

# frontier

Vol. 3: No. 35

DECEMBER 5, 1970

PRICE: 35 PAISE

## On Other Pages

COMMENTS	..	2
<i>View from Delhi</i>		
UNITY BALONEY		
FROM A POLITICAL COR-		
RESPONDENT	..	4
INDIRA'S ECONOMIC		
REALITIES		
A. P. M.	..	5
ARMED STRUGGLE IN		
AMERICA		
N. K. KALAM	..	7
PATRIOTISM—INDIAN STYLE		
A. ROY	..	9
CALCUTTA DIARY		
GYAN KAPUR	..	11
BIBHUTI BHUSAN AND THE		
INDIAN RENAISSANCE		
HIREN GOHAIN	..	12
<i>Book Review</i>		
TRIBAL, FOLK, CLASSICAL	14	
CLIPPINGS	..	15
LETTERS	..	17

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

## BEHIND THE ACT

IT is not fortuitous that incidence of violence has gone down in Calcutta, and perhaps in West Bengal, with the promulgation of the Prevention of Violent Activities Act. The title of the Act is an instance of brazen hypocrisy, for it vests in the Government exactly the same powers of which it had been deprived when the Preventive Detention Act lapsed in the beginning of this year. In a sense, the new Act is more retrograde than its predecessor for it has been rendered ineffective against hoarders and blackmarketeers. The leftist parties being what they are may find in this another sign of the progressiveness of the Prime Minister and compete with one another in sustaining the regime she heads. In the plethora of protests against the measure not a word has been said about this stealthy deletion of the sole redeeming feature of the earlier Act. The left parties are crying themselves hoarse against the measure and have called a Statewide general strike next week alleging that it will be applied against their cadres. The fear is more simulated than real and is meant to preserve what these parties think is their oppositionist image. The Government is not going to touch them for they have purchased their immunity through clandestine deals. The CPM, the most revolutionary of them all, has done it by collaborating with the police in hunting down the Naxalites. In this matter the CPM and the Bangla Congress are speaking in the same voice, and it seems the good old days of the United Front may return once again when the people will be regaled by fulminations against the common enemy by Mr Ajoy Mukherjee and Mr Jyoti Basu from the same platform. The CPM Politburo's lengthy statement apropos of a minor exchange in the Lok Sabha to declare its repugnance of violence and to plead that its talk of counter-violence is as toothless as that of the Congress under Gandhi shows how terribly afraid the party's leaders have become of jail-going. No Government needs take the bluster of such a party seriously.

The Government will say that its policy of terror has paid; the Naxalites have been made to realise the price of capture, and they were cooling off. And having proved what a beast it can be, the Government does not want to display its bestiality further. This means a change of tactics, not of policy or attitude. Whether the Naxalites have been, or will be, cowed will be known in future. But the sudden thaw proves

that much of what was being called violence was in fact, counter-violence, an outburst of anger at indiscriminate arrest, harassment, torture, and killing; the turmoil was a sequel to the police repression launched four months ago. The sudden halt in the mounting ferocity of this repression with the promulgation of the PVA Act suggests that the police were fomenting violence to provide a circumstantial justification for the Act; murder, arson, and clashes had to continue in Calcutta to enable the Prime Minister to secure a consensus in the Parliamentary Consultative Committee in favour of the measure. Now that the strategy has succeeded the Governments at the Centre and in the State have suddenly become sensitive to complaints of police excesses. The Centre is said to have advised moderation, and within twenty-four hours of Presidential assent to the Bill the State Government, in its turn, directed the police to slow down. As a loyal agent of the Government, the police have listened.

The offensive against the Naxalites will continue—in the same old fashion where necessary and with the aid of the PVA Act where possible; they will continue to be killed in “inter-party clashes” and in “encounters” with the police. The new humanity of the Government is not for them. What the Government has called off is mass retribution for it has now got the Act which it can invoke against anybody it dislikes. The Act is meant primarily to deter the novitiate and those in other parties who are disillusioned by the unprincipled politics of their leaders. The Government proposes to do a good turn to these Parties, and, in response, they are, despite their public gestures of protest, lining up with the Government against the Naxalites. By promulgating the Act the Government has also provided them with a pretext for a “mass movement” in which the accumulated anger of the people against months of police brutality may be dissolved. With no possibility of general elections before 1972, a bit of anti-congressism is

permissible politics now. Even the CPI is allowed to endorse a pledge to fight and defeat the ruling Congress so that the proposed movement by the left parties may not appear as diversionary, so that it may not be suspected that the movement is designed more to help than to embarrass the Government. The leftist tirade against the Government is for ensuring closer harmony in future.

## U Nu's Revolution

When in power Burma's ex-Premier U Nu was a bad administrator and might yet prove worse if he recaptures it. But there is no denying his ingenuity. If there was ever a need of an example of how to conduct a liberation struggle (through PR U Nu's would perhaps be the best. Ever since he declared his intention to launch armed struggle against the 'fascist Ne Win regime' at a London press conference in August last year communiqués and manifestos from the Buddhist politician have been falling thick and fast. Now to make a revolutionary use of newspaper correspondence columns, he has put the world on notice about the beginning of his liberation struggle through a letter to the Editor of the *New York Times*. U Nu has already been running a clandestine radio station from Thailand and that could have been an ideal medium for trumpeting about the new revolution but to make sure that the people at large tuned in their radio he chose to accept the hospitality of the *New York Times* columns and make an advance announcement about the broadcast. Obviously because the Burmese postal services would not oblige the correspondent-revolutionary, he had to write it from “somewhere in Thailand”. If this piece of information flew in the face of his supporters' claim that since the end of October he has been in Burma leading the revolt, the leader couldn't care. This is after all a minor credibility gap in the service of revolution.

The nationwide revolt against the Ne Win regime which U Nu has been threatening for over a year is yet to materialise. But if this struggle turns out to be the tribals' war on Rangoon that would mean hardly anything new to Burma where Kachin, Shan, Karen and Mon rebels have been up in arms almost ever since independence in 1948. According to press reports, some leaders of these belligerent tribes have accepted U Nu's lead to set up a National Liberation Front to replace Ne Win's military dictatorship with a federal parliamentary set-up wherein the tribes would have the right of autonomy to the extent of having separate tribal militias. Nobody excepting General Ne Win and his friends would grudge the tribals their legitimate rights and they might succeed better if they could unite their forces as they have supposedly been doing under the leadership of U Nu. But long before U Nu surfaced a multi-tribal fighting force came into existence—the North-East Command.

But Burma is not just a bundle of tribes. U Nu has not yet said how the people of Central Burma feel about his plans. Although he has not spelt out how he intends, if he has the chance, to rescue the country from its present economic abyss, indications are that he is after a Thai model which would make Burma a free hunting ground for American capital. And that is perhaps why Bangkok is tolerant of U Nu.

In a great show of solidarity with General Ne Win the Soviet Ambassador in Rangoon has come out with a denunciation of the monk-politician as a CIA agent. But what the gentlemen in Moscow would turn their blind eyes on is the brutal pacification campaign carried on by General Ne Win against the communists—and that with American weapons. Perhaps this is logical for the BCP is backed by Peking and that makes BCP ipso facto a CIA operative.

## Games After The Cyclone

The lakhs of peasants and thousands of workers who died in the recent cyclone in Pakistan, come to think of it, would have died anyway after the normal span of human life. They died in circumstances which were beyond human control. The vital difference however is that Nature killed them at one stroke and did not allow the feudal-bourgeois gangs of Pakistan to kill them slowly and profit by their sub-human existence.

The people who perished are beyond condolences. Those who have survived the over-wrenching cyclone certainly require all the sympathy and help. But gestures of sorrow and help can be sickening when these are shown by people who conceivably do not have any love for them. The cyclone has laid bare the brazen inhumanity of the feudal-bourgeois gangs of the sub-continent—the inhumanity which normally lies hidden to the gullible under the trappings of liberal humanism.

Few would believe that Mrs Gandhi was so overwhelmed by the cyclone in Pakistan that she released money for aid, lifted restrictions on Pak aircraft seeking to fly over India and offered helicopters to help Pakistan. It was too good an opportunity to miss and Mrs Gandhi hardly lost a moment to put President Yahya in a severe vise. It was beyond the power of puny Pakistan to restore pre-cyclone conditions with her own resources and therefore President Yahya was in no position to refuse help from whatever quarters it might come. But could he possibly accept help from India without jeopardising his political stance, especially when anti-Indian propaganda was his mightiest weapon? And that too right before the general elections? In thrusting him between the Scylla of politics and the Charybdis of flood, Mrs Gandhi had no stake whatsoever. Not even the Jana Sangh could have possibly criticised Mrs Gandhi's milk of human kindness, worth one crore of rupees,

and helicopter charges. And the opportunity came to her all neat and ready; she did not have to manoeuvre for it. But the horns on which she put President Yahya are so obvious that the Indian help had little chance of reaching the rotting people in the cyclone-hit areas. The battle of wits between the lady and the Tartar may give us a glimpse into some facets of bourgeois humanism.

The latest news from Pakistan is that the first phase of the relief measures has been completed, the distressed people have been taken care of and, as President Yahya said, there had been in East Pakistan no starvation, no cholera. The general elections will be held in polite distance from the ravaged areas. This is all sublime. The cyclone swept away, officially speaking, two lakhs of people, unofficially twenty lakhs. It takes little imagination to think what happened to the rest. No homes, no means of livelihood, no clothes in winter, no water to use without risking diseases, no future to think of. Handfuls of atta and fistfuls of powdered milk, from Anglo-American generosity, are the only means of subsistence. That the Pakistan Government values its political life more than mere problems of existence will go down in the parliamentary annals of the world in golden letters but the hiatus between the latifundists and common people will grow wider in Pakistan.

The country is going to the polls on December 7 to elect members to the National Assembly. Not all parties will participate. A few days ago Maulana Bhasani announced that his National Awami Party would not, for the sake of relief work. There have been massive demonstrations in Dacca itself to protest against the callousness of the authorities.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of the Awami Party, however, insisted on the elections. We do not know, in the absence of any worthwhile communication between the two neigh-

bouring States, what lies behind his insistence, but to outsiders, there appears to be a certain inhumanity about the attitude of this popular leader. Let's not, however, talk about humanity in politics. The Sheikh is being tipped by many as the future Prime Minister of Pakistan and why should he miss the bus?

This is going to be the first election on the one-man one-vote basis in Pakistan. The legislators will have to draft a constitution within 120 days. If it in the opinion of Yahya Khan, weakens the unity and stability of Pakistan, the constitution will be rejected and the Martial Law administration will continue. There is a good deal of resentment in West Pakistan against the demand of regional autonomy for East Pakistan; unless there is a miracle, there is bound to be a deadlock. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman once weakened the movement by attending the Round Table Conference called by Ayub Khan. Few parliamentarians ever learn.

*Just out*

বিপ্লবের গান

Bengali Translation of

"Song of Ouyang Hai"

Inspiring novel of To-day's China.  
Model for To-day's Revolutionary  
Literature

Price: Six Rupees

এ যুগের কবিতা

Collection of Revolutionary Poems  
from China, Albania, India, etc.

Price: Rupee One

**PEOPLE'S BOOK AGENCY**

1, Kishore Ghosh Lane

P.O. KHAGRA

Dt. Murshidabad

\* Available at different progressive  
bookshops of  
CALCUTTA

## Unity Baloney

FROM A POLITICAL  
CORRESPONDENT

THE unity balloon has been deflated and grounded. The Americans, the Birlas and those who feel insecure on either side of the Congress fence, and of course the fence-sitters were pining for unity while the CPI and the Moscow lobby were denouncing the moves as a big business manoeuvre. Moscow saw in the unity balloon an attempt at detaching the so-called left in Mrs Gandhi's party from the so-called centre. So unity of the two Congress parties would have been disastrous to the programme of a national democracy with peaceful transition to socialism in the bargain. The Birlas and the Americans thought that Mrs Gandhi had come to depend too much on Moscow and unless the Congress-O made a gesture to restore unity there was every danger of Mrs Gandhi going left. This reminds one of the convergence of the CPI-M and Swatantra interests on Mrs Gandhi's leadership. A few months ago when the SSP General Secretary, Mr George Fernandes, wrote to the non-Congress parties about the need for a concerted plan to topple Mrs Gandhi's government, the Swatantra Party wrote to say that it would be a folly to attempt a toppling operation without an alternative programme because Mrs Gandhi's exit would result her following going over to the Communists. The CPI-M wrote to say that Mrs Gandhi's ouster would result in her following going over to the right parties. A Politbureau member was saying in the lobbies that of about 230 MPs of Mrs Gandhi's party in the Lok Sabha, about 180 would go to the Congress-O, Swatantra Party or the Jana Sangh. The fact is neither Mrs Gandhi nor the Congress-O leadership wants unity but it suited Mrs Gandhi fine to abet the unity balloon so that there is confusion in the

Congress-O camp and some of its MPs defect reducing it to a mere Opposition group. To this extent her plans have boomeranged because the distance between the sentimental unity-ists and those who oppose unity has grown.

There is intense confusion all around. The Opposition is anxious not to give the Government any opening for forcing a mid-term election. Any minor reverse in Parliament would be exploited by Mrs Gandhi and made the pretext for seeking dissolution of the Lok Sabha. So the parties are playing it soft, stopping short of a toppling manoeuvre because there is the risk of a manoeuvre succeeding. Last week, the Government survived a vote by nine votes, the lowest ever in our Parliamentary history. The danger of escalation is clear to all these parties.

Much has been happening in the two communist parties. The CPI is reluctantly realising that it would have to fight both the Congress parties simultaneously if it has to be relevant. At least the West Bengal unit is convinced of this and the Tamil Nadu unit has taken such a tactical line for granted for the coming civic polls. The leadership itself seems hopelessly divided on its attitude to the Congress. It was mounting pressure on the Congress-R for a snap poll in the hope that such an eventuality would force Mrs Gandhi to formalise the Kerala-type alliance at the national level and in the States. But there is little enthusiasm for it now. First, the draconian powers the West Bengal special law confers on the administration put the CPI in a spot and its leadership would find it hard to justify any understanding with the Congress-R. Secondly, the Congress-R in West Bengal is as discredited and obsolete a force as the other Congress. (In Kerala, the Congress-R represents the younger generation). Thirdly, the Congress-R in Kerala was desperately wooing the mini-front while its West Bengal counter-part has been cold to the idea. In Tamil Nadu, the CPI finds it necessary to fight the Con-

gress-R which is in the seven-party front.

### After Kerala

Inside the CPI-M the developments have been equally interesting. The Politbureau has indicted the Kerala State unit on various counts over the mid-term elections. The Politbureau in the first place has rejected the State Committee's assessment of the results. Through an elaborate analysis the State Committee has tried to prove that the party's own base was intact and it was the combination of the forces against it that brought about the defeat. It was even sought to prove that the party has gained significantly in terms of votes. But the Politbureau thought that it was just so much sophistry. In the first place the State Committee drafted the report on the basis of what it wanted to tell the Politbureau and in justification of its strategy and tactics, without so much as consulting the District Committees about the reasons for the debacle. Secondly, the Politbureau has come round to accepting the Andhra leaders' view that the strategy itself was wrong. Before the elections, Mr Sundarayya and Mr Basavapunniah had pleaded that the party should make the defeat of the CPI the prime objective and should make alliances right and left to this end. But Mr Namboodiripad and Mr A. K. Gopalan had set their sight on the prospects of winning power almost independently and set themselves two formidable tasks, power in addition to defeating the CPI. The Politbureau thinks that the State leadership has bungled the situation. Both Mr Namboodiripad and Mr Gopalan are under a cloud now. The serious

---

For Frontier contact

People's Book House

Meher House,

Cowasji Patel Street,

Fort, Bombay

DECEMBER 5, 1970

party purge in Kerala does not convey adequately the nature of the crisis gripping the party. As many as 18 district committee members have been expelled in an attempt to find scapegoats and the fact that most of them are likely to join the Congress-R provides the most telling commentary on the calibre of the CPI-M in the State. Those who were on the Marxist bandwagon are trying to get off.

The Politbureau thinks that the State leadership should have tried to come to an adjustment with the Karnataka Ekikaran Samithi in the border constituencies and honoured its commitment to the ISP. It should have also tried to wean the RSP away from the mini-front. Mr Sundarayya is known to have cryptically remarked that if it was a question of fighting for power they could have fought alone and lost to the Congress-R instead of rehabilitating the CPI. The results proved that the State leadership did not achieve either of its objectives but had succeeded in making the CPI respectable when it could have been finished as a force. In addition to losing on both, the party is now left with the stigma of having entered opportunistic alliances with forces like the Congress-O. The State leadership could have spared the party of this ignominy.

On the whole the Kerala members in the Politbureau are no longer in the dominant position they were. The Andhras are atop now. The tussle between Namboodiripad and Gopalan at the State level has lost its relevance when the entire State leadership stands discredited in the eyes of the all-India leadership. The CPI-M's proximity to power in Kerala and West Bengal seems to have been its undoing. After all the CPI-M is a little more than a Bengal-Kerala party with the Andhra leadership holding the strategic balance.

---

For FRONTIER contact

SANYAL BROS.

26, Main Road Jamshedpur-1

DECEMBER 5, 1970

## Indira's Economic Realities

A.P.M.

MRS Gandhi, when she was Mrs Gandhi, abhorred economics. Nobody could then have pretended that she appreciated the intricacies of modern economics. Now, when power in New Delhi has concentrated in her hands, it is only natural that she should rule over others in economic decision-making too. The outcome of this situation in the past one year or so could have, and possibly should have, been nothing short of catastrophic. What we witness, however, is the same, slightly erratic, drift in the economy toward a sort of self-willed, as contrary to a planned, fate. The reason for this continuity in the main trends of the economy, despite Mrs Gandhi's now forgotten brave declarations at the time of bank nationalisation, lies elsewhere than what New Delhi proclaims from time to time.

In a sense, there has all along been one uniform reality in the economy, ever since the first attempts were made, with justifiable enthusiasm, to plan India's economic development. A parallel politico-economic factor has worked with consistent efficiency all this time. "It is the politics of pressure", explained an industrialist recently. The politics of pressure is a surprisingly sophisticated and, so it seems in retrospect, quite apt description of this factor. Before the meaning of the term is elaborated, it may be added that Mrs Gandhi has so far failed and will continue to fail to tackle effectively today's economic realities mainly because she is not capable of working above the politics of pressure.

What are the economic realities Mrs Gandhi faces today? Unemployment, rising prices, sagging exports, not enough industrial investment. In brief, it is a planned economic development in which certain adverse factors are functioning so effectively that New Delhi is now openly baffled. It is significant that nobody im-

portant enough in the Establishment is any longer talking in terms of containing the "monster of unemployment". When he was still fresh in the Finance Ministry, Mr Chavan did attempt to sound brave by declaring his determination to stop the price rise. Everybody laughed then, including his own men. Today it receives his and Mrs Gandhi's 'constant attention'; that's about all.

Far more than the steps the Government is taking to improve the situation, like arrangements for more steel, confinement of further items to the small sector and boosts to export promotion efforts, the factors that are shaping the economy more effectively are the politics of pressure and Mrs Gandhi's total incapacity to take vital economic decisions.

It is time to examine the politics of pressure more closely. The industrialist referred to above did mention this factor earlier this year, when Mrs Gandhi was still occasionally sounding radical. It was also the time when the Birla fertiliser project in Goa had been given the go-ahead signal after longish dilly-dallying. It was then put to the industrialist if New Delhi's radical posture of the past one year was at last giving way to 'pragmatism'. "But you are basically wrong", the gentleman was evidently aghast at the naivete of the reporter. "I do not believe", he elaborated, "that there is any real mistrust of business by Government. There is certainly a recognition of the potentiality of individual initiative and the contribution of the private sector as a whole to the national economy. This recognition, however, is strongly countered by political pressures. And whenever these pressures mount, Government vacillates, delays occur and only when the matter assumes urgency, there is action. This is precisely what has happened in the case of the Birla fertiliser project in Goa." A

most sensible analysis of the realities, one must admit.

As a footnote to this candid analysis of the realities in New Delhi, what may be termed the spontaneous wailing of a sugar tycoon may be recalled. It was at the beginning of the 1969-70 sugar season, when the determination of the free sale-levy ratio was being assiduously fought out. "These MPs are simply fantastic," bemoaned the exceptionally obese gentleman. "They promise support while here, but listen to their socialistic jargon when the same people speak in Parliament. They say they must play safe while speaking publicly. They can only help us privately."

### Steel Prices

Yes, the politics of pressure is far more real than the impressive manner in which the Planning Commission sets out to plan development of the economy. This politics has been determining the shape of our economy for longer than we care to know. The latest example of how it works to the detriment of the economy is shaping right now. After a long period of haggling, the steel workers have got a substantial pay rise. The steel companies have immediately staked out their claim for a parallel price rise. Till now, Mr Bhagat sounds tenaciously brave and refuses to discuss the demand. But for how long? Not a few men in the industry and Government are prepared to predict a price rise before long. And then what is sure to follow is a succession of claims, from the steel consuming industries, for price rises. Simultaneously, employees of all these industries would holler for pay rises. And allegedly to cover these, their employers would in turn demand further prices hikes. For the uninitiated, it would be difficult to believe that our economy is still influenced to such an extent by such mini-laissez faire escapades. To a cynic, it is all a hilarious merry-go-round of higher prices chasing higher wages. To others, the mess is evidently getting out of hand. Meanwhile, who is

having the last laugh? According to a press report, on the very day following the announcement of the pay rise for steel workers, the prices of vegetables in the Durgapur bazar registered a 5 to 10 per cent rise. Even before the corpse is sighted, vultures have started swooping down.

In a melodramatic vein, the analogy can be extended to the economy itself. If it could be likened to a corpse, (an exaggeration, when all is said and done), then everyone, from the over-fed tycoons down to emaciated government clerks and petty pedlars of smuggled goods, is a vulture feeding on it. And this includes the trade unions, too. Mrs Gandhi is very much a part of this permissive, out-and-out campaign for profiteering. Hers is admittedly power-oriented, while others seek plain pelf. But her involvement in the game, as that of others in her company, negates the possibility of any serious attempt by Government to stop the rot in the economy.

Thus, while the politics of pressure bulldozes over sober considerations, in which both the exploiter and the exploited participate without inhibitions, the economic realities grow more complex and hard to tackle. According to the National Commission on Labour, the number of educated unemployed in December 1967 stood at 10, 87, 400. One year ago, it was 9,17,500. Of this, 50 per cent people were located in West Bengal, UP, Maharashtra, Kerala and Bihar. According to employment exchange statistics, there has been occurring a steady decline in placements as a percentage of registrations, from 30.3 in 1951 to 10.5 in 1968. It is now established that the five-year plans have failed to achieve the objective of full employment. What is significant is that the attempt has now been abandoned altogether. The Fourth Plan document does not mention any employment target.

As a matter of fact, there is now realisation in New Delhi that the economy is worsening and not much can be done about it. The Fourth Plan document predicts, and it is a

sad prediction, that a per capita consumption level of about Rs. 27 per month (at 1967-68 prices) by the end of 1980-81, equivalent to the consumption level of only Rs 15 per month in terms of the 1960-61 prices, can possibly be attained.

It is, however, the price spurt which has completely baffled Mrs Gandhi and her non-government. This is another crisis in which New Delhi is exhibiting all the signs of a resigned attitude. Every month in the 1970 lean season has witnessed a steady increase in the wholesale prices. The general index of wholesale prices (Base 1961-62—100) stood at 182.3 for the week ended 17 October, 1970, showing a 6.8 per cent rise over a year-ago level. It went up to 7.7 per cent. The wholesale price index for industrial raw materials was 196.1 in 1969-70, a 14.5 per cent rise over 1968-69. An economic newspaper has recently concluded: "In view of the bias in the price policy towards the producer by means of price support by governmental agencies, it is feared that the price spurt may be sustained in the coming years despite attempts at the stabilisation of prices... The price increases can be kept under check only if the Government thinks twice before announcing its price support policy."

This statement sums up the choice before Mrs Gandhi. It also indicates her limitation. Her Government would not think twice before letting the economy slide further toward the deepening gloom. For, its interests and those of merchants and manufacturers overlap each other.

---

Our agent at Alipurduar

Mr SUBHAS BOSE,

Newtown Library,

Alipurduar, P.O.,

Dist. Jalpaiguri,

West Bengal.

# Armed Struggle In America

N. K. KALAM

BY and large Western leftists have viewed armed struggle rather benevolently and patronisingly as the revolutionary tool of "the oppressed colonies, but armed struggle in the oppressor mother country has always been viewed from the safe distance of a lyrical romanticism; it is something to be engaged in, to be practised only by a generation yet to be born. As the prospects of armed revolution in the Third World developed in the last decade, all that the white Western left was prepared for, ideologically and practically, was to stand on the sidelines and cheer—sounding even militant at times.

The ethics of reasoning with the imperialists is profoundly rooted, almost without exception, in the entire spectrum of the Western left. The most pathetic unfolding of this theme was the spectacle during the May revolt in France, when the tottering bourgeoisie summoned and received the aid of the "old left" to re-establish the power of a bankrupt capitalist regime.

Today, in the U.S. there are signs that the ideological and political groundwork is being laid for armed struggle, for the first time in an advanced capitalist country. If the ranting of the more radical sections of the New Left smacked of adventurism, that adventurism is fast changing under the stick of an intolerant ruling class, and is being compelled, as a matter of survival, to translate radical rhetoric into action. The far more profound and powerful thrust toward armed struggle comes, of course, from the Afro-American community. The ghettos where they live constitute a plot of genocide by the power structure against the Black people of America. To be black is to be a victim of a cold calculating plot from birth to death.

That is why there is a Black Panther Party.

The Panthers are the most prominent of a number of Black militant,

social and political organisations that emerged in the wake of the civil-rights movement. Long before his death, Martin Luther King's Gandhian apparatus had been bludgeoned to disrepute by a ruling class that responded to pacifism with a fury and violence that were bred of habit. In King's non-violence the white ruling class saw an old slave trying new tricks. It had dealt with black revolts before, it knew what to do now—the stick for the hard-headed radicals and the carrot of reforms for those who could be so bought off. What it did not realise is that, as Cleaver puts it (*Soul on Ice*), "today the Black man in America is fully aware of his position, he does not intend to be tricked again into another hundred-year forfeit of freedom."

The post civil-rights period was marked by spontaneous rebellions by the black people shaking the foundation of virtually every major American city. Black people demonstrated that they would not settle for less than their share of the wealth they helped to create. But they were no match for an armed power that had rehearsed the smashing of insurrections from the Dominican Republic to Vietnam, and had demonstrated its intention to spare no efforts in crushing the one now brewing right at home. From the repression that followed these ghetto risings emerged the Black Panther Party for Self-Defence in 1966.

As Huey Newton (whose recent release on bail after a three-year detention marks a major victory for the Panther campaign to secure release of all political prisoners) said in 1967, the BPP was formed, in part, to prevent the Black people from being slaughtered in disorganised revolts: "We're going to talk about Black people arming themselves in a political fashion to exert organised force in the political arena to see to it that the needs of Black

people are met." The Party's platform was a ten-point programme that spoke of meeting the needs of housing, education, food, the right to bear arms, refusal to serve in imperialist wars, and as "our major political objective, a United Nations supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the Black colony in which only Black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate, for the purpose of determining the will of the Black people as to their destiny."

The importance of the Panthers lies in the fact that they proved themselves capable of serving the needs of black people better than the government has been willing or able to. The party has gone into the ghetto with an iron discipline that in itself speaks to the black community of the party's potential as a political vehicle. The party soon won the ear of the black community. Not long after the party came into being, a black youth was shot and killed by the police in California, and the police account of the killing was contradicted by about 20 eye-witness accounts of the incident. The boy's parents called in the Panthers to investigate. Just how the party functions is well demonstrated by the events that followed. It entreated the enraged black community to abstain from an unorganised reaction to the killing. They decided instead to hold a street-corner rally to expose the fact of the murder and the political importance of self-defence. Here's an account. "The Panthers, assuming that the police would try to stop the rally, decided to demonstrate their point on the spot and set up armed guards around the rally site. Hundreds of black people turned out, many carrying their own weapons. The police who came to stop the rally quickly turned away, except for one caught in the middle of the crowd, who sat quietly and listened to all the speeches.

## Armed Patrols

Armed and disciplined groups of Panthers patrolling ghettos are a familiar sight. The Panthers stress two things about armed self-defence; first

that they operate within the gun law and their constitutional right to bear arms, and second that the arms are to serve a political purpose and should not be viewed solely as a military weapon. They have restored confidence and dignity of the black people. The humiliation and harassment of black men and women by the police has tapered off in the face of the threat of revolutionary self-defence.

The Panthers' most notable achievements lie in their programmes to serve the black community—free breakfast for children, free 'liberation schools' for adult and young blacks where they are taught socialist and black history and culture, free health clinics, legal assistance centres etc. All of this brought the Panthers sympathy from the black people. The range of support for them can be estimated from the fact that with the onslaught of repression unleashed by Nixon, all sections of the black community, including the Rev. Abernathy, the pacifist successor to Dr King, called on it to come to the defence of the Panthers.

Fearing their potential, the Nixon administration has launched a concerted repression campaign. Twenty-eight Panthers have been killed by the police until the end of August. The entire Panther leadership is in jail or detention, facing serious charges which few believe have any roots in reality. Those charged are most often held without bail, or on ransom for vast sums of money (\$100,000). Panther offices and children's breakfast programmes are favourite targets of the police. The office in Los Angeles was raided by 400 men from the tactical squad—most of them Vietnam veterans with special training in urban counter-insurgency. These 400 were accompanied by an armed helicopter hovering overhead, and an armoured tank alongside. The target was fourteen black men and women. The five-hour battle was a historic one. The blacks refused to surrender, and suffered only minor casualties. They held out till the black community and the press arrived on the scene and

forced the police to withdraw.

The battle of Los Angeles awakened the black people to two facts; first, the white power structure will spare no ruthlessness in attempting to suppress their movement, and second—a more important lesson—the armed power of the State seems invincible only when it is untested. The Panthers argue that only the political use of urban guerilla warfare can muster the strength of a people who by the realities of America are forced to be revolutionaries—or perish. For black America, fascism is not a theoretical possibility, it is something black people live with every day of their lives. But they also realise that today they are not alone:

"Because we understand that our struggle for our liberation is part of a worldwide struggle being waged by the poor and the oppressed against imperialism and the world's chief imperialist, the United States of America, we the Black Panther Party—understand that the most effective way we can aid our Vietnamese brothers and sisters is to destroy imperialism from the inside, attack it where it breeds."

With inspiration from Third World struggles, and the growing strains in the American economic and social systems, the black revolution stands out in the vanguard of the struggle in America, projecting the alternative of a socialist society. The recent repression programme against the Panthers made the black struggle a catalyst for all democratic forces in America. And this is what the white power-structure fears most.

Already the politics of armed struggle and Mao Tse-tung's thought which the Panthers translated into reality in America have caught the imagination of a large segment of the white radicals. A number of splinter groups from the old Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) are making inroads in the strongholds of the white working class. *The Wall Street Journal* bemoans the fact that the workers, especially the young ones, inspired and instigated by the student radicals, are increasingly challenging the leadership of the re-

actionary unions, a revolt which resulted in the necessity to forge a working-class movement. They realise that it is the only way to head off fascism, the last resort of a bourgeois democracy that has one foot in the grave.

#### "Left Adventurists"

Apart from the conventional Marxist-Leninist parties like Progressive Labour, there is a blossoming of "left adventurists" like the Weathermen, Mad Dogs, MC-5 etc, groups that advocate direct physical confrontations with bourgeois institutions and their armed forces. The Weathermen (named from a line in a Dylan song, "You don't need a Weatherman to know which way the wind blows") who claim to follow Mao have spelled out a doctrine that runs something like this: (1) There is an international struggle under way from Vietnam to Guatemala to Palestine directed against the world capitalist system. (2) This Third World struggle will be decisive in overcoming capitalism. Therefore, the task in the U.S. is to directly assist in this armed struggle instead of organising reformist movement at home, which, acting in its national interest, tacitly allows the genocide of Third World Vietnams to continue unrestricted. (3) The working class in the U.S. benefits from imperialism and is so-brainwashed culturally and politically that it is lost to the anti-imperialist struggle. But working class youths are potential allies, especially since they are called upon to pay with their lives in imperialist wars. Moreover, the impact of a new youth culture with its values and life styles has exposed these youths to an alternative social system in a way that their parent-generation has not been exposed or receptive. (4) Ingrained racism has prevented white radicals from plunging into an armed struggle that has been forced upon the black people and Third World colonies. White radicals are not prepared to pay the price they have called on the oppressed to pay. This is partly due to the brutal suppression of the working class over

the past thirty years. This has so demoralised the American working class that they have come to believe in their imposed impotence. (5) Only in the course of armed struggle will the confidence of the workers be restored. Only by inflicting wounds on the armed power of the State can its vulnerability be exposed. Only by demonstrating their willingness to fight will the white radicals convince the black revolutionaries that they mean business.

The Weatherman (and Weatherwomen) went to Chicago to take on the city's notorious police force. In pitched battles fought between the cops and small elusive groups of Weathermen, the radicals came out on top, inflicting heavy injuries on the police. This was the first time that white demonstrators had got the better of the police and at the same time demonstrated that it does not take much to bring the delicate mechanism of a modern metropolis to a halt. Soon after this incident the Weathermen went underground, to organise in their communities, from small collectives and Weathercells. They have since claimed credit for hundreds of bombings of capitalist shrines like GE, GM, Chase Manhattan Bank etc. and various military-industrial research and production units. Trains transporting military hardware are favourite targets as are power-lines leading to war-related industries. Whatever the criticism to be levelled against the Weathermen and other such groups, they have served a purpose in demonstrating conclusively that the war machine of the imperial motherland is highly vulnerable to domestic insurgency—especially since the expertise of the militants is derived from the training and experience of their enforced missions in Indochina. Their revolutionary practice in the metropolitan centres may well evolve an hitherto undeveloped strategy, as capitalism chokes itself to death in the process of smothering the revolt at home.

The radicals have no illusions about the revolutionary potential of the American working class. They have a long way to go from being a

thorn in the side of the ruling class to destroying that class and creating a new society. In the short run they hope to mobilise armed resistance against U.S. interventions in the Third World and in the black ghettos. In the long run they hope to build a revolutionary organisation and revitalise the struggle of the white working class which, thanks to the Vietnamese, is becoming increasingly conscious of the irreconcilable con-

traditions in their society.

The threat as the ruling class sees it is very real. The exclusive suburbs of the elite are busy building shelters against the coming deluge. And Attorney-General Mitchell has won the applause of the radicals with his acute insight into communist affairs. Hasn't he stated his willingness to trade, 'any day, 'these long-haired, militant, revolutionary communists for "wellbehaved Soviet communists?"

## Patriotism—Indian Style

A. Roy

IT happened in London. In an exclusive Indian students' hostel. The occasion was the C. R. Das Memorial Lecture to celebrate the centenary of the Deshbandhu's birth. An eminent proprietor-editor of an equally patriotic Calcutta newspaper had been booked for days in advance to deliver the lecture. About a hundred patriotic Indians dressed in the best Indian fashion—Carnaby Street three-pieces—sat solemnly across the inner tables awaiting the learned peroration.

The Chairman introduced the Chief Guest recalling how great a man the latter was and how eminently qualified he was to speak on the occasion. The Chief Guest arose to speak, from under the garlanded portrait of the Deshbandhu, following thunderous applause from the audience. The speaker apologised for his inability to speak on the occasion and, before his statement could be misunderstood as Vaishnavite modesty, clarified: a group of British journalists were waiting to meet him and of course, being a good Indian, he could not disappoint foreigners. But since he had earlier condescended to grace the occasion he would neither disappoint his audience.

He began the C. R. Das Memorial Lecture by recalling that the day also happened to be the jubilee (I forget

exactly of which mineral) of his marriage, and recalled, by suitable anecdotes, the secrets of his happy-married life. Great man that the learned editor was, he also recalled how he managed to pass his only examination—the Matriculation—by playing the tabla for the kirtan of his headmaster. There was tremendous clapping all around. It was time for the speaker to meet the British journalists. But the editor was patriotic enough not to forget the epitaph. He said: the Deshbandhu was a great man and knew the Editor's uncle—a Mahatma—so well that he would not do anything without consulting the Mahatma; so much so that the Mahatma's editorial office was the centre of Deshbandhu's political activities.

Thus ended the C. R. Das Memorial Lecture in London, in 1970, the centenary of his birth.

A couple of days later I saw a prominent headline in the editor's own newspaper, echoed in other papers also, of the vandalism of the Naxalites in Calcutta who threatened to behead Deshbandhu's statue; it was a shame on the glorious heritage of Bengal, said the entire Indian press which were on to recall Bengal's glorious past and compared it with its degenerate present.

\* \*

This also happened in England, like

so many other important Indian events which still keep happening on the island—from Channel swimming to pornography on stage. The BBC had screened one of the most artistically satisfying films on life in (no oh!) Calcutta. Louis Malle had focused his camera on some of the most sensitive aspects of life in this city and viewed them with a warmth that can at least be called rare for non-Calcuttans in recent times. It was the most artistic authentication of the old theme: Nehru's "nightmare city" now the "world's greatest mass of urban decay".

About two months elapsed. The BBC became bolder in its pursuit of focusing the truth, though not the whole truth, about the exotic aspects of life in the once brightest jewel in the Crown. What is this happens to be one of the more innocuous of the English pastimes: to view their colonies set in the twilight between the Empire and the Commonwealth from across their island where the sun never shone and never set.

India was outraged, though by a delayed reaction. Calcutta's honour became the last refuge of patriotic Indians. Retribution came hard, if not swift; Louis Malle and the BBC paid for their tactlessness.

\* \* \*

These events occurred in the geographically contiguous landmass called India. The Dravidians said: 'Glory to Tamil', 'Tamil at all costs'—otherwise to hell with the nation. The Heartlanders said Hindi is more important than a dubious motherhood, the Dravidians must be forced to be free and learn Hindi. A section among them said that Mother India being what she was, begot illegitimate children; such progenies had to be legitimised through nationalisation. The warriors from the north shouted for a Homeland; their opponents reacted with calls for lebensraum. The Peshwas said 'Hamchhi Bombaii'.

Mother India, with her abundant indulgence for the prodigal children, said: 'You are my sons.. Peace be with you'. After all juvenile delinquency was a fact of life, and what was needed to tackle such problems was a requisite admixture of social welfare and corrective detention. After all these children were following the known rhythm of life and, above all were sources of potential strength in a future adversity.

How far-sighted the Mother was?

This happened in Bengal, in Calcutta; it could as well have happened in Vietnam, in Saigon. The people were no longer playing the same tune; no longer the classical music with permissible aberrations but vulgar pop music without following any rules of the same. It was insanity, pure and simple.

People were not talking of language, caste, religion or race; not being restrained by any reminder of their glorious heritage, believing in no myth of territorial sovereignty and in no God except the one, they believe, who could deliver them from their present miseries. Students no longer studied what they felt was useless, teachers did not teach for the very same reasons, clerks no longer felt any compulsion to circumvent their alienation, workers no longer calculated their social obligations in simple arithmetical terms, the peasants no longer toiled to reap others' fruits. There were far too many people thinking about the society than is good for its functioning. It was sheer confusion and chaos.

How can law and order prevail in a society where Bengalis would kill Bengali industrialists and jotedars for the sake of Bihari, Oriya, or UPian workers and Santhal peasants? How can, for that matter, law and order prevail when so many would stake a share in what has till now been so peacefully distributed among the few?

Yet, the situation was so much simpler and life so much richer in the

same Bengal only five years back. The people had enough to eat, enough time to produce award-winning films and plays, good footballers, gay night life and all that life could ask for. What a degeneration! And how soon!

The situation is irrevocably arrived at in New Delhi; it could have been in Washington in the case of Vietnam, but perhaps only ten years back. So what? All that is a decade out of date for the Capitol Hill is still operational for the North Block.

The decision was unanimous. The Allies, under a common threat to the system, patched up their internal contradictions although each of them had their own differences as to how to deal with the new menace and also how to insulate it from a possible domino effect. All the erstwhile delinquent children had grown up to be responsible citizens. Mother India's foresight and indulgence paid off rich dividends.

The classic all-purpose blueprint to deal with such situations prepared by the Holey (no printer's devil) Trinity of the Pentagon, Capitol Hill and the CIA was dusted off the cupboards. The preface said: the stick and the carrot; and so it was.

The operative part was simple, in fact so simple as to appear almost textbookish. Deny the right of self-determination to the people as long as the people elect inconvenient representatives, even under the present polling system; play up the question of law and order for those to whom known injustice is preferable to an

---

For FRONTIER contact

S. P. CHATTERJEE

Statesman Office

Steel Market

Durgapur-4

unknown system of justice; create local allies like Dieum, Kyfi and Thieus (like our so many Ghoses and Mukherjees) for those having a stake in power; give money to spend to those having a stake in spending others' money. Thus, having appeased all the gods terrorise the expendable mortals to silence and bribe the hungry into obedience. After all the city has to be saved for the country; the inhabitants are expendable. Escalate the confrontation, impose punitive fines and curfews, shoot them at sight.

It is the same old story all over again, including even the minute details like the inevitable McNamara visit, change of ambassadors as scapegoats from Taylor, Cooper etc etc and the kicking of the Commander upstairs. The decision of New Delhi, backed up by its Allies, must succeed like that of Washington. The Dharamviras, Dhavans and Sens are no worthier than the Taylors, Coopers and Westmorelands.

But New Delhi and its Allies have to still await the answer from Washington and its Allies to the problem of 'too little too late' and to the more important problem of how to deal with the historical phase of communism where it coincides with the lowest common denominator of the basic aspirations of the common man, in content, if not in form call it nationalism or any other convenient neutral terms.

Recalling such apparently unconnected events, which manifest a revealing pattern, one is reminded of Toynbee's categorisation of history as a tapestry of recurring patterns. But so also are its blunders. So why read the dustheap that is history?

---

FRONTIER is available from

DURGAPADA DAS

Basirhat R. N. Road

24-Parganas

DECEMBER 5, 1970

## Calcutta Diary

GYAN KAPUR

DEVELOPMENT of Calcutta of late has become a subject for endless speeches in which both charlatans and politicians delight. It is no wonder then that this should inspire the mock-Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mr B. B. Ghosh, who also happens to be the Chairman of CMDA, to express some pious wishes at a seminar organised by the Association of Engineers. In a rare burst of frankness, Mr B. B. Ghosh is reported to have said that very little had been done to implement the various schemes for solving the various problems such as housing, transport, sanitation and so on.

Mr Ghosh, however, expressed the hope that things could be improved if all concerned tried their best. It was in general an appeal to all and sundry to co-operate with the Government of Advisers and to the industrialists in particular to expand their activities. As for the unemployed, all Mr Ghosh could tell them was to take whatever work is offered, conveniently forgetting that nothing in fact is offered. Further Mr Ghosh was kind enough to offer another bit of advice, probably to counter this argument. He would like all manual work to be done by the people of this State. How, Mr Ghosh? Would you like our engineering graduates to take up the work of cleaning the garbage of CMDA? And the other educated young men, should they go about rampaging around like the Shiv Sena in Bombay, fighting to drive out the workers who happen to be from other States? So that the fragile unity of workers and employees should be smashed once for all? Indeed, reaction's age-old weapon is still the same: Divide and rule.

With Mr Ghosh of course we know where we stand. But it is saddening to find that Prof Satyen Bose, National Professor, could inaugurate such a function and echo similar sen-

timents. The pay-off it appears came at the end of Prof Bose's inaugural address when he bestowed the title of 'Karmavirttama' on Sir Biren Mookerjee amongst others for his 'outstanding professional achievements and life-long dedicated service to the cause of engineering and technology.'

The irony of this seems to have been lost on both the learned Professor and the self-styled saviour of West Bengal, Mr B. B. Ghosh. Not so long ago, workers of Sir Biren's companies were starved into submission after about seven months of strike. To come to the present, in the context of Mr Ghosh's homilies on employment and improvement of transport in Greater Calcutta, the veteran Bengali industrialists group of companies also include the Martin Burn Light Railways. The lines have already been closed down with 1,300 becoming unemployed. On top of that, according to the Ruling Congress's own MP, Mrs Purabi Mukherjee, they 'had' not been paid provident fund, gratuity and compensation for closure.' There is talk of taking out the rail tracks and making roads over them to run buses. We know what comes out of such plans. In any case the out of jobs remain out of jobs.

\* \*

The two new West Bengal Acts have apparently been a godsend to the fourteen parties forming the two combinations of six and eight. They could not have come at a more opportune time because things had started to flag somewhat. Sundry killings here and there notwithstanding, there was creeping over the general public a feeling of apathy shaken only by some local horror and resulting in a local bandh. For the

---

### NOTICE

Articles cannot be returned unless accompanied by return postage.

Business Manager  
Frontier

# Bibhuti Bhushan And The Indian Renaissance

HIREN GOHAIN

rest, it is business as usual. For with its many virtues, Calcutta has its own peculiar vices. The ease with which the city can learn to live with practically anything is one. Polemics apart, there has been markedly poor general public revulsion at the killings, even those where the hand of the police is suspected. Whatever the Police Commissioner might say a fear psychosis has started working and people no longer feel free to speak their minds at all times and all places. Nor do they feel at ease to go to places where they are not known or which they do not know well enough. When such a situation develops, anything can happen. The road more often leads to fascism than a proletarian revolution.

Let us be thankful, then, for the December 8 hartal. Even though it was preceded by much that made little sense. All's well that ends well. We shall have our extra holiday again after some months. Children and young men can play in the streets, at least most of them. The CPI will have proved it is no less revolutionary than anyone else. It can both fight the Congress-R and join forces with it. Have we not already seen the astonishing spectacle of the polished Comrade Bhupesh Gupta going around the streets of Calcutta to demonstrate against the two Acts, no doubt to return to Delhi to laud the progressive role of the Congress-R?

Whatever else December 8 might mean, it does not mean that the two combinations have again joined hands against the forces of reaction for good. Lest we should think so, the two combinations were very careful not to issue a joint statement. They seem to have learnt nothing and forgotten everything.

---

FRONTIER is available from  
CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY  
23/90 Connaught Place  
New Delhi-1

THE heritage of the so-called Indian Renaissance of the 19th century has now come in for a sharp reappraisal, not a moment too soon. The new turn in the history of our society and the practical imperatives it compels upon us dictate this reappraisal. But the results of that reappraisal seem to me unsatisfactory. The approach itself is so schematic as to falsify our knowledge of that period. A few all-purpose slogans have gained currency. They are no substitute for a grasp of concrete, living reality, gathered from adequate analysis and investigation.

My field is literary criticism where I search for that reality or an image of it. I am aware a good deal of it is ideology in the sense of false consciousness. But I feel sure that in so far as it is literature it will also challenge the conventions of mere ideology. Besides, the presence of that truth in literature is immediate, concrete, so that structures of perception and thought remain hidden, implicit. For example, it is not enough to say, vulgar Marxist fashion, that Shakespeare's history-plays reveal the emerging pattern of powerful monarchy out of the chaos of baronial strife. The unenviable condition of the 'lucky' kings is no decorative complication. The tense, sleepless and haunted figures of the kings, despising their office in their heart of hearts, yet unable and unwilling to relinquish it, betray the alienating effect on the human person of the Renaissance State. There you have an implicit humanist criticism of the dehumanizing power of the State as it tends towards centralization and separation from the body of society. The medieval State was embryonic in comparison. The sardonic humanist criticism, of course, does not go so far as to advocate 'abolition' of the

State, but it can scarcely be ignored.

Modern Indian culture is supposed, in certain recent accounts, to reflect the mentality of a parasitic middle-class, beholden to the imperialists for their very existence. This culture is snobbish towards the peasantry, and fails to achieve true solidarity with them. I find that account rather too simplistic. The premises of that theory cannot throw much light on a large variety of facts. I have chosen here for the sake of illustration Bibhuti Bhushan Bandyopadhyaya's fiction, or a part of it.

It seems to me that Bibhuti Bhushan reacted against the fashions of that dominant middle-class culture with its strong bias towards abstract idealism. His point of view may be described as a kind of populism, no accidental trend in our recent history. This sort of populism seems to be a major strand in the rag-bag of Gandhism: the 'socialist element' in Gandhi stems, not from a realistic analysis of contemporary Indian society, but from an idealized vision of the simple and well-knit life of the village community, purged of its disagreeable features. That sort of 'socialism', like the 'feudal' and the 'true' socialism denounced by Marx, appeals from the cash nexus of capitalist society to the real social relations of the past, often extensions and duplications of kinship ties. It is not explicitly anti-imperialist, scarcely revolutionary, is probably calculated, in the ultimate analysis, to suppress revolutionary stirrings among the peasant masses. But it has a distinct edge upon the dominant middle-class ideology traceable to Rammohun Roy. It is closer to the life and culture of the rural masses, which probably accounts for Gandhi's superb, magician-like rapport with them for decades.

The point of convergence between Gandhian ideas and the world of Bibhuti Bhushan are rather more numerous than we are prepared to accept calmly. Their attitude towards the village and the villager is not that of patronage but of identification. Gandhi's attitude towards the mandarins of the Indian Renaissance and towards their heir Tagore was respectful, but not a little quizzical. Bibhuti Bhushan, as I shall state more amply in a little while, reacted in a similar way to the dominant way of thinking of the mandarins, especially to their variety of idealism. Both of them are attracted to the simple, contented life, the life in intimate touch with the earth. The dominant ideal of conduct for both is pacifist, and both shrink from debate and conflict. Society is pictured in terms of mutual aid and 'love'. The intellect is considered an unhelpful ally. The poverty, ignorance, superstition and intolerance of the village are treated with humorous indulgence if not sentimentalized. To Gandhi modern medicine is not simply expensive, it is as bad as quackery.

Like all sincere pseudo-socialist beliefs populism of this type was also not without its contradictions. Gandhi struck many of his contemporaries as a kind of chameleon. Bibhuti Bhushan pays dutiful homage to the ideals and the leading representatives of the so-called Indian Renaissance, and tries desperately to 'keep abreast of' the latest trends in reading and thinking in mofussil towns and out of the way places. *Smritir Rekha*, a series of jottings from the period 1924-1928, the period during which *Pather Panchali* was written, habitually yokes together Sankaracharya and Galileo—they are both *savants*, seekers after enlightenment, adventurers of the spirit, and the peculiar idealist syncretism of the Indian Renaissance is dutifully followed by Bibhuti Bhushan. These notes, as well as the haunting *Aranyak* (any influence of Hamsun's *Pan?*), reveal an intense romantic wander-lust, a fascinated interest in the primitive, and a vision of life as an infinite ad-

venture—feelings and themes hardly in tune with the poetry of the intensely local rural life. The entry dated January 22, 1928 reads:

"If one feels the need from one point of view of a simple homely life, from another point of view one may not ignore the need in this life of light, art, beauty, music..." I suspect here a dawning consciousness that life reduced to utter simplicity may turn out to be barbarous. An even more startling confession, breaking off a moving nostalgic passage recalling childhood life in the village, expresses disgust at his own weakness for that life:

"The life without adventure, in a dull even tenor—what kind of life is that? The Lord save me from that pampered, effeminate, monotonous life!" (August 9, 1927)

On a few other occasions he contrasts the pettiness of that life with the energy and élan of the life of European explorers. The enthusiasm, a little Boy-scoutish, was inspired by the great explorers and pioneers of the age of imperialism, driven across continents by a strange urge we cannot directly connect with the drive for sources of cheap raw material and profitable markets.

#### Romance of the Railways

The populist vision of the past carries idealised memories simply because that past retreats and abandons the visionary on the threshold of capitalism. Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* was a violent reaction against 'science', 'machinery', and 'railways' and 'the acquisitive urge', attributed to the wicked Westerners. *Smritir Rekha* records almost on every page Bibhuti Bhushan's intense preoccupation with the mystery of time and change. What did people do and think a thousand years ago? What will they do a thousand years ago? What will they do and think and feel five hundred years ago? What will they do with wonder, excitement, weariness, anxiety and serene acceptance. It is to Satyajit Ray's credit that the rhythm of rural joys and sorrows in his *Pather Panchali* recede for a glorious moment when the children, away

from home, discover the thrill of the telegraph and the romance of the train. The next film *Aparajita* is dominated by the image of the train—hurding across iron bridges, streaking away in the distance, snaking into the village. Ray has simply brought out the latent contradiction in the village life Bibhuti Bhushan kept subdued in the atmosphere of nostalgia. One is reminded here of Marx's dramatic observations on the impact of the railway on traditional Indian life.

But the dominant theme of *Smritir Rekha*, indeed of *Pather Panchali*, is the sad beauty of a life that is gone. (This is a rather stupid generalisation, but it cannot be helped.)

There is a powerful dose of sheer nostalgia here, but the author's pity does not degenerate into self-pity. He is concerned here with other lives, obscure, unaided in their grim struggles, and now vanished. He evokes and makes real not only their sufferings and their transient and transcendent joys, but their fundamental outlook, their unconscious philosophy. The dreamy haze playing around the vivid details also suggests a fatalistic serenity, a sense of the insignificance of the individual, a social attitude that healed quarrels and rifts like a gentle river, and an ambience that drowned the jealousies and the spiteful intrigues in a sense of larger life, subduing 'evil' (with its capacity for creation according to Hegel and the hard-headed Engels) to a broad tolerance bordering on apathy. (Bibhuti Bhushan caricatures himself in *Adarsha Hindu Hotel*, where quietism is cloying, poisonous.)

In *Smritir Rekha* some of the positive elements of that populism appear in crystalline observations and musings. In these entries Vedantic idealism and the longing for the infinite are transformed into a love of human life in all its historic variety. The many recollections of his own childhood, his parents, relatives, acquaintances and neighbours are the links between his mature self and the forgotten lives of those millions who had lived and died in the villages of Ben-

gal. In an entry dated December 23, 1925, he alludes to the dumb suffering through so many ages of millions of lives, obscure and unregarded. In another entry dated February 4, 1926, he remarks that the truest joy comes from sharing the suffering of the lost and the poor, the defeated and the humiliated. Two days later he speaks again of the poverty, disappointment and humiliation of millions of unknown lives, those "whose tears sparkle in the moonlight, whose sights make heavy the sultry air of summer". The sympathy is genuine and profound. But the vision of human life that it embraces is notably lacking in efforts to transform life. No wonder the heroic ardours and exertions of Rabindranath's Gora are entirely foreign to those who suffer eloquently in Bibhuti Bhushan's fiction, in a story for example like *Mouriphul*, poignant and passive evocation of man's cruelty to man.

Like another outstanding populist, Dostoevsky, (to be sure from a different climate and country), Bibhuti Bhushan also exalts the innocence and humility of such lives. Like Dostoevsky he expresses keen distrust of the arrogance of the intellect, and its abstractions. Dostoevsky made vivid, memorable figures of those ruled by their egotism and pride of the intellect. Bibhuti Bhushan's evocations are definitely in the minor mode, but, the distrust of the intellect is none the less keen. In the story called *Nastik* the philosopher deeply versed in ancient lore searches in vain for the key to the mystery of being in the brilliant illusions of the intellect. The reader has a feeling that wisdom lay in the poignantly tender recollection of his childhood sweetheart whom he had wronged and bullied, now recalled in anguished yearning as he lies on his death-bed.

I am unable to recall the title of another story where there is a pointed contrast between the personality of the hero's aunt, handsome, fair, "cultured," and aloof, as though afraid of the touch of other human beings, and a *shaman* from a despised tribe,

unlettered, but brimming with spontaneous warmth and vitality. The touch of his hand seems to the hero's senses like a taste of 'heavenly sweetness' and he is not to forget it all his life. The intellectual mysticism of the educated had apparently failed to open the hidden channels of love and fellow-feeling.

My last example will be that wonderful story, *Drabamayeer Kashibas*. Throughout the author adopts the point of view of the illiterate village woman and shows her superior to the town-bred woman, aristocratic, educated, prisoner of intellectual doctrine and devotion. The latter seeks salvation through Upanishadic words, complicated spiritual exercises and studied mortification of desire. This non-attachment, so dear to generations of educated people in Bengal and the rest of India, is monstrous absurdity in the eyes of the village woman, who watches her fellow-pilgrim in growing disbelief, indignation and contempt. Though the educated woman seeking Vedantic salvation is sophisticated in some respects, in other respects her reactions are rigid and simple, in other respects her reactions are rigid and simple. She lacks the rich sensuous life of the village-woman. The latter's incapacity for abstraction goes with a deep appreciation of the concrete. Her lemon bush, the cow in her shed, her kinsmen and neighbours, the fig tree in her garden continue to haunt her, and her spiritual ignorance turns in the author's hands into a kind of grace.

Humour plays around such figures like a caressing light. The village elders sit together in the evening in the *chandi-mandap*, and to the contented mutterings of the *hookah* join their lazy gossip: has anyone seen a mountain? What does a mountain look like? . . . But their very immersion in their petty existence seems like an assurance against the follies of the new Vedantic learning.

*Addendum*: The attitude of wondering incomprehension towards the revolt led by Titu Mia in *Ishamoti*,

that massive exercise in nostalgia, clearly defines the limits of populism. Populism, after all, is a *middle-class* fad. (H.G.)

## Book Review

### TRIBAL, FOLK AND CLASSICAL

COMPARATIVE research into the correlations between tribal, folk and sophisticated music gives rise to a new field of study. Music created, practised and enjoyed by the primitive and semi-primitive non-Aryan ethnic groups of India in their respective languages forms the subject-matter of ethno-musicology which has a direct bearing on regional folk music and an indirect bearing on classical Indian music.

Although nothing has been explicitly stated in the ancient scriptures of Indian classical music, yet, on the strength of semantological evidence, it can be safely inferred that it drew extensively upon the fund of folk music at the time of Matanga's *Brihaddeshi* in the 7th century A.D. when the old classical *Jati* system of music of *Bharata's Natyashastra* had already declined. The names of ragas *Gurjari* (of Gujarat), *Bangali* (of Bengal), *Bihari* (of Bihar), *Saindhavi* (of Sind), *And'ri* (of Andhra), *Kalingada* (of Kalinga), *Marhatta* (of Maharashtra) etc. may be cited in support of our argument. The relationship between folk and classical music can hardly be exaggerated. Of course it is to be remembered that such tunes as were composed of not less than five notes were considered fit to be admitted into the raga pantheon.

What happened to the tribal tunes and tone-motifs? As is well known, primitive musical forms all the world over resemble one another in that they are generally composed of one to four tones. The Indian archipelago has an enormous reservoir of primitive music—from the paleolithic Andamanese to the modern, acculturated Santhals and Oraos. Primitive music is highly ritualistic and communal, being almost akin to

magic and incantation. When the same group mixes with a more advanced population they take to agriculture and their culture-pattern also goes through a comparatively high stage of development. Think of the agriculturised Gonds, Bhils and Santhals. This process of change in the mode of food-production brings a process of acculturation by which their shorter musical scales are lengthened like those of their agriculturist neighbours. This is how such primitive tunes as *Gondakriya*, *Gondmallar*, *Bhairava*, *Kedar*, *Todi*, *Nayaki Kanada* etc. found their entry into the classical fold. Folk music is the workshop where tribal tunes are expanded and then exported to the classical land. This process has been going on ever since the 7th century A.D.

Ethno-musicology and semantology can illuminate the obscure chambers of Indian classical music. For instance, raga *Vrindabani Saranga* does not take the 'E' flat. There is wide controversy regarding the correct tone-structure of *Gunkali* (*Gondakriya* of old days). Even in the 15th century *Bhairava* was a pentatonic scale. Analysis and study of these tribal songs can shed immense light on the obscure evolution of these and such other ragas.

From primitive or tribal music to folk music and from there to classical ragas is a long-drawn process in course of which the tone-structures and their songs lose much of their original flavour and on the other hand acquire many new tonal qualities by which they become full-fledged ragas. It is almost impossible to imagine how raga *Bhairavi* or *Sudh Todi* looked like as sung by their original singers in the background of their communal festivity. It is here that ethno-musicology can come to our rescue. But unfortunately very little has so far been done in this field of musical enquiry.

Mr Sudhibhushan Bhattacharya's first attempt\* in this field has been

\*Ethno-musicology and India  
Indian Publications. Price Rs 12.50

as honest as it is praiseworthy, though not exhaustive and complete. The selection of songs lacks primitive specimens though one Andamanese song has been translated without a corresponding notation. The notations of the 'basic scale' patterns given in the book ought to have been more elaborate and accurate just like a notated song in order to determine their tendency of progression. For future guidance the field team would be better advised to employ string instruments and professional notationists so as to obtain better accuracy of the *gamakas* of the songs neglected in this monograph. Very few people will agree with the author when he places Tagore-music midway between folk and sophisticated music—hasn't Tagore music all the traits of sophistication? He is also mistaken in referring to Pandit Ratanjankar as a late personality because he is still very much alive.

H. CHAKRABORTY

### Clippings

#### Voice From E. Pakistan

*(Newspapers and journals published in Pakistan are hard to come by, not to speak of party documents. This is why an abridged version of the statement in which Toaha announced his resignation from the Bhasani NAP some time ago is given below. Toaha now leads one the 'extremist' parties in East Pakistan.)*

AT present there are some questions and illusions in different political circles, especially among the sympathisers of the Pakistan National Awami Party regarding the present role of that party.

The National Awami Party entered the arena of Pakistani politics at a very critical moment, when Mr S. Suhrawardy, the Awami League leader, became the Prime Minister and in his eagerness to serve American imperialism completely forgot his duty to the nation, his vows of liberating the teeming millions from the shackles of capitalism and feuda-

lism. This betrayal led Bhasani to form the NAP and from the very day the party was born I was with him. The ideals which the NAP should follow were:

(a) It would not use provincialism and religious feelings) as political levers.

(b) Considering the peculiar geographical, linguistic and cultural structure of the Pakistan State, it would work and fight for equal development of the different regions of the country.

(c) It would force the Government to withdraw from all the military pacts of American imperialists. It would liberate the people from the exploitation of the capitalists and feudal lords and establish people's rule. Although the NAP's programme against feudal exploitation, the exploitation which we consider to be the greatest impediment to our liberation and progress, had many weaknesses, it announced its determination to establish socialism on the very grave of exploitation.

Since then, during the past fifteen years the party has passed through many events; for instance, it split into two groups and it participated in the anti-Ayub movement of 1968-69. The movement which started under the leadership of the NAP and at the initiative of its three organisations, i.e., the Sramik Federation, the Krishak Samity and the Students' Union, against the tyranny of Ayub, took within a short time the shape of a great mass upsurge.

Although the role of the NAP in that mass upsurge was not always up to the expectations of the people, yet it deserves credit for its acceptance of some important decisions. It boycotted the election of Basic Democrats and also the Round Table Conference. This enhanced the prestige of the NAP and attracted the attention of the people in greater number towards it.

But that was not enough. That was not the end. As a result of the great upsurge Ayub was ousted from his place of vantage but nothing has been done to incapacitate the imperia-

lists, the feudal lords and the capitalists from corrupting and coercing the people. Only an individual and his government have been removed. This has been done to throw dust into the eyes of the people and to run secretly that very old administration and exploitation. Ayub's tyrannical rule has been replaced by the martial law administration. Fortunately the lesson of the last upsurge is always before our people and today, there is only one thing which they want, that is, a complete change of the economic and social system. No other alternative, however sweet it may appear to others, can satisfy them. Now, in order to save themselves from this crisis, the ruling class has dangled the bait of parliamentary democracy before the people and has also repealed the "One Unit" system.

It is true that one of the major demands of the NAP was the repeal of "One Unit", but at the same time it should also be admitted that the repeal has not been followed by the establishment or acceptance of the democratic rights of the peasants, workers and other hardworking elements of society. So far as the NAP is concerned, it has not admitted the truth that the struggle has ended. On the contrary it should continue till the complete destruction of the evil forces. But it is a matter of great regret that, since the last movement, a section of the NAP has been indulging in anti-NAP activities and fostering ideologies and programmes completely inconsistent with those of the party. For instance :

The aim of the NAP was socialism, a society without exploitation. But now Maulana Bhasani has started preaching Islamic socialism and this he has done without the prior consent of the organization. Moreover, his explanation of the "Islamic cultural revolution" has created much dissatisfaction and difference among the party's workers. Maulana Bhasani has decided to use religion as a lever in politics. It signifies his betrayal of the promises he made to the people. These ideas of "Islamic socialism"

have sprung from the brain of Maulana Bhasani. They are entirely his own creation. He never sought our consent when he took these decisions. But, today, he asks us to share these bogus things with him.

Maulana Bhasani says that his "Islamic socialism" and "Islamic cultural revolution" will put an end to corruption, bribery and other vices. But we ask him one thing: It you do not change the present social, economic and administrative system, how can you put an end to the vices you dislike? The existing system is the breeding ground of all vices and disorder. Until and unless you destroy this system, you cannot check those vices. However, Maulana Sahib is not doing that. On the contrary, he is indirectly strengthening the reactionary forces in society. Today, when the poor peasants are still groaning under the increasing burden of oppression and the feudal lords and moneylenders have still kept the fires of hell burning in the rural Bengal, Maulana Bhasani, instead of destroying this hell, has been trying to divert the attention of the people in a completely opposite direction. It is a foregone conclusion that the path he has shown is not the path of liberation.

The NAP was to stand for communal harmony. But recently, the speeches of Maulana Sahib have the seeds of communal hatred. They have destroyed the prestige of the party and weakened the movement.

Since the beginning of the martial law administration, some important problems appeared before us, i.e. the crisis in the lives of the people, the proposal of bourgeois parliamentary elections, the problem of complete autonomy for East Pakistan and the problems of different linguistic nationalities of West Pakistan etc. In order to solve these problems the NAP should have given a clear-cut programme, but it has not done so. As a result today the party is in a cumbrous position.

It should also be noted that Maulana Bhasani does not give any importance to the constitution of the Party. Rather, he wants to make us

understand that he himself is the party, the constitution and the Programme. The party runs, not according to the constitution, but according to his whims.

Finally, the circumstances in which the NAP was born, have changed altogether. The people themselves, for whom we are fighting, do not any longer believe in any stopgap arrangement. They demand a complete change in the economic system and the foundation of a social set-up without exploitation. They demand a strong leadership which would not compromise but fight incessantly against the class enemies.

From my long experience I have come to this conclusion that the NAP is not fit for this leadership. Under these circumstances I have decided to resign from the party.

#### **Dangerous Delay**

...although relief planes were arriving in Dacca on the average of one every two hours (a few days after the disaster), precious little of the food, water, clothing and medical care was reaching the isolated survivors who needed it so desperately... blankets and medical supplies were being stored in Dacca warehouses where they could easily find their way to the black market. Compassionately, India authorised the Pakistanis to fly across the 1,000 miles of Indian territory that separates West Pakistan from the eastern portion of the country, but new aircraft—including six U.S. helicopters—were agonizingly slow to arrive. The Pakistani Air Force has twelve C-130 Hercules cargo planes, perfect for air drops but not until a week after the disaster did one show up to start parachuting rice to the survivors.

As many people in East Pakistan saw it, the government's sluggish response to their plight was only the latest chapter in a long history of injustice, for they have long harbored the not totally unjustified suspicion that the power structure in West Pakistan—the larger, richer and more influential part of the nation—placed its own interests before theirs. The government was condemned for fail-

ing to take more effective flood-control measures in the first place and for waiting five days before officially proclaiming a state of "major calamity".

It seemed likely, however, that not even a massive and efficient relief operation could have coped fully with the aftermath of the catastrophe. East Pakistan's rice crop was decimated by the floods, and all reserves in the area were washed away. Red Cross officials in Dacca believe that 100,000 more people may easily starve to death before aid can reach them. More ominous yet, the water supply in many places has turned bloody and brackish, and some health officers, think it is already too late to halt an epidemic of typhoid or cholera. And in a final awful irony, many of the survivors don't even have the materials for makeshift shelters to protect themselves from the blazing sun—another hazard of life on the northern rim of the Bay of Bengal. (*Newsweek*, November 30)

#### It Can Be Done

Appalling though the losses and damage caused by the cyclone in East Pakistan are, they do not constitute the "worst natural disaster of the century" as the media have too readily assumed. The event which can claim this unhappy title was the flooding of the River Yangtse in 1931. Historically China has always suffered disaster on a mammoth scale but this one outstripped them all in the death and devastation left in its wake. Some 3,700,000 people lost their lives (mostly through the famine which followed the flooding), and a further 80,000,000 were forced from their homes. An area of 123,000 square miles was devastated (far greater than the area of the British Isles) and the cities of Wuhan and Nanking were inundated for four months.

The Chinese Government of the time must bear much of the responsibility for the extent of the disaster: it was "passive" before and during the floods and relied heavily on the International Relief Commission's

philanthropic measures afterwards.

In 1954 the Yangtse reached an even higher level than in 1931 (97ft. 6½in. at Wuhan instead of 92ft. 9in. in 1931) but the damage was incomparably less thanks to the extensive anti-flood measures undertaken by the Communist Chinese. No figure for the number of deaths is available, but this time only 40,000 square miles was inundated and half that was saved by prompt drainage in time to plant autumn crops. Life in Nanking and Wuhan continued without disruption.

Perhaps the Pakistani Government should take a leaf out of Red China's book. (*The Times*)

### Letters

#### Computer On Campus

A serious and unhealthy situation has emerged from the dispute over the installation of an IBM 1130 computer at the Institute of Radiophysics and Electronics. The authorities are stated to have given an assurance that the computer is meant solely for scientific computation. Past experience shows that these assurances are extremely liable to violation.

When the computer CDC 3600 was installed at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay, Mr Nehru declared in Parliament that it would be employed for scientific computation alone. But a very large amount of computer time is being utilised by such companies as Burmah Shell and others. The experience of some of us with the computer IBM-1620 at CMERI, Durgapur, shows that business concerns can utilise the computer time by payment of money while research students are not allowed to work on the computer outside the nominal time allotted to them yearly even if their institutions are ready to pay off the bill.

Similar is the situation prevailing at most other places. From an analysis of all these two conclusions emerge: (1) the promise of the authorities that a computer will not be available to business firms or for

office work is highly liable to violation, (2) the cause of research is often not considered foremost even in educational institutions.

Hence the suspicion of the employees of Calcutta University of a customary written assurance. No doubt, a computer here will serve many users in their research problems. On the basis of past experience, however, we suggest that the installation of any computer be deferred till the formulation of an agreement to the satisfaction of the employees. We urge that both the research workers and the employees should strive for mutual co-operation and understanding in this respect.

Signed by 34 research workers of Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, Calcutta.

#### Manipur

Being a businessman having dealings in Manipur my visits there are not infrequent. My last visit was five-six months ago.

In contrast to my many previous visits I observed a growing sense of insecurity and fear in the minds of my patrons. This made me apprehensive of my business prospects there. Naturally I became inquisitive. My vague apprehension that grew into a strong impression was that the outsiders' who mostly own shops were increasingly being made targets of harassment, threats and even violence, by the local youngsters, with the tacit backing of the political parties. Then there was a flare-up in which the shops of the 'outsiders' were looted and burnt, private houses entered and people beaten up. And all this from an the alleged teasing by an 'outsider' of a local girl!

The fact that the whole of Manipur on account of such a trifling incident should be in danger of being thrown into chaos seems to speak volumes about the background to all this holocaust. The simmering hatred against the 'outsiders', which no one took heed of, turned into ill-will and burst forth.

It is now that I realise the truth contained in *Frontier* (August 29) under the caption 'Unrest in Manipur' which I had overlooked at the time of my first reading. *Frontier* deserves unqualified congratulations for such an objective, cool and penetrating analysis of the present malady of that far-off State about whose real conditions New Delhi seems to be in the dark.

T. RAMCHANDRAM, Bombay

### 'War Of Annihilation'

This refers to Mr Madan Mohan's letter of September 19, 1970. In my letter of August 22, I only refuted Mr Morris Roy's interpretation of the "War of Annihilation" and his advocacy of the "line of annihilating the class enemies i.e. the jotedars." I never suggested anything about "politicalising the people, arming them in secret, training them so as to engage the army or the police units", nor did I, in my letter, "envisage a process of arming the people peacefully." All these could therefore be ascribed to his own sense of vision, which is indeed strange.

Apart from his charge that I am not taking into consideration the particular context in which the 'tactic' of war of annihilation was adopted by Chairman Mao, he errs on two major points. According to him, because Chairman Mao got a base with red power, he never insisted on killing the landlords or class enemies individually. This literally means that had it not been for this, Chairman Mao too would have insisted on the same procedure. This is downright slander. At no time either before the establishment of base areas or after did Chairman Mao advocate or insist on killing landlords or class enemies individually. In fact he always stood for the principle "the less you kill, the better", even though there were many high-ups in the Chinese party in its early days who advocated such a line of action as can be seen in classics like *The Struggle in the Chingking Mountains*.

Another contention of Mr Madan Mohan is this: because one has no base area, one should not combat the enemy's armed forces outright. So, one is forced to go ahead with the job of annihilating the class enemies. Then, only then, things begin to happen. "The suppressive forces become active against the people." As if, the suppressive forces were all this time remaining inactive against the people! I advise Mr Madan Mohan to take a trip to our vast countryside to see for himself how the suppressive forces are functioning there, even in the absence of his so-called annihilation work. Anyway for the sake of argument, let us assume that the suppressive forces are in the beginning very passive and once you start annihilating class enemies, they become active. Then, and then only, according to Mr Madan Mohan, one is to retaliate and once you do this against a force which by this time is fully alert, you are supposed to create base pockets for your guerilla units. This indeed is naive logic. At first one should not attack the armed forces of the enemy 'outright', because that will mean underrating him. Besides one lacks the conditions necessary for self-preservation—defence—because of the absence of base areas. So, you kill jotedars and invite enemy repression on the people and enemy attention to your presence in the area. Then, you are supposed to "retaliate" and you have base pockets.

May I ask, retaliate against what? Is it against the armed forces of the enemy or some force which is unarmed? If it is the armed forces, how can you, Mr Madan Mohan, now advise such a course in the absence of a base area, which you said earlier was so necessary for self-preservation? And again what a simple and a rosy picture you make out of this process of retaliation. You say, it directly results in base pockets for the guerilla units and these again, when unified, result in the Red Army and Base area. In fact you are only fighting shy of preparing to face the enemy's armed forces by insisting

on the annihilation of class enemies in the name of a beginning for guerilla activities. There is a world of difference between killing landlords and the anti-feudal struggle of the peasants. There is also a difference between the anti-feudal struggle and the struggle for political power. But between these two there is a bridge (and this is very vital for us) as between all other forms of struggle and the political struggle can only be resolved the military way—by armed force. There is no sense in fighting shy of this Marxist truth. Right from 1857 was it not this important lesson that our political leaders had been deliberately side-tracking? Why continue this unhappy tradition under new pretexts even today, when we all talk in terms of armed struggle?

Anyway you admit one thing. Without winning victories over the enemy's armed forces, at least in limited areas, even if it is in the name of retaliation, there cannot be base pockets or base areas of any sort. The question of where and how to begin this job depends on many factors, both objective and subjective. It is wrong to advocate a hard and fast line for all places in our vast country. Why not leave it to the initiative of those amongst our people who dare to act, instead of thrusting into their throats a 'line' which has failed all over and caused us all so much loss?

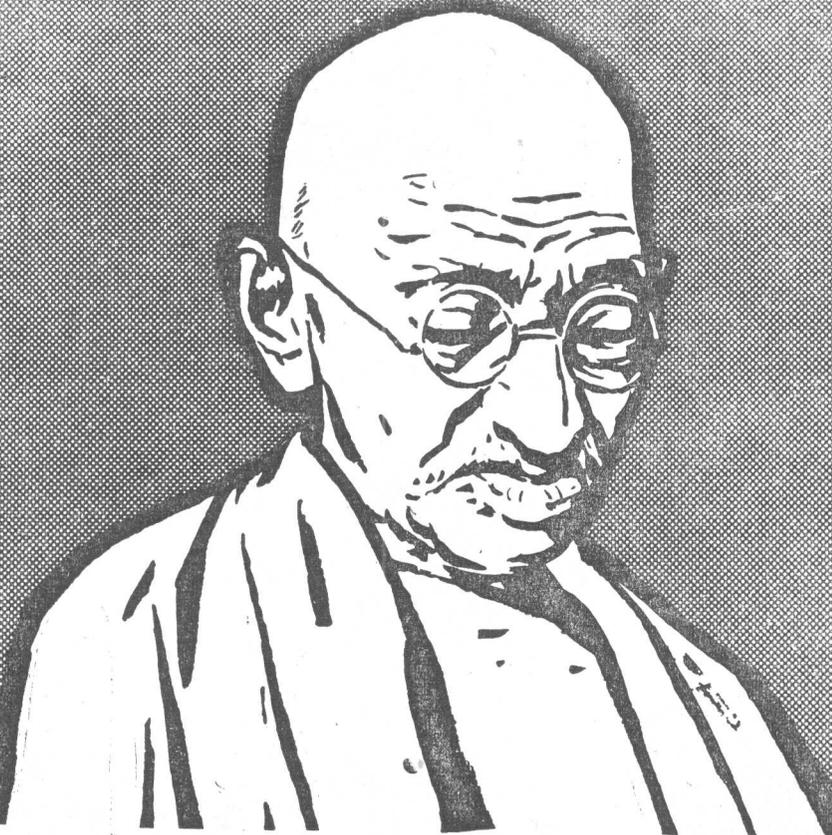
The question of where to begin and how to begin is a question in which the broad masses of our people, who are today straining at the leash, are also deeply interested. And it is good to remember that "the masses are the real heroes, while we ourselves are often childish and ignorant". It is a fact that we have no experience of revolution; only after we take a number of tumbles and acquire experience that we will ultimately be able to win final victory. In the meantime let us all, as quickly as possible, "get rid of the baggage" that has accumulated in our brains over the years and "start up the machinery" in right earnest.

KUNHIKKAL NARAYANAN  
Calicut, Kerala

**“HATRED INJURES  
THE HATER**

***NEVER THE HATED”***

*Mahatma Gandhi*



# ASSAM BENGAL RIVER SERVICE PVT. LTD.

POWER BOAT BUILDERS & ENGINEERS

26A, EZRA MANSIONS

10 GOVT. PLACE EAST,

CALCUTTA-1