

frontier

Vol. 5: No. 6

MAY 20, 1972

PRICE: 35 PAISE

On Other Pages

COMMENT	2
<i>View From Delhi</i>	
NO FACE TO LOSE?	
FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT	4
BANGLADESH AND KASHMIR	
ASHOK RUDRA	5
<i>Bihar</i>	
CPM: SPLIT WITHIN A SPLIT	
N. K. SINGH	7
INDO-NEPAL RELATIONS WITHOUT CLOTHES	8
SANGH SEN SINGH	9
TENSION BETWEEN THE YEMENS	
A. K. ESSACK	11
GREEN REVOLUTION IN INDIA: PRELUDE TO A RED ONE?—II	
HARI SHARMA	13
ONE DIMENSIONAL MAN	
BY A DRAMA CRITIC	16
<i>Clippings</i>	
HANOI BRACED FOR ONSLAUGHT	16
LETTERS	18

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

THE BULL FIGHT

THERE has been no dramatic response to the American blockade and massive bombardment of North Vietnam. Even the Moscow summit is likely to come off. The Americans have let it be known that they do not intend to intercept any ships on the high seas, not even minesweepers—waters cleared of mines can be resown without difficulty. A number of Soviet ships are sailing towards North Vietnam; some others are now headed towards Chinese ports. Some harsh words have been uttered, but the Americans can take it all; they have shown that their action is law.

Not for all time, though. The blockade and the bombardment will not affect the operations in South Vietnam because the communists and their allies have built enough stocks to last for months. As for future supplies, the railway route from China will have to play a decisive role now. These lines of supply have about the same import capacity as Haiphong. Shipping down the Red River from China, and transport by road, as experts point out, are also important sources of supply. In January 1969 a National Security study commissioned by Kissinger reported that "all of the war-essential imports could be brought into North Vietnam over rail lines or roads from China in the event that imports by sea were successfully denied." The disruption to imports would be "widespread but temporary" and within two or three months Hanoi and its allies would be able to set up alternative channels.

The total capacity of these channels is believed to be about 16,000 tons a day, more than two and a half times the highest volume ever reached by all routes combined, including that by sea. There is thus almost no possibility of cutting off the North Vietnamese from their allies. Even to paralyse the two railway lines from China a minimum of 6,000 attacking sorties a month would be required. As for repairing the damage, the North Vietnamese and their friends have shown that they can achieve near-miracles. The Chinese, before Johnson ceased bombing of North Vietnam in 1968, kept about 20,000 engineering troops there. They may now return. In fact in the new phase of the war volunteers from fraternal countries may be helping Hanoi in many non-combatant jobs. A team of Cuban medical volunteers is already working in North Vietnam.

Reports from Hong Kong and Moscow speak of plans for better

co-ordination to ensure bigger supplies to Hanoi via China. In fact, if Nixon sticks to his order to bomb the supply routes throughout North Vietnam, the Chinese border will become live.

Thus two facts stand out: the brilliant operations in the South will go on and supplies to the North from China and Russia cannot be choked by the melodramatic but dangerous actions

of a paranoid President. Perhaps this is why Sam Bull is being allowed to rage and bellow on the stage. The matadors are playing it cool. But, whatever the course of events in the next few weeks, there is another fact that cries out: thousands of extraordinary people who could contribute to the building of a brave, new Indochina will continue to perish. Unlike guns and planes, parks and buildings, they cannot be replaced.

A similar controversy has now started over what should be the ceiling for urban property. The radicals in the party feel that the various ceilings suggested so far are too high and they must be brought down to reduce the disparity between rural and urban holdings. This matter too has been referred to a committee whose report no doubt will set off another debate, interpolation or no interpolation. This will give ample time to those who are likely to be affected whatever be the ceiling to select their respective means of evasion in the event of the law being ever enacted and sought to be enforced. The Prime Minister has indicated that an amendment of the Constitution may be necessary to prevent evasion of the proposed laws on ceiling by persons acquiring estates in more than one State. This shows how late soon can be. She has cautioned against other difficulties also which should not be minimised. In the mean time, the radicals and the less-than-radicals will continue to quarrel to give the impression that the party is vigorously seized of the high-falutin promises it had made before the elections.

The Great Debate 18 18 31

The gusto with which the Congress party at various levels is debating measures to give effect to its election pledges makes one wonder if the party will have any energy left to implement the programme when the excitement has settled down. Possibly taking their cue from the CPI Congressmen are now engaged in what appears to be a friendly slanging match between radicals and less-than-radicals with, as it should be, the Prime Minister as umpire. The mock fight has its points of utility for the party, though. Experience has taught the silent but conformist majority not to rely on election pledges. Few of them are prepared to take the post-election assurances of the party to act up to those pledges at their face value; even most Congressmen do not, otherwise they would not have been in the party. The grand debate in the Congress is designed to dispel this mass cynicism, to create an impression that the leadership does not lack in earnestness; but there are hurdles in the way set up by party unfaithfuls which must be cleared before any effective steps can be taken in the promised direction.

Much is being made of the alleged interpolation of six words in the key recommendation of the Central Land Reforms Committee for excluding land not benefited by government irrigation schemes from the purview of the proposed law on ceil-

ing. It is true the interpolation will make a great deal of difference. According to one estimate, three-quarters of the total arable land in the country will escape the ceiling if it is made applicable to irrigated land only; this proportion is fast going up, for land-owners in many States are dismantling the private irrigation systems to evade the ceiling. If the ceiling is restricted to government-irrigated holdings only, not more than three per cent of the land under cultivation will be affected. (More about it later).

Holes In The Bucket

There has also been a feeling that the Centre is trying to shift the burden of imposing the land ceiling on to the States and the States are shifting it to the Centre. Mrs Gandhi, at the two-day conference of Congress party leaders at New Delhi, denied the existence of this dialectics of burden-shifting. The Centre and the States are working together, and because we are not living in a dictatorial society, they are working cautiously without hurting too many people, she said. Several States have imposed or are going to impose land ceilings and, this she said, would go a long way in achieving 'Garibi Hatao'. Ninety per cent of the rural people would benefit from the legislative measures, she claimed.

This is all very fine. The feudal structure in the land is going to be broken; productivity of the soil is going to be released; produce of the land will not be henceforward eaten up by the rural folks, it will add to the national wealth and will be invested in industry and the millennium will be hastened.

But the two-day conference revealed several holes in the bucket, as big as the bucket itself.

The Congress leaders agreed that the land ceiling should not in any case exceed 18 acres. Punjab has introduced a bill which prescribes a ceiling for most of the land at 27.5 acres and for some land at 45 acres. The Centre or the Congress leaders cannot do anything about it.

In Madhya Pradesh, Mr P. C. Sethi admitted, the Government obtained 60,000 acres in 1960 after fixing 25 acres per individual. The land has not been distributed to date.

The Congress election manifesto upheld the West Bengal Land Reforms Act as a model Act. Now, the Chief Minister of the State has let it out to a journalist that there are practically no land records in the State.

These are three instances which can be cited to get at the meaning of the sentence, written by the Union Agriculture Ministry in its working paper submitted to the Central Land Reforms Committee: "The imposition of ceiling on agricultural holdings in India is a case of inchoate policy, imperfect legislation and inefficient implementation."

But Mrs Gandhi is undeterred by her experiences. Her 'omniscience' and 'omnipotence' have led her to believe that she can do whatever she likes, she believes that she can remove poverty, and that by talk only. Land reform constitutes the crux of India's problems, but this is an area more filthy than the augean. Every single file in the huge directorates of land revenue of the States has got to be dusted off before any ceiling can be effectively imposed. Every word of the legislation has to be guarded, if the measures are to be saved from getting bogged in constitutional propriety as the Kerala Land Reforms Act has got into. But these are two tasks which cannot be performed by the class which today holds the land of the country primarily for rent and not for production. Assuming for argument's sake that Mrs Gandhi has declassified herself, it will be evident from the two-day conference that the leaders are not at all serious. Knowing that there are no clear land records, they talked of land ceiling. Knowing that benami transfers have been taking place for the last five years at a speed quicker than General Aurora's liberation of Bangladesh, they carried on debate on government and private irrigated land. There was

no discussion on restoration of land to sharecroppers, no attempt to make available to the landless labourer easy credit or cheap seeds, fertilisers or irrigation water. There was an impression that mere lowering of

the ceiling will solve all problems. The leaders knew that it would not. And that Mrs Gandhi was very happy at the results of the conference shows that it was all for the consumption of the lay public and the CPI.

Accent On Pragmatism

"We don't back down, we won't give up, we'll fight on, if need be, in the cities and the villages. Only if it's necessary, if they force us to. But for my part, I'll do everything to stave off a violent confrontation... I'll use all the means at my disposal to prevent Chile from being torn apart by a fratricidal struggle." These words well sum up the present psyche of President Salvador Allende and how he proposes to meet the challenge of the Opposition. The President's worries would have been much less had there been no criticism of his reformist policies by militant leftists at the same time. No less agonising a problem is to avoid appearing to sacrifice his socialism to foreign bankers. Till now Allende had more success in renegotiating the procedure of repayment of debts running up to \$3.7 billion to 12 Paris club of creditor countries. When the ITT scandal of an attempt to sabotage the election victory of Allende became public, Paris club members became somewhat doubtful whether any agreement would be possible in the near future. Santiago made an announcement to the effect that Chilean assets of ITT would be expropriated. Finding that the stocks of the Americans were running low in Chile following the revelations by Jack Anderson, the Nixon Administration decided to accept the principle of dissociating the issue of indemnities for expropriated U.S. companies from renegotiating repayment terms of foreign debts. The two countries have recently established contacts at different levels—the UNCTAD session provided a unique opportunity—and the outcome of these has encouraged many to inquire whether a thaw

in U.S.-Chile relations is in the offing. Allende himself thinks that the "present prospects are not too bad." It is not his faith in socialism but his pragmatism that led him to accept the IMF as technical adviser instead of assigning it the role of supervising the economy. But anyone who is not naive will understand that what Allende has settled for amounts to what has been rejected. The same pragmatism was shown on the issue of compensation for foreign assets taken over. The Chilean position at first was that the issue was to be settled according to local law and court but subsequently a compromise was struck. This says that just compensation should be paid according to Chilean and international law, and this in all likelihood will include ITT also.

Turning to the domestic political scene, one finds an intense polarisation of forces, never before known in Chile. The Opposition, bolstered first by the Popular Unity's electoral reverses in February and now by the success of the Christian Democrat candidate in becoming the rector of the University of Chile, is pressing for a plebiscite. In an interview with a foreign journalist President Allende said that he was ready for a plebiscite if it would be on clear, specific issues like the dissolution of Congress and workers' participation as authorised by law, but there could be no question of defending himself since the allegation of having violated the Constitution was absurd. He said that his "Government is scrupulously respectful of the Constitution and the law." The President is having trouble with the Congress where the Opposition is in a majority. A

constitutional reform designed to limit the "sanction" of the Allende administration and make the Popular Unity ineffective has been vetoed by the President. But whether the President is competent to do so is now being reviewed by a Senate Commission. While Allende is defending himself against the rightist attack by saying that the people have become

conscious during the 18 months of popular rule and there is now no question of putting the clock back, he has become the butt of criticism of militant leftists for his reformist policies. The mass line the Leftist Revolutionary Movement is trying to sell may well lead to its banning. Allende should have learnt by now that there is no short cut to socialism.

that a deal of the two super-powers in the current Vietnam situation. If the principal contradiction is between imperialism and the national liberation movements, the Soviet leadership would have to admit its serious mistake on this issue of ideology.

Official New Delhi however is oblivious to all these implications and its concern over Vietnam had more to do with Soviet discomfiture than with the issues involved. Mr Swaran Singh's statement was just within the limits needed to bolster the Soviet position for he had nothing to say about India's responsibility as chairman of the ICC. It looked as though India had no special role or responsibility and therefore did not have to respond in a special manner. Soviet capitulation in Vietnam has serious implications for the Indo-Soviet treaty, Article 9 of which is the security clause. One does not know if the Soviet Union invoked this clause when President Nixon clamped the blockade on Vietnam ports and told the Soviet Union to keep off. If the blockade could be construed as a threat to Soviet security, consultations under Article 9 of the treaty were indicated. The credibility of the Indo-Soviet treaty is eroded now, even before it is a year old, in the view of many New Delhi observers.

* *
The rigmarole over lower land ceilings and imposition of urban ceilings was the weekend attraction during the doggiest days of the season. Mr C. Subramaniam tried to set the pace for the Congress leaders' conference by indulging in some ultra-radical talk and others followed him sheepishly in the belief that he was reflecting the Prime Minister's views. The Prime Minister reacted sharply, debunking the new style radicalism in the party and seemed to have great sympathy for the Chief Ministers who in any case could not implement any radical reform. The radicals were stumped and tried to retract. The Central Land Reforms Committee cleared the Food and Agriculture Minister over the ceiling

View from Delhi

No Face To Lose ?

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

OUTSIDE the shrill Moscow lobby, the general belief in New Delhi is that only President Nixon could save the Soviet face in Vietnam but the whole scenario seems to have been agreed upon by the two super-powers during Dr Kissinger's secret mission to Moscow and each has proceeded in the firm knowledge that the other side does not want a confrontation. If pushed to the edge, the Soviet Union would rather capitulate over Vietnam than risk a confrontation with another super-power. Its record over Cuba has not been forgotten by the world even after ten years. What the Chinese thought of the Soviet role in the Cuban missile crisis would have some relevance in the present Vietnam situation.

On more than one occasion we have made it clear that we neither called for the establishment of missile bases in Cuba nor obstructed the withdrawal of the so-called 'offensive weapons' from Cuba. We have never considered that it was a Marxist-Leninist attitude to brandish nuclear weapons as a way of settling international disputes. Nor have we ever considered that the avoidance of a thermo-nuclear war in the Carribbean crisis was a 'Munich'. What we did strongly oppose, still strongly oppose and

will strongly oppose in the future is the sacrifice of another country's sovereignty as a means of reaching a compromise with imperialism. A compromise of this sort can only be regarded as 100 per cent appeasement, a 'Munich' pure and simple.

"The Differences Between Comrade Togliatti and Us," *People's Daily*, December 31, 1962.

To go by an interview given by Prince Sihanouk before the present escalation of the Vietnam war, the Soviet Union has been helping Vietnam just to lose the war but not to win it. Soviet help to the struggle in Cambodia and Laos has been nil. But the publicity build-up during the present crisis aimed at suggesting that the offensive owed everything to Soviet help and the Chinese were nowhere in the picture. The fact is the Soviet leadership has never been happy about the Vietnamese offensive because it wanted the operations to be held within reasonable limits, so as not to complicate Soviet-United States relations.

If Vietnam is the focal point of all the contradictions of this epoch one would be justified in putting the Soviet ideological positions to test here. If, as the Soviet leadership has been saying, the principal contradiction was between imperialism and the socialist camp, this contradiction

controversy and passed the buck on to the Chief Ministers. The party sub-committee has looked into the matter and it would in any case go to the Chief Ministers but the Young Turks seem set to make it an issue at the next AICC. It is now five years since Naxalbari and the Government is yet to define a standard acre and irrigated land. Again, among the Chief Ministers, not only is there no will to enforce the ceilings law strictly but there are differences also, over who should get the surplus land—if any. Some want it distributed to the tenants who are already cultivating it while others want it given to landless labourers. One Chief Minister even said Harijans should get priority among the landless labourers while another said

the landless could remain landless but the tenants should get the land. Immediately after the two-day conference, Mrs Gandhi hastened to assure the rich people that the Congress party was not against them. So it was a happy ending story, everyone going home satisfied that nobody's property rights would be abridged while implementing the Congress manifesto.

The Indo-Pakistani summit is coming off, at last, but the intransigence of Bangladesh would make the prisoners of war issue a problem. Dacca's rigid position on several issues has begun irking Indian opinion. With every passing day world opinion is building against India over the prisoners issue though Bangladesh

would ultimately be responsible for any delay in settling it. Mr D. P. Dhar had to dash to Dacca before he went to Murree and Mr Abdus Samad was in New Delhi until after the Murree talks. Mr Dhar is to go to Dacca again. It would be pointless now to pretend that Indian and Bangladesh approaches to the prisoners issue are exactly the same. Mr Bhutto seems to be planning a diplomatic offensive on this issue before the summit. If he fails on this at the summit (he is certain to, because Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would not attend it until Pakistan recognises his country), the issue might be raised in the Security Council by some one, much to India's discomfiture.

May 15, 1972

Bangladesh And Kashmir

ASHOK RUDRA

WHAT justification for India's stand on Kashmir could possibly remain after Bangladesh? Kashmir is an integral part of India—its accession to the Indian Union through the instrument of accession signed by the Maharaja of Kashmir in 1948 is final and irrevocable—can this stand be continued to be taken even after the Indian Army marched into what was East Pakistan and silenced for ever the strangely identical sounding declaration on the part of Pakistan: "East Pakistan is an integral part of Pakistan and there cannot be any dismemberment of what is a single country"? There is no provision of secession in the Indian Constitution—can this stand of India vis-a-vis Kashmir be distinguished from the stand taken by Pakistan on the secessionist move by what was until recently East Pakistan?

There is no means of denying that India's stand on Kashmir and that on Bangladesh cannot both be justified on any moral or legal grounds. Either India has all along been right on

Kashmir and then she has committed a very grave international crime by helping the secessionists of East Pakistan to form a new, independent state of their own; or one has to say that India has done a service to humanity by giving moral, material and military support to the just and legitimate struggle for national self-determination of the oppressed people of Bangladesh and enabling them to form their nation State but then one has to admit that India's stand on Kashmir has been wrong and immoral ever since India began its refusal to hold any kind of consultation of the will of the people of Kashmir, and taking a stand purely on military might and legal rights.

There are very few people in this country who would hold that the struggle for liberation of the oppressed, exploited and massacred people of East Pakistan was not a legitimate national liberation movement and would not hail the formation of independent Bangladesh, and the writer of these lines is certainly not one of those few. But unfortunately the

number of persons in the country who would hold that India's stand on Kashmir is wrong and immoral is even smaller.

There are two crying scandals associated with the Kashmir case. One is the case itself; and the second, the total lack of any criticism inside India of that case.

Is it necessary, now that India has helped in the carving up of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh, to argue why India's stand on Kashmir is untenable? India's stand ever since 1954 has been primarily a legal one. When one challenges the ultimate legality, one falls back on real-politik: losing Kashmir is not acceptable to India for geopolitical reasons. India cannot afford to lose such a strategic area bordering on China and Russia. It is of course such geopolitical arguments that have always been given by every military power to justify every military conquest. India has doggedly avoided facing the issue on the grounds of people's right of self-determination. The irony is that it is India itself that first moot-

MAY 20, 1972

ed the idea of plebiscite and continued, up to 1954, to negotiate with international bodies as well as Pakistan on the basis of various proposals for consulting the will of the people. But ever since that time India has squarely based its stand on a military and legal fait accompli and resolutely opposed all suggestions for any form of consultation.

Lest there be any misunderstanding, let it be stated clearly that the present writer is not making any comparison between Pakistan's treatment of East Pakistan and India's treatment of Kashmir. West Pakistan milked East Pakistan dry by naked exploitation; India on the other hand, in a vain attempt to bribe the people of Kashmir, has poured endless funds into the State, which, incidentally, have gone largely to fatten a class of corrupt politicians who enjoy no popularity among the people and whose role has been only to act as puppets of the Indian government. West Pakistanis have systematically exercised tyranny over the people of East Pakistan—India on the other hand has showered various institutional benefits and economic welfare measures on the people of Kashmir. India has not robbed the people of Kashmir of anything but their democratic freedom, in particular their right of self-determination.

Second Scandal

If the first scandal about Kashmir consists of all these thoroughly undemocratic things that the Government of India has done in the name of the people of India, the second and much bigger scandal consists in the almost total lack of any criticism in the country of these reprehensible practices. Not only among the lay masses who may be expected to be chauvinists and even communalists, but even among intellectuals there has been an alarming absence of any feeling of discomfort at India's stand on Kashmir. It is a matter that raises serious doubts about the sanity and health of a society which claims to cherish the values of freedom and democracy. It does not matter whe-

ther a government's official stand on any matter is right or wrong: it is one of the tenets of liberalism that it is a sign of health of public life that there should be some opposition, some dissent. The absence of dissent, irrespective of the merits of the case, is considered to be a highly undesirable trait in a society. By that criterion it is appalling that the man who represented Kashmiris just as universally as Mujib represents the people of Bangladesh could be arrested and subjected to a framed trial lasting over years without any voice of protest rising from among Indians, not even from among Indian intellectuals. The extent to which this bad faith of Indian intellectuals can go is exemplified by the book on Kashmir by Gajendragadkar, a Chief Justice and a university vice-chancellor, who gives an excellent exposé of India's impeccable legal case on Kashmir but manages not even to mention that Sheikh Abdulla was kept under arrest over years without a single charge against him ever getting substantiated. And it is known that it is not only the framed conspiracy case: civic liberties have been systematically suppressed in Kashmir, malpractices in elections have been widespread and open—only the other day, the last assembly elections were preceded by mass arrests of people of the opposition.

It is not that there is no dissent in general in the country. There is indeed a great deal of freedom of expression and opinion and it cannot be said that the freedom is not made plentiful use of. However, it is only to the government's internal policies that criticism is confined. When it comes to India's dealings with the rest of the world, the prevalent Indian attitude is 'my country, right or wrong'. The fact of the matter is that we Indians are chauvinistic in the extreme and even our intellectuals have yet to develop any conscience in so far as our country's relations with other peoples of the world are concerned. This is to be contrasted with the role played by dissenters in such countries as the USA, England or France.

In the USA it would be difficult to find any intellectual who would support the war in Vietnam and there are always dissenters, who are organising protest demonstrations against their own country's imperialism in other areas. In the United Kingdom there were always defenders of the cause of Indian independence during the heyday of British imperialism and more recently critics of British policy, say, vis-a-vis Rhodesia, have not been lacking. Likewise in France the opponents of the Indochina war and the Algerian war were among the forces that forced the hands of the French government to bring these wars to an end. It may be objected that it is beyond all proportions to compare any international action by India with any actions of any of these imperialist powers. But is there really any difference between India's sending warships to protect Colombo and helicopters to transport Ceylonese soldiers and America sending the Seventh Fleet to intervene in East Pakistan? It is characteristic of Indian public opinion that no Indian protested—no political party, no individual, no intellectual—at this assumption by India of the role of international police. Ceylon's abortive insurrection was after all Ceylon's own internal problem. If India's sending her armed forces to help the Ceylonese Government crush the insurrection can be justified, then one wonders by what principle India can condemn America's role in policing the South-East Asian waters.

This Indian chauvinism and this lack of dissent among the intelligentsia in so far as India's international actions are concerned, is a dangerous portent for the country. For Indira Gandhi might rapidly discover that to establish India's military supremacy over her immediate small neighbours is a far easier task to perform than to abolish poverty; and that the poor and hungry masses in the country may be made to forego bread and be more easily fed with nationalist glories. The ruling party's recent massive and unprecedented electoral victory is to be largely accounted for

the brilliant military and political history the country scored under Indira Gandhi's leadership and the lesson may not be altogether lost on the leaders of the government as to how to continue to keep up popularity among the starving masses.

But if one wants the good of the country not in terms of glory without food but in terms of more food and better distribution of food among the masses, then an impressive task would be to cut down defence expenditures by coming to a peaceful settlement with Pakistan on all outstanding disputes between the two countries, among which the most important is the question of Kashmir. On this question national self-interest as well as morality—if at all morality be considered relevant in international relations—demand that India voluntarily comes down from the position of 'irrevocable accession'. India should on its own suggest the organisation of a plebiscite and accept the people's verdict.

Whatever might have been Mr Bhutto's previous records, it would be not only ungracious but harmful for India's interests not to recognize that ever since his assumption of the power of President he has given proof that he can rise above the level of a petty politician. In India there is a considerable body of opinion that suspects the genuineness of the various gestures for peace that the Pakistan President has been making. But it is an undeniable fact that it was Mr Bhutto who released Sheikh Mujibur Rahman unconditionally, but for which Bangladesh would not have so quickly established itself as a nation State enjoying the diplomatic recognition of many countries of the world. A less far-sighted Pakistan President could surely have delayed the recognition of the nation State by the world and put India in a most embarrassing position of a occupying power by not releasing the Sheikh. India's not recognising and reciprocating this generosity of Pakistan would put the responsibility of continued strife in the subcontinent squarely on its shoulders.

MAY 20, 1972

Bihar

CPM : Split Within A Split

N. K. SINGH

MAYBE—as has been alleged in the letters column of this journal—by over-publicizing the poll rigging story, *Frontier* is trying to console the frustrated, bewildered and disillusioned cadres of the CPM and thus helping the consolidation of its shattered house. However, the thing has failed to click in Bihar where the two rival factions within the party seem to be heading for an imminent showdown. Perhaps with this point in view, the CPM Politbureau has called a meeting of the Bihar State Party in Calcutta for May 20. Besides the five-man State Secretariat, which forms the core of the 'official' group, the other leaders summoned are: Messrs G. S. Vidyarthi, U. S. Shukla, Taqui Rahim and Chandi Prasad. Obviously, all these gentlemen belong to the 'rebel' group. The meeting will be supervised by three of the PB members: Messrs P. Sundarayya, B. T. Ranadive and Promode Das Gupta.

The differences between the two factions are so deep-seated—their roots lie deep in the ideological grounding—that the summit's utter failure may easily be forecast. The matter of the fact is that the inner fight between the two varying groups has brought the party to the brink of a virtual split.

Things inside the Bihar State CPM have moved very rapidly—and dramatically, too—since the last mid-term poll, in which the party lost its sole seat in the State Assembly. The defeat, though not unexpected, hastened the process of polarisation between the 'non-official extremists' and the 'official liberals' within the party, which had started long ago. (For details see my report, "Bihar: Division In CPM," in *Frontier*, February 26, 1972.)

The process of eliminating the 'ex-

tremists' from the party, which had started with the expulsion of Mr A. K. Roy in September, 1971 and led to virtual capture of the State Committee and the State Secretariat by the 'liberal' group with the consent of the party bosses in Calcutta earlier this year, culminated in April when the infuriated State Secretary walked out of a meeting of the Patna Town Committee and later dissolved it as it had become "the centre of anti-party activities." The walk-out, unprecedented in the history of the communist movement for never before had a member of a higher committee walked out of a lower committee—was provoked, it is said, by an intrepid party member who alleged that the State Secretary's blue-eyed boy, who was nominated as the party candidate in the last election from Patna West despite the protest of the entire Patna District Committee, had taken money from his Jana Sangh counterpart and collaborated with him. The accuser was willing to supply evidence in support of his grave charge. As a reward he, a member of 15 years standing, was suspended by the State Secretary.

Later, in a stormy general body meeting of the Patna Town CPM, the State Secretary was accused of being a "neo-revisionist", while he dubbed the members as "agents of Yahya Khan" for their stand on the question of the so-called Bihari Muslims in Bangladesh. The meeting ended with militant members accusing the national leadership of "Hindu communalism." Besides Patna, the other district committees opposing the 'liberal official' group are: Gaya, Champaran, Ranchi and Saharsa.

Mr S. S. Srivastava, the State Secretary, in a special interview to this correspondent, described the 'rumour' of groupism in his party as "non-

sense" and said that "groupism is incompatible with a Marxist-Leninist party." Ironically, the election review (described by Mr. Srivastava as "for inner-party consumption only") passed in the April 30-May 2 meeting of the Bihar State Committee flashed that there were "dangerous trends of groupism...and inner sabotage" within the party! So if one follows the criteria led down by the State Secretary, either this point in the election review (drafted by the Secretary himself) is wrong or else the CPM is not a Marxist-Leninist party.

The election review is an interesting document in the context of the factionalism prevalent in the party (It should be remembered that the 'liberal' group has a sway on the State Committee). The review strongly criticises the Gaya District Committee—an 'extremist' stronghold—for its failure in the election. It has also taken to task the Patna District Committee, and in an indirect reference to its Secretary's participation in the 'Bihari Bachao' convention, accuses it of "blatant opportunism" and "the member of the State Committee from the area" (obviously referring to the District Secretary. Mr. Taqui Rahim who had participated in the 'Bihari Bachao' convention) of "gross individualism."

The State Secretary confirmed the report and said that the 'Bihari Bachao' convention was attended by "one of our State Committee members, who was neither asked by the State leadership nor did he officially represent the party... He was later censored for it."

Censored or not, the Patna District Committee still holds that its stand on the 'Bihari' Muslims was correct. In fact twice did it refuse to accept the election review of the State Committee and passed a resolution to this effect. One of the points on which the Patna District Committee criticised the State leadership was that the election-ticket from the Sonepur constituency was allocated to a woman who was not even a

candidate-member of the party. Her only qualification was that she is the daughter of a 'pro-official' member of the State Secretariat.

The Patna District Committee, in

a resolution, has demanded that a fresh State conference be held and new bodies be formed. Perhaps there was a rigging of the CPM's inner-party's election too!

Indo-Nepal Relations

R. P. MULLICK

VICTORY in the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 has given India's ruling class the vicarious satisfaction of playing the super-power in a limited geopolitical perspective. The rulers seem determined to convert this ersatz role into a real one vis-a-vis Nepal. The Prime Minister of this little Himalayan neighbour has felt it; the young monarch, too. Hence the former's recent goodwill tour of India,

New Delhi took this visit in its stride. The posters, with the picture of Nepal's P.M. inset, and the welcome flourished with studiously controlled fanfare, indicated the new mood of the Capital. It had the self-assurance of a big power. "So now, you come round to accepting the realities" was virtually the unuttered attitudinization. The tone of an elder reformer was unmistakable; the methodology of manipulating a small State's foreign policy through subtle suggestions and blunt homilies was too obvious to be missed. Closely following the Nepalese P.M.'s arrival and his rather polite words that Indo-Nepalese relations were too close to need the bindings of a treaty, the *Times of India*, reflecting New Delhi's new mood, did not stint in extending gratuitous advice as to how Nepal should conduct its international relations, especially in respect of China. It wrote: "Kathmandu on its part should take a second look at its foreign policy assumptions and decide for itself whether they need to be revised in the interest of a durable friendship with India. (April 24, 1971). The entire gamut of Indo-Nepalese relations was touched upon, showing India's magnanimous suffrance of an errant Nepal's acceptance

of aid from China in the building of the Kathmandu-Kodari road, and the services of a few agronomist-experts (and some mineralogists too). There was a veiled hint that India does not wish to allow use of its soil by rebels acting or prone to act against the regime in Kathmandu, out of sheer friendliness, and that, Kathmandu should therefore reciprocate by playing cool towards China.

Simultaneously with this visit India's propaganda machinery was focused on its State-to-State-oriented munificence. It is well known that Nepal has had to take a large dose of foreign aid over about 20 years for structuring its developing economy on sound foundations, (approximately \$250 million) That India contributed the largesse of a \$100 million total is supposed to entitle it to the position of the greatest benefactor of Nepal, hence of one deserving to speak from a pedestal of strength. It is forgotten that China has contributed a fair share of the total aid—about \$35 million—and that this contribution was bereft of both interest-motive and considerations of big-Power military-political advantages. But who, in New Delhi's present gumption of a great nation carrying the burden of an Asian leader restructuring the entire power set-up in a big way, would believe that a socialist country's concept of aid was founded on entirely different norms, and that power-politics had no relevance there? It was therefore necessary to play up India's new role, developing Nepal's immeasurably potential power-resources (hydro-electric) with the altruism that India's hallowed tradition imparts.

However voices are already heard of Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan, voices connected with the ruling circles and vested interests in those States, which reveal the desire to siphon off the cheap Nepalese hydel-power into the capital-intensive projects there. It has always been so; a relatively developed State, lending the services of its bureaucratic capital, its expertise and even the materials and sinews of development to a less developed country wants to reap many times more its investment by way of value-returns.

But though poor Nepal has so far received a total foreign aid that does not exceed 4% of its national income, and does not come up to more than \$3 per capita per year, eyebrows are raised and concern expressed as to how Nepal's supposed vulnerability to foreign influence can be plugged off best with India's overweening role.

The history of international relations does not show that any qualitative or permanent shift in the realities of a geopolitical situation occurs as a result of a single military episode, or limited victory in a limited conflict. But the consequences of the Indo-Pakistan confrontation of 14 days are being interpreted in a motivated manner in New Delhi and even the super-powers—whose acts of initiation and surveillance of the affair are well known—are being shoved to the background. It is suggested, as if a new situation has developed, of decisive and perennial change in the regional power-balance, and therefore all South Asian States, especially India's neighbours, had better take note.

How will Nepal act in future in the international arena? The policy of maintaining a healthy poise in the relations with two powers on either side of a little one, is not easily given up for alternatives of a passing phase, of ephemeral political advantage. Yet, pressures are building up.

Without Clothes

SANGH SEN SINGH

THE Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, is said to have been put in a very delicate and embarrassing situation when she presided over the first meeting of the committee to observe the 2500th death anniversary of Vardhamana Mahaveera, held at Vigyan Bhavan in April. At the insistence of Jain tycoons the Government of India formed this Committee with Mrs Gandhi as the Chairman and comprising Jain mendicants, the laity, Government officials and some non-Jain religious leaders. As regards the mendicants, those belonging to the Shwetambara sect (those who go about in white) were also welcomed.

There was a big row half an hour before the meeting, when a mendicant of the Digambara sect, those who do not wear anything, tried to enter. The officers on duty objected as the rules do not allow any naked person at such occasions. This was resented by the Digambara mendicants and the laity alike as an expression of disrespect to their faith. Many suggestions were put forth by the top bureaucrats present there—the mendicant should cover his private parts with fig leaves, should move in and out with men holding screens around him, should be seated behind wooden covers in one corner of the committee room, so on and so forth. But he and his disciples were adamant. Ultimately the officers telephoned the Prime Minister and reported the matter to her. She asked the officers to allow the mendicant to enter and occupy a seat in a corner. They, on their part, extracted a clear promise from the mendicant that he would remain seated in his place until the Prime Minister left the room after the meeting. The meeting began. When some members started giving their views on proposals for a befitting observance of the grand occasion, the mendicant stood up and started speak-

ing. Again there was a great row, the officers on duty physically pressing his shoulders to keep him seated. There was violent protest from the non-violent Jains (the basic tenet of Jainism being non-violence). The Prime Minister, with her face turned to the other side, reluctantly allowed the mendicant to speak.

The officials and the Prime Minister were helpless, although sections of the Indian Penal Code (Act No. XLV of 1860) are very clear, on this point. Section 294(a) prescribes three months imprisonment with even a fine. Section 290 also covers this offence. This incident proves beyond any doubt that all civil and criminal enactments are made by, and not for, the ruling classes. During the heyday of religious rivalries among the Jains, Brahmins and Buddhists, the Brahmins had the guts to declare, "Hastina Varyamano pi na vishej-jaina mandiram" (even at the cost of being trampled under foot by an elephant, one should not enter the temple of the Jains (because of the naked idols inside)). How ironical it looked with a naked human in a committee of Brahmins, Buddhists and others! Yet more ironical is the fact that in a committee meant for the observance of the anniversary of Mahaveera, who professed Aparigraha (non-possession) and remained naked throughout his life, one of his own followers who tenaciously wants to adhere to his teachings, was humiliated. The most ironical, of course, is the fact that the teacher who so passionately preached complete non-possession (even of clothes) is today acknowledged by the wealthiest (parigrahis) section of our community.

The basic question is whether the Government of India is justified in organising such functions. A Jain may contend that if the 2500th death anniversary of Lord Buddha could be observed by the Government in 1956, why not that of Lord Mahaveera today? The contention is sound. Why did Mr Nehru spend a huge amount of public money on the death anniversary of a religious

teacher? The reason was very simple. He dreamt of leadership of the Asian nations. When during those days some Muslim religious leaders approached the Government about the observance of the 1400th anniversary of the Prophet, they got a clever reply: "Wait till the 2500th anniversary." The same Government has sanctioned Rs 50 lakhs for the death anniversary of Lord Mahaveera and the same amount for the 400th anniversary of the composition of the *Rama-charitamanasa*, of Tulsi Das. What about the Government's profession of secularism? Does secularism mean spending a huge amount of money by the Government for such religious purposes? The hypocritical approach of the Government towards the religious faiths, particularly the majority faith, is manifest. Sometimes the leaders of the minority faiths express their displeasure when they get very little share of this indirect distribution of loaves and fishes. But they too share the privileges, if not to that extent. The result is that observances of the above type have become a common thing. But why the mushrooming of such religious committees? It is because the capitalist class wants these things for its survival. The feudal lords adopted the same practice. The result is that like a contagious disease, the practice goes on from one religious community to another.

On April 22, 23 and 24, the Third All India Convention of Kabirpanthis was held on Ram Lila Grounds in Delhi. It invited delegates from different parts of the country. The Chairman of the Reception Committee was Prof. D. P. Yadav, Deputy Education Minister at the Centre. The impression one got at the first session of the convention was that they felt aggrieved over the fact that they had not got that patronage which other religious communities got. Their explanation for holding the Convention in Delhi was to attract as many people as possible to their deliberations. This resembles the age-old practice of holding religious congregations in the

capitals of powerful kingdoms.

New religious sects are also mushrooming. One often reads in the dailies that so and so is being acclaimed as the Godhead of such and such sect. Lekharaj becomes Lord Shiva, the Parama Pita of the Ishwaryee Kanya Vishwaridyalaya. Prem Singh Rawat, alias Bal Yogeshwara (a fourteen-fifteen year old boy) of Delhi, emerges as God and declared himself on November 8, 1971 to be superior to even Rama and Krishna. A premier Hindi daily of Delhi questioned his bona fides. This led his disciples to demonstrate against the newspaper and in the process blows and bricks were freely used. A policeman (by chance a Muslim) died of injuries. Some members of Parliament (the house was in session) condemned the incident, particularly the disciples of Bal Yogeshwara and demanded his immediate arrest.

We are not discussing here the growth of new sects or the decaying or increasing influence of the other ones, because the process of emergence of all religious faiths has been normally the same, except of those which rose in protest against the malpractices of the existing ones. In course of time even these too acquire the same character and become the faiths of vested interests. Kabir was fully aware of this situation when he rebuked his son, Kamal, for his efforts to commercialize his father's religion. (Doobaa Bans Kabeer Kaa Upajaa poet Kamaal, or ruined is the lineage of Kabir that a son Kamal is born to him). Centuries ago Ram and Krishna might have emerged in the same way as Bal Yogeshwara has done today. In fact, it is the vested interest of the followers of Rama and Krishna who condemn the emergence of new religious sects in this way. For a socialist both are "opium" to the society.

The shrewd Indian bourgeoisie knows very well when to mellow the apparent contradiction between religious faiths. Muni Susheel Kumar, the famous Jain mendicant, has already established a union of all ma-

major religions of the world. A congress was held on Ram Lila Ground in 1970. Sant Kirpal Singh, a famous Sikh saint, is already working on a similar Indian union of all religions. One thing is very clear. They all are arrayed against modernism or, more precisely, socialism. Their efforts are meant to check the growth of people's movements in the country. Recently a famous Jain Muni (mendicant) started on foot on his mission to West and East Bengal to teach the Bengalis the message of non-violence and peace. The function was even addressed by the Prime Minister, Mrs Gandhi. She blessed the laudible efforts of the Muni. It reminds us of the mission of Lord Mahaveera himself to Gauda (a part of present Bengal) more than 2500 years ago. Not only did he find very little response there, he was faced with very difficult days. A naked mendicant of a very high stature, Lord Mahaveera himself, was put to humiliation wherever he went in Gauda. This fact finds its echo in the Aayaranga Sutta. The Bengalis of those days were adjudged to be very rough, rude and evil-mannered. They let dogs loose on Lord Mahaveera when he moved about in the streets for alms. Will not the Padajatra of the Jain Muni meet the same fate? This is one of the instances of how the bourgeoisie is at work, with this age-old weapon. Another instance of a different but subtle nature merits mention here. Rajasthan University at Jaipur established a Department of Para-Psychology with one Dr Banerjee as its head. A lot of Ford Foundation money has been granted to it. The work assigned to it is to explore the possibilities of proving the correctness of the rebirth theory.

The question is, how to make ineffective this powerful weapon of the bourgeoisie? The solution lies in the total involvement of the people in revolutionary struggles. Class consciousness is the antidote of religious obscurantism. The real people must be made to understand how the bour-

geists, the class of exploiters, is making use of religion for their further enslavement. It is the duty of every revolutionary to make the people know this subtle game. It requires frank and bold exposure of the religious leaders of each community.

oil monopolies have had to rely on Feisal of Saudi Arabia.

The role that Feisal is playing is similar to that of Hussein. If the Jordanian monarch has been charged by Washington and Israel to liquidate the Palestinian revolution, the monarch of Saudi Arabia has been told that it will be his job to destroy the Government of People's Yemen and the People's Front for the Liberation of the Arab Gulf.

To do this job, Feisal has had to rely on mercenaries. These are well paid and equipped with the latest American made arms. West German arms have also found their way amongst the mercenaries. Since its independence in 1967 the People's Democratic Republic of South Yemen have had to face a continuous stream of attacks.

At the beginning of this year, the mercenaries mounted a force of 2000 men. They were supplied with heavy lorries from the USA to transport them. They were led by a notorious bandit and mercenary, El Ghader, who played a leading role in overthrowing the Republican regime of North Yemen in favour of the pro-Saudi Arabian government.

But to the chagrin and surprise of the puppets, this force was ambushed as it stepped into South Yemeni territory. So total was the victory that El-Ghader together with six of his notorious officers lay dead on the field and the mercenaries fled in utter confusion leaving their dead behind as well as vast quantities of ammunition. It is to avenge this defeat that reaction now wants to cause trouble between the Yemenis. It is known that the mercenaries from Saudi Arabia could not invade South Yemen without passing through North Yemen.

The liberation forces are not underestimating the strength of Saudi Arabia as a base for counter-revolution. It has already established military bases and installations in the southern part of its border. It is from these bases that it hopes to launch counter-revolutionary attacks on South Yemen. Unlike Hussein

Tension Between The Yemens

A. K. ESSACK

THERE are reports of tension between the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South) and its northern neighbour. Left to themselves there is little doubt that the Yemeni people, both from the north and south who have a proud record of common struggle against imperialism, would easily solve their differences. The people of the south also remember with great warmth that in their struggle it was the north that they had to rely on in the initial period of armed struggle for supplies.

However other forces have stepped in and they are bent on fomenting trouble between their two neighbours. The People's Democratic Republic in a strongly worded statement has denied Western inspired reports that its troops were massing along the border against the north. However the tension along the border does bring home the unpalatable fact that the Yemeni people have been drawn into a wider arena of struggle that is engulfing the entire Middle East.

If one drills deep enough one will see that the politics of the Middle East could be eventually traced to its source—oil. The Middle East, according to 1970 figures, was the world's top producer of oil with 770 million metric tons. It thus had outstripped the United States of America. But within the Middle East itself, it is the Gulf, which has less than five million people, that produces more than one third of this oil. The Sultans and emirates, belonging to an era which mankind has now passed, have been resuscitated to play the role of guardians of the oil monopolies.

The industrialised countries have realised that oil has become their

lifeblood. The fact is that the monopolies have tried other substitutes for fuel, but they have not been able to make much headway. Hence they have clung to their interests with all the tenacity and fierceness that characterises a jungle battle. All the giant oil monopolies like Shell, B.P., Esso, Total, Gilbenkian, Aramco have been directly or through their subsidiaries involved in oil production in this strategic region. What they say goes for respective governments as well, and the Western countries are determined to protect their interests there at all costs.

Imperialism thus sees the threat, immediate and potential, coming from two sources. The immediate danger comes from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Arab Gulf. This, unlike the Palestinian resistance movement, has already established a base area in the region of Dhofar which it has almost liberated completely. From Dhofar the liberation forces have moved northward and eastwards towards Kuwait. A further blow to reaction and imperialism was the announcement of political unity with other liberation forces, thus enlarging the base of operations and coordinating action. Now imperialism and its puppets face liberation forces not only in Dhofar but in the entire Gulf.

Imperialism believes that People's Yemen has provided the liberation forces with an excellent base area to get supplies as well as arms and ammunition. They naively believe that the liberated area of Dhofar would not be able to survive once People's Yemen is liquidated. But imperialism has not been able to get Yemenis to do the job. The result is that the

who is a pauper and has to live on handouts from the U.S. and puppet monarchs, Feisal of Arabia controls a oil-rich kingdom which produces 175 million metric tons per annum. Part of this wealth is being used to suppress the liberation movements and destroy independent Arab States.

Second Prong

The second prong in the attack has been through the puppet ruler of Muscat, Qaboos. This sultanate was granted independence by Britain. But Britain is very much in evidence. In fact the policy followed by the British Government is nothing less than Nixon's policy of Vietnamisation—to make Arabs fight Arabs. The Heath government provides air power as well as British commandos.

In October-November 1971 the army of Qaboos, commanded by Major Graham who has been seconded by the British army, launched a massive campaign of annihilation and mopping up similar to the campaigns in Vietnam, in the eastern sector of the liberated area of Dhofar. It was a joint enterprise consisting of Qaboos's puppet army and British commandos. The British forces were landed by helicopter to the guerilla bases while the rest of the army followed.

The liberation forces allowed them to come and extend their lines. Then from the defensive they moved into a counter-offensive and chopped the pockets of the aggressors one by one. The result was that the venture proved disastrous and three bases fell. These were the Yur centre, Gubgat centre and Dhebdout centre. The last two fell in December last year. Dhebdout however was only liquidated after the revolutionaries had launched over a hundred attacks. In all these centres the enemy had to leave vast quantities of provisions.

The effect of this was that it blew the cover of the British that this was only a local war. A demoralised Britain could not hide any more its involvement, for Dhofar was becoming a vast cemetery for the British commandos.

The defeat of the puppet army is creating restlessness. Qaboos is unpopular and he trusts nobody. As a monarch he also is the country's Prime Minister, as well the Minister of Finance, Interior and Justice. However there is one major portfolio over which he has only nominal control, and that is defence. Here although he is the Minister of Defence, it is the British officer, Hugh Oldman, who is the real power behind the scenes and who makes the major decisions. This however did not save the combined armies from an ignominious defeat.

Puppets have desperately tried to forge unity against the growth of revolutionary forces. Thus Qaboos sent a sum of \$2 million to bolster the tottering regime of Hussein. At the same time he flew to Saudi Arabia to meet Feisal. However there was hard bargaining and Feisal for his intervention through his mercenaries has extracted a heavy price in that he agreed that the disputed territory of Burami be annexed by the Saudi Arabian monarch.

The defeat of the mercenaries by the Yemeni troops, and their rout together with another victory by the liberation forces of the Arab Gulf have greatly raised the morale and confidence of the liberation forces and the local militia. They had to contend with murderous air attacks and with troops having superiority in weapons and numbers. Yet these were dispersed. More significant is the fact that in the recent campaign the British scrapped the Hawker Hunter for the Canberra and "Strike master" which could hit ground targets from the air. But this too was to no avail.

It was no easy victory for the liberation forces however. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Arab Gulf published the names of the martyrs who fell to defend their homes, their country and their revolution. They gave their lives for a just cause which they knew must triumph in the end.

OUR LATEST ADDITIONS

THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT
by S. Rao .. Rs. 6.50

Indira Gandhi
INDIA AND BANGLADESH
Selected Speeches &
Statements .. Rs. 12.50

THE INDIAN EXPERIMENT
Key to Asia's future
by G. Wirsing .. Rs. 17.50

DEMOCRACY & POLITICAL
CHANGE IN VILLAGE INDIA
by Sanjee .. Rs. 25.00

POPULATION IN
PERSPECTIVE
by Gyan Chand .. Rs. 30.00

ESSAYS ON THE LAW
OF TREATIES
ed. by Agarwala .. Rs. 30.00

FIRST SPARK OF
REVOLUTION
by A. C. Guha .. Rs. 40.00

Sheikh Mujibar Rahman
BANGLADESH MY
BANGLADESH
Selected Speeches &
Statements
ed. by R. Majumdar .. Rs. 18.00

SELECTED WORKS OF
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
Volume—I .. Rs. 60.00

PROSPECTS OF POPULA-
TION CONTROL: EVALUA-
TION OF CONTRACEP-
TION ACTIVITY
by Dondekar & Bhate .. Rs. 20.00

ORIENT LONGMAN LTD.
17 Chittaranjan Avenue,
Calcutta 13.
BOMBAY, MADRAS, NEW DELHI,
BANGALORE

Green Revolution In India : Prelude To A Red One ?—II

HARI SHARMA

GROSS economic inequalities and strong feudalistic elements in social relations were two of the most pronounced ingredients of India's agrarian structure when she gained political independence in 1947. The underlying factor was of course the question of land: its ownership, its cultivation, and the distribution of its products. The land tenure systems of that date were extremely varied and intricate. In general, however, they were products of pre-existing local conditions which the British had adapted to their own interests while conserving the feudal exploitation of the peasantry. Regardless of whether the area fell in former British India or in the native princely states, and of whether the prevailing tenurial system was of the *zamindari*, the *ryotwari* or the *mahalwari* type, at the time of independence a highly skewed landownership pattern, a substantial proportion of landless or near-landless peasants, and an extremely exploitative landlordism of a semi-feudal kind, were among the features which characterized the Indian agrarian system as a whole. Regional variations were undoubtedly important. Nevertheless, the following are some of the main highlights of the countryside agrarian structure as it obtained shortly after independence.

1. As many as 59 per cent of the cultivators' holdings in 1951 were below 5 acres each, accounting for only 15.5 per cent of the total area under cultivation. Taking 10 acres as the cutting point—the generally agreed upon minimum size for an "economic holding" by Indian standards—more than 78 per cent of the holdings fell below this level, accounting for only 33 per cent of the total land. On the other hand, holdings of over 25 acres made up only 5.6 per cent of the total holdings, while taking up 34.4 per cent of the land. These figures, significant as they are to show the inequali-

ties in the system, relate only to cultivators' holdings (whether owner or leased), and do not reflect the pattern of ownership.

2. Only about 29 per cent of the total agricultural population in 1951 comprised what could be called peasant proprietors. Between them, these owned 40-45 per cent of the agricultural land. This group included some rich peasants who, besides themselves engaging in cultivation, leased part of their land to tenant farmers.

3. The remainder of the land—55-60 per cent—was under the control of feudal landlords (variously known in different parts of the country as *zamindars*, *talukdars*, *malguzars*, *narwadars*, *jagirdars*, etc.), who made up fewer than 2 per cent of the total agricultural population. A part of this land was owned by various religious and charitable institutions, particularly in the South. However, the priests who reigned over these institutions were no different from the other feudal lords. Through the medium of a large stratum of feudal sub-proprietors and intermediate, noncultivating tenants, most of this land was cultivated by tenant farmers.

4. Approximately 42 per cent of the agricultural population consisted of tenant farmers, falling into two major categories: occupancy tenants and tenants-at-will. Occupancy tenants enjoyed legal protection in the form of fixed rents, and permanent and heritable rights in the land they occupied. The rights of the tenants-at-will, on the other hand, were not even nominally defined by law. Often they were only subtenants of the occupancy tenants. In any case they had no security of tenure and the rent they paid was exorbitant, ranging between one-half and two-thirds of the crop they produced. In some places it was as high as 75-80 per cent of the crop. Exact estimates of

the extent of the two types of tenancy (occupancy tenants and tenants-at-will) are not available. It seems, however, that the latter was the far more prevalent pattern. For example, in the pre-partition Punjab, while occupancy tenants cultivated only 7.3 per cent of the land, tenants-at-will cultivated about 48 per cent. In any case, the fact remains that tenancy-cultivation, as a form of extreme feudalistic exploitation of the peasantry, was a prominent feature of Indian agriculture. In 1951 as much as 43.2 per cent of the total land in cultivators' holdings was made up by the area taken on lease. Furthermore, insecurity of tenure and exorbitant rents were not the only form of exploitation of tenants by landlords. *Begar* (forced labour) on various kinds of construction, agricultural or household works, and a multitude of special levies—in some places, as many as fifty—were additional burdens imposed by the landlords upon their tenants. Any special expense which the landlord had to incur—on death, on marriage, on buying a car or an elephant, on sending his son to be educated in England, on receiving important guests—on, in fact, anything—was passed on to the tenants in the form of levies. And there was no escape. Failure to meet these demands could result in severe beatings and tortures, in sale of what little belongings the tenants had, or in outright eviction from their tenancy.

At The Bottom

5. At the very bottom of the agrarian structure were, of course, the labourers, constituting 28 per cent of the total agricultural population. Most among them did not own any land, not even the small patches on which stood their meagre dwellings. Their main, and in most cases, only source of living was physical labour on farms—whenever it was needed,

which was in many areas limited essentially to the peak agricultural seasons, and for whatever payment (often in kind) the landlords were willing to make. In some parts of the country such labourers were even attached to their landlords in permanent bondage because of indebtedness inherited through generations. Not only did they live the most miserable life in terms of poverty, but also, since most of them belonged to the group of outcasts or untouchables, they carried with them the most dehumanizing stigma. In many areas they were not permitted to approach, let alone touch, those of higher caste.

In addition to the above features of the agrarian structure, there was the usurious exploitation of the moneylenders, usually local traders operating either within the village or in nearby towns. Often the big landlords themselves were moneylenders or traders; at the very least, the two had very close ties. In 1951-52, 75.7 per cent of the total agricultural credit came from these local moneylenders, who were reported to be charging as much as 24 per cent per annum interest on loans.

The scene was thus one of a pauperized peasantry, plundered by feudal landlords and moneylenders through rack-renting, illegal exactions, usury, and the application of brute force. According to one estimate, in 1950-51 land rent and moneylenders' interest amounted to Rs 14,000 million, which was about a third of the value of the country's total farm produce that year. [S. J. Patel, "The Distribution of the National Income of India". *The Indian Economic Review*, Vol. III No. 1 (1956)]. In circumstances like these abject poverty, sporadic starvation, and periodic famines characterized rural India.

Another factor needs to be emphasized to place the above in proper perspective. Although since the mid-nineteenth century the Indian village had been increasingly drawn into the orbit of international capitalism and was subjected to its vagaries, until

about the end of the 1940's, and to a certain extent until much later, it managed to maintain itself as a socio-logically viable entity. Castes, which often functioned as occupational guilds, *panchayats* (village councils), various forms of real or fictive kinship ties, and inter-caste functional interdependencies provided a degree of internal cohesiveness, the strength of which varied inversely with the degree of involvement in the market system. And such involvement had undoubtedly begun to occur during the last hundred years of British rule. Industrial, consumer goods, like cloth, umbrellas etc. were entering the rural market. At the same time, with the introduction of plantation economy (tea, coffee, etc.) in south and north-east India, and of cash crops (particularly cotton) in western and central India, a part of Indian agriculture had already begun to assume some elements of capitalistic farming and was subjected to international market forces. On the whole, however, it was a picture of stagnant agriculture based on subsistence farming. In most parts of India, the village was largely insulated from the outside world, with little political, economic, or even cultural articulation with the wider society beyond its immediate region. Even the government's intervention seldom exceeded the collection of land revenue and the maintenance of law and order, with the exception of small relief measures in times of extreme calamity. What little industrial activity had already taken root in India had only limited ties with the agricultural sector. The surpluses extracted from the peasantry by the landlords did not, for the most part, take the form of capital. Even if landlords lived in the cities, which many of them did, they used their income in conspicuous and wasteful consumption. As long as they could continue to extract this surplus, they had neither need nor desire to establish a capitalistic growth pattern for agriculture. The label of "feudalism" to characterize the Indian agrarian system has been a subject of continuous debate among scholars. It is true that

the well-known categories of "Marian feudalism" do not neatly apply to the Indian situation. Yet, it contained as Bettelheim says, "enough of the characteristics of the declining feudal system to be called semi-feudal. Typical of the situation is the absence of a labour market in a large part of the rural sector; the personal subservience of the immediate producer to the landowner; the excessive importance of land rent; the under-developed marketing system resulting in little social division of labour, a low rate of accumulation, and the use of produce mainly to satisfy immediate needs".

Congress in Power

Although the Congress Party which came to power in 1947 represented, by and large, bourgeois-landlord interests, conditions in rural India were so grim that it had no choice but to institute reforms. Furthermore, in order to facilitate much-needed industrial growth, agricultural productivity had to be boosted. Most important, however, were the rising, and to some extent organized, popular demands of the peasantry for immediate relief. A Kisan Sabha was formed as far back as 1936 which, in its first conference, demanded the introduction of a system of peasant proprietorship under which the tiller of the soil is himself the owner of it and pays revenue direct to the Government. The forties saw some of the most militant peasant movements and uprisings in India: the Tebhaga movement in Bengal, the Telangana movement in Hyderabad and numerous other uprisings in Madras and Kerala. For all these reasons, pacification of the peasantry became one of the top items on the agenda for the new government, particularly when it had set out on the parliamentary path based on adult franchise.

Thus began a whole series of measures: land reforms, bureaucratic and administrative innovations, and the setting up of new institutions to provide credit, storage, marketing, and technical facilities to peasants. While it is impossible to detail these mea-

asures here, it is necessary to identify their salient features and to assess their effects on the formation of new class forces. Ostensibly, most of these measures, particularly those dealing with land relations, were meant to alleviate the conditions of the weaker sections of the agricultural community and to curtail the exploitive powers of the landlords. What came out at the end of roughly fifteen years was, however, far from these original intentions.

Land legislation went through three distinct stages. The first period ran from about 1948-49 to about 1951-52, when the various States of the Indian Union passed laws to abolish vast estates of the *zamindari* type, as well as to eliminate the various non-cultivating, intermediate tenants who lived off the peasants' labour. The second phase, from about 1951-52 to approximately the end of the 'fifties, saw numerous legislative measures which sought to regulate tenancy relations: to provide security of tenure, to fix rents, and in many cases to provide opportunities to the tenants to become owners by buying up the land they tilled. In the third phase, running from the late fifties to the early sixties, attempts were made to put ceilings on the size of individual land holdings, with the hope thereby of creating a pool of excess land which could be distributed to landless labourers or to small peasants.

Decade of Turmoil

Because of these numerous laws, because of time lags between the framing and the enactment of these laws (and even more, between their enactment and their actual "implementation"), and because of the widespread legal and constitutional battles that surrounded the laws, the 1950's was a decade of turmoil and uncertainty in rural India. The traditional village elite saw a deluge coming, and saw it in time to prepare to safeguard its interests. The primordial, village-based norms of reciprocity and interdependency soon disappeared—at least for those who held the economic and political power. The

'fifties were characterized by double normative standards: by deceit, false promises, political manoeuvrings, and bureaucratic manipulations, all of which concealed a massive power play. Even while the tenancy laws were still in process of enactment, large-scale eviction of tenants occurred throughout the country; alternatively, at the least, tenancies were put on an oral, informal basis in order to prevent the tenants from claiming ownership when the laws were passed. In situations where such evictions could not be carried out for technical reasons, landlords invoked traditional norms to put pressure upon tenant farmers: they appealed to them to uphold village solidarity, respect tradition, maintain the *status quo*. All kinds of deceitful statements were made: that all this was a temporary effort by undesirable elements to create discord in the village community; that to avoid such discord tenants should deny to the authorities that they were actually tenants; but that once the period of danger had passed, business would go on as usual and tenants would be allowed to cultivate the land as heretofore. Unorganized, lacking a political base, fearful of severe reprisals if they opposed the landlords' wishes, and unequipped to defend their new rights in the courts, a vast majority of the peasants succumbed to these pressures. Thus an amazing phenomenon occurred. Countless numbers of erstwhile tenants "voluntarily surrendered" their new rights. Those who did not thus succumb confronted awesome, expensive, and lengthy bureaucratic and legal battles. The odds were against them. More often than not they found that the revenue records on which they were to base their claims were either totally missing or had been altered to suit the interests of the landlords, who undoubtedly possessed far greater means to oil the bureaucratic machine. Physical force, or at least the threat of it, also dissuaded some adamant tenants from carrying on their legal struggles. In such ways landlords in most parts of India were able to evade

the land reforms. Indeed, they were often not obliged to resort to unlawful means, for in most States the laws themselves contained loopholes or outright provisions to safeguard the landlords' interests. Resumption of tenancy land for the landlords' "self-cultivation" was, for example, provided for in most State land reforms laws as well as in the earlier *Zamindari Abolition Acts*—a provision widely used by both *zamindars* and lesser landlords to dislodge their tenants and to retain large amounts of land under their own control. "Self-cultivation" could, moreover, mean anything from disguised tenancy to cultivation through hired labour or to mechanized farming. Again, landlords took care in advance of impending legislation on land ceilings by dividing their large holdings into small parcels and registering them in the names of real or fictitious relatives. Partly for this reason, and partly because when the laws on land ceilings, after much opposition in the legislative assemblies and after long battles on the grounds of their constitutionality, did finally become effective they contained within them so many loopholes and exemption

চীনের কমিউনিষ্ট পার্টির ইতিহাস

১৯২১-৭১

মাও সে তুঙ

চীনা কমিউনিষ্ট পার্টির কেন্দ্রীয় কমিটি

'পিপলস চায়না' পত্রিকা

'রে'ন্থন রিপাও হোঙছি', চিয়েকাঙ

চুঙপাও দাম : ২.৫০

নয়াগগতন্ত্র প্রসঙ্গে : মাও সে-তুঙ ৮০

কর্মপ্রসঙ্গে দ্বন্দ্বপ্রসঙ্গে :

মাও সে-তুঙ ১'২৫

১০ বছরের গৃহযুদ্ধ : চেন পো-তা ৬০

র্যাডিক্যাল বুক ক্লাব

৬ কলেজ স্ট্রোয়ার

কলিকাতা-১২

categories, besides prescribing too high a ceiling on the existing holdings. There was hardly any surplus land left to be distributed to the poorer far-

mers and landless laborers. Later we shall return to some of these exemption categories.

(To be concluded)

One Dimensional Man

BY A DRAMA CRITIC

CHARANDAL's production of *Bidrohi Nazrul* shows the inspiration that the speechless poet provides even to a contemporary group dedicated to theatre. Peopled by a host of characters who are very much alive (some kicking too) and some of whom were present at the Academy auditorium, the play touches Nazrul at too many points and in fact the introduction of a galaxy of celebrities at times appears to be intended to lend credence to the whole thing. This prevents the director from concentrating on essentials to portray the revolutionary poet.

A rather longish first scene catches the budding poet in his early habitat and shows him engrossed in his thoughts of how to pick up the English language and military might with the ultimate aim of driving the colonialists out. A needless exercise, one should have thought, and perhaps the director is not unaware that investing a small boy with this might not bear scrutiny. Which is why a leaflet distributed to the audience seeks to ex-

plain the revolutionary implications of the poet's life even in the earlier phase.

The poet in uniform is much less impressive than the poet in dhoti in a later phase in Calcutta. Here the poet strikes his form in poetry, polemics and of course his source of songs. The private life is a useful interlude showing the quiet determination of the poet against social odds. The friends who surround him draw inspiration from him and are in turn a source of strength to the poet and his family. Some snippets excellently bring out the simplicity and dedication but they are a little too many, making it very difficult to create the required dramatic intensity. The characterisation falls between the two stools of the revolutionary and the poet and succeeds only in giving a one dimensional portrayal of Nazrul.

The production is by no means modest if one takes into account the sets which are excellent. The cast has done a none too bad job in a situation that demands stamina. Songs are well chosen and well rendered,

one might think. The markets are less animated than usual, but they remain well stocked to feed a still considerable clientele... In this atmosphere where nothing, not even something apocalyptic, would surprise this calmly resolute people, life goes on, with everyday objects bought and sold—even flowers.

Bombing Hanoi will no doubt do far more damage than might be supposed to an "evacuated" city. The air attacks on Haiphong, for instance, appear to have taken a greater human toll than official figures indicate. I was able to get some idea of the effects of bombing after (the)... attack on Thanh Hoa on the 20th Parallel. I saw the ruins of a 600-bed hospital evacuated for the first time in 1965 and reopened in September 1970. It was bombed on December 26, 1971 and again last April 27. Today only a partly completed building remains, and that too has sustained considerable damage. The hospital was attacked by waves of planes which also dropped a number of penetration bombs with devastating effect. The hospital was not yet operational, and this rain of fire and explosives in a limited area took only nine lives. The hospital is out in open country; there is no sign of an industrial or strategic site nearby.

The American command gave no explanation for this raid. Not that official explanations mean much. There is a temptation to see signs of panic and rage in the choice of targets. The impression of wild disorder is strengthened by the sight of the small Dong Yen school, only a few miles from the hospital. Here 28 people were killed, among them 11 children, and 25 badly hurt. Though one young girl survivor among the wounded broke into sobs as she described the raid, the entire population demonstrated that dignity that genuine disaster invariably brings out.

...The prevailing sentiments here are neither sorrow nor pity, but courage and scorn... They (officials) regard it as obvious that neither the blows rained down by their adversary

Clippings

Hanoi Braced For Onslaught

CLAUDE JULIEN

Hanoi—...Before the National Security Council met on Monday (May 8) in Washington, the residents of this city were expecting President Nixon and Henry Kissinger to opt for the very policy that proved so ineffective in Lyndon Johnson's presidency. Though the first pre-alert is enough to send people shelterwards, they go perfectly calm, without the

least hint of panic.

It is hardly worth pointing out the incomparable discipline of the North Vietnamese any more. The scenes in the capital... only underline the perfect harmony between the people and the nation's leaders...

Guard against surprise it is to this end that the capital has been largely evacuated, but not as completely as

FRONTIER

61, MOTT LANE, CALCUTTA-13

Subscription Rates

INLAND

One Year : Rs. 16.50. Six Months : Rs. 8.25
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*.

nor pressures, friendly or otherwise, exerted by other countries will deflect them from their purpose.

(From *Le Monde*, Paris, May 13, 1972.)

Letters

Hanoi And Peking

With the war in Vietnam in its decisive phase, there is a lot of confused reporting about the principal suppliers of Hanoi and the Vietcong. Sino-phobes in this country are always out to belittle China's rôle in the liberation war. In this context it may be useful to quote Douglas Pike, author of *Vietcong and War, Peace and the Vietcong: A Study of Current Communist Strategy of Vietnam*, and a leading authority on contemporary Indochinese affairs:

"The invasion force was also equipped with anti-aircraft weapons including the newly improved Soviet-made SAM-2 guide-line surface-to-air missiles, Chinese made low altitude surface-to-air missiles as well as the more conventional anti-aircraft artillery.

"The less sophisticated weapons, such as the infantry's basic sub-machine guns, were manufactured in China. . . . The uniforms worn, the radios employed, the medico's bandages, came from China. Quite likely even the food consumed by the attackers was imported, for at least one fourth of the rice eaten in all of North Vietnam comes from China.

"The economic assistance, both military and non-military, which the USSR and the PRC have supplied to North Vietnam over the years was generous, often lavish, and most importantly essential to the war which the North Vietnamese are pursuing in the South.

... "Previously of the two economic axes, Hanoi-Peking, and Hanoi-Moscow, the first was the more important. This now is changing but primacy of China remains at this writing. An indication of the rather extreme dependence of North Viet-

nam on China is contained in these statistics: As on January, 1972, about half of the seaborne imports to North Vietnam came from China. This amounts to about 42,000 tons per month (DRV imports in 1971 averaged about 1,40,000 tons monthly), about 25 per cent of the rice eaten in North Vietnam comes from China, some 80 per cent of the consumer goods sold in the shops and markets in Hanoi are Chinese-made." (*The Indian Express*, Bombay, April, 28, 1972).

Of course admirers of the Soviet Union and Mrs Indira Gandhi often point out that China is not physically involved and indulges only in verbal fireworks. A cardinal feature of national liberation wars is that it is fought by people themselves and not by hired mercenaries. It is unlike the so-called liberation of Bangladesh where a counter-revolutionary government has been installed by the semi-feudal and neo-fascist government of a geopolitically well positioned neighbouring country under the guidance of the social-imperialists in order to encircle China.

SISIR KUMAR MAJUMDAR
Bombay

A Blueprint

The dead weight that is lying on the back of the people of West Bengal, Andhra and Kerala, is the total weight of the rest of India. Intensification of revolution in a particular small part of India is what the capitalists and landlords want because then they can teach the "adventurists" a lesson by striking them down with all the oppressive organs of the rest of India. In my opinion, instead of intensifying revolution in West Bengal, Bihar, Andhra and Kerala the revolutionaries should try to make "Bengals" in U.P., Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mysore and Tamil Nadu, the least class conscious but encompassing the largest area of the country. If you can make one "Bengal" in Madhya Pradesh with its tradition of heroic dacoits fighting from time imme-

morial, then the Indian bourgeoisie can be paralysed. The area of operation of the dacoits extends from Rajasthan in the west to Bihar in the east. It is the centre of India and if you can control that area you can control the west, east, north and south. And the area being very large, small fast moving squads of guerillas can easily evade the police and organise mobile bases with local support. Intensifying armed struggle in the plains is more risky as the oppressors can easily bring all their destructive power on the spot. The plains of Bengal can serve as a "Ho Chi-Minh trail" to supply this heartland of guerilla operations rather than as an area of guerilla operations itself. In my opinion one should not get obsessed with the bookish idea of organising bases immediately. Let the Bengalis not get obsessed with Bengal. The only solution is to catch central India.

During this "jungle" mobile period in the plain the masses can be organised on economic grounds.

M. N. D. NAIR
Trivandrum

ANUSTUP

A BENGALI LITERARY QUARTERLY

(This Issue in May, 1972)

1. Views on the Current News from the Literary World :

Saroj Dutta/Nirod C. Choudhuri and the Ananda Bazar Patrika/What David McCutcheon has said/Drama and Book Reviews.

2. Articles :

Anti-social, counter-revolutionary and Naxalites/Our literature and our life/Nobel Prize—Commitment—Pablo Neruda style/Social Imperialism.

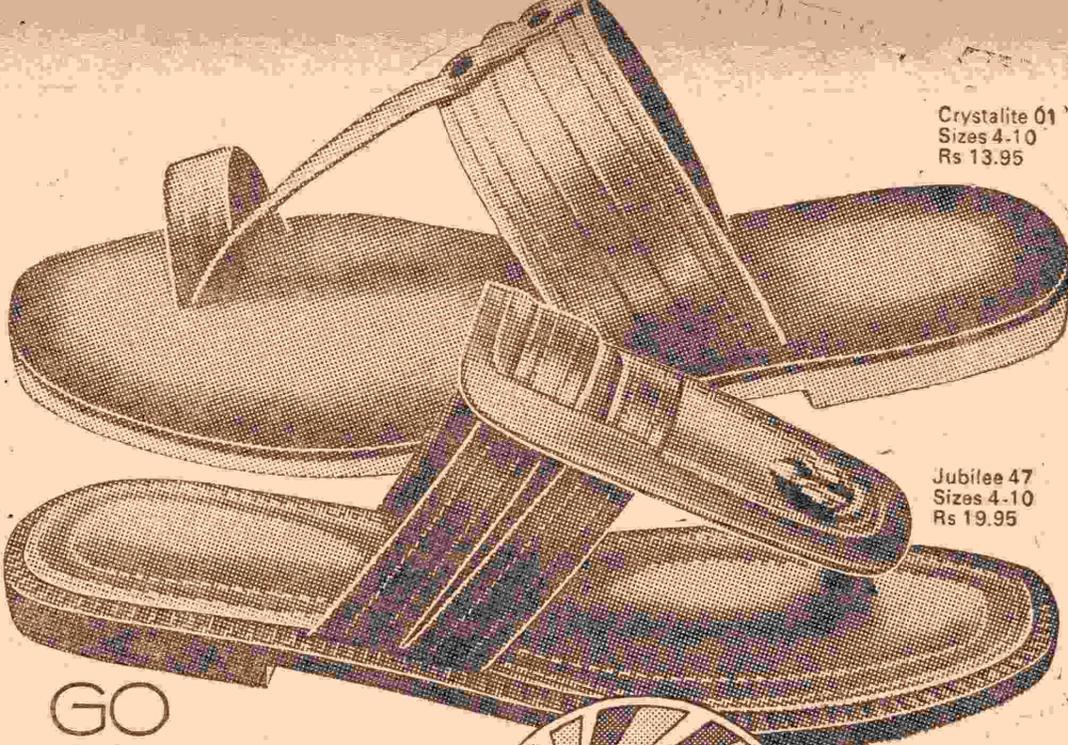
3. Stories by Swarna Mitra and Norman Bethune

4. Poems.

P-55B, C.I.T. Road,

CALCUTTA-10.

Crystalite 01
Sizes 4-10
Rs 13.95



Jubilee 47
Sizes 4-10
Rs 19.95

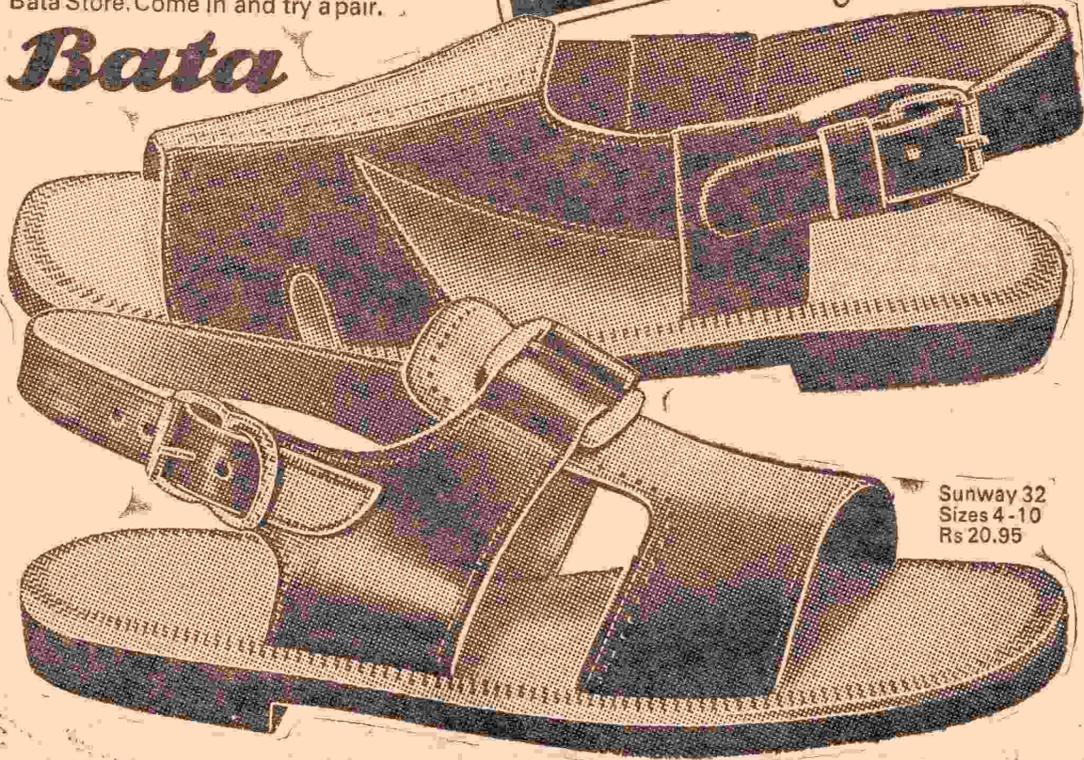
GO LIGHTFOOT IN SUMMER

Airily open, Bata Sandals and Chappals bring a light, cool feeling to your feet. You can tell by the trim, slim styling that they were designed to keep your feet feeling fresh all day. The styles shown here are some of the many youthfully smart varieties now available at your favourite Bata Store. Come in and try a pair.



Sunway 37
Sizes 4-10
Rs 20.95

Bata



Sunway 32
Sizes 4-10
Rs 20.95

ASSAM BENGAL RIVER SERVICE PVT. LTD.

POWER BOAT BUILDERS & ENGINEERS

26A, EZRA MANSIONS

10 GOVT. PLACE EAST,

CALCUTTA-1