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PEACE SOON ?

PEACE, it is said, is about to break out in Vietnam, though Mr Nixon is most unlikely, at the time of writing, to have the agreement signed on October 31. The publication of the agreement by Hanoi was rather embarrassing; it shows how the Americans have been going back on the agreed dates on one pretext or another. But by now the world has got used to the chicanery of the rulers of the most powerful and the most brutal State it has known. The delay in signing the agreement will enable the Americans to wrest some more concessions and rush arms to South Vietnam. But what about the presidential election? The disclosure by Hanoi is not likely to upset the large masses of American voters; they wanted the gooks to be taught a lesson and, but for a tiny minority, never bothered about the inhumanity of what was going on in an Asian country as soon as the boys started coming home. Even those who professed concern and agitated were muted when the war began to be conducted from the air. Vietnam is both a shame and a glory; shame for a world which has shed the idealism of the Spanish Civil War, and glory for the indomitable spirit and courage of the Vietnamese who have fought Japanese, French and American imperialism.

The Vietnamese know best what is good for them. They have made compromises to achieve a cease-fire: That man Thieu stays, and the National Council of Reconciliation and Concord is not the same thing as a provisional government. But the principal aim will have been achieved: total withdrawal of American forces so that the Vietnamese may themselves decide their own future through negotiations. The cease-fire 'in places' will enable the NLF to control a large area of the countryside; but the American shadow will loom large from the 7th fleet and Thailand. It is the political part of the agreement that will be most complicated. It will be difficult to thrash out an agreement with American puppets like Thieu, though changes in the balance of power in that part of the world will perhaps compel the Saigon regime not to be too unreasonable.

What a fine thing it would have been if the liberation forces could give the Americans a bloody nose and make them quit with dishonour! But the international communist movement has reached such a stage that this is not to be. And it is rather ironical that North Vietnam should state that it is an imperative obligation for America to contribute to the

rebuilding of its devastated economy. This is not the same thing as asking for reparations. The velvet gloves of the American ruling classes are as nasty as their mailed fist.

Language And Politics

Since independence, Assam has witnessed language riots in 1948, 1955, 1960, 1968, 1971 and 1972. In the last decade four territories had had to be carved out of the State: Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Arunachal. In the context of the present arson, molestation, looting and murder committed on the language minorities in Assam, the Plains Tribals Council of Assam has demanded autonomy for the northern tracts of five districts to safeguard their linguistic rights. The CPI has demanded for Bengali-speaking Cachar a separate statehood. The Linguistic Minorities Rights Committee of Assam has refused to accept Mr Fakhruddin Ahmed, Central Minister, as the mediator in settling the problem because it considers him as one of the engineers of a previous language riot. It blames the whole thing on the linguistic chauvinism of the Assamese people. The CPI, believing in the goodness of people, refuses to blame the students or others who are agitating to establish Assamese as the only language that matters in Assam; it puts the blame squarely on the CIA. Those who do not accept any charge against the CIA without hard evidence and yet cannot take the language agitation in good humour believe that the whole thing has been the doing of 'anti-socials'. Newspapers have observed a voluntary censorship of the riot news, after a surprising order by an Assamese district magistrate, to the effect that all news must be pre-censored by him, was judiciously withdrawn.

Out of all this mess one thing seems to come out clear. Assam is a State where Assamese-speaking people form 42 per cent of the popu-

lation. Some, including census authorities, suspect that even this figure is exaggerated. In this land if immigrants, therefore, the students demanding that, ten years hence, Assamese should be the only medium of instruction in universities seem to be less than just. The CPI demand of statehood for Cachar is no solution at all; the logic behind it, if stretched, would lead to further fragmentation of the country. Unilingual states are a good thing, to an extent. But they do not solve any real problem—not in the least the core problem of India: exploitation and poverty.

There are some people who piously believe that people can do no wrong, that students are always right. True, people are essentially good but they can be misled. In feudal times, religion was the principal weapon to mislead people. In bourgeois times, linguistic communalism does mislead people. In Telengana, the Mulki rules have led the people to a blind alley. In Assam, the linguistic passion has been compounded by racial distrust. Under the present circumstances, the best thing for Assam would perhaps be to maintain the status quo. As it is, there are 'more important' problems that harass the people there; the issue of medium of instruction touches only a fragmentary section of the middle class. But in India, the ruling class has been able to manufacture artificial crises to divert the attention of the people from the crucial points. The political supremacy of the ruling party being assured, there have to be some burning issues, other than the relation between the exploiter and the exploited. In Assam, the relation between the Assamese and the non-Assamese is not a relation of exploitation. That the students of the State are spearheading an essentially reactionary movement, by inciting one section of the people against another, should be obvious. In Darjeeling, people had at least confronted the Prime Minister and her prestige; in East Bengal in 1954 the students and others gave violent

battle to the authorities who wanted to impose Urdu, but in early March 1971 large numbers of poor people were seen huddled on the roads near the airport in a bid to escape the consequences of their speaking Urdu; in Sind this year Punjabis and Sindhis shed their own blood; in Assam the people are chasing others whose only fault is that they do not speak Assamese. In Assam, students are being used by the ruling section in a shadow-chasing battle. And that seems to corroborate the hypothesis that students come forward in a country where there is bankruptcy among progressive political parties. The pity is that students are misguided.

Economic Despair

Government policies are sacred; they are not to be criticised even if they are found to be going wrong. In fact when old policies are abandoned for new ones, the authorities do it in such a manner as to avoid giving the impression of policy failures. One hardly knows any occasion when either the Finance Ministry or the Reserve Bank of India admitted the failure of monetary or fiscal policy. It is because of this that the Reserve Bank's confession of policy failure—though in a discreet way—in its latest annual report on currency and finance created so much surprise. Perhaps its loss of autonomy vis-a-vis the North Block when central banks in other countries are having a greater say on the management of the economy has something to do with the sudden candidness. What has been said in the report is more or less known, but since it comes from a source like the Reserve Bank one can take it without reservations. Over the years the scope and extent of the report have expanded; this may have something to do with the dimensional changes in the economy. Although solid information and firm data have been always at a premium, the report covering the period July 1971 to June

1972 makes a refreshing attempt to be analytical. The inclusion of a new chapter on national income, saving and investment and the 'introduction' which tries to show that certain trends observed during the year conform to the underlying changes in the economy since the drought years of 1965-67 are some useful innovations.

The report says that although there has been an increase in tax revenues no improvement in the proportion of public investment financed by public savings has been noticed. What this amounts to is that the increasing level of forced savings has made little impact on public investment. Additions to public investment have now come to depend more on drafts on household savings. In regard to the price situation it says something which is already known—the failure of prices to rise in the last half of 1971 was due to a build-up of unutilised purchasing power which was activated and superimposed on supply shortages in the first half of 1972. In spite of larger supplies of wage goods and slower additions to development expenditures than envisaged in the Fourth Plan, price increases could not be checked. Both price increases and the Government's price support policies have shifted the bias in favour of agricultural producers. The shift has had the effect of keeping food and other agricultural prices high even where supply conditions favoured a reduction. Because of the rising prices the incentive effect of the measures taken to promote exports and the deterrent effect of tariffs and other restrictions on imports have been greatly eroded. As the economy has failed to grow and diversify, there is now little scope for further raising exports and restricting imports. Inflationary developments outside the country had offset to some extent the impact of domestic price increases on balance of payments. But the changes that have already occurred could accentuate the pressure on foreign exchange reserves as domestic investment picks up and competition

from third countries becomes more intense on the export market. The Bank is not at all impressed by the rise in industrial production in the first half of 1972 since the gains were all scored by cotton textiles and jute. (The capital goods industries have remained where they were. The setback in agricultural production reminds how hollow is all the big talk about structural and technological changes in agriculture.

Mr Dhar's Plan

On the morrow of his assumption of office as the Planning Minister, Mr D. P. Dhar said that the policies and priorities of Indian planning had to be relaid and past attitudes were to undergo mutations under his guidance. His declaration did not surprise anybody, however. For with his past record of socialist achievement as the country's key man for foreign relations, his famished countrymen had prepared themselves for a fresh bout of slogan-mongering the moment New Delhi announced his installation in Yojana Bhavan. But what was subsequently published as the approach paper of the Fifth Plan proved a damp squib; it contains nothing new except some vague resolutions and vaguer ways to realise them.

The Fifth Plan's broad objective, as of all other plans, will be "growth with social justice". During the past two decades Indians have time and again heard such pledges. But to what effect? More than 50 per cent of Indians, to quote the Planning Commission, are below the poverty

line. Also, the exposition of the 'core sector' is moth-eaten. Till 1963 the Indian planners toyed with the idea of developing the key sector, to the exclusion of others, or the 'core sector', if you so will, and gave it up under duress.

Nobody will take umbrage with Mr Dhar, however, if he wants to resurrect these ideas and ideas. But few will welcome the half-hearted manner in which he proposes to do that. This week the Planning Commission has proposed a bigger plan, with bigger financial needs and Mr Dhar has promised to set up appropriate machinery to put them into effect. After the Third Plan the emphasis on the key sector shifted, thanks to the famine, war and devaluation. Ironically, the after effects of war and drought have begun to be felt with severity when Mr Dhar proposed the switch-over and he has little idea of how to get around them. He has urged the farmers to increase their output but has not elaborated how he would supply them with more fertilisers and water or the fertiliser factories and pump producers with more power. Neither could he tell how he would implement his price control measures. If the price rise continues at the present rate another devaluation will be inevitable, which would mean the end of all planning.

It does not, however, matter whether or not he is able to do what he says. But this quinquennial ritual has to go on. For otherwise the fading socialist image of his Prime Minister will be further tarred. His 'leftist' friends are there outside Yojana Bhavan to see that the ritual is duly carried on.

From Esso With Love

Like any strategist, the three foreign oil companies know that one of the essential preconditions of success in any encounter is to harass the other side. This they have been doing with flattering success for some

time. Nearly two years ago they put forward a deceptively innocuous suggestion: the Government should take over 51 per cent of their shares and run the companies as joint ventures. If accepted, the move would

have enabled the firms to retain their grip over a vital sector of the Indian economy, and the country would then have remained perpetually on the tenterhooks on the question of crude supplies. That the foreign companies never miss an opportunity to embarrass the Government has been proved so many times, the most glaring instance being perhaps their refusal to refine crude supplied by New Delhi during the 1965 India-Pakistan war. So the offer was rejected. But the companies have not stopped there. They have come up with one or the other demand, the most common of them being the pleas for increases in crude prices. On New Delhi's part, it is a pity that it has allowed the initiative to lie with the other side for all these years.

Now the companies are back with a still more ingenious move. Esso (which in the 'fifties, then known as Standard Vacuum, was largely responsible for much of the initial bungling in oil exploration from which India does not seem to have recovered fully yet) has now offered to sell 74 per cent and even 100 per cent of its shares to the Government against an apparently harmless condition that it be allowed to bid for crude supplies for its refinery. Giving reasons for the decision, a spokesman first said that Esso could not function in an environment where it felt it was not wanted. That was nothing if not a highly audacious statement. But on second thoughts it seems to have mellowed a bit. The company fears, the spokesman said, that if the establishment is nationalised after the expiry of the refinery agreement in 1979, it may not get a fair compensation as New Delhi by a recent constitutional amendment has assumed powers of making arbitrary payments for taken over properties. So if the shares can now be sold to the government, it hopes to secure a better price. But it is plainly rather difficult to believe that a company of Esso's size should be so unduly concerned over assets worth no more than Rs 30 crores. The real motive

behind the proposal is to denigrate the Government of India, to scare away prospective foreign entrepreneurs interested in making investment in this country and to raise the bogey of nationalisation. Indeed, Esso has pulled a fast one, and New

Delhi cannot just afford to lose time by brooding over it. The least it can do is to confront the company with an equally innocent-looking counter-proposal and thus steal from it the initiative as well as the propaganda mileage.

View from Delhi

A Forgotten Anniversary

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE tenth anniversary of the border war with China, which went almost unnoticed, was ironically preceded by reports from Washington about the project for an electronic surveillance system along the China border. Under the project "Peace Indigo" private firms in the United States were supposed to provide radar equipment to link India's existing forward surveillance system on the border with China and its inland military command areas, United States embargo on military equipment for India clamped down during the December 1971 war stands in the way of projected supplies. The reports had it that discussions were under way in New Delhi between U.S. and Indian officials to get the embargo lifted. These reports have not been contradicted in New Delhi—or in Washington.

The Sino-Indian border dispute has remained frozen at the highest level since 1962 when India's China policy collapsed. The war resulted in the imposition on the ground a boundary acceptable to China and China has had no reason to alter the status quo. According to India, the area under Chinese occupation before the war was 12,000 square miles in the Aksai-Chin area. The war resulted in the occupation of about 2,500 square miles of additional area in the same sector. India has not charged China with occupation of any area in the NEFA sector or the Central sector, which means effectively the dispute related to 14,500

square miles of the Aksai-Chin area in Chinese occupation.

Significantly, when Mrs Indira Gandhi said at a press conference in Paris in November 1971 that India was prepared to exchange ambassadors with China without insisting on solution of substantive issues like the border question, there was no protest in India from the traditionally anti-China elements. She was reported as saying that the Aksai-Chin issue can be discussed, but later she suggested that she had been misreported. Assuming she had been misreported, there was no objection, serious or formal, to the statement attributed to her. Which is a measure of the change that has come over Indian public opinion during the last ten years.

The duality of standards is obvious. Pakistan has been in continuous occupation of over 31,000 square miles of territory in Kashmir. The dispute here is territorial and not one of boundaries. While India has throughout insisted that no negotiation would be possible with China unless occupied territory was vacated first, it has been too willing to discuss Kashmir and related matters at different levels and in different series of talks. In fact, the 1962 war was utilised by the Anglo-United States military aid givers to force five rounds of ministerial-level talks on Kashmir and related matters. If the Simla agreement could be a model for other tension zones in Asia, as India wants it to be, the

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Aksai-Chin issue should be no problem. The fact that India is for bilateral solution to bilateral problems is proof that it no longer insists on Chinese acceptance of the Colombo proposals in toto as the condition for discussion on the border issue.

But the border issue is the least important factor in Sino-Indian relations now. A step-by-step normalisation of relations was possible until the Indo-Soviet treaty was signed in August 1971. The treaty was the Soviet answer to Dr Kissinger's visit to Peking and the timing of the treaty should have clearly suggested that it was a checkmate on China. New Delhi chose to interpret the ambiguous Chinese reference to the treaty in the beginning to mean that China did not regard it as some thing hostile. But by November, Chinese assessment of the treaty was clear; it was an anti-China military alliance and part of the Brezhnev plan for collective security in Asia. The Chinese attitude to the Bangladesh issue was about to undergo a change when in their view, it underwent a qualitative change in October-November and assumed the character of an India-Pakistan issue.

Indian leaders have sought to maintain that the setback to normalisation of relations with China was the result of China's support to Pakistan on the Bangladesh issue. But could not it be that the Indo-Soviet treaty was responsible for the hardening of the Chinese attitude to Bangladesh? Was the treaty the result of renewed Chinese hostility to India or its cause? The Soviet Union never had it so easy and so good until the Chinese veto on Bangladesh's entry to the United Nations on August 2. With the rebuff from Sadat, the first of the new series of Soviet friendship treaties took a bad buffeting. The failure of Soviet and Indian diplomacy to secure Pakistani recognition of Bangladesh before August underlined the Soviet debacle further. Several small countries look at the Indo-Soviet treaty with deep distrust.

Normalisation of relations with

China would in a larger measure depend on India's ability to demonstrate an independence of super-powers. India which has near-identical friendship treaties with Bangladesh and the Soviet Union links both these countries and to this extent even Bangladesh would have to demonstrate its independence of the super-powers.

The reported negotiations for lifting the embargo on radar equipment for border surveillance, if true, take India's policy back to the days immediately after the 1962 border war. This seems to be a continuation of the policies of the famous Air Umbrella days. Short of an umbrella India got a joint air exercise christened "Siksha" in which United States and Commonwealth personnel and aircraft participated. The radar equipment brought for the exercise were left behind for border surveillance. About a year ago, a report from New Delhi in *Los Angeles Times* that India and United States have been exchanging border intelligence was flatly contradicted by New Delhi while Washington did not deem it necessary to respond. And now comes the report on "Project Indigo" which suggests continued convergence of super-power interests on India as part of the larger plan for Asian confrontation.

October 29, 1972

Orissa

The Cuttack Contest

SUKODEV PADHI

THE contest between Mrs Nandini Satpathi, the Chief Minister of Orissa, and Mr Biren Mitra, the ex-Chief Minister, in the Cuttack constituency is going to be one of the toughest ever in Orissa, tougher than the one at Rourkela in September 1971 when Mr Binayak Acharya contested Mr Biswanath Das, the then Chief Minister. Mr Mitra has played well so far: first he wrote to Mrs Satpathi that he would give full

support to her election campaign, but then at the eleventh hour, he decided to contest her. The question is: can Mr Mitra win?

In the 1971 mid-term election Mr Mitra was defeated by Mr Bhairab Mohanty, a Congress candidate. But in 1971 there was the Indira wave which swept away a good many parliamentarians and leaders like Madhu Limaye, Fernandes, Ranga, Surendra Dwivedi. It was thus not surprising that Mr Biren Mitra was defeated by a Congress candidate. Besides, though Mr Mitra has a good influence over Cuttack citizens and is known as 'Birenda' and liked by working class people, during the mid-term election he fell ill and could not have any personal contact with the people.

Mrs Satpathi is not Bhairab Mohanty. Mr Mohanty was once an MLA and became a minister (1952). He was the real builder of the Barabati Stadium, one of the prettiest and largest stadiums in Asia. He is the Vice-President of the Cricket Control Board of India and the General Secretary of the Orissa Olympic Association. So from his early career he has been maintaining his status and reputation. But Mrs Satpathi has not yet faced a single election. She is not a State cadre leader. For her to defeat 'Birenda' would not be so easy as it was for Mr Mohanty.

Last but not least, which party will support whom? It is inevitable that all the other parties except the CPI will support Mr Mitra. Mrs Satpathi cannot get full support from the Congress itself. There are four groups in the Orissa Congress: Dr Mahtab's group; Mr Binayak Acharya's group which all the youngsters are supporting; ex Swatantra and the ex-Utkal Congress group which recently joined the Congress; and Mr Surendra Dwivedi's PSP group which has also joined the Congress. All the four groups are unlikely to support Nandini.

Mr Biswanath Das, a prominent leader and ex-Chief Minister, has pledged to back Biren Mitra.

Probably he has not yet forgotten the wound inflicted by Mrs Satpathi a few months ago. Mr Das's great associate, Mr Radhanath Rath, the editor of *Samaj*, the largest circulated daily newspaper in Orissa, will mould public opinion against Mrs Satpathi through his *Samaj*. Let us see how Her Majesty's candidate fares.

Tamil Nadu

MGR'S Party

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

THE new party formed by MGR, called Anna DMK, has received the backing of an MP and a few MLAs but even then the support enjoyed by MGR is poor. He is being given wide publicity by newspapers and AIR and people are under the impression that Mr Karunanidhi will now be thrown out at any moment. But this assumption is wrong. The power struggle waged by different parties in Tamil Nadu differs from the pattern in other States. True, all the parties except the DMK and the CPM have suddenly started loving MGR and some of the anti-DMK dailies like *Alai Osai*, *Nathigam* are selling like hot cakes. But it is highly doubtful if the various lies and guesses being circulated by the different dailies and weeklies will stand the test of time.

Political consciousness in Tamil Nadu is higher now. Unfortunately, the communist parties of the right or left are unable to exploit this situation. Since they form opportunistic alliances with either the Congress or DMK, people think that they are like any bourgeois party. Further, people know that the communists can throw only stones, like any other party. What they want the communists to take up is rifles. During the Congress regime, there was no such awaken-

ing as now, in spite of its corrupt practices. When there was strict gold control order, nobody knew how one former Chief Minister of the Congress had given licences to party men to use gold to make "Thanga Paspams" (Ayurvedic medicine—something like Kaya Kalpam). No one knew at that time that there were Congress MLAs who smuggled cardamom, cloves and other spices from Ceylon. No one knew how the previous Congress Ministry used goondas and rowdies to suppress people's movements. Now the DMK is following the same corrupt practices, but its corruptions are coming out very easily thanks to the growth of regional dailies and weeklies. The corruptions of the DMK are apparent, unlike those of the Congress at its time. Most of the taluk and district secretaries of the DMK, MLAs and MPs who were previously a set of gamblers, drama actors, story writers, teashop owners, tailors, barbers, butlers etc. were inspired by Mr E. V. R. Naicker's fanatical, religious approach and anti-Brahminism and later joined the DMK establishment. Originally most of them were very poor and belonged to lower or backward castes. These men now own two or three modern buildings, houses, plots of land, cinema houses, cars, gold, shares in different industries. All DMK leaders except a few MLAs became very rich in a very short time and this led people to think that Mr Kamaraj is the man to look up to rather than these corrupt rogues. The anti-DMK sentiments favour Mr Kamaraj as he is not personally a corrupt man. Unlike other leaders, he has not invested money for personal assets (though he allowed others to become rich). Further, by using his influence, he is helping several poor and deserving families of selfless workers. For instance, after the death of Mr P. Jeevanandham, a famous orator and a big leader of the CPI, Mr Kamaraj helped the widow in distress, even though Jeeva was his political opponent. Apart from his good quali-

ties, Mr Kamaraj and his party have a good organisation like the DMK. After the split in the Congress, he was left alone with many selfless young cadres. Most of the corrupt elements of the Congress joined the Congress (R) in order to flourish in their business. Therefore, the present wave is for Mr Kamaraj.

But Mr Karunanidhi has enough cunning to exploit the personal enmity between Mr Kamaraj and Mrs Gandhi. People are being led to think by the newspapers that the Congress (R) will use the MGR issue as a law and order problem and impose President's rule in Tamil Nadu. But Mrs Gandhi will not take much interest in Tamil Nadu politics, if Mr Kamaraj gains from the MGR issue.

The Anna DMK is nothing but a springboard to dive into the Congress (R). The Congress (R) will not succeed in any by-elections in Tamil Nadu even if MGR gives his support. Since there is no organisation for the Congress (R), leaders like C. S. or Mohan also cannot win independently without the support of the Congress (O) or the DMK. If there is a three-cornered fight, either the Congress (O) or the DMK will come to power. Considering these aspects, Mrs Gandhi may not undertake a foolish adventure of imposing President's rule. Similarly, Mr Karunanidhi is not a fool, as imagined by the press.

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NOVEMBER 4, 1972

Moga Massacre

G. SINGH

MUCH has been written about the trouble in Moga, Punjab, where the police fired on students. The students were struggling peacefully through their principals and other officials against the goondaism of cinema owners and their practice of selling the costlier tickets only. They lodged protests with the local authorities. But the authorities did not bother at all. This continued for about a month. Then on October 4, about 50 students went to see a film and asked for concession; they were beaten up by the hired goondas of the cinema owner. One of the students later died in hospital.

In the evening students went to the SDM and demanded the arrest of the cinema owner and the goondas. But he remained deaf to their grievances.

Next morning the students of all the local colleges went to the SDM and repeated their demand. To their surprise, he refused to take any action. The students became furious and went in a procession to the Regal Cinema, raising slogans against the goondas. The police came and stopped them from entering the cinema but the students insisted. Then, at the order of the DC and SP, the police fired tear-gas shells and later resorted to firing straightaway, aiming at the heads, necks and trunks of the students. The students started running. Some took shelter under cotton bales lying near by. But the police dragged them out one by one and shot them. Some students entered a nearby dharamshala and a temple whose priest helped some (about 12) to go away through a backdoor. But the police caught six students, running behind them and locked them up in a room of the temple where they were beaten to death. Some policemen entered a grain mar-

ket where they shot an eight-year-old girl, two labourers of the grain market, one person standing in a chemists' shop, two rickshawpullers and some peasants standing in the market. Firing went on for about two hours.

In the evening, people of Moga collected and went to the DC and asked for the return of the bodies of the killed. He assured them that the bodies would be returned next morning. At 3 a.m. there was a sudden black-out and people saw fire on the cremation ground. They came out of their houses and went to the cremation ground and tried to enter it. The police fired in the air and, meanwhile, loaded uncremated bodies on trucks and fled. After that the people went near the site of cremation and found some pieces of the bodies—they had been cut into pieces. People took one body with the lower half and went in a procession through Moga, condemning the police authorities. Women raised the slogan 'Blood for blood'. It was October 6. On October 7, in the morning, about 1,500 people set the Regal Cinema on fire. The police again fired, killing and wounding many.

It was a massacre of students, labourers, children, peasants, women.

The Government ordered a judicial enquiry into the incident of October 5, and suspended a DSP, Inspector of Police and six other policemen to pacify (rather fool) the people. It put the number of dead at six. Actually it was near 50 and 100 wounded. The local English newspaper toed the Government line.

The military was called out at five places—in Moga, Jagraon, Ludhiana, Khanna and Amritsar. Thirty companies of BSF were also brought into action against people at various places.

All institutions—schools and col-

leges—were closed by the Government throughout Punjab. But despite all these measures people led by students demonstrated violently throughout Punjab. In the neighbouring states of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu also there were demonstrations. There were severe lathi charges at various places and firing at Ajnala (Amritsar district) and Garhdiwala (Hoshiarpur district). The number of killed is not known. Even primary school children at some places did not lag behind. They gheraoed police stations for many hours.

A news broadcast by the Lahore Radio Station of Pakistan said some corpses were floating in the Sutlej which flows from Ferozepur to Pakistan. It said the bodies could be given to the UN. Students sought clarification from the Punjab Government and the Central Government but no reply came. After about 10 days, the Chief Minister of Punjab announced the transfer of the DC and SP of Faridkot (of which Moga is a sub-division) and also that it had reached an accord with the Moga students and they had withdrawn the struggle against the Government. These few students were nothing but lackeys of the Government. The Government ordered the opening of all institutions on October 23 after a closure for 15 days. But the students and people are keeping up the struggle, Section 144 is to continue further, for a month. The army and the BSF, along with the Punjab Armed Police, are present.

Mrs Indira Gandhi who came out with a prompt statement on the Munich incident did not have time to say anything about Moga. Rather orders were issued to crush the resistance. Why should she speak, after what had taken place in West Bengal, Andhra, Bihar and other States on her orders?

Our agent at Varanasi

MANNALAL DAS

D-35/321A Jangambari

Punjab : Voices Of Revolt

DHUPDEEP

LITERATURE has always been a precise reflection of the society which produced it, and in a society rent by sharp contradictions, a great deal of its literature will quite naturally be far from healthy. Only a big, progressive, political upsurge can cure it.

The Naxalbari upsurge in October 1967 ushered in a new era in Indian history and filled the youth with hopes and dreams. The emergence of the CPI(ML) was of historic significance. Literature could not keep itself aloof from this struggle, proving once again that practice of literature cannot be separated from the struggle for man's liberation. It is in defence of this belief that revolutionary writers and poets laid down their lives. It is this spirit of dedication before which contemporary bourgeois writers feel themselves shoddy purveyors of stereotyped words and clichés. In October 1969 Amarjeet Chandan wrote in an editorial in *Dastavez* that the crisis through which India is passing will compel the writers to take a firm and clear decision about whose side they should stand on. This is the time that we should become an integral part of our people and make sacrifices for the sacred cause of Indian revolution. This understanding of the situation helped the Punjabi writers and poets to find a path out of the ideological jungle.

Before the event

my feet were in a jungle of directions

But now I have chosen my beloved direction.

(Halwarvi).

Some of the recent publications of these poets are: *Lok Katha* by Pash (1970), *Suilej di Hawa* by Lal Singh Dil (1971), *Mitti da Rang* and *Arambh*, two anthologies of militant Punjabi poetry edited by Amarjeet Chandan and Mohanjeet respectively. The latest book in this series is *Lahoo de Nakash* (Facets of blood)

by Jagtar. This group of youthful Punjabi poets also includes a few more—Harbhajan Halwarvi, Darshan Khatkar, Gurdeep Grewal, Fatehjeet, Sukhwant Kaur Mann, Surjeet Patar, Jujhar Singh, etc.

They do not believe in the notion of pure poetry or pure literature. They look upon their poetry as a weapon to change the face of society. For them poetry is not an end in itself but a means to an end. Their poems are purposive, with a conscious attitude to the class patterns of life, to the forces working behind social relations. They believe that armed revolution is the only way to put an end to the utter poverty and subjugation of the Indian masses. The path to revolution is full of sacrifices. Only armed masses equipped with a revolutionary theory can translate their hopes and dreams into reality. They call the people for a constant armed struggle against the establishment. This is the main theme of their poetry.

Before the emergence of this new wave, the Punjabi literary scene was dominated by the so-called "experimentalists", a gang of mutual flatterers. Sexual frustration, despair and absurdity were the essential elements of their poetry. They created the image of a lifeless and impotent man submerged in the marshes of individualism with all its imported modernity, hypocrisy and cynicism. The advocate of this anarchic trend, J.S. Ahluwalia, a high official in the government (he claims to be a Marxist) initiated new stunts in Punjabi poetry, radicalism being the latest. His radicalism is like a satellite which leaves the earth with tremendous speed but after reaching a certain height starts revolving around it.

The poets connected with political poetry are the real heirs to the militant Punjabi traditions. The spirit of revolt against injustice and oppression marked the philosophy of the Sikh gurus and writings of the young militant poets are imbued with the same spirit of sacrifice and determination. They arouse your hatred and scorn towards untruth,

pretension and imposture. Disgust with the contemporary social life, ruthless oppression and white terror lends their poetry implacable hatred, revenge and inflammatory anger. This poetry makes the middle class conscious of its degradation, helplessness and insecurity in a dehumanising system and thus pricks the spineless intellectual's servility. Their earlier poems had revolutionary romanticism but now that they have come directly in touch with social reality and experienced the onslaught, their poetry is acquiring a new sensibility and objectivity.

They abhor compromise and believe in direct and relentless action. It is natural that their poetry should evoke hostile incomprehension. Representatives of the decaying forces heap scorn and abuse on the new emerging things and seek to destroy them. Some bourgeois intellectual eunuchs call this poetry nothing but repetition of the words "sword and bullet", because they do not get in it traces of their own aestheticism and intellectual subtlety.

The new poetry has no conventional patterns of rhythmic expression. But that does not mean that it is devoid of sentiment and emotion. Dil is the representative poet of this new trend. A wage labourer himself, he depicts the suffering and humiliation of the working class surrounded by poverty, grief and a harsh outlook. His poetry contains an element of unexplained sadness of the twilight when he broods over the gloomy sides of life. His unpretentious little songs glisten with a folklore tinge. He was the first poet in Punjab to welcome the Naxalbari upsurge in January 1968.

The peasants of Naxalbari are marching with spears on their shoulders along the jungle paths
With their love for the fields
slain yesterday

From the dark cottages flames
are rising high and this long
caravan is marching everywhere.

Pash is a poet who has passed through a 'jungle of swords'. He was the first poet to break the con-

ventional rut in Punjabi poetry and evolved his own style of writing political poetry. He tries to philosophise about the nature of things and considers it necessary to destroy the garbage dumps of the decadent culture of the exploiting classes. His poetry is full of energetic imageries of courage, self-sacrifice and devotion. In his earlier poems, his efforts to give new meanings to words associated with different cultural forces lent his imagery some sort of immobility and opaqueness. But in his latest poems he is getting rid of this habit and becoming more simple and clear to the reader. It is always the nature of the oppressors, blinded by class enmity, not to accept the new truths.

Whether you accept it or not makes no difference to the truth. On its painful limbs truth has suffered a life, and every truth after suffering a life changes into an epoch.

And this epoch is embracing not only the fields and factories but also swaying the lines of troops.

Tomorrow, when this epoch will crown itself with spikes on the Red Fort and will take the salute of time

Only then you will know the real meaning of truth.

Darshan Khatkar is another whose poetry is full of optimism with a steadfast faith in the future. He has been charged with seven murders and is now facing the court. While at the interrogation centre at Amritsar where he was brutally tortured, he wrote the following lines on the floor of his cell.

We will not bow down in servility

And accept a life that cringes and creeps in the dirt
we shall look up and wink at the stars.

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Amarjeet Chandan organised the Writers Front in Punjab and raised the slogan: Naxalbari—our path. The impact of his poetry on the reader is intellectual rather than emotional. His portrayal of the complex socio-psychological contradictions baffles the ordinary reader with its sophistication and obscurity. He is an excellent translator and has translated poems from Vietnam, Palestine, Angola, Mozambique, Greece (Mikis Theodorakis), China and Latin America. A few months ago he was arrested and sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment. He denounces scathingly the election stunts as a 'musical-chair race' of the propertied classes and exposes the colonial legacy and capitulation.

And all those people for whom the ballot boxes are the lamps of 'Aladin' will try to digest the ill-gotten food By thumping violently the tables in the legislatures.

The tables on which the pair of bullocks

put on tri colour loincloth and start singing

The song in praise of George V
Jana Mana Adhinayak.

Jagtar undoubtedly has some of the finest rebellious imagery. He has his own way of deploying symbolism, defining and analysing the feelings and emotions of a man passing through revolutionary practice. He is a master craftsman, he so arranges the words as to create musical sounds of various intensities that build up a proper atmosphere to communicate with the reader in a forceful manner. He rips the mask off bourgeois sentimentality.

I have no last will or testament
To scatter my ashes over the fields

An inane desire
more non-sensical and paltry
only those people aspire
whose kinship with the fields
whose relations with the peasantry

were never primordial
But the very existence of mine
has sprouted up from the soil.
(Jagtar)

In a short span of three years these poets have become very popular with the Punjabi youth, especially the students and teachers. In these crucial times when even the murmuring voices of dissent are being crushed, they have glorified freedom. For all this, Punjab has paid a heavy price. No matter how barbarous the attack of the ruling class, these voices of revolt cannot be crushed. People have fought, they are fighting and will go on fighting till the final goal is achieved.

Words have been said
long before us and long after us
You may cut our tongues if possible
but the words have been said.

(Dil)

Let us hope that the social milieu and realities in the coming upsurge will help them to find their way to maturity. They will grow, face the hardships and finally become men singing among the flames.

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Remembering Lu Hsun

PRAFULLA KUMAR SENAPATI

HO Chi Minh held that the poet should 'know how to lead an attack'. If the talent to lead an attack was a label that he stuck on a writer, and not the talent to turn out works of art smelling of gunpowder Lu Hsun possessed that talent to an amazing degree. He, along with Li ta Chao and Chu Chu Pai, was the herald of the new cultural awakening that swept China at the dawn of this century, the pioneer of the new realist literature that prepared the ground for the socialist-realist phase in China's literary history. Lu Hsun was very alive to the bourgeois democratic revolution of 1911, the setback it suffered with the assumption of power by Yuan Shi Kai, the 1919 Fourth May nationwide protest and demonstration against imperialism, the 1925 May 30 upheaval that shook the roots of feudalism and struck terror into the hearts of imperialist robbers, the 1927 coup, masterminded by Chiang Kai-shek, the conclusion of the epic Long March of the Reds from Kiangshi to Shensi, and the establishment of the Workers and Peasants Soviets in the liberated areas there. When the Red Army reached Shensi, Lu Hsun and Mao Tun, in a congratulatory message, communicated their greeting: 'the hope of the entire people of China is centred in you'.

Lu Hsun, born on September 1881, to an old style scholar and a peasant mother, had always to take up the cudgel against those forces that fleeced the Chinese people. The unyielding revolutionary spirit in him forced the ruling class to bare its fangs and he had to flee in 1926 from Peking to Amoy, from Amoy to Canton in January 1927 and then to Shanghai in October that year. He was the spearhead of the China League of Left-wing Writers founded in 1930 that took upon itself the task of exposing and attacking the viciousness and treason of the Kuo-

mintang. Later this League was disbanded and a united front of writers was forged in Shanghai to meet the exigencies of a united struggle against the Japanese intruders. Lu Hsun was the standard bearer of this united forum. Despite his failing health at that time, he was able to inspire that front. He died on October 19, 1936.

What Lu Hsun was to the Chinese people was best demonstrated when ten thousand people, belonging to various walks of life, attended his funeral. Lu Hsun was to China and her toiling masses what Gorky was to Russia and her stricken people. Once Gorky put a very pertinent and crucial question to writers and artists: workers of art, on whose side are you? This came very much nearer to Lu Hsun's assertion that all literature is propaganda, even if all propaganda is not literature. In a class society, ridden with class contradictions and antagonisms, literature was bound to take a class stand, to be class literature. While on the editorial board of *New Youth*, Lu Hsun was castigated for entertaining politics in the journal. Hun Shih, the bourgeois intellectual, threatened a split if he did not keep off politics. But Lu Hsun understood that politics, culture, education and literature were not isolated, disjointed fragments, but constituted an organic whole, a superstructure on the economic base. One influenced the other. This reading of dialectics gave a new turn to his life. He felt that the best way he could serve China was not by taking up a doctor's career but by taking up the pen.

It was the time of the Russo-Japanese war in 1905. There he saw a film, showing some Chinese, one of whom was bound, while many others stood around him. They were all strong fellows, but appeared completely apathetic. According to the commentary, the one with his hands

bound was a spy, working for the Russians, who was to have his head cut off by the Japanese military as a warning to others, while the Chinese beside him had come to enjoy the spectacle.

'Before the term was over I had left for Tokyo, because after this film I felt that medical science was not so important at all. The people of a weak and backward country, however healthy and strong they may be, can only serve to be made examples of, or to witness such futile spectacles; and it is not necessarily deplorable no matter how many of them die of illness. The most important thing, therefore, was to change their spirit, and since at that time I felt that literature was the best means to this end, I determined to promote a literary movement'. (Call to Arms).

It was to these pusillanimous Chinese people that Lu Hsun turned. He saw a China under feudal and colonial exploitation, a China that was the milch cow of the imperialist bandits, a China in her phase of semi-colonial and semi-feudal ravages. The whole history of China, the cradle of an ancient civilisation, could be summed up in two words: 'Eat people'. The mad man, in his 'A Mad Man's Diary', a pungent tirade against feudalism, drew a very poignant picture of China. He was surprised and shocked that in spite of the much flaunted evolution of the species from reptiles to men, 'Some are still eating people'. 'Don't try to be good and remain reptiles still'. The mad man, mad because he wanted others, his own brother even, to desist from eating human flesh, was severely barged by his brother whose habit of man-eating he sought to reform. Broken-hearted, he could still cherish a hope:

'You should change at once, change from the bottom of your hearts! You must know that in future there will be no place for man-eaters in this world'.

The mad man was no other than

the imaginatively projected Lu Hsun himself, the prophet of the emancipation of the proletariat, living in a country 'where for four thousand years they have been eating human flesh'. Lu Hsun could foresee that 'the future belongs solely to the rising proletariat'.

II

The characters that peopled Lu Hsun's stories were human beings of flesh and blood, but they were also more than that. They were the emblems of a China in the grip of imperialist plunder, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. They bore those traumas of enslavement and victimisation. Look at them; and you would see on their bodies the traces that could very well convey to you what ate into their soul. Kung I-chi was a big man, strangely pallid, and scars often showed among the wrinkles of his face. Mrs Old Chuan's hair, in 'Medicine', was 'whiter than in the previous year'. Mrs Old Chuan and the widow, Hsia, 'suffered from failing eyesight'. Jun-tle, the landless peasant, in 'My Old Home' looked 'sallow and acquired deep lines and wrinkles'. His hand was 'like the bark of a pine tree'.

Lu Hsun's writings were, in a sense, a panorama of the Chinese society: The under dogs, the destitutes, the tramps and the hungry peasants were not just robots surrendering to the inexorable force of exploitation. They could fight back with a fierceness and fury and to the finish. Some of them, linked that they were with China, in various stages of her revolutionary history, compromised as the revolutionary movement of that particular phase suffered reverses. Ah Q in 'The True story of Ah Q' was a homeless peasant who lived on part-time menial services and made his home the Tutelary God's Temple in Weichuang. He was beheaded for throwing in his lot with the revolutionaries. Age-old enemies of the people wormed their way into the revolution, successfully betrayed it, directing it to serve their own ends:

'From the news that was brought they knew that, although the revolu-

tionaries entered the town, their coming had not made a great deal of difference. The magistrate was still the highest official, it was only his title that had changed; and the successful provincial candidate also had some post...; while the head of the military was still the same old captain'. Ah Q grew sadder and wiser and realised that it was not enough to wind your pigtail up on your head; the most important thing was to get in touch with the revolutionary party'. He was carried on an uncovered cart, in his front were a number of soldiers and militiamen shouldering foreign rifles. Before his execution, he could still believe with a peasant's innocence that 'in this world it was the fate of everybody at some time to have his head cut off'. Lu Hsun, in this story, while recording the revolutionary tenacity of a landless peasant, telescoped into it in a magnificent manner the betrayal of the revolution and the direct penetration of imperialism, with the connivance of the indigenous anti-people forces that sought to maintain their stranglehold over China. His heroes like Wei-fu who once went to the Tutelary God's Temple to pull off the image's beard, could not be reconciled to the fiasco of the revolution and unable to look forward to anything better, compromised with the rotten system and taught Confucian classics and Mencius. When asked as to what he meant to do in future, a pathetic reply, with a touch of frustration and defeatism, fell from his lips:

'In future? I don't know. Just think: Has any single thing turned out as we hoped of all we planned in the past? I am not sure of anything now, even of what I will do tomorrow, nor even of the next moment...'

The same tragedy befell Wei-Lien-Shu in 'The Misanthrope'. In the

past, he harboured a streak of revolutionary idealism, restructured, in his dream, a China where the children, in future, would not have their souls warped. If children turned out badly, 'it is because they have been moulded by their environment. Originally, they are not bad, but innocent...I think China's only hope lies in this'. But in the long run, Wei-Lien-fu became an adviser to General Tu just to eke out his living. He sold his soul to save his 'skin'.

Lu Hsun never missed the opportunity of paying tribute to those who staked their lives to redeem China's woes. His undaunted fighters like young Hsia, who pitted himself against the Manchu empire—'Manchu empire belongs to us'—left an impression of revolutionary immortality behind them. Hsia was stripped and his clothes were taken by the Red-Eye, the jailor who pocketed the whole reward, 25 taels of bright silver. Hsia's property was confiscated and Hsia was condemned to death. Lu Hsun bestowed upon his grave 'a wreath of red and white flowers' as a token of his reverence. In the person of Hsia's mother, he hoped.

'But a day of reckoning will come, heaven will see to it'.

Lu Hsun, through the prism of dialectical materialism, could very well identify those who were the enemies of the Chinese people. Soldiers, bandits, officials and landed gentry squeezed Jun-Tu dry as a mummy. The provincial scholar, Mr Ting, beat Kung-I-chi so savagely that his legs were fractured, as a result of which he met his tragic end. Mr Lu and Mrs Lu, notorious for their inhumanity, callousness, cupidity and indifference to human values, got rid of Hsiang Lin's wife

সন্ধিষ্ণ

অনিবার্য কারণে বিশেষ নভেম্বর বিপ্লব সংখ্যা ৫ই নভেম্বরের
পরিবর্তে ২০শে নভেম্বর প্রকাশিত হবে।

as one casts off old shoes. The forces of darkness and of light, of revolution and of reaction, were locked in a fierce combat. The war sent some of Lu Hsun's characters crazy, made some conformists and compromisers and took toll of some of them. Those who fell were given posthumous recognition and reward. They drew Lu Hsun's sympathy and love and ours also, as they were the path-breakers. Out of the debris, the wrecks, the ashes and the corpses that Lu Hsun's works were littered with, he conjured up the future millennium, the Peoples' Republic of China.

'It is just like the roads across the earth. For actually, the earth had no roads to begin with, but when many men pass one way, a road is made'.

The road that Lu Hsun and his creatures made led to the China of today.

Lu Hsun belonged to the fraternity of revolutionary writers and workers, for whom October 19 is a day of mourning. The red lantern that he was, he still burns on the soil of Vietnam, on the ricefields, on the docks and in the Dragon River Commune of China. His ghost still haunts and inspires revolutionary writers and poets like Subarao Panigrahi whose budding poetic life was claimed by the gendarmes and armed greyhounds of the Congress regime. Lu Hsun's service was not merely limited to China in the sense that Gorky's was not circumscribed within the geographical confines of Russia. A friend of the working class, he never elevated the writer above the worker. The worker work with his tool, the writer with his pen. The writer, it was his view, would trail behind the working class, the revolutionary vanguard, and never lead it; the writer was the cog and wheel in the revolutionary machine, and never the engine that the working class was.

Book Review

Varga Again

MONI GUHA

PROGRESS Publishers, Moscow, have given us a new book by Y. Varga—*Politico-Economic Problems of Capitalism*. One V. A. Cheprakov, D.Sc. (Econ.), introducing the book, writes, "The latest book by Academician Varga, the outstanding Marxist economist is written in defence of the living soul of Marxism, for it throws light upon the discussion taking place between Soviet scholars who are striving for deeper understanding of the process at work in the capitalist countries."

"This massive work summarises the author's many years of research". He further informs us that "Varga's book has achieved wide success in the Soviet Union. Two editions have been sold out in record-time". "Varga's book", he writes in conclusion, "is a major contribution to modern economic thought. Although many of the problems raised in the book are still awaiting a final solution, it is successfully breaking the chains in which dogmatists and revisionists had fettered Soviet economic thought."

In 1947, Varga, in the capacity of the Chief of the Institute of World Economics and World Politics, wrote a book entitled *Changes in the Economy of Capitalism Resulting from the Second World War*. In October 1948, in an enlarged session of the Learned Council of the Economic Institute of the Academy of Sciences, a discussion on "Shortcomings and Problems of Research in the Field of Economics" was held. Varga was charged with "retreat from Marxism-Leninism to reformism". He at first tried to defend himself most stubbornly, but afterwards thought it wise to thoroughly recant his formulations as "mistakes". In an article in *Voprosy Ekonomiki*, No. 3, 1949 issue, and in a letter to the Editor of *Pravda*, March 16, 1949, Varga

not only recanted his formulations but also promised to correct his errors in a revised edition of his work, which he did and the revised edition was published before March, 1953. In March, 1953, Stalin died. In 1957, Varga published a new book under the title *Basic Problems of the Economy and Politics of Imperialism* in which he resurrected all his recanted formulations. In this book also he revives some of his formulations which he had recanted during the 1948 discussion.

Varga supplies us with an explanation in the present book as to why he admitted "mistakes" in the 1948 discussion. He says, "I should like to remind my readers that at the time of debate I was compelled to put an end to the discussion by admitting that there were mistakes in my book. This was not because pressure was exerted on me in the Soviet Union [good God!] but because the capitalist press made a political sensation of this discussion and true to bourgeois form, used it for violent anti-Soviet propaganda, asserting that I was pro-West, was opposing the Communist Party etc. It therefore became little important to me whether my critics or I were right. After almost fifty years of work in the ranks of the international working class movement, the bourgeois press was trying to make the capitalist world see me as opponent of my own Party and this was something that I could not tolerate" (p. 60). Even at its face value the logic does not stand. What bewilders a rational being is how the same man who expressed noble sentiments about his "own party" in the face of violent anti-Soviet propaganda by the capitalist press could play such an ignominious role in deceiving in a double-faced manner his "own Party" and people by not only admitting mistakes, but also by pro-

missing to publish a revised edition recanting all his mistakes and actually publishing the book. Certainly, he was not compelled to publish the revised edition. Had that been so he could have said so as another proof of Stalin's "tyranny".

This is Varga as a human being, apart from his formulations and "theories".

Criticising Stalin's formulation of the basic law of capitalism, which he enumerated in his *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, Varga introduces a quite new theory in the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism, saying there is no basic law in the sense of *absolute* determining law, in capitalist society as there are always forces that counter the determining law. Thus, the law which is called basic or determining law, instead of being a determining one becomes a mere tendency. None of these tendencies (acting and counter-acting) can be said to be the determining law as they always change their position and one alternatively dominates the other. So, Varga concludes, it is the task of the dialectical materialists to analyse concretely the "concrete historical situation" instead of wasting time in finding out the basic law in abstract. Thus, in the name of dialectics, Varga introduces a peculiar kind of agnosticism and philosophy of inaction throughout his book, completely repudiating Marx and Marxism. Marx, in criticising Proudhon, says, "If the current rate of wages rises above the natural price, it is precisely because the law of value put as a principle by M. Proudhon happens to be counter-balanced by consequences of varying relations of supply and demand. *But the minimum wage is none the less the centre towards which the current rates of wages gravitate.*" (emphasis added, *Poverty of Philosophy*; F. L. P. H. Moscow, 1947, p. 56). It means, that, in spite of the counter-tendency, the law of minimum wage will assert itself. Even one who has acquired a preliminary knowledge of Marxism-Leninism knows that so long the

objective and material basis of capitalist society remains intact the objective law of capitalist society will assert itself with re-doubled energy, if, per chance, pushed back temporarily by the counter-tendency. With his revisionist theory Varga has drawn the conclusion that as the socialist world and the world revolutionary movement are the dominant tendencies today and as these dominant tendencies have become laws, capitalism can be modified and changed without any revolution and colonial liberation can be effected peacefully and constructively with the disinterested help of the socialist countries. Although Varga does not say all these things in such a straight and grotesque manner, this is implied in his formulations. (See pages 120-21).

In refuting the theory of absolute impoverishment of the working class Varga says, "How can Communists mobilise the working class for the protection of their interests for strikes, if they themselves state that a deterioration in their position is inevitable? ... What could a Communist striker answer if a strike-breaker asked him 'why should I go on strike and refuse my wages today if you yourself say that our impoverishment is inevitable?'" (P. 119). This is a pet argument of the revisionists. In a similar vein Khrushchev *et al* asked, "how can you mobilise people for peace against war if you yourself say that war is inevitable?" Varga, by his counter-tendency theory, "proves" that neither war nor absolute impoverishment is inevitable, they are mere tendencies which can be and are counter-acted. They counter the inevitability with the logic of expediency. If you think these are inevitable, it is useless to fight against them.

This argument is not new. The followers of Proudhon and the Lassallians also advanced this logic and said it was useless to fight for a wage-rise since sinking of the average standard of wages is the general tendency of capitalist production. Marx, in refuting this stand of help-

less surrender to the inevitable, had to deliver an address in the General Council of the International Working Men's Association, which was subsequently published under the title *Value, Price and Profit*. In conclusion of his address, Marx said, "These few hints will suffice to show that the very development of modern industry must progressively turn the scale in favour of the capitalist against the working men and consequently the general tendency of capitalist production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages, or to push the *value of labour* more or less to *minimum* limit. Such being the tendency of *things* in this system, is this to say that the working class ought to *renounce their resistance* against the encroachment of capital and *abandon their attempts* at making the best of the *occasional chances* for their *temporary improvements*?" If they did, they would be degraded to one level mass of broken-down wretches past salvation. I think I have shown their struggles for standards of wages are *incidents* inseparable from the whole wage system, *that in 99 cases*

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out of 100 their efforts at raising wages are only efforts at maintaining the given value of labour... By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement... They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady..." (F.L.P.H. Moscow, 1947, pp. 70-71; all emphases added).

Two things are clear here. Counter-tendency cannot change the direction of the capitalist law, cannot abolish the causes of the effects, cannot 'cure the malady' as Varga tries to make us believe, but can only retard the worsening of the situation and can be used as palliatives. Secondly, in spite of the inevitableness, the fight against the effects—not against the causes—of the inevitable will prepare the working class for initiating the larger movement against the causes of the inevitable, and surrender to the inevitable without any fight against the effects will degrade and disqualify the working class. This warning of Marx applies equally both to the revisionists and the sectarians. This is Marxist logic. Here lies the answer to Varga's question as to how the Communists can mobilise the people for the protection of their interests in spite of the inevitability of war, absolute impoverishment etc. Here lies the difference between the active philosophy of Marxism and the fatalist philosophy of Varga and revisionism.

Referring back to his discussion on monopoly capitalism and the character of the bourgeois State, Varga, after sixteen ears of "research" and productive thought, says, "Whether under monopoly capitalism the state is a state of the whole bourgeoisie, as I stated in my book, or a state solely of the monopoly bourgeoisie (financial oligarchy) as was asserted by my opponents, I now find that

depending on concrete historical situation either thesis may be correct or incorrect". (P. 45). This kind of peculiar "dialectics" is expressed throughout the book in dealing with all questions, viz. "Questions of Bourgeois State", "Problems of state monopoly capitalism", "Problems of inter-imperialist contradiction and war", "Problems of Bourgeoisie's role in national liberation struggle for colonial peoples", "Problems of relative and absolute impoverishment of the Proletariat" etc. In the answers to these questions supplied by Varga, the reader will nowhere find any definite answers to definite questions. Instead he will find "this may happen and that may also happen; all depends on the concrete historical situation". The answers are always 'yes and no' at the same time and in the same breath as if Varga is living above or beyond a definite historical epoch and discussing the problems as a bystander. Nowhere does Varga use the word 'historical epoch' in which and around which the concrete historical situation develops. He uses only changing concrete historical situations and thus he sees only the movements. It reminds us of the famous dialectical, though naive, debate of the early Greek philosopher who said, "we cannot bathe in the same river even once as the stream is constantly in motion". In the name of "concrete historical situation" Varga poses all the problems schematically, completely disregarding time and space relations and avoiding definite answers to definite problems of a definite historical epoch in which he lives. He only discusses the series of changes and its effects and probable effects which generally occur and may occur. As such there are truisms in Varga's analysis and conclusions and that is why it demands cool and objective criticism. Marx asked us to change society but Varga asks us to interpret it. Here lies the difference between a revolutionary and a pedant.

Lenin in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* says, "Every individual producer in the world economic

system realises that he is introducing a certain change into the technique of production, every owner realises that he exchanges certain products for others, but these producers and these owners do not realise that in doing so they are thereby changing social being. The sum total of these changes in all their ramifications in the capitalist world economy could not be grasped even by seventy Marxes. The paramount thing is that the laws of the changes have been discovered, that the objective logic of these changes and their historical development have at bottom and in the main been disclosed... The highest task of humanity is to comprehend this objective logic of economic evolution (the evolution of social life) in its general and fundamental features, so that it may be possible to adapt to it one's social consciousness and the consciousness of the advanced classes of all capitalist countries in as definite, clear and critical fashion as possible". (emphases added; F.L.P.H. Moscow, 1947 pp. 336-37).

When even "seventy Marxes could not grasp" the "sum total of changes in all their ramifications in the capitalist world economy" and when Marx and Lenin remained satisfied by discovering the laws of changes and their historical development "at bottom and in the main" and considered it the "highest task of humanity", Varga, one and only one Varga, undertakes a different job, different from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and by doing this he only wanders in a jungle of ramifications and loses his way in the ramifications and thus fails to discover the basic and determining laws and ultimately says, "all laws are mere tendencies" and thereby fails to arrive at a definite conclusion and definite method of struggle. Everything to him is correct and incorrect as the situations are subject to constant changes and thus he is lost in the process of unending changes and sooner or later everything to him would be Maya or illusion.

Peking And CP(ML)

The following letter was reported to have been circulated by a number of CP(ML) leaders—in jail now—quite some time before Charu Mazumdar's arrest, and death in jail custody.

Comrades,

WE convey our revolutionary greetings to all. We feel that we are not competent to send you these suggestions, but owing to abnormal situation inside the Party now, we are compelled to take this course.

By this time, we hope, you all know that the great glorious and correct Chinese Communist Party has sent us most valuable fraternal suggestions in respect of our liberation struggle in India in the month of November, 1970.

We are citing certain excerpts of the valuable suggestions for our convenience. The suggestions are:

(1) The Chinese Party grew and developed by fighting alien trends—both left adventurism and right deviation.

(2) The Chinese Revolution became successful with three magic weapons: (a) the Party (b) the people's Army (c) the United Front.

(3) To call a Chairman of one Party as the Chairman of another Party is wrong, and ... it will wound the national sentiment of the working class of this country.

(4) Your idea of United Front is wrong. You have said that the United Front will come into being only after the formation of some base areas. This is a mechanical understanding. The United Front is a process. The United Front comes into being at every stage of struggle, and again it breaks down. This is not a permanent organisation. There is no doubt that the worker-peasant unity is its main basis. But the main understanding behind the Unit-

ed Front is the unity between the exploiter and the exploited (those exploiters who are not the main target of the revolution). The characterisation of the bourgeoisie as a whole comprador is wrong.

(5) Regarding the formulation that the open trade union, open mass organisations and mass movements are out of date, and taking to secret assassination as the only way: This idea needs rethinking. Formerly we misunderstood your word 'Annihilation'. We used to think that the idea is taken from our Chairman's war of annihilation. But in July 1970, issue of *Liberation* (the organ of CPI-ML) we came to understand that this annihilation means secret assassination.

(6) You have applied Lin Piao's People's War Theory in a mechanical way. Lin's Guerilla War theory is a military affair. During the anti-Japanese resistance war when we had an army of 10 lakhs, at that time some comrades in the army raised a slogan that positional warfare and mobile warfare are the way to mobilise the people. In reply to this wrong theory, Comrade Lin said that guerilla war is the only way to mobilise the people. This military theory has no relation with political and organisational question.

(7) Regarding the formulation that if a revolutionary does not make his hand red with the blood of class enemies, then he is not a communist. If this be the yardstick of a Communist then that Communist Party cannot remain a Communist Party.

(8) No stress has been given on agrarian revolution and the slogan for the seizure of the State power is counterposed to the land problem. There is no agrarian programme.

(9) Without mass struggle and mass organisation, the peasants' armed struggle cannot be sustained. The Communist Party of China supported Naxalbari struggle not merely as a struggle for the seizure of state power. The article 'Spring Thunder' published in China in support of

Naxalbari and published in *Liberation* will clarify it.

(10) The authority and prestige of a leader cannot be created but grows and develops.

(11) The general orientation of (CP-ML) is correct but its policy is wrong.

We firmly accept these valuable suggestions and criticism from the fraternal party. We deeply feel that the Central Committee of our Party led by Comrade Charu Mazumdar should have accepted the above suggestions and criticism at once and made self-criticism and rectify the mistakes, as suggested, in the interest of the agrarian revolution of our country.

But to our great disappointment, regret and disgust, we found that Comrade Charu Mazumdar and the Central Committee led by him, has refused to take lessons from the above valuable suggestions. In our opinion, if he had any reservations in respect of the suggestions, from the fraternal party, then he could have readily circulated the fraternal party's suggestions to all the party units for discussion. But he failed to take this course, as a result of which discussion and discord cropped up inside the Party. This is the bad old method and practice followed inside the Indian Communist movement.

We firmly believe that the Central Committee and the Central Party line have deviated from the path of the glorious Naxalbari peasant uprising. That is, the path shown in their Report on Peasant Movement in the main has completely departed from the path enunciated in the famous article "Spring Thunder" in respect of our armed agrarian revolution. We deeply feel that our policy suffered Left adventurist deviations as a result of which a wrong left adventurist method was adopted for which at present the Party in fact has split into groups and factions, and Com. Sushil Ray Chowdhury was the victim of this method and for this the cause of the armed agrarian revolution of our country is hindered and jeopardised.

We firmly declare that we do not owe any allegiance to any group or faction. Our relation with the groups which believed in the Thoughts of Mao, both inside and outside the CPI (ML) is not antagonistic. We firmly believe that as General Secretary of the Party Comrade Charu Mazumdar is mainly responsible for the Left adventurist deviations and at the same time, we firmly believe that all the members of the former first Central Committee elected by the first Congress of the Party and all the members co-opted in the present Central Committee cannot also shirk their responsibilities, because they are also more or less directly or indirectly responsible for the Left adventurist deviations.

We, the undersigned, with utmost devotion and frankness accept our guilt and we emphatically declare that we will boldly accept the criticisms of our comrades in this connection, and we are also doing our self-criticism with full honesty. We call upon all the members of the former and present Central Committee to accept their guilt and make self-criticism in the interest of our armed agrarian revolution.

We earnestly request all the members of our Party and the sympathisers to be bold enough and come forward unhesitatingly to repudiate the Left adventurist deviationist line advocated by Comrade Charu Mazumdar and ask him to make honest self-criticism and to accept his guilt in respect of our armed agrarian revolution. We also appeal to our comrades and sympathisers to criticise the Central Committee members and ask them to accept their guilt and make self-criticism honestly. We must be very careful against revisionism, while fighting against Left deviations, which have become the main danger inside the Party for the present.

We appeal earnestly to all the members of our Party to prepare a review of the struggle in their respective areas; start discussions throughout the Party; and try to

rectify the mistakes in the light of the Naxalbari path as laid down in the article 'Spring Thunder', and by accepting the suggestions from the great glorious, and correct Chinese Communist Party as the basis, without any reservations; and create a new unity to carry forward the armed agrarian struggle.

Kanu Sanyal
Chowdhary Tejeswara Rao
Souren Bose
D. Nagabhushanam Patnaik
Kolla Venkaiah
D. Bhuvan Mohan Patnaik.

Gandharva's New Play

HITEN GHOSH

GANDHARVA's latest, *Majār Majā* (Fun of Funs)—a collection of skits—is the group's offering on the occasion of the Bengali theatre centenary which is almost entirely taken up with revivals and memorial services. Gandharva brings a professedly anti-play or anti-theatre. Not for it the drama with plot, characterisation or development. So away with climax, anti-climax and all such useless heirlooms. Only a paroxysm of rage here—no theatre of protest though, no blue-print for struggle, no diatribe against anything or anyone, and still less a burst of irresponsibility.

Gandharva calls its new play an amalgam of sketches to glance through in idle curiosity for an odd glimpse of events in the past years. And yet here is, the programme assures us, the 'real drama' for you and me. A curious, though candid, apologia this.

The group seems a little split in its purpose. From all one could gather from the present showing, it believes in theatre of commitment and is not ashamed of being propagandist. Propaganda and protest are writ plain all over the play under review. Which cannot be a vice in itself, but the play suffers from a contradiction in the group's aim as set forth in the handbill.

The contradiction or conflict of purpose is a result of misalliance between social realism or propaganda if you will, and the new vogues of modern theatre—absurd, alienation, expressionism and what have you. I am far from suggesting that these are incompatible. On the contrary. The real way out of the dead end at which the theatre of social protest has arrived in certain quarters, can only be through a happy marriage with the new force on the stage. The 'socialist' theatre is not really barren but only wedded to an old impotent formula. It breeds only when mated with something young and virile. The mating efforts staged by Gandharva, though quite energetic, are not entirely successful, but deserve to be cheered none the less.

There are five sketches in all, loosely strung on a thread held by a Guru (Master) and his chelas (attendants) who form a roving company of variety performers and give these shows which include conjuring tricks and acrobatics to suit all tastes and manners. The attempt at alienation through conscious make-believe is obvious.

In one of the sketches the Guru himself is involved, with his principal chela cutting off his tongue to save him from blurting out dangerous truths for which the Guru has an invertebrate itch. The chela invites the audience to have their tongues removed in like manner, and be done with perpetually remaining on guard against speaking their minds to the annoyance of the power that be.

The other items on the Guru's bill scarcely get off the beaten track. The travesty of justice which upholds the 'rights' of landowners against tillers, the story of a young lover driven by ambition to sacrifice his beloved to his boss's lust, the self-enrichment of the saviours of the poor and the murder of a young man who goes astray, by 'angels of peace'—these are presented in a kind of revue with mimes, voices off-stage and devices of an

expressionistic theatre freely mingling with plain naturalism. All the pieces are done with considerable skill, though not without a suggestion of triteness in content. Indeed the play cannot avoid getting somewhat of a bore in patches as when the Guru and his chela meet. These in-between dialogues and antics do really drag. Ways must be found to cut these down to size or ginger up the shows that follow them, or both.

The play leaves much to be desired. The Guru-chela exchanges are better without their sentimental evocations, and the performers' own life may be woven into or shown as foil to the burlesques they stage. At all events the audience must be allowed a detached and critical attitude throughout to what is going on, whether in the real life of the performers or the illusions they conjure up. And why pluck their heart-strings so roughly by recalling the misery of the performers in a fairly over-worked key—lost home, lost parents and the like? In any case the singling out of the Guru and his principal chela for such exhibitionist paths remains unexplained and is hard to take.

The play should have its emphasis rightly apportioned between the main skits and their frame. Improper emphasis may have had to do with the dullness that lies like a heavy pall over the performance as a whole. The actual satirical portraits appear a little fleshless and skeletal, there is something unreal about them, something flitting and evanescent. They are not solid enough to make an impression. Even the art of conscious make-believe and stylization can do with a little more of concreteness here.

For too long Bengali theatre has been plagued by verbal excrescences—a lush overflow of words over action. It is a healthy change from this to the new theatrical idiom of visual and muscular sensations. All kinds of doors to new possibilities are opening here. In Gandharva's present venture rank verbiage stifles the theatrical innovations. The

words are descended from a dead tradition of realistic theatre. There is little fresh exploration such as the new poetic drama and prose plays are attempting.

The true harmony between words and action is achieved by Brecht and, on a lower level, Ionesco, Pinter and others. Gandharva is placed between two stools—its language is lush but prosaic with no new adventure in verbal communication; while its theatrical accessories are avant-garde which go ill with such obsolescence in language. The latter has a flatness with no suggestion of parody or common speech. It may be a defect of creative power after all, but solution will come through overcoming a technical problem—by learning to combine words and gestures in a new way, that is.

In spite of these defects, however, the play has possibilities which appear through the mist of sentimentality permeating it. The production is remarkable otherwise, the air of conscious make-believe is preserved throughout; the music provides ironic commentary on the theme of the play and the acting is appropriate, with a few false notes though. The image of justice as a grinning skull is brilliant, whoever thought it up.

Uttam Kumar, The Miracle Workers

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

“OH to be in Santiniketan now that the spring is here!”, must be in the thoughts of Uttam Kumar when he meets Aparna Sen on the platform of Bolepur Station in *Memsahab* (directed by Pinaki Mukherji). Cupid's shaft goes right through his heart and like most screen romances, it has to be love at first sight. Uttam is a starving journalist although he does not have any difficulty in having his square meals, thanks to the Saratchandra-

brand ubiquitous sister-in-law of the typical Bengali cinema. Aparna Sen has also her share of misery in the shape of a mini-tyrant uncle whom she is ultimately able to dislodge from her house. Uttam on his reporting spree and Aparna graduates into a teaching job, both of them, of course, devoting more time to amorous jaunts than to their respective jobs. But why grudge them? After all, we must spare our matinee idols the mundane duties which poor mortals are subjected to. So they glide through the flower-bed crooning duets and it is romance, romance all the way. Uttam Kumar gets a sack, but his fiancée, the guiding angel, packs him off to Delhi with passage money and there in Delhi, as if by the power of Aladin's magic lamp which so frequently operates in the make-believe world of the silver screen, Uttam Kumar makes his grade—how not shown, not to be asked either (only some loosely-jointed shots of Uttam Kumar doing the Delhi dekkho, are perhaps his stairs to the top). Aparna goes to Delhi to see Uttam off on his foreign trip (he has by now managed to squeeze himself into the press party of the Prime Minister on her goodwill mission around the world and his colleagues in the real-life fourth estate must be green with envy). A brief spell of pre-marital honeymoon follows, again with a bout of duets but the physical passions are supposedly unrequited, although innuendoes and direct hints sinking to the level of crude, bawdy pokes are often thrown in. The foreign trip is a stupid compilation of scenes showing Mrs Gandhi conferring with the international state-heads, juxtaposed with shots of Uttam Kumar filing his stories amid bevy of foreign-looking extras. The world tour over, Uttam Kumar rushes back to Calcutta to meet Aparna and to fix the marriage, but again duty calls. The Bangladesh war breaks out and Uttam Kumar is sent to the border as a war correspondent. He goes on boosting the morale of our jawans by his fiery despatches (almost a

reincarnation of Shrikrishna with his philosophy of righteous war). Aparna is not also lagging behind in the patriotic duties. She is out to defend the sanctity of our examination system and in the true shining images of Mother India and Joan of Arc rolled into one, courageously holds her fort when extremist youths (whys and wherefores are conveniently skipped in this part of the script) storm into the examination centre. A bomb explodes on her head and she rolls down the staircase to a "martyr's" death. Uttam Kumar, a dejected forlorn soul, roams amid their favourite haunts, perhaps contemplating suicide. He looks up to the sky, probably his last look around, but lo and behold! The voice of Aparna booms through the filter drenched clouds urging him to keep on smiling and inspiring him to higher goals. The only thing missing is a scene showing the President of India awarding to Uttam Kumar a posthumous Param Vir Chakra for the valour of his dead spouse.

Uttam Kumar can, indeed, work miracles. He can conjure up romance out of a vacuum, he can start from the scratch and get to the top; he can outwit all the villains on the earth and to cap it all, he can also find a dead body on the wayside who looks exactly like him. Believe it or not, this is what happens in Chhinapatra. He goes to the house of the dead man, deceives all but the sister who keeps mum about all this for some vague reasons of keeping the sick father in comfort. Uttam confronts a host of characters, wins the girl, smashes the villain's ring, unravels the murder-mystery of his double, reforms a devil's moll who finally crosses over to the side of the angels, finds out his runaway father, wriggles himself out of a frame-up and lands into a fortune. But with all the ladies wooed, mother soothed and the villains crushed, does Uttam Kumar ever realise that the Max-Factor youth will not last him any longer?

Letters

Peaceful Marxists

On October 13 in Bombay, the CITU, HMP, HMS, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh and UTUC organised a protest morcha and satyagraha against the Government's failure to tackle the problems of spiralling prices of food articles and disappearance of essential commodities from the open market.

In the preliminary meetings of the political parties, a controversy arose between the CPI and CPM as to who is responsible for the spiralling prices. The CPM leadership maintained that it was the bourgeois landlord government which is responsible; hence the attack should be against the government.

Out of the 25,000 workers who gathered on the Azad Maidan for the morcha, the CMP had mobilised not even one-tenth though the issue was a serious one. The CPM leadership, however, used all the CITU banners from their office for display in the morcha.

One morcha of about 400 workers with United Labour Union banner came with militant slogans 'Mang Raha Hai Hindustan, Lal Kille Par Lal Nishan. This morcha was led by an alleged Naxalite trade Unionist. It is learnt that the United Labour Union (ULU) is not affiliated to any of the central trade union organisations. Seeing the militancy of the workers, the CPM sensed that the programme of the ULU would hamper their programme of peaceful Satyagraha Attempts were made to impose the CPM discipline(?) on the leadership of the ULU. The Co-ordination Committee leadership appealed to the ULU leader to give up the plan to force through the police cordon even if it meant assaults from the police. It was really interesting, the way the militant workers were made to give up their programme.

The morcha went near Hutama Chouk (Flora Fountain) where, as usual, demagogic speeches to over-

throw the government were delivered. After this programme, the leadership of the CPM quietly went to the Museum side where a huge police force stood to watch the peaceful satyagraha.

LILADHAR P. SATHE,
Bombay.

Beaten Up

When prisoners in the Central Jail, Hyderabad, protested on October 2 morning against the rotten food, full of worms, served to them, the Deputy Jailor on duty hit Mr Hanumanth with a big spoon. The other prisoners protested. The siren was sounded and about 60 prisoners were beaten up, ten of them receiving head injuries. The incident took place in the presence of the Welfare Officer. Twenty-five sepoy came in a group and asked the prisoners to eat the rice, though it was full of worms. The political prisoners were beaten up when they protested.

Prisoners demand second quality rice, change of utensils, new clothes instead of the torn outfit, supply of firewood for boiling and cleaning the clothes every Sunday, supply of rations according to the fixed quota and of newspapers that are not proscribed, and an enquiry into the incident.

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