

# frontier

Vol. 5: No. 46

FEBRUARY 24, 1973

PRICE: 40 PAISE

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PRINTED AT MODERN INDIA PRESS,  
7, RAJA SUBODH MULLICK SQUARE,  
CALCUTTA-13 AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY  
FOR GERMINAL PUBLICATIONS (P) LTD.  
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## WHAT'S COOKING?

NOT many people knew that trouble had broken out in parts of Orissa, until it was no longer possible for newspapers to maintain their diplomatic silence at the dictates of the fraternal, Congress governments concerned. The trouble was over a third leader in a Calcutta English daily which was supposed to contain material derogatory to the Orissans. As an example of the hyper sensitivity of the Indian intelligentsia, the leader is worth quoting, in part. Discussing the proposal of the Siddhartha Sankar Ministry to offer 400 jobs in the countryside to doctors from Orissa (Bengali doctors are said to be reluctant to work in villages), this is what the newspaper said: "...The traditional image of the Orissan in West Bengal is changing; it will be good to entrust the wellbeing of our physique to his ministrations, as in the past we used to entrust the safety of our bellies to his cooking. It was an Orissan scholar, Mrityunjoy Tarkalankar, who wrote the first Bengali prose textbooks and primers of grammar, thereby teaching Bengalis their own language. It is marvellous that our eastern neighbours will take over a profession that so far had been regarded almost as an exclusive preserve of the Bengalis."

Presumably it was the reference to the "safety of our bellies" that annoyed sections of educated Orissans, carrying as it did memories of the innumerable Orissans that used to work as cooks in Bengali homes in the past. On the face of it, the remark is not derogatory. But then, for one thing Bengalis outside Bengal have been famous for being snooty; for another the middle classes hate to work with their hands and, therefore, the job of cooking is looked down upon. These two attitudes combined to create resentment in parts of Orissa and resulted in attacks on passenger trains, and shops and hotels owned by Bengalis. Ugly retaliation followed in West Bengal. Trains were held up at Kharagpur and passengers attacked. There were incidents in Howrah. In the bitter atmosphere the newspaper apologised, but with very little effect. In the absence of hard news, wild rumours contributed not a little to the pretty bad situation. No Orissan doctor can come now.

One begins to despair of the Indian situation. Here we are, bressed down by high prices, lack of jobs and homes, and disease; in many parts of the country millions are going hungry and are in a slow process of extinction as a result of the drought; what passes for government is

nobody's business; in many areas it is police-CRP rule. The objective situation is excellent for mobilising people against the regime. But all the pent-up anger and frustration are being given vent to in irrational explosions organised by the middle classes at the insidious suggestions of the ruling interests. The perverted middle classes are infecting the toiling masses with their poison. When there is no outburst, when there is celebration of any damned thing, thousands of people flock together to watch the fun.

The rulers are happy. They sang hymns to national integration during the war with Pakistan. That this artificial integration is breaking down is a result of, among other things, the cruel economic situation which, again, is a legacy of the war, does not disturb them so long as people fight each other. A distracted people is the surest guarantee for the rulers to continue their game. And the people have got the leaders they deserve.

## Trading With Russia

With the signing of the Indo-Soviet economic protocol in New Delhi, the fear that India's rapidly expanding economic relations with the USSR may convert this country's economy into a colonial one in the near future seems to have intensified. This is because of what has been said and left unsaid at the ceremony marking the signing of the elaborate agreement which, in the words of the Planning Minister, Mr D. P. Dhar, "opens new and extensive vistas" of economic, scientific and technological co-operation between the two countries. But all that one would like to say is that before beginning to traverse new horizons of economic collaboration, the Government of India would do well to have a hard look at the transactions so far made with the USSR. Have they been entered into on the basis of mutual benefit and equality,

which is proclaimed to be the Russian policy? Had it been so, India would have surely refused to import computers from Soviet Russia which is known to be very backward in the field of computer technology or the Government of India would have surely adopted measures to change the pattern of its trade with the USSR, which continues to be largely the same as that with Great Britain in the colonial days. To substantiate this charge one may recall a recent report written by one of the editors of the *Swiss Press Review*, Mr Peter Sager. It relates to the causes of the hitch over the recent cotton conversion deal whereby India is to process 20,000 tons of Russian cotton into textiles and export the made-up items of cloth and towelling to the Soviet Union in return. The report says that Moscow is reselling the end-products to earn hard currency and it recalls the sad experience of Egypt in this respect.

Mr D. P. Dhar's special assignment of selling out India's economy seems to have been meeting with success. The Soviet pressure in India is becoming so deep that it can refuse to answer the longstanding allegation that Russia resells India's tea to West European countries. Russia's tea imports from India have, of late, swelled both in volume and value and at the last tea auction in Calcutta she almost acquired a monopolistic buying of Darjeeling tea which often enables her to dictate the prices. Indian suspicion about switch-trading by Soviet Russia has never been dispelled at the official level. On the contrary, it has been strengthened.

The agreement reached at the Indo-Soviet Commission for Economic and Scientific Co-operation provides for about 2 per cent growth in the trade turnover, that is about Rs. 450 crores, within five years between the two countries. Exports of Soviet machinery and equipment including tankers and cargo ships will increase at the end of 1975 by about 35 per cent. About 70 industrial

and other projects have been built or are being built in India with the co-operation of the USSR. Some 30,000 Soviet tractors are working in India. The Soviet Union has extended credits, totalling Rs. 673 crores as on June 30, 1971 in terms of actual disbursement and technical assistance to enable India to set up several key industries. The high-level Delhi parleys have devised ways to dovetail India's overall planning into that of Russia, a daring exercise that has been undertaken for the first time. Going through the terms one can rightly think that the rupee payment agreement with Soviet Russia is disadvantageous, if not harmful, to this country. This is because there is no such thing as buying foreign goods with India's money. Eventually India has to give in exchange goods and services for what one buys from Russia.

At the ceremony, marking the signing of the economic protocol, Mr S. A. Skachkov, Chairman of the State Committee for Foreign Economic Relations of the USSR, said the Soviet Union would study the possibility of absorbing in their markets a portion of the production from the Soviet-aided industrial complexes in India. This gesture seems to be innocent. But one should note that Soviet Russia intends to import those Indian products which India cannot use internally. The surgical instruments plant at Madras, built at heavy cost by India, is producing surgical goods which the USSR imports at a cheap price as they have no market in India. Thus the USSR has in the first place avoided the capital cost of a plant of its own; secondly, it has sold some machinery to India; and, finally managed to get cheap Indian labour and goods.

All these facts are certainly known to the Government of India. But still the present Congress Government headed by Mrs Indira Gandhi is forced to play the role of the puppet in the interest of narrow party politics.

## Devaluing A Crisis

Once again New Delhi has been caught on the wrong foot in the face of a currency crisis. It has hardly shown any capacity to act, not even to react. To start with, it took the easiest course of suspending spot and forward trading in dollars and decided to announce the rates from day to day. Then, obviously piqued by the criticism it faced after the December 1971 crisis of allowing the drift to stretch for too long, it resolved to put up a show of great decisiveness and announced with all the pretensions of profundity that India would watch how the pound behaved and the rupee-sterling parity would be maintained. Initially the pound has strengthened against the dollar leading to an appreciation in its value; in a sympathetic rise the rupee has also thus scored a few points against the American currency—3.7% to be precise till February 15. But now the pound has started faltering; and when Whitehall sneezes, North Block catches cold. The happy dreams of our finance officials to win a round of kudos from the little knowing public men by claiming that the rupee has won in a slanging match with the dollar seem unlikely to come true.

It is pretty clear that Washington is playing this time on long rope. The change in its style is significant. In December 1971 it conceded a devaluation only after failing to stem the tide; in February 1973, it has done its part of the job right at the beginning in order to rub in the point that it would not like much nonsense from others either. While Europe is not exactly itching for a confrontation right at the moment, the mood in Tokyo is clearly not submissive. India does not come into this "big money" picture, but from its own point of view the developments are highly significant. It is unlikely that the pound will be able to record some durable gains against the dollar, Britain's own pay-

ments position and inflation are bound to tell upon sterling's health. New Delhi's decision to stay on the pound's bandwagon come what may amounts to picking the wrong horse. Indeed the official spokesmen were grilled by newsmen as to why exactly the rupee must remain linked to one or the other intervention currency. Their explanation—that there has to be some kind of link with one or the other intervention currency and that the

sterling was such a currency—does not just explain why the rupee's relation with other units must be decided through a third party and not directly. Many people are allergic to the word devaluation and unfortunately their number seems to be quite large in India. But keeping the trend of world trade in view, it would perhaps be better if New Delhi keeps its options open on this question.

## Best Of Indira Gandhi

In the One Asia Assembly, Mrs Gandhi perhaps thought that a little bit of demagogry was in order and she did it at the expense of America. Since there are indeed a few who can explain, let alone justify American savagery in Vietnam, she could not imagine that the American Government would take exception to what she thought a fine piece of oratory. But Mr Nixon did take exception and it was let out that Mr Moynihan had put off his departure for India. Mrs Gandhi immediately made amends and said that she did not criticise Mr Nixon but merely made an objective assessment of the Vietnam situation. How an objective assessment can be made of the Vietnam situation without putting America squarely on the dock is up to Mrs Gandhi's exceptional calibre to make but it did not wash much. Mr Gunnar Myrdal was surprised that Mrs Gandhi would retract in the face of American displeasure; the Swedish Prime Minister did not, even if America black-listed Sweden when the Swedish chief criticised American aggression in Vietnam. The difference between the two reactions is obvious; a capitalist country, even under the hegemony of super-powers, has some independence of opinion; a neo-colony has precious little.

Mrs Gandhi made another faux pas by offering to resign if that would solve the Andhra imbroglio. But she grew angry when she was taken

at her word. The Andhra mess is very much there and unless Mrs Gandhi eats the humble pie by accepting the bifurcation, it seems there is little chance of any solution. But she says she would resign when she feels her mission is over—she is not going to resign under pressure. In India as it is today, Mrs Gandhi imagines herself to be a colossal figure and it seems she is trying to blackmail the country just as M. K. Gandhi used to do in his heyday by his threats of fasting unto death. Nobody however took Mrs Gandhi very seriously.

Mrs Gandhi now is palpably not in the best of her elements. But, as she says herself, she can turn out her best in the face of dire difficulties, for example, when the CPM posed a real threat in West Bengal or Bangladesh refugees in India. This we ought to appreciate. There is no need to think much of the unemployment situation in the country which is today in the acutest form; there need not be any big fuss over the unprecedented inflation raging in the country; the drought and scarcity that has gripped three-fourths of the country need not be bothered about; the industrial stagnation can be wished away. These are not major issues for Mrs Gandhi. More important is the development of 'maturer' ties with America; more important is the conclusion of the Indo-Soviet Commission. She knows which side

the bread is buttered. And her way of doing things is all her own. She encourages a healthy opposition but cannot brook even forums within her own party; she scotches political opponents by letting loose the State power—vide the last elections in

West Bengal and poses innocence when reminded of that. The Allahabad demonstrations meant little to her—so long she enjoys imperial patronage, she will continue to give the best of her. What that means for the country is not her business.

## Madrid And Moscow

A. C. M. Saly

**G**ENERAL Franco's military regime in Spain has now decided to end its political estrangement with the Soviet bloc. Madrid, in what was considered an unexpected, if not surprise, move, announced recently that it was according diplomatic recognition to East Germany. Western political observers called this a "Spanish Ostpolitik".

Since the Civil War of the thirties Spain has refrained from having diplomatic ties with East Europe. Other types of relations, however, were there. Between 1956-62 commercial contacts between Spanish and all East European banks dealing with external trade (except the Soviet Union's) were started. Trade and consular agreements were also signed between them. Bilateral trade has kept expanding every year since then and, according to a Beirut report, it reached about £65 million by 1971. Spanish exports to Czechoslovakia and East Germany, mainly fruit items, have kept increasing over the last so many years and, in 1971, citrus fruits alone made more than 40% of Spanish exports to Czechoslovakia and East Germany. Spanish-Polish trade increased five times in the period.

In 1972, the Soviet Union concluded a five-year trade pact with Spain for about £16 million. The Russians offered the Spanish an unusual, significant concession, which they never give to their trading partners: payments not in roubles but in hard currency. The Spanish authorities, reciprocating the Soviet gesture, did not insist on

their famous old demand that Russia return about 510 tons of gold bullion the Spanish Republican fighters had sent to the Soviet Union in the course of the Civil War. (The Russians say that they purchased arms for the Republicans with that money). Even before the trade pact was signed, the Soviets maintained a Consulate and a merchant marine office in Madrid; Russian fishing vessels were given docking, supply and other facilities in the Spanish-held Canary Islands in the Atlantic; and Russian cargo and passenger vessels used to call at Spanish ports, bringing with them an impressive number of Soviet tourists.

While relations short of diplomatic ties were in swift progress, the pro-Moscow Communist Party of Spain opposed these developments. Mr Santiago Carrillo, General Secretary of the party, was reported to have stressed some time back that the opening up of relations between Spain and East Europe should not and cannot be thought of so long as Spain remained under a dictatorial regime. The party openly expressed its disapproval over the Russo-Spanish trade agreement.

'Comaraderie' between the Russians and the Spanish CP in exile was not warm either. Mr Carrillo denounced the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. He was joined by the party chairman, Dolores Ibarruri, a prestigious heroine of the Spanish Civil War, now in her eighties and living in Moscow in exile. Soon after, Moscow made open attempts

to replace the party leadership and even forced some leaders to repudiate Carrillo. The Russians were reported to have appointed a new General Secretary of their own choice, without even formally allowing their Spanish fellow-travellers to do the job. But Ibarruri used her influence with the Soviets and averted a major rupture. Moscow wanted, in return, that they must keep their mouths shut, which they obviously did. Although Ibarruri was mildly critical of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia and its attitudes to a number of international issues, she is highly respected in the pro-Soviet camp the world over. The Spanish CP, thereafter, was stated to have started wooing Peking, which it had repudiated, during the ideological conflict, as Trotskyite. China was understood to have responded favourably to the Spanish party's gestures and, from behind the scenes, had been helping the breach between it and Moscow to widen, by making some tacit moves.

Meanwhile, political observers in the West said they did not expect the Madrid authorities' move for diplomatic recognition of a Soviet bloc country so soon. It may be that although General Franco's regime allowed relations in other fields to develop without any hitch, it did not make up its mind to have diplomatic relations with the Soviet bloc except Cuba which maintains an Embassy in Madrid. Further, General Franco may be unwilling, though temporarily, to shake hands with a State, then led by Stalin, that actively sided with the democratic forces resisting the General in the Civil War. However, obviously, Spain no longer entertained fear or bitterness towards the Soviet Union, since it is quite convinced that the present Brezhnev leadership has long discarded the pre-Khrushchev era policies. But reluctance persisted. Madrid's choice of East Berlin first, instead of Moscow, is apparently due to the fact that it needs time to prepare the ground for eventual political collaboration with the USSR.

The swiftly-growing ties between

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Spain's military regime and the Soviet bloc are tending to create more differences within the Soviet camp. The Spanish CP, which is feeling strongly and is disappointed and disgusted with its Soviet Big Brother, will, no doubt, voice stiff opposition to these moves. In that case, some, if not all, of its leaders run the risk of being expelled from the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact States. This would probably have serious repercussions in the international pro-Soviet camp as the Spanish party and, especially, Ibaruri, are held in high esteem. At the same time, the possibility of Moscow's firm suppression of the Spanish CP's voice also cannot be

ruled out. When faced with the threat of expulsion from Moscow and losing the privileges they had and the comfortable life they lead there, the Spanish party leaders, now in exile in Eastern Europe, would, perhaps, drop their hard line and swallow the bitter pill.

In any case, one thing is certain beyond doubt. The Soviet Union will definitely not hesitate to sacrifice her ideological comrades-in-arms when she can get a foothold in the strategic (and "unexplored") land of Spain, located in between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, which would help her to gain political and military supremacy throughout the world.

## Japanese Investments In S. Vietnam

WHILE U.S. imperialism was panting to rescue itself from the quagmire of the Vietnam war, the Japanese Government announced gigantic agricultural development projects for Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, covering the whole region of the Indochina peninsula.

Outstanding among reconstruction programmes is a government-proposed yen loan totalling US\$50,000,000 for the Phan-Rang Agricultural Development Plan. Phan-Rang is the birthplace of President Nguyen Van Thieu. Thus, in honour of his birthplace, the Japanese Government hopes to provide finances for a programme to establish a waterway leading from the Da Nhim water-power station for use in local agriculture. The formal contract will be concluded in Saigon just after a cease-fire. Above all it is noteworthy that these reconstruction programmes were already proposed as early as the beginning of the 1970s. (*Nippon Keizai Shimbun*, Oct. 29).

Anticipating the end of the war, the Japanese Government and various enterprises investigated potential regions for "economic assistance" in 1971. The Japanese Government gave financial aid totalling

Y600,000,000 (US\$2,000,000) to South Vietnam and proposed reconstruction programmes amounting to US\$150,000,000 in Indochina. However, the strong offensive of the Vietnamese interrupted these programmes at the initial stages of investigation. Thus, now is deemed most opportune for the Government to reintroduce these huge projects.

Japanese imperialism is ready to expand its empire based on the foundations which have been established since the end of the 60's. Construction of water-power stations, irrigation works, joint ventures with local capital for establishing assembly plants—these are the tactics of economic invasion designed to maintain Japan-U.S. joint imperialism over Asia in the 70s, a "take-off" stage of Japanese imperialism in South Vietnam, cloaked under the guise of "economic assistance."

The plants exported so far include a sugar plant, a plant for the production of glass, fertiliser and cement and one for production of instant noodles.

Construction works: 1961 to 1964—construction of De Nhim water-power station financed by the reparations agreement Y9.9 b.—US\$ 33

m). Construction of irrigation works in Phan-Rang district under the reparations agreement. Construction in 1965 of My Dhuan Bridge over the Mekong River financed by Japan Export & Import Bank (US\$8 m.). October 1970—repair work of Da Nhim water-power station financed by gratis aid from the Japanese Government: Y50 m. (US\$1 m.). Sugar-cane exploitation in Phan-Rang district in 1970. Construction in Aug.-Oct. 1967 of a port for the U.S. army helicopters and dredging of the Saigon River, Nov. 1967 to May 1968—deepening of Vung Tau port to accommodate large warships. Construction in June-Aug. 1968 of two small airports at Hue. (All by Goyo Kensetsu).

Oki Electric Industry & Mitsubishi Corporation—Construction in 1968 of South Vietnamese National Police Telephone Centre.

Ohbayashi-gumi Co.—May 1969—successful bidding for construction of a mammoth bridge, a part and parcel of the Mekong Development Project, at total cost of Y6,193 m. (US\$20,650,000).

Joint ventures include: Kubota Iron and Steel Co. and Marubeni-Lida Co. established in May 1969 as an assembly plant in Saigon-Bien Hoa district in technical cooperation with Viknyo Co. in Saigon; 800 land engines, 800 ship engines for fishing, 1,200 irrigation pumps to be produced each year.

Yanmar Diesel Motor Co. and Nichimen Co. established in January 1970 a joint venture with Vietnam Power Products Manufacturing, increasing the total capital from US\$50,000 to US\$500,000, participation of 12.5% each by Yanmar and Nichimen; production of diesel engines for ships beginning in the summer of 1970.

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) and Mitsubishi Corporation—established in April 1971 "Farmachine", a joint venture for the manufacture of agricultural machinery in the suburbs of Saigon; capitalized at V.N.\$200 m. (US\$867,000); factory completion was scheduled for spring

1972. 4,000 cultivators, 3,000 land diesel engines, 1,000 tractors to be produced annually in the first five years; products to be exported to Cambodia and Laos; two Japanese vice-presidents of Mitsubishi Corporation and manager of Technology Division of MHI participate in the Board of Directors.

Ishikawajima-Harima Heavy Industries (IHI) and Maruka Kikai—In Aug. 1971 Maruka Kikai, a dealer of IHI's agricultural machinery, applied along with two local sales agents to the S. Vietnamese Government for permission to establish a joint venture to make agricultural machinery; permission granted in Nov. 1970; IHI will provide the joint venture with technical assistance; 50% of investment from Maruka and the balance from the local firms; paid-up capital by Maruka amounts to US\$1.6 m.; 1,000 tractors and 1,000 cultivators to be locally produced per year.

Sato Zoki and Sumitomo Shoji Kaisha established in June 1969 a joint venture to repair and produce trucks and construction machinery for agricultural use with 'Dhai Viet Trading' in Saigon. Two factories were established in the autumn of 1969.

Toyo-sha and Toyo Menka planned to establish a truck-producing joint venture to be capitalized at V.N.\$100m. with two local firms including Vo Van Van Co., a prominent local trading firm; a new factory to be built in the suburbs of Saigon will produce small-sized four-wheel trucks under the technical instruction of Toyo-sha.

Iseki Agricultural Machinery Mfg. Co. announced it would establish a company to repair and sell agricultural machinery.

International Agricultural Development Co. established a joint venture in June 1969—'Japan-Vietnam Machinery Service' along with a S. Vietnamese corporation; an assembly plant for agricultural machinery.

Fuji Heavy Industries Co. acquired a licence for a joint venture assembly plant in 1968.

Toyota Motor Co. planned to increase in April 1971 the capital of 'Vietnam Automobile Product'; assembly plant of Toyota cars; 10% of the investment from Toyota.

Matsushita Electric Industries Co. established in January 1971 a joint venture 'Vietnam National' to assemble transistor radios; the venture is capitalised at Y360 m. (US\$1.2 m.); paid-up capital by Toyota as of Oct. 1971 amounts to Y215 m. (US\$ 750,000).

Sanyo Electric Co. established in March 1971 'Sanyo Kogyo (Vietnam)'; a joint venture to assemble black-white TVs with a local factory in the industrial district near Saigon, capitalized at Y260 m. (US\$870,000); paid-up capital by Sanyo amounts to Y19,722,000 (US\$658,000).

Sony Corporation in March 1971 proposed a project for the establishment of a joint venture to assemble radios along with local capital; capitalized at Y180 m. (US\$600,000); 40% of investment from Sony; also obtained Saigon Electronic Industries Corporation totalling Y104,728,000 (US\$350,000).

Taiyo Fishery Co. established in October 1971 a joint venture with local capital; 'Mekong Fishery Product', a factory to process shrimps caught in the Mekong River.

Resources exploitation projects include:

Kaiyo Oil Co.—a Japanese consortium established in March 1971 to exploit oil resources in S. Vietnam in cooperation with Gulf Oil Co.; total paid-up capital of the consortium, Y230 m. (US\$770,000), comes from Japan Petroleum Development Corporation (50%), five major trading firms, two "independent" oil companies—i.e., Alaska Oil Development and Idemitsu Kosan and Toyota Motor Sales Co.'s total expenses over five year period amounting to Y20 m. (US\$70 m.); 30% of the expenses from Kaiyo Oil and the balance from U.S. Gulf.

(From *Ampo*, Japan)

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FEBRUARY 24, 1973

# A Letter From Sweden

MOHIM ROODRO

I had to be in a village in Sweden to see the famous/infamous film on Calcutta by Louis Malle. When I left India, over a year and a half ago, it was still banned in India.

The thing I could not work out was what precisely the Government of India was protecting the citizens of India from by not allowing it to be shown. I suppose it could be a way of showing anger. But anger against what? And in any case, excepting India, the rest of the world is seeing it anyway. I expected some slant, some unfair angle that could be considered anti-Indian and/or untruthful. I could see nothing unkind in it, nothing untrue.

I clearly remember my first impression of Calcutta when I returned there after a twelve-year-long stay-away from the country. I remember how as the ship neared the port and the flag of India was sent up the mast of the ship my flesh goose-pimpled. I had a lump in the throat. I was eager to get off and touch the soil of my own country.

But, nevertheless, the Calcutta that hit out on me at my first sight of it then was hardly distinct from Louis Malle's. The Calcutta that I grew to love, the undercurrent that grips one and haunts one,—I came to recognize it as time elapsed. But what I saw in the beginning was reeling. And it took me a good long time to get my senses out of the jar and functioning.

Louis Malle's film is a very truthful and vivid, closely observed, aesthetically produced account of the first impressions of a newcomer. He hardly takes his camera into the middle class or upper middle class areas. Instead he moves in the street, in the slums, and anywhere where you see the torrential flow of humanity that is Calcutta. And his camera therefore sees the poor. And that is precisely what we are. The thin skin that is formed by the

middle classes is hardly enough to hide the billowing masses that are poor. Louis Malle sees them with great feeling and understanding.

It may be said that his film does not give a total picture of Calcutta; that it has not gone into the great mystery of how in spite of such hardships, such misery, such poverty, such blatantly impossible conditions, creativity persists. Poets write poetry, musicians play music, dancers dance, artists paint and sculpt; intellectuals and writers exist. But it will take many films to document all that. Louis Malle, however, shows through his study of the poor how life goes on and vitality persists. He has shown gatherings on the Maidan: groups singing, wrestling matches, acrobats. He has shown political demonstrations and police firings,—and it takes a good bit of daring to take all those on-the-spot shots of clashes between the police and the demonstrators.

It has been exciting and satisfying to stay in Sweden just when this little country, whose entire population is not larger than Calcutta's, spoke out through its Prime Minister scathingly against the USA for its bomb-to-wipe-out onslaughts against North Vietnam. As the B52s rolled on in waves over Haiphong and Hanoi destroying everything they could on an unprecedented murderous scale, Olof Palme came out with a statement that compared the USA with the Nazis. That displeased the almighty USA no little bit. Diplomatic relations became strained, nearly on the point of breaking, and Nixon frowned. However, Olof reiterated his statement, and on the day Nixon was formally installed as president for his second tenure, Sweden treated it as a day of mourning.

Olof Palme is known for his leftist leanings, and is no darling in the

eyes of the opposition parties. But on the issue of the U.S. bombing he succeeded in bringing all the parties together on a joint declaration of condemnation and a signature campaign was launched, sponsored together by all the five parties. The forms had the signatures of the five party chiefs printed on them. The radio announced it, and then television drove it home. The campaign started with a swing. Forms were all over the places, in the post offices, banks, shops. And then came the announcement of the Paris agreement and cease-fire. The signature campaign has halted. Now there is a fund raising campaign to aid North Vietnam.

Television is on its way to India. The old story. Should you have razor blades or not? You may slit your throat with it. However, it has been proved that people in general prefer to use the razor blade to shave themselves and only a very few chose otherwise.

But television?

There is a distinction between the radio and television. The radio occupies your ears. But television demands both ears and eyes. In other words, it totally immobilises you. You can listen to the radio, and still carry on doing something. You look at television and hear it. With the cinema, the fact that it is not inside your room means you have to make a choice, take a decision, and finally make a journey. Television being at hand, like the switch of a light, one just puts it on. And the two channels here, and a half a dozen in America, pour out information, news, theatre, films, jokes, and entertainment of all sorts. Indeed, serious subjects are frequently dealt with, but essentially, your own thinking apparatus is lulled, and you become a receiving unit; spoon-fed, entertained, inactive.

I have just now in front of me a magazine for the age group ten to thirteen, and am looking at a double-spread dealing with some questions asked of boys and girls of that age

group about how they spend their evenings. There were eleven of them. Each and everyone spends his or her evening watching the TV, the only variation being in the length of time permitted. Most of them have to stop viewing around 9.30. But one or two are allowed until 10.00. There was one boy who said on

some evenings he goes out training in sports, as that is his special interest. Reading, they are not interested in, unless it is comics. Other kinds of reading they find "dull".

That seems to be one of the big blows that television has dealt out—the reading habit is fast on the wane.

meaning Mr Guha makes.

What I wanted to say is that in no economic formation, pattern of ownership is the *essence*; the essence of an economic formation is its basic economic law. This *does not mean* that the basic economic law has no relation or connection with the pattern of ownership in a society. The pattern of ownership is in fact changed according to the requirements of the law or the requirements arising out of the operation of the law.

So, what I did actually contend was that we can *identify* a particular economic formation *not merely by the pattern of ownership* of the means of production but *by the basic economic law* under which the given formation activates itself.

Mr Guha's confusion arises from a wrong notion—common among some self-styled Marxists—that in an economic formation, the pattern of ownership of the means of production is the prime criterion for identifying the same. Therefore the notion by implication suggests that a fascist country becomes socialist because it nationalises some means of production industries or the Soviet Union became socialist because she had nationalised productive undertakings of different sectors or India is crawling towards socialism because the present Government has nationalised many industries and developed a public sector.

True, Mr Guha does not make categorical statements to this effect. But to a question how one should identify a particular mode of production, his answer has to adopt the above position, otherwise it has to be equivocal.

"The mode of production... is an abstraction and summing up of *decisive* properties of social production" (his italics).

Certainly, feudalism or capitalism or socialism has some *decisive* properties of their own. But what are these? How should one identify them in order to differentiate, for example, feudalism from pre-feudal economic formations, or capitalism from feudalism or socialism from

## Reply To A False Brother

ARJUN MAJUMDER

I have just read 'A False Brother' (January '27). It makes some false charges against me in connection with my article, 'Mode of Production in the U.S.S.R.' And to hide his own confusion about the basic economic law of socialism Mr Guha demonstrates his reading of Marx-Engels correspondence quite unnecessarily.

He alleges that I sought "to create an impression that the public ownership of the means of production is *not* a 'prime requisite for a socialist mode of production'..." This is a false allegation. He picks up my words 'prime requisite for a socialist mode of production' from a sentence in which I was writing about the inadequacy of the Soviet studies so far undertaken. The particular sentence from which he smuggles my words runs as follows:

"Studies of Soviet planning so far undertaken tend to give the impression that the prime requisites for a socialist mode of production are public ownership of the means of production and substitution of capitalist market mechanism by comprehensive planning. That such an impression is grossly inadequate has been evident..."

One may think that Mr Guha makes the innocent mistake of interpreting the word 'inadequate' as something implying 'not'. For him I should give the following extract from my article:

"Private ownership of the means of production—whatever importance

it may have in the dialectical interpretation of the evolutionary history of various economic formations e.g. feudalism, capitalism and socialism—does not constitute *the unique essence* of either Feudalism or Capitalism *although socialism in contrast to all previous economic formations... must necessarily contain predominant, social ownership of the means of production.*" (emphasis now added).

It seems that Mr Guha in his over-eagerness to smuggle Marx's words and use Marx's epithet 'A False Brother'—though inappropriately—did not read my article where it is actually relevant for his avowed purpose.

The second false charge Mr Guha makes: "Mr Majumder further writes that the pattern of ownership of the means of production *has no relation or connection* with the basic economic law of society." (emphasis added).

I do not know where he has seen this: It seems that to my statement (which he quotes): "In no economic formation the basic economic laws have a pattern of ownership of the means of production as the nucleus around which they operate" he attributes the meaning that "the pattern of ownership of the means of production *has no relation or connection* with the basic economic law of society." I admit that this expression—due to my poor English—is not happy, but in the context in which I made it cannot lead to the

capitalism? Mr Guha cannot possibly confidently reply.

That he cannot reply is obvious from his effort to hide behind a generality—a generality which requires a factual basis for its validity. He says:

"Mr Majumder should know that land units under community or tribal ownership and under private ownership of the feudal lords mean neither the same *property relations* (this is obvious like the difference between black and brown—A.M.) nor the same mode of production" (this hypothesis is factually untrue, as sometimes the same mode of production contains different property relations as is evident from the fact that in the early stage of feudalism in most of the countries [on the expiry of different types of pre-feudal formations like *Ancient, Oriental, Germanic* or *Slavonic*] individual private property of land units was not yet developed and wherever developed, it coexisted for a considerable period of time with only private property. Individual private property in land was fully developed later with the maturity of feudal formations when in fact it started showing its signs of crisis.\*)

He further continues: "nor does the same basic economic law operate in different property relations and mode of production."

It was indeed my contention in the earlier paper that a particular mode of production cannot have more than one basic economic law. Hence the piece of advice Mr Guha offers to me is uncalled for, but his sentence, for the sake possibly of rhythm, demonstrates a wrong notion that under the same basic economic law there cannot operate different property relations.

I think that by the term 'property

\* Mr Guha in this connection may consult *The German Ideology* by Marx-Engels, particularly Ch. I, and *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formation* (Ed. by E. J. Hobsbawm) by Marx, London, 1964.

relations' he means the pattern of ownership of the means of production, because he attacks my view on the relationship between the pattern of ownership and the basic economic law under a given economic formation.

I referred to the feudal mode of production where one sees more than one pattern of ownership of the means of production, although these patterns belong to different phases of its evolution. Similarly, under capitalism we find different patterns of ownership of the means of production during its different phases. For example, under competitive capitalism, the operation of its basic economic law, i.e. the law of surplus value did create private ownership of the means of production and the State did not own any means of production. But under monopoly capitalism, particularly at its highest

stage, the same basic economic law of surplus value did inevitably lead to the institution of public ownership of the means of production, in the capital-goods sector or the sectors producing defence goods, transport, communications, banking etc.

Hence my contention was that the pattern of ownership is not the *nucleus* of an economic formation, it is the effect of a cause. The cause is the basic economic law governing the particular economic formation. If the pattern of ownership by itself identifies an economic formation, then we cannot differentiate capitalism from feudalism (both having private ownership of the means of production) or socialism from capitalism (both having at some stage public ownership of the means of production). Mr Guha with all his declared vanity about his own understanding of dialectics should try

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to understand the dialectics of operation of a mode of production. Mode of production means the mode of unleashing productive forces and this mode determines the character and degree of division of labour in a society. The character and degree of division of labour give rise to production relations in general, property relations in particular. Productive forces tend to come into conflict with the production relations when the former's growth confronts the latter as a fetter; the latter changes its forms only up to a limit—a limit imposed by the basic economic law regulating the general unleashing of productive forces within the precincts of the mode. Under the capitalist mode of production, division of labour being accentuated in course of reproduction of capital *ad infinitum*, productive forces are tremendously developed. Reproduction of capital *ad infinitum* is the positive virtue of capitalism (as without its reproduction capital cannot exist) and the positive virtue by its active expression creates the negation of the law of reproduction of capital, by generating productive forces and by necessitating a higher degree of division of labour and hence by making newer and newer production relations or property relations unavoidable. This is how capitalism develops from its competitive stage to its stage of State capitalism. From the point of view of the productive forces, State capitalism represents and holds out prospects for a new mode of production, while from the point of view of the law of surplus value or its attendant production relations, it represents a dead-end.

#### Another Confusion

Mr Guha alleges that I have "discovered" the law of surplus value as the basic economic law under socialism and that I have "refuted" Stalin's formulation of such a law.

My article quoted Stalin's following words: "the essential features and requirements of the basic economic law of socialism might be formulat-

ed roughly in this way: the securing of the maximum satisfaction of the constantly rising material and cultural requirements of the whole of society through the continuous expansion and perfection of socialist production on the basis of higher techniques." My comment on this formulation was: "Indeed, Stalin's formulation was 'rough' as he himself had admitted. It is rough, because it is vague."

I called it vague, because Stalin nowhere was categorical or precise about the basic economic law of socialism, nor did he point out how his above formulation was derived i.e. what dialectical analysis of capitalism's working led him to his understanding of the phenomena of opposites so that he would derive such a formulation for a socialist mode.

Stalin's formulation has three parts: (a) the securing of maximum satisfaction, (b) constantly rising material and cultural requirements of the whole of society, (c) continuous expansion and perfection of socialist production on the basis of higher techniques. Both (a) and (b) by themselves may have no operative significance, President Roosevelt or Nixon could say the same thing to the American people who are blessed with high demand for consumer satisfaction and a high degree of material and culture (or acultural) requirements. (c) is the only operative part of his formulation where he very correctly lays stress on *higher techniques* as the foundation for continuous expansion and perfection of socialist production. But even with reference to (c), Stalin nowhere explained the difference in content between a socialist economy's stress on higher techniques and capitalist economy's use of technological development for the furtherance of capital reproduction.

Such an explanation was necessary. The necessity arises from the fact that the socialist mode of production is germinated by the capitalist mode of production as the potent negation of the latter. Mr Guha

himself admits it in the following words: "The mode of production... first creates *shoots* of a new mode of production and... then shoots take full form and dominate."

The capitalist mode of production is governed by the basic economic law of surplus value, the purpose of the law being reproduction of capital by the capital itself, but the very process of such reproduction germinates the development of productive forces, expansion of the productive base and the base for a further development of *higher techniques* of production—in a word—all the economic features of a socialist mode of production.

#### Socialist Mode

What is the essence of these features of a socialist mode of production? The development of productive forces on the basis of higher techniques in order to satisfy—not the insatiable hunger of capital for its reproduction—but the growing use-value requirements of the entire people. In other words, to accelerate the quantitative and aqualitative increase of social use values, i.e. society's consumption goods.

What controls the growing requirements of the people? Under capitalism, the law of surplus value controls them by precipitating a set of production relations—the relations which enrich capital in exchange for relative immiseration of the social labour. Under socialism, the law of increased value (concomitant with an unfettered development of productive forces on the basis of higher techniques) controls by germinating a set of production relations—relations which enrich labour in exchange for relative destruction of capital's self-expanding process i.e. by using capital only as *a means of labour*, not as in capitalism as *a means of value appropriator*.

This is what I sought to contend in my earlier paper with reference to the mode of production prevailing in the USSR. Mr Guha nowhere challenges my use of the Marxian

concept of use value and quite unnecessarily gives a long quotation from Marx-Engels correspondence. His needless exercise led him however to vulgarisation of what Marx actually said in that quotation.

Marx in his particular letter to Kugelmann was explaining how a growing division of labour becomes an objective necessity for the development of productive forces and how such necessity is circumscribed by different forms under different economic formation. Nowhere in the letter Marx meant by those words that the law of surplus use value is a 'natural law', as it is claimed by Mr Guha.

Mr Guha's confusion breeds from his notion of use value (he defines use value as 'useful labour' and does not care to note how Marx defined it in *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1951, Pp. 24-40).

His further confusion comes from his 'Idea' that "without surplus use value there cannot be any march towards civilisation". Possibly what he meant was that without surplus goods, pre-feudal, feudal or post-feudal economic formations could not make headway. Hence his comment: 'nature-imposed' thing without which there would have been 'no life'.

Again without understanding my exact proposition vis-a-vis what Marx said in *Capital*, Vol. I, P. 50, he quotes Marx unnecessarily. What Marx said was about the role of labour in all forms of society, and not how surplus use value governs the existence of life or not, whether surplus use value exists in all forms of society or not.

Labour creates use value from the primitive stage of human existence—everybody knows that. But one should also note that the production of use value by labour takes different modes corresponding to the different stages of development of productive forces. Under pre-feudal and feudal modes, there were respectively two kinds of intercourse between man and nature in order to generate productive forces—one

was simply between man and nature straightaway and the other was between man, his individual craft, skill etc.—very narrow division of labour among society's individuals—and nature. Under capitalism, nature was relegated to the background and the main form of intercourse came to be the one between capital—the product of past human labour power—and living labour, in a setting of a high degree of division of labour.

Again under pre-feudal or feudal economic formation, the modes of production did not by themselves produce surplus use values; a part of the use values came to be accumulated as a result of slave-owner's, or nobility's or landlord's appropriation of that part of use value. This pre-feudal or feudal accumulation was the prime motive of their respective formation, but such accumulation was accumulation of exchange value and primarily meant under those modes to be in com-

mand of greater and greater amount of society's use values, not to produce surplus use values with a higher degree of division of labour concomitant with a higher technique of production and a more expanding base of production. Therefore one cannot say that pre-feudal or feudal modes of production were subject to the law of surplus use values.

But under capitalism, the situation became radically different. The process of self-expansion of capital made accumulation of exchange values necessary not merely for a greater command over society's use values, but for speeding up expansion of capital. As every expansion of capital requires use value to be its carrier as much as every activity of capital requires human labour power to be its instrument—although the purpose of capital's expansion or the object of capital's activity is not to produce more and more use values or more and more labour productivity as such—were

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find that the maturer a capitalism is, the stronger becomes the law of surplus use value and higher becomes the labour productivity. Therefore we find that the very process of realisation of the law of surplus exchange value (or the law of surplus

value) under the capitalist mode of production generates within its womb its very negation, i.e. the law of surplus use value—the law which determines the essence of the socialist mode of production.

11.2.73

## The Way Out

RAMADHAR

**M**R Shukla's reply (January 20) to my article "The Only Way Out" (December 30, 1972) has both pained and surprised me. Pained, because I felt as though I had indulged in tall talk to have evoked a sort of violent reaction from Mr Shukla, and surprised, because I expected a certain level of detachment from him while discussing vexed and involved problems. But perhaps the stress and strain of immediate local tyranny and harassment, which landed him in jail, does not permit him to view "our horde of national problems" in their proper sequence, order and perspective. When I say this I have no desire to hurt him. I only mean to suggest that we will have to sort out all things in a cool state of mind. Of course, I know that this may be construed as pontification because, I am sitting in a safer place than Mr Shukla does. And yet I must take the risk.

Mr Shukla says: "Permissiveness and lack of social concern and righteous indignation are graver threats to the national life than anything else. Evasion is becoming the national life-style. A slogan a day will not keep the wolf away all our lives. The pile of crime and corruption in the quarter century of our free country will prove a goldmine for researchers in sociology. Let us not confuse laxity with liberalism. Let us not encourage the politics of scapegoats and craven appeasement. Our national life is already sold out to drift and degeneracy. Traitors and tyrants in power need not be helped to undo the heritage and the future of this country."

Who are the men he has in mind when he says all these things? For whom are they meant? If the allusion is to the disenchanted ruling group of Manipur who, ever since they formed the non-Congress Government in their small State, have constantly been under the shadow of the Centre's overbearing authority, then, I am afraid, Mr Shukla has hardly done justice. For then these wise words have little relevance in the context of what I tried to say in my article. And then who are these "traitors and tyrants in power", the culprits behind this process in a "quarter century" of free India? Is their number, proportion or weight greater in Manipur than in New Delhi, the seat of power where lies the heart of sovereignty? And ultimately where do these culprits and the process in which they thrive spring from? Are they not the end-product of a soulless system? And, in the final analysis, who are the authors and executors of this system? Do they not adorn the citadel of power symbolised by New Delhi? They certainly have their juniors in Manipur and elsewhere. But as authors and presiding deities of a power structure they represent a system that is not only unjust and tyrannical but also disruptive of unity and cohesion at the national level.

In Marxist terms, who are the principal enemies of the people? Or let's leave out Marx. When a corrupt system has to be replaced by an honest and integrated one, how shall we proceed about it? Shall we not evolve and follow a method and

system which is not only people-oriented but in a given time also strives to advance the interests of the lesser enemy against the bigger and more cruel one? To retain its basically integrated character, will it not be necessary to sort out the friends of the people from their enemies whom they will fight with the help and cooperation of their principal and non-principal friends as well as those who, sitting over the fence, can be won over to the side of the people? And in this process of sorting out things, what place shall we assign to the men and women in authority in New Delhi? Do they not stand out as the principal enemies of the people? I agree that their satraps or minions in the State capitals will also come under this category. And yet will there be no difference of degree in their order, priority or importance? I also agree that in a revolutionary process the revolutionaries will have to fight the local enemies in the first instance for they will be the ones who will be immediately pitted against them. But they cannot afford to ignore or forget the link between the immediate local enemy and the more powerful distant enemy at the Centre. It is possible that contradictions might arise in the ranks of the enemy which is much more likely when the same party is not in power in both places, as is presently the case in the context of Manipur. But contradictions are also likely to arise when the same party happens to be in power in birth places, as was the case in Gujarat to which a reference has been made by Mr Shukla. And yet both are the enemies of the people and therefore though the contradictions within the enemy ranks can and should be exploited in favour of the revolution and the people, the fact should never be lost sight of that both are the enemies of revolution and their order of importance is determined by their respective power and strength, and since it is the Centre which controls the army it always remains a far more powerful enemy than the local ones who control only the local police.

Thus, in the order of priority, the Central Government, whose authority Mr Shukla would like to invoke to redress a local or regional wrong or injustice, remains the first principal enemy.

Of course, this sounds rather academic in the context of the present deplorable condition of the revolutionary movement which today stands in disarray, all because the line followed by the revolutionaries was not correct. It was not determined after due scientific investigation of the prevailing conditions and a thorough summing up of the past failures and achievements.

I do also admit that the Centre may sometimes seem to appear useful in respect of suppressing communal riots etc, and this is precisely the phenomenon we have to fully understand. These riots and similar other riots based on the language problem, regionalism or casteism (like killing of Harijans) are the products of the structure of values engendered and fostered by the exploiters with a view to serving their own narrow class-interests. On the one hand, they indirectly instigate riots and, on the other seem to suppress them in the name of the victims of such riots! On careful scrutiny it can always be found that such seeming redress of wrongs through the intervention of the Central authority never solves the problems at all. If Mr Shukla will carefully compile the statistics about the victims of communalism etc, he will be simply bewildered to learn that, in spite of the "prompt" intervention of the Centre, a much larger number of people have been killed or affected during the quarter century of our so-called freedom than during the preceding more than one century of British domination. Suppression by the Government and recurrence of communal violence, and some other forms of violence, have been going on all these years and therefore it is really not true to say that the Centre's intervention has ever helped in such matters because this process of violence and counter-violence and

the repeated massive violence of the State (particularly of the Centre) to put down the smaller violence has never come to an end. One is therefore inclined to infer from Mr Shukla's assertion about the Centre's

intervention being helpful in the matter of curbing communal or regional violence, that he sees all these happenings in isolation and not as a connected whole. It will be a pity if it is so.

### Clippings

## As Sihanouk Sees It

In a cabled reply to various questions sent to him by Nayan Chanda, the Paris correspondent of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Prince Norodom Sihanouk made the following points:

Our Vietnamese comrades' experience incites us to prudence. If we had only the Lon Nolians to contend with, there would be no problem. However, it must not be forgotten that the Khmer resistance has against it all the US apparatus of war and genocide. We are establishing a plan of armed conflict for our army until 1976, the last year of Richard Nixon's second mandate which can no longer be renewed. With Nixon, one must expect the worst.

You will see that in Vietnam too, one must expect the worst, even with the so-called ceasefire and political reconciliation agreements. The Geneva accords of 1954 claimed to establish peace in neutralised South Vietnam and Laos. You know the catastrophic and tragic results of their contrary application, and of their impudent and criminal violation by US imperialism. The divisions in the heart of South Vietnamese society are far deeper and more hateful and irreconcilable in 1973 than they were in 1954. Accordingly, there is no reason that peace and harmony should in fact be established between the two great antagonistic factions. Already the international press points out to us that there have been hundreds of cases of violations of the Paris agreements.

Those principally responsible for

these violations are Nguyen Van Thieu's government and the US government, which continues to interfere openly, and even militarily, in the affairs of the South Vietnamese and also in those of the Khmer and Laotian peoples. Washington's proclamation affirming that the Saigon government is the only legitimate and legal government of all South Vietnam, the US Air Force intervention in Cambodia and Laos, the maintenance in Saigon, Phnom Penh and Vientiane of permanent military missions with a very numerous staff, and the continuation of military aid to the three satellite regimes, are also violations of the Paris agreements and sabotage of an in fact nonexistent peace.

\* \*

The Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the National Liberation Front and the Provisional Revolutionary Government will always be equidistant between their two greatest friends and supporters: China and the Soviet Union. Their dealings with these two great brother countries as socialists can certainly never vary in the sense of a rapprochement with one and an estrangement from the other. This said, the fact must be stressed that socialist Vietnam's relations with China remain cordial and fraternal. When Chairman Mao speaks of a new Asian family, he is undoubtedly referring to the family of Asian revolutionaries, particularly China, the KPDR of Korea, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the NLF and PRG, the Laos of the Pathet Lao and Cambo-

dia of FUNK and GRUNK. (The National United Front and the Cambodian People's Liberation Armed Forces).

\* \*

A real war between the Soviet Union and China is inconceivable, but China has reason to feel directly threatened by the massing of so many Soviet troops with arms of all kinds, including nuclear arms, along the length of its frontier with China, by Moscow's devotion to a policy of political and military encirclement of China, by the Soviet-India pact, the Bangladesh affair, the stationing of the Soviet fleet in the Indian Ocean, the obstruction of Cambodia's friendship with China, the entente with the U.S. in an attempt to establish an American-Soviet de facto condominium in Indochina—not to mention the famous so-called security system for Asia, the idea for which was launched by Mr Brezhnev.

\* \*

The Soviet Union's hostility is forcing China from its isolation into attempts to normalise relations with Japan and the U.S. China, for its own security, has an obligation not to abandon or throw itself into the arms of Moscow. Japan's present militarisation is not advanced enough to constitute a menace to China, while the Soviet threat is more concrete.

\* \*

From the moment the Soviet Union loudly renounced anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist policies and adopted a new direction establishing relations with the great powers of the free world to prevent the other third from revolting and totally freeing itself from the neo-colonialism of the great white powers, China had no alternative but to normalise relations with a certain number of non-revolutionary Asian countries,

whose policies and attempts for independence vis-a-vis the two imperialist superpowers it encourages.

China's nuclear power is still too modest to allow it to hold an exaggeratedly inflexible revolutionary position. But its revolutionary moderation is only apparent, for Mao Tse-tung's China has never bargained its political and diplomatic support and material aid to the popular movements and revolutionary countries of the rest of the world. At the UN as elsewhere and under all circumstances, China has never compromised the principles of justice and liberty... China had also discreetly

proposed sending Chinese volunteers to Indochina to help the Indo-Chinese people to conquer the U.S. aggressors, but these people did not accept China's proposal. We Khmers in the resistance could not reproach China for being lukewarm towards us when, in 1971, it even told us that its soldiers were ready to sacrifice themselves or die for our cause if we needed them at the front in Cambodia. And now China is the only great revolutionary power to deny that any international conference can impose a ceasefire, a de facto partition, or a compromise with Lon Nol's regime. Can one ask more of a revolutionary nation?

## Birla Academy Exhibition

SANDIP SARKAR

ONE hundred and twenty-eight works of contemporary artists were on view at the Birla Academy from February 6 to 18. Paintings, sculptures and graphics were arranged to give some clue as to what the artists are trying to do. A panel of five judges awarded four prizes of Rs 1000 each to four artists. One must say that the judgment was impartial on the whole.

Annual exhibitions by the art academies of Calcutta remind one of the puja numbers of Bengali magazines. Good, bad and indifferent works are exhibited side by side. Care should have been taken at this exhibition and the bad ones rejected outright. Most of the talented young artists participated but some very powerful artists were conspicuous by their absence. One may ask why there were no works by Prakash Karmakar, Bijon Chaudhury, Bikash Bhattacharya, Sarbari Raychoudhury and Somnath Hore.

In spite of certain omissions there were some very interesting works in this exhibition. "Descent" (misspelt "Decent") by Suhash Ray had a headless human figure falling downwards done in black and white. On

one shoulder there was a stem with three leaves. It was done with a certain austere grace and intense feeling (108). Veena Bhargava's ("Seated Figure 72") (15) done mostly in blue and red had sculptural quality. Form had been distorted to give the effect of volume. Yet the tones of flesh had been maintained. Mrs Bhargava wanted to bring in the feeling of mass and volume without parting with the essentials of painting. In this she indicated what she would like to experiment with. Dharmarayan Dasgupta's "Journey of an Antique" (47) in tempera was an ambitious work. The bottom half had trees with birds and the corner of one side a man and woman, presumably a god and goddess. It was a gay fantasy handled with consistent care. This work was intriguing because it exposed the problem of identity which modern Indians face. The bottom half reminded one of Klee and the top half of Indian temple sculpture. The fusion was almost complete but not quite. Manu Rathod on the other hand worked out a synthesis. He deftly used colour and space and intuitively

placed his stylized figures to give his composition a certain character. His "Verdict" (98) had only three colours—in fact was done mainly in black and white with red in the middle. Yellow used in the corners gives the effect of illuminating the whole thing. His ("Tandav") (99) was weak by comparison. Madhavi Parekh's "Mother" (90) and "Festival" (91) were graceful paintings. Her stylized drawings were influenced by Gujarati folk art, but her handling of oil painting was good. She is a mingling of naivety and maturity.

Among the younger established artists Ganesh Pyne's "The Harbour" (95) was undoubtedly the best exhibit. Done in tempera it had a dream-like quality. A prostrate figure and an open-mouthed figure shouting out, with little foliage and nuances of colouring imposed a haunting quality. Rabin Mondal's "Women" (82) done in mixed medium captured the present mood of helplessness and misery. A magic quality emanated to grip the viewers. Isha Mahamad's "Towards Eternal Peace" was like music played in dim light. Manu Parekh's "He and She" was like a dull tom-tom that hammers and breaks the skull of the viewer. Gopinath Das' "Cock and the Moon" (43) and Lalu Shah's "Ganesh" (121) were reasonably good. And so too was B. R. Panesar's collage "Image—71."

Sunil Das' work changes from one exhibition to the other. He is very skilful, energetic, smart and trendy. In his "Anandam" (46) he was out to shock. He painted a woman with an exposed and emphasized vagina. In this vociferous painting one almost saw a sign-post, "This way to hell"—or is it heaven? Das' is always up to some trick which reminds one of adolescent behaviour. Gopal Sanyal had a drawing of his usual horse (112). Shuva Prasanna Bhattacharyya's drawing "Death" (23) was in tune with what he has shown us in previous exhibitions.

In graphics Shymal Dutta Ray proved once more that he is a competent craftsman (56). Sanat Kar's "Baul" (69) and "This World" were

skilful but a bit too sweet. Similarly Jyotsna Arora's "On Festive Mood" (2) and Harekrishna Bag's "Lithograph 21 & 22" (3, 4) were interesting. Santanu Bose's "The Mystery" and "Circle in Yellow" were elegant compositions.

P. Chandravinod's sculptures in marble (33, 34) were bold and imaginative. Subol Chandar Shaha's sculpture in bronze "Yesterday, today and tomorrow" had subtle evocative power. Niranjana Pradhan's sculptures in wood, especially "Lovers" (94), Manik Talukdar's terracotta "E Bis Unum" (126) and Sudhir Dhar's sculpture in clay "Embrace" (45) had both promise and maturity.

On the whole, by Calcutta standards, this was not a bad exhibition at all.

### Letters

## Whom Do They Fool?

This is with reference to an article by K. V. R. "Mass Upsurge in Andhra" and a letter, "Just Struggle", by the Revolutionary Writers Association Emergency Executive Committee, Hyderabad, (January 27).

It was amusing to read in the *Hindu* (January 9) that the Revolutionary Writers Association of Andhra Pradesh, meeting at Hyderabad under the Presidentship of Mr K. V. Ramana Reddy, "appreciated" the Separate Andhra Movement and exhorted the people to "turn the present movement to the path of armed struggle to achieve socialism."

In this connection it is pertinent to note what Mao said about M. N. Roy:

Borodin stood just a little to the right of Ch'en Tu-hsiu and was ready to do everything to please the bourgeoisie, even to the disarming of workers, which he finally ordered M. N. Roy, the Indian delegate to the Comintern, stood a little to the left of both Ch'en and Borodin, and he talked too much, without offering any method of realisation.

Mao thought that, objectively, Roy had been only a fool, Borodin a blunderer, and Ch'en an unconscious traitor, (vide Edgan Snow, *Red Star Over China*, Part IV, Chapter 5, p 190).

Does the RWA stand in any better position than M. N. Roy? Indian communists (except those who are working in jungles and among peasants) have only been talking all these 50 years.

The belief that the people will turn every mass struggle into armed struggle and overthrow the State or government without conscious political organization of mass struggles, is the height of idiocy which the communist parties, and the RWA are guilty of. The RWA is in no better position than Gandhi, who wanted the capitalists to hold property "in trust" for the poor, when they ask the struggling Andhra Pradesh middle class to resort to armed struggle. The Revolutionary Writers have not grown beyond their middle-class background.

The irresponsible and loose talk of the RWA synchronised with the coming of Naxalites and mass killings in the past. When they cannot participate in "political violence" (because they are too intellectual to do that) they better keep their mouths shut.

The latest news is that Sri Sri, President of RWA, has resigned from the RWA dissenting from its stand. He believes in integrated Andhra Pradesh. Frailty, thy name is Marxism.

KMVG KRISHNA MURTHY  
Hyderabad

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M. VEERAMALLIAH,

Station Road,

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Andhra Pradesh.

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## The Periar

There are many errors in that letter from Delhi (January 27). There is no doubt that E.V.R. achieved a social revolution in a sense. But he was not bothered about Harijans at anytime, now or before. His perspective was never economic either. In so far as Harijans are concerned, the movement was spear-headed by Brahmins only, like Rajaji and the great A. Vaidyanatha Ayyar of Madurai. What is noteworthy is that non-Brahmins have often been virtually more anti-Harijan than the Brahmins.

Secondly, Karunanidhi is not the son of a barbar—in fact there is traditional tribal enmity between his castes and the barbers of Tanjore district. (He belongs to the Isaivelalar—Devadasi—Nattu Vanar community).

It is silly to identify Brahmins with the priests, who form one exclusive sect of Brahmins. These priests 'exploit' both Brahmins and non-Brahmins. The bulk of the Brahmins have nothing to gain from the priests at all.

C. MAULI  
Madras

## Barricade

Mr Lohit Nag, if I have understood him, seems to mean that Utpal Dutt's *Barricade* is at once an *expose* of violence, lawlessness and injustice which characterise the bourgeois rule under fascism, and an impassioned call to the communists to organise armed struggle as a means of ending this rule. Marx had long ago exposed the real character of the bourgeoisie, even under liberalism, and the basis of its political and economic dominance in history. It is a pity that any communist should see the bourgeois rule for what it is, only after an election has proved itself a farce. With Marx, the need for violent overthrow of the bour-

geoisie arises with the very birth and development of capitalism. Marxist political and economic theories are based on the assumption of violence, lawlessness and injustice as the driving force of capitalism in all its places.

True communists are never taken in by the garb of legality which the bourgeoisie affects, nor are they caught unawares when naked force confronts them. They find themselves forewarned, and therefore, forearmed to meet the violence of the exploiting class with that of the exploited. Those who have believed that the bourgeoisie reveals its true nature only through the rigging of parliament or court of justice, must have held a very high opinion of these institutions which do nothing but justify exploitation. For Marx, the very fact of exploitation is, in itself, a denial of justice to the greater part of the people. Bourgeois rule remains bourgeois rule no matter whether the avowed rights of a bourgeois constitution are respected or trampled on. The rights prevail when all goes well with the bourgeoisie but, at a crunch, they are thrown overboard. The communists' revolutionary strategy must be oriented, from the start, on viewing this naked and desperate act of capitalism, as a matter of course, and not no hopes about the interim reprieve they may win from time to time. This does not mean that they should not employ such weapons as the bourgeoisie cannot help putting into their hands, but if these are their only weapons, they will find themselves helpless when the need for a strategic offensive develops.

The whole approach of the play *Barricade*, on the question of revolution, is thus *petit-bourgeois* and revisionist. So is the attitude of the plays' apologists and admirers. They are all great believers in bourgeois values and institutions from which they derive their livelihood. They want their political illusions back to give them shelter against this cruel reality of livelihood and dependence on capitalism. They are

sorry that their idle and hypocritical dreams of democracy and socialism are shattered at long last. All their tall talk of barricade against fascism in India is but an antidote to shame and despair. They are angry that the present government, while giving them enough to eat, does not allow even a modicum of illusion or comfort about the nature and purpose of their own function in society. They forget that the situation has changed. Both under a deepening crisis and direct threat of armed struggle, as exemplified in Naxalbari and Srikakulam, the ruling class has no option but to suppress their *petit-bourgeois* idealism and exuberance. Utpal Dutt has long since made his theatre a vehicle for canalizing this exuberance and reaped both popularity and profit. But with the larger and poorer sections of the Bengali middle class, the enthusiasm for Dutt's gimmicks has waned. Most of them may have gone for different dopes, but some are awakening to reality. The opiate still works strongly only on the upper strata. Hence the showing of the play at Kalamandir.

A DRAMA CRITIC

## Willing Slumber

Film critic M. S. Ray wonders in *Frontier* (February 3) who passed the 'free promotional' *Woh Kiun?* and for 'whose benefit' the 'glamour show' involving A. Bachchan and Jaya Bhaduri?

Mr Bachchan's father, Dr H. R. Bachchan, an ex-MP, Rajya Sabha, was for long years in the External Affairs Ministry as Hindi specialist at Nehru's invitation. His mother, Mrs Teji Bachchan, a New Delhi socialite, is a personal friend of Mrs Gandhi. The Italian daughter-in-law of Mrs Gandhi stayed with the Bachchans before marriage, after leaving Italy. Mrs Bachchan, therefore, is on the Film Council of India. These explain, in some way, the meteoric rise of Amitabh on the Hindi screen.

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Dr Bachchan, deemed, in parts, radical, when he wrote poems like 'Do not pray. Temple and mosque are monuments of man's defeat' in the 40s, has come a long way to be among the main cheer-leaders of the Establishment. A good case for study. He is a great success in every way and is included in all governmental delegations.

And then, the class composition. Amitabh studied at Sherwood College, Nainital. Some people are intelligent enough to be born well. Too, Mr Bachchan is a Hindi poet, well known all over India.

ONE WHO KNOWS  
Calcutta

## Sex And Society

Ashok Rudra is perfectly free to champion what he calls 'sexual freedom' (10. 2. 1973) but it is ridiculous to drag in Marx and Engels in support of his stand. Contrary to what he asserts, it was *never* the contention of Marx and Engels that the "Communist movement fought for *sexual freedom* as one of the cardinal freedoms". Even in the most explicit directive that they laid down for the proletariat concretising its tasks after seizure of power—the famous ten-point programme of the *Manifesto* of 1848—Marx and Engels never mentioned the realisation of such a freedom as one of the tasks.

Unlike Rudra, the founders of scientific socialism always distinguished between appearance and reality, always seized the essence behind the phenomenon. Thus they pointed out repeatedly that there was no 'sanctity of marriage' under a bourgeois regime, that in spite of appearances to the contrary, all the bourgeois *talk* of the sanctity of family relationship was just a cover to hide the unsavoury *reality* of the woman being treated as a part of the bourgeois property relations. The bourgeois man dominating the woman wanted the latter to observe the 'sanctity' while he could violate it with impunity.

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The Marxists hold that emancipation of woman, and not 'sexual freedom', is the real question. Emancipation means absolute equality of woman with man in *all* spheres of life—not merely in law, but in reality. This can come about only in a society where property relations do not dominate the human relations—that is, in a classless society. In such a society marriage will certainly remain, and perhaps for the first time, will be really sanctified, based as it will be only on genuine love between the two partners. This is the gist of what Engels envisaged as the most likely occurrence in the society that will succeed the bourgeois society, in his classic work on the origin of the family, private property and the State. Lenin, in his turn, in a letter he wrote to the French militant Ines Armand in 1915, rejected the so-called 'free love' preached by her and asserted that this was a *bourgeois* and not a proletarian demand. Lenin significantly added that love was not a question of subjective desires or preferences, it was a question of class struggle.

In fact, Rudra's demand for 'sexual freedom' is a demand for satisfying a purely physiological desire and is on a par with the desire to quench one's thirst from any glass of water whenever one feels thirsty. This, of course, is an individualist, selfish, and hence, essentially bourgeois stand on love and has nothing to do with Marxism. No wonder that Lenin characterised this 'glass of water theory' of love as "anti-Marxist" in his conversation with Clara Zetkin in 1920.

Reaction against the hypocrisy about love and marriage in the contemporary class society is of course natural for honest individuals and is to be welcome. But for a person claiming to be a Marxist the treatment of the sex question in isolation is an aberration and is like putting the cart before the horse. The primary question here is the question of class struggle and the seizure of power by the proletariat. Any other

struggle should be considered only in so far as it contributes to this liberation struggle.

SUDHANSU RAY  
Calcutta

## Panchu-O-Mashi

Your drama critic, in his review of Theatre Workshop's *Panchu-O-Mashi* (10. 2. 1973), examines at length Brecht's explorations, achievements and mastery, but one thing he has forgotten—that, like him, one need not acquire beforehand a comprehensive knowledge about the dramatist's own conceptions while one goes to see a play. The performance is generally judged on its presentation. So, the common people who have seen *Panchu-O-Mashi* have hardly been able to understand, unlike your drama critic, that the performance based on underworld life is "thus a caricature of the upper world of respectable trade, industry, culture and morality". The slangy dialogue may be adorned with adjectives like, "boldness" or madness as your drama critic pleases, but in some of the scenes it is so vulgar that it would enrage even those who are well acquainted with modern Bengali slangs. Good direction and superb acting cannot be the main criteria for judging the quality of a performance of this kind. It should be considered in all its perspectives.

It is regrettable that a unit like Theatre Workshop which gave us two outstanding productions—*Rajrakta* and *Chak Bhang Maahu*—is now on the way to naked commercialism.

PRAMATHA MALAKAR  
Calcutta

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## Education In India

I have read Mr M. N. Nandy's article. "The Education" with interest. I appreciate his candid exposure that the motive force behind education in India has so far been serving the interests of the ruling powers. I wish such articles as this, as well as Dr N. Singh's, dealing with fundamental questions regarding education in general and science and technology in particular, would keep appearing in *Frontier* in order to educate the "educated"—a la colonial style—Indian.

My appreciation of Mr Nandy's article however is not unmixed praise. Frankly, I am alarmed by the negative attitude of the article—it tells us how vulgarized Indian education has been but it does not indicate who is responsible for such vulgarization, how it could be chastened and what the characteristics of "true education" ought to be.

The article concludes that the people can begin receiving true education only after its vulgarized, class-oriented role has been abolished through social revolution, participated in by teachers and students. I apprehend an element of determinism in this whole contention. Should we then wait for the social revolution to take its own time and occur; should we work towards hastening the social revolution; or should we try to bring about the educational changes independent of, or along with, the social revolution, to the extent possible? I think the answer to this question depends upon how exactly we define the educational changes that we have in mind, how many of them we feel can be achieved even before a social revolution has been completed, at what stage, in terms of social revolution, the society is at present, and what role we want to play in bringing about these changes.

The purpose of education has long been a matter of controversy. While in one extreme it has been stated to be the pursuit of knowledge per se, in

the other the utilitarian aspect has been emphasized. It was eventually realized however that the two aspects of education are more complementary than contradictory and that the whole problem can be resolved through an appropriate apportionment of the energy and resource input between the two aspects. With specific reference to science, one could quote Bernal's expressive statement: "The researcher ploughs the Lord's land for half the time and can plough his own for the remainder". The weightage to be given to each aspect and assigning priorities to specific topics within each seem to be the primary point at issue, which can be resolved only by reference to the total social context at a given point in time and space. If and when this is done, we would probably start receiving "true education", which in the Indian context should be largely, though not exclusively, concerned with this primary contradiction.

In colonial times education was designed to serve the interests of the ruling class, observes Mr Nandy. But the question is, who makes and who implements these evil designs? In the colonial times the policy-making was done at the high seat of the colonial power abroad and implemented by native collaborationists in the hope of promoting their narrow, individualistic, selfish interests, and we condemned these collaborationists at least in a general way although probably not with specific reference to the sphere of academics. After independence however, the responsibility for much of the policy-making and implementation has been vested in renowned scientists, technologists and educationists—the intellectual elite in short—who profess complete dedication to all kinds of progressive reorganizational principles. Their stand is then mightily endorsed by the political elite. Why do the maladies then keep lingering on in spite of all this intellection? Why are these principles, so generously handed out in sophisticated conferences by scientific and political

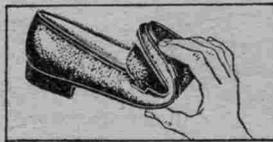
elites, not implemented in their own institutions by the same intellectuals who voiced their progressiveness with so much enthusiasm? In a previous communication to these columns I suggested that probably the intellectuals lack a sense of awareness of their social responsibility, but does it now seem more likely that they have taken up, by choice, a role analogous to that of the collaborationists of the colonial power during the pre-independence period, by serving the interests of a specified section of the Indian population. If this nagging suspicion deep down in our hearts is valid, have we then condemned this collaborationist intellectual community yet? Or we have not done so, after all, for fear that the condemnation might hit our own selves, or at least, a section of our community—the scientific—which is responsible for policy-formulation and implementation? Are we scientists then so scared to undertake a rational, dispassionate self-criticism, which is so fundamental to the scientific outlook.

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A YOUNG SCIENTIFIC WORKER  
Calcutta

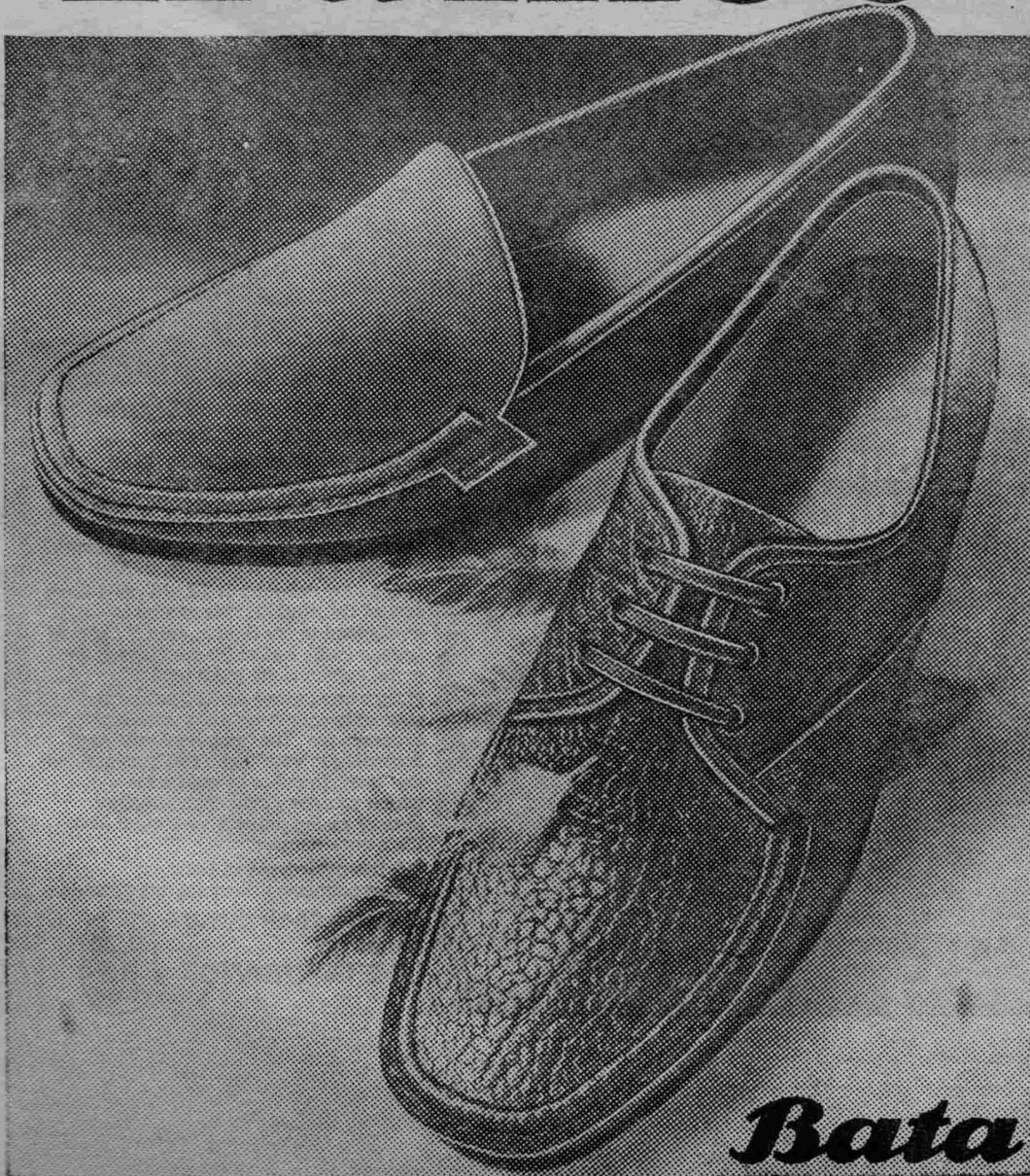
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