

# frontier

Vol. 7: No. 10

JUNE 29, 1974

PRICE: 50 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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## AGAINST PROFESSION

ALTHOUGH New Delhi claims to have granted instant permission to the Pakistan Prime Minister's plane to overfly India, it will closely study Mr Bhutto's activities and his statements if he at all visits Bangladesh, which at the time of writing is uncertain. Indian interest may have bordered on concern on seeing Dacca reports that Bangladesh has reacted "favourably" to the announcement of Mr Bhutto's visit and the popular reaction is in tune with the Government's. Such concern will be short-sighted, for an improvement of relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan cannot but contribute to an overall improvement in the sub-continental situation which is India's proclaimed aim. A treaty of friendship etc between Bangladesh and Pakistan should be as unexceptionable—or exceptionable, depending on how you look at it—as the Indo-Bangladesh treaty concluded during the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Dacca. If the latter was a step towards a durable peace in the subcontinent, there is no reason why the former should not be. Any reservation on this score can arise only from a theory of permanent antagonism between India and Pakistan. Indian professions of peace and harmony in the subcontinent will lose all credibility if they exclude normalisation of relations between what were once two wings of the same country.

The immediate reason for India's concern is Mr Bhutto's sharp denunciation of the nuclear explosion in Rajasthan and his staunch refusal to accept that the Indian intention in acquiring nuclear know-how is peaceful. Indian politicians could not have been so naive as to expect a different reaction from Pakistan. In assessing the political repercussions of the explosion they must have taken into account the adverse reaction that it will generate in Pakistan. And whether they admit it or not, they must have also included in their calculations the possibility of India's other neighbours getting somewhat nervous, even though they may prefer to make a show of accepting the Indian assurance at its face value. It is only natural that Mr Bhutto will try to play upon the suppressed nervousness during his visit to Bangladesh. It may be taken for granted that he will make the same effort when the Ceylon Prime Minister's proposed visit to Pakistan comes off. New Delhi can protest but it cannot prevent Mr Bhutto from campaigning that India's aim is nuclear blackmail and further dismemberment of Pakistan. He is also within his rights to seek guarantees from other countries of the territorial integrity of Pakistan, though this integrity depends on the internal strength of a country.

The explosion in Rajasthan has introduced a new and unknown element in the politics of this subcontinent and despite Dr Kissinger's certificate, made conventional approaches obsolete. The sole responsibility for this is India's, and New Delhi has to ensure—a difficult task indeed in view of the wide gap between profession and practice that has marked this vedic government—that the Rajasthan explosion remains politically as clean as it is claimed to have been ecologically. This has to be a protracted process, and India has to face and bear the misgivings of the smaller countries of the regions. Not much of this is evident in some recent speeches of Indian leaders. Boastful declarations of the country's defence preparedness and military capability have again become frequent. Evidently, old obsessions persist, and all those visions of durable peace in the subcontinent and friendship with Pakistan have been merely superimposed on Pakistan's indelible image in the South Block as the eternal aggressor. That is why New Delhi scents a conspiracy in everything Mr Bhutto does. His Bangladesh visit will be no exception. Apart from being unfair to Bangladesh, such an approach is highly exceptionable, because it disregards the sovereign rights of Pakistan and Bangladesh to fashion their relations in any way they like. But Bangladesh is not that free, judging from the way its radio and newspapers begun to harp on the past on the eve of the proposed visit.

## Sikkim

On June 20 the Sikkim Assembly had to meet rather late in the evening, because earlier the loyalists, the palace guards, had blocked the session. The Assembly, in which the party of Kazi Lhendup Dorzi, has 31 of the 32 seats, passed two resolutions, one reducing the Chogyal to a titular head, and the other urging closer association of Sikkim with Indian economic and other associations. That is, the less the powers of the Chogyal, the greater the involvement with India. The constitution has been drafted by Indian experts.

What happened after the June 20 session—the swan song of Sikkimese feudalism as Indian officials in Gangtok say—is that the Chogyal has not ratified the two resolutions and demonstrations and counter-demonstrations are going on. The Government of India has maintained a virtual censorship, so that people here think that the rallies have been peaceful; but there have been lathi-charges and the CRP is having a day, not to speak of the Indian army which is always present in strength in Sikkim.

There can be little sympathy for the Chogyal. But the Sikkim Congress is still moving within constitutional limits and the Chogyal can say that

as long as the 1950 treaty with India stands, the Assembly cannot discuss his powers etc. Besides, what the Assembly has passed is a resolution, and not the constitution bill. The Chogyal has his advisers. He can play on Bhutya-Lepcha suspicions.

The argument is not likely to hold if the Congress takes to mass pressure, with the Indian forces standing by. What one does not understand, however, is the illusions nourished by the Kazi's party about the Indian Government, the eagerness of anti-feudal forces to walk into the net of an ambitious spider. Don't they know what the female spider does to the male?

## The Same Old Story

A correspondent writes:

Dissension is the thing in Bengali politics today and the CPM is right in the stream along with the Congress, although due to varying tides. The Congress is splitting because it is too full of power and there is a cut-throat approach in the distribution of spoils. The CPM is facing a split because it has no power and has been stagnant for months. One would have been glad if one were not forced to bracket a communist party with a reactionary party, but in West Bengal and for that matter in India, there is hardly anything to distinguish the one from the other, as far as the leadership is concerned.

It is not yet clear whether the split the CPM is facing will be a major or minor one. In fact the big bosses have denied that there is any dissension in the party—there are minor differences of opinion, true, there are expulsions from the party of two or three small leaders, true, but nothing, say the party leaders, warrants speculation of a major disunity. The expulsions too, according to the official version, are because of personal matters and not political.

That is of course a little curious. The charges framed against one comrade relate to moral turpitude! It smacks of the same old story—a familiar thing in the history of the Indian com-

munist party. It is either woman or money or both which makes a comrade fall apart from the party, or so the party would like to tell others. But the story has worn a little thin. Not because there is a sexual revolution in the world nor because the middle class in India is quite abreast of that revolution; nor because corruption is a way of life in modern India. The point is, not many even in the CPM leadership will escape the test, if it is applied too rigidly. The point is, the leadership takes no cognizance of any moral turpitude when it occurs but digs the scandal out when the party needs it. The charge framed against one expelled leader is one such.

The expulsion of the leaders is not of course that significant by itself. The whole thing may not rest there. There was one report in a Calcutta daily that there would be a commission to thrash out the dissidents. In Calcutta district alone there will be enquiries against 600 such dissidents. The report was not officially corroborated—but that is neither here nor there. Things are brewing up, the ranks are suspicious of the leadership, the erstwhile party comrades are wary of the party moves. There are rumours that the party leaders have secretly met Mrs Indira Gandhi as many as five

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times. Some in the party are too eager to join the West Bengal Assembly. Some say that the leadership is eager to get a good conduct certificate from New Delhi and sail along parliamentary democracy. The trouble is that the ranks have no means to assess the situation—such as the CPM organisation today. Many of the cadres have been driven out of their areas of work. Some have simply dropped out of the party in sheer frustration. Some are still unattached to any unit and therefore do not get the party circulars. The DC leaders are too busy to see them and written questions are thrown into baskets. And these were the comrades who paid heavily during the turbulent days of 1970-73, were hounded and harried. The leaders made good use of them to further their own interests and now demand blind obedience to their opportunist ambitions. The party, or what remains of it, is decaying at the roots.

## The Enemy Within

A correspondent writes:

It is becoming increasingly clear that the CPI supported the railwaymen's strike only to subvert it from within. Its influence on the railwaymen was limited but it could not remain aloof. There is reason to believe that the CPI-led All India Railway Workers' Federation was formed a few months earlier than the NCCRS at the behest of the Railway Minister, Mr L. N. Mishra, and that his overweening confidence during the strike was no less due to the confidence that he enjoyed of Mr S. A. Dange than to other factors. While Mr Mishra spared most of the CPI activists from arrest and victimisation, the latter worked as the Trojan horse of the Government.

The CPI decided to ingratiate itself both with the labour and its decreasing mass base. It has to depend more and more on the ruling party for support and crumbs of power to which it has got used. Again, because of its phoney fear of the 'rightist takeover', it has

undertaken the self-imposed task of preventing the Government from going right. A Herculean task indeed which is yielding quite the opposite results. The net result of CPI policies is that the Indira Government is growing more anti-people in general and anti-labour in particular. While the policies of the Government are leading to acute economic hardship for the people, the police and para-military organisations like the Territorial Army, the BSF and the CRP are being utilised to crush the people. However, the CPI is not the least perturbed over the situation. One can have an easy conscience if one is given a share in power—in Kerala directly and indirectly elsewhere.

The CPI's talk of 'right reaction' and 'left adventurism' shows that it does not work for any purposeful labour action. No wonder the CPI's mouthpieces like "Patriot", "New Wave" and "New Age" wrote so forcefully about the need to end the 'unnecessary' strike, as in their view the "growing disgruntled working class... will be taken advantage of by the most reactionary elements and left adventurists in the country..." This was a few days before Dange's call to the workers to take the decision to end strike zone-wise and group-wise. Even the CPI leader, Mr S. M. Banerjee, expressed surprise at Dange's volte face at a time when the entire official force was out to crush the strikers. Representatives of the BMS, HMS, CITU and UTUC reacted sharply to Dange's unilateral call but nothing deterred him from his premeditated pro-government course. Knowledgeable sources as quoted by some Delhi papers point out that top railway officials were in constant touch with the CPI leaders and

one of the bureaucrats was categorical in saying that they could not have faced the situation without the help of the CPI. It is also reported that Mr Dange gave the hasty call for withdrawal because he wanted the strike to end before his June 3 pro-government show at Patna.

It may also be noted in passing that the Soviet official paper "Izvestia" wrote during the strike that 'the current unrest in India is entirely on account of the machinations of certain rightwing groups who are also utilising certain ultra-leftists'. This was a clear hint from the Kremlin for our cringing comrades.

It may be recalled that at the initial stage of the strike, Mr Dange offered to get an assurance from the Government that there would be no victimisation if the strike was called off, clearly showing that he was in constant touch with the Government. When asked on whose behalf he was giving the assurance, he was on the defensive. However, he admitted that he was trying to secure a solution with the help of the Prime Minister. He even suggested on his own a sixpoint formula for ending the strike.

Right from the beginning of the strike, the CPI's attitude was lukewarm; it supported the strike as a sop to its rank and file who are increasingly getting disillusioned with their party. More and more party workers are now thinking that their leaders have lost faith in peasants' and workers' movement to usher in a revolution and are instead facilitating the march of fascism in the country, as is obvious from the steamroller tactics of the Indira Government which is so dear to the heart of Mr Dange and his party colleagues.

## Who Will Bell The Cat?

The paper tiger has roared again. What has happened must have been something like this. One fine morning garibi hataowallahs got up from bed with the sudden and certainly profound realisation that the country was going to

the dogs, that the garibs (the poor) were getting a raw deal and that all that has been tried to hold the price line so far has miserably failed. Secretaries, economists, advisers were summoned and ordered to produce a plan to counter all

## Japan : Pressure for Nuclear Arms

AKIO YAMAKAWA

this. The harried experts got into lengthy confabulations, called in sub-experts and talked about the plan over lunch and dinner. And presto, a plan was born. The Essential Commodities Act, which has adorned the statute books ever since 1955, should be extended, given a bite and turned into an all-important vehicle for bringing about the great socialist reformation. If the hoarders, profiteers and blackmarketeers have already made all the fortune they needed and have made all the contributions that "democratically-held" elections required, a time has come to make a break from the past. So an ordinance must be passed right now. And it has all the pretensions of a really radical measure. It provides for summary trial of the offenders, it raises the maximum term of imprisonment from five years to seven and it sanctions mandatory punishment even in the case of first offences. If only all this really got off the ground!

Even given the benefit of the doubt, it is hard to believe that the modified Act will really work. The cynicism is based not so much on the capability of the law-enforcing authorities as on the ingenuity of the offenders. The latter have by now perfected an art whereby even draconian measures have been turned into a mere whimper, and in this the bureaucracy has a leading part to play. Unfortunately, when the law-makers thought of changing the Act, they did not seem to have taken sufficient notice of the role of corrupt officials—in fact of the Government itself—in perpetuating the economic offences. While the ordinance recommends stiff penalty for blackmarketeers and company it should have also provided for summary trial of officials who connive with the criminals. As it is, what has been done now is to entrust one set of thieves to arrest another set. Stringency, like charity, has to begin at home. But then, who will bell the cat?

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TOKYO: Tokyo continues to reverberate with the shockwaves from India's ten-kiloton nuclear blast, which are setting off new pressures for Japanese nuclear armament. Not satisfied with Japan's number two position in the "peaceful" development of nuclear technology, important military and political forces both within and outside of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) are redoubling their efforts to force entry into the exclusive Nuclear Arms Club.

Although the LDP government bowed to the Japanese people's well-known anti-nuclear sentiment, based on the U.S. devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki a generation ago, and signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968, it has not yet ratified it. Thus far the treaty has been signed by 96 governments but ratified by only 83. Among the signatories, Japan has joined Italy, Switzerland and Egypt in delaying ratification.

The officially cited reason for Japan's failure to ratify is the difficulty of negotiating satisfactory inspection guarantees from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

But the real reasons lie elsewhere. Ratification has been delayed because of significant hawk opposition to the treaty within the LDP. The leading figure pressuring for Japan's nuclear armament is Moriyama Kinji, Director of the Science and Technology Agency. Even after instruments of ratification were presented to the Diet, Moriyama delayed negotiations with the IAEA.

Within the Diet, Ishiwara Shintaro, the novelist turned Dietman who leads the rightist "Seirankai" group, is the most outspoken proponent of nuclear weaponry. He declared recently that ratification of the treaty would decisively hamper Japan's nuclear arms potential.

LDP opponents of the treaty assert: (1) that it merely perpetuates the U.S. and Soviet nuclear monopoly; (2) that it is faulty since both China and France

refused to sign it; (3) that peaceful development of nuclear energy can be promoted without the treaty, and (4) that Japan should not tie its hands by precluding future nuclear armament.

Japan is officially and repeatedly on record—most recently during Foreign Minister Ohira Masayoshi's May visit to Washington—as rejecting nuclear arms. Moreover, the Foreign Ministry is concerned that refusal to ratify the treaty might induce the U.S. to restrict its supply of enriched uranium to Japan for peaceful purposes.

Confronted by mounting criticism of Japan among her Asian neighbours—driven home by the riots which greeted Prime Minister Tanaka during his January tour of five Asian countries—and in the West, the Foreign Ministry has been anxious to allay suspicions of Japan's intentions. Thus the Ministry was less than pleased when IAEA Secretary General Ecklund, visiting Japan in March, expressed surprise that Japan is already second only to the U.S. in the peaceful application of nuclear technology. He used this achievement to lend weight to his attempt to persuade Japan to speed ratification of the treaty.

These diplomatic considerations took precedence in a policy statement on behalf of the Non-Proliferation Treaty recently prepared for the Diet by Premier Tanaka. Before he could deliver the speech of which it was a part, however, Minister Moriyama and others succeeded in eliminating all mention of the treaty.

Indeed, support in ruling circles for a non-nuclear Japan has always been at best a weak reed. Government disclaimers about nuclear arms have never ruled out the future development of nuclear warheads. Rather, government and military leaders speak of "nuclear option diplomacy". This means maintaining maximum capability to produce atomic weapons while at least temporarily foregoing their production to strengthen bargaining power with the

U.S., the Soviet Union and China.

The advantage of such a policy is that it enables Japan to remain the number one non-nuclear military power rather than inviting world censure by becoming a fourth-rate nuclear power. Moreover, it enables Japan to continue to wield the threat of nuclear weapons without their expense.

Japan presently operates six nuclear power plants generating 2,283,000 kilowatts and producing annually the plutonium equivalent of ten Hiroshima-type bombs. Eighteen additional nuclear power plants are presently under construction. At the same time, it was recently disclosed in the Diet that Mitsubishi Heavy Industry's Nagasaki Shipyards are producing launchers for nuclear torpedoes.

Japanese proponents of nuclear armament have won support from an unexpected quarter. There is evidence that the U.S. government is wavering in its support for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, although it is unclear how opinions on this issue are divided within the government. As early as March 1972, Robert Kilmarx of the Strategic Research Centre of Georgetown University told a meeting of Foreign Ministry and Defence Department officials here that there was increasing criticism of the Treaty within the U.S. government.

Kilmarx, for twenty years an Air Force intelligence operative prior to his appointment as a special advisor to the Secretary of the Air Force, suggested that it was to the advantage of the U.S. to see nuclear weapons proliferate among its allies. He advised Japan to begin by equipping its submarines and artificial islands with nuclear warheads, suggesting that U.S. nuclear technology would be available through private business channels. Kilmarx's speech is presently circulating in the upper reaches of the Government as debate over the Non-Proliferation Treaty intensifies.

Despite Foreign Minister Ohira's statement of May 25 that India's nuclear explosion would not derail Japan's ratification of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, it seems clear that it will combine with pressures from other quarters on the eve of new Diet elections to doom the Treaty once again.

(New Asia News)

## The Press

# Dirty Campaign

PATRAKAR

OUR pen-pushers must have got weary of receiving occasional reprimands from Mr Inder Gujral, the illustrious Information and Broadcasting Minister. Not content with merely criticising the press for its poor professional standards—dull output, poor quality and biased views—the honourable Minister has taken upon himself the task of a self-styled reformer of the press and, indeed, leaves no stone unturned to give 'concrete' suggestions to improve its quality.

But how far has Mr Gujral been able to implement his ideas in his own empire—the government information media including the radio and TV?

Has anyone ever read anything more boring than government publications, heard anything more stale than AIR and seen anything more dull than TV?

A recent instance is the rail strike. It presented the government information media with their biggest challenge for many years. After the month-long publicity campaign, however, they emerged as very unsophisticated liars—nothing more, nothing less. The damage to their credibility was total.

Especially the radio. Its credibility, which was always low, is at the lowest ebb now. We were told for days after the railway system was thoroughly disrupted that train services were normal. Critical references to this in Parliament and the Press brought forth the official clarification that the normality claimed in the circumstances related to the "re-scheduled railway services".

The PIB, AIR and the DAVP over-worked and wore themselves out during the strike period. Services of professional campaigners were hired. The expenditure was enormous. All this, however, went down the drain. It was a dirty campaign—vulgar to the core—and did not have much of an impact.

Take, for example, the ads put thro-

ugh the Directorate of Audio-Visual Publicity. One ad showed a pregnant woman and carried the following script. "This poor woman is expecting her baby soon. Think what would happen if there was no rail transportation for carrying medicines". (The copy-writer, of course, failed to refer to the deaths caused recently by adulterated glucose when the train services were normal). A second ad blared: "They are doing what the enemy failed to do". "In 1962, 1965 and 1971", said the DAVP copy-writer, "our blast furnaces blazed away, turning out steel, the backbone of the nation's economy. The enemy could not stop them... what the enemy failed to do, a section of our misguided railwaymen are out to accomplish".

Thinking that films are a far more effective medium, the services of Sukhdev, the 'angry child' of the Indian screen, were commissioned to produce, what was ironically named, "the voice of people". It was supposed to be a free and intimate account of the people's reactions about the rail strike. Heavily financed and released on almost all theatre and television circuits, the movie did not bring into focus any critical assessment; moreover, those who were covered by a "freely hanging camera and a tape recorder" came exclusively from the affluent sections of society who are sure to have missed their holidays in luxurious resorts because of the strike.

Only two people directly involved in the strike were interviewed. And it proved interesting.

Sukhdev: The strike would increase the rise in prices.

Worker: The prices are going up even without a strike.

Sukhdev: If the trains come to a halt, people would not be able to get foodstuff and other essential commodities.

Worker: As if we are getting plenty of them now!

As mentioned in the issue dated May 11 (Shadows of 1984), in addition to the garbled news, the fertile brains of AIR hacks, in close collaboration with the PIB, have devised short government ads sandwiched in the popular Vividh Bharathi programme. In one of these ingenious propaganda pieces, the father of a student participating in anti-social acts, blames his son for having "fallen into the trap of opposition parties". There is a lot of misplaced wailing about hoarding and blackmarketing in these ads. From the common man's point of view, AIR's 'solicitude' for the victims of these social evils would have carried some conviction if there had been at least occasional references to rampant corruption at various levels of the political and official hierarchy. However, AIR avoids the topic of corruption like the plague. Perhaps because it was engaged in the far more important task of waging a relentless war against the 'anti-national' strikers.

One had initially heard of some murmur of protest in Akashvani Bhavan against the deliberate and almost total distortion of news and material supplied by the reporters and also against the mediocre diversification. But nothing seemed to disturb the bosses and even the acknowledged leaders of protest were tamed.

One should have expected some protest from the national press. But the correspondents themselves were busy churning out propaganda pieces for the PIB. Moreover, AIR has its own way of dealing with the influential coterie known as special correspondents. Pampered and chosen correspondents are favoured for assignments of talks and other types of broadcast. Apart from the fact that it generally means considerable sums of unaccountable money, the senior correspondents' writing in their own papers definitely get influenced, and in many cases are permanently attuned to the needs of the radio.

On the other hand, correspondents not in line with the establishment line are dropped like hot bricks and at times this even results in termination of programmes for which they were formally made to sign contracts.

All this has resulted in a confusing situation where non-specialist people are signed for broadcasts of a highly specialised character. It is probably much easier to handle an ignorant talker than a real specialist of stature. No wonder professors of human geography are invited to talk on Muslim politics and political scientists are often featured in programmes on science or aspects of ecology.

But as Mrs G says, the sole purpose of government information media, including AIR, is "propagation and projection of the government policies". As all of us know, everything is fair in love and war; and it is the GOI's war against the working class.

## Popular Sports In Rig Bug Republic

From A Correspondent

### অন্যক

সামাজিক-সাম্রাজ্যবাদ-বিরোধী সংখ্যা

পয়লা জুলাই প্রকাশিত হবে ॥ দাম তিনটাক

- বর্তমান সোভিয়েত দেশ কি সামাজিক?
- সামাজিক সাম্রাজ্যবাদের মতাদর্শগত পটভূমিকা ● রাষ্ট্রনৈতিক অভিব্যক্তি ● অর্থনৈতিক অভিব্যক্তি ● সাংস্কৃতিক অভিব্যক্তি
- সাম্রাজ্যবাদ বিরোধী লড়াই এবং সামাজিক সাম্রাজ্যবাদ ● সামাজিক সাম্রাজ্যবাদ বিরোধী কবিতাগুচ্ছ—এবং ● চীনের কমিউনিস্ট পার্টির মতাদর্শগত দলিল: "ফ্রুশ্চভের ভূয়া সাম্রাজ্যবাদ এবং হুনিয়ার কাছে তার শিক্ষা।"

অন্যক .। ১. কুলদ, রায় লেন

পোঃ খাগড়া ॥ মুর্শিদাবাদ জেলা

TRUE to its reputation of offering amusements gratis and purveying them for the pleasure of its neighbours, Bharyavart blasted an atom to entertain them. It announced all over that this was calculated to spread peace and solidarity among people far and near, and that this was the only way to forge friendships universally in the true spirit of non-violence and co-existence. But Sister Ida was astonished to see that the neighbours instead of clapping the show in admiration, went sullen. She announced, all undaunted, that perhaps this being her first attempt. Idaland had failed to produce the desired effect, but this would not deter her from perfecting the device through several such blasts which would certainly be more exciting. So the neighbours should be in no hurry to call it a damp squib. The performance would be improved

upon, given good neighbourly patience.

Nearer home, she found her favourites, Allen, Dickshit, Casey a little too worn out with neglect. When she asked them why they had been so glum for the last few days they barked in chorus: "Blasts for them, Bullets for us". Decoded, it meant: "You gave the neighbours nuclear device to entertain them, give us at least some new kind of bullets to play with".

Now this was something slightly out of the way, not that it was totally unexpected. But she told them to wait so she could deliberate. 'Hey presto', said Big Sis, and there appeared plastic bullets from her hair, of course made in a small country called Best Jermamy. Now here were bullets with which Allen, Casey and Dick could play, not among themselves in the first instance, but among the hungry marchers of Idaland.

The game required hundreds and thousands of men and women at a time, a variety of them, of all ages and both sexes. The rules appeared wee bit queer at first to the triad of pups, but repeated over All Ida Radio for the benefit of them all, they were soon amply clear to the two parties to the game.

They started playing with the pellets. They sprayed hundreds of people of Bharyavart at will with the newly acquired curiosity, paralysing so many at a time. This thrilled them, the sight of so many rendered paralysed in a jiffy. The more it thrilled them, the more they did it.

Then started trooping in her august presence the hoarders, adulterators, blackmarketeers, tax-evaders, smugglers, with their petitions. They had complained of nothing except the privilege she had granted to her favourites which was improper in democracy and invidious in socialism. Intelligent as she was, Sister Ida saw their point and granted them too the same charter to practise the sport of killing people through spurious drugs, illicit liquor, adulterated foodstuffs, artificial shortages and exorbitant prices. She instructed the police and judiciary to help these worthy pillars of Idaland enjoy their game. Idaland became littered with mortuaries. Her intelligence men fed her with the information that the games were extremely popular and everybody was happy, shouting huzzas for democracy and cheers for socialism. She was reassured that nobody in her country suffered from ennui, boredom, alienation etc. plaguing the West. Confirmed in her land's predilection for spirituality she exuded sang froid.

But the quinquennial national sports called Elections were being increasingly resented by the people. For, uncannily whichever way they voted they found a set of thugs repeatedly sweeping the polls. For a few years this was a source of amusement and wonder. But later the people tired of the trick and whispered doubts about the machines. They remonstrated, they questioned the dubious contraption which had fooled them all along. Those who were disgusted with the shady business ex-

pressed their disapprobation a little too audibly and were clamped in the jails. Some of them were secretly murdered. Some of them were mysteriously rendered destitute and fugitive. Sister Ida's liquidators (police) and leeches (minions) knew it to be a heresy to damn or doubt the demo(no)cracy she was presiding at and so-so-cialism that she was at pains to instal in Idaland. Being the daughter of Wah-Wah it was her historical duty to consummate what her illustrious father had initiated with blessings from the Maha. By the way, Maha, now forgotten, was the spiritual father of the nation. Wah-Wah was his famous political heir and disciple. If these names sound macabre, it was

not her fault. She was descended from the gods formerly resident in Ash-Mir.

She engaged an Indi writer Shikhandi Verma to coin slogans with meaning. But sometimes he hit upon gems like: "The lesser the happier." It meant that numbers were a disgrace. Canada, a vast country, had such a small population and that explained its riches and beauty. Let Idaland streamline her population to become a happy and strong nation. So, the Big Sis agreed, games like plastic bullets should be multiplied if people refused to play the Election Game, so that the nation grows strong against the external enemies lurking around.

### Clippings

## The Indira Brigade

...the (Indira) brigade and its affairs never roused any public interest. It was not even noticed until April last when bands of young men came out on the streets of Patna with Indira Brigade banners to counter the agitation launched by the Chhatra Sangharsha Samiti. They led torchlight processions and spun round the city in flag-bedecked taxis and scooter rickshaws, raising slogans against the "fascist agitation" led by Mr Narayan. These processions often ended at the residence of the Chief Minister, Mr Abdul Ghafoor, where they shouted slogans in praise of him. To the on-lookers it was abvious that all this was part of the big Congress plan to counter the J.P.-led agitation. It was obvious, too, that these Indira Brigade bands had come into a lot of funds from somewhere. Their processions over, bands of young "hoodlums" who could be described as students only euphemistically, crowded the posh bars and restaurants of the city. They were supplied liberally with "passes" for drinks and food, all their bills going to some "third party". It was openly talked about in the city that each volunteer got a daily allowance ranging between Rs. 50 and 100, on

top of all the food and drinks. The number of these volunteers could at no time have been more than a hundred and most of them were allegedly hired on a day-to-day basis.

Although the general public had no idea of the dangerous potential of these Indira Brigade personnel until the bomb blasts in the dak bungalow, some men in the Congress knew better. One dissident Congress leader, Mr Ram-lakhan Singh Yadav, claimed that he told a meeting held on May 23 at the residence of the Congress President in Delhi that three rooms had been reserved in the Patna dak bungalow in the names of Bihar Ministers and noted criminals had been brought in. "I had told them that revolvers and bombs had been kept in these rooms, that the hired goondas had turned the place into a den of corruption and debauchery and that an untoward incident could take place any day". Mr Yadav said he had also told Mr Shankar Dayal Sharma, Mr Dixit and others that the Indira Brigade too was composed of similar elements and that their nefarious activities were ruining the prestige of the Congress in Bihar.

(The Hindusthan Standard)

## Internal Colonialism: The Culture of Repression

SHUKLA

RARELY does a doctoral dissertation add these days very significantly to our stock of knowledge or recommend forthright measures towards solving problems. Nor are their writers necessarily knowledgeable. Nor, yet, have the agencies of the United Nations been putting out publications which are bold and lucid. Sociological studies are generally dense and drab. But "Peasant Rebellion in Latin America" by Gerrit Huizer (Pelican) is a notable exception. Its author has been active in the field for 24 years—in community development and peasant organization, as a volunteer in villages (Central America and Sicily) with the ILO in Latin America and S.E. Asia 'concentrating mainly on field-projects and action research'. Since 1971 Huizer has been visiting professor at the Institute of Social Studies at The Hague and research fellow at the Institute for Development Research in Copenhagen. These antecedents are valuable. The book includes a rich bibliography and suffers from no foot-notes and cross-references. (The Pelican title is an abridged version of his Ph.D. dissertation published, 1972, as The Revolution Potential of Peasants in Latin America, Lexington, Mass.) Its 162 pages make lively reading.

It should be read by the Bhoodanis, Trusteeship-pedlars, parliamentary addicts and constitutional faith-healers, and by all Indians (as the country is still described as agricultural) in view of these remarks by two Swedish sociologists in another timely study "Face to Face: Fascism and Revolution in India": India's democracy is not a democracy for the country's hungry majority. They have no control of their

future—that is decided by the few (p. 84). A man who is starving, whose tomorrow is dark and uncertain, who cannot read, whose economic life is in the hands of landowners, profiteers, and blackmarketeers, who cannot, in any real sense, influence the decisions that involve him—such a man is not free. Such a man is subject to lifelong violence. This description applies to the majority of India's populace (p.86). Kilvenmani, Monghyr, Itiahok, Banda, Taloda, Mushahri, Tebhanga, Telengana, Naxalbari emblazon the legend of our slavery, and the shame and despoliation of our peasantry.

The first three chapters deal with the Peasant Distrust in Latin America, its rationale, and its transformation, in Chile, into Effective Participation. Chapters 4 and 5 relate to the Peasant Organizations in Mexico, Bolivia, Venezuela, Peru, Brazil, Colombia and Guatemala, the two latter symbolising 'a case of illegitimacy and violence', and 'reform and counter-reform'. The 6th chapter is an anatomical study of the Peasant Organizations comprehending such topics as some common factors as conditions for effective peasant organizations, awareness of grievances and first steps, the role of leadership, urban support and regional organization, the demand for land and appropriate means of struggles: a process of escalation. The 7th chapter, lastly, as its contents show, analyses and formulates predictively the "Political Implications" and the Revolutionary Potential under the tell-tale titles of four sections: 1. The 'culture of repression' and illegitimacy. 2. Success and Neutralization of peasant organizations. 3. The creation of organizations from above: 'Populism' 4. Other factors promoting revolutionary potential.

### Object Lesson

The strategies employed by the Latin American Peasant Organizations and the vicissitudes suffered by these will prove an object lesson to the countries of the Third World. Valuable lessons can be learned from the experience of mistakes and frustrations inhering in them, and their pitfalls avoided. The defeats encountered in Latin America can pave the way for our victories. Of course, to pre-empt the landless and the lowly organizing themselves, noises against 'disruption' and 'violence' are being frequently made precisely by the same elements and classes in Indian society which are responsible for its degradation and disintegration. They have equated democracy with their exploitative sectarian interests. In this context, it is pertinent to point out that the rulers and opposition parties in India are complementarily working towards the preservation of the

## বিপ্লবের গান

চিন চিং মাই

চীনের বিপ্লবী উপন্যাস "বিপ্লবের গান" আবার (তৃতীয় সংস্করণ) প্রকাশিত হচ্ছে জুলাইয়ের শেষ সপ্তাহে। দাম : ৮ টাকা। যারা ৩১শে জুলাই '৭৪-এর মধ্যে ৬ টাকা পাঠিয়ে গ্রাহক তালিকাভুক্ত হবেন, তাঁরা ৬ টাকাতেই বইটি পাবেন।

টাকা পাঠাবার সময়ে (১) মানিঅর্ডার কুপনে স্পষ্ট করে নাম ও ঠিকানা লিখতে হবে; (২) বইটি হাতে নেবেন, না ডাকযোগে নেবেন, তা জানাতে হবে।

কলকাতা ও বহরমপুরে হাতে হাতে বই পাওয়া যাবে—অগ্রত্রে ভি. পি.তে বই পাঠানো হবে, এবং ডাকখরচ ক্রেতাকেই বহন কোরতে হবে।

পিপলস বুক এজেন্সি

১, কুলদা রায় লেন \* পো: ষাগড়া

মুর্শিদাবাদ জেলা



status quo. The hike in the pay of university and college teachers is a kind of Permanent Settlement with its attendant evils.

These thoughts are germane to an understanding of the parallelism, that strikes even a casual reader of this book, between the Latin American and Indian situations. Some of the findings listed in the Introduction are: The landowning elites usually spend their considerable earnings conspicuously and in ways highly detrimental to the national economies, rather than in a manner that would stimulate development. Only a radical change in the large-scale system would free the economic resources currently monopolized for personal consumption by this small privileged group; such a change would, at the same time, free the energies of the peasants to participate in a national development effort that would give them a just share in the benefits. It appears that the peasants can be mobilized quite well if the mobilization is to change the existing status quo for a system under which they can reasonably expect effective improvements. Only through the exercise of overt or covert repression of the peasantry was the hacienda (large-estate) system able to establish and maintain itself, creating for the peasants living under its sphere of influence what has been called the 'culture of repression' or 'internal colonialism'; changes were introduced into the village only piecemeal, and opportunities for more substantial change were purposely blocked by the landowners and the government agencies controlled by them. . . . peasant distrust can be one of the most important promoters of change and development if it is used as a force that brings peasants together in a common struggle in opposition to the traditional vested interests of landlords and other repressive forces. . . . Practically all situations existing at present in Latin America contain considerably revolutionary potential: 1. straightforwardly repressive regimes maintaining the status quo are increasingly considered to be illegitimate; 2. regimes that have neutralized a strongly organized peasantry are creating new frustrations. 3. 'populist' regimes

that try to introduce change but are not radical enough to satisfy basic peasant demands are creating uncertainty and high expectations with an explosive effect. The overall distrust and resentment among peasants under the traditional hacienda system, in addition to the frustrating effects of modernization, seem to make the peasants ready for militant organization as soon as they can find sympathetic and able allies to guide and support them.

Besides that monument of inanity, the Planning Commission, to go by its grandiose designation, we too had a Z. A. Ahmed Committee of Parliament which did report on the state of our agriculture. Which bird remembers what came of it?

The scattered and small-scale peasant resistance was bloodily repressed—as in India, so in Latin America. Peasants in 1898 helped a liberal government come to power in Bolivia. Then the promises of justice were forgotten, the peasant leader Zarate Willka was murdered and peasant armies overcome by the regular army. A system of servitude required that daughters be provided for the sexual pleasures of the landlord. The permanent threat of severe violence kept the peasantry, in the anthropologist Holmberg's phrase, in a 'culture of repression'. Rodolfo Stavenhagen calls the situation 'internal colonialism'. Tristeza (suffering) is the main quality of peasants' lives which makes for 'a climate of slumbering explosiveness'.

What about legal remedies? In Chile, in 1695, most of the law suits had been lost. . . through the incapacity of the comuneros (communal peasants) to pay lawyers and the courts traditionally tended to be on the side of the landed elite. . . there is little tradition of violence in Chile, and a greater respect for orderly procedure than in most other Latin American countries'. But, did it avail?

#### Mexican Struggle

The Mexican agrarian struggle and its fortunes are a veritable treasure of experience and guidance. Zapata who led the struggle was assassinated, but the struggle went on until 1934 when

President Cardenas started a mass programme of land distribution, supported by armed peasants. After his term was over in 1940 the peasant organizations grew ineffective as their leadership went over to, or went to, the landed elite, whatever gains were made, were possible because armed peasantry had played a crucial role. Zapata also hired a lawyer. But it proved long and fruitless. Then the peasants decided to occupy the disputed lands. Only after all legal means had failed. Zapata's troops had no uniform, and this helped a great deal. They, on seizing a town, would destroy the records of landownership. The armed peasants defended the lands which they had taken over when the federal forces came to throw them out. The landowners financed a press campaign describing this movement as bandolerism, banditry. How did urban workers behave? 'Their battalions helped P. Carranza in 1915 to combat the peasant armies'. And students? 'The students of the National School of Agriculture helped the land distribution programme'. Effective land distribution took place only where peasants were armed. Who were the 'white guards'? Bands of armed men who defended the landowners' interests by intimidating or terrorizing the peasants who organized the agrarian committees provided for by the law. The army's role? It joined the 'white guards' and assassinated the local leaders. And landowners? They hoped to avoid distribution of their lands by burning down the villages. In a matter of months over 2500 were murdered, for the offence of organizing the peasants. Land distribution, political organization and armed defence by peasants laid the foundation for the political stability Mexico has enjoyed since 1940. The rural militia had 60,000 men with arms, and half of them with horses, in 1940. At times the government seemed to have more confidence in it than in the regular army. Psychologically, possession of arms for the defence of their rights helped overcome their fear of the landowners and their allies. After 1940 the landowners were able to re-establish themselves in new forms, through co-opting government

technicians by bribery or other means. So, the Mexican Revolution has gone only half way.

In Bolivia in 1946 a reformist President, Villarroel, was assassinated as in our days Allende in Chile. Peasant protest after 1946 was met, by armed force. The intransigence of the landowners had apparently provoked a strong awakening of the peasants! But large-scale military intervention repressed the movements in various parts of the country. Once the peasants receive land through agrarian reform, they lose interest in promoting further revolutionary change in society as a whole. So they were used to combat the miners demanding fundamental changes.

Comparing Bolivia and Mexico, Huizer says that in neither country did peasants gain an influence in national policy-making which corresponded to their numerical force. Political power having been transferred from the traditional elite to the middle sector, the peasantry was neutralized as a political force. The break with the traditional system was much more drastic and immediate in Bolivia than in Mexico. This explains why the Bolivian reform did not provoke the violent struggle that swept Mexico for years. Therefore, in Mexico it took 50 years of ups and downs in agrarian reforms for most of the land to be distributed, in Bolivia the latifundia was de facto abolished in 1952-53 in a sweeping campaign lasting less than a year.

As to Venezuela, an unintended consequence of the government's policy of repression was an increased potential for militant organized action by the peasants. In Peru when peasants demanded a school, a teacher, first-aid box etc. the police came to dislodge them! Peasant mobilization became militant from the landlords' opposition. Violence escalated from police action and landowners' terror. In January 1963 hundreds of peasant leaders and lawyers were captured. Hugo Blanco was imprisoned for 25 years.

#### Poets and Singers

In North-East Brazil in 1956 the peasant leader Julias was imprisoned as

subversive for demanding agrarian reforms.

What role have artists and intellectuals assigned to themselves in such situations? In the process of identification and winning confidence, the well-known violeiros, popular and peasant poets and singers, played an important role. (Let us recall Chile's most popular singer and composer Victor Jara at this point. The junta arrested him, battered him into a mass of flesh, blood and bones, and then riddled his body with machine-gun-fire.) The first leader of Brazil peasants, Joas Pedro Teixeira was assassinated in 1962 by goondas employed by a landlord. Capangas, private policemen in landlords' service, were later fought back by the peasants. The Catholic Church organized peasant unions to counter the increasing and radicalizing influence of the Peasant Leagues. The coup of April 1964 reversed the situation and repression was let loose.

In Colombia 'the agrarian reform legislation' is related to unstructured peasant movements which were a reaction to the illegal practices, intransigence and violence of the landed elite. Illegal occupation of land by this elite covered 500,000 hectares. Law and police sided with the landowners. Peasant defence was branded as violence to launch repressive intervention of the police, army, private troops of the landowners. The liberal presidential candidate with leftist tendencies, Jorgan Eliecer Gaitan, was assassinated on April 1, 1948. Two to three million men were killed over ten years, and no benefits were gained for the peasantry, for the parliamentary Liberal and Conservative parties used the peasants to fight for their narrow interests.

Guatemala saw outside intervention when its reform laws started to become effective. The Catholic priests branded the movement 'communist' when it had 190,000 members. Landlord violence and vengeance continues there still.—And Guatemala is seething.

Terrifying, though true, that the effort to create representative peasant organizations could be undertaken only by persons willing to risk their lives, and that courts and rural labour autho-

rities were largely controlled by vested interests and decided only rarely in favour of the peasants. India partakes of this Latin American 'lawlessness'. So, the government, unable or unwilling to enforce the existing legislation in cases where it protects the peasants rather than the landlords is a strongly radicalizing stimulus in the rural areas.

On a crucial element of proletarianism Huizer says that while most industrial labour conflicts are solved in Latin America within a prevailing system, leaving the social structure of enterprises as such intact, solutions to the basic problems in rural areas can come about only through changes in the social structure. So, peasant organizations which focused only on wage increases or similar adjustments in the status quo were more liable to decay or were outstripped by more radical ones. Simple slogans 'Tierra y Libertad' (Land and Freedom) or 'Tierra o Muerte' (Land or Death) rally the peasants quicker.

#### Legalistic

Oddly, the peasants are too legalistic. They want the landlords to respect the laws as they do. But the law is ignored or interpreted in favour of the landlords who wield power. Conscientization, teaching and explaining, should go along with struggle. Most acts of violence related to the agrarian reform issue came from the landlords. And, 'alarmist publicity stimulates police or army intervention to be more, drastic than necessary' when peasants act to redress injustices. Institutionalized violence comes to the rescue of the 'culture of repression' and reinforces 'internal colonialism'. State coercion is ranged against the peasants. Whereas 'no cases are known...where landlords were persecuted for their former abuses or crimes after the power relationships had changed'.

Who will guide the peasantry? Urban allies. 'Practically all cases of peasant movements known to be strong have had such allies'. Fidel Castro, Julias, Hugo Blanco were by birth members of elite classes. Part of the strategy for promoting peasant organization might be directed towards increasing the num-

ber of dissidents among the traditional elites and its youth which finds self-esteem derived from personal effort potentially more satisfactory than status derived from inheritance and seigniorial life. The restlessness of youth and students in many countries is not unrelated to an attitude of protest against the traditional value-system which upholds the overall status quo, most sharply visible in the rural areas. Repressive regimes in Latin America are supported by the USA in the name of 'stability'. The academic circles agog with criticism of U.S. intervention and economic domination are the rallying points of protest. They have yet to relate to the agrarian agitation. There is a considerable gap between the urban intellectuals, the defecting young members of the upper classes and students on the one hand and the distrustful peasants on the other. A close link between them is feasible, says Huizer.

Frustration, radicalization and repression leading to greater radicalization seem to be a recurrent theme in Latin American peasant politics, says the author whom experience tells, 'it is clear that the more resistant the Latin American elites are to change, the more radical the demands of the peasantry—and their means of struggle—will become'.

One can well wonder when, and what, about India!

For-Frontier contact

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JUNE 29, 1974

## Artists of West Bengal—XI

SANDIP SARKAR

### Sunil Das

#### Biographical Notes:

1939 Born in Calcutta. 1956-60 Studied in Government Art College, Calcutta. 1961-63 in France on French Government scholarship for Fine Arts. Since the early sixties a member of the Society of Contemporary Artists. Awards: National Award, Lalit Kala Akademi (1959). Two awards from college (1960). Two awards from Calcutta University (1960). Gold Medal, Academy of Fine Arts, Calcutta (1960) and various awards from other Indian cities. He has averaged two group shows a year with the Society of Contemporary Artists in major Indian cities. One-man exhibition: 1959 Gauhati; 1959; '61, '62, '63 Paris; 1959, '66 (3 shows), '67, '68 (four shows), '69, '70 (two shows), '72 (two shows), Calcutta; 1963, '64, '65 (three shows), New Delhi; 1972 Rourkela; 1972 West Germany; 1973-74 exhibition touring major American cities. 1974 Transferred to Madras. He is married.

#### The Interview

Sunil has been in the limelight from the beginning of his career. While still in his second year he won the National Award from the Lalit Kala Akademi. Later on his agility as an artist, constant change of technique and content, diverse ways of using colour gave rise to a lot of controversy. His playful mood, his habit of shocking people and disregard of pictorial grammar, gimmicks done in mock seriousness angered many. He has always been methodical in making contacts and using critics, connoisseurs, gallery owners and dealers in a business like fashion. His whole approach to painting is very aggressive and professional. Without batting an eyelid he can be openly critical of art and artists. Sunil has something of a young man, perhaps of an adolescent or a dandy in him and this makes people accept or reject him outright. But he sees to it that they do not ignore him.

Sunil was waiting for me in his studio, ready with an album of photogra-

phic reproductions of his work, newspaper clippings and exhibition catalogues. He answered promptly and illustrated what he meant.

The main problem of modern Indian art is how to make oil colours into an Indian medium. Our tradition has taught us to paint frescoes, murals, miniatures and 'pots' but oil is a foreign material. Canvas, easel etc are all alien things. The tussle is how to get this foreign element into the body of our artistic tradition. It is like a heart transplant—the chance of rejection is quite high.

This process started almost as soon as the British came. The fate of the traditional art material was sealed once and for all. Since the forties of this century we have woken up to this truth. This awareness gave the artists of that decade a confidence. They understood that the days of wash etc were limited. They understood where to attack and how to approach. From the fifties onwards there was a distinct trend to adopt the Western style lock, stock and barrel. The artists of this decade believed that art had no international barriers and hence anything that vaguely reminded of things Indian was suspect. Art became imitative. From the sixties, however, one sees attempts to integrate the best of both traditions. Sunil decided that Indian content and sensibility would be his guide. The days for things like the Bengal School are over. Artists are now challenged to spell out their individuality. Self-expression in an Indian fashion is the goal.

"You see, I am not a painter, but an artist. I change my style, composition and content frequently. The painter puts out feelers in his painting and tries to discover what attracts the buyers to his painting. Having once determined that, he sticks to it. He becomes repetitive. The artist is a man who is willing to risk his neck. I drew horses and bulls and they sold, well I could have stuck to them. I claim that I am an artist because I renew myself constantly.

"The artist is an innovator. Most painters get bogged down in current fashions. Take Indian surrealism for instance. From Salvador Dali to Rabin-dranath Tagore there have been great

personalities who were surrealists. Many followed. Indian buyers are interested in it because it has dramatic illusion. The painters are interested because they get away with bad drawing, misuse of oils, lack of basics. The basic problem is how to enchant the viewers in a very Indian way.

### His Art

Sunil's art reveals his restlessness. He was exposed to the ancient and modern masters of Europe at a very early age. From the very beginning of his career he had proved to be different. His drawings of horses and bulls were robust. The linear flow was sure and rhythmic but there was inherent artistic restraint even where he had been very eloquent. These drawings were realistic in a way, but there was something very romantic and symbolic about them.

A prolific painter, he works himself harder and harder, as if some slave-driver is pushing him on. In his world of pictorial values, pure aesthetics—if such a purity is possible—reigns supreme. At times he has been attracted by Indian folk culture. He has been taken in by obscure tantric symbols, 'kantha', 'alpna', folk motifs and religious objects. Yet international exposure forces him to search for an Indian identity.

He can handle large canvases with confidence and skill. There is a sleek professional competence in his work. He might stick a bit of glass, or some alien object on the canvas just for the effect, or paint a reclining woman with an open vagina from the front use some obscure religious cultic object, or juxtapose monsters with many eyes or limbs as an exercise in calming the aggressive or erotic side of his nature. He sometimes paints snakes, uses totems, arrows, phallus, designs found in horoscopes in an attempt to give his painting an Indian character. There is a grim and eerie element that effects the viewer's interior. Sometimes some banal motif can become an obsession with him, but one somehow feels that the artist in him is at helm most often than not.

He takes the canvas as a flat area but is ready to make variegated and multi-dimensional dents where necessary.

## Old Calcutta

SANDIP SARKAR

THERE was an interesting exhibition of prints, paintings and various things on view at the little known Subhom Gallery, Russell Street. It almost physically pushed one back to an altogether different period and one saw a marshy swamp become a colonial capital with the usual tall buildings, large

His colours, whether smooth or thick, have a complex texture and this allows light to filter through when necessary, but gives air no chance to penetrate. There is a rawness and robustness in his use of colours. He distributes area throughout the canvas. His search for formal purity, his apparent syncretism while trying to work out a synthesis, has a sort of elegance. In his own way he has been able to paint the anger, frustration, love, hate and aggression inherent in contemporary life. He has been attracted by the art of men from prehistoric times to the most recent avant-garde movements and has tried to integrate this into his work. He dares where most others are hesitant and cautious, experiments where others choose a cloistered life. Although he still lacks the integrity that is the gift of mature years, he has unlimited potential. He manifests the symptoms of an age which, rocked by social and historical upheavals throws up diverse opinions and philosophies demanding absolute loyalty. In such a situation the forlorn artist genuflects, gesticulates and does strange mimes in a ritualistic fashion in an effort to get even with a society which rejects and exiles him. The historical situation of a society in travail is vaguely understood by the artist, or even misunderstood as having no meaning. The communication gap that this creates makes the viewer reject the artist as fake, while for the artist the viewer becomes an arch philistine. The total personal, creative and social situation becomes relatively meaningless for the artist and he presumes that his work, and all artistic work, is outside time.

offices, soldiers in their finery and foreign ships alongside Indian boats becoming a part of the landscape. It made you aware not only of the change in manners and customs but also in the use of garments and hair styles. One does not find Bengalis using purgrees these days or wearing thick pigtailed on shaved foreheads.

The bowls, jars, cut-glass inkpots, several types of pre-electricity table lamps, the kantha with quaint folk motives and the baluchari saris with exquisite designs gave glimpses of the past.

The lithographs depicting a fairly representative sample of every segment of society were historically interesting. There were the Rule Britannia Sahibs who had not given up the 'Indian Smoking Machine' which could be a simple hookka or an elaborate gorgorah costing anything between a few shillings and over £100. They were in the habit of patronising natives from whom they expected a polite salaam. Their houses were crowded with servants who occasionally had to face the temper of the memshahib. They rode horses, built stately buildings, came to see native festivals and held military parades on august occasions. Chowringhee and Dalhousie looked different and one can guess that the city had more men than women from the beginning. There were various kinds of palanquins and some resembled a sedan chair while a first-class compartment had a divan underneath and a bunk on top, with a curtain separating the toilet which had a very old-fashioned wash-stand. The rich traveller lolled on the bunk smoking the gorgorah while his servants prepared meals on the floor. Festivals had peculiarities. Charak was not overcrowded. Durga had four hands and rode a peacock which then rode a lion.

The Indians worked at various jobs, bathed in the Ganga, rowed boats while the more fortunate sought the patronage of some sahibs, performed pujas on a large scale. Their erotic life was well preserved in some of the very fine Kalighat pots on view. One wonders whether the portraits of voluptuous baijis were used as pin-ups. These pots are

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very simple with vibrant lines binding the colours, vivid drawings and disarmingly naive stylisation.

Every exhibit was a challenge to our imagination to understand and re-create the whole social history of the period.

## Letters

### "Secret Meeting"

One Mr S. K. Ghosh, while exposing the 'secret' of the 'secret meetings' says (June 15, 1974): "These secret meetings are organised by the agents of the police" and refers to such a meeting at Muhammad Ali Park held 'about a year or so ago' where many extremists were arrested. Unfortunately, this gentleman, wittingly or unwittingly, is dancing to the tune of the political police.

Together with different student and trade union organisations, I was one of the organisers of the meeting at Muhammad Ali Park. This proposed rally was scheduled for November 24, 1972 to commemorate the October Revolution. The notice of the rally and procession had been sent to all the Bengali dailies. As such, there was no secrecy about it. But I was arrested along with 168 others.

The political police, in their zeal to stifle the democratic movements led by the revolutionaries, invent 'secrecy' and 'conspiracy' in democratic movements. There is a political conspiracy also. Taking advantage of the sectarianism of a section of revolutionaries, the political police, by this method, try to provoke the revolutionaries into conspiratorial methods only.

It appears that Mr S. K. Ghosh has fallen victim to this political conspiracy of the political police of the establishment.

MONI GUHA  
Calcutta

### Once in, Never Out

My son, Bharatjyoti Raychaudhury, was arrested at Durgapur on 13-11-73 in a false charge and discharged by the trying court of Durgapur. He was not set free but sent to Birbhum. He is now in the District Jail, Suri, as an undertrial prisoner. The police started four cases against him under several police stations of Birbhum. After four months bail petition was granted one by one for all the four cases. But the police filed another case on the very date the last bail petition was granted.

PRODHYOT KR. RAYCHAUDHURY  
Sheoraphuli, Howrah

### Torture Of Women

Torture of women prisoners of Presidency Jail by the police officers at Lalbazar thana has come to light. "Satyayug" of 17.6.74 reported that eight women Naxalite prisoners, seven of them young girls and one an old woman of 60, are brought from the jail to the thana every month for interrogation. They are taken to an underground chamber where they are undressed and then burning cigarettes are pressed on their necks, breasts, abdomen and other delicate parts of their body. Sometimes even an iron rod is pushed into their anus. When the victims become senseless, they are loaded into a police van and carried back to the jail. The girls lie there 'unconscious'. They are brought to Lalbazar again after a month and the same thing is repeated.

What are the left parties doing? Can they not combine on this issue and trigger a mass movement throughout the country? Illustrated booklets describing these activities inside prisons should be published and distributed among responsible people in India and abroad to show what is happening in the largest democracy of the world where, according to Brezhnev, everything is fine. Let people rise and bring this anti-people government to the dock. Let revolutionaries take note of the names of those sadist police officers who are responsible for this crime against hu-

manity so that they may be punished in due course. The day of reckoning is not as far off as the fascist rulers imagine.

Rabin Roy  
Calcutta

### Court Trials

In trials of murder and other cases in West Bengal in which Naxalites have been falsely implicated the resources of the State and the privileges of the police are being used to oppress the accused as well as their families.

The police in every such case are procuring a large number of false witnesses by dubious means with the help of cadres of the ruling party as well as abusing the processes of law. The police are also procuring false approvers by these means.

In the Nepal Roy murder case the police have procured an approver against whom, according to the case records, there were as many as 12 criminal cases started by the police including some murder cases. He will be discharged from these perhaps as soon as the hearing of the Nepal Roy murder case is concluded and some innocent men are convicted on his evidence.

A similar performance of procuring an approver by the police is in progress in the Hemanta Bose murder case.

The performance of the judges and magistrates varies.

In the K. L. Roy murder case the hearing, including the recording of the evidence of 58 witnesses, was concluded within 32 working days. In the Ajit Biswas murder case it took the court a much longer period. In the Nepal Roy murder case only 16 witnesses had been examined till May 17, 1974 in 45 working days.

The deliberately prolonged hearing makes it impossible for any accused to defend himself at his own cost and he has either to go undefended or State lawyers have to be engaged to defend them. Quite naturally these lawyers are responsible only to the State from which they get their fees and they are beyond the control of the accused or

their friends and relatives. The result is reckless cross-examination and consequent conviction of the innocent falsely implicated by the police.

The judge who passed life sentences on three accused persons in the K. L. Roy murder case, on the meagre evidence of two chance witnesses, has been promoted to the office of the inspecting Judge of the Calcutta High Court. R. P. Sinha  
Calcutta

**Solidarity**

We have learned that political prisoners in various Indian jails are on a hunger-strike since May 17th, 1974. We declare our solidarity with this hunger-strike. With the strikers we protest against torture, denial of medical treatment, denial of visits and the complete lack of freedom of information, which is significant for the situation of political prisoners in Indian jails. With the strikers we protest against the arrests which are made at random on the basis of MISA and D.I.R., which have brought the number of political prisoners in India up to more than 20,000 not counting those arrested in the course of the rail workers strike.

For den Vorstard  
M. Peiseler  
Association of Junior Barristers,  
Gerichtreferender  
South Western Germany,  
Heidelberg

\*The hunger-strike was withdrawn after 28 days.

**Threat To Journal**

**Part I**

"Janatar Mukh", the fortnightly journal of Santipur, is again the target of the Local Youth Congress. On June 23, these people broke up the seventh annual conference of the Nadia district unit of the West Bengal State Electricity Board Workmen, made a bonfire of "Janatar Mukh" there, went in procession and threatened the press workers, editorial board and readers of the journal, saying that it would not be allowed to come out. The police were nowhere to be seen.

Mikir Khan,  
Editor, "Janatar Mukh"  
Santipur.

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61, MOTT LANE, CALCUTTA-13

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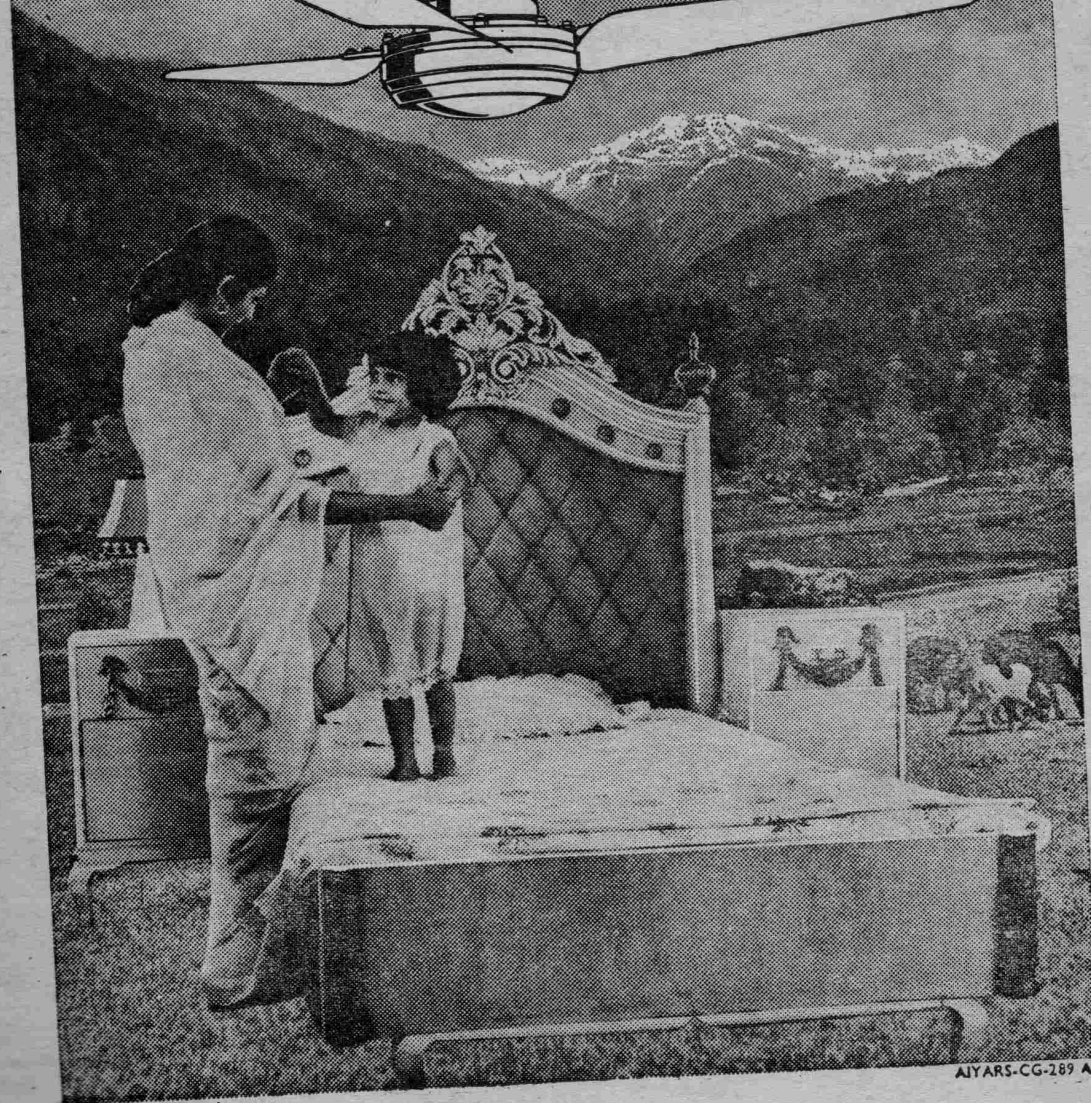
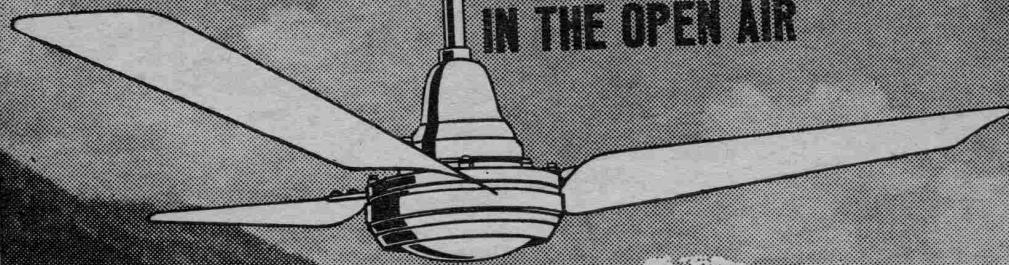
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Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers of India under R.N.16516/68

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