

# frontier

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## IN BATTLE ARRAY

THE political parties in West Bengal are an ungrateful lot. They seem to have already forgotten the Government of India's role in the liberation of Bangladesh—a feat unparalleled in history, for never before had a country liberated another out of such unalloyed altruism. Only sophists and Sinophils will cynically suggest that India's holy war for democracy and human rights bears a close resemblance to other wars of which the world has seen many. Their barks have, however, convinced none within the country and very few outside. And even those few should come round after the Soviet recognition of Bangladesh; for this arch-enemy of imperialism would surely have behaved differently if the Government of Bangladesh were a puppet of New Delhi. Nor do the left parties of West Bengal seem to care much for the humiliating defeat inflicted on Pakistan on the western front. Ever since partition every patriot of India had been itching for a fight with Pakistan to deal a secular blow to religious bigotry. After nearly a quarter century, this dream has come true. But the leader who has brought this about and his party have been seemingly abandoned by the left in this State.

The solitary exception is the CPI which is pursuing with exemplary zeal its mission of separating the progressive grain in the Congress from the reactionary chaff. The factional feuds in the Congress(R) in all States, the relentless tussle among the contending groups to secure nominations for their own henchmen, the flourishing trade in distribution of patronage, the slanging match, the demonstrations and counter-demonstrations, all these are regarded by the party as corroboration of its thesis that the progressive Congressmen are trying to assert themselves. The CPI does not mind if, in the process, the party is becoming an appendage of the Congress(R)—an expendable appendage, according to most Congressmen. It is prepared to be a martyr to the cause, for collaboration with the Congress(R) has become its revolutionary duty after the treaty of friendship between the Governments of India and the Soviet Union. The party cannot help if other left parties in the State are unable to appreciate the virtues of this policy of cooperative transformation of society. Even the humiliating response its overtures had been meeting from the State Congress(R) and the assault of party leaders and workers by the students and youths of the ruling party have not

deterred the CPI. It is prepared to put up with all these and some more as long as the Congress(R) is ready to allow the party to parade itself in Mrs Gandhi's plumes.

All other left parties have arrayed themselves against the Congress(R), most of them in alliance with the CPM. The CPM has been able not only to break through its isolation, but also to isolate the Congress(R) and its unequal partner, the CPI. The CPM will, of course, try to appropriate to itself the credit for this family reunion of the left, but the real reason may be the common suffering of the left parties during the Presidential regime at the hands of the student and youth wings of the Congress(R). These so-called militant new entrants to the party

have taken to a programme of rehabilitating the Congress(R) through violence. The left parties have united because they realise that their survival will be difficult if the Congress(R) is returned to power. The peculiar knack that the left parties in West Bengal have of uniting on election-eve to secure more seats than what their strength warrants has stood them in good stead; they have sunk their differences in the common suffering and danger. If, however, they are able to defeat the Congress(R) their need to remain united will disappear. Their defensive alliance may then fall in pieces as it did so often in the recent past. The State's experience since the fourth general elections does not permit of any hope for a durable leftist alliance, whatever be the claims of its constituents.

## Pleasure In Masochism

The apparent American failure in gaining political leverage in favour of Pakistan and against Bangladesh has led many to believe that American influence in India has dwindled and that India can forgo American aid. We therefore need to know how much we are in debt to America already. *India 1969*, the government publication, gives the following figures:

According to the 1969-70 budget, the total debt raised in the USA was Rs 3510.66 crores. The total debt raised outside India was in that year Rs 6569.50 crores. The debt raised in Russia incidentally was Rs 372.34 crores. Read against this the gross national product of the country—about Rs 30,000 crores.

In matters of export and import the USA again is the principal patron of India. In 1967-68 the USA bought Rs 207 crores worth of goods and supplied Rs 771 crores of goods. The Russian figures are Rs 121 crores and Rs 95 crores respectively. And the total export and import of the country were Rs 1198 crores and Rs 1974 crores.

All these figures of course do not include the military aid given by the USA. The country will never know how much military hardware the USA has given India—she shouldn't know it because of her own security!

The volume of aid and commerce that the USA has sent to India should be sufficient to show that the Indian economic structure is American-oriented. If the USA demands something in lieu, India has got to give it. And when we say we do not want American aid, we are but having a bit of masochistic pain, knowing that the pleasure is coming.

And it has come, in the form of Mr Robert McNamara. The World Bank President, the proxy of America, has pointed out that the Bank had sanctioned more assistance in the last six months than in the earlier years. He has assured all that the Bank aid to India would not only continue but was also likely to increase. The IDA which extended credits to India till 1969 of Rs 760 crores will this year alone extend about Rs 200 crores in credit.

Mr William Rogers, the U.S. Secretary of State, and Mr L. K. Jha, India's Ambassador to the USA, are sending in the same echo from the mainland. Indo-American relations are not as bad as they are made out to be, said Mr Rogers. The U.S. is looking upon India with a new vision, said Mr Jha. The pain part being over, the pleasure part is in.

This being the general picture, the Youth League of the CPI was evidently fighting against a windmill when it broke the furniture and window panes of the Bank of America in Calcutta last week. It agitated against the first National City Bank too. The CPI daily hailed the movement as an escalated, new and higher phase of struggle against American imperialism. A new and higher phase of struggle surely it was, in the sense that the demonstrations occurred before Bank premises and not in front of the USIS—escalation from the cultural superstructure to the economic base indeed! Going all out to help the "national bourgeoisie" that holds the state power and sells it out to the imperialists and then trying to clip off a leaf of the gigantic tree it helps to nourish—that is their dialectical approach to American aid. Read Freud instead of Marx in the situation and the mystery ought to be solved.

## Ghana

The gun has always been the final arbiter in any struggle for state power in post-colonial Africa. Ghana went this Africian way after a brief spell of rule by an elected parliament when Dr Busia was deposed in mid-January by some lesser known army leaders. Busia had sensed his doom. Months ago he warned the people against the danger of an armed takeover. Despite this foreboding, however, he was surprised by the coup news in London where he was holidaying and, perhaps still more, when his antagonist repeated the

same complaint he had made against Kwame Nkrumah after his ouster. Col. Acheampong, the coup leader, charged that the Busia regime had failed to solve Ghana's basic problems and taken the country further down the descent road.

When Busia waded to power he had nothing but pledges to offer to his famished people. But unfortunately as the facts have shown, his deeds have lagged behind his words. During the tenure of his rule the job-hunters multiplied; wages remained sticky but prices moved up. The trade gap has been yawning steadily and the country has been head over heels in foreign debt. But this has not stopped an opulent middle class from indulging in boozy festivities and frittering away precious foreign money in importing luxury goods. But Busia's greater failure lies elsewhere. Ghana, like many African countries, is one-crop country. It lives on the cocoa crop, whose price has been dropping remorselessly for the past few years. And despite all the pious wishes, Busia failed to insulate the country from these uncertainties. He neither could build up an offsetting mineral industry nor diversify the farm system. No wonder, therefore, that he could not prevent Ghana's economy from rocking when the cocoa prices flopped by more than 80 per cent in the world market last year.

Some of Busia's Western friends who were boasting about the slow return of democracy in Ghana will surely be sore to find the country reverting to rule by men of arms. But this sense of loss will undoubtedly be greater among the proposers of a "dialogue" with South Africa, who will find their ranks depleted. Though Busia did not rub shoulders with the racists as brazenly as Ivory Coast's ruler, he had been gradually drifting to a position of friendship with Pretoria. Perhaps he thought that by talking about a negotiated settlement with the racists he would win friends. But in reality he incurred the hostility of his friends both in and out

of his country; anti-apartheid still finds support even among the worst reactionaries in Africa. He sealed his political fate when he antagonised the army and bureaucracy, the real power elite in Africa today, by cutting down their amenities and freezing their wages. It would, how-

ever, be folly to assume that the ruling junta, a ragtag combination of civilians and military—can spruce up Ghana's fledgling economy and ease the ordinary Ghanaian's life. Like their predecessors, the junta's aim is not the good of the people, but power.

### *View from Delhi*

## The Other Retreat

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

AT this year's Republic Day celebrations here, the Beating Retreat band spectacle was the biggest war casualty. But then there have been other retreats around, on the policy front with the red carpet unrolled for Mr Robert McNamara who stayed incidentally at the Rashtapatibhavan. There has been a slide-back on aid. The Bangladesh Finance Minister, Mr Tajuddin Ahmed, appeared braver than our own spokesmen when he quibbled about World Bank aid. He would not reject aid from that quarter outright but was content to point out that the organisation is dominated by some powers. The Indian Government would not of course say such things even if the pro-Moscow press has been keeping up a shrill cackle against World Bank aid. The fact that both India and Bangladesh are getting massive foreign aid and what would be unacceptable as direct U.S. aid will be acceptable when routed via Mr McNamara. All this despite the realisation in New Delhi that foreign aid will not and cannot be self-liquidating given the present structure. Foreign aid has failed to end foreign aid and has not merely brought in extra investible resources but also a milieu of habits and behaviour, the most striking being the attitude towards consumption level. There is talk of realigning the economy so as to eliminate dependence and aid being limited to few crucial sectors

where they are absolutely available and essential.

This year's January 26 parade had two other spectacles, one on the freedom movement and the other on the Bangladesh struggle. The first promoted the spurious cult of non-violence and the second, unconsciously debunked it. For it was demonstrated on Vijay Chowk that the ballot box had to be backed by bullets in Bangladesh. But the spectacle itself, despite the fact that Sambhu Mitra had had a hand in it, on the whole amounted to challenging the sovereignty of Bangladesh. As the cynic in the gallery asked: How would the Indian Government react if the Calcutta jail killings were to be enacted in Peking as part of the national day celebrations? Or how would the Soviet or the Czechoslovak Government react if next year's Republic Day spectacle in New Delhi includes the second liberation of Czechoslovakia by Soviet troops in 1968? Mr Tajuddin Ahmed seemed to enjoy the Bangladesh pageant while in fact the situation called for a protest from his country. There is still some gratitude left in public life and discretion is the better part of protest in such situations.

A couple of furlongs away in the AICC headquarters, it is a big mela. An astrologer is making a minor fortune outside 5, Rajendra Prasad Road, making comforting forecasts to the ticket-hunting lot. A few typists

have set up shop to turn out complaints and petitions to the Prime Minister over injustice in the matter of ticket distribution. Last week witnessed a spectacle reminiscent of the feudal days. If Mrs Gandhi cannot go to Bhopal to preside over the ouster of Mr S. C. Shukla it is just as well that the entire M.P. Congress Legislature Party moves to New Delhi to enact the show in Mrs Gandhi's own backyard. If someone cannot go to the mountain, the mountain should go where it should.

Mrs Gandhi's hatchet men are shocked that the Birlas have managed to instal their own men as Chief Ministers where Mrs Gandhi tried her toppling operations. And there is the cry of rightists swamping the Congress. The CPI is no doubt getting a few crumbs and should be more than satisfied because the party is no longer of any strategic importance to the ruling Congress. It can be of some tactical use and the rewards are exactly on a quid pro quo basis. Time was when the Chief Ministers used to determine the choice of the Prime Minister. Mrs Gandhi pushed herself into office through such manipulation in 1966. It was Mr D. P. Mishra of Madhya Pradesh who led the other Chief Ministers into the ring. The ease with which one Chief Minister after another is being sent packing into the wilderness is a more exciting spectacle than the cheap circus stunts that were provided as part of the Republic Day pageant.

The intermediary élites were smashed during the 1971 elections and what emerged was a combination of the extremes, Brahmins, Harijans, Muslims and other minorities around the Congress. But judging from the keenness of the contest for the Lok Sabha seat in Darbhanga this has just about broken up. While the Congress sweep to power is beyond doubt, Mrs Gandhi's election managers seem to think Madhya Pradesh would be more unpredictable than West Bengal this time. The CPI-(M) Politbureau, one presumes, agrees with this assessment judging

from the subdued tone of its spokesmen.

The one-party dominance which seemed to be declining in 1967 is being restored to its old glory. Opposition necessarily has to be internalised with the familiar spectacle of factional squabbles. Nevertheless, it would be useful for the ruling party to keep the Jana Sangh and the CPI(M) alive so that the bogey of right reaction and left adventurism

can be raised at will. All the other parties can remain marginal pressure groups. At some stage, if the Jana Sangh also opts for the same role, it should be most welcome. The threat to Mrs Gandhi is not from the right any longer. The right is returning to her own fold. Only the marginal left in the form of the CPI(M) recalcitrants would remain as long the ruling party wants.

January 30, 1972

## On Parity

M. S. P.

ONE of the frequent protestations of the leaders of the Government of India, particularly when fulminating against critics of its policies vis-à-vis Islamabad, is that India cannot be treated 'at par' with Pakistan. This country, one is given to understand, has to be considered as being qualitatively different from Pakistan, a difference that is derived from qualities that have nothing to do with the mere physical facts about the size and population of the country. Thus, Pakistan is a 'theocratic military dictatorship' while we are a 'secular socialist democracy'. From this basic assumption follow a series of contrasts, each doing greater and greater honour to India, while highlighting the weakness and worse of Pakistan. But a little impartial investigation will show that the differences are indeed no more than quantitative; that Pakistan is indeed only an image of India, seen through the wrong end of the telescope, as it were.

Let us take the recent war, for example, and analyse the ways in which the governments and the peoples of the two countries have reacted to the events of December. On the face of it, it would seem that India emerges as a sober, mature power, dignified and magnanimous and even modest in its victory; Pakistan, on the other hand, emerges in a very bad light. Its propaganda was very vicious, its

outlook medieval, its falsehoods were so transparent that each lie, when exposed, had to be covered by a fresh lie. The public relations experts of the Government of India of course would want us to believe that the contrast provided by the images of India and Pakistan during and after the war—a contrast undoubtedly very flattering to India—was *per se* due to some inherent virtues in the character of the Indian people and the system of government adopted (or borne) by them. But if one would pause and reflect for a moment as to what the reaction of our people and our government would have been if we had been losing the war instead of winning it, one realizes that our reactions would not have been very much different from those of the people and the government of Pakistan. On an occasion not very long ago when we lost a war, the lies of our propaganda machinery were so ridiculous that after the Prime Minister announced over the radio the loss of Bomdila, the news broadcast that followed fifteen minutes after spoke of fierce fighting going on in defence of that same pass. The vicious Pakistani call for jihad against India had its counterpart in the call to Dharmayuddha that our President gave; and a hideous quarter-hour daily programme over the radio, called India and the Dragon (or something like that), far exceeded the Pa-

kistani calls for jihad in an attempt to stir up racial hatred towards the Chinese people.

In December, as Mrs Gandhi announced a unilateral cease-fire, the reaction in Pakistan was one of confusion and dismay, and we were very superior about our 'magnanimity' and full of tolerant contempt for the confused and demoralised Pakistani people. Again, one recalls that our people too were equally (if not even more) demoralised and confused in 1962, and the Chinese announcement of a unilateral cease-fire was viewed with the deepest suspicion, as something probably even more lethal than a continued thrust into the plains of Assam.

What I am trying to suggest is that there is only a quantitative difference between India and Pakistan, deriving from the physical immensity of India. Otherwise, there seems hardly anything to choose between the two. Religious fanaticism, linguistic chauvinism, xenophobia, you name it, we both have it. This country has a larger middle class base, but that again is because of the larger reservoir it can draw from. Similar, for that matter, are the reasons for the larger 'intellectual' elite, the more 'sophisticated' political and administrative infrastructure etc. that are a feature of this country. Even the military establishments are only copies of each other (natural, being derived from a common source), as the combatants and commanders discovered recently to their mutual satisfaction. And if this country's armed forces have not engaged in systematic genocide, it is certainly not for lack of training and temperament; in the limited field available

to it in 'remote' areas like Nagaland and Mizo Hills, our armed forces effectively practised repression on a large scale. The repressive powers of our civic police forces are of course too well known to need any comment here, and in this respect, even the Pakistani police may profitably learn a few lessons from the Indian policemen.

With Mr Bhutto's assumption of power in Pakistan, even the basic distinction between India and Pakistan so necessary from the Indian point of view (theocratic military dictatorship/secular socialist democracy) might get eroded. Mr Bhutto's 'hatred' for India is of course well known to our leaders and is in fact often cited as yet another proof of the essential superiority of our political culture. No Indian Minister would ever make a speech condemning 'Pakistani pigs', at least not before a foreign audience. But Mr Bhutto has grown a lot since 1965, and though he continues to be a highly emotional performer on international platforms, his performances still never come anywhere near those of our own Mr Krishna Menon in the 1950s. Mr Bhutto's 'hatred' of India is the result of a fairly complex attitude towards this country, and it barely conceals a fascination with, and even admiration of, the political and administrative features of this country. The measures he has taken since becoming President have been interpreted by many foreign observers as his way of 'doing an Indira Gandhi'; he has more than once expressed a desire to visit Delhi and even address a rally there, than which there cannot be a more convincing proof of the essential equation that exists between India and Pakistan.

In the years following independence, the process of the emergence and consolidation of a military-industrialist-bureaucratic elite was highly visible in Pakistan; in India we order things differently, but the difference is only a matter of style, not substance. With the impending 'restoration of the democratic process'

in Pakistan under the benevolent leadership of a highly anglicised (and Americanised) aristocrat (who recalls with pride three generations of links between his family and the Nehru family), the differences in style too might gradually fade away. If Mr Bhutto should follow our Defence Minister's advice (the same advice offered even by *Radiance* in its issue of January 9), and make his country, too, a secular, socialist democracy (just like Bangladesh and India), then everyone can be good friends for all time to come. And then at least, the revolutionary forces of this sub-continent will be able to recognise 'the enemy at last in plain view, huge and hateful, all disguise cast off.'

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FEBRUARY 5, 1972

# China And Our Left Intellectuals

MANIK GHOSH

CHINA's attitude to the recent happenings on the Indo-Pak subcontinent resulting in the creation of Bangladesh has for obvious reasons roused a great deal of surprise and indignation among Indian intellectuals of nearly every variety. The CPI-supporters' reactions are of course perfectly understandable : the less said about them the better. The attitude of the middle-left groups loosely allied with the CPM reflects in certain cases a genuine puzzlement and in others a clumsy opportunism. But it is those left intellectuals who generally profess to support China and brand the Soviet Union as social-imperialist and the Indian rulers as feudal-comprador, whose emphatic disapproval of China's stand on the present issue is intriguing and calls for a serious study. If they had shown China to be wrong by means of solid dialectical logic, it would certainly have merited rational consideration. It would have meant something even if they had condemned China from a bourgeois-humanistic point of view, as most people have been doing. But the trouble is that while professing to be profound Marxists they unconsciously lapse into the insidious spell of bourgeois humanism and naturally get everything wrong.

There are two sets of confusions, one general and the other specific, that these "Marxist" intellectuals seem to be suffering from. They forget or probably have never understood that the kernel of Marxist theory lies in the recognition of the fact that the development of anything, any process, any social phenomenon, depends primarily and chiefly on the development of its internal contradictions. The development of revolutionary conditions within a country will depend fundamentally and chiefly on the development of the conditions within that country, on the nature and extent of the progressive sharpening of the contradictions within the

existing social framework, and not on the external influences which can play only a secondary role. That is why the deduction made implicitly by Lenin and Stalin and elucidated most fruitfully by Mao Tse-tung was that revolution cannot be exported as opposed to Trotsky's view. It was partly because Trotskyite ideas lingered on, however, feebly, that the Comintern so pompously took upon itself the task of guiding the Chinese Revolution and, as long as its authority lasted, succeeded only in confusing and misguiding it. Even Stalin, looking at the final phases of the Chinese second civil war from outside, misjudged its inner contradictions as they stood in the spring of 1949, and advised the CPC to leave Chiang Kai-shek alone for the time being on the south of the Yangtse. This advice the Chinese respectfully acknowledged but ignored by instantly crossing the great river to attack Chiang and wiping him out within a matter of months ; and, of course Stalin admitted his mistake and congratulated the Chinese leaders on the correctness of their decision. It is this fundamental principle as emerging from and reinforced by experience that has led the Chinese leaders to adopt the policy of not trying to stimulate or direct a revolution from outside. That is why the Chinese have genuinely accepted the principle of *Panch Sheel* which involves recognition of one another's sovereign status by friendly States and their respect for each other's territorial integrity. The acceptance and pursuance of this principle was found, on examining the nature of the principal contradiction between aggressive, decadent imperialism and the great masses of people in the underdeveloped countries, to be best calculated to protect and promote the interests of revolution there.

While the framing of a formal international body to officially guide

world revolution is avoided, especially in view of the rise of revisionism turning into social-imperialism, the role of a true socialist country in providing guidance for the struggling masses all over the world is by no means ignored. Everywhere the rise and phased progress of revolution will be principally determined by the development of the respective inner contradictions, and a socialist country's guidance in the matter will take the following main forms : (1) The socialist country will go on interpreting the principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought correctly in the context of the ever-developing situation applying it to the concrete conditions appearing in different parts of the world, thereby providing guidance for every revolutionary situation. (2) The socialist country will try to stimulate and take advantage of all possible contradictions within the imperialist camp, thereby confusing the enemies and preventing them from launching united attacks on socialist countries and on the struggling revolutionaries in different parts of the world. It is with the purpose of (i) propagating its genuine friendly feeling for the peoples in all countries regardless of the political character of their governments and (ii) creating confusion and constant misunderstanding among the reactionary governments, the inveterate class enemies of socialism, that China has been trying quite palpably to establish friendly relations on a State level with more and more countries, including some imperialist and imperialist-dominated ones. But that should never induce her to discourage and stand in the way of true revolutionary movements within a country. Only—and again, in order to further the ultimate interests of the revolutionary forces as a whole—it will have to adjust its open reaction to the revolutionary activities in that country (silence or objective re-

porting or mild approval or open support) according to its *diplomatic relations* with the government of that country at the moment.

Only when imperialism launches a direct attack on a socialist country, as it did in Korea and is still doing in North Vietnam, that a socialist country is expected to come forward to resist the aggressors directly, by allowing the revolutionaries to use its territory (if it happens to be contiguous) as a hinterland, by giving it all kinds of arms and technical aid or, in extreme situations, to send its troops to fight there. It is the duty of a socialist country not to be accused of taking part in an unjust war or making a show of brute force, as Russia has done in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia. It perfectly suits the aims of a true socialist country not only to profess but also to demonstrate to the peoples of the world that it wishes to leave revolution-making in any country to the people of that country, and is obliged to interfere to assist the revolutionaries only when foreign reactionaries step in barbarously to assist the local reactionaries in suppressing popular movements.

Therefore the thesis advanced by these left intellectuals that the Soviet Union became social-imperialist because it established diplomatic relations with various non-socialist states and did not help the communist movements within those countries is, to say the least, childish. The Soviet Union became social-imperialist inevitably because it had polluted its socialist economy by introducing the profit-motive governing capitalist society; because instead of refining socialism into communism it had gone backward to form a kind of state capitalism; because to meet the needs of the inevi-

table expansion of that capitalism, it had, following the steps of the USA, launched itself on profit-making and power-grabbing ventures all over the world; because it had deliberately established an *active* friendship with the USA at a time when the latter was engaged in the most atrocious counter-revolutionary acts all over the world, including the monstrous attack on Vietnam across the 1200 miles of the Pacific; because it had never tried to compel the USA to withdraw from Vietnam; because it had abandoned the fundamental Marxist-Leninist principle of antagonistic social contradictions being solved by violent revolutions and invented the myth of expanding socialism through peaceful competition—with the purpose of sharing the commercial spoils of the underdeveloped world with the USA; because it had isolated and betrayed Socialist China and threatened it with invasion by massing nearly a million of the most formidably armed troops on her borders at a time when America and Japan were threatening her from the other side; because it had more than once sent its armies to settle political disputes in other countries when there was no question any imperialist invasion there.

#### Principal Contradiction First

Let us in the light of the above points consider the specific charges brought by some left intellectuals against China, viz, her failure to support what they hail as the liberation struggle in East Pakistan, and her lending support instead to the Pakistan Government, practically in conjunction with the imperialist USA, calling the brutal suppression of the national upsurge of the Bengalis of East Pakistan a just struggle to preserve Pakistan's territorial integrity—which in their view is just as bad as Russia's support of India. The attitude taken by these 'Marxist' gentlemen is that of super-moralists who shake their heads at everything and find nothing to choose between different contending parties,—an attitude, again, which grossly contra-

venes Marxist theory in that it practically identifies the two struggling aspects of a highly developed contradiction—unless of course they assume that the contradiction is feigned and that China and Russia are in secret collusion.

This is not to assume that it would be wrong to criticize China on any point, but to point out the unmarxist and unscientific nature of an attitude which wishes to pass itself off as the cream of Marxism. China, like anyone else, can commit mistakes if she misjudges the contradictions involved. To assume that she is infallible because she has so far tackled the internal contradictions and led world revolution more or less correctly would be to harbour a religious attitude, not a Marxist one. How far she is right or how far she is wrong can, however, be determined only by carefully considering both aspects of the different contradictions involved in a situation, that is by judging the situation as a whole from an objective, dialectical point of view.

China is well aware of the fact that the struggle in East Pakistan has a certain bourgeois-nationalist content, that the West Pakistan ruling regime *did* oppress and exploit the people of the eastern wing much more than it did the people of the western wing, that the Pakistan Government is just as reactionary as the Indian Government and that the American motion calling for an immediate Indo-Pakistani cease-fire and withdrawal of troops was sponsored with the intention of safeguarding American interests on the subcontinent and in South-East Asia. Yet China took up the position she did, because she adhered steadfastly to the basic dialectical principle of focusing one's attention on the principal contradiction involved in a situation and of concentrating one's efforts on tackling that principal contradiction to the comparative neglect of the many minor contradictions involved, in order to quicken the development of the situation as a whole. In South-East Asia and specifically in the Indian subcontinent there are many

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minor contradictions of which the contradiction between the Pakistani rulers and the people of East Pakistan was one. But the principal contradiction in the situation is between the forces of the two imperialisms, U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism, and the broad masses of people there. This is the fundamental fact that China has firmly grasped and steadily kept in view and has been constantly harping on, on every relevant occasion. Therefore China's primary concern has been to divide and create dissensions among the comprador forces through which imperialism has been operating, so that (i) their power to strike at the growing revolutionary forces is weakened and (ii) they are unable to form a solid ring of imperialist encirclement around China.

Our indignant left intellectuals should consider how important it is for world revolution to preserve the existence of China as the only big and powerful socialist State in the present-day world and how seriously her existence is threatened. For a long period during her socialist infancy the USA was poised to attack her from scores of neighbouring bases, while Russia was looking on quietly. The USA is now a little off colour because of China's active guidance (China alone has provided more than 70 per cent of the total foreign arms assistance to the Vietnamese people) of the heroic struggle of the Indochinese people resulting in the gravest American military debacle and financial crisis in history, compelling her to think of realigning her relations with China. But though the U.S. menace is on the decline, it has been more than replaced by two no less deadly enemies on either side: fast-rising Japanese militarism on the east and Soviet social-imperialism, with the world's most formidably mechanized troops assembled along her north and western borders. It has to be clearly realized that China's steady exposure of the revisionist and social-imperialist character of the Soviet Union over the last decade has resulted in a

steady increase of hostile relations between China and the Soviet Union, until, for all practical purposes—though China has not yet stated it explicitly—Russia with her new imperialist hunger, her unspent power, her socialist cloak and her renegade's cunning, has in the given conditions become China's most formidable enemy and indeed, potentially, the most dangerous enemy of the world's revolutionary forces.

Let our left intellectuals now look at the almost complete imperialist encirclement of China. Only a single wide breach had been made in the wall by the armed anti-imperialist struggle in the Indochinese peninsula under China's stimulation of the internal contradictions there. There was only one other comparatively feeble patch in the wall—Pakistan. This was not at all because the Pakistani rulers were more progressive than the Indian rulers: the internal economy of Pakistan testifies conclusively against any such assumption. Because India, a much bigger country, was her enemy, Pakistan had sought friendly relations with big China who was also India's enemy. China took full advantage of the situation and befriended Pakistan against the increasing menace of her big neighbour not out of any love for the Pakistani rulers, but with the purpose of confusing and unsettling the imperialist-comprador forces in the subcontinent, thereby reducing their ability to tackle the ever-growing inner revolutionary forces, and of weakening the imperialist ring around herself on the south.

#### Array of Forces

Locally on the Indian subcontinent two facts stood out; one was that in international matters India, in spite of her secular and democratic garb, was more dangerous to China because of, among other things, her interference in China's Tibetan affairs and her efforts to infiltrate into Chinese territory resulting in the border clashes of 1962. Therefore China correctly assessed Pakistan as reactionary and comprador, but content to

remain so at home, while her bigger, cleverer, more "democratic" neighbour India, more developed militarily, was not only equally reactionary and comprador at home, but was anxious to expand her territory and export counter-revolution at every conceivable opportunity.

The second concrete fact was that, right from her birth, Pakistan was divided into two widely separated geographical segments. The ruling class belonging almost entirely to the western wing naturally exploited and supposed the aspirations of the people of the weaker and less developed eastern wing. This gave rise to genuine grievances which the suppressed bourgeois-landlord classes of the eastern wing effectively utilized to secure votes for themselves and to demand a completely autonomous status. Imperialism looks for commercial and counter-revolutionary opportunities everywhere. Undivided Pakistan was good enough for America, but the idea of East Pakistan forming a loose autonomous unit along with her separate foreign aid-receiving programme, was even better as it opened up possibilities of fresh large investments and of another extremely strategic military base. But, embroiled as it was in so many troubles all over the world, the USA did not want the business to develop into an armed conflict. Then, when it found that East Pakistan was going to fall to the Indian army with full Soviet backing and that it would result in Russia, and not America, making huge direct or indirect investments and building military bases in the promised land, it adopted a sanctimonious attitude and

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Statesman Office

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FEBRUARY 5, 1972

sponsored a 'cease-fire and withdrawal of troops' resolution.

China saw what was happening. She found that the West Pakistani oppression of East Pakistan had resulted in an inevitable upheaval—Chou En-lai told Neville Maxwell that "East Pakistan was a time bomb left by Lord Mountbatten". She saw that the upheaval had an apparent bourgeois-nationalist content; but she thought that a political separation of East Pakistan at this stage would inevitably end in that country becoming a semi-colonial adjunct of India, and virtually pass into the hands of one or both of the imperialist superpowers, seriously retarding revolutionary movements in the entire region.

Even so, China waited quite a long while before making any comment on the situation. She was waiting to assess the relative strength of the progressive and reactionary forces involved, to see if there was any chance of its developing into an *internal protracted war*, in which case the leadership of the struggle would surely pass into the hands of the proletarians. But when she found that the Indian Government was preparing to take advantage of the trouble, she clearly denounced the expansionists, in resisting whose interference she supported the Pakistan Government. Then the signing of the Indo-Soviet treaty confirmed her fears that Russian social-imperialism, more deadly in the immediate context than U.S. imperialism, was trying to infiltrate into East Pakistan and in the whole subcontinent and ultimately to control all South-East Asia and the Indian Ocean, through India. This at the moment constituted for China the principal contradiction, the one between cunning and rapacious social-imperialia-

lism bent on exploiting and stepping up counter-revolution in the whole region, and the millions of oppressed people of the region as spiritually represented by the revolutionary forces there, while the contradiction between West Pakistani rulers and the eastern wing was a relatively minor one.

China knew only too well that the USA was sponsoring the 'cease-fire and troops withdrawal' resolution with the sole purpose of stopping Russian infiltration into a place it had itself fancied. And if the USA was anxious to put forward a motion to stop the Russian infiltration, it perfectly suited the intentions of China to agree with the USA on that concrete point and lend firm support to the motion. And nearly all the small and middle-sized countries of the underdeveloped world who have been offering the most fruitful opposition to U.S. imperialism joined hands with China in backing the U.S.-sponsored resolution. Was it because all of them had become secret agents of the USA overnight, or was it because they thought India and Russia were committing a grave wrong?

Supposing for a moment that China had supported the movement in East Pakistan and condemned the Pakistan Government as an oppressor, what would have happened? East Pakistan would have been fallen to India backed by Russia, just as it has actually and in the absence of a powerful fighting communist party, an Awami League government would have been installed there, exactly as has happened. What has been done in the teeth of massive moral opposition of 104 nations would only have been done more smoothly with China's support. That is, China's support would in the given conditions have only served the purpose of furthering imperialist interests of strengthening the counter-revolutionary forces and of tightening the imperialist ring around herself.

As for West Pakistan, it would, in the event of Chinese condemnation, have been not only hopelessly weake-

ned physically, but would also have been totally isolated on all sides. In this isolation it would have capitulated and gone over wholly to the side of imperialism. The contradiction between the Indian and the Pakistan bourgeoisie and the resultant confusion among the imperialist forces and the resultant advantage to the revolutionary forces would all have been neutralized. The Indian subcontinent would have presented a monolithic comprador-bourgeois structure in the close grip of the two superpowers, and the encirclement of China would have been solidly strengthened on the south.

It is true, the Chinese aim of preventing the Indo-Russian action and creating a Bangladesh has materially failed. But has not China succeeded in exposing expansionism and social-imperialism? Why otherwise did as many as 104 nations condemn the Indo-Russian action and only a few Russian allies support it?

China has so handled the contradictions that the comprador-reactive Pakistans, while engaged in ruthlessly protecting its self-interest in its eastern wing, has been unwillingly driven into countering and fighting against the interests of Russia. It is because of this gesture against imperialism—unwilling though it be—that China has continued to befriend Pakistan in spite of its onslaught on the people of East Pakistan, and Pakistan cannot forget that. The result is that Pakistan's contradiction with India, that is, with the forces governing India, will not only continue, but is sure to get sharpened; confusion and tension among the bourgeoisie will persist, perhaps increase, in the subcontinent, thus dividing and weakening the sum-total of the reactionary forces and dialectically strengthening the forces of revolution.

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## The Murder And After

N. K. SINGH

IT is an age-old story. It started with the first killing of a slave when the master became furious.

The mass murder of Santal sharecroppers in the twin villages of Chandwa-Rupaspur in Purnea district, North Bihar, last year will go down in Bihar's history as one of the most gruesome crimes in recent years. In what was described as a land dispute, ten Santals were shot dead and four others burnt alive. Not less than 35 were wounded by the hirelings of the landlords of the area. Of the 14 killed, four were women and of the 35 injured, 20 were women. Among those seriously hurt by bullets was a little child of three years—his body was riddled with pellets. Local unofficial sources put the number of causalties much higher, alleging that some of the Santals were still missing and that some hurriedly disposed of bodies had not been traced by the authorities.

Out of the conflicting versions of the episode it is now possible to piece together the tragic story. The dispute between the Santals of Rupaspur and the landlords of Purnea is old. The Santals had been cultivating the land as sharecroppers for quite a long time. They have also been entered in government records as sharecroppers. Under Section 714 of the Bihar Tenancy Act, it is the sharecropper's right to harvest and thresh the crop. Thereafter the landlord gets 25% and the sharecropper 75% of the crop. But the landlords were not prepared to accept the rights of the sharecroppers. The fact of the matter is that the law is often reversed, with the landlord getting as much as 75% of the crop.

Trouble in the village was apprehended and the Government had posted a police party on the spot on November 10, 1971. But on November 19, the Block Development

Officer and the Deputy Superintendent of Police went to the village and the landlords readily agreed to let the sharecroppers harvest the crop. Later developments suggest that this was only a ruse to get the police party withdrawn and lull the Santals. For the Santals, though very simple, can become a ferocious enemy with their bows and arrows.

As the day broke on November 22, the inhabitants of Rupaspur saw some unusual movement on the compounds of the landlords. The Santals became panicky because the police force posted in the village had been withdrawn two days earlier. They rushed a man to the Dhamdhaha Police Station, which is within walking range of Chandwa-Rupaspur, but he was turned out by the Station Diary Constable. He then went to the BDO who heard him with indifference.

In the meantime, a sizable 'private army' of the landlords' henchmen, armed with guns and other weapons, raided a plot of paddy land claimed by the Santal sharecroppers as their own. When the goondas started harvesting the paddy a group of agitated but fearful Santals tried to resist the "harvest loot". But they were outnumbered and chased by the armed mob. While some Santals fled for safety, others ran into their hutments.

The 'private army' put the village under siege. Armed men in jeeps, station wagons, tractors and on foot surrounded it. They bolted and locked the doors from outside and set fire to the hutments, while the men, women and children cried for help. In a bid to escape some of the younger Santals broke open the doors or jumped over the walls of their burning homes, only to be mowed down by bullets or hacked to pieces.

The fire subsided only after reducing the entire village of 45 houses to ashes. By that time four Santals, including two women, one child and an old man, had been burnt alive, 10 killed by bullets or hacked to pieces, while 33, including a three-

year-old, were seriously wounded. Most of the wounded had gunshot injuries on the back, hip or thigh.

After the operation which lasted about three hours was over, the jeeps and tractors were pressed into service. The bodies were loaded on them, driven 20 miles away and dumped into the bed of the river Kosi, truly known as the 'sorrow of Bihar'.

### Police Inaction

The 'operation' started at about 3.30 p.m. and went on till 6.30 p.m. But the police party, stationed only about a mile away, got no information. The BDO and the DSP reached the spot two hours after the mass slaughter. That was not all. The first information report was entered in the Dhamdhaha Police Station register only the next morning and the district authorities were informed thereafter. The bodies were recovered some 48 hours after the killings.

The most intriguing fact is that the DSP, locally known as Lathi Singh, belongs to the caste of the landlords (Rajputs). As he was a pet of the local big wigs, he was transferred to Gaya during the last non-Congress SVD Ministry, but as soon as the Congress-dominated PVD took over, the landlords saw to it that he was brought back. Within 10 days of his joining at Gaya, he returned to Purnea.

The incident occurred on November 22, but till the 25th, the State Government had no information. The first news of the bloodbath was broken to newsmen on the morning of November 25 by the Socialist Party Chairman, Mr Kapoori Thakur.

The Press and the opposition raised a hue and cry. The Centre had to intervene and as a result 68 persons, including the former Bihar Legislative Assembly Speaker, Dr L. N. Sudhanshu and his son, Mr Pradyumna Singh, were rounded up. The property of 18 absconders has been attached. The Government has suspended the DSP, the BDO, two Assistant Sub-Inspectors of Police

and a Diary Constable of Dhamdha Police Station for alleged gross dereliction of duty.

All seems quiet now in the Santal settlement at Chandwa-Rupaspur. The survivors have begun a new life amid

the ruins of their huts at the site of the gruesome tragedy, a police camp in the background providing them 'official' security.

Chandwa-Rupaspur is very close to Naxalbari.

caste Hindus. The fact was what appeared to be caste struggle was in fact class struggle, the Harijans constituting the landless and the land concentrated in the hands of the upper castes. Another specious theory was that the Naxalite problem was limited to the rice-growing areas and the wheat country was free from it. The fact is that the land hunger and pressure of population on land are still the highest in the rice-growing deltas.

About this time, a controversial study by Francine Frankel was changing hands in its draft, mimeographed form. Most embarrassed was the USAID which had provided a grant for the study. The study has now appeared in an enlarged, book form.\*

Even bourgeois-democratic land reforms of the kind passed in India could lead to a sharp polarisation of class and property relations in the country and eliminate the middle peasantry as a category. The land reforms have not been implemented with any degree of earnestness but the Green Revolution is throwing up tensions which might achieve it ultimately.

Francine Frankel's conclusions are corroborated by other studies. As a result of the IADP approach, almost all classes of cultivators had gained in income and yields but the gains have been more striking in the wheat areas compared to rice areas. The gains of the new technology have been uneven in distribution. In rice areas, the big farmers have gained a good deal while small farmers have at best been able to stabilise their living standards amidst rising costs. For the small farmers who also took holdings in lease the new techniques have actually resulted in absolute deterioration of their economic condition. Farmers owing 5 to 10 acres have done better.

\* Francine R. Frankel, India's Green Revolution : Economic Gains and Political Costs.

Bombay. Oxford University Press, 1971. Rs. 50.

## Book Review

### Revolution – Green And Red

M. R.

**A**BOUT two years ago, the Union Home Minister, Mr Y. B. Chavan, tried some colourful speech at a conference of Chief Ministers to discuss land reforms. "The Green Revolution will not remain green unless accompanied by a revolution based on social justice," he warned them. "Red?" sarcastically asked Gujarat's Hitendra Desai. "Red or white, it would not be green," chirped the Marxist Revenue Minister of West Bengal, Harekrishna Konar who later looked to the World Bank's expertise to carry out land reforms in his State. That was the beginning of a cliche. Bureaucrats in New Delhi's Secretariat where power lies about slovenly in files, like some indefinable life-factor, used to whisper to journalists in earnestness: "You know, if we do not carry out land reforms the green revolution would turn red?".

The Green Revolution has been a deceitful benediction. All the resources and energies of the Centre and the States were concentrated in selected pockets to make it a success. In 1959, when the Congress adopted the co-operative farming resolution at Nagpur, the Right emerged in some strength and raised the bogey of the farm and family being in danger. The land reforms and progress towards co-operatives were scuttled by the wily Mr S. K. Patil and we got massive PL-480 wheat imports instead. This gave the ruling classes a policy cushion and land reforms were no longer a must if the problem was merely one of higher food

production. The imported wheat from U.S. surpluses was there. The next phase began with the New Agricultural Strategy, also of distinctly United States inspiration. It is less painful for the ruling classes to solve the food problem through the Green Revolution than to solve the land problem. The Green Revolution was supposed to herald the end of the decades-old food shortage. But the new technology was tried on an outmoded agrarian structure. The Green Revolution was a matter of better inputs like fertilisers, seed and better water management and had nothing to do with social change. If anything, it increased India's dependence on foreign aid—either through the need to import more chemicals or to open the country to foreign investment in production and distribution of fertilisers. The Chief Ministers quietly forgot to implement the land reform measures passed over the last two decades. It was the revolt of the peasants—Naxalbari, Mushahari, Srikantham—amidst land hunger that shocked the Centre into an awareness of the problem. A Home Ministry study on the nature and causes of the agrarian tensions (an innocuous euphemism for class struggle in the countryside) set the pace for a hushed discussion inside the Government. Outside, several new-fangled theories were getting into circulation. The peasant unrest in Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu was sought to be fitted into the familiar matrix of the traditional conflict between the Harijans and upper-

Another finding of Frankel needs serious attention:

"...the introduction of modern technology under the intensive areas and the high-yielding varieties program has not only quickened the process of economic polarisation in the rural areas, but has also contributed to increasing social antagonism between landlords and tenants, and landowners and labourers." (p. 197).

The rural economy has been transformed from a subsistence way of life to a profitable set of business activities, pushing up rents and tempting many landlords to resume personal cultivation. Moreover,

...the land reform laws in all States, while largely abortive, have caused landowners to view tenants as potential adversaries, and this has further contributed to the breakdown of the permanent patron-client relationships. As one observer pointed out, the advent of the new technology confronts the small owner-cum-tenant cultivator with the bleak prospect not only of increasing economic disparity, but also of "an agonising change from security in the midst of poverty to growing insecurity along with poverty." Obviously, tenants who are shifted from plot to plot, and cultivate always in fear of losing some part of their holding to the landlord or another tenant, also quickly slough off traditional feelings of deference and obligation towards the landlord. The same tendency toward erosion in traditional attitudes of mutual dependence and obligation is also apparent in relations between landowners and labourers.

#### New Kulaks

The more important factor to remember here is the emergence of a strategic class of new kulaks who are part of the support structure of every party functioning within the parliamentary system. Even the CPI and

the CPI(M) have great solicitude for this new class and successive reports of the Agricultural Prices Commission to lower the procurement price have been vetoed by the Chief Ministers who have to look to these kulaks. But as Frankel notes, "tendencies towards social polarisation and class conflict have emerged more quickly than originally anticipated."

Can the government meet the new situation? Already in Punjab, worried about restive labour, the new kulaks are thinking of harvester combines. In an economy like India's, yield per acre and not yield per man is important. Yet the Soviets and the East Europeans have been dumping tractors in India and setting up additional capacity for indigenous manufacture of farm machinery. Again, as Frankel sums it up:

Without at least some sign of good faith on the part of the government, it cannot be expected that the mass of agriculturists and labourers will continue passively to accept their fate, or that the government can continue to take for granted the fundamental requirement of any process of economic growth in the rural areas, conditions of "law and order."

...an effective response by existing governments to the rising level of agrarian tension requires full recognition that outbreaks of rural violence demand more than a law and order program.

This is where one comes up against the political consequences of the Green Revolution. An environment receptive to new slogans of economic and political equality has been created by liberating forces like literacy, education, and adult suffrage. Low-caste agricultural labourers or sharecroppers will no longer accept the client status in economic and political life as final. "If only for this reason, vertical patterns of political mobilisation are bound to undergo even more severe strain in the years ahead." The March 1971 Lok Sabha

elections demonstrated this. Or, as Frankel says, "The multicaste political faction led by traditional landowning patrons and construed with support from families of low-status client groups, especially tenants and farm workers, will become more and more difficult to sustain as a viable political unit at the local level."

The "massive mandate" for Mrs Gandhi at the 1971 poll was a vote for change, based on rising expectations which could collapse into rising frustrations. "Moreover, the politicisation of the peasantry, once begun is likely to prove irreversible. It will inevitably bring in its wake proliferating demands for greater opportunities and services by large numbers of persons and groups formerly content with a passive or follower role in politics."

Yes, Mrs Gandhi's victory is significant in keeping open options for orderly change. In Frankel's view it is still possible for the Indian planners to achieve their multiple economic and social aims through the democratic structure. Democratic parties would have to compete actively with the radical left in organising the most vulnerable sections of the rural population and be willing to risk alienation of the new kulak class. "The response of the democratic parties to the growing challenge of agrarian unrest will weigh heavily in the option India finally chooses."

The latest squabble in the Maharashtra Congress (a typical kulak party flattery on sugar factories owned by family co-operatives) over lowering the land ceiling does not hold out much hope that the politician would risk the wrath of the kulak who underwrites the present "democratic system." As Frankel says, "It is, of course, possible that revolutionary parties will ultimately prevail, at least partly by default."

That might well be the inadvertent contribution of the Green Revolution, in the long run.

## Hurricane Incomplete

A. L.

GIVEN all the subjective prerequisites, the creation of a truly revolutionary art calls for only one objective condition. And that condition, to cut a long story short, is a revolution. Read Chou Li-po's *The Hurricane* and you definitely will see eye to eye with me. Consequently, if the promise of 'a complete novel with Indian Revolution in the background'\* eventually gets reduced to a highly sensitive account of the revolutionary ventures of Raghu, a fifth year student of Calcutta University, that surely is not because of Swarna Mitra's literary incapacity or naivete.

Without entering into the controversial subject of defining a 'truly' revolutionary art, this much we can assert: "What we demand is unity of politics and art, of content and form and of the revolutionary political content and highest possible degree of perfection in artistic form." (Mao Tse-tung—Yenan speech. Bowing down to the inevitable and at this moment insurmoundable limitations, Swarna has very nearly succeeded in hitting the bull's eye. You see quite plainly, through events. You see vacillations and you see the winning over; the suspicious screwing of eyes and the informal familiarity; the differences and the unison; the reluctance and the spontaneity of response—and all in a manner practically uncontaminated by shallow sentimentalism. Herein lies the merit of this novelette.

Petty bourgeois mishmash does protrude here and there, and possibly the greatest restraint had to be exercised in order to refrain Raghnath from carrying too far his descriptions dealing with the 'coveted

\* GRAMAY CHALO (Let's go to the village) by Swarna Mitra.

transformation' of his parents—a transformation that comes about too easily to be convincing.

But let us not dwell upon such trivialities. 'The unity of politics and art, of content and form' is nowhere more pronounced and successful than where Raghu is bent upon motivating the peasants politically. He endeavours in the beginning to see his revolutionary ideas projected and translated into practice among the poor peasants. Disillusionment comes in no time and appears to be the only inevitability. A languorous Raghu seeks advice from his leader-comrade Achintya Chatterjee. He comes back, sets about mixing intimately with people, bathes himself in their life-current, takes part in productive activities, and a new consciousness emerges in him, a sense of the flaw of subjectivism. Now, this is theory. But what we experience in the novelette are men and minds, some sort of objective correlatives, if you like. The throbbing discontent, the angry lives come first and politics next. Yet these two combine when, for instance, old Goondadhar, a reluctant old man of lukewarm attitude, at last realises with confident conviction, "What, must an old man forget the past—so easily? Why, my son still lives and he must continue to live!"

In the effortless, sometimes almost inadvertent, as it were, depictions of the countryside, a sense of rough unevenness, of a haggard face with numerous wrinkles of discontent stamped on it, at once strikes one. Still this is of minor importance. What establishes Swarna beyond a shade of misgiving is his handling of the dialect. 'The people's language', wrote Mao Tse-tung, 'is rich, vigorous, vivid and expressive of real life'. Indeed, the consistent easy infallibility with which the author has used the dialect imparts a peculiar taste of this 'real life', quantitatively different from Manik Bandopadhyay's *Padma Nadir Majhi*, to this story. Just imagine a poor ignorant

peasant or a day-labourer describing to his fellow comrades, in a language rising from the very marrow of his bones, drawing in imagery from his own hazardous experience of life, the tactics of guerilla warfare or how death could be heavier than a mountain or lighter than a goose-feather, how the old man could remove mountains; and seldom does lecturishness poke its nose. I wonder how many of our professional litterateurs, spending days and nights in the forest, could boast of this feat.

When all this has been said, one cannot suppress a sigh of pity when one finds this unity slacken just at the moment it appears to have dug firm roots. Old Uncle dies fighting heroically, the peasants get more than ever enraged, their revolutionary zeal touches a new peak and then—the story ends! The death-scene unmistakably resembles that of Old Chao in *Hurricane* and yet how very much they differ in the cumulative far-stretching impact of the latter and the abrupt ending of the former, thus sacrificing the wonderful undercurrent of unity of form and content for the conventional optimistic musings of Raghu.

But this, as I have already pointed out, is perhaps inevitable. Perhaps one more decade must pass before we can have our own *Hurricane* complete. Meanwhile, we must remain grateful to Swarna Mitra for trying to create a revolutionary culture, his success crippled only to the extent that our revolution is incomplete.

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# Commodity Prices

(CONTRIBUTED)

**T**HIS chart gives an idea of the rise in prices between 1939-1964. The commodities mentioned are essential for daily life. The price-rise went up to twenty times. Since September, 1969 the price list has not been published in the *Calcutta Municipal Gazette*. So it has not been possible to bring the picture up-to-date. However, prices have been gradually rising since 1969. Rice, suji and flour have been controlled and can be had at controlled rates in insufficient quantities; open market rates are much higher.

Sl. No.	Commodities	Unit.	1939-2nd	1947-10th	1959-9th	1962-9th	1969-6th	1971
			September Rs A P (Pai)	December Rs A P	September Rs A P	July (paise)	September R P (paise)	10th Feb. R P (paise)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Contr.								
1.	<i>Rice :—</i>						Controlled	Open market
	Coarse	per maund	3-12-0	Controlled	18- 0-0	22.00	1.24 (per kilo)	1.60
	Medium	"	4- 8-0	A :—26- 4-0	19- 3-0	23.00	1.28	1.80
	Patnai	"	5- 4-0	B :—16- 4-0	22-12-0	25.00	1.41	1.90
2.	<i>Dal :—</i>							
	Mug	per seer	0- 3-0	0-12-0	0-12-0	0.75	1.70	1.90
	Arhar	"	0- 2-6 to	0-14-0	0-13-0	0.62 to	1.60	
			0- 3-0			0.75		
	Musuri	"	0- 2-0 to	0- 8-0	0-12-0	0.62 to	1.60	
			0- 2-6			0.69		
	Chhola	"	0- 1-6 to	0-10-0	0-10-0	0.62	1.40	
			0- 1-9					
3.	Mustard Oil	"	0- 8-0	1-14-0	2- 6-0	2.60	4.80	6.00
4.	Coconut oil	"	0- 6-0	2-00-0	3- 8-0	4.00	11.00	11.00
5.	Kerosene Oil	per tin	3- 2-0	0- 3-6	0- 3-6	7.12	0.54	.60
6.	Til Oil	per maund	5- 4-0 to	140- 0-0	—	—	—	—
			9- 0-0					
7.	Sugar	per seer	0- 5-0	—	—	1.30	1.78	—
							(controlled)	
8.	Salt	"	0- 0-6	0- 1-9	0- 1-9	.14	.20	—
9.	Atta	"	0- 2-6	0- 7-6	0- 6-0	.44	1.10	—
							(open market)	
10.	Flour	"	0- 2-9	0- 9-0	0- 9-0	.60	1.10	
11.	Suji	"	0- 2-6 to	—	0- 9-6	.63	1.14	
			0- 3-0					
12.	Cow's Milk	"	0- 3-0	0-12-0	0-13-0	.80	1.72 (litre)	—
13.	Ghee (cow)	"	1-12-0 to 2- 0-0	8- 0-0	8- 0-0	8.00	15.00 to 20.00	
14.	Butter	"	0-14-0	3- 0-0	5- 0-0	5.40	12.50 to 14.00	
15.	Tea	1 lb.	0-10-0 to 0-12-0	2- 8-0	4- 0-0	4.00	5.40 (per 500 gram)	—
16.	Coconut	each	0- 0-6 to 0- 1-3	0- 4-0	0- 6-0	.37	.75	1.25
17.	Potato	per seer	0- 2-6	0- 5-0	0-10-0	.37	.90	—
18.	Onions	"	0- 1-3	0- 4-0	0- 5-0	.37	.75	—
19.	Patal (Desi)	"	0- 0-6 to 0- 2-0	—	0-12-0	.37	1.50	—

## FRONTIER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
20.	Brinjal	"	0- 1-0 to 0- 3-0	0- 2-0 to 0- 4-0	0- 8-0	.62	1.25	—
21.	Egg :— Fowl	20	0- 9-0 to 0-10-0	2- 3-0	3- 0-0	3.10	Rs. 6.00 to Rs. 7.00	—
	Duck	20	0- 7-0 to 0- 8-0	2- 3-0	2- 8-0	3.40		—
22.	Fish :— Prawn-Bagda	per seer	0- 6-0 to 0- 8-0	2- 8-0	3- 0-0	3.50 to 4.00	9.00 to 10.00	—
	Bhetki	"	0-10-0	1- 8-0	3- 4-0	3.00	8.00	—
	Hilsa	"	0- 6-0 to 0- 8-0	2- 0-0 to 2- 8-0	3-12-0	3.50	10.00	—
	Rohi	"	0- 8-0 to 0-10-0	1-12-0	3- 0-0	4.00 to 5.00	8.50	—
	Koi	"	1- 0-0 to 1- 4-0	1- 8-0 to 2- 0-0	5- 0-0	5.00	6.00	—
	Singi	"	0- 4-0 to 0- 8-0	2- 8-0	4- 0-0	4.50	7.00	—
	Magur	"	0- 8-0 to 0-12-0	3- 8-0 to 4- 0-0	5- 0-0	6.00	7.00	—
23.	Meat :— Mutton	"	0- 8-0 to 0-10-0	2- 0-0 to 3- 0-0	2-12-0	3.75 to 4.00	6.00	—
	Fowl (small)	each	0- 3-0 to 0- 4-0	1- 8-0 to 2- 8-0	2-12-0	2.75	8.50 (kg)	—

N.B.—In Table 1 kg. should be read in columns 7 and 8 instead of 1 seer.

In column 6 rupees, annas and pies were shown in the Calcutta Municipal Gazette although decimal coinage was introduced in 1957.

## Of Adults And Adolescents

By A FILM CRITIC

HINDI films these days fall into two categories—those financed by big producers and those by the Film Finance Corporation. Money-wise the west coast is having a surfeit, enjoying the best of both worlds. It is well tended by private producers who, with their kitty full of ill-gotten wealth, demand colour, good location, preferably in the hills or in exotic surroundings and of course the stars, sometimes of two-decade antiquity. True to entrepreneurial capitalistic tradition the less ambitious are frowned upon and seldom favoured by them. The public sector has taken kindly to the latter category only lately after having sunk

an enormous amount in a vain bid to chase the big wigs apparently to gather expertise. Over the past few years, however, films made with FFC money have been singularly blessed and often enough the young performers, as in *Dastak*, find themselves catapulted to fame, being recipients of best actor and actress awards.

Rajinder Singh Bedi's *Dastak* centres around two characters, newly weds, who find an apartment in a disreputable area of Bombay town. The director, who is a writer, tries to show the impact of the immediate environment on them, their reactions to the situation and also how it

momentarily affects the relationship between them. Excellent material for an exploratory exercise and the director has a measure of success in achieving it initially. In the first half he confines himself to presenting the pair in this milieu and the interaction comes off rather well. The girl's sense of loneliness during the day, and the inevitable nocturnal knock are liberally punctuated with songs, scenes of embrace and sexual overtures between the couple. The censors take a liberal view of what goes on in the bedroom. One can guess what their attitude would have been if it were not between a married couple. Rehana Sultan who portrayed a prostitute in *Chetna*, settles for a wifely role in this film though being in close proximity to surroundings she had lived through in her earlier film. She turns in a good performance.

In the second half, however, the story is stretched beyond the immediate confines and unnecessarily so. We are taken to the girl's father's place in a remote village. One wonders whether it is to provide a rationale for the modest girl's singing abilities because we now know that her father is a renowned musician of yesteryear. The film has one song too many, not unlike other Hindi films. The girl who hardly steps outdoors in the first half, goes about with her hubby singing and merry making mostly on the beach and on roads as unwed lovers. (On one occasion they are even hauled up by the police on this suspicion).

The climactic point is reached when a man, who used to visit the apartment when a disreputable woman was the inmate, appears on the scene apparently to whet his appetite for music. The irate husband was aghast to find his wife relenting to sing for the guest. To him his edifice seems to collapse in a trice. But the moment of truth is brought home by the villain-like panwallah who has been pestering them for long. The couple come to terms with reality and in a somewhat naive vow promise to stay put to fight intruders of all sorts, because there is no escape from the surroundings one happens to be living in.

Bedi's bid to tackle the story boldly enables him to be a little different from others in Hindi films but he has certainly not been able to tread on grounds left alone by the run-of-the-mill directors. The usual ingredients composing a Hindi film have not been entirely dispensed with and judging from the second part of *Dastak* one can hardly conclude that the director's intention was to make a complete departure from the conventions. Surefire box-office trappings are cleverly mixed with an intrepid theme and one acknowledges a certain deftness, which is no small mercy in the circumstances.

#### Summer of '42

Robert Mulligan's *Summer of '42* harks back to the salad days of three

adolescents who are vacationing at a sea resort. Their itch to get to know the facts of life, their frantic funny efforts to know about the female anatomy from a medical treatise, their alternate merry making and fisticuff, all in an idyllic background, lend a nostalgic dimension. The principal character's yearning for the company of

the young married girl, whose husband has gone to war, is tenderly treated and his shortlived happiness with her when she gets news of her husband's death, is full of extraordinary charm and innocence. This is indeed the long lost vista of the American dream and Mulligan's credit lies in rebuilding the milieu peopled with lovable innocents at home.

#### Clippings

### China : Realists vs Purists

It would be incorrect to speak of a "power struggle" in China simply because there is friction between the political hierarchy and the military leadership—the fiction largely responsible for the Lin Piao affair. The phrase is wanting in that it implies a struggle for power as an end itself.

What has been happening in China has rather been a clash between two schools of thought on how to use power—a clash which the Chinese refer to as "a confrontation between two lines."

...The first bone of contention between the two hierarchies was the extent of the purge within the party ranks. Quite early in the movement, Mao Tse-tung tried to contain its damaging effects by pointing out that real "traitors" were a mere handful, and that the good party militants, misled by their revisionist leaders, would soon be restored to a role in the structure once they owned up to their mistakes.

The truth is that on the local level very few party officials were eliminated. Much of the weeding out during the cultural revolution took place at the highest levels, although there were just as many "revisionists" in the middle and lower ranks. While the party takes a lenient view of all those who believe or pretend that it was their ignorance which took them down the slippery path of deviationism, it deals mercilessly with those who "knowing full well what they were doing," set out to "accomplish

their dark designs by taking advantage of their comrades' ignorance."

...A controversy broke out over defining foreign policy, and it is no accident that it came to a head over the proposed visit by President Nixon to China.

The Chinese leadership had to decide whether it was a betrayal of its own and world revolution to deal with the leading representative of imperialism. For Chou En-lai the answer was simple: it mattered little whether the discussions with the Americans proved successful or came to naught; what was important was not to seem obstructionist by refusing to talk when the opponent wanted to.

It was pointed out that in 1945 the Chinese communist party agreed to negotiate with Chiang Kai-shek at Chunking, though Mao had considerable trouble in getting some of his followers to accept such a meeting. It was then that he wrote: "Sometimes to refuse to negotiate is to exchange blow to blow; yet again agreeing to negotiate is sometimes to exchange blow for blow."

In 1971 the "leftists" opposed the Nixon visit. Officials now feel that, if their view had prevailed, they would have done a disservice to the revolution and given China the image of a nation opposed to any move to reduce world tension.

But other problems have stirred up similar disagreements. When, for example, Prince Sihanouk decided to

establish himself in Peking after the Cambodian coup in 1970, China had to decide between the purist notion of restricting support to the "Red Khmers"—veterans of a long struggle without too much hope of victory in the near future or, in the interests of an effective revolution, welcoming the ousted Prince and backing a united front against Lon Nol.

By opting for Sihanouk, the Chinese widened the basis of the "anti-imperialist" forces and contributed to a more cohesive revolutionary movement in all of Indochina. The split became clearer with the complex problems presented by the rebellions in East Pakistan, Ceylon, and the coup in Sudan. The "leftists" in Peking wanted to support the oppressed minorities, but it was the "revolutionary realism" of Mao and Premier Chou which won the day.

The confrontation must be seen in the context of the "tripolar" universe to be thoroughly understood. Pek-

ing has in fact to decide which of the two hostile forces, "American imperialism" or "Soviet social-imperialism" is the most dangerous. I put the question myself to a number of highly placed Chinese officials. The answer, without detailed examination or comparison, was simply that the Soviet threat is at this particular moment closer and more pressing in geographical terms.

...It is to create further safeguards against "Soviet social-imperialism" that Mao and Chou got rid of the leftists and uncompromisingly rigid party members who pressed for a more sweeping purge and opposed any dialogue with Washington. Soviet troops on the Chinese frontier have been reinforced and the internal crisis comes much more clearly into perspective as seen from an international angle. So far Mao's "proletarian line" has triumphed both at home and on the diplomatic front. (Claude Julien in *Le Monde Weekly*).

West Bengal is going to have another general election—the fourth in five years.

The most powerful political force to contest the coming election is the ruling Congress. It is the party where the most intelligent, cunning and far-seeing elements of the reactionary classes of India are concentrated and organized. Behind it stand the social-imperialist rulers of the Soviet Union with their enormous economic and political power. The ruling Congress is a much deadlier enemy than the downright right elements (Swatantra, Jana Sangh, etc.) because its power of manoeuvring, of political deception, is immensely greater. The Communist revolutionaries must not underestimate this enemy.

At this moment, to defeat this enemy on the electoral front is a most important task. And in order to defeat the ruling Congress, the communist revolutionaries are obliged to support its principal opponent—the bloc of petty-bourgeois parties headed by the CPT(M).

We do not suggest an unconditional support. The communist revolutionaries will ask the people to vote the anti-Congress (R) bloc to ministerial power only when the leadership of the CPI(M)—principal constituent of the bloc—gives an unequivocal and solemn pledge before the people that, (1) they will never re-employ terror tactics against any political organisation opposed to their party line on theoretical grounds; (2) if they are voted to power they will restore to the people such freedom of speech and organisation as is possible under the present political set-up; release all political prisoners held without trial without any distinction; appoint a public enquiry commission to go into the killings in jails and thana lock-ups and elsewhere since the fall of the second UF government, and adequately punish the guilty officers and their principal accomplices.

Is there any possibility of the pledge being given? The CPI(M) leadership is confronting a formidable

## Letters

### Dangers Ahead

My revolutionary credentials are weak but I must write this letter. Three terrible dangers face us today and we, all and each one of us, must recognise these dangers and fight them.

Each legal party has experimented with various forms of fascism. They had built fanatical goonda bahinis, killed opponents, captured, tortured and murdered the revolutionaries of the CPI(ML), used the police to terrorise entire areas and liquidate opposition. The Congress, with the Government behind it, is now coordinating, legalising and institutionalising these fascist forms. Instead of local outbreaks, it is becoming a countrywide phenomenon. The Congress Government fascism is based on state monopoly bureaucratic capital. It is now, with the help of all legal parties, forcing our people into the first genuinely fascist elec-

tions to be held in India, thus opening up a future of exploitation coupled with oppression; oppression which is brutalised and brutality has already been made a virtue.

Urged and commanded by Russian social and U.S. imperialism, aided and abetted by every legal party in India, the Congress and its Government is preparing for a new adventure. Youth Congress pamphlets, Dalai Lama's movements, the Indian Army's preparations, McNamara's statements about India becoming a big power, all point to this looming danger. When this happens, not only will the Indian people be ground deeper into misery, but the liberation and revolutionary struggles of the whole world will suffer.

These dangers are becoming real everyday. How shall we fight them?

T. DAS  
Calcutta

opponent; any support from any anti-Congress (R) elements will help them to achieve what they desire; it is therefore, quite probable that they will give the pledge to gain support.

Are you not advising us to spread reformist illusions among the people? —the communist revolutionaries may ask. No, we are not. We ask them to frankly tell the people the bitter truth that no state ministry of a bloc of petty-bourgeois parties under the semi-colonial state structure of India can or will solve any of their problems in a substantial measure; only their own united struggles guided by a determined revolutionary leadership can lead them to win some of their immediate vital demands. The revolutionaries must never relent in their effort of concretely exposing the real character of the ministry.

But a petty-bourgeois ministry can restore some of the democratic rights. The people need those rights. The revolutionaries need them, too. So they should fight to win them and use them properly.

ANJAN LAHIRI  
Serampore

### On The List

On January 14 a group of local roughs forced their entry into the premises of Kamarpukur College and demanded immediate resignation of as many as 19 professors and a number of the non-teaching staff. They accused the teachers of participation in the political activities of the CPM, which they considered unworthy of people closely associated with an ideal educational institution. These people made no bones about their determination even to liquidate the teachers should they fail to comply with their demands. Apprehending physical torture and even death, 17 teachers submitted their resignation forthwith. The rest did not, simply because they were absent. The principal accepted the resignations of four who had close party affiliations and warned them that thenceforth they must seek his permission before

coming to the college. A committee was formed by the accusers to decide the fate of the 13 others, and the obliging principal accepted the proposal. The ruffians, alleged to be members of the Congress (R), assaulted the teachers amidst hysterical shouts of 'Bande Mataram' in the presence of the SDPO (Arambagh) and the Second Officer of Goghat P.S.

The incident, of course, had its origin in the alleged theft of an answer-script from the examination hall. This, it is said, belonged to a student-leader of the Chhatra Parishad taking the B.A. Part I examination in Sanskrit Honours in 1970 from Kamarpukur College. A student, the General Secretary of the BPSF of the college, was blamed for the offence and was beaten up by the ruffians of the Chhatra Parishad who forced him to admit that he had actually stolen the answer-script. They would also have him give in writing that a number of teachers had helped him. All this happened in the presence of the principal who did nothing. In the following days the supporters of the BPSF were mercilessly beaten up and leaflets were circulated by the members of the Chhatra Parishad seeking co-operation of the public in their crusade against the CPM intellectuals. The local leaders of the Congress (R) followed suit.

Unfortunately enough, the WBC-UTA remained silent at first though the matter was brought to its notice in due time. Its inaction can perhaps be explained by the fact that the General Secretary of the organisation happens to be associated with the CPI.

HAREKRISHNA RAY  
Calcutta

### Non-Aggression Pact

I have read with avid interest the article written by Mr Hasan (January 8). I beg to differ with him when he condemns the Soviet Union indirectly or questions its morality for concluding a non-aggression pact

with Hitler's Germany. He writes: "In the recent Indo-Pakistani conflict over Bangladesh, the Soviet concern for genocide and lack of democracy cannot be taken in good faith. In fact at the height of the German genocide, the Soviet Union concluded a non-aggression pact with Hitler in 1939...."

History has justified the pact. It gave Russia breathing time to make all-out preparations for an ultimate war to be fought against Germany. Everyone knows that the battle of Stalingrad sealed the fate of Germany and thus mankind was saved forever from a greater genocide at the hands of Hitler.

Even after signing the pact Stalin had no illusion about Hitler's real design against Russia. He knew clearly Hitler's demand for a Lebensraum for the future of the Volk.

In order to defend China's role in Bangladesh, Mr Hasan also indulges in queer logic in favour of his argument. According to him, China has condemned India and Russia because she had genuine "concern for the revolutionary movement" in East Bengal. If that is the real position of China, why did she not come out with open verbal support for these "revolutionaries" when she had been doing the same thing in the case of Vietnam? China's diplomatic relation with India did not debar her from supporting openly the cause of the Naxalites in our country.

Imagining the existence of a "revolutionary movement" in East Bengal (where there is none) and then counselling the ill-armed Mukti Bahini not to accept any military help from any quarter only means, indirectly, supporting a course of wholesale massacre by the Pakistani troops. It is nothing but hypocrisy and self-deception. In the days of the War of Independence (1778-82) 'Republican' America received military assistance from 'Monarchist' France.

S. P. BASU  
Ballavpore, Midnapore

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