

frontier

Vol. 3: No. 24

SEPTEMBER 5, 1970

PRICE: 35 PAISE

On Other Pages

COMMENTS	..	2
<i>View From Delhi</i>		
OPERATION PRINCES	..	5
LESSONS OF DURGAPUR		
ADINATH BHATTACHARYA	..	7
CONFRONTATION		
R. K. BASU	..	8
<i>Book Review</i>		
REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES		
MOHAN THAMPI	..	9
THE OUTSIDERS		
MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY	..	11
CLIPPINGS	..	12
LETTERS	..	13

RETREAT IN CALCUTTA

THOSE who remember the police firing in the Naxalbari area in April 1967 in which about a dozen women and children were killed will refuse to be impressed by the holy anger of the CPM over the insave measures imposed by the West Bengal Government to prevent the party's massive demonstration in Dalhousie Square area last Monday; or by the floral offerings in unprohibited Subodh Mullick Square by leaders of the eight-party combination who, like well-behaved children, are seen but never heard. No inquiry into the Naxalbari incident was held by the UF Government; not a single blood-thirsty policeman was punished; those poor landless Santal women and children were denied the halo of martyrdom because they had chosen to confront the police when the left parties were in power. It would seem that police or military bullets in a non-left regime can not only kill a man but make a martyr of him also, while the same bullets under a left government can kill anti-social elements only, or at most misguided extremists; it is the colour of the regime that makes or unmakes a martyr. In this, as in many other matters, the left parties are merely a weak imitation of the Congress. They have all disqualified themselves for honouring the martyrs; their wreaths are of artificial flowers, their tears are glycerine drops.

The point at issue is not why the restrictions were imposed and troops called out on the eve of Martyr's Day, but why they should have been imposed at all? The "when" is unimportant in spite of the CPM leaders. Perhaps the confusion has been created deliberately as they are unsure of their strength, especially after the Durgapur experience. No party, far less the biggest party in a State, gives a call for resistance without specifying the form it should take, unless the leaders are crippled by an utter lack of confidence in themselves. They are not sure that their writ will run in the party or in the areas dominated by it. By withholding a central directive they kept an emergency exit open; if the response to their call for resistance was unflattering, they could have trotted out the plea that the poor show was not a reflection on them as they had nothing to do with it. There may be a more obnoxious reason also. After two spells in office, however, brief, the party leaders are shy of encouraging openly defiance of the law. The politics of election has made them timid; as they want to return to power through

Editor : Samar Sen

PRINTED AT MODERN INDIA PRESS,
7, RAJA SUBODH MULICK SQUARE,
CALCUTTA-13 AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY
FOR GERMINAL PUBLICATIONS (P) LTD.
BY SAMAR SEN FROM 61, MOTT LANE,
CALCUTTA-13

TELEPHONE: 24-3202

the ballot-box, they are reluctant to run the risk of jail-going. Of course, nobody blames them for not staging the familiar farce of courting arrest with garlands round their necks; it is good that they have avoided mimicking a sacrificial goat. But there could be bolder, more vigorous forms of defiance, as was the silent long march in Calcutta in 1966. Instead of that the party left to the people to decide for themselves the form and content of their resistance. In most cases the protest stopped at police cordons, because the protesters did not know what was to be done next. They loitered and retreated, presuming that defiance was not on the agenda. They were right, judging by the quiet abandoning of the proposals for a demonstration in the Dalhousie Square area and a rally on the Maidan by the CPM.

After the heart-warming success of the three-day strike of the State Government employees, the party had no reason for such nervousness. The success was all the more remarkable, because the eight-party combination had put a political label on blacklegging to salve the conscience, if any, of the strike-breakers. In some districts the EPC set up rival coordination committees and marshalled all its strength to break the strike with the eager assistance of the Government. The strikers had to contend not with governmental intimidation and repression alone, but also with sabotage attempts by the so-called left. It should not, therefore, be surprising if the strike was not as successful in some districts as it was in Calcutta. However, there is no reason to believe all that was doled out daily by official spokesmen to newspapers and blared by AIR. To depress the morale of the strikers the Government went on claiming blatantly that in some districts attendance was 100 per cent, forgetting that normal attendance in a government office does not exceed 80 per cent. To sustain the impression that in Durgapur the workers' movement has been crushed it was given out that attendance there was 90 per cent, though, in fact, it was as negligible as in Calcutta. Inflated figures

were circulated even about Writers' Building where the Government's defeat was complete. The strike there was more successful than ever, the Congress regime not excluded, the average attendance being less than one per cent; and this was by and large true of most State Government offices in the city. Confronted with this massive success of the strike, the Government is naturally having second thoughts on the question of punishment to the strikers; the hawks

are in favour of maintaining the aggressive posture while others would like to be a little conciliatory. The failure of the CPM leadership to stand up to the challenge of the Government over the Dalhousie Square demonstration has put heart in the humbled bureaucracy, and attempts may still be made to victimise the strike leaders. The gains of the strike seem to have been wasted on the non-demonstration in Dalhousie Square.

Agnew In Asia

American Vice-Presidents have always been a character in search of a role. But with Spiro T. Agnew there was no such problem. Right from the day of his investiture he set himself up as a Don Quixote of the Free World bent upon bashing the heads of all and sundry critics of Nixon. But in course of a year with his fascist rhetoric and virulent abuse against any form of dissent, he has emerged as a menace to the American people. Nixon, who gleefully set Agnew upon his domestic critics, last week let him loose in Asia. Here is the right person, Nixon thought, who could bully the communists in Asia and instil courage into their trembling puppets—for the second time in eight months. Agnew had a similar assignment in January last when he drank and dined with the Asian puppets and explained to them the real meaning of the Nixon Doctrine for Asia. But events in Asia and America since have brought their morale to a new low. With burning campuses and a barking Congress Nixon did have to pull out his troops from Cambodia where, despite massive American bombing, liberated areas continue to grow steadily like a drop of red ink on linen. News from Washington too was disquieting. Dovish senators who had earlier passed an amendment prohibiting financial support to mercenaries in Cambodia were also trying to pass another for bringing all the GIs home by December 1971. And with every passing day wails from Seoul, Taipei, Saigon, Phnom Penh and

Bangkok have grown louder. Time surely was ripe for another dose of Agnewiana.

At Seoul Agnew tried his best to cheer up Chung Hee Park who has been hysterically screaming against the American decision to withdraw 20,000 troops from South Korea. Agnew told him how nice it would have been for South Korea and the Free World to have retained the current level of U.S. troop commitments to Asia but how difficult it is now to reverse the decision in the face of "bizarre extremists...kooks or demagogues...oddballs...learned idiosyncrasy...the cynics, the relativists...the radical or criminal left" at home. But he pointed out that 44,000 troops still stayed on and promised never to reduce the level of American troops to the point where South Korea would be "vulnerable to attack from North Korea". Seoul was also assured of "substantial additional military assistance to modernise its armed forces". A wing of F-4 tactical fighters would be immediately transferred from Japan to South Korea. Despite all this, however, it seems Park's frayed nerves were not fully soothed. The way Agnew described his talks at Seoul—"very frank exchange of views"—indicates that there was neither total agreement nor the warmth usually expected of a grateful valet.

With the guns of pro-Sihanouk forces booming barely six miles from Phnom Penh, Spiro Agnew's unscheduled dash to the Cambodian capital brought much more solace to

the beleaguered General Lon Nol than it did to Chung Hee Park. Although Spiro did not consider it wise to spend more than six clandestine hours in Phnom Penh the message he delivered was heartening enough to the general. At the time of the Cambodian invasion Nixon promised never to return to Cambodia even if the "sanctuaries" there were recaptured by the communists after the withdrawal of American troops by July 1. Even in the middle of last month official spokesman in Washington said that apart from giving limited military aid and "interdiction" bombing the U.S. could not do anything to prevent Cambodia from going under. But now comes Spiro Agnew to declare that "we will not allow it to be used as a sanctuary from which attacks can be launched on U.S. forces while we're completing the Vietnamisation programme". Further elaborating on this theme he said that Washington is "going to do everything it can to help the Lon Nol Government". The message was clear. Cambodia controlled by the pro-Sihanouk forces is considered by the Americans to be a "vast sanctuary" and they are going to do "everything" to prevent that eventuality. That the word "everything" includes massive commitment of American ground forces was made quite plain by Agnew in his apocalyptic speech delivered before the war veterans in Miami on the eve of his departure. "There will come some-time", he said, "in the vengeful Providence of God, another struggle in which, not a few hundred thousand fine men from America will have to die, but as many millions as are necessary to accomplish the final freedom of the peoples of the world".

For FRONTIER readers in

West India can contact

S. D. CHANDAVARKAR

10, Kanara House

Mogal Lane, Mahim

Bombay-16

SEPTEMBER 5, 1970

To Each His Own

We are yet to know what had piqued Mr Apa Pant who took laudable trouble to keep the image of Calcutta pure. Calcutta is not of course an unviolated city. There has been a horde of critics, ranging from Jawaharlal Nehru to Dom Moraes, to speak very uncharitably about this fuzzy city. But the Pants seem to have drawn a line somewhere. No offence is taken if an Indian wins an international laurel by photographing an Indian beggar but it hurts the Indian sensitiveness most cruelly if a foreigner turns his lens on the beggar very willing to pose for money. This ought not to cause surprises. Objectivity may have many dimensions; it changes complexion with a shift in the purpose for which the portrayal is used. When an Indian does it, as Nirad C. Chaudhuri would say, it is self-criticism; when a foreigner does it, it is plain denigration or outright commercialism.

It is quite possible that Louis Malle picked on some unsavoury aspects of Calcutta's life. There is no denying that this city has a handful and a half of sinister traits, just as any other city in the world has. Even the holiest of the holy—the Vatican—has run into dire trouble over what is strongly suspected as nun-trafficking. That Louis Malle's documentary vision has been drawn to these traits is not certainly his special curse. The world today is attracted more to the unlovely exterior than to the innate worthiness that helps a city or a nation survive in spite of its decomposing exterior. The infatuation all the world over with the revue on buttocks (Oh! Calcutta!) shows what civilised people like today. It is just right that Louis Malle is true to this new wave.

Louis Malle is all the more pardonable because he has no pretensions. His knowledge of Calcutta is by his own admission awfully limited. It is after all his bias that his documentary reveals and not what Calcutta is. Any sensible person should have accepted or dismissed the series as the projection of his per-

sonality and not as the essence of Calcutta.

Mr Pant, it seems therefore, could have as well left the BBC viewers alone to enjoy what they want to enjoy. The BBC has its own brand of humour; if their clients are dense enough to enjoy it, why not let them enjoy? They had appreciated, for example, in the last week's Money Programme of the BBC, Mr G. D. Birla explaining his theory of monopoly. The sole beneficiaries of the Birla monopoly are the common people of India for whose progress every paisa of the Birla profits is ploughed back continuously and the members of the Birla House live frugally without spending the profits for their personal use—said Mr Birla. Mr Pant had no objection to this brand of Birla truth but he could not stand the Louis Malle truth according to which the young girls of Calcutta are hotted up sexually, by well-considered means and gadgets, so that they meet the world standard of prostitution. Mr Pant objected.

And the objection was sustained by the Government of India. That is surprising. Mr Pant, it might be imagined, was acting in self-defence; it would not have been in his ambassadorial interest had he slept quietly while the BBC got away with the Calcutta bashing. The Foreign Service had been well enough rapped in the past for such negligence. But what made the Government of India extend its censorship beyond the national frontiers? Doesn't it believe in the Panch Shila any more? If it did, it wouldn't have interfered with the Britons' right to enjoyment. Isn't the protest to the BBC a patent interference with the Briton's most internal affair—their understanding of truth?

NOTICE

Articles cannot be returned unless accompanied by return postage.

Business Manager
Frontier

A Moth-Eaten Document

The Fourth Plan, that moth-eaten document while still new, had said, in case you care to remember, that exports must grow at the annual rate of 7 per cent. It was on this assumption that Yojana Bhavan predicted the halving of net foreign aid by 1973-74. If the first thing does not happen, the second thing would not follow. It is now amply clear that the first thing is not going to happen. During 1969-70, the first year of the Plan, exports grew by barely four per cent. Worse has followed. The trade figures are now available for the first quarter of 1970-71. Exports, instead of advancing at the postulated rate, have in fact declined by as much as 2.5 per cent compared with the first quarter of the previous year. Traditional exports, including those of jute and cotton textiles, continue to perform abominably badly. It could hardly be otherwise. The price of domestic cotton has over the years been jacked so high that whatever the subsidies, open or revealed, that one might accord to textile exports, it would be impossible for us to meet the competition from China, Japan, Singapore, or Hong Kong. In jute the position is about the same. International prices of sacking and hessian have been allowed to go up and up, and no questions are asked. Manufacturers are happy with the cushy domestic market; and, pray, why should they bother about exports, do they get any part of the foreign exchange earned? Occasional noises are made, dutifully, regarding the desirability of lowering the export duty on jute manufactures. But as each such lowering is followed by a corresponding adjustment in the price at which Pakistan offers her wares, our exporters return to their contented gloom.

There is one basic factor regarding exports which politicians, civil servants and the rest of them are fully aware of, but is nonetheless considered unmentionable in polite society. One might fiddle with rates of subsidies, cry oneself hoarse over unfair

competition from Pakistan, offer umpteen other alibis, in the final analysis however exports depend on the efficiency of domestic production. The unit cost of raising the raw material and the unit cost of converting the raw material into the processed fibre are crucial to efficiency. India continues to slide on both scores. In Pakistan, the per acre productivity of raw jute is in the range of 3 to 4.5 bales, and the quality of the jute is vastly superior to what we are able to raise across the border, apart from the fact that the corresponding productivity per acre here is as low as 2.2 bales. In view of the relatively more modern equipment, the unit cost of conversion is also considerably lower for jute goods in Pakistan. One is not altogether sure, but maybe even managers and entrepreneurs are somewhat less crooked there than in India, that is Pilani and Jhun Junu.

It is a repeat story in cotton. Cotton raised in Sind and West Punjab is superior in quality to what is raised in Gujarat, Maharashtra and elsewhere. The unit cost of raising it also continues to be lower over there. The farm lobby in Pakistan cannot compare with the power exercised by our native lobby. And the traders here have a century's experience behind them in the manipulation of prices. The new outfit of the Cotton Corporation is supposed to ensure that prices do not go out of hand and equity is maintained in the

distribution of the fibre. The reality is likely to work out altogether differently, since, as with everything else, even in cotton trade, the Government is determined not to alienate any group: it cannot afford to. The Cotton Corporation will be there and will remain notionally in charge of the cotton trade, but private trade will exist simultaneously. Emulating the glorious role of the Food Corporation of India, the Cotton Corporation too will appoint private traders as its agents in the name of nationalising trade; all that could happen would be the addition of another link in the chain of intermediaries. What will be achieved would be the obverse of cost cutting.

Once you raise the price level of one set of crops, you have to raise the prices of the other crops too. Part of the reason for fibre prices having been pushed up is the fact that there has been no effective control on food-grain prices. If wheat in India costs double of what it costs in Pakistan, cotton growers in India would also then demand twice of what the growers get in Pakistan, and so on down the line. Once the prices of all agricultural products get raised in this manner, the industrial cost structure too turns out of gear. A high cost economy cannot survive in competition, and we will be unable to survive. It follows therefore that the goal of halving net foreign aid by 1973-74 would also fall by the wayside. After all, it is not our fault if we cannot become self-sufficient; what can we do if exports do not pick up?

Small Car

Whose fancy the small car was ten years ago is wholly irrelevant to the recent decision in principle to set up a project in the public sector. The gentlemen presiding over the Industries portfolio periodically talked about the necessity of a car which was first christened economy car. This was later to become people's car (who are the people?) to satisfy the socia-

list pretensions of the Government at the Centre. But this was again dropped in favour of just 'small car' which has now clicked. After dilly-dallying for a decade, the outcome has been such as to delight only the three existing private manufacturers. Competition from a public enterprise is the last possible thing; they know well how to run down any such unit.

In any case, it will be some more years before the promised car is placed on the market after it has gone through the process of a formal decision, selection of a model based on a proven foreign design and collaboration arrangements with a foreign automobile manufacturer. Two foreign models are reportedly being considered—the Renault offer involves a capital expenditure of about Rs 20 crores with a foreign exchange content of Rs 3.7 crores while the price of Mazda 800 is expected to be half that of the French model. But cost estimates quite some time ago have gone overboard and when the proposed project goes into stream the actual expenditure, will be very much more than the original estimates. Therefore, the consumer will have to pay a much higher price than he may now conceive. Let him.

How small the small car will be, is, however not known. The Government has also decided to issue two letters of intent—the one fortunate recipient would be the son of Mrs Indira Gandhi, Mr Sanjoy Gandhi. Thereby, the Government has contradicted itself on two counts; first, while the two private parties would produce cars with indigenous technical know-how and components, the Government, in the case of the public-sector project, has conceded the “necessity” of foreign assistance; and secondly, the earlier stance of the Cabinet was that if and when a small car plant was set up, it would be in the State jurisdiction.

On the basis of its demand estimates, the Planning Group on Transport Equipment suggested the provision of facilities for the production of another 50,000 cars a year. This, at the time of consideration of Fourth Plan priorities, was opposed by the Planning Commission on the unexceptionable ground that the country's scarce resources should be invested in important areas. Is the demand potential high enough to allow the six units to operate at their optimum levels? Indications are that the demand forecasts of the Planning

Group will remain unfulfilled even during the Fifth Plan period. Not only are car prices rising with a steady fall in quality—which means the capital invested in a car depreciates at a faster pace—but the maintenance cost also is almost prohibitive. Even the lucky people who can afford cars are

becoming fewer in number. The tax-payers may reasonably ask why their money is going to be spent on a project to add to the pleasures of the elite. If the Government wants to offer cars at a lower price, why not merge and then take over the three units in the private sector?

View from Delhi

Operation Princes

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE BBC seems to have taken the “pack up” order in its stride. But not the Scotch-swaggering Brown Sahebs of the Indian Press, who are now as sentimental about it as over the end of the Empire. To them the relentless bullying of the relatively free sectors of the Indian Press by the Government is of no consequence. Those who bemoan the end of the BBC outfit here are also the bully boys of the Government. For all the feints of Mr Inder K. Gujral, the entire Big Business Press has been lined up behind the ruling group, through the dual tactics of bullying over company law irregularities and the offer of concessions for fertiliser plants and a liberal licensing policy. The Big Business Press might indulge in stray snipings at Mr Gujral whenever he makes an indiscreet statement there seems to be complete accord on the ground rules which of course are forgotten on rare occasions.

One might be justified in asking an inconvenient question here. The Government accepted Her Majesty's Government's explanation that the BBC was an autonomous body and our High Commission began dealing with the BBC directly on the Louis Malle films. A similar explanation was given by the Soviet Government when confronted with objectionable broadcasts by the outfit that goes by the name of Radio Peace and Progress. The Government of India was terribly impressed and convinced

by the explanation but would not take up the matter with the mythically autonomous Radio Peace and Progress. It is common knowledge in New Delhi that the Soviet knight-errants who work for this outfit have been enjoying even diplomatic privileges like CD number plates for their cars. The Government dare not think of any action against Radio Peace and Progress. Back in 1967, the Home Ministry made a study of the role of foreign broadcasting outfits vis-a-vis the Indian elections and it was found that while the BBC was most objective, the role of Radio Peace and Progress which had just gone on the air amounted to interference in our domestic affairs. This finding was part of a Cabinet note circulated to the Cabinet shortly after the Fourth General Elections. The only upshot of the furore over the objectionable Soviet broadcasts was the discontinuance of the supply of the Government's monitoring service to journalists and MPs because the monitoring included the broadcasts of Radio Peace and Progress in addition to those of Radio Peking and Radio Pakistan.

One cannot help feeling that the action against the BBC has much more to it than the objectionable films. The British attitude to Indian immigrants and British passport holders of Asian origin might have had something to do with it. Or was the episode contrived to divert public attention in India from the Soviet

maps episode? Between them, the nuns and the BBC got all the attention last week. As the wag said, the church is in a lurch and there is no hope for Pope. But it isn't all that hopeless for the BBC, which has hinted that it would open shop in Pakistan. Who knows, the BBC might again be permitted to begin operations.

Mrs Gandhi's Problems

Mrs Indira Gandhi has larger than life problems on hand. The BKD has banged the door on the merger move and either the Congress-R behaves in Uttar Pradesh or quits. Her plan to induct the BKD into her Party before going for an electoral adventure has gone on the rocks. Mr Jagjivan Ram went on a mission to Calcutta to psyche the Bangla Congress into the Congress fold. Meantime, the Young Turk challenge has become too strong to be ignored and there is talk of disciplining the recalcitrant bunch. On the policy front, Mrs Gandhi had to yield to the Young Turk pressure on one of the

two issues—on land grab or on the privy purses. Support to the land grab movement was too high a political price to pay to silence a couple of them irresponsible boys. The privy purse issue came in handy because a low-risk adventure on this would be more than worthwhile when party morale is sagging and there is an election to fight in Kerala. So she reversed the earlier decision to put off the bill and it would have been voted upon when this column appears in print. Lo's heads I win and tails I don't lose. In all probability Mrs Gandhi wants the bill to fall through in the Lok Sabha for want of a two-thirds majority. That might at worst mean a loss of prestige to the Government but her own political ends are adequately served. If the bill fails she can go hammer and sickle at her rightist detractors when she campaigns in Kerala. If the bill is passed, it would mean a windfall of a few lakh marginal votes for her party.

Mrs Gandhi's camp has been desperate about Kerala. Last week, after hush-hush talks between a representative of the Kerala Congress and the Cong-O in Kerala, and the Prime Minister, a plan to come to terms with the Kerala Congress directly (and the Congress-O indirectly) at any price was drawn up. Mr C. Subramaniam was despatched on an urgent mission so that the Kerala Congress would get all the seats it wants even as the Congress-R keeps its deal with the CPI. The anti-Marxist front is to acquire a new dimension if the plan goes through. Mrs Gandhi was not averse to using even the Church because the Archbishop of Delhi who met her last week, ostensibly to explain the position regarding the nuns, was in fact bold to intervene with the Kerala Church and secure the support of the Kerala Congress for the new move.

Despite everything, the Marxist front is still on the top. The Centre's agencies in their confidential assessments have rated the CPI's chances low and the alliance with the mini-front (which does not include the Kerala Congress) is now consi-

dered a liability for Mrs Gandhi's party.

Until the last minute, the Marxists had even left the option open for an understanding with the Muslim League because it is once again anti-Congressism of the pre-1967 election vintage in Kerala. The Congress-R has taken upon itself the task of fighting the Marxists and the CPI has been advised to take the back-seat. In Marxist calculations, the CPI and the Congress-R together constitute the main enemy and a "third" front is a windfall. The dissensions in the Congress-R (three district committees have revolted against the alliance with the "mini-front") have reduced the credibility of the Congress-R mini-front alliance. A Politbureau member is known to have told his friends that the alliance led by his party plus the Congress-O had hoped to win 60 of the 133 last week but now he would put the figure at 80. But a deadlocked Assembly cannot be ruled out though the Marxists as a party might stand first.

The alignments in Kerala might well be a pointer to the pattern of alignments to emerge at the next general elections. Anti-Congressism which was dead for a while has been resurrected and ultimately no serious party would find it worthwhile going with the Congress-R in an extended battle, when the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections are held simultaneously. Even the parties that strategically need to support the Congress-R could find it difficult to support it tactically in any seat. There is little doubt that at the end of the poll in Kerala, not only the CPI would come to grief but the Congress-R too. The Marxists might stand vindicated, though only negatively.

August 30, 1970

NEW BOOK CENTRE

14, Ramanath Majumdar St., Cal-9

Just published

J. STALIN

on

CHINESE REVOLUTION

A collection of all the writings, speeches and reports by Stalin on the character, direction and class content of the democratic revolution in China.

Price: Rs. 4.00

Also available

Chen Po-ta: **Stalin and the Chinese Revolution**—1.25. Paul Lafargue: **Evolution of Property from Savagery to Civilisation**—2.25.

For FRONTIER contact

S. P. CHATTERJEE

Statesman Office

Steel Market

Durgapur-4

SEPTEMBER 5, 1970

Lessons Of Durgapur

ADINATH BHATTACHARYA

DURGAPUR is a 'fine' town, a town made finer and trim by the presence of—or would one call it, occupation by—the trim CRP and their comrades-in-arms, the CISF. Almost every third vehicle plying today carries contingents of the CRP or the BSF and every fifth man you talk to belongs to one of these two 'fine', Central para-military units, and every third employee there was a striker till August 22.

The story of the strike has important and instructive lessons. When the statute authorising New Delhi to raise the Central Industrial Security Force was passed some time back it was almost immediately challenged by the union of security staff of the Plant both at the organisational level and at the Calcutta High Court on the contention that a number of its provisions were unconstitutional. It needs to be mentioned here that one of the objects—never expressed in so many words—was to crush the union of the security staff of the Durgapur Steel Plant in which the CPM has a large say. Strangely, the Employees Union paid only lip service to the stand taken by the security staff union. It is said that members of the security union alone paid for the legal battle that started on the constitutionality of the CISF statute.

The injunction on deployment of the CISF was vacated by the High Court on August 3 with a suggestion that the CISF should not be posted at the plant till the legality of the statute was finally settled. The Central forces, who were kept ready to take over, immediately entered the plant and asked the security people on duty to quit. There was no immediate opposition by the employees for they had not been prepared by the leadership for the contingency. Seldom, if ever, had the unpreparedness of the Employees Union been laid so bare and the price employees in general had to pay so heavy. There was, of course, a bandh the

next day but the damage had been done by then.

Mr Dilip Mazumdar, the local member of the now dissolved Legislative Assembly and some other Marxist leaders were arrested on August 5 on trumped-up charges. There followed mass protests in the form of spontaneous strikes and rallies. Durgapur became a centre of seething discontent.

It was in this context that the Durgapur Trade Union Co-ordination Committee decided on August 9 to declare an indefinite strike in the entire complex from August 13. The issues were, release of the leaders, withdrawal of the CISF, CRP etc., in that order. The decision was momentous; never before had such a decision been taken by a handful involving so many, on issues entirely political, with priorities confused and almost without any preparation. The wisdom of the decision was challenged on many counts: the class composition of the workers was not considered, their battle-worthiness was ignored—most of them came to know of the decision only on the 10th—the principles of democratic centralism were brushed aside and the point raised by some that no attempt was made to politicise the workers for the decision was pooh-poohed. Examples were cited: If the bargemen at Calcutta Port could strike and the workers of industrial units like Remington or Jay Engineering could strike for months on end, why could not the workers of a public sector steel plant? It was forgotten that while in the first instance, the striking workers belonged to the class of real have-nots, in the second and third cases the authorities concerned had little chance to mobilise so much stark terror as at Durgapur. The question as to what extent the workers of Durgapur with their largely middle-class composition could go in the face of large-scale terrorisation was either ignored or brushed aside.

The strike ultimately started on August 12. Till about the 14th, it was almost a complete success despite the terrorisation and the anti-strike combination popularly known as the EPC. The CPI and the SUC in particular deserve outright condemnation for their anti-worker role in Durgapur. Not only did they take active steps to break the strike but they also collaborated with the Haryana General to the extent of asking their partymen to travel in plant transport posing as workers going to or returning from plant. The role of Mukherjee's INTUC was no less sordid. Thus, the CPI, SUC and the Congress(O) joined hands with General Wadhera to break the strike.

On August 14, Comrade Jyoti Basu came to Ondal, which was beyond the 144 Cr PC zone, to address the struggling workers of Durgapur. The workers had expected him to come to Durgapur and address them there. His 'wisdom' shook their confidence in the leaders of his party who had given the strike call.

Then came the discharge notice on the non-optee security personnel numbering about 650 and the ultimatum by the steel plant to join duty by the 18th or face the music. The lock-out of the AVB and the involvement of an ex-Deputy Mayor of Calcutta in this act are too dirty to be described. The role assigned to the CRP and the BSF was played well. They went into striking workers' colony, broke into their quarters and dragged them into waiting trucks. Injury and insult were incidental to this treatment. Cases are not uncommon where they urinated on cooked food in the houses of strikers. They have also been accused of theft. A large number of cases of injury inflicted by the CRP have been treated in the plant hospital as 'injured on duty'. Many strikers were arrested when they refused to join the plant even under duress.

Women Out

The first batch of workers started joining their plant from the 17th. Attendance further improved on the 18th to about 50% of the total

Confrontation

R. K. BASU

strength. These developments unnerved the Co-ordination Committee leaders. They mobilised a large number of women volunteers—about 3,000 in all—to resist the CRP from entering the colonies and intimidating the still striking workers. This was a brilliantly organised and successfully executed strategy and the attendance in plants dropped to almost 5% on August 20. The authorities hit back by clamping a curfew from 2 p.m. of the 20th resulting in total confinement of women in their households. The vacillating workers had by then been won over by threats. Larger and larger numbers joined on the 21st and 22nd. At the time of withdrawal of the strike, that is on the evening of the 22nd, hardly 35% of the workers were still on strike.

The lessons of Durgapur are too serious to be ignored. Her Majesty's Government is now out to crush the CPM in the State. The decision to deploy the CISF in Durgapur alone, leaving aside the other two public sector steel plants, was guided solely by this resolve. The CPM has been somewhat cornered in the present situation, thanks to the manoeuvres of the ruling clique and its stooges and also to its own ill-applied strong-arm tactics. A lot of heart searching is necessary if the CPM wants to retain its base and strengthen it. It is time to ponder if clashes with the CPI (ML) are now more necessary than the task of resisting, containing and ultimately crushing the evil posed by the Central Government through the CRP, BSF and State Police. Violence may not be desirable but it should not become a taboo either, with a party swearing by Marxism. The Constitution can hardly be wrecked from within and constitutionalism never delivers the goods.

The workers of Durgapur, and for that matter, the rest of the country need not get disheartened over this failure. A battle might have been lost but the war is still to be fought and won.

For FRONTIER contact
SANYAL BROS.
96, Main Road Jamshedpur-1

ELECTIONS are again becoming the talking point of the different political parties of West Bengal. Demand for an early poll or a late one are being made according to the calculation each is constantly making about its chances. Election manifestos have of course not been drafted nor public meetings held but hints of the issues on which the parties mean to fight the elections have now and then, been thrown. So far, however, the emotive issue of a State David taking on a Goliath Centre has not featured in the hints, not conspicuously at any rate.

It is interesting, may even be educative, to recall in this context a bit of recent history. About the time, a little over a year ago, when the UF was returned to power in West Bengal, the word "confrontation" was often heard. Faintly echoing the late Dr Soekarno's utterances on konfrontasi the UF leaders invested the word with almost the ring of a war cry proclaiming battle against the Centre. It was only a matter of time—the import was—before "confrontation" took place and Bengal kept its own tryst with destiny.

How quickly the word went out of fashion!

Somewhere along the Caravelle Cal-Delhi route it seemed to have dropped off like the skin of a healed sore, unnoticed and unregretted. The leaders acquired a new wisdom which necessitated a semantic re-orientation. The vogue word of yesterday became the dirty word of today, not to be uttered in polite society. The battle cry underwent a metamorphosis and became a prayer. "Give us this day our Ministry and forgive us our trespasses. Blessed are the meek for theirs is the kingdom of office."

The fact that neither the politeness nor the prayer availed need not be a reason for not recollecting yes-

teryear or have a few thoughts on "confrontation". For all one knows, the word may have to be rescued from disuse before long.

What did the word imply? Was it a calculated catchword used as an alibi for not living up to the expectations raised during the election campaign? Or, was it merely an expression of a passing emotional tantrum the Bengalis are prone to? Did it reflect, however transitorily, a basic reality of the Indian polity today?

The dilemma of the CP(M), the dominant partner, was real. It had to ask for votes to become working participants in machinery which it had, at the same time, to denounce. The canvassing of votes had to be on a broad keyboard from which numerous notes issued forth, the base note, if not the signature tune, being promises of economic betterment to almost everyone. There was, of course, no chance of a quick realisation of the expectations raised. As a matter of record, given the constraints and the time available, the UF did an excellent job of helping the economically downtrodden. But necessarily the result of the exercise could not be anything but marginal. Conceivably, the talk of confronting the Centre was not an alibi but a real search after remedy for the economic ills of the State. If so, the reason for its soon fading away could only be a realisation of the imperatives of functioning within a system which logic and Marxism both held was not suited to bring about a quick re-ordering of society.

The natural inclination of the schizophrenic Bengali for adopting non-conformist postures may also have been at work. No one likes abstractions better than he. But when the abstractions demand translation into concrete propositions he gives up or re-translates the concrete back to the abstract on a different plane. It was alright so long as confronting the Centre and extracting power and aid from it did not involve an unromantic preparation for disciplined gathering of strength. But the moment the hard facts of

political life made their appearance, there was melting of resolutions.

Basic Trend

I would, however, like to think that there was more to it than these. It may not be altogether fanciful to think that the CP(M) reflected more approximately than the others a basic trend in the Indian polity today, namely, the growth of sub-nationalism and a shift of the focal points of loyalty. Whether such a shift has always been latent and is a natural tendency of a people who historically have evolved, over the ages, a universal society rather than a universal State is for social historians to say. Whether, again, the allegiance of the people that the UF won can be interpreted as a case in point in support of the Heartlanders Vs Coastlanders theory, is for political analysts to examine. But the fact of growth of polycentric power is far too patent to be brushed aside.

The language which the CP(M), or any other Marxist party for that matter, employs for diagnostic purposes does not seem to take cognizance of, except for denunciation, forces which do not easily fit into Marxist categories. This means that for propagandist purposes it has to bypass certain issues, the language issue for instance, which could have an immediate appeal. If, in spite of such constraints, the CP(M)'s growing strength and popularity were somehow related to and part of an all-India phenomenon, it follows that its appeal to radicalism found a response in emotional areas not directly appealed to. That it was so, at least partly, had been observed by many reporters who had closely followed the last elections. The protest and the anti nature of the people's reaction had, at that time, been widely commented upon. It is possible that in the protest there was something more than anger and resentment against immediate surroundings. Maybe, there was an element of historical pull in it.

If indeed the motivation sprang from an urge to assert an identity ra-

ther than from an adherence to a programme of radical economic change, then the later dilemma of the leaders can easily be explained. Consciously or unconsciously they reflected the desire of the people to restore an identity which had been badly battered. This led to the adoption of a posture of defiance—to talk of "confrontation". The leaders were however captives at the same time of programmes drawn to different measures. The result was that it must have become clear to them quite early that the imperatives of

remaining in power and office—to the essential condition for translating the programme into actuality—involved a lot of adjustments. No wonder, brave words and aggressive stances were quickly given up and the leaders settled for less arduous postures such as politeness and prayer.

Doing so, however, they could neither resolve the dilemma nor escape the logic of Indian realities. Now that the parties have again started preparing for elections they may do worse than ponder over a bit of recent history.

Book Review

Revolutionary Perspectives

MOHAN THAMPI

FRANZ Marek, the Austrian Marxist philosopher, has made a noteworthy re-examination of certain basic tenets of Marxism in the light of recent history.* Subtitled "A contribution to an Anthology of Theories of Revolution," this book is a slightly revised version of the original German edition published in Vienna in 1966.

One of the criticisms repeatedly levelled against Marxism since its origin pertains to the theory of the inevitability of socialism. Marxism is dismissed by many of its critics as crudely deterministic and is presented as having no room for the initiative of human will. In other words, if socialism is inevitable why should the working class undertake a struggle full of sacrifice and violence? Marek's first theme is the interplay of necessity and freedom in the development of human society.

His second theme is the failure of the revolutionary forces in the advanced Western countries to make revolution. Marx visualised that revo-

lution would break out first in Germany and England. But it succeeded in backward Russia and in still more backward China. What is the kernel of Marx's theory of revolution? In what sense did Lenin modify it? Do the theories of Mao Tse-tung fit into Marx's or Lenin's formulas? What are the perspectives for world revolution? These are some of the important and topical problems which Marek grapples with while discussing the second theme.

At the outset it must be stated that the book is one of the major works of elucidation of certain key concepts of Marxism. It is lucid and concise and wholly free from pedantic text-bookism. One should like to add however that while the first theme—the interrelationship of necessity and freedom—has been handled brilliantly the author's arguments concerning the second theme are not always persuasive.

The Marxian law of motion of society states that in the history of social formations the relations of production always strive to conform to the development of the productive forces. Marek discusses to what extent this can be called an inexorable law. Marx and Engels have cautioned that laws

*Philosophy of World Revolution

By Franz Marek

Lawrence & Wishart, London. pp. 438, 21s.

of social development are not inevitable in the sense of the laws of physical nature. They are better formulated as historical tendencies. To Marx the laws have no reality except as "approximation, tendency and average." The necessity of socialist revolution operates through the recognition of its inevitability by the social forces. Marek clarifies this idea while discussing Bernstein's attempts to revise Marx by refuting the Marxian ideas on increasing misery, concentration of capital and the economic crises which would lead to the ultimate collapse of capitalism. Marek counters Bernstein by pointing out that the latter separated necessity and the conscious decision to realize it, which are actually a unity in Marx's thought.

According to Marek, after Lenin's death, along with the popularisation of Marxism among the millions, the theory got vulgarised. He says that Stalin, Kautsky and Bukharin, each in his own way, degraded and crudely vulgarised the doctrine. During the Stalinist period the reigning interpretation combined a crude fatalism with a subjective voluntarism. Arbitrary decisions were paraded as inviolable universal laws. This section of the book includes a scathing criticism of Soviet historical writing. "The vulgarised Marxist historical writing which dominated the scene in the Soviet Union from the thirties onwards dissolved all colour, character and subtlety in concepts and ideas. Personalities, contradictions and accidental happenings which threatened to burst the bounds of these concepts and ideas were ignored as being either uninteresting or non-existent. And at the same time a certain idiom was developed which explained every detail and the shape that things took by reference to the general laws of history, every error and accident was represented as being either inevitable and absolutely necessary—or else as irrelevant anyway." Marek does not tell us to what extent the Soviet historical scholarship has improved.

An important chapter entitled "Intervention from behind Prison Walls" deals with the little known

but pregnant ideas of the great Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci. (Some of the important essays of Gramsci are available in *The Modern Prince and other Writings*, Lawrence and Wishart.)

Marek refutes the traditional Marxist formulation expressed in Oskar Lange's *Political Economy*. "Economic laws are the result of consciously purposeful activity by man, but all the same they possess a regularity which is independent of human wills and human consciousness...because men carry on these affairs in definite social conditions and property relations." Marek argues that one cannot characterise social laws, or even the principal law of motion of society as being independent of the wills and consciousness of men. He calls this a correction of Marxism in Marx's own spirit. He says that after the atomic age "the law of motion of society is no guarantee against the extermination of society".

In contrast to the Soviet philosophers' attitude to Sartre, Marek pays eloquent tribute to the French existentialist's intervention against the vulgarisation of Marxism and to his efforts "to restore man to his proper place within Marxism". But he categorically states that Sartre's basic existentialist position cannot explain why there are general laws or tendencies in society and history.

Fundamental Issue

According to Marek the fundamental issue of the theory of revolution which the present-day Marxists have to tackle is that the Marxist law of motion of society has been realized in ways different from that foreseen by Marx and Engels. In other words, Marx's "model" has turned out to be inconsistent with most of the revolutions led by Marxists. After a couple of illuminating chapters discussing Lenin's original and bold formulations which advanced the theory and practice of proletarian revolution Marek points out that the special problems of the Chinese Revolution cannot be adequately dealt with in terms of Marx's and Lenin's ideas of revolution. Marek finds in-

consistency in Mao's concept that the "armed struggle of the Chinese Communist Party is a peasant war under the leadership of the proletariat." Till the division within the international communist movement erupted to the surface this formulation was generally accepted by Marxists, Marek does not belong to the Marxist historians who make out that Mao Tse-tung is a combined avatar of Confucius and Chengis Khan. Nor does he share the puerile belief that if Mao is wrong and evil today he must have been always wrong and evil. But his treatment of the topic is not commensurate with its complexity and importance. The right question to ask is not whether Mao's formulation fits into earlier theories but whether it helps to advance the revolutionary movement. Marek's statement that the Chinese Revolution was led by Marxist intellectuals is beside the point. At the head of every revolutionary movement there have been intellectuals. The class character of the leadership of a political party should not be confused with the social origin of its individual leaders.

Marek's main conclusion in this section is bold indeed for a communist to make. Discussing the character of the changes taking place in some 'third world' countries, he states: "The anti-feudal, anti-imperialist revolutions which have a socialist perspective have gone beyond Lenin's model and are creating a new type of socialist revolution in which 'the leading role of the proletariat', finds its chief expression in the leading role of intellectuals who have espoused Marxism, the science of the revo-

Our agent at Alipurduar

Mr SUBHAS BOSE,

Newtown Library,

Alipurduar, P.O.,

Dist. Jalpaiguri,

West Bengal.

lutionary proletariat." (p. 94) He goes on to say that the Cuban revolutionary leaders were intellectuals who accepted Marxism after their victory. In Algeria only two years after the victory did the military leadership combined socialism and Islam. He also asks whether the economic and political orientation in Algeria, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Egypt and Burma can be designated anything other than socialist. One should admit that a clear-cut answer is lacking. Many Marxists hesitate to commit themselves. Marek is aware of the hesitation. He says that you cannot get out of the situation by using expressions like 'anti-capitalist revolution' and 'non-capitalist development'. Marek here actually dissolves politics into economics. It is evident that he considers that the dictatorship of the proletariat superfluous and irrelevant in the present-day context of building socialism. The only virtue I find in this position is its clarity.

Marek's faith in "structural reforms" is a logical derivative of his renunciation of the principle of proletarian dictatorship. Given the newly acquired flexibility of the capitalist system to avoid or tide over acute economic crises and misery of the people it is difficult to convince the masses of the necessity of socialist revolution. In fact he sounds quite pessimistic. "It is quite possible to have glittering although stagnating consumer societies and even authoritarian welfare states without its resulting in this break-through to a socialist society." He further complains that the attraction for socialism in Western Europe has been damaged by the GDR and the CCSR (which were developed industrial societies before the revolution) copy-

ing the Soviet model which bore the backwardness of its past.

Lin Piao's Formulation

Another most important question raised by Marek is whether it is a law of the world socialist revolution that it shall triumph first in backward countries. Lin Piao's thesis about the "world's rural areas" encircling the "world cities" is cursorily dismissed on the basis that so many 'villages' are still ruled by reactionaries. He considers, quite unjustifiably I think, that the logical extension of Lin Piao's formulation is an atomic war. One fails to understand why the success of revolution in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America should lead to an atomic war. If more countries become socialist and if the capitalist encirclement of the socialist camp is replaced by a socialist encirclement of the capitalist camp the balance of forces will radically and qualitatively change in favour of revolution and world peace. (The passage from Lin Piao's article is inaccurately cited in the book.) The Chinese strategy for world revolution is to accelerate the revolutionary processes in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America where at present conditions are more favourable than in Western Europe and North America. This will in turn have its impact on the revolutionary movements in the advanced countries. The role of the Vietnam war in radicalising the masses in these countries is an instance. There is nothing in the text of Lin Piao's article to warrant the assumption that the Chinese want to spread revolution to the West through an atomic war. The Chinese have consistently maintained that the oppressed classes and nations can achieve liberation only by their own revolutionary struggle and that no one else can do it for them. The Chinese predilection for metaphors ('caper tiger', 'east wind prevailing over west wind', 'hundred flowers', 'worlds' rural areas and cities', 'spiritual atom bomb' etc.) often leads to interpretations, which, when they are not deliberate distortions, are too naive.

The Outsiders

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

EXISTENTIALISM has become the catchword of the age, almost a cliché and when Camus' novel goes in for a film version there is always the danger of the director getting trapped in a web of fashionable fads. But as one critic has put it, "Cliches only turn into clichés when they are treated as such", and Visconti has invested the much-used existentialist formula with new meaning in his rendering of *The Stranger*. He has always remained faithful to his literary source but this has never resulted in slavish dependence. With a keen eye on visual details, Visconti's camera follows Mersault, a Frenchman working in pre-war Algiers, and the situations and the characters have been drawn with meticulous care. Mersault's angst generates from his lack of concern for the world around him and the consequent disharmony between his thoughts and his actions. Mastroianni's splendid acting and Visconti's superb handling of the theme have been able to bring to the surface the basic contradictions of human existence. Visconti has also shown us the confrontation between the rebel individual and a pettifoggish, pompous and dry officialdom, in his deliberate overdoing of the courtroom scene when Mersault is tried for the murder of an Arab. Visconti has also carefully worked out the exact visual equivalents for Camus' excellent prose of which Satre says "each sentence is like a snapshot of a gesture or object". He has also moulded the characters in Camus' image of the modern man as one who "reads newspapers and fornicates." Visconti's colour photography has not only captured the Algerian setting with a high degree of authenticity, it has also imbued the film with a poetry of physical sensation, so that killing heat, the suffocating night-wake by the coffin by Mersault's mother, the beads of perspiration on Mersault's face, sun-drenched ripples, the glittering knife which dazzles

For Frontier contact

People's Book House

Meher House,

Cowasji Patel Street,

Fort, Bombay

SEPTEMBER 5, 1970

Mersault and makes him shoot the Arab, have all become palpable and gripping physical realities and when Mersault describes the sun as the motive for the murder, it no longer remains a clever play of words, but turns into a philosophical truth.

Staircase

Stanly Donen's *Staircase*, is also a tale of the outsiders, Harry and Charlie, two homosexuals sharing the same profession, living together and clawing at each other. Derived from a play, the film has failed to shed off the elements of staginess and verbosity. But somehow both Rex Harrison and Richard Burton have performed with personality, and all the morbidity, squalor, and the self-pity of their queer existence have been conveyed with force.

Clippings

Andhra Camps

Running of camps and torture of people brought to these camps is a part of putting down the Naxalites in Krishna district. Two such camps were set up by the police, one in the PWD traveller's bungalow in Vadali village of Kaikalur taluq and another in the rest house bungalow in Babulapadu near Nuzvid railway station. It is understood that these torture chambers are being operated since May last and hundreds of people have been brought for "operation torture" from Kaikalur, Nuzvid, Gannavaram, Gudivada, Bandar, Divi taluqs and from Vijayawada town.

The police camp at Vadali began to function on May 3, with the Masulipatam DSP in charge, along with 30 police men.

All those suspected to be Naxalites are brought to this camp and the farce of an enquiry into the Prodduvaka murder case is being conducted. (In Prodduvaka, a landlord is reported to have been murdered by Naxalites). Without exception, everyone brought to this camp is beaten up... they have adopted a particular

technique to tie up both the hands above the head, bend the head, introduce a thick bamboo between the head and the tied-up hands, make him stretch his legs, and as one policeman goes on dancing on the knee-joints, another man goes beating on the lower part of the feet. Once this is done, these Naxalites cannot even walk for two to three days.

Apart from this technique, these suspects are asked to place their palms on the table and then the palm joints are beaten until they get swollen; people are given lathi blows on their back by four policemen in succession; they are beaten up until bones are broken. Even women are not spared. Families, including women and children are brought to these camps and women are so beaten up that they cannot walk. A number of instances were there when their breasts were crushed and they were kicked on their vaginas and abused in the foulest language. Not even 60-year-olds are spared.

If anyone gave in to this torture and gave out a secret, they were further beaten up with a view to getting out more information. Nobody knows when he will be called again and beaten up.

...It is also understood that the food served to the suspects brought to these camps is horrible. Except rice with tamarind water (rasam), nothing is given. The tamarind squeezed in the morning for rasam is also used for the evening as well. It can be easily imagined how their health will be. If anyone dares to ask, they are told: yes, you die if you cannot live. It is our desire that you die. If you die, you will be buried here.

It is also learnt that thumb-impresions are being taken from a number of people. Some of them are involved in the Prodduvaka murder case and some were presented before the Nuzvid magistrate's court. Some of them were beaten to such an extent that they were disabled and were let off. Some others are still in the Bapulapadu camp, in Veeravalli police station and in Vijayawada.

In order to feed these and the police in the camps, forcible collection

of rice is made from passing lorries; some of this rice is finding its way elsewhere. Thus, people in Krishna are being subjected to inhuman torture in police camps. (*Prajasakti*, CPM weekly, August 15).

Murder in a Thana

"My father pressed his head down with his feet. L.M. and M. went on beating him. He vomited blood, and urinated—there was blood in the urine. Then I left to get our milk."

On that evil day a little boy was telling this story to a milkman in a *khatal* just opposite the Shyampukur Police Station. He had gone there to fetch milk in the morning. His father was the jamadar of that police station.

Samir Bhatnagarya was seventeen last month. The last year of his life it proved to be. He was killed in the police lock-up... The post-mortem report has not been delivered to his relatives despite requests. But the doctor had said: God is there, I have children, I shall not lie. The *dom* (morgue-man) present at the time of the postmortem had burst into tears. He said he had not seen such torture even during the British Raj. The liver, kidney and lungs of the boy had burst.

The Police Commissioner has said he himself will make an inquiry and the guilty will be punished. But ten days are over, nothing has happened. Nothing seems likely to happen. Samir's father is just a poor Brahmin, a retired government employee.

The jamadar was going to have his bath. But he could not check the temptation of beating up the boy. With the towel on, he started the job. Not that there were no officers present. Mr B. was watching all the time. When the boy pressed his stomach and collapsed, the killers somewhat came to their senses. Samir groaned for water. But it did not strike them to give him water. Two days later his elder brother Bablu poured same water into the mouth of the dead on the funeral pyre at the Kashi Mitra burning ghat and repaid the debt.

The thana people had sent for a doctor. He said: "What have you done? It's all over." Hurried steps were taken to remove the body, a car was brought, armed police surrounded the police station and the body was taken out. There was a crowd. Samir had been killed on the wrestling ground inside the thana... Just across the wall is a big bustee... some one had climbed the wall and shouted to the police: "What are you up to? The boy will die."

The people were told that a Naxalite had broken one of his legs while trying to escape and he was being sent to the police hospital... It was not even 1 p.m.... But the cruelty of it, throughout the day the thana officers kept on telling Samir's uncle that he should go to court—the boy would be released on bail.

Samir was darkish in complexion and slender. He was useful to everyone in his locality... How much they loved him must have been evident to police bosses when the funeral procession started. (*Darpan*, August 28).

Beseiged City

Five months of President's rule are gone. The local police and the CRP have taken charge of Calcutta which gives the visitor the impression of a city under siege. Men, women and children have been made to walk with upraised hands at some important street crossings. Thousands of young people arrested on suspicion and after a few hours let off without a charge being levelled against them relate to their friends and relations stories of atrocities on them in police lock-up. A youngster was beaten to death in a lock-up, the like of which had not happened even during the worst days of Sir John Anderson's regime in the 1930s. No one can now say that the guardians of law and order have not activated themselves. (Ranjit Roy in *Hindustan Standard*).

Police HQ Affected

The first day (August 26) of the State employees' three-day strike affected Lal Bazar police headquarters, Calcutta. Of the 162 members of

Class III and Class IV staff, who do not belong to the police cadre, only 51 attended office. The Calcutta Police Gazette, which comes out in the evening every day, did not appear... The reason was that there was not sufficient turnout in the press situated within the Lal Bazar premises. Fans in some rooms were found not working. The electricians, who are under the charge of the State Public Works Department, were not at hand. (*The Statesman*).

Be Aryans

The maladjustment with the rest of India, and more especially with the Hindi-speaking Indo-Gangetic plain, which is at the root of most of our (Bengal's) ills today cannot be ended without giving up the non-Aryan theory which has become the strongest buttress of our provincialism. It is only by accepting the Aryan-Brahmanic affiliation of our proper emotional bonds with the rest of India that we can establish proper emotional bonds with the rest of India.

By accepting our ethnic and cultural isolation which the non-Aryan theory involves we shall be succumbing to the climate of Bengal which has enfeebled us. In Bengal the virility and strength of the Aryan was always in conflict with the effeminacy and weakness generated by the geographical environment. I find every day that the Bengalis who are most provincial and isolationist are also the Bengalis who are most feeble and despondent. In Bengal only the memory of a more heroic existence can keep up any residue of strength in us. Why should we give that up by calling ourselves non-Aryan gratuitously? (Nirad C. Chaudhuri in *Hindustan Standard*).

Letters

Questions Unanswered

As a worker of the CPM in the Dum Dum area I did put the following questions to the party leadership:

(1) In protest against the murder of

Shri Ananat Dutta, a veteran CPM leader in our area, a call for Dum Dum bandh was issued a few days ago. The leaders of the CPM at a meeting denounced the terrorist activities of the CPM(ML) and asked the people to resist murderous attacks on individuals to settle political differences. With all respect for the memory of Shri Dutta, I asked the leadership why it should not also denounce the murder of Shri Kanak Adhikari, a CPI(ML) leader, who was the first victim in a chain of political murders in the area? I also asked the leadership if the killing of at least four CPI(ML) workers in retaliation against Shri Dutta's death did have their consent. I was specially interested in the party's reaction to the murder of Shri Adhikari as it was committed by persons who were known wagon-breakers and had crept into our party during the last UF regime.

(2) I also expressed my doubts about the sincerity of the party's demand for stopping police repression and withdrawal of the CRP when I personally found some responsible leaders of the party actively helping them in apprehending their political opponents. Besides, would withdrawal of the CRP signify that the people of West Bengal would find it alright with the West Bengal police force? If so, what about police atrocities in the rural areas as reported in the party's own journals? If withdrawal of the CRP is being demanded because it is a paramilitary force, then, what about the Eastern Frontier Rifles despatched by Mr Jyoti Basu to Debra and Gopiballavpur? If the ground is that it is a heavy burden on the State exchequer, then what prompted Mr Jyoti Basu to boost the police budget?

(3) What would the CPM do if it failed to get absolute majority along with its allies in the next election? Would it form a Ministry once again by coming to terms with parties which it is now dubbing 'anti-people'?

No convincing reply to these questions was provided by the leadership. As I considered the issues to be of the utmost importance and as

the party failed to satisfy me, I decided to leave the party gracefully. But what followed? The very next day I was called a 'Naxalite' (and, of course, an anti-social element) and beaten up severely on the street.

P. R. G.
Dum Dum

Woman Power

Apropos Mr Prabhakar's comments (August 22) about my article on Woman Power I would readily plead guilty to the charge of having zeal in respect of any expression of woman's rebellion against man. I would also readily concede the suggestion that this attitude of mine might involve a certain form of sexuality; just as I find easily acceptable Mr Prabhakar's suggestion that the new feminist militants' various demonstrations might have sexual elements which could be accommodated within the spectrum of sexual variations. But so what? What is wrong with any form of sexuality as long as it does not involve any exploitation, any use of a person as if she (or he) were an object? To recognise sexual elements in any demeanour is one thing. It is entirely different when one dismisses an entire social movement as being "merely" a vehicle for expressing new variants of sexuality. This is downright cynicism. It is not with cynicism that revolutions are made. It is a common habit of mind to sneer at zeal, enthusiasm and romanticism and exhibit arrogant cynicism. However no revolutions have been made without zeal, enthusiasm and romanticism, which is not the same thing as saying that these sentiments alone can make a revolution.

I also plead guilty to having zeal for signs of any new progressive social movement within the United States. It is precisely because the U.S. state power represents the biggest enemy of all progressive movements in the world that all challenges to that power system from inside are so important. It is no Marxism to dismiss all social movements in the United States merely because the protagonists themselves might enjoy

the benefits of affluence.

Mr Prabhakar criticises me for lumping together student power, black power and woman power, but I do no such lumping. I only mentioned them together as movements that are threatening the power structure of the American establishment each in its own way. There was no suggestion in my writing that the programmes of the three movements are harmonious and compatible, nor any "blank cheque" to any one of them in all their detailed programmes. But I do think it is wrong to dismiss the student movement and the women's liberation movement as mere diversions of pampered sections of an affluent society and recognise progressive features only in the black power movement. That could indeed be a very reactionary view, born of a racism in the inverse. The single most important domestic factor forcing the U.S. President to acknowledge its defeat in Indochina seems to me to be the powerful anti-war movement, dominated by students. As to the pooh-pooing of student movement in general contained in Mr Prabhakar's statement "...like equating a group of college wreckers with the guerillas of Srikakulam", I would like to recall that in India the same revolutionary party or parties that are leading the guerilla movement in Srikakulam are behind the boys who are wrecking colleges in the cities. Also that Mao Tse-tung, who has led and inspired some guerilla movements in his life found it necessary to depend upon masses of students indulging in activities very similar to college wrecking to bring about a cultural revolution in China.

Mr Prabhakar's real difference with me comes out in his last paragraph, I believe the attitude he expresses there is shared very widely by "progressive" people in our country. Why do I at all consider the problem of women's liberation excepting as a part of the anti-imperialist struggle that is being waged all the world over? Why do I not look for inspiration at the courageous men and women of Cuba and Vietnam who are at the forefront of the struggle

against imperialism? Do I think that the women of Vietnam and Cuba have to learn anything from those who are indulging in the women's liberation movement in the pampered sections of American society?

I have not studied in detail the feminist problem in the set-up of Vietnam and Cuba. So I shall not make any comment about these specific countries. But I refuse to accept the general principle that women's liberation will come, almost automatically, as a by-product of the National Liberation Movement or the struggle for socialism. This facile assumption is made by male progressives and revolutionaries for it helps them not to look at themselves as exploiters of women. Domination of one country by another, of one class by another, are different phenomena from the domination of one sex by another. A peasant or a worker, who is subject to exploitation by a landlord or a capitalist, is usually himself the exploiter in relation to the womenfolk of his family. And communist leaders and rank and file cadres, in many countries including our own, are known to largely subscribe to traditional values in the matter of family and sex. There is no doubt that when women participate in any large-scale struggle shoulder to shoulder with men, they find it easy to get rid of many of the age-old taboos that weighed them down earlier. But to think that all the subtler aspects of women's inferior and humiliating position in a man's world are left behind in this process is indeed a very simplistic view. Women in India who participated in the non-co-operation movement under Gandhi or who joined the Communist Party in their early youth indeed often emancipated themselves considerably through those experiences. But do we not know any number of Mrs Grundys among Gandhi's ex-Congress women? And do we not see today among ex-communist housewives who in their student days braved the police in the street many model Hindu wives?

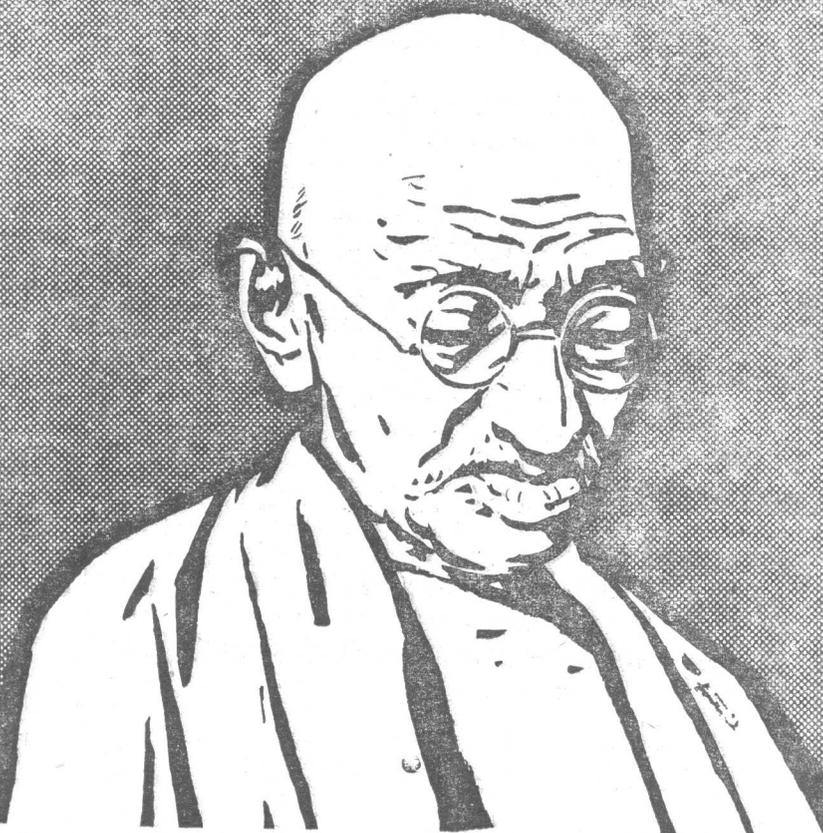
ASHOK RUDRA
Santiniketan

SEPTEMBER 5, 1970

**“HATRED INJURES
THE HATER**

NEVER THE HATED”

Mahatma Gandhi





33 p.
for 10

Relax ! have a Charminar

Get that toasted taste
of pure tobaccos.

CHARMINAR taste makes it
India's largest-selling cigarette!

A VAZIR SULTAN PRODUCT

CMVS-5-209