

# frontier

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## SOEKARNO

DEATH must have come as a great deliverance to Bung Karno. Never mind its being a lonely death, for the lonely living, shorn of majesty, shorn of the grandeur of power, was certainly much worse. President Soekarno was less lucky than Jawaharlal Nehru; the ordeal of the ignominy of dethroned existence has been somewhat more elongated in his case. Now it is all over; Indonesia's last link with the mainstream of Asian nationalism is snapped. Even as the present unfolds as history, Indonesia, at least for some years in the immediate future, will find itself bereft of a context. This discontinuity is a terrible burden to bear for any nation: for the country which Soekarno, almost single-handed, banged into an integrated emotion, even though it be for an altogether short duration, the burden is bound to be inordinately more complex.

It has been a tangled, messy story, from the pinnacle of the Bandung Conference of 1955 to the toothless, clawless remainder of the days in recent years. One could of course always commiserate and exclaim, what a way to go; but, in retrospect, history would indeed seem to have been bloodmindedly fair. There is a certain ersatz quality in the ingredients of the heroes of yester years, be it Nehru, Nkrumah or Soekarno. Flamboyance plays a role at particular junctures of an emerging country's history, but only at those specific junctures. While fighting an alien power, it is perfectly in order to cut ideological corners, to slur over such vital issues as those concerning the relationship between economic reconstruction and class alignments, or those touching on the relationship between the base and the super-structure. Style is the man, or something to that effect, was alleged by Shakespeare; Soekarno, by his personal example, vindicated the statement. But a Latin temperament is scarcely the most appropriate asset-holding for one who aspires to fill in the leadership of resurgent Asia. The temperament did not click with the role. Many of Bung Karno's famous cross-continental missions thus failed to set rivers of Asian consciousness on fire. On the home front, the deficiency was still more obvious. The ideas were all right, but the Brother was in a hurry. He assumed socialism was amenable to legislative and administrative fiat. So the social structure was left as it was; the national democratic front, embracing the PKI at one end

and the Nahadatul Ulama at the other, became the repository of infinite trust. President Soekarno, impatience in his vein, waited for some years for the double miracle of instant economic development and rampant socialism. Neither followed: rampant inflation and bureaucratic machinations were feeble answers to the grandiose ambitions. In his impatience, Bung Karno sometimes turned, at least covertly, to give acquiescence to short-cuts. In a heterogeneous society with a fragmented mass base, and a near-primitive economic structure, the strategy of a military counter-coup for strengthening socialism is perhaps little less than romanticism, especially if no prior attempt has been made to raise and deploy armed partisans who could strike simultaneously. Of course, such retrospective judgments are cheaper by the dozen. And perhaps poor Soekarno was more sinned against than sinning. The full details of what happened in the autumn of 1965 will now remain buried, for long decades, under the gory butcheries perpetrated by the agents of America.

Those believing in historical determinism will legitimately maintain that none of those millions of deaths has been in vain—in the final round, the exploiters and the military bandits are bound to disappear along with their foreign patrons, and, in the country, the people will prevail. But that still leaves unanswered the question whether the deaths were at all necessary. And surely, even as President Soekarno, incarcerated in impotent luxury, deserted by wives and offspring, was counting out his residual longevity during the last few years, overshadowing his personal tragedy, the tragedy of the Indonesian people must have been uppermost in his mind. Or so one would like to think. To think less would be to be unpardonably graceless toward the memory of a man who was great in his own manner even though the manner passeth.

## Powell Wins

It is difficult to see why a Tory victory in Britain should sadden "progressive" Indian hearts. A setback for socialism? Even the fuzzy Fabians would have been shocked to hear that socialism would mean no more than a national health service. A blow to the world's forces of progress? Even Richard Nixon could not have hoped for a more unfaithful satellite than the pragmatic socialist who headed the Labour Government. Heath's support for American aggression in Indo-China will be more outspoken, his endorsement of racist policies in Africa or at home more direct, his espousal of the capitalist cause more open. There will be less deception. Not that the Wilsonian deceit was not transparent, but its socialist label was a sickening sight. What did the pragmatist with the pipe promise Britain? Nothing but a little petty-bourgeois peace, heavily protected by bourgeois law and order. Didn't he say that the people wanted nothing but a quiet, strong government? What did he promise the world, assuming that the promise could mean anything? Nothing but a self-complacent role as a lackey of the Americans and West Germans.

Since Heath is reaction without any progressive plumage, he will more truly represent the mainstream in Britain today. Not that Britons are interested in the foreign "issues" he raised in the election campaign. Dreams of a continuing role east of Suez may sustain a few delusions of grandeur in some senile Tory brains, but the average Briton does not care much what happens in Indo-China or anywhere else so long as his private life remains undisturbed by the fear of another devaluation and high prices. With all such nonsense as socialism taken out of the Government vocabulary, life is likely to be even less complicated than it has already been under Wilson's management. The Common Market promises some dubious comfort; a European identity is also

good for the ego of people who have lost their colonial possessions and have in recent years been made to feel inferior both across the Atlantic and across the Channel.

Finally, Heath has been appropriately chosen the Prime Minister of a racist Britain. After all, the Labour leadership could not bring itself openly to defend Powellist racism. For that matter, even Heath thought Powell to be a problem; indeed, he did drop Enoch from the Shadow Cabinet, and the Cabinet announced last Saturday was untainted by Powell's presence. But the fact remains that Powell was a principal Tory campaigner and his campaign was a more immediate reality than the Springbok's 70 Tour that never was or the World Cup that was denied England by some Teutonic brethren. The skinheads who recognised this readily are 18, 19 or 20 year olds who came to vote after a bout of Paki- or Indi-bashing. Powell's apocalyptic tones, conjuring up visions of a threat graver than Nazism, may have embarrassed the staid supporters of gentlemanly British values; but young factory workers, fed up with Afro-Asian colour, could not care less. Even a study of the reported incidents should have revealed this trend, but the psephologists chose to ignore an unpleasant fact. This, of course, is not the first time that pollsters have totally misread all prospects, but seldom have predictions displayed such collective ignorance. The New Delhi wizard who has specialised in going wrong with every election forecast in India, need not lose heart. He is reported to have demonstrated his flair also on an island across the Palk Straits, but after the British election results he can consider himself to be in distinguished company. If the sahibs can go wrong, why can't we?

## Mid-Term Manoeuvres

The left parties in West Bengal are progressing, as the Americans would say, famously despite the collapse of

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the United Front. Some of the parties are still claiming to work for the revival of the 14-party front without realising how out of date they are. The 14 parties are already 17, and the process may not have come to an end. The proliferation of parties has, however, already reached a higher stage of development in the shapes of proliferation of fronts, though front is a word that is being carefully avoided by all parties so that, it seems, it may be used in all its pristine innocence if after the next election the left parties find the need of another all-in alliance to get into office. The six-party combination, led by the CPM, and the eight-party combination, led naturally, by the CPI, are already several weeks old. Now Mr Ajoy Mukherjee has threatened to form a democratic front—he does not shy at the word perhaps because he feels he can make and unmake fronts whenever he likes. Who will be the partners of this front, apart from the Bangla Congress, are not clear. It seems he will draw upon the eight-party combination, some of whose constituents are eager to ally with the Bangla Congress at any event; others will have to decide whether to toe their line instead of splitting strength. They are united in their opposition to the CPM; the only point to be settled is to what extent they would collaborate with the Congress(R).

Out of office, the left parties have suddenly become alive to the miseries of the people to alleviate which they did precious little when in office. They are crying themselves hoarse over the rising prices, over police repression, over deployment of the Central Reserve Police. These are all old battle-cries of the left parties; the difference this time is that they are not being raised from a united left platform. The CPM-dominated group has called a convention next month to work out a programme of agitation to be climaxed by a Bangla bandh. The eight parties under the leadership of the CPI have planned a separate movement practically on the basis of the same demands, except that one of their principal aims is to expose

the "perfidy" of the CPM. Even the Bangla Congress is toying with the idea of a movement for undoing the wrongs done in the UF regime. With so many movements in the offing, the people of West Bengal could look forward to an exciting time. But they have to be wary also. The eight parties are unlikely to participate in the bandh to be called by the six parties; if they oppose it actively, as they did on March 17, blood may flow again. The prospects for the eight-party agitation are no different. The movement threatened by the Bangla Congress, if it ever takes place, will be directed against the other two for neither the six-party nor the eight-party combination is, at least on paper, ashamed of the land recovery movement in the UF regime.

Apparently, the movements are not meant to achieve their declared objectives. Had it been so, there would have been a single movement as in the past when the left parties were not very much more united than they are at present. The movements will cancel one another. The majority of the left parties have already opted for dissolution of the Assembly and another mid-term poll. The fence-sitters are realising that they cannot continue to evade the issue for long on the pretext of further efforts for revicall of the original front; they are likely to make their decisions soon. The only parties which do not want any elections before 1972 are the Congress(R) and the Bangla Congress. The latest offer of the former to support any non-CPM ministry that may be formed by Mr Ajoy Mukherjee seeks to defer a united demand for a mid-term poll. Whether this will have any effect on the eight-party combination is doubtful; there are parties in this group on which Mr Mukherjee will not be able to prevail, though they are supporting him in his anti-CPM campaign; for the sake of Mr Mukherjee they may defer the demand for some time, but not indefinitely. Within three months the left parties are tired of being out of office, and they are not prepared to wait till 1972. The proposed move-

ments are a rehearsal for the election, a matching of strength to find out what the chances of the contending groups are. They will pass by the common man, though they are being waged in his name.

## Another Coup

The nonchalance of the Argentines over the eighth coup in three decades which deposed President Juan Carlos Ongania and brought back the military junta into power was not surprising, for there is now tweedledee in place of tweedledum. Except Casa Rosada, the Presidential palace in downtown Buenos Aires, which was besieged to make Ongania surrender, there were no other visible signs of a coup. Life in the capital was like any other day. Politics in Argentina has been conducted in such a way that it has become an exclusive preserve of the armed forces. The charge against Ongania was that he did not stick to the guidelines spelled out by the military chiefs who chose him to succeed Arturo Illia in 1966, by refusing to consider their proposals aimed at restoring democracy. Ongania, on the other hand, maintained that the country was not yet ready for a return to constitutional rule, because the aims of the "revolutionary charter" under which he took power had not been fulfilled. A balance-sheet of the last four years' working of the Government will show that it has drawn a blank on the credit side, notwithstanding the abatement of inflation from 30 per cent to about 8 per cent a year. Taking advantage of a weak labour union movement, the Government maintained in 1968 a total wage freeze. However, following the May 69 unrest a 17 per cent wage increase was authorised. As a consequence, Argentina's long-stagnant economy is beginning to overheat. Ongania's economic measures, which were aimed at inviting foreign investments, weakened the position of the national financial elite. Under Article 8 of Articles of Agreement of the IMF;

Argentina liberalised international transfers on current account. Furthermore, exploration rights of foreign oil companies which were revoked by President Illia were re-negotiated. Argentines looked on helplessly while foreign interests, mainly American, gained control of the commanding heights of the economy. Labour and radical students were the bete noire of Onganía, for he knew that they would form the core of the opposition to his regime. Actually Onganía's power started crumbling after the May uprising. There is a trichotomy in the Argentinian labour movement. The General Confederation of Labour (CGT) is divided not only between Peronists and anti-Peronists but among Peronists themselves. Efforts were made to unite different factions of the CGT so that it could be made the sole bargaining authority. But its internal dissensions and capitulation before Government pressure brought the unions most opposed to the regime under a new CGT. It had been successful in organising the State Oil Refinery Strike (YPF) in La Plata. It played a great role in co-ordinating the students, industrial workers and shopkeepers during the May uprising. The Government panicked and Onganía ordered his troops to bring the situation under control. But the army which is the real power in Argentina did not like to play the role of police. Nor had it any liking for Onganía's concept of "Consejos Asesores". The President wanted to rule the country by appointing representatives of labour unions and different professions to the executive council. The experiment conducted in the province of Córdoba for the establishment of an economic and social council to represent community interests led 'conservative liberals' to fear that Onganía's ultimate aim was to introduce the system of corporate state. Onganía thought he could remain in power by periodically purging the high command and balancing the nationalists and liberals in the army. After General Lanusse was appointed commander-in-chief he made quick changes in the middle ranks by dropping some important

nationalists. It was already too late when Onganía realised the implication of these dismissals.

## The War In Cambodia

Whatever may be the name of the game Nixon is playing, he is already finding it tough-going. The guerillas of the Cambodian National Liberation Army continue to strike at will. Even in the Fish Hook region where the Americans claimed to have broken the guerilla infrastructure they are getting hammer blows from the 'ragged guerilla bands.' With most of the countryside in the hands of pro-Sihanouk forces, General Lon Nol (poor soul, he has lost 19 pounds since the coup) and his American masters are desperately trying to bombard the cities into submission wherever they see that the people are rallying round Sihanouk. After the townspeople are forced to slip into the surrounding countryside to escape the murderous bombing, General Lon's troops conduct a victorious march and "recapture" the smouldering ruins of the town. Despite what sensational newspaper headlines might say, Cambodian guerillas do not seem to be in a particular hurry to occupy towns, not to speak of the capital Phnom Penh. From the strategy they have so far followed it is obvious that they intend to consolidate quietly their control over the sprawling countryside and slowly tighten the noose around the capital. Faced with such a strategy, General Lon has to spread his army thin over the whole country and suffer crippling blows. The South Vietnamese put into service to bolster up his strength have in fact weakened his position in reverse proportion by their orgy of loot, rape and arson. And now even the South Vietnamese General Tri admits that General Lon's writ does not in fact run outside Phnom Penh. It is no wonder that General Lon makes the magnanimous offer of handing half of the country to guerilla control.

Meanwhile Thailand's Marshal

Thanom Kittikachorn, as a first step, proposes to send the 12,000-man Black Panther division to Cambodia. The payment these mercenaries now employed in South Vietnam get from the U.S. is a significant contribution to Thailand's foreign-exchange earnings and with the American masters willing, this can be further augmented on the Cambodian battlefield.

But the mood of the U.S. Senate does not augur well for the generals in Saigon, Phnom Penh and Bangkok. Last week in Washington the Byrd amendment that would have sanctioned unlimited authority for the President to order military actions in Cambodia if judged necessary for the safety of the American troops in South Vietnam was unceremoniously rejected by the Senate. This has brightened the prospects for the Cooper-Church amendment that would prohibit the President from spending any funds for military activities in Cambodia after July 1 without the prior consent of the Congress. If passed this amendment would be a definite obstacle to sending mercenaries to the help of General Lon. It is quite possible that Nixon would veto the bill and keep his hands free for further escalation of the war in Indo-China. But in that case he might risk violent resistance inside the country, while suffering greater defeats on the battlefield.

## Export Symphony

It used to be fashionable in the country, for the last two years, to talk of an export boom. Ministers and secretaries made it a point to dole out statistics about the rise in exports and the fall in imports; ad men of business houses rushed to newspapers to publish their wonderful stories about export records and import substitutions; foreign firms showed how they were stabilising the country's economy by earning dollars and roubles. The symphony rose to a climax when the GOI

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published its Economic Survey of 68-79 in April and said that export promotion efforts made since the Third Plan "were at last bearing fruit" (vide the 13.5 per cent export rise in 68-69, the decline in traditional items' export, the spurt in non-traditional and so forth).

After all this miracle, suddenly we are told that the nation's export rise in 69-70 has been 3.84 per cent. Those who observed the curve from the beginning and noticed that the movement was not that vertical as the GOI would have wished were wondering over the export ecstasy. What happened to all the record-shattering export achievements, given out month after month?

The official summary of India's foreign trade in 69-70 has been published. The grand drums and cymbals of the Survey have been replaced by whining woodwinds and strings. The magniloquence of image-establishing has been abandoned, the pomp of non-traditional goods' spurt has been muted, excuses and more excuses have come instead. Fall in unit value of primary products on the world market, glut in tea in London auction houses, U.S. cut-back in orders for jute manufactures, a tough fight in cotton textiles have let India down.

With the 13.5 per cent growth rate in 68-69 dwindling to 3.84 per cent in 69-70, when the Fourth Plan's modest export target was 7 per cent, the export ecstasy is rather difficult to sustain, even by the vivacious GOI. But it says, growth is growth, even if the quantum be small. The World Bank, however, reluctantly admits that the Indian economy has gone definitely nuts. Or, how is it that since devaluation, export earnings as a share of the national income have over the past four years steadily come down?

How goes the import counterpoint? There has been a 19 per cent decrease in 69-70 imports. The official summary, after a lyric on the miracle HYV seeds and magic tools, mentioned that Rs 69 crores less have been spent abroad on food-grains. Even two months earlier,

the reduction was assumed to be worth Rs 121 crores. On the other hand, the cut in expenditure on import of machinery, chemicals and metals has been as much as Rs 211 crores. Which means that so much was less spent for the growth of industry, crawling as it has been already. Import restrictions were assumed to guarantee the industrial growth rates! No wonder, newspapers now abound in reports from business houses pointing to falling production, lack of raw material and incentives, non-utilisation of industrial capacity, etc. etc.

The achievements in engineering goods, however, have been persistently good. There was 30 per cent more export in 69-70, with the earnings totalling Rs 107 crores. And that has made Mr B. R. Bhagat's head reel. The Steel Ministry bans the export of prime steel but Mr Bhagat wants the ban to be lifted so that the export earnings on that account can readily be inflated. Moreover he wants at least half a million tonnes of steel worth Rs 25 crores so that they can be converted into Rs 140 crores worth of engineering goods. How can Rs 25 crores worth of steel be converted into Rs 140 crores worth of engineering goods? Of course, the engineering goods industry uses more indigenous than imported steel. So the export of prime steel cannot be warranted, can it? Mr Bhagat has further said that, for the cause of export, domestic consumption must be curbed. How would it be possible without causing further inflation, under the existing circumstances? Can he make the local entrepreneurs fully utilise their rated production capacity? As a matter of fact, the number of companies willing to increase investment in engineering goods dropped in October 69—March 70 by more than half compared to the first half of 69. The six-month survey of the Indian Engineering Association has shown that there has been unutilised capacity in 75 per cent of 114 small, medium and large engineering companies, covering different sectors of the industry.

## View from Delhi

### China Shop Again

FROM A POLITICAL  
CORRESPONDENT

NEW Delhi's trial balloons on a dialogue with China are almost invariably a Pavlovian response to an impending U.S. aid cut or projected delivery of a new range of Soviet arms to Pakistan. The latest trial balloon was pegged to the reportedly friendly (and special) smile of Chairman Mao for our man in Peking at the May Day reception. Our man, in his excitement, rushed to New Delhi for hurried consultations.

At the ruling party's AICC session, there was a well articulated demand for a dialogue with China to solve the border dispute. The only jarring voice was that of Mr Nalinakshya Sanyal from West Bengal. Mrs Indira Gandhi attacked his demand for "containing" China and pointed out that even the Americans had not alleged Chinese troop presence in Cambodia, something which Mr Sanyal was trying to establish.

There is little doubt that there is a strong section in our Foreign Office and a sizable section in the ruling party which thinks we cannot afford to allow the Sino-Indian border dispute to continue indefinitely. Assessments that a Chinese peace offensive is in the offing and that Peking's foreign policy, at least its attitude to neighbours is becoming more flexible add to the arguments of those who want a dialogue with China.

But something more about the Our Man in Peking episode. Mishra Junior is the son of the Madhya Pradesh Congress boss D. P. Mishra, who incidentally is Mrs Gandhi's number one tactician behind the party split. Mishra Jr., while posted at the U. N. headquarters, knew that he would be the next Charge d' Affaires in Peking and perhaps thought he would go down in history as the man who brought about the thaw in Sino-Indian relations. Peking's "new look" diplomacy seemed

to make the realisation of his ambition possible. So he tried to establish a rapport with Albanians first, as the preparation for his Peking assignment. In Peking, he is known to have launched his own trial balloons trying to get across to the Chinese leadership the message that his papa was the real power behind the Government in New Delhi. When Mr D. P. Mishra was to undergo an operation, Mrs Gandhi thought it would be the best time to call Mishra Jr. for "consultations" in New Delhi.

Mishra Jr. is believed to have gone back with the understanding that India aimed at restoring ambassador-level relations with China first, and if possible a border settlement. After all it was India's decision not to send Mr G. Parthasarathy back, in 1962, that lowered the level of relations with China. It was a matter of protocol and when the Indian Ambassador did not return to Peking, China was obliged to recall its Ambassador in New Delhi and not to send him back again.

Can Mrs Gandhi afford to initiate a dialogue with China? On January 1, 1969, Mrs Gandhi hinted at such a dialogue, answering a question at her New Year Day press conference. (She has not held a formal press conference since). New Delhi's thinking lapsed back to its old rigidity in a matter of weeks.

It once suited the Government leadership, including Mrs Gandhi, to whip up an anti-China hysteria as part of cynical politicking. Even a demand for greater autonomy for States was met by the redoubtable Home Minister, Mr Y. B. Chavan, with the incredible argument that a weak-Centre would help China and only China wanted a weak Centre in India.

How would the parties of the right, fed on anti-Chinese hysteria engineered as part of deliberate policy by the Government, react to any diplomatic initiative by India? The demand for such an initiative came among others from Mr K. R. Ganesh, Lok Sabha member for Andamans, Mr Ganesh, of Tamil origin, was close to the CPI in student days in

the old Madras Presidency but cannot be regarded as a Young Turk of the Chandrajit Yadav variety. Another prominent AICC member who voiced the demand was Mr Barkatullah Khan from Rajasthan. But the pro-Soviet lobby in the ruling party was most embarrassed by the demand, in contrast to the enthusiasm of the Yugoslav lobby.

Assuming New Delhi is serious about a diplomatic initiative, Mrs Gandhi would have to encounter opposition to it from two quarters: the Jana Sangh-Swatantra combine and the Soviet lobby. Surprisingly, thinking in favour of a settlement with China is growing within the Congress-O.

A far-fetched interpretation of Mrs Gandhi's new stance on the border dispute is that she is activating the "settle with China" group in the party to put pressure on the Soviets not to give any more military hardware to Pakistan. Assuming this is not true, and the Government is earnest about diplomatic initiative, the odds are against the Prime Minister and she has to thank herself for this position. Certain things are not easily forgotten. It has always suited the Government leadership to abet the U.S.-inspired lobby campaigns in New Delhi to demand snapping of diplomatic relations with China and to recognise Taiwan. Those who actively campaigned for the Two Chinas theory and severance of relations with Peking are very much a part of the "new Congress". It suited the Government leadership to whip up such lobbies at startlingly regular intervals.

One should hardly be shocked if the Soviets begin activating the same lobby, even if the Americans are indifferent. The *New Times* article of June 9 appears to have been timed to warn India and other countries against any detente with China. For instance, the article says about alleged Chinese interference in the affairs of Bhutan and Sikkim things that even India has not said. The Sikkim ruling circles are being assiduously wooed by India's Moscow lobby. Those who called the Sik-

kim Maharani an "American Trojan mare" are now welcome as State guests to the Himalayan kingdom.

The Soviet reading appears to be that China is out to forge an anti-Soviet united front in South and Southeast Asia, and later on a global scale though China's final confrontation will be with the United States. Granting this premise, it should be in China's interest to respond to any initiative by India and isolate the Soviet Union on the Sino-Indian border issue. The influence of at least one of the super-powers must be eliminated by India if it means a serious dialogue with China. Diplomatically, it should help China considerably to be able to isolate the Soviet Union and be able to point out that while a non-socialist country like India could settle its dispute with China, only the 'socialist' Soviet Union does not want to settle its dispute with her.

The Soviets fear this situation most. After all, by the end of 1962, according to a Soviet official statement, there were 5,000 incidents on the Sino-Soviet border. Even before Peking gave notice of its intention to raise the border dispute with the Soviet Union (the notice came in the form of a reply to Khrushchev's attack on China by proxy, through the U.S. Communist Party's attack on Peking in connection with the Cuban missile crisis), the border confrontation was complete. The issues in the Sino-Soviet and Sino-Indian border disputes are the same. It would be in Soviet interest to block a settlement of the Sino-Indian border dispute so that it can have a second front against China. India has in the past obligingly played the super-power game of containing China. If Mrs Gandhi's attack on Mr Nalinaksha Sanyal's "containment" theory represents any shift in New Delhi's China policy, it should logically lead to a diplomatic initiative on the border dispute. If things stop there, one can only conclude that it is yet another gimmick to fillate the Soviet nerves and prevent delivery of Sukhai-7s to Pakistan.

## Another Kind Of P. R.

A. P. M.

THE three car manufacturers in the country have two industrial associations. One of these is based in Calcutta, dominated by the local manufacturer. This association has a top secret file, which is interesting on several counts.

First, it contains a list of influential people the automobile industry approached for making a favourable representation on its behalf to the Government last year when the car price rise was a big issue. The people contacted were all residents of New Delhi, both permanently and temporarily. The persons belonging to the latter category were those who bear the burden of law-making for the country. It is they who constituted the majority of the people the industry contacted last year, when in its frenzy it imagined the Cabinet had turned irrevocably radical. The panic has subsided and the file has not been opened for some time; it, however, highlights a few aspects of our public life.

Handling the file, what strikes one immediately is that the approach to the law-makers had been very selective. No undue labour was exerted to sound people with the least socialist pretensions. The persons approached by the industry are, or were in the case of a few since dead, resoundingly rightist in their economic and political thinking. No or little time had been wasted on the preliminaries. Some of these people had, in fact, summarised more competently the essential points of view of the industry than the industry representatives themselves could.

The law-makers' replies, however, were more interesting than the fact of the contact itself. They often cut across the formal party lines and talked remarkably with each other in import. The people approached ranged from the Swatantraites to the conscience voters. Once the industry men knocked on their doors and informed them of their necessity, the

response was immediate, unexpectedly favourable and enthusiastic. But the most interesting thing is that while the industry wanted these people to speak in its favour publicly, the latter instead suggested private confabulations with the people in the right places. For, this was less risky.

Even in their enthusiasm, almost all the people contacted frankly pointed out the inadequacy of the logic on which the plea for a price rise had

been built up, because they could not close their eyes to two aspects of the industry—poor quality and extremely high prices of the products. Because these two things could not be covered up, the industry was sadly informed, no epoch-making, Treasury Bench-cowering speech was possible. A far more feasible substitute would be to apply the rules for winning friends and influencing people with the Secretariat bureaucrats and the elected higher-ups in the Administration.

## Chaibasa : A Case Study

N. K. SINGH

A study now of the Chaibasa (Bihar) riots in April may appear late, and overshadowed by what happened in Maharashtra. But since the Chaibasa happenings did not attract many journalists, it is worthwhile to recapitulate the ominous sequence of events, a sequence which is becoming a familiar pattern and which reveals an organisation and a kind of planning not confined to Bihar alone.

Chaibasa—the headquarters of the adivasi district of Singhbhum—has about 30,000 people, of whom eight thousand are Muslims. A considerable number of East Pakistan refugees too live in this clumsy town. Since it is not an industrial area, Chaibasa does not have many working-class people.

In the last mid-term elections, the Jharkhand Party won Chaibasa, which is a reserved constituency. No municipal elections have been held at Chaibasa for 12 years. Mr S. R. Rungta, a local big-wig, is the city father. The Jana Sangh and RSS are quite active at Chaibasa and RSS *sakhās* are organised by them regularly.

There had never been any communal riot at Chaibasa. It remained unaffected even during the widespread communal riots in 1964 which enveloped the district, including the steel-city of Jamshedpur.

The Chaibasa riots started in the wake of the Ram Navami procession on April 15. According to the official version, the trouble exploded and assumed formidable dimension because officialdom was supposedly caught unawares. This, however, is not the exact truth.

There was some tension in the air over an old dispute as to whether the Ram Navami procession should skirt off near the Urdu Library into a lane and pass in front of a mosque in the interior of Bari Bazar. The dispute rose this year when a Muharram procession allegedly stopped in front of a temple in which daylong *kirtan* was going on and allegedly caused a lot of annoyance by beating the drums. This foolish act, said to have been initiated by some militant members of Jamaat-e-Islami, had caused a good deal of resentment and provoked a counter-challenge. Actually, the procession had to stray from the scheduled route and pass by the temple because on the normal route some construction was going on.

Since then some youths of both the communities had talked of a "trial of strength". Particularly, the workers of the RSS and Jamaat-e-Islami were very militant about it and were found challenging each other openly.

This correspondent came to know from reliable sources that a top RSS

leader, whose actual identity was not given but who was introduced as Bhaujee (must be one of the Maharashtrian lieutenants of Golwalkar, as the name suggests) had attended and addressed a specially organised RSS rally on the local Gandhi-Maidan on April 7—barely one week before the trouble.

It is also reported that two of the notorious fire-eaters of the Jana Sangh—one from Ranchi and the other from Chakradharpur—were mysteriously lurking at Chaibasa on the eve of the havoc.

### Tension

So, a thick air of tension was hanging over Chaibasa. For days together rumours were around that there would be serious trouble during Ram Navami. Many Muslim families had moved to "safer zones".

Another thing which gives clear indication of tension is the hurriedly called meeting of the Peace Committee on April 13. No meeting of the committee had taken place since its formation in 1964. Due to the tension in April it was decided that the Peace Committee members would lead the Ram Navami procession.

One must take note of an intriguing incident in this connection. The printed question paper for the examination of non-gazetted officers of Chotanagpur which includes Chaibasa contained an item which said the Government had received reports that political parties were planning large-scale communal riots on Ram Navami day in the State. The examinees were asked to draft a note to district officials on the Chief Secretary's behalf suggesting effective steps to maintain peace!

This year, the organisers of the Ram Navami procession had originally applied for passage through the Muslim locality of Barakandaztoli but later withdrew it under official pressure. The original application gave some indication of the intention: if the Muslims had passed by a temple, the Hindus too must pass by a mosque.

However, the number of militants was small. But more enthusiasm was

found this year among a considerable section of the procession organisers.

As scheduled, the procession of about 10,000 people, which included many children, started from the Baba Mandir. Crackers were burst at the mandir and again in the Sadar Bazar to mark the occasion.

The organisers of the procession, from all available evidence, had gone about the town and advised the Hindu shopkeepers to pull down their shutters after 2 p.m., which they did. (The Muslim shopkeepers followed suit. One could not get tea in the town after 3 p.m.)

Several known Jana Sangh-RSS fellows and mine-owners were active in organising the procession. One jeep bearing the number BRS 2903 moved all over asking the shopkeepers to pull their shutters down—something never done before. The jeep is owned by a Sanghi and was driven by him.

A Muslim said that slogans such as "Maro Musalman Ko" (kill the Muslims); "Jai Bazrangbali" were being raised in the procession. Volunteers with yellow badges (influence of the Sangh) were controlling the procession which was armed with lethal weapons.

Though the police were kept in reserve, only six or seven constables were actually sent along with the procession. No magistrate, no police high-ranker accompanied it, while in previous years all of them used to turn up in strength.

### The Incident

When about half the procession had passed the 'point of danger', i.e. Barkandaztoli, some of the participants tried to divert the procession towards the mosque. A 'war of words' started between the mischief-makers from both sides. At that moment some crackers were thrown. Police claim that these came from the predominantly Muslim residential area. Another version is that crackers had been used by the processionists themselves quite frequently from the very start. However, seven or eight people were injured.

A general melee followed and with-

in a short time the police arrived in force, the police station being just 200 metres off, and shooting began, followed by looting and arson.

In the first two hours the riot was an affair between Muslims and Hindus in which some 45 persons were injured and some were killed. But after that the majority receded into the background, with the town put under curfew.

It is alleged that policemen of lower ranks took the field and resumed the riot on their own account—a riot more ferocious, devastating and brutal. Innocent people were killed and thrown into the burning houses, thus removing all chances of a post-mortem.

The cause of this allegedly abrupt change of policemen into a squad of rioters was a rumour, which spread like wild fire, that a constable had been slain by the Muslims. The constable was only injured but policemen, it is said, went on a rampage.

It is reported that at one place, the SP found three constables chasing two helpless women with loaded guns during the curfew. The SP and the DG saved them and took away the rifles of the constables and suspended them immediately.

All the burning, looting and assault took place just near two police stations. Petrol was used in plenty and it is alleged that a petrol pump owned by a local big mineowner supplied all of it. Most shops affected were not looted in the usual manner but just set on fire.

Another curious feature was that electricity suddenly went off at the precise moment of the melee, plunging the whole area into darkness. Supply was not resumed for the next four hours while the rampage was on. Electric supply in Chaibasa is maintained by a local business magnate. The telephone line too went dead suddenly.

### Casualties

No one is taken in by the official figure of 23 killed at Chaibasa and 2 at Chakradharpur except of course the officials who gave it to the press. The unofficial figure is 32.

Data personally collected by this correspondent indicate that only two Hindus were killed. One Mungri Oraon, a rickshawpuller who had a dagger wound died in the hospital before he could give his statement. Another Hindu, Mr R. S. Joshi, an employee of the ACC (Chaibasa) was beaten to death by a violent gang, which would not hear his plea that he was a Hindu too! The scooter rickshaw on which he was travelling was burnt along with the Muslim driver.

As it always happens, most of the victims were lower-class people. The most important thing is, that, except for the general melee, direct confrontation and clashes between the two communities were absent. The deaths were mainly, it is alleged, the result of wanton, unwarranted police firing concentrated in one particular Muslim residential area. Except one identified and four unidentified charred bodies, all other deaths are claimed to have been from bullet injuries, though the police are disputing this.

The assassination of Mr J. Rahman, the Assistant Superintendent of the ITI (Chaibasa), is evidence that only handful of vested interest elements plunged into the affair. The ITI enrolls 200 students of whom 20 are Muslims. Owing to the prevailing tension in the town, Muslim students and instructors had shifted to "safer zones" by 11 a.m. on April 15. But Mr Rahman did not. He said "I would not move. I've faith in my comrades."

But in the evening, as reported by the co-workers of Mr Rahman, brick-battling started all of a sudden on his quarters. Nobody went to that side, being afraid of the consequences. The spot of murder makes it clear that Mr Rahman was not killed by a mob but rather by a small but determined gang. In this background there is the story that Mr Rahman was charged by the local Hindu communalist group with having kept his only son and two daughters in Pakistan.

Mr Indrabhushan Singh, Joint Secretary of the Chaibasa Town Com-

mittee of the CPI, reported that two Muslims were trapped inside a 'bora' and were burnt alive near the local Kalika Art Press. On receiving the information, Mr Singh hurried to the spot but the victims were already half-roasted and could not be saved.

On the evening of April 16 two bodies were found lying barely 150 yards from the Sadar Police Station. They were salesmen in a nearby ganja shop.

Two Muslims coming from Orissa in their car No. ORJ2151 were burnt alive along with the vehicle.

One Md. Mustafa, who was coming from Rourkela and had boarded the 'Lal bus' at Chakradharpur, was dragged down at Chaibasa and reportedly beaten to death.

As for the deaths caused by alleged police firing many names were reported to this correspondent while he was roaming in the minority community areas of Chaibasa. Two boys, including one student from Ranchi named Manzoor, lost their lives when the bullet-spraying police van appeared. Rickshaw-puller Dil Mohammad was shot point blank. A barber who himself had a bayonet wound claimed that police forced open his saloon and dragged him and his brother to the police van. When his brother showed reluctance, the police, the barber said, shot him point blank.

Md. Hanif, grand old man of Chaibasa who every year used to offer pan and cold drinks to all who took part in the Ram Navami procession, was shot dead in front of his garage and his body reportedly burnt with petrol.

Residents reported that the following persons were killed in the police firing: Jalil, a petty hotel owner; M. Alam, owner of the Naj Hotel; son of a tyre dealer Md. Yusuf; Rahman, father of a radio dealer Mumtaj.

The correspondent saw many bullet marks on the inside door of a house near the local Public Relations Office. The scene at another residence was more shocking, patches of blood here and there and everywhere on the roof. Many bullet marks too were there to tell the

pathetic story. This correspondent counted at least 85 bullet marks on the walls, roofs, inside doors and windows of many residential houses in the disturbed area.

As for the injured, officials gave their number, on April 16, as 32, but as expected, by the 20th it swelled to 52, of whom 34 were described as seriously injured. Unofficial sources put the figure at 100. As usual most of them belong to the lower class of the minority community.

#### Loss of Property

All the 90 shops and houses looted or gutted (mostly belonging to the minority community) particularly or wholly were within yards of the town's two principal police stations. Unofficial estimates put the damage to property at several lakhs of rupees. (Grand Total Rs 17 million 13 thousand).

In the Sadar Bazar area which is dominated by the majority community no damage has been reported to Hindu property. Some Muslim shops were not gutted but looted. The reason was perhaps that they were in the same line with Hindu shops. All the property gutted in that particular area are in the premises of Choti Masjid—just in front of the police station. As there was no fear of any loss to Hindu property, they were set on fire.

Great damage was done in the Bari Bazar area where the trouble started. There too all the damaged shops were just in front of the police station.

This correspondent has found only one instance (residence of Mr M. C. Biswas) where the property belonging to a Hindu, though separate from the property of the minority community, was set on fire.

As it usually happens on such occasions, there was no dearth of wild rumours. A rumour was spread that the Mahavir Murti, which was taken out in the Ram Navami procession, had been bombed and seriously damaged and that it fell off the van and broke into pieces. It was later found that the image was not affected by any explosion.

### The Blame

Mr Daroga Rai, Chief Minister of Bihar, blamed the riots on Naxalites and Pakistan agents. When this correspondent asked Karpoori Thakur, SSP leader, to comment on this, he said it was most irresponsible for the Chief Minister to say that Naxalites had any hand in the Chaibasa riots.

In a special interview, Mr S. N. Singh, Secretary of the Bihar State CP(ML), said: "The whole world knows that Marxist-Leninists consider communalism, casteism, provincialism and national chauvinism as opium for the people. The CP(ML) stands for the politics of class, not of religion.

"Mr Daroga Rai is talking through his hat. It is nothing less than political dishonesty to mix up communism with communalism. It is indeed unfortunate that in his concoction Mr Rai would not go beyond the mental horizon of a mufasil police daroga."

Talking to people of both the communities in the riot-affected towns of Chaibasa and Chakradharpur helped to restore the faith of this correspondent in the sanity of people and the future of this country. But it also shattered whatever faith he had in the administrative machinery, particularly in its law and order arm.

It is understandable when a Hindu goes for a Muslim and vice versa, when communal frenzy grips a place. At Chaibasa this was not so and Muslims openly alleged that the assaults on them were led by the lower ranks of the police. Even if a part of the allegations is true, it is a fearful state of affairs.

The police not only failed to protect the minority community, they also did not take any steps to pre-

vent violence. No police force was posted at any sensitive spot and most of the acts took place near police stations, indicating police inaction, to say the least. As Mr Karpoori Thakur told this correspondent, it may be stated without any fear of contradiction that the administration failed miserably not only in the intelligence but also in dealing with the hooligans.

Till April 17 as many as 143 arrests were made. But among the arrested there were only two from the majority community—a fantastic situation in which the overwhelming majority of the killed belonged to the minority community.

During the presence of senior central government officials in the town, arrests from among the majority community too started later. Even then none of the ringleaders of the RSS or Jana Sangh were affected. Reportedly, all of them were absconding. It is said that 24 Muslims were arrested who do not belong to Bihar and that two of the arrested are probably Pakistani nationals.

The wonder of wonders is who ordered the police to fire. None, including the officials of Chaibasi, could answer the query. The local DDO who was present in the procession was named in this connection.

The police, at first declared that they had fired only 20 rounds. Later the figure went up to 40 rounds. Perhaps no less than 100 rounds were fired. And probably 'three-naught-three' rifles were used.

What impressed this correspondent most was that not one of the minority community among the many he met, complained against the majority community; their only complaint was against the police.

The darkness at Chaibasa has been somewhat relieved by examples of secularism by members of both the communities. A five-year old Hindu boy, Lakshman, was handed back after four days of tender care by the Muslim of Barkandaztali. Three Madrasis belonging to the majority community were given shelter by a Muslim family of the same locality for days.

### Book Review

## The Peasants Of North Vietnam

N. K. CHANDRA

THE valiant struggle of the Vietnamese people against the U.S. aggressors has produced as one of its by-products a plethora of books from every possible angle. By now numerous reporters with widely divergent political views have been allowed inside North Vietnam to write up their own stories. Gerard Chaliand\* is one such foreign journalist who spent there five weeks in the autumn of 1967. But then his mission was rather unique: he wanted to make an on-the-spot study of the rural communes in North Vietnam.

Chaliand started with this query: "How has a small agricultural land, with a population of 32 million only, (less than that of West Bengal—NKC) with nothing in its favour save determination and ingenuity, managed to stand up to the nation which leads the world in technological achievement?" Later on the author says, "There are historical reasons, stemming from the inherited patterns of Vietnamese rural society, and political reasons, stemming from those later patterns which the regime has deliberately fostered. The survival of North Vietnam has been made possible by massive decentralization, a wholesale movement away from the towns and cities; the process has been facilitated by the communal traditions of village life and carried out with a remarkable degree of technical efficiency." (Our italics)

Most appropriately, the book begins with a 50-page introduction highlighting the salient features of Vietnam's history where the importance of the village commune through the centuries is underlined repeatedly. The commune not only maintained a

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By Gerard Chaliand. Pelican, 1969.  
Price 7 shillings

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good measure of independence vis-à-vis the central authorities but also played a key role in resisting and ultimately driving out the great Chinese, Mongol and French invasions. Because of the communes, guerilla warfare was started as early as the 13th century against the Mongols. In the fifteenth century Vietnam was ruled for a while by the Ming dynasty from China to be overthrown again by guerillas led by Le Loi, himself a landowning peasant. Le Loi's political adviser was a strategist of genius, Nguyen Trai, whose highly original writings on the political and military aspects of guerilla warfare have had a big impact on the present generation of Vietnamese leaders. The chapters on history bring us right up to the present times.

On the Vietnamese Workers' Party only two points may be noted. Firstly, the party had, within three months of its formation in February 1930, made agrarian reforms in favour of the landless agricultural labourers its main slogans. Secondly, even while the Popular Front line was promulgated by the Comintern, the demand for Vietnamese national independence was dropped in favour of an alliance with the bourgeoisie and the Party decided to cooperate with the colonial administration in the war against fascism and was consequently allowed for the first time to operate legally,—in spite of all these "favourable" trends the Party did not wind up its underground set-up. The Party successfully managed to function at two levels: the open and the clandestine. Later events amply justified this decision of the Party.

The more substantive and original part of the book deals with peasant communes in four provinces of the Red River delta, namely, those of Hung Yen, Thai Binh, Ha Tay and Nin Binh. The account for each province opens with a longish statement from an important Party or State functionary that provides a backdrop to the pages that follow. There are numerous personal accounts from peasants, mostly non-party, telling their own life-stories, how exploited or well-off (some of the speakers did

fairly prosper in the older days) they were, when and how they joined the rural cooperatives, how the social organizations function, and so on. There is also a lot of evidence on how the individuals actually faced up to U.S. bombings, their sufferings and their determination to fight back to the last. The author also gives us a carefully drawn account of ordinary and specialized schools, hospitals and other social services. Achievements in production and in farming techniques also find a prominent place in the author's accounts. In the following paragraphs we shall try and present a summary view of only some of these topics.

#### Field Output

The first notable feature of Vietnamese development is the steady rise in agricultural production and productivity throughout the post-liberation period. No overall figures are given, except for a statement that agricultural production went up annually by 4% until 1964. No source is given. More revealing, it would appear, are the data relating to individual provinces, districts or cooperatives. For the small province of Hung Yen with a population of 650,000 rice production rose by 20% between 1957 and 1962 and a further 11% between 1962 and 1966. In one of the more successful villages the yield rate per acre increased from 0.4 tons in 1959 to 0.9 tons in 1960 (through double cropping) and 2.0 tons in 1966. The bigger province of Thai Binh with its 1.3 million inhabitants and 0.5 million acres of arable land is more fertile; 11 out of its 12 districts achieved an average yield rate of 2.0 tons/acre or more in 1966; a leading cooperative, Tan Phong, attained as much as 3.8 tons an acre over a total paddy area of 456 acres. Total agricultural production in the Thai Binh province was valued at 131 million dongs in 1961 rising to 186 million dongs in 1966, i.e. an increase by over 40 percent during 5 years. In the third province of Nin Binh production of rice per acre stood on an average at 2.5 tons in 1965 indicating a more than

threefold rise since 1939; by 1970 the expected productivity was as high as 4 tons an acre. From these one can conclude that (a) agricultural production has risen at an impressive rate by international standards, (b) growth has been quite uneven as between the provinces and (c) the current productivity levels are often among the highest in the world. All these, let us note, have been achieved without advice or help from the Ford or Rockefeller Foundation experts who are trying to bring in the green revolution in the countryside of the Third World.

What are the reasons behind the moderate success story? First and foremost stand out the political factors: the deep involvement of the North Vietnamese peasantry in the defence of their socialist order against imperialist aggression; without raising their production they could not fight the Americans and at the same time maintain their national sovereignty. More immediately, the extremely wise policy adopted by the Party towards cooperativization had an important role. The successive steps are worth spelling out. The land reforms programme had started prior to 1954, the year of the Geneva Agreement although on a limited scale; even if 59% of the land in some 3,035 villages were thus distributed, only 20% of the toiling peasantry derived any benefit from it, the other 40% still remaining totally landless. Preceded by a very thorough class analysis of the villages (along the lines of Lenin, the Soviet economists of the 1920's and Mao Tsetung), the land reforms programme of 1955-56 was much more thorough in character. This time 65% of the peasantry benefited. The typical landowner found his allotment reduced to about 10% of his previous holding, while the rich peasant had a more or less constant acreage. On the other hand, the middle peasant had his holding increased by 50%, the poor peasant by some 300% and the erstwhile landless labourers came to possess nearly as much land as the middle or the poor peasant. As is almost inevitable

in such cases there were certain 'leftist deviations' in implementation but these were swiftly corrected. In 1957-58 mutual aid teams were revived so that several families could pool their resources together during the sowing and the harvest seasons; neither land nor output was shared and labour was paid for at the prevailing market rates. Almost simultaneously production cooperatives made their appearance. While individual families retained their ownership rights farm management passed on to the hands of all members of the cooperative. Collective farms prosper in which members as a group, but not individually, possess the land and organize production, were introduced only in 1959; in these farms individuals' earnings were strictly related only to the quantity of work performed. Peasants were not coerced into the cooperative collective farms. Initially, only a few joined; at the end of the first year the members' earnings were less than before, less too than the earnings of those who had remained outside. The Party did not give up the policy in panic and went seriously over the organizational problems of the new type farms. Thus at the end of the second year the cooperative farms fared as well as the private ones. Consequently, their membership increased from 5% of the peasantry at the end of 1958 to 45% in 1959 and 86% in 1960. Gradually, these cooperatives were transformed into collective farms.

#### Essential Functions

The collective farms were not created for ideological reasons alone. They performed three essential functions that lay beyond the capabilities of private farming. Firstly the problem of water management was from the beginning recognized as the key to agricultural prosperity. Husbanding water resources implies not merely the erection of mammoth dams (as has been the case all too frequently in India) but also digging canals, setting up dykes and other complex measures of controlling floods and droughts that had been a perennial

curse with the Vietnamese people. Hung Yen province had experienced as many as nine droughts within the ten years 1947-1957. When President Ho Chi Minh visited the province early in 1958 and showed the necessity of building a 4-mile-long canal, the cooperatives got together some four to five thousand people who completed the job in two months. The basic idea is carried on to this day: every member of the collective farms is expected to provide 50 days of labour on building roads, dams, etc. without being paid in return.

The second kingpin of Vietnamese success has been the development and proper utilization of agricultural experts. Even without the collective farms the State could have trained any number of experts as in most neo-colonial countries. Such experts would have merely learnt some jargon and fads from American or some equally remote foreign writings without an intimate knowledge of the local environment, local practices of cultivation and the dynamics of local society. Further, private farming could not make use of agricultural experts as is clearly found in India where agronomists most frequently have little to do either with cultivation or agronomic experiments. Agricultural training in Vietnam is most closely related to agricultural practices from the beginning to the end. Thus the school at To Hieu, designed to train junior technicians for the entire province of Hung Yen, contains also a veterinary centre, seed research centre and an artificial insemination centre. It possesses 85 acres of land for experimentation. There are two-year courses for technicians and three-year courses for managerial workers; there are also part-time courses for those already in full-time jobs. While the province had no 'experts' and only four junior technicians in the late 1950's, ten years later the numbers rose to 35 and 600 respectively. The plan for 1970 envisaged for every cooperative three technicians with one each in cultivation, in stock-breeding and in pisciculture, in addition to two management cadres. Towards the end

of the two-year training the students spend six months on probation in a co-operative where they directly take part in production, mostly confining themselves to particular commodities. After this period of probation the students have to submit a thesis for completing their course. Some of these were of quite a high standard and one was commended by the country's leading Agricultural Research Institute at Hanoi. Apart from these specialized schools, the general educational system puts a great emphasis on practical farming. In a typical higher secondary school the students are required to work on the fields every afternoon for 6 months in the year. To be rated good as a student one must also perform well on the land; every month a pupil must produce a document from the appropriate cooperative indicating the quality of his work.

The third important ingredient of success in agriculture has been the fertilizer and farm mechanization policy. While modern commercial fertilizers have not been totally ignored, these could not be the mainstay. Manure from piggeries has been used in almost massive doses. In Thai Binh 2.8 tons of manure per acre was used in 1963-64 and the rate went up to 5.6 tons in 1966. Such a big rise can only be attributed to (a) a careful development of animal husbandry and (b) significant improvements in the sewage system; without these, manures could not have been used so extensively.

On mechanization too the Party adopted a correct posture, although it was of lesser importance. Mechanization has been considered necessary, firstly due to the exodus of the able-bodied male to the warfront and secondly due to the relative shortage of manpower during the transplantation and harvesting seasons. However, mechanization has made only small progress but the accent is towards more of it even if the war were over. For, socialism can guarantee jobs as well as a decent living standard for one and all. Standards of living have slowly

crept up over the years. Once again no overall figures are available but only partial and indirect evidence. The first and most obvious evidence is the rise in agricultural production at a rate exceeding the population growth. A second index is the rise in the sale of such 'durable' consumer goods as mosquito nets, blankets, bicycles, transistors etc. Thus the Hung Yen province bought goods worth 18 m. dongs in 1965 and 24 m. dongs in 1966 from the State. The obverse side of the same picture is the increasing volume of rural surpluses of cereals etc. sold to the State. The movement of prices, specially for mass consumption articles, may provide another indication. In North Vietnam there exists a two-tier price system: one is fixed by the State and the other is determined by the market, the latter tending to be much higher than the former. Thus rice sold in the market at 2.20 dongs/kg against the official price of 0.27 dongs; the respective prices for pork were 5.0 and 1.45 dongs/kg, loaf 0.4 and 0.1 dong/lb. and cigarettes 1.0 and 0.55 dongs/packet. The gap was considerably narrowed by the end of 1967 through a general decline in free market prices; all this time the official prices were kept constant. One may note here that the free market is legally sanctioned; every peasant is allowed to use it provided the State delivery target (normally amounting to 75-80% of his total output) is fulfilled.

The book also contains some interesting information on relative incomes. At one end of the scale, the stipend of a student at the agricultural training school was 20 dongs per month. The monthly earnings in dongs of other groups were: primary and secondary school teachers 35-40 and 40-45 (they usually live rent-free and spend about 18 dongs on food), agricultural technicians and 'experts' 50 and 70 respectively, medical doctors 45-50, surgeons 60-70, and the chairman of the village commune 23. The chairman usually takes part in additional productive work for about one month in the year and thus supplements his income.

The highest earnings are reported at 250 dongs/month.

The peasants are paid according to a points system similar to the Soviet 'trudoden' or 'labour days'. Now these payments are in two parts, one consisting of a share in crop output and the other of a share in the profits of the cooperative through the sale of fish, commercial crops etc. If a peasant is able to earn so much rice that he has a surplus over and above his delivery obligation to the State and his own consumption, then he may sell the remainder in the free market. Further, peasants are given small private plots (430 sq. yards in some cases); anything that is grown here is either for self-consumption or for free market sales. As is well known, it is pretty difficult to compute a peasant's real income; nevertheless some broad outlines may be given. Thus in one cooperative a 'normal' family with two working adults earned 4,000 points, getting 1.3 tons of rice plus a share in the sale of fish; the private allotment was enough to meet the family requirements of vegetables and fetched an additional 300 dongs a year from free market sales. In the same cooperative the highest points achieved was 6,840 while the lowest, 1,830 was earned by a family of one old woman and a breast-feeding young woman. The poorer groups receive their extra rice needs at the lower official rate of 0.27 dong/kg while the better-off had to pay the free market price of 2.20 dongs/kg. In another cooperative an affluent peasant with his wife, 17-year-old son and 4 other children earned for a whole year a total of 2.1 tons of rice and 1,170 dongs from cash sales. Hence it can be concluded that the gap between the 'rich' and the 'poor' is not large; it is certainly less than that either in the capitalist or in the socialist countries of Europe. Asian communism, if we remember China's experience, thus appears to be far more egalitarian and consequently more mature ideologically than communism as it is practised in 'advanced' Europe.

The other issues of some impor-

tance may be briefly touched upon: the system of incentives and the structure of administration. Till the middle of the 1960s economic incentives were dominant; the peasants joined or left and rejoined the cooperatives out of monetary considerations alone. Within the cooperatives payments, as we have seen, were mostly according to the performance of the peasant. Correspondingly, there prevailed a view that the masses were not sufficiently prepared in the ideological sense to take into their own hands all powers and responsibilities of decision-making. In most popularly elected bodies from the village upwards party cadres were preponderant. Since April 1967, i.e. after nearly two and a half years of open aggression by the Americans and some 10 months of the Cultural Revolution in China, the emphasis in official policy changed significantly. Although full self-management is a long way ahead, there are attempts to introduce more and more of popular control at all levels, to delimit Party representation on any committee to a maximum of 40% of the seats, to encourage the setting up of rival candidates in elections instead of a single list as hitherto, and finally, to devolve over more significant areas of decision-making to the lower organs. Simultaneously, in the economic sphere there is less and less of resort to the material incentives and goods are being increasingly distributed in cooperatives according to individual needs and social availability. The important question still remains: will this trend continue into the post-aggression period? Or is it merely a wartime phenomenon to meet the specific requirements of combating the powerful foreign enemy under semi-guerrilla conditions?

Before concluding, however, a few serious lapses in English translation and editing work ought to be pointed out. Thus while the whole of the Hung Yen province had in 1966 a rice production of 191,962 tons (P. 89), one cooperative alone is said to have distributed 462,049 tons among 450 households (P. 127). The comma is used in lieu of a decimal

point on the continent; hence the second figure should read as 462,049. Again the whole column 4 of table 11 (P. 122) suffers from this lapse. Conversion of French 'hectares' into 'acres' has not been done too systematically (e.g. line 6, p. 231). 'Le paysan moyen' has been wrongly translated as the 'average peasant'; the more usual 'landless agricultural labourer' should have been used. Fur-

ther the Vietnamese measures of 'sao' and 'mau' are not explained. Finally, there is no index at the end of the book.

Despite these blemishes, rather minor ones on the whole, the book gives us a very interesting cross-section of information on the living, working and fighting conditions of the North Vietnamese peasantry, and deserves to be widely read.

cadre to work in the villages an army of young people were sent out to the rural areas. But a substantial section of them found the villages difficult places to work in and complained they would be misfits to work among the peasants. It was, therefore, decided to involve them in "actions" in Calcutta. (*Hindustan Times*)

#### Police and the Public

The (Calcutta) Police Commissioner, Mr P. K. Sen, told reporters that attacks on policemen might affect the morale of the police force: He regretted that though the days' incident (a plainclothes constable was stabbed to death in Calcutta on June 15) took place in daylight, no one from the public raised any alarm, let alone defend the victim. Even after the incident, people of the locality, who must have witnessed the murder, were not coming forward to assist the police in detecting the murderers. (*The Statesman*)

#### To The Governor

West Bengal's former Deputy Chief Minister, Mr Jyoti Basu, has in a letter written to the Governor criticised certain "improper actions" taken by his Government since the promulgation of President's Rule... Mr Basu said that a tendentious statement had been made in Parliament by Mr V. C. Shukla, Union Minister of Home Affairs, to the effect that politically committed officers of the State Government, as he put it, would be weeded out. "This is boundless hypocrisy coming as it does from a Minister of the Congress Government which has attempted to use the administration for the last 22 years in the interests of the Congress party". Mr Basu referred to the transfer of Mr S. B. Ray (former Home Secretary), Mr S. M. Murshed, Mr A. Sen, Mr S. K. Singh and Mr T. Dutt... "It is quite clear that one of the prime reasons behind these transfers is the attempt to denigrate and attack the Ministries held by representatives of the CPI(M)."

Questioning the claim that the integrity of the administration had been restored by the transfer of some

## Clippings

IT has been estimated that a sum of Rs 7,255 per month is spent by

It has been estimated that a sum of Rs 7,255 per month is spent by the (U.P.) State Government on each Cabinet Minister, who swears by Gandhian simplicity or by socialism... Monthly pay—Rs 1,000 income-tax free or Rs 1,100. Rental value of free bungalow furnished at the expense of the Government—Rs 650. Financial gains from a chauffeur-driver State car with free petrol—(A) Car depreciation Rs 350. (B) Driver's pay Rs 200. (C) Cost of 400 litres of petrol, including 168 litres allowed for using the car in Lucknow Rs 440. When a Minister goes on a long journey the petrol consumed by his car in excess of the limit of 168 litres is paid for by the Government. Monthly interest on Rs 22,000, price of an Ambassador car, Rs 175. Charges for electricity consumed at home—Rs 100. Telephone Bills—Rs 1,000 per month. Cost of travel by rail borne by the Government—Rs 1,500 a month. Each Minister is entitled to get four first class berths reserved. Pay of a gardener, a sweeper, and a chowkidar—Rs 420. Monthly pay of two shadows, "personal guards", constables or head constables who accompany Ministers wherever they go—Rs 400. Pay of one head constable, two constables and one sub-inspector who are stationed at the residences of Ministers—Rs 920. (*Times of India*)

#### Catching The Naxalites

The police claim that the extre-

mists have walked into their trap... It was debated... whether or not to arrest the principal Naxalite leaders like Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal. The vote was against such a move. Instead, it was decided to flush the Naxalites out of their bases in the countryside and compel them to crowd into Calcutta... So far, about 1,000 Naxalites have been arrested in the State... The police believe that the base of the activists has been incapacitated. The hard core of about 200 will... find it impossible not to unleash a series of adventurist assaults on "class enemies" to boost the sagging morale of the ranks, and find itself in the clutches of the law.

Whether the police gamble comes off remains to be seen. Meanwhile, there are certain dangerous portents... Scores of students and other young people from Calcutta and district towns continue to visit rural areas to indoctrinate the villages and "de-class" themselves... If the outflow of students to the villages is real—the district authorities confirm such reports—the police claim of a grand plan would not seem to hold good. In fact, Naxalites themselves explain, the recent spate of violence in Calcutta was actually resorted to for two reasons. First... to pin the major police force in Calcutta which would facilitate extending the movement among peasants... Secondly, Naxalites privately admit that following the intensification of their "actions" in Gopiballavpur and Debra and in trying to build up a large student

officers, Mr Basu stated that though the "Vigilance Commission had made charges of depravity and corruption" against Mr R. Banerjee, Commissioner, Presidency Division, "Mr Banerjee remains where he is." The report of the enquiry (into the circumstances leading to the attack on Assembly House by a section of policemen)... stated that D. Dhar had "deliberately evaded his responsibility, shirked his duty and was generally found to be incompetent and cowardly."... "We wanted to transfer him from the charge of the Presidency Range. In this I was frustrated by the then Chief Minister..." Mr Basu also complained of unwarranted and limitless "police repression" on workers, kisans, government employees and CPI(M) workers and concluded with the warning: "You shall achieve nothing and in the end we shall prevail." (*The Statesman*)

#### RSS-Jana Sangh

Sir.—I joined the RSS in 1939. When I joined it, the RSS had not even begun to think in nationalistic terms. We had a short prayer and it had four lines in Hindi and four lines in Marathi. I raise these points because it is possible that Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Mr Balraj Madhok may not be aware of them. The prayer clearly pledged every volunteer to work, sacrifice and live as a guard of Hinduism. The stress on patriotism and the country was nominal at the time when I, as a young volunteer 12 years old, saluted Dr Hedgewar, the founder of the RSS.

We boys began to go to the RSS playground for recreation and to play the organisation's favourite game—kabaddi. Subsequently, we were submitted to brainwashing. The emphasis in the tales told to us was again intensely communal and we were told how we Hindus were stabbed during communal riots, how Muslims ate cows. Not a word was said in all these sessions about the country's struggle against its British rulers. This was supposed to be politics and the RSS had nothing to say about or do with the British. Almost all collective activities—games,

parades, camps and even mock fights—had the same communal colouration and were designed to make us feel strongly about the communal situation. At these the volunteer was taught to unquestioningly follow the orders of his chalak, that is Daksha. The volunteers, young and old, were merely taught to repeat the RSS creed and thus all became more like a set of mesmerised instruments.

There was a technique in recruiting volunteers: teachers of schools subscribing to the RSS creed became handy instruments to catch youngsters. The emphasis was on children below ten years since they were easy to mould. The present-day leaders of the Jan Sangh must all have been picked up in this way and grown through all this brainwashing. Hence one finds them propagating the Indianisation theory which is identical to the RSS theory of "India for the Hindus." When most children were involved in the freedom struggle the RSS boys enjoyed normal schooling, a regular college life and as soon as freedom and democracy came they broke out in the different professions.

The RSS does not preach Hinduism. It preaches anti-Muslimism. It also aims to capture power misusing democratic channels to impose a fascist order. At the RSS camps brainwashing still continues and is a regular feature in the shakhas. And it is these volunteers who take military-like orders on parade, who don black caps and shorts, who salute the two-pronged saffron flag in the morning. The very same people emerge in dhoti and kurta later in the day posing as democrats, to salute the rectangular Jan Sangh flag in the evening. In the mornings they are perfect Hindu Swayam Sevaks, in the evening perfect 'Bharatiyas' (as the Jan Sangh terms them) posing with Muslims to prove their secular look. (Letter to the Editor, *Hindustan Times*.)

#### "Britain In Danger"

"I have demonstrated that even after making every concession, however improbable, however unreal, a

fifth or a quarter of such towns and cities as Wolverhampton, Birmingham and inner London will in course of time consist of the Commonwealth and their descendants... I declare that... the prospective growth in this country of the Commonwealth immigrant-descended population will result in civil strife of appalling dimensions... The future of Britain is as much at risk now as in the years when imperial Germany was building dreadnoughts, and Nazism was re-arming: Indeed the danger is greater today, just because the enemy is invisible or disguised, so that his preparations and advances go on hardly observed..." (Enoch Powell, Tory MP).

#### Cambodia

High officials in Washington are reported to have admitted privately that in his decision to move into Cambodia, President Nixon and his advisers completely misjudged the communist political and military response. Mr Nixon was told by the military that the enemy would concentrate on fighting for the sanctuaries. What was not foreseen was that the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong would slip out of the sanctuaries and spread over the rest of Cambodia to join up with the Cambodian Communists and the peasants who still look upon Prince Sihanouk as their leader. (*Hindustan Standard*)

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# 'Intolerance'

## The Eternal Film

G. Dasgupta

TO review a film produced in 1916 today is in itself a hazardous task. Unconsciously intrudes that unwanted feeling of being 'cinematically superior'. This complex—or conceit—is entirely unwarranted, and if there be a single soul who should differ, Griffith's *Intolerance* is the film for him. Surpassing the technical achievements, means of expression and cinematic qualities of the films that went before, *Intolerance* bore witness to the genius that was Griffith. Born a Southerner at Kentucky in 1875 and belonging to a near poverty stricken family, he struggled hard to gain entry into the world of films, only to be disillusioned by the conventional style of the day—that detached manner of film-making, a bit too theatrical and the camera being used to record scenes complete in themselves—on the one hand, and the magical aspects of the films from France on the other. Eager to bring innovations to this art and in the process bringing into concrete form his inventive powers, he never for once relinquished the artist in him. *The Birth of a Nation* in 1915 put him right on top amongst the giants of the film world. Then came *Intolerance*, a monumental work.

An advertisement inserted in the *New York Dramatic Mirror* (December 3, 1913) by Biograph Pictures introduced Griffith to its readers as "Included in the innovations which introduced... are: The large or close-up figures, distant views (as represented first in *Ramona*), the 'switchback', sustained suspense, the 'fade-out' and restraint in expression...". For a film that ran 20 hours before cutting and consumed 300,000 feet of negative, the 'sustained suspense' could only be achieved by one who was at once possessed by daring, skill, courage and a noble and unyielding spirit. The film shown

here piecemeal ran 175 minutes, the complete film being nearabout 205 minutes, but all that was put into it dictated film-making in the years to come. The rapid intercutting at the close of the film, bringing with it to the surface the underlying common theme of the four episodes is craftsmanship at its best. Earlier, we have the recurring image of Lillian Gish rocking the cradle, titled in line with Whitman's "...endlessly rocks the cradle, Uniter of Here and Hereafter" to symbolize time, eternity and birth; and in the background watch silently, but scathingly, and knowingly the three wise men (the Magi?). And when all is said and done, they leave, keeping behind the knowledge that the audience has acquired to review in close up what now appears without the title, a spiritual apparition of the Virgin Mary and the child. It is interesting also to note Griffith's use of long scenes in each episode, rigidly controlled in its internal structure, at the beginning, to help in establishing the dynamism and unity of the climax. The integrating element provided by the image of Gish was later abandoned because of the moral implications common to each era and leading, in a state of organised confusion and turmoil, to the final act where 'they mingle in one mighty river of expressed emotion'. The mathematical precision and timing of the short cuts in the sequence leading to the repression of the workers are dramatically built up with action in one image leading to the other, reminiscent of the works by Eisenstein, Pudovkin and others. Here too, the drama culminates in a final long held shot serving to restrain emotion kept in reserve for the 'grand finale'. Symbolic images of Jenkins lost and beaten by the workers' call to strike reclining helplessly in the room where once he was authority, and the fingers stringing harps to follow a shot where a boy and a girl talk of love recall Eisenstein and *October*, though in a rather crude manner, coming as they do from a not so 'intellectual cinema' as the latter. But these were new in those days as

was the use of the 'switchback' (flash-back), together with the close-ups in the film. The hands of Mae Marsh clasping in agony and torment are not mere poetic and 'permanent images', but epic ones in that the past comes back to dynamically justify and consolidate the soul state of the image in a near motionless shot. The study of her face in terror could compete with the best of Antonioni, and it is small wonder that such techniques became the order of the day, notably achieving success and appeal in Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc*. It would be relevant here again to deal with Griffith's masterly cutting, specially where Marsh look across the frame in terror, following which we have the boy in his cell being read to by a priest. Such preconceived notions and exercise at 'montage', together with the modern concept of editing being the source of life to the till then lifeless celluloid, echo Clair's statement that "nothing essential has been added to the art of the motion-picture since Griffith".

### Commitment

Taking his cue from a true-to-life incident in which 13 workers of a chemical factory were mowed down by the 'Goths' (Griffith's term for state power), he arrived at the modern episode of "The Mother and the Law". Bitter in its social commentary and attacking the 'charitable institutions' of reformers, the profiteering racket with its ups and downs, and authority at all levels, this episode was tightly knit and compact in dramatic structure. Its creator found firm footing to carry his load of social commitment, honesty, moral and poetic earnestness and purity of child-like innocence. In a certain sense, he could be termed a 'realist' and this was to find further support in the scenes following the exodus of the beaten labourers and their rehabilitation in a neighbouring city. Considering Griffith's hold and execution both in the revealing and the style of this story, it appears strange that he should have gone in for the three other epi-

sodes viz. the Christ legend of Judea, fall of Babylon and the massacre of the Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's Eve. The safest would be to quote Griffith—"a protest against despotism and injustice in every form" and that "each story shows how hatred and intolerance, through the ages, have battled against love and charity". But then, this statement weakens under the overwhelming class consciousness that comes filtered to us through the unfolding of the modern episode. The genius in him revealed the necessity to unwrap history in its epic grandeur and wrath in the perspective of the drama of individuals. Reckoning likewise, the modern story establishes a social milieu from which result individuals who interact within and fight against the intolerance of the epoch, thereby justifying the need to do so. And this very justification of the need to protest, to condemn and to re-affirm human existence and freedom is history in its uncensored objectivity.

The Babylonian story suffered in that it was too much of a spectacle to enable us to see through it the fancies and intricacies of the mountain girl in relation to the setting. Whereas in the modern story the individuals were swallowed up by the prevalent system, churned in its own mould and thrown back to live an existence on the level of the chained yet free system, the mountain girl's adventures were more of a romantic and heroic nature, not justified by conflict as in the former. Cyrus of Persia battled against the Belshazzar of Babylon to extend his kingdom and a stray arrow struck our girl who stood up to defend her king who once retrieved her from the marriage market. A very sloppy, sentimental tale of devotion and its consequential reward, highlighted essentially by the gigantic sets comprising walls 300 feet high, the grandiose banquet scene for Belshazzar's feast having involved the sum of \$250,000, and the bewildering expertness evident in handling 16,000 people. What struck one as amazing on the level of cinematic technicalities were the use of marks, 'trucking' movements, 'distant

views' enhanced by the artificial sky and attempts to bring in and involve the camera of Bitzer in the action. On a delayed thought, the only issue which supports the tale is that of Belshazzar being completely unaware of the sincerity and devotion of this forgotten maid, who tries to justify herself in the eyes of the king she admired. And resorting to cruel pity Griffith does not show us the conflict between love and hatred, but the conflict of distant and high-handed resignation as opposed to one alienated. The girl's act being a near 'existence' choice, the theme does not carry much weight.

#### Sort of Allegory

The medieval French story was a sort of allegory on the 'Romeo-Juliet' theme. The episode feverishly and nervously set out to determine its own course in the chain of historic events and hopelessly floundered, as was not organically related to the religious intolerance existing at the times. Its fault primarily lay on its being too incidental—there was love, there was religion, there was intolerance, came war, and the lovers died. The social bearing of the lovers in the regime of Catherine de Medici and the reciprocity that must exist for conflict to arise and have consequential significance were absent, and to me this episode was much weaker than the Babylonian one in both treatment and theme.

Though the film cost \$1,900,000, it, unlike *The Birth of a Nation* was not a commercial success. However, to quote Agee—"in epic and lyrical and narrative visual poetry, I can think of nobody who has surpassed him and of few to compare with him. And as a primitive tribal poet, combining something of the bard and the seer, he is beyond even Dovzhenko and others of their kind." He was the man to whom, as Chaplin said, the whole film industry owes its existence. And even more—a social artist of historic importance which earned him a place in Lenin's Russia.

Censured and cut by the cinema's 'reformers', it leaves out a lot that I presume belonged to the modern

story. After viewing the film, it was the part left out which interests me more than those that were in it. And if they had been retained, I am sure Griffith's *Intolerance*, labelled a 'pacifistic' film by unknowing critics, would assume the dangerous proportions of a violently intolerant protest film. And if there be a worthy dedication to Griffith the artist, let it be of protest.

## Bilambita Laya

BY A FILM CRITIC

UTTAM Kumar and Supriya play a young artist and a young songster respectively in *Bilambita Laya*. They get married early and are divorced soon after. However, Dipa Chatterjee who dies to reconcile them looks more like a mouse than a martyr. Kanika Majumdar, in the interlude, acts like an expensive tart and not a refined vamp.

Aragami—the directorial group—tries to live on the star value of a pair who are well past their prime. The paddings Aragami uses date back to the mid-fifties when Uttam Kumar and Suchitra Sen as the reigning stars played not dissimilar roles.

In the denouement it would hardly matter if the hero was a petty clerk instead of a poor artist. But a bash at the class barrier is easier given by a rich woman for an artist. And the sequel comes handy for building the wishy-washy conflict between the desires to live well and to live for an ideal.

There are some build-up shots which are replete with details. There are others which are clever, like revealing the bald patch on Nirmal Kumar's head to indicate the passage of time. But the woods have been missed for the trees all the same.

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## Committed Plays

ABHIJIT MUKHOPADHYAY

ART-East, a newly formed group which emphatically believes in committed theatre, have presented two plays—Utpal Dutt's *Hetha Arya* and Bimal Gupta's *Asami Hajir* at the Mukta Angan. Though both the plays are adaptations of foreign ones, yet the job has been done extremely well. Dutt tells the story of repression of the people of Jentimai on the north-east frontier by the Indian army in the name of national integration and border security. Gupta's play has the theme of the trial of a man who thinks for himself.

Unfortunately, however, Art-East's presentation failed to thrill the audience because of low production values, and lack of a high standard of group acting. Individually, mention should be made of Sisir Chanda's intelligent performance as Botha, the interpreter in Dutt's play. In *Asami-Hajir*, the acting of Kumar Basu as the *peshkar* would have been haunting had he instilled a bit more stylisation instead of melodrama at the end.

For *Hetha Arya* and *Hetha Anarya*, the stage was kept almost bare in tune with the theme of the play. But the decor for the second play was so cumbersome that it became visually offending.

Lighting was done in a perfunctory manner and had no effect at all. It is better to have no music than unimaginative music.

If serious attention is given to production values, these plays may help Art-East's aim to remain equally honest to theatre and politics.

## Letters

### Midnapore Jail

A letter dated June 19 and written in Bengali by several mothers of the under-trial prisoners in Midnapore Central Jail, states in part:

After the incident involving Naxalite prisoners and Mr Deben Das, MLA, who used to visit the jail, we made repeated attempts to see our sons, but all our entreaties were rejected. Most of the injured are in the jail hospital. According to old convicts, 400 are seriously injured, including 80 who are being given oxygen and blood transfusion. From the moon of June '66, we have seen carloads of doctors with bandages and medicines going inside the jail. The Eastern Frontier Rifles men were called in to beat up the prisoners.

Why can't we see our children? We are told to wait "for another seven or eight days". Why?

### Mao On CPSU

Addressing the Eighth Congress of the CPC, Mao Tse-tung said: "The ... 20th Congress of the CPSU also worked out many correct political principles and denounced the shortcomings in the party. It can be said with confidence that in the future their work will get exceptionally great development". This was in 1956.

In 1957, Mao Tse-tung said: "Creatively applying the Marxist-Leninist theory in solving practical tasks, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union ensured for the Soviet people continuous victories in building up the new life. The programme of struggle for the building of communism in the USSR, as set forth by the 20th CPSU Congress, is an outstanding example". Mao Tse-tung was addressing the jubilee session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution.

It is now clear that Mao Tse-tung was wrong in saying that the 20th Congress of the CPSU evolved correct policies. Was there any self-criticism on the part of Mao Tse-tung? This is a question I ask of the CPI(M) and Naxalite friends. I hope there will be an answer.

S. C. SAHA  
Calcutta

## Gandhi Workers

To Marxists only the class character of an individual determines whether he is an ally or enemy of the masses. Gandhi also should be assessed in this perspective. He was out and out an enemy of class struggle, he never wanted any militant uprising of the masses against the oppressors, he made the people fatalists and made them think that what they were today was because God made them so. Communalists and exploiters of different shades took shelter under his political umbrella. He was shocked at the glorious unity of Hindu and Muslim sailors and workers during the naval mutiny in Bombay in 1946. A man living at Birla House and Agha Khan Palace cannot lead the people in their struggle for liberation. I was in Gandhi's land (Saurashtra) for five years and he is totally forgotten in his own home—there Harijans are still denied admission to temples and exploited by the upper classes in all possible ways. All anti-people acts are committed in the name of Gandhi.

I beg to differ with Mr Ramadhar (June 13) that Gandhi was an ally of the proletariat and a proletarian himself. With his class character he could not afford to be a proletarian. He knew how to suppress the revolutionary zeal of the masses by mixing politics with religion.

Today we need leaders like Mao and Ho Chi Minh and not class collaborators like Gandhi and Nehru.

SISIR K. MAJUMDAR (DR)  
Ashokenagar

I agree with Ramadhar (June 13) when he states that much of the criticism levelled against Gandhi by the leftists is unnecessary. His identification with the masses was complete. He always spoke for the have-nots. He was the first to create a mass movement in India embracing the whole nation and was secular. He pointed out the glaring difference between our town and country life.

GORA MUKHERJEE  
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