

frontier

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RETURN OF DRACULA

NO apology is needed for harking back to the same subject, for killers in uniform are stalking West Bengal. Fresh evidence is piling up of how a blood-lust has informed the police force, how a gang of Draculas go on the rampage every night to quench their thirst for young blood. They have copied even the methods of the fictional monster; it is said they no longer ring the door-bell but scale walls to surprise the inmates and "ambush" the chosen victims. The last act of the operation is generally performed on the streets, or in prison vans, or in police stations, perhaps to spice the tedium of cold-blooded murder with variety.

About sixty young men have been killed in police firing in Calcutta since the beginning of the pogrom a few weeks ago. To this figure has to be added the murders committed by the salaried hoodlums of the police, the so-called Home Guards, hand-picked by the Police Commissioner from the "urban poor" to exterminate the "Naxalite anti-socials" who come of the urban middle-class. The police have thrown open the doors of their subsidiary organisations to hardened criminals and granted them a general licence to maim and murder with an advance promise of amnesty. How many of the murders conveniently ascribed to inter-party feuds are being committed by this anti-social fringe of the police is known to the Government alone. In the name of restoring "order and law"—the reversed phrase can only mean that law will be in abeyance till order has been restored—the police are arming the underworld with fire-arms a steady flow of which has been assured to the State by the Centre. The historiologist police chief thinks he is waging a class war; what he has done is to set murderers and agents-provocateurs on the citizenry.

So defiant have the police become that they do not care even to vary the stories of encounters. In every incident the police are attacked with bombs and they fire in self-defence killing one or more of the assailants. Never before were the police so accurate in their marksmanship. Previously, several rounds of police firing used to result in injuries to a few and very rarely in death of anyone. Now practically every shot fired by the police kills a man wanted on charges of murder, loot, and arson. The encounters are as phony as the police list of wanted offenders. The police have to fulfil their daily quota of killed and

injured to maintain the supremacy of terror. They are shooting down anyone they like and labelling them later as criminals.

Some policemen would have been injured if every case of police firing was for repelling bomb-attacks. But not a single policeman has been injured in the nightly encounters in Calcutta in the past few weeks. Nor have residents of the "disturbed" localities heard reports of bomb explosion. It seems the Naxalites have invented bombs that burst noiselessly and harmlessly specially for use against the police. The snag in the story may, of course, be due to plain carelessness, for the police are not unaccustomed to throw bombs to create a pretext for action. At times the plan is going awry, and the marked-out victim turns out to be someone who cannot figure even in the imaginary list in Lalbazar; for instance, the policeman shot a man at point-blank range in Shyampukur while he was pleading that he belonged to the port police.

For those who are being shot after arrest a different kind of fiction is being circulated. The selected victims are being taken out and shot in the streets at dead of night, but the story given out is that they had agreed to point to the police some arms cache with the intent of trapping gullible, unsuspecting policemen; that when the police reached the spot they were attacked by waiting miscreants who were joined by the decoys; that the police were compelled to fire and somehow only the arrested were killed. The story was first tried over the incident at Bhowani Dutt Lane, and the pattern was set when the police could get away with it. The latest instance is provided by the death of four young men, residents of a housing estate at Beliaghata. About a fortnight ago, two people were killed in exactly similar circumstances in the Salt Lake area. The deceased were described as anti-socials, but several teachers' organisations have protested that at least one of them was a secondary school teacher.

How the eight young men whose bodies were found scattered over a wide area in Barasat met their death has not come out fully yet. But there are significant pointers. Immediately after the bodies had been identified, the police said all of them were wanted in connection with criminal offences. Why should the police try to attenuate the murder if they themselves were not the culprit? Why should the Police Commissioner hasten to explain to his superiors and to newspapermen that .38 bore bullets can be fired from pipe-guns also? One has to take only his word that the solitary pipe-gun he is showing around was recovered from anti-socials recently. Equally responsible police officers have said that there is not a single instance of .38 bore bullets being fired from pipe-guns. Besides, why should the Police Commissioner be so keen on exonerating the police? He is in charge of the Calcutta Police only, and nobody has alleged openly, whatever be the suspicion, that the young men were murdered by the Calcutta Police. It is not his business to plead the innocence of the entire State police force; he has superior officers to do that. Or is it because of the report that the mother of one of the victims has alleged that her son had been killed by the police as he was among those who were arrested near Shahid Minar on the Calcutta Maidan at dead of night on November 19, a few hours before his body was discovered? She had the story from a boy who escaped the round-up and will not disclose his identity for obvious reasons.

The Centre is said to be gravely perturbed over the persistent reports of police excesses; so is the State Government. It is hypocritical of the State Government to plead ignorance when, on the basis of a complaint of a deputy secretary of the Home Department itself that his son was severely beaten up in police custody, the officer-in-charge of a police station has been transferred summarily. The police are on a genocidal spree, and the ineffectual

men at the top are afraid to restrain them, even if they want to, lest the rebellious mood now displayed by police officers in conference rooms should explode in open defiance. That is why the Police Commissioner has been entrusted to inquire into the death of the four young men in Beliaghata even after he and the Additional Police Commissioner had told the Government that the firing was justified. It is now beyond the Government, either at the Centre or in West Bengal, to bottle up the jinn.

Wagon-Breakers, Boot-Leggings All?

A correspondent writes:

Of the eight whose bodies have been identified Kanai Bhattacharya (35) had left the CPM. Until six months ago, he was a worker at Texmaco: he had stopped going there, it is said, owing to inter-party tension. He has left behind his wife, two sons and a daughter. Jatin Das (36) also a worker whose wife and four daughters survive him, had stopped going to Texmaco for the same reason. Tarun Das (14) was a Class X student at the Kalachand High School at Ariadaha. Samir Mitra (18) was a B.Sc second year student, His father runs a small biscuit factory. Ganesh Ghatak (19) was a B.Sc student at the Pyarimohan College, Uttarpara. His father works at Texmaco. Sankar Chatterjee (21) studied Zoology at the Ballygunje Science College. His father runs a tea-shop at Ariadaha.

All of them used to live in practically the same area. All of them, according to some reports, had left their places on Wednesday, November 18. Their bodies were discovered on Friday morning.

Seeing the huge, anxious crowd in front of the police morgue, a high, investigating officer is said to have wondered why people should be so concerned about these bad men—

before the bodies had been identified. He was repeating, in a milder form, the sentiments of CPM leaders who have been providing the police with moral ammunition by their slanderous propaganda about the Naxalites.

Other rumours are spreading. The intensity of clashes between these two parties on Monday is a grim warning. According to one leftist newspaper close to 'progressive' Congressmen, the police have a plan to instigate more murderous inter-party clashes to draw out the "anti-social" elements from their hide-outs and finish them.

Wake up, partymen, it is later than you think. Or, perhaps, it is already too late.

Bombing The North Again

American bombers have again returned to North Vietnam to knock off the illusions about the Americans going home. Americans, some people naively thought, were dead set on getting out of the quagmire called Vietnam. In the enthusiasm for the peaceable Americans it was often overlooked that, by a pervert kind of logic, the more the Americans "disengaged", the larger became the theatre of Indochina war. Bombers that have been hitting North Vietnam till October 1968 simply headed south-west to level Laos. On the ground the Americans and their Meo mercenaries tried to nibble at the Pathet Lao areas. Then came the invasion of Cambodia. All these moves, the Pentagon claimed, were no extension of war but limited action designed to ensure American lives in Vietnam! The hundreds of tons of bombs dropped over North Vietnam this week too are meant to serve the same purpose. All this is in response to the shooting down of one "unarmed reconnaissance aircraft" with two pilots over North Vietnam. Lest people misunderstand the intentions of the Pentagon and denounce the aerial invasion of North Vietnam,

Defence Secretary Laird has come out with an appropriate term for the raids—"limited duration protective reaction air strikes" against missile and anti-aircraft batteries in North Vietnam.

That this "protective reaction" air strikes against military installations would mean massacre of civilian population does not surprise people used to American savagery over the years. Neither is one struck by the gangster logic that Americans are at liberty to hit back at those who dare to challenge their marauding missions over their own territory. But one is amazed at the American cheek in suggesting that by a secret deal the Vietnamese people agreed to American prying missions over North as a price of the bombing halt—a strange case of bartering aerial sovereignty for peace on the ground.

Curious excuses apart, the Americans have indeed been very consistent in their policy of clutching onto Vietnam by any means. At the time of announcing the bombing halt over North Vietnam on October 31, 1968, Johnson spoke of his conviction about securing a "firm and honourable peace in South-East Asia". Nixon too is determined to have a "honourable peace" in Vietnam. And the peace that would confer honour on Washington is one which ensures liquidation of the NLF and undisturbed rule of their puppets. American officials in Saigon do not care to hide their plans to stay on until the guerillas in black pyjamas disappear from the scene. To make sure that they disappear, or at least become ineffective in the onsetting dry season, American bombers have launched the current offensive against wide areas of Indochina wherefrom, Washington thinks, the guerillas in the South draw their strength. Strangely, the bombers which were supposed to silence anti-aircraft batteries in North Vietnam turned west to attack in redoubled frenzy areas of Laos and Cambodia. Laird did not care to recommend any antiseptic term for the raids on Laos and Cambodia.

If the Americans count on popular discontent in North Vietnam against the government as a result of air raids after two years of respite they cannot be more wrong. Not to speak of demoralization, even the *New York Times* considers that the bombing would only toughen Hanoi in its determination. Robert McNamara admitted in August 1967 that "there is little reason to believe that any level of conventional air or naval action, short of sustained and systematic bombing of the population centres, will deprive the North Vietnamese of their willingness to continue to support their government's effort." And Johnson had to abandon bombing after the latter course too failed to shake the Vietnamese.

Contrary to the Pentagon's hopes, people in North Vietnam never thought the war was over and never for a moment did they slacken their vigil. Even before the systematic bombardment of industrial centres began North Vietnamese industry had gone literally "underground". After the cessation of bombing they started rebuilding the communication network but made no attempt to reassemble decentralised industries or regroup the population in cities. In February this year the Joint Director of *Associated Press* was surprised to find that Hanoi made no effort to rebuild the destroyed towns and cities and when asked the reason a North Vietnamese official quietly replied that the bombers might return. Now that they have returned they would receive a hot welcome from the ack-ack batteries as evidenced by the prompt shooting down of six aircraft.

United They Fall Again

A correspondent writes :

The striking Government employees in Maharashtra who appeared to have been soaring high, with the massive thrust given to them by all the central and regional trade unions, crashlanded after twelve days. The State Chief Minister did not budge

an inch; withdraw the strike before resumption of wage talks, said he. The trade unionists insisted on resumption of talks first and foremost. Behind them rallied leftists and rightists of all hues, including the Congress-controlled unions. Marxists and Jana Sanghis, Communists and Socialists, and the Shiv Sena supported the strike by 200,000 of Grades III and IV Government staff. Mr Bal Thakre personally blessed the employees who carried red banners. All sections of workers offered voluminous support; teachers and seamen, transport workers and bankmen, insurance employees and housing board staff threatened total strike if Mr Naik, the Chief Minister, remained adamant. Workers from six States sent in their support, telegraphically of course. A total bandh was decided upon. Against all this stood Mr Naik quite cavalierly and he won.

A few weeks earlier, the leftists in Maharashtra combined with the 'democrats' and were given a stunning blow by the Shiv Sena at Parel. Now they combined with the rightists and have been given one more by the Congress. Theirs is certainly an unenviable lot, whatever be their permutations and combinations!

But a little prudence and a little more political sense could have saved them from the humiliation. Was the case of the strikers strong enough for championing? In India, where any man with a job is considered lucky, Maharashtrian Government employees are possibly the most privileged, next only to the Central Government employees. Their pay is higher than that of the corresponding Government staff in other States; they get dearness allowance at the Central rate. The State exchequer was already stretched far enough to meet the increased pay of the Government staff. Was the demand for interim relief, at the Central rate, an urgent one, under the circumstances? Besides, given the present price structure of essential commodities, could an addition of Rs 15 to Rs 160 make the staff even marginally more com-

fortable? The question, is given the economic situation of today, is a wage fight the right one for the leftists? This is not to say that the Government staff of the country should stay put. Any act that weakens the Establishment can be tactically correct for the left. But can the wage issue weaken the Government? Can the issue mobilise genuine and sustained mass support?

After the twelve days of the strike, during which 20,000 employees got job termination notices, hundreds were evicted from their tenements and thousands clamped in jails, what was the gain of the strikers? An assurance of non-victimisation and just that. There was a time when this assurance was deemed a victory. Are we to believe that workers, even if they belong to a politically immature State like Maharashtra, are now in that infaht stage of trade union movement? Mr S. A. Dange congratulated the strikers, after their surrender, on their great victory. Professional clowning apart, Mr Dange and his comrades have taken the Maharashtrian workers several steps back by landing them into the firm clutches of the employers. They fanned the employees' grievances without keeping in mind the total perspective. They called an indefinite strike without the necessary stamina. They decided upon a bandh without knowing if the strikers would be able to carry on till the date of the bandh. They allowed the strike to encompass hospitals and milk supplies. From start to finish, the strike was a bungle.

Coup, Federation

Foreigners have often found politics in Syria rather obfuscating, but the recent bloodless coup has not come from the blue. That the military faction in the Baathist Party would be looking for an early opportunity to dislodge the civilian activists was in the air since September, the month the Hashemite monarch

gave his army a carte-blanche to kill the Palestinian commandos. Damascus and Baghdad had their moral support for the guerillas; the former went a step ahead by allowing some 200 tanks, under the command of the PLO, to enter north Jordan. Syria could not intervene decisively and the 12,000 Iraqi troops in Jordan remained inactive because of Russian pressure. Russia propped up Hussein as he supported the Rogers proposals and restrained Syria and Iraq who were opposed to these.

A development that has decisively tilted the balance against the civilian wing is that the Saiqa, which always lent armed support to it, is now almost a non-existing force in Syria. The belated move by General Jadid, Assistant Secretary-General of the Baathist Party, to strip General Assad of the Defence portfolio could not save the situation. Grotesque though it is, Druses in the south, Christians in the north, Damascenes in the middle, Alawites in the west and Beduins in the east have not found any inspiration to shed their very intense regional and religious loyalties. Syria could have made some contribution to the regeneration of the Arab world based on unity and socialism if it was not so hopelessly divided within and pathetically dependent on Russia for arms supply. The provisional national leadership that has been constituted said that it favoured moves toward a union of Egypt, Libya and the Sudan and would work toward giving Syria its natural place in it. But these things are more easily said than practised.

One wonders whether it is at all necessary for Egypt, Tripoli and Khartoum to try anything bigger than their present close alliance. It is still fresh in memory how the union between Egypt and Syria ended in ill-will on both sides and the competing federation between Jordan and Iraq in blood. The one conceived between the UAR and Yemen and the proposal for union between Egypt, Syria and Iraq never took off. At a recent meeting, Anwar Sadat, Muammar

Gaddafi and el-Nimeiry have constituted a Tripartite Political Command for the realization of political federation. Now, as when Nasser was alive, the young Libyan leader is the principal promoter of the idea. More than the practicability of the concept and the advantages that would flow from eventual federation, it is Nasser's charisma that brought the three countries of north-east Africa close. With Nasser the illusion is gone. Reports did not say people greeted the three leaders with "One people one people, one people. The proposed federating units have, however, certain advantages which were lacking in past agglomerations. Besides being neighbours, their economies are complementary in character. Libya has

the capital resources, the UAR the manpower and the Sudan surplus food and cotton. But there are suspicions among sections of Libyans and Sudanese that they would be subordinated to the Egyptians owing both to the latter's numerical majority and political sophistication. The UAR is largely to blame for this as the patronising attitude of her experts has made them as unacceptable as any other foreigner. To what extent the proposed union will improve the morale of the three countries and their bargaining power in international diplomacy can only be guessed. One thing is, however, certain—the military balance which is very much in favour of Israel will continue to be so in spite of any federation.

the Bangla Congress has been so enthusiastically campaigning for. The reported CPI-Bangla Congress clashes in Midnapore are no doubt a queer phenomenon but the CPI-Bangla-Congress axis still continues and until the CPI repudiates this no one will take its pleadings seriously.

* *

It was amusing to read a big business daily like *The Statesman* report that the pro-Soviet lobby has succeeded in scuttling New Delhi's initiative for a dialogue with China. The realisation that it is not in Soviet interest to promote or permit a settlement with China is something. The more articulate section in the Establishment which wants a dialogue with China is going about it on the assumption that a prolonged dispute with China would make the country totally subservient to the Soviet Union. A small section in the Foreign Office shares this view. But then there is an anti-China lobby, more powerful in the establishment as well as in the Foreign Office. The "inside" story on the recent Mao smile-and-frown episode should interest many. In various capitals, Indian ambassadors have been trying to sound their Chinese counterparts about raising the relations to ambassador's level. (India recalled Mr G. Parthasarathy and never sent him back to Peking and China, for reasons of protocol, was compelled to withdraw her ambassador). When the Chinese told our ambassadors point blank that it was for India to make amends for her belligerence in not having an Ambassador in Peking, our diplomats are known to have said that New Delhi was keen on making amends but it would have to face a hostile public opinion. It would vastly help matters if China made some gesture: cool off towards Pakistan and stop supporting the Nagas, Mizos and "Naxalites."

All the Hong Kong reports by Indian journalists about a change in the Chinese attitude to Pakistan turned out to be moonshine. The Chinese response to General Yahya

View from Delhi

Operation Hooghly

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

ALL is set for the most massive manhunt in India since the Telengana days. The Centre claims consensus for the two bills for West Bengal and the President's orders are to give effect to both of them, the passive resistance of the two communist parties and their allies in the Establishment notwithstanding. The Centre had prepared for an "Operation Hooghly" in late 1968 which provided for the killing of 3,000 if necessary. There was no need to put the operation plan into action because the expected opposition to the coup against the United Front did not come from the barricades. What is now indicated is an operational plan more diabolical, the leftist parties abetting it in one form or the other. Those who are in the know in official Delhi will tell you how wonderful the co-operation from the CPI(M) has been in the drive against the "Naxalites". Deputy Chief Minister Jyoti Basu held the Home Portfolio when a conference of intelligence and police chiefs of

three States, including West Bengal, met regularly and was earnestly prompt in sending reports on the "Naxalites" to the Centre. The RSP, which is now a close friend of the CPI(M), might insist that the CPI and the Naxalites are in league with each other to liquidate the CPI(M)'s middle-rung leadership. To a point, this is not wrong because official Delhi rubbed its hands in glee over Mr Bhowani Sen's reported speech claiming that they were together with the Naxalites when it came to fighting the CPI(M). Prof Hiren Mukherji's eloquent exposition of the West Bengal situation, and the "grapes of wrath" being stored there, might be good parliamentary oratory compelling applause from Mr K. C. Pant but there is little doubt that the bills that are to be pushed through Parliament will take the toll of all the leftist parties. Inter-party clashes have become a phenomenon in West Bengal and the answer does not lie in the direction of these bills which

Khan's visit would prove that beyond doubt. The Chinese have made clear to us that it would be futile on India's part to expect a change in their attitude to Pakistan. As for the rest of the Indian demand, the NCNA blast at Indian solicitude for Taiwan and the Tibet lobbies and their anti-China activities in India spelt out the basis for a quid pro quo. The Chinese have also made clear that if India ever sent an ambassador to Peking, it must be a career diplomat of some stature and not a nin-compoop. This is the story behind New Delhi's public stance of an anxiety for a dialogue with China climaxed by Mrs Gandhi's statement in Paris that she saw signs of change in the Chinese attitude.

The Writers

The pro-Soviet Afro-Asian Writers Conference, whenever held, has always been something of an elaborate racket which has had the official patronage of the Government of India in a number of devious ways. The ageing "progressive" writers, who have derived the maximum warmth from the fur-lined Soviet straitjacket and accumulated bank accounts in Moscow, have been selling hard the conference that ended here on November 20. The permanent secretariat of the outfit, based in Cairo, has been an Arab affair while the preparatory committee in New Delhi was an extension of the CPI and its sentimental fellow-travellers who commute to Moscow with consummate ease.

The show in Vigyan Bhavan was a boring affair, even by underdeveloped Afro-Asian standards. The communist definition of an intellectual, that is anybody who can read and write, seemed to have been accepted as the criterion for choosing delegates to represent writing in various Indian languages. Embassy hacks and slogan writers crowded the creative writers out but the quantity was the thing. Malayalam and Kannada did not merit representation at the conference.

Most of the delegates from Afri-

can countries travelled via Moscow and must have been briefed about what they should do in return for the air tickets and hospitality paid in the ultimate sense out of the Soviet people's pocket. The presence of a North Vietnamese delegation lent the show some responsibility but the delegation must have gone home bitter that it had been taken for a ride by someone. The countries where there are active liberation movements in Africa went unrepresented while nondescripts from the most reactionary African countries appeared important. The Soviet writers, with their dubious claims to belong to an Asian country, were of course the conscience keepers of Afro-Asian writing. The functions of a Soviet delegate included replying to the angry dissenters by asserting that Mrs Indira Gandhi's land ceilings, nationalisation of banks and the like were meant to usher in socialism. An Indian poet got special honour at the conference, not for any subversive writing, but for a long poem extolling the virtues of alcohol (not duty free, one presumes).

There is a little footnote to the story. Beginning with the Afro-Asian Journalists Conference in Bandung in 1963, the Government of India has always been patronising delegations to conferences where a Sino-Soviet confrontation was possible or likely. Suddenly outfits like the World Peace Council became respectable in Government eyes and delegations from India used to be packed with Congressmen and in return the Government was liberal with foreign exchange and P forms. This became a habit. Most of the organisations have split and the pro-Soviet ones still enjoy the patronage of the Government of India.

The show in Vigyan Bhavan looked a little too prosperous for an Afro-Asian writers' meet. And nothing succeeds in new-fangled Afro-Asian writing like affluence; the liberation movements can well take care of themselves without the affluent writers.

November 22, 1970

Kerala

The Purges

RAMJI

THE two major parties in Kerala, the New Congress and the CPM, are going through a process of purge. First the New Congress. The purge in this party has not surfaced as news. Yet, the purge is going on. In a party, allegedly wedded uncompromisingly to instant socialism and not too distant a millennium, the purge is based on purely subjective values and hinges around the self-interests of the current party bosses, Mr K. K. Viswanathan, the Pradesh President, and Mr A. K. Antony, the Secretary. And in this allegedly ultra-progressive set-up of the Indira Congress the purge is directed against radical elements. The provocation for the purge is the current elections to the Youth Congress and the forthcoming elections to the Pradesh Congress organisation, which come off in December 1970. These are the first elections after the split. The leaders of the New Congress have adopted rough and ready methods to implement their purge programme. In the process they have thrown overboard all the pertinent rules in the Congress constitution and elementary democratic propriety as well. The Youth Congress organisation elections illustrate the new technique of the New Congress leadership here. All those existing members suspected of radical leanings, particularly those suspected of disloyalty to the party bosses, and getting their Congress membership cancelled summarily. The affected members do not have any right of appeal or avenues of redress at all. They come to know that they are no longer members, only at the time of the elections. Congress ideology, according to the two party bosses, begins and ends with blind loyalty to them. This highhandedness naturally triggered vehement protests and on November 1 there was a fracas over it, inside

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the KUCC office, when the District Congress Committee President, Ernakulam District, who is the Chief Returning Officer for the State Youth Congress organisational elections, was about to be marhandled over the summary manner in which existing members were kept out of exercising their rights and also over the manner in which new members were denied membership on the score that they were radicals and pro-Marxist or pro-Naxalite elements. This is the charge against those who are suspected of disloyalty to the two party bosses. The elections to the District Committee scheduled for November 1, were postponed indefinitely following the uproar on the 1st. But the elections were conducted in a clandestine manner on November 8 and it was announced that the elections were unanimous. This has triggered very vehement protests. But the leaders refused to budge. Following this, in the Youth Congress mandal elections at Mattanchery, in Cochin City, an ardent Youth Congress leader, who is in addition a prominent state leader of the Congress-led Kerala Students Union, was assaulted by his colleagues in the party and he had to be hospitalised.

The weeding and screening process in the Youth Congress, carried out by the State leadership, is being implemented in the Congress party also. This has been most marked in Trichur District. Whole chunks of old members, who are not in favour of the two Congress bosses have been deprived of Congress membership and new entrants refused membership if they are suspected of anti-leadership leanings. The aim is pure and simple: the two leaders want to build up a monolithic party

completely under their thumbs. To be fair, these two leaders are only following the all-India pattern. While it is the Indira Congress at the all-India level, it is going to be the Viswanathan-Antony Congress at the State level, in Kerala.

Both the CPI and Muslim League parties are actively behind this purge in the New Congress. In fact the leaders of these two parties act as advisers to the new Congress leadership. The two parties want Viswanathan and Antony and no one else. These two Congress leaders are very loyal to the Muslim League and the CPI and these two parties feel that if any fresh leadership comes up after the party elections the support of the New Congress now enjoyed by them to remain in power, might not be so readily forthcoming.

CPM Purges

Amidst a plethora of derisive propaganda mounted by anti-Marxist elements led by the CPI, a purge is going on systematically inside the Marxist party. At the time of writing nearly half a dozen leading lights of the party have either been censured, suspended or thrown out of the party and the process is going on. An indication of this move was given in the lengthy resolution passed by the State Committee of the party in the first week of October. The resolution frankly admits that there is a big chunk of revisionist elements in the party who have to be removed to make the party fully dynamic and revolutionary in content and character. The resolution admits that there are elements at all levels in the party, who have been responsible for either sabotage or for softpedalling the party's activities in line with the party programme and ideology and promises to weed these out. The main weakness of these elements is their overweening thirst for power under the parliamentary set-up and their readiness to sacrifice the party line of action to secure strictly personal interests.

This weeding out process is bound to increase the credibility of the party

among its sincere followers. The CPI and other propagandists are picturing the purges as an attempt on the part of E.M.S. to throw out pro-A. K. Gopalan elements, who are supposed to be anti-E.M.S. Quite a lot of space in the local papers is used up every day to din this propadanga in. But, among the rank and file of the party there is a new awakening and new determination and at the top level there seems to be a renewed consciousness of the utter limitations of the parliamentary system. The party is now fully engrossed in building itself up on a more disciplined and homogeneous basis, on a scale not attempted so far.

Sidelights

Hats off to the CPI, in Kerala. The party has progressed so tremendously that it is now the public champion of the Kerala police who, while they have always been notorious for excesses, have now established new records for vandalism against the humble classes. Recently, some policemen raped four women agricultural workers in Aleppy. The incident provoked protests even from such elements as the Kerala Congress which has always been complaining that the police are soft and have lost virility. The women victims of the rape were hospitalised. But after a day, they were discharged because the police department did not want any medical proof. It was only after a local agitation that they were taken back by the hospital for treatment. In the meanwhile, the Secretary of the Aleppy District Committee of the CPI came out with a press statement

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that the whole affair was a fabrication of the Marxists and that no rape had been perpetrated. And this, while the issue is *sub judice*, since a case is now pending before the courts against the alleged culprits in the police force. No wonder, the police force just loves, the CPI. Then again, the CPI had nothing to say against the indiscriminate and bestial lathi charge made by the police on students in North and South Kerala ; an exploit which has wrung protests from the New Congress leaders even.

One of the serious charges against the Marxists, when they were in power, was that they recruited pro-Marxists into corporation and public sector bodies under the control of the State. The demand was that all such recruitments should be through the Public Service Commission. Thus, when the first Achutha Menon Ministry assumed power the first act of the Ministry was to send out over 600 men recruited to the State Transport Department, on the grounds that the appointments were irregular. But, soon after, the CPI started its own recruiting office and began to shove their own men into various units including the State Transport Corporation. New Corporations were created and the discredited and rootless CPI leaders were made chairmen of these units. Currently, a large number of men recruited by the CPI organisation units at various levels, have been taken into the State Transport Department. The crowning act was the recruitment of four candidates into the Travancore Cochin Chemicals, a State-run public sector undertaking. Out of the four, one is the nephew of C. Achutha Menon, the CPI Chief Minister, another, the nephew of Avukader Kutty Naha, the Muslim Minister in the Achutha Menon Cabinet and the other two, sons of CPI leaders. These recruitments were made while a bill for such recruitments through the Public Service Commission was in the process of discussion inside the State Assembly.

The Muslim League is no whit behind the CPI in promoting revolu-

tion through patronage to followers of the party. Thus, while there are no candidates for learning Arabic in the State, under the dispensation of the Muslim League Education Minister, no less than 3,500 Arabic teachers have been appointed on a full-time, permanent basis in the schools in Kerala. While this huge and unnecessary expenditure on a leg of education for which there are no takers has been readily undertaken, there are now hundreds of schools in which education in Malayalam and Hindi and English is badly neglected for want of sufficient staff.

The CPI's Mahila Samajam staged a State meet at Cochin recently. All the affluent leaders at the State and all-India levels participated. And the papers gave a good, flattering coverage. At a press conference addressed by the State boss, Mrs Rosamma Ponnouse, a reporter asked whether the organisation would take steps to investigate the alleged rape of the peasant women in Aleppy, Mrs Ponnouse, true to her salt and her high class background, replied that no such incident had been brought to their notice and that the Government was there to look into such issues. At the same time she protested that the organisation was for equal rights for women and in general for women's emancipation. At the public meeting on the 15th, which rounded off the delegates' session, the organiser played a cunning trick on the public. They announced that the leading film, star, the Urvashi Award winner Sarada, would be present at the meeting and would address the rally. People in their thousands gathered at the venue to have a peep at their fabulously adored screen idol. But Sarada did not appear at all. Instead, there was Mrs Aruna Asaf Ali and she did not fill the bill as a star and did not have any relevance in popular esteem. The crowd melted away. But the propagandists of the CPI scored a point. They were able to bloat up a half truth that thousands upon thousands gathered to listen to Mrs Asaf Ali and other leaders of the Nation and what not.

Bihar

“Neo-Princes In Session”

N. K. SINGH

THE use of government machinery for party purposes by a political party in power amounts to corruption. A blatant example was the three-day Ruling Congress AICC session at Patna in October. It turned into a State show rather than a political party meet. For the first time in the history of Bihar about 60 under secretaries, a contingent of magistrates and hundreds of peons were forced to forgo their Puja holidays to work and supervise the arrangements of the AICC session. The Congress drama staged at Patna set a new record in misusing government machinery.

The total expense due to this session is estimated at about Rs 50 lakhs. It is of course a different matter that the party collected only Rs 3 lakhs and the rest of the expenditure was met by the various departments of the State Government.

First of all, the city of Patna was given a face-lift—the sole benefit to the people of Patna from the session. People residing in the central part of the town were sick of jumpy roads, which had not been repaired even after their crying themselves hoarse. But it was done at long last. And that also by cancelling the Puja holidays in the concerned departments. Roads were repaired—not only simply tarred—but rather cemented on a war footing. To cap it all, traffic police posts and islands were constructed.

The State Public Works Department was also asked to repair the Rajendra Nagar Stadium, the venue of the session. The stadium, with a capacity of 100,000 people, was almost covered with a huge pandal capable of accommodating 10,000 people. And the construction of the entire pandal was made under the

supervision of Government engineers. At least 200 fans were fitted in the pandal. According to a local newspaper, the fans were supplied by a contractor of the Electricity Department. Thus, at least Rs 6½ lakhs were spent in the construction of roads and the pandal.

To accommodate the delegates of the AICC, the officers directed many hotel-owners, especially the posh ones, to keep their suites vacant during the session without any formal booking. Besides hotels, a number of newly built government quarters were brought into order to lodge the delegates. The rest were accommodated by local industrialists, businessmen and big-wigs. It is further reported that top engineers of the PWD and PHED were employed to look after the comforts of the delegates regarding furniture, fittings and sanitation.

The misuse of government machinery during the AICC session was unparalleled. Never in the past had any political party in power utilised government staff on such a large scale. It seemed as if the government servants were party servants. Even those matters which are essentially managed by party workers were handled by the government staff.

Those who have attended Congress sessions in the past know well that Congress Seva Dal volunteers are posted at entry and exit gates, and the police keep at a distance as a stand-by for any emergency. But in this session, the functions of the Seva Dal were handed over to the police and instead of the white Seva Dal uniform the khaki police uniform could be seen all over the Rajendra Nagar Stadium.

Two temporary police-stations were started at Patna on the occasion of the session. Two DIGs of police were specially deputed to supervise security arrangements. Thousands of police were also drawn away from their usual places of posting and brought to Patna. It is alleged that services of 3,500 Central Reserve Police-men were also

requisitioned. About Rs 3 lakhs were spent on these arrangements.

Not only this. More than a score of secretariat officials of the rank of deputy secretary and under-secretary were ordered in writing not to leave the station in view of the session. The officials could be seen attending personally to the arrangements of sitting, transportation, cooking etc. A special magistrate was deputed to supervise the kitchen.

The buses of the Bihar Rajya Transport Corporation were hired by the Reception Committee at the rate of Rs 2.12 per mile. Several other additional buses were put on the road for "the benefit of the public," according to Corporation sources, but several of them were seen plying half-empty and with ticketless passengers. Besides this, a large number of government vehicles were requisitioned from different district headquarters and semi-government institutions like the National Coal Development Corporation to solve the conveyance problems of the delegates.

The Public Relations Department was forced to forgo its Puja holidays and its resources were frequently used for the propaganda of the Indicate. It was for the first time even in the history of political party conferences in Patna that the PRD vehicles were openly used for a political party. The PRD vans were found making necessary announcements and distributing presentations like bags, files etc. to the delegates of the AICC. Such facilities were unfortunately not extended to other political parties when they held their conferences here, before.

To cap it all, the Food Department of the Central Government sent special instructions to the Supply Department of the Bihar Government to arrange rice, wheat, sugar, vegetable oil's etc. for the session. The local office of the Food Corporation of India was asked to provide good quality rice.

This is the small story of the Great Socialist Ruling Congress Party. God save the country.

The Politics Of Statues

MONI GUHA

ON the university campus Sir Ashutosh was pushed down, in Gol Park the shining face of Swami Vivekananda was besmeared with coal tar, Vidyasagar and Sir Prafulla Chandra have been beheaded in College Square, Rabindranath Tagore, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose have also not been spared. Naturally the admirers are shocked. They say that the attacks on these statues of 'great and noble men' are attacks on whatever progressivism stands for. They also say that these attacks are cowardly.

This is only one side, miserable and pathetic, of the fate of the 'dead heroes' and their statues. There is also another side which is described as 'glorious' and 'befitting'. The Ochterlony Monument, a boastful and arrogant memorial to the hateful conquest by the colonisers, to the 'victorious' colonial march over Nepal in league with a section of Indian feudal chieftains, now stands as a venerable memorial to the freedom fighters who laid down their lives against that very colonial power and rule! It was not razed to the ground in fury, nor was it kept as a historical witness for the future generation. Instead, it has been given the respect and dignity of a "Shaheed Minar". Overnight it became a 'national symbol' of great respect!

If one takes the trouble of rummaging the old files of the 'dailies' of the days when Nazimuddin was the Chief Minister of undivided Bengal and when Shri (he was not called 'Netaji' then) Subhas Chandra Bose launched a movement for the removal of the Holwell Monument, that hateful and repugnant memorial of the fake "Black hole tragedy", he will find that Nazimuddin proposed the renaming of the statues and symbols so that they "look" patriotic and not repugnant. The political leaders of those days, not excluding people who took the initiative in renaming and

refurbishing the repugnant and atrocious memories, drowned that 'hateful proposal' of Nazimuddin with much hatred and anger; the 'nationalist' papers denounced Nazimuddin as an "agent of imperialism". Strangely enough, the very same political leaders are now executing the very same proposal of the then "agent of imperialism", in the name of 'changed political conditions'. Thus the Ochterlony Monument becomes "Shaheed Minar" and Anderson House "Bhowani Bhavan." These acts concerning the statues are not considered 'cowardly acts of a few miscreants' or as an "attack against what progressivism stands for". Instead they are glorified as 'most befitting'. After a generation or two the hateful memories of Ochterlony and Anderson will be effaced and history will be written anew.

There is one more side. Lenin the revolutionary has been made Lenin the harmless humanist, though according to Lenin himself, there is nothing in common between bourgeois humanism, which is nothing but philistinism, and communism. Lenin, the Bolshevik, the 'promoter of class hatred', 'violence', 'armed revolution' 'usurper of democracy' and 'organiser of totalitarianism' has today become 'a great humanist' and 'a lover of mankind'! The statue of Lenin has been installed at Esplanade with much fanfare. This is not regarded as an act of "duping the people", an act of cowardly conspiracy of the political miscreants for the consolidation of the oppressed masses, emasculating revolutionary doctrine of its content, vulgarising it and blunting its revolutionary edge as Lenin said in his celebrated book *The State and Revolution*.

More. The attack on dead heroes and on their statues did not begin in West Bengal, nor was it initiated by the "anti-social Naxalites". The attack on dead heroes began from the very rostrum of the 20th Congress of the CPSU. The statues of Stalin were razed to the ground, demolished, defiled in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and the

USSR. The Stalin statues faced the same fate as those of Vidyasagar, Netaji and others. The bourgeois Press, at that time, reported gleefully that these events were the expression of the just and spontaneous hatred against the Stalinist totalitarianism. But now in West Bengal, statue breaking is the act of a "few vandals and miscreants" against progressivism!

Lumped Together

The story does not end here. Raja Rammohun Roy, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Kali Sankar Ghosal, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Dinabandhoo Mitra, the Reverend Lal Behari Ghosh, Harish Chandra Mukhopadhyaya, Akshoy Kumar Maitreya and a host of others are lined up with Radha Kanta Deb, Ram Kamal Sen, Bankim Chandra, Ramakrishna, Dayananda, Vivekananda, Keshab Sen, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Ranade, Annie Besant, Gandhi and a host of others. In the same breath both groups are painted as "progressives", "great and noble" and "awakeners of India". Both groups are haloed as national heroes and national leaders as if both Raja Rammohun Roy and Vivekananda stood for progressivism!

The great reformers were the products of Western ideas and ideologies. They received Western education and natural science readymade before the economic, social and political condition to which these were related had arisen. By dint of Western education they found that Hindu culture, especially Hindu religion, had suffocated the society and the individual in a network of patriarchal family and social obligations. The final result was passivity, stagnation and impotence. They found the manners and customs of Indian life unjust. They found the answer to this challenge only in the West and Western education and science. In the mean time, the colonisers introduced a few superstructural changes in the administrative, judicial and educational spheres and reformed a few glaring feudal-patriarchal social vices. The question of conquest of political power from the clutches of the

foreigners did not and could not arise in their minds as the social forces capable of effecting a political revolution, that is the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, did not exist then. As such they became rebels against all obsolete feudal-patriarchal social vices and traditions, became fervent Westernised modernists. This is what is glorified in Indian history as "the renaissance", "a great awakening". Undoubtedly they were progressives so far some of the super-structural spheres were concerned, but on no account were they political revolutionaries, as the question of political revolution did not arise at that time due to the historical absence of the necessary development of production and social forces. They had their historical limitations. The reformers rose to the occasion of their epoch and there lay their greatness. Nobody denies or should deny or denounce the heritage of the great reformers. But at the same time nobody should raise this heritage of an epoch of political and social unripeness to the epoch of political and social revolution. But the formal historians have avoided and still avoid this crying contradiction and the limitations of that epoch and show the "great reformers" as "great revolutionaries".

Curiously enough, the formal historians do not attribute greatness to the advocates of "the renaissance" only. As a reaction to this "renaissance" a seemingly patriotic movement arose with pronounced reactionary features and forms. The Arya Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission, Theosophical Society etc. were born. These groups believed and preached the cult of the "special genius" of India and Hindu religion. Failing to understand the reasons for the deplorable stagnation of Indian life, they made a virtue of it. They began to idolise the past which had brought about the misery of India. The backwardness of India was a fact and it was not possible to remove it by glorifying its causes. The lingering faith in the infallibility and eternalness of ancient culture made India a baffling problem. In

contrast with this section the advocates of the renaissance were really big rebels and big reformers. But the formal historians and politicians, being afraid of the spectre of national inferiority, idolised anybody who upheld anything Indian and undermined Western ideas and ideologies. As a whole, the views, doctrines and activities of these schools were reactionary, though in some spheres and in some respects, certain individuals had contributed positively towards the development of language, literature or something else.

The "expert hand" on South African soil, Gandhi, appeared on the political stage of India. Gandhi and the Gandhi-led Congress did never carry forward the heritage of the great reformers. On the contrary Gandhi carried forward the heritage of the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission, the Theosophical Society etc. It was Gandhi who canalised the whole national movement into the blind alley of religion and obscurantism, opposed Western science, industrialisation, industrial civilisation, modern science and culture for which the reformers fought.

The politicians of "left" and "right" of today are saying that the attacks on statues are attacks on whatever progressivism stands for. If the historians and politicians mix up the reformers with political reactionaries and try to use this adulterated commodity as an ideological weapon against the march of history, then it is very difficult for honest persons to blame the present-day "Luddites." Marx, in criticising Proudhon, said that theft was the first form of protest against property, though unconscious. The demolition of statues is undoubtedly a protest, though unconscious and primitive.

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Frankly Speaking

SANJOY

THE campaign for an enquiry into Lal Bahadur Shastri's death at Tashkent, about five years after the event, is ridiculous if not sickening. It is admitted on all sides that Lal Bahadur was unsure of the reaction of his countrymen to the agreement, which means he knew that he had climbed down. Therefore his antagonists had no earthly reason to get rid of him—he was not a permanent superman. As for New Delhi, the capability and propensity for palace intrigue of the successor were still undeveloped. Lal Bahadur Shastri had agreed to withdraw from some feature, captured at considerable cost, beyond the cease-fire line, which New Delhi had declared it would hold on to at any cost. But he agreed to vacate, unlike his predecessor who had made it plain to the world that every inch of territory claimed by the British and passed on to the Congress under the law of primogeniture would be defended by unclad and almost unarmed Indians in freezing cold. LB, who had not the benefit of British education, decided to relent—the Russians wanted him to—and whatever the worth of the Tashkent agreement, it was good that the epic, 22-day-war between India and Pakistan came to an end.

What about our journalists who accompanied LB to Tashkent? LB asked them to see that the first reaction in India was favourable. Patriots all, they obliged. The point is, they should have written according to their judgment. Not that they would have been Daniels—there is always the policy of the owner to think of—but one or two discordant voices would have been sweet music to those who swear by liberalism. What one does not like is the writing in chorus.

When the banal campaign for a Tashkent enquiry began it was the duty of the journalists to counter it, on their own. But the manner in which the recollections of Tashkent

have been synchronised makes it clear that the journalists have again been prompted by the Government of India. What they have written is not being questioned here—some of the pieces have been quite interesting—but what is objectionable is the habit of writing in chorus under governmental persuasion or pressure. This subservience to the GOI is sickening.

Perhaps it is patriotism that prompts them to rise and write to the occasion? But patriotism can bugger a nation. Think of the epileptic hysteria of most journalists in 1962. Think of their recent, almost concerted, haste to write long rigmaroles about that controversial book, *India's China War*. It is time the Indian journalists took some lessons from their American counterparts. Quite a few Americans have not hesitated to expose the great American crime in Vietnam and at home. Perhaps they believe that the nation is not synonymous with the government, whereas we fawn on the government and forget the nation.

* * *

And the devil save us from journalists who descend on Calcutta from Delhi, Bombay or Madras to study the Naxalite problem—and rely on the Police Commissioner, of all people, for the truth, nothing but the truth. The Commissioner, of course, is famous for his philosophical discourses on 'order and law'—please, oh, please note the brilliant reversal of priorities (and reproduce it in the editorials). But the reversal means, in cold print that in cold blood, the Police Commissioner, with the blessings of the Centre, is operating a gang of thugs whom he has armed to the cadaverous teeth and asked to go ahead and shoot at sight. In the past few months the police have spent some Rs 10 crores for arms, training and various facilities and on a whole army of petty informers and gangsters at all levels whom the polite Americans would call the urban poor. Police morale is high indeed. Not satisfied with all

they have got, they still cry for safer houses, armed escorts, more vans and wireless sets and what not. They will soon ask for armoured cars, helicopters and a nuclear umbrella. While the petty police go in fear and shoot at sight, their burrasahibs strut and rave at press conferences. They can strut and rave because some of the top revolutionaries of the State often speak in police accent and do as they do. These revolutionaries used to be sarcastic about the ineffectiveness of police firings. Now that the police have proved very effective and there is, at times, a public outcry, they are busy theorising about the class character ("wagon-breakers, boot-leggers, drunken louts") and role of police targets, thereby encouraging more police atrocities. Whatever the role of the killed, they are at least different from those who panicked and stampeded when the police went on a rampage in the Assembly.

At the moment a grand alliance of leftists, the police and right reactionaries is functioning in defence of schools, colleges and statues. Pitted against them, says Promode Babu, are CIA agents, anti-social ruffians who get lousy drunk and attack the police and established institutions—just for the sake of getting killed, wounded, arrested and tortured in a state of drunkenness! This grand alliance of like-acting people is unique. You never see such an alliance of furious babus and cops in defence of the interests of workers and peasants or the minorities when pietist Hindus butcher them. Perhaps the members of the alliance have been told that if they behave thus, they will have their aphrodisiac-elections?

For FRONTIER readers in

West India can contact
S. D. CHANDAVARKAR
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A spectre is haunting West Bengal, the spectre of Naxalism. Why this spectre is so intent in these grim days on raiding educational institutions and symbols at such a heavy price is of course, unknown. We implore it not to deprive the paper-setters, invigilators and examiners of their extra income. And why should poor parents be made to incur losses and scared to death about the security of their children in examination halls?

It is a queer place, West Bengal. Anything goes. Do you want an armed struggle within the limits of the Constitution? Arm peasants and workers—if the police do not ban it—with lathis, tangis, spears etc and assemble them at meetings and demonstrations. This may be a mockery of the magnificent fighting qualities of landless peasants and workers. Never mind, the show is the thing. Do you want a bloody-minded Gandhi-ite? There is Ajoy Mukherjee who asks his non-violent flock to chop off the noses and ears of the disturbers of educational institutions. Not metaphorically. His followers at a place in Midnapore caught hold of two acid-carrying young men, blinded them with the acid and handed them over to the police. Do you want a peaceful revolution? Well, the CPI calls the land-grab movement it launched—and dropped like a hot potato when Mrs Indira Gandhi and Mr Sushil Dhara frowned—the greatest agitation since the nationalist movement. Thank Kosygin, they do not yet call it greater than the Russian Revolution.

Are you in a lighter vein? Then, for old wives' tales and village gossip you could have gone to the Netaji enquiry and been among men and women waiting for the Leader.

Come to Calcutta, if you care for political entertainment. It still offers examples of wild, almost suicidal courage on the one hand and crafty buffoonery on the other. For a guided tour and interpretation of these phenomena, however, go and see the Police Commissioner and the political commissars waiting for office.

A Weary Christmas

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

CHRISTMAS jiggles are in the air; the chilly mist creeps over the landscape; and in the Gothic interiors of his castle, King Henry II paces up and down in frenzied agony. He has to make an important decision, to bequeath the royal throne of England to one of his three sons, Richard, Geoffrey and John. He summons them to a Christmas Court. Along with them come Queen Eleanor, Henry's mistress Alais and King Philip of France. The game of crown-billing begins. Henry's choice is John; Richard is Eleanor's protege and Geoffrey tries to keep the balance by playing one against another. Indeed, it is a weary Christmas for England. This interplay of intrigues, passions and the conflicting emotions is the subject of Anthony Harvey's film *The Lion In Winter*. Unlike most other period pieces, this film is strong in analysis, without any unnecessary elaboration on outward action. The main theme is, of course, the clash between Henry and Eleanor drawn to each other by the normal mutual attraction of opposites, and the characters are superbly sketched out by the magnificent acting of Peter O'Toole and Katherine Hepburn with a stylised flamboyance. The other characters also shine as bright cameos and the period reconstruction is absolutely flawless. But despite these qualities on the whole the film has a lumbering pace and the static visuals and occasional cutting on dialogues result in a kind of staginess.

For FRONTIER contact

S. P. CHATTERJEE

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NATIONAL SAVINGS ORGANIZATION



Red Thoughts

MAOIST thoughts cast their shadow...on the fourth Afro-Asian Writers' Conference (in New Delhi). While the participants in the conference were busy finalising in closed door meetings the resolutions and recommendations of the three committees on organisational cultural and political matters, a group of 20 Indian writers launched a public "Naxalite style" campaign against the conference. The 20 extremist writers who chose to call themselves the All-India Co-ordination Committee of the Revolutionary Writers, met in a hotel, summarily condemned the conference and issued a six-point statement to foster a revolt against the "co-existence and co-discovery" spirit of the conference.

The statement advocated that the writers should take to the pen and the gun at the same time. It charged "the sponsors of the conference have nothing to do with the people's struggle in the country. On the contrary, they are collaborating with imperialism and social-imperialism in international sphere and with the comprador bourgeois and feudal elements in the country. This is very clear by their slogan, "coexistence and co-discovery." "We strongly condemn this collaborationist stand."...Openly declaring their belief in violence the statement declares: "We hold that the present epoch is that of armed revolutions against imperialism, social imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism all over the world."

"Under these circumstances no people's writer can remain unconcerned with the armed struggles of the peasants and tribals in West Bengal, Andhra and other parts of the country. Martyr poet Subbarao Panigrahi and others like him have shown us the way by fighting with both pen and gun. This should be emulated by all the revolutionary writers."

The statement said that it had been decided to form an all-India Co-

ordination Committee of Revolutionary Writers to organise a convention of revolutionary writers and artists sometime next year.

Sri Sri, a known Communist writer, has been in recent months writing more and more virulent works in the Maoist tradition and one of his recent pamphlets, "Call," has been considered one of the most inflammatory pieces of inciting writing. (*Times of India*).

Children's Day

As the country celebrated 'Bal Divas' (on November 14), children from Harijan and jhuggi-jhonpri colonies in the Capital staged a demonstration outside the Prime Minister's residence demanding better living conditions, free education and medical facilities.

The Prime Minister could not receive the children's delegation as she was resting after her journey from Paris. (*Times of India*)

Storm and Stress

More than one million people lived on Bhola, the largest island in the Bay of Bengal. The paddy fields here, on neighbouring Hatia island and on shore areas were blackened with salt water which destroyed the crop. A few bodies were still sprawled in the midst of the soggy fields. Even from the aircraft it was possible to smell the odour of death, but the pilot said the situation had improved on that of two days ago when the smell almost made pilots vomit and then take sleeping pills after their flights over the area.

...Water and wind had crushed an area in which Bengali farmers lived, clustered in tree-shaded communities with a density of 600 to a square mile. Most home sites remained, but corrugated iron roofs had fallen flat on the ground. The land is perfectly flat, much of it already dyked to prevent the sea from over-running it. Nothing was seen which could have blocked the 20 ft tidal waves. There was no place anyone could have safely sought shelter.

A whole village had disappeared

as if sucked up by a huge vacuum cleaner, leaving only muddy outlines of house foundations as evidence of its existence.

The enormous force of wind and water was seen clearly on a tiny island between Hatia and Bhola, where a cargo ship of about 500 tons had been raised from sea and set upright on the shore about 50 yards inland. No living person was seen on board.

Although the southern part of Bhola was almost deserted, some survivors showed themselves there and in other parts of the worst hit area. According to the pilot who had flown over the area earlier many had started to put up new houses. The matchstick remains of other houses littered groves where people had lived. Survivors on the scene showed a curious tranquil domesticity with bright clothes hanging on lines and draped over fodder mounds to dry.

More movement was seen in northern Bhola, where the biggest towns are situated...Not until the town of Bhola itself was reached was it possible to see many people, as well as a bridge still standing. The town also revealed the first and only vehicle seen during a two-hour inspection of the area—a bright red lorry. (Arnold Zeitlin, AP).

Prisoners in Indonesia

...Mr Sean MacBride, secretary-general of the International Commission of Jurists...who has just returned from a visit to Jakarta... said in an interview (in Geneva) that the Government had originally said that 35,000 "Category C" prisoners, against whom it had nothing, would be released by the beginning of this year...Some 5,000 "Category A" prisoners were to be brought to trial "some time", but this would take about 10 years, even if new judges were appointed.

There was grave international concern, he said, at the creation on the malaria-ridden island of Buru of a penal settlement for 10,000 of the 15,000 "Category B" prisoners,

There was once a village called Khajuraho.

Tourism transformed it.

Khajuraho was a sleepy little village. Unsung. Unknown. Its few inhabitants eked out a meagre living by farming. It had some beautiful temples. But these were almost inaccessible, visited only by an adventurous and dedicated few.

Then things changed. Khajuraho was developed as a tourist attraction. Roads were improved. Hotels sprang up. A market was built to cater to the requirements of visitors.

And they came. By the thousands. Khajuraho began to hum with new activity. An airport was built. Transport services were expanded. There were more jobs for more people. More buyers for more handicrafts. Khajuraho was no longer an unknown village. It was an exotic destination name in world tourism.

Soon, Boeing-737 jets will bring more visitors to Khajuraho. And a master plan which envisages a new township of 10,000 people dependent entirely on the tourist trade has been approved.

Tourism is the world's biggest business and the fastest growing. In five years it will be worth Rs. 18,000 crores. And tourism offers high returns on investment in the shortest time. For instance, in 1968, Yugoslavia earned three and a half dollars on every dollar it invested in Tourism.
● A net profit of 250%!

Tourism is also a people's business. Because people benefit wherever the tourist travels. Wealth flows from the affluent countries to the less affluent. And within the country from the developed areas to the less developed. Everyone benefits. Airlines, travel agents, hoteliers, shopkeepers, craftsmen, waiters, taxi-drivers. The chain is endless.



DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

against whom charges had never been brought.

He hoped, therefore, that the Indonesian Government would consider releasing all "A" and "B" prisoners against whom there were no specific serious charges. All the prisoners, dispersed among some 250 camps and prisons, had already been held for five years, many of them denied all contact with their families.

"Some officials tried to tell me that even if the men were not communists when arrested they had since become 'infected' with communism, he said. (*The Times*).

Letters

'Challenge And Response'

A middle class sympathiser of the CPI(M-L), I know little of their tactics and nothing of their organisation. But I do admire their valiant spirit. I am awed by the horizons of change that so few of them have opened up so swiftly before so many of us. Above all, I love them for giving us back our self-respect. I was beginning to hate our land where the weak were so abject and the strong so cruel. The CPI(M-L) has given us a sense of honour—the weak can hit back.

The witches of the Right, Left and Centre are now brewing a set of laws intended to frighten and suppress the CPI(M-L). These laws are a challenge. I would like to answer it on behalf of the CPI(M-L) workers whom I respect and love.

The challenge is accepted. You who seek to destroy us, are welcome to try.

You will imprison us for 7 years if you catch us with instruments of your

destruction. You are already shooting, killing, maiming us, driving our comrades insane with repeated electric shocks. Your prisons do not frighten us!

You will jail us for 10 years for "subversion"! Your acts and actions have long ago subverted what you piously seek to preserve. An education system which has kept 35 crores illiterate, and another 10 crores barely literate, in a country of 50 crores—has destroyed itself. An economic system which sanctifies private property and then delivers the ownership into the hands of two imperial powers and their handful of lackeys is a dead system. Its only products are—unemployment and inflation.

Your political trappings, borrowed so hopefully to cover your distorted and decayed feudal-colonial system, are hanging in tatters. Your legislatures are cattle markets. Your judiciary a forum of sycophants. Your administration is a rotting corpse suffocating the people.

Your nationalism—bound up in your flag—has long ago been consigned to the sea of foreign 'aid'. And your non-violence is manifested only in your concern for the health of stone images; a concern whose depth is exceeded only by your brutal callousness about the spilt blood of our youth.

Who can save this system which you have subverted so well? We are merely sweeping away the debris.

You threaten us that you will not allow bail to us! Blind boys, maimed men, people likely to be shot at sight, care little for bail. Those who have chosen to travel the path of revolution do not depend upon your legal loopholes to accomplish it.

You will stop, hold, arrest, despoil, expropriate without warrant, without order, without restraint. That is, you will unleash your dogs. We know these dogs. Even without

this law, we have seen your dogs do precisely these things. We have seen expropriation, arrests, oppression and naked sadism. We do not fear your dogs. But be careful that they do not bite you. Unleashed dogs have that habit.

You will kill us. But you are killing us already. This is not new. Both Promode Dasgupta and Ranjit Gupta have regretted that the police should fire so many shots and score so few kills. You are killing us systematically, brutally and desperately.

You do not frighten us. Our comrades have sung while being shot. Our comrades have been burnt, tortured, beaten, crippled, made insane, but not many of them have given their comrades away. When we began we were few and we took up arms against an armed force of at least 20 lakhs. Now we are many. We were not frightened then. We cannot be scared off now.

We accept your challenge. We accept it with gladness. Because it marks our progress. You and your agents have run a short swift course of degeneration. Your beloved constitution now stands suspended. Your panic and that of your agents shows in the dirty linen you are forced to hang up in public.

We accept the challenge and return it. What we have done before is nothing compared to what is to follow. You cannot go much beyond what you have already done. Your brutality has already outstripped your threat, but we have yet to bare our claws. Look at the countryside. There are 56,800 villages. Can your laws stop them? How many uniformed killers can you send to each village? Your police and army are children of the peasantry. For how long can you make them torment their own flesh, desecrate their own blood? Do you not see your guns turning upon you? And do not expect mercy. Boys with no nails, broken wrists, damaged spines have no mercy. Men whose wives have

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*'We have to lay great
STRESS ON EQUALITY,
on removal of disparities. . . .
Socialism is not the spread-
ing out of poverty. The
essential thing is that there
must be WEALTH AND
PRODUCTION.'*

—Jawahar Lal Nehru



been raped have no mercy. Women whose children came home dead in a police van, can have no mercy. You have dried the revolutionary tinder. Prepare to burn.

We accept the challenge and issue a warning to those who are duped even now by the legal parties of the so-called "Left". This law will devour you. We have fought and died and are fighting still. But your leaders have disarmed you. Your leaders have bluffed you into waiting for the ministerial pot of gold at the end of the political rainbow. You need bail. You need a 'legal' political life: nice, free, liberal and false. A bloodthirsty police suffering from delusions of grandeur is about to pounce on you, my soft friends. Are you prepared for it? Are you prepared to be the sacrifice on the altar of the New Law?

As for us—we shall stand and fight and survive and overcome.

S. ROY
Calcutta

Who Are The Goondas ?

Parliament is enacting two bills under which the police will be empowered to shoot goondas and looters at sight. One can welcome this proposal. Now, who are the goondas? According to the considered opinion of ex-Justice Mulla of Allahabad High Court, the Indian police force is the most organised goonda gang operating in India. And who are the looters? Any one can find out for himself if he goes to a policeman's home—the lowliest in the ranks having a smaller share and the mightiest a higher share of the loot. To follow the spirit of the bills will be to shoot the police first! What angers the people most is the fact that the guardians of law and order are the most brazen lawbreakers, besides being the immediate instruments of class oppression. The police are the gendarme of capitalism which has reduced the poor people, themselves oppressed and exploited, to the shameful position of serving as an instrument

of oppressing fellow poor people. Now it is this gendarme who is described by the CPM as friends of the people.

ABINASH SEN
Calcutta

'T' For Torture

For some time past I have been observing a curious phenomenon regarding the particular letter 't' of the English alphabet which has been frequently missing from its proper places on the pages of your extraordinary journal. I have been wondering whether the proverbial printer's devil is the real culprit or something else. Suddenly, one day, it struck me that, of late the happenings in Calcutta may be the explanation for your being allergic to this particular letter in so far as it initiates the most obnoxious word in English language—torture.

The custodians of law and order in our country have been very faithfully observing the connotations of this word since the time of the British "raj". After independence this legacy is being zealously pursued by them. Police "zulum" does no more surprise even a child. Strictures against this species of our social genus, even if they were by Anand Narain Mulla, are to be considered aberrations. Torture is a necessity for any corrupt regime whether democratically elected or not, facing uncalled for opposition from the misguided revolutionaries. When it is resorted to by the corrupt oligarchy in Brazil where the hot-blooded policemen torture political opponents or summarily liquidate them through death squads with characteristic Spanish brutality, there is no reason why the method cannot be used in this land of eternal peace of the Buddha and Gandhi, if only to perpetuate a democratic institution? If people near thanas are unable to sleep at night because of wailings coming from them, it is entirely their business. The custodians of law and order in Calcutta are only doing a thankless job of torturing

and killing 16-year-olds and 20-year-olds, most of whom are students, no, I beg your pardon, criminals, bad characters and anti-social elements like wagon-breakers, who have turned Naxalites, God knows why. I think you have not yet been able to become a real leftist, a radical-thinking person like our left leaders. If you are allergic to 't', Mr Editor, it is your business as long as you don't violate law and order and act according to the divine edicts of the sacred Constitution.

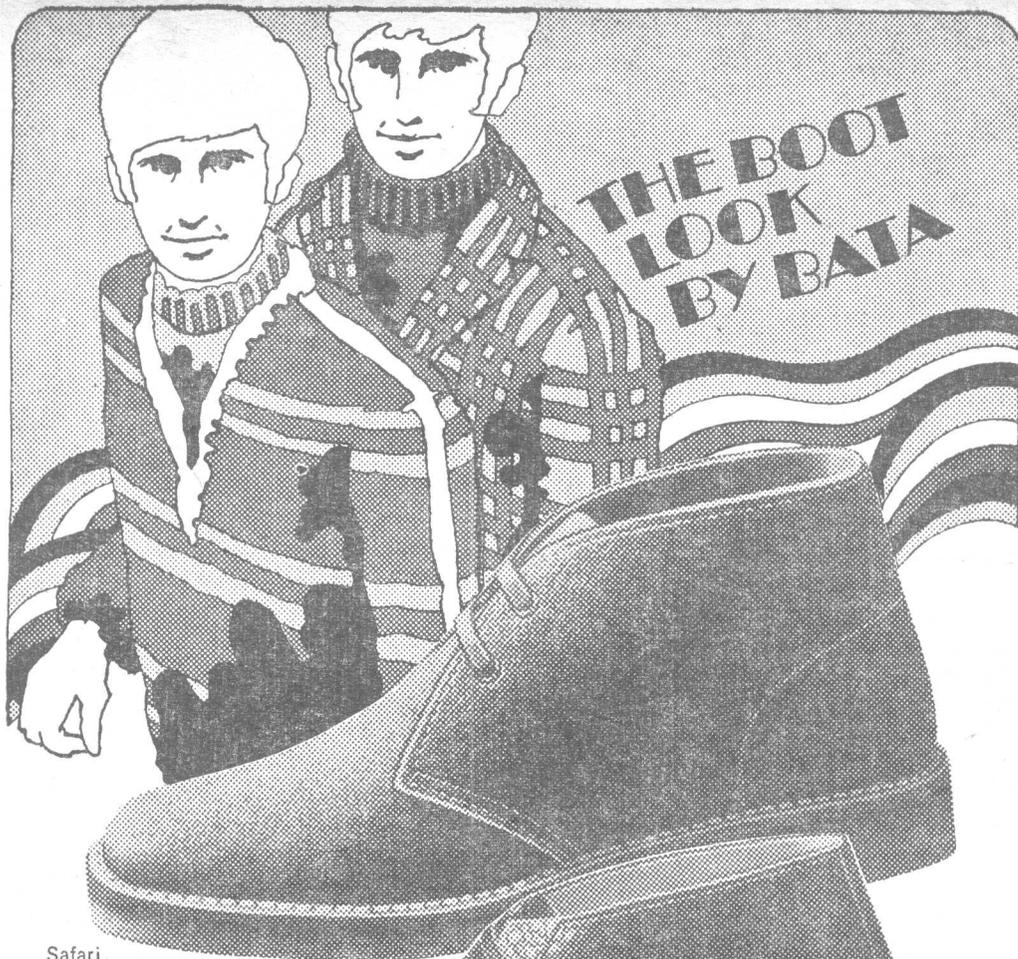
S. MUKHERJEE
New Delhi

"It Tolls For Thee"

In your two editorials of October 31 and November 7 you have ripped open the facade of deceptive simplicity and the seeming innocence and innocuousness of the State's administrative machinery whose police, in the pretext of maintaining law and order, are indulging in orgies of murder and torture of the common people, especially of the younger generation, with the connivance of the Central Government. Equally emphatically, you have taken off the purda of hypocrisy of the leaders professing Marxism and laid bare the hiatus between the practice and profession of people whose studied reticence coupled with their inter-party strifes more than anything else have strengthened the hands of the reactionary forces in the wanton killing and maiming of young men. What a shadow of fear hangs over the faces of parents with sons between the ages of 15 and 25 who are protesting against the motheaten established order, perhaps in a wrong way or perhaps not! Despite the abuses heaped on Bengalis for their wayward course, despite their penchant for running their affairs in somewhat different ways from the rest of India, and above all despite all attempts to lower the people of Bengal in the estimation of the world, your journal still holds out hope.

BARNALI SEN (SM)
Hoogly District

NOVEMBER 28, 1970



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