

LETTER

'OCTOBER 8, 1971'

My attention has been drawn to the letter written by N K Chatterjee about the cold-blooded killing of Siddhartha Mitra, a young CPI(ML) activist on October 8, 1971 (Vide *Frontier*, June 19-25, 2011). The matter was reported in the book *Bharatiya Ganatantrer Swarup* (Real Face of Indian Democracy) published by the Association for the Protection of Democratic Rights, West Bengal. One of the fellows who saw the corpse and had it photographed reported the incident to me in 1984. If the description given by that fellow and N K Chatterjee is correct, and if the Indian legal system is to be respected, it follows that both the then DM and the SP of Birbhum should have been tried under section 302 of the Indian Penal Code. But the tragedy of our country is that administrators and police officers are always in an advantageous position to suppress evidence of crimes committed by them. Manish Gupta, the then DM, ostensibly served the Indira Gandhi-Siddhartha regime faithfully. It is also clear that he later succeeded in becoming a blue-eyed boy of Alimuddin Street; otherwise how could he get the post of the Chief Secretary to the Government of West Bengal at a time when the party control was supposedly ubiquitous in key appointments? Let the people, including singers like Pratul Mukherjee, form their own opinion.

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