

frontier

Vol. 5: No. 18

AUGUST 12, 1972

PRICE : 35 PAISE

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PRINTED AT MODERN INDIA PRESS,
7, RAJA SUBODH MULLICK SQUARE,
CALCUTTA-13 AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY
FOR GERMINAL PUBLICATIONS (P) LTD.
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JUBILEE WITHOUT JUBILATION

A lavish programme has been drawn up by the Government of India and the State governments to celebrate the silver jubilee of independence on 15 August. The Prime Minister's penchant for midnight dramatics will find an opportunity for full play at the midnight session of Parliament where she may reveal the secret of "garibi hatao" despite the "seasonal" rise in prices that will not come down even when the season is over. In the State capitals her hand-picked Chief Ministers will enact the drama in a somewhat abridged form but generously interpolating passages flattering to their leader. A few tears will perhaps be shed for those unfortunate who failed to hold out for a few days more and have died of starvation or, if you will, malnutrition, thus depriving themselves of the privilege of witnessing the jubilee pageantry. It may, however, gratify these disembodied ones to learn that on their account feasting and illumination will not be on the scale originally planned. Calcutta citizens will doubly welcome this token mourning, for they may be spared increased hours of load-shedding to provide for a well-lit jubilee.

The Government has a point, though, in ordering celebrations on this royal scale. The tryst with destiny remains unproductive even after twentyfive years. People die of starvation, though the government claims to have brought about a green revolution; drought and flood wreak havoc in contiguous districts despite the multi-purpose river valley projects; Harijans are hunted like animals and are burnt or speared to death, and their womenfolk are paraded naked if they have the effrontery to insist on any of the rights granted them by the law; unemployment mounts despite the expenditure of thousands of crores of rupees on labour-intensive schemes; zamindars thrive even after laws to abolish zamindari have been faithfully implemented; and wealth accumulates in a few hands in spite of the imposition of expropriatory taxes on high incomes. The police are still the master; they extort, harass, abuse, maim, and kill, depending on what they think a given situation demands. The agents of the Government remain corrupt, indolent, and bribe-happy. Independence has brought about no change at the points of contact between the average citizen and the Government. The gigantism of twentyfive years has passed him by as have the social and economic reforms.

Even politics have not changed. A generation has passed; the

daughter has succeeded the father, but she is cast in his image and disowns the generation gap. The principle of one-party-one-leader still holds good; there has been no real change of leadership and not even an apparent change of the party in power. Democratic rights remain frozen at freedom to agree with everything that the leader does and says. The parties of the left have not been able to get out of their habit of worming their way to the leader whenever opportunity occurs, of growling when rebuffed and tail-wagging when patted; they refuse to grow up and revel in their perennial adolescence.

Mere Drought, Not Famine

It is a vagary of Nature that India, in this year of the silver jubilee of her independence, should be visited by a drought. According to the pattern set since 1949, the drought should have occurred in 1970 or at the latest in 1971, leaving 1972 free to the anniversary-wallahs in the country. But Nature ordained otherwise, oblivious of the inconveniences thus caused. However, zealous people, thanks to the glorious Indian tradition, have established the superiority of mind over body and the silver jubilee pomp starts on August 14 midnight.

Not that the Indian ostriches are not stirred by the severity of the drought. Every stricken State is quite active, on the mission of extracting drought aid from the Centre. The Union Agriculture Minister, who, so far as 1972 is concerned, should consider himself a Drought Minister, is equally active, out on a fact-finding mission lest the Centre should be cheated by any State on this drought count. The men who disburse relief funds have no reason to be dismayed by the rains that have eventually come, because the havoc on agriculture is already done. The drought may have withered the poor peasants but will fatten the relief-mongers.

It is natural in the circumstances that the people should be unable to distinguish one year of freedom from another and need to be told from the ramparts of the Red Fort that our independence is another year old. The jubilee celebrations have to be different from the annual ritual to make them realise that a milestone in time is being crossed. The celebrations are meant as a daub on the unrelieved grey of the years of independence to separate the undistinguished past from the undistinguishable future; they mark the close of a quarter-century of unfulfilled promises and unrealised hopes.

With a comfortable buffer stock of 9.5 million tons, there is no threat of famine. That is to say, people who have money will get foodgrains alright. But what about the peasants who constitute the bulk of the population and who live and earn money through their work on the crops? When a West Bengal Minister says complacently that more and more rations are being lifted from the statutory and modified ration shops, he plays a self-projecting fool. But not West Bengal alone. The Centre too is talking about improvement of the distribution system.

In the north-eastern regions of the country, drought has been compounded with the floods. The twin natural phenomena, beyond the control of the shortsighted ruling class, have released a veritable flood of clichés: emergency situation, war-footing, long-term planning and all the rest that goes with it. The drought or floods do not hurt the upper section of the people as the prospect of a war does. It makes it more enthusiastic about defence preparations against a political enemy than a natural phenomenon. The Defence Minister says that the country will not slacken its defence production, in spite of the enormous burden it entails. So long such peo-

ple continue to stay at the helm of the country, all discussions on how to check floods and drought will remain academic, enabling some of the planners to go abroad on a sight-seeing tour. As for us we must learn to live with five-year plans and five-year droughts interspersed with floods.

The Export Muddle

Lalit Narayan Mishra normally does not like to be involved in political controversies. But such as luck would have it, the ministry he heads at the Centre never seems to be very far away from one controversy or another. Last year, soon after he had announced with obvious self-satisfaction a 8.5% rise in exports for 1970-71, there came the disclosure that the figures were actually somewhat inflated due to calculating errors. Subsequently, when the Reserve Bank came out with its own figures, the discrepancy was made still starkly bare. There was a furore and the issue came up even before Parliament. Still Mishra could have expected the storm to blow over if only there were no repetition of the same thing this year too. But the 1971-72 figures also do not seem to have done much better and are reportedly lower than actual. Some of the exports to Bangladesh are alleged to have been left out. The Foreign Trade Ministry has neither confirmed nor denied the charge yet but Mishra, obviously more annoyed than embarrassed, has asked the Director General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics to go on leave. The fact, however, remains that the credibility rating of even such vital official statistics like export figures has again been further eroded.

But more important than the mistaken addition or subtraction of a few crores of rupee is the question of the all-too-evident trend in the country's export trade. It is clear that actual exports are lagging behind

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even the modest target of 7% annual growth—the minimum that the country needs just not to depend more hopelessly on foreign assistance. In the first three years of the Fourth Plan, the growth rate has averaged at 5%, and it is not very likely that the leeway could be made up in the last two. In fact, if the exports growth in 1971-72 has just managed to crawl up to the humble figure of 2.1%, it is largely because of some fortuitous factors like the mini-boom in jute goods sales helped by the virtual absence of the erstwhile East Pakistan from the world market and the exports to Bangladesh. But if the former is not likely to last for long, particularly because of the trade offensive Dacca has already mounted in jute exports, the latter is more of a kind of mere transfer accounting as sales to Bangladesh are largely financed out of Indian credit. So something more is needed if the export sector is not to become a drag to the economy. Mishra is talking about gimmicks like compulsory export quotas for certain industries and "restructuring" of the export strategy with greater stress on trade with the socialist countries and with the Asian neighbours. But if only he could curb the rampant over-invoicing and under-invoicing racket indulged in by a section of trade with a bit more of that socialistic commitment, the export figures will present a quite different look.

Thailand

The slow-flowing Mekong which touches the north-eastern fringe of Thailand seems to have linked up the latter's fate with the rest of Indochina. With the Vietnam war approaching the other side of the Mekong Thailand's deceptive peace is being threatened and the air is increasingly becoming sulphurous. Though Thailand is away from the mainstream of the Vietnam conflict, it is deeply committed to it and this involvement has increased with the recent escala-

tion. Throughout the war the country has been used by the U.S. air force as its main staging ground; U.S. air bases dot the Nakorn Ratchasima, Udon Thani and Ubon Ratchathani provinces. Withdrawal of most U.S. troops from South Vietnam and the shift to the air war have revived these bases and reactivated a number of once rejected airstrips in Nakhon Phanom.

But Bangkok's main threat is from its own countryside. Early this year it ruthlessly suppressed the Meo uprising in northern Thailand. But the new danger is from the north-east. Ominous reports of new communist activities are steadily pouring into the capital and the insurgents appear to be far more firmly saddled in their jungle hideouts and on the mountains than their brethren in the north. Intelligence sources have reported that the guerillas are now descending on the villages after their uncertain jungle life. A political network has already been established in these villages and a formal takeover of Nakhon Phanom is said to be imminent. The changing fortunes of the Indochina war also favoured the communists more than the men in Bangkok. Control of Route 13, paralleling the Mekong on the Laotian border and the Bolovens plateau, by the communists has permitted the Thai reds to move in men and material without much difficulty and build up, despite the border guards.

Thanom Kittikachron, the Chairman of the National Executive Council, and his men have brusquely ordered mass evacuation from the region and subsequent weeding out of the communists from the jungles. But his attempt may not bear much fruit as the Thai insurgents, already rooted firmly in their base, have both the resources and the sophistication to foil this clearing operation. And Thailand's fast sinking economy may not give Bangkok the necessary breathing time. Thanom Kittikachron has initiated a number of impressive looking rural development programmes and the generous Americans are funding

them. Accelerated Rural Development Plans, Mekong river programmes and other package plans, American style, are being spawned daily. But the baht is losing its worthiness steadily and the peasants are discontented. The situation has further been complicated by the presence of American bases and the proliferating social and economic malaises that go with them. Thanom's U.S.-manned counter-insurgency army may maul the red guerillas temporarily this time. But the objective condition for their resurgence will remain.

Going Nuts

Thomas Eagleton, the Democratic Party's Vice-Presidential nominee, seems to many to have blown off the whole thing for George McGovern by suddenly confessing to the world the secret that, back in the 1960s, he was thrice hospitalised for mental disbalance resulting from nervous exhaustion and fatigue and twice given electro-shock therapy. The confession not only blighted, Eagleton's prospects, it put McGovern and his party between two horns of a dilemma; on the one hand to carry Eagleton on the ticket meant running with a man whose fitness for high office is jeopardised by his medical history; on the other, to jettison him meant putting the party to the painful task of finding a better candidate at this late stage of the election campaign. McGovern had to do it, however. The hard political calculation of the electorate cut through all the generous human sympathy for Eagleton's personal misfortune. Four out of five think that he should have told McGovern about his medical history before accepting the Vice-Presidential nomination. When the secret was out a large number of Americans liked him to resign from the Democratic ticket. Doubts about his future were not mitigated by the American Psychiatric Association's statement that the depression from which Eagleton had

Mazumdar's Last Writing

BY A CORRESPONDENT

been suffering back in the 1960s is a treatable and curable condition. Most Americans seem too ill-educated to be able to make the distinction between mental depression and derangement. They were against voting for a guy who might go nuts if the Russians or whatever put the pressure on him.

A Pentagon official who obviously wanted to score against Eagleton privately pointed out that a military man with Eagleton's history might well be disqualified from high-risk assignments, such as those involving nuclear weapons. The official lacks education, for American Presidents have a long tradition of 'madness', and even a casual study of American history might have informed the official that John Adams, James Madison, John Quincy Adams and Abraham Lincoln all experienced periods of acute melancholia and lassitude that would be treated today with electric shocks.

There might be yet another way of looking at Eagleton's supposed 'insanity'. Haven't the Americans already had enough of sanity, the calculated, diabolic sanity that has plunged them in the billion-dollar lunar race while one of the major problems facing mankind today is plain and simple poverty, the sanity that has put them to the embarrassing task of hiding the Vietnamese skeleton in the expansive cupboard of Yankee culture, and that has, according to the estimates of the National Institute of Mental Health, driven more than 250,000 Americans off their nuts? Well, the world might really go in for a taste of American insanity, for it couldn't be any the worse than what American sanity has already made it.

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

WITH the death of Mr Charu Mazumdar, natural or otherwise, it is being said that the CPI (ML) movement in India, particularly in West Bengal, will gradually disappear. But some top officers of the Central Intelligence Department who came to Calcutta from Delhi shortly after the arrest of Mr Mazumdar, it is reported, held a different view.

The report they prepared on the basis of information supplied by the Special Branch of the West Bengal police and after continuous interrogation of Mr Mazumdar during his 12 days' stay in the Lalbazar lock-up is said to have pointed to the fact that Mr Mazumdar had been very much busy organising his party at an all-India level for the past two months. Somewhere in Calcutta a meeting of the Central Committee of the CPI (ML) was held in June and it was attended by leaders from different parts of the country, particularly from States like Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and Bihar. Mr Mazumdar who presided over the meeting, the report says, presented a new thesis to the party to develop a countrywide movement on that basis. The report, it is reliably learnt, further states that a well-organised group of CPI (ML) leaders is still active in different parts of the country and they are waiting for an opportune moment to launch "Naxalbari-like armed struggles" in different zones with renewed vigour.

What should be the guideline of the next phase of the CPI (ML) movement is clearly defined by Charu Mazumdar in his latest thesis. The thesis, published after Mr Mazumdar's death in the July 31 issue of *Deshabrati*, a Bengali mouthpiece of the CPI (ML), is said to be the last writing of Mr Mazumdar. It bears the date 9.6.72. Printed from the underground, the current issue of

Deshabrati has been sent to different newspaper offices in the city by post as it had been done on previous occasions.

Mr Mazumdar in his latest thesis urged his partymen to carry forward the task of building the Party among the "basic" masses, and to establish, on the basis of struggle, a united front with the broadest sections of the people. Mr Mazumdar in his thesis said, "A broadest united front against the Congress rule can be established."

The thesis says, "Today the 'leftist' parties are not giving any lead for struggling against the oppression the Congress is perpetrating on the ordinary people. The worker-peasant masses within these parties have resentment against their leadership. We have to carry on efforts to be united with them on the basis of united struggle. Even those who at one time practised enmity towards us will in special circumstances come forward to be united with us. We must have the largeness of mind to be united with all these forces. Largeness of mind is the quality of the communists. It is the people's interest that today demands united struggle. It is the people's interest that is the party's interest."

It further says, "The armed struggle in our country has, after reaching a stage, suffered a setback. Our task at this time is to keep the Party alive. We will have to build the party among the broad worker-peasant masses. If only we can build a politically united party we shall be able to overcome this setback, to raise the struggle to a stage still higher than before. I hope that we shall be able to achieve it within a very short period."

Mr Mazumdar concluded his thesis with a hope that a countrywide upsurge would soon develop. He says, "An upsurge is coming. A country-

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wide upsurge. We must keep this upsurge in view. Then only we will have self-confidence. Before this we witnessed upsurges in one or two districts. The upsurge that is coming will be spread over a still wider area, it will be of a still higher stage than before. It has to be remembered that the progress of struggle is not evolutionary but revolutionary. If we consider the way in which the struggle under the Party's leadership is progressing and calculate on that basis, our country cannot be liberated even by 2001, what to speak of its being liberated by 1975. Since the progress and development of struggle is revolutionary, the upsurge in the coming days will no longer be confined within a small area in which it occurred yesterday and the struggle in the days ahead will be still deeper and of a still higher stage than that of the past.

"Shall we be able to provide leadership everywhere during the upsurge that is coming? Certainly not. The struggle in areas where there will be our conscious leadership will act as an example to areas where our party leadership is not present. If we are able today to accomplish the work of land reforms in some areas the work of land reforms may be done spontaneously in many areas during this revolutionary upsurge. Our conscious leadership will give birth to armed revolutionary upsurge, it is through this armed revolutionary upsurge that our leadership will be gradually established everywhere. In a short period a spontaneous resentment will develop in our country and it will ultimately take the character of a national upsurge. India is a vast country. The people are crippled by torture and exploitation. The exploiters and exploited are now living in two distinct camps and face each other. The hatred is generating among the exploited masses. They will not allow torture to continue. Their growing resentment will soon lead to spontaneous explosions in different parts of the country. When the people of this vast country will explode no reactionary

government will be able to control it."

The editorial of the July 31 issue of *Deshabrati* alleged that like Mr Saroj Dutta, Charu Mazumdar was killed. It alleged that during his 12 days' stay in Lalbazar lock-up no medical treatment was given to him. The doctors were forced to issue the death certificate, it alleged.

It said that the Indira Government would not tolerate any kind of political opposition. It is mercilessly indifferent to the starvation deaths of 50 poor and landless peasants in Malda and West Dinajpur. The Government of Mysore, it is alleged,

had recently encouraged the police to open fire on groups of young job-seekers in front of a rubber factory at Kalyani killing two instantly. The Government supported the joint police-Congress workers attack on a demonstrating crowd before the Maharashtra Assembly when it went to protest against the action of the police who forced a Harijan girl to walk naked in a Maharashtra village recently.

The July 23 issue of *Deshabrati* gave a detailed report of armed struggle under the leadership of the CPI(ML) in Haryana, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar.

A Tale Of Two Cities

N. K. SINGH

NEW Delhi's initiative in ordering an official inquiry into the recent riots in two of the U.P. towns, Firozabad and Varanasi, is not going to solve the crux of the problem, i.e., the fear complex which haunts the minds of the minority community. Nothing short of a judicial inquiry or an all-party parliamentary inquiry will restore the people's faith in the secular credentials of Mrs Gandhi's Government. So far the so-called 'law and order' wing of the Government is concerned, one or two suspensions and making a few petty policemen scapegoats would not do; the entire department needs a reorientation.

But the primary task before the ruling party is to purge its own organisational structure of the hidden and not-so-hidden communal elements. The irresponsible statements of the U.P. Chief Minister, who was all praise for the police, and the behaviour of some of the local Congress leaders have destroyed the faith of the people—particularly the minorities who had to face the wrath of the Provincial Armed Constabulary in Firozabad and Varanasi between June 16 and 19—not only in the ad-

ministration but also in the party in power.

As it has become pretty clear now, the riots in Firozabad and Varanasi were provoked, instigated and supported by the police and the PAC on duty there and not merely the handiwork of communal forces on either side. Even a hurried tour of the torn towns and a study of the state of affairs will be enough to confirm this view-point.

Thirty-two persons (eleven in Varanasi and 21 in Firozabad) are officially reported to have been killed in the riots and property worth several lakhs of rupees destroyed or looted. Non-official sources put the death toll at 75—60 in Firozabad and 15 in Varanasi, 66 either by the PAC bullets or by the knife of some assassins who, in most cases, were protected by those who were charged with the responsibility of maintaining law and order.

Nearly 300 shops, workshops, small factories, houses and thatched huts of the poor—two hundred of them in Firozabad—were burnt down.

In Firozabad, the majestic three-storeyed Jama Masjid was put on fire along with the aged, paralytic

Imam, whom both Hindus and Muslims used to respect. Another small mosque was also set alight and the tomb of Shah Sufi, a little distance away from the town, was desecrated. The Islamia Inter College, which used to cater to 60 per cent Hindu students, was burnt and almost razed to the ground systematically in several instalments.

In Varanasi, at least six mosques were damaged.

Almost all these actions took place while the towns were under 'strict' curfew and orders to 'shoot at sight'!

Similarities

Curiously enough there are similarities between the riots at the two places. A close inquiry will reveal that the modus operandi adopted by the PAC was the same.

At both places, the riots took place following the observance of the protest day by a section of the Muslims against the Aligarh Muslim University Act at the call of the same Muslim communal organisations.

At both places, the trouble started with police-Muslim scuffle, and in the absence of general tension and mass participation on either side, the situation could very well have been controlled at the primary stage had it been handled tactfully.

Once the clash took place between the police and some turbulent youths belonging to the minority community—it is alleged—the former tried to give it a communal colour. It gave a free hand to goondas, themselves turning into benign—nay militant—onlookers. Muslim houses were set on fire, Muslim areas attacked and their shops looted and ransacked. The police also indulged in these actions. Instances have been reported of policemen snatching away ornaments from minor girls and women, with their ear-lobes torn off in the process. There were also quite a few cases when the PAC killed innocent men and raped women. There were also cases where the police put "safety" cordons around houses and told the goondas to go ahead with arson and looting.

A few cases will suffice to give an idea of what it must have been like :

"Police came to my house at 3 a.m. They came over the roofs of houses and got people while they were asleep. I was abused and beaten up and they broke both my wrists with rifle butts."

"They came three times to our place in the night of 16-17, attacked our houses and assaulted my daughters each time."

"PAC and the local police came at about 3-30 a.m. They jumped over the walls and came to the roof with a gun. 'We will burn the houses if you do not open', they said to those who were afraid to open their doors. They beat us and took us to the police station where we were given no water. And those who persisted in asking for it were urinated on."

These accounts are not exaggerations. I saw the victims of wanton violence in Firozabad, one old man shot through his shoulder, a girl with torn ear-lobes as she had had her ear-rings pulled off, a whole street where almost all male members bore the marks of severe beating even ten days after the incident. In fact, as a result of the treatment meted out to the unfortunate victims who had been hauled up and huddled together in the crowded lock-up in the Eastern Police Station, one small shopkeeper, Id Mohammad, died before he could reach the jail where they were to be lodged.

However, people are terrified of giving accurate evidence regarding the behaviour of the police, as intimidation is still going on. Even at the time of writing, the police are reportedly going round with fake warrants and extorting money from innocent people. Also, not many women are willing to give evidence regarding how they were maltreated, though, some did come forward with veiled accounts of assault.

Firozabad

In Firozabad, a curious phenomenon was the complete absence of any loss of life and property of the Hin-

dus living in Muslim areas. On the contrary, many Hindus, especially the poor ones, tell of the way the Muslims protected them and gave them food or milk for their children.

As for Hindu involvement, it was more inspired than willing. The police and the PAC, by their behaviour, aided and abetted Hindu goondas. However, the extent of such participation, or at least the measure of support for the attacks of the police, can be ascertained by the *langars* (free eating places) opened to feed the PAC in many localities of Firozabad.

Another amazing phenomenon was that things only improved when the CRP and the BSF were brought in and the functioning of the local administration was brought to an end.

Another notable thing, which may be an indication of the new technique of the frustrated communalist arsonists of both the communities, is that during the riots none of the leaders of either the Jamaat-e-Islami or the Jana Sangh-RSS came out in the open, though it is reported that all the shakhas of the Firozabad town RSS met jointly on the 15th evening and the Swayamsevak were asked to teach the Muslims a good lesson "should anything happen during the proposed bandh". But of course the well-knit RSS organisation was busy spreading rumours to influence Hindu opinion. At both places all sorts of wild rumours were in circulation.

But the most important fact that emerges from a closer scrutiny of the Varanasi and Firozabad riots—and also the riots at Jabalpur, Ranchi and Ahmedabad—is that while the attack was on the minority community as a whole, it was directed with special vehemence at the craftsmen and the workers, whose homes were looted, living jeopardised and who were subjected to physical torture. The former—weavers in the case of Varanasi and bangle-makers in the case of Firozabad—had had their tools looted and would no doubt be reduced to factory hands soon enough.

West Bengal : Agony And Ecstasy

I. K. SHUKLA

WHAT Bengal suffers today the rest of India may suffer tomorrow. These lines result from this concern. The aim having been destruction unlimited, West Bengal was left with the agony part of the caption. The ecstasy escaped elsewhere.

The ghastly horrors perpetrated in and around Calcutta going unreported in the kept press would make mockery of the loud protestations of the so-called concern for the freedom of the press by the jute and steel barons and their pen-pushing retinue. The English, Bengali and Hindi dailies of Calcutta established a record, not so enviable, in journalistic immorality. Consequently, the rest of India would not know the chamber of horrors that West Bengal was turned into during 1969-70-71. The question of a countrywide reaction, therefore, to the events here, is superfluous.

What was the reaction and creative response of the literati here? Political commitment, or lack of it, apart, did the litterateurs here rise to the occasion and refuse to be swamped by the massive apathy and craven 'unconcern'? Perhaps their protest remained individual and cautious or unknown. But it is an uneasy thought that they remained, the bigwigs, on the whole, on the safe side of the fence during the three years of travail here.

To the man-made famine ravaging Bengal in 1943 the collective response of the writers was quite adequate, and journalism played its proper role in the exposure of the tragedy. The country was not kept in the dark. But that was before 'Independence'. The jute press is now more 'free' and would not abide our question.

Coming to the literary exposé of a national tragedy I recall a longish Hindi poem, *Bangal Ka Kal* by the eminent Hindi poet, Dr H. R.

Bachchan, which, capturing as it did some of the anguish rampant here, had stirred the Hindi world considerably. That such a literary reaction leading to a verbal freeze of a tragic moment in our lives has been absent all over India vis-a-vis the '69-'71 nightmare in West Bengal, would prove, among other things, that it is the rulers who keep the people divided and disunited, in their own sordid interest. On such occasions nobody screams 'Akhand Bharat'. These cries are used, effectively enough, against the conjured bugbears, viz., Pakistan and China. Will the political parties, particularly of the rightist complexion, please note?

It would be a simpleton who betrayed a righteous shock at the atrocities inflicted in West Bengal. And one from U.P. would ill feign horror at the fascist ferocity let loose in this hapless part of the country, because U.P. has distinguished itself in phenomenal police savagery and can well claim the plum for it. But that a whole State was subjected to a well-knocked out plan of 'pacification' makes West Bengal's experience look so horrid. This should make us sit up.

I was thinking of Satinath Bhadhuri's *Jagori*, a novel on the 1942 movement at a point when the revolutionaries were released following a compromise with the British. If I recollect aright, he lived in Bihar, and this Bengali novel had created quite a sensation. A Hindi novel *Paro'e Par* by Brajendranath Gaur too had made its mark on the literary landscape and the popular mind. Naturally enough, having gleaned from afar a stray item or two from a few independent Bengali and English weeklies, I was keen on exploring literary manifestations touching upon a horror-session of three years in West Bengal. The job proved rewarding, and the sense of stark

helplessness and blackout has given way to some optimistic relief. An additional comfort is the thought that the Bengali literary output was not all sex and crime or historical romance and religious pilgrimage with which alone the Hindi world has been mostly made familiar of late. That all the voices have not been muffled nor all protest muted is something one can still feel thankful for. That the literary craftsmen have not abdicated their responsibility as conscience-keepers of the community and that one need not be evasive or apologetic about their role in a tragic situation is a major relief.

The few short stories and poems that will be considered here as projecting the terror trail are not detailed as propagandist writing, but in the words of Sartre, as 'a secondary method of action which we may call action by disclosure'. One only wishes this action by disclosure were more concerted, massive, frontal and fiery. It should be made clear at the outset that the writing or their corpus I have at my disposal need not be regarded as either exhaustive or representative. I am using them as symbols of literary expression embodying certain situations and, in some cases, attitudes. My ignorance of the political leanings (or lack of it) of most of the writers is surely my asset in a way, and a safe launching pad.

Perhaps these, being too close to the events, in certain cases, are too tentative, or tenuous or turgid. Perhaps many among the writers, not represented here, were too stunned by the immediacy of the happenings to be able to write. Perhaps, some of them did not venture into writing for not having known these crimes at first hand. All the same, the short stories, nearly all, appear more mature, stirring and spontaneous. The same, I am afraid, cannot be said for all the poems with me.

'Calcutta, Calcutta' (M. Acharya) would appear, on the surface, a listless romance of a metropolitan city. But at a subtler probing it yields another meaning: Sita has been waiting the whole evening for Nikhilesh who, for having 'broken' the military cordon, has been shot dead. The police knock at her door at the dead of night. Sita's name and address on a slip was recovered from the pocket of the deceased. Does she know him and would she identify him at the morgue? Sita: No.

'Abhinoya' (M. Pal) is a tale of tragic camouflage. Mahadeva, a postal peon and his wife, have lost their son Anil, 21 years old, killed by the police, and pretend not to know it, keep themselves cool and would not weep lest it betray them. What a strain it implies for the mother and what considerations impel the peon to dissimulation have been most movingly brought out.

'Aaleya Shudhu' (M. Sen) is remarkable for using certain haunting metaphors. 'Darkness like a killing ground', 'Kurukshetra battle-field', 'the accursed killing place'. Mothers, in the dark, after the carnage, seeking the bodies of their sons on the littered field, like archetypal primadonnas of antiquity silhouetted in an unending quest. This ancient, limitless dark, this ocean of gloom. Vulgarly watching it from above and a safe distance is the industrialist's mansion, all lit up and lewd.

'Pipasa' (N. Chattopadhyay) is a memorable record of callosity, crime, gasp for life and eventual fade-off into a death-wanton and woeful. The young boy, left shot in the field, gets Dayamayee, sharp of tongue, fearless and old, to wet his lips with a few drops of Ganga water. But it was too late. The metamorphosis and human courage of the erstwhile shrew are artistic sleights.

'Topu Chole Jachhe' (P. Sen) shows a young boy, Topu, after some torture in a police lock-up, returned home but thoroughly broken and leaving Calcutta for safe sanctuary at some distant relative's place. His crime? His youth!

His father realises reality to be more perilous than the truth. The school-teacher that he is, he is in a fix as to where his son was at fault. His mother is cryptic and cutting: 'The whole country is aflame. Where is a safe place-?'

'Ekti Mastani Golper Bhumika' (T. Ghosh), even if slightly diffuse, is not only a humanistic document but also a moving record of the insensate violence and idiotic criminality of our law enforcement machinery which turns ordinary men into patriots. A teacher who avoided the so-called locality louts finally finds out they are all innocent victims of an anonymous devil.

'Paramanavik Chukti Ebong Neeladri kolkatay Buddha Purnima' (S. Das). Neeladri has waded through dead and half-dead bodies at night on Buddha Purnima, and it shatters him. Who killed whom is meaningless when they are all young, in bloom, cut prematurely dead.

'Calcutta: 1970' (A. Mukhopadhyay) proves Bibha right in her naming the roads of Calcutta the Depot of Dangers, wrong in her evaluation of human character. Her son is killed, she is shot in the arm, another boy, a friend of her son, is bleeding from a shot too. But this boy, whom she hated formerly, pledges revenge for his lost friend and consoles Bibha who is too shocked for words. He disappears in 'the serpentine dark'.

A satirical masterpiece is 'Ganantra and Gopal Kahar' (A. Mukhopadhyay). A frame-up, foul and false in the extreme, ends in Gopal losing one of his arms. Released from jail he vows to sacrifice the second in establishing a popular, real republic. The policemen beat and batter him 'for saving democracy', at the instance of the affluent jotedar. Its pathos and vignettes of the human mind are so sharp as its message is trenchant.

'Jol poka' (S. Dasgupta) shows a father having seen his own son in a pool of blood. How would he convey this to his wife? He himself has been threatened by hooded ruffians.

Will he be able to live decently hereafter?

S. Biswas' 'Jibon Japan' is the portrayal of a poor teacher's life, dismal and drifting, around him bombs exploding, his demoralization, his perplexity.

S. Chattopadhyay in 'Raktim Basanta' shows a beggar and a maid visiting the city to see it celebrate the advent of spring. But there they find the air overlaid with fear of death, people talking in whispers, young students arrested for just singing a song.

'Er Nam Samajdeh' (G. Bhattacharya) depicts how harassed by the police, and advised by the lawyer friend, Biram Choudhury is reconciled to persuade his son in police lock-up or jail to own the false charges framed against him.

These stories are testimonies in art about the savage repression, anguish, sacrifice, loss, anger and courage witnessed on a terrible scale by West Bengal. It is a mystery why some of the maudlin sentiments for Bangladesh could not as well have been shown for the West Bengal tragedy which was the more intense because it was made obscure and obscene.

I do not know if all this is the necessary price West Bengal must pay for being in the vanguard. But this doubt, questioning and exploration on her part, are any day preferable to the safety of impassivity, dull and docile. Bengal saw everything old crumble, crash and found itself cheated and ravaged. Bashirhat-Diamond Harbour-Birbhum-Baranagar-Cossipure-Behala are only some of the bloody pennants. The writers of the short stories discussed here, whatever their political affiliation, are agreed as to something gone seriously wrong. The spate of murder and killing is for some a radicalization of politics, for others, inter-party strife, and for still others, inhuman barbarism.

True, all of these are not of an even order. But they all are ablaze with anger, pain, satire. Their orchestration is in some cases loud, in

others, light. It is proper that in the immediate heat and proximity of these tearful and terrible events the writers have refrained from indicating any suggestion as to the way out of this all-enveloping darkness and inglorious network of death. Perhaps

this is neither easy, nor discreet. But that their conscience in conjunction with their creative impulse has prodded them into forceful verbalization of the events around them, bloody and brutal, is in itself an achievement.

II

A mass circulation Hindi weekly months ago published a Bengali short story which proved, in many ways, a major event. It had appeared earlier in *Desh*. The hero hemmed in by violence, of course 'Naxal', implicitly, is aghast to discover that he has lost his sexual potency! The moral is obvious. Considering the popularity of the Hindi weekly and vast expanse of the Hindi-speaking zone, the message spread far and wide, quite purposively. It was a deeply cutting mischief. This was taken to be the representative, if not real reaction; and from Himachal downwards to Madhya Pradesh people were inspired to draw their conclusion and learn the necessary lessons.

Again, the witch-hunt, the combing campaign, the indiscriminate arrests, detention without trial, the organized slaughter of innocents following 'encounters' with the police, the suspension of legal niceties—all these led to no massive and organized protest in West Bengal and elsewhere against the policy fury exercising itself zealously in the promotion of a certain kind of democracy and infliction of an eerie kind of stability and peace. So literature as a vehicle of intimidation, and the repressive state apparatus as a vehicle of organised torture were thus put to good use, with all remonstrance and resistance going mute or forcibly silenced. The recent arrest of an Institute of Management teacher is both a logical culmination of the State dragnet fast closing in on large sections of the populace, as also a pointer of the guts the State has meanwhile acquired in its bid to stifle independent thinking, which it intends using

increasingly indiscriminately. Therefore, it is imperative for the intelligentsia to exert itself in a multi-pronged denunciation of the draconian measures and modes of the State denying people the right to live with dignity and in peace. MISA and such like Acts spell misery for the citizens, with a capital M, and not only in West Bengal.

The few poets and their poems under notice here seem to be aware of the threat posed, its dehumanising potential and demoralising performance. Govindchandra Das' 'This is not your country' acquires piquancy from this tragic experience. Birendra Chattopadhyay's book *Human Trunks Screaming in Glee* is a powerful and candid indictment. 'With every morsel of rice I envision the small child's streaming blood, he is lying dead in the earth', 'The people, while starving, pay taxes for bullets to be bought, police to be deployed, goondas to be fed. That way is spent all the money. This is called democracy'. 'These press reporters forget that the hungry Bengal is not a piece of ornament to enrich the minister's rhetoric'. 'This is our kingdom, claims Tal-Betal. When tremor and typhoon cease, a hurricane lantern will light up the mountain of bones'. 'Yet is freedom far away, a decoration like a star'. 'The night is not over yet... A deadly black sky above lies in ambush with its paws spread'. 'One ignorant of singing, will go dumb and blind when the storm comes'. 'Remove the rocks, look skyward and speak: LET DOOM DESCEND. ... If someones comes to apply abir (colour) to your face tell him to bring two drops of blood from the

heart'. 'Whom to ask why so many innocent boys were shot dead? Is there a human being here? Am I one?' 'This Hell'. 'Who kills and whom? None in this characterless crowd will answer. Murder is the rage'. 'The morning radio tells me the gods are now gunmen'. 'Those killed were not kids but serpents fed on milk and plantain. Police know it, Delhi knows it'. 'The scaffold which I call my motherland'—are some poignant statements suffused with anguish, signed with anger. But I choose for special attention his poem 'My progeny may go to Hell Daily'. This deserves to be widely known. Part of its second stanza runs thus:

Yes I am your slave, you have bought us, Rani, and chained our Shame and Reason; I, Bengal's Leader, poet, reporter; at the dead

of night
I place at Delhi's altar my
Beheaded son; washing my hands
In the Ganges water I stifle my cry,
'Alas, these suicidal kids lie in
blood'.

Amitabha Chattopadhyay's 'Barbed Wire Enclosure' is artistically perhaps maturer in a sophisticated technique. 'Three dead bodies seen in the moonlight' is not only a poetic expression of immediate impact but also a naked narrative of the human condition vis-a-vis beautiful, unconcerned nature. 'At the head of every corn you'll find human blood. Whenever did civilization progress without struggle?' 'Incite, Kaberi, our jaundiced manliness. So that we smash the dragon teeth of the final war'. 'Hanging from the banyan tree is the wail over riots, partition, massacre'. 'Many thousands overnight were reduced to legend... Men were responsible, bureaucrats accountable!' 'Those days are still fresh in mind when (my friends) were resplendent as human beings'. 'Your downcast eyes won't shed tears easily, maid, you're Calcutta'—are his flaming, but finely-edged arrows of involved articulation. His two poems however, 'In Calcutta' and 'Ijara' are especially creditable. In the one, his friends

have all fled the city, roaming strange towns unknown, while Calcutta is agog with inquiries and bombs, and redolent with their memories. In the other, the poet feels interned, more when he walks the roads alone, with no friends, who are still friends but fled far away. He knows why they broke out of this barbed-wire enclosure but would feign ignorance.

The third book *This Land a Prison*, tell-tale and quite direct, is by Binoy Gupha. 'Many lose lives in this land shot by bullets, many stars from the sky of this country drop dead'. 'The Ganges is dyed red here with blood. Hence my belief—the earth one day will sprout red roses'. 'Hitler survives here still'. 'Every wall with peeled off plaster looks an exhibition of apparitions. Take weapons in hand and destroy this ancient house now'. 'A cup of tea, a sip, and it tastes like blood. A cup of coffee, the same. A peg, no less. Your lips, when I kiss, breathe fine'. 'Nilima's body fire-coloured is the flag of freedom'. 'The lashes of '59, the lathis of '66, imprinted on the chest and back, remain still. Forgotten the pain, forgiven the same, We are great Jesuses. In our brain dross!'—these are his blows in words at the anti-social activities of the State. His two poems 'Intellectual' and 'Crores of Suns Grow in Mothers' Laps', are a very powerful impeachment, one of the supine, somnolent and 'prostituted' tribe of the so-called intelligentsia, and the other of the State savagery. From the latter a few lines:

They are not dead, will not die
ever
With whose blood you drenched
Bengal's earth
It will be avenged by Tomorrow
for sure
Every house is getting ready for
the event.
.....
With a crore of suns in revolt the
jails will be stormed
In the fire of a crore of suns will
be burnt DIR

The sky is red with the wicks of
a crore of suns

The fire of a crore of suns will
consume the fascists.

Krishna Dhar's volume is titled *Calamity and the Poet*. The agonized moments make him reflective and this quality is uniformly present in all of his poems. And most of them would be cherished for the easy, unlaboured diction clothing some very sharp pains and startling observations. 'The boy while being hanged promised to come back to this earth. We are waiting for him at the crossroads'. 'I am in a fiery enclosure'. 'All around fire, all of us trapped in a shellac-house'. 'Whom are they whisking away to the slaughter ground? The sky with bated breath finds lines of stupefied men, who like dumb insects are expectant, in their eyes fright, curiosity... These terror-stricken men at the sight of their dying fellow... God today looks fiercely violent... Hangman of humanity... You could not disarm Him'. 'We are the contemporaries of human suffering'. 'We, without arms walk alert. In the bush may be waiting the killers'. 'Hot words of fire inscribed on the walls'. 'All around us the footsteps of the impending ruin'—are his criticisms couched in poignant language, breathing on certain occasions pathos, defiance and on others, mere hopelessness and brooding. But all his poems ring with a positive attitude. The tragedy of a mother awaiting his son, who must have been killed by a bullet and lying unclaimed somewhere is vividly brought out in contrastive stanzas of 'Bloodshed'. 'To you, Oh Calcutta', is another, all stirring and soaked in the blood and tears of its people. He calls this city 'a mourning procession', 'a scream', now, as against the movements of '42 and '46.

Ashis Sanyal's highly pictorial metaphor 'The Trembling Background', could have been more effective if the romantic-individualistic strain had been kept apart. Sukomal Rai-chowdhury in his 'Faults all Mine', has a section captioned 'Poems at the

Point of Revolution'. His virtuosity is indisputable. But the overlaying of obscure allusions and abundance of abstraction dilute his message and detract from the sharpness of his comments which are quite of a high order. Ajoy Nag's two lines well express the gloom pervading here: 'These days flowers remind one of death and gardens of cemeteries'. Dinesh Das's 'One day the sun will ring the bell of light in the sky' is very near an affirmation like Thompson's 'sleeping is not death.' Nagesh Das 'in the face of the imminent storm' feels sad at the sun setting, and angry and hostile at injustice. Kalyan Chattopadhyay, among others, writes an elegy on his dead friend Mrinal, which shows a challenge to his killers. 'This death will be avenged'.

Ralph Fox put it brilliantly, the artist's involvement as follows: 'The essence of the creative process is the struggle between the creator and external reality, the urgent demand to master and recreate that reality'. It is in this spirit that these poets have been reviewed. A good many, unfortunately, have been left out. And the critical activity undertaken here is for the reason, as Eliot said, that it 'binds its highest, its truest fulfilment, in a kind of union with creation in the labour of the artist'.

Sartre is once again worth quoting with respect to the poet's role and the function of poetry: 'Poetry is a case of the loser winning. And the genuine poet chooses to live, even if he has to go so far as to die, in order to win...' This random sampling of poems would confirm just this, and a bit more. However, as to those included in this write-up, as in the case of short stories so also in that of the first four poets, my work was facilitated by all being available at one publishing house. Secondly, these publications are specifically devoted to the agony of West Bengal. I wish I had come across more of such material.

I can't refrain from quoting Manik Bandyopadhyay's lines he wrote in another context years ago, but which

have a strange bearing on events here today, and which as well could have been written by another poet of this hapless land in the seventies :

Bengalis have died, are dead, will die

But alas,

No more can they die !

As much as possible we have died ; no more.

I swear by Kāli, in the name of God,

In no way can we die any more.

Therefore, leaving aside, God, leaders, viceroys,

Now we want to survive

For human beings, as human beings,

Let the house be divided,

We won't allow the division of bodies and spirits.

The poets under discussion seem to echo Manik Bandyopadhyay in his determined declaration : 'No more of this death, no more. We want to live as human beings'. Anybody seeking to frustrate this design for living by people, is inviting, in the words of the Bible : 'Fire, next time !' Resistance regenerates a people, and re-shapes history. This legend is in the process of becoming a reality. Let the rulers be chary of forcing the pace of events.

Just Out !

অন্যক

(A Monthly journal: August '72 issue)

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Andhra Pradesh

The Writers And The Police

NIKHILESWAR

ANDHRA Pradesh is an area of darkness where we can find lotus-eaters as well as 'kavi samrats'. Here one 'kavi samrat', (poet emperor), Viswanath Satyanarayana, reigns over the state of letters as an officially appointed poet-laureate. A revivalist and a reactionary, he was honoured last year by the great Gyanpith award, true to its inception and feudal nature.

Apart from it, we have here a great linguist and translator at the helm of State affairs. Under his initiative the idea of establishing a Sanskrit university is being floated. The great akademies are there. The writers who provide reading material of a third-rate nature usually run the fanfare of triennial Telugu conferences. We boast of having every third man as a poet. The most popular woman writers cook sentimental stuff for the commercial weeklies.

The so-called progressive and neo-classicist poets are having a heyday while the market for cheap and vulgarised film songs is hot. They are keeping one foot in the university boat and the other in the mud of the film industry. The ignorance and apolitical trend amongst youth and the general public is thus nourished. To fight against this area of darkness there emerged the A.P. Revolutionary Writers Association, Marxism-Leninism became its weapon. It gave moral support to all sorts of people's struggles.

The government takes pleasure in proscribing genuine people's literature. Since 1971, the authorities of the Home Department have made it a point to examine every word published by the RWA. The literary cell in the Special Branch is literally browbeating the creative writers.

After the inaugural function of the

RWA at Khammam in October 1970, the government began to shadow the writer-members of the association. The correspondence of its office-bearers was censored. In February 1971 a poetry collection entitled *March* was banned for sedition and the writer and editor, Mr P. Kishan Rao (by profession a peasant), was arrested in his field. Later on he was implicated in another case of giving shelter to an underground worker. During his interrogation he was slapped. After two weeks in jail custody, he was given bail. The other day the First Class Magistrate of Jangoan pronounced the judgment on Mr Kishan Rao: for the crime of writing poetry he was sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment or Rs 500 fine. He paid the fine.

After *March* intelligence people of the Special Branch banned another poetry collection of the RWA entitled *Jhanjha* (Storm) by Mr K. V. Ramana Reddy, the noted Marxian critic and poet, after two editions were sold out in no time. Later another poetry collection called *Lea* (Arise) was also banned.

Immediately after their proscription the police swooped on the houses of Jwalamukhi, Cheraband Raju, M. T. Khan and Nikhileswar in the middle of the night to confiscate these books. They took away all kinds of Marxian literature. I was taken to the nearby police station for interrogation. Peculiar questions covering even my birth and marriage were asked and recorded. Later I was sent back.

In August 1971 along with Jwalamukhi and Cheraband Raju, I was arrested under the P.D. Act. We were kept in Secunderabad District Jail as detenus. We belonged to the group of Digambara poets. This

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group with its three collections of poetry had already created a literature of protest. Later, along with other young rebel poets, we had merged into the RWA. We three had participated in many conferences on civil liberties apart from literary meetings.

That was the reason for the resentment of the establishment. One of the charges of the police against us was that we had prodded Mahakavi Sri Sri away from the PWA to the RWA. What an insult to the sixty-year-old poet of the people!

The executive member of the RWA, Dr M. V. Ramana Reddy, was also arrested for 'conspiracy'. After repeated attempts he was given conditional bail. During our jail terms the RWA made it clear over and over again that its members were committed to the people's cause in literature but not involved in any political party or activity. The establishment never cared to believe this clarification.

After habeas corpus petitions were moved in the A. P. High Court, we were set at liberty. The judges struck off Section 6-A of the P.D. Act. Mr Justice O. Chinnapa Reddy and Mr Justice A. D. V. Reddy in their judgment remarked that they were unable to see any relevance between the grounds mentioned in the order served on the petitioners and the object of the detention, namely the maintenance of public order. It was not stated in the order of detention or even the counter-affidavit filed by the Commissioner of Police (detaining authority) that either the Association of Angry Poets called "Digambara-Kavulu" or the Revolutionary Writers' Association was an unlawful organisation or an organisation indulging in unlawful activities.

The judges were also unable to see how the petitioners' belief in Marxism-Leninism and Maoism or their "vulgar" references to certain classes of people in their writings had any rational connection with the object of detention. "Beliefs are not subject to controls and no one can be jailed for his beliefs".

Stating that they had gone through the poems of the petitioners, the judges said that all of them were quite harmless. Some were critical of the condition of today's society and scornful of the policies pursued by the government. Some of them were clothed in bitter language. Some of them contained exhortations to the people to be ready to sacrifice their lives. None of them contained any direct incitement to public disorder. As for the likelihood of public disorder on the basis of these poems, the chances were nil. The verses were contained in books of poems and obviously they could not reach everyone, even the literate, leave alone the illiterate. To claim that these poems were likely to lead to public disorder would be even more extravagant than the language of the poets, their lordships said.

Last December, during the war, Dr M. V. Ramana Reddy was again arrested under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act though he was on conditional bail for his previous case. This time he was arrested just because once in his journal *Prabhanjanam* (fortnightly) he asked the then Home Minister, Mr Vengal Rao, to come to the dock to answer for the police firing on the unarmed Naxalite prisoners of Chittoor Jail. Dr M. V. Reddy had already been applauded for his creative journalism and stringest criticism of the establishment. Afterwards he was released by the High Court as his detention by the police was found irrelevant.

Not only Dr M. V. Reddy but two other members of the RWA, namely, Mr D. Venkata Reddy (Editor—*Vidyullata*), and Mr Chiranjivi (a doctor too) were also jailed but later released.

The RWA had challenged the Government's order of forfeiture of its three poetry collections in the High Court. The division bench of judges with its 2:1 judgment retained the ban on *March* and *Jhanjha* but lifted the ban on *Lea*.

Mr Vara Vara Rao, editor of the monthly *Srijana* (Creativity) and

executive member of the RWA, is also facing police harassment in Warangal. This famous literary magazine is a real forum for new writings with revolutionary fervour. It seems that some of the numbers of *Srijana* are being chargesheeted.

Only the other day another RWA publication was banned—a story collection edited by the most respected and popular writer, the sixty-year-old Mr Kodavatiganti Kutumb Rao (Vice-President of the RWA). The collection was entitled *Ippudu Veestunna Gali* (The Wind Which is Blowing Now). In June there was an interesting discussion on it in the A. P. Legislative Council.

The Home Minister, Mr V. Krishnamurthy Naidu, told the Council that the State Government proscribed a book entitled *Ippulu Veestunna Gali*, written by revolutionary poets and edited by Mr K. Kutumba Rao, because it contained passages which were provocative and would create hatred against the Government. The book was dedicated to persons responsible for murders and atrocities in Srikakulam district (namely Panchadi Nirmala and P. Krishna Murthy). Mr Koteswara Rao, speaking on a call attention motion, said the Central Government considered the book as one of the outstanding publications. There were no provocative passages in the book. He wanted the Government to withdraw the ban.

The Home Minister said the CID had gone into it. The Government, after examining the report, decided to proscribe the book. Mr Koteswara Rao suggested that a committee consisting of literary men be set up to go into the book. The Home Minister rejected the suggestion.

After the ban on this book, again there were midnight police raids on the houses of nearly fifty people apart from the houses of RWA members in Hyderabad City.

Under this ruthless repression, any writer of common sense with some sort of commitment to the truth and the cause of the people would term

this government of so-called democratic socialism a fascist order.

This government does not permit dissent. It is a weak government because, with all its organs, radios, poet-laureates and akademies, it is unable to face the challenge of people's writers. The police may boast of the unbridled authority given to them by the rulers. But they can never crush the real voice of the writers, of the people.

Book Review

On Gandhi

ARJUN BANDYOPADHYAY

IN the first decades of the 20th century the Indian scene was changing rapidly. In the 19th century the loyalty of the landlord class and the passivity of the masses were the two pillars on which British imperialism relied. But from 1905 the passivity of the masses began to disappear: the British Government was annoyed by their violent methods and uncompromising attitude; the leaders also became conscious of the potential force of the working class which was evident in the great Bombay strike of 1908. No doubt, the Extremists activated and awakened the masses though during the time of uprising they failed lamentably to lead them. The British imperialists were clever enough to understand that they would not be able to tide over this unrest only with the help of the landlord class, already fully alienated from the masses; hence widening of the social base of imperialism was necessary. This was done by drawing the big Indian bourgeoisie within the orbit of imperialism. Of course, the Indian bourgeoisie were already economically and politically dependent on the British monopoly and their role was vacillating from the beginning and during the whole period of the national movement ("while G. D. Birla, for long the outstanding spokesman of the nationalist wing,

might demand the repatriation of all British investments in 1943, he was not above seeking further British investments in 1945"—Michael Kidron.) The political reforms introduced by the British satisfied them and their demands of fiscal autonomy, protection etc were granted, particularly since 1916. Gradually the collaboration between British imperialism and the native bourgeoisie became more and more explicit and jointly they began to exploit the masses. (See *The Future of Indian Politics* by M. N. Roy). This was the situation when Gandhi entered Indian politics between 1915 and 1919. Both the tendencies of direct participation of the masses in politics and collaboration with British imperial interests were present in his leadership.

In this collection of essays* the contributors try to explore the climate and structure of politics in India in 1919; they focus on the cities which responded to the Rowlatt satyagraha which, according to R. Kumar, was the first countrywide agitation to be launched against the British Government and paved the way for Gandhi's emergence as a dominant figure in Indian politics. Some interesting points have been raised by the authors of these essays. A. L. Basham shows the reasons for Gandhi's influence on the country. He suggests that several of his concepts—Truth, Ahimsa, Satyagraha etc—are fully in keeping with Indian tradition. According to him, Gandhi was emotionally a simple theistic Hindu, with absolute faith in god, and truth for Gandhi seems to incorporate some of the contents of the Indian word Dharma. Gandhi's non-violence is an extension of the classical Hindu principle of ahimsa which involves merely doing as little injury to living beings as possible, in the direction first of 'loving one's enemy and secondly of inviting injury in a non-violent spirit, as a form of resisting

*Essays on Gandhian Politics: The Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919. Edited by R. Kumar. Oxford at the Clarendon Press 1971. £3.25 net.

evil. Satyagraha is ethically a great refinement of dharna or prayopovasa, performed by the creditors and Kashmiri Brahmins in ancient and medieval India. Basham finds no prototypes of Gandhi's emphasis on the dignity of manual labour and emancipation of women in India's past. But being a believer in renovation of small peasant-artisan economy Gandhi insisted on the dignity of labour and in traditional Indian folk lore this was always present. On the other hand, from Western sources Gandhi got the idea of emancipation of women. But what type of emancipation? At the same time he took the vow of brahmacharya and as Erik Erikson points out, some vindictiveness, especially towards women as the temptress, survived in him and made him insist on absolute chastity as a necessary condition for leaders in non-violence.

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P. H. M. Van Der Dungen in his article, *Gandhi in 1919: Loyalist or Rebel?* points out that according to many writers transformation of Gandhi's attitude to the British occurred about this time. Gandhi was transformed from a loyalist or loyal or moderate nationalist into a rebel. But, according to Dungen, the most decisive change in Gandhi's political outlook took place between about mid-1905 and the end of 1909. But the question may be asked: Was Gandhi ever anti-imperialist in the sense Lenin was? To Lenin war came as an opportunity for accentuating the process of revolution but Gandhi was eager to secure it through recruitment and to him the demand for swaraj was inseparable from the survival of the Empire. Dungen rightly points out that the real enemy, according to Gandhi, was not British imperialism, but Western civilisation and India could achieve swaraj only by discarding Western influence. But Dungen is wrong to assume that after 1919 Gandhi became out and out anti British imperialism. In 1917 Dominion Status for India had his blessings and he called this a noblest act of the British. "The British rose to the occasion, decided voluntarily to break the empire and erect, in its place an unseen and more glorious empire of hearts." The very language and attitude shows the mentality of Gandhi—the British voluntarily breaking the empire!

In other articles the authors write about the organization for the Rowlatt satyagraha and give accounts of it in different parts of the country: Central Provinces and Berar, Ahmedabad, Bombay, Delhi and Lahore. Gandhi leaned heavily on the Home Rule Leagues set up by Tilak and Annie Besant; he himself also created a new organization, Satyagraha Sabha, and helped to give birth to the Khilafat committee but even after Gandhi's reorganization of the Congress in 1920 it remained loose and structurally amorphous. According to H. F. Owen, in this collection, it was due to the anarchist temperament of Gandhi. But Gandhi's aim was to build up a

relation of love and co-operation between the zamindars and the peasants, between the capitalists and the workers and it was natural that the organization led by him would be loose and amorphous to include all of them in the same boat. Moreover, according to Gandhi, there was no place for class struggle in the character of Indians. He declared that he would fight if the property of the rich was taken forcefully.

Uneven Support

On the other hand, despite Gandhi's leadership the Rowlatt satyagraha relied on local discontents to draw various classes and communities into the movement of protest against the British Government. The support to Gandhi was not uniform in all the provinces. On the whole, the movement was much stronger in cities and large towns than in rural areas, though it involved smaller towns, market centres and even villages in Gujrat and the Punjab and to a lesser extent in the United Provinces and western Maharashtra. But even in the cities and larger towns different sections of the community responded differently. In Bombay satyagraha was observed in the main, by the Gujarati and some of the Muslim middle and lower middle classes; the Maharashtra mill workers did not show any enthusiasm. In Ahmedabad both the working class and the professional class supported Gandhi's movement. The same was true of the cities of the north like Lahore, Amritsar and Delhi where prosperous Hindu middle classes as well as the lowly Muslim artisans participated in the protest against the Rowlatt Act. No doubt the Rowlatt satyagraha got wide response but it had nothing to do with Gandhi. The widespread unrest in India after World War I was the root cause of it and it was also not very deep-rooted. The satyagraha did not evoke enthusiasm in the cities of the south (except Madras) or in Calcutta. The quietness of these areas should be studied to understand the politics of 1919.

R. Kumar in the introductory essay remarks that Gandhi's success in mobilising the common people in an unprecedented way was not due to the consummation of a marriage between popular religion and mass politics. It was achieved by Gandhi's perceptive insight into the social loyalties of the individual and into the manner these loyalties could be invoked for political action. Leaders like Tilak and Aurobindo also used religious symbols but did not succeed. The middle class leaders thought of India as a homogeneous political community. Gandhi looked upon the peoples of India as a loose constellation of classes, communities and religious groups and because he had no illusions about the nature of political society in the country, he was able to unite it in a way it had never been united before. Conscious absence of the language of class in the appeal of Gandhi must attract the attention of social history. Gandhi assumed that loyalty to religion was the dominant loyalty in India. If R. Kumar's conclusion is correct and the class concept is wholly inapplicable to India, and community and religion are vital social loyalties in India, then the career of Gandhi as political leader is a gigantic failure because ultimately in 1947 India was divided according to communal feeling. His repeated declarations that he was a Sanatan Hindu, then, were deliberate utterances to prove that he was the leader of the Hindus, not of the entire masses. No doubt, there was communal feeling in India, but Gandhi did not try to transcend it, he pampered it. He wanted only participation of the masses. Initially Muslims also supported him but his Hinduism alienated them. R. Kumar's arguments show that Gandhi did it consciously, though according to some writers it was an unconscious byproduct of Gandhi's politics. The only alternative was to awaken the masses in the real sense: the introduction of the concept of class and sharpening the class consciousness were the only path. It should be remembered that recent research proves that even in the traditional

village community class-tension was present. It is true that the middle class, bhadrak leadership could not move the masses as Gandhi did. But Tilak and others amongst them were bitter anti-imperialists as Subhas Chandra Bose was in later years. The bhadrak leadership believed in some sort of nationalism. It was a difficult task to inculcate any type of national attitude amongst the masses, but it was and is essential for a national-liberation movement. Gandhi did not care for it. He took the shortest route. When an effort was made to introduce anything rational he opposed it vehemently, even with under-hand means, as in the case of Subhas Bose who believed in planning and industrialisation and thought in terms of haves and have-nots. Subhas Bose rightly raised the question: one is forced to wonder which is the greater menace to India's political future, the British bureaucracy or Gandhian hierarchy. (Of course, Subhas Bose had serious limitations and dangerous attitudes: in a sense ultimately he was a political adventurer without any root in his own country. But his criticism of Gandhi deserves attention.) Indeed only to involve the masses in politics cannot be a criterion of the ability or greatness of a leader, at least to the Marxists. Hitler also did it.

But unfortunately the Marxists also made mistakes regarding the character of Gandhism and the achievements of Gandhi. According to them Gandhi was the mouthpiece of the Indian bourgeois class and always looked after the interests of the bourgeoisie. This is far from truth. The "rationality" which characterises the bourgeoisie, even the compradors, was totally absent in Gandhi. During the time of national movement the bourgeoisie, whose relation with British imperialism was not essentially antagonistic, used Gandhi particularly because Gandhi also believed in collaboration and was not so much anti-British as Subhas Bose was. Through Gandhi they controlled the masses. In fact Gandhi was a firm believer in small-peasant economy and village community and wanted to go

back to Ram Rajya with its traditional social, economic and political structure, with its values, even superstitions. His leadership had a strong charismatic foundation as analysed by Max Weber. Charisma knows only inner determination and inner restraint. The holder of charisma seizes the task that is adequate for him and demands obedience and following by virtue of his mission. His charismatic claims breaks down if his mission is not recognized by those to whom he feels he has been sent. He does not derive his right from their will in the manner of an election. Rather the reverse holds. Charisma always rejects as undignified any pecuniary gain that is methodical and rational. In general charisma rejects all rational economic conduct. Gandhi always spoke of individual conscience, inner feeling etc.: the whole Gandhian movement was run by the inner conscience of the master who was strictly authoritarian and anti-democratic. He said, "a Dharma-Yuddha comes unsought and a man of religion is ever ready for it. A struggle which has to be previously planned is not a righteous struggle. In a righteous struggle God Himself plans campaigns and conducts battles." Through whom do the plans come? Obviously through the leader i.e. Gandhi. So others had nothing to say. His lieutenants and party workers were there only to obey him. On the other hand Gandhi was successful in building up an image of a Saint, a moral being who outwardly (by dreams etc) became identified with the Hindu peasants. It was done also by his outspoken traditional values which in the hands of a dynamic and revolutionary leadership get a new orientation. Gandhi's hunger-strike, brahmacharya, idealization of the caste system remind us of the superstitious rituals of traditional Indian craftsmen: the chamars (i.e. the breeders of silk-worm) held the insect in a degree of religious awe and thus as sacred, and imposed upon themselves penalties for its salvation. In the period during which the worm has reached two-thirds of its full

growth, the intercourse of the sexes was forbidden. Other rituals were observed: they did not shave, remain in dirty clothes etc. Gandhi also imposed penalties on himself for the sin of violence of the masses; he also emphasised brahmacharya when his worms, the masses of India were growing in the dharma of ahimsa. In the laboratory of Gandhian politics the masses were nothing but worms. But Gandhi's existence was unstable. With his death the whole structure of his ideas crumbled down: his followers, particularly the bourgeoisie, who used him, believed 'virtue is gone' out with him. Under the leadership of Nehru they wanted a bourgeois break-through but it was impossible for them, thanks to their dependence on foreign imperialists and the tremendous pressure of the rural rich.

Clippings

North Vietnam's Real Objective

... There are in Saigon a number of "Socratic" figures who spend most of their daylight hours imparting wisdom to their "pupils" and whose past predictions about what the other side is up to have proved astonishingly accurate. When the current offensive began, one such "sage" was asked why Vo Nguyen Giap had taken the risk of resorting to conventional warfare.

"Don't worry about Giap," came the reply. "The fighting will go on for at least five months. Just you wait and see." "But where is Dien Bien Phu?" asked his baffled audience. "Everywhere," replied the sage mysteriously.

Three and a half months later, the fighting is as ferocious as ever and the first glimmer of understanding is beginning to dawn among Saigon's lesser sages. The object of the offen-

sive, it is clear, was—and is—to destroy Vietnamisation. But this... means much more than giving the South Vietnamese Army a bloody nose. Far more important (and much more difficult) it means destroying the whole "pacification programme" which had been taking firm root in the countryside, where the bulk of South Vietnam's 17 million people live. In many rural areas which four years ago were effectively under NLF sway, the Government had, by the beginning of this year, established a strong presence and driven the National Liberation Front administration into the jungle. The single most important factor which allowed the Government to operate at this "grassroots" level in security was the presence of the South Vietnamese Army in each province to spur on the local forces and keep the NLF guerillas at bay.

Since the offensive, however, the situation in the countryside has changed drastically. Formerly, the army's main preoccupation was with the NLF. Now the vast bulk of the South Vietnamese Army has been withdrawn from the countryside to defend the government flag against the much more formidable North Vietnamese Army at the three main battlegrounds—Quang Tri and Hue, Kontum and Pleiku, and An Loc. For example, the whole of the Delta south of Saigon now contains less than two South Vietnamese army divisions. In many of the South's province there is no longer an army presence.

* * *

The result, then, is that the NLF in many parts of South Vietnam now has a free rein to continue its old activities in the villages and hamlets. In many, the same NLF administration which was driven underground by "pacification" has set about restoring the old order of things. There is little to oppose it.

* * *

The situation in the countryside now is infinitely worse for the Government. President Nguyen Van Thieu announced after his "re-elec-

tion" last year that 97% of South Vietnam's population had been brought under government control. An Opposition politician takes a rather different line: "Just wait until a ceasefire is called and see how many NLF flags suddenly appear from nowhere throughout the country. Only then will we know who really controls the countryside." And then, too, will the world fully realise how the North Vietnamese, for all the beating they took, successfully achieved their objective.

(Benjamin Cherry in *The Far Eastern Economic Review*).

Letters

What Do You Stand For ?

I have been a subscriber to your journal from the very beginning. With a sense of disappointment I have now started pondering what it stands for.

It was supposed to be a voice of dissent—a non-conformist journal. Amongst the chorus of conformism all around this was welcome. But non-conformism is surely not negativism. Possibly too much non-conformism degenerates into negativism. *Frontier* is anti-Congress, but it is more anti-CPM. Of course it is anti all other recognised political parties. Is it pro-CPI (ML)? I doubt. Because except for some casual expression of sentiment now and then there has been no serious and systematic analysis of the Naxalite movement in *Frontier*. It must be made clear that I do not expect or desire that *Frontier* should be the official mouthpiece of any political party. My reference to the parties means the policies and principles these parties stand for. For a journal which claims to be Marxist, the Naxalite movement provides an opportunity for serious and absorbing study of its strong and weak points. Why a movement which caught the imagination of the best sections of the students and

youth so quickly ended up so soon like a flash in the pan?

Frontier claims to be anti-establishment. But it is strange that its anti-establishment stand does not lead to any protest against the reported threats by the Secretary, WBPC, to close down by force two anti-Congress periodicals.

Frontier claims to be pro-people. But its pro-people stand did not prevent it hiding its glee—though couched in revolutionary verbiage—at the discomfiture of the ULF parties in the last elections. Nobody can deny that the CPM with all its drawbacks and deficiencies still remains the only forum for the expression of the oppressed peoples' grievances. Without the CPM the Congress is having a field-day and the people are only helpless onlookers. Is it also not a fact that if the CPM becomes strong then only the real revolutionaries become stronger? Is it not that all the revolutionaries came from the cadres of the CPM? And now when the CPM is down the revolutionaries are out.

Frontier is not so mindless as not to understand this. But it has been caught in the quagmire of negativism and cannot come out of it. The negativism of *Frontier* is doing no less harm to the leftist movement than the open onslaughts of the reactionary class and its mouthpieces. Possibly for this reason only, *Frontier* is sometimes patronised in quarters least expected.

I wish you will publish this letter so that other readers may also express their views which may be some sort of a guide to you if you so desire.

S. N. Roy
Calcutta

"Maduraism" Picked Up ?

Two cryptic lines "If one faces facts... a deluge." in your leader "Packing up?" ((29.7.72) imply two things—that the U.S. President could not have been so brazen without the acquiescence of Peking

and Moscow, and that Peking and Moscow have the same hue. Such philistinism(?) under any veil is common among the hired coolies of imperialism and the petty-bourgeois reactionaries though they call themselves socialists. The criminal bombing of North Vietnam is the last resort of the imperialists to save the desperate puppets of the U.S. in South Vietnam, irrespective of whether the U.S. President visited Peking or not. Moreover, if Peking was strong enough to thrash at a time both the imperialists and the social imperialists it would not have hesitated to face a direct confrontation with the U.S. imperialists. (Surely if you face facts, it is crystal-clear that the moment Peking intervenes directly in Vietnam the social-imperialist USSR, ready with a million of mechanized army along its border would lose no time in jumping on China to fulfil the 'Moscow Agreement'.)

Secondly, one wonders how you could place Peking and Moscow on the same platform. Is it 'honest confusion'? In any case, you try in vain to confuse the intelligentsia. In your comment you have artfully substituted 'facts' for facet to obscure the profundity of objectivism. But facts are stubborn things and they have to be reckoned with whether you like it or not.

S. M. JANGI
Suri, Birbhum

Paradise Lost ?

I have read Mr Kanchan Kumar's letter, "Paradise lost?" (July 29, 1972) with mixed feelings and apprehension. I do fully agree with him that Mr Dutt switched over from the proletarian cause and started catering to the fancy of the petit-bourgeois class to establish himself as a real good boy in the eyes of the establishment. I do also share the view that the establishment wants Mr Dutt [and also others like him] to shake off all his [and their] pretensions and side with it completely or go to hell. But if we say only this much and

proceed no further, that would also not be very different from that of the CPI(M) 'leadersheep'. We cannot shake off our responsibility and obligation to fight for the democratic and civic rights of people of all quarters, irrespective of their political, social and religious views, against persecution and gagging by the establishment. We should be neither gleeful nor remain silent over the anti-democratic acts of the government against our political or ideological opponents.

The mysterious "death" of Charu Mazumdar in the Lalbazar lock-up and innumerable acts of omission and commission by the establishment are going astonishingly unchallenged only because we have been "trained" by the CPI(M) and others to see the democratic movement too narrowly and in a sectarian manner. Let us shake off this suicidal policy and rise equal to the occasion.

MONI GUHA
Calcutta

It is no means astonishing to find that typically self-professed Marxists like Mr Kanchan Kumar miss no chance to spearhead their malicious attack on Mr Utpal Dutt, using the same argumentative lines of the CPI(M) & Co. which bases itself on nothing but subjectivism, close-doorism and petty-bourgeois phrase-mongering. It is clear that the so-called revolutionary that he is, Mr Kumar firmly believes in and practises all those lines in his analysis of the question of Indian revolution and, for that matter, of the role of intellectuals and cultural workers like Mr Dutt and others—and therefore can gleefully write off Mr Dutt and the like from the revolutionary ranks at the slightest opportunity. Likewise, he may discover with the usual aplomb that Mr Dutt's betrayal reached a higher pitch when he tried to glorify the Indian people's national liberation movements during the British Raj in his various well-staged dramas. Toeing the foot-steps of his

guide-philosophers of various brands (of the CPI, CPI(M) and lastly the CPI(ML) Mr Kumar may unequivocally deny this truth that to lead the (Indian) revolution, at this stage, one must devote all his energies towards the preparation and unfolding of the incomplete national and democratic revolution of the Indian people, and Mr Kumar seems to do so. However, his doing so will never be able to alter the reality either (as the owl's enmity with the sun cannot change its direction).

Instead of posing himself as a Marxist intellectual, if he is honest (what he probably is not), Mr Kumar should try sincerely to grasp the fundamental laws of Marxism, which is a science, and only then should he try to analyse anything a Marxist way. Otherwise, he will wilfully chain himself to remain only a chatterbox, as many amongst his compatriots remain—and become no more a Marxist than that famous 'frog in the well' of Mao.

TARUN SENGUPTA
Calcutta

Educational Reforms

A recent newspaper report states that the West Bengal Government will bring about vast changes in the educational system within a short time. There is no doubt that the Government is under constant pressure from the members of the Chhatra Parishad who have been demanding some reformative measures and may not cease agitating till all their demands are met. However, one wonders whether the 8-point programme of the CP will cure the University of Calcutta of all the maladies. Students all over the civilized world have been taking part in the administration of the universities. It is expected that the University of Calcutta will accept some of the students in the governing body. The problem of minimisation of the course is associated with the problem of the medium of instruction. While talking with a CP leader of a Cal-

cutta college, I came to know that almost everywhere the regional languages have been accepted as the medium of instruction. If we accept Bengali as the medium of instruction in the University of Calcutta, we have to minimize the syllabi of other languages only. For example, a BA student has to read four essays (including a very big one), a drama by Shakespeare, another drama and more than ten poems. The course, no doubt, is heavy. It is so because English is the medium of instruction. If Bengali be the medium, the course will automatically be minimised. It will then be possible to have a course covering one drama by Shakespeare, one essay by Lamb or Goldsmith and one poem from each of the Romantic, Victorian, Georgian and Modern periods.

One wonders whether all these measures will solve all the problems. So long as the students are allowed to sit in one building, there will be educational trouble. There will have to be decentralisation. But how? Decentralisation can be done by selecting 25 or 30 colleges as A Grade colleges. The pattern is there even today. Presidency College students can do the MA and MSc as students of the college and not of the University. So can the students of some departments of other colleges including Asutosh College. I propose that there should be no university. All the subjects that are taught in the University these days will then be taught by expert teachers in different colleges. Thus, St. Xaviers or any good college can teach Mathematics and award degrees, Maulana Azad College can teach and certify students of Persian, Arabic and Urdu, Asutosh College can tackle Geography and Geology, City College (all the branches) can teach and award Commerce degrees. Other subjects can be dealt with by good colleges outside Calcutta and many of the students there are really brilliant. They will get the proper encouragement if they are not forced to come to Calcutta and lead miser-

able, wasted lives.

This plan can work only when these upgraded colleges are given full powers to conduct examinations. The authorities of these colleges will be responsible for the examinations. But it will not be difficult for, say, three colleges to tackle three hundred students of one particular subject.

What, then, will happen to the university teachers and employees? All of them can be employed by the upgraded colleges. Money cannot be a problem because the University earns several lakhs of rupees every year as tuition and other fees. The amount of money will remain the same. If it falls short of requirements, the Central and the State governments will surely make up the deficit.

Every change in the curriculum is a great boon to the publishers. There are numerous notoriously unscrupulous publishers in Calcutta. The Government should restrict publication of made-easies and help books. Neither the students nor the teachers have thought of the evils associated with the publication of notebooks. Students, however, will cease to copy if notebooks are proscribed. They can once again be persuaded to read their text-books provided the syllabi are not heavy and uninteresting.

RATHINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAY
Calcutta

CIT Flats

In 1954, with subsidy from the Central Government, the Calcutta Improvement Trust built four-storeyed buildings containing one-room, self-contained flats at Christopher Road, Calcutta-14, and let out these at low rent to lower middle class people working in factories within the meaning as specified in the Factories Act of 1948. Subsequently, the CIT built many such flats in other areas. Two-thirds of the total cost was paid by the Central Government and one-third was borne by the CIT. Of

the two-thirds paid by the centre 50% was a gift and 50% was a loan on long term to the CIT. And the rent of these flats was fixed at a low rate at the recommendation of the Central Government. Say, the cost of a flat was, at that time, Rs 6,000. The Central Government gave Rs 4,000 (Rs 2,000 as gift and Rs 2,000 as loan on long term); CIT spent Rs 2,000 only. By now CIT has realised Rs 4,100 as rent from each flat holder plus Rs 2 p.m. as service charge from the tenants at Christopher Road CIT Buildings under this scheme.

During the last five years or so, the West Bengal economy has suffered the most and people engaged in factories and industrial organisations were victims of slump, closure, lock-out, strike, retrenchment, lay-off etc. In this year of the silver jubilee of our independence, I would urge the Government to grant ownership of these flats to the flat-holders. This will provide homes to these homeless people who have, after 18 years, paid the bigger portion of the value of these flats by paying rent. In this State as well as in other States the Own Your Flat scheme is already in vogue. So, under this scheme ownership can be granted to these flat-holders now.

CIT may look after the maintenance of these flats/buildings for a reasonable charge to be realised from the flat-holders on monthly rates.

PANKAJ MUKHERJEE
Calcutta

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