

# frontier

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## THE BANDH IN BIHAR

THE three-day non-violent bandh called by Mr Jayaprakash Narayan has brought down neither the Congress Ministry nor the Congress-dominated Assembly in Bihar. Mr Narayan's strict instructions to his followers to remain peaceful in all circumstances enabled the Government to terrorise the people in any manner it liked. Nearly 100,000 armed security personnel, including contingents of the para-military Border Security Force, were inducted in the State for peace-keeping during the bandh, and the army was alerted. Their arms did not rust in unuse. As everybody could foresee and Mr Narayan could not, the bandh turned violent at places, though the satyagrahis remained peaceful, providing an occasion to the peace-keeping forces to beat up, lathi-charge and shoot the demonstrators. No doubt agents provocateurs were busy, and they did their job well considering that they could lay the ground for police action on a scale which could result in the death of sixteen people and injury to hundreds. The lesson for Mr Narayan is that under Congress rule non-violence breeds violence.

The bandh was to mark the beginning of the final phase of the student-and-youth agitation under Mr Narayan's leadership for the dissolution of the corrupt Ministry and Assembly of the State. The agitation will continue till its goal is achieved, though it is not known in what precise form. Mr Narayan has given a call for no-work in government offices which presupposes that Bihar has a functioning government. The fact is to the contrary. The Government of Bihar stopped functioning long ago when rebellion in the ruling party broke out against Mr Kedar Pande's chief ministership. No-work in government offices is a long-established fact of life in Bihar, and Mr Narayan has not called for anything which may worry the Congress Government. What other weapon Mr Narayan has in his armoury? His declared aim was to paralyse the Government so that it might quit out of sheer shame. The Government is paralysed but it will not quit because it is bereft of all sense of duty and shame. It has to be thrown out. Mr Narayan's problem is how to throw out the Ministry without resorting to violence.

The Ministry seems confident that it cannot be thrown out so long as the agitators remain loyal to Mr Narayan's leadership and directives. On the eve of the bandh Mr Narayan himself had said that he might be arrested. His prediction has not come true. The Government is too clever to arrest him; it knows that the agitation in its present form and content will never be able

to force a showdown. To succeed the agitation will have to acquire new dimensions. It is being said that Mr Narayan's leadership is the most effective guarantee against the agitation taking a turn which will prove fatal for the Government. For its survival the Ministry is perhaps relying on Mr Narayan's leadership of the agitation continuing in its present form; it has no use for Mr Narayan in prison. It is certain that at least at this stage the Bihar Government will not arrest Mr Narayan even if he

seeks to court it. Mr Narayan has said that in Gujarat the movement fizzled out after the dissolution of the Assembly because the agitators had no well thought-out programme. In Bihar his own agitation may reach a dead end and out of sheer weariness fizzle out if he refuses to vary the form and content of the agitation in accordance with the demands of the developing situation. Agitations have their own way of growing, and attempts to alter it are likely to kill them.

## Nothing But Whining

Mr Subramaniam's whining at the recent FAO Conference in Tokyo, imploring, begging and frantically gesturing for something being done to stave off the spectre of starvation stalking his country, represents the endless circumlocution of the neo-colonial blind mole. The tide of countrywide hunger gives him a sense of doom for his class, and yet he cannot even suggest doing anything about it directly, for he belongs to and represents the very class which has been strategically co-operating with imperialism in keeping Indian agriculture in a state of semi-feudal stagnation. That is, the same class which is responsible for and profits from the dismal agrarian stagnation is indulging in public hysteria about the food crisis. Keeping the realities carefully in the background, high abstract principles are put forth, stirring moral exhortations are resorted to—reminding one of the flamboyant emptiness of the old Nehru style. A neo-colonial bourgeois cannot come to the crux of a matter, to the root of a problem even when evasion becomes critical for his very existence—because the very existence of his class is founded on falsification of economic and political realities. He can make many minor modifications in his stand, but only within the framework of his subservience to imperialism (of whatever brand it may be)—which is the fundamental condition of his existence and by means of which he came to assume the imperialist regency of country. He cannot put the finger on

the sore spot, he has to go on hedging around. He cannot bluntly say that it is the lingering semi-feudal relations of production which are responsible for the petrified state of Indian agriculture, that production would be trebled if land and accompanying facilities were distributed among the peasants. Two reasons why he cannot. One: His class is also the class which gets most of the picking from even this stunted agriculture. Two: Imperialist capital to which he is totally subservient needs for its effective operation in a backward country a perpetually stunted agriculture which prevents capital formation for native industry and necessitates an endless process of conditional food and capital import. The Indian comprador bourgeois cannot afford to displease the imperialist powers too much, cannot dream of asking them to quit, for, in that case he would have to quit as well. Much though he might at times resent the outflow of the lion's share of the loot to the imperialists, he knows only too well that he needs them to keep the hollow-centred economy functioning and—to help quell revolutionary upsurges.

## Business As Usual

Three months have passed since New Delhi clamped down a number of measures to hold the price line. But neither the actual market prices nor even the official indices show any sign of stand-

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*The Autumn Number of FRONTIER will come out on or about October 15.*

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ing still, let alone of coming down. Official spokesmen naturally claim that it is too early to expect the package of measures to start showing results. This may be partly true, though. The government allowed the inflationary forces a long time to entrench themselves and delayed its steps so much that the problem has become far more intractable than what it was earlier. It did not in fact require very high quality economic wizardry to foresee that the set-up in government spending during 1971 on the Bangladesh refugees and the crop failure in the subsequent year were bound to have an inflationary backlash. But in the euphoria of political success, this simple economic phenomenon was ignored. The government merely kept on saying that the difficulties that were coming to the surface were of a temporary nature and that everything would fall into place soon. The lie was being repeated with such a consistency that the Government itself in the end came to believe it. And once that happened there was no question of being alarmed at the danger signals of an impending economic crisis.

The subsequent story is well known. One thing has led to another. Inflation has broken all restraints and has become the single most important factor of the economic crisis. The food problem would not have been so serious at all had not prices of food articles gone up to such an extent even in interior villages. Indeed seldom before had inflation played such havoc in the rural economy. Rice prices have shot up from an average of Rs 1.50 a kilogram or at best Rs 2 to anything like Rs 3.50 or even more. The inflation has accelerated the pace of monetisation of the rural sector and the gap between the moneyed



and the rest has tended to widen. Much of the distress in villages is essentially due to the change in their basic character of society. Side by side, the inflation has widened the disparity in income between different classes. For the jobbers in villages, the traders in district towns and big business in cities, the inflation has created a bonanza of profit. The Government has only helped the process with its slanted policies. Garibi hatao has really come home to roost.

## Foreign Capital

Shaken thoroughly by the economic crisis and industrial stagnation, the Congress Government is now taking the step of allowing imperialist capital to flow in large amounts and on less stringent terms.

## অনুটপ

### বিশেষ শব্দ সংখ্যা

#### প্রবন্ধ :

- নয়া-উপনিবেশিকতাবাদ : শে ষণের স্বরূপ
- নতন্বর বিপ্লব ও ভারতীর পরিস্থিতি
- কমকুশিনাস ও লিন পিয়াও : চীনের
- নতাদর্শগত সংগ্রামের বর্তমান পর্যায় প্রসঙ্গে
- মহাচীনের অর্থনৈতিক পরিকল্পনা ॥

রেণ হু বার্জার

- গ্রামশিচি : একটি মার্কসব দী মূল্যায়ণ
- একটি কাব্য নাটক : ফেরার ॥ অতীক

গঙ্গোপাধ্যায়

#### ● গল্প :

শপথ / প্রাগৈতিহাসিকের পরে /

নুয়ে ওয়ে হুই ভাই

#### ● অনুবাদ গল্প :

লু স্তনের অপ্রকাশিত গল্প—গিবি-সংকট  
ছেড়ে ও আলবেনিয়ার হুটি গল্প। এছাড়া  
সাম্প্রতিক সংস্কৃতি সমাচার, কবিতা,  
লিমেটিক ও মতাদর্শ।

মূল্য : ৪.০০

The Union Finance Minister, Mr Chavan, has told the general meeting of the Indo-German Chamber of Commerce, that the Government would like foreign capital to function as an instrument for the transfer of technology, and as a rule, this capital should function on a minority basis. But once permitted, whether as direct investment or in collaboration, "we would not deny remittance of profits and dividends earned by foreigners on their investments in India". Mr Chavan also pointed out that the present foreign investment policy was not rigid and relaxation would be made when called for.

The balance of trade between India and West Germany is at present, very much against India. India's exports had never been more than a fraction of its imports from that country. Even if loans from West Germany are taken into account there was still a transfer of funds from India to the other. West German capital, it is learnt, is pouring in at the rate of 500 million DM (Rs 150 crores) annually. The Indo-German industrial collaborations numbered 344, and are increasing. The Government's excuse, of course, is that in this way development of technology will be encouraged. That, in practice, it has been just the reverse and has stifled indigenous technology does not seem to have disturbed the Government. Foreign capital has increased its monopoly hold on the economy and is draining away wealth from this country through various means. The Government is giving them still more facilities because the Indian monopoly groups are getting tied with foreign monopoly groups on an increasing scale.

Earlier Mr Chavan told the Rajya Sabha that India's attitude towards foreign investment should not be "an obstructive one", that the Government allowed foreign investment in areas where there was "absolute need". Some MPs pointed out that foreign investments had been allowed in the hotel and marine food business and called Mr Chavan's bluff. They might have given more examples by mentioning soft drinks, chewing gum, tooth paste, ladies' undergarments etc.—all produced for the rich of the country.

## Year Of The Vulture

From A Correspondent

AGARTALA: Travelling from Agartala to Dharmanagar, a distance of 200 kms in the north, you feel as if you are journeying through a land devastated by war. On both sides of the Assam-Agartala Road stand dilapidated huts and at places cluster of hovels, all deserted.; Not a soul to be seen anywhere unless it happens to be a market-place. There will be no reason to be surprised if in between your journey, you come across vultures and jackals feasting on dead bodies in broad daylight. Next you will be struck by the sight of vast stretches of wild plants which seem to have been trampled down by wild animals. But in fact they were rummaged by starving people looking for wild roots and herbs. As soon as this source of food dried up, the people living in and around the area left, nobody knows where.

The farther you go into the hills and plains, the more dismal the picture. Nobody knows for certain how many people have died of starvation over the last eight months. The rough estimate is that on an average more than two persons are dying of starvation every day. Reports of suicide to escape the lingering agony of starvation are also trickling in. Hunger stalks the entire State; the northern district which comprises more than half of the total inhabited areas is the worst affected. Hunger, which has long ceased to be a special phenomenon for the tribals, is today a nightmare in the life of the non-tribals as well.

The villages under Kamalpur, Dharmanagar and Kailasahar sub-divisions have been reduced to pockets of hunger, though these areas are known for good harvest almost every year. During my short stay in a village in Kamalpur sub-division inhabited by more than three thousand people, mostly poor and landless peasants from what was East Pakistan, I saw hundreds of people, almost naked but for a small loin cloth, collecting herbs from the bushes. In their

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search for herbs many others had left for the neighbouring villages, where also the conditions are not any better. No longer able to endure the heat of the blazing sun, three of the men collapsed in my presence and of them one died after a few minutes. Many of these people can afford one meal of rice daily only for a short spell during a year. After that jackfruit (which grows in abundance in Tripura), herbs, roots and other inedibles serve as their staple food. During the last three months, they said, they had not seen rice and had been living on herbs collected from bushes and this too was not always there. Most of the children belonging to the age-group 3-12 had lost their eyesight. More than 100 children of this age group died of starvation at the beginning of this year while many more are starving to death. Next to children, the death rate among females is higher than that among males. In 90 per cent of the cases women cannot survive childbirth because of starvation, malnutrition and absence of medical care even of the crudest form. This also contributes a great deal to reducing the birth rate in the villages. Thirty per cent of the male members of the ages of 20 and above in the villages have become almost invalid, no longer able to do any menial labour even though there is very little scope for it. This year the villagers produced enough food-grains, but the major portion of it was forcibly taken away by the FCI for Re. 1 per kg, while the jotedars and rich peasants remained untouched by the procurement drive. The poor thus were left with no alternatives but to buy rice from ration shops at Rs. 2 per kg which is far beyond their reach. The grimmest poverty and helplessness are forcing the villagers to become the cheapest form of drudge labour in the towns and semi-towns.

### Trafficking in Women

A handful of men of the landed gentry and traders, middlemen and moneylenders are making money out of the abysmal misery in the villages. I heard harrowing reports of the trafficking these men are carrying on in young girls. They are, it seems, mercifully

sparing the unfortunate parents of the ignominy of having to sell their young daughters on the open market. Taking advantage of their hapless condition the sharks are duping the poor peasants into selling their young daughters at prices ranging between Rs. 50 and Rs. 100. Sometimes this racket is carried on further under the cover of marriage when the victims are resold by the 'bridegrooms' to other buyers at much higher prices. The jotedars, rich peasants and the moneylenders happen to be the prospective buyers in the countryside, while the contractors and other traders operating under government patronage are using these unfortunate girls for the gratification of high government officials. In the villages the victims are used as slave-labour in the households of the kulaks, moneylenders and the trading middlemen apart from satisfying the lust of their masters. In the towns and semi-towns rickshaw-pullers and domestic servants are being pried upon for supplying this human material. Only a few days ago there was a big furore when it became known that the headmistress of a girls' higher secondary school at Kailashahar was involved in clandestine trading in women.

But, then, Agartala, the capital town of this State, which has over the years grown into a bastion of feudal reaction and bourgeois vices, presents a curious spectacle. Thanks to the creation of Bangladesh, you have fashionable bars and restaurants, cinema houses, roving prostitutes, and the gaudy Rabindra Bhaban at the service of the town's upper and lower middle class gentry to feed their latest craze for bourgeois sophistication. The northern part of the town, now transformed into a posh suburbia, shelters the civil and military bureaucrats in medieval grandeur. The small business establishments, grocers' and wayside teastalls are all closing down one after another, unable to survive the uneven competition. You have the ever swelling ranks of unemployed youths and pavement dwellers, a formidable army of goondas and roughnecks, living on cash doles from the ruling cliques, ever ready to play havoc with the lives of the people. There is the continuing stream of beggars and other destitutes from the

countryside crying for food and work day and night. The starving rickshaw-pullers and other day labourers, fighting with tuberculosis and other virulent diseases, vomit blood and drop dead. Hundreds of starving people crowd the local hospital daily to get admitted as patients so that they can get some food. The town has ever-burgeoning military establishments, swarms of police, CRP and a dozen other para-military forces, government intelligence agencies operating under various names, holding the people under constant threat of liquidation. And the foreign missionaries and RAW are there to redeem the tribal people from politics.

From time to time we are also treated to 'democratic mass movements'. The latest was the one-day civil disobedience movement launched by the student wings of the CPM and the Forward Bloc on September 24, demanding supply of essential commodities at reasonable prices and punitive measures against hoarders and blackmarketeers. When the 4000-strong civil disobedience marchers arrived in front of the Civil Secretariat in a procession they were stopped by armed police, though no prohibitory orders were in force till then. As the demonstrators, among whom were also a good number of girls, raised slogans, the District Magistrate and the SP clenched their fists and gnashed their teeth. As the demonstrators attempted to surge forward in a bid to break through the barricade of law thrown up by rope enclosures, both the DM and SP's anger knew no bounds. In a fit of rage the DM himself pulled one of the girls by her hair and threw her down while the SP ordered his policemen to swing their lathis at the students. The students were taken aback by this sudden attack and ran away in panic while some of their comrades were left with no other option but to try to resist with the help of the festoons and placards they were carrying with them. In the process hundreds of students were injured, quite a good number seriously. Some members of the local Bar Association who witnessed this orgy of violence let loose by the DM and the SP later issued a statement condemning it. At other places in the State the police and CRP used lathis and teargas to scare away the



civil disobedience marchers and arrested scores of students. Whatever resistance some of the militant students were compelled to put up against the police atrocities was definitely not what the leaders

had wanted them to. As a mark of protest people observed a Tripura Bandh on September 26, though the Government offices functioned as usual.

## Perish The Fearless

I. S.

**T**HE Vice-President of India, Mr. B. D. Jatti, recently exhorted the Delhi Study Circle to have a fearless and free Press and wanted the citizens to be "thinking beings possessing an independent opinion and intelligent interest in public affairs".

Really? Events are coming up thick and fast to give us a feel of the rulers, conduct.

Teachers' Day in Delhi was celebrated this year with lathi blows on and beatings of teachers in the Nizamuddin Polytechnic. The police forcibly entered the institution and smashed all in their way.

Mr Shankarlal Kheriwal, editor, **Naya Rasta**, a Hindi weekly of Jamshedpur, was murdered for having investigated thoroughly the smuggling of uranium from Bihar and in the process having come into possession of secrets which unbugged the police and bureaucrats besides the smugglers. Mr Maheshwari Prasad, another journalist, was shot dead at Dehri-on-Sone, July 8. Mr Ramji Prasad, a journalist of Nawadah, was arrested under the Explosives Act following bomb explosions in the town. Agra editor, Shiv Narain Sharma, was stabbed to death on June 27 for he had exposed the underground world of gangsters regularly in his paper investigatively. A Bihar MLA died of poisoning in June, an ex-Minister was shot dead for leading a procession on September 5. (JP called it 'cold-blooded, deliberate murder'). A Japaipur editor, Mr Devendra Dube, was assaulted by a cloth merchant on September 4 and is hospitalised. An item in his weekly had referred to the raids carried on by the central excise department in the city and commented on it. A Muzaffarnagar editor, Mr Uttam Chandra Sharma, was beaten by anti-socials

for his criticisms of Mansurpur Sugar Mills affairs. In Banda, Mr B. D. Gupta is suffering harassment and incarceration for having highlighted the plight of Harijans in his write-ups. This was the government way to silence him. short of liquidation, Mr Jagadish Chandra Kaushik, a school teacher in Sawai Madhopur district of Rajasthan, took a little too seriously the leaders' exhortation to help the authorities locate the anti-social hoarders and profiteers. He helped the officials by taking them to a fertiliser-hoarding merchant's store in Mundawar. As a reward, he has been jailed, transferred, and has a host of frame-ups against him which will involve him in litigation for years.

### Apathy

There is no anger anywhere. Apathy and unconcern fit well in the Hindu scheme of things which posits all else as Maya except one's own interests and affairs. This roster of crimes is minuscule, picked up at random. The extent of terror and torture in "the land of non-violence and truth" is woefully astounding. It is in such a climate that Mr Swaran Singh entered bonhomie with a flourish in his recent jaunt to South Korea. It is not unreasonable to assume that he must have imbibed quite a few good lessons from this sister democracy in Asia in how to bash dissent and burke opposition. India has come of age, externally, with its nuclear cap, and internally with its murders and detentions within and without MISA/DIR/PUA/PVA acts. Sikkim typifies more than merely a geographical annexation.

This erosion of civil liberties and fundamental freedoms is a consequence of massive indifference and callous

cynicism. Our citizenry, by and large, has lacked a social conscience. It has sought privileges, not equity or equality. Not once have our teachers, and similar educated sections, come out in the open against the Government on issues of serious impact, national or international. Mostly, theirs has been a militancy limited to securing a better deal for themselves. They never linked it up with the larger problems emasculating the nation. Nor has any political party made an issue of a problem in terms of a time-bound programme. Examples: A Union Minister became the national angel by blandly admitting he forgot to pay his income tax for, hold your breath, just TEN years. It did not strike anyone that it could be exploited to force his resignation, and make the Government lick dust.

Then, so long as you talk of corruption or repression as metaphysical quantities, there is no harm. The Government, as well as the Opposition, enjoy the game, as does the citizen. The moment it comes to a specific case, either the citizen has no courage, or he is too resigned to it as a norm, or the Government gets away by calling it "politically motivated", or the Opposition lets it go by default. So that the day is not far off when the Government will start holding the Opposition responsible for floods and famines, droughts and epidemics. It has already initiated the exercise. After the firing by the Indira Brigade in Patna on peace marchers, New Delhi declared coolly there was no unit of this corps in Bihar. After the Bandits' Brigade of Youth had swooped on Delhi and earned notoriety way back home in August, it was stated that "anti-socials" and Shiv Sainikis had infiltrated the "Young" Congress. Point out a ministerial crime now, you will be told there is no such minister in existence.

Again, time-bound, specific issues were not taken up, not even Naderism (consumerism), for they entailed confrontation with the Authority. Neither the politicians nor the so-called intellectuals would have it disturb their peace and prosperity. It was not, they held, "responsible", nor "respectable", to take to streets. Constitutional and

parliamentary methods, they pontificated, alone were befitting their dignity.

This makes the "circus" go on, no matter whether it is "dishonest" or "idiotic". Only a philosophically brave Quixote would, in these circumstances, take on the high and mighty all alone, and be branded either a lunatic or a clown. His sacrifices will have gone in vain, for the simple reason of his fellow citizens "minding their own business", and by their example, impelling him to do the same. When he refuses to conform, he becomes their targeted enemy, and not the Establishment or the Oligarchs, for his defiance and survival shame them into a continually nagging sense of inferiority and irrelevance. All the same, unable to shed even a shred of their soft life and its attendant joys—like status and security—they go on wallowing in an existence which is a brew of bathos and betrayal. They have forgotten the day of reckoning quite conveniently. Whether the day of reckoning has similarly forgotten them is not so certain.

প্রকাশিত হল

ফিকশোর ও যুব-ছাত্রদের মুখপত্র

বীক্ষণ

বিশেষ শারদ সংকলন, ১৯৭৪

বিহারের বর্তমান ছাত্র আন্দোলন। নতুন  
সিলেবাস (স্কুল)। দুর্ভিক্ষ—আজকের ও  
অতীতের। বিজ্ঞানশক্তি—CSIR-SWA'র  
প্রস্তাব। বিজ্ঞানীর সমাজ। আন্দোলনের  
বাহিনী। গ্রামের সমাজ। এবং অন্যান্য ॥

দাম : দুই টাকা মাত্র

ঠিকানা : ২০১ শঙ্কুগাবু বেন, কলি-১৪

## Eritrea : The Achilles Heel Of Ethiopia

A. K. ESSACK

AS the edifice of the 3000-year-old Ethiopian monarch was axed, with the Emperor completely stripped of the immense power he had wielded for over 45 years, the Ethiopian Defence Minister flew to Eritrea in an attempt to heal the 3-year-old conflict.

Hidden hitherto from the established Ethiopian press the whole issue of Eritrea exploded like a megaton bomb in the Ethiopian Parliament when 23 members from this area accused the three-month-old government of complete indifference on the Eritrean question. They accused their own government of continuing the policy of massacre of innocent civilians. They also stated that the amnesty for all political prisoners did not apply to over 200 political detainees from Eritrea. They then left Parliament en bloc.

The fact is that the Eritrean war, far from subsiding, continues to escalate. Only in June this year the guerillas blew up a bus, killing 8 and injuring 17 just 130 km. from the Eritrean capital Asmara. Later the ELF announced the execution of five policemen. The Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) is the Eritrean guerilla organisation which has been waging an armed struggle since 1961.

Of particular significance was the gunning down of Shum Ibrahim, an Eritrean who was the political adviser to the Governor General of Eritrea, holding the rank of Minister of State. The Ethiopian Government was not able to protect him. This lesson was not lost on the Eritreans working with the Ethiopian authorities. The outburst by the 23 MPs shows the direction of political thinking in Eritrea. The ELF hit the world headlines when the two Canadians and the three Americans working for the American monopoly corporation TENNECO were picked up by the ELF. According to official reports, their helicopter had to

land a few kilometres from the naval base of Massawa for bad weather. As the plane landed they were seized by the ELF guerillas. This just highlighted the fact that the ELF guerillas control vast areas of Eritrea in the countryside.

The war has already taken a heavy toll of lives running to several thousands. It has played havoc with the fragile economy. For the last few years the estimated cost has run up to 35 million shillings a year. More to the point, its activities have been on such a scale that the guerilla movement has been able to tie down the Second Division of 8000 men.

Early this year an AP correspondent pointed out: "The ELF bury their dead like the NLF of Vietnam and so one cannot count the casualties. There is a noticeable trend towards prepared positions, foxholes and minefields. The ELF picks its own battlegrounds and often comes out ahead."

The seeds of the conflict can be traced to as early as 1950. The U.N. against the wishes of the Eritreans created a federal government of Ethiopia and Eritrea under the Ethiopian Crown. As a result Ethiopians had now access to the sea through the seaports of Assab and Massawa. In 1955 the Arabic and Tigrina were abolished as official languages of Eritrea. The Eritreans went to the U.N. to protest against these and other matters. On their return the leader of the delegation, Mohammed Kadi, was arrested and sentenced to ten years imprisonment. His lawyer was given six months for "defending the enemies of the Emperor".

It was only when legal methods were of no avail that the decision to launch an armed struggle was arrived at. At the beginning the movement had no clear programme and direction and thus gave opportunity for tribal elements to mislead it. The first national congress of the ELF met in 1970 from



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October 12 to November 12, and this gave the movement its first comprehensive programme and policy. It stated that:

The Eritrean Revolution is a national democratic revolution and its enemies are Ethiopian colonialism, American imperialism, foreign capitalists and the Eritrean collaborating classes.

It guaranteed freedom of religion but politics shall be free from religion and religion shall be free from politics.

All so-called government land which has been sold to foreign capitalists and to Eritrean collaborators shall be returned to the people.

All land which is owned by absentee landlords and parasites shall be wrenched away from the landlords and restored to the people who work and live on the land.

Showing the specific force of the democratic revolution and its direction it said, "The revolutionary government shall patiently demonstrate to the peasantry the advantages of co-operation and of collective ownership."

The ELF shall also nationalise all industrial, commercial and foreign enterprises and these shall be confiscated without compensation. The workers shall be granted unrestricted rights to form trade unions for they "are the most advanced and democratic section of the population".

The ELF made it clear that it had nothing against the Ethiopian people whom it also regarded as oppressed and exploited. Its resolution stated that it would support and work together with the Ethiopian revolutionary movement.

The first shots were fired when Hamid Idris left for the mountains and began guerilla operations. Attacks were usually directed at army posts and police stations and it is usually from these that supplies of weapons were obtained. There was a surprise attack on Halhac resulting in the seizure of all the arms at that post.

One spectacular attack was at Agordat seven months after the launching of the armed struggle. The Emperor's representative, Ahey Abebe, had come to tell his plans of Ethiopia's final annexation of the territory. Suddenly a commando hurled two bombs injuring

him. Then there was the Haicota operation. Here the freedom fighters disguised as nationalists took a bus to the army camp and in open daylight attacked the Ethiopian guards, took 51 rifles and machine-guns, hoisted the Eritrean flag and withdrew. The people of the town watched these operations and applauded.

The situation now is that the ELF controls the rural areas of Eritrea where the mass of the three million people reside. The result is that:

Truck drivers have to pay the ELF mine removal tax from the North region to Asmara.

Due to repeated attacks all rail traffic from Asmara to Keren and Agordat have been discontinued.

Freight services have also been discontinued.

Will the government concede the demands of the Eritreans for independence? Although the government has stated that it regards the matter as top priority, it has also said that it will not succumb to "blackmail and force". There is a feeling that if the Eritreans were granted independence they would be deprived of the seaport towns of Massawa and Assab, the two outlets to the Red Sea.

The ELF has stated that it is willing to enter into negotiation with the Ethiopian Government. This meeting could be the first vital step towards ending the 13-year-old war.

## Voice Of Thunder

ANIRUDHA GUPTA

ONLY a year ago, a sort of uneasy calm settled over the Zambesi. There were rumours about guerilla fighting in Angola, in the Tete province of Mozambique bordering Zambia and Malawi, and in the eastern region of Southern Rhodesia. But the placid waters of the Zambesi appeared undisturbed.

At times though, tempers ran high and security guards on either side of the river exchanged fire as if to break the monotony of tense expectancy. In one such incident, two Canadian tourists were killed on the Rhodesian side. This provided grist to the breakaway regime of Mr Ian Smith. He accused the Zambian Government of committing an act of aggression. But President Kaunda behaved magnanimously. Regretting the incident, he pointed out at a press conference that it was impossible to police his country's borders in a normal way when the minority racist governments in Southern Africa conspired with the Portuguese colonialists to invade his country.

The charge was not altogether baseless. Only a couple of years earlier, South Africa's Prime Minister, Mr Vorster, had threatened that his troops would not hesitate to overrun Zambia in case the latter failed to check guerilla incursions into his country.

A week after the shooting incident, I reached Victoria Falls, now called by the picturesque name of Moshi-O-Tuniya (Voice of Thunder). Watching the narrow bridge, which connects the two territories across the falls, I fell into a soliloquy. The information I had gathered from different quarters did not make me unduly optimistic about the prospects of liberation in Southern Africa. In late 1968, a joint force of guerilla fighters belonging to the ANC of South Africa and ZAPU of Southern Rhodesia, managed to cross the Zambesi, but they were soon located and shot dead by the security forces. The disaster caused great misgivings in the two organisations.

At this time fissures also appeared in the ranks of the independent African States. Some advocated compromise with South Africa, which came to be euphemistically called "the policy of dialogue", others opposed the move violently. At a summit meeting of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), these divisions came to surface. Meanwhile, drawing encouragement from these developments, South Africa extended its diplomatic and military operations beyond its own borders. Some of the weaker African States, such as Malawi, Lesotho and Malagasy, entered into direct diplo-

matic and economic relations with it. On the other hand, South African troops were sent far and wide to assist the counter-insurgency operations in Rhodesia, Mozambique and Angola.

After an intensive spell of fighting, demoralisation set in among the African nationalist forces. I gathered as much even while visiting the offices of various liberation movements. The assassination of Dr Mondlane caused a leadership dispute in FRELIMO. In late 1971, the Portuguese announced that two top leaders of FRELIMO had crossed over to their side. Shortly after, the news of the assassination of Amílcar Cabral—one of the most dynamic figures of the liberation struggle in Guinea-Bissau—stunned the world. In Angola too, endemic disputes between the two rival organisations—the MPLA led by Dr Neto and the FLNA of Roberto Holden—helped the Portuguese to recover military positions in the guerilla-infested territories.

Under these circumstances, I wondered, how would liberation come to the Africans? Some whites in Zambia openly boasted that for the next fifty (or was it hundred?) years they foresaw little change in Southern Africa. Some leaders of the liberation struggle assured me, on the other hand, that they would in fact win the war in no time. Officially, Zambia favoured the idea of driving a wedge between the Portuguese and the rulers of South Africa and Rhodesia chiefly because the heavy burden of the colonial war made Portugal's hold on the empire increasingly tenuous. But would that bring about collapse of the Portuguese Empire?

#### Unexpected

Yet the unexpected had happened. On April 25 this year the Portuguese army staged a bloodless coup in Lisbon. Within hours, the fascist dictatorship, foisted by Salazar in the 1920s, collapsed. The new Government headed by General Antonio de Spínola announced that it would work for the cessation of war in Africa. When progress in the direction appeared sluggish, young army officers, who had masterminded the coup stepped in once more. They forced the resignation of a num-

ber of new Ministers, including M. Carlos, the Prime Minister. In his place, they installed Colonel Gonçalves who is dubbed by the conservatives as a communist sympathiser. Whatever may be the case, the reconstituted Cabinet decided to grant independence to the African colonies as soon as possible. Announcing the decision, Socialist Foreign Minister Dr Mario Soares, said that a whole chapter (in Portuguese history) was being turned with a decisive beginning towards decolonisation.

How did this historic change come about? Does it mean that Portuguese soldiers are more humane—and less irrational—than the politicians? Not really. Initially, neither President Spínola nor his Cabinet had any wish to hand over power to the Africans. Given the chance, they would indeed have clung to the colonies. But circumstances, far beyond control, forced their hand.

One of the circumstances was that the coup of April 25 was not an ordinary one. It was, in reality, the product of the 13-year-old colonial war. Curiously enough, the war opened the possibilities of economically exploiting the resources of the African colonies. On the other hand, it dragged so long as to exhaust Portugal's own resources, burdening its population with new taxes and tyrannical laws. Dissatisfaction spread among all sections of society; intellectuals, students and workers resorted to strike, the banned parties sought to establish links with dissenting elements in the ruling Popular National Action Party, and army officers started an underground movement to oust the regime.

The link that united all these elements was their opposition to the war. Hence, with the downfall of the **ancient regime**, they all expected Spínola's Government to put an end to the war. Yet, like General de Gaulle, Spínola perhaps dreamt of building a vast Lusitanian community across the oceans, with Lisbon presiding in all its glory. Also, some of Portugal's NATO allies cautioned him against hurrying matters. But soon complications arose.

In the first place, nationalist groups in Africa refused to negotiate with the new regime until the latter pledged to transfer political power categorically. Se-

condly, the months following the coup witnessed an intensification of the war which greatly added to Portugal's losses in both men and material. Moreover, anticipating that a ceasefire might be declared, Portuguese troops—especially in Mozambique—refused to go into action against the guerillas. The situation went definitely out of hand: Portuguese settlers in Angola and Mozambique openly began organising racial riots, while many African peasants simply lined up with the freedom fighters. In short, the war that had brought about the coup, now threatened to dislodge the new rulers. Hence, brushing aside the inhibitions, the latter acted in the only way open to them. They declared that they would grant independence to the colonies. (And now General Spínola has resigned).

But this does not mean that independence will come to Africans without further obstacles. The settler groups in Mozambique and Angola are not only well-armed, they are also receiving support from South Africa and Rhodesia. The dreaded mercenaries, who had once played havoc in the Congo, may become active. There is a great danger of total breakdown of law and order in Angola, where there are numerous factions. Thus, the primacy of MPLA is challenged by Holden's FLNA, which receives support from the Bakongo tribes on the Zaire border. Tribalism may prevent the political integration of the oil-rich Cabinda enclave, where the local people have so far refused allegiance to any of the nationalist groups. Under the circumstances, would it be unnatural for the racist regimes in the South to join the fray and fan the forces of lawlessness?

It is almost unthinkable that South Africa would accept the installation of an independent African Government in Mozambique. It has already invested much capital in the building of the Cabora Bassa dam. Besides sending help to the white settlers, South Africa may try with Malawi to bring about divisions in the ranks of FRELIMO. This, more than anything, may stall for a time negotiations between FRELIMO and Lisbon.

For South Africa, as much for Rhode-



ma. Mozambique is strategically important because it constitutes their northern and eastern flank. For a long time the port of Beira was also Rhodesia's major access to the sea. But, now fearing guerrilla infiltration, Rhodesia has stopped using the Beira railway.

A militant revolutionary regime in Mozambique would most certainly give aid to the liberation forces to move into South Africa. In such an event the security and political stability of Pretoria will be at stake. Would foreign investments flow into South Africa if it turns out to be the next theatre of warfare?

The future is full of uneasy portents. At the moment it appears that South Africa may not openly intervene in the affairs of Portugal's collapsing empire. But as the chief citadel of White power, with immense military and economic resources at its command, it would neither sit quietly. As the chief of the defence forces, Admiral Hugo Biermann, boasted that at no time had South African forces been better trained, equipped and organised than now. Who knows when South Africa would plunge a whole continent into a racial bloodbath of unknown proportions?

## Begum Akhtar's Solo

BY A MUSIC CRITIC

ALTHOUGH late by one and a half hours Begum Akhtar's solo programme at the Mysore Culture Association Hall on September 29 under the auspices of the Acharya Alauddin Music Circle charmed the audience, especially those who listened to her live singing for the first time. She initiated her programme with a Thumri. Her voice was strained owing to exhaustion but after the intermission it registered definite improvement. She sang dadra, ghazle, kajri one after another on request from members of the audience, including some old favourites such as "Koyelia mut kare pukar" etc.

In singing light classical songs the Begum is really unsurpassable. She pays special attention to the verses and

emphasises the literary suggestions of the poems so that the songs become doubly meaningful through her passionate singing. Therein lies the secret of the art of Begum Akhtar.

Mr Keramatullah Khan gave excellent assistance on the table. The harmonium accompaniment of Mr Baker Khan was remarkable while Mr Mahesh-prasad Mishra accompanied on the sarangi. Among the notables present was the octogenarian wife of the late Alauddin.

## An Odd Mixture

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

SAJAROOR Kanta opens with a series of murder scenes in which the credit titles are superimposed but as soon as the title sequence is over, we are transported to the conventional territory of the Bengali cinema with the typical family set-up. The characters are all the familiar types, a domineering grandfather presiding over the household, his recalcitrant granddaughter who wants a match of her own choice, her loving but meek parents who have never learnt to disobey their elders. A cliché-ridden family drama which develops into a complex triangle after the girl's marriage to a groom selected by his family. The "other man" creeps into the film, the girl's lover, but we have him as an invisible "human voice", only an aural identity percolating through telephone. The husband accepts the wife's infidelity with grace and they start putting up an outward show of marital bliss, while in reality, there is a wide chasm between the two. An interesting situation, which could have been utilised to build up an exciting drama of psychological tension, and there are some flashes of insight into the complexities of human characterisation in the film. Also the handling of the gradual process of the girl's disenchantment with her calf-love and the growth of a steady and maturer emotional relationship shows some signs of an adult approach to the problem. But the real bane of the film is the interpolation of

the crime element, resulting in an odd mixture because it fails to converge with the mainstream of the plot. The criminal motivations lack clarity and the operations are just amateurish. And the smart-set, hard-smoking Byomkesh of the film is indeed a far cry from the worldly-wise, witty and sensitive detective of Saradindu Bandopadhyay's original.

## Pandit's Exhibition

SANDIP SARKAR

MR Vasant Pandit, whose water colours were on view at the Birla Academy from 21 to 29 September, has not changed much since his last exhibition earlier this year. He has again painted the Indian jungle in all its glory; the clustered up-trees, natural clearings, the various moods that play on the foliage all through the day, a forlorn fort, and the grandeur of the silence that engulfs such solitary spots. The feeling of contentment in loneliness and a certain amount of mysteriousness have no doubt been translated into pictorial terms. There is a particularly good painting of a forest on fire.

His use of poster colours, particularly the technique of wash, is quite competent, although there is fumbling when it comes to details like the leaves of trees. He has used a dropper to drop paint on paper and a dry brush to spread it and then very judiciously has used a blade to scrape off paints to make it look like colours bursting and splintering into tiny particles. He has used newsprint to impart a graphic effect. He has brought in some people this time but they have an unreal, phantom existence.

It is about time Mr Pandit left his Prospero-type insular world and returned to the world of men. Otherwise he will be what Gopal Ghose is today.

## Moitra's Show

In his paintings, on view at the Academy of Fine Arts from September 25 to October 4, Mr Arun Kumar Moitra tries to make use of the Indian epics

and create a world of heroes and villains, especially taking such tragic episodes as Karna's chariot wheels getting stuck in the mud as a point of departure. But in spite of good intentions he has not been able to handle these heroic themes with even a modicum of competence. The tragic grandeur of the epics escapes him and what comes out is so mediocre that one feels these would attract the cheap calendar makers. If prints were made of his 'Urmila' and 'Urvashi', I believe, they would sell well as pin-ups. Mr Moitra, unlike Reubens, does not prefer voluptuous women, but just fat girls. Their out-of-proportion bodies lend his drawing just shape but no form. His drawing is very weak. His brush work is bold, but as his colours are gaudy his composition so disturbing and his line such a jumbled mass of confusion, he can hardly get anywhere, try hard as he might.

Aspiring artists should consider and reconsider the merits of what they have painted before exhibiting publicly.

## Letters

### Famine And The Fair Lady

Mrs Indira Gandhi and her government are perturbed, not so much at the starvation deaths taking place in the country, but at the external publicity. She and her stooges ought to know that some of the foreign countries keep more information about India than we perhaps do. But as far as famine conditions, starvation deaths are concerned Mrs Gandhi, her government and party know the facts fully well. They only pretend ignorance and in order to cover up, they sometimes change the vocabulary and call it death due to malnutrition.

A Pradesh Congress Committee President has gone on record as saying "that they have received reports of at least one thousand starvation deaths in West Bengal". A top national daily carried a front-page news item that in Dhubri district alone (Assam) 300 had died of starvation. Shri Morarji Desai, ex-Deputy Prime Minister, during his tour in Gujarat met people who de-

manded poison from him to end their lives. There was a similar instance in Motihari district, Bihar. Throughout the country almost every State is in the grip of famine, but the other day the Food Minister, Shri Subramaniam, almost pounded upon the Press for publishing some of the news. The Government's directive is not to highlight the starvation and famine news.

In this situation the External Affairs Minister, Sardar Swaran Singh, from a comfortable abode in Los Angeles has accused the American Press of exaggerating the risk of famine in India. He said, "we face a shortage of only 5 per cent of our foodgrain needs", and he also said categorically that there had been not a single death from starvation in India because of famine.

This 5 per cent shortage would obviously be taken by us as five per cent less in the sphere of availability to the common man. The people will judge for themselves what a big lie this is.

Mrs Gandhi had been talking about the green revolution, self-sufficiency and "reaching a position to export foodgrain" and according to their books of accounts (Economic Survey 1973/74) the per capita daily availability of cereals is about 400 gms. What has happened to the rest of the foodgrain? Is it not her own Congressmen and other patrons, namely the big landlords, hoarders, blackmarketeers who are sitting over huge stocks and will only part with them at their own price? Even the Foodgrain Dealers Association of India has revealed that big growers in Punjab, Haryana and upper U.P. are holding at least three million tonnes of foodgrains. They have not of course, said how much they themselves are holding for profiteering.

Mrs Gandhi refused to take over wholesale trade in rice. She did a gimmick in taking over the wheat wholesale trade, but as soon as a fat purse and assurance for support came to her she handed it back. The public distribution system is being fast dismantled. Crores of rupees spent on building godowns etc. have been redundant. Last year the public distribution system handled eleven lakh tonnes of cereals per month. Later it was reduced to 7

lakh tonnes and then to 5. Now it is almost nearing zero.

The same old story is being repeated. The government has fallen at the feet of Americans. This time it is worse, because the business is between the Government of India and U.S. private traders. Last time it was between the two governments. The stalwarts of the Wheat Association of America are busy roving in Delhi. The price that is being paid is fabulous, much more than what other countries paid to America for wheat. The secret news is that the Government of India is praying to the American tycoons for a crash shipment programme against cash payments plus many business concessions. This is how Sm Gandhi has made India an international beggar, although she remains as affluent as ever.

If today she went to the polls, leaving the office for some time, the world will see that the people of India will reject her scornfully and with all the emphasis they have at their command. The people's attitude towards her and her party could be seen from a recent incident. A Member of Parliament belonging to her party from Madhya Pradesh was smeared in the face with black shoe polish, garlanded with shoes and paraded on a donkey in Kharsia city for their (Congress) failure to serve the area which was hit by famine.

Jyotirmoy Bosu, M.P.  
Calcutta

## Repression

Government repression in various States has been condemned by 300 eminent intellectuals of the world. The A.P. Home Department denies the repression.

A statement showing the dates and places where more than 200 persons including Panchadri Krishna Murthi were shot dead after inhuman torture, was sent to the Government of India by us. It was further submitted that the documents filed by the Prosecution in the Parvathipuram Conspiracy Case will stand as prima facie evidence to show how they were shot after receiving wireless messages from Hyderabad.

Sri Kesaiah, Congress MLA, toured

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the disturbed areas of Khammam and reported how the police were shooting innocent 'Girijans in "encounters".

An official of West Bengal once boldly announced that he forced a top Naxalite leader at gun-point to disclose arms, which is in violation of Article 20(2) of the Constitution which says that no person shall be compelled to be witness against him. It also indicates how the police are following third degree methods of investigation in violation of the Law of Evidence.

In 1969-70 thousands of people were arrested throughout the country as Naxalites. In Andhra Pradesh the only court constituted to try the Naxalite cases has so far tried 52 sessions cases, involving 760 people, and acquitted 640, thus showing how false most of the cases are.

P. Venkateswarlu

General Secretary, Andhra Pradesh  
Civil Liberties Committee

Amnesty International's report on the plight of the undertrial prisoners in West Bengal is nothing new to the people of this State.

Some time ago Mr Indrajit Gupta, MP, had drawn the Prime Minister's attention to allegations of indecent and inhuman police torture of some women undertrial prisoners in the Lalbazar lock-up. He named one particular police officer who was mainly responsible for the torture. I do not know what action the Prime Minister was pleased to take but as far as I remember that officer had been awarded "Rashtrapati Padak" about a year or so ago.

Mr Justice Mulla of Allahabad High Court (Lucknow Bench) had in his mind officers of this kind when he observed in a case that "if the Police Force (Indian Police Force) must be manned by officers like these, it is better that we tear up our Constitution, forget all about democracy and the rights of the citizens and change the meaning of law, not only in our penal enactments but also in our dictionaries".

The Supreme Court was pleased to expunge from the judgment of a portion of the remarks of the learned judge because it was "too sweeping". But the

remarks cannot be expunged from the minds of the sufferers in West Bengal. They feel in the marrow of their bones what is meant by democracy guaranteed by our Constitution in India that is Bharat.

Sunil K. Ghosh  
Calcutta

### 'All Is Well'

We are supposed to be under 'judicial custody'. What exactly it means has not been made known to us. Thanks to the Government, we have been obliged to make the jail our house, our hostel, our talking-shop, in short our whole world. It is by no means a mother-in-law's house and let the Chief Minister be under no apprehension on that score. We are actually under the thumb of the jailor and his khaki-wearing and lathi-wielding gentlemen of coloured topees. This is enough to turn the jail into a veritable bedlam.

Freedom was denied to us in the vast and open prison-house which goes by the name of 'society', and now it is denied to us in a fragment of society called 'jail', which is indeed a closed mini-world, with all its bossing and tyrannising by the armed and protected part of the society against the much bigger but unprotected part of it.

Our sin, in the eyes of law, was that we championed the cause of the people, writing for them, reciting for them, and singing and talking and working and moving for them. This has been termed "inciting" them. People do not need incitement from any one other than from their rulers who are providing it day in and day out, what with the soaring prices, inflationary spiral, chronic famine conditions, starvation and privation and to cap them all, monstrous repression. We only desire that the people should shake the yoke off their neck and come into their own as the real and rightful rulers of themselves and makers of their own destiny.

I shall now relate an incident which took place on September 7.

We were taking the proverbial forty winks in the early afternoon that day when we heard the clinking of hooves

on the floor of our barracks. On opening our eyes with a start, we found bipeds instead of quadrupeds with iron-heels and iron-tipped sticks—jail constables—numbering as many as we the undertrials, setting about to "search" under the personal supervision of the two assistant jailors, acting on the express "hookum" of that absentee landlord of the jail, called the "jailor". The latter was obviously implementing the lessons of his New Delhi training in the advanced course of (mis) treatment of the prisoners, before those lessons faded out of his mind.

All our things were rummaged, books, printed and unprinted articles of daily use, clothing and what not. At last they got hold of an underwear which belonged to a fellow prisoner who does the cooking for us. What was the offence of that innocent thing? It was red in colour. With it the jail police marched out. Then only were we able to collect our wits to remember that on 28th August we had hoisted the Red Flag in memory of the second death anniversary of Comrade Charu Mazumdar and also in honour of other immortal martyrs of the armed revolution of the Indian peasantry, who were all done to death by the neo-fascist monsters who now lord it over the country.

To cite another instance: the jail constables, who are assigned guard duty at night have of late been instructed to herd us into our barracks at 19 hours IST, even if we have to forgo our supper. The latest disciplinary antic is to get the flower-shrubs in our backyard uprooted. All these are said to be provisions in the Jail Manual. Does the Jail Manual consist only of these things? Are there not some provisions relating to our rations etc.?

More distracting is the way in which these humans bellow out their lungs, with cries "Sab Thik Hain", all is well.

In fact, all is not well and can never be well with the world. All is not and can never be quite well at the front. Society is diseased and ill at ease. Forbearance too has a limit. The exploited and oppressed—the workers, peasants and others—the great and dark masses of this hopeless land—are erupting. The Red Flag shall displace

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the Tricolour. Our jailors shall be jailed, our prosecutors shall be prosecuted, even our prosecutors and judges shall be judged and prosecuted.

K. V. Ramana Reddy  
Lecturer  
Accused in the Secunderabad  
Conspiracy Case

### "The Assassin"

Indians should oppose the Shah's attempt to get atomic power cooperation from India.

The assassin has made Iran a bastion of the CIA to suppress the struggles of the people of the Middle East.

Call back our soldier brothers from Dhofar and Oman.

Release the 40,000 political prisoners.

Long live the people's liberation struggle of Iran and the Persian Gulf.

Iranian Students in India

### Decline

It was April 1968. The handsome young Hindusthani who supplied my newspaper every morning jubilantly informed me that **Frontier** had come out. I could not find the exact reason for his jubilation. Definitely he was not a reader of **Now** and surely he would not enjoy the editorials in **Frontier**. But he was sympathetic to the former editor of **Now**, and his simple but unmistakable sense of justice made him welcome the new journal.

After that more than six years have elapsed. The political and economic panorama has changed a lot. Suffocating darkness has set in. The popular outburst for the U.F. government proved to be euphoric, the revolt of the extremists, at least for the time being, has ended in isolated actions and mutual bickering, but still **Frontier**, the direct offshoot of the post-1967 environment, is continuing. No doubt, from the very beginning it has been a political weekly but it has understood politics in a wider connotation and perspective. It has fought against the idea of day-to-day so-called political tactics of our left parties. It has seen politics as closely

linked with the socio-economic-cultural background, with past history and future development. In it we got political comments on contemporary events and at the same time, lively controversy on Bengali poetry and tradition, useful discussion on the Bengal renaissance, depth-studies of economic history and development of Calcutta. On Bangladesh and Ceylon, on the U.P. Government and the extremist challenge, I got in **Frontier** the most authentic comments and analysis. Gradually it became the focal point of radical thinking.

But the crisis deepens. The cost of publishing is going up, **Frontier** has to squeeze its space. Due to opposition from both the right and the left establishment, the flow of advertisement is a trickle, the financial crisis is acute. But economic stringency is not the root cause of the crisis of **Frontier**, though, no doubt, it has its impact. The objective correlative of **Frontier** is totally absent; the reality is now crude, gloomy, full of despair. After the disastrous U.F. experiments and the almost suicidal self-sacrifice of the extremists, the middle class has become an inert and tragic victim of circumstances. **Frontier** gets its readers from among these middle-class men. As a natural consequence, it is the victim of the despair, but its radicalism does not fit with it. Its comments now sound hollow and it has become gradually more narrow; and at present it has taken politics in the narrowest sense. It has to praise Mrinal Sen's **Padatik** as his most mature film, though distortions of fact and reality are there. It has to publish document after document on CPI(ML) politics, without any result; perhaps it is meant for bringing unity but in practice it accentuates the conflict. When practice is nil, theoretical harangue and hair-splitting is inevitable. Now **Frontier** is the platform of that haranguing.

I, an admirer of the journal, am gradually losing interest in it. Already a few of my acquaintances have stopped buying it. Of course I still collect my copy from the nearest bookstall; it is a habit and everybody knows middle-class people are servants of habits. The lone fighter weekly is degenerating and I feel more heavily the burden of the

stinking environment. This letter expresses the disillusionment of a middle-class individual who from an enthusiastic reader has turned into an occasional, perhaps a very insignificant, contributor to this weekly. It may be a personal disenchantment. I hope, **Frontier** is and would be green for ever.

Arjun Bandyopadhyay  
Naihati

### Free To be Human

Felix Greene's article "Free to be human" (September 28) should serve as an eye-opener to our intellectuals who are imprisoned in the cell of "me-ness". Our educational system, a handmaid of the British colonialists, teaches them to develop a sort of high-brow attitude and keep aloof from the mainstream of social life. Once Romain Rolland said, "The vanity which knows its self but not its poverty is the vanity of the intellectuals of the bourgeois society". We should know that man wants to be more than just himself. He wants to be a whole man. He is dissatisfied with being a separate individual; out of the isolation of his individual life he strives towards a 'fulness' that he senses and demands, towards a fulness of life of which individuality with all its limitations, cheats him, towards a more comprehensible, a more just world, a world that makes sense. He wants to refer to something that is more than 'I', something outside himself and yet essential to himself. Moreover, he wants to make his individuality social and this is possible in a co-operative society like China where man is an essential part of a society which does not divide him from others, which releases him from prison, the small cell of 'I', and which frees him from the 'unreal humanity'.

Sanjoy Hazra  
Calcutta

Our sole agent in Bangladesh  
**CHALANTIKA BAIGHAR**,  
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Dacca-1



## Garm Hava

Apropòs Balai Dutt's letter on **Garm Hava** (7.9.1974), I would like to say that there was nothing in my original letter (which was trimmed and then published in **Frontier** dated 24.8.1974) that could give hint to the effect that I considered it quite unnecessary to speak about the sufferings of the Indian Muslims. But I have still reasons to say that in a relative sense the political consciousness of the Muslim upper and middle classes is low. The fact remains that the main development and progress of the community will come from inside the community itself rather than from outside. With all my physical and mental limitations, I think I am not a bigot (at least I try not to be so) and at the same time I think that even the best of us are not completely free from subjective considerations. Absolute objectivity is not possible, however hard one tries to attain it. As a common man, without being attached to any party or party line, I sympathise with the progressive and revolutionary forces of India to whom the future belongs.

A Film-goer  
Calcutta

## Assault On Culture

The Federation of Film Societies of India and the Film Societies unreservedly condemn the illegal and forcible closure of the play **Duswapner Nagari**, the killing of Prabir Dutt at the Curzon Park and the attacks elsewhere in West Bengal on cultural and dramatic performances. All these represent a direct assault on the artists and art and culture.

Dipak Roy Chowdhury (Calcutta Film Circle); Satyanarayan Chowdhury (Cine Study Group, Serampore); Shyamal Sen Gupta (Cine Academy); Shanti Kumar Biswas (Cine Club of Naihati); Mriganka Sekhar Ray (Calcutta Film Society); Shivjiban Pathak (North Howrah Film Circle); Panchanan Das (East Calcutta Cine Club); Sadhan Chakravorty (Cine Central, Calcutta); Manabendra Bhowmick (South Calcutta Film Society); Kalyan Kumar Adya (North Calcutta Film Society); S. P. Lahiri (Film Club, Calcutta); Sudhin Banerjee (Cine Club of Calcutta); Ajay Dey (Federation of Film Societies of India); Prodosh Mitra (Federation of Film Societies of India); Dipak Mukherjee (Howrah Film Society).

## Teachers' Pay Scale

It is quite some time since the Government declared an upward revision of the pay scale of all university and college teachers. But the Central Government has not paid its quota in implementation of the scheme. The diverse authorities concerned, it is understood, are discussing in detail the principle and mechanism of pay fixation. It is high time they finished their deliberation and implemented their word of honour. Delay and default in the matter, besides creating distress, will tend to compound the chaotic conditions in the educational world.

Debal Kr Chakravarti  
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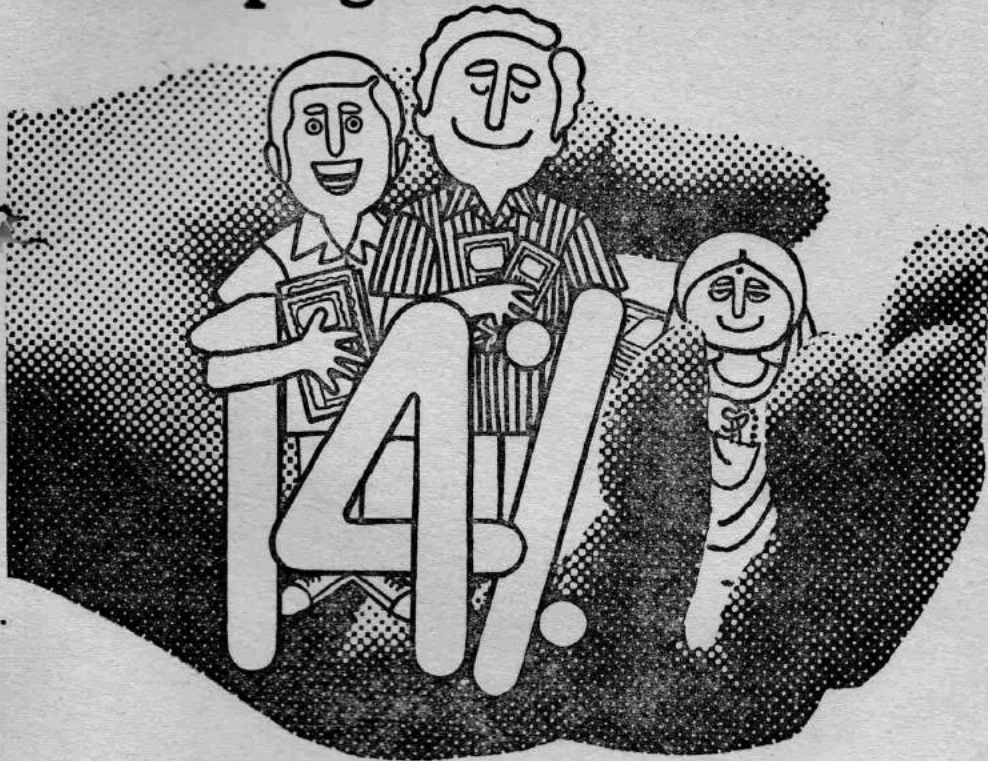
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