

frontier

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WHAT'S COOKING ?

AS we go to press on Wednesday morning, October 4, we do not know whether there will be great turmoil later in the day. Mr Siddhartha Sankar Ray should know that agitations on the eve of and during the puja holidays are ruled out by most political parties. What the leftists want is to demonstrate their hold and the whole thing will be confined to numbers and the Maidan. But the Congress party which, though divided itself, wants to rule every nook and corner of West Bengal is not in a mood to allow even that. Whether, despite the unashamed bullying and threats of the rulers, people will turn out in large numbers remains to be seen. Provocation, in view of the present emaciated state of the leftists, can come from the government side alone. Will the numerous roughs of the Congress allow the leftists even the luxury of a demonstration? What a turn since 1966-67 when the Congress dared not hold any meeting in Calcutta! And what an anti-climax to the leftist rejoicing over the election of Mr V. V. Giri as President, which event was supposed to register a victory, though a limited victory, for progressive forces! Come to think of it, would things have been worse if the Congress (O) had continued to rule? Had the split in the Congress been aggravated by the leftists, as Lohia wanted it, the leftists perhaps would not have reduced themselves to a bewildered, whining lot, praying to the rulers not to disturb one of their meetings. As things were, the leftists sowed illusions in the minds of the people about the young guard of the Congress. The young guard!

The picture is bleak. Prices have continued to shoot, unemployment is rampant, the peasants are yet to recover from the effects of drought. All the while, thousands of young men continue to rot in jails, with no sign of any agitation for their release. As one set of charges are dismissed, fresh charges are brought and the provisions of the different detention acts resorted to. When someone cannot be produced before a magistrate within 24 hours of his arrest because of broken limbs in police custody, he is given another name so that the police can say that he has been released before the expiry of 24 hours. The food is awful, the 'dinner' plate is sometimes shared by eight prisoners, the convicts rough them up and provoke them into retaliation.

Thieves are taken out in police vans and asked to say that a

particular shop had been used by them to store stolen goods; the shopkeeper is asked to pay. If he does not he is taken to the thana and not released until the payment is made by his relations. A merry world indeed, for the police. And by the way, what about the forensic report on Charu Mazumdar? Weeks ago, the Minister of State for Home Affairs in Delhi admitted in Parliament that prima facie the report had been delayed. And that was weeks ago.

Style Is All

The Industrial Finance Corporation of India is the oldest development bank in the country and is considered to be a symbol of New India. The smug satisfaction with which its Chairman made his annual statement last week should lead one to think that everything is going according to plan, the socialist plan that is. One of the highlights of his statement was the Corporation's contribution to stimulating industrial growth in less developed areas. Its concessional finance of the projects in these areas makes up 27 per cent of its total sanctions. Seen from another angle, the contribution of the Corporation to the development of the new economy will again appear to be very impressive. Its assistance to industrial co-operatives, specially sugar and textile, constitutes 22 per cent of the total assistance since its inception. This prism will refract other pleasing lights if one looks at its growing profits, growing reserves, steady offer of maximum dividends. One should not therefore deny the Corporation, which is celebrating its silver jubilee this year, a grand conference of sugar co-operatives, or establishment of a management development institute.

In his annual statement, the IFC Chairman, however, did not disclose one aspect which he was forced to do afterwards under pressure of newsmen: 35.5 per cent of the IFC's loan

assistance had gone to large and larger houses during the last 24 years. Moreover, in spite of the convertibility clause in loan agreements, the IFC had exercised the option in only 20 per cent of the loans.

The rationale behind assistance to monopoly houses is simple. The Union Government has been issuing industrial licences to larger houses and therefore the IFC has followed suit. The Union Government has given licences to larger houses because it considered them economically viable. This is not at all unique. The LIC or any other public finance institution or the nationalised banks have been pursuing industrial development on the same lines. The caution taken for loan recovery has made favoured these well-established, flourishing houses against new entrepreneurs. The noble scheme of helping weaker sections of the industrialists, underdeveloped areas and priority sector of the economy have been neatly forgotten. Public money, raised for the all-round development of the country, especially in the interest of the masses, has been siphoned to the monopoly houses. As a result the industrial growth of the nation has been at half the rate promised in the last three years with the simultaneous doubling up of the retained profits of the larger houses during the same period, as a Reserve Bank of India study revealed in the last fortnight.

Which brings us to the main issue. There is an all-pervading impression that the Indira regime has definitely set in a socialist era, in which, for example, Siddhartha Sankar Ray can fulminate against the Birlas and get kudos from the masses. There is an impression, even among the discerning intelligentsia, that a more advanced consciousness has dawned on the masses, that the masses have become more critical of the rulers, a telling proof of which is the fact that Indira Gandhi has been forced to talk of socialism. It is not only the CPI which is speaking of progressive sections of the ruling clique; there

are other leftist parties too who claim that they have forced the Congress to take a socialist stance. If public memory is not that short, it may be reminded that socialism has been the talk of the Congress right from 1947 in some form or other and it is no significant departure of Mrs Gandhi's. The IFC, LIC, nationalised banks are standing reminders that the patronization of the monopoly houses, supposed to be the only reactionary elements, still continues. The content of the exploitation has been the same, yet we are being persuaded to be taken in by the style. In this country with the legacy of the Sanskrit grammarians this is no wonder: Style is all.

Not By Analysis Alone

The annual meeting of the World Bank and the IMF every year produces a lot of noise but little substance. Delivering his Sermon on the Mount this year, McNamara, the Bank President, spoke at great length on the sorry plight of the poor nations and of the sorrier prospects that lie ahead of them. With his background and with the responsibilities of the office he holds, it was natural for him to express concern at the way things are going. The hiatus between the rich and the poor is widening, both among nations and within individual nations, giving rise to a dangerously explosive situation. "When the highly privileged are few and the desperately poor are many—and when the gap between them is worsening rather than improving—it is only a question of time before a decisive choice must be made between the political costs of reform and the political risks of rebellion", he has said. The observation is significant, for it constitutes perhaps the most succinct indication of where exactly the soul of these glorified international agencies lies: with the forces of the status quo, with the Establishment. Not unexpected-

ly, when some developing countries are forced, out of sheer economic desperation, to nationalise foreign concerns that drain away their resources, some powerful nations try to twist the arm of the World Bank group, among others, to teach these economies a lesson by stopping assistance. Till even the other day, the group would not finance public sector projects in countries like India. Now, however, overwhelming economic realities, are forcing the World Bank and its associates to revise their policies. In any case, McNamara and his Bank owe allegiance to a system rooted in an inequitous past.

McNamara's speech has been long on analysis of the threats that lie ahead but pitifully short on how they can be stemmed. He has noted the increasing reluctance of the developed countries to extend further assistance to the poorer nations. The rich nations now perhaps feel that with about \$75 billion already lent to the developing world and with an annual debt servicing burden of \$7 billion inflicted on it, they can now afford to sit back and see the unfortunate debtors tighten the noose round their neck by trying to get out of it. For them, it already amounts virtually to a sell-out and there is hardly any way for getting off the hook. Whatever little chance there was has been successfully blocked by the rich countries, first, by raising higher and higher tariff and non-tariff walls against the developing nations' exports and, secondly, by modifying the world monetary system exclusively by themselves and for themselves. The demand made by India and some other countries for a reissue of SDRs has fallen on deaf ears, for the rich countries, with nearly all the world's gold in their storehouse, are not interested in "paper gold". Still it is a pity that the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America have learnt nothing and continue to quarrel among themselves in international forums. Or are some of them being tutored to keep alive the discord?

View from Delhi

The More The Messier

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Fifth Plan is not going to be an aid-less wonder, after all. Nobody in New Delhi interprets self-reliance as doing away with Soviet bloc aid and Mr D. P. Dhar's mission to Moscow will result in dovetailing of India's planning with the COMECON's. The country is fast returning to the double-alignment and the nostalgia is still for the old days when United States aid was the thing to look for. The overtures to the United States, in the form of Mrs Indira Gandhi's article in a forthcoming issue of *Foreign Affairs* quarterly and Y. B. Chavan's well-briefed utterances in the United States seek to convince Washington that the super-power interests could once again converge on India. Mr Chavan's speeches remind one of the T. T. Krishnamachari begging mission in the late fifties. New Delhi was a little upset over reports that the presence of the Acting United States Secretary of State at a dinner in honour of Mr Chavan amounted to a breakthrough in the relations between the two countries. The suggestion was promptly denied but subsequent utterances by Mr Chavan were proof that India was seeking something. The offer of a friendship treaty to the United States, on the lines of the Indo-Soviet treaty, was just puerile. If it was meant to counter U.S. suspicions about the treaty, then Mrs Gandhi has been taking Indian public opinion for a ride. For, after her October-November 1971 swing of six countries, she said nobody raised this subject, implying that only a few cussed critics at home were obsessed with it. Inside the Planning Commission, Mr Dhar has been talking of doing without U.S. and Western aid by mobilising the people and persuading them to sacrifice, etc but one section has posed the alternatives; either the

country cuts back on its huge defence spending or goes for aid.

The decline in prices claimed by the Government has been illusory. There is an upswing again. The National Food Advisory Council (no one knows when and how it came into being) decided a day before the Chief Ministers' conference (on September 30) that the higher prices recommended by the Agricultural Prices Commission were inadequate in a drought situation and therefore have to be revised. The Government might lose out on the price front, as it is wont to, but the kulaks have to win. In the past, the kulaks, through the Chief Ministers have succeeded in shooting down every proposal of the Commission for lowering the procurement prices. Ironically, when the Commission has recommended an upward revision, kulaks would shoot them down again, to get still higher prices. The more, the messier it will be, adding to the vast inflationary potential that already exists.

The Congress leadership has succeeded in neutralizing the CPI, after all. The presence of Mr Chandrajeet Yadav and Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma for the show that went under the garb of a peace conference in Calcutta did the trick. The CPI pleaded at length with Mr Yadav that it cannot withdraw the agitation it has announced and the agitation in West Bengal was part of the all-India plan. The CPI has fallen in line with the Congress requirement by promising that it would not link up with the parties of the right reaction or left extremism including the CPI(M). It wants to fight the Congress in splendid isolation, with the help of ex-comrades like Mr Yadav who constitute the "left and democratic" core of the party. The CIA bogey was perhaps raised to neutralise the CPI and ensure that it did not go overboard.

The Congress solicitude for the CPI is mystifying and can be explained perhaps only in terms of some unwritten clause in the Indo-Soviet treaty. The High Command has

directed the Pradesh units not to antagonise the local CPI units. On its part, the CPI gave in unabashedly in Bihar where it had pledged to see Mr Kedar Nath Pandey out. It is now established that the CPI was acting at the behest of Mr L. N. Mishra, the affluent Minister for Foreign Trade and the Congress party's star fund-raiser. The High Command is supposed to have pulled up the Bihar Chief Minister and told him to observe the normal courtesies with the CPI.

With the CPI neutralized once again after what looked like a passing aberration, the Congress is set to fight the rest of the Opposition in October. Even as the agitations pick up, the Government leadership will initiate a new dialogue with Big Business. On the eve of his departure for Moscow, Mr C. Subramaniam called in a PICCI delegation and pleaded for their cooperation to tide over the serious crisis. One of the suggestions he made was distribution of essential commodities at fair prices to the workers at the factory level. He had asked for more meetings with Big Business and the FICCI is pleased as Punch at the Government's climb-down after all the public pilorying of the private sector.

The leadership has had no integrated approach to economic policy and it is still groping for one. Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma's hair-raising stories notwithstanding the agitations are snowballing. In contrast to the unorganised agitations so far, the organised phase of agitations will be beginning next month. Bonus is an issue with the defence, P and T and railway employees. There are other issues in the organised private sector industries and it is fairly certain that the Government cannot hold the price line. The effort would not get past the seminar and discussion stage by October-end when the economy would have gone plummeting down the inclined plane. There would be no CIA to blame then.

September 30, 1972

Assam

The Language Dispute In Assam : Round Two

HIREN GOHAIN

THE Assam Congress Legislature Party has rushed through the Assembly an Act making Assamese the sole medium of instruction in the Brahmaputra Valley and recommending that a new university be established in the Cachar district, presumably with Bengali as the medium of instruction. A new university will cost the State at least Rs 15 lakhs every year. Gauhati University itself is in the red to the tune of Rs 16 lakhs, leading to the stoppage of several programmes of development and expansion. Thousands of colleges and schools are suffering from shortage of funds. Teachers of primary schools are reaching the nadir of penury. Several departments of the State Government have unceremoniously sacked thousands of employees in an unprecedented drive for economy. And the Government itself is blithely going ahead with plans for a new university for a district merely because it wants to placate illiberal and parochial sentiments of the Assamese bourgeoisie.

Already certain extremist Assamese groups are urging the people of Cachar to adopt Assamese. Two colleges in the Brahmaputra Valley in areas of concentrated Bengali population had moved the Supreme Court against the high-handed decision of the Academic Council of Gauhati University. They are now being vigorously "persuaded" to withdraw the suit. Indeed, bloody riots seem almost inevitable. There are of course strong contingents of police everywhere, but one suspects that they succeed in intimidating the Assamese goondas rather less than the Bengali victims.

The Bengalis have their share of guilt. They have for the last few decades played a curiously passive part in the social and political life of the

State. A few honourable exceptions apart, they have taken little interest in Assamese culture, and maintained an air of nostalgic superiority while the youthful Assamese bourgeoisie have tried to assert their new-found confidence. Having secured good foreign degrees, good posts and started lucrative business here and there, the local bourgeoisie have naturally felt like challenging a rival group. Seething lower-middle-class discontent due to large-scale unemployment and growing peasant resistance have also goaded them on to use the age-old diversionary tactics of communal violence.

There is no doubt that in certain areas the 'movement' (which for reasons we shall disclose need fear no police repression) has become popular. There is no doubt that it is an extremely reactionary movement captained by the Assamese bourgeoisie. Why this attempt to harry the Bengalis? Why is no one willing to give them a hearing? There is no answer except the merest suspicion that the Bengalis mean mischief, that they are temporizing with some foul design in the dark depths of the notoriously cavernous Bengali mind, that they want a sovereign Bengal at the expense of Assam. The last allegation is supposed to be given countenance by Maulana Bhasani's plans for a united Bengal including Assam. (If Bhasani has said any such thing, he is a fool).

Hats off to Biswa Goswami, secretary of the State unit of the Socialist Party, who has come out with a strongly-worded statement that pierces the murky atmosphere of language politics with reason and humanism. The CPI and the RCPI have brought disgrace upon themselves by currying favour with a misguided mob. It is a wonder that in

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spite of their thick revisionist coats they do not realise the disastrous consequences of their policy to the ideology of the Left. The unattached 'progressives' as usual are waiting in the background, as vultures and hyenas do before a battle. Among the students—and one says this with pain—even those acquainted with the poverty and wretchedness of the real Assamese, those who live in the villages, are at the moment under the spell of potent bourgeois propaganda. The student and the youth wings of the CPI(M) are likely to be active in defence of the rights of the minorities.

Patriarchs Join In

Yet the situation is now clearer than it was three months ago. The ruling group of the Assam Congress at that time, was rather unwilling to commit itself to the patriotic epidemic. It seems to have given the green signal to a widely-read partisan weekly and to the Youth Congress. Now the patriarchs themselves have moved in. To the dismay of extremist student leaders they even threaten to monopolise the laurels of heroism. The attitude of the government has encouraged a section of the teachers at Gauhati University to form an 'action committee', with two senior professors flourishing this new brand of activism. They have appealed to all the schools and colleges to form similar action committees to defend the honour of the mother-tongue. It is not known whether the grave professors would really favour the methods dear to the patriots, for instance, arson. The bourgeois press (and we have no other press in Assam) is singing a daily hallelujah to patriotism, detailing the treacheries of the Bengalis who have dared to conspire against the saintly Assamese, and blacking out anything that is disagreeable to patriotic stomachs. They are also claiming that despite the allegation of "evil-minded, international-spirited, super-subtle intellectuals" the Bengalis are actually accepting the blessing of the Assamese

language with ecstatic happiness.

Those who sentimentalise about "youth and recklessness, daring and adventure etc." do not have much respect for our youth. They fail to notice that our student and youth leaders are at least as mature and shrewd as they. The dirty business of buying and selling souls that is known in bourgeois circles by the honorific name of 'politics as vocation' is thriving among our students. They skim the cant and rhetoric and quickly come to the conclusion that the career and conduct of leaders signify doping and deceiving people with powerful and empty slogans, with private enrichment as the end. Some of our student leaders have become past masters of this craft. But they are annoyed that this eminently sensible policy, which seems to have pushed reigning MLAs and ministers into their present pomp and power, is opposed by two inferior breeds—the Communists and the Intellectuals, both certified by powerful ministers to be Traitors to the Nation and Enemies of the People. However they have now realised with some gratification that not all Commies are bad guys. Only the Bengali-lover is the poisonous type. Similarly it is not so hard these days to spot the harmless intellectual and the wild variety.

One particular body of students is now given wide coverage in the press. The All Assam Students' Union has in its train *all* the schools and colleges in Assam. How? By the simple expedient of having a constitution that automatically confers membership on the elected union secretary of any school or college anywhere in Assam. Many a novice secretary is likely to find this automatic membership of an all-Assam body highly flattering, if not inspiring. They will back up to the hilt any decision of the all-Assam body in the interest of 'solidarity'. This body also has a flair for organization. At present this body is dedicated to the task of saving Assam from the Bengali menace.

While the higher rungs of the

Assamese bourgeois (which are extremely clannish) are safely ensconced in their government posts and business, their poor relations are in a mood of revolt. The almost uninterrupted economic stagnation of the State, the pressure on land, the poor progress of industries, and now the spiralling price-rise have made them grumpy and testy—though they are unable to discover the real cause of their misery. As yet they stop short of identifying with the poor peasant. All they want is a clean shirt and enough of pocket-money for the weekly film. Hence their present anger is turning against 'outsiders'. The Sinha ministry began by promising miracles. So far they have passed scores of new Bills in the Assembly with monotonous machine-gun rapidity. Under their regime thousands of people in several departments are haunted by fear of retrenchment. They do not seem to have any plans for industrialising the State. Under pressure from the Central Government they have now drastically cut government expenditure on development. Having indulged in violent rhetoric against the extravagance of the former ministry, they lapped up Rs 48,000 in three months as travelling allowance. There are not too many ways open to salvage a fast-fading prestige. That perhaps explains the present ministry's kind of interest in the language dispute. The Sinha Ministry is of course trying hard to prevent an outbreak of violence. That is unfair to the police-officers who rarely come upon a situation where they can express their patriotic solidarity with their civilian brethren. At any rate, you cannot have your cake and eat it too.

Lastly, let me air a private theory of my own. Encouragement to chauvinism is a form of counter-attack on communism. The legitimate aspirations of the poor and deprived thus end in the ashes of fratricide. That it is anti-Bengali is also predictable. After all, as the source and haunt of Marxist ideas in Eastern India, West Bengal has

long troubled the dreams of the exploiting classes. To foster an indiscriminate anti-Bengali attitude is to encourage regressive loyalties and stem the tide of disturbing ideas. English has in any case fallen on evil days. If the people also stop reading Bengali books, the ruling class will be safe from subversive ideas at least for a decade. The British too had once played that game, when they pitted Bengali provincialism against Assamese provincialism, and considerably weakened the rush of radical nationalist ideas to Assam. But their success was temporary. The success of the Indian ruling classes in dividing the exploited people is also bound to be temporary. When the hurly-burly dies down both Assamese and Bengali radical intellectuals and Communists must resume the urgent task of purging the people's minds of the poisonous bourgeois chauvinist ideas. Let us keep our faith in the people's ability to learn.

P.S. In launching this Bill the ACLP has taken its stand on the report of the Kothari Commission. The Kothari Commission only recommended that the government should help preparing courses in regional languages. It nowhere said that minorities which wanted to retain their language in instruction should be prevented from doing so. On the contrary.

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ফিলে খোঁজ করুন

সন্ধিক্ষণ

বিশেষ সংখ্যা

অক্টোবরের প্রথম সপ্তাহে বেরোচ্ছে

- ভূমি সংস্কার প্রসঙ্গে
- শ্রমিকশ্রেণীর তথাকথিত অধঃপতনে
বামপন্থী দলগুলির ভূমিকা
- নকশালবাড়ী রাজনীতির মূল্যায়ন

Dictatorship Of The Secretariat

I. K. SHUKLA

WHEN Mr C. C. Desai, ICS, now MP (C-O), during the discussion on the abolition of privileges of the ICS in the Lok Sabha on September 2 hectored: "You eat out of their hands" and "cringe before them in private", he was arrogant and abrasive, but, truthful, in a way, all the same. And, as if the ICS possessed a monopoly on the brains, he said: "You can't take away their brains". A Calcutta daily called it a 'stinging reply'. It were better described as a stinking reply. Let us see where the stink is.

The Pipelines and Housing scandals are only the latest among a legion of such rackets since independence in which a host of ICS/IAS men have been involved. The Kashmir issue in the U.N. is another igno-

not be their haven after what they had done her over the years.

And Nehru had a crush on this inglorious 'steel frame'. (Wags say, because a good number was Kashmiri). No wonder, Aurobindo in Alipur Jail mordantly called his tumbler an 'ICS tumbler'. He had to drink water from it and also urinate in it. According to the British water is water, whether drink it or pass it. This then is the much vaunted mythical excellence of the ICS which served its British masters only too well. These affinities and loyalties will be their sheet anchor when the black ('brown' suggests illegitimacy) ICS men retire to England. The sooner they are pensioned and siphoned off, the better. As for their poor toy replica, the tin-frame of the IAS (or the plastic-frame, whatever you will), it is a still dirtier story.

How these co-conspirators and collaborationists of the British stymied and stultified our independence and how they later diluted and distorted its quality became evident with every passing day. Instead of sending them packing at the dawn of freedom, Nehru rewarded these men of the colonial rule with still greater powers of manipulation. Thus the compromised Independence became the pocket preserve of a few in the country and the masses remained stuck in the same centuries-old squalor and serfage.

It was C. R. Das who had cautioned against this danger in his ringing words: 'I want Swaraj for the ninety-eight per cent. . . I do not want to substitute the white bureaucracy by a brown bureaucracy'. And yet the 'brownies' usurped power, and pampered and protected the decrepit politicians, saw to it that Raj remained the exclusive privilege of less than two per cent.

That the danger from the bureaucracy is increasingly assuming gigan-

minious reminder of an ICS man. The notorious Bilasia Murder Case which rocked the nation in the 40's and whose sequel was the suicide of Mr B. B. Singh, ICS, is yet another monument to their probity, and ingenuity, in giving it the complexion of an Indo-British encounter, in which the pious sons of Bharat Mata had to emerge victorious as a matter of course. Suicide was the apex of victory celebrations, and the letters left by Mr Singh for his daughters and wife were more tell-tale than the proceedings in the court. The unashamed cry for pension in pound sterling betrays the quality of service the ICS men rendered Mother India, which, they are rightly sure, would

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tic dimensions is again testified to by a reviewer of the book *The British Ombudsman*. He says, '...in undeveloped... countries the bureaucracy and sundry pressure groups can be a menace'. Pakistan is a recent example where the bureaucrats in league with the merchants and militarists precipitated the crisis resulting in its smash-up. Reviewing another book 'Government Through Consultation: Advisory Committees in Indian Government' another reviewer observes: 'the danger of bureaucrats resisting powerful advisory committees is real'. That is why our Vigilance Commissions have been reduced to a big fatuity. The persistence and pervasiveness of this malaise is too alarming to be dismissed lightly any more. How ubiquitous and deadly this class is need hardly be emphasized. By the way, those knowing Hindi can probably read *Rag Darbari*, a masterpiece in fiction by Shrilal Shukla satirically exposing the gross corruption and rank cynicism of this breed.

It is to this class that Milovan Djilas refers in his celebrated work *The New Class*. We can add the corps of modern moghuls, viz., the ministers, MPs, MLAs and managers. The old princely order has been replaced by this upstart rabble. Mediocrity and mammon-worship distinguished this crowd. Through Parkinsonian progression the tribe is on the increase. Not only India, but also the post-Stalin Russia is weighed down by the growing army of bureaucrats whose values are not the ones of revolution which they have thrown away on the roadside. Admittedly, it was in the Stalin era itself that this mammoth was created. But it functioned with an enclave without bearing down on the citizens indiscriminately, firstly, because Stalin's staying hand was there to curb improper enthusiasms and ignoble encroachments, and secondly, because the Revolution had not yet receded into oblivion.

Credit must be given to Trotsky for having shrewdly foreseen and

forewarned against this disease. He once complained that 'his more powerful rival had replaced the dictatorship of the proletariat by that of the Secretariat'. This latter apparatus was the creation of Stalin and did not exactly mean bureaucrats then. It was a closed circle of aides and assistants. The Stalinist Secretariat did become, in some cases, an instrument of tyranny. (That is another story altogether. But his successors most unscrupulously undid the dictatorship of the proletariat, clamping in its place an oligarchy of 'techbucrats' (technocrats and bureaucrats).

The Indian case is more desperate for a number of reasons. A foreign language shields our bureaucrat in his perverse habits and he can practise shooting for fun from this awesome hide-out. The chokingly massive Hindu hypocrisy which blandly preaches austerity to, and inflicts it on, the masses, but justifies aggressive acquisitiveness and insatiable accumulation for the select, provides the hybridized ('anglicized' according to Nirad Chaudhuri) IAS the fig leaf of respectability. He collects bribes and coos his Vishnu-Sahasranāma with equal felicity. The Hindu ambivalence between pious profession and impious practice salves the conscience in an abject pursuit of material gains by dishonest means. Hinduism appears to be the ideal nursery for the rank growth of philistinism and vulgarianism.

True, dictatorship of the proletariat was never plighted by the architects of our freedom. But neither had India pawned her fate to the functioning anarchy of red-tapism—anonymous, arbitrary, and amoral. Nor the 'socialistic pattern of society' ever received from the crores of Indians any mandate to inflict on them the hordes of anti-socials flourishing as black-marketeers, smugglers, hoarders, forgers, and adulterators with bureaucracy in the vanguard as their guiding angel.

Anti-People

It is this caboodle which ren-

ders the administration, central and state, anti-people and runs it in a language and style which is feudal, colonial, and fascist. An Indian citizen visiting his state capital or Delhi, and their respective secretariats, finds himself a total stranger in his own country. He is assailed by questions like: Does India belong to Indians? Does it belong to the kisan and jawan who feed and defend us? Who does it belong to? Is not our 'freedom' both a tragedy and a hoax? Freedom to starve and die like flies? Freedom to be fleeced and flouted? How do the officials, fed on our money, afford to play the arrogant master and not the polite servant of the people? Why have they been allowed so many privileges and perquisites to live like nawabs? At whose expense? Is this the 'heaven of freedom' in which Tagore wanted his country to awake?

It is they who as agents and accomplices of the vested interests would perpetuate the economic and educational inequalities, and frustrate land reforms etc. And it is the so-called rule of law (which they subvert) which would protect them! The national repository of the vested interests, parliamentary democracy, which represents a complex of organised exploitation, will need and nurse the bureaucracy. The 'democratic' illusion of advance will remain the national carnival. Any attempt at dissent and change will be met with fascist terror, because the parliamentary patriots and bureaucrats would have nothing to disturb or decrease their enjoyment of luxury and licence.

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The Tappers Of Kerala

YOHONNEN MATHAI

It is a pleasure to get out of our city. Calcutta with its built-in insecurity and turmoil is synonymous with misery—at least in modern Yankee English. If you get a chance in winter, if you can afford a car, a driver and the time, it is pleasant to escape and if escape you must you should go south. Calcutta to Howrah, then you cross over to Orissa via Jhargram and reach Andhradesh at Srikakulam to take the mixture of chicken and chillie with a large preponderance of the latter under the close vigilance of the armed cop at the hotel gate.

But as you cross Srikakulam district you really reach the fairy land of Andhra. You drive through villages where pure buffalo milk sells at 90 paise a litre, meet friendly eyes welcoming you from heads of bodies with tattered loincloth as the only covering, take steaming idlies at 10 paise a piece, go ahead along the Godavari canal with its sparkling blue water till you reach the great river which could entice Rama and Sita, Valmiki and Michael. If you are not satisfied you can buy famous Andhra grapes at 2.50 a kilo, best guavas that can put the U.P. ones to shame both in size and sweetness at Re 1 a dozen and shafedas at 40 paise a dozen and the friendliest of smiles in the bargain. If that is not enough for your relaxation you may as well look at the coiffures of semi-nude peasant women, bright with white and yellow, red and crimson flowers.

Yes—you are in a different world. Far from the city which started its misery with the famine of 1943 and continued its journey to the climactic through bombing, riot and partition, war and refugee problem, violence and counter-violence. Here is a definite world—a land of fairies. If you can reach Kerala, the land of cocoanuts and take shelter in the estate of a rubber baron (not rob-

ber) on the top of a 200 ft. hillock covered on all sides by a dancing rivulet singing lullabies to put you to sleep at night—well, even the fairies may envy you.

The bright colourful building on the top with electricity and running water beckons to you with smiles of Shefalika and Asoka. The rose-wood furniture with foam-rubber cushion and the friendly hospitality of the baron—20 miles from the nearest town—confers a peace and security unthinkable in Calcutta.

Here you get everything. Rice and chicken, milk and eggs, fruits and salad, idli and upamma, fresh toddy, freshly ground coffee from the gardens, all this may even put the Birlas to shame. Early in the December morning you get up to find the fragrance of Shefalika calling you to the plantation.

You have to choose. Resisting the aroma of the best spices in the world being used for your breakfast you go out, stand in the midst of acres of rubber plants. In an expansive mood, you like to talk. Maybe you don't know Malayam but you can get hold of an interpreter. The tappers nod. They know you are the guest of the baron. But even then, slowly the stories come out.

He has to come out early, long before the baron's cocks announce the advent, of light. He may not dislike the welcome change from the darkness of his miserable hovel. He has to use the knife to make the plants bleed and send forth their white latex for your child's eraser or the baron's motor tyre. He has to collect the previous day's latex in the bag on his back and go to the storehouse to mix it up with water. Filter it through sieves and again mix it with acid and leave it to set. As it sets the water has to be squeezed out through the rollers of the press. The latter is really a smart contrivance, fond of nothing but muscle-power. So it simultaneously squeezes out the water from the rubber sheet and the strength from the fellow's muscles. But that is not the end of the story. The squeezed rub-

ber has to be smoked and dried, to make it fit for the market.

For this work from dawn to dusk he gets a paise per tree tapped. This comes to about Rs 3 per head per working day—in the maximum. For it is not possible for a tapper to work more than 300 plants in a day. But the price of rice is about 1.70 per litre which comes to about Rs 2.50 per kilo. The employment of course is not round the year. In days of excessive rain he has to sit idle. There may be death and festivities in the family. So the average number of working days may not reach 270 out of the 365 allotted to the year.

But then why are you obsessed so much. There is the big red rice of Kerala. That is an unnecessary luxury. There is tapioca selling at 25 paise a kilo. Protein and mineral content of tapioca practically nil? Food value very much lower than rice? Never mind. It is much better than outright starvation. But even that you cannot avoid always. Tapioca may be dirt cheap but not as easily available as dirt. Yes, the employed tapper is really fortunate. He should not forget that the lowest per capita income in India is in Kerala. The average is Rs 303/- annually or 83 paise per day against the annual Rs 421.50 for the whole of India. And he should be proud. He earns more foreign exchange for India.

Perhaps he knows and appreciates that. That is why the deep brown bodies and the black eyes are so friendly. It is not the sulky hostile look of a revolting Bengali. And when you hear the same people practising carols for Christmas, singing Malayali songs preaching universal brotherhood for children of Noah, you are charmed.

They are a happy lot—happy, carefree and friendly. The Church teaches them to accept their lot with a smile.

They have free education in the local school run probably by the same baron as the manager. The scandalmonger may say all sorts of things about the school managers of

Kerala but certain facts you should not forget. Live virus introduced in the body in proper dose and manner may protect you against deadly diseases like smallpox and polyomyelitis. Likewise proper education helped by the Church and the school manager may protect the tapper against dangerous subversive ideas. Starvation in a hovel may produce disease but our barons and bishops take good care of that too. There are hospitals where a telephone from the baron will arrange free treatment and care. You should not forget that Kerala has the lowest death rate in India—16.1 per 1000 compared to 22.8. And that goes to the credit of the much-maligned bishops and barons.

The longer they live, the more they work for the Baron, the Bishop and the Church for their prosperity, for the kingdom of God.

Yes, this is a foolproof system. It guards the baron, takes care of the tapper checks subversion and arranges for the kingdom of God here on earth.

Perhaps in your childhood, you heard of two friendly women—one a fishmonger and the other a flowermonger. The fishmonger had to catch fish in ponds and rivers outside the capital. A villager out and out, she would occasionally come to the city to sell fish only when the rural market was bad. The flowermonger had to arrange flowers for the king any time of the day and night. So she had to live in the capital city. Once it was too late for the fishmonger to go back to her village. So she came to sleep with her friend the flowermonger. In the middle of the night the flowermonger found her friend tossing in bed without a wink of sleep. At first she was a little bit surprised—the best room, the clean soft bed, the pleasing company of a friend cannot bring sleep to the fishmonger? But being an old friend she diagnosed the problem quickly. She brought and placed the fishmonger's basket near the nose of

the proprietress. The smell of stale fish did what the fragrance of fresh flowers could not. The fishmonger went fast asleep.

A Calcuttan may sometimes behave like the fishmonger. This peace and tranquillity, this idyllic surrounding may disturb him. He may then roam out of the manor across the moat on the stream and find refuge on the verandah of the mud-hut on the road side. Here the rubber and toddy tappers, the workers in the fields and plantations, come in their loincloth and smile for a glass of black coffee—a rare pleasure for the princely sum of ten paise.

A crowd gathers round the Calcuttan and his family—but they are friendly—the Calcuttan does not feel like an animal in the zoo. It is all friendship and no hostility. Their loving Malayali murmur mingles with the murmur of the brooks. One or two broken English words vie with the chirping of the birds overhead to make the Calcuttan feel at home. They explode a sample Christmas cracker and laugh, they stop a village vendor to show his miserable bundle of Christmas cakes and halwa to the stranger, offer a kilo of fish caught from a nearby rivulet for Re 1. They are eager, they are frantic to show their Christmas spirit, to find some way to make the Calcuttan feel at home.

But the Calcuttan may be a peculiar species. This idyllic tranquillity, this foolproof system for the preservation of the status quo does not make him feel at home. He misses the intoxication of daily insecurity of his city. Suddenly he hates the Shephalika and the Ashoka, the rosewood furniture and dinner with the world's best spices. He even hates the mother of God, the son of God, even the friendly rubber tappers. He feels for the key in his pocket—the key to his car, key to the road, key to the city, the city of misery.

The Autumn Number of **frontier**

is due on or about October 9

Contributors include:

Joan Robinson on Economic Planning in China.

Benoy Ghose on Pre-political Rebellions in Bengal.

Rossana Rosanda on Mao Against Marx?

Hiren Gohain on Tolstoi and Art.

Hiten Ghosh on Dying Culture.

A Correspondent on The Lessons of Birbhum.

After the Autumn Number Frontier will appear again in the first week of November, as the Press will be closed for two weeks.

How Old Was Alauddin ?

HIRENDRA CHAKRABORTY

LIVES of most of our musicians are shrouded in myth and mystery. There is the mythical story of competition between Nayak Gopal and Amir Khusrau during the reign of Alauddin Khilji which ignores the hard historical fact that the above-named celebrities were separated by a time gap of more than one hundred years; there is the physically improbable story of the right hand of the corpse of Mian Tansen rising in approval of the style of singing Vilas Khan, his youngest son, after a controversy had raged among the children of the deceased maestro as to who should be the rightful protagonist of his heritage. There is yet another physical improbability of the virtuoso being aflame after his recital of the raga Deepak and legends invent various characters to sing raga Meghmallar in order to extinguish the flames by causing instantaneous rainfall. Various versions of the story have various names as the rescuer. While one has Saraswati, the Mian's own daughter, as the rescuing songstress, another has a village girl named Tani, still another has Haridas Swami, the debatable preceptor of the virtuoso. Legend and fantasy thrive in the absence of history.

The days of the Akbari court have become ancient. No wonder if the factual accuracy of some data of that period cannot be historically ascertained today. But it will certainly be a matter of surprise and regret if the essential biographical data of so contemporary a man as Ustad Alauddin Khan are hopelessly mixed up with hearsay and fantasy. The late Alauddin Khan, the third son of one Sadu Khan of village Shibpur near the sub-divisional town of Brahmanbaria in Tippera district, was from his infancy more mindful of the other attractions of his social environment than his school lessons and was given to an errant disposi-

tion. The boy was taking after the tradition of his own father who was a habitual visitor to the house of Ustad Kashim Ali Khan (of the seni gharana) at Agartala as a student of sitar. The standard of his acquirement in sitar playing is not known for certain but this much can be said that it did not greatly inspire the imagination of the boy Alauddin. For, after getting the first opportunity of learning music he opted for everything else one after another except a string instrument.

Nevertheless, music was the mainstay of the family of Sadu which was known both as *nagarchi* and *natua*. People connected with the musical profession were called *natua* and they belong to the lower sections of the Hindu community some of whom were converted to Islam, such as the drummers of Bengal and the shehenai players of upper India. The word *nagarchi* may be a defecation of the word *nakarchi* (just like *bawarchi*) denoting people playing on the nakara, another variety of the drum. Alauddin himself has admitted the legend of the family having descended from a Hindu ancestor. But it is highly doubtful that a devout Brahmin like Bhowani Pathak was the initiator of the line. Because by conversion a family used to change its religious faith—not its age-old profession which was considered sacred and unchangeable.

The boy used to forget his classes and lessons and visit the *akhras* of the wandering sadhus and fakirs and while away his time listening to their songs and instruments and observing their ways of life. His habits may have been formed by the uninteresting village school-masters as by his own innate interest in music. There was more than enough music in the house—both string percussion and woodwind—for which the boy did not have to roam about the precincts of the sadhus and fakirs. But after his delinquency was reported by the school and after he was a little roughly brushed by his mother, he fled from the house. Why? To avoid the dull monotony of school?

To learn music? Perhaps both.

The most pertinent question that arises now is: why did Alauddin rush to Dacca instead of going to Agartala if he was really born around 1862? Kashim Ali Khan was in Agartala around 1872 and Agartala was the hot bed of music in those days. It would have been natural for Alauddin to go to Agartala instead of to Dacca. Again, around 1892 Kashim Ali Khan was in Jaidevpur and Dacca was the hot bed of music and it would have been most natural for Alauddin to rush to Dacca. The inevitable conclusion arising out of this curious choice is that the hero of the legend could not have been born earlier than 1881. He was only ten when he fled the house, i.e. in 1891. It is known for certain that he was only 15 when he was traced in Calcutta, brought back to Shibpur and was married to a girl of 10 in about 1896. Again he fled the house and returned to Calcutta and found to his dismay that Gopalchandra Chakraborty (Nulo Gopal as the popular nomenclature had him), the dhrupad singer of the court of Raja Jatindramohan Tagore of Pathuriaghata, was dead. He does not mention Kshetramohan Goswami who was a court musician of Pathuriaghata. He also must have been dead by the time Alauddin took up his music lessons again in Calcutta and this time he changed from vocal to instrumental music. The reason for this change was (1) dearth of a first-rate vocalist to whom he could be easily apprenticed and (2) necessity to earn his daily bread. The newly-founded Bengali stage was then in the need of musical hands. He was introduced to Amritalal Datta (Habu Datta), youngest brother of Swami Vivekananda, who saw him into the orchestra of the Minerva Theatre. His family heritage of percussion playing and lessons from Mr Labo of the Eden Gardens Band stood him in good stead now. In this way he learnt to handle numerous instruments: But his thirst for vocal music was gone for ever. It is also interesting to note in this connection

that he did not try his hand at any Indian string instrument—not even his father's most favourite sitar, which has been credited by the legends to have lured him into the akhras of the sadhus who are said to have sung their devotional songs in its accompaniment. The sitar has always been a costly and sophisticated instrument—not at all meant for accompaniment—beyond the reach of poor sadhus and fakirs. Being a man of East Bengal and having passed 20 years of my life in that land I never came across a single sadhu or fakir playing on a sitar. Even the *dotara* was a luxurious affair to them.

After a few years the prodigal son returned home with the credit of his ability to play a range of instruments and a job at the Minerva Theatre at Rs 12 per month. He was induced by the brothers to go to Muktagacha and exhibit his mastery before Raja Jagatkishore, an old patron of the family and a great connoisseur of music. The Raja saw the youngman's ability to handle numerous foreign and indigenous instruments. What did he play that day? Doubtless he played his newly acquired theatrical tunes. The Raja did not make any adverse comment but understood that the youth had become a jack of all trades and master or none; that he had not taken up any serious Indian string instrument; and that he had not taken any systematic *talim* in *raga* music. He asked the youth to come next morning and listen to the sarod recital of Ahmad Ali Khan of Rampur who was his court musician.

Ahmad Ali Khan was the nephew of Mazru Khan, disciple of Bahadur Sen of the tenth generation in the line of Mian Tansen. Ahmad Ali Khan's style of playing on the sarod left Alauddin almost speechless. Such depth and vast expanse of the raga conception, such masterly control over the notes and their magnificent combinations, the subtle nuances and deep inflexions of the notes—everything was beyond Alauddin's comprehension. After the recital the Raja

asked for his opinion and he unreservedly admitted that he had never listened to and thought of learning such music. He began to keep constant company of Ahmad Ali Khan who, on the recommendation of the Raja, agreed to accept him as his disciple. Alauddin stuck to Ahmad Ali Khan just like a flea and did not leave his company when he went to Rampur. His apprenticeship in Rampur especially to the great vazir is full of gossip and rumour, the long and short of which is that he had to accept servility in the houses of his preceptors for the sake of musical knowledge. But why did he practise such servility? Because he had realised that his 15 years' stay in Calcutta had been in vain. He had practised no less servility in Calcutta but had got little in return. He had not learnt a single basic tonal instrument of Indian music. It is doubtful if he had any touch with classicism after the death of Nulo Gopal. Karamatulla Khan and Kokubh Khan, the two giants of the sarod, used to regularly visit Calcutta and give demonstrations during Alauddin's stay in Calcutta but he did not know them. Vazir Khan lived in one Munshiji's house in Chandni Chowk for long eight years when Alauddin was sidling but the latter does not seem to have been aware of the demonstrations given by the former in the court of Pathuriaghata which he once used to visit along with Nulo Gopal. Engaged in dramatic music he was then far away from the world of classical music. Had he been in it much of his pains to get a passport to Vazir in Rampur would have been minimised. His knowledge of commercial music came to his rescue when he needed a little cash earning after his wife had come over to Rampur. His experience in theatrical concert secured him a job in the ensemble of the native princes.

It was round 1905 or thereabouts that Alauddin followed Ahmed Ali Khan to Rampur. Alauddin's first daughter was born in Rampur after his wife had gone there to live with him and he was then in his thirties. In com-

puting his correct age the cardinal fact has to be borne in mind that his wife was younger than him by 5 years only.

Alauddin received his initial lessons from Nazir Khan, eldest son of Vazir Khan. It was Alauddin's fortune and misfortune that the budding Ustad died a premature death whereupon Vazir relented and himself took up the disciple. The great authority died in 1926.

It is curious to note that even from Vazir Alauddin did not learn any classical instrument like the rabab, the sur-shringar or the veen. Instead he stuck to the romantic sarod. The Rabab-style of playing on the sarod was introduced by Nyamatulla Khan, a forefather of Hafiz Ali. Alauddin combined with it Vazir's veen style. He expanded the system of alap and remodelled it on the style of the veen and ornamented it with elaborate *tar-paran*. It is not correct to say that he did away with the Masidkhani slow-tempo composition—in order to keep with the spirit of the

প্রকাশিত হল

অনুষ্ঠ প

ত্রৈমাসিক সাহিত্য পত্রিকা

পি-৫৫.বি, সি, আই, টি, রোড। কলি : ১০
সাম্প্রতি সাহিত্য সংবাদ : বিষ্ণু, দে—লাপ-
পতি লেনিনবাদী, বিষ্ণু দে প্রসঙ্গে মাণিক
বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের চিঠি, বুদ্ধিজীবী ও একটি
প্রশ্ন, মাস্ক থেকে মাও সে তুং—জর্জ
টম্‌সন; বুলগেরিয়ার কবিতা; ক্রুটিয়ারের
সীমানা।

প্রবন্ধ : ষাট দশকে ফরাসীর সাহিত্যে বাম-
পন্থী ধারা / বিভাগসংগের 'ইতিহাস'
ও জাতীয়তাবাদী চেতনা / আমাদের
সাহিত্য ও আমাদের জীবন যেরকম /
গান্ধী ও অসহযোগ আন্দোলন
(অনুবাদ) / নাটক (অনুবাদ) ও
কবিতা।

মূল্য ২'০০ / সডাক ২'৫০

composition it has been further slowed. The style of composition has assumed a dhrupad character which is more akin to the veen baz. Nor is not true to say that he has incorporated all conceivable folk tunes as the bhatiyali, baul or kirtan in his Todi or Darbari Kanada. He turned a purist in his later years and refused to play thumri in Bhairavi because Bhairavi in his opinion is nothing but the primeval goddess of power which can have nothing in common with eroticism. Of course he incorporated many things in his style and system of playing without hindering the classic character. He never aimed at unnecessary sweetness only to please the common listener, as some of his disciples have done. His manner of playing was rather rugged when he played Shri or Sughray Kanada. He loved to play all classes of music—whether a raga or a kirtan tune—but never confused or mixed them up.

Now we come to the close of the controversy. Alauddin went to Europe with Uday Shankar at the age of 55, as will be testified by the contemporary photographs. The death of Nulo Gopal, the age difference with his wife, his going to Dacca instead of Agartala—all point to one basic fact that Alauddin Khan was born around 1880, in 1881 to be more precise. His age on August 14, 1972 was 91 years, not 110 years as given out by the news agencies.

Letters

Swastika on The Campus

Jadavpur University is one more institution where the ruling Congress is virtually in control of everything from the unions to day-to-day administration. It captured the unions one by one through a process of diatribes, terrorisation, forced confession, adhoc committees and show of election. Not even mild dissent is allowed let alone protest. As the unions were formerly controlled by

the CP (M), so they have to bear the brunt. Several activists connected with the non-teaching staff and engineering students' unions who are local residents or attached to local party units are not being allowed by the local thugs to come to the campus or even to their homes for the last six months. They have been absconding for fear of physical liquidation.

Fourteen local lower middle-class young men—all of whom are Ruling Congress activists and some of whom are known hoodlums—have been taken into the University as members of the subordinate cadres of the non-teaching staff from the middle of September. The way they were given employment, disregarding all norms and practices prevalent in the University, shows the blatant connivance of the authorities in allowing the ruling party to dictate policies. All of the new recruits have been given jobs on recommendations from two of the employees—the present president of the Karmachari Sansad, the non-teaching staff union, and a local Ruling Congress bully-cum-organiser, and another who, despite his record, always remains in the good books of the administration. The total submission of the administration to these elements is something to be seen to believe.

On an occasion, a former student union leader was taken out of the campus by the local thugs and compelled to sign a statement at gunpoint. On June 19, the former joint secretary of the non-teaching staff union and a worker of the Central Library joined office after long leave. The next day, he was asked to come out for some 'talks' in the union office on the top floor of the administrative building. But having reached the building, instead of 'talking', the present general secretary tried to hand him over to a group of thugs in front of the building. The library workers went there on hearing the news and took the ex-union leader out of the campus. He is still un-

able to join as his appeals for protection go unheeded by the authorities. The position of three other office-bearers including an assistant secretary of the former union is the same. The authorities are now adopting means which are legally untenable to terminate their services.

On September 4, the ex-president of the Karmachari Sansad was beaten up severely while he was returning home. On the same day, a member of a subordinate cadre of the non-teaching staff, who was also an office-bearer of the former Sansad, was 'ordered' to quit the campus within 24 hours when he tried to join after long leave. The 'order' was given mainly by the person who always remains in the good books of the administration. As there was no alternative, he had to quit.

The complicity of the administration is evident from another incident on the same evening. Five B.Sc. students of physics were debarred by the Controller of Examinations from taking the final examinations as they had failed to get any marks for their sessional work. According to the existing rules they could not sit for examinations. As all the students belong to the Ruling Congress, they made a political issue of this and demanded immediate dismissal of the Controller who was accused of being a CP (M) sympathiser. The non-teaching staff union also supported them. The administration obliged them on the next day by forcing the Controller to go on indefinite leave. A committee to investigate the students' charges has been set up; the members are all sycophants and Ruling Congress elements on the campus.

It looks like that the driven out students will never be able to come back, the employees will lose their jobs and the rest will have to stay in conditions which are not much different from those in Germany in the thirties.

A CORRESPONDENT

OCTOBER 7, 1972

Munich

Your editorial (of September 16) justifying the action of the Palestinian Commandos at Munich is deplorable.

The Vietnamese people are also fighting a national liberation struggle against yankee imperialism. Though the Americans are bombing civilian areas and the dyke systems of the DRV, the Vietnamese never try to kill Americans either in America or in European capitals. The Palestinians should wage war against the Zionist State on Palestinian soil, not at Munich or Stockholm.

And you know very well that the Israeli people are after all their brethren. They belong to the oppressed majority of Israel and would one day be masters of Revolutionary Palestinian land along with the Refugees.

As for your avowed sympathy and admiration for the Ceylonese insurgents and again for the commando action at Munich, I would like to close this letter with the following quotation from Lenin: "Left wing adventurism is nothing but an infantile disorder."

K. SUNDARAM
Bangalore

14 Policemen

On 28-5-71 near Srikhanda Railway Station, Burdwan District, three police constables were murdered by some alleged Naxalites. Mr Abdul Karim Mallick, District Secretary of the Burdwan Non-gazetted Police Karmachari Samity, in a telegram to the Home Secretary and the Inspector General of Police, West Bengal, said that the murders could be committed for the serious negligence of the district police authorities. The wives and relatives of the police force demanded the presence of the SP and the DM, Burdwan, before the funeral of the dead could take place. They wanted to know why the authorities had violated the IGP's orders. The SP, Mr Panchu Gopal Mukherjee, appeared after an abnormal delay though he was present in

Burdwan district. He did not visit the place of occurrence, nor did he meet the family members of the murdered constables. He left for Asansol with the then District Magistrate. He arrested one sub-inspector, one assistant sub-inspector and 12 police constables for an alleged demonstration. Not only were three separate cases started, 14 policemen were also detained under the PVA Act for the same alleged demonstration. On 17-11-71 the Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate, Burdwan, discharged the 14 policemen and two judges of Calcutta High Court released them from illegal detention on 16-2-72. On 1-7-72, on the eve of departure from the district, Mr P. G. Mukherjee as D.I.G. of Police, Burdwan Range, again planted a case under the Defence of India Rules against the 14.

Mr Karim Mallick, Secretary of the District Non-gazetted Police Karmachari Samity, submitted a representation to Mr Siddhartha Sankar Ray, the Chief Minister, praying for a judicial commission to bring the offenders to justice, giving details of the conspiracy of the SP, Burdwan. He stated that the then District Magistrate of Burdwan had helped the SP to cover his guilt and that the report sent to the Cabinet Minister in May 1971 was totally different from the opinion of the judicial records of Burdwan Sadar. The SP had taken political shelter and tried, by his personal influence, to establish false cases but had failed. In spite of this he is still seeking to crush all these poor policemen.

Mr Karim says in his representation that he will be able to establish the true facts by placing important materials so that the offender could be brought to justice.

A READER

Frontier

Reading *Frontier* and before that *Now*, I found the editor's intention is only to act as a forum for discuss-

শারদীয় সংখ্যা

৬পন

ছয়ই অক্টোবর সংখ্যাটি
বাৰ্ধিত কলেবরে বিশেষ শারদীয়
সংখ্যারূপে দৃষ্টিগোচর হোল।

এতে থাকবে সাপ্তাহিক সংবাদ
ফিচার, ব্যঙ্গচিত্র, ছবি ছাড়াও বিশেষ
কয়েকটি প্রবন্ধ।

বিষয় ও লেখকসূচী :

পশ্চিমবঙ্গের বেদনা / রণজিৎ রায়।
সেন্টিমেন্টারি সলিডারিটি লোকসংস্কৃতি
হরেকৃষ্ণহরোরাম / বিনয় ঘোষ।
বিভেদ নয়, ঐক্য : ভারতীয় কমিউ-
নিস্ট আন্দোলনে নতুন চিন্তাধারা /
চণক্য সরকার। পশ্চিমবঙ্গের রাজ-
নীতি ১৯৬৭-৭২ / কাজল সেন।
বুর্জোয়া বিচার ব্যবস্থা : আমার
অভিজ্ঞতা / হীরেন বসু। স্বপ্ন ও
বাস্তব / চন্দ্রশেখর। বামপন্থী
আন্দোলনের সাফল্য ও ব্যর্থতা
১৯৬৭-৭২ / কুমুদ দাশগুপ্ত।
শিবে গুন্ডা, শিবে গুন্ডাই /
অশোক মিত্র। সি পি আইয়ের
বন্ধুদের প্রতি / নারায়ণ চৌধুরী।
জাতীয় ঐতিহ্য ও সাংবাদিক /
কল্পতরু সেনগুপ্ত। বামপন্থী
চিন্তা : সি পি এম / অর্জুন
বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়। মারণাস্ত্র ব্যবসা, যুদ্ধ
ও শান্তি / রণেন নাগ। সংগীতে
রাজনীতি / হীরেন চক্রবর্তী।

এছাড়া লিখছেন সমর সেন, বিনয়
সেন, মৃগাল সেন, তরুণ চট্টো-
পাধ্যায়, নীলাঞ্জন দাশ, দেবেন
শিকদার।

দাম এক টাকা, আন্তঃশুল্ক দু-
পয়সা।

ing, from a leftist point, current political and cultural events. I do not think he ever pretended to run *Frontier* as a mouth organ of any political party. Whether it should be so run to serve the Revolution is another matter. But so far the editor has not shown any firm commitment. His policy, it seems, is only to provide a forum for well-intentioned people who want to bring real changes for the downtrodden in India. That way it is doing a service in the formative years of Indian Revolution.

M. N. D. NAIR
Trivandrum

'Sarat Babu'

Sarat Chandra might have infused some new blood in the otherwise anaemic Bengali novel' as stated by Mr Phani Bhusan Ghose (September 16) but in Telugu literature he has left some dust off the feet of his heroes mingled with some tears of his heroines. He ruled over the Telugu novel for a decade through the translations of almost all his works. He was called 'Sarat babu' by novel-crazy readers in Telugu. He swayed many a temperamental, bourgeois among young novelists of either sex who generally

produced third rate sentimental time-killers sometimes, first rate too.

The womenfolk of Sarat Chandra did not have spinal chord, as pointed out by M. N. Roy. The Telugu rebel writer, Chalam, could provide that spinal chord without showing the social and economic back ground.

Sarat Babu has not only turned some poor businessmen into rich publishers and film producers but has also left behind so many Devadases—the broken hearted lovers.

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