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ANOTHER MUNICH

SPORTS and politics go ill together, pontificated a spokesman of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, commenting on Munich. But music and murder seem to go well together—when, for instance, the police shot dead a man at a musical soiree in Calcutta and dragged the body out. There are different yardsticks for everything. When the Palestinian guerillas killed two resisting Israeli athletes and held nine others as hostages in the Olympic village on September 5, they perhaps succeeded, if not in anything else, in forcing the 'civilised' people of the world to look a little deeply into their civilisation. In this century of insensibility people quietly accept American savagery in Vietnam, Israeli barbarism in Palestine, South African oppression of the black Africans, not to speak of thousands of other slightly less brazen atrocities in every corner of the world; yet they have the cheek to profess, among other things, amity and friendship of the peoples at the Olympics. The Palestinian guerillas, who laid down their lives after the West German Government's duplicity at the instance of the Israeli Government but not before carrying out their threat, have hit the civilised people where it hurts most—at their cultural psyche.

The pundits of revolution say that the blind outrage on the Israeli sportsmen would not further the cause of the Palestinian refugees. They quote Marxist scriptures to prove that personal annihilation of the Israelis was a tactical mistake, a military blunder and what not, and say that mass sentiment all over the world has gone against the Arabs and in particular against the Palestinian commandos, because the killed Israelis were innocent. But so were the women and children killed by Israeli bombs in the Israeli reprisals against the villages of Syria and Lebanon. Right from the beginning of the birth of Israel, Arabs have been killed in hordes and driven away like cattle, but not much conscience was aroused. Some who could not ignore the plight of the Arab refugees, who continue to be refugees for over half a century, salved their revolutionary souls by passing infructuous resolutions at the League of Nations and the UN and sending harmless arms to the Arabs. If the commandos have taken upon themselves the responsibility of restoring their rights, without waiting for the Guardian of Revolution, who is busy hauling gold at the Olympics, it is entirely their

business—the miseries and the deaths are theirs—they do not want our applause or approval. The whole world was aghast at the Olympic massacre—Mrs Gandhi was over-prompt in sending a message and decrying the commandos—but no such promptness is noticed when the Syrian and Lebanese villagers are killed as a direct reprisal.

There ought to have been a limit to hypocrisy. Greece which gave the Olympic torch to the world is today the home of extreme fascism. Yet Greece did not bat an eyelid in sending sportsmen to the Olympics at Munich or in condemning the act of the commandos. It was truly a wonder why Rhodesia was refused permission to participate in Munich. Do we not believe that sports and politics can be compartmentalised, that it is possible to fight at Vietnam and play chess at Iceland?

It is not known yet under what circumstances the first two Israeli athletes were killed. By all accounts, it seems that the commandos wanted to keep the athletes as hostages for the liberation of their comrades in Israeli jails. Once in Cairo, the Israelis would have the responsibility of the Egyptian Government. For the airport carnage, all responsibility is West Germany's and Israel's. Indeed, the responsibility has been accepted by them, and that with a great bravado. True to their nature, they sought to bribe their way out, holding out offers of money to the commandos. Money failing, they resorted to treachery. And they ended up with seventeen dead on their hands. But the Olympic games were not stopped—the profits of the organisers, even after the compensation to the dead Israelis, would be fat. So the game went on. Meanwhile, the carnage at the airport and the U.S. veto have helped Israel to step up the tention in West Asia; vague expectations of fresh moves aroused by the departure of Russian experts from Egypt do not suit Tel-Aviv.

Tinsel Sabre-Rattling

The belligerent attitude, suddenly struck by the CPI towards Comrade Congressman of election-eve, has set many political hearts a-flutter, especially of the left. Visions of joint struggles of workers, peasants, and youths, reminiscent of the halcyon days of the left, are being conjured up; the left parties are once again bracing themselves up to give the Congress one more knock to dislodge it from the pedestal. In their eagerness to arrange a warm home-coming for the CPI, the left parties are only damning themselves. They do not realise that they are giving the CPI an importance which they themselves have been saying all these months the party does not deserve. If there has been any accretion of CPI's strength it is entirely because of the party's association with the Congress; its new adherents will desert the party as soon as it breaks with the Congress. The Congress knows it, the CPI knows it; only the left parties with their infinite capacity for self-delusion do not seem to know.

The CPI must be laughing in its sleeve. Its attitudinising is reaping unexpected dividends from still more unexpected quarters. Even the CPM is ready to forget the "right" Communist Party's treachery and admit it to the Left Front so that its promised mighty movement against terror, corruption, high prices etc may become mightier. Does it not amount to an indirect admission that the CPI still has a role in democratic movements, that the left parties feel themselves a little orphaned by the CPI's entente with the Congress? If the delayed movement now gets off to a start with the blessing of the CPI, will not the leftist posture be open to the interpretation that the left parties have at last been able to summon courage to cast off their policy of inaction because they feel the CPI's association with their movement will act as a talisman against governmental repression? The left parties have not yet been able to get over their post-election trauma; otherwise they would not have put such a simple interpretation on the sly and complex manoeuvrings of the CPI and extended a premature welcome to the rupture-to-be. If they had weighed carefully what it would mean for the CPI to break with the Congress, they would not have allowed themselves to be so easily taken in by the CPI's simulated anger and disappointment at the reluctance of the Congress to live up to its election pledges.

Much has been made of the CPI's supposed concern over the possibility of its losing its leftist image through continued association with the forsworn Congress. This is an infantile argument for it presupposes that the CPI has been able to retain its leftist image in spite of all its chummery with the Congress for the past three years. The plain fact is that the CPI has no image to lose. On the other hand, in the unlikely event of a pursuit to refurbish an image that it does not have, the CPI will stand to lose all that it has gained from its association with the Congress, beginning with the leadership of the coalition in Kerala; it will invite on itself the wrath of the Government and the militant cadres of the Congress; will have to swallow its formulations about the National Democratic Front and give up its efforts to bring about a split between the progressives and the non-progressives in the Congress. Above all, it will have to secure a clearance for this policy turnabout from the Soviet Union. It is difficult to believe that Moscow will allow the CPI to behave in any way which may cast a shadow on the present spirit of togetherness between the Governments of the two countries. On the contrary, Moscow has reasons to overvalue India's friendship because of its cold war with China. The CPI pigtail is tied to the apron-strings of the Soviet Union, and it cannot do anything which may annoy Messrs Kosygin and Brezhnev who care little for New

Delhi's economic policies as long as its political postures are in favour of the Soviet Union and against China.

Japan-U.S.A

There was a curtain of doubt and disenchantment around Honolulu as President Nixon and the Japanese Premier, Tanaka, began their talks to iron out the differences that threaten these old allies. But after the talks it is this old relationship which lies in a shambles. And after the meeting Japan emerged from the position of a grateful beneficiary to that of an ally on whose restraint depends the wellbeing of the other party as much as help from it is crucial to her own survival. In that sense the Honolulu talks are a victory for Japan. Tanaka did relent on certain points like increased imports from America. But for that he exacted a heavy price. He had his new stance regarding China as well as the adjustment it needs in the Tokyo-Taipei relations endorsed by Nixon.

Nixon gave the first jolt to the Japanese last year when he announced his China trip and virtually devalued the dollar to negate the Japanese steel and cotton producers' prowess. But it did not occur to the U.S. President that the Japanese have become very powerful, thanks to American aid and the U.S. defence umbrella. For some time Tokyo groped around. Then it abruptly turned towards China and even agreed to jettison Taiwan. An idea of Tokyo's new thinking could be had from the Foreign Minister Ohira's statement early this month that Japan would snap her diplomatic ties with Taiwan if China wants that in exchange of business relations with her. And then by allowing the rumours of Chou En-lai's intended visit to Japan and the regular air link between Tokyo and Peking. Japan gave evidence of which way the wind is blowing. The Honolulu communique confirmed it.

But this means complete dismantling of the old edifice of U.S.-Japanese friendship based on the Security Treaty and the 1969 Sato-Nixon communique. Taiwan is the linchpin of this security concept and Japan was to lend herself as a base against any possible red piracy in the Tonkin sea. But now Japan wants to get out of this binding and seeks a new role in the present multi-dimensional power relationship. She wants to enter the European community and also relink herself with the Asian backyard, particularly mainland China and possibly the Indochina peninsula, when the war ends. But the question is how long Japan can venture alone? She is dependent on the Americans for primary resources and has already accepted huge sums of money from them. Maybe, Japan does not want to go very far, but only wants a better deal that suits her bursting affluence.

Confusion In Spain

One does not expect Spain to be swept by the winds of change so long Generalissimo Franco is alive. Still there is now speculation in the Western press that the septuagenarian ruler may be forced to introduce certain liberal measures to secure the full participation of his country in the European Economic Community. This is the major foreign policy objective of the Government. It will no doubt be a great embarrassment for the Community members to accept Spain ceremonially. While the Community members have all perfected the style of repressing revolutionary forces without appearing to be demons, the Franco regime finds a macabre pleasure in liquidating all kinds of left forces. What will strike any visitor to Spain is that in the 36th year of General Franco's rebellion, the Government in Madrid shows signs of increasing resistance to political change. The only encouraging thing in an otherwise depressing situation is that the debate has already started about what will happen once the Generalissimo is out of the scene. In a sense Spain has already moved into the post-Franco era. The participants in the debate are an assorted lot—from businessmen who have expanded their operations to such an extent that they stand to gain from full integration with the Common Market to the man in the café. The common man is, however, totally confused; he fails to understand why the Government is so allergic to change when its prime diplomatic objective is to open relations with the rest of the world. The radical students and other leftists are more vocal but less discreet. They do not dislike the idea that the European countries have so far spurned the Spanish moves seeking integration. While it is not expected that the present Government will be at any time disposed to soft treatment of the leftists, the EEC refusal is creating dissatisfaction at many levels. Spain is not, however, in the economic lurch so far as the EEC is concerned. The two are bound by a preferential agreement to lower tariffs, principally on industrial goods. The problem that will arise once British becomes an EEC member is to be sorted out by the series of negotiations to start this fall. In any case it does not seem that there will be any great economic crisis in the near future to force the Generalissimo or his successor to change the domestic course.

An Incident

A correspondent writes:

Commandos are active in Calcutta also. Not in the Sealdah area alone, against leftist journals. A few days ago a group of 3 or 4 turned up at 10-30 p.m. at Statesman House and subjected the reporters present to a harangue: most journalists are drunkards, most papers and reporters toe the CPM line, the pen is something, but they have something

stronger, how dare the paper report that the Chhatra Parishad warned the Minister of State in the Home Department about the rising prices, etc. We are not sure about the content of the harangue, but the visit was a fact. The visitors left after handing over a rejoinder to the report about prices.

A strange aspect of the story is the silence that the paper maintained. The raid—or visitation or whatever you call it—was not reported in the paper. The reason for the silence was, perhaps, the unprecedented fact that the leader of the commandos was the Minister of State in the Home Department, and the deputy a big shot of the Chhatra Parisad. They seem to be firm believers in direct talk—and direct action.

The Chinese Political Scene

MANORANJAN MOHANTY

CHINA watchers are having a heyday again. This time Western news reports claim more authenticity because many of them are datelined Peking. China's open door diplomacy has made this possible now. Reports about the fall of Lin Piao, first speculative and now supposedly authentic, explained this in terms of various theories and they were prominently displayed all over the world. Contrast it with the situation during the Cultural Revolution (1966-69), the last time the China watchers had a boom. Most reports originated then in Hong Kong, Tokyo or Taipei. Just for that reason many people abroad dismissed some of the theories propounded by commentators to explain the Cultural Revolution.

At present, however, there is amazing uniformity in the commentaries served in the West as well as in India which seek to explain the fall of Lin Piao. Nearly all analysts are advancing the theory that the "ideologues" have lost in China and now the "pragmatists" led by Chou En-lai have firmly established their rule. Along the same line some others say that there has been a "restoration" of pre-1966 policies in place of the "ultra-leftist" policies advanced by the "ideologues" during the Cultural Revolution. Yet others say that the "bureaucrats" or the "organization men" are back in power under the leadership fo Ghou, the super organization-man. As usual most reporters show a sense of glee and scholars some sense of vindication of their "established theories"—theories about social system in general and socialist systems in particular. Only some who had found inspiration from the Cultural Revolution look at this problem differently. Even here, surprisingly, there is a sense of shock and disbelief rather than any attempt to patiently understand and examine critically.

As the seventies came, more and more signs of maturity in China scholarship and China reporting appeared. Shedding off the cold war inhibitions, many liberals were beginning to look at China with some empathy. Reporters did not just any longer buy explanations from either Taipei or from anti-China "research institutions" in Hong Kong. They tried to look for direct evidence for explaining developments in China. The literature emerging out of the Cultural Revolution was used by several young economists, political scientists and sociologists to challenge the existing dominant theories and concepts of "modernization", "nation-building", "participation", "authority" and "education", to mention only a few. Theories on the "military in politics" underwent a drastic process of rethinking as in the case of all other concepts. The Chinese communist theories of politics, economics and social organization acquired legitimate place in Western writings in these disciplines. But is that trend continuing unabated? The current level of analysis of the recent events in China suggests that the answer is a disappointing 'no'.

The old China scholarship had two main difficulties which inhibited a fair understanding of China. One was the dichotomous thinking and the other was the inability to go beyond one's own framework. Dichotomous thinking is so ingrained in the liberal thinking that pairs of concepts like centralization and decentralization, leadership and people, dictatorship and democracy, party and army, ideology and environment necessarily appear as contrasted terms. Conversely, some radical enthusiasts of the last decade have gone to the other extreme in the name of the dialectical method and have claimed that there are no contrasting characteristics between these terms. In fact, dialectics is nothing if not "unity and struggle of opposites". While liberals ignored the aspect of unity many radicals ignored the aspect of struggle. The other difficulty is well known. The Western analysts kept looking at China within the framework of parliamenttary system and its concomitants, the Western growth models and other Western systems. Thus terms like "mass line" had to be translated with the help of the categories of the American "populist movement". At worst they used the "totalitarianism" model to explain the communist-led States though this model had originally come to the fore in the context of fascist systems during the thirties. Now one realizes that at the end of the sixties China scholar had not, after all, shed off these drawbacks even in a major way. All the theories being advanced today to describe and analyse the Chinese political developments clearly represent the old inhibitions of dichotomous thinking and self-addicted frameworks.

Without accepting as the whole truth or dismissing as eye-wash propaganda let us see what the present

Chinese leaders are saying about the recent developments. Editorials in party journals and speeches by leaders and slogans raised from time to time are available to us for this purpose. In viewing today's China we must take a total view of the scene and not only a partial view of that area which supports someone's pet theory. During the past two years there were three sets of political campaigns which have gone on in varying degrees of vigour. The most important of them all is the campaign to strengthen the collective leadership of the party over all other spheres of activities. The other two which are related to the first are the campaign to "repudiate revisionism of both right and 'left' variety" and the campaign to carry on "line education".

Now it is clear that the Second Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) which met from August 23 to September 6, 1970 initiated the first campaign. During the second half of 1970 and through the next year there were many reports of campaigns to "make the Army serve the people". The Army Day (August 1) joint editorial in 1971 said: "it (PLA) places itself under the absolute leadership, going where the party directs and acting as Chairman Mao teaches". The special joint editorial of December 1, 1971 entitled "Summing Up the Experiences in Strengthening Party Leadership", made it abundantly clear that there were two main aims of the campaign. One was to subordinate the PLA to the CPC leadership and the second was to put the party's Central Committee above the personal leadership of Mao. During the present year more explicit statements have been made to this effect. Commanders of many military units have made self-criticisms to confess their mistake of taking a "purely military viewpoint" and now they have promised to respect the leadership of the party unit at their level. In the Revolutionary Committees which were formed during the Cultural Revolution with dominant representation of the PLA, "party core groups" were recently formed to provide leadership.

Three Elements

There were three elements during the Cultural Revolution which could have harmful effects on future developments in China. One was the "deification" of Mao which Mao himself admitted in his interview with Edgar Snow in September 1970 with a note of unhappiness. No matter how it was justified then, for the evolution of mass politics it was not healthy. The second was the designation of a successor in a party constitution. Instead of confidently leaving it to the already evolved political practice according to which the Central Committee and the Politburo assigned responsibilities when the time came, Lin Piao was named heir to the present Chairman as if it was a monarchy. The third element was the role of the PLA. Undoubtedly, the PLA was a political army and since 1959 under the leadership of Lin Piao it had become more loyal to the Maoist political line. The PLA was called upon in 1967 to play a very crucial role in defeating revisionists. But for the first time in the Chinese communist history party structures were fully replaced by other bodies. The last time the communists had set up revolutionary committees was in 1936-37 in the Shensi area which were disbanded once the united front was formed with the KMT. Never during the anti-Japanese war or the anti-KMT Civil War were CPC structures disbanded. Perhaps it would have been wiser for Mao to reconstitute the party committees during the Cultural Revolution than to replace them altogether. Once the PLA was allowed to play the dominant role in a "revolution" a whole new theory was developed as a result of which even after the seizure of power from the revisionists the PLA claimed the same role. But in a dictatorship of the proletariat the vanguard of the proletariat class, namely the Communist Party, must lead. Hence the current campaign to establish the party leadership over the army.

It may be said that both army and party leaders have been among those who have been ousted from power in China. This would be a simplistic way of understanding the argument. Concrete instances have to be seen in the composition of the provincial committees, in the revolutionary committees which run factories, communes and other institutions where the PLA had a major share. Over the principle of army role there must have been differences both within the army as well as in the party. Therefore, it is not surprising that both army and party leaders have been ousted.

The second set of campaigns is aimed against revisionism. Whereas the revisionists criticised during the Cultural Revolution were accused of rightist deviation, now it is of a "left" variety. The reference in current writings in China to "swindlers and charlatans like Liu Shao-ch'i" clearly means Lin Piao and his group. It should be remembered that not all these new deviationists were guilty of all the charges. The charge of left deviation was first made known in 1970 against a certain "May 16 Group" which is supposed to have taken control of the Chinese Foreign Ministry on that day in 1967. This group gave an ultra-leftist orientation to Chinese foreign policy by denouncing regimes like Ne Win's and attacking foreign missions in Peking. (The Naxalbari revolt got their support also during this period.) Now the charge of "left" mistakes covers economic matters also. For example, in certain areas, the local leaders changed the existing mode of management and accounting system in communes in a militant way. Instead of the production team, which is the lowest agricultural unit, the higher level, namely, the production brigade was made the accounting and distribution unit. On an initiative from the provincial committees such steps have recently been rectified. Other

charges against the new revisionists are arrogance, careerism, splittism and conspiracy. These clearly refer to the group's power politics. In this context, the Chinese writings of today charge that in the name of Mao's supreme leadership this group led by Lin Piao (who is not named yet) was assuming power for itself. Hence the present campaign to establish the leadership of the CPC Central Committee. This campaign is reinforced by the third set of campaigns launched to study ideology.

One of the instructions from Mao in 1971 is said to be this: "Line is the key link; once it is grasped, everything falls into place". Part of this campaign has been the emphasis on the study of classics of Marxism like *The Communist Manifesto, Critique of the Gotha Programme, Anti-Duhring.* The attempt to study Mao in "capsule form" or Quotations is now being decried. (The Little Red Book made many people little red!) Incidentally, not only in China, throughout the world Maoist ranks grew like mushrooms for some time through the Red Book. The present campaign for ideological education aims at steering clear between rightist as well as "leftist" deviation.

Seen in this perspective Lin's fall does not mean a return to the pre-1966 period, nor is it a return of the pragmatic bureaucrats who have ousted "ideologues". The present movement is meant to carry out the policies upheld during the Cultural Revolution without committing excesses. Present-day policies in agriculture, industry and education are nowhere near the pre-1966 policies. Every report from China on any one of these sectors glaringly contrasts the present situation with the pre-Cultural Revolution level and at the same time mentions what "leftist" errors were committed in recent times. If the pre-1966 situation was the thesis and the Cultural Revolution the anti-thesis, the present situation is a synthesis. This again as a thesis will also have its anti-thesis for which we must wait and watch.

At the same time, it should be noted that in a Maoist system, inner-party struggles had not so far led to assassination attempts and escapes. This raises questions as to what extent the top leadership itself has accomplished the party norms on handling such conflicts.

Vietnamisation On Its Last Legs

KARRIM ESSACK

HENRY Kissinger has become the diplomatic stormtrooper of the Nixon administration. He is sent to the frontline when the armoured battalions and the B-52 bombers fail in their objectives. His increased diplomatic activity in secret negotiations with Le Duc Tho, a Politburo member of the Workers Party, has indicated one thing. Not only on the battlefields in Vietnam, but also right within his own doorstep, in America, in his own house—the Republican party—Nixon is being forced on the defensive.

The bombing of the dykes has boomeranged and he is being assailed from all quarters, from the Secretary General of the United Nations to the young actress Jane Fonda. The Republican Party machine is becoming worried. It is not as blind and insensitive as Nixon. These mistakes could cost the Republican party not only millions of votes but even the Presidency. Hence Kissinger has been called on to conjure up another peace plan in order to continue American aggression in Indochina.

The Easter offensive which continues to gather momentum was aimed at Nixon's underbelly, namely his Vietnamisation programme. Within the space of a few weeks, the liberation forces drove out puppet troops from well-entrenched and fortified positions below the DMZ in the Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces. As from nowhere the liberation forces appeared and key towns like Hue, An Loc and Kontum were surrounded.

The Pentagon never really appreciated the strategy behind the offensive. It was not a question of taking over territory or holding on to towns. The offiensive was timed so as to coincide with the American elections, yet this too was not the principal aim. The chief objective was to finish off the Vietnamised puppet troops.

Nixon put in everything he had to stave off this new phase of the struggle. He called in his navy and marshalled every type of plane. Bombs of all types were used. Thus demolition bombs, blasting bombs, shell pellet bombs, bombs with toxic chemicals, phosphorous and napalm bombs were offloaded from the skies. Carpet bombing made sure that nothing in a wide area would remain standing or emerge alive. At times he ordered over 300 sorties a day in a vain and desperate bid to slow down the offensive.

The puppet troops were then marshalled and sent to Quang Tri. It was aimed principally to bolster their sagging morale and at the same time help the negotiators at the Paris peace talks to talk from a position of strength. Quang Tri was chosen as the target. There are roughly 700,000 puppet Saigon troops. Thieu's army had 13 full divisions of regulars. He sent two elite divisions totalling 40,000 men to Quang Tri. These consisted of the elite divisions—the paratroopers and the marines.

Initially the liberation forces retreated from the province of Quang Tri. This spurred the puppets on to come more and more into the interior from the sea. What was in reality a deadly trap was interpreted as a victorious advance. The trap lay precisely in that the liberation forces lured the puppet troops from their entrenched and fortified positions into new positions. Then the libera-

tion forces who had superiority locally struck. Instead of retreating further, they gave battle. The citadel, near Quang Tri city, became the focal point of the struggle.

The Americans made one of the most concentrated and devastating bombings known in history in order to dislodge the liberation forces. Radio Hanoi describes vividly the tenacity and courage of the defenders when it said: "Regardless of thousands of tons of bombs falling upon their heads, the liberation forces were holding it steadfastly." Despite this attempt at "softening" the way, the puppet troops never really got into the citadal. Deadly 122mm artillery appeared from nowhere and the puppet troops were mowed down. The paratroopers sent to capture the citadel found themselves slowly decimated. According to their own figures, they were suffering casualties at the rate of 150 a day. They decided to pull out, leaving the honour of capturing the citadel to the marines.

Having been bogged down, the puppet troops found that their supplies from Highway 1 were cut. They had to be fed from the air. On all sides they found themselves hemmed in. A correspondent of the London based *Observer* remarked: "Whether the political goal of retaking Quang Tri is worth the military price is pretty arguable. The real target in the north is Hue and if the South Vietnamese army squanders its resources on recapturing a pile of rubble in Quang Tri, it may run into trouble later".

In Quang Tri the liberation forces defended. But in An Loc, Kontum, Hue, it is the puppet troops who were surrounded. But the strategy of the liberation forces was the same. All four of these drew out the puppet troops from their entrenched positions. An Loc, 50 km from Saigon, is a case in point. With overwhelming superiority the liberation forces could have taken this town. But they chose not to. The puppet Thieu regime decided to send its troops to relieve pressure on this. It is over three months, but these troops never reached An Loc. They are mauled before they reach their destination. Again puppet troops were drawn from their entrenched positions. Three full divisions have found themselves bogged down in the An Loc area. In the Quang Tri area over 9,000 enemy troops have been destroyed in the space of a few months. It is through the decimation of the puppet troops that Vietnamisation is being bled to death in Indochina.

'Pacification'

But the heart as well as the guts of Vietnamisation is Pacification. It is from these glorified concentration camps that the puppet troops conscript their soldiers and collect taxes. Therefore to hit at Vietnamisation, it was necessary to damage its heart.

Perhaps the greatest victory in this offensive has been the destruction of the Pacification programme by the liberation of thousands of Vietnamese from the strategic hamlets. Yet this has received the least coverage in the press. Nixon's biggest achievement and his biggest boast was the success he had achieved in his Pacification programme. He boasted of his success in the Binh Dinh province and in the heavily populated areas in the Mekong Delta, in provinces like Long An, My Tho, Vinh Long, Bien Tre, Tra Vinh and Can Tho. The Mekong provinces are not only fertile, but also are the granaries of Vietnam. In all these areas, the Pacification programmes have gone up in smoke.

The significance of this will only by appreciated if one recalls just how the Americans and the puppets achieved Pacification. First, they would spray the village with toxic chemicals and this would destroy crops. They would drop one of the many varieties of bombs to destroy houses. The helicopters then would come and land troops who would comb the whole area. The bulldozers would move in and raze the whole village to the ground. The people then are herded into strategic villages. The ruthlessness of the whole thing could be seen in the fact that in some villages "Pacification" was achieved by wiping out the entire population. Thus a village in Bien Tre province was pacified by shooting all the 5,000 inhabitants.

The puppet troops are now kept guessing because they do not know what to expect and from where. The element of secrecy and speed necessary in an armed insurrection has been developed almost to perfection in the present offensive. The puppet troops south of the DMZ were expecting a rocket attack at the most. Suddenly tanks and heavy artillery appeared as from nowhere. The puppet soldiers panicked and either fled or surrendered. By the time the B52 bombers made their appearance the heavy armour had just evaporated. On the other hand, around the Saigon region, believed to be almost safe, the puppet troops have been subjected to heavy rocket bombardment.

The recent offensive has given ample scope for the display of initiative, skill, daring and courage. The attack on the Long Binh military base, just 20 km north east of Saigon, is a case in point.

This is the largest American military base in Vietnam. It is from here that all damaged armour is sent to Japan for repair. Men of the liberation forces, with explosives strapped to their backs, slipped through the heavily guarded and wired outer perimeter. They made their way through to one ammunition dump and them another. There were seventy caves of ammunition dumps in this base. They ignited several and slipped back. According to the AFP correspondent, the whole area was rocked with explosions for a whole day. Saigon heard it too. The attackers escaped without capture.

How Vietnamisation has been spiked can be seen in the figures. In this period, over 220,000 enemy troops were killed, wounded or put out of action. A clear case of demoralisation and disintegration of the puppet troops has been the number

of those who have crossed over. It has totalled over 30,000. But it is not a simple case of desertion, for these soldiers mutinied and killed their superior officers as well as the American advisers before crossing over.

With most of the 13 puppet divisions badly mauled, with the soldiers bogged around Quang Tri, An Loc, and Hue, with highways like the strategic Highways 1, 13 and 14 virtually cut, with Pacification going up in smoke, with ammunition dumps blown skyhigh, Vietnamisation is now on its last legs.

It is against this background that we should expect another bogus peace proposal from Nixon and Kissinger.

The Labour Scene

A. P. M.

THERE is some sort of jubilation in the CITU camp. From the state of near-total absence in labour actions since the beginning of 1972, it is now slowly but definitely coming back to the centre of trade union activities. The first fruit of its efforts in this direction is its participation, along with the WBPNTUC and AITUC, in the one-day token strike on 12 September, 1972 in the engineering industries. There is reason to believe that further such joint actions are being planned.

There is scope to marvel at this turn of events; for, the WBPNTUC and the handful of pretenders in trade unionism have by no means given up their CPI (M)-bashing. In fact, as Mr Jyoti Basu came back from his nonvisit (but the *Times* Diary devoted one paragraph to him, didn't it?), informing distant audiences of Indiraite fascism, reports kept on trickling in of more CPI (M) headbashings. The juggernaut of the new Congress trade unionism is rolling on gloriously; from January 1 till the third week of August, 654 new unions were registered with the Labour Directorate, over 80% of them under the deshi Swastika. The Directorate uneasily recalls the 1967-69 period, the days of radical leftism, and comments on the bizarre similarity the new Congress unionism is increasingly displaying with that unmentionable period of recent history. The employers are no longer reticent; talking to them right now is great fun, for they have not yet learnt to walk the tight rope as far as the present situation is concerned.

Meanwhile, how believable is the well-publicised rapprochement between the strictly legitimate WBPNTUC and the Labour Cell of the PCC and the pariahs, the NLCC, NLO, CP and YC? At least one day before the August 31 meeting some employers came to learn of an interesting explanation of the move for peace. They were gently advised not to give much credence to the celebrated in-fights, the WBPNTUC's righteous indignation and the NLCC's slightly baffling posture of defiance. It was hinted that the clan enmities might not be as spontaneous as they appeared. The PCC had been considering how to corner the independent-minded WBPNTUC, a body much more important for strategic reasons than any other at the moment for the party. According to the theory, as expounded by an unnamed Ruling Congress high-up to the goggle-eyed employers, the NLCC and other non-WBPNTUC trade union bodies were being actively encouraged by the PCC to defy the WBPNTUC. Now that the WBPNTUC could lay claim to only 200 unions among the 654 new ones labelled Congress, the 'corrupt' organisation was obviously prudent enough to acknowledge the capacity of non-affiliated bodies to act independently in the trade union field. The theory laid down that as soon as this admission, which should have a sobering effect on the otherwise powerful organisation, was available from the WBPNTUC, the NLCC and the others would be directed to patch up their differences with the former. It may be relevant to point out that the first of the nine norms agreed upon at the August 31 meeting requires the WBPNTUC to align and identify itself completely with the Congress. Knowledgeable observers prefer to lay importance on this norm rather than on those requiring the largest Congress union in an industrial unit to be identified, etc.

One of the points raised by the rebel Congress labour bodies against the patriarchal WBPNTUC was the latter's continued efforts at consorting with the arch-enemy CITU. Despite the formidable opposition, however, the WBPNTUC is keen on cultivating the strictly professional and largely strategic working liaison with the CITU. The principal reason why the token strike in the engineering industries was sponsored jointly with the Left is that the WBPNTUC is relatively weak in these industries. It could have never managed to call an industry-wise strike by itself. Therefore, the cooperation of the CITU is necessary. But a far more interesting aspect of the situation is the latter's attitude to the WBPNTUC in the present context. There are reasons to believe that the leftist trade union bodies have launched a long-term campaign to draw the WBPNTUC and its temporary cronies toward themselves. The means of doing this is apparently the imponderables of trade union politics. As a well-known labour leader of the Left remarked happily to a representative of employers. 'This is the beginning. But we have already hit the mark.'

A few days back, the general secretary of the CITU union of a large engineering company walked into the room of the labour adviser to his employers and handed over a well-documented publication on Congress goondaism. He demanded a reply

from the adviser and was told that it would come only after the employers were consulted. What did the CITU man seek to achieve by presenting that book to a man who wholeheartedly supports what Congress goons are doing to CPI(M) cadres and others? Just for the sake of record that the employers had been notified duly of the depredations of Congress trade unionism, so that when the time came, they would not be able to escape responsibility. It is interesting to watch that while both the employers and Congress trade unionists are increasingly becoming aware of CITU tactics, they are finding it more and more difficult to discover any means to circumvent them.

Thoughts On Teachers' Day

I. SHUKLA

THE nauseating homilies sung nationally on September 5 every year on the teacher as nation-builder and on his role in strengthening democracy focus a little too glaringly a very lurid light on the national hypocrisy. The President and the Prime Minister add their bits to the circus. The wonder is the teacher himself participates in this his national disgrace quite joyously, or thoughtlessly.

For example, he never pauses to ponder why there is no doctors' day, engineers' day, clerks' day, contractors' day, or rickshaw-pullers' day. Why does he need a day in the national calendar to cry for pity and patronage from society? What does he get out of it? If he has any sense of self-respect left in him why does he become a party to his own national humiliation? Why does he fail to see that this is the equivalent of giving the untouchables a grandiose name like Harijan, and continuing to ill-treat and incinerate them ever thereafter?

Where is the democracy that he is supposed to be strengthening? If he has not heard Gandhi calling parliamentary democracy "a barren cow" and Lenin characterizing it as "false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for the exploited, for the poor," has he not seen for himself that parliament and the legislative assemblies are glorified gossip clubs, projecting the illusion of reform and advance, deceiving and doping the people, serving vested interests, diverting the masses by jingoist alarums, and thus anti-democratic and anti-people?

Why does he not ask himself which democracy he is serving, or strengthening? A democracy propped permanently on emergency with a capital E, a democracy brought about by rigged elections, a democracy which postulates and permits detention without trial, death through torture in jail and police lock-up, mass killings of innocents in a series for their fault of being young, a democracy which countenances the death of Saroj Dattas and Charu Mazumdars because they had the temerity to be non-conformists and thinkers? And Saroj Datta was a teacher too. A democracy which stamps out dissent and scares away protest, which is trigger-happy, which nurses storm-troopers, which resorts to naked fascist terror and intimidation?

At best he bands together with fellow-teachers and agitates for higher salaries and proper d.a. etc. And that is the farthest where his sense of duties and rights ends. He never relates himself to the other sections of the society and sees in perspective what his role and responsibility in this complex is. Where his real affinities should belong he does not know. That he is in some ways privileged he does not realize. That he affords to shed some of the modes and values of a bourgeois existence, already in decay, he would not concede.

Why can he not expose the falsehood inherent in some of these slogans? For example, he is not consulted by the nation's decision-making bodies. How then can he play any role good or bad? Not that by joining these bodies he can be really effectual. But he should call the bluff. The various commissions and committees set up by New Delhi and State governments pass him by. He is left out in the cold. And yet when the Establishment mouths these unctuous cliches about him as nation-builder, path-finder, torch-bearer, and conscience keeper of democracy, he, instead of rebelling at the persistent lie, revels in it!

And finally, some introspection. Is he equipped with the tools of competence, character, and convictions to be in some way useful to the nation? Greedy and opportunist, unscrupulous and incompetent, vulgar and venal, he is more an object of ridicule and contempt than esteem or emulation. Before aspiring too high or clamouring for more privileges let him rehabilitate himself in the society's esteem. And for this he will have to cleanse himself. Can he be a bit cruel to himself before others can be kind and deferential towards him?

This is not a plea for the practice of austerity or abnegation by him. Rather, it calls upon him urgently and unreservedly to integrate himself with the millions of under-dogs in India, those living in privations and penury, those on whom, when dead, the Government of Inida con-

পাক্ষিক লাল তারা

পড়ুন ও পড়ান

১৫০ মুক্তারামবাবু স্ট্রীট, কলিকাতা-৭

fers the distinction of having chosen to die not from starvation but malnutrition, and, when alive, of having the discrimination to vote for democracy, stability, strong Centre, in short, the Congress (R). Unless the teacher looks into the class character of the government and the usurpers of power, he will continue to wallow in ignorance, vegetate in a meaningless and useless existence and become part of the 'silent majority' which is supposed to sanction all fascism and total betrayal. There comes a time in an individual's and a nation's life when silence is either idiotic or criminal. Let the teacher become more questioning, more vocal.

Otherwise the ritual and noise of September 5 will, as they are meant to, keep him benumbed and benighted. And then, those who join H. L. Mencken in his opinion of teachers will not be wrong. The American essayist with some sardonic perception had observed that only an ass could persist in being a teacher year after year, and not an intelligent person. We are not out to score a debating point. We may reject it as uncharitable and extreme. But if the teachers in India remain cooped in their coffins of complacency and conformism, then September 5 will remain our national day in celebration of a big joke at their cost.

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Remembering Sarat Chandra

PHANI BHUSAN GHOSH

IN the spate of political romances, monographic books, euphemistically called experimental novels, short stories and other works, it is no wonder that Sarat Chandra has receded into the background. The wide gap between what the present generation experiences and sees and what it reads in his works has eroded his once-proverbial charm and incredible popularity. If his treatment of love and other values of life appears stale to today's young men, this is the result of a new relationship between the two sexes, based on a more thorough exploration of the human mind. This apart, the socio-economic set-up which formed the background of his stories and novels is well poised for a rapid dissolution, setting in motion ideas in no way compatible with those by which Sarat Chandra was guided. The inevitability and ruthlessness with which new ideas have emerged and are emerging out of the conflict and tensions between the two contradictory forces of life has exploded the myth of his progressivism. The divergence between the two is to all intents and purposes irreconcilable and creates for the modern reader a big obstacle in the way of his appreciating Sarat Chandra.

The most common epithet that adorns the name of Sarat Chandra in any discussion of his writings is 'daradi' (sympathetic); this he has earned quite justifiably by virtue of his humanism. This is sometimes mistaken for a social commitment—a definite proof of his progressivism. The deadly accuracy, bitter irony, and biting sarcasm with which he has put the caste-ridden and narrow-minded Hindu society on the dock in the background of its bottomless hypocrisy and moral bankruptcy can be conveniently cited to prove the point.

His precision and almost brutal outspokenness in portraying the zamindar's heartlessness and unfeeling nature in "Mahesh" were not meant to condemn the system as such; they have been used to drive home the sharpness of the contrast between a vainglorious zamindar's lack of any human feeling and the poor Gofur's passionate love for Mahesh— a useless, old, starving dumb animal that is still dearer to its owner than anything else except his motherless daughter Amina. Despite the fact that the writer's sympathy is always with Gofur and that a subdued hostility runs through the entire story against the zamindar's heartlessness and that of the society to which he belongs, Sarat Chandra has scarcely a word against the system which causes the sort of exploitation of which Gofur is an outstanding victim. In some of his short stories and novels ("Andhare Alo", "Abhagir Swarga", *Denapaona*, *Datta* etc) Sarat Chandra has depicted the zamindar's life but nowhere has he given us any hint to think that he dislikes the zamindari system; rather his sense of broad humanism seems to delight in the soft-spoken, enlightened, handsome and kindly zamindar. His humanism is the humanism of Edmund Burke who impeached Warren Hastings for his failure to conform to the eighteenth century English standards of morality but did not have anything to say against the most shameless exploitation of the dumb millions of India by his own countrymen.

The second aspect that appears somewhat hollow to a modern reader is his romanticism. It is different from the brand associated with Shelley, Wordsworth and Keats; it is exclusively Bengali in emotional content and expression. Sarat Chandra's romanticism has its origin in the Vaishnav poets such as Chandidas, Jaidev etc, the same that has travelled down the ages through Mangal Kabya and has manifested itself in various colours and modes in

September 16 is the birthday of Sarat Chandra

Bengali literature. In course of a review of *Andhare Alo* and *Bindur Chele* the *Times Literary Supplement* wrote in its issue of July 11, 1918; "He is so keen and amused a spectator of the life about him, whether in cosmopolitan Calcutta or in somnolent little villages buried in dense verdure among the rice fields, that it was not without doubts and difference that we attribute to him a tendency to praise past times and comfortable conventions".

Sarat Chandra's romanticism is therefore confined to uncritical love of the past; it is in no way associated with a rebel's irresistible urge to seek refuge there in view of his temperamental inability to adapt himself to the hard realities of the present. His romanticism stems from his sane conservation—a term that convincingly conveys almost everything that needs to be said in favour of Sarat Chandra's social commitment and 'progressivism'. Despite some very vivid and lifelike portrayals of the then social scene, his *Srikanta* is a romance par excellence and not an autobiographical novel as some have called it. The zig zag course of love between Srikanta and Rajluxmi spreading over quite a number of years has been consciously kept to a level beyond the comprehension of ordinary mortals who are not enamoured of spritual love as such but want it to achieve fruition in physical union. Not only in *Srikanta* but also in many other novels dealing with love, Sarat Chandra seems to have been haunted by a guilt consciousness whenever he has attempted to defy his essentially conservative nature. In *Charitrahin* and *Grihadaha*—two of his most successful novels—he has not spared his leading characters for having dared to break the conventional moral values, more often than not obscured in their surreptitious breach. In fact, to be frank enough, Sarat Chandra's romanticism has not much of a qualitative difference from the one we are acquainted with in Bankim Chandra.

"Superficial"

The charge of being superficial, very often brought against him, can be attributed to his disproportionate emphasis on the triumph of love—a passion that, according to him, doggedly overcomes all obstacles. His sense of realism has gone away here and in treating love as the supreme passion of life he has quite understandably bypassed and ignored the bitter realities which bring about decisive changes in the entire emotional structure of the human mind. Like everything else on earth the human mind, beyond doubt the most mysterious creation, is subject to changes and cannot be expected to nurse the same passion as assiduously as it once did because time, the most cruel annihilator of everything earthly, hardens the human mind by piling up on it layer after layer of its inevitable quota of pain and pleasure and hopes and anguish alloted to every human life. The sudden revival of Rajluxmi's girlish love after a long time for Srikanta may not be psychologically unsound but appears somewhat unreal in the mundane world where Sarat Chandra's characters are meant to move.

So also are Bijoya's for Naren, Annada didi's for her wayward husband, Satish's for Savitri. In life as we know, it is not love but the question of economic wherewithal that always plays a dominant role. But in most of Sarat Chandra's novels this question has been made to appear almost non-existent, and this has created an air of artificiality—something of an economic vacuum—that has fitted in well with the carefree life of his heroes and heroines. Bijoya is a zamindar with very little to worry about monetary matters; Rajluxmi has amassed a fortune when she appears on the stage to play her role; Suresh has enough to fall back upon to assure himself of a lifelong comfortable life and Rama and Ramesh are quite affluent even according to the standards then prevalent. In *Arakshaniya*, as the name itself suggests, Sarat Chandra should have been preoccupied with the penurious condition of Gnanada when her father dies and her consequent dependence on a not very well-off maternal uncle, leading to the mental tensions of a grown-up and helpless girl waiting to be cast aside by society if she cannot be married within the age-limit fixed by the same. By emphasising the love between Gnanada and Atul, Sarat Chandra has rubbed the edge off the trials and anguish of Gnanada. The thematic treatment becomes melodramatic.

What about his realism? No doubt, this quality of his writing brought a gust of fresh wind into the otherwise monotonous and colourless framework of the Bengali short story and novel. People were tired of the 'gomasthas' 'naibs' beharas', 'palkis' and the elaborate description of the do-nothing beauties of the zamindar's place standing in magnificent isolation in the sleepy villages, and wanted some democratisation introduced in the choice of heroes and heroines in Bengali fiction for a change. Sarat Chandra entered the scene with his genuine sympathy for the downtrodden and gave a series of pictures relating to the life of the neglected sections of society, still now almost incomparable both in emotional depth and penetrative power. His keen, restrained artistry invested all these with so much of compassionate feeling for the underdog that this attitude was considered the forerunner of a revolutionary change likely to overtake Bengali literature. But what is intriguing to a modern reader was his inability to weave this sense of realism into the network of his stories and novels. In *Pallisamaj, Arakshaniia, Abhagir Swarga, Mahesh, Bamuner Meye, Birajbou,* to name only some, Sarat Chandra gives us the most authentic and accurate pictures of our rural life, but in every one of these the subterranean theme does not get dovetailed into the outer form, and the line of demarcation, though thin, because of the writer's supurb artistic sense, is nevertheless a blemish worth mentioning. In *Pallisamaj,* for example, Sarat Chandra has depicted with

aggressive accuracy all the vices associated with our stagnant and conservative rural society but the leading lights of the two warring rural factions, Rama and Ramesh, and their subdued love are very little affected by the clash of their material interests. Sarat Chandra seems to have taken it for granted that Ramesh will continue to have the same emotional response from Rama by virtue of his urbanity, sophistication, idealism tinctured with youthful exuberance and tact and his boyish attachment to her as she used to have earlier. Sarat Chandra's realism is not the realism of Flaubert, Zola and Daudet; it is essentially a Bengali brand abounding in middle-class sentimentalism, sustained by our cultural tradition and climatic conditions. Since it happens to be a by-product of his humanism (to which I have already referred) and not of any total outlook on life and society, it has not fitted in well with the thematic structure and treatment of his writings. However, whatever the nature of his realism (found inadequate in the light of modern conditions), there can be no denying that Bengali fiction needed it badly to lift it out of the quagmire it had got into.

Love

Sarat Chandra has received a lot of admiration for the way in which he has treated love. It has been said that he discovers love in the most unlikely places,—the outcasts of society, in people whose bodies had succumbed to temptations but whose souls were kept clean and untarnished, in women who set no store by chastity. This is based on the assumption that people who have not been able to achieve some amount of respectability because of their poverty and other social injustices are less than human beings and as such, are without those sensibilities and emotions that are supposed to be the exclusive monopoly of the precious breed. The charge of their lacking in finer sensibilities arises because of their nerve-racking preoccupation with the problem of physical survival. They have very little time to indulge in the luxuries of love-making and its attendant emotional behaviour as Rajluxmi, Bijoya, Achala, Kironmayee, Sorojini etc do, unburdened as they are with the struggle for livelihood. If 'Porakatha' in *Arakshania,* the nameless woman who nursed the ailing Srikanta to recovery, and Gofur in "Mahesh" are sometimes rude and rough, it is because their life is one long tale of uninterrupted misery and despondency. All their human virtues lie buried under the crushing burden of a life that continuously hangs on the perilous edge of imminent disaster. A man who made it a mission of his life to pry into the secrets of the human mind could not but be conscious of the fact that all human beings, irrespective of their social status and economic condition, are subject to the same elemental passions and emotional conflicts. Sarat Chandra's credit lay in bringing in those people who for their social backwardness had so long been left to languish in oblivion and utter contempt.

But Sarat Chandra's treatment of love, for which he was severely condemned by the self-appointed guardians of literary morality, is conventional every inch; the state of the Hindu society's conservatism can be seen from its hostility to the man who had the least intention of making any assault whatsoever on its traditional values, and in fact, he scrupulously avoided doing anything of the kind. Rajluxmi, though a professional singer of affluence, belongs to the same social stratum as Srikanta and their love is based on their mutual necessities. In Srikanta Rajluxmi finds a young man of cultivated taste and restrained passion with no personal axes to grind who can be relied upon to be her lifelong mate and through whom she will be able to fulfil part of her dormant motherhood. The uneven course of their love, full of a great many sharp bends, is due to her self-imposed, unpredictable turns and painful twists meant for cleansing her body and mind of the filth and dirt she may have accumulated during her professional days. Rajluxmi's tensions and conflicts which very often rock her mind are due more to the writer's inhibitions about the forbidden love than to the stresses and strains of the circumstances through which both have had to pass.

In *Grihadaha* Sarat Chandra has not been more daring either, though he has to bring in the ups and downs of a triangular love episode. Used to a life she finds stale in her father-in-law's house and married to a man whose reticence and reserve is in sharp contrast to Suresh's passionate temperament, it is not unlikely that Achala will take Mahim's temperamental oddities as a lack of feeling for her. To make this reversal of feeling convincing immediately after the marriage Sarat Chandra has had to bring in Mrinal, a distant relation of Mohim. In the novel, Sarat Chandra has not failed to give unmistakable hints that he clearly disapproves of the Suresh-Achala affair and critics may not hesitate to point out that Suresh's death is not only a fictional necessity but a retribution for his deliberate defiance of the conventional ways of life. He could not evade rendering poetic justice to Suresh because he dared to intrude into the sanctity of married life. It is in *Charitrahin* and *Srikanta* Part IV that Sarat Chandra has given some proof of his daring and adventerous spirit. Bengali fiction, to be frank enough, has few characters like Kironmayee; brilliant in conception and near-perfect in execution, she unfurls the flag of revolt against the utter indifference of society to the innermost cravings of the human mind. Deceived in marriage, both physically and mentally, tied to a man bookish and sickly, she nonchalantly offers herself to her husband's physician. Not that she loves him. It is her long suppressel physical hunger that goads her to a man who has very few qualities to fill up her mental vacuum, thereby defying the age-long sanctimoniousness of married life. But what makes her a class by herself is the way she takes

revenge on Dibakar, the younger brother of Upen who spurns her advances. Kironmayee continues to elict admiration by virtue of her intellectual gifts, daring and subtlety but scarcely any sympathy she rightly deserves for her sufferings. There is nothing unconventional about the treatment of Kironmayee's love because the whole thing has been made to move within the narrow compass of that section of society which considers itself to be the guardian of our morality.

In *Srikanta* Part IV Sarat Chandra has gone a step further by bringing in Gahar, a self-educated Muslim poet, to make the Kamal-Srikanta episole more poignant. To me Gahar's unexpressed love for Kamal, fully conscious as he is of the religious barrier standing in the way of their coming closer, is itself a very courageous attempt by the author to strike at the root of the impregnable fort of Hindu conservatism and narrowness, if judged in the conditions then prevalent. But Sarat Chandra's progressivism seems to have stopped half way, probably because of a feeling that he should make some amends for his uncalled for adventurism by making Gahar write a Ramayana. Not only that, he has also triel to Hinduise Gohar by making Srikanta recollect his own earlier associations with Gahar's family as also by taking him to his (Gahar's) home after a long time. Without being uncharitable to Sarat Chandra, it may, however, be asserted with some emphasis that in Gahar's closeness to the Hindus and their society he has made a worthwhile attempt to keep his enlightened conservatism at ease.

So Sarat Chandra's treatment of love has not in any appreciable way deviated from the beaten track; whenever there is any, it appears to have stemmed no so much from a total outlook on life and society as from a desire to infuse some new blood in the otherwise anaemic Bengali novel. Even this cannot be underestimated, for to do it is to ignore and bypass a milestone that leads to a long, though uneven, way, along which Bengali fiction has travelled right up to the present time.

To sum up, the kind of humanism Sarat Chandra has so eloquently displayed in his literary output is now considered to be a bourgeois virtue meant for hoodwinking the comoner; the kind of protest he has sometimes raised against the landowning class can quite often be treated as the camouflaged approval of the status quo. If his espousal of the downtrodden is thought to be a feeble attempt to rouse the social conscience within the existing socio-economic set up, especially in view of the changes that have sharpened of late the dormant class consciousness, nothing can be said against it. As for his realism (for which he once received kudos from all quarters) which is only an idealised version of reality, a modern reader can have only contempt because to him, literature besides being an object of intellectual entertainment and spiritual elevation, has a distinct socio-economic purpose to serve.

Sarat Chandra's brand of realism is awfully inadequate to serve the same. So also is his treatment of love and sex which people now no longer treat with as much seriousness and sanctity as they used to earlier, as they have discovered that love like other passions is guided more by the socio-economic tensions of which an individual is a victim than by anything else. It is not at all unusual that in these days of permissiveness Sarat Chanlra's 'sane conservatism' will appear hollow and completely outdated. In short his sentimentalism, his treatment of love and sex and last but not the least his humanism belong to a brand of fiction that has outlived its utility and has hardly any relevance in modern conditions.

Is not Sarat Chandra then worth remembering and worth reading? Unloubtedly he is, and that is more for what he has left undone than for what he has done. He opened up in his own characteristic way a new frontier of Bengali fiction which must have had a decisive influence on the literary outlook of many a writer. Besides, his work, however undervalued at present, has its own worth stemming from his literary artistry, a product of immense labour rather than spontaneity. It is an authentic source of material for social historians.

Tired of the humdrum life, its chaos and confusion, people will still now read Sarat Chandra, sometimes in a long summer evening, sometimes in the cool morning of autumn lays and sometimes in rain- soaked, still nights and sigh for the days when Srikanta did not have to think about his livelihood and could pass his days in the security and comfort of Rajluxmi's love.

Revolutionaries All

N. K. SINGH

DELHI, to be precise New Delhi, is a city of rackets. And revolution is one of them. It is damned easy to establish yourself as a revolutionary—green, yellow, red or white, whatever shade you prefer—in this city of scandals, which is truly said to have no culture of its own. Naturally, the Delhi revolutionary never talks about a revolution in his area, rather he looks either towards the hills of Srikakulam, the forests of Naxalbari, the fields of Mushahari and the town of Calcutta or towards EMS's Kerala and Jyoti Babu's West Bengal and nobody's Tamilnadu for bringing about a change in the socio-economic structure of society.

In Delhi revolution revolves round the Mini Cafe, the not-so-secret meeting place of local Naxal chaps, the Jawaharlal Nehru University, the fabulous, majestic Ajoy Bhavan on Kotla Road and the AICC office on Dr Rajendra Prasad Road. The revolutionary credentials of the last two places are too well established to discuss here. However, the first two

places may provide a clear insight into the state of affairs prevailing in the capital city of India.

To confess, though this correspondent had heard much about the 'Coffee House' revolutionaries, he had never had the honour to come across this species. Thanks to Delhi and its Mini Cafe he had had his fill. Almost all the revolutionaries who attend Mini Cafe discourses on Marx, Lenin, Mao and Charu—of late Bhagat Singh has infiltrated in between—are Hindiwallahs serving the mouth organs of this or that political party or working as a free-lancer for some 'bourgeois' journal. In the daytime they are busy writing a leader on the democratic bona fides of Mrs Gandhi's Government and in the evening they speak at length at a meeting organised to mourn Charu Mazumdar's death. The skill with which they manage to perform both the tasks at the same time is a matter of appreciation for all the circus fans.

But perhaps the best thing about the Mini Cafe is that it is just one floor below the Coffee House. So, a few steps upwards and you are amidst the well-dressed bourgeois gentlemen and a few steps downwards and you are back to your good old Mini Cafe. Perhaps this is what they call having the best of both worlds.

There is yet another variety of revolutionaries. They do not like being called coffee house revolutionaries. Neither do they attach themselves to the scholarly social-scientists-cum-revolutionaries. This in-between variety remains 'underground' the whole week, comes out on Wednesday evening, buys a copy of *Frontier* and vanishes. Nobody has reported them wearing masks, though.

However, the most amusing but nevertheless more sincere looking brand of revolutionary is provided by the academic institutions of Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru University is one of them. Another is the Indian School of Social Sciences which has started a monthly journal, *Social Scientist,* by spending just a paltry sum of 3,000 rupees. All these people want to facilitate the path of revolution through their academic researches and scientific analyses. They are particularly very fond of the term 'scientific' and use it as a prefix or suffix whenever possible. These scholars think that their task is to provide a theoretical basis to the revolution. And they go on writing volumes for it.

Division of work, say economics text-books, is the scientific way to boost production. So one group makes research, another does the reporting, yet another reads . . . and there is of course one more group which works, fights and dies. Fools!

The End Of The Quest

HIRENDRA CHAKRABORTY

THE legendary life of Ustad Alauddin Khan met its end at the controversial age of 110. Coming of a humble *natua* family inheriting many Hindu traits, the boy used to visit the zamindar houses of Tippera and Mymensingh where the *natuas* were commissioned to provide music (mainly drum and shehnai) on the chief religious occasions of the Hindu landlords. It was on one such occasion in the house of the late Raja Jagatkishore of Muktagachi that he listened to the late Ustad Ahmad Ali Khan play on the sarod and became enamoured of the instrument.

His insatiable thirst for musical knowledge sent him wandering for almost half a century in quest of a suitable medium as also a preceptor. His pertinacious quest became a legend. Without casting any aspersion on his numerous teachers it may be said that his tireless quest succeeded when he was able to have the great Vazir Khan of Rampur, of the line of Tansen, as the most desired preceptor.

The story of the tireless devotion and rigorous discipline imposed upon Alauddin by his teachers, his versatility etc. have been dwelt upon ad

infinitum. Yet the question remains: What exactly is the positive contribution of Ustad Alauddin Khan that places him above all his contemporaries and ensures him immortality in the history of Hindusthani music? So far as my knowledge goes, this point has been lost sight of in the labyrinth of legends, myths and anecdotes about him. True, he has been the only Bengali who secured universal recognition and respect as the doyen of North Indian music; true, he has the creation of many major ragas to his credit; true, he is the creator of a galaxy of class-one artistes of national and international fame. But that is not all—the secret lies somewhere else. In the preceding two hundred years Ustad Alauddin was the singular musician who, by dint of his genius, changed and reshaped Hindusthani classical music and brought it abreast of his times. He took up such instruments as the sarod and the sitar, considered profane by the connoisseurs of the last century, and infused in them the *dhrupadi baz* or classical mode of playing. The mode of playing on the sitar is nowadays much different from that practised by the late Enayet Khan. Previously alap of the *dhrupad* type was played on the *vin* and its varieties, not on the sitar or the sarod. Players of the latter instruments used to play *ragalap* to display only an outline sketch of the raga concerned—not a full alap consisting of four stages. By replacing the medieval and semi-obsolete *rabab*, sur-shringar etc. with the sitar and the sarod and by imparting to their manner of playing a full classical character Ustad Alauddin gave classical music not only a new lease of life but also newer potentials and dimensions. Before him it would have been almost unthinkable for a flute or a shehnai to aspire to the position of a full-fledged solo instrument.

It is not for the misadventure of the so-called Indian orchestra (which has been a total failure), nor for his numerous musical progeny (the late Suresh Babu Mane and Vilayet Hussain Khan had equal claims to such credit) but for giving a new form and content to classical instrumental music that Ustad Alauddin Khan will go down in the annals of Indian music as the father of Hindusthani classical music of the twentieth century. An almost similar thing was done in the field of vocal music by the late Abdul Karim Khan and Hirabai Barodekar. They created the present-day slow-tempo kheyal on the model of the dhrupadi alap *ang* and enhanced its beauty and depth. It is not the personal success or expertise that goes to the making of an epoch-making genius—it is his total contribution, his power to mould and reshape the art that immortalises a great musician.

Jyotirindranath

JYOTIRINDRANATH Tagore's talents had a versatility. He was a playwright, a literateur, a musician, an actor, a commercial entrepren eur and a patriot. It will be true to say that the romantic movement in Indian music was initiated by him and furthered by Rabindranath, his brother and disciple. The magnitude of the latter's genius has eclipsed many a contemporary talent of whom Jyotirindranath was one.

A select bunch of songs composed by Jyotirindranath was presented at the Fine Arts Academy on September 8. The songs reminded us once under the auspices of the Indira Music Circle more of the hard fact that without the musical spadework of this composer, the blossoming of the fine crop of Tagore music would have been impossible.

Not only that. There are a few branches of music in which Jyotirindra was definitely superior to his younger brother. In the matter of patriotic and comic songs he by far surpasses the poet. He not only encouraged the teenager, would-be composer by setting to tune his first two operas; also by his ceaseless creations and collections he inspired the growing poet. The song *hey antaryami* is an instance which went to the making of *ey parabasi rabe ke; chal re chal sabe Bharata-santan* inspired the poet's *ar nahe ar nay*. Such instances are numerous.

Both the solo songs of Mrs Suchitra Mitra were very well sung. The first song of Mr Devabrata Biswas was sung better than the patriotic song which should not have been assigned to him. The comic song of Mr Ashoktaru Banerjee was more appreciated and applauded than his dhrupad song. Mr Arghya Sen proved his competence. Mrs Geeta Ghatak was tolerably well but it was not understood why she reduced a kheyal-type *gitkari* into a Tagorite *tappa*. Most of the chorus songs were well rehearsed. But instrumental harmonisation, especially with the solo songs, was disturbing.

On the whole it was a highly commendable venture and would have been much more interesting had it been accompanied by a chronological analysis of the songs.

An Appeal

An Association for the Protection of Democratic Rights has been formed, with Mr Kapil Bhattacharya, as President and Mrs Kalyani Bhattacharya as Acting President. The Secretary is Mr Promode Sengupta. The Association points out that for the last two or three years an orgy of slaughter and brutal repression has been sweeping over West Bengal, Punjab, Andhra and many other places. As a matter of fact, in many places the police have been given the authority to shoot down political suspects and they have exercised this illegal authority and killed hundreds of youths. Such fascist atrocities and brutal repression were unknown even in the days of the British Raj. Various detention laws of the British regime have been brought back under old and new names (PVA, MISA etc) and workers of different political parties and other common people in their thousands

have been detained under them. At the same time many others have been implicated in false cases and thrown behind bars. Persons released on bail are re-arrested within the very premises of the court under fabricated charges.

According to the Government's own admission, the number of prisoners has far surpassed the capacity of the jails. Added to this is the supply of the worst possible food, extremely frightening sanitary conditions and meagre facilities for treatment. As a consequence, incurable and infectious diseases have been playing havoc with the lives of the prisoners. Already many have died of these diseases untreated and many more are on their way to death. Guardians and friends of the prisoners get no response from the Government even after repeated appeals. Persons detained for political reasons are far from being recognised as political prisoners and are being refused even the minimum facilities which are assured for all categories of prisoners by the jail code. Even the right to have a weekly interview of a few minutes' duration with their relatives is not being allowed. Recently following the footsteps of the former British rulers, prisoners have been deported to such far-off places from West Bengal that their relatives get no information about their wards.

Unspeakably barbarous tortures inflicted upon the prisoners under the plea of extorting confession during their detention in police custody has already maimed many and are going to maim many more.

Topping this list of shameful record are the incidents of indiscriminate killing, leaving aside the unheard of campaign of slaughter that is continuing outside. What any civilized society will shudder even to think of, has also come to pass—unarmed, helpless prisoners in their hundreds have been beaten or shot to death in a most cold-blooded fashion under different pretexts in jails and police custody.

The executive organs of the State have, in complete defiance of all constitutional provisions, been executing the sentences of death, which can be decided upon by the judiciary only. Yet judicial authority is surprisingly silent about it.

None of the important urban or rural areas, nor any section of the common people, be it intellectuals, middle class, workers, peasants or students have been spared this marauding march of death and repression. And the most promising section of our population viz. students and youths, has become the worst victim of this barbarism.

The Association appeals to all sections of our people including workers, peasants, intellectuals and students—whatever differences of opinion and party affiliation they have, to agree to an united effort to end this reign of terror and repression and also to end mutual in-fighting amongst themselves.

They should demand, among others, the immediate withdrawal of all laws of detention without trial; withdrawal of all cases under false charges; recognition of persons arrested for political reasons as political prisoners; the keeping of political prisoners in jails nearest to their places of habitation; proper arrangements for treatment within the jails and if necessary in outside hospitals; reintroduction of the system of weekly interview of the prisoners; cessation of torture or ill-treatment of people detained in police custody or in jail; impartial and thorough investigations in all cases of mass killing inside (Dum Dum, Alipore, Berhampore, Midnapore etc) or outside (Barasat, Diamond Harbour, Burdwan, Kalna, Baranagar, Howrah, Bantra, Bhawani Dutta Lane etc.) the jail and police custody.

The Association appeals to relatives and friends of political detainees, victims of slaughter and repression due to political reason to contact it at the address given below:

Mr Kapil Bhattacharya (President, APDR) 18 (N), Madan Boral Lane, Calcutta-12.

Mr Kapil Bhattacharyya, Sm Kalyani Bhattacharyya (Das), Sushil Banerjee, M. A. Latiff, Baren Daw, Saroj Chakraborty, Promode Sengupta, Dilip Chaudhuri, Amal Bose, Kshirod Dutta, Asit Ganguly, Dulal Bose, Satyananda Bhattacharyya, Kanai Paul, Suhasini Devi, G. Ghatak, Utpal Dutta, Nalini Sur, Sanjay Mitra, Sudhir Mazumdar, Amiya Kumar Basu, Sova Sen, Santosh Kumar Roy, Pinaki Chatterjee.

Letters

Bangladesh

A true national liberation struggle in a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country has to be both anti-feudal and anti-imperialistic. This is because imperialism is quite powerful and cannot be fought without the support of the majority of the people. The majority of the people are peasants and they cannot be effectively drawn into the struggle without their being anti-feudal. And thirdly, feudalism and imperialism are linked up.

If there were symptoms of underdevelopment in East Bengal, namely poverty, unemployment, rising prices, unutilised natural resources etc., this was due to an exploitative socio-economic system. Imperialism plunders Pakistan. This plunder is done through the native props and feudal and bourgeois forces, who get some crumbs from the booty. The bourgeois elements of East Bengal felt that they were not properly represented among the ruling classes of Pakistan and will not get their due share of the loot. They struggled for an effective bargain. For various reasons, this ended up in armed struggle, quite contrary to their wishes. Consistent with all the people's struggles under bourgeois leadership in the imperialist era, this also pushed the unarmed people forward as prey to the armed might of the State. Even then people were coming closer and began to lay their hands on power. Imperialists and the Indian

ruling classes were armed. They realised that this under-current might sweep them away. India got the green signal and the task was not so difficult. Thus, there was a change in East Bengal. The dominant classes of East Bengal which had West Pakistani ruling classes as intermediaries between them and the imperialists, now have Indian ruling classes as intermediaries. The difference is that Indian ruling classes are closer to social-imperialism than the Pakistani ruling classes. Even the dominant classes of East Bengal thus did not gain any kind of genuine freedom. What about the people who had to bear the brunt of the opportunistic and compromising policies of the bourgeois leaders.

Land distributed by peasant guerrillas to landless peasants has been taken over by the Mujib Government and given to landlords who returned from India. Private ownership of the means of production prevails in industry. As the State is controlled by feudal, bourgeois and imperialistic elements, nationalisation does not make much difference. Colleges, schools and universities are not run on new lines. There is no change as far as the people are concerned. There was a shoot at sight order. So much for socialism and government by discussion. Prices have been steadily rising. The price of rice alone rose by over 50%. There are plenty of dollars around. It may be an indication of increasing imperialist manoeuvres. Posh hotels are becoming busy, while poverty, starvation, unemployment, disease and misery have increased.

What has happened in Bangladesh was a systematic sabotage of a genuine people's democratic movement in the offing. Our 'Marxists' are happy about it. They accuse China for not recognising this government and for not admitting it to the United Nations. They term China's opposition to such a regime as 'unworthy of a socialist government'. Marx, don't tremble in your grave!

SUBHASH KELKAR
Bombay

Frontier

Apropos Dilip Karmakar's letter (19-8-72) I must say that as a regular reader of *Frontier* I expected it to be the voice of the people and its editor, at least, a Marxist. But his own admission that he is not a Marxist and the trend of the writings of its contributors have led me to realise that the journal has failed to be the organ of the poor and the exploited classes. On the contrary it has been a club-house for the not-too-risky theoretical, political exercise of a few intellectuals. So far nothing positive, therefore, has come from their pens. The paper's limitations appear to be the outcome of its purely petty-bourgeois origin. Its patrons and contributors, by their very class position, are hangers-on of the establishment, drawing in full their sustenance, both physical and moral, from it.

What the poor peasants and workers, a majority of whom have no knowledge of the 3 R's, need is not learned discourses on Marxism-Leninism, but revolutionary politics under the guidance and active participation of Marxist-Leninists.

ABINASH KAVIRAJ
Uttarpara, Hooghly

The indignation of Mr Karmakar at the mutilated publication and the analytical quest of Mr Roy ("What do you stand for?" 18-8-72) for the reason for negativism of *Frontier* have divulged many aspects but not the core. Have readers ever noticed in *Frontier* any comprehensive, open and unswerving critical review of the role, in the recent past, of the CPI or the USSR? The answer would stop you from trying further.

S. UPADHYAY
Rampurhat

Cadres And Leaders

Facing facts I agree with Mr S. N. Roy (Letters, "What do you stand for?", 12-8-72) that the overwhelming majority of the revolutionaries came from the cadres of the CPM. But, Mr Roy, your leaders, the vanguard of 'parliamentary cretinism', branded in no ambiguous terms those revolutionaries as anti-social elements, agents of CIA and what not.

However, hats off to the CPM cadres and cadres of different left parties who are not at all down but are determined to rise equal to the occasion, grasping the path of revolution. It is only the sectarian liquidationist "leader-ship" which is down.

ANIK ACHARYA

Indian Intelligentsia

Mr R. Banerjee in his 'Indian Intelligentsia' (2-9-72) has tried to analyse its character and role in our national life. No serious efforts till now appear to have been made to trace the rise and growth of the Indian intelligentsia in the background of the country's socio-economic con-

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ditions. The rise of the Indian intelligentsia is intimately connected with the spread of English education because it was through the English language that the Indians became acquainced with the latest development of the different branches of human knowledge. But the social and intellectual gap between the negligible fraction which took to English and the masses created a barrier. Independence did not improve things because independence, despite the tall promises made by Mr Nehru on the midnight of August 14, 1947, was a clandestine transaction between the white vested interests and their brown counterparts. The intelligentsia became a willing and active collaborator of the reactionary forces bent on exploiting the masses all the more vigorously.

The strategy adopted by the ruling class to dupe the intelligentsia was nothing novel. The post-independence period saw the rapid extension of university education which led to the setting up off a large number of universities, pathetically inconsistent with the resources the country could afford for the same. This was done obviously at the cost of compulsory and universal primary education and other amenities that should have gone to the innumerable children in the countryside. It was not without a purpose that the ruling class did such a thing. The innumerable academies, universities and other cultural and educational institutions, provided the intelligentsia with a market where they sold quite willingly their intellectual attainments at a comfortable price, deluding themselves that by so doing they were serving the masses. This self-delusion, an offshoot of narrow self-interest, vaingloriousness and complacency, has characterised the activities of our intelligentsia since it attained maturity and adulthood. It is this self-delusion—an inability to face the truth squarely—that has led to the growth of a double-facedness among the intelligentsia. This contradiction stems from their inability to harmonise their hereditary conservatism and acquired progressivism—a thing to be cast aside easily whenever suitable or convenient; the lack of sincerity and a sense of mission which plagues their activities so often and which explains their intellectual dishonesty is attributable to this constant clash of these two contradictory forces. That is why the Indian intelligentsia, while professing Marxism and Leninism, consider themselves, though subtly, a part of the Establishment, knowing it full well that creature comforts and other amenities they enjoy, are due to the 'socialist humanism' of the Establishment; the Establishment, on its part, is prepared to take an indulgent view of the 'revolutionary' doctrines of the intelligentsia as long as it knows that all the talk of revolutionary change is sound and funy, signifying nothing. If appears that both the parties have a secret agreement by which each will leave the other undisturbed. The days of dithering and hesitancy are, however, coming to an end, and if the Indian intelligentsia do not take up the historical role that awaits them in right earnest, they will be swept away by the ruthless historical forces which never spare the vacillating and the hesitant.

PHANI BHUSHAN GHOSH
Ashokenagar

For Frontier contact
People's Book House
Cowasji Patel Street,
Meher House,
Fort, Bombay

A Neglected Instrument

The esraj, a highly capable string instrument of the 'gayaki style', has few lovers today. Even serious students of Tagore songs no longer care to learn to play the esraj, in spite of Tagore's vigorous advocacy of the instrument. In the Sangit Bhavan of Santiniketan the esraj is compulsory till the end of the second year of the diploma course. But very few students take the trouble of continuing it afterwards. Of the serious institutions teaching Tagore songs in Calcutta only Surangama and Indira show a real love of the esraj. A few years ago Amiya Tagore, singing Tagore songs at a simple function, was accompanied on the esraj by Sailajaranjan Mazumdar, Subinoy Roy and Prafulla Kumar Das. In May this year Nilima Sen at one of her recitals in Calcutta was accompanied on the esraj by Gourhari Kabiraj, the famous esrajist. Later Indira arranged a solo performance by Nilima Sen where she was supported on the esraj by Subhas Chowdhuri. One only wishes such instances inspired those who are passionately fond of Tagore songs. The sooner the esraj is rehabilitated, the better for Tagore songs.

SUBHAS BHATTACHARYA
Katwa

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