

# frontier

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## On Other Pages

COMMENT	2
NEW STRATEGIES	
R. P. MULICK	4
SOCIAL SCENARIO	
B. G.	6
AFRICAN LIBERATION STRUGGLES	
NARENDRA SINGH	7
ARTISTS OF WEST	
BENGAL—XII	
SANDIP SARKAR	12
A PLETHORA OF CONFUSIONS	
MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY	13
LETTERS	14

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## NIXON GOES

MR Nixon is perhaps consoling himself with the thought that he has already passed into history, as the first American president to resign. He went in disgrace, to avoid conviction on impeachment charges. The high-sounding bill of impeachment drawn up by the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee said, "Richard Nixon has acted in a manner (wasn't he to the manner born?) contrary to his trust as President and subversive of constitutional government, to the great prejudice of the cause of law and justice and to the manifest injury of the people of the United States".

The charges were obstruction of justice, abuse and misuse of power and refusal to obey subpoenas issued by the Judiciary Committee. Tax-evasion, use of public money to beautify his private residence, the prolonged bombing of Cambodia in violation of Congress directions etc were left out. The first two relate to personal behaviour and, under the capitalist system making money and evading taxes are all right. As to the third, Congress now does not seem to mind much the manifest injury done to a poor Asian country by the biggest and most powerful State the world has yet seen. After all, Americans under successive presidents, Republican or democrat, have seen much duplicity and destruction in the exercise of power in Asia and Africa. In the impeachment bill, therefore, the Judiciary Committee concentrated on the injury done to the American people and their constitution.

There was no doubt what the charge of obstruction of justice would bring. Section 1510 of the United States Code states that "whoever willfully endeavors by means of bribery, misrepresentation, intimidation, to force or threats thereof to obstruct, delay, or prevent the communication of information relating to a violation of any criminal statute of the United States by any person to a criminal investigator" is liable to criminal prosecution. Mr Nixon was guilty of this when he asked for hush money to be paid to Hunt.

It is not known for certain whether Mr Nixon will be left in peace to arrange his papers and write his memoirs—the staff and office expenses in any case would cost the Government \$96,000 a year—enjoying a tax-free pension of \$60,000. The memoirs could be highly interesting and a best-seller if—and it is a big if—the writer is truthful and does not behave like the man whom Truman described as a shifty-eyed goddam liar. Public opinion, it appears, has already been appeased by the act of resignation, and compassion for the fallen man may spare him prosecution and conviction. Besides, most people in America, as elsewhere,

think he has made great contributions to detente and deserves to be left alone.

Will the cancer within the White House go away? Such an extraordinary gang-up was rare but was it a chance phenomenon? Isn't it cancer of the entire ruling class? Perhaps if other past combinations in the White House had been subjected to such exposure, the results would have been more bearable, but not above board. Was Nixon the limit? The American people who gave him a landslide victory for a second term will have to wait and see.

As for the lesson of Nixon, the Foreign Minister of the largest democracy in the

world, Mr Swaran Singh, has stated, of all places at Seoul, that the White House resignation will strengthen democracy and that whatever boosts democracy is welcome in his country. We are great ones for hypocrisy. Otherwise Mr Singh would not have forgotten so soon the charges brought by the CPI(M) MP against Mrs Gandhi and others in her Cabinet during the no-confidence debate in the Lok Sabha. The charges remain unanswered. However, as very moral persons we can rejoice in the fact that Mr Nixon quit on August 9, a day to remember in India.

## Ask No Questions

The Wanchoo Commission was appointed to enquire into allegations of corruption against West Bengal Ministers. Out of 130 complaints originally submitted to the Commission, the learned Mr Justice Kailash Nath Wanchoo, after some sifting, recommended that 10 deserved to be probed. At this stage, the West Bengal Cabinet got into the act. The Cabinet—or at least some of the Cabinet Ministers—decided that five of the 10 allegations lodged against important Ministers were altogether frivolous, and must not be taken up. The Chief Minister, Mr Siddhartha Sankar Ray, concurred, and the Commission's terms of reference were modulated accordingly. A unique innovation has thus been introduced in the field of jurisprudence. The accused on their own have determined that no prima facie case exists against them and have vetoed the recommendations of the former Chief Justice of the country who has thus been instructed to enquire into only residual allegations against residual Ministers. Since the latter wield little political clout, the leaders of the various factions of the State Congress are no longer unduly perturbed. If, for brightening up the image of the party, some Ministers have to be found corrupt, or at least have to stand investigation, let the relatively unimportant be offered as sacrificial goats. The big ones must go scotfree; the judge must not investigate

their conduct, however serious the allegations.

The real purpose of the commission can be easily understood if one goes through the application recently moved at Calcutta High Court against the Wanchoo Commission by Mr Ranadev Chaudhuri on behalf of Mr Tarini Mahato, General Secretary, Youth Congress Committee, Purulia and Mr Sambhu Nath Baksi. The petitioners challenged the Wanchoo Commission's terms of reference dated July 16 on the grounds that serious charges of corruption have been ignored, the ad hoc decision to appoint the Commission was motivated by political considerations, the terms of reference were too narrow and the whole procedure adopted was ultra vires the Commission of Inquiry Act, 1952. The petitioners' case was that in their memorandum submitted on June 22 they specifically mentioned names, dates and figures to show how Mr Sitaram Mahato, Minister-in-charge, Forest Department, indulged in the "grossest abuse of official powers", encouraged and practised nepotism, unduly exercised his influence and as such introduced corruption in definite matters of public importance. Along with the memorandum copies of some of the original documents in support of the allegations were submitted. It was alleged, that complaints of comparatively minor importance were picked up, omitting the serious charges,

thereby misleading the public that no serious charges other than those referred need be inquired into. Any step to give such an impression was mala fide and an attempt to further the political ends of the party to which the Chief Minister belongs. Calcutta High Court issued a show cause rule on the Wanchoo Commission. Similarly, complaints in writing supported with documents against Mr Tarun Kanti Ghose, Mr Prafulla Kanti Ghose, Mr Abu Barkat Gani Khan Chaudhuri and Mr Jainal Abedin are missing. More than one Minister did complain that against these four Ministers allegations of the most serious nature were deposited. Where have these gone? Some of them said that the allegations being enquired into are so minor that even an officer in charge of a police station is competent enough to look into them.

Detailed reports have appeared in newspapers of how some of the complainants living outside Calcutta are being harassed by the authorities under the pretext that they want to know whether they are fake or not. The police have been interrogating and terrorising entire communities; and registered letters addressed to complainants have been held up so that non-reply can be adduced as proof that the complaints are not genuine.

Mr Justice Wanchoo is now in Delhi. He has been reportedly asked by the State Ministers as well as the Prime Minister herself to hold the Commission's session in a closed-door court room. Being overruled by the very Ministers whose conduct he is supposed to investigate, the former Chief Justice is reported to have agreed.

## It Goes On

A correspondent writes:

Even making a blistering speech in Parliament is crying in the wilderness. Newspapers do not have either the guts or space to give the readers a fair idea of the debate. Besides, how many people can read newspapers? There is no drive against illiteracy; literacy can be awkward for the government. Radio and television, state controlled, are bet-

ter vehicles of falsehood and fraud in this country. Had there been a wider and alert readership some of the points made by members of Parliament would have brought about some change.

On July 26, Mr Jyotirmoy Bosu of the CPM ridiculed the government claim of saving Rs 371.51 crores for 1973-74, in the Lok Sabha. The pattern of the cuts and the increases is a revelation.

**Cuts:** Agriculture: Rs 13.84 crores Assistance to State plans: Rs 93.9 crores. Advance action for Fifth Plan: Rs 34 crores. Education Rs. 11.76 crores. Irrigation and power: Rs 23.98 crores Steel: Rs. 31.72 crores.

#### Increases:

Central police (1972-73): Rs. 130.31 crores. (1974-75 budget estimates): Rs 169.39 crores. Administrative Services (1972-73): Rs. 233.66 crores. (1974-75 budget estimates): Rs 389.09 crores. Defence (after Bangladesh war) 1972-73: Rs 1652.22 crores. 1974-75 (budget estimates): Rs 1915 crores. Intelligence Bureau (1969-70): Rs 4,49,31,000. (1974-75 BE) Rs 8,87,52,000. Discretionary Fund has jumped from Rs 3 crores in 1969-74 to Rs 13 crores.

Mr Nehru used to take a cabin in an aircraft. Now Mrs Gandhi travels in a chartered jet aircraft—often for party purposes. In 1967 the Prime Minister's security cost Rs. 3, 14, 622. In 1973 Rs 9,17, 993.

In a previous speech Mr Bosu mentioned the fantastic profits made by certain industries, Indian Explosives (Imperial Chemical Industries) made Rs 737.40 lakhs in the year ending 30, 9, 1972 as against Rs 245.20 lakhs in the previous year. Hindustan Lever Ltd., soap and vanaspati, made Rs 10,50,000 lakhs in 1972 (Rs 7,45,59,000 lakhs in 1971).

Such largesse for big companies goes hand in hand with unprecedented repression, trickery and corruption—Mr Nixon is small fry. The CPM member said that Mrs Gandhi was the fountain-head of corruption in the country. So, nothing can be done against her favourites like the Chief Minister of Haryana or the former Chief Minister of Gujrat. He is reported to have said that if he is touched he will reveal what he has

sent to Delhi. Mrs Gandhi, it was alleged, has been given Rs 1 crore for the price rise of Rs 4,000 per car allowed by the government. Mr L. M. Mishra is said to allot two rakes of coal wagon for Rs 1,20,000 a day; the Commerce Minister, Mr Chattopadhyay, Mr Bosu said, was given Rs 2 crores by the jute industry.

However, the show goes on.

## Long Live Floods

Every year around this time the weather gods take over the Indian economy. Some parts of the country experience floods and others drought. Chief Ministers and Central Ministers fly over the submerged areas or visit the drought-stricken ones, wasting hundreds of kilolitres of aviation fuel and motor spirit. On their return to the base, they issue fittingly sympathetic statements voicing their sorrow at the plight of the people and their earnest intention to do something about it. But within days, and sometimes within hours, more "pressing" affairs of State overtake them and the noble feelings of really doing something for the hard-hit people, get submerged under issues more vital for their own survival. This has been the scenario all through, and it shows little sign of changing in the near future.

But to many others, it is all just not that simple. To a section of the bureaucracy, floods and drought provide the god-send opportunity to make a quick buck at the expense of the suffering of some stupid silent people who must go on through the ordeal for years on end. The officials are given a large sum of money for relief operations but the laws do not prevent them from pocketing a substantial part of it by inflating the bills or showing fictitious names of recipients or programmes. The unscrupulous section of the bureaucracy has a ready ally in the unscrupulous politicians and the so-called social workers who mint money out of all this. In fact, almost everybody gets a spin-off from the relief expenditure except the people for whom it is intended. The whole process has been perfected to such

an extent by this time that there is just no way of checking it. What is worse, the people who are supposed to do the checking, like the members of the ministries, are themselves involved in the sordid game. From this year, the Government has even dropped its pretence of doing anything about these afflicted people. The Centre, following the recommendations of the Sixth Finance Commission, has told States that they must manage such relief expenses on natural calamities from reserves that they have to build themselves. But the States have hardly done that, nor have they surpluses for this purpose. The result is that whatever little managed to trickle through after successive "helpings" by different parties might not even be there this year. Last year, according to the annual report of the Union Ministry of Power and Irrigation, the damage from floods and cyclones was estimated at Rs 500 crores. And any economist would feel that the proper thing to do is to make substantial capital outlay over one, two or three years, set up the projects that could reduce the extent of damage by such natural calamities and thus spare the country of such a huge recurring loss. But then what simple economics suggests can never hope to be acceptable to the learned experts. More important, why bother when floods and drought help you to make money?

# প্রভুতি

পড়েছেন কি ?

মতামত জানান

৩২, রাণী হর্ষমুখী রোড,

কলকাতা-২

# New Strategies

R. P. MULLICK

IT was the incompatibility of East Bengal, geographical, political and cultural, which helped the interventionist strategy in the fall of 1971. Now the seeming incompatibility of Baluchistan and the Pushtu-speaking areas in West Pakistan tempts the strategists towards a further revision of the power-balance in South Asia, and supremacy.

The compulsions are many. A major operation for altering the existing equations of power cannot, of necessity, stop half-way. A supposedly revanchist Pakistan can never be expected to conform to the altered power-structure; even a manipulated change in its government is no guarantee that the new set of rulers would be less prone to uphold the natural sentiments of Pakistanis for preserving Pakistan's integrity. The better tactic, therefore, is to work for a slow and persistent nibbling away of Pakistan's national morale, of creating sub-national groups with separatist sentiments in favour of a separate polity, and to exploit the underlying spirit of self-determination of such groups in the direction of setting up State structures predisposed in favour of the strategists' concept of power-balance.

In 1971 the strategic quest was to create a new buffer State and maintain it as a potential pincer against not only China but also against any possible line-up of anti-super power forces (in Burma, rebel areas in Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur), which might prove unamenable to the designs of establishing power hegemony in South Asia. In 1974 such an aim appears well within the reach of practicability; the tired and crisis-ridden US imperialism has, perforce, altered its global strategy in South-East and South Asia to adopt a stance or tactical retreat and suspended presence, its armed strength and military and political capability employed only as factors of influence, in conjunction with the political power of China and the economic capability of Japan. The U.S.A's foreign policy has perhaps

been changed to the extent of accommodating New Delhi's present moves, which are to consolidate the gains of 1971 and to expand still further the latter's power-structure in South Asia. The USSR stands to gain immensely through an expanded Afghanistan and independent Baluchistan.

Russia's specious advocacy of the people's right to self-determination has, however, begun in cut both ways: provoking disruptionist and secessionist movements in Baluchistan and the "Pakhtoon" areas of Pakistan, as well as providing moral muscles to the Kurds' struggle for a free Kurdistan in Iraq.

Before the advent of the present Baathist regime in Iraq, with its commitment to an ambiguous variety of socialism and pro-Soviet line in foreign relations the USSR had helped Mullah Mustafa Barzani's armed movement for autonomy in Iraqi Kurdistan. The subsequent withdrawal of Soviet support for the Kurds' right of self-determination was an act of gratuitous political bounty to pre-West Turkey and Iran, both of which have substantial numbers of Kurds (5 million and 4 million respectively). Relatively, the number of Kurds living in and around Mosul, the oil-rich mountainous area of north Iraq, is much less; but they are better led and better organised. This is why the Kurdish struggle for the right of self-determination has continued for decades. Since Iran's is an absolute authoritarian regime, a safe political expedient for the Iranian monarch would be to let Kurdish aspirations die through secret repression and callous neglect of their economic development. The Shah of Iran has another political compulsion for following a binary policy in international affairs, offering the allegiance of an imperialist camp-follower to the USA, and the appeasement of a pragmatist to the USSR: he has the headache of a considerably numerous Baluch minority in south-eastern Iran, contiguous to Baluchistan in Pakistan.

This explains the ambivalence of the Shah's attitude to Pakistan's rulers:

Should the Baluchis of Pakistan succeed in seceding from Pakistan (with secret military and political aid and diplomatic support from such powerful neighbours as the USSR and India); it might start a chain-action, leading to partial disintegration of Iran. Should the Shah, in view of such a possibility, assume too overt an approach of committed support to uphold Pakistan's integrity, it would not be difficult for the USSR to provoke disruption within Iran and put a blight on the Shah's neo-Aryan dream of an imperial Iran. This consideration has been weighty enough, recently, to prod the Shah to toe a highly ingenious line of pleasing both the Pakistan-Islamic integral, and the Soviet-Indian entente cordiale. But since there is an obvious limitation to such diplomatic ingenuity and its inner contradictions, the net result of Iran's foreign policy, as applied in this region of South Asia, has been a slow but distinct cool-off apropos Pakistan.

And that, naturally, has encouraged New Delhi. No wonder India's Foreign Minister speaks with such gusto about the reign of terror in Baluchistan, and is so concerned about the Baluchis and the Pakhtoons in Pakistan, and also over the way the administration of these Pakistani areas is carried out. The Indian Foreign Ministry drops casual comments about Bhutto's "internal problems" and makes sympathetic references to the struggle of these elements for carving out semi-independent autonomous areas in frontier regions of Pakistan. The Afghan Ambassador in India stated in New Delhi on July 26 that the territories of Pakhtoons and Baluchis were not integral parts of Pakistan. He added that the support (extended by the Afghan Government, impliedly) "for the cause of the Pakhtoons and the Baluchis is in no way interference in the domestic affairs of Pakistan". The Afghan Government's policy "of fully supporting the legitimate demands of Pakhtoons and Baluchis could not be changed" by Bhutto's threats and aggressive attitude apropos the Afghan Government.

That the Government of Afghanistan enjoys the tacit support of New Delhi is borne out by the trend and tenor of authoritative pronouncements by its Cabinet

## FRONTIER

representatives and also by editorial comments in pro-establishment newspapers. The "Times of India", for instance said on July 27, 1974: "Mr Swaran Singh has done well to leave Mr Bhutto in no doubt that this country takes a very dim view of his bellicose utterances against Afghanistan and regards these as an indication of his lack of interest in peace and stability in the region.... Mr Bhutto cannot feel entitled to disturb the status quo in Kashmir and at the same time claim that the Durand Line drawn up by the British Government is sacrosanct. He should also recognise that the language of threats can be highly counter-productive and that Afghanistan is not without friends. The Soviet Union cannot, for instance, allow it to be humiliated".

Yes, a peaceful operation may be provoked from without and engineered from within. If need be, there can be a swift and major war-operation.

But it would be a mistake to think that all this has been thought out in isolation. After completing the integration of Sikkim within the system, the ever-troublesome Khampas in the sensitive border areas of north Nepal are being groomed. It is worth remembering that the Khampas have been incited into militancy only after Nepal had decisively opted for diversifying its overseas trade northwards and a Chinese trade delegation had visited Kathmandu (in the last week of May 1974) to finalise arrangements and terms. The immediate objectives are twofold: To prevent Nepal from pursuing a really independent foreign policy (including foreign trade policy), and so prevent a rapport between the new generations of Nepalese and Chinese (including Tibetan) peoples, from growing up; and to keep China on the tenterhooks of anxiety and tension over security, and thus put a spanner in its programmes of socio-economic development in Tibet, as well as its testing schemes of ballistic projectiles.

The markings on arms and ammunition surrendered by or captured from the Khampas are of U.S., Taiwanese and Indian origin. Although the Nepalese authorities have been polite enough to look the other way and refrain from suggesting any complicity of a neighbouring

government or even of any agencies/organisations enjoying the latter's confidence and inspiration, trouble is now being stepped up by the emigre Nepalese politicians of feudal-bourgeois origin (staying in India). But the most surprising feature of this misadventure—angling for and stirring up pseudo-guerilla bands in north Nepal border areas and in Tibet, with the aim of getting the Dalai Lama and his political henchmen reinstalled in Lhasa—is the collusion of the USA. If anything, this secret political and military collaboration between the USA and the USSR proves that the obsession with communism and animus against China is still the ruling yardstick of Soviet-American convergence, mis-called detente. Incidentally, it is relevant to note that the Dalai Lama declared as recently as January 19 this year, at Gaya, that he was prepared to go back to Tibet provided the "Chinese" agreed to hold an internationally supervised plebiscite there". How far or how close is this stand from or to that of Sheikh Abdullah in Kashmir? Pertinent in this context will be to state two facts. The USA's India policy has undergone a transformation, with a definite tilt onwards acceptance of India's position of superiority in South Asia, to the extent as the formulators of that policy were convinced that India was independent and intended to remain so, and that the Soviets had not received any special treatment or facilities following the Indo-Soviet treaty, which could not be regarded as a reflection of the relationship that had already existed between the two countries (Mr Sisco, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, testifying before a sub-committee of the Congress, middle of March 1974). The USA's attitude towards the question of self-determination for the Kashmiri people has undergone a sea-change correspondingly as its foreign policy makers have overcome the "sentimental period" of late 1971, when the USA and India had "expected from each other what no two countries had a right to expect". (Kissinger speaking at a dinner in Washington, July 16, 1974). But its approach to the Tibetan issue remains much the same as it was in 1959, when trained CIA agents and conspirators chaperoned the Dalai Lama and his entourage to

India and, besides, had already sponsored the Khampa insurgency for Tibetan "independence".

It is now the fervid hope in New Delhi that some sort of a constitutional set-up giving limited autonomy to the Kashmiris on the Indian side of the international border would by itself draw those on the other side, that is in Pakistan. If the political hold of the latter over a section of the Kashmiri people can be unsettled the vexed question of Kashmir's self-determination will disappear. New Delhi thinks that the rulers of Pakistan will never see the necessity for granting freedom to Pak-occupied Kashmir straight-away.

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## Social Scenario

B. G.

**A**UGUST 15, 1974. It is the 27th year of India's independence. Those who were born in 1947 have now reached the peak of their youth. Those who were born ten years later, at the beginning of the Second Five Year Plan, have now reached almost the end of their teenage. Those who were born in 1972, the Silver Jubilee Year of India's Independence, are now only two years old, just brachiating like anthropoid apes. What have been our achievements during this fairly long period of generations of youths, teenagers and children? Quite a lot, and very much impressive at that. You can get a good idea of it if you look through 'India—A Reference Annual 1972', compiled by the Research and Reference Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. If you want to have a 'better' idea of the development process and the monumental progress of India during this period, you should read Prof D. H. Butani's 'Economic Story of Modern India', brought out by the Ministry, because it is the 'first title' in the Yuva Sahitya series "which aims at generating wholesome reading matter for very young adults". Hence its importance. Butani says: "...we must know that development has to be paid for in real terms: either the common people pay for it by foregoing butter and milk and fruits and good housing; or the rich pay for it through, say, taking a one-egg omelette instead of 2 eggs, and half an ounce of butter, instead of a full one ounce. If poverty cannot be removed, it must be shared and that readiness to share will alone give the needed kick to the development process, as nothing else will". After narrating the economic story up to the present, Butani carries it forward "as a historical fantasy into the year 2001 A.D" possibly inspired by Han Suyin's 'China in the Year 2001'. He says: "My argument is very simple that if we can organise mass mobilisation, we can immediately provide some food to all the people, some clothing for all the people, some decent

housing—even if it be made of mud—for all the people, at least primary education for all the school-going children; and if we do all this, this country will be a land of opportunity by 2001".

This is the stuff, produced by the Ministry of I & B for 'generating wholesome reading matter for very young adults. Wholesome indeed! According to Butani's advice, knowing that poverty cannot be removed, the rich and the common people of India are already sharing it. The rich are taking one-egg omelettes and half an ounce of butter in the posh hotels, and the common people are forgoing, not only "butter and milk and fruits and good housing" as per Butani, but also their everyday meal, and as regards houses, good or bad, they are already deserting them en masse for open pavements and platforms. In fact, the 'kick' needed to push up our development has gone right through our stomach so deep, during the development process of four five-year plans, that our entire intestinal infrastructure, and also cerebral superstructure, are just collapsing. We may not survive another five five-year plans, to reach the blessed year 2001 when, according to the distinguished economist, India 'will be a land of opportunity'. That is, a land of opportunists and reckless climbers. By that time most of the common people of India, will be delivered from this earthly life, to a life beyond sorrow and suffering by our benign Lord Krishna. Hare Krishna! Hare Krishna!

\* \* \*

We need not, therefore, indulge, for nothing, in the perverse pleasure of making mountains of the molehills of our failures and invite the wrath of the Congress President Dr Sharma, and be dubbed CIA agents or right reactionaries or left extremists. Sharma's wrath, emitting volcanic fire from the third eye on his forehead, like that of Lord Shiva, may burn not only JP and his followers but all of us into ashes. Hordes of bloodhounds—like the PDA, MISA, the CRP, the police, the brigades of bullies etc, will be set upon you, in the name of democracy and justice, and you will disappear for ever or reappear after

some time in some police lockup or jail. Be wise, as you you ought to be as a middle-class gentleman, and do not say anything about the misdeeds of the present rulers. Your personal safety and security you should value most. I have chosen therefore to select a few utterances by veterans and VIPs among Congressmen and to place them before you, with a few riders, so that you can judge for yourselves the achievements of the Congress rulers.

The Minister of State for Planning, Mr Mohan Dharia, admitted in the Rajya Sabha (August 1) that two-thirds of the Indian population were now living below the poverty line. That is, about 400 million people. The Minister said, in a written answer, that the monthly per capita private consumption of Rs. 20 at 1960-61 prices (that is, about Rs. 75 at current prices), was regarded as the minimum desirable level of consumption. People living below this level of consumption were regarded as poor. The wage-cell in the Labour Ministry is very much worried about the wide disparities in salaries in the industrial sector, not only at different levels, but also between the same category of employees in different undertakings. For instance, the highest paid peon is in the State Trading Corporation, with a salary, inclusive of all allowances, of Rs 429.12. It is a 100-rupee jump from what he was getting in 1971. Much lower in the scale is a peon in Indian Airlines with a salary of Rs 275 a month. At the intermediate levels, a peon in the nationalised banks gets Rs 344.52, in the LIC Rs 381, in Hindustan Steel Rs 351.80; An upper division clerk in STC gets Rs 609.90, in LIC Rs 524, in the nationalised banks Rs 437.30, in Hindustan Steel Rs. 391.80; and in Indian Airlines Rs 350. The average mon-

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... salaries of an upper division clerk and a peon are about Rs. 450 and Rs. 325. The clerk and the peon have their families, and each family is expected to be a little 'collective' of 'five members. Deducting a minimum of 20% of their income for expenses on items other than food the clerks and peons, who constitute the majority of the vast stratum of the 'lower' and 'middle' middle-class, are living today below the desired level of consumption, that is below the breadline. The breadline is ascending from the huge stratum of workers and peasants and swallowing a large segment of the middle class. This has been the net result of 27 years of planning and development, and this has been the direction of our progress toward 'the land of opportunity', which India will be in 2001.

\* \* \*

'Flit them. Finish them. Don't suffer pests, flies, mosquitoes, cockroaches, bed bugs'. It is an advertisement, and not a political slogan. It flashed like lightning before my eyes three times on three evenings, as I stood befuddled before a bewildering variety of men and women, young and middle, flowing over Dhurramtolla-Chowringhee, Park Street and Gariahat crossing. Time: 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. My vision was clear, and there was no trace of any alcoholic haze before my sight. These men and women are denizens of a different planet. So it appeared to me. There are minor variations in the quality and composition of the crowds in the different areas of the city. In the Dhurramtollah area the non-Bengalis predominate, in the Park Street Bengalis and non-Bengalis are almost in equal proportion, and in Gariahat there is an absolute majority of the Bengalis. There is a uniformity in the style of the youth everywhere, in their beatnik-style dress, Che-Castro-Ho Chi Min-style beards, flying eagle-like or reverse S-type moustaches, and long hair cropped at the end of medulla oblongata. Now behold the fair sex, ranging from 55 to 15 years of age, from mothers to daughters! It is difficult to distinguish one generation from the other, either in the style of dress or in the shambling gait of walking, each vying with the

other in exhibiting her sex. The series are steadily descending downward from the waistline, as the mini-blouses are ascending upward from the breastline, and as millions of people are being rolled down the breadline.

Who are these creatures, these unhooded hordes, stumbling and staggering over the pestiferous pavements of this city, who appear like cockroaches, when the bars and the eating-houses and the shops and the cinemas close? As you gaze at them, the advertisement flashes across your mind—'Flit them. Finish them'. They are the beneficiaries of our 27 years of planning and development, the

cognates of the new classes of super-rich rich, super-middle, upper-middle and middle-middle—the creatures of inflation and black money. They will celebrate Independence Day, being the best patriots of our country, with pomp and pride, at the gay and hilarious jam sessions of hotels and bars, at the house-full cinema houses, at the reserved tables of eating houses, at the markets and shopping centres, and then they will come out swinging and staggering on the pavements, like rats and cockroaches. 'Flit them. Finish them'. It is an advertisement, not a political slogan.

## African Liberation Struggles

(Press Diary May-June 1974)

NARENDRA SINGH

GUINEA-BISSAU, Following political changes in metropolitan Portugal, the first positive developments concerning the African territories occurred with the announcement of the new Portuguese Government that it would begin negotiations with the Guinea-Bissau rebels in London on May 25. The peace talks, which opened in London as scheduled, proved to be tougher than the Portuguese expected. They had hoped that the London talks would be restricted to arranging a cease-fire. However, PAIGC (Party African for Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde Islands) insisted that the cease-fire be conditional on four points, recognition of the State of Guinea-Bissau, recognition of the right to independence of Angola and Mozambique, Portuguese agreement to discuss the independence of these two States with FRELIMO and MPLA; and regroupment of the Portuguese forces in Guinea-Bissau. The four conditions were decided upon at a meeting between the three liberation movements and the Liberation Committee of the OAU (Organisation for African Unity). The first round of talks ended in May, with the second round to begin later in Algiers. The second round did begin on June 13, but the prospects of early

success appeared to be in serious doubt. The PAIGC negotiators decided to end the talks, because the differences between them and the Portuguese team proved very great. The cease-fire talks were broken off, but an informal cease-fire has been in effect since the first round of talks in London. Not only that, the soldiers of both armies fraternise widely and a feeling of headlong decolonisation is in the air.

Cape Verde Islands witnessed on May 20 a demonstration of thousands in support of PAIGC, which led to some violent clashes between rival local factions. The demonstrators were protesting that Portuguese troops were still being sent, specially to the Cape Verde Islands where lately big agitations had taken place. According to a communique issued by the demonstrators, Guinea and Cape Verde are one country. "The Provisional Government of Portugal speaks only about the independence of Guinea, trying to divide two peoples united by their history and their struggle".

Daily Telegraph (June 6) reports, "Meanwhile the signs are that Portugal's grip on Guinea-Bissau is crumbling fast. Reports from Bissau say Portuguese soldiers at the isolated outpost of

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# Twenty seven years of Independence



## Twenty years of significant service

Born in 1954, Hindustan Steel Limited was perhaps the largest and boldest venture of Free India. We believe we have made some contribution to our coming of age as an industrial nation; we have helped to develop our material and human resources, our self-confidence and self-reliance.

### GROWING INDUSTRIES

To India's growing industries, as on March 31, 1974, the Bhilai, Rourkela and Durgapur Steel plants of Hindustan Steel have supplied over 12.8 million tonnes of pig iron, one million tonnes of ingots, 7.3 million tonnes of semis, and over 22 million tonnes of finished steel.

We have also supplied about 5.6 million tonnes of coke, a million tonnes of coal chemicals, and 5.3 million tonnes of miscellaneous by-products that include middlings, slags, dolomite, etc.

To the agricultural industry, we have so far supplied over 1.8 million tonnes of calcium ammonium nitrate and 550,000 tonnes of ammonium sulphate—fertilizers, manufactured from by-products, vital to improving India's agricultural yields. Besides, we have ensured a steady supply of steel for irrigation projects, construction of dams, deep tubewells, silos, farm equipment and other agricultural uses.

The total sales value of all these materials amounts to approximately Rs 3594 crores excluding exports.

The approximate break-up of finished steel despatches from the public sector plants as on March 31, 1974 is as follows:

	Quantity in million tonnes	Percentage of total despatches
A. Defence	0.88	3
Railways	4.50	20
Other Government departments	4.94	22.5
Total (A)	10.32	45.5
B. Industries	6.97	32
C. Stockists, including HSL stockyards	4.95	22.5
Total	22.24	100

The Alloy Steels Plant has supplied 20.6 thousand tonnes of ingots, and 188.2 thousand tonnes of finished tool, alloy and special steels valued at Rs 88 crores to the country's sophisticated industries such as automation, aviation, atomic energy, ordnance factories, machine tool industries, etc.

Between October, 1970 and March, 1974 Hindustan Steel has imported a little over 2 million tonnes of steel to meet the urgent needs of priority industries.

To ensure a steady supply of vital inputs like coke, iron ore, limestone, etc. for its plants, Hindustan Steel has developed its own captive mines, quarries and washeries which have produced millions of tonnes of the materials required.

### DISTRIBUTION

A Central Sales Organisation, backed by a network of 20 stockyards throughout the country, has been set up to ensure prompt delivery and equitable distribution at reasonable prices. The total sales turnover since inception, including exports, has been Rs 3886 crores.

Since the Bokaro Steel Plant went into operation in October 1972, over half a million tonnes of pig iron valued at Rs 31.5 crores, have also been supplied through our Central Sales Organisation to meet the country's demand.

### FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS

Hindustan Steel entered the export market with pig iron and semis in 1959; subsequently stepped up its exports to cover a wide range of products particularly when there was a decline in the domestic demand for steel. So far over 6 million tonnes of pig iron, ingots, semis, finished steel products and coal chemicals have been exported to over 40 countries in six continents against international competition, earning nearly Rs 241 crores (FOB) worth of valuable foreign exchange for the country. Since commissioning of its first blast furnace, Bokaro Steel has exported through Hindustan Steel, pig iron valued at Rs 11 crores (FOB).

### MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT

Hindustan Steel has directly employed and developed a new generation of over 130,000 industrial workers and managers and generated new skills and technological disciplines which are a basic necessity for the sustained growth of any modern steel industry.

### CONSULTANCY SERVICES

The realisation that the development of an indigenous consultancy, design and engineering service was imperative to Indian Steel led Hindustan Steel to establish in 1959 its Central Engineering and Design Bureau. It is now an independent Company: "Metallurgical and Engineering Consultants (India) Limited" (MECON)

### MODERN TECHNOLOGY

Our plants incorporate the latest developments in steel like the LD Process, sintering, etc. Other technological innovations to increase steel productivity and conserve scarce raw materials are being taken in hand. Some of these are: high top pressure, auxiliary fuel injection, oxygen lancing, slag granulation, pelletization, beneficiation of iron ore, etc. A nucleus of Research and Development has been formed.

In keeping with market demand, product diversification and rationalising of various sections have been initiated. We have introduced in the market cold rolled galvanized sheets, plain galvanized sheets in coils, electrolytic tinplates, heavy rails to Indian and international specifications, etc.

### FINANCIAL POSITION

This is the financial position of Hindustan Steel Limited as of March 31, 1974:

	Rs (in crores)
Total income	4284
Less: Excise duty and Freight outward	289
Net income	544
Total expenses	3451
Leaving Cash surplus	2896
Stock of finished and semi-finished products	555
Total surplus	151
Out of this, Government dues on interest	706
We are left with	269
But had to account for depreciation	437
	683
	(—) 246

In the year 1973-74, we have made a profit of Rs 4.81 crores, thus reducing the previous under-provision of depreciation to Rs 246 crores. This represents our accumulated loss so far. From our cash reserves, we met our working capital needs as well as re-invested Rs 118 crores on additions and balancing facilities, and repaid long-term and short-term Government loans to the extent of Rs 170 crores. Our outstanding Government loans are Rs 374 crores.

Currently, our plants have to provide annually depreciation of about Rs 69 crores and interest charges of about Rs 24 crores, that is a total of Rs 93 crores. Cost escalation of inputs last year was estimated at Rs 38 crores. Excise duty paid in 1973-74 was Rs 101 crores, as against Rs 96 crores paid in the previous year, and yet, significantly, the per tonne steel price in India is way below world steel prices.

### WHERE WE STAND TODAY

Today, Hindustan Steel Limited is 20. Young yet mature. To get where we are, we have had to struggle hard and overcome many obstacles including our own inexperience. Harder struggle lies ahead because as our production increases, the infrastructural imbalances—raw materials, transportation, power—come in the way. But we are confident of our progress.

It is the vitality of youth and the faith in our future that have helped us along, even as it has helped along our nation. As we take stock and look to the future, we steel ourselves for greater efforts. With the formation of the Steel Authority of India Limited, we feel confident of more efficient, more productive service to India.



## HINDUSTAN STEEL

## FRONTIER

Jamberem have abandoned their positions without permission and retreated to a bigger garrison at Cacine. Jamberem has been regularly under artillery attack by the rebels of PAIGC national movement. Soldiers from other outposts are also reported to be trying to head back to Bissau for the expected abandonment of Guinea by the Portuguese forces".

**ANGOLA:** The Portuguese military command in Angola ordered a halt to all offensive operations against the two main liberation movements, to persuade the nationalist guerillas to lay down arms and take part in political life. But it was clarified that this was not a unilateral cease-fire; the defensive operations would continue. (Guardian, May 20).

The MPLA Congress to be held in Angola was postponed indefinitely because of certain complications. MPLA has called for a united front with the rival Angolan Liberation front (FNLA) to prepare for the independence of the territory. However, no merger of the two organisations was considered possible so long as MPLA followers remained detained in Zaire, according to the MPLA leader. Dr Augustinho Neto (Daily News, Tanzania June 1). FNLA has released 3 MPLA militants (FNLA communique of May 29).

The OAU has recognised UNITA as a legitimate liberation movement in Angola and the recognition has been accepted by MPLA and FNLA, which in the past were opposed to the creation of a third movement inside Angola. According to Star Weekly (South Africa) of June 22 the UNITA guerilla group agreed to end hostilities with the Portuguese. However, FNLA denounced the cease-fire which UNITA had entered into with the Portuguese. (Zambia Daily Mail, June 19).

Meanwhile 32 Portuguese soldiers of African origin deserted to the ranks of MPLA, with large quantities of arms and ammunition from the Portuguese barracks at Kaio-Nguembo in the Cabinda district, according to an MPLA communique (Daily News, Tanzania, June 17). Another MPLA communique reported killing of two senior Portuguese officers and 12 soldiers in an attack on

an army camp, and capture of four troop transport vehicles in the attack on Kaio-Nguembo camp on June 9 (Times of Zambia, June 18).

An MPLA report stated that the Second Rifle Company of 45-19 Battalion, based in Cabinda, had mutinied, refusing to leave for Belize to reinforce the garrison there following the start of a victorious MPLA offensive in the area.

Reports of a new development were broadcast. A majority of the 20,000 people in Cabinda, capital of the small oil-rich enclave in Angola, appeared to be demanding separation from Angola and seeking independence. The campaign is of the greatest importance to Lisbon, because of Cabinda's rich offshore oilfields, and basic to Angola's healthy balance of payments position. (Daily Telegraph, June 22).

**MOZAMBIQUE:** This territory continues to be the centre of intense activity comprising of actions, talks, reactions among non-militant blacks and the whites, and further revelations about Portuguese massacres.

On April 20, two out of the 25 invading Rhodesian planes were shot down over the liberated areas of Tete province, according to a FRELIMO war communique issued in Dar es Salaam (Daily News, Tanzania, May 8). Reportedly, an agreement had been reached between the Portuguese fascist regime and the Rhodesian racists to divide Tete province into two regions for the purpose of repression, with the Portuguese solely responsible for the eastern region and the Portuguese and Rhodesians jointly for the western. There are almost daily air and land incursions into Mozambique by Rhodesian forces. Rhodesian planes were attacking the areas of Zumbo, near the tri-border of Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique, and of Fingoe, deep inside Tete, north of Zambezi.

A military spokesman of the Portuguese armed forces at Nampula (Mozambique) claimed that about 5,000 FRELIMO fighters were stepping up operations in northern and central areas to achieve a "position of force before peace negotiations began". The operations were particularly on the road-rail network linking the port of Beira with

Rhodesia as well as in the north-eastern Cabo Delgado region bordering Tanzania. On May 27 guerillas attacked a heavily guarded convoy carrying supplies to the Cabora Bassa dam site, the first time the rebels had ambushed such a convoy, which is always guarded by ground troops and air support.

More guerilla activity was reported from north of Mozambique, after troops moved south to counter raids on road and rail links between Rhodesia and the port of Beira. Twenty-five residents of a settlement near Vila Cabral were abducted when an armed group of 20 attacked with bazookas and automatic rifles, destroying a school, police station and several houses. Another armed group destroyed a lorry about 15 miles east of Vila Pery, and damaged another. (London Times, June 1). Three Portuguese commandos were killed in a guerilla ambush near the town of Inhame-tanga, about 25 km north of Inhame-tanga. Less than an hour later, the intensified FRELIMO attacks on the vital Beira-Malawi rail link continued, when terrorists machine-gunned the north-bound train at Semacuesa, about 80 km north of Beira (Star Weekly, South Africa, June 1).

The Portuguese High Command was reported to have launched a counter-offensive against the guerilla bases in Mozambique, following the latter's recent attacks on positions near the Tanzanian border. The Portuguese said, however, that they still wanted to facilitate negotiations between the guerillas and the Portuguese Government.

On June 10, FRELIMO attacked two trains on the Trans-Zambezi rail line linking Beira with Tete and the Malawi border. A landmine exploded under a southbound train near the Sena junction, and three hours later an armed group machinegunned a northbound train near Zamgue bridge. The vital rail link between Beira and the Cabora Bassa dam was cut in four places along a 60-mile stretch on June 13. Again on June 26, guerillas launched a fresh attack on the Tete railway line, badly damaging 600 yards of track with 28 explosive charges. Unconfirmed reports reaching Beira also said that a guerilla group attacked the town of Caldas Xavier on the Tete line

## FRONTIER

On June 25, shelling it for nearly two hours.

On June 6, the talks between FRELIMO leaders and the Portuguese government officials opened in Lusaka, but after 8 hours were adjourned with a decision to meet again in the middle of July. The Portuguese wanted to have a cease-fire while the nationalist leaders insisted on the cease-fire being conditional on a settlement related to fundamental political principles. The communique made it clear that the resumption of talks with FRELIMO would depend on the negotiations going on with the PAIGC representatives from Guinea-Bissau. Both PAIGC and FRELIMO indicated that the Portuguese should recognise their right to independence as part of an overall agreement on cease-fire. Mr Sampora Machel, the FRELIMO leader, said after the talks that he looked forward to more fruitful discussions with the Portuguese officials next month.

Later, the FRELIMO leader told the heads of state at the OAU summit in Somalia on June 13 that FRELIMO rejected the latest Portuguese peace terms and considered the offer of a referendum and pledge of self-determination as an insult to the people of Mozambique.

Among the non-militant blacks, there is mixed reaction to the new developments. A Portuguese-backed organisation, the Group for the Unification of Mozambique (GUMO), created earlier with official support, to draw some African support away from FRELIMO, held an unsuccessful meeting on May 4 in the African area of Lourenco Marques. But the meeting was splashed with FRELIMO banners, and shouts of "Viva FRELIMO" pierced the air. GUMO also wants the strongest possible ties with South Africa. However, a shift in GUMO policies was becoming evident. The GUMO leadership had begun to appeal to FRELIMO for discussions on ways of linking the programmes of the two organisations leading to freedom of Mozambique. It has also revised its stand, in stating that it would deny Rhodesia access to the Mozambique ports and would impose sanctions against South Africa.

Whites in Mozambique continued to remain shocked by the Lisbon coup. Such

was the political ferment among the whites that three parties emerged in the first week of May. Now there are five parties among the white population, all demanding independence but none in agreement on its shape or achievement. Some moderates among the whites are supporting the multi-racial, African-dominated GUMO. The most virulent of the white groups is Independent Front for Western Solidarity, calling for Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) on the lines of the whites in Rhodesia. On May 12, serious rioting broke out between Europeans and Africans in Beira, Mozambique's second city, during which volleys of automatic gunfire were heard. It is learnt that the Portuguese secret police (DGS), now reported to be disbanded, was active in Mozambique and lending its support to the racist whites. There was tension also among the Portuguese armed forces. On June 25, Portuguese commandos opened fire on an angry crowd of black miners returning from South Africa at a border post, killing seven Africans and wounding six. The Portuguese officials put the blame on black 'agitators'.

As the UN Commission on Massacres in Mozambique began its first sitting in London on May 14 reports of other massacres appeared in the world press. An Italian Catholic priest accused the Portuguese troops of inflicting a terrible bloodbath on the African population of Unango in north Mozambique between 1967 and 1968. He claimed that the dead outnumbered those reported massacred at Wiriyamu. (Guardian, May 14). Another account of terrorism and massacres in recent months has appeared in the London Times (May 11) from a memorandum of five Dutch missionaries. The events cover the period between August 1973 and March 1974. The military commander in the Inhamitanga area, the scene of events, has denied the involvement of the army in the massacres or executions, but added that he could not vouch for the actions of the former security police (DGS). The South African Star Weekly correspondent (May 25) reported seeing nine mysterious mounds on the outskirts of Inhamitanga, which are claimed to cover the remains of not

200, but many more Africans gunned down by the DGS during the last months.

### Fraternal Support

OAU has called for intensification of guerilla activity against the Portuguese in Africa. The Foreign Ministers of the Congo, Tanzania, Zaire and Zambia, the four black States bordering Angola and Mozambique, confirmed their continued support for the freedom fighters and said that the freedom fighters should continue their confrontation until the Portuguese accepted the principle of independence (Guardian, May 11). A special committee, sponsored by OAU, was formed to deal with negotiations with Portugal. It includes Algeria, Tanzania, Zambia, Zaire and the Republics of Congo, Guinea and Senegal. U.S. press reports spoke of the arrival of the first of 112 Chinese military instructors in Kinshasa to train a liberation army for Angola, along with the Zaire paratrooper instructors. A regular army division of 15,000 men is to be formed, two-thirds equipped by China and a third by Zaire (International Herald Tribune, June 3).

### Rhodesia

The business community in Rhodesia wants something more reassuring than the statement of Ian Smith that Rhodesia "does not interfere in the affairs of other countries". Its morale is reported to have been shattered by the speed of developments. (Daily Telegraph, May 6). On the other hand, the new government in Portugal seems to be ready to co-operate with Britain in closing the loopholes in the UN sanctions on Rhodesia and to step up pressure on the Smith regime. (Guardian May 27). According to reports reaching Salisbury, Rhodesia has been asked by the Portuguese military junta to stop all military pursuit operations against guerillas in Mozambique.

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ambique (Star Weekly, South Africa, May 25).

Work on the Rhodesian direct rail link with South Africa has been accelerated "in the light of present circumstances". Observers believe that "present circumstances" refer to the possibilities of an independent government in Mozambique closing the present Rhodesian rail links with the ports of Beira and Lourenco Marques. African villages in the tense borderlands with Mozambique are being fortified, defence look-outs built and extensive wire fences set up against infiltrating terrorists. A number of leading African detainees, including ZAPU'S Joshua Nkomo, have been moved away from the Gonakudzingwa detention area near the border of Mozambique. Five guerillas were hanged in Rhodesia on June 7 on charges of possessing arms.

#### South Africa

South Africa will adopt a "take it or leave it" attitude to black majority governments in Angola and Mozambique, according to its Minister of Interior and Information. Already its military policy is being reshaped from the traditional "buffer zone" approach, such as maintaining para-military police units in Rhodesia and the possibility of intervening in Mozambique, to that of defending the country at its own borders. (Daily Telegraph, May 27). South Africa's huge financial investment in the Cabora Bassa hydroelectric dam scheme in Mozambique could be in jeopardy, with FRELIMO coming into power. During the past, its involvement in and financial support for the project has been growing. Its giant construction group, LTA, has been awarded contracts worth R30m, and the LTA will be working in partnership with two firms of France. However, the latest reports say that the Vorster administration expects a black government in Mozambique to honour the Cabora Bassa treaty which guarantees to South Africa considerable power supply. On one side desperate attempts are being made by the South African officials to persuade Mozambique that, whatever happens, she can not do without white South Africa's help. Government controlled newspapers and radio are constantly drumming on the

theme of economic interdependence. On the other side, more strict anti-guerilla measures are being promulgated. The anti-guerilla police patrols along the Caprivi strip have been replaced by 19 army units. This confirms that guerilla actions are endemic in the area. Vorster has already decided to go shopping for arms to Europe. A major diplomatic row has blown up between Britain and South Africa over the former's decision to withhold delivery of one Westland Wasp helicopter to South Africa.

Reports speak of a growing number of people from Ovamboland crossing into Angola to receive military training in Zaire and Zambia. The white commissioner-general of South-West Africa's indigenous population, appointed by the Pretoria Government, has admitted that a secret organisation was operating in Ovamboland and Angola, helping the blacks to cross the border. The situation, according to him, worsened after the collapse of the Portuguese security police. A number of refugees from South West Africa have been detained in Angola in the latter half of June.

## Artists Of West Bengal—XII

SANDIP SARKAR

#### Rabin Mondal

Biographical Data: Born 1932 in Howrah city. Graduated from Calcutta University 1952. Art education at the Indian College of Art and the Asutosh Museum, Calcutta University. Publication: Drawings by Fourteen Contemporary Artists of Bengal. Works in the S. E. Railway. Unmarried. 1963 founder member, Calcutta Painters.

One-Man Shows: 1961, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1971, 1973, Calcutta. Forthcoming exhibition in Delhi in November. Group Exhibition: 1964, 1965, 1969, 1972, 1973 with Calcutta Painters, Delhi, 1965, 1969, 1970, 1972, 1973, 1974 Calcutta, 1968, 1974 Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan. 1972, 1974 Bombay.

#### The Interview

Rabin's background is a little different from that of other artists we have been discussing. This needs a bit of elaboration. Like Nikhil Biswas, Rabin comes from the Mahisya casts. It is a predominantly agricultural caste, but it forms the largest single group of entrepreneurs in the small-scale engineering industry of Howrah. It should be observed that these entrepreneurs, unlike their counterparts studied in India or elsewhere, do not belong to merchant, artisan or professional classes. Sometime in the last century Ramin's people migrated to Howrah and successfully adopted the roles that modernisation and urbanisation demand. Rabin's family history is a long success story. His grandfather gave his name to Fakir-das Mondal Lane. There were dhru-padiyas, lawyers, founders of municipal workers' union among the members of the family. The family still runs a very successful light engineering unit. Rabin at first identified and later rejected the identity that this background thrust upon him.

His personality is deceptive. At first people feel that he is not very attractive or intelligent. It takes time for the fog to lift. His answers were pointed and well thought out. He said, the problem that the artists in India faced was what Indians as a whole face in their life. Modernisation has not changed our thought patterns completely. As Braque said somewhere, it is very difficult to be a contemporary. The problem that the artists face is acute, for the West taught them what modernity in art meant. On the other hand, they live in a society that is Indian.

"As for myself, I refuse to paint things Indian just because foreigners are asking for them. I live in an Indian atmosphere. I see the merciless tropical sun every day, the trees, flowers and the people—the angry, hurry, sick and invalid people—exploited and leaderless. If I am sincere this is bound to be reflected in my work. If I force myself to search for my Indianness in Ajanta, miniatures etc, then that means I do not understand the present or have faith in the future. Moreover, art does not have boundaries in the old sense any more.

"People are crying themselves hoarse asking artists to be Indians. Yet when the artist dresses himself up and tries to play-act, he loses his spontaneity and becomes an imposter. After independence the artist has become free because he is not imposed on by the national movement from outside. There is of course the colonial hangover that makes him drowsy and numb".

#### His Art

Rabin's paintings do not have variety but they point to the depth of his experience. He belongs to that generation of painters of Calcutta who made their debut in the late fifties and committed themselves to translate the loss of faith, poverty, insecurity and violence which characterises Calcutta. The twin cities of Howrah, where he lives, and Calcutta, where he commutes seven days of the week have inspired and influenced his work in many ways. In his earlier paintings he was concerned with the group identity of men. He glorified work and his canvases had fisherfolk, potters at their wheel, men and women threshing grain and labourers at work in small machine shops—a familiar sight in Bellous Road. The atmosphere of capstan and turret lathes, vice machines and drills had been stylised to glorify human skill and endeavour. These paintings were dominated by square areas demarcated by invisible lines done in blue with a little grey and a touch of Indian red. But soon Calcutta, forcibly snatched away from Rabin from the insularity of Howrah. This sprawling and agonising city cast its shadow and Rabin was forced to retreat into his inner world. As a fringe element he looked at society as an outsider. He began to feel that he would not be able to relate his experience of the complex human situation except by using archetypal imagery.

His second period is marked by a note of anguish. The lurid life of the brothel dominates his work. A cat eyes jealously while his contemporary is petted by a prostitute. Everything seems insecure and red begins to dominate the blue tones. Occasionally he broods about the suffering of Christ. The figure of Christ on the cross is broken up and juxtaposed with scenes of orgy to give it a passionate intensity. At this point Rabin exhausts himself and is forced to seek the consolation and comfort of temple and church architecture. Lines are broken up and tensions of paint built up. Search for texture and unified surface tension make the work of this period interesting to an extent.

Then comes the total break. His world of primitive bulls on cave walls suddenly appears. There is something sculptural and enigmatic. Thereafter comes his most significant period to date. His human figures are no longer part of the professional world. They are detached from the everyday world—a severe comment on the loss of identity—they seem to be robbed of the common humanity they share with us. Terrified and alone they stand in their isolation and wait without hope. These men and women stand erect and static without any rhythm or movement. Sometimes alone, sometimes in groups, they look lost and unconsolable. His 'King and Queen', 'Mother and Child', 'Archetype', 'Totem', 'Taboo' 'Fertility Cult' all spring from the imagination of disaster. Restless and shipwrecked they grope in uncertainty and are not articulate or, if so at all, their voices become shrill and incoherent. In this two-dimensional world he has flattened out and stylised in a peculiar folkish way. Rabin has gone back to the tribal world for plasticity of form and unsophisticated vigour. With Bronislaw Malinowski he believes that myth 'in the living primitive form is not a story told, but a reality lived'. Rabin wants to give a myth-like quality to the contemporary scene. He wants to find meaning in all those fragments of sordid misery, frustration, anxiety and suffering, he wants to discover primeval reality in present-day life.

His colours rising and gushing out like molten lava from the region of the

sub-conscious, are bright and glaring. He uses pigments, thick dynamic layers of paints, dissimilar and contracting, and builds up a texture which by its very violence attracts and enchants. His lines, powerful and vibrating with tribal rhythms, weave a complex pattern of shapes and shadows.

His artistic endeavour recently reached new heights with collage. His world of primitive myths gains in dimension in the collages. His colours become more bold, riotous and capable.

However, he has explored his primitive islands and it is time he began sailing again.

## A Plethora Of Confusions

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

FROM the closed claustrophobic world of the nineteenth-century feudal household in "Streer Patra", to the raw, rough world of asphalt jungle of the ongoing seventies in "Chenra Tamsuk" is indeed a long journey. In the earlier film, the central female character, Mrinal, tries to break away from the tutelage of aristocratic convention. In this Film, the central female character, Bijlee, has gained freedom and has to come out in the open in her struggle for existence. Whether that freedom means some extra happiness to her is, of course, another question. But in spite of the difference in atmosphere and social setups, the two films are similar in a way. In both the director betrays a total lack of understanding of the environments and the characters he is dealing with and fails to shape his material into proper cinematic forms, confusing all the time the cinematic with the pictorial. In both the director tries to hide his failures under a futile exercise of visual gimmicks completely alien to the themes he is expounding.

The original story by Samaresh Basu is cheap, sensational, penny-romance stuff, describing the tragedy of a girl and four young men hovering around her. Three are just unemployed, frus-

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AUGUST 17, 1974

trated youths who have turned criminals, one is a nouveau riche type who wants to exploit the girl and she ultimately sells her body to him for money, gets pregnant and kills herself. Purnendu Pattrea has not been successful in any way in shedding off the crudities of the original and infusing some sort of emotional and social significance into the thing. As a result his characters lack credibility, the situations are devoid of any motivation and the climax consequently fails to bear any visible impact. The least the director could have done was to thread a drama of violent tensions smouldering inside the characters and their outward manifestations in the story-situations. But he fails to do that because of his poor command over the narrative build-up. He tries to compensate his shortcomings by some supposedly slick and arty devices, but these come to nought because of weak execution and basic confusion in conception. Somebody must have told him that "modern" cinema means only short, fragmented scenes, and the film becomes almost a disjointed string of fleeting visuals without any unifying link, because nobody has ever told the director that to hold each scene in its proper relationship, one has to have a concentrated emotional effect and one scene must smoothly flow into another and should not look like grafted chunks. The director places his story in a particular time and place, but his social awareness is absolutely nil and the snippets of social comment in the film are silly, superficial and irrelevant. The atmosphere of a small mofussil town with all its narrowness and intimacy never comes alive on the screen. The artistes are all listless. Apparently the director has not been able to guide his acting crew. Maybe he believes, not in directorial guidance, but in some on-the-spot divine inspiration. Unfortunately that does not spark off. The camera work, like his previous film, unnecessarily relies on decorative designs as empty embellishments without any bearing on the total pattern, (although the technical qualities of the photography are superb and I think the talented cameraman Sakti Banerjee, definitely deserves a better director). The director's adherence to conventional techniques beneath

a veneer of novelty would be clear from one example, the poetry conference sequence. The sole purpose of this otherwise pointless sequence is to play the lines of some modern Bengali poets on the close-ups of some characters for bringing out their mental anguish and guiding them to some final action. This is application of the same old, rusty device of the average, commercialised Bengali cinema in the garb of modernity. The only difference is that in the case of our typical Bengali film, some roving Baul or some radio singer or some invisible background voice would do the job, here in this film, some modern poets have replaced those old hands. A new "wave" indeed!

## Letters

### PSC Irregularities

A post of Professor of History in the West Bengal Senior Educational Service was advertised in the Statesman on 13. 1. 74. Interviews of several candidates, including departmental candidates, were held on 4. 7. 74 and 5. 7. 74. It is reported that the Selection Committee consisted of Mr J. L. Kundu, Chairman of the Public Service Commission, Mr A. K. Majumdar (Member of the PSC) and Mr H. C. Dutta (Member of the PSC), presided over by Mr Kundu. Dr. R. C. Majumdar sat on the Selection Committee as the only expert or adviser.

It is also reported that Dr R. C. Majumdar, adviser, recommended the name of Sri Haridas Mukherjee for appointment to the post of Professor of History, and his recommendation is believed to have been accepted by the other members of the Selection Committee. The name of Dr R. K. Roy was placed on the panel as the second nominee. No other candidate figured in the panel prepared by the adviser.

It is alleged that a few days after the interview was over, the panel was rearranged according to a preconceived plan, giving first nomination to Dr R. K. Roy (the son of a very big government official), and the second nomination to Mr Ajoy Chandra Banerjee (the younger brother of a very senior IAS officer).

The name of Mr Haridas Mukherjee who was given by the adviser the first nomination was bypassed to make room for their favourites. The modus operandi said to have been adopted also appears to be quite shocking. It is said that finding the adviser's assessment sheet too inconvenient for the purpose of pushing their own candidates, the adviser's marksheets were spirited away. Two members of the Commission are said to have pointed to this lacuna in their dissenting notes on the file. According to them, the assessment sheet of the adviser is an important factor in judging the merit of candidates. None of the members of the Selection Committee is a student of, far from being an expert, in history. The pertinent question is how can such members of the Selection Committee select candidates on their own initiative for the highest post of the Educational Service?

The above facts tend to suggest that all is not well with the PSC in the present set-up. The appropriate authorities should take steps to prevent such irregularities and nepotism and to ensure that not only justice is done but is made to appear as done.

One who knows  
Calcutta

### Conspirators

That the personal effects of the Secretary, Gandhi Peace Foundation, were stolen on August 7 at the residence of JP in Patna only proves that the conspirators are in a hurry. It is no ordinary thief to be sure, and poor Biharis know better than stealing a diary and some documents. It is the handiwork of RAW and CBI, and to deny this will be to deny the obvious.

The anti-people conspiracy is multi-pronged. The West Bengal police have decided to intensify its operations against the so-called Naxals. New Delhi has let it be known that Nagas and Mizos will be dealt with toughly. A slanderous book against China, "China's Special Area", has been published by the Allied, New Delhi. The publishers have been paid heavily by the Soviet outfit in India. All this, maybe, to prepare the Indians

## The Cadres

Letters and appeals for unification of CPI(ML) groups have been appearing in Frontier one after another, but nothing concrete seems to have emerged so far. We cadres are bewildered at the state of affairs. Nobody tells us about the steps taken so far towards unity, and as to what response there has been from our senior comrades. We demand to be informed and refuse to live in the dark.

Some time ago an appeal was circulated by comrades. Khokan Mazumdar and Tapan Dutta to all group, members, fighters and sympathisers of the CPI (ML). We the undersigned resolutely support this just revolutionary appeal. We agree that the CC elected at the first (Eighth) Congress is still the only genuine all-India central body of the Party, today and that no other split CC has the right to call itself the genuine CC.

We also feel that another main hurdle is the whispering campaign against Comrade Charu Mazumdar. This must stop! Either the comrades should come out openly and denounce him or uphold him as a Marxist-Leninist who sacrificed his life for the Indian revolution, to which his contributions outweighed his mistakes.

We are all aware that the masses of the Indian people want us to unite under the leadership of one Central Committee of the CPI(ML). The present revolutionary situation demands that all the splintered groups strive to dissolve themselves. Where reunification starts, dissolution of groups becomes a historical necessity. Therefore it is the urgent call of the hour to take positive steps towards contacting various revolutionary committees and the sooner we are able to persuade the available Central Committee members elected by the Eighth Congress to call a meeting, the easier will be the process towards dissolving the existing groups that are working in isolation. In other words, we must keep in our mind the task of dissolving our groups as soon as possible and such dissolution is possible only when a new Central Committee is formed by the Ninth Congress of the Party.

Sushil Sen  
Raj Kumar  
Mirzapur, U.P.

## Evidence

P. R. from Bombay differs (13.7.74) from Mr R. P. Sinha (29.6.74) who expressed his opinion that the convictions in the K. L. Roy murder case were based upon the evidence of two chance witnesses.

I had something to do with the appeal filed by one of the three people convicted. I express no opinion regarding the judgment but I think P. R. is misinformed.

True, the daughter-in-law and the elder son of the deceased judge deposed in court. But I think Mr Sinha has not referred to them as chance witnesses. On a survey of the evidence of the elder son the learned judge found "that the did not have sufficient opportunity of seeing the miscreants at the time of the occurrence and the weight of his evidence has been whittled down considerably by contradictions with his earlier statements". The daughter-in-law identified two of the accused. One of them was convicted and the other acquitted. She did not identify the other two people convicted.

I think the chance witnesses referred to by Mr Sinha were three men who came to the Kumartuli Institute for gossip when no one else was there. One of them was totally disbelieved. The learned judge believed the other two. He found that their evidence was "substantially true and worthy of credit" in spite of "little superadditions" thereto. The convictions were based mainly on their testimony.

S. B. Ray  
Calcutta

for another confrontation with China—in view of our runaway inflation and economic ruin. From Allahabad alone, 500 boys were brought to Delhi for August 9 to promote the Youth Congress. Railway fare both ways plus refreshments were paid by the Congress—Mrs Kamala Bahuguna being the organising inspiration behind it. She is the U.P. Chief Minister's wife. The Punjab CM said that the truck-owners of Punjab had lifted a contingent of youth from there to Delhi because they were on their own very "enthusiastic" about it. Nixon also believed that everybody was doing dirty things for him out of "enthusiasm". Our elite are living the life of corruption and laxity like their counterparts in Saigon, Thailand and Cambodia. Our bureaucrats are collaborating with the foreign powers and doing damage not only to national interests but also its morals and future. This, in the hope of, and perhaps at the promise of, assignments abroad by the super-power concerned. How we cater for national interests is clear from two instances. 1. Neville Maxwell in India's China War, page 181, relates this story: "The leader of the Chinese delegation, Marshal Yeh Chiyang-ying, visited (1958) the Staff College at Wellington in South India... was presented with a silver replica of the college emblem—an owl. A shadow was seen to pass over his face as he examined the gift... he explained that in China the owl was a bird of ill omen, and could hardly be regarded as an auspicious gift between friends". In the first quarter of 1974, 113 schemes of foreign collaboration have been sanctioned by the Ministry of Industrial Development. The ministry deserves being named the Ministry of National Mortgage. Sometimes we wonder if it is India.

Criticus  
Delhi

For Frontier contact :

BANKURA NEWSPAPER  
AGENCY,

Lokepur,

P.O. & Dist. Bankura.

AUGUST 17, 1974

For Frontier contact

MANITHAN,

No. 2, Mangesh Street,

T. Nagar,

Madras - 17.

## Defend Prisoners

The Legal Aid Committee has been functioning since August 1972 to help thousands of political prisoners living in sub-human conditions in different jails in India. Most of them being poor people and peasants are not able to defend themselves against the large number of charges (sometimes as high as 60) framed against them. If any one was granted bail or acquitted, he or she would be tagged onto other cases and rearrested.

The Legal Aid Committee tried to stand by the side of the victims irrespective of their ideology.

The task was not easy. Getting information and instructions from the prisoners, organising legal defence in various courts, acute financial and numerous other problems, specially in a regime of police terror, stood in our way. But a large number of friends, sympathisers, and democratic-minded people and organisations cooperated with us to tackle the problems.

Up to June 1974 nearly 2,000 political prisoners from different jails sought legal help from the committee.

One hundred and forty bail and habeas corpus petitions were moved for detenus and bail was granted in 56 cases. Twenty-one were released. The rest are pending hearing.

One hundred and forty bail petitions were moved for undertrial prisoners; bail was granted in 20 cases.

Sixty-six Sessions cases were attended; 46 were acquitted. Eleven are pending trial. The rest were convicted.

Twenty-eight appeal cases were filed before the High Court in connection with death sentence and life imprisonment; two appeals were filed before the Supreme

Court. Sixty miscellaneous appeals were filed before various courts.

During the past two years the committee has participated in various democratic movements to demand the release of all political prisoners and protect the civic and democratic rights of the people at large.

The committee knows that very little could be done so far and that our efforts barely touch the fringe of the vast problem. The committee appeals to progressive and democratic people and organisations to set up support groups in their respective neighbourhoods in order to provide continuous help to the committee.

It invites criticism of its work and suggestions. It appeals to all concerned to come forward and help it financially, organisationally and by communicating information about those still languishing in jail.

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):—

1. Bina Banerjee,  
Account No. 10816  
United Bank of India, Sealdah.  
Branch, 28, Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy Road, Calcutta-9.
2. Jayasree Rana, Secretary, Legal Aid Committee, 9, Old Post Office Street, (First Floor), Calcutta-1.  
Office hours: 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.  
Monday to Friday  
Sd/ Amar Prasad Chakravarty  
President, Legal Aid Committee  
Sd/- Jayasree Rana, Secretary,  
Legal Aid Committee.