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On Other Pages

COMMENT	2
<i>Bangladesh</i>	
SITUATION FAR FROM REVOLUTIONARY	
FRATELLO ROSSO	3
ON THE STATEMENT OF THE CENTRAL ORGANIS- ING COMMITTEE OF THE CPI (ML)	5
THE GUERRILLAS GO AHEAD IN ZIMBABWE	
KARRIM ESSACK	7
ON INDIAN ECONOMIC GROWTH	
RANJIT SAU	8
SOCIAL SCENARIO	
B. G.	11
<i>Clippings</i>	
WHO KILLED THE SI?	12
LETTERS	13

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THE LEFT PREPARES, AGAIN

THE left parties are spoiling for a countrywide agitation to end the people's suffering from mounting scarcity and spiralling prices. When the agitation will start, whether there will be a united agitation or a convergence of separate agitations under the leadership of rival left parties are not known. yet. The only thing that seems certain now is that the parties are still a little away from the take-off stage. The CPM and its associates in the nine-party alliance have scheduled their agitation for some time in August-September; the CPI National Council is meeting towards the end of this month to draw up a programme. Mr Namboodiripad has succeeded in keeping Kerala in a state of permanent agitation since his ouster; even now he is leading an agitation whose principal demand is dissolution of the State Assembly. The proposed agitation to be led by the CPM will therefore be concentrated in West Bengal, and that may be the reason why the party is not planning to launch its agitation immediately. Food prices touch their highest in this State in August-September, and in the next few weeks hardship of the people will further grow. Besides, the peasants are still busy in the fields in the countryside; an agitation in July is unlikely to draw into its vortex peasants and farm-hands.

There may be yet another reason. Hopes of leftist unity die hard. A move has been initiated for a second meeting of the left parties, including the CPI, to explore the possibilities of united action against rising prices. At the April meeting of the left parties the Government's refusal to concede the demands of railwaymen acted as a circumstantial force for unity; the two so-called anti-inflationary ordinances promulgated by the Centre may do that job now. All left parties agree that the proposal to put into a special deposit wage increases and 50 per cent of additional dearness allowance amounts to a wage freeze; not only will the workers and employees be denied of some immediate, though inadequate, relief, but the value of their deposits will sharply decline because of the steep price rise that will inevitably result in the mean time from government policies. The left parties are committed to resisting this move; if they can agree on a common form that their resistance should take, a limited unity of action may be possible. The fundamental differences between the left parties will however persist, and these will no doubt blunt the edge of their common action. Even then it may make a greater impact than several agitations professedly with the same objective but working at cross purposes.

This is not the first time that left parties in West Bengal are threatening to

start an agitation against the regime that usurped power through rigged elections two years ago. Their past endeavours have not been a roaring success; and though the admission is, their programmes appeared more impressive on paper than on the ground. One reason for this no doubt was the terror tactics of the hired hoodlums waving the Congress banner and adequately supported by the police. The strongholds of the left parties were systematically stormed by Congress brigades, parading under one name or another, and mass persecution was let loose. The possibility of reversion to those tactics by the Congress for scotching the proposed agitation still remains, though the gang-fight within the ruling party is now so acute that total deployment of its army of anti-socials against the left parties may be beyond it. The efforts of the Congress leadership, including the Prime Minister, to bring about a semblance of unity in the State Congress are designed to equip the party for the coming battle with the left. While planning their agitation, the left parties should not leave out of account the possibility of a concerted Congress-Government onslaught. The calculation that inner contradictions of the ruling party have rendered it incapable of concerted action may not turn out valid. The people are disgusted with this Government; their hardship has reached a stage when any agitation against the Government will evoke ready response from them. It is not only the inadequacy of left leadership that has till now prevented an organised explosion of their discontent, but also their utterly wrong politics.

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Sabre-Rattling ?

Mr Bhutto has been telling people of Indian and Afghan troop movements and asking them to keep alert. New Delhi spoke up later—which means a propaganda disadvantage—to deny the allegation and charge Pakistan with troop manoeuvres near the Indian border. We may believe New Delhi, being good patriots, but since Pakistan is a much lesser power, in terms of population and resources, than India, the outside world will find it difficult to believe that it is on the point of creating a big provocation that might lead to another war. Though, what happens on this sub-continent sometimes defies speculation.

There is, of course, a good deal going on in Kashmir. Sheikh Abdullah and the Plebiscite Front no longer insist on a plebiscite as an instrument of self-determination about which they have been so vocal for so many years. They want, perhaps, an autonomy of sorts which will leave defence, foreign affairs and communications to India; and they have been saying that the arrangement,

if clinched, would include 'Azad Kashmir'. The Sheikh does not now believe that Pakistan should be consulted.

The Sheikh has moved closer to the ruling circles, but the opposition to him is now erupting into violent incidents. The Awami Action Committee of Moulvi Farooq says that the Sheikh is about to betray the Kashmiris for a handful of favours and wants the entire issue to be decided by a plebiscite. Followers of both trends are clashing, though no heads have rolled yet. The opposition to the ruling party and the Sheikh will find it tough going—there are thousands of Indian troops in Kashmir. Did New Delhi anticipate any serious trouble and take advance steps? And will New Delhi placate the Sheikh now, on the understanding that he accepts the accession as final? With the Sheikh and without any additional troops, Mrs Gandhi should be able to brave the Moulvi. But fresh troop movements are another matter. Pakistan is unlikely to risk her neck for Kashmir at this moment. But if something bigger is envisaged, something involving other powers, then troop movements make some sense.

Hunger And Exodus

This year there was a record crop in West Bengal, according to the Government. But still thousands are streaming into Calcutta and the suburbs for alms. The city streets, mofussil towns, railway stations, are all already thronged by hundreds of living skeletons, men, women and children, crying for a palmful of rice or anything that can be eaten. The modified rationing system that doled out minimum subsistence to the poor villagers has broken down completely.

Whatever government relief is there, it all goes straight into the pockets of the local Congress bosses. Rice sells at about Rs 400 a quintal, four rupees a kilogram in the districts. Scores of starvation deaths, sales of sons and daughters, suicides are reported. Here are some cases that have taken place in the four months from March to June. Jugantar of June 10 reports: Haunted by the pangs of hunger, Riazuddin Sheikh, a

peasant of Bansaraja village under Toofangunj police station, Coochbehar district, throttled his five-year-old daughter to death and threw her body into the river. It is revealed that after five days of starvation the peasant accompanied the girl to Toofangunj town. On their way home he killed the girl on the river bank and cast her into the waters. The same Bengali daily reported on June 17: Poor Hamid Ali of Kasai village in the Gopalnagar thana under 24-Parganas could find only one way to live a day or more free from hunger. With tears gushing out of his eyes, he sold his one-year-old son for Rs. 10. A widow in village Gobindapur of Murshidabad district found no work for weeks. A landless peasant, she sold away her two daughters for Rs 60 as the last resort to save the three lives. The Statesman reported on July 12 that distressed villagers from different parts of south 24-Parganas had crow-

ded the platforms of railway stations in the city and suburbs, reminding one of scenes witnessed during the evacuation from Bangladesh in 1971. Most of the squatters were from villages in Basirhat, Canning, Bhangar and Hasnabad areas. They said they had left their villages because little work was available in the fields and the daily wage was too low compared to the food prices. Now many of them live on begging. Some work as servants and maid-servants. Some others sell tit-bits at nearby markets.

While the food situation has reached this stage in villages, the Government is giving the big traders a bigger scope for blackmarketing and hoarding. The wholesale trade in rice was not taken over

despite a decision to that effect. The wheat wholesale trade which was taken over for a season has been handed back to the private trader after making a huge increase in the procurement price of wheat, from Rs 76 a quintal to Rs 105. The traders are demanding that there should be on ceiling on the price at which they will supply wheat to the deficit States. The public distribution system has been reduced by 30 to 40 per cent. The modified rationing in village areas hardly exists. The net result is that more and more people begin to depend on the open market where the prices go on spiralling. Government spokesmen however, say that foodgrains are at least available, though at high prices.

Going Underground

Well-wishers of Calcutta, whose number incidentally goes up as living conditions in the city go down, must be heartened at the seriousness that all those concerned with the underground railway project are now showing. Late last month we had a traffic rehearsal the findings of which will presumably prove very useful to the authorities to work out alternative traffic plans. There could have certainly been less expensive ways of doing the rehearsal other than with all those bamboo networks, but economy as we know is the first casualty when the Government launches such grandiose plans. We have been promised jam tomorrow and so should not be too minded about such flamboyant misuse of taxpayer's money. The important thing is to realise that we must have the tube railway and at any cost—for without it the city cannot be saved. Admittedly the transport situation in Calcutta has fallen so bad as to need some such drastic measures. Calcutta State Transport Corporation has proved incorrigible. The West Bengal Transport Minister had made a lot of promises earlier. He had even sold "unusable" old buses at a throw-away price of Rs 1,200. And he has been appointing one committee and commission after another to diagnose its ills and suggest prescriptions. But poor

Mr Sohanpal! Things have hardly improved. Still, less than 50 per cent of the Corporation's buses come out into the road every day. Yes, he is the Minister in charge of the undertaking, but he cannot be said to have any special responsibility for the total failure. So the best thing to do now is to accept the fact and dangle a bait of an underground railway before the public.

The Rs. 30 crore-project is scheduled to complete the Dum Dum-Tollygunge section by 1979. The Russians are collaborating in the scheme in a big way. And if they are unduly delaying in supplying some of the essential equipment, that should not be allowed to stand in the way of the speeding juggernaut of Hindi-Russi bhai bhai-ism. After all, nobody should be so naive as to believe that such a massive project should keep to the deadline. Hasn't the far more modest subway scheme at Howrah station itself been running for three years now? And only the obscurantist and the rank stupid would now argue that the money earmarked for the project could have been better utilised to build some flyovers, broaden some of the roads and do some such other things to yield more immediate result. No, this is the season to go "underground", even if that pulls down part of the city with it.

Bangladesh

Situation Far From Revolutionary

FRATELLO ROSSO

THE social crisis in Bangladesh is deepening. Ironic indications of the near-desperateness of the people of Bangladesh were visible when Dacca was visited by State guests from both the brother nations of the subcontinent.

Chamber talks with foreign guests and the splendour of banquets often are a palliative for rulers who are unable to handle the internal crisis in their country, or do not want to face the anger of their own disappointed people. This tactic, however, does not work for Sheikh Mujibur Rahman any more. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who survived the fall of the 'butcher government' in 1971 in spite of his part in the slaughter by the Pakistan army, arrived in Dacca on June 27 on a state visit. He was received with a tumultuous welcome at Dacca airport. The people of the city greeted him more or less as a saviour, refusing to hide the disgust with their Government. In contrast, when the President of India, Mr Giri, who supposedly represents the country which 'liberated' the people of Bangladesh, was in Dacca on a state visit on June 16, he was given a feeling of the undercurrent of violence reigning in the country.

Not long after Giri, in reference to the liberation struggle of 1971, had declared Dacca to be a 'nursery of revolution', several bomb attacks took place in Dacca, apparently directed against Giri's visit and against India. The bombs were 'greetings' from the underground which is showing its muscles again, after having been quiet for a number of months.

The bombs and other spectacular actions on and around June 16 were part of the action programme of Siraj Sikdar's East Bengal Proletarian Party. The party had called for a general strike on that day, among other things, to pro-

test against Indian 'expansionism'. The party, which frequently resorts to terrorist tactics, announced the call for a general strike as part of its 'mass line'. The masses were, however, very thin and not so proletarian, since support to the strike was limited to partial closure of stores in two district capitals.

The party gave 'strength' to its 'general strike' by letting bombs explode at several places in the capital and other big towns. Members of the East Bengal Proletarian Party came out in armed processions in three district capitals during the evening hours of the 16th.

Siraj Sikdar's underground party is a strange product of the radical left-wing movement in Bangladesh. Among all the existing Marxist-Leninist groups, the East Bengal Proletarian Party's actions seem most clearly divorced from its ideological goals. (Charu Mazumdar in many ways may have deviated from Mao's teachings, but his mistakes not even remotely match the concoction which Siraj Sikdar has brewed from Chinese revolutionary principles). It is true that the actions of his party are a demonstration of its strength, its organising talent, and even of a spirit of sacrifice by its cadres. But they also show a very poor understanding of the social reality in the country.

Example, the repeated appeals by this party to the population to start a liberation war against India hardly have any real meaning for the poor, landless peasants in rural Bangladesh.

Last fall and winter, Bangladesh was the theatre of attacks on police posts and on police training camps. Undoubtedly, many underground parties considered this tactic a convenient way of getting arms. But a major part in this drama was played by the party of Sikdar. Terrorist tactics used by this party include secret murders of members of the ruling class, and bomb attacks like the ones which took place on June 16. Furthermore, regular bank robberies and other acts of looting have greatly increased both the financial resources of the party as well as the personal pockets of its members. The party reportedly uses blackmail against other underground parties.

Consequently, it is not surprising that other underground parties are very much

embarrassed with the party of Sikdar, and call him a 'bandit', a 'terrorist' and even an 'agent of imperialism'. Voices from the underground are whispering that Sikdar is being encouraged by American imperialism. One rival party, the East Bengal Proletarian Party (Marxist-Leninist), a split-off from Sikdar's group, openly calls Sikdar a CIA agent in its major pamphlets.

10 or 12 Parties

But the East Bengal Proletarian Party is only one group in a whole spectrum of revolutionary parties all claiming to represent the vanguard of Marxism-Leninism in this country. At present there are at least 10 or 12 of these parties, all leading an underground existence (with the exception of the 'Leninist' Communist Party, led by Amal Sen, Kazi Zaffar and Rasheed Khan Menon).

Only one of these parties appear to be recognized as an authentic Marxist-Leninist party by China, namely the East Bengal Communist Party led by Toaha. If the differences and the number of factions among the Marxist-Leninists before the upheaval in Bangladesh were already considerable, the strategies and tactics among the revolutionary parties now can be compared with a many-coloured fan. For example, while a number of groups (especially during 1973) have been engaged in robberies as a source of party financing, other groups reject this tactic either because it has a corrupting influence on the cadres or leads to misunderstanding in relation with the masses (these are arguments put forward by Toaha's East Bengal Communist Party and the Bongo Communist Party led by Saiful Alam). An alternative was attempted by the East Pakistan Communist Party (ML) led by Abdul Haque. This faction, at the beginning of this year, was temporarily able to impose taxes on the richer layers of the middle class in Jessore district.

Some parties are at loggerheads over the question whether Bangladesh is a colony of India or of the Soviet Union. The tactic of attacking police outposts was a major controversy, until most groups decided to refrain from these activities since they are (at least at pre-

sent) harmful to the interests of the underground movement.

But the major dispute remains the same as before the struggle of 1971, namely the question whether the 'main contradiction' for the proletarian struggle at present is a 'national' one or rather an internal, 'class contradiction'. In fact, the majority of the groups seems to share the first opinion, and argues in favour of a 'liberation struggle' against foreign powers (the EBPP led by Siraj Sikdar, its rival group the 'East Bengal Proletarian Party (ML) the 'Bangla Communist Party led by Deben Sikdar, and Abdul Haque's East Pakistan Communist Party (ML). This in spite of the fact - that as long as the life of the country is not directly dominated by the military and administrative rule of a foreign power, the ruling class of Bangladesh is the main enemy in front of the struggling landless and land-poor peasants. Parties convinced of the need for an agrarian programme or agrarian struggle include the party led by Toaha; mentioned above the East Bengal Communist Party (ML) formerly led by Motin and Allaiddin (now in jail), and the Bongo Communist Party led by Saiful Alam.

Attempts At Unity

In the last few months there have been repeated attempts to bring about some kind of unity among the radical left in Bangladesh.

One of such attempts which was led by the group called Bongo Communist Party, resulted in a 'united front' of four groups in the district of Chittagong. It is, however, doubtful whether such attempts can be very successful at the present. Not only are there factors like the influence of foreign powers (in particular the dealings of the CIA and the Russian KGB), personal rivalries among the underground leaders, limit the chances for more unity. Also, differences in programmes and tactics (still) remain so large that unity now would be a hazardous undertaking. A clear programme for revolutionary action seems almost a precondition for joint struggle. And it may well be that such a programme will grow out of a different sphere than that of the party politics of the underground in Bangladesh.

There are a number of socio-economic programmes in Bangladesh in which the poor peasants have been mobilized.

There is no doubt that Bangladesh is faced with another major economic and social crisis. More substantial evidence than the ironic indications around the state visits of Bhutto and Giri is provided by the recently announced yearly budget. No less than 74.5% of the revenues for the development budget of 1974-1975 would have to be obtained through foreign loans, which is far more than originally planned.

Looking at more subjective factors, the peasants seem demoralized and passive. In fact however, their mood could quickly take a revolutionary turn. The Government and the government party are very much aware of this fact. Consequently, they get nervous whenever one or the other revolutionary party undertakes spectacular actions. But whether a peasants' revolution indeed will take place in the not too distant future hardly seems dependent on acts of terrorism and protest in the form of 'social banditry'.

One could argue that Bangladesh, objectively speaking, is in a pre-revolutionary stage, but many 'subjective' conditions for a violent uprising are (still) lacking. The present is a critical period for the revolutionary movement in Bangladesh. A crucial question remains whether the movement will be able to develop its strength before the continuous stream of Western loans and 'assistance' helps the Government of Bangladesh to regain its influence, at least among the more affluent classes in the countryside and among the middle classes—an influence which at present it has clearly lost.

Dacca, June 1974

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On The Statement Of The Central Organising Committee Of The CPI(ML)

BY A MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

THE Central Organising Committee prepared statement in February which was published later in 'Frontier', 'Pilupu' and some other papers. Opinions expressed by some friends on the statement have given rise to these comments. All those I met unanimously asked me: why was there no mention at all of annihilation of class enemies in the statement? Has the Party given up this policy?

After the death of Comrade Charu Mazumdar, it took the Party committees in different States a long time to establish contact with one another. Therefore, despite a considerable lapse of time, the Central Committee could not be organised afresh. Another factor which caused the delay was the ideological, political and organisational confusion in the Party following the momentary setbacks to the armed peasant struggles led by the CPI(ML) in different parts of the country. During this period of difficulties, the party had to face the attacks of the Government and the revisionists on the one hand, and on the other, ideological confusion. It was very hard indeed for the party to reunite under such difficult circumstances. The party is facing two major tasks in the course of its efforts to organise and lead the armed struggles further ahead. The first, to draw lessons from the victories achieved and mistakes committed during the last six years either on account of lack of experience or lack of depth in ideological understanding. The second, to lead the armed peasant revolution by taking necessary steps to bring the Party nearer to the people. The first task is related to self-criticism and the second to practice. Any individual or the party can foresee the future clearly only through self-criticism based on Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-tung thought.

After analysing the past experience, the COC held that the general line of the party was correct. It once again

clarified the line accepted by the Party Congress and set before the party four immediate tasks with the aim of snatching power by the people under the leadership of the working class. This, in brief is the essence of the statement. The statement has a limited purpose and is confined only to the aspects mentioned above. Therefore, the statement has no analysis of the victories achieved or reverses suffered by the party during the past six years nor does it contain any self-criticism regarding the usefulness or otherwise of different forms of struggle. These issues were out of the scope of the statement. The COC decided to prepare soon a detailed report on self-criticism to be presented to party members for discussion. The present document limits itself to the aim of mobilising the party on the line accepted until the death of Comrade Charu Mazumdar.

Annihilation

Why, then, there is no mention of annihilation of class enemies in the statement? The question is natural because during the last five or six years annihilation of class enemies remained the main form of struggle and a major aspect. In view of the present ideological confusion it would not be surprising if this lack of mention is exploited to make contradictory interpretations. In fact, the COC in the present statement reiterated only the main revolutionary line. There is no specific mention of various forms of struggle. Similarly, there is no mention of annihilation of class enemies. The COC thinks that no form of struggle which helps the armed peasant revolution to some extent or other and enjoys people's confidence should be rejected. The COC holds that such forms of struggle should be mobilised and led by the Party.

It was during the lifetime of Comrade Charu Mazumdar that the long neglect of partial forms of struggle

which enjoyed people's confidence was accepted as a mistake. This was also mentioned in his last article. While condemning the views of some revisionists that armed struggles should start only when the people were steered through economic struggles, the party, for a long time, held the wrong view that all economic struggles were revisionist and hence the party neither supported nor participated in such struggles. Comrade Charu Mazumdar referred to this aspect in his last article. Therefore, the COC made a reference to this aspect and it was included in the third task. Specific reference to this aspect was made only because the party had neglected it for a long time. This does not mean that all other forms of struggle are given up, or their importance undermined. For example, there is no mention in the statement of "snatching of arms" which had assumed a form of widespread struggle in West Bengal. The lack of reference to this form of struggle does not mean that it has been given up by the party altogether. Similarly it is also meaningless to say that the party has given up annihilation of class enemies. It is also incorrect to say that the party would give up annihilation of class enemies during the long and protracted civil war and developed stage of class war as well. In this regard I consider it my duty to say that any other interpretation of the statement would be nothing but wishful thinking on the part of people with different motivations. The essence of the COC statement is that the party should take up all other forms of struggle along with economic struggles that might arise in future. Such struggles should be taken up on the basis of their usefulness, as far as possible, in further strengthening the peasant revolutionary bases in the country to further strengthen armed struggle.

Then the question arises whether the party correctly assessed the peculiarities and usefulness or otherwise of the forms of struggle followed by the party during the last six years. Has the party developed the necessary competence to take up such forms of struggle? Did the party commit any mistake? If so what were these mistakes and what was the

ideological weakness which led to such mistakes? Such questions arise while analysing the past experiences. These issues will be taken up in the report on self-criticism. It will be incorrect to strive for different interpretations of issues which have not been raised in the statement.

Third Task

Some doubts have been expressed about the third task which says the party should assume leadership of mass organisations through participating in all struggles. We had neglected mass organisations as well as economic struggles until the last article of Comrade Charu Mazumdar was published. Such neglect was strong among the Party members. It is not surprising if such attitude persists even today, and therefore, the doubts expressed are natural. Since almost all organisations in our country are under the leadership of either revisionists or reactionaries, we had been under the impression that mass organisations would only remain as they were, and instead of helping would become hurdles in the path of revolution. As a substitute we resolved to organise the masses in every village by forming revolutionary councils. We failed to recognise how other forms of struggle continued to be effective to a certain extent even when war is the main form. Similarly, when we took up formation of revolutionary councils as the main form to organise the people, we forget the need to continue other organisational forms simultaneously. Actually, revolutionary councils were formed only in those areas where struggle had reached higher stages. Since we failed to recognise the fact that a strong enemy could not be defeated by disorganised masses, we failed to achieve our objective even when such committees were formed. In fact in different places, such committees remained only for name's sake. While repeating superficially the principle that forms of organisation and struggle are evolved by the people themselves, we mostly followed the forms which suited us, without taking into consideration their implications. Organisations which are tools in the hands of the Government cannot help

the revolution. Similarly our past experience shows that mass organisations, imposed from above without taking into consideration the preparedness of the masses, only remain on paper and prove to be ineffective.

Therefore, along with the formation of revolutionary councils with the understanding that they are the main form of organisation, other forms of organisation, should also be taken up according to the preparedness of the masses. Some of these organisations may exist for a long period while others may be useful for the time being depending on the nature of the problems. For example, student unions and trade unions exist for longer periods while committees formed to lead the struggle on the food problem against price rise exist for a shorter period. It is to be understood that through such struggles people develop their consciousness and realise that they will have to fight for their rights. Through such struggles they also realise the need for organisation. Only after this realisation, as Lenin said, such organisations can become powerful weapons in revolutionary struggles. As on all other issues, there is complete or total difference between revisionists and revolutionaries regarding the formation of mass organisation. Revisionists give importance to form while revolutionaries give importance to content. That is why revisionists need pocket organisations. For revolutionaries even a small issue is important enough to organise people and lead their revolutionary consciousness a step ahead. That is why they make use of every form of struggle in accordance with the preparedness of the people. At a time when this Government is practising fascist policies, it would be an illusion to believe that mass organisation can always function smoothly. With the sharpening of struggles between the people and the Government it will be inevitable for mass organisations to exist only secretly. In practice they gradually take the form of revolutionary committees. Considering the above aspects, the COC holds that organising of the masses should be given due importance and depending on the situation any form of organisation may be taken up.

On the question of leading the people,

there is no difference between leading mass organisations and leading the people. No revolution will succeed without the leadership of the vanguard of the proletariat, the communist party. This is the main point in our political resolution. Therefore it would be wrong to say that assuming the leadership of mass organisations would be incorrect.

There is another view which says that working in mass organisations would expose the party organisation. This is very much true. But it is not concerning the organisation only. This problem confronts whenever we try to combine

legal work with illegal work. Then, what is the solution? The solution lies not in abandoning the task of organising the masses but in acquiring efficiency in organisation. There is no other way than to follow the line of organising the masses without exposing the organisation. Such a line should be evolved by ourselves through practice.

It is hoped that comrades will understand the COC statement in the light of this explanation, and will take up the tasks given in the statement in a Bolshevik spirit.

total of 72. The deal then was that African members representing five and a half million Africans would have parity with Europeans numbering 250,000 in sixty years time. Observers reported that Muzorewa had accepted this but the ANC Central Committee rejected the offer. The rejection was not principled. The Committee wanted not power for the Africans but more seats. It asked Muzorewa to continue talks. The people were angry not only at Muzorewa but also at the Central Committee which had degenerated into a bunch of power-hungry individuals who were cashing in on the sacrifices of the freedom fighters. The people of Gwelo called on the ANC to stop all contact with Smith.

The ANC which spearheaded the struggle against the Pearce Commission has become a shadow without substance. In the country itself it has been repudiated by the three guerilla groups, namely Zanu, Zapu and Frolizi. The ANC strength lies not inside the country but outside—in the columns of the British press and in the programmes of the BBC. It is these media which are keeping alive a body which ought to have had a decent burial two years ago.

The Guerillas Go Ahead In Zimbabwe

KARRIM ESSACK

SMITH is reaching the end of the road. The more he sees the forces of history catching up with him, the more ruthless, mad and savage he becomes. The latest barbarous act, one in a long chain, has been the execution of five Zimbabweans. Their only crime was that they possessed firearms.

Since his usurpation of power eight years ago, Smith has passed draconian measures and hatched out schemes against the five and a half million oppressed Zimbabweans. He has decreed that all adult men and women must stop having babies or else they would lose their jobs. Then, in crass imitation of Salazar and Caetano, he called for one million white immigrants. He has armed his police, army and the bureaucracy with wide powers, including six months detention without trial. They have been told that should they meet with trouble-makers and terrorists (read freedom fighters), they must shoot to kill and ask questions afterwards. His prisons and detention camps are full and he has ordered the uprooting of thousands of peasants into concentration camps, euphemistically called "protected villages".

Smith however got the jitters when the fascist junta headed by Caetano was over-

thrown in Portugal. He saw his whole north-western front collapsing with Frelimo liberating vast areas in the Tete and Manica e Sofala provinces. His panic-stricken mind saw hordes of terrorists flooding his beloved Rhodesia from an independent and free Mozambique. In this deranged state he ran to Vorster, now his only remaining prop. and pillar for aid, support and advice.

However, the far-sighted sections of the British bourgeoisie in Britain coolly advised him that he still had time and that he should not fritter it away. He should lift his ostrich head from the quicksands, face reality boldly, stop relying on force alone to maintain himself in power. He should use other means. It was after his visit to the South African Prime Minister that Smith summoned Muzorewa once again for secret talks. The leader of the truncated African National Congress brandished his trump card once more. He said: "Negotiate with us now, or in three years time it will be too late, for then it will be on the issue of independence." Muzorewa has already been offered the post of Vice-Presidency in the apartheid-ridden Zimbabwe. In these new talks Smith conceded six more seats, thus giving the Africans 22 seats out of a

"Weak Spot"

That Smith has agreed to increase African representation is due to the changed political and military situation in Zimbabwe itself. On July 1, 1973 Smith, while making a glaring admission, nevertheless added boastfully, "I have no hesitation in saying that it is impossible for the terrorists to secure a permanent foothold in Rhodesia. Not only will we clear the lot in a short time, but when our long-term plans are complete we will be able to prevent any future occurrence". Yet nine months later in an interview with an American television

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P.O. & Dist. Bankura.

member, Mr Buckley, he complained, 'Mozambique is one of our weak spots. While Rhodesia had been fairly successful in holding the line on the Zambezi, the terrorists came through Mozambique and they caught us unawares'.

Smith is correct when he says that Zanu freedom fighters discovered the weak link on the common border adjoining Tete in Mozambique and the north of Zimbabwe. After Frelimo had liberated important areas in Tete province it was possible to use this as a base area and establish a foothold. The breach widened dramatically in 1973 and the whole of the north-eastern area became an area of operation. It was these gains that transformed Zanu into the leading guerilla group in the country. The Zanu representative, Mr Mtambanenegwe, said that his organisation's armed forces were operating in an area of 50,000 square miles of the territory and embraced two million people. He added, "Fighting has spread as far as Umtali, in the east, to the midlands as far as Catooma and southwards as far as Fort Victoria".

That was last year. Recently engagements have been reported just 90 miles from Smith's capital. Those familiar with the pattern of guerilla warfare know that with people's war, if military engagement takes place a hundred miles away from a place then political activity and political mobilisation is fifty miles ahead.

One can infer intense political activity 50 miles from Salisbury from the report of "Time" correspondent, Lee Griggs, quoted by the London "Times". It said Lee Griggs recently encountered about 40 soldiers of the white-led, black-staffed Rhodesian African Rifles, gingerly searching the roadside bush. Behind them were three trucks with more soldiers and heavy weapons pointed outward in all directions".

Zanu's war communique No. 9 of 1974 is much more specific. It says that between March 22 and May 17 this year Zanla launched over 12 major operations in the Centenary, Bindura Kandeya, Mount Darwin, Sipolilo and Mrewa districts. Besides killing or wounding about a hundred of enemy troops, it captured a cache of arms as

well as a radio transmitter. However, the most significant development in the history of the eight years of armed struggle was that Zanla's forces were able to down four planes, one of them being a Canberra light bomber. While Smith in typical ostrich-like fashion blamed bad weather for these losses the far-sighted section of British imperialism pondered soberly and reached the inevitable conclusion that missiles, or "Comrade Sams" have made their debut on the soil of Zimbabwe.

Zapu guerillas have been active in Wankie district. Here troop carriers and supply trucks have been destroyed by land mine explosions. However, the most spectacular incident was the rocket attack on South African soldiers on September 27 last year when a number were killed.

Frolizi has carried out sustained activity around Wedza district, south of Salisbury. Throughout last year attacks were made on stores, farms and in one case a military post. The farm of a lieutenant-colonel of the Rhodesian army was attacked with hand grenades and automatic weapons. It is as a result of these activities that a "Guardian" correspondent was able to report, "Frolizi guerillas have deposited a cache of arms at a village of Enkeldoorn and set up a camp at another village of Umvuma some miles away".

It was in this district that the Zambia Daily Mail reported a new atrocity. It said, "White Rhodesian soldiers forced an African medicine man who was travelling from Salisbury to Wedza on Christmas Day (1973) to eat a dried chameleon at gunpoint. The man died in his home three days later at Wedza".

Sparks

Sparks are flying all over the country and political mobilisation is taking place in the most unexpected of areas. The Bulawayo Sunday News reported, "Police teams have been working over a wide area which includes Shabane, Selukewe, Inyati, Somabula and Fort Nixon... the search was mounted when an African man dropped a bullet as he was talking to a police constable in a Somabula tea room. He escaped,

when chased, threatening pursuers with a pistol".

The Zimbabwean freedom fighter organisations have gone a long way since the time when they asked the British Government to use force to crush Smith's illegal rebellion. Hard facts forced them to recognise the reality that they alone must be their own liberators. Today their capacity to sacrifice is earning for them the same respect that has been accorded to those of Mozambique, Guinea Bissau and Angola. It is the armed struggle that will bring Smith to his senses and then he will have to negotiate not with toothless and clawless lions but with the leaders of guerilla movements who alone are true representatives of the Zimbabwean people.

On Indian Economic Growth

RANJIT SAU

THIS note is not exactly a rejoinder to Mr I. Sen's review of the book "Indian Economic Growth", in *Frontier*, June 15, 1974. Rather it picks up the thread of discussion on certain highly interesting points raised by Mr Sen. The points at issue have long been debated in this weekly as well as elsewhere. Evidently confusion and ambiguities yet pervade the polemic.

Mr Sen is correct in saying that the law of motion of the Indian economy cannot be fully grasped unless the contradictions of the economy are properly analysed; and the 'principal' contradiction among them is identified. He could have added that the contradictions do not operate in mutual isolation. One impinges on the other; they interact with each other. And in the process they change their relative position. A contradiction that was minor yesterday may emerge as the principal one in the course of today's dialectic.¹

The author of the book reviewed by Mr Sen is aware that it does not identify the principal contradiction of the Indian economy; nor does it go into the full historical evolution of the contradic-

tions. It is concerned only with the contradictions as such that had riddled the Indian economy in the last two decades or so. The book is but a small step in a long journey. The reviewer's comment in this respect is well taken.

But the fundamental question remains: what is the correct 'method' for identifying the 'principal' contradiction in a concrete situation? One, of course, hears of so many contending theses proclaiming this or that to be the main contradiction in India today. But these claims are hardly supported by scientific investigation. Merely asserting an opinion is one thing; scientifically proving it is another. Mr Sen seems to consider the contradiction with imperialism to be the principal one for the Indian economy. The author would be grateful if he could demonstrate precisely how he reaches this conclusion. This is an important question to which the attention of every reader is invited. Would some one please enumerate the Marxist-Leninist methodology for identifying the 'principal' contradiction in a concrete historical situation such as obtains in India today?

For, if the book did not make any attempt to single out the major contradiction in the Indian economy it is because of the author's still inadequate grasp of the relevant methodology, certainly not due to "an insufficient appreciation of the role and the character of world imperialism today on the one hand and the development of imperialism into neo-imperialism on the other", as Mr Sen alleges. The book in fact clearly shows how the vested interests of foreign monopoly capital intricately mesh together with those of the domestic bourgeoisie and the feudal remnants: how, for instance, it is profitable for the domestic monopoly to import highly capital-intensive technology even though there is an abundant supply of labour power in the country at a low wage rate that had remained virtually stagnant during the last three decades.

Moment and Trend

"Pure capitalism never existed anywhere in the world; nor can it ever exist. The reality is always an admixture of more than one mode of produc-

tion". Mr Sen calls this observation, which appears in the book under review, a bizarre remark! Perhaps he does not know that it is a paraphrase of the following statement of Lenin: "There is no 'pure' capitalism in the world; nor can there be; what we always find is admixtures either of feudalism, philistinism, or of something else."² This incident by itself is trivial; but it gives an impression that the reviewer is not acquainted with the works of Lenin. And this impression gets confirmed as one proceeds further with the review.

Mr Sen's formula for measuring the level of capitalist development is indeed mathematically elegant. As he puts it: "In practice, since the 'differentia specifica' of capitalism (Sweezy: "The Theory of Capitalist Development", page 56) is 'free wage labour', one can identify the extent of development of capitalism by considering the proportion of 'free wage labour' to the total number of workers". This particular quotient formula seems quite novel. Is it Mr Sen's own invention or is there some Marxist-Leninist literature from which one can learn more about it? Has this formula been ever tested in practice?

It may be recalled here that in the course of analysing the development of capitalism in Russia and the USA at the turn of the century Lenin uses the percentage of 'farms' which employ hired labour as the index for the 'level' of development of capitalism in agriculture; and the percentage increase in outlays on labour per acre of improved land as the index for the 'rate' of such development.³ And he characterises a farm as capitalist if the number of wage workers exceeds that of family workers.⁴ Lenin points out the limitations of the then available data, and still concludes that "the data on hired labour are far more indicative and offer better proof of capitalism in agriculture."⁵ But he also mentions that in effect it leads to "an overestimation of the degree of capitalist development". To quote him at length: "While we correctly defined the 'trend' of development, we did not correctly define the 'moment' of that development. We assumed that the elements of capitalist agriculture have already taken full shape in Russia, both in landlord farming...

and in peasant farming, which seemed to have given rise to a strong peasant bourgeoisie and therefore to be incapable of bringing about a 'peasant agrarian revolution'. The erroneous programme was not the result of 'fear' of the peasant agrarian revolution, but of 'an over-estimation of the degree' of capitalist development in Russian agriculture... The revolution (of 1905-1907) has exposed that mistake; it has confirmed the 'trend' of development as we have defined it" (as distinct from the 'moment' of that development).⁶

Briefly, it is one of the lessons drawn by Lenin from the first Russian revolution of 1905-1907 that the data of hired labour, when used as an indicator, 'overestimate' the moment of capitalist development but correctly reflect the trend. In this sense it is easier to identify the trend than to measure the moment of the development of capitalism—'easier' in the relative sense, though not 'easy' in absolute terms. The book reviewed by Mr Sen does not elaborate all this in so many words, but reference is made to the relevant literature.

Definition, Essence and Manifestation:

This is a relatively complex subject; but in the book only a small section is devoted to it, and of course due references are cited.⁷ The problem is important enough to deserve a brief explanation here.

The basic problem is: How to measure the moment and trend of the development of capitalism in a given historical situation? To solve it, the first step is to ask: what is capitalism? Or, what is the 'definition' of the capitalist mode of production?

The capitalist mode of production having been defined, all the essential features of this mode may not be found with sharp clarity in a given historical situation. For, as Lenin says, what we always find is admixtures of more than one mode of production. In his own words: "Life creates forms that unite in themselves with remarkable gradualness systems of economy whose basic features constitute opposites. It becomes impossible to say (for instance) where 'labour service' ends and where 'capitalism' begins"⁸ If full-blown,

'pure' capitalism cannot be found in practice with all its characteristics, then one has to examine whether or not the 'essence' of capitalism prevails in the given context.

But what is meant by the 'essence'? According to Lenin, the 'essence' means "one of the 'essentials', one of the principal, if not the principal, characteristics or features"⁹. Every essence reveals itself in a mass of 'phenomena'. A 'phenomenon' is the outward, direct expression of essence; it is the form in which the essence is manifested. What we directly observe is a phenomenon, an outward appearance. The employment of wage labour, for example, is a phenomenon which is a 'manifestation' of the essence of capitalism, namely, "that stage where labour-power itself is a commodity". Mr Sen may call it Hegelian, but, remember, it is Marx who says: "All science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided"¹⁰. (Note: while the 'definition' contains 'all' the essential characteristics, the 'essence' gives only the 'principal' feature).

What particular manifestation of the essence should be measured and how in order to cognise the degree of development of capitalism in a given case depends very much upon the nature of the data at hand. On one occasion, for instance, Lenin finds that "railway statistics provide remarkably exact data on the different rates of growth of capitalism and finance capital in world economy"¹¹. Of course, by no means is the growth of railway route-kilometres the essence of growth of capitalism and finance capital, but only its manifestation in one form in one specific historical context. Nor do the railway route-kilometres occur anywhere in the 'definition' of capitalism and finance capital in world economy.

To sum up, the 'definition' of capitalism as such may not always provide the operationally valid criterion for the measurement of the extent of development of capitalism in a concrete situation. The reality being an admixture of more than one mode of production, the right question to ask is whether or not the 'essence' of capitalism prevails in the given context. However, in order to measure the

moment of capitalist development one has to observe and analyse certain 'manifestations' of the essence of capitalism.

"Wherever commodity production prevails and wage-labour is not casually but systematically employed", observes Lenin, "we have all the features of capitalism"¹². On another occasion he adds that "the employment of hired labour" is "the principal manifestation of agricultural capitalism"¹³. A careful examination of these two statements would bear out the methodological contention of the distinction we are making between definition, essence, and manifestation.

Differentia Specifica

If Mr Sen wants to know the 'differentia specifica' of capitalism he should read "Capital", vol. 1, p. 618 where Marx enunciates it as follows: "Labour-power is sold today, not with a view to satisfying, by its service or by its product, the personal needs of the buyer. His aim is augmentation of his capital, production of commodities containing more labour than he pays for, containing therefore a portion of value that costs him nothing, and that is nevertheless realised when the commodities are sold. Production of surplus value is the absolute law of this mode of production". This is not an isolated quotation torn out of context; indeed it contains the core of Marx's view on capitalism as a mode of production.

It follows that the employment of hired labour by itself does not necessarily connote that the mode of production is capitalistic, for labour power might as well be employed "with a view to satisfying, by its service or by its product, the personal needs of the buyer". Herein perhaps lies the clue as to why the data of wage-labour per se, if used as an indicator of the development of capitalism, may lead to an over-estimation of the moment.

A far more reliable index of the degree of capitalist development in agriculture can be found if we keep in view this observation of Marx: "The prerequisites for the capitalist mode of production (in agriculture) are the following: The actual tillers of the soil are wage-labourers employed by a capitalist, the capitalist farmer who is engaged in

agriculture merely as a particular field of exploitation for capital, as investment for his capital in a particular sphere of production"¹⁴. Note: "Wage-labourers employed by a capitalist"!

Wage-labour is possible without the capitalist to the extent that labour-power is purchased for satisfying the personal needs of the buyer, by its service or by its product. But the capitalist cannot exist without the wage-labourer. The capitalist farmer therefore is the chief sign and surest indicator of capitalism in agriculture.

One cannot blame Mr Sen if the few lines in the book which barely touch on these issues were confusing to him. A highly controversial subject like this was compressed into a little over one page in the book reviewed by him. In any case it is hoped Mr Sen by now realises the worth of his quotient formula to measure the degree of capitalism.

Certain other parts of Mr Sen's review also indicate his failure to fully understand the book. But that is yet another matter.

NOTES

1. See, Mao Tse-tung, "On Contradiction", Selected Writings (Calcutta, 1967), pp. 658-91.
2. V. I. Lenin, "The Collapse of the Second International", Collected Works, vol. 21, p. 236.
3. Lenin, "New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture", *ibid.*, vol. 22, pp. 45-46.
4. Lenin, "The Capitalist System of Modern Agriculture", *ibid.*, vol. 16, p. 432.
5. Lenin, "New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture", *ibid.*, vol. 22, p. 33.
6. Lenin, "The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in the First Russian Revolution of 1905-1907", *ibid.*, vol. 13, pp. 291-292.
7. See particularly, Ranjit Sau, "On the Essence and Manifestation of Capitalism in Indian Agriculture", Economic and Political Weekly, March 31, 1973, and "Can Capi-

- talism Develop in Indian Agriculture?", Seminar in the Political Economy of Indian Agriculture, Calcutta, March, 1973.
8. Lenin, "On Development of Capitalism in Russia", Collected Works, vol. 3, p. 197.
 9. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *ibid.*, vol. 38, p. 359.
 10. Karl Marx, "Capital", vol. 3, p. 817.
 11. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", Collected Works, vol. 22, p. 274.
 12. Lenin, "The Handicraft Census of 1894-95", *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 367.
 13. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 237.
 14. Marx, "Capital", vol. 3, p. 618.

Social Scenario

B. G.

'CURIOUSER and curiouser!' cried Alice as she was opening out like the largest telescope that ever was. Not being Alice myself, I did not feel like crying, but I was feeling like subsiding when I went through the newspaper reports of the State Cabinet meeting on the Wanchoo Commission (July 7). In fact, quite unlike Alice, I was shivering and shrinking like the smallest pigmy that ever was. There was everything, from angry threats and gesticulations to sentimental tears, hurling of dirt and filth at each other and what not! What a band of Ministers! One wonders at the alarming rate of 'uglification' of everything under the sun in West Bengal. Gentle readers! if you say like Alice that you have never heard of 'uglification', I must tell you like Gryphon that if you know what 'beautiful' is, like beautifying the city of Calcutta, you should know what 'uglify' is, like uglifying by the present rulers of Calcutta. Down, down, down. Would the fall never come to an end!

'De-distantiation' is a sociological concept introduced by Karl Mannheim to explain the phenomenon that with the rise of modern democracy, the distance separating the average individual from the central authorities becomes less. That is, the distance between the average individual and the central symbols and objects of faith diminishes with the advent of democracy. Social distance between the ruling elite and the people tends to become closer and closer. What has recently happened in Sikkim may be called 'de-Chogyalisation', which is, sociologically speaking, nothing but

this 'de-distantiation'. This will not only diminish the geographical and political distance between Gangtok and New Delhi, but also will bring the 'model' economic, social and cultural institutions of India closer to Sikkim. And as a result of this closeness, 'democracy' will rise like a Naiad on the confluence of the Lachen and the Lachung, wherefrom the Teesta originates. The Chogyal was worrying, for nothing, about losing his country's identity, and this was due to his poor knowledge of modern sociology. With a minimum sociological sense he would have known that 'de-identitisation' is a part of 'de-distantiation', which again is related to the rise of 'democracy'. Kazi Lhendup Dorji had this sense, which the Chogyal, for his feudal ancestry, lacked. One should be thankful to the Supreme Deity of Sikkim that at last, He has been able to persuade the Chogyal in a dream to give assent to the Sikkim Bill and to accept the policy of de-distantiation, in the interest of democracy and the people.

de-Mao-Chouisation

As we were immersed in the democratic rituals of de-Chogyalisation in Sikkim, a Chinese balloon was found in a village near Namkhana in 24 Parganas. Meteorologists and the police have examined the balloon and found that it came from Formosa, about 3000 km from Calcutta. It contained several thousand of leaflets, all in Chinese, condemning the activities of Mao and Chou, and exhorting the Chinese people to rise in revolution against them. It was aimed at the Chinese mainland, but a high wind appeared to have diverted it

to Namkhana in India. The Action Committee 526, on whose behalf the anti-Mao-Chou leaflets and slogans were stuffed in the balloon, was possibly inspired with the idea of de-distantiation, which means de-Mao-Chouisation, democracy, interest of the people and all that. Where is the mainspring of this inspiration? In the Kremlin, or the White House? We do not know. We know only that the trend was set in the 1960s in eastern Europe, by de-Hungarisation and de-Czechoslovakisation.

de-Inflation

It has been reported in newspapers that the All-India Marwari Federation may soon start a continuous satyagraha in protest against 'ostentatious weddings' and the dowry system. The president of the Federation, at a recent meeting in Calcutta, denounced the practice of 'throwing cocktail parties, erecting large pandals and indulging in other forms of extravagance during marriages'. If the practice continues, the federation may offer satyagraha outside those houses where such weddings take place. The president feels that the most effective way to abolish the dowry system is to encourage 'love marriages'. We appreciate the feeling of the president, though we are doubtful about the impact of love marriage on the dowry system. Moreover, love marriage was a pre-second-world-war social phenomenon, and now it is out of fashion, especially in the post-third-five-year plan period. Young lovers now insist that 'love' is love, and 'marriage' is marriage, the twain should not meet. If love matures in marriage, the marriage should be strictly formal. That is, it must be celebrated with proper dowry, gifts and rituals. This demand of 'latest lovers' is founded on hard social reality. They know, which their parents did not, that love flourishes on pre-marital mental soil, and fades away on post-marital mental desert. Dowry alone remains after complete defoliation of love.

Why then this denunciation of the dowry system and ostentatious weddings, and by the Marwari Federation? That is the point. Everybody knows that

dowry, costly weddings, cocktail parties and things like that have provided the biggest outlet for spending the black money in independent India. Now the Marwari Federation wants to plug the holes of black-money drainage. It must have been inspired by the 'de-inflationary' measures (not deflationary) of our Finance Minister. The rich will be richer and richest after ten years, as the amount of black money that will be 'immobilised' for these years will multiply with compound interest. The dowry system and ostentatious weddings, and also cocktail parties, may therefore be withheld for these ten years.

de-Christianisation

Those were the days of Rai Bahadurs and Rai Sahibs when we were born and brought up. Fathers, both Catholic and non-Catholic, were a little different then. In these days of Padma-bhusans and Padmasrees, things have changed and are changing so fast that often we feel like living on the Moon or some other planet. The Orissa CM told the State Assembly (July 2) that preliminary inquiries conducted by the State Government revealed that the allegations of "immoral conduct" against six Roman Catholic priests of Orissa were "partially true". The CM said that some sections of the Roman Catholics had alleged that these priests had purchased houses, opened a hotel, bought land, and were running taxis and trucks by "misappropriation" of relief articles, including foodgrains. There was great discontent among about 200,000 Roman Catholics in Orissa and some of them were on hunger-strike at Cuttack, protesting against the corrupt practices of the six Keralite Fathers. You may call it 'de-Christianisation', or if you like, 'de-Fatherisation'. Formerly, sons followed the footsteps of their fathers, now fathers are following the footsteps of their sons, who are sinners. This is amoral, not immoral.

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Clippings

Who Killed The SI ?

Sub-Inspector Killed

By Our Staff Correspondent

A sub-inspector of an armed police battalion was speared to death in Sree Pally Chakda under Regent Park thana in 24-Parganas around midnight on Thursday.

Information reached the police that some people had allegedly demanded a large sum of money from the guardians of a girl whose marriage was to be held on Thursday. Plainclothes policemen kept watch on the people who had visited the house on the occasion. When the allegedly wanted person entered the house, the policemen divided into two groups, one of which went up to the first floor. The man was apprehended and asked to surrender.

Just at that moment the entire area was plunged into darkness as a result of power failure. As the man tried to escape, one of the officers fired from his revolver and a bullet seemed to have hit him. Although injured, the man jumped on to the parapet and then slipped down on the ground.

The sub-inspector, who had been waiting outside, chased him and fired six rounds from his revolver. After covering some distance he stopped near a tree to reload the revolver. Some people, suspected to be associates of the wanted man, surrounded him and fatally attacked him with a spear,

(The Statesman, Calcutta,
 July 13, 1974)

SI Stabbed to Death

By A Staff Reporter

Mr Manwar Singh Negi, a sub-inspector of the State Armed Police was stabbed to death by a gang of alleged Naxalites in the Regent Park thana area, in the Southern suburb of Calcutta at about 9-15 p.m. on Thursday. Sixteen persons have so far been arrested in connection with this murder.

According to police sources, a raid party had gone to the Sripalli-Chakdah locality in the Regent Park thana area,

in search of a "wanted" man. Sensing the arrival of the police, the alleged extremist took shelter in a house where a marriage ceremony was in progress. Mr Negi along with eight other plainclothes-men went after him.

No sooner had the police got inside the house than all the lights went out (police say the extremists cut the power connections. There was utter confusion in the house and people started running helter skelter in panic. The alleged extremist scaled the boundary wall and took to his heels. Mr Negi chased him firing from his revolver. But soon his ammunition ran out. He was attacked by several men with lethal weapons. He dropped dead.

(Hindusthan Standard, Calcutta,
 July 13, 1974)

Subedar Killed

The Jadavpur police heard on Thursday night that an anti-social called Amal, who is a well-known Congress worker, would raid a wedding party at Putiari. The police had been looking for Amal on various charges including murder. On receiving the news, the police in plain clothes left for the place. When they were near the destination they were showered with pipe-gun bullets from various directions. The police returned the fire. At that moment the lights went out in the entire area because of load-shedding. The police spokesman said that in the dark the Armed Police S.I. Monohar Singh fell behind the party and taking advantage of this he was stabbed to death.

(Satyayug, July 13, 1974).

Not Naxalites

By A Staff Reporter

Some seniormost officials of the West Bengal Police admitted on Sunday that the fatal attack on a constable on July 11 in the Regent Park P.S. area was not made by Naxalites.

According to preliminary findings, the incident might have been caused by ordinary rowdies. The officials hoped to wind up the investigation soon.

(Hindusthan Standard, July 15, 1974)

JULY 20, 1974

Letters

A New Art ?

Has Sandip Sarkar lost his cool? Really! How abruptly do his Palm Sunday hosannas (June 8) to the "modern masters" degenerate when he notices the Americans, not the "aesthetically satisfying" ones such as de Kooning or Hayter, mind, you, but the publicans and sinners such as Dine, Warhol et al kneeling comfortably at the transept praying to 'his' God.

The truth, if one should introduce a frivolous note into art criticism a la Sarkar, is that bourgeois artists from Cezanne's "Bathers" onwards have banished man from the centre of attention precisely because bourgeois man, in the period of imperialism, dares not look at himself. The murdering, bestial and emasculated profile which the workers see and defy is too disturbing, even more disturbing than junk, with or without soul. How much more "satisfying", "relevant", "vigorous" etc. are the "flourish and charm of the Arabian Nights", the "profundity of a vase", and the "white binding lines". Don't ask about binding chains, unless you want Sarkar to dissolve in laughter at such socialist realism.

If Mr Sarkar wants to rediscover the human, then he must erase from his mind the blight of the "modern masters". It's no use recoiling before the 'tachistes' and the "hard-edge" painters. The Americans have simply been extravagant guests at the Feast laid out by Cezanne, the genius who pulled down the curtain on bourgeois art. The rest is the familiar off-stage story of queers, freaks and quick-timers catching the fast buck.

A new art which begins in compassion and quickly moves to defiance of oppression is slowly burgeoning where the workers, peasants and other oppressed masses are fighting the battles of the century, away, quite far away from the fashionable galleries of Paris, London and New York. You catch a glimpse of it in a cover to a revolutionary tract, in the massive murals in the Mexican sun, or in the graceful muscles of an African breaking his chains on a Peking poster. True, this art, this new huma-

nism has not generated the formal dynamism to match Bellini's "David", but we, dear Sir, will surpass such bourgeois achievements as we proceed to put ourselves, the millions upon millions of Davids, upon the Canvas and Stone of history.

Sailen Nandy
Kadamtala, Jalpaiguri

Partial To Bhutto ?

I agree with your criticism of the Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh as the representatives of vested interests and hence anti-people. However I notice that your criticism of Mr Bhutto is muted and some of his actions which are brutal even by fascist standards are glossed over in Frontier.

China supports Mr Bhutto not on ideological grounds, but because it suits its own national interests. Frontier has no such excuse, and a suspicion is created that you are going along with the Chinese national policy, rather than evaluating the sub-continent's problems according to Marxist-Leninist principles.

C. Subrahmanyam

Where Do They Go ?

We have received complaints that for the last few months the police, under the garb of "Naxalite-police encounters", have been resorting to cold-blooded murder of prisoners in custody and refusing to give the whereabouts of persons arrested in different parts of Hooghly district.

It was reported by the police that a "Naxalite" worker named Jaydeb Modak was killed in an "encounter" in Telinipara, Chandernagore. According to local people and co-detainees of Mr Modak in the Chandernagore police lock-up, Jaydeb was not at all present at the place of occurrence of the above incident. He was arrested on the previous day and the police killed him in the lock-up on the day of the incident.

In another incident of this nature the police, after killing three alleged Naxalite workers detained in Mograhat

P.S., circulated a false story of encounter later.

A large number of people including tribal men and women have been arrested in connection with the incident of 'Police-Naxalite encounter' in the Kamalpur village of Burdwan, near the Hooghly border. The police are refusing to tell anybody where they are being held. It is heard that they have been brought to Calcutta at Lalbazar, Police HQ and instead of being produced before the court they are being brutally tortured in the lock-up. A considerable section of the local people suspect that many of them have either been killed or are going to be. And that is why the police are refusing to disclose their whereabouts and not producing them before court. At the same time, widespread police repression is going on in Kamalpur village.

On 20.6.1974, the police arrested two young women and one young man from Bus No. 3 at Uttarpara. They are refusing to tell even their relatives in which P.S. they have been kept. Nor are they being produced in court. One of the girls is named Krishna Banerjee.

The police are arresting many more young boys and girls and refusing to tell their whereabouts.

On behalf of the Association for the Protection of Democratic Rights we demand that the Government immediately conduct an impartial enquiry into these deaths and furnish the whereabouts of arrested political workers to their relatives. We appeal to the broadest section of the people to come forward against these barbarous and illegal police atrocities.

Sd/- PROMODE SENGUPTA
Secretary, APDR, Calcutta

Protracted Trial

I am a solicitor. On June 24 I went to the City Civil Court in connection with a civil suit. The hearing was adjourned as the court was engaged in hearing a Sessions case. I found several young men in the cage of that court. They were the accused in the Nepal Roy murder case. In my presence one of the accused complained to the the judge

JULY 20, 1974

that the trial was being unnecessarily prolonged by prosecution and the lawyers engaged by the State to defend those who had no means to arrange their own defence. Prosecution was producing many witnesses to prove the fact of murder. This was unnecessary as nobody was disputing the fact of murder. The defence of all the accused was that they had nothing to do with the murder, and as the witnesses were not proving the complicity of the accused with the murder lengthy cross-examination of these witnesses was wholly unnecessary. The trial had started in the beginning of March this year and only sixteen witnesses had so far been examined. There were about 90 witnesses in all. The accused prayed for a speedy disposal of the case.

J. Banerjee
Calcutta

Medical Representatives

I am very sorry to write that Mr Anil Kumar Saha (June 22) could not understand the spirit of our letter. Our aim was not to attack the CPI(M) but to express our grievances against the conduct of the recent WBSMRA elections. The elections were rigged. This should not have done in a so-called Marxist trade union. Yet another "member" has written that the elections were conducted as per conventions and rules. Here also I beg to differ as in our constitution there are no such rules which prevent the democratic conduct of elections—even if there are any those could be amended with a view to making the organisation more democratic. Probably it is not known to the "member" that whenever any employee gets his membership he becomes entitled to cast his vote and participate in discussions for the betterment of the organisation. May I request both Mr Saha and the said member to be a little more thorough about trade union activities.

A. Sen
Calcutta

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Defend Prisoners

The Legal Aid Committee has been organised to defend all those who are being victimised for holding political beliefs dissimilar to those of the party in power. Our object is to defend such cases irrespective of the political ideology of the victims.

There are thousands of detenus and undertrial prisoners in West Bengal only. Innumerable cases have been pending since 1968-69. Despite reminders the police are reluctant to submit chargesheets and bail is being opposed stubbornly. If one is granted bail he is tagged to some other cases. Thus the prisoners are virtually denied any defence. The overwhelming majority of those who had to be released after the Supreme Court struck down Section 17A of the MISA, were immediately re-arrested.

There is great need to expand our work and the task before us is huge. We can hope to tackle it adequately only if greater co-operation is forthcoming from all democratically-

minded people not only in this State but in the whole of India.

We appeal to all democratic people :

To contribute generously to this Committee ;

To communicate to us all cases of political victimization in need of legal aid.

Cheques drawn in favour of Bina Banerjee may be sent to either of the addresses given below; money orders, cash and communications to the office (2).

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