

frontier

Vol. 5: No. 39

DECEMBER 23, 1972

PRICE: 40 PAISE

On Other Pages

COMMENT ..	2
MOSCOW, PEKING, HANOI FROM A CORRESPONDENT ..	4
MODE OF PRODUCTION IN THE USSR—II ARUN MAJUMDAR ..	7
<i>Orissa</i> A BORDER REPORT FROM A CORRESPONDENT ..	13
SOMBHU MITRA, THE MAGICIAN HITEN GHOSH ..	14
STALE COMEDY MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY ..	16
DETENUS' ADVOCATE ..	16
LETTERS ..	17

Editor : Samar Sen

PRINTED AT MODERN INDIA PRESS,
7, RAJA SUBODH MULLICK SQUARE,
CALCUTTA-13 AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY
FOR GERMINAL PUBLICATIONS (P) LTD.
BY SAMAR SEN FROM 61, MOTT LANE,
CALCUTTA-13
TELEPHONE: 243202

BACK TO SQUARE ONE

RADICALISM, Congress style, has many pitfalls. And at least one of them—on the question of takeover of the wholesale trade in rice and wheat—is proving quite embarrassing for the ruling party. Nudged by criticisms that the Government was not doing much to check the inflation, the party at the last Ahmedabad session decided to have a go and committed itself to a scheme for the takeover of the wholesale trade in the two principal grains. But the decision, as it now appears with the advantage of hindsight, was a little rash and indiscreet. About the necessity of greater government involvement in the distributive trade of foodgrains, and for that matter of other essential commodities, there cannot be any serious doubt. Prices of these items are being determined as much by micro-economic factors, shaped and guided by individual traders, as by macro-economic phenomena like demand-supply imbalance and money supply in a society based on class exploitation. Without firm regulation of the distributive process, which has played a rather unedifying role in jacking up prices, the problems of inflation cannot possibly be fully tackled. The Ahmedabad resolution was based essentially on the recognition, or pretence of recognition, of this basic fact, though even it could not muster sufficient courage to include takeover of retail trade in the proposal.

But the move—which if implemented would incidentally mark the Government's first encroachment into the area of private food trade—has run into a storm of controversy, much of which presumably is inspired by the powerful traders' lobby. Soon after the Ahmedabad session, a few chief ministers notably of Mysore and Gujarat, had come up with the plea that in view of the extremely tight food position in their States, they intended to go slow on the proposal. Others were not more enthusiastic, and some covert moves were made to project this or that difficulty as an alibi for not implementing the proposal. This was broadly the position when the food ministers of States, who have the ultimate responsibility of carrying out the takeover, met in New Delhi last week and performed a sort of tight-rope walking. They were all for the takeover, but they were worried over some of the related problems like locking up of funds, storage, administrative apparatus and transportation which would follow in its trail. It is rather strange that such doubts and misgivings

should be voiced so long after the Ahmedabad session had put down its seal on the resolution. But now that they have come up, New Delhi has dutifully decided to set up a high-powered committee to go into all these matters. The entire issue can thus be said to have gone back to square one and if Mr Ahmed's assurance that there is no question of going back on the proposal now sounds a little hollow, that cannot be considered sceptical.

Peasant Slaves

Strange as it may sound, a contracted farm worker in West Bengal gets Rs 1.75 a day and a casual worker barely Rs 1.38. When the Indira wave visited the State, the Fourth Plan was in the fourth year of its non-activity. Almost the whole of that year was taken to readjust the state apparatus and to instal new outfit to prepare the ground for the now economic thought. Meanwhile there was unending talk of impending prosperity. But for the people life has not changed much; the worthlessness of their hard-earned money has increased.

The Government has proposed Rs 3.75 as the minimum wage for special agricultural operations. But the farm labourer is never given more than Rs 2.79 a day. With the existing family size of four persons and the working unit of 1.5, their annual per capita income varies from Rs 135 to Rs 160, which is 23.02 per cent of the national income for 1969-70. In the face of such chronic imbalances the talk about income equality and the expert suggestion that the calory intake of the average Indian should be worth at least Rs 175 a month sound hollow. On the statute book of course it has been prescribed that the agricultural workers should be paid higher wages if they are made to work more than 9 hours a day. But this was never heeded and the peasant workers are forced

to sweat from dawn to dusk to earn their pittance.

The Naxalbari uprising has been put down and there is little possibility of another Debra-Gopiballavpur in the near future. But the reality of quasi-animal living for these villagers continues to be a reason for revolt. Most of them are indebted to the village 'babus' to the extent of Rs 300 to Rs 600 and that, at the monthly interest rate of 6 paise per rupee, that is, 72 per cent per annum.

Pilot Scheme Crashlands

Several crores of rupees have been lost and tax arrears have mounted sharply since the Centre adopted a pilot scheme in the administration of the Income Tax Department. Taxpayers would not worry overmuch to learn that it has been so; crores of rupees are being lost in hundreds and thousands in this way or that. It is a consolation moreover for the poor taxpayers who have been paying their taxes regularly to know that the Centre has tried to extract taxes from the rich who can pay but evade payment. The pilot scheme has been now discarded. What is however more revealing than the impression that the Centre did try, is that the scheme was adopted after our specialists went over to the USA, studied the tax administration scheme there, and got the fine idea that it would suit Indian conditions. Subsequently, our tax officers were sent to the USA for training. The net result was the crashlanding here of the pilot scheme.

The failure, or if one thinks of it—even the success which might have been, could have been brushed off as insignificant, for what after all is one scheme or a few crores of rupees in the perspective of State affairs in a country as large as ours? We can jolly well afford to spend crores of rupees in receiving dignitaries from abroad, in holding party plenary sessions or running an inconsequential election or conducting a mini-war. But the pilot scheme now crashlanded

To pay the interest the peasants work as servants or general handymen of the landowners; their children work as cow-boys, and their womenfolk cleanse the households of the creditors; yet the loan remains unpaid and the peasants remain bound to the creditors. Not only in West Bengal, in other parts of the country also like Bihar, Mysore and Rajasthan the same grim story is being told and retold in spite of crash plans, loan banks, and the 'Garibi Hatao' flag.

is significant not because it was related to tax arrears and evasions but because of the idea behind it—that our specialists should go abroad to learn things which they should have learnt right here in the country. Not only the tax officials. Our town planners, our development officers, our tourism commissioners, our statisticians, our economists go abroad and frame models which have no bearing on the country. On paper, the models look fine. It is reported that Professor Hicks was very much impressed by the working of the CMDA. That was indeed news! Our economists are considered an addition to the bright galaxy of economists abroad—and then look at our economy. Brilliant mathematicians they are all, eagerly waited for in London, Cambridge and Massachusetts—and then look at the clumsy arithmetic at home, with all the Plans going awry, with the majority of people going down below the poverty line, the minority going sky-high with their planetariums, mandirs and sermons. What is a matter of concern is not the bureaucrats who are conscious sinners, and who must make their fringe benefits more substantial than their basic pay—and going abroad for training is one good and apparently noble front—what is more disastrous is the bankruptcy of our intellectuals who cannot think without foreign gadgets. As a contrast, look at what China made of the medical science, and all by itself.

DECEMBER 23, 1972

A Deepening Crisis

West Asian politics whose main characteristic is irrationality is often beyond the comprehension of an outsider. Still one is able to appreciate the deepening crisis of the region. The crisis follows from the uncomfortable situation that no-war no-peace has given rise to and the Russian association. In July the Egyptian Prime Minister went to Moscow with the objective of securing offensive weapons in order to alter the situation on the Suez Canal. But the Russian leaders did not oblige. On Dr Sidky's return, President Sadat asked the Russian military advisers to leave the country; the order caused no little surprise. True, General Sadek, who was himself peremptorily sacked in October, had urged Sadat to remove the Russians, but he did not expect the President to act or the Russians to respond. The main complaints against the Russians, as Sadat revealed in some candid Press interviews, were that they were holding up Egyptian action and compromising Egyptian sovereignty. But the relations between the two countries again took a turn for the better after Dr Sidky's return from Moscow in October. He established a climate helpful for resuming a dialogue. President Sadat then told the nation about the indispensability of the alliance with Russia.

The immediate outcome of the resumption of dialogue was the sacrifice of a group of officers hostile to Russia; General Sadek was at the top of the list. Such moves, however, cannot hide the impotence of the Egyptian regime which is becoming more and more evident in the face of continued Israeli occupation. The failure to show anything positive in the promised "year of decision" has very much affected the credibility of the army which is the mainstay of the present régime. As the Israeli flag floats on the Canal, the morale of the Egyptian people suffers.

Sadat does not only have to fight

a political battle in the street, but also has to take into account the conflicting factions of the ruling bourgeois class. Political power, however, mainly originates in the army; rumours are current that there is unrest in the armed forces and that Sadat may be ousted. The rumours may be exaggerated but they are not entirely baseless. If Sadat continues to be the President, it is because the army yet does not know who is to replace him. But Sadat cannot al-

ways be with the most powerful section of the army. The young men in the army are becoming increasingly impatient with their continued conscription. The present regime has not done anything to justify the state of semi-alert. It is not that the Egyptian army has now the capacity to drive back the Israeli occupation forces; the soldiers know it. Still if they are pressing for action, it is because of an unavoidable despair with the present impasse.

The Game Continues

A correspondent writes :

So the Americans have scuttled it again. The take-it-easy, mass-murdering headman of the rabid group of Yankee imperialists put on a garb of sanctimonious piety and universal goodwill immediately before the American elections. He talked of nothing in those days but the overflowing desire for Vietnamese peace in his soul, under cover of which, of course, he continued the murderous bombing of innocent and heroic people living 12000 miles away from American shores. His envoy roamed the world like an unquiet spirit and, assuming an ardent air of sincerity, gave it out for universal consumption, particularly for the delusion of American voters, that a draft agreement had been reached with the North Vietnamese and PRG delegates and that the signing of it, bringing the Vietnam war to an end once for all, was at hand. But this stunt did not work quite as well as expected because the Vietnamese demanded the signing of the draft agreement within a pre-election deadline. Nixon said, like a Christian, that for everything to be clarified, they should meet just once more, "for two or three days at the most", and then there would be peace. Hanoi insisted on immediate signing. This gave Nixon the delay he needed to delude his countrymen into voting for him under the false assurance that peace in Vietnam was really at

hand but was being slightly delayed only by the obstinacy of the other party.

How wicked the deceit was anyone can now see. The DRV and PRG agreed to sit with the Americans for "just two or three more days". But what is the result? After days of negotiations, no agreement has been reached. Bombing above the 20th Parallel has been resumed to "assist" a peace settlement. The hyenas are happy. The fact is, before the elections it was one thing and after Nixon's thumping victory it is quite another. The American Government, now that it is running no risks at home, wants to squeeze more concessions out of the agreement than it had seemed to be satisfied with earlier. It has gone all out for a massive arms build-up in Indochina.

Not that Nixon's discomfiture and McGovern's victory would have brought a sea-change in U.S. imperialist designs as some naive people are prone to imagine. What could have happened is a substantial change in imperialist tactics, the aim remaining entirely the same for the simple reason that the leopard cannot change its spots without ceasing to be a leopard. The possibility of U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam, of course, would have become stronger. This is not because U.S. capitalism would have grown philanthropic and saintly, but because the less

rabid, and probably more cunning, capitalist group represented by McGovern seem to think that if U.S. imperialism is to survive in the fast-changing array of world forces it must try to 'turn over a new leaf', must gracefully withdraw from patently dirty and thankless adventures like Formosa and Vietnam, even at the cost of some of its dubious prestige, and keep looking around for fresh pastures. Nevertheless, that would have been a victory for socialism and a defeat for imperialism since the latter would have been compelled by the might of socialism not only to abandon one of its rich hunting grounds but also to modify its tactics against its will, thereby losing the initiative in the global class struggle.

Not that the morbid tenacity of Washington in pursuing its double-dealing game will save either its prestige or its slippery foothold in Vietnam. Times are changing fast. The countries of Africa, Latin America and the Middle East are growing more resistant to American imperialism every day, causing a continual shrinking of the manoeuvring space it needs to keep its dirty game going. The joint plan of open and covert imperialism to encircle and stifle China, the great fountainhead of friendly aid for Vietnam since the Dien Bien Phu days, has collapsed on yet another front with the Sino-Japanese diplomatic accord. While Vietnam stands inflexible under savage attacks from civilised super-bombers, the pressure on U.S. imperialism is increasing on all sides, confusing and dissipating its powers and making it act with growing desperation in critical situations. Regardless of the unending and shameless trickery practised by the envoys of the Aid-and-Loot organization, their nasty game in Vietnam is clearly going awry and is approaching the final

As the Political Correspondent is away, there will be no View from Delhi for some time.

stage. A little more patience and endurance on the part of Vietnam combined with continuing all-out aid from socialist China and the mounting pressure of world opinion will clear Indochina of the filthy vermin

infesting her land and waters, and usher in a new dawn of health and happiness, warming up the revolutionaries and striking cold terror in the hearts of native and alien oppressors in other backward countries.

Moscow, Peking, Hanoi

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

'**T**REASON' is the word now fashionable among the Trotskyite new left in Europe when one talks of the socialist world's support to Vietnam. The Soviets are traitors who have sold the valiant Vietnamese down the drain. Fair enough. But they paint the Chinese too with the same brush. If the Vietnamese are talking peace and making concessions to U.S. imperialism, they insist, it is because of the joint Sino-Soviet pressure. It may be decades before one knows the full story of the Vietnam war but two recent articles in the French press—even making allowances for their fragmentary and subjective nature—could nevertheless be of some help in understanding the roles played by China and the Soviet Union.

The South-East Asia specialist of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Olivier Todd, in a recent despatch from Hanoi contrasted the Chinese and Soviet attitudes to North Vietnam as well as the nature of their assistance. "In Hanoi the Soviets—diplomats, journalists, technicians—repeat ceaselessly, the Vietnamese are crazy. They are at their tether's end. The longer the war lasts the less beneficial will be the compromise, which is inevitable' The Chinese, reserved, united in Asian solidarity, do not go beyond declaring: 'Our Vietnamese friends know what they are doing'.

"It would perhaps be too much to generalise or overestimate the psychological factors, but the Chinese behaviour in Hanoi is more 'correct' than that of the Soviets. The latter have rather too free a supply of

vodka. In 1967 the Soviets in Hanoi's Thong Nhat hotel were occasionally found drunk. In 1972 this appears to be a regular feature. The Soviets betray—even if in a somewhat veiled way—the racism of the white against the 'yellow', of the rich against the poor. They easily call the North Vietnamese employees 'boys'. And they do not like that a well-bred diplomat like Pierre Susini (the French diplomat who died recently in American bombing) should address them decently. Their scornful, arrogant attitude is in contrast with the meticulous discretion of the Chinese. In the Third World, in Vietnam as well as in Yemen, nobody resembles an American adviser more than does a Soviet instructor.

"Aerial escalation, begun in April, has destroyed the cities which have been spared 'under Johnson', as they say in the capital and hamlets of North Vietnam. The Chinese keep account of the attacks and the bombs dropped. The Soviets forget them. Even when they themselves are affected. When a Soviet cargo ship was downed by the U.S. Air Force in the Gulf of Tonkin the Soviet correspondents, under order, avoided speaking about it. But to underline the blow Hanoi decorated the Soviet seamen with 'posthumous titles'. The Soviet Embassy in Hanoi finally lifted the embargo on reporting this 'smudgy affair'. The Soviet correspondents wanted to see the wreckage. 'Well, put on diving suits', replied the North Vietnamese officials.

"During the major part of the second escalation the Soviet

journalists would be confined to Hanoi. Fuming, they would see a Swedish television team getting the scoops.

"All the observers notice, as I did too, that on Route No. 1—which sees convoys pouring downwards, towards the 17th Parallel, the demilitarized zone and Quang Tri province, the culminating point of the offensive launched in April—the Chinese materiel is new while the Soviet ones are worn out. Trucks and tankers made in China are more and more numerous. Those of other socialist countries—excepting East Germany—are becoming rarer. Under the trees, between the old ruins and new huts, in the dispersed depots of munition one more often encounters Chinese characters on boxes and shells than Slayonic alphabets. Finally, there are anti-aircraft guns made in China. In the sky, Chinese-made Mig-19s fly with Soviet Mig 21s.

"Beyond official pronouncements and thanks-giving one clearly sees the limits of Soviet aid. The Kremlin has always provided aid in carefully measured doses (after a tacit or secret agreement with Washington). Since 1965, militarily the greatest danger to the North Vietnamese has been the B-52 bomber. Only a very sophisticated electronic system or SAM-3 can counter these squadrons coming from Guam and Thailand. When I raised this military aspect of the Vietnamese problem in Hanoi in 1967 I was politely told, "We don't want to provoke a Third World War. We don't ask for perfected ground-to-sea missiles which can serve as deterrent to the aircraft-carriers of the 7th Fleet." In 1972 they tell me without hesitation: "The Soviets have given SAM-3 and Mig-23 to the Egyptians. Since 1967 years have passed. Do you believe our government has seen our people massacred without thinking of military parades?"

"Having long ruled out any idea of serious confrontation with the Americans, the Soviets have chosen to let the Vietnamese die. Right or wrong in the long term for world peace, the nationalist policy of super-

powers in search of balance and order—concepts dear to Henry Kissinger—has sacrificed millions of Vietnamese. The yellow life is not dear. Because of permanent competition with China for international prestige and also for rapprochement with Washington, Moscow has not been able to totally drop the Vietnamese. But today, all the chancelleries know this is anything but spontaneous. Soon perhaps, the historians will be able to judge the responsibility of the Soviets as well as the Americans for this butchery and to measure the hypocrisy and cynicism of the one and the other."

Natoli's Report

If Todd's account is rather impressionistic and subjective, not so is Aldo Natoli's. Natoli, a former communist Deputy and member of the Central Committee of the Italian CP, visited Moscow, Peking and Hanoi with a fraternal delegation in the spring of 1965. The detailed notes he maintained at the time (as the Party specialist on foreign affairs) of his formal talks with top personalities in those capitals have just been published in *Il Manifesto* and reproduced in *Le Monde* as a document for history. Below are some extracts:

"Le Duan told the Italian delegation that during the recent meeting (Kosygin's visit to Hanoi in February 1965) the Soviet comrades have been convinced that the struggle for the independence of the South and peace for the North is just. It is then not unreasonable to think that before Kosygin's voyage the Soviets were not yet convinced. Without making any departure from their habitual balance and prudence, the Vietnamese however, have never hidden that their relations with Khrushchev were anything but satisfactory. Khrushchev did not like to listen to the talk of liberating South Vietnam through armed struggle. According to him it was only a question of economic competition. Standards of living in North Vietnam should be improved which would automatically

lead to 'conquest' of South. As one of the top Vietnamese leaders told us calmly, 'we have never followed this advice'.

During his voyage to Peking Kosygin met Chairman Mao (February 10, 1965) and among other things proposed coordination of aid to Vietnam. Till then both the Chinese and Soviets had maintained a discreet silence about the talks. But in Moscow Aldo Natoli had access to verbatim stenographic accounts of the Mao-Kosygin talks, prepared by the Soviets. Based on this Natoli thus summed up Mao's position on coordination of aid to Vietnam: "The unity of action between the Chinese and the Soviets could be achieved only when the latter have definitely clarified their policy towards American imperialism, when they have abandoned the line of peaceful co-existence and of summit agreements with Washington. In other words only when they have abandoned the Khrushchev line.

"If the Soviets had done all this, there would have been unity between the Soviet and Chinese people, and the Chinese would have been on their side had the Americans forced a war on them. In the minutes there is not the slightest hint that Mao had demanded that the Soviets open up a second front in Europe before establishing unity of action."

In Peking (end of April 1966) the Italian delegation had extensive talks with Chinese leaders, especially the then Secretary of the CPC, Teng Hsiao-ping. Teng told Natoli, "We know what it means to fight with the United States. We have known it in Korea and in a sense even during the war with Chiang Kai-shek. But the Vietnamese have a much greater experience and we have all to learn from them. That way it's good that you are going to Vietnam. Our position on Vietnam is similar to that of the Vietnamese comrades. We have studied the situation together and discussed the perspectives to arrive at an agreement. We support the struggle of the Vietnamese people with all our force. There is no

alternative to driving the Americans out of South Vietnam for they have declared their unwillingness to leave the country in any case. It renders any other negotiation impossible. We have conducted negotiations in Geneva but the Americans have violated them.

"As to the perspective let us make no illusions. We are faced with the threat of escalation. There are said to be seven steps and forty-four smaller steps. We do not know precisely at which stage we are.

"In the meanwhile they are increasing their troops from 30,000 to 50-60,000. But it is probable that they would soon be 150,000. The experience of the war conducted by the French in Indochina points in this direction. And they lost. The bombing of North Vietnam does not solve anything, as was the case in Korea.

Escalation

"It could well be that in the process of escalation they would be attacking Hanoi and other industrial cities. (In that period bombing was limited to the south of the 20th Parallel). Will they go as far as to invade North Vietnam? In that case we will not remain idle. There will be a local war of the biggest dimension.

"At that point the escalation could well continue with the bombing of the whole or part of China. Then there will be a great war between the United States and China. The United States has not yet decided about it but who can foresee? War has its laws which are beyond human will. Even if they are opposed to it they will do it, but in that case one million people will not be sufficient. I tell you that China is ready. We have foreseen it and taken the necessary measures.

"So, if the war stops at the border of Vietnam we will help them with all our strength, but we will not desist from fighting if the United States wants to spread it to China. Chou En-lai has made it clear to the Americans.

"In that case, war will have no

limits. The United States will have naval superiority, but we also have some superiority. They will wage the war as they know it, and we will do as Mao has taught us. Will there be a world war? Not necessarily. World war depends on the United States and the Soviet Union. If they don't want to have it there won't be any.

"In any case great responsibility will fall on the Chinese and Vietnamese people. From the strategic point of view the United States is faced with volcanoes. If tension increases here it will increase in Cuba and Latin America. If the United States wages war in Vietnam and China, these two nations will provide the greatest assistance to the people of the whole world."

"At this moment", says Natoli, "I asked Teng what he thought of the Soviet position. Teng said, 'The Soviet Union thinks that China encouraged the United States to attack Vietnam. Kuznetsov has said it at the World Peace Assembly, even if politely and without naming us. They want people to believe that the imperialists were "forced" by us. Even Khrushchev has said it in connection with the so-called Tonkin Gulf "incident". The truth is that we have given and are giving arms to the oppressed people.

"It is said that the disunity between China and the Soviet Union might have provoked the attack of the imperialists. No, the United States started violating the Geneva Agreements from 1954 and we were united at the time.

"What in fact weakened our forces and encouraged the United States was Khrushchev's policy since the 20th Congress. That was the general line of peaceful co-existence and Soviet-American cooperation for settling world affairs.

"Even a few months back, in February (1965) the USSR tried to have a deal with the U.S. while trying to implicate Vietnam and us. Vietnam refused. There is nothing to negotiate about without the U.S. withdrawal—was their reply.

"Rumours were spread that China might have refused to allow Soviet aid to pass through China. But we only opposed the Soviet proposal to send aid to Vietnam by a sort of 'air-bridge'. We said that 'air-bridge' serves only propaganda purposes but transports little aid. We refused to leave the Kunming airport at Soviet disposal as a base for a dozen Mig-21s.

"These aircraft cannot operate in the Vietnamese sky for sufficient flight time from Kunming airport. The Soviets in fact wanted to control a Chinese airbase.

"For the transport of Soviet aid Chinese railways have always been available and still are.

"We think that unity between China and the USSR will finally be achieved. But the problem is to know on what basis. With Khrushchevism without Khrushchev? On the line of U.S.-Soviet cooperation for the partition of the world? Or, against American imperialism? That is the point."

A few days later the Italian delegation met the Secretary of the Vietnam Workers' Party and noted that "at that phase of the war there was a total agreement between China and Vietnam on essential points: (a) the assertion that without evacuation of American troops there cannot be any negotiations, (b) the evaluation of the perspective of escalation and eventual Chinese intervention in case of invasion of North Vietnam, (c) the international value of the Vietnam war for the people of the world because of the fact that imperialism is here entangled and weakened.

"I carefully consulted my notes to verify if evaluations of this genre cropped up during the conversation we had with Soviet leaders (Suslov). I haven't found anything, and nothing of the kind was spoken during the Mao-Kosygin encounter. The most positive thing affirmed by Suslov related to sending of economic and military aid to Vietnam. But one had the impression that it was all the painful duty of helping a poor patient in distress."

Mode Of Production In The USSR—II

ARUN MAJUMDAR

AT the very outset we have to point out that as the socialist mode of production is the logical outcome of the basic contradiction of the capitalist mode of production, the socialist mode of production cannot be achieved overnight if a country, after achieving revolutionary seizure of state power by proletarian masses, remains predominantly backward in its stage of development of productive forces. This consideration justifies Lenin's advocacy of state capitalism as a means of developing the productive forces in the post-revolutionary situation in the U.S.S.R.¹⁰ What was the purpose of this state capitalism?

Lenin himself gave the answer in course of his ideological battle against "left-wing" infantilism: to fight against "the petty bourgeois elements and the small owners who are usually widespread in Russia" and in that situation were the real enemy against the consolidation of productive forces. Lenin admitted that state capitalism certainly represented the higher level of exploitation of labour, but under the dictatorship of the proletariat, this exploitation of today's labour was for its own benefit tomorrow. This is how he did differentiate between state capitalism in the Socialist Soviet Republic and state capitalism represented by junker bourgeois imperialism in Germany.

It is this purpose of consolidation and development of productive forces which led to the resolution of the Fourteenth Congress of the Communist Party in 1925 recommending a priority development of heavy industry. Not only that. By the decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on December 5, 1929, it was provided that "every enterprise had to have an independent plan of production and finance".

The state budget used to collect accumulation of enterprises and organisations, taxes on individuals, proceeds of loans, idle balance of insurance institutions and savings banks, most of the revenue coming from the light and foodstuff industries. The wholesale price of capital goods used to cover production costs (i.e., cost of labour and raw materials plus amortisation charges) and some profits. The price of machinery used up in the productive process could not enter into the price of the product (in the form of depreciation charges). But these depreciation charges used to make entry into the value formations through the retail price of consumer goods which was exorbitantly higher than its own wholesale price because of a heavy turnover tax.

It was repeatedly stressed by the Soviet economists that the wholesale price of producer's goods is below its actual cost (how one does not know unless one assumes that this actual cost consists of those costs included in the wholesale price and also those not included, i.e., the purchase price of machinery used up in the process) and also that the wholesale price of producer's goods plus the retail price of consumer goods (in which the particular type of producer's goods has presumably been used up) constitutes the total value of the product. How is this total value to be calculated? In the capitalist way, i.e., by including both total capital advanced and used up plus surplus value? Or in the socialist way, i.e., by including only the value of socially necessary labour used up (i.e., wage) and its surplus? Soviet statistics were silent, only Soviet theoreticians were eloquent to the effect that turnover tax represented the social surplus constituent of the total value. If turnover tax represented the social surplus contributed by current labour to his actual production, what role should one assign to profit (45 per cent, of which used to be remitted to the state budget and 10 per cent as income-tax) earned by the enterprises? No answer was available also

on this point. What were the basic features of various planning measures adopted till 1949?

In the first place, all the measures contained two characteristic features: (a) Consolidation of centralised state controls over the financial system as a whole and resources mobilization towards the centre in particular (as a result of which during the First, Second and Third Five Year Plans there did occur repeated changes in the tax structure, including the major one during 1929-32, changes in credit policies and policies concerning the financing of state enterprises and collective farms).

(b) Utilization of all other branches of the economy for rapid development of a particular branch, i.e., capital goods base even at the cost of the former (as a result of which inflationary trends became very pronounced; turnover tax was very high).

Secondly, some of the measures were aimed at expansion of output with a view to augmenting revenue resources to be appropriated by the state budgets (as the various taxes to be paid to the exchequer used to be deducted out of planned prices and sometimes planned or sometimes actual turnover).

Thirdly, although there were several reductions in the prices of producer's goods throughout the 'thirties and on 1st January, 1949, one could not know on what principle this was done. In case of consumer goods, although in selected items, particularly industrial raw materials and food items, planned prices were reduced during the 'thirties; such reductions were more than compensated by a general rise in the prices of both producer goods and consumer goods during the Fourth Plan period (1946-50). One cannot explain such changes in prices unless one assumes that the state acted as a monopoly giant anxious to keep the level of profit high when demand exceeded supply. This was actually the observation by a group of Soviet academicians while they explained the reasons for the postwar price rise to be

(1) stable prices of those goods during the war and (2) enormous military expenditure during the war.¹¹

Fourthly, during the Third Plan and particularly during the Second World War the aggregate investment pattern swung heavily towards unproductive war production. From the table below this will be evident:

		(in million roubles)			
		1940	1943	1944	1945
Revenue					
Turnover tax & deductions from profits	..	12,760	9,110	11,630	14,000
Taxation of individuals	..	940	2,860	3,700	3,980
State loans	..	1,150	2,550	3,860	2,900
Expenditure					
National economy	..	5,830	3,310	5,370	7,440
Social & cultural amenities	..	4,090	3,770	5,130	6,270
National defence	..	5,675	12,501	13,776	12,824

The danger of war investment (although somewhat supplementary to investment at the capital base of the economy) lies in the fact that although it raises the surplus exchange value to a very high rate, it at the same time causes a major redistribution of surplus socially necessary labour against the growth of use values. In an open market economy, the result is certainly of inflationary character and in a planned economy the result is decline in the growth of productive forces resulting in various shortages and gaps in the economy. The Soviet economy later showed signs to an extent visible even to the bourgeois Western world.

Two Standards

Fifthly, two standards were used for the price and production policies respectively of collective farms and state enterprises. While in the case of retail prices of manufactured consumer goods, fixation was the task of the government, in the case of collective farms, prices were the outcome of the interplay of unrestricted market forces. The result was whenever industrial expansion started to make

big jumps, collective farm production responded to this more by a price rise than by any quantitative increase. This tendency became more conspicuous during the war years, when the declining agricultural production was supported by its enormous price rise. The Soviet planning policy towards collective farms was all along twofold: one was extraction of as

much revenue resources as possible from the agricultural sector (including collective and co-operative farms) and the other was to supply tractors, machinery and know-how to those farms through innumerable M.T.S.s (motor tractor stations) at a relatively cheap rate. In other words, the collective farms were allowed to operate on a fully capitalist basis to make them look gainful to those who were still unwilling to enter into such collective or cooperative groups. As is known, the collective farmers were allowed to retain personal plots for private production of livestock, poultry, etcetra and were sought to be made the richest species in the agricultural sector.

From the study of the basic features of the planning measures noted above and the actual situation resulting from them at the end of the Second World War, it was obvious that state capitalism worked in full swing during the period and the law of surplus value worked well in augmenting value-formations of the type available in the most advanced stage of capitalism, i.e., monopoly capitalism.

In the absence of dependable wage

statistics¹³ of that period, it becomes difficult to examine the quantitative aspects of use value distribution in the Soviet Union and to measure the actual rate of labour exploitation during that period. While one cannot do away with labour exploitation under state capitalism even in a society having social ownership as its basis and socialism its objective, what is important to note is that such exploitation should have had a falling tendency in course of the quarter of a century so that the socialist mode of production could gain an upper hand over the capitalist mode used under such state capitalism. Even if one inflates Soviet statistics on nominal wages more than double the figures, the Russian officials would like to supply, the average annual growth of personal wage till 1950 did not exceed one, although during the same period only the sectors producing consumer goods and food-stuff registered an average annual growth rate of more than 1%. One should, however, remember that the Soviet worker had to surrender part of his wage in course of paying turnover tax on consumer goods, and he had to pay income-tax after the individual wage earnings crossed 100 roubles.

It is, therefore, obvious that in the Soviet Union state capitalism never weakened during the course of the first four Five Year Plans, and this certainly contributed to the tremendous development of the productive forces. This made the Soviet development more and more double-faced, promoting two economic laws opposing each other. The law of surplus value did indeed operate by raising the exchange value content of the growth process, the rate of value accumulation being possibly the highest in the then contemporary world. But at the same time the value accumulation paved the way for a tremendous increase in the quantity of use-values and thus did actually develop its Frankenstein, i.e., the law of surplus use value.

This contradiction expressed itself particularly after the Fourth Five

Year Plan was launched following the Second World War. It expressed itself in the form of a war between production and exchange value, and most of the time exchange value won, production suffered. For example, it was the common experience of the Soviet planners that many enterprises did not feel like fulfilling the targets, because either due to price rise, planned value could be easily achieved or the products were not being sold at the existing price (hence suggesting a price rise for the products concerned) or because they would not receive necessary equipment or raw material due to unforeseen shortages or diversion (hence condemnation of the bureaucratic management). Sometimes industrial production targets were set below capacity, just to have some scope for overfulfilment of targets and or for production in the unplanned sphere in order to fetch a larger sum of money from the sale and enrich their individual coffers (under Soviet system levy on planned production is relatively much higher than on unplanned one, i.e., above the target or unplanned production with the help of "waste products"). Apart from all these, because production used to be sold most of the time through a prior contract (particularly the means of production), the enterprises were often indifferent to product-efficiency.

In short, the Soviet state capitalism was poised for a revolutionary change not in its principles of management but in its basic motivations. The choice was really twofold—either perpetuate state capitalism in a modified form—such modification was necessary because centralised control was acting as a fetter on the smooth operation of the law of exchange value; or strengthen the progressive decline in exchange value content of a product and promote by phases the increase in per capita use value.

Second Choice

The second choice was Lenin's objective at a stage when the productive

forces would be tremendous. This implies that a socialist mode of production in order to assert itself against the law of surplus value has to have not only a high rate of growth of labour productivity (the rate of growth of labour productivity is high also in the mature monopoly capitalism of the U.S.A. and how this high productivity is used to obtain a higher rate of surplus value is evident from many empirical or theoretical discussions on the subject),¹⁴ but to use it for a relatively high rate of expansion of quantity of use values than its use in the expansion of exchange value. To make it more concrete, if a certain technological change increases labour productivity say, three times, this decrease in socially necessary labour could be alternatively used either for expansion of use values through a fall in the exchange value of the product, i.e., increasing the number of products at the given quantum of exchange value produced by labour or for expansion of total exchange value in the form of higher profit if the price of the product is kept constant or is lowered only by, say $\frac{2}{3}$ times it was before.

Not only that. The tremendous rise in productive forces in the Soviet Union for its fruition into socialist mode of production required a higher rate of rise in the quantity of use value in order to arrive at a situation where every bit of expansion of the means of production could have a consumer goods equivalent so that in the subsequent periods the means of production could be supplied *free of cost* to the labour engaged in consumer goods production. Only by this way the socialist mode of production and its characteristic value formation centring around its basic economic law, i.e., the law of surplus use value could come to its full working.

Recent Trends

As we have already noted, the crises precipitated by state capitalism in the Soviet economy expressed themselves in course of the Fourth

and Fifth Five Year Plans and posed a big question mark about the root causes of the evil. It was a great misfortune that the country enjoying the first revolutionary seizure of power became the first victim of counter-revolutionary twists in its economic system. Lenin once said, by revolutionary seizure of power, or by public ownership of the means of production, the Soviet system did not become socialist, because socialism as a process had to be generated and made from capitalist hang-overs. The post-Stalin Soviet Union very clearly opted for not only the perpetuation of state capitalism but also for its improvement towards efficient capitalism. How and why?

In the first place, the successive Five Year Plans did not disrupt the value formation inherited from the past; on the contrary they strengthened it more along the lines of the capitalist mode of production. A steady growth of exchange value operations did represent the policy towards constant capital, variable capital and surplus value. On the other hand, in the name of raising consumer goods production (certainly the rate of growth of consumer goods production became higher), it did create "consumption illusion" in order to accelerate the exploitation rate of Soviet workers.

Secondly, the 1965 economic reforms were practically reforms in order to streamline the working of Soviet capital engaged in expanding surplus value. The cost accounting principle or what is known as *Khovrashchot*, principle of enterprise management, triple efficiency criteria of enterprise performance—(a) saleability of output, (b) profitability, (c) fulfilment of planned target—the principle of material incentives as the only form of accomplishing labour activity, the principle of labour recruitment and retrenchment and the principle of mutual negotiations, contracts for sale and purchase at the enterprise level—all these "new inventions of socialist management" are now obsolete techniques in the

Wall Street market of the USA.

Thirdly, not only the internal economic processes but also the external economic policies of the Soviet Union and the USA have been leading towards a point of identity. In this connection one can mention the nature of working of the COMECON or the Soviet trade and aid policies towards a number of countries belonging to the underdeveloped world.

Let us now substantiate our first two main observations; the third is proposed to be developed in another article. The Soviet state policy towards constant capital (machinery and raw materials) contains the typical capitalist policy towards the same (as analysed by Marx). In the determination of the exchange value or price of a product of use value the Soviet production cost is included, apart from enterprise profit (in capitalist firm analysis this is known as 'normal profit'), service charge plus profit earmarked for service centres, turnover tax (taken away by the state). The basic components of production cost¹⁵ are (1) wages, (2) expenditure on fixed assets (in the form of depreciation charges),¹⁶ (3) expenditure on raw materials, (4) auxiliary supplies, (5) fuel, (6) electricity, (7) administrative and managerial costs, and (8) various money outlays.

What is striking is that if the fixed assets appear as exchange value to the enterprise, then under the norms of capitalist valuation it can create values, but under the norms of socialist valuation fixed assets do not add to the value process. Their function remains only as use value of living labour. In other words, if exchange value of the fixed assets does enter into the price of the product, the price can never be equal to the socially necessary labour expended upon the product, while the purpose of the socialist mode of production is to bring about that equality. To the extent price is higher than the socially necessary labour embodied, the mode of production creates a contradiction because the value of the total volume

of commodities supplied at such prices would be more than the value created by labour. In the Soviet Union the compensation for the use of fixed assets by enterprises is taken twice: first in the form of depreciation charges, and then in the form of charges on enterprises' profit. In practice, both are shifted to the wage earner as consumer.

The next point worthy of our attention is that the enterprise profit, service charge plus profit and the turnover tax—all these elements derive their value from the surplus socially necessary labour (comparable to the surplus value in the capitalist system of production); the magnitude of the sum of these three represents current exploitation of productive labour. A sizable amount of profit is retained by the state enterprises in order to finance their investment, expansion, additions to working capital, material incentive fund, etcetra, the remaining portion is handed over to the state in the form of (a) charge for the use of fixed assets, (b) fixed rental payments, (c) Bank rate, (d) repayment of long-term credits, if any. The minimum rate of profit being 10 per cent of the total production cost (in some cases being as high as 30 to 35 per cent), the amount of profit in most enterprises closely follows the wage costs. If one assumes that the major consumer-population consists of wage-earners, one can understand their situation. As a worker he pays profit to the state and enterprise in exchange of wage and a paltry sum in the form of bonus or perquisites, but as a consumer, the major portion goes again to the state in the form of turnover tax entering into the price of his consumable products. Not only that. The entire body of (production costs minus

wages, the entire body of service charge plus profit in service enterprises are to be borne by productive workers' labour. As a consumer a productive worker is no doubt set at par with a non-productive income earner, but as a producer of value, he is discriminated against even if an average productive worker's earnings are more than the earnings of an average non-productive worker (although there is no evidence to disprove the Western Sovietologists' allegation that in the Soviet Union as a whole the salary earners, administrators and most of the white-collar people, including the party managers and enterprise managers, occupy uppermost positions of the society's income-scales. This novel brand of dictatorship of the proletariat has its counterpart in the U.S. economy).

Thus the value formations and mode of labour exploitation remaining as they are under a typical capitalist mode of production, the Soviet capital assumes bureaucratic character in order to enrich the quantum of surplus value through a rapid rise in labour productivity and a very tame rise in the size of the wage-fund distributed among workers. The inter-temporal trends (between 1950 and 1965) of wage fund, employment, average nominal wages and average real wages in the USSR have been shown in the bottom table.¹⁷

The average real wages have increased by 35 per cent over the ten years from 1955 to 1965, the annual rise being of the order of 35 per cent.

What is the rate of increase in productivity during the same period?

Figures for 1962-65 are not available to us. According to a Soviet academician,¹⁸ during the ten-year period 1950-60 the productivity of labour in industry in the Soviet

(Index Numbers 1955 = 100)

	1950	1955	1960	1965
Wage fund	72	100	144	211
Employment	80	100	128	159
Average nominal wages	89	100	112	133
Average real wages	72	100	115	125

Union increased by 96 per cent, the average annual rise being of the order of 9.6 per cent. The volume of industrial production during 1951-61, according to him, increased at an annual rate of 14 per cent. While industrial production registered a 140 per cent rise, productivity improved by 96 per cent. If we take into account the fact that the degree to which an average worker is subjected to exploitation both as a producer and a consumer, the rise in the average real wage of 3.1 per cent or even 6 per cent a year is too low when the annual productivity rate is nearly 10 per cent.

This suggests that if the wage-productivity gap is accelerated—this is indeed the avowed objective of Soviet ideologists¹⁹—the rate of growth of working capital and fixed assets (the other name of Soviet capital accumulation) would progressively be higher and higher preparing “a technical basis of communism”, by 1980. Now if one compares the rate of growth of the wage fund or personal wages with the rate of growth of fixed assets from 1926-27 to 1957-58, one will find that while the former was hardly higher than 5 per cent on average a year (this is based on the most fortunate period for wage earners, i.e., 1940-1948 and 1950-55), the latter grew at the rate of nearly 13 per cent on average a year, i.e., at nearly triple the rate of surplus appropriation. The target for 1980's communism is to have 20 per cent annual rise in fixed assets.²⁰ No target was set for a wage rise during that period. Communism indeed!

The accumulation of fixed assets does not by itself indicate an economic system to be capitalist or socialist, unless one explains its mode of function vis-à-vis the living labour. In the United States, the accumulation of fixed assets is very high, but they are used to extract higher rate of surplus value by creating an increasing gap between wage and productivity. If the Soviet system precisely does the same, one cannot but conclude that the essentials of the

two systems are similar in spite of the formal difference in ownership pattern and size of employment, because ownership ceases to have a functional role under the matured stage of monopoly capitalism and full employment does not affect the capitalist mode of production if a vast army of unemployed persons progressively disengaged from the productive sectors (as a result of technological innovation) are driven to prestigious unproductive occupations.

In the Soviet Union it is said that 82 per cent of the population are engaged in building and construction, transport, industry, unproductive services (i.e., culture, education, health, public administration, etcetra), trade, communications, collective farms, cooperative farms and industrial farms; the remaining 18 per cent consists of army people, students and housewives. It is a matter of manpower planning if growing technological advancement replaces labour from productive occupations at a rate higher than labour absorption rate resulting from horizontal expansion of productive investment (this is a feature of the capitalist mode of production as described by Marx) to engage the growing surplus manpower in occupations of unproductive categories. This has been taking place in the U.S. economy, where the underconsumptionist riddle is most acute. The logic of the Soviet system has to be similar, if not today certainly tomorrow.

While the excessive accumulation of physical assets in the United States economy is being ‘knocked out’ by a very high rate of obsolescence resulting from streams of new models, new designs, new innovations and inventions, the Soviet economy is now on the road to the same situation, i.e., the situation of high accumulation of physical assets with the same process of value-formations with the help of some capitalist principle of enterprise management, i.e., the principle of Khozrashchot.

What is the principle of Khozrashchot? “An enterprise operating on

this basis (i.e., of the principle—R.H) keeps account of all outlays which are to be covered by its income, leaving also a margin of profit.”²¹

This principle was introduced under a Statute of the Socialist Industrial Enterprise by the USSR Council of Ministers on October 4, 1965.

The Statute allows a state enterprise virtual independence in matters of determining the nature, composition and quantity of both labour and non-labour resources under a very broad ceiling decided by the higher authority, of fulfilling the planned tasks by any means in conformity with planned minimum total outlay of making non-plan production on its own responsibility, of deciding wage fund, bonus, material incentives in accordance with state laws on wages, of setting prices within a range fixed by the higher body, of making independent contracts for purchase of raw materials and labour or for sale of its own output with other enterprises and of a host of others.

The enterprise shall be headed by a director who “shall organize the entire work of the enterprise and shall bear full responsibility for its operation” and who “shall issue orders at the enterprise within his competence; engage and dismiss workers, in accordance with labour legislation, reward or penalise workers of the enterprise”. Again this director of the enterprise will be responsible for his performance not to the workers but to the superior body which (not the workers themselves) shall appoint and dismiss him.²² The deputy directors, the chief accountant and the chief of the quality control department shall be appointed or dismissed by the superior body on the recommendation of the director. The Statute repeatedly warns that fixed assets, equipment should be properly harnessed. Lenin's ‘School of Communism’, the trade union, under the terms of the Statute, should be an assembly of animal inputs completely devoted to

production and completely devoid of initiatives in any vital policy matters of the enterprise, because there is no provision in the Statute asking the workers to take initiative in any matter of the enterprise except the faithful carrying out of orders from the director of the enterprise. This is how the Statute encourages 'initiative from below'! The director being responsible only to the superior body which—by virtue of what standard the statute does not mention—is more wise in its task of evaluating enterprise performance but remains responsible to the concerned Ministry—much wiser in evaluating productive performance. In other words, under the existing principle of management, the more distant a position remains from the actual workers of the enterprise, more powers are accumulated by it under the terms of the Statute—this is trumpeted to be a novel discovery of Soviet socialist management to ensure 'democracy' and 'initiative' from below.

This is in fact the capitalist principle of management abundantly practised by capitalists all over the world. Why do the capitalists not want to make workers of an enterprise the all-in-all in plan-making and policy making body? Mainly because the capitalists are interested in production only when they see the prospect of increase in exchange value over and above what they supplied in the form of advanced total capital (constant capital and variable capital). In other words, capitalists are interested in saleability and profitability of output, not in quantity of use value produced thereby. Workers see the produced commodity as their bread earner, hence they are never eager to be in their own creative form. As a result, in a capitalist enterprise, the worker's creative faculties are replaced by a commodity labour and he becomes more interested in his wage, material incentives to be earned in exchange of his labour power, than in production as a source of social use value. The Soviet management, its content and form is just a

replica of the capitalist management; like capitalists it seeks to allure workers with bonus and incentive payments rather than making him a revolutionary torch-bearer of communism or even a moderate Stakhanov dedicated to the cause of his society.

The Khozrashchot policy in management decisively suggests that under the present process of capitalist value formations, the Soviet capital wants to be bureaucratic but a novel one at that. It wants to make its self-expansion with a higher rate of investment and technical progress—indeed higher than what the capitalist world has ever seen—but in a 'non-capitalist way', i.e., through planning, planned pricing and planned rise in value, so as to have 'communism' in 1980, when Marx, Engels, and Lenin's volumes would fetch the highest exchange value in the Soviet underground market of the Great October Revolution.

(Concluded)

References

10. "Socialism is inconceivable without large-scale capitalist technique based on the last word of modern science; it is inconceivable without planned state organisation which subject tens of millions of people to the strictest observance of a single standard in production and distribution."
—Lenin, Selected Works, Vol VII (Lawrence & Wishart, 1937) P. 335.
11. Soviet Financial System (Moscow, 1966) Pp. 109-117.
12. Op. cit. Pp. 111.
13. Soviet statistics always make a large army of Western statisticians or Sovietologists confused and engage them at a state of perpetual war of nerves against each other. Soviet official data were released in detail only for the years 1928-35 and 1937 i.e. till the beginning of the Third Five Year Plan. Taking 1926-27 as base year, the average annual personal wage index during that period shot up from 100 (base year) to 486.9 or in absolute terms 624 roubles to 3038 roubles. This is obtained from A. Bergson's "A Problem in Soviet Statistics" Review of Economics and Sta-

tistics, November 1947 XXIV, P. 236. Mr Naum Jasny in his Soviet Price System (P. 23) compiled Bergson's, M. M. Lifshitz's and his own collections to prepare a table depicting wage trends for 25 years of the Soviet Union i.e. from 1926-27 to 1950. The table showed a big chunk of annual wage rise taking place during the Second World War, the absolute value (in terms of roubles) rising from 4054 in 1940 to 7058 in 1948. According to him, from 1950 onwards, the figures started to show an absolute decline i.e. from 7056 in 1948 to 6000 in 1950. One is however to note that all the above figures or indices are based on money values, not on real values the measurement of which requires detailed study of price changes taking place frequently particularly before and after the war. After the war, there was a general rise in prices of both capital and consumer goods, followed within two years by a selective reduction in prices. The price map is more complicated than that of wages.

14. Mr Kidron—*Western Capitalism since the War* (Pelican, 1965): on the theoretical aspect, one should refer to M. Kalecki's memorable work on *Theory of Economic Dynamics*—a study in long-term changes in capitalism (Allen & Unwin, 1954) particularly Ch. VI.
Prof Steindl's work *Maturity and Stagnation in American Economy* and his subsequent theoretical standpoint as explained in his article "On maturity in capitalist economics", in *Essays in honour of Prof M. Kalecki* (PWN, 1964) require mention.
15. Soviet Financial System, Pp. 144.
16. It is to be noted that the Soviet theoreticians think that depreciation charges should be made because "Fixed assets take a full and recurrent part in the productive process; they maintain their physical form and gradually transfer their value to the product which they are helping to manufacture, to the extent of their depreciation". (Ibid p. 134). What is true in the case of fixed assets must be true in the case of raw materials. Marx said that in order to obscure the fact that the entire additional value is generated by the living labour, the capitalists pretend that constant capital has its share in productivity as

expressed in the added value of the product. Because to the capitalists, constant capital is merely an exchange value, not a means of living labour and therefore they transfer the exchange value of the used up portion of constant capital (i.e. fixed assets, raw materials and other means of living labour) to the value of the product in the form of depreciation charges. But this is according to him a built-in illusion of capitalism in order to hide the fact that constant capital is the concealed labour coming through the technological metamorphosis of past surplus value and only living labour used up constitutes the net exchange value of a commodity. See *Das Capital*, Vol. 1 (Moscow 1954), Pp. 199-201.

17. Source: Based on United Nations, *Incomes in Post-War Europe*, ECE, Ch. 7, p. 34, 1967. Taken from J. Wilozynski's 'The Economics of Socialism' (Allen & Unwin, 1970), p. 104.
18. Plotnikov—'Economic Development of the Socialist Countries' Problems of Economic Development (Ed. E. A. G. Robinson) (Macmillan, New York, 1966), Pp. 58-62.
19. Soviet Financial System, P. 188. Art. 35 of the Statute governing the state enterprises directs the management that it "shall see to it that a correct ratio is maintained between the increase in labour productivity and the rise of wages, that the wages fund is used economically and expediently". Soviet Economic Reforms (Novosti), Pp. 160.
20. Ibid. P. 134.
21. Soviet Economic Reform—Main Features and Aim (Novosti Publication).
22. 5 schedule of the Statute, Ibid, p. 171.

১২শ সংখ্যা বেরোলো

সন্নিহিত

(রাজনীতি অর্থনীতি-সমাজনীতি সংক্রান্ত
পাক্ষিক)

দাম ৩০ পয়সা স্টলে খোঁজ করুন

Orissa

A Border Report

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

THE border area of southern Orissa (Ganjam District) and northern Andhra Pradesh (Srikakulam District) has been subdued by counter-revolution, and is in the grip of savage police repression and exploitation. Many of the villagers, tribal and non-tribal, in the hills and plains, helped the revolutionaries; now they are incapable of helping themselves. For a short period the revolutionaries put fear into the hearts of landlords and moneylenders and challenged their domination of the peasants. Now the exploiters have been reinstated in their power more firmly, because armed police camps occupy the area. Oppression by police and Government officials has become more cruel because of these unwelcome guests quartered on the helpless land.

Annihilation of exploiters has not helped the peasants. The landlords of the plains village of Banjore in Andhra Pradesh and of the small neighbouring hamlets on the hills were at the mercy of the Sahukar of Banjore, Sara Appana. In Banjore village he owned more than 70 acres of paddy land. Seventy-three per cent of the villagers are landless, and live by labour when work is available (at the rate of Rs. 2 per day for men, Rs. 1.25 for women) and by collecting and selling firewood (to do which they must bribe the forest guards). The small hill hamlets of Kantasahi, Gopalsahi and Rangamatia neighbouring Banjore contain forty households of Saora tribals. They possess little hill-land, but all the paddy land they owned in the past was seized by Sara Appana when they were unable to pay back the money borrowed from him at heavy interest. Now they cultivate that land, guard it from wild animals and harvest the crops, only to store them in the landlord's house. Sara

Appana was killed by the revolutionaries, but now, safe in the knowledge of police protection, his son continues to exploit the peasants. Many landlords from other villages in the area who fled at that time have returned.

Sealloti village, in the R-Udaygiri subdivision of Ganjam district, is a mainly tribal village, hit very badly by the recent cyclone. In the village 40 per cent of the peasants have no land for settled cultivation, but a few do shifting cultivation on hill-lands; for this privilege they pay at least Rs. 50 a year to the forest guards. Two philanthropists of the village lend money to the villagers. For this service the villagers repay at harvest time in crops, paddy, millet or ganja, at the rate of three to five times the original loan. These kind gentlemen also buy mohul fruit from the villagers in the season, 8 to 15 gouni per rupee, and resell it—3 gouni per rupee three or four months later. One of these businessmen made himself a fine friend of the revolutionaries. In private he reasons that he will one day be a rich man.

Exploitation by the police and forest officials is traditional, especially in the interior areas. Forest officials take bribe for allowing collection of firewood or shifting cultivation. Police frequently descend to take money, chickens, rice or other foodstuffs, on all sorts of pretexts. Since the suppression of the revolutionaries, the area crawls with police and they have new opportunities for exploitation. Thus a common threat is that if any villager does not pay what the police demand, he will be accused of being a Naxalite, tortured and thrown into jail. In the Banjore and Sealloti areas the police have been unable to find any revolutionaries, and have resorted to arresting poor tribals, who are in fact completely ignorant of politics.

A large police camp has been established in Banjore. The police extort free labour from the villagers, as porters and for doing odd jobs in the camp, and demand chickens and goats either free or at ludicrously

low prices. They say that the villagers owe them something for being protected against "Naxalite goondas". The police (Orissa Military Police) stationed in Parlakimedi sub-station of Ganjam District, have seized goats, chickens and vegetables from many villages, threatening and often administering savage beatings. According to the complaints collected by the local MLA, Gorsanga Sabara, OMP personnel have seized a total of 195 goats and innumerable chickens from MLA, Gorsanga Sabara, OMP personnel have seized a total of 195 goats and innumerable chickens from eleven villages, either without paying or by paying a ridiculous price.

However, it cannot be said that the activities of the revolutionaries have been entirely fruitless, even in the short run. For the consciousness of the villagers has been raised everywhere in the area, at least to the extent that they are aware that their poverty and exploitation are not eternal, that the poor have the right to act against the rich and Government officials and that the peasants are not alone. Of course the levels of consciousness vary among them. Where it is least formed, as in some hill areas, the people have only a blind hatred of the police, but see no possibility of change, and they rely only on God. But they are at least prepared to articulate their grievances, as in the case of the villagers of Parlakimedi and R. Udaygiri sub-division who submitted petitions against police depredations to their MLA. Of course petitions are meaningless, but in the present situation of white terror nothing else is possible, though it may be doubted if the villagers themselves have much faith in their effectiveness. The landless, poor and middle peasants of the Banjore area are well aware of the system, despise the Government and support the policies of the revolutionaries. But with a police camp on their doorstep, they are scarcely in a position to express their feelings. In the Telugu-speaking villages of Uppalada and Lingipur about eight miles from Parla-

kimedi town, consciousness is widespread, advanced and articulate. But it is well known that any kind of protest against the system or against the present repression will be fatal: protesters would be accused of being Naxalites, tortured and jailed.

It is clear that the repression and counter-revolutionary violence in this area, echoing American actions in Vietnam or Indian policies in Mizoram, are the result, to a great extent, of some faults on the part of the revolutionaries, in particular their neglecting mass movements and concentrating on individual annihilations. It would be unfair to say that the revolutionaries

betrayed the villagers, but by their unprepared actions they left the villagers in no position to defend themselves and they failed to create a safe base area for themselves. The argument that confrontation with the full fury of counter-revolution gives rise to a deeper consciousness of the true nature of the system is of questionable value when the peasants have not been equipped to oppose that system. Nonetheless the foundation has been laid. It is to be hoped that when the revolution returns to this area the cadres will be stronger and better equipped, to arouse and defend the peasants and to teach and equip them to defend themselves.

Sombhu Mitra, The Magician

HIREN GOHAIN

IN *Pterodactyl* Bohurupee's Sombhu Mitra has brought about a quiet little revolution in stage designing. He makes his entrance and exit through a wardrobe while others except one use the normal expedient that a normal stage provides for such necessary exercise. This highly ingenious invention I attribute to him for he employs it in the role of a magician, though the idea may have originated with the dramatist or the director Tripti Mitra. In any case, between them the trio have given us nothing short of a revolution in stagecraft!

Sombhu Mitra performs some more tricks as a magician. For example, he produces cups of coffee out of the same wardrobe by a mere touch of his wand. He is a wag who spins a few yarns about how he fared among the Eskimos and Samoan women, got off with Italian beauties and kidded Americans with his rope trick. Of course, he does not mean his pleasantries to be taken seriously but once he attempts to touch the deeper chords with Tapas Sen's lighting giving him the necessary aid in creating appropriate effects. This

is when he consoles the love-lorn artist with the story of how a young man in a similar plight got rid of his infatuation after he had carved the figure of his beloved out of a block of stone. After years of his artistic endeavour he found the girl he had pined for grown old and ugly while the image he had created was to remain for ever beautiful for ever young. A pretty old Keatsian contrast between life and art, but how deeply it moves the audience with admiration for Mr Mitra's wide range and easy progression from light fun to profound philosophy!

But this is hardly the end of Sombhu Mitra's skill or power to work wonders. He produces characters like rabbits out of a magician's hat: a love-lorn artist, his angry fiancé, an encyclopedist, a doctor of philosophy, a physicist and a revolutionary youth. Not all the characters are treated on the same footing. The revolutionary youth is a malicious caricature, a flow rough who has acquired fluency in underworld slang after long and intense practice, swears by "Lelin" (cannot say Lenin) and curses the bourgeois though he

thinks nothing of extorting money from his bourgeois friend, the artist. Next to the revolutionary comes the doctor of philosophy in the shabbiness of treatment but the crudeness of this caricature exceeds the vulgar phillistinism of the other one. The physicist is a maniac who makes a computerized human doll—a life-size female (but why female?)—who can talk, walk and even make love, if ordered to. The encyclopedist, who comes and goes with the magician through the wardrobe, is presented with the greatest indulgence as an amusing eccentric.

None of these caricatures gives a real insight into the human situation or human types or social reality. They are not even the usual stock-in-trade of Bengali stage but an odd assemblage of types unrelated to one another or any situation or idea which might give unity to the play. The characters and their words and ac-

tions contribute nothing to the theme of the play for whatever it is worth. And yet this incoherence and meaninglessness is not the subject of the play, as in much modern drama in the West. Sombhu Mitra, the magician, simply conjures them up to provoke silly laughter. And he rounds it off with a romantic match between a poor artist and the daughter of a wealthy barrister. Whatever idea, theme or situation the play *Pterodactyl* may be supposed to contain centres round this romantic couple: the hero, an unacknowledged genius; the heroine, a spoiled, provocative witch madly in love with him. At first, she misunderstands the artist's genius when he paints her as a pterodactyl, quarrels and leaves him. She remains in huff until the very end when her rich father appreciates the young artist's contribution to modern art and buys the maligned picture at a higher

price. Repentant, she comes back and all ends well with the artist explaining the meaning of his portrayal of his beloved as an extinct flying reptile of the Jurassic period. The explanation sounds neither here nor there but the girl is reconciled, more so with Tapas Sen playing his tricks with the light and someone doing his bit with the music. (It is significant that the heroine must wait for her rich father's appreciation and blessing of his lucre on the artist in order to accept him both as husband and a genius. Bohurupee may have unwittingly represented the actual case with our award-winning geniuses whose popularity only follows such recognition in high places.)

At the end Sombhu Mitra makes his bow, a self-satisfied smile playing around his lips, meaning he has given us a good evening's entertainment for our money's worth—and none the loser for it. But Mr Mitra

THE COMMUNIST STATES IN DISARRAY 1965-1971

edited by Adam Bromke and
Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone

presents a revealing picture of the changing communist world through a survey and analysis of developments in the communist states and their relations with one another and with other nations.

(Minnesota) \$4.95

MAKERS OF MODERN STRATEGY

Military Thought from
Machiavelli to Hitler

edited by Edward Mead Earle

'... a valuable study of the science of war as well as a book of great practical usefulness...'

The New Republic

'It is seldom that any book can lay claim to being unique, yet *Makers of Modern Strategy* has that distinction.'

The Nation (Princeton) \$3.95

Eric R. Wolf

PEASANT WARS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Professor Wolf presents six cases of rebellion and revolution in our time in which peasants have taken the lead. His aim is to point to recurrent features and to account for the strategic differences.

(Faber) £3.00

Se-Jin Kim

THE POLITICS OF MILITARY REVOLUTION IN KOREA

In this factually sound study Dr Kim, a Korean by birth, examines the task of nation-building in Korea under an ineffectual 13-year civil rule followed by a modern military establishment. The baffling ambivalence of the military in politics is given serious study in this book.

(North Carolina) \$9.25

Malcolm H. Kerr

THE ARAB COLD WAR

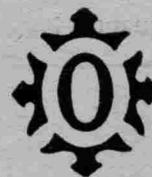
Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir
and his Rivals
1958-1970

'... admirably successful in unravelling some of the complicated strands of the political scene in the Arab East, particularly the Egypt-Syria-Iraq triangle...' *Afro-Asian and World Affairs* \$1.95

REVOLUTIONARY LEADERS OF MODERN CHINA

edited by Chun-tu Hsueh

\$4.95



OXFORD
University Press

Delhi Bombay Calcutta Madras

misconceives the role of a dramatic producer by equating it with the function of a magician. A magician plays tricks to entertain—it is a game of skill—and he uses his troupe as obedient tools. To treat his actors and actresses as a magician's attendants is to insult their talents, which are of a high order including Mr Mitra's own. They take one's breath away by their superb performance—all of them, but especially Shnaoli Mitra as the heroine and Mr Kaliprasad Ghosh as the encyclopedist, and of course Sombhu Mitra himself. But what price these talents now that they are held under the wicked spell of a magician intent on money and cheap popularity? Sombhu Mitra seems to be getting away with this treatment of his troupe as performing animals in a circus show.

The artist-hero in this play has his picture sold for a sum higher than its price, the collector being the wealthy father of his girl. This is symbolic up to a point. Much art in our times sells at prices higher than its worth, thanks to the growing artistic sense of the moneyed people. I do not know whether Mr Mitra has had a share of this good fortune as yet. But when he does, as he must sooner or later, I expect he will follow Prospero, another magician, who after regaining his dukedom buried his magic wand and released the noble spirits he had at his command. At present Sombhu Mitra is squandering the talents of the "spirits" at his disposal on trivia—and what talents to squander!

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

Stale Comedy

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

THE basic situation in O. P. Ralhan's film *Hulchul*, a case of funny mistake in listening, could have yielded a breezy comedy, had the director not gone in for the hackneyed devices of the Hindi cinema. O. P. Ralhan, the simpleton hero, overhears a patch of conversation and learns that somebody is going to bump off his wife. He warns the three possible victims through telephone. As in all these three cases, there is the "other woman" in view, confusion and chaos follows in the typical manner, complete with horseplay, buffoonery and cheap gags. Feeling that the spectators are not sufficiently entertained by all these, the director has also brought in a complete ballet on world peace and international brotherhood where the Zulu hunters and the South Indian temple dancers huddle together and the inevitable court-room scene where the proceedings go on in blissful disregard of the existing legal procedures. The end is not to be disclosed, but it is so very predictable that one does not have to labour much to find out the solution to this puzzle. The absence of songs is a relief, but that is suitably counteracted by the constant thundering of the one-word leit motif "Hulchul", which sounds like the mating call of the ghosts.

Mukul Dutt's *Raaste Ka Patthar* which aspires to be an essay on contemporary social issues done in a serio-comic style, turns out to be nothing but a pot pourri of silly comic contrivances. Amitabh Bachhan, who works in a visualising agency, is trying to build his career by allowing his apartment to be used by his bosses for their extra-marital rendezvous. Everything is going on well, but love intervenes and Amitabh sees red when he realises that his girl will also be going to bed with the boss. There is also a totally meaningless sub-plot involving Shatrughna

Sinha as an unrecognised writer who likes to have all the good things of life, but does not seem to work for these and lives off the shady earnings of his wife, who is a call-girl-cum-cabaret dancer. This sequence is there to provide the quota of fights and killings, Hindi film's favourite brew. The director's conception of contemporary permissiveness does not go beyond the parading of bare legs and a couple of hard-smoking, hard drinking dames. The shadows of a Billy Wilder comedy are clearly noticeable, but the director has a total lack of understanding of Wilder's trenchant humour and the adaptation is so weak that Mukul Dutt cannot even claim the credit for being a successful plagiarist.

Detenus' Advocate

From Indrajit Roy Choudhury,
Advocate.

Dated November, 15, 1972.
32, Naktala (2)
Calcutta-47.

To

The Inspector General of Police,
West Bengal,
Calcutta-1.

I am an advocate practising mainly in Alipore Police Courts as well as Sessions.

I was appointed advocate to move bail for Souren Bose, and Santosh Rana, undertrial Prisoners and moved for their bail on 16 September, 1972 before the Additional Chief Presidency Magistrate.

On the date Shri Souren Bose was detained in Presidency Jail and Santosh Rana in Midhapore Central Jail.

On 26 September, three Police Officers, one of them disclosing his identity as Mr Aich, District Intelligence Officer, attached to Jadavpur Police Station came to my residence and in my absence asked my wife that I should contact Mr Aich immediately on my return. Accordingly I contacted him on telephone and he asked

DECEMBER 23, 1972

me to see him at Jadavpur Police Station and on my expressing my inability he came to me on Sunday the 1st October, 1972 along with 2 other persons.

Mr Aich went out of his way to ask me whether I was defending Souren Bose and Santosh Rana and gave out veiled threats to me that I should not defend those persons. He also began interrogating me as if I were on trial and he had undertaken investigation of any offence that I had committed. He also began questioning me on my relations as well.

In my opinion, it is an unwarranted interference with my professional activities.

I thought at first to ignore this but, whenever I have visited the Court of Presidency Magistrates at Bankshall Street, other intelligence officers have asked almost similar questions as Mr Aich and every one 'advised' me to give up those cases.

I am apprehensive that your lower ranks are unduly interfering in my lawyer's vocation and this must stop.

I am also sending a similar communication to the Bar Council.

Yours faithfully
INDRAJIT ROY CHOUDHURY,
ADVOCATE
Calcutta

The Bar Council of West Bengal in a resolution condemned the attitude of the police officer concerned for interfering with the administration of justice and the freedom of the legal profession and urged the Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court, the Minister in Charge, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of West Bengal, the Minister in Charge of Law, the Secretary to the Judicial Department, and the Advocate General, Government of West Bengal, to take appropriate action so that in future this sort of interference may not recur.

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

DECEMBER 23, 1972

Letters

Teacher's Arrest

It was hard to believe that Prof I. K. Shukla, an Associate Professor of English of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Centre for Post-Graduate Studies at Manipur and a free-lance intellectual, had been arrested simply because he wrote an article on Manipur in a Delhi weekly criticising the alarming nature of Manipur politics and aiming at rousing intellectual consciousness against the stealthy rise of fascism in the State. But his arrest is quite in keeping with the general policy now being pursued by the Government of India towards intellectuals having a leftist bent. The time has come to unite against the creeping fascism in the country, expose the myths of democracy and fight the empire of exploitation.

K. CHATTOPADHYAY
Calcutta

Assam

In her girlish letter (November 25) Sm Tarulata Doley describes Assam as a colony of West Bengal. In West Bengal most of the businessmen are non-Bengali and Calcutta is virtually under their control. However as an Indian everyone has the right to live at any place within India which he finds congenial. Bengalis too cannot be deprived of this right, as Indians, it they live in Assam.

Sm Doley seems quite concerned over the fact that the tribes in Tripura have been outnumbered by immigrant Bengalis. Could she tell me who rendered these people homeless, who made them leave their birth-place? The people of West Bengal or the so-called leaders of our country? The leaders became Ministers at the cost of innumerable lives. Why do they now want to evade their responsibility? It is the duty of every Indian to make room for them.

She holds the Bengalis responsible for the present turmoil in Assam and instanced the death of Anil Bora. Right-thinking people would condemn

such brutality. But wasn't it negligible compared to the damage the Assamese caused to the life and property of the minority community? Even the other day they burnt an entire market to ashes in Dibrugarh, which was under curfew then. How could it be done without the help of the local-authorities? They do not hesitate to kill a doctor or assault a professor if he happens to be a Bengali.

She wants the Marxist leaders to support what is going on in Assam in the name of language and claims that at the beginning it was an anti-government movement. No true Marxist, whether he is Assamese or Bengali, wants to get involved in such a loathsome matters. And how could Anil Bora, a student leader and secretary of the Congress-led student union be a party to an anti-government movement?

It is an instinct of a revolutionist to preach revolution among the down-trodden and neglected people of society irrespective of their caste and province. So if anybody strives to mobilise the grievances of the Boro and other tribes (backward castes, as she says) he should be encouraged even if he be not Assamese.

Is there any country where all natural resources and industries are concentrated in a particular area? There is nothing to boast of if Assam grows the bulk of tea, Bengal grows jute and Punjab Wheat.

Immediately after the outbreak of the present disturbance I went to Assam and visited a few places to see things for myself. I had to terminate my journey at Gauhati because I was requested by a fellow passenger to drop my plans. I obeyed him. It is better not to state what I saw there and how I was treated at Jhalukbari Station. But let me say it is something different from what Tarulata claims to be an objective study.

SHYAMAL SEN
Calcutta

By way of defending the recent violence in Assam, Tarulata Doley (25-11-72) says that 'communalism

stems from the tide of a people's revolution'. We know that it is only people's revolution that discourages all sorts of communal and other parochial feelings. What sort of revolution it is that condones murder, loot, arson, rape and burning of houses of poor, helpless and innocent people?

Doley, however, has made no bones about pointing out the reactionary forces against which the Assamese have been fighting for long to establish a separate identity of their own. And it is the Bengalis who constitute such a force, only because they are demanding their right to be educated in their mother tongue and that too not at the expense of Assamese which must have by all means its due place. This demand on the part of the Bengalis living there does not in any manner stand in the way of the fulfilment of the hopes and aspirations of the Assamese. A language, to enrich itself, must associate and co-exist with other languages.

Doley then laments that, but for Bangladesh and West Bengal which are Assam's neighbours, Assam's position would not have been as bad as it is today. The en masse migration of a large number of Muslims that was encouraged by the League Ministry of Assam under the leadership of Mohd. Sadatullah was motivated by a sinister design to turn Assam into a Muslim majority province so as to facilitate its incorporation into the eastern wing of Pakistan. The process continued for many years after independence; the post-independence immigrants were mainly refugees comprising a particular community forced to quit their hearths and homes because of political and economic compulsions in the erstwhile East Pakistan. The charge that Bengalis were encouraged to migrate to Assam at the initiative of the British Government to dominate it is a blatant concoction. When Assam was carved out as a separate province, its administrative framework required a large number of trained hands which only Bengal

could supply at that time. The then British Government had no love for the Bengalis. It is, of course, true that the scarcely inhabited, rich and fertile Brahmaputra valley tempted many a Bengali to Assam in quest of livelihood. In course of time, they came to form a substantial proportion of the population there.

The next charge that the Brahmaputra valley has been made a colony of the rest of India seems to suggest that Bengalis have bled the Assamese white through ruthless exploitation. How much of the total money invested in various economic fields of Assam is owned by the Bengalis? What is the amount they are smuggling out as profit? Doley wants to lay all the blame at the Bengalis' door for the high price they have to pay for oil and tea which Assam produces in plenty, pleasantly oblivious of the that the Bengalis not only in Assam but in West Bengal also are equally affected by the downright gangsterism adopted by several monopoly houses (none of which is Bengali) control the entire economic life of the country by their business activities. The economic crisis gripping the Brahmaputra valley is only a part of the malaise that has overtaken the whole of India, and the forces responsible for this are the same as those aiding the linguistic chauvinism in Assam, the activities of the Shiva Sena in Maharashtra with the catchy slogan of 'Maharashtra for Maharashtrians', the movement in the entire State of Andhra in the name of Mulki rules, the torture of Harijans, innumerable communal riots throughout India and the regional and fissiparous tendencies plaguing India at present.

The present linguistic chauvinism in Assam is caused by the frustrations and disappointment of the increasing number of educated young men. The vested interests, always in happy collusion with the ruling class, have given a clever twist to the accumulated resentment of the poor and unemployed over the continued failure of the Government to improve their lot.

As for the dig at the leftist parties for not supporting the cause of Assamese, they believe that the minority in their own interests should have sufficient acquaintance with the language of the majority, and that this will gradually pave the way for the growth of a composite culture, enriching in the process both the languages. Any support, overt or covert, to a partisan or regional agitation goes basically against Marxism which not only demands equal economic opportunities for all but also advocates proportionate facilities for all the languages of the country to ensure their all-round development.

It is not yet known who killed Muzammil Haque and Anil Bora. The demand of objectivity from *Frontier* would have been meaningful if Doley had taken care to give us even a heavily-censored estimate of the losses suffered by the Bengalis.

PHANI BHUSHAN GHOSH
Ashokenagar, 24-Parganas

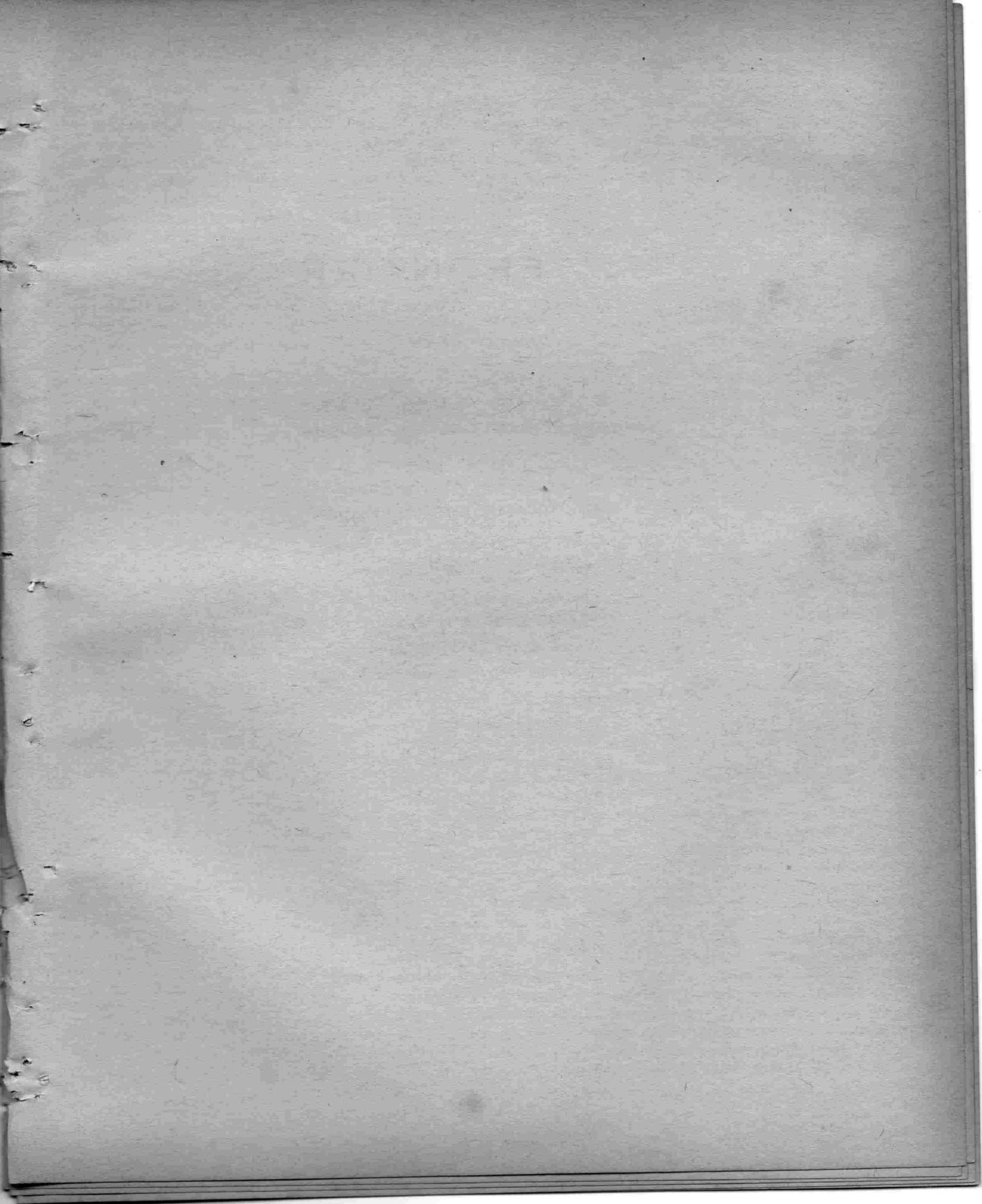
Postponed

The Ward No 16 by-election of Santipur Municipality, in which Mr Kanai Pal, ex-MLA, is fighting the Congress(R) as an independent leftist candidate, was due on December 10. But at 1-30 p.m. on December 9 the District Magistrate informed the candidates that it had been postponed to January 7 for "unavoidable reasons". (This by-election had been postponed twice, earlier).

Many had come to Santipur to vote, but postponement at such short notice caused them inconvenience. There is reason to think that power is being misused to help the ruling party. Despite threats and intimidation, the voters have resolved to return the leftist candidate. They think that their resolve has led to the postponement of the by-election. We voice our strong protest against the anti-democratic action of the Government.

DEBU CHITTOPADHYAY
Secretary, Election Committee,
Santipur

DECEMBER 23, 1972



FRONTIER

61, MOTT LANE, CALCUTTA-13

Subscription Rates

INLAND

One Year : Rs. 18.00 Six Months : Rs. 9.00.
Five Years : Rs. 75.00. Seven Years : Rs. 100.00

By Surface Mail

All countries : Rs. 40 or 5 dollars

Foreign AIR MAIL Rates (One Year)

Revised

America : Rs .116 or 16 dollars

Europe : Rs. 98 or 13 dollars

Asia : Rs. 88 or 11 dollars

Please supply FRONTIER for

Six Months/One Year/Five Years/Seven Years

I am sending Rs.....

by cheque/money order*

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Signature

* Cheques should be drawn in favour of *Frontier*