

# frontier

Vol. 7: No. 31

NOVEMBER 23, 1974

PRICE: 50 PAISE

## On Other Pages

COMMENT	2
KERALA POLITICS	
MUKUNDAN C. MENON	3
<i>Assam</i>	
BEHIND THE FAMINE AND THE FLOODS	
CHIRANJIT CHALIHA	5
<i>Madhya Pradesh</i>	
FAMINE AND CULTURE	
N. K. SINGH	7
ARMED STRUGGLE IN INDIA: THE GHADAR PARTY-III	
GAIL OMVEDT	7
<i>Clippings</i>	
SIKKIM	11
NIRODE MAZUMDAR'S BOITORONI	
SANDIP SARKAR	12
LETTERS	13

Editor : Samar Sen

PRINTED AT MODERN INDIA PRESS,  
7, RAJA SUBODH MULLICK SQUARE,  
CALCUTTA-13 AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY  
FOR GERMINAL PUBLICATIONS (P) LTD.  
BY SAMAR SEN FROM 61, MOTT LANE,  
CALCUTTA-13  
TELEPHONE: 243202

## AN INTRIGUING FUSS

THE meaningless hullabaloo about the lathi-charge on Mr Jayaprakash Narayan by the Central Reserve Police in Patna on November 4 shows many of the total revolution-makers in their true colours. Some of the opposition parties that have turned to Mr Narayan's movement more out of despair than conviction have expressed holy horror at the lathi blows he received on the day; their leaders went furious in Parliament. A four-member delegation from the opposition rushed to Patna to find out what exactly had happened. The delegation has reported that Mr Narayan was hit twice by lathis and a tear-gas shell fell into his jeep. Dutifully the delegation has demanded a parliamentary probe, the opposition recipe for all maladies. For every scandal and controversy, be it connected with Nagarwala, or Sanjoy Gandhi, or Lalit Narayan Mishra, or Tul Mohan Ram, the opposition seems to have a tape-recorded suggestion to make: institute a parliamentary probe. This merely shows that the opposition parties are incapable not merely of any action but also of purposeful thinking. They endlessly make the same demand on every occasion, because they are too lethargic to think, too afraid to speak out.

In fact, the demand for a parliamentary probe is a big bluff. It is meant to divert popular attention from the policy of inaction of the opposition parties. It is a slogan over which they can cry themselves hoarse and which the Government can reject without turning a hair. The opposition parties seem to be too dumb to realise that a parliamentary probe is no substitute for action and they do not raise themselves in the estimation of the people by the inanity. The people do not need a parliamentary probe to be convinced that this Government is corrupt, or inefficient, or ruthless. The utter vacuity of the opposition mind is evident from the fact that it does not realise that an inquiry by a parliamentary committee will always go in favour of the Government. The opposition will be hoist with its own petard if the Government, for a change, agrees to the suggestion for a parliamentary probe. The opposition representatives will have, of course, the freedom to submit notes of dissent and get some more publicity which is perhaps their sole aim. In any event, the average citizen has, from personal experience, formed his views about policies and events, and he is not going to modify them in the light of what a parliamentary committee says. He does not regard parliamentary committees as his guide and mentor.

The character of this Government should not be unknown to the opposition

parties. It will employ every means to put down mass upsurges that may seem to threaten its monopoly of power. A lathi blow on Mr Narayan is an innocent nothing compared to what the Government is capable of unleashing and did partially unleash in the not-too-distant past in some parts of the country. Not all wings of the Government's security forces are armed with plain lathis, and the Government will not hesitate to ask the more sinisterly equipped forces to tackle the situation in any manner they like should the masses refuse to behave. The lathi blow on Mr Narayan is just a warning. Mass movements have an inexorable logic of their own, and in every movement a time comes when a faltering weak leadership finds itself at variance with the urges of the masses. The point seems to have been reached in Bihar. The change of tactics on the part of the Government calls for a similar change on the people's side. But the leadership is against a tit for tat policy. That is why the opposition parties are wailing

over the ruthlessness of a Government which they want to unseat. It is amazing that advocates of a total revolution should be unready for total repression; maybe they imagine that a total revolution can be made with total consent of the Government and the ruling class. The opposition leaders are reported to have resented the manner in which the Home Minister, Mr Brahmananda Reddy, apologised for the lathi blow on Mr Narayan. They should know that if the total revolution does not fizzle out, Mr Reddy will not offer even a qualified apology for far more repressive actions. Remember what happened in Srikakulam when Mr Reddy was Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh; he has got his promotion, so has his police minister who now heads the Andhra Pradesh Cabinet. Perhaps the election-oriented opposition parties consider such projections irrelevant; they are trying to make a revolution which the Government will not regard as deserving of even a lathi blow.

marginal at best. The Iranian Minister further pointed out that if all the resources of OPEC members were added up, at the end of 1974 these might amount to \$45 billion to \$50 billion. By comparison, one single country, Germany, stands there with enormous reserves (33.4 billion at the end of August according to the West German Bundesbank). Yet it is being said that it is the oil producers who are going to end up with huge reserves of dollars and other hard currencies. Mr Ford even hints at armed action against them to save the world economy.

## The King's Men

The CPI General Secretary, Mr Rajeswara Rao, in one of his recent articles published in the party's weekly journal, *New Age*, has stated that "it is the CPI which has been fighting the anti-people policies of the Government more than any other Left parties in India". For quite some time after its dalliance with the Congress began, the CPI did not think there was anything anti-people in the policies of the Congress Government. However, Congress policies being what they are, that pose could not be kept for long and the responsibility for whatever was anti-people was put on a few reactionaries and the CPI continued its line of "strengthening the progressives" in the Congress and "pushing" Government policies to the "Left". The party, to its great discomfiture, soon found that while it was involved in "strengthening the progressives" and "pushing to the Left", "the reactionaries" had not only become "strengthened" but "dominant" in the Congress and the policies "were moving towards the Right". And today after all this verbal jugglery which has been their only policy, they claim to be the staunchest fighters against the anti-people policies of the Government.

Among the great actions to the CPI's credit listed by Mr Rao is the all-India land struggle of 1970. May one ask Mr Rao how many people got land in this great struggle? And may one also inform Mr Rao that where the landless really occupied land was in West Bengal

## Blaming The Arabs

A correspondent writes:

The most acceptable excuse—after the theory of over-population—for yet another full-dress account of the cause of the crisis in the capitalist world including India—would be the oil price rise. And naturally the Arabs are the target. They are being accused of exploiting the world. Exploitation indeed. But who is exploiting whom? Direct U.S. private investments in the Middle East oil amounted to \$1,800 million by the end of 1972 whereas U.S. profit from the investments was \$2,400 million that year alone. The profit rate was as high as 130 per cent or 10 times the average for all U.S. overseas investments. The temporary and false prosperity of the Western countries in postwar years is built on the natural resources and the blood and sweat of the peoples of the Third World. According to U.N. statistical data, in the 21 years from 1950 to 1970 prices of primary products—exports from Asian,

African and Latin American countries—had always been lower than in 1950 whereas those of manufactured goods from the developed countries rose steadily, with prices in 1970 up 44 per cent compared to 1950. On account of sharper exploitation the developing countries suffered from an exchange of unequal values in trade, which caused them a loss of U.S. \$103,400 million in 1960-72. It is precisely to check this and to protect their purchasing power that the Arabs now want the oil price to change with the rate of inflation in the industrialised countries. Inflation began long before the rise in the price of oil. The Iranian Minister, Mr Jabshid Amuzegar, recently told the *Time* that before the oil price rose, the average inflation rate reported by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) was 12%; it is now about 14%. The consequence of the oil price rise is therefore

## Honouring Malraux

and Kerala and that in Kerala it was done in face of the most brutal repression from a Government whose head is a leader of the CPI? For Mr Rao his party's land struggle which did not give one per cent of land to a single landless peasant is a great fact. In the same category are his claims about his party's "dehoarding campaigns", "great marches", etc. He should not forget that his party opposed the all-India bandh of May 3; after coming into the railway strike, it sapped the morale of the strikers by its call for "zone by zone and group by group settlement"; it refused to join the broadly representative convention against wage-freeze in Delhi on August 29. This is the real record of Mr Rao's party and in many States it is pursuing the same disruptive line in regard to the struggle against the wage-freeze.

That the CPI leaders have become adepts in talking and acting like Congress rulers is proved by a statement made by the Kerala Chief Minister, Mr Achutha Menon, justifying the recent police action against agricultural workers who have been occupying the surplus land of landlords. In course of their first phase of the land grab movement, the peasants established their rights to land by plucking coconuts, erecting hutments and cultivating the land. In the second stage of the movement just begun, they are harvesting the crop they had raised. Both in the first stage and the present one, the coalition Government unleashed police repression on them. How does the CPI, sharing office in Kerala, view this struggle? Its State Council in a resolution says: "In the name of a land-grab movement, there had been several instances of unauthorised plucking of coconut, reaping of harvest etc". Just as Congress rulers in every State justify such repression, the CPI resolution says, "the police were attacked, a constable was beaten up and his rifle was snatched away". When the police ran amuck in Cannanore the CPI leadership not only justified it with the same cock-and-bull stories but asked the Government to "initiate stern measures against the struggling peasants". More loyal than the king, aren't they?

For politicians to honour intellectuals in recognition of their service to the cause of politics is an instance of social symbiosis, which is no less important or natural than biological interdependence between two dissimilar organisms. The ritual is also a part of peaceful cultural competition between nations. So far as individual politicians are concerned, apart from such reasons of state an element of snobbery cannot be ruled out. By giving the Jawaharlal Nehru Award to Andre Malraux the Government of India has exhibited its pretensions to International Understanding. What Malraux felt about the depth or extent of any interest in his work among those who were honouring him cannot be known. What he said on receiving the Indian award is not exactly a model of Southern lucidity or Gallic charm. It amounted to no more than that it takes all sorts to make the world of peace and understanding, that the crisis of the modern world is a fall out of technical progress and that India can contribute to its solution with its so-called unique mixture of Gandhian non-violence and military intervention in a righteous cause. It is a pity that he did not let loose the usual panegyrics on India's spiritual tradition and greatness. Perhaps his existentialism came in the way. But then, as something of an Indologist or Orientalist he ought to have known better. The concept of Being as Nothingness, an impermanent shadow or illusion, has long been formulated by the seers of this country. Kings and princes made vast endowments of land and cattle, with hereditary serfs to work and tend them, to enable the philosophers to elaborate the concept of absurdity of all creation. Obviously such a faith was never at odds with an enjoyment of the good things of life—of course, in a spirit of non-attachment.

It is a far greater pity that the citation, read out by Mrs Gandhi, does not mention any of these things. India has always honoured intellectuals far above the common folk. Her rulers have always

cared both for their material and spiritual well-being. If Plato had come to India instead of going to Syracuse, a commercial city in Southern Italy, he would have succeeded better in founding his ideal republic (with philosophers as kings and kings as philosophers), and could thus escape exile and frustration. India has always been a country where the rulers have extracted vast wealth from the labours of the vulgar masses to enable the philosophers to live in peace and preach the virtues of abstinence to the multitude. Andre Malraux might as well be told that in honouring him India's present rulers were only honouring a venerable tradition. A short spin around the countryside would have convinced the French philosopher of the truth of his own ideas on Man's Fate vis-a-vis Nature and Society. The reality would baffle his narrow European rationalism and the absurd would stare him in the face. His European despair in the face of possible nuclear annihilation will fade before a stark, more primitive sense of helplessness.

All this has perhaps nothing to do with the Indian Government's appreciation of Malraux. Maybe it is far more due to the French author's unreserved and unwavering support to India's intervention in favour of the Bangladesh rebels. Ever since independence, India has been losing her old friends among Western intellectuals and making no new ones; quite a few have been engaged in tarnishing her image. Maybe Malraux has come in handy to fill the place of an Annie Besant or C. F. Andrews.

---

For *Frontier* contact :

SUNIL KUMAR MOHANTA,

Collectorate Compound,

Balurghat,

## Kerala Politics

MUKUNDAN C. MENON

OCTOBER 5, 1974, marked the "grand" fourth anniversary of the Kerala Ministry led by the CPI. Although the State Government had acclaimed its "achievements and gains" widely, especially through a special number of *Patriot*, the condition of the people has not improved even slightly, particularly after the recent floods. The only thing the Ministry could be proud of is perhaps its record ruling period. No Ministry has ever remained in power for four continuous years in Kerala, and if the present government completes its scheduled five-year term that will certainly serve the ruling parties by way of propaganda in the 1975 elections. Aware of this, the CPM-led opposition started action against the Ministry, with chappal-throwing and fist-fighting on the floor of the Assembly.

Politics in Kerala is different. Here one could see the splendid rise of parties and leaders to power and also their tragic downfall at lightning speed.

Take the case of the CPI. After the first split in the undivided Communist Party in 1964, the first trial of strength between the CPI and the CPM took place in Kerala in the mid-term election in 1965. The CPI suffered a severe setback, with a mere three seats. At that time it was well accredited as "patriotic communists" following its unconditional support to the Nehru Government in branding China as the border aggressor, while the CPM argued publicly that the question between India and China should be settled in a peaceful manner and that in the Aksai Chin area India should show some consideration to the Chinese arguments. In the inner-party meetings of the undivided Communist Party, they stated that China, being a socialist State, cannot be accused as an aggressor. This viewpoint was enough for the Central Government to arrest many of its leaders and cadres. Even then in the 1965 Kerala election the CPM stood first, securing 39 seats, among whom the majority contested the

election from within jails. This massive support received by the "unpatriotic" CPM surprised even its own leadership.

During the 1967 election period, CPI improved its position, from 3 to 21, mainly because of its involvement in the CPM-led United Front. Being the major component in the 1967 United Front, the CPM got 52 seats. But after two years it suffered a tactical failure when the fellow-travelling CPI joined hands with the Congress. The CPM was virtually isolated from the rest of the parties in the United Front when all of them started to see "progressives" in the Indira Congress. Not that the outlook of the CPM was much different at that time. On issues like bank nationalisation, privy purse, presidential election, and, later, Bangladesh, the CPM leaders left no stone unturned in supporting the "progressive hands" of Mrs Gandhi. It miscalculated that the right-wing Congress will get a majority and remain as the main ruling enemy. It also thought that if it succeeded in achieving Mrs Gandhi's goodwill, it will be able to bag more benefits. The CPM theoreticians realised the situation much later when the CPI established relationship with the Congress and posed a threat to them in their strongholds of Kerala and West Bengal. Desperate because of isolation, the CPM leadership tried to satisfy the cadres and sympathisers by arguing it had given only "critical support" to the progressive actions of Mrs Gandhi and "will continue to do the same in future". This type of dialectics proved indigestible to the masses.

The first Achutha Menon Ministry, formed in 1969 after the resignation of the United Front Ministry, was short-lived. In 1970 when Kerala went to the polls the CPI-Congress-led United Front secured the minimum majority with which Mr Menon formed his second Ministry. The CPM put up a fight against the Front, with the support of small parties like the KTP and KSP. It did not make allegations of rigging and accepted the defeat.

One thing which the CPM has done so far in Kerala is to upgrade the status of several unpopular parties. The CPI,

which was virtually finished in 1965, gatecrashed into power and has kept it from 1967 till today only because of the misdirected political adventure of CPM theoreticians. The Muslim League, the famous "dead horse" of Nehru, had a rebirth in Kerala because of the CPM's affectionate attitude towards them. Today these two parties hold an important role in Kerala politics, that of king and kingmaker, and remain as rivals of the CPM itself. CPM theoreticians always formulated their ideas on the basis of cheap and immediate gains. They paid no attention to the after-effects of such policies. In Indian politics, survival seems to depend upon popular time-to-time tactics rather than on unpopular broad-based, long-term policies.

Another gimmick is the RSP. When the Central leadership of the RSP asked its Kerala unit to part with the present Menon Ministry, it dissociated from the central party and continues its participation in the Ministry even today as the Kerala RSP. Another party is the PSP—which got three members in the Assembly of whom one is a Minister—which also broke into two. These two factions are known today in the names of their respective leaders, like "Balakrishnan PSP" and "Attingal PSP". The former is a Minister and the latter an aspirant for a berth in the Cabinet, now sitting with the opposition.

The clowns in Kerala politics are the unaccountable SPs. There was a strong SSP in 1965 and in 1967. It turned into KSSP, when there was a split with the central SSP. This party has been eliminated now, and like the PSP, several "individual SPs" still remain alive, viz. "Kurup SP", "Seshan SP", etc. Both these leaders—P. R. K Kurup and N. K. Seshan—were pillars of ministry formation in Kerala during 1967-70, but today they are ignored. Mr George Fernandes recently toured Kerala in a vain attempt to rechain the splinter groups.

Believe it or not, a new Communist Party has sprung up in Kerala based on casteism. It is a party of Ezhavas, by Ezhavas, for Ezhavas. Of course, they also quote Marxism-Leninism. Meanwhile, their traditional caste enemies, the Nairs, are active with their National

NOVEMBER 23, 1974

Democratic Party. Keen on stopping the privileges given by the government to the downtrodden castes, the NDP is ready to join with any other party to achieve this end.

Some splinter leaders from the CPM formed another party three years ago, called the Communist Unity Centre led by A. V. Aryan. They "popularised" their party by killing Azhikodon Raghavan, one of the foremost leaders of the CPM, and for this the Court sentenced some members of the CUC. The CUC today poses another threat to the CPM as it has already spread its activities to the southern and northern parts from the middle district where it originated. Two so-called Naxalite leaders—Arayakandi Achuthan and K. P. R. Gopalan and their groups joined the CUC recently. It should also be noted that Nagi Reddy, the Andhra Naxalite leader, attended their State Convention held at Trichur three months ago. The CUC is against the present parliamentary system, but will not hesitate to contest elections to expose the weakness of the present bourgeois order. At the same time it is based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung thought. One wonders how it differs from the CPM, whose ideology is the same, though it found it very difficult to implement.

The Kerala Congress serves mainly the interests of the Christian community as well as the feudal elements. That is why it is strong only in mid-Travancore regions. It was formed in 1964 after a split between the then Chief Minister, R. Sankar, and the then Home Minister, P. T. Chacko. Eventually the Christian supporters of the Congress party, guided by the Church and missionaries in their anti-communist campaign, joined with the Kerala Congress. For the first time the Kerala Congress found a berth in the 1969 Menon Ministry, but was soon forced to quit. Recently it has witnessed disintegration, many of its pillars having deserted it perforce or on their own choice. The Kerala Congress recently joined with the NDP in forming a third front on a non-communist, non-Congress, non-religious(?) basis. What is their party then? Yeah! They are the real servers of the people from among the vested interests and reactionary groups.

Now the national boss—Congress. Like in other States, in Kerala too the split in the Congress party led to a mushroom growth in leadership. During the days of the split in 1969, when the crucial presidential election took place, the undivided Congress nominee, Sanjiva Reddy, bagged all the 9 Congress votes from the Kerala Assembly, plus the remaining 5 votes of the Kerala Congress. But when Mr V. V. Giri won the presidential chair and Mrs Gandhi established her political base at the Centre, the Congress(O) leader in the Kerala Assembly all of a sudden became the vanguard of Mrs Gandhi's policies. Till then he had differed from the then Indira Congress Pradesh President, Mr K. K. Viswanathan, a veteran follower of Mrs Gandhi and the present Governor of Gujarat. But in his somersault he managed to get a seat in Menon's Ministry. This, in short, is the portrait of Mr K. Karunakaran, the present Home Minister.

Young men inside the Congress say they are the pillars of the party in Kerala. Although they have considerable control over student and youth organisations, their voice did not count much with the KPCC and the Ministry. This feeling led to rethinking and a split. Mr M. J. John, a rival of the KPCC President and the Youth Congress leader Mr A. K. Antony, left the party and formed his own group which he named "moderators".

The "wonder party" in Kerala is the Muslim League. In 1960 it was anti-communist and pro-Congress, when there was a Congress Ministry. In 1965 it was with the CPM and won a good number of seats. The same was repeated in 1967 when it got two Ministers in the United Front. After that, in 1969 and 1970 it became anti-CPM by joining the present Ministry. C. H. Mohammed Koya, a former Muslim League Minister and at present an MP, contested from the Maijeri Lok Sabha constituency in 1972 by facing a rival Congress candidate at a time when both the League and the Congress were partners in the Ministry. Thus their ideology is simple: join with all ruling ministries in Kerala whatever these may be.

## Assam

### Behind The Famine and the Floods

CHIRANJIT CHALIHA

**I**N a word the situation is unprecedented. Seven waves of massive flood, grim scarcity of foodgrains, and skyrocketing prices of all the essential commodities are creating havoc with the poor millions, the parallel of which will not be found in the last hundred years' history of Assam. Thousands of people from different parts of the State, mainly from Dhubri subdivision were on the streets with begging bowls. Starvation deaths are now commonplace. Reports of parents selling their children for a paltry sum are no longer novel. The State Government calls it death due to malnutrition.

Everyone seems to agree that the reason for the present food crisis is the Government's take-over of wholesale trade in rice from the big wholesale merchants. A section of the bourgeois press is trying to paint the Chief Minister as the poor lamb among the ferocious wolves. The implication is that the policies of the Sinha-ministry are detrimental to the interests of the big merchants who used to conduct the wholesale trade in rice, and so they are making an all-out effort to sabotage Mr Sinha and the result is the present food crisis. But how can these merchants, flourishing under the Congress Government for the last 27 years, be at loggerheads with the latter? Has Mr Sinha's Government undergone any basic change from the previous Congress governments in the State? Besides, how can one account for the food problem in the other States where the local State governments did not dare 'offend' the big businessmen by undertaking such socialist manoeuvres as the taking over of wholesale trade in foodgrains? A handful of corrupt businessmen and industrialists cannot thwart a party whose members cover two-thirds of the total seats in Parliament as well as the majority of the State assemblies? Moreover, this

party in its war against profiteers, hoarders, corrupt businessmen and officials has the support of a galaxy of Russian and East European super-socialists! Also sitting there in Delhi is the sensible guy Moynihan, ever ready to plead for the now-clean (after the exit of Nixon) White House's support and assistance to Mrs Gandhi's Government and warn the CIA not to interfere with her progressive policies at home.

The simple truth is that in the present circumstances people are bound to die even if the markets are overflowed with foodgrains. After all the foodgrains do not come to one's kitchen on their own, they have to be bought. Assam has not remained immune from the sharp price-rise. On the contrary the people in this State have the proud privilege of—thanks to the feudal Mahajans—giving leadership to the rest of the country in this field. The buying power of the commoners is fast decreasing. Even the conservative official estimate shows that 70% of the total population of the State are below the poverty line in the face of the phenomenal price rise. The ground below their feet is gradually moving away. The problem of land for agriculture is adding to their miseries. The usual channels have dried up in a vast sandy patch of famine or near-famine.

To put it bluntly, Assam along with the entire north-eastern region is only a colony of the New Delhi Government. Its industrial backwardness during the British era has undergone no basic change in the last 27 years. Large amounts of natural resources have been either drained out of the State for industries based outside Assam or left unused. While the problem of land is pressing hard on the peasantry large

tracts of fallow land are lying all over the State at Government's disposal. Stark feudalism alone can create such an artificial land problem for the peasantry. In the early fifties Assam's per capita income was much higher than the all-India average, but now it is below the latter. But paradoxically, this State produces 70% of India's tea, 66% of India's crude oil and of the total foreign-exchange earnings of the country 10.12% comes through the resources of Assam. The tea industry alone drains out capital to the tune of Rs. 75 crores annually to the bulging pockets of the British tea magnates, the Indian compradors and to the Central Government's coffers. The few Assamese national bourgeoisie who are in this industry are fast losing their ground under the pressure of the imperialist and comprador capital backed by the Central Government. In the oil industry also the foreign interests have the upper hand. The State Government has to remain content with a meagre royalty from oil. Moreover, the bigger portion of this crude oil is refined in the refineries set up outside Assam. The Indian big bourgeoisie have not set up any major industry in this State. Instead, they have made it a market for the commodities produced in their farms outside Assam and have allowed some feudal merchants, mostly Marwaris, to step in as the officers-in-charge of this market. As regards the public sector industries in Assam, the less said the better. Further, in the interest of the big bourgeoisie and their agents the feudal profit-grocers, the communication system between Assam and the rest of the country has been left undeveloped. On the pretext of this inconvenient transportation the feudal stockists increase the prices of all the commodities brought from outside Assam according to their whims, and as a result a packet of shaving blades that costs only 60 paise in Delhi costs Rs. 1.50 in Assam.

These feudal merchants have the blessings of the big bourgeoisie and therefore have enough liberty with the Union Government also. Under these circumstances, the State Government has got nothing to do but just echo the wishes of New Delhi with respect to these mer-

chants. In the interest of the imperialists, the big bourgeoisie and these big feudal merchants the Central Government has been taking a colonial attitude towards Assam. Under the first three five-year-plans Assam got only 1.25% of the total public sector investments of the Government of India. The Congress Government in the State is bound to obey the dictates of its masters in Delhi. If it grumbles for allocations of more funds for Assam it will be just replaced by another set of ministers faithful to Delhi. This we saw in the case of the previous Congress Ministry. The present Ministry is of course truly obedient to Mrs Gandhi. Obviously therefore, there is no question of the State Government offering any effective resistance to the big feudal merchants in the State in their profit-oriented trading. However virulent the attacks of the Ministers against these traders on the Assembly floor might be, behind the scene they are on the same boat in their mission of 'plundering the people. The so-called failure of the wholesale rice-trade can be explained only in the light of this come-boy-let's-travel-together attitude between the Government and the traders.

#### Floods

The same debris of colonialism that have pauperised the national economy of Assam float in the flood waters of the Brahmaputra. Neither technical incompetence nor financial want can explain the Centre's indifference to this devastating problem which cannot be handled by the State Government with the spectre of Reserve Bank overdrafts already looming large. But our bosses in Delhi have not yet shown any sign of effective change in their attitude of indifference which they have consistently assumed for the last two decades in this matter. Such indifference even after this year's unprecedented floods whose full repercussions on the economy of the people are yet to be measured, is horrifying. For some, it is a pinprick to the soap-bubble of the so-called one-nation, one-India sentiment, harboured over the years as a great, noble sentiment or outlook. For middle-class liberals it is terribly painful. Assam's strong representation in the Union Cabi-

For Frontier contact

MANITHAN,

No. 2, Mangesh Street,

T. Nagar,

Madras - 17.

net till the shifting of Mr F. A. Ahmed and Mr D. K. Barooah to other offices makes it all the more pathetic. Moreover, the present Chief Minister, too, is a staunch supporter of Mrs Gandhi and it was only for this allegiance that he could replace Mr M. M. Choudhury. But in spite of all these plus points Assam has been cold-shouldered by Delhi even when the State is in the grip of the worst ever flood and famine. The Madam in Delhi has a stony heart for the teeming millions of Assam. Those who do not understand the nature of the cold, calculating colonialism find all these things shocking. So let's come from hazy, liberal sentimentalism to the brass tacks of the colonial reality again, some of which were shown earlier with respect to the food problem in this State which has a surplus production of rice. Now the flood problem.

As stated already, 70 per cent of the people in this State are below the poverty line. These are not the chief customers on the market which the Indian comprador big bourgeoisie have set up in Assam through their feudal agents. The town-based middle class people form the bulk of these customers. The lower middle class is also now gradually turning away from this market. But still there is a good market for the refrigerators, the Gwalior suitings and other luxuries of the sort. Still there is a class in this State floating on the Cocacola culture. So who cares for the flood and famine victims? Obviously these people in the below-the-poverty-line category can make no impact on this market even if they turn away from it en masse.

For Frontier contact

PABITRA KUMAR DEKA,

Assam Tribune,

Gauhati-3,

Assam.

NOVEMBER 23, 1974

Secondly, the few industrial concerns, that the imperialists and compradors have in Assam are in no way affected by the floods. Therefore the present flood is no headache to the Centre which simply implements the interests of these classes.

Thirdly, but for a few parts in lower Assam, there is no big landlord class. Had it been there, its interests would have been affected by the floods and in that case, the class having a say in the functioning of the country's State machinery could have compelled the Government to take drastic and effective measures to fight the problem.

In this situation, only a strong public opinion can force the Central Government to take any effective measure to check the flood problem. But the present Chief Minister faces the same handicap as did his predecessor—the in-fighting in the party. New Delhi's attitude is clear: If you pester them for more relief, more money, more industrial plants, you will just be kicked out; there are so many eagerly waiting to step into your place.

Economically the neighbouring hill States are more backward than Assam. Prior to their separation from Assam, the New Delhi regime with the collaboration of an opportunist elite among the hillmen told the common hillmen that their backwardness was the result of exploitation by the plains people. But now they have their own States. And save for a flourishing opportunist middle class they have practically nothing to raise their standard of living. The anti-Centre movement that is now fast gaining momentum among these people is therefore understandable. To brush it off as "desperate terrorism" of "a handful of savage hillmen" simply betrays one's political puerility. Maybe the hill people have discerned the truth which their brothers down the hills are yet to see. Maybe they have already caught the sweet smell of the flowers of the South-East Asian jungles where small nationalists like them are fighting for the cherished principle of national liberty. The pity is that we in the plains are still far away from those jungles.

## Madhya Pradesh

### Famine And Culture

N. K. SINGH

**M**ADHYA Pradesh is in the grip of a famine. Many starvation deaths have been reported from the adivasi-dominated Chhattisgarh region. Batches of hungry people are migrating to cities for food and jobs. The situation, even the government concedes, is grave; it is the worst drought of the century.

Here, in this sleepy capital town of Bhopal, everyone is concerned about the famine. They are doing their best. Politicians of the ruling party are daily (or even twice a day) issuing statements urging New Delhi to rush help; even the 'dissidents' among them have abandoned their favourite topple-the-government game for a while. The opposition is already a docile lot, even the fire-eating Jan Sangh chief is said to be very chummy with the Chief Minister. Now they have taken upon themselves the constructive task of dehoarding food-grains. Without caring for the cosy air-conditioned comforts of Bhopal—or even petrol consumption for that matter—the high officials are making flying visits to the drought-affected areas to, as officialese has it, study the situation. Even the Cabinet is not lagging behind; most of the Ministers are camping at Raipur, braving assaults, intimidation and abuses of angry yet foolish people. Reports have it that they are emotionally too moved to move into the deserted villages.

Apparently, everybody who is somebody wants to help them. But as fate would have it, they have not enough funds. The stone-hearted people at New Delhi have refused to give any dole. The State Government, whose budget already shows an unprecedented deficit, is in a fix. Hence it has gone in for austerity, with due fanfare, of course. All the development works have come to a standstill. A cut in administrative expenditure was sought. As the Ministers and big officials were too important to be disturbed, the axe fell on ill-paid government employees. A big cut was

## FRONTIER

made in their pay packets and allowances.

But even this was not enough. Hence the Government is out with a begging bowl, ceremoniously called the Chief Minister's relief fund. People are contributing generously. Even the institutions are not lagging behind in this noble and philanthropic cause.

Recently the Madhya Pradesh Kala Parishad contributed about Rs. 2,000 collected from the sale of tickets for its annual dance and music festival to the Chief Minister's relief fund. Cynics point out that this meagre sum—even a high school could collect that much through a simple cultural show—was collected after spending about 15,000 rupees on the three-day fanfare. After all, it is not the money that matters, it is the intention behind it. One meal for 2,000 starving people! And all this while serving art and culture. It is very noble.

### Cultural Revolution

Art, literature, dance, drama, music etc. are the latest craze in Bhopal. A cultural revolution seems to be round the corner. And the credit for it goes to the young budding secretary of the Kala Parishad, who is poet, critic, editor and IAS, all rolled into one. He is also a 'leftist'—whatever you mean by it. (He used to be a Marxist but that is now out of fashion; an intellectual cannot be dogmatic.)

As soon as Mr Secretary descended upon Bhopal he took upon himself the task of a self-styled cultural reformer. Bhopal—or the whole of the State for that matter—was culturally illiterate, he declared. Urgent messages were sent to different parts of the country—specially to a particular group of writers, poets, critics, artists etc. Friends rushed in to save Bhopal from cultural famine. Bhopalis who were weary of seeing budgetary provisions for cultural activities lapsing year after year and mispending of money on third-rate *sarkari* programmes, were grateful to Mr Secretary for his pioneering work. He was declared the unopposed Cultural Messiah. However, soon enough it became clear that the same set of artists

and writers would visit the town time and again.

The biggest success of Mr Secretary was in restricting entries to the cultural shows to the ticket-holders—even in the case of Ministers, politicians, big officials and journalists who were hitherto treated with courtesy passes. But that restriction, it appeared later, was only for the ordinary shows. Special free shows of some dramas were held for the MLAs on which the Parishad incurred quite a few thousand rupees. It gave the feeling of a *muzra* being held in the mughal *darbar*. The journalists continue to receive free 'tickets' instead of courtesy passes. Old wine in a new bottle.

Since Mr Secretary is an IAS, a large number of officers became regular attendants of Ravindra Bhavan programmes—thanks to the 'cultural rivalry' among the IAS tribe. This was, indeed, no mean achievement at a time when the cultural interests of most of our civil servants are confined to club, cocktail, cabaret and pocket books. A *bhadrajaner* (gentlemen's) culture was born.

Mr Secretary was not to be satisfied with reform in the field of art and culture only. He is basically a literary man. The only snag was that the Kala Parishad is supposed to deal with painting, sculpture, music, dance, drama etc. For literature there is a separate body, Sahitya Parishad. But Mr Secretary was not to be deterred. Where there is a will there is a way. Under his able direction the academy of "performing arts" has intruded into the field of literary criticism. Mr Secretary, who is naturally the editor of the magazine, has kindly allotted about 15 per cent of the total space to the performing arts.

The magazine must have cost quite a fortune—mostly handmade paper, good printing and on top of it all, association of some 'big names', who have kindly agreed to be on its advisory board. (Cynics, again, smell fishy things in the 'big names'—all friends of Mr Secretary.) One expects they must be honorary, though of course, they would charge TA, DA once in a while to descend upon Bhopal from their heavenly abode in New Delhi.

Anyway, who cares for the expenditure when the State Government is more than liberal? Thanks to the laurels earned by the Kala Parishad in the local press, the Government has increased the grant of the Parishad; the State might have gone bankrupt financially but cultural bankruptcy is intolerable.

Or for that matter, who cares for the Parishad employees, who are getting wages far below the government scales, and who have been asked to sacrifice—of course, in the name of art and culture. Does not the Parishad need money to throw the occasional dinner parties for a get-together of the guest artistes with the local 'talents'?

Reports have it that Mr Secretary is going on a foreign jaunt in a delegation of Indian writers. There, he will exchange views on "the need of poetry in our time" or something like that.

## FRONTIER

### INLAND

Six months	..	Rs. 11.00
One year	..	Rs. 22.00
Three years	..	Rs. 60.00
Five years	..	Rs. 100.00

### By Surface Mail

All countries .. 6 dollars

### Foreign AIR MAIL RATES

#### (One Year)

America	..	18.50 dollars
Europe	..	15 dollars
The Netherlands	..	18.50 dollars
Asia	..	13 dollars

Back numbers of *Frontier*, more than two months' old, cost Re 1 each if they are available.

*Frontier* will no longer be sent by VPP

Long-term Subscriptions will help the weekly.

NOVEMBER 23, 1974



## Armed Struggle In India The Ghadar Party—III

GAIL OMVEDT

ACTIVITY had begun in China before the arrivals of the emissaries from Moscow, California and India. Its base was apparently Sikhs who were employed in the cities as watchmen for municipalities and private business; these men had gained their jobs as a result of army presence but were more easily reachable immediately than the troops. Thus, for example, one of the most active of the Hankow group was Ganda Singh, an ex-watchman who had been in Hankow for twelve years; another, Jiwan Singh, was said to have been aboard the *Komagata Maru* and to have come to China via Japan. A crucial beginning was the formation of the International Union of Oppressed Peoples of the East, which held its first conference in Hankow in the summer of 1925, which brought together revolutionary "Hindus" (Indians), Koreans, and "Annamites" (Vietnamese) and which began the organising under which the Ghadar activists worked.

The leading organiser of the Union was Ho Chi Minh, then just sent out to China as a Comintern leader. He had written just before that:

Imperialism has now reached a degree of almost scientific perfection. It uses white proletarians to conquer the proletarians of the colonies. Then it hurls the proletarians of one colony against those of another. Finally, it relies on the proletarians of the colonies to rule white proletarians. Senegalese had the sad distinction of having helped French militarism to massacre their brothers of the Congo, Sudan, Dahomey and Madagascar. Algerians fought in Indochina. Annamese were garrisoned in Africa. And so on.\*

Being particularly sensitive to "divide and rule" tactics, Ho was undoubtedly

\*Bernard Fall, ed., *Ho Chi Minh on Revolution* (New York, Praeger).

pleased to work with a group which worked to prevent these.

The most significant leader of the Sikhs in China was apparently Dasaunda Singh, who had been active for some time in California, then came with the Mahendra Pratap tour and was the main representative of the Ghadar party; he apparently took his instructions from Pritam Singh, the Ghadar representative in Moscow. Dasaunda Singh wrote a number of early articles, including one—"Let India and China Unite for the Holy Cause"—which was published in Anglo-Chinese newspapers and also in the *Hindustan Ghadar*, a San Francisco paper; then he helped to found a paper in China, *The Hindustan Ghadar Dhandora*, which came out twice a month. By this time units of the Union of Oppressed Peoples had been formed in Shanghai, Canton and in Hankow, where the Indians were particularly active; it was from Hankow that the paper was published and it was Hankow that became the primary centre for Ghadar revolutionary activity.

When Dasaunda Singh was arrested in late 1927 after the murder of an Indian army official, his papers indicated several aims, including the organising in China of a branch of the *Hindustan Ghadar* party with objects of cooperating with the KMT against British imperialism, the appointment of secret agents for propaganda among troops at Hong Kong and Shanghai, and the formation of Indian revolutionary units for service under Chinese military authorities. Indeed, constant appeals were made to soldiers to desert or mutiny, and 80 Sikh watchmen in Hankow were formed into an armed military unit under the KMT. Dasaunda Singh's wider dream was perhaps expressed in a speech to a meeting in Shanghai in April, 1927, quoted by the British intelligence:

The Hankow government is ready to give military training to a thousand Indians and says that each should be paid not less than what he received from the Shanghai Municipal Council. They should persuade their fellow Sikhs and the Indian troops to desert and join the Hankow government. After a year's training they would be taken to the frontiers of India through

Afghanistan and supplied with arms, ammunition and money by the Moscow government. Afghanistan, Russia, Turkey, China and perhaps Japan would declare war on Great Britain. At the same time simultaneous risings would take place in the Punjab and a number of troops would mutiny. (See Petrie).

And to an editor of a militant Sikh newspaper in the Punjab Dasaunda Singh wrote:

Indians are bent upon shedding blood for the sake of the independence of India at every place and step. Brethren in India should know it well that the maximum hope of the liberty of India depends on them. China has set an example for Indians. (Petrie).

How serious were all these efforts at organising, fomenting mutiny, and giving military training to Indians?

The British, at least, took it all quite seriously, in particular the possibility that, as Petrie said, "trouble outside our borders should synchronize with any serious outbreak within them." In spite of stories of Indian soldiers refusing to fire on Chinese strikers in Hong Kong in 1925, the British at first gave little credence to revolt among the Indian community in China. But—

But by the beginning of 1927, the abandonment of the Hankow Concession had pointed its own moral as to the power of anti-British propaganda backed by mob violence; and from that time the position has rapidly deteriorated until, at the moment of writing, the anti-British agitation among Indians in China is of an extent and intensity that cannot be regarded without some anxiety. (Petrie)

These promising beginnings came to an end not by British efforts—arrest of a few Ghadar leaders at Hankow left

---

For *Frontier* contact :

**BANKURA NEWSPAPER**

**AGENCY,**

**Lokepur,**

**P.O. & Dist. Bankura.**

the movement as active as ever—but apparently by Chiang Kai-shek's coup and the final communist split with the left Kuomintang, which cut off possibilities of organising in the cities of south China. Nevertheless, though Petrie wrote after the initial coup, his concern was only partly diminished:

It would seem unwise to count with any certainty on the setback to Bolshevism being anything more than a temporary one. At any rate it is safe to assume that for as far ahead as anyone can see, there will be no strong, impartial Central Government in Peking or anywhere else, and there will be no settled and efficient administration in the Provinces. In such a soil every foul weed is bound to take root, and Bolshevism will probably continue to flourish... Similarly, the Indian revolutionary element will find a footing in a disordered China, and the Ghadar plotter and the Soviet emissary will join forces and endeavour each to exploit the other to his own advantage. The combination is an awkward enough one, and it demands that we should continue to observe it with a jealous and watchful eye, at least so long as it is in vigorous existence in a country so contiguous to our borders as in China.

There can be no more significant testimony to the international ramifications of revolution.

**The Phasing Out of Ghadar: Tensions in the Punjab**

After 1930, however, it seems clear that whatever identity and force Ghadar communism held on the international plane had withered away. Yet for fifteen years the Ghadar Party had been a primary focus of revolutionary activity for Punjabis as immigrants and soldiers

throughout the world; within the Punjab itself it had helped to stimulate the new wave of nationalism that led to the massacre at Amritsar and the intensified politicisation of the province in the 1920s. Its communist leaders after 1920 had clearly thought of themselves as an ongoing party, had been concerned to have their special representatives in Moscow through whom they would take Comintern instructions, and had shown no desire at all to become organisationally absorbed into the Indian communist activities directed first by M. N. Roy and then by the CPGB. In the Punjab, besides starting the newspaper *Kirti* and organising the *Desh Bhagat Parivar Sahayak Sabha* (an organisation focussed on support for older Ghadar activists, which brought in large amounts of California money channeled ostensibly for relief for families of political prisoners) they had also developed links with the Akali Dal, a quasi-military organisation that began to grow after 1920. With such an organic and developing base, would their separate identity easily disappear?

In fact, while sources are scanty on Punjabi communist and peasant history, this separate identity did not easily vanish. It is clear that there were two distinct groups and tendencies among Punjabi communists, the first focussed around Sohan Singh Josh, the second around Teja Sing Swatantra. Indeed, these two men symbolise the struggle within Punjabi communism: Josh had been jailed for his role in the Akali movement and after his release in 1926 had become an editor of *Kirti*; he joined the Communist Party in 1928, was jailed in the Meerut conspiracy case, and went on to become the most important organisational leader of the CPI in the Punjab. He was a man, it may be noted, with no separate organisational connection with the Ghadar party—in contrast to Swatantra, who had been sent by the Ghadar communists to a military college in Turkey, was briefly in the U.S. with Ghadar people and then spent two years in the U.S.S.R., and then returned to become the leading communist peasant organiser in the Punjab.

The Ghadar communists first began to gather around the newspaper *Kirti*, and

in fact the group took on the name of Kirti Kisan Party (Workers and Peasants Party) in 1926, which was in accordance with a contemporary Indian communist strategy of creating such parties. However, unlike other parts of India, the Kirti Kisan Party of the Punjab was not phased out. In fact, when in 1934 Indian communists began to organise and centralise their party, and chose Sohan Singh Josh as the secretary of the Punjab unit, the majority of the Ghadar group resisted being absorbed. Thus two separate groups of Punjabi communists came to exist: the official CPI group under Josh, and the Kirti group under Teja Singh Swatantra which managed to maintain for a long time control over funds coming from the Ghadar party in the U.S.

It appears that the tension between these two groups was not just a matter of personalities or factionalism, but of real differences in revolutionary outlook. The special characteristics of Ghadar communism, as Mark Juergensmeir has partly noted (*Perspectives on Ghadar*), were an emphasis on revolutionary nationalism and armed struggle; indeed the growth of Ghadar communism out of a revolutionary nationalist party was perhaps more akin to the development of Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean communism than to that of the rest of the Indian movement. For other Indian communists of the time there was no possibility of armed struggle and a rather ambiguous relation to the national movement. Thus the focus was on mass organising, and at first this was almost entirely among the working class; not until the 1930s did much peasant organising begin, and this came with leaders in new areas of communist activity who themselves were from non-Brahmin and peasant backgrounds. Similarly the communist leaders of the 1920s had a tendency to remain aloof from the Indian National Congress and not until after 1934—partly as a result of British and international directives—did a real "united front" (and "bloc within") policy begin; when the communists joined the Congress Socialist Party to work within the INC and begin the serious organising of peasant leagues. It can therefore be argued that the contrast

For "Frontier" contact:

**WORKERS' BOOKSHOP**

81, George Street

Glasgow G.1

England

was between the all-Indian communist leaders, who were petty-bourgeois in origin but oriented to a rather abstract working class sectarianism and a rather romantic concept of internationalism—and the Ghadar communists who were actually more working-class in origin but oriented to a national liberationist, peasant-based people's war version of revolution.

What gives credence to this analysis is the changing relationship between the two groups. Though some old Ghadar leaders (such as Baba Gurumukh Singh) worked for unity, the groups only began to come together during 1940 and 1941, in a period in which the official CPI was taking a militant nationalist line (the context was that of Hitler's pact with Stalin, which left Indian communists free to attack the British) and when the leaders found themselves together in jail: they resolved to unite. But then in 1941, when Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, and the CPI after some indecision decided to call the war against the Nazis a "people's war" and to give full support to the British government—thus isolating itself from the most fervent nationalist outbreaks of 20 years—they fell apart again. The Swatantra group split away and decisively formed a separate party, the Lal Communist Party. From this time on the two groups were known as the "Red" and "White" Communists of the Punjab.

The Red Communists apparently aimed at fighting a revolutionary war against the British in conjunction with the 1942 "Quit India" movement; however, the fact that most of their leadership was in jail apparently meant that little coordinated activity could go on in the Punjab. They did, however, represent a tendency that was expressed elsewhere among Indian communism—a tendency that saw itself as loyal to internationalism, but felt that loyalty could be expressed only in the full development of revolution in India. After

Our sole agent in Bangladesh

CHALANTIKA BAIGHAR

14, Banglabazar

Dacca-1

NOVEMBER 23, 1974

the war and release from jail, the Red Communists apparently became intensively involved in some sections of the Punjab in peasant seizures of land, and reportedly also had not forsaken old ideas of establishing liberated zones in a border area: According to one account Communists from 1948 to 1950 were involved with smuggling arms in the area of Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh (the border areas for the Punjab) and "dreaming of having a Yenan of their own."<sup>\*</sup> This was a period, shortly after Indian independence, of intensive peasant revolt and insurgency. Swatantra himself was underground until 1962.

Official communists such as Jesh have argued that the "Ghadar Babas" in fact supported the regular party and attempted to heal the split with the Red Communists. But the evidence is that the Red Communists were to a large degree the inheritors of the whole Ghadar tendency and base. Their party, the Lal Communist Party, contested the elections of 1952 as a separate party; it got 2.1% of the vote in contrast to 6.1% for the official CPI, but it did best in the districts of Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala Jullunder and Sangrur, which were the central Sikh districts and the earliest strongest base for Ghadar activity.

It was, however, impossible for a dissident communist group, however revolutionary, to survive at that time in the face of the official party, particularly after the Punjabi official party managed to gain full control of the funds coming from the U.S. Thus the Lal Communist Party, after 1952, did merge again into the CPI. But there is one final footnote to Ghadar revolutionary tendencies: Much later, when the pro-Chinese, guerilla warfare oriented CPI(M-L) was formed, it was rumoured that the first "Naxalite" killed in the Punjab was Baba Bujha Singh, an old Ghadar member. And it was the most important of these early members, Baba Gurmukh Singh himself—the very man who had tried to mediate between Red and White Communists in the 1930s—who broke away to join the CPI(M-L) and become editor of its Punjabi journal, the *Peoples' Path*. (Concluded).

\* *Punjabi Communists: An Analysis* by Chadha.

## Clippings

### Sikkim

Peking, October 21, 1974. Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, declared publicly on October 15 that "Sikkim was not an independent country. It was always part of India." But the same Prime Minister had stated not long ago that "India will always respect Sikkim's individuality." One cannot help asking: since Sikkim is part of India then how can its "individuality" be respected? Has the Indian Prime Minister ever spoken of "always respecting" the "individuality" of Uttar Pradesh which is part of India?

To say that "Sikkim was always part of India" is a fabrication of history. Anyone who has a common knowledge of Asian history knows that Sikkim, the Himalayan kingdom, which has a history of 300-400 years, was founded in the 17th century when India was invaded by the old-line colonialists and gradually reduced into a British colony. Britain started her armed invasion of Sikkim, using India as a base after the latter was completely colonised in the middle of the 19th century and forcibly turned Sikkim into a British "protectorate" in 1890. Before 1947 when India won independence, both India and Sikkim were the victims of colonialism. India was a British colony, while Sikkim was a British "protectorate" and never part of India. But after attaining independence, the Indian rulers have forgotten that historically India shared the same destiny with Sikkim and took over the mantle of colonialism. Acting in the way of the big bullying the small and the "strong" oppressing the weak, they carried out aggression and expansion at the expense of Sikkim and compelled her to sign a "status quo agreement" which had India replace Britain in her colonialist status in Sikkim. In June 1949, Indian troops were sent to the Sikkimese capital Gangtok to take over the Sikkimese Government by force. In 1950, the Indian rulers imposed upon the Sikkimese people the "India-Sikkim peace treaty", making Sikkim as an Indian "protectorate". Upto

now, Sikkim has only been under India's colonial rule for 27 years. Judging from history, the allegation that "Sikkim was always part of India" is a sheer lie, a lame excuse for India's expansionist act. This was pointed out by impartial Indian public opinion. The *Hindustan Times* pointed out in an editorial on August 30 that "Sikkim is not territorially part of India. Constitutionally it is a foreign country". S. N. Mishra, member of the rival Congress in Parliament, wrote to Indira Gandhi on August 31 saying that "Sikkim is not a part of India".

The Indian Prime Minister's recent speech is a stark avowal of India's annexation of Sikkim. Sikkim [was named] an Indian protectorate before September and an "associate State" after the Indian Constitution was amended in September and now, dropping all the previous names Sikkim is called a "part of India".

To speak bluntly the painstaking effort of the Indian rulers in fabricating history is nothing but an attempt [to describe the annexation of Sikkim as India's "internal affair". In this way, other people would "have no right to speak about Indo-Sikkim relations". But having committed colonial expansion and annexed Sikkim, the Indian rulers can in no way escape denunciation and condemnation by the world people. The voice of justice can never be silenced by a few lies of anybody.

But there were some people [who really beat the drum for the Indian expansionists. On the very day the Indian Prime Minister made the extremely absurd statement on the annexation of Sikkim, the Soviet news agency Tass in a dispatch on October 15 described the just denunciation of India's annexation of Sikkim by people all over the world as "an interference in the internal affairs of India". To describe obvious expansion abroad as an "internal affair" is a lie typical of the Soviet revisionist social-imperialists. But history cannot be altered, no matter how "clever" the Indian rulers appear and how vigorously the Soviet revisionists beat the drum for them.

By altering history, the Indian expansionists can only arouse stronger op-

position from the Sikkimese people. Since India's forcible annexation of Sikkim in early September, the Sikkimese people have held many protest demonstrations. Trying to turn Sikkim into a "part of India", the Indian expansionists will eventually be punished by history and will not come to a good end.

(Hsinhua correspondent)

## Nirode Mazumdar's Boitorini

SANDIP SARKAR

**N**IRODE Mazumdar had a one-man show in the Academy of Fine Arts titled "Boitorini" from November 2 to 9. He is probably our most influential artist. Yet there are critics and laymen who say that his metaphysical and mythological paintings have not changed since his return from Paris.

In this series he had fifteen canvases, some good, others quite good and one or two not that good, but he has shown what his style is capable of doing, with certain alterations and additions. He has not only enlarged his scope but has shown that he is involved in the life of the people and knows about their trials and tribulations. He has boldly commented on the rottenness of the social fabric and denounced the men in power. He has identified with the life of the poor peasant and shown how he is sucked dry by the big landholders, law courts, officers of the state and finally by the bastion of democracy—Parliament.

I was afraid of these paintings becoming posters and illustration, but Nirode Mazumdar is no ordinary artist. He has brought all that makes his technique mature—sense of colour, capability of imagination and innovation—to take up the challenge.

Like his earlier works these paintings also have a core near the middle of a canvas, an exact centre from where his universe expands in every direction. The whole canvas is tense but flexible and each part has a rhythmic relation to the other. Generally there is one

major colour accompanied with white—white which is grey or ash—that dominates, while other colours, sometimes two or sometimes three, play their minor role. His colours are never loud even when they clash in contrast, but modulated and worked into the matter with skill and poetical-feeling. The colours are strictly bound in linear movements and what is left outside the linear area is integrated. The whole canvas has the charm and majesty of araga.

In 'Tyranny' we see a man on horseback, very primitive and savage, trampling everything. The composition is tightly knitted and nicely balanced. There are patches of blue, Indian red harmonised with white. In 'Feast' there is a hapless man being devoured by judges and lawyers stylised as vultures wearing wigs. Red and gold are used with restraint and the black binding lines accentuate the crime. The whole super-structure is shaky and in 'Fall' men are seen falling down headlong and books titled puranas, aesthetics and metaphysics come tumbling after. There are paintings where he has effectively used the technique of wall poster and got away with it. In 'Sucker' a jotedar and moneylender have inserted pipes into the body of a peasant and are sucking him dry. In 'Analogy' a milkman is surrounded with cows that he milks.

There are three other canvases done in a lighter mood. In 'Parliament' you see a bunch of cackling crows around a severe looking owl. In 'Toy Shop' you see a monkey selling firearms, guns, ships and airplanes and the analogy is quite clear. In 'Quixotic' Don Quixote is the artist himself who rides a donkey with a symbolic rifle in his hand and brushes sticking out of the case on his back instead of arrows, while Sancho Panza follows on another donkey with one eye closed and another eye on the view-finder of a movie camera—a dig at the movie-makers. In 'Merry-go-round' a figure stands on a chair in front of a booth in a fair with a rifle on his back and a violin which he plays with a flourish. At the back there are shadowy figures running helter-skelter, tilting and off balance. The construction is well balanced and the dominant colour is Indian red. 'Limelight' is more

ambitious and powerful. There are three panels on a single large canvas which are constructed into a whole. Just in the middle, there is a point with a wheel done in gold, yellow and violet—is it the wheel of karma or the cycle of life? One wonders! At the top of the central panel there is a convocation where men wearing masks of the donkey receive degrees. On the left panel top corner a man is shouting, below him there is a sitarist and a sarodist. On the right hand side there is a woman in pain, a hindside of another woman, a film director and at the bottom painters and sculptors come out in the open in a procession. The composition is a well-knit unit and the stylisation exploits the cartoonist's art with power and the whole cultural scene is condensed. Colours are subdued and yet the stylisation gives it a poignancy.

In 'Boitorini' the whole theme is deepening into mythical terms. Boitorini is the river one crosses to the valley of death, and at the other end there is heaven. The main colour is blue with black binding lines, which quiver and curve while figures decline, coil, fall and try to stay erect. Small flames of Indian red here and there indicate violence and excess, yet everything is synchronised very imaginatively.

Nirode Mazumdar is sombre, sad, fiery, ready to denounce all that is bad and evil, uphold all that is good, ready to prophesy doom and destruction if the house is not put in order. He identifies with the lot of the common man. He laughs at human folly, satirises and even weeps with fire in his eyes. The Boitorini series has the flavour of Balzac.

For Frontier contact  
**BANI PRAKASH,**  
 Panbazar,  
 Gauhati-1,  
 Assam.

NOVEMBER 23, 1974

## Letters

### Patna November 4

I do not agree with JP's asinine political theory and his confused and sterile strategy of change, but the question is: Why is he succeeding in his "designs"? The answer evidently lies in the totality of objective material conditions of existence as they have developed since independence and prevail today—the deepening poverty of the broad mass of our people, the rising cost of living, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, mounting unemployment, shocking corruption in high places, palpable hollowness of the ruling elite's democratic professions, the slow but sure choking of peaceful channels of popular protest by the increasingly repressive feudal-bourgeois State power and the growing sense of a general crisis. So only a fool or a flunkie will believe the Bihar Government's assessment of JP's November 4 mass demonstration in Patna. The Government sealed off Patna, barricaded the city streets and roads, impounded some private buses, taxis and cars, searched and arrested a number of people on their way to Patna (even a dead body being carried for cremation was searched by a magistrate—this, to save our 'democracy' even from the dead), mobilised countless police and paramilitary forces and alerted the army, cancelled a number of trains, clamped Sec. 144, externed some prominent opposition leaders from the state and arrested some others under the DIR and MISA, and, to top it all, undertook an air surveillance of Patna city and lathi-charged and tear-gassed the demonstrators (that JP was also hit is a minor point for me.) And at the day's end the Government proudly declared that JP's demonstration call was a "flop"! The Government took these wartime defence measures just to meet an unarmed civilian protest demonstration which they knew was going to "flop" anyway on account of the lack of popular support to JP's call! Interesting, isn't it?

More. Accepting that the demonstration was by and large peaceful, the Patna

D.M. and Commissioner significantly observed that whether the demonstrators indulged in violence or not, the Government had to use force to disperse them for the violation of Sec. 144 and the DIR. Thus, the Government rule of the game is: first impose Sec. 144 and DIR to prevent the people from collecting to ventilate their grievances and then beat them and arrest them for violating the prohibitory orders, if no other excuse is available!

Two last points. First, JP must not accuse Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of taking the country towards communism, for the accusation is not only patently false but amounts to giving her a radical image which ill suits her. Second, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's call to defend "democracy" is quite valid and necessary. But what if her Government itself turns out to be the biggest danger to democracy (as I understand it) on deeper analysis? For a Government may smile and smile and yet be a villain—and Mrs Gandhi's Government is not even smiling now: it is snarling.

Suresh Varma  
 Lucknow

## Planners

In 'Two Very Important Personages', (October 19), Mr Arun Majumdar states—"The Bombay plan of 1944 containing the views of P. Thakurdas, Tata, Birla, Shri Ram etc. could utter not a single word against feudalism while it advocated "full freedom in economic matters" from foreign rule.' Commenting on 'the Bombay Plan' on the other hand, Nehru once observed that though the plan 'is still not complete and there are many lacunae in it', coming from the big industrialists, the plan was 'welcome', as 'Revolutionary changes are inherent in the plan'. He agreed with the planners, that, 'Also, agrarian reform is a fundamental prerequisite.' (**Discovery of India**).

The plan did 'utter' a few words 'against feudalism' actually. In the sphere of agriculture, while it mainly relied on technological improvements for raising production, the plan also sug-

gested the gradual abolition of landlordism with compensation and co-operative farming. The first path was 'technological improvement'—which can be identified with what Lenin called the 'American Path', whereas the second one could be termed 'institutional reform' which had been characterised by Lenin as the 'Prussian Path' (Junker landlord farming). Doubtless, both the paths advocated by the Bombay Plan, were 'capitalist' paths indeed. On paper the 'Bombay Planners' were so much in favour of co-operative farming (another sure sign of the 'capitalist' path), that they had suggested the following course:—

'...in order that co-operative farming should come into vogue as early as possible, some measure of compulsion appears desirable'. (A Brief Memorandum... Part I, p. 30). (Emphasis mine).

Perhaps, Mr Majumdar is not conversant with the famous dictum of Mao—'No investigation. No right to speak'!

Sankar Deb  
Calcutta

### Tragedy & Farce

Mr Majumdar has informed us that 'an eminent Indian economist' believes that 'all facts and personages of great importance in history' may occur more often than twice and also that they occur 'First as farce, then as a tragedy'. In this connection, Mr Majumdar has commented in jest that such a believer is 'more Hegelian than Hegel himself'. Thus it follows that according to Mr Majumdar, the remark ('First as... then as...') was also made by no other than Hegel himself. However, in Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, we find—'Hegel remarks somewhere that all the facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.' (Emphasis mine). It is clear that the remark was made by Marx and not by Hegel.

Tarun Sengupta  
Calcutta

### Russian Economy

The writer of 'China And the CPM' (August 3) has tried to prove that the socialist economy of the Soviet Union has degenerated into capitalism. The writer does not produce any evidence. Of course, he says: "The Soviet bourgeoisie does exploit the peasants and workers at home. The high standard of living of the elite was made possible by the low standard of the masses, as under capitalism... Material incentives and competition disguised as economic reforms lead enterprises to compete with each other and workers are alienated from each other." But dear Mr Editor, are not these arguments superficial in character? Will you please supply me with brief particulars about at least five monopoly houses in the Soviet Union?

Animesh Roy  
Calcutta

### Decline

Arjun Bandyopadhyay (October 12, 1974) in spite of being a regular reader, an admirer of *Now* and *Frontier*, has failed to realise the significant contributions the latter continues to make towards an understanding of revolutionary politics. In the turbid atmosphere of the Indian press *Frontier* is still a beacon of light and hope.

By praising *Padatik* (which is no doubt one of the best political films made in India) and by publishing CPI(ML) documents, *Frontier*, far from degenerating has given rise to healthy debate. For most of the people who are interested in the goings on within the various CPI(ML) groups, *Frontier* is the only available journal providing information and insight. Bandyopadhyay's letter shows not only his middle-class mentality which he is honest enough to admit, but also his incapacity to encounter and overcome it. Many people belonging to the middle class, including this writer, have not only fought with their selves but have succeeded to a great extent in shedding their rusted mentality and replacing it by a progressive scientific world outlook. The credit for this transformation is also shared by *Frontier*. For a lot of us here it

is the only bold, frank and radical journal in English. More and more people in Bombay are turning to it.

Madhosh Bilgrami  
Bombay

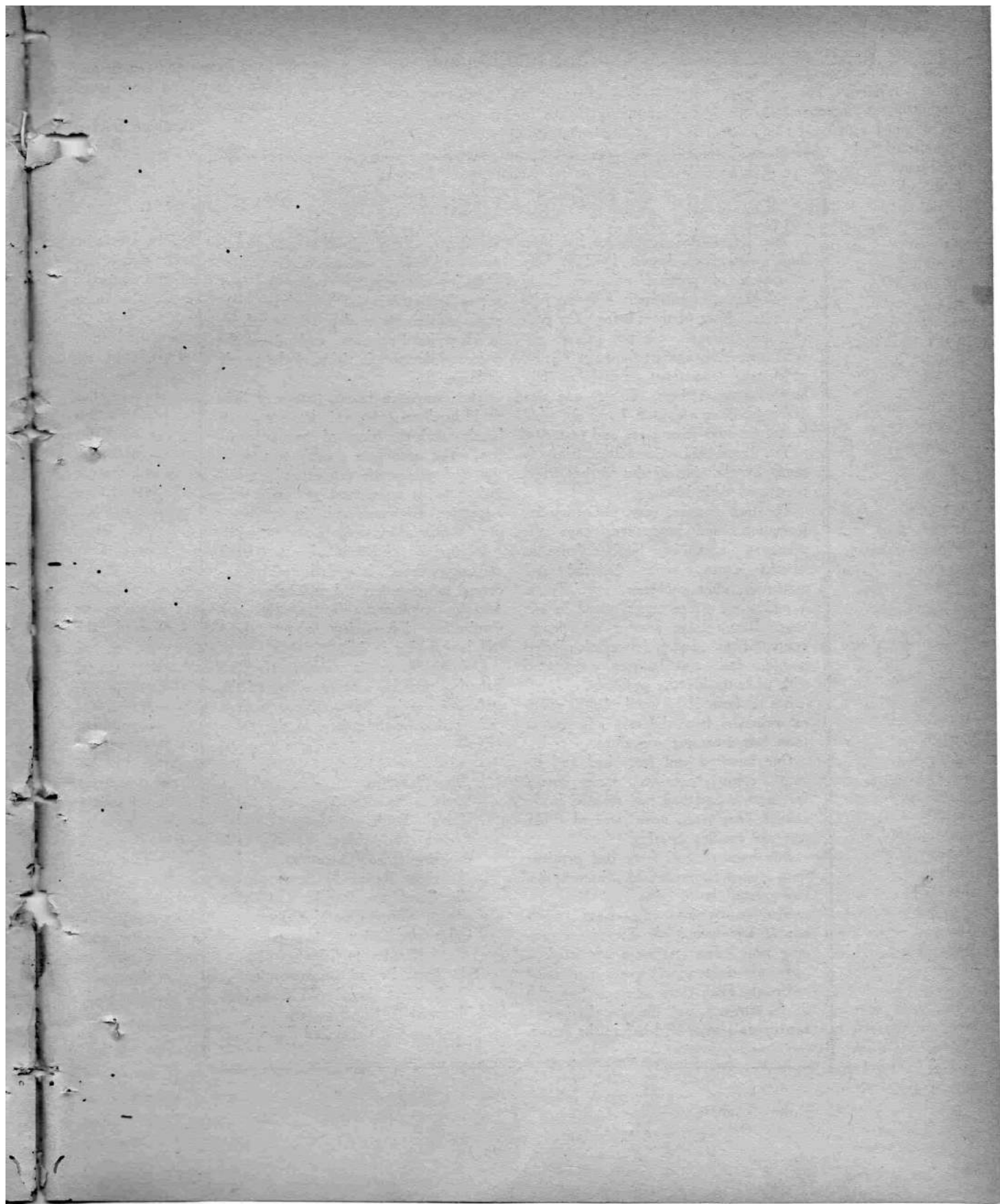
### PFLP Decision

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine declares the decision to suspend its membership of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

We do so as not to shoulder responsibility for the historical deviation followed by the leadership of the PLO. We have a deep and strong conviction that the settlement being prepared now cannot be but a liquidationist imperialist one that will lead to the expansion of U.S. influence in the area and concede the existence of "Israel" with future guarantees of its security and stability. We are convinced also, that for some time now, there have been serious efforts to drag the PLO to become a part of this liquidationist imperialist settlement. This also aims to give a cover to the capitulationist stands of some of the Arab regimes. It is apparent for us that the PLO leadership agrees to be part of this settlement, and even struggles so as not to miss on such a role.

The PFLP has no choice but to firmly face these deviations so that our masses and the revolutionary forces will be able to expose all these deceptions in order that a historical force will emerge from our masses. This will guarantee the continuation of the revolution until the liberation of Haifa, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Safad, Gaza, Nablus and every inch of our Palestinian land... until the racist zionist, fascist entity is destroyed...—and until the revolutionary regimes tied with imperialism, such as Jordan and others, are also destroyed, and until the Arab land is liberated from all imperialist influence and exploitation; even if this requires that our nation has to struggle for tens of years and sacrifice for it millions of martyrs.

The Popular Front for the  
Liberation of Palestine



## 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 detenues 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.