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THE WAGES OF LABOUR

THE two so-called anti-inflationary ordinances promulgated last week have laid bare some basic truths about our socialist Government more glaringly than anything else in the past. First, the measures relating to wages and dearness allowance confirm that New Delhi has chosen labour as the target of its attack presumably because it holds—quite naturally with its class structure—the working class to be the villain of the piece. This line of thinking became obvious during the railwaymen's strike which was broken by a most unabashed display of brutal police power. The measures now being taken—impounding of all wage increases during the next one year and half of the additional dearness allowance for the next two years—are bound to please the tycoons who have been prodding the Government to teach the labourers a lesson as they themselves monopolise all the good things of life with all their cache of black money which has gone unscratched. Secondly, the ceiling on profits and dividends has been kept so liberally high that it would hardly affect most of the companies; in any case, none of them are so foolish as to show all their incomes in the balance-sheet and they have all the means in the world to draw up their accounts just the way they like it best. Thirdly, for all the thunder that the ordinances make, they clearly show the limitations from which the Government so plainly suffers. The press note does not make any reference to price freeze, even at the manufacturers' level. But without some check on price hikes, any semblance of control on wage rises becomes obnoxious and positively inequitable. But then New Delhi cannot pretend to be unaware either that with its fiat flouted by big business with a disdainful casualness and with its corrupt bureaucracy, there is just no question of putting prices in a straitjacket.

So what the Government has done is to take the line of least resistance. Anything else would have been surprising. But it should at least have the honesty to admit its inability and not try to project its half-hearted steps as representing the acme of radicalism or the height of its ingenuity. But still New Delhi has done a clever thing. The payments for the impounded wages will start by the middle of next year or about seven to eight months before the next parliamentary general election, due in early 1976. All this will be a kind of election gift from the ruling Congress party and should be accepted by the labourers in the spirit that it is intended—as a bribe for voting the party. If releasing all these funds at a time will only aggravate the inflation further—

in other words if it means that we would have the worst inflation over the next couple of years instead of right now—that has to be viewed as part of the game.

Playing With Commission

Mr Siddhartha Ray has shifted his stand so many times and so frequently over the proposed commission of inquiry to go into allegations of ministerial corruption in West Bengal that it is difficult to take any of his statements as definitive. His sudden announcement that a commission of inquiry is being appointed was primarily designed to silence his quarrelling partymen none of whom may have reasons to be happy over the prospects of an impartial and thorough probe. He had reckoned that after the announcement, Congressmen would stop accusing one another of corruption and no non-Congressman will come forward with specific allegations knowing that a stunt is a stunt is a stunt. His calculation has gone awry. Though Mr Ray's reputation as a great one for political and administrative gimmicks and stunts is well established, a few people decided to make him prisoner of his promise. They did file specific complaints, closing Mr Ray's option not to appoint the commission. On a scrutiny of 130 complaints received Mr Wanchoo, who will constitute the commission of inquiry (if it comes off), has reported that 10 of them called for an inquiry. The first round has gone against the Chief Minister can he avoid appointing the commission?

Mr Ray fell back on his second line of defence. He undertook a re-scrutiny of the petitions to find out if the complaints that Mr Wanchoo thought needed a probe were based on facts. One should have thought that this was the precise purpose for which the commission was meant. The lawyer Chief Minister put forward a characteristically unbright argument in support of his bid to usurp the commission's powers. He said that if there was an allegation

against him that he had received Rs. 5,000 from an organisation for making a government grant of Rs. 30,000 to it, it was incumbent on the Government to find out if the grant was made at all before referring the matter to the commission. If government records showed that no grant to the organisation had been made, it would be proof conclusive that no bribe was taken; in that event, the allegation would not be sent to the commission. Who is he trying to fob off? Is it not possible for a person to accept a bribe and refuse to carry out his part of the contract? Or for that matter, promise a licence for a consideration where no licence is required? A corrupt person can also be a cheat and a fraud, and the Chief Minister's suggestion that no honourable Minister is capable of accepting a bribe without paying the bribe giver something in return is untenable. In fact, graft cases come out only if the briber or the bribed fails to carry out his part of the deal. When both honour their commitments, no occasion arises for exposure. Corruption, like mercy, is twice blessed; it allegations in the State secretariat and takes.

Mr Ray's rearguard action is aimed at removing from the purview of the commission as many of the allegations as possible, at least the most serious of them. In asking Mr Wanchoo to scan the allegations to find out if any of them made out a prima facie case for inquiry by a commission to be headed by him, the Chief Minister is alleged to have deliberately inducted a legal flaw in the procedure which may stultify the commission if its appointment is questioned in a court of law. Despite this hurdle if appointment of the commission cannot be avoided, Mr Ray is ensuring that no tenable charge of ministerial corruption goes before the commission. He and his Cabinet have arrogated to themselves the powers of an appellate tribunal competent to review the recommendations of a former Chief Justice of India. It is natural, in the circumstances, that suspicion should spread that at some stage between the receipt of the allegations in the State secretariat and the handing over of them to Mr Wanchoo the really serious petitions had vanished,

that contrary to published reports and Mr Ray's assurance, Mr Wanchoo is not the person who performed the opening ceremony of the complaints. It is clear that if any case of ministerial corruption goes before the commission, it will be one of the minor lapses and that too against a Minister Mr Ray wants to get rid of. Mr Ray has the constitutional right as Chief Minister to remove from the Cabinet anyone he likes, that is, dislikes; but he does not have the political power to do it as leader of a group of self-seeking, quarrelsome, unprincipled men who go by the name of the Congress party in this State, as in other States. He may therefore utilise the commission to that end. Mr Ray cannot afford an impartial probe into ministerial corruption nor can any other Chief Minister. For a probe in one State will provoke demand for a similar inquiry in another, and the chain reaction may logically end up in a demand for a probe into the allegations over the Nagarwala or the Maruti case.

Disenchanted Frontiers

The Chogyal has given his assent to the 'Constitution' Bill which reduces him to a titular head and confers on the India-nominated Chief Executive powers which a modern Chogyal Khan would envy! The CE, in practice, would be head of state, governor and chief minister rolled into one. The march of democracy has been such that the Assembly will have no say in home affairs, finance and establishment and the powers of the Council of Ministers will be so limited that two members of the Sikkim went on a protest hunger-strike when the constitution was disclosed. The CE can use his financial veto to negate even the powers transferred to the Assembly in other fields and also any recommendation of the Council of Ministers if he thinks that it conflicts with his special responsibility to "ensure the enjoyment of basic right" by all sections of the populace, or some such thing. If this is not making a colony of Sikkim, what is? It is a wonder of wonders that the 'progressive' Sikkim

Congress, headed by Kazi Lhendup Dorzi, is an active supporter of the sweeping powers of the Chief Executive. Or is it so surprising?

The loyalists in Sikkim are confined to the Bhutia-Lepcha community, reduced to a minority of about 25 per cent in course of time by the influx of Nepali settlers who constitute the dominant force in the Sikkim Congress. Deprived of economic and other opportunities by the ruling clique and Indian exploiters, the Nepalis have developed little loyalty to the concept of a separate entity for Sikkim, on which the Chogyal now harps. They look out to India, to Darjeeling district, where there is a large Nepali population, as their nexus—for the time being. Hamstrung in the small State, they want greater opportunities of employment, trade and commerce outside. Hence, perhaps, the clause in the June 20 Bill, asking for Sikkimese representation and participation in Indian political and economic institutions. This suits India well.

The Bhutia-Lepcha minority and the Nepalis seldom came together for a common cause, except in the last elections, and elections, we all know, can fool people. In any case, the Nepalese majority was bound to win. It can now develop greater longings for India, which the Bhutias and Lepchas cannot for Tibet.

Tibet? Now that Sikkim will have a brand new ministry under the all-powerful umbrella of the Indian Executive, officials in New Delhi are referring to the danger that was being posed by pro-China elements trying to infiltrate the administration and parties in Sikkim. The danger is now over. At least until the time it suits the Government of India to talk about it again.

The King of Bhutan will ponder over the lesson of Sikkim. Darjeeling district Nepalis have had a shot in the arm. Whether there will come a time when they will begin to think of autonomy within a State which will merge Sikkim and Darjeeling district is a matter of speculation.

A digression. India has been tough with the Chogyal, is reticent in Bhutan (not much is now heard about the conspiracy against the ruler hatched by

the Dalai Lama's brother who resides in India and who was said to have been involved in raids on Tibet across Bhutan) and is being rather soft to Sheikh Abdullah of Kashmir. This is putting the border States in order. The May 18 explosion of a nuclear device has kept alive the tension with Pakistan, and Bangladesh has followed suit in making it clear that it cannot be nice to Pakistan, unless Pakistan is nice to India. The heartland of the subcontinent remains disturbed. In New Delhi very knowledgeable officials keep quiet, with a knowing look, when pressed to answer why the emergency should continue. Some newly married army officers are being transferred to forward zones. The railway workers have been smashed and a wage freeze, under another name, is being introduced. Scores of 'extremists' are being arrested and many being killed, as in 1971, that year of peace when Mrs Gandhi thought of the Buddha and asked her nuclear scientists to go ahead with preparations for the blast. Is something going to happen again this year? Unlikely. Between Russia and China? Unlikely, etween Russia and China? Likely, thinks Neville Maxwell. There's the rub. Under the friendship treaty, we will get involved.

Another Hoax 81

While the country's economy is fast facing ruination, the Congress rulers play one hoax after another on the people. One such is the Presidential Ordinance under which blackmarketeers, hoarders and profiteers, it is said, will be liable for prosecution by summary trial. One of its provisions is the raising of the maximum term of imprisonment from five to seven years. Was it the absence of such a provision or of such an ordinance that was preventing the Congress rulers from acting stringently against blackmarketeers, hoarders and profiteers? Apart from other laws which can be effectively used, and are being misused against the working people, there was already the provision for a maximum imprisonment of five years. What blackmarketeer, profiteer or hoarder has

so far been sent to jail for five years in this country? In West Bengal there was the report that people detained for economic offences under the MISA got out of jail even before their detention terms expired. And for every blackmarketeer roped and paraded in the streets, thousands sit smugly amidst their hoards, sure of official protection.

The fact is that the Congress rulers had all the powers without the new ordinance, if they had the will to act. They just do not have that will because the offenders are flesh of their flesh and blood of their blood. So, instead of stringent action, we have the ordinance hoax. Two recent press reports are worthy of note in this context. One from Chandigarh dated June 24 said that after "the fixation of the price of wheat exportable by the wholesalers from Haryana and other surplus States to the deficit areas at Rs. 150 per quintal... the daily arrivals of wheat which were around 10,000 quintals per day before the fixation of export price have now come down to 3,500 quintals". Obviously, the wheat is there with the landlords and wholesalers and they are smuggling it out to the deficit States at fancy prices. The report is dated two days after the Presidential ordinance was promulgated. The Haryana Government which was reported to have strongly moved again the price fixation, finds itself unable to do anything in the matter.

The second report is from Delhi where there was a so-called "crackdown" on steel hoarders recently. The "Hindustan Times" (June 23) reports, "Another curious aspect of the entire episode is that despite the seizure of alleged hoarded steel worth several lakhs, the authorities have not invoked MISA".

There you are. MISA is for railwaymen and other working people.

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In China Again

HEMANGO BISWAS

AS we move around in China, we find that this country of 800 millions is being rocked by the "Phi Lin, Phi Kung" (criticise-Lin criticise Confucius) campaign.

When I first came to China, in the summer of 1957, the entire country was in the grip of the 'Great Debate'—"To Pien Lung" as they called it. The subject of the debate was 'the socialist road' versus the capitalist road. Chairman Mao's thesis, 'contradiction among the people and how to solve it', set the tune of the debate. But what then in the beginning promised to be, in the words of Mao Tse-tung, a 'mild breeze' of mass criticism of the bureaucracy of the Party and Government functionaries, grew into a whirlwind. The rightists led by Lo Lung Chi, Chang Po Chuin and Chang Nai Chi, the three Ministers belonging to the Democratic Party, taking the opportunity of the mass criticism, challenged the very basis of the socialist State—the proletarian dictatorship—and openly campaigned for bourgeois parliamentarism. Some of the party functionaries, university teachers and students and intellectuals joined them. Among them were some well-known party writers like Ting Ling and Feng Shie Fong.

The antagonistic contradictions were thus brought to the foreground. The masses were on the move. The 'Jeng Fung Yuntung' or the Rectification Campaign" started. I had the unique opportunity of seeing what "mass line" means in practice. In factories, fields, offices, schools and even in hospitals, tumultuous debates were going on for months and millions participated. A new mass medium known as "Da tse Pao", the 'Big character posters' in colour and calligraphic artistry, were to be seen everywhere.

In a great battle between two lines lasting for almost a year, the socialist-roaders came out victorious with no blood flowing and no heads rolling on the battlefield.

The storm of ideological battle brought in its trail a rich harvest. The 'Ta Yao

Chin' or Big Leap Forward', the 'Chung lu Shien'—the 'General line of Socialist Construction'—and closely following that came the 'Renmin Kungshe'—the "people's commune". These are known in China as 'Three Red Flags'. During my long stay in China I had the rare opportunity to see at close quarters the three 'Red Flags' being unfurled by the people, though it was extremely difficult for me to follow all the events and realise their significance. The infusion of a new revolutionary spirit in socialist construction was done by what they called the 'Hsishiung Jiefang'—the 'Liberation of the mind'. It is in the light of this process of 'liberation of the mind', that we have to try to understand the significance of the present 'criticise Lin criticise Confucius' campaign that seems to have spurred on China to a new stage of the Cultural Revolution. Before I left China, in the middle of 1959, I had the idea that now the storm was over and socialist construction will have a smooth sailing. My talks covering nearly six hours with Li Moh Han, the then deputy propaganda chief of the CPC, gave me this impression, when he explained to me the four stages of the Rectification Campaign that concluded by the end of 1958.

Fiercer Storm

Little could I imagine that a much bigger and fiercer storm "Wenhua Ta Goming"—the Great Cultural Revolution—was to come which would sweep away Lin Moh Han along with his chief Chon Yang, who was implementing Liu Shao-chi's line in the cultural field. It was fiercer because the Rectification Campaign was directed against the rightists outside the party, but the Cultural Revolution was directed against the bourgeois headquarters within the party! The question of wresting power from the hands of the capitalist-roaders occupying the top positions in the party and the Government, was posed before the cadres, workers and the masses in general. The student rebels started the process and

the workers took it up; and in the famous "1967 January storm" in Shanghai workers setting up Revolutionary Committees set the pattern of seizing power from the revisionists within the party and the Government. But that was not the end but a phase of the Cultural Revolution. With the Lin Piao affair the revolution has passed on to a deeper and more thorough-going stage.

The criticise-Lin-criticise Confucius campaign is the unerring indication of that stage. The Cultural Revolution is on, though the dramatic phase of the 1967 days is not there.

An unknown student, Nieh Yuan-tzu of Peking University putting up a big character poster in May 1966 criticising Lu Ping—the then vice-chancellor of the university, first blazed the trail of the Great Cultural Revolution.

In January this year a 'nonentity'—a young teacher of Tun San University, Canton—Prof Yang Rung Kuo writing an article in a monthly criticising Lin Piao as a follower of Confucius, sparked the fire that is blazing the path of a deeper and more thoroughgoing revolutionary thinking in China today. Wherever we go, in communes, factories schools, hospitals, even in kindergartens we see cartoons of Lin Piao and Confucius along with the 'Da tse Pao'. But this time the character of the "Big character poster" has changed. The Chinese characters are not so big and their number is not so numerous as before—they are not just posters, they are like short articles on wallpapers, far deeper in content. The ancient history of China is being churned out in the light of the struggle against the ideas of Lin Piao.

A newcomer to China reads in journals published in foreign languages innumerable articles about how Lin Piao preached the Confucian precept "Restrain yourself and return to rites" and the Confucian "doctrine of the mean" and thereby wanted to thwart Mao Tse-tung's revolutionary line of socialist construction and restore capitalism. All this may appear to the newcomer as an exercise in metaphysics. But when a factory vice-chairman of the revolutionary committee reports: how can 'criticise-Lin criticise Confucius' campaign is boosting

production—it becomes all the more perplexing.

It is easy to follow a grandma nearing 80 in a people's commune we visited when she after telling us how she lived as a landlord's cook, said, "you know Confucius laid down for us, the womenfolk, three stages of dependence: on father, husband and son. Lin Piao by opposing Chairman Mao also wanted us to go back to the old society where we were no better than slaves".

But the claim that the criticise Lin-criticise-Confucius campaign is boosting production, research work, innovations etc. remained the most difficult and complex subject for us to study during our tour. I asked Comrade Lu of the Revolutionary Committee of the Machinery Plant No 2 of Peking, after he gave us some impressive figures of the growth of production in that factory, as to how the campaign helped them in stepping up production. What he said in reply can be summed up thus: Confucius believed in the wisdom of the few and according to him only the highest who are wise will rule over the toiling masses who are basically stupid. Confucius despised productive labour. The Lin Piao line of thinking also has its roots in Confucianism. He also believed in the 'innate genius' of a class of men—technicians, engineers, scientists and not in the creative genius of the masses. He and Liu Shao-chi opposed Mao Tse-tung's revolutionary mass line and through their theoretical, educational and cultural policy wanted to build up an elite who will guide the masses. If our workers are to be imbued with such poisonous ideas, they will lose their initiative for socialist construction and technical innovations. Workers fighting consciously against the Confucius line advocated by Lin Piao are arming themselves to make further achievements in their great task of socialist construction. Comrade Lu concluded his explanation by saying that by preaching Confucian ideas of 'restrain yourself and return to the rites', Lin Piao intended to facilitate the restoration of capitalism in China.

The fear of restoration of capitalism, Khrushchev-Brezhnev style, seems to be the clan vital of the entire Chinese na-

tion. From Peking University down to the kindergarten school in Darien that we visited, the new educational reforms putting proletarian politics in command was explained to us as intended to train up a new generation with new proletarian psychology and mental make-up which will be the surest guarantee against capitalist restoration.

Aggression

With this fear of internal subversion has combined the fear of external aggression, particularly of "She hue tiko Chuyi" social imperialism. For them social-imperialism is not a polemical subject but a stark reality. In Ansan, Darien and Tientsin workers of the different machinery plants gave concrete instances of how after the rise of Khrushchev there were systematic attempts to thwart China's socialist construction, how they refused to supply vital machines stipulated in the contracts, how the blue-prints were taken away by the experts when they were suddenly withdrawn.

The other side of this picture was the magnificent rallying of the workers, cadres and technicians under the guidance of Mao Tse-tung's line of 'Self-reliance and hard labour' and the inventing of machines and completing half-done projects in a way that was beyond the imagination of Khrushchev and his entourage. For instance, when Soviet revisionists refused to supply 2000 h.p. diesel engine parts to the Ansan Diesel Engine Plant, the workers, technicians and cadres after hard labour brought out diesel engines all on their own. Comrade Lin Wei, vice-director of the plant, told us at length about the many attempts of the Soviet revisionists to sabotage this plant and added with pride that from July next this plant would start producing 4000 h.p. engines in place of 2000 h.p.

Having failed to subvert China economically the social imperialists tried subversion through Liu Shao-shi and Lin Piao, but here also they have failed. Now they are massing troops on the Chinese border and encircling China has become the main thrust of their foreign policy—that is how every Chinese feels today. That is why they have so seri-

ously and energetically responded to the call of Chairman Mao: "Be prepared against war, be prepared against national disasters—and dig tunnels deep, store grain everywhere and never seek hegemony".

One has to see to believe how the Chinese people in every city are digging underground tunnels. They are not just air defence shelters. The one we visited at Peking which is 270 metres in length 80 metres below the surface, has all arrangements for water supply, ventilation, electric supply, protection against poisonous gas, storehouse, kitchen, first aid and a spacious reception room. But the one we saw at Darien—it has been dug out under a hillock—is astounding. It is 100 metres below the surface with a big storehouse and market-place which sells all the daily necessities. It has a big kitchen and a dining hall with accommodation for nearly 400 people at a time. It can accommodate 10 thousand tons of commodities. It is equipped with a heating system and a modern air distillation system as a protection against poisonous gas.

The most significant point about them is that all these underground tunnels are being done by "Lao dung"—'voluntary labour', one of the most sacred terms in China today. The fantastic amount of earth that is being dug out for these underground tunnels will perhaps go to make another Great Wall—which will be impregnable.

The "Transform the Hills, Transform the Rivers" slogan is also driving the Chinese masses on in the "Foolish Old Man" spirit—to move mountains just as the 'Red Flag Canal' or the 'Ta chai' on the Tai Hang mountains. This spirit of moving mountains is the result of the 'liberation of the mind' effected by the Cultural Revolution which through the criticise-Lin-criticise Confucius campaign has reached a higher stage. This revolution, according to the Chinese people, is a "Puh-Toan Goming", "uninterrupted Revolution".

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On The Problems Of Unification

WE, the organising comrades of two different CPI(ML) factions working in different districts of West Bengal, held a meeting on 17.6.1974, and discussed the problems of unification of the Party and of other revolutionary forces in the present situation. We have come to this unanimous decision:

1. Just after the Party Congress in 1970 the struggle between the two lines gradually gained momentum and by 1972-73 took a wide shape. But now at all levels of the party, i.e. within the total leadership and within the broadest majority of the cadres, a unity of thinking has been achieved.

(a) That just as the CPI(ML) has made positive contributions in the context of the Indian revolution, it is also responsible for the nationwide setback, mainly because of its left-sectarian deviations. (We are not repeating the discussions going on as to the causes of these deviations. What we need to say is that, in our opinion, no particular leader or individual is solely responsible for these deviations. On the contrary, the total leadership is more or less responsible, and the cadres also cannot deny their responsibility).

(b) Almost all of us are convinced that the CPI(ML) must take the responsibility to lead the Indian revolution by correcting its deviations. It must be made the unity centre of all revolutionary forces.

(c) There is no basic difference of opinion on the question of what were the errors, and what should be the right programme after correcting the errors. That is, on this question unity has been achieved in the main in regard to the future programme and line of action.

(d) A thorough probe into the different documents of different groups of the CPI(ML) reveals that the leaders and cadres are not yet united in a single organisation. Different elected Central Committee members of the CPI(ML)—1970 Congress—established different centres, each declaring that it is the sole successor and tried in vain to lead the organisation and unify the Party. The demand for 'Party reorganisation'

by Comrade S.N.S. and others in 1971, and by Comrade Soumya and others in 1973, could not solve this problem.

(2) The tendency to present hundreds of documents separately and the mentality to keep each of their own 'secret mountain strongholds' should come to an end. (From some quarters an apparently logical argument is heard that the political differences should be clinched and then and then only will there be unity! So far so good. But after having discussions and criticisms during the last 4/5 years, where have we reached? Is there any political difference on account of which unity cannot be achieved? Is there any difference which cannot be kept within the level of inner-party struggle?) Every one of us believes that without a revolutionary centre—without a unity centre for all the cadres, the revolution cannot be led forward.

Naturally the question comes—what is to be done? What is the step that can make the CPI(ML) again a united centre? (Like the elected committee in the 1970 Congress).

'Only Ones'

We put forward very clearly a request and a demand to our leaders—give up your claim of 'We are the only ones'. Because this claim divides the Party, and reveals lack of correct self-criticism and repentance for previous serious mistakes. Thirdly, no matter how emphatically you say that you are 'the only ones, the majority of the cadres, supporters, and revolutionary masses do not believe your claim. If you give up this claim, you will be able to unify the party and set an example for unity. At the same time it will be a concrete step to rectify your own mistakes. If on the basis of political unity at the organisational level the CPI(ML) is united, we believe that it will greatly enthuse and encourage the ranks, workers, supporters and revolutionary people. Incidentally, it is necessary to mention the recent statement published in 'Frontier' by Comrade Ashim Chatterjee, a Party leader in detention. We agree to ac-

cept that part of his statement which deals with the evaluation of Comrade Charu Mazumdar. We also appreciate his call for keeping the Party united. But he appears rather hazy about uniting "all former and present Central Committee members" of the Party. If different leaders of different centres whimsically co-opt comrades and announce themselves as the 'present' Central Committee members, it will lead to unnecessary confusion in the way to unity. It is only the Central Committee which holds the power to co-opt, and not isolated group. But since there has been no Central Committee meeting after the Party Congress, only those members elected in the Party Congress of 1970 are Central Committee members. Hence the words 'former' and 'present' create confusion. We accept the Congress of 1970 as the only one, because the split that came later goes on.

The Central Committee members who are still working and want to lead forward the CPI(ML) should, as a united body, reorganise and consolidate the Central Committee. This united Central Committee should (a) publish a clear, self-critical document and report the evaluation of the past activities; (b) publish a draft programme and constitution for the preparation of the 9th Congress. In the meantime in order to carry forward the work towards the 9th Congress, amend the documents of the 8th Congress and place a minimum programme of work; (c) establish a party committee system and democratic centralism within the Central Committee and at all levels and obey it; (d) recognise the Party committees in the province and at other levels at par with the Central Committee reorganisation; (e) take theoretical work with seriousness and start ideological struggle methodically; (f) initiate the work of unifying and mobilising the Party forces for starting important strategic zones, with a view to building base areas and an army; (g) initiate the process of unification with groups outside the Party.

We believe that this will be the best process to unite the party and destroy anarchic trends, systems and processes.

FRONTIER

Discussions with comrades of various organisations of West Bengal and some other States have convinced us that the broad majority of comrades support this process and only this process. The CPI(ML) leaders must bear in mind the teachings of Comrade Mao: "Since our decisions incorporate the correct views of the cadres at the lower levels, the latter will naturally support them". The CPI(ML) leaders must understand that as they cannot end eplitism, which is a part of left-sectarian politics within them, they are trying to pass off a group as the Party.

How Long?

At the same time it should be clearly stated that if the CPI(ML) leaders do not do anything about this, the cadres are not bound to wait any longer. They cannot leave their future and the future of revolution in the hands of a few leaders for an indefinite period. But if the situation so forces, the CPI(ML) cadres will have to take the entire responsibility of revising the Party. So we request all our comrades to pay close attention to this side and to make preparations, because at this moment, it is the foremost task of the revolutionaries to unite the party.

(3) We hope the leaders elected in the 1970 Congress will come forward to unite the Party. Otherwise an alternative measure will have to be taken. No matter how unity is achieved, the CPI(ML) should not forget that from the very beginning one of its defects was that it could not unite the different revolutionary groups, although this could have been done after the formation of the Party. The CPI(ML) leaders themselves sealed all the ways for unification when they, from a very sectarian standpoint, labelled all these groups as "revisionists" at the Party Congress. This error must be corrected. On the basis of a draft programme, constitution and tactical line put forward for the 9th Congress, we shall have to patiently continue discussions with these groups and must make an all-out attempt to clinch the differences. If there is no difference on basic questions, we shall request them to join the 9th Congress. This attempt on our

part is our duty and at the same time a practical step to rectify a past mistake. Even after this, all those who refuse to unite and maintain group existence giving useless arguments or showing smaller differences, will have to accept the responsibility of disunity. What we want to say is that we should make all efforts to establish the 9th Congress of the CPI(ML) as the 'unity Congress' in its true sense. We even invite those comrades who think that the line of Comrade Charu Mazumdar was fully correct, Revolutionary forces cannot be strengthened if everyone forms separate groups according to one's own whims.

We notice a certain trend among some people. There are those who exaggerate the errors and divisions of the CPI(ML) and pretend to have been correct all along. On this matter, our opinion is that, reevaluation of the CPI(ML) is going on and we are doing it ourselves. But that doesn't mean that others were correct and need no reevaluation. Is there any group in which there has not been a split? Above all, is it not necessary to evaluate what they themselves had done and why they had failed?

With regard to the article 'More about Naxalbari' by the leader in detention, Comrade Kanu Sanyal, published in 'Purbataranga', with due respect to him, we are not at one with many of his opinions. We mention here only one point. It seems that he thinks that the formation of the Party in 1969 was wrong. He opposes the question of consolidating and re-unifying the party today, and proposes building up co-ordination afresh. We notice that some comrades who were once members of the CPI(ML) are also making similar statements. Some of them are of the opinion that there is the necessity of a 'Unity Congress' at present, but whether it will be the Congress of the CPI(ML) will be decided by "history".

While evaluating the negative side of the CPI(ML), to deny its positive side is incorrect, and we are against it. We want to say firmly that the formation of the CPI(ML) in 1969 meant the reorganisation of the Communist Party of India; and its first Congress in 1970

which is the 8th Congress of the Communist Party of India, as the most important, glorious and revolutionary incident in the communist movement in India since 1921. In spite of many defects the formation of the CPI(ML) has meant a qualitative leap in the Indian Revolution. It has firmly held high with boldness the flag of revolution and the irresistible hunger for revolution of the Indian people. And also for the first time the revolutionaries captured the Party centre, ousting the revisionists. To deny this is to deny all revolutionary heritage. The CPI(ML) has been divided into some parts; so divide it more and then start co-ordination from zero and, passing through protracted ideological struggle, form a correct party. This idea leads to liquidation. Our efforts should be to quickly heal the split and ideological struggle can be handled maintaining the united framework. There are divisions, so make these permanent — is the tendency to float with the tide. We shall have to resist splitism, make unity, but not give up the ideological struggle. In our opinion, we shall have to move towards the 9th Congress admitting our revolutionary heritage. When we admit it, the next Congress must be the 9th Congress and the Congress of the CPI(ML). We cannot leave the future in the hands of spontaneity in the name of 'history'.

(5) Lastly, we appeal to and request the CPI(ML) leaders: take correct, positive steps to unify the Party soon. We request all cadres and sympathisers and comrades to start discussion in this regard within their organisation and convince the leaders. They should be ready to shoulder all responsibility to unite the Party. Reorganise the Party forces and strengthen practice within the masses with a correct programme, and with an aim to build base areas and an army.

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War And Revolution—II

R. L. MAHANTI

LET us now turn to Mao Tse-tung's second alternative and see how revolution might prevent the outbreak of another world war and of big wars in general. Here, of course, a mere analysis of past history will not suffice and it will be necessary to have frequent recourse to theoretical formulations and predictions.

Wars in the future can broadly be of three kinds: (a) inter-imperialist wars and wars between imperialist and social-imperialist powers; (b) wars between imperialists and/or social-imperialists on the one hand and the socialist countries on the other; and (c) revolutionary wars, i.e., wars between revolutionaries and reactionaries in a country, the latter aided directly or indirectly by imperialist and/or social-imperialist powers.

Mao Tse-tung was not, of course, talking of revolutionary wars of type (c) when he said that revolution might prevent war, for revolutions and revolutionary wars are inseparable. He was, therefore, meaning the other two kinds of war classified under (a) and (b). We have, accordingly, to understand what kind of influence revolutionary upsurges would in the existing historical context (i.e., in the background of the developmental process characteristic of the current historical epoch) exert on the array of forces tending towards the outbreak of wars of the (a) and (b) types.

Let us for a moment suppose that revolutions are 'not' taking place, that revolution is 'not' the main trend in the world today. What would happen? We would be virtually back in the heart of the Lenin era (we are actually nearing its end), the age of the final and ultimate development of imperialism. What were the 'dominant' relations between the imperialist powers in that age in which there were (virtually) no revolutions in the colonies or semi-colonies, in which the oppressed people of the world more or less passively endured imperialist domination? The re-

tions were 'not' characterized by (as Kautsky had predicted they would be) inter-imperialist collusions resulting in the creation of a "super-imperialism" or "ultra-imperialism" but (as Lenin had predicted) in "sharp and mortal contention" between two huge imperialist factions resulting in two terrible world wars. Thus, 'absence' of revolution, i.e., the non-advancement of revolutionary forces, and the 'passivity' of the exploited peoples had the effect of intensifying, not reducing, the contention between the different world-capitalist powers, and there is no reason to doubt that this law of historical development would under similar conditions hold good in the future as well.

If, therefore, "no revolution" promotes inter-imperialist contention and correspondingly undermines inter-imperialist (including, of course, social-imperialist) collusion, 'revolution' must have a generally 'opposite' effect. That is to say, revolutionary upsurges in the Third World (with corresponding reverberations in the imperialist and social imperialist countries themselves) will, generally speaking, have the effect of blunting the edge of inter-imperialist contention and of stepping up collusion between the different imperialist and/or social imperialist powers. But how exactly?

Revolutionary upsurges in the Third World, i.e., progress of revolutionary wars in the neo-colonies, would have the effect of weakening the imperialist power or powers concerned. For they would have increasingly less to take from the revolution-swamped country and increasingly more to give it in a desperate effort to beat back the revolutionary forces. Thus, revolution—of course, if it is correctly oriented and succeeds in forging ahead—would weaken the imperialist country or countries concerned and bring down their power to attack each other or to launch attacks on the existing socialist countries. If such revolutions occur in 'many' countries (as Mao Tse-tung must have anticipated), the imperialist (and/or social imperialist) countries would be more seriously weakened. In fact, considering that imperialism (of all kinds) is an intricately interlinked world system,

the virtual loss of control over the resources and the markets of the countries engulfed in revolution and the desperate outflow of imperialist resources (chiefly in the form of war equipment) to these countries would seriously upset the balance (or rather, sharply accentuate the potential imbalance) of imperialist economy and confront the imperialist (and social-imperialist) countries concerned with a grave economic crisis. Amidst this deepening crisis their two desperately pursued objectives will be (i) to suppress the mounting grievances of their own proletariat and to keep their profit-yielding economic systems going, and (ii) to crush the widespread revolutions in the disturbed semi-colonial countries. This serious double diversion of their resources will naturally reduce their capacity and inclination to attack one another or to invade the socialist countries. Minor and occasional inter-imperialist clashes might, of course, take place; but the main inter-imperialist (-cum-social-imperialist) trend in the face of rising Third World revolutions would be towards increasing collusion and not towards increasing contention.

The collusion would come in a very gradual course as a result of grievous common losses sustained at the hands of a common enemy, i.e., communist-led revolutionaries making heavy inroads on the world capitalist system itself. In the event of revolutionary risings in the Third World assuming such a menacing character, the imperialist system itself, in which the different imperialist (and social imperialist) powers are partners, would be put under severe pressure and, in fact, its very existence would be threatened. They would, thus, have a feeling of being concerned, of fighting a losing battle, of being pushed to the brink of the abyss, and would naturally 'try' to settle the quarrels among themselves and to put their resources together in a desperate bid to save the world bourgeoisie (including the new bourgeoisie) from being swept off the stage of history.

The same grim confrontation with widespread revolution in the Third World and the deepening economic and political crisis at home would prevent

the imperialist (and social-imperialist) countries from making war on the existing socialist countries. For, in spite of deepening collusion, two factors would prevent them from launching "united aggression" on the revolutionary forces of the world. First, the further advance of the historical process will have so much weakened the total imperialist forces and so much strengthened the total revolutionary forces (including further tremendous development of the productive forces in the socialist countries) that it would no longer be possible for the former to swoop down on the latter in a massive world-wide confrontation. Secondly, the resources of the different imperialist (and social-imperialist) countries will be so maddeningly diverted into different channels at home and abroad that united aggression on the socialist world or even on the fresh revolutionary foci of the world would be well-nigh impossible. Fresh revolutionary upsurges would, thus, be an almost absolute guarantee against attacks on the existing socialist countries. Both kinds of war, (a) as well as (b), might, thus, be prevented by widespread and powerful revolutionary upsurges in the Third World.

Testimony of History

History has already provided us with quite a few instances of revolution preventing war and of non-revolution or regression of revolutionary forces promoting direct or indirect imperialist aggression. The Western powers, particularly the USA, were poised for an attack on the Soviet Union at the end of the Second World War (as Churchill's infuriated confession so clearly proved) in an effort to blot out the great enemy of world capitalism once for all from the face of the earth. But the fact that another tremendous revolution (in China) involving a quarter of mankind was before their very eyes giving birth to another great communist power frightened them and dampened their spirits and made them give up their aggressive plans for the moment. On the other hand, one of the reasons why the USA did not dare to launch direct aggression on the Chinese communists either during the last months of

the revolutionary war or immediately after was the presence of the solid socialist might of the Soviet Union—the mature fruit of an earlier revolution—behind China. The Korean War (the U.S. imperialist aggression launched on Korea, with the purpose of resisting the advance of the Korean Revolution and with the ultimate object of attacking China, as General MacArthur openly confessed later) could not be escalated into a major conflagration because of the tremendous revolutionary upsurge in North Korea itself and because of the tremendous revolutionary upsurge shown by the Red Chinese armies which had gone to help the Koreans against the aggressor a bare one year after the completion of the long and bloody Chinese Revolution. The Korean performance of the Red Chinese troops in directly accosting and beating back the U.S. imperialist troops (thought to be invincible after their victory in the Second World War) marked a further revolutionary advance on their earlier performance against the Japanese invaders and the Kuomintang reactionaries, and it was this "further advance of the revolutionary process" which played a major part in stemming the tide of imperialist aggression. Then, again, the great (yet unfinished) Indo-Chinese Revolution did 'not' intensify the contention between the imperialist powers. On the contrary, it was during the last decade of the great Vietnamese war of liberation that Russia (while outwardly sending a "maintenance supply" of arms to Vietnam) got increasingly involved in a number of alliances with the USA. Also, the advance of the Vietnamese Revolution, instead of increasing the threat of American aggression on China, neutralized it to a great extent.

On the other hand, failure of revolutionary forces to push ahead has often led to the intensification of imperialist aggressive plans. It was in the period following the suppression of the Indonesian communists that the American threat to China became most menacing and it was this signal recession of the Indonesian revolutionary forces that doubly encouraged the U.S. imperialists to escalate their

aggression in Vietnam. The 1971 revolution in Ceylon (however misguided it might have been) had resulted in a frantic, though temporary, collusion between different imperialist (and social-imperialist) powers and their agents, even between India and Pakistan who were then in the midst of a bitter quarrel. But when, after the suppression of the uprising, the quarry had again become quiescent, the collusion between the powers was retransformed into competition for a major share in the draining of the country's resources. India could, as an agent of imperialism and social imperialism, send massive armed contingents into East Pakistan and Sikkim only because revolution in India itself had failed for the time and because true revolutionary forces had not properly developed in the countries invaded. Russia could dare to commit repeated aggression on the East European countries only because revolutionary forces there had long been under a revisionist eclipse.

A most interesting example of the operation of these two principles of historical development can be traced in the recent (and current) turmoil in the Middle East. As long as the Arabs were quiescent, inter-imperialist (in this case between two imperialist super-powers) contention in the region steadily mounted. But as united Arab resistance flared up in late 1973, the two chief imperialist contestants, the USA and the Soviet Union, entered a devious course of collusion to bring the Arabs back to a "normal" state of passivity. As a London-based Soviet official put it: "And now you could say that Kissinger is acting in the Middle East for the Soviet Union as well as the United States". ("Broadsheet", January 1974). And now, again, as the Arab resistance has started softening, the super-powers as well as their satellites have resumed their game of contention, trying to "buy off" the different oil-producing States with their manifold allurements.

Of course, the replacement of contention by collusion as the major aspect in inter-imperialist relations can come only when the revolutionary trend has acquired a world-shaking dimension;

when, in short, we shall have crossed the Lenin era and have passed, or would be passing, into the socialist (or communist) era in the history of mankind. At the same time, every single advancing revolutionary movement will, locally and partially, tend to produce the same basic results. The slow quantitative accumulation of revolutionary forces will finally acquire a qualitative world-concentration that will transform the overall inter-imperialist trend from contention to collusion.

Meanwhile, as the Tenth Congress Report of the Chinese Communist Party says, we are still in the era of Lenin, the era of imperialism, though nearing its end. Doubtless, there is a revolutionary trend in the world today, but it is not powerful enough yet to throw the imperialists (of all kinds) into total confusion and disarray, to make them huddle together like a flock of frightened sheep, to make them face mortal contradictions simultaneously at home and abroad and, consequently, to turn them to mutual collusion from their present mutual contention and to force them to abandon their plans of attacking the socialist countries. Relative to the critical concentration it is sure to attain in the future, revolution is weak today, the exploited people are 'relatively' passive and, consequently, contention and rivalry still continues to be the main aspect in inter-imperialist relations, while collusion is only casual and temporary. It is only through the further and wider revolutionary upsurges of the future that we shall be able to pass into the post-Leninist, i.e., the socialist, era where the reversal of the balance of forces indicated by Mao, the transformation of the offensive stance of imperialism into a defensive one, will become a concrete reality.

(Concluded)

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POPULAR BOOK STALL,

Near Bank of India,

Bhadra

Life On Water

BY A CORRESPONDENT

THEY came here from Ashashuni, Hogla, Radule-Rathpara and many other places of Khulna district of erstwhile East Bengal. They tried to settle down at Kalinagar, Hingalunge, Mollakhali, Gosaba, Satjelia, Maszidbati and other places in the Sunderbans. They made their 'kunjis' very small hut thatched with mats and leaves and struggled hard before settling down in the area. They are 'Malos', 'Rajbansis', 'Tentule Bagdis'. Most of them had no alternative but to go in for fishing. Exploring the riverine areas of the locality was not enough and they had to venture into the jungle area. They are fishermen by profession.

The census report of 1961 says that there were no homeless men in the Gosaba Police Station. It shows that the area was not thoroughly surveyed. Some of the 'Rajbansis' who came here before 1961 have been homeless since then. They were brought to Gosaba from Maszidbati by the 'Malos' and some political leaders who wanted to ensure their own footing. (Some of the 'Rajbansis' of the Sunderbans are from Midnapore. They are now cultivators and hence excluded from this study. 'Rajbansis' referred to here are those from East Bengal.)

The Sunderbans is famous for fish of high quality. Making the 'bheri' or fishing and supplying fish to Calcutta and other places was the business of a rich section. In a 'bheri' fish is allowed to come from the river, but there is no way out. The area is full of rivers and estuaries. But the British rulers were not interested in fishing. Nor were the people in any study of the area, as rice and fish were in abundance for them. Fishing in the bogs, tanks, canals and rivers was enough to ensure a large supply. There was no need to go to the forest for fishing.

After partition came the fishermen from East Bengal. There was no scope to compete with the cultivating landless

labourers. They had their boats and nets. For their profession they had to go to the jungle area. Some old men admitted that some of them went occasionally there for fishing in the pre-partition days. But the practice was not so regular as it is now. Some 'Tentule Bagdis' and some 'Rajbansis' said they did not depend at all on fishing. They had their own land to cultivate. But here in West Bengal the picture was totally different. Going to the forest regularly for fishing became the main feature of their life. The market also became larger day by day and now the demand of Calcutta is largely met by the fish from this area. But the fishermen on the other hand are so much engaged with the jungle that it seems none of them is able to come out.

The best season for fishing in the jungle area is June to October (the rainy season and autumn). But fishing goes on throughout the year. There are two periods in a month—the period or 'gon' of the full moon and that of the new moon. The fishermen would start positively by "dashami" and arrangements in the area should be completed within 'trayodashi'. They can return only by the next 'sasthi'. That means they can stay at home only three or four days in a fortnight. Sometimes two or three periods at a stretch are spent in the forest area. Thus they spend most of their time away from society, struggling against nature for their existence.

Their weapons in this struggle are a little better than primitive. The main techniques: (1) An estuary is blocked by nets in the high tide. When the water level goes down during ebb-tide, various kinds of fish are collected. One has to be prompt, for tigers may attack any time. (2) Making 'komors' is a method generally adopted by the 'Rajbansis'. Twelve sticks of 'garan' are tied on the head by a special type of creeper. It is set in the river near the shore in a tent-like form. A branch of tree with leaves is placed within it. Fish take shelter there to feed on rotten leaves. A separate day is spent for the collection of the sticks and creepers.

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A special kind of net is used to collect fish from the 'komors'. A large quantity of fish may be had from a single 'komor'. (3) Big nets (benti) are set in the river. Bhetkis or other such big fish are collected in this way.

Collective

A life of struggle against nature away from home and the methods adopted to catch fish lead the fishermen towards collectivity. A cultivator may sow, cultivate and harvest all alone on a piece of land. But this is not possible in the case of fishing in the forest. A team has to be formed. Collective effort is essential for blockade of the estuaries, making 'komors' or even for setting 'benti' nets. Simple division of labour is essential. Collective life is a primary condition for the fight against the onslaught of the man-eaters. So there evolved the 'sain' system: A 'sain' is a team of several boats. There must be three men in a boat and a 'sain' may be composed of three to twenty boats.

This spirit was not allowed to thrive in its own way by the prevailing feudal system. 'Saindar' or the leader of the team soon took the role of a feudal exploiter. The fishermen are not at all respectful about them. They know well their past. Some of them, as they say, came to the boat with only 'gamchhas' on their shoulders. Now they own a considerable amount of landed property and a big grocer's shop at a prominent marketplace. They were once trusted to keep the money earned by other fishermen. But they took up the role of a moneylender with the amount and ultimately became a 'saindar'.

'Saindars' of the early stage had the more or less simple function of the

leader. In the process they earned some extra money with which they could not set up any business. With this money they ruined themselves in gambling and merry making. But the new 'saindar' is fully conscious of his role. He is not a leader but the owner of the 'sain'.

A fisherman who joins the 'sain' with a boat and a net soon gets indebted to the 'saindar'. Keeping accounts is not for him. Six per cent goes to the 'saindar', 'miscellaneous' takes a large share. A part is kept aside for the common fund for puja, festivals, etc. Lastly a part is deducted from the fisherman's share as repayment of loan, how and when taken, one does not know. Loss occurs when there is any mishap. Dacoits may rob a fisherman of all he had. He may have to return without anything when a man of his boat is killed by a tiger. Of course the 'saindar' has nothing to worry about, for the 'sains' as a whole will bear the loss. Ultimately his boat and net are forfeited by the 'saindar' and he can never repay what he did not actually borrow.

Slaves

Suppose he cannot go with the 'sain' this time, he has to arrange for a substitute. If he likes to leave this 'sain' and join a new one, the new 'saindar' must take all his liabilities, otherwise he will not be released. Thus these fishermen are turned into a new type of serfs. They started as brave fighters against nature, but the system made them slaves. One of the fishermen, being deceived by a 'saindar', left the 'sain'. Plans were made to assault him physically. He managed to escape and for a season served as a day-labourer during the time of cultivation. Next year he returned to a new 'sain'. Within a year he became indebted to the 'saindar'. He raised the question: "I worked with so many mahajans (jotedars), but none of them can demand a single paisa from me. Here in the boat, I risk my life, work is harder. Why is it that the 'saindar' says I must pay him some amount which I never borrowed?"

Only 20 kilograms of rice is allotted for three men in a boat for a period

('gon') in the jungles. Now the amount has been reduced to 15 kilograms. The fishermen are angry, but helpless. Recently there was a plan to gherao a 'saindar' for fair accounts and against mismanagement. The plan did not come off as the 'saindar' was tactful enough to avert the situation. A man who came here from a locked-out Calcutta mill wanted to go back. The 'saindar' asked, "Is there no tiger in Calcutta?"

The 'saindar' has his own reasons. He supplies food to the fishermen in the jungles. Advance is made to them before the 'sain' starts. So he has every right to a share of six per cent of the total income. The practice of going along to the forest area with the 'sain' is being abandoned by the 'saindar'. They are now busy with book keeping. Other functions are performed by appointed supervisors.

The 'saindar' is not the only person to exploit these fishermen. There is the 'aratdar' who offers advance of money, as much as required. Repayment of the loan is never demanded. The only condition is that the total quantity of fish is to be sold to him and he will pay six per cent less than the actual price. Twice in a month the fish is brought by the fishermen and the six per cent does not make a negligible amount. 'Aratdars' are found in towns like Canning. The dacoits also take upon a vital role of exploitation. The forest is the most unprotected area, though thousands of people are always busy there. The dacoits snatch away whatever they get from the fishermen. They would take the ration, the clothes, the nets, the fish, the instruments—anything they get. Sometimes the fishermen are robbed as soon as they reach the area. Sometimes all they

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earn is lost. If this goes on for long, they are ruined. No reliable security measure has been taken yet. Arrangements for giving money to the leaders of some gangs are sometimes made by the fishermen themselves. But the dacoits from Bangladesh these days are not satisfied with any such arrangement.

In the early period attempts were made to form a co-operative of the fishermen. This, however, could never function. Without going into the question why it failed fresh attempts are made by interested people to form another co-operative. Lakhs of rupees have been sanctioned by the government. Only the fishermen of Gosaba, Satjelia and Masjidbati have been included in the society. But a large section from Hingalgunge, Mollakhali and even from Pakhirala, a part of Gosaba, has been excluded.

অনুষ্ঠান

বর্ষা সংখ্যা

১লা জুলাই প্রকাশিত হয়েছে

এ সংখ্যায় থাকছে—

- তেলুগু সাহিত্যের ওপর বিশেষ কোডপত্র—
- (১) প্রতিবাদ থেকে বিপ্লবের পথে তেলুগু সাহিত্য (প্রবন্ধ)—নিখিলেশ্বর (২) স্বকীর্তি ও পাণ্ডিত্যের কবিতা (৩) মার্কণ্ডেয় রাজেশ্বর রাও-এর গল্প।
- বাংলাদেশের প্রগতি আন্দোলন ও প্রগতি সাহিত্যিকদের ভূমিকা—ইন্দু নাহা ● শরৎ-চন্দ্র ও বাংলা সাহিত্য ● সাম্প্রতিক সংস্কৃতি সমাচার ● একটি চীনা গল্পের অনুবাদ ● ছড়া ও কবিতা ● মতামত

কাগজের মূল্যবৃদ্ধির জন্য সীমিত সংখ্যক ছাপা হ'ল। ষ্টলে খোঁজ করুন। বিশেষ শরৎ সংখ্যার জন্য এলেকট্রনিক মন্ত্র কার্যালয়ে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Kala Bhavan Students

SANDIP SARKAR

AN exhibition of paintings by Sunil Garai, Uma De, Samir Roy, Baby Dutta and Satyanarayan Kar was on view at the Academy of Fine Arts from June 25 to July 1. These artists have all recently graduated from Kala Bhavan, Satiniketan.

One cannot deny that there is a kind of freshness in their painting, but there is nothing in their work that indicates an aesthetic search or technical research. One fails to understand why all of them are trying to escape beyond despair. It seems our art institutions at present are unable to impart a positive attitude to life. Mr Dinkar Kowshik, the Principal of Kala Bhavan, is aware of this, but he tries to throw wool over our eyes in his foreword: 'They are trying in their own way to bring cheer to a world ridden with strife...' And he is an honourable man! The result is insipid art of sorts.

Sunil Garai reminds one of Mohim Roodro. He uses a variety of translucent colours to create different moods and succeeds to a certain extent. Uma Garai does not bother about structure so much as she does about design. She goes to villages and religion for her subjects. As a result her figures are stylised. Her canvases seem to split from the middle at times as in the 'Birth of Buddha'. Samir Roy uses colours that are pretty and one is reminded rather about gorgeous textile designs. His drawings are not bad at all. Baby Dutta on the other hand has a kind of vision but lacks the power to execute. Satyanarayan Kar with his complex and yet simple composition reminds one slightly of Binode Behari Mukherjee. Kar seems to know how to distribute tensions and build on the surface with confidence in his own competence.

The disarming naivete of the group gives reasons to hope that some day these young artists might find something to paint that is more relevant.

Clippings

Rough Justice In Israel

The Israeli occupation of Sinai, Golan and the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has just completed its seventh year. Some still call it a "benevolent" occupation, "the most liberal occupation in history". It is a curious form of "liberation" with hundreds of new prisoners in the past few months crammed into Israel jails in addition to the thousands already there for several years.

I am a lawyer in Israel, and during the years of occupation I have often appeared in the military courts in the occupied territories and Israel to defend opponents of the occupation. I must point out that there is no legal way of opposing the occupation. Peaceful demonstration, protest strikes, distribution of leaflets are heavily punished. Hundreds of my clients are in jail for having chosen these forms of resisting occupation.

For giving any form of help to a person suspected of anti-occupation activity—sometimes even for giving a glass of water to a suspected son, brother or sister—the military courts impose prison sentences. According to one particularly harsh law, any person who suspects that another person intends or is about to commit an offence against the military laws in force in the occupied territories, and who does not prevent him from doing so or inform the authorities at once, is himself guilty of an offence punishable by up to five years' imprisonment or a fine of about £1,000.

Many of my clients who were charged with this offence were brothers, fathers, sisters or even mothers of suspected persons and would rather go to jail than inform on their own kin.

The number of houses destroyed during the years of occupation has reached about 18,000. House destruction is a form of collective punishment against whole families. One member of the family may be suspected of sabotage or of aiding saboteurs, or arms may be found in or near the house. The other members of the family, including women and

small children, who know absolutely nothing about the alleged crime, are made the victims. They are given one or two hours' grace to remove their belongings, and the house is blown up. In practice there is no time to appeal to the court (although this law, however draconic it is, does in theory allow such an appeal) or to any other body. The house is destroyed before any judicial procedure.

Dozens of my clients were deported to the East Bank of Jordan; they were taken directly from jail or from their houses, without the possibility of appeal to any court of law. The deportations are carried out across the desert, in Wadi 'Arabah, where the deportee is faced with the choice: either try to go back and be shot by Israeli soldiers, or go forward towards the patrols of the Jordanian army, who often shoot at the deportees, mistaking them for enemy troops.

Administrative internment—under the 1945 Defence (Emergency) Regulations—has been widely used. This is detention without trial, which the authorities may impose without explanation and without having to justify it in any court. Some people were interned for years under these regulations...

But the most painful problem is that of the violence, beatings and torture to which suspects are subjected during interrogation by members of the Shin Beth (Israeli security service). During the years of my practice I saw more than once marks of beating on the faces and bodies of my clients. There is hardly a trial whose records do not contain a testimony in which the accused complains of beatings and/or torture. I have made hundreds of complaints on this matter to the competent authorities, but their reply is invariably: "Your complaint is unfounded".

My demands that my complaints be investigated by some independent body—a Knesset committee of inquiry, a public commission or any other appropriate body—have been rejected. (By Felicia Langer, a member of the central committee of Rakach, the Israeli "New Communist" party, in "The Times", London).

Letters

The Mask Comes Off

Political leaders and their parties in India specialise in masks. Like the ancient Greek actors they put on these masks to hide the dominant emotion on their faces for all time. All these masks are benign, the difference is one of degrees only. But the most beautiful and cunningly made mask of them all is worn by CPI(M) leaders. They wear it with much aplomb and it always covers their real faces most effectively. Only once this mask slipped off, completely exposing the rage-distorted horrible faces beneath. That was in 1967-68 when the Naxalites had to be smashed. But the mask was fast replaced and its hypnotic effect erased the memory of that demoniac face from the minds of the cadres.

Now years of wear and tear have weakened the fabric of the mask. The Bangladesh affair tore off a large chunk, the Indo-Soviet Treaty enlarged the hole, the sundry betrayals on mass fronts continue to tear off strips. The leaders have now lost their faith in the efficacy of the tattered piece of "papier mache" adorning their faces and are thinking of dropping it altogether. They are becoming openly pro-Soviet and anti-Chinese, they are showing off their pride in India's nuclear achievement and one hears of understanding here and understanding there. The clique-ridden party is being abandoned by the honest cadres and the people are fuming: are the leaders, rising piously above shame and revulsion and fear, siding with the ruling party?

A small incident: A convention demanding the release of all political prisoners was recently organised at the University Institute by the Association for the Protection of Democratic Rights. A democratic lawyer and well known CPI(M) man was one of the speakers. He did not dwell on the political prisoners too long but several times alluded to China as the aggressor in the 1962 conflict. He paid no heed to the protests raised from the dais and from the audience. He was speaking as

the representative of the CPI(M), he was no individual indulging in irresponsible comment. So we are bound to infer from his comment that the CPI(M) officially considers China to have attacked India in 1962. If we are incorrect in our inference, we hope we will see the lawyer being publicly reprimanded before long. (Otherwise we shall know that the CPI(M) and he think alike.

BALAJI DUTTA
Calcutta

Statement

United Labour Union, Bombay, congratulates the middle-class government employees. Their 48-hour dharna against the Naik Government showed their revolutionary solidarity in fighting out the basic issues of collective bargaining which they exercised very heroically and fraternally at the time of the railway workers' strike. At a time when the Government is trying to enforce a 'wage freeze' policy without being able to check the spiralling prices and black-marketing, it is important for government employees to join with the revolutionary workers to end once for all the misrule of the reactionary dictatorial Congress Government. The Union calls upon leftist trade unions to launch a revolutionary programme to take hold of the government to give relief to the oppressed masses. It also calls upon the representatives of opposition parties in legislative assemblies, parliament and at all levels of the State apparatus to resign their seats and take active part in the revolutionary class war that is the need of the day.

S. V. NAVALKAR (MISS)
General Secretary,
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Court Trials

While basically sympathetic to the points made by Mr R. P. Sinha in his letter "Court Trials" (June 29, 1974), I would like to correct some misinformation regarding the K. L. Roy murder case with which I happen to be familiar. The two "chance witnesses" that he refers to are the elder son and daughter-in-law of the late judge who were present at the scene of murder. The "meagre evidence" that he mentions was positive visual identification of three of the accused by those witnesses. These facts may be ascertained from the 51-page judgment given on the case.

P. R.
Bombay

Murder Will Out?

The Legal Aid Committee is seriously concerned about the new plans by the police and through police by the executive government to counter attempts by various democratic and left-wing parties and people to protest against their operations.

There is now a wide conspiracy to create fresh panic by circulating reports calling most of the murders which are being committed as politically motivated. We, from the Legal Aid Committee, have made enquiries after statements by the police and the administration and found that such murders had nothing to do with left politics. In fact many of them have been committed by rival Congress factions. The murder of two constables in Paikpara by some wagonbreakers, even the murder of Chandi Mitra—all these can be cited as examples.

About an alleged channel for escape having been discovered in an empty cell in the Dum Dum Jail along with a cache of arms, ammunition and explosives, we have made enquiries from which it is apparent that the whole thing is a fabrication by the police and jail authorities. In any democratic country, it is the duty of the Press to find out the truth when such serious allegations are made by the Government but no such attempts are made here.

Although we along with many other

organisations have time and again complained about torture by the police of those political prisoners who, they feel, are non-compliant, it is necessary to repeat these complaints once again as there has been no decrease in the number of such cases. Torture of both men and women political prisoners has become more or less a routine, mostly while the prisoners are in police custody but instances have come to our knowledge where prisoners have been illegally taken from the jail to the police lock-up for fresh torture as soon as the prisoners have recovered somewhat from the effects of the previous torture. The case of 7/8 young girls who are being kept in isolation in Presidency Jail and frequently taken to the Lalbazar underground torture chamber when iron rods are pushed into their rectum and vagina, has been brought out in a signed pamphlet by some leading members of the Nikhil Banga Mahila Samity. These statements have also been corroborated by Mr Indrajit Gupta, MP, who interviewed them in jail. The Minister in charge of Prisons, Jnan Singh Sohanpal, while denying the statement has not instituted any enquiry, judicial or otherwise, to find out the true state of affairs.

One of the methods adopted by the police to demoralise the young left workers is to arrest them on some flimsy grounds and to keep them in prison as undertrial prisoners as long they can on the plea that further investigation is necessary and when at last bail is granted by the court, to re-arrest them immediately on some other equally flimsy or fabricated charge. The process is again repeated, practically endlessly. People have been arrested again and again on charges of crimes which had occurred long ago and sometimes even crimes which had occurred when the persons "concerned" were in custody. We give below examples which have come to our knowledge and which we have been able to investigate; there are many many others.

1. Mohit Mukherjee (re-arrested four times);
2. Sajal Mitra;
3. Gopal Seal;
4. Anu Chakravarti;
5. Rasaraj Bal;
6. Subhas Kundu;
7. Netai Dey;
8. Haru Sarkar;
9. Chinu;
10. Rabin Patra;
11. Tapan Dutta and so on.....

The rights of political prisoners achieved by them by hunger-strike for 29 days are not being given.

We, of the Legal Aid Committee, desire that all the departures from law should be opposed and all these evils should be ventilated so that progressive and democratic-minded people may take up the issue.

Amar Prasad Chakraborty,
President
Jayasri Rana
Secretary,
Legal Aid Committee.

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