the subsistence sector".

In addition to these people being uninvolved productively in the rest of the economy, and the strain to the economy this state of affairs implied, equity demanded that corrective measures must at once be taken to improve their situation.

"This strong demand for restructuring the economy from outward to inward orientation so as to make it more responsive to people's wants was reflected very clearly during the bi-annual conference of Tanu in September.

"It marks a decisive shift in our development strategy, whose impact will have a far-reaching effect. It marks acceptance of the basic premise of the new school of thought—that development stems from within and not from outside", Mr Babu wrote.

He added: "By re-directing our attention to the development of our natural resources for ourselves we shall not only accelerate the development of our material base, but also prevent the development of one of the major scourges of the developing countries, namely unemployment, which is the direct result of our excessive integration into the world market from the periphery".

Letters

Vietnam

The Vietnamese struggle continues. One can go into ecstasies over the indomitable human spirit of the Vietnamese, but I feel sad, helpless, even resigned.

The impersonal technology of the

B-52s, the multifarious sure-kill gadgetry in the hands of a people who need no human spirit to operate their super-weapons of death are pitted against an entire people whose technology is far inferior. It is one dimension of the Vietnam war that 15 p.c. of its adult population has perished in battle. It is another dimension that Vietnam is a shambles, by any norm of economics.

That the struggle will continue is a measure of the human spirit and dignity. That the technological disparity will also continue in spite of the proclaimed solidarity of America's only equal is a tragedy. The disparity in involvement in tangible terms between the U.S. honouring a State level understanding and the Soviet Union participating in a consanguinous ideological partnership strains credulity. Soviet academicians and their loyal stooges will be able to retain and caress their documents of declaration to solidarity. Lesser people apprehend that Vietnam may be consigned to anthropologists and archaeologists.

P. R.
Calcutta

Attack On Teachers

On May 5, about 5,000 private school teachers, men and women, held a demonstration outside the Assembly in support of their demands which include security of service and a pay at par with that of government school teachers. During the election the Congress had supported these demands. But the police exploded tear-gas shells and lathicharged the demonstrators. Union leaders were up. At least 200 men and women were seriously injured; many became unconscious. When the mounted and armed police attacked the women teachers, they screamed and ran for shelter. The leg of one was broken and the principal of a girls higher secondary school had her skull fractured.

About two weeks ago students of the Punjab Agricultural University held a big demonstration to protest

against the American bombing of North Vietnam. The university authorities took disciplinary action against over half a dozen students for organising this rally. It is well known that this educational institution is a stronghold of American capital. But one more historical fact is worth noting. The Vice-Chancellor of the University, Dr M. S. Randhava, is a man with a 'national reputation'. Mr Manmatha Nath Gupta in his book *Those Who Live Dangerously* has devoted a few pages to his services during the British raj as a magistrate. He regrets that such a person who inflicted severe punishments on freedom fighters is now occupying the chair of a Vice-Chancellor. The old veteran has deployed special vigilance staff to check the activities of 'anti-national and rowdy elements' on the University campus.

AMARJOT
Chandigarh

Request

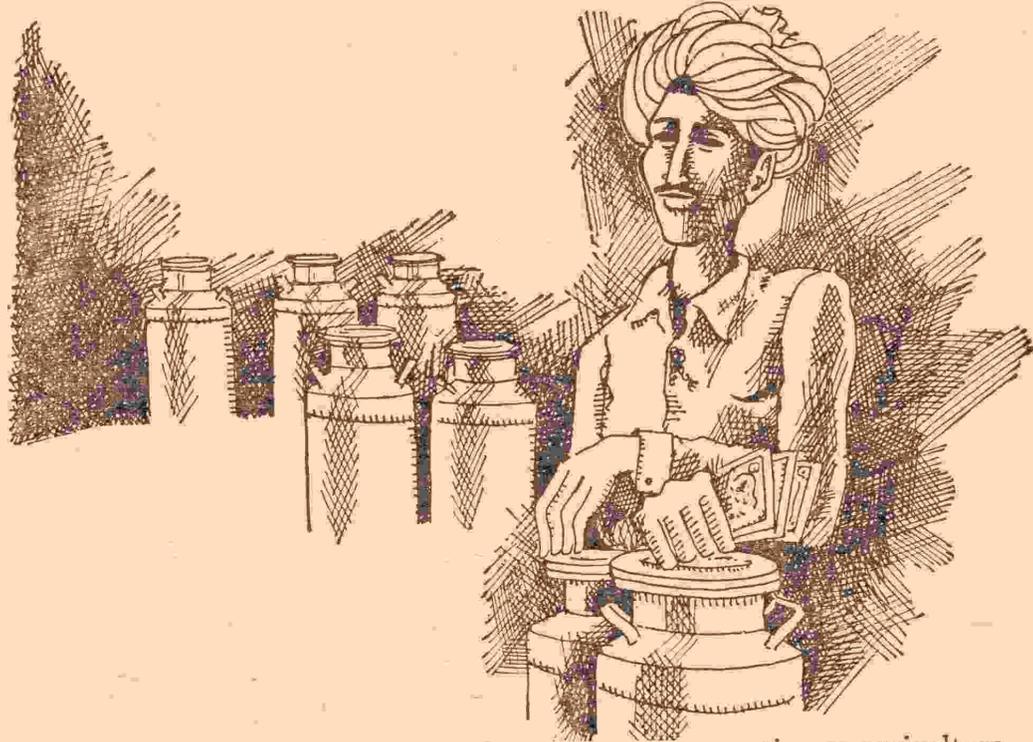
We feel that one major aspect of the problem of revolution is not being given sufficient accent in your magazine. The paramount need for a growth in class consciousness and communist ideology both on our part and on the part of the workers and the peasants, has not been emphasised. Most of the efforts seem to be limited to the petty-bourgeoisie. We must begin by finding out and evaluating past efforts in this field. We propose to do this by preparing a review and bibliography of such literature in Bengali. We therefore request, through your columns, all friends and comrades to share their knowledge with us. Specifically we want information on revolutionary literature for the masses and suggest the following points:

(a) name of the writing; (b) author; (c) publisher; (d) year of publication; (e) availability: market (price), library, private collection etc; (f) short comment or evaluation.

RANJU BHOMIK
Raghabpur, Panpara, Nadia
West Bengal

*Milk co-operatives
as an instrument for creating new jobs*

Survey of two villages in Kaira* traces half their income to milk



Rearing milk cattle has become as important an occupation as agriculture in many villages in Kaira. In villages with milk co-ops, slightly over half the income is from milk, as against 20% in villages without milk co-ops. Apart from raising village incomes, milk co-ops have created more jobs in villages, in collection centres, in cattle feed plants and in animal husbandry services.

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

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

Amul has shown the way.

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STATEMENT OF POSITION

DECEMBER 31, 1970 Rs.	LIABILITIES	DECEMBER 31, 1971 Rs.
2,80,00,000	CAPITAL : Paid Up	2,80,00,000
4,79,10,000	Reserve Fund	5,22,35,000
2,95,80,58,892	Deposits	3,37,43,98,457
21,11,47,116	Due to Banks and Correspondents	9,28,53,473
7,60,12,420	Bills Payable	5,28,79,850
34,18,73,143	Bills for Collection	34,30,22,487
10,69,28,107	Branch Adjustments etc.	10,69,53,545
30,17,45,910	Acceptances for Customers	24,51,23,663
	PROFIT & LOSS ACCOUNT :	
1,42,02,974	Profit for the year	1,80,44,792
	Less : Transfer to Reserve Fund & Bonus to Staff	1,27,85,000
<u>94,92,054</u>	Balance to be transferred to Central Govt.	<u>52,59,792</u>
<u>47,10,920</u>		<u>4,30,07,26,267</u>
<u>4,07,63,86,508</u>		
	ASSETS	
33,12,25,968	Cash on Hand and with Banks	31,10,66,626
1,62,64,000	Money at Call & Short Notice	4,85,00,307
83,65,58,068	Investments in Govt. & other Securities, Shares, Debentures etc.	99,05,53,193
2,17,14,67,526	Loans, Advances and Bills Purchased & Discounted	2,28,86,42,352
34,18,73,143	Bills for Collection	34,30,22,487
30,17,45,910	Constituents Liability on Acceptances	24,51,23,663
2,41,24,238	Premises	2,61,54,342
2,69,66,312	Furniture & Fixtures	2,92,76,679
2,61,61,343	Other Assets etc.	1,83,86,618
<u>4,07,63,86,508</u>		<u>4,30,07,26,267</u>