

frontier

Vol. 7: No. 44

MARCH 1, 1975

PRICE: 50 PAISE

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Editor : Samar Sen

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

WHEN Mr Kissinger admitted that India was the dominant power in South Asia, the satisfaction in New Delhi was unbounded. There is indeed some basis for this dominant power theory. The old Pakistan is gone, with the manipulated emergence of Bangladesh. Though a mendicant country, India has exploded a nuclear device; she has also reduced Sikkim to the status of an Associate State. Her armoury and ambitions are growing. There is some trouble with the Nagas and Mizos, and the mood of the Kashmiris is still an uncertain factor. But Pakistan is having much greater instability in Baluchistan and the NWFP, with Afghanistan prodding on the Pakhtoons. All in all, the situation is rather promising for India, despite the abysmal economic situation.

But, then, Mr Bhutto has been to the USA and Mr Ford has decided to lift the arms embargo on Pakistan and India imposed ten years ago. The heavens seem to be falling and the dominant power in South Asia is peeved like anything. New Delhi seems to think that it is the business of both Washington and Moscow to maintain its dominance: there should be no arms race on this subcontinent, which means that the biggest country must be allowed to sprint ahead while the weaker ones must be made to limp behind.

New Delhi should not be so diffident. India is a big country whose resources in manpower, technology and cunning Pakistan is hardly able to match. There is every reason, on the other hand, for Pakistan to feel diffident after the events of December 1971, the Rajasthan blast of last May, the exercise in Sikkim and the growing trouble in Baluchistan and the NWFP. The fear of further disintegration in almost instinctive now in Pakistan. There is little logic in India herself securing arms from all quarters but creating a big fuss over a weakened neighbour getting arms from abroad.

Perhaps the reason for the intense uneasiness lies not in Pakistan but in international alignments. The great shadow is China. Her relations with Pakistan are friendly, and strengthening Pakistan in a way helps Peking. And whatever be our public posture towards China, New Delhi has not forgotten 1962. It would be naive to think that our defence budget which grows every year is based on calculations of what Pakistan might or might not do or that it is a defensive budget. We have scores to settle with Peking, like the Russians. "We'll teach them a lesson next time" is how top Indian army officers brag referring to China. India and the Soviet Union are the two countries with outstanding border problems with China. An Indian-built satellite to be

propelled by a Russian rocket is symbolical in more than one sense.

The USA has her own dirty, oily motives in renewing arms supply to Pakistan. She is preparing for some kind of action against the Arab oil-producers if they misbehave again, and a grateful Bhutto might provide her

port facilities. But to pretend that Russian arms for India are all for peace while U.S. arms for Pakistan are different, that Marshal Grechflo is a god and Mr Schlesinger is a swine, is ridiculous. Both the super-powers, the arms peddlars, make money and mean mischief. We are their agents.

Made To Order

The order was clear: there must not be any more rise in fares as the electorate does not like it. If such a move proves to be absolutely unavoidable to prop up the tottering railway finance, the budget at least should not be made an occasion to break the unpalatable news. The budget must show the Government's concern for the common man. Equally important, it must demonstrate in concrete terms the Government's widely publicised interest in maintaining price stability. As and when it becomes essential to raise more revenue as it would be sooner rather than later, the blame can always be put at the doors of the employees saying that they have "refused" to forgo their dearness allowance rise and such other "petty" dues. All this amounted to a rather other order. And it must have been a tough job for the backroom boys in the Government to carry it out. But they have done it, and done it remarkably well. With some only "marginal" changes in the freight rates for foodgrains, manganese ore and iron ore, they have performed this seemingly impossible thing of neatly window-dressing the railway's crumbling financial position and to draw up, of all things, a surplus budget. Even by the present standard of economic hypocrisy, this has been a great achievement.

The holes in the accounting are however too numerous to need detailed elaboration. But one of them at least is a little more important than the others and thus merits elucidation. What the Railway Ministry has now done is to drastically prune its development outlays. This has been used as a major cost-saving device. Except for some projects which have already been too much publicised, like the Calcutta underground

railway programme, virtually all other major schemes have been shelved. There has been precious little mention in Mr Kamalapati Tripathi's speech of schemes for expanding the railway's capacity either for passengers or for goods. A surplus budget at this juncture and large development outlays would have been incompatible, and the railways obviously didn't feel any compunction when it decided to sacrifice, conveniently, its own development and the larger economic interest at the altar of political expediency. A slowdown in railways' development outlay can mean a lot for the economy, already perilously perched on the brink of a major disaster. But who cares? With the elections not very far off, the records must be kept straight. There will always be time later on for garibi hatao, socialism, concern for the masses and such other shibboleths. Now is the time to prove that the Government is with you—dear voter. But the voter will have to pay more for his food.

Barking at Peking

A correspondent writes:

At a time when people in this country want normalisation of relations with China, the Communist Party of India has stepped up a campaign against the CPC and the Chinese Government. The CPI's hostility to People's China and its communist leadership dates back even to those days when Sino-Soviet relations appeared almost normal to the outside world. The right wing of the undivided Communist Party of India came all out against China on the India-China border question. They were, as hysterical as, if not more than, the Congress, Jan Sangh, Swatantra and other anti-China political parties and groups

in the country. This hostility to China has become chronic and absurd. On the one hand the CPI welcomes normalisation of relations between the Soviet Union and imperialist powers which it calls a "historical change from the cold war to detente and growing consolidation of the principles of peaceful co-existence of States with different social systems". On the other hand, it calls the very same detente, when it is between the U.S. and China, "the Nixon Mao rapprochement of 1972 (since which) Maoist China has come out as active collaborator with U.S. imperialism in our region".

In a recent article in *New Age*, the CPI's General Secretary, Mr Rajeswara Rao, states that "Maoist China has consistently rejected every offer made by India for normalisation of relations with the People's Republic of China". It is well known that on several occasions during the continuing conflict the Chinese leaders showed their readiness to settle the problem on a give-and-take basis: it was the chauvinism of a section of the Indian leadership which prevented a settlement. The Indian leaders are so blind to realities (or are they?) that they have thrown away every opportunity that came their way to settle the India-China problem in an honourable way. The CPI which advocates the Russian proposal for an Asian Collective Security Treaty saying that this should be open to all Asian countries including China is still deliberately active in anti-China propaganda. A collective security treaty would help only if the Soviet Union and China could collaborate in working out such a treaty. Theoretically speaking, if the proposal for such a treaty came jointly from them and if they agreed to work together to eliminate all traces of imperialist domination from the signatory countries, the treaty could be a powerful instrument. That is not how the proposal for the treaty came: China rejected it, saying that it is part of the Russian scheme of encircling it. And yet, the CPI leadership is so patronising towards China as to concede that the treaty is open to all Asian States, including China. One is surprised to hear that such a collective security treaty "alone can open up in full measure vistas of ever-growing cooperation among

the Asian countries for the well being of their peoples". Is it necessary for India to join the proposed treaty to open a dialogue with China by, say, unilaterally sending an ambassador to that country, or taking other initiatives to bring normality between the two countries? India, after all, was the first to withdraw her ambassador from Peking. Many smaller initiatives for normalisation of relations with China have been suggested by people who are familiar with the problem. Can't the CPI leadership ask the Government of India to take these smaller steps by way of preparing for that Asian collective security which, according to them, is the panacea for all the ills from which the peoples of this region are suffering? But, would their Russian mentors like better relations between India and China?

Cricket and Politics

A correspondent writes:

The greatest asset of imperialism and its local agents in this country is the profoundly reactionary cultural superstructure holding back the crucial advance of the contradictions at the base. Never was there such a yawning gulf between the people's material condition and their "cultural consciousness"—of which the latest manifestation (in an economic and moral vacuum) is the unprecedented cricket craze.

The vast middle class strata down to the most wretched levels nearly went crazy over the India-West Indies test series—as though everything they valued and lived for depended on the outcome of these matches. Cricket, as its very look indicates, is a game of reactionary origin, a leisurely, lordly, sumptuous affair, a time-wasting parasitic luxury which is in no way connected with social progress (as so many other popular games are) and in every way acts as an opiate on the consciousness of the oppressed masses. Cricket has been shunned by all countries (and by all international athletic organisations) except a few British colonies and semi-colonies where the curious feu-

dal-imperialist combine so typical of British reactionary culture still holds sway. And the poorest and craziest of these is India, lately the brightest jewel in the British crown.

The strongest of all tragedies—a delicious comedy to the enemies of the people—is that vast numbers of the downtrodden Indian petty bourgeoisie (including the large bourgeoisified strata of the proletariat) in a country where seventy per cent., of the people struggle for bare existence, where mass deaths due to starvation, exposure and medieval epidemics, the annual loss of eyesight by lakhs of famished children and the most merciless trambling of the people's liberties are the order of the day, should seek their beatitude in a few cricket test matches. Strange that our pathetically degenerate petty bourgeois (who used to be so revolutionary-minded a few years ago) including the most glaringly uncivic and unpatriotic sections of the people fighting their neighbours for the basest of gains should find their souls heaving with the patriotic impulse at the prospect of a dozen odd pampered Indian parasites scoring a win over their West Indian counterparts! That the consciousness of the vast national calamity darkening the horizon should be obscured by the dust-clouds of the cricket craze!

As for the great West Indian cricketers themselves, their brightest specimen, the darling Sobers, a person of Negro descent, declared himself "bowled over" on being "knighted" by the British whose shins had once carried lakhs of Sobers' African ancestors like caged animals for slave labour on the American cotton plantations, and who are still draining the life-blood of the West Indian people. How absolutely blessed our own cricketing stars would have been if they had been likewise knighted! But alas, such crude forms of *bakshish* are not permitted under the neocolonial system.

As we have said, the reactionary cultural superstructure in India is formidable, and vast sections of the poor are tragically under its seductive influence. And of all the diverse forms of the cultural opium administered—the chauvinistic hysteria, the drinking and sex-

hunting habits, the *Kali* and *Sani*-worshipping mania, the cinema, AIR and the brand-new television, the State-run gambling organisations, the reactionary periodicals and the pornographic magazines—cricket is probably the most dangerous since it can attract vast numbers of relatively clean-minded people including Naxalites who would shun most of the other patently dirtier forms of enjoyment. It is primarily in its capacity to beguile the innocent, to lure them further away from a sense of reality, to mess up their social and class consciousness that the special role of cricket lies. And that is exactly why this big-cricket craze is being so carefully fostered by the Establishment through such a massive concentration of its propaganda media.

Bangladesh

New Wave of Repression

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

Dacca: The proclamation of the State of Emergency (on December 28 last) by the Awami League Government came at a moment when tensions were mounting and when armed struggle was flaring up in various parts of the country.

Thus, this step by Mujib's Government did have an immediate political significance. Indeed, the Sheikh, his ruling party, and their allied security services had long since buried their democratic image and the idea that they are out to respect fundamental human rights, but this Proclamation was more than a formalisation of the existing situation. The formal suspension of civil rights and the concentration of practically absolute power in the hands of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was followed by a substantial offensive against the left opposition in the country and against the population in general. The arrest and murder of Sikdar, and the sudden offensive against slum-dwellers and against the helpless 'shelterless people' (*bostuhara*) in Dacca show that Mujib and his machinery of repression (in particular the *Rakkhi Bahini* and various

secret police organisations, like the 'Prime Minister's Vigilance Group' and the 'Special Branch') have shed off all pretensions of tolerance.

Only three days after the proclamation of the State of Emergency (on January 1, 1975), a police party from a house in Chittagong port arrested Siraj Sikdar, the leader of the East Bengal Proletarian Party (EBPP). His arrest and subsequent death were announced in a press release from Dacca on January 3. According to this report, Sikdar had made a 'confessional statement', agreed to point out the hide-outs of his party, but had tried to escape when taken to these hide-outs and killed while trying to escape.

Both the details of the announcement and the time of its publishing left room for many doubts. Observers in Dacca reacted with scepticism, arguing that the statement was false. After all the Government of Bangladesh at this moment of its crumbling to power had an interest in creating confusion and uncertainty amongst leftist parties and revolutionary cadres. But when next day pictures of Sikdar's dead body appeared in Dacca newspapers, little doubt was left regarding the fate of this hero of armed struggle.

On the other hand, there is hardly any doubt that the newspaper story of his 'confession' and attempted 'escape' is fake. It is almost certain that Sikdar refused to extend any cooperation to Mujib's dogs of terror (the set police posses, and was tortured to death. Apparently, Mujibur Rahman did not hesitate to have him killed.

Thus, a hot winter in the history of Bangladesh passed. Sikdar was killed at a moment when he was becoming increasingly popular. Since December 16 people's dislike of his terrorist methods was giving way more and more to approval of his unswerving line of armed struggle and violence against the oppressive regime of Mujibur Rahman. On the 'Day of Victory' Sikdar's East Bengal Proletarian Party had called for a hartal which turned out to be remarkably successful in rural Bangladesh. Most of the underground parties, like the 'traditional' Marxist-Leninist factions of Motin-Alauddin, Toaha, and

Abdul Haq, had given their support to this hartal. The mood of the people was becoming increasingly militant; as can be gauged from a number of events.

For example, on December 25 at least three important members of the Awami League (among others the MP of Kushtia, Kibria) were killed while they were praying in mosques. The attitude of the people in these areas in which the events took place shows that, rather than being angry at this rough disturbance of the holy prayers, they silently approved of the execution of 'enemies of the people'!

Furthermore, the armed actions by or under the cover of Abdul Haq's East Pakistan Communist Party in the district of Kushtia and in various parts of north Bangladesh were becoming more frequent. In the district of Barisal there were cases of 'spontaneous rebellion' by people who often do not understand Sikdar's political line, but who nevertheless considered him the true representative of the 'unavoidable' armed struggle against the rule of merchants and political touts connected with the Awami League. And when the State of Emergency was announced, cadres of Sikdar's EBPP were quick to challenge this tightening of repression through raids on police outposts and through attacks on the forces of the Rakkhi Bahini.

Heavy Blow

What will happen to Sikdar's party and to the revolutionary struggle, after his death? Undoubtedly, in the short run Mujib has dealt a heavy blow at the underground opposition. Many Bengalis mourned the loss of this rebel. And cadres who looked with blind admiration up to his personal leadership are demoralised. Many opponents within the proletarian movement who disapproved of his terrorist tactics and his tendency towards sectarianism, nevertheless admit that he has made a significant contribution to the revolutionary struggle in Bangladesh. Thus, whatever turn that struggle may take, Sikdar has advanced the movement.

On the other hand, his historical role has been fulfilled. In the evolution of the proletarian movement, he had become an obstacle. At present the need of the proletarian

moment is for a serious mass line and for maximum unity amongst Marxist-Leninist groups. Here, 'Sikdar's terrorist tendencies and his tactics of blackmailing were an obstacle. 'No', maybe his party comrades will reconsider some of the tactics of their leader, and after a temporary vacuum a correct political line and a unified revolutionary leadership may emerge. In the end Mujib's cruelty may turn out to be counter-productive.

For the time being, however, the State of Emergency will strengthen the repression by Mujib's police apparatus. As a consequence of the Emergency rules anybody can be arrested and detained without any court protection. The so-called 'lawful authorities' can enter and reach any place "suspected of being used for purposes prejudicial to the security or public safety or interest of Bangladesh". Political parties and groupings can be prohibited, and the Government can prevent the circulation of any newspaper. Censorship has already been instituted and demonstrations and strikes have been prohibited by decree.

The most conspicuous consequence of the State of Emergency till now has been the large-scale offensive against illegal settlements on government property in Dacca. The action does not touch the occupation of buildings and stone-houses (of former collaborators) by the nouveau-riche Awami Leaguers. The victims of this clean-the-city-drive are the thousands of 'shelterless' who had been encouraged by the 'Father of the Nation' himself in 1972 to make use of empty spaces in the city area. Forced by police bamboo sticks and by the threat of guns of the Rakkhi Bahini, everywhere in the city whole quarters of bamboo-shelters, tea stores and little workshops are being broken down. With brutal violence masses of pauperised slum-dwellers and lumpen-proletariat are driven out of the city without any prospect of work elsewhere, and without clarification of this sudden expulsion. Impoverished people who had come to Dacca as a consequence of the misrule by this Government are leaving for an uncertain destiny—according to some for certain death. It is like the migration of a nation, involving at least one hundred

thousand people.

Mujib's rage against the militant opposition in the country may have killed the symbol of armed struggle. But resistance will continue. In Dacca things look quiet, for newspapers cannot publish reports about clashes and violent fighting outside the capital. That the Government is very busy countering armed resistance is indicated among other things, by the fact that Migs of the Bangladesh Air Force regularly cross the air above the capital. From Chittagong and elsewhere information is coming about battles between government forces

and guerilla units. In particular the Chittagong Hill Tracts continue to provide a spectre of full-scale war. According to observers events there are a follow-up of the action of the Indian Army against the Mizos in 1972. This time the opposing forces on both sides are more varied. Mujib's hated Rakkhi Bahini, the BDR (Bangladesh Rifles), and the Bangladesh army are entangled in an armed confrontation with leftist guerillas and rebellious national minority groups. A veiled civil war.

* This article was written before Mujib became President.

fruits are shared collectively by the masses, have led to crisis conditions and may be utilised by hostile elements within as well as outside.

It is against this perspective that the efforts of Nepal's leadership and of the rising left forces should be viewed. Indeed the latter are now on the anvil of history, facing antagonistic attacks from the right conservatives as well as from pseudo-progressives. Can they shape the present system into a form to meet the challenge?

What is and what should be India's Nepal policy? Not only is Nepal geographically the most contiguous of all neighbouring States, its people are, besides, the closest to Indians, politically, economically, culturally and even ethnically. These facts of history are well known and have been recognised by many in India.

However, the other fact—a crucial one at that—is that Indians generally are not aware of the real implications of the Government of India's approach to and policy regarding Nepal. It hardly helps if information about Nepal is limited to pet obsessions like the one about partyless panchayati system—that it is not the reflection of people's desire; or the other of a ruling elite opportunistically clinging to the monarchy to satisfy its vested interests and to project an anti-Indian populist stance for diverting people's attention from unsolved internal problems. From such premises grow New Delhi's policy formulations. The recent phase of strain in relations is the result of an assessment at the highest level that some 'development' within Nepal could wipe out the power-base of the ruling elite in Nepal, paving the way to re-appearance of a parliamentary party-led system of governance and situations. This assessment leads to political pressure for helping to power an entrenched Nepalese bourgeoisie ostensibly national but in reality tagged to the Indian ruling class by a thousand and one commercial, economic and political stakes.

Piqued by anti-Indian demonstrations over Sikkim, New Delhi has started a campaign that Nepal is truculent and in-

New Delhi and Nepal

R. P. MULLICK

WHAT happened on December 15 last when the Nepal Army Headquarters was burnt down within a brief half-an-hour may not be a mystery after all. Last year Kathmandu's most magnificent building, the Sinha Durbar, (Central Secretariat) was the victim of a fire that did not look like the result of mere accident. Last year, increased subversive activities by the feudal-bourgeois literati of Nepal, many of whose leaders have found sanctuary in this country and political support from their class confreres, added a new dimension to the possibility of internal rebellion, at a few places at least selectively chosen from the Terai area. Clashes have already occurred leading to the death of 16 men at Okhaldunga, including some leading members of the Nepal Congress leadership; besides a bomb was thrown at a site near Pokhara where King Birendra was presumed to have been present at the time. These events fall into one composite picture, the embryonic plan of those elements who are out to strike now to bring about an enforced change in the Nepalese Panchayati System. The King's latest step to submit the system to review by a commission in an open manner is a sequel to the series of incidents that began with Nepalese protests against the change

in Sikkim's political status in which India was involved as the prime mover. New Delhi's reassessment of its Nepal policy started from this focal point.

The following facts stand out: 1) conscious sections of the Nepalese intelligentsia fear that the much too obvious economic influence that India wields may turn into an instrument of political pressurisation. ii) After the virtual assimilation of Sikkim within the political system of India, and the slow erosion of Bhutan's independence (it has in reality no say in the formation of any foreign-policy options and despite its membership of the U.N. is but a protegee of India), New Delhi's newly assertive power-wielders cannot suffer in Nepal the existence of either a buffer State, or a tranquillising link of power-balance between itself and Peking; it must have a regime in Kathmandu that would be more friendly to it than to China, and by implication less sovereign than it is now. (iii) The present economic backwardness and massive poverty in Nepal, the very limited achievement of the scheme for devolution of power to the grass-roots levels of society, also the near-failure of the allied scheme of a village-oriented, decentralised economy where the incentive for development generates from the lowest strata and the

transigent, that Nepal is not even cooperating in finishing projects like the Kosi Canal and Karnali hydel power-production. It is forgotten that the Kosi irrigation project is likely to benefit India mainly and Nepal only incidentally, and that the yet-untapped immense power-potential in north-west Nepal is a priceless resource that Nepal can ill afford to sell away to the power-hungry industrial entrepreneurs and kulak farmers of India at dirt-cheap rates. Nevertheless, the rising, super-suffused nationalistic leadership in New Delhi is pleased to think that all sub-Himalayan peoples on India's northern frontier, and their distinctly different ethnic-cultural groups are only too anxious to merge their identity with India's national stream. Strangely enough, even radical political thinkers in India have been misled, through lack of information, about the realities and force of people's ethos and thus lend unconscious support to the end of traditional neo-imperialist designs. The people of India, specially those belonging to the working classes, in urban and rural areas, should take effective steps to establish a healthy and comprehensive rapport with the Nepalese, their just urges and aspirations and also reciprocate in their desire to achieve an international poise, based on absolute equality of relations with both China and India.

The Nepalese Prime Minister recently visited New Delhi to urge the latter to reformulate its Nepal policy. It appears that Nepal has had the pinch of what appears to be the first phase of economic war, the stopping of supply of petrol, diesel and other vital petrochemicals. There is disconcerting talk that the scope of this tightening of economic screws may reach out to essential consumer-commodities like fertiliser, cloth and salt. It is perhaps not widely known that the quantum and total value of those Indian exports which directly benefit Nepal's economy and help its growth have been falling over the past twelve years or so, that is, since the time Nepal gave up "democracy" and went in for a partyless, panchayati system. The trade and transit pact which expired in 1970 was followed by illiberal bargaining and political pressures.

Constitution of the People's Republic of China:

KARIM ESSACK

THE first Soviet Constitution bore witness to the fact that mankind was on the threshold of a new era, for the working class had entered the historical stage by seizing state power from the exploiting classes in Russia. The modern working class waging a relentless struggle for over a century in which they suffered many cruel defeats were led to victory by the Bolsheviks in the eventful month of October 1917. Before that many a heroic son and daughter of the working class in the 1848 revolution, in the Paris Commune of 1871 and the 1905 uprising in Russia had laid down his or her life.

The first Soviet Constitution bearing the unmistakable stamp of the Fathers of modern socialism, Marx and Engels, as well as the experience of the Bolshevik Party mean that for the persecuted and hunted worker there was now a home—the USSR which encompassed one-sixth of the globe.

The Constitution adopted on January 17, 1975 by the Fourth National Congress of the Peoples' Republic of China was the reaffirmation of the fundamental principles laid down by the first Soviet Constitution as well as a continuation of and a development from it. Thus Article I of the General Principles states clearly and simply. "The Peoples Republic of China is a socialist State of the dictatorship of the proletariat led by the working class and based on the alliance of the workers and peasants".

It is Article 28 of the Constitution which restores to the working class its most powerful weapon of struggle next to the party—namely the right to strike. The right to strike was a criminal offence under feudal law. After decades of struggle in Europe, the workers won this right in the nineteenth century. It is this weapon which the workers used not only to win concessions for themselves but also to conquer power from the bourgeoisie. With the overthrow of the

capitalist system, this right was gone, for how could one strike against one's own workers' State and against one's own nationalised enterprises? Chang Chun-Chiao who read the report on this part of the revision of the Constitution said that the move came from Mao himself as "In accordance with Chairman Mao's proposal the specification that citizens enjoy the freedom to strike has been added to Article 2 of the draft".

The basic question is why should the working class be accorded the right to strike against their own socialist State and against their own nationalised enterprises? The answer is that Mao Tse tung has grasped the supreme truth that socialist society covers a long historic period. In this period not only will there be classes, but also class contradictions. And if the contradictions pose the danger of becoming antagonistic when the bourgeoisie, having wormed their way, want to seize state power, then there is no alternative but to continue with the class struggle. The truth then from the Chinese experience is that the class struggle continues between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in this entire historical period. The bourgeois will not be a fat man with a bulging belly smoking a fat cigar because all the factories and other means of production have been nationalised. But he is found in the socialist State sector, in the socialised enterprises, in the collective farms and in the entire superstructure including the party and the army. He betrays himself in his working style and his attitude to workers and above all in his ideology.

The Cultural Revolution showed how and where the bourgeoisie had wormed itself into. It was the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie that made restoration of capitalism in China even more difficult.

The bourgeoisie has to be fought; the bourgeoisie has to be suppressed. For

the working class to exercise its role of dictatorship it is not enough for it to have its vanguard party. Experience had shown that it is precisely in this party that the bourgeoisie had wormed its way and occupied leading positions. Hence it is necessary for the working class to have its weapon restored to it—the weapon of the strike.

Those familiar with recent Chinese history know that its working class, matured in the period of socialist construction and tempered in the Proletarian Cultural Revolution, is politically conscious. It will not use the strike weapon lightly and certainly not for a few yuan more here or there. During the Cultural Revolution the bourgeoisie tried to incite the workers to come out on strike for economic demands but failed. The strike weapon thus will be used as a political weapon against the bourgeoisie in order to maintain and reinforce the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The bourgeoisie through their media have used the term 'dictatorship of the proletariat' to strike terror in the minds of certain intellectuals. They have conjured up pictures of absolute authoritarian rule, concentration camps, firing squads and the hangman's noose. But Articles 12, 13 and 14 show that there are two sides, dictatorship over the bourgeoisie and democracy for the workers, peasants and soldiers. Thus Article 14 says that "the State deprives the landlords, rich peasants, reactionary capitalists and other bad elements of political rights for specified periods of time. . . . provide them with the opportunity to earn a living. . . . supporting themselves by their own labour".

But Article 12 shows that the dictatorship has to also be an ideological one, for the proletariat must exercise dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in the superstructure, including all spheres of culture.

Democracy for the people is enshrined in Articles 13 and 28. In the latter it states: "Citizens enjoy freedom of speech, correspondence, the press, the assembly, association, procession, demonstration, freedom to strike, and enjoy freedom to believe in religion and freedom not to believe in religion and to propagate atheism". In Article 13

it says: "Speaking out freely, airing views fully, holding great debates and writing big character posters are new forms of carrying on socialist revolution created by the masses of the people. The State shall ensure to the masses the right to use these forms".

Section 27 accords to the workers and peasants another right against their own leaders if necessary. Thus it says: "Citizens have a right to lodge to the organs of the State at any level written or oral complaints of transgression of law or neglect of duty on the part of any person working in an organ of State. No one shall attempt to hinder or obstruct the making of such complaints or retaliate".

It is this democracy for the people, carried now into law from the practice of the proletarian revolution that must "lead to personal ease of mind and liveliness" that must promote unity and discipline.

Oppressive and exploitative societies have been known for persecution of their minority nationalities. They have often been used as scapegoats to divert and spill the hatred of the masses against their exploiters on these defenceless and often rightless people. The chauvinism, and evil heritage of feudalism and capitalism, has been carried through into socialist societies. Lenin before his death launched an attack against Big Russian chauvinism which had infected some leading Bolsheviks. Chauvinism is the ideology of the bourgeoisie and Article 4 in combating this states. "All nationalities are equal. Big nationality chauvinism and local nationality chauvinism must be combated. All the nationalities have the right to use their own spoken and written languages".

This together with the rights of women, the revolutionaries will have to uphold even if it meant going against the stream.

The Fourth Congress was representative of the entire people, including representatives from the overseas Chinese and from Taiwan. The 2864 deputies represented not only industrial workers, peasants, army men and revolutionary intellectuals but also minority nationalities. Women represented 22% of the

delegates. But in accordance with Article I the decisive force were the worker, peasant and soldier deputies. Together they accounted for 72% of the total. The working class through its alliance with the peasantry does not exercise theoretical but actual power in the highest legislative body of the land.

Foreign Affairs

The preamble states that in international affairs China will uphold the proletarian internationalist line and hence will strengthen unity with socialist countries and all oppressed peoples and oppressed nations. This will mean that there will be no change in China's international duty towards liberation movements engaged in armed struggle against colonialism.

Chang Chiu Chiao said: "Like the morning sun, our socialist system is very young. But it is very rich in experience. It has faced and tried to solve the problems of bridging the gap between mental and physical labour and that of the countryside and the towns. It has grappled and found an answer as to how to train the youth to be worthy successors when the present generation is no more. They have not only participated in the cultural revolution in their millions but also in their millions they have gone into the countryside and linked themselves up with the peasant masses".

Marx and Engels limited by their time could only delineate in broad outline the transitional, and the final phase of communism. The first which China is in, is characterised by the slogan— "To each according to his ability to each according to his work". The final one will be "to each according to his ability to each according to his needs". Linen laid down the broad strategy of now to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is Mao who has uncovered the basic law operating in socialist society—that of the existence of classes, class contradictions both antagonistic and non-antagonistic. The solution of the former lies in class struggle and persistence in revolution.

For Frontier contact
POPULAR BOOK STALL,
Near Bank of India,

An Unusual Diplomat

A MOMENT IN TIME

By Apa Aant

Orient Longman Ltd. Rs. 40

INDIA is certainly not the only country in the world to boast of a long tradition of mysticism. There are others, mostly underdeveloped, to share this honour. But no other country can claim to have achieved successfully such a symbolic growth of ultra-modern politicking and traditional mysticism as one finds in India. Here politics means an experiment with the Truth, and even a diplomat's proverbially Machiavellian job is a spiritual quest for the ultimate meaning of Life.

Apa Pant, formerly High Commissioner for India in London, has sincerely tried in *A Moment in Time* to bring home to us this uniqueness of Indian politics as embodied in his career. His life as a son of the magnanimous Raja of the princely State Aund is a message for those who are still lamenting the loss of privy purses, and his career as an ambassador is a lesson for his colleagues in what is best in Indian politics and religion. No doubt Padmashri Pant's autobiography will touch the right chord in the hearts of many patriots in India, the most advanced country in the world in spiritual terms.

He has dedicated his book to the proud and poor people of the Aundh villages, who for the first thirty years of my life, toiled, sweated, went without food, to tolerate and provide my houses, elephant, cars, gliders, travels, play and study abroad.' It shows that Apa Saheb, unlike the Rajas of other Princely States, has his heart in the right place. The first few chapters of his book relate how he tried to pay the debt he owed to his subjects by setting up a democratic government in Aund at a time when democracy in other parts of British India was only a dream. Noble must be the heart of the democrat who still suffers from a sense of guilt life this: 'My annual ex-

penses at Oxford could have meant one year's food, clothing, shelter, education for children, for two hundred Aund families.'

The most valuable part of the book, undoubtedly is that which recounts his experience of the democratic experiment in Aund, a subject of great historical importance. It is a pity that there is as yet no book about the Aund 'experiment'. Looking back Mr Pant now sees the scheme for the Federation of Deccan States and his initial resistance against the merger of Aund with the Indian Union as an idealistic blunder, but his realisation is still tinged with a melancholy nostalgia. A little more frankness on this subject would have perhaps brought us nearer the 'Truth', the avowed aim of his diplomatic career.

In fact, *A Moment in Time* is Apa Pant's spiritual autobiography tracing the growth of a diplomat's mind toward a real awareness of the 'Eternal Now', his diplomatic missions being covert spiritual adventures. Whatever he happens to be, Tibet, Egypt or Indonesia, he would rather go on gleaning spiritual truths than pry into the corridors of power.

If he remembers a political figure like Sukarno it is more for his interest in Hindu philosophy than for his politics. If he writes about the Dalai Lama, it is because he is the greatest authority on Nirvana. Great personalities, like the Mahatma, Nehru, the Raja of Aund and Indira Gandhi as Mr Pant would have us believe, have their 'curas', 'vibrations' and 'radiations'. While massaging the Mahatma's 'soft, supple' body, he felt so 'giddy' under the impact of his powerful radiations, 'as if I had been whirling at a mad speed on a roundabout'. The best part of Mr Pant's autobiography is however concerned with the occult powers of monks and sooth-sayers in Tibet Sikkim, Bhutan, and Indonesia. The most interesting example is probably the story of a Tibetan

lama stopping the rain with his rituals. Once Nehru on his journey to Tibet was caught in the rain, but he crossed into bright sunshine in Tibet. When Mr. Pant thanked the lama for the good weather, he said: "This time I did not have to pray or go through the rituals. Prime Minister Nehru is a Boddhisatta. He brings his own good weather with him". So it is clear that not only the lamas, but Nehru also could do miracles with personal 'aura' or 'radiations'.

In a book that deals mainly with such mystical phenomena and uncanny miracles politics seems an awkward intruder. Mr Pant should have left it out altogether. His book, as the publisher's blurb says, is the author's 'autobiographical reflections on the profound questions of life'; and when 'profound questions of life' mean magic, miracles, tantra and other obscurantist rituals, what business has politics disturb them. But, as the Indian tradition would have it, mysticism invariably leads to politics and if politics comes, can mysticism be far behind? So Mr Pant's *A Moment in Time* begins and ends with mysticism, with politics making a brief appearance occasionally. Even his political comments on East-West relation, problems of development and dangers of centralised power have an 'aura' of religiosity that is likely to confirm many Western observers in their belief that spiritualism is still India's largest export trade. And that is likely to make Mr Pant feel rather happy and proud, for China, India's rival, has, he believes, very little to contribute to the spiritual salvation of the world, in spite of her material progress.

Reading Apa Pant's book one would hardly disagree with Indira Gandhi when she says in the foreword: 'Apa Sahib is not the usual diplomat'. Surely the diplomat who is more interested in erecting two shrines, one to the elephant-headed Ganesh and the other to the monkey-god Hanuman in Sikkim than in being diplomatically effective is not the usual diplomat by world standards. Or, is he the usual Indian diplomat, a proud synthesis of Western liberal education and Indian obscurantism?

Dipendu Chakrabarti

MARCH 1, 1975

Twelfth New York Film Festival

GAUTAM DASGUPTA

OVER the past eleven years the New York Film Festival, under the artistic guidance and directorship of Richard Roud, has emerged as a highly reputable cultural event. It has consistently managed to avoid the unfortunate fate of the festivals at Cannes and Berlin which are rapidly turning into marketing grounds for "art-house" films. Since most of the commercially viable films are picked up at the European film fairs, the festival in New York, held later in the year, is conducted in a far more relaxed manner. Freed from commercial trappings and the superficial glamour of a "sales show", the New York Film Festival can concentrate on bringing together a varied assortment of films that are representative of the best and the most innovative work being done for the screen.

The 12th New York Film Festival, was held at Alice Tully Hall with far less fanfare than in preceding years. Contrary to one's expectations, the festival opened with *Don't Cry With Your Mouth Full*, a French entry and the second film of the relatively unknown 28-year-old director Pascal Thomas. But then again last year's festival was not a usual one. Although it had its quota of films by well-established directors such as Bunuel, Rivette, Bresson, Resnais and Malle, the organisers, in a show of daring, had included several lesser known figures like Thomas, Daniel Schmid, Jack Hazan, Wim Wenders and Sergio Ricardo, who, in their own way, sought artistic expression and fulfilment in highly personal, idiosyncratic and refreshing idioms. However, the festival was weighted in favour of French entries and the absence of films from other countries was noticeable. In spite of this, the festival was immensely exciting and gave an idea to movie-goers of the diverse directions that film-making might pursue in the years to come.

The best film, by far, at the

festival was the long-awaited *Lancelot of the Lake* by Robert Bresson. Considering his monumental achievements over the past few decades, one has come to expect nothing short of masterpieces from the director who gave us *Diary of a Country Priest* (1950), *Pickpocket* (1959), *Le Procès de Jeanne d'Arc* (1962), *Mouchette* (1966) and *Au Hasard, Balthazar* (1966). With his most recent film, Bresson once again proves true to his genius and cinematic style. Shot in subdued tones, the film longingly probes the fate of the rapidly dwindling knights of the Round Table after their quest for the Holy Grail had met with failure. Amidst the sparseness of King Arthur's medieval fortress, the film, while intermittently dwelling on the calamitous love relationship between Lancelot and Queen Guinevere, concerns itself predominantly with metaphysical and spiritual longings.

Lancelot reflects Bresson's obsession with the theme of human enslavement in highly articulate visual metaphors. Imprisoned in their armoured suits and helmets, the knights present an exterior from which all traces of their inner soul have been obliterated. And yet, in Bresson's vision of the world, all we are left with is the outer shell, an outer self that for ever seeks to justify an inner existence. This seeming paradox in a world without God and faith is beautifully rendered in a rhythmically complex pattern of elliptical cutting where the camera repeatedly returns to rest on the knight's armours in the fervent hope that we might catch a glimpse of the soul underneath.

Bresson's ascetic style is uniquely his own and one that grows organically from his personal concerns, but his insistence on externals, objects, and signs has influenced several younger directors represented at this festival. Daniel Schmid's *La Paloma*, the second film by the young Swiss director, is a hyper-kitsch, operatic version of the old Camille story. Film

ed in a highly artificial idiom, *La Paloma* proceeds by stringing together a series of cliché-images familiar to movie-goers. "People", Schmid argues, "are more and more estranged, they do not live their action directly, but always through pictures perceived". It is through the use of signs and cinematic compositions borrowed from a past that *La Paloma* is constructed. This lends to the film a high level of artificiality, a certain stylisation which in turn reflects the notion that man is defined not by his inner self but by what he chooses to be and appear on the outside.

Inner and outer

The dichotomy between the inner and the outer, between inner reality and outer fiction, was equally well demonstrated in Jack Hazan's revealing portrait of the British painter David Hockney in *The Bigger Splash*. Shot with the rigour of an Antonioni film, Hazan constructs a semi-narrative, semi-poetic documentary which is quite a breakthrough in the cinema's attempts at novel approaches to documentary film-making. The meagre plot revolves around Hockney's break-up with his lover prior to his New York exhibition. Training the camera on the artist's canvases in such a way that art seems real, reality takes on the feverish dimensions of Hockney's paintings in this successful venture by a young British film-maker.

This contemporary approach to film-making, where extreme stylisation is the norm, attains its apotheosis in the films by West German's prolific and talented young film-maker Rainer Fassbinder. Born in 1945, Fassbinder has been active on stage both as an actor and a playwright. His career in films has by now assumed legendary proportions, and with *Ali* (last year's winner of the International Critics Prize at Cannes and his third entry in the New York Film Festival) he has completed over 20 films. Theatrical in construction and melodramatic in nature, *Ali* is a poignant study of a sixty-year-old cleaning-woman's love affair and eventual marriage with a young and virile Moroccan emigrant labourer. Lonely individuals,

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cast away from the mainstream of bourgeois living, they come together in the hope of finding solace in each other's arms. As the film progresses, their love turns sour due to the critical and condemning gaze of a society which finds their union perverse. Shunned like the plague as it were, the couple are photographed against barren streets. This technique not only comments on the film's theme, but also functions as a quasi-Brechtian alienation device by calling attention to its artificial mise-en-scene.

The other two West German entries failed to carry the bite and technical ingenuity of Fassbinder's powerful film. Alexander Kluge's name was a welcome return, but **Part-Time Work of a Domestic Slave** could not sufficiently dramatise its theme of a Utopian mother of three who, hounded from her job as a part-time abortionist's helper, is gradually politicised into selling hot-dogs wrapped in revolutionary pamphlets outside a factory. The film's casual and meandering approach to its subject resulted in an incohesive work. The other film, which I did not get to see, was Wim Wenders' **Alice in the cities**. His second film is better known for his previous screen adaptation of Handke's novel, **The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick**. His newest work is about a young German journalist in America who finds himself with a nine-year-old girl on his way home. According to the programme notes, the "film's real subject is America and Europe, their differences, of course, but even more their similarities".

Stylisation was carried to its farthest limits in Miklos Jancso's **Rome Wants Another Caesar** and Brazilian director-composer Sergio Ricardo's **The Night of the Scarecrow**. Both films dealt with themes of power and presented revolutionary ideals through highly ritualistic and choreographic designs. Jancso's ritualistic concerns have been evident in all his earlier films through the precise formalism and patterning of his visual panorama. In my brief interview with Jancso, he mentioned that all revolutions, in fact all human actions are conducted, consciously or unconsciously, through "elaborate ritual designs". Inclined to agree, I neverthe-

less found his film so esoteric and vague, that whatever ritualistic implications were present remained unclear.

Ricardo, on the other hand, offers an easily comprehensible social document, but clothes it in pseudo-religious, passion-play-cum-musical forms that serve to complicate matters more than simplify them. Photographed in luscious colours, the Brazilian peasants are contrasted with their oppressors through a complex visual design that suggests, according to the programme notes, a "mixture of Dali, Debray and De Mille".

Ermanno Olmi's **The Circumstance** was also partially flawed by the complexing and elliptical nature of the work. Focusing on an upper-class Milanese household, Olmi's extravagant camerawork seeks to capture the subtle changes in all members of the family as they react to external events. Heavy-handed in its symbolic and metaphorical touches, the subtlety is lost when Olmi repeatedly interjects scenes from a slaughterhouse presumably to draw a parallel with the senseless killing of the human soul.

There were two American entries and one, titled **Roots**, featured four short films by directors Mirra Bank, Martha Coolidge, William Greaves and Martin Scorsese. All of them celebrate, in their own unique documentary fashion, an American past lovingly recreated from ethnic standpoints. The other film, **A Woman Under the Influence**, was written and directed by John Cassavetes and superbly acted by Gena Rowlands as Mabel Longhetti, the emotionally disturbed wife of a blue-collar husband played by Peter Falk. It is a profoundly disturbing and compelling portrait of American society searching to cope with the paranoia it has unleashed in Mabel, a mother of three who is alienated from the workaday world of her husband and his friends. As usual, Cassavetes insists on the truth from his actors and actresses by ruthlessly analysing their faces in a variety of close-ups. In what seems to be an improvisatory approach (although it isn't), the film is strikingly real in its impact on the audience.

Improvisation

With regard to improvisation, the two

films that were consciously created along these lines were **Out One/Spectre** and **Celine and Julie Go Boating**, both directed by Jacques Rivette. The former, a four and a quarter hour condensation of the 13-hour original **Out One**, based loosely on Balzac's **Story of the 13**. The cast, asked by Rivette to create their own character and dialogue, developed an odd mixture of reality and fantasy. Under his strong directorial hand, the film avoided levels of psychodramatic indulgence but was nevertheless loosely strung together and, mostly because of its non-narrative or highly elliptical narrative structure, failed to hold interest.

This was not the case with his three and a quarter hour long fantasy **Celine and Julie Go Boating**. Again created out of a close rapport between the director and his actresses, Juliet Berto (Celine) and Dominique Labourier (Julie), the film is a very imaginative juxtaposition of Henry James' **The Other House** and a playful take-off on Lewis Carroll's **Alice in Wonderland**. Acclaimed by **Film Comment** as the most important film to come out of France since 1968, Rivette's latest work deals with Celine (a magician) and Julie (a librarian) who mysteriously become involved with a drama being played out within the confines of a suburban home. Tantalisingly hypnotic in presentation, with a tightly knit narrative structure, the film, in spite of Rivette's exercises in improvisation and structuralist experimentation, was extremely well received.

Alain Tanner, working closely with Marxist art critic John Berger, was at hand to present his fourth and successful feature **The Middle of the World**. Brechtian in form, the film deals with the extra-marital affairs of a young

ART FAIR

The Art Critic, **Frontier**, reports: The Annual Calcutta Art Fair '75 is on at the Market Square near the New Market. All the important artists are exhibiting there and there is scope for dialogue with them. You can have a wonderful evening. It will stay open till March 4.

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Swiss engineer with an emigrant Italian waitress. In pursuit of their romantic idyll, Tanner's striking visuals and impressive soundtrack frequently comment on the isolation of Switzerland, the need for international dependence and, more significantly, the baneful life of Swiss inhabitants secure in their wealth and bourgeois ideals. When the affair comes to an end, partly due to the waitress' realisation of the stasis of their situation, and partly owing to the conforming pressures of society, the film throws light simultaneously on human individuality and socio-political concerns. Beautifully rendered in colour, Tanner's film confirms his status as a director of the foremost rank in Europe today.

Malle, Resnais and Bunuel, all three of whom were present at the screening of their films, failed to generate much excitement. Malle's **Lacombe, Lucien**, set in the French countryside towards the end of the German occupation, is a study in fascism. Lured by power and wealth, Lucien, a young French peasant lad of meagre means, finds himself a part of the local Nazi unit stationed near his home town. The proud possessor of a new identity, he is torn between his allegiance to the role of a collaborator and his love for an innocent Jewish girl significantly named France. Naive, awkward, arrogant and vain, Lucien's ambiguous and confused personality is revealed in his innocent, albeit threatening, relationship with France and her father, M. Albert Horn, played with consummate skill by Holger Lowenadler. Echoing Marcel Ophuls' masterpiece documentary **The Sorrow and the Pity** in its dissection of French collaborators during the War, Malle's film renders its theme from a psychological point of view without too much emphasis on the political and social reality that engendered a politics of collaboration in an embarrassing moment of French history.

Resnais' **Stavisky**, hailed by **Sight and Sound** as a "Marienbad by daylight", revolves around the exploits of a notorious gambler Stavisky (Jean-Paul Belmondo) who, because of his financial cunning, brings about the downfall of the French regime. Dovetailed into this grandiose tale of intrigue and international scandal are scenes from Trotsky's

exile which, instead of lending a historic perspective to the movie (as Resnais himself suggested), finally results in a mere distraction. Presented straightforwardly, the film will disappoint those who have grown accustomed to Resnais' elliptical style and his experiments with time, memory and the subconscious. Photographed in lush colours and set in the art-deco style of the early quarter of this century, the film is a visual delight minus the inviting intrigue that compels us to watch **Marienbad** over and over again.

The opening film by Pascal Thomas is a tender expose of French provincial life. **Don't Cry With Your Mouth Full** spans three generations and chronicles the ups and downs of life's incessant flow as it appears to a 15-year-old girl. Directed with ease and an eye for the little things of life, the film is a charming interlude that looks at life in practical terms without the veil of fantasy, glamour or urban sophistication.

Bunuel's Film

Fantasy, however, clothed in typically surrealist fashion, was the expected subject of Bunuel's **The Phantom of Liberty**. The closing film at the festival, Bunuel's latest work is a strangely ironic and cynical comment on life taken for granted in its banal and dull existence. Subverting common norms of behaviour and expectation in a chain of inter-related episodes, the film's irony and playfulness is captured in the opening shot when a group of Spanish soldiers, lined up in front of a firing squad, cry out: "Down With Freedom". A tribute to the illogical workings of the mind and the irrationality of our hearts. **The Phantom of Liberty** is an exercise in surrealist technique and Bunuelian enigmas, surprises and humorous side-effects. Unfortunately, the film is devoid of the biting social wit of his earlier **The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie** or the religious satire of **The Milky Way**.

The retrospective screenings, a necessary part of any film festival, was given over to a showing of Bunuel's earlier works and to two films lesser known to the American public: **Liebelei** by Max Ophuls and **Les Enfants Terribles**, Jean-

Pierre Melville's treatment of Cocteau's novel. Of the short films shown at this festival, except for Chabrol's 52-minute version of Henry James' short story **The Bench of Desolation**, the others were of no great import.

And so one looks forward once more to the next New York Film Festival with the hope that it will be just as daring and aesthetically satisfying as this one.

Letters

Unity

Comrade Ashim Chatterjee holds (4. 1. 1975) that, "the formation of CPI(ML) on 22nd April", was in the main correct", that "All comrades", "specially in the struggling areas felt its necessity and demanded it. As such it was the product of objectives necessity". What does he mean by "all comrades"? In fact, the coming to power of the CM leadership was opposed by the largest section of comrades belonging to the revolutionary camp. Then, how does the fact of belonging to a 'struggling' area, (by which he means only those areas where peasant movements were going on, thereby continuing the old tradition of holding ideological struggles and struggles of working class as not being struggles!) lead by itself to the thoughts being correct? Is it not particularly misleading to think like this after all the struggles led by the comrades of the 'struggling' areas have been defeated? Then Comrade AC argues that "without the formation of CPI(ML) the struggle of Debra and Gopiballavpur would not have been possible". But is it not a much more important fact that it was because of the formation of the party that the struggles collapsed? In places like Srikakulam the possibilities as well as the movements were excellent before the party formation. But after it they collapsed.

It is true that due to the (incorrectly based) feeling that at last a correct leadership has emerged, and the revolutionary heroism of the cadres, the sensational appeal of the adventurist line before

the crisis-ridden masses, the publicity given to the 'action' by the enemy etc. the line of CM led to some 'dazzling' initial successes. But the reasons for and the results of the initial successes were also those leading to failure. At the same time the same cause enhanced another contrary process that was much more powerful, deep-seated and long-term — the process of getting isolated from the people. 'What is real growth' of the struggles? In the initial stages growth means laying the basis of further growth, setting up processes and machinery that assure long-term, permanent and increasing growth. Can these 'initial successes' that sabotaged the basis of further growth be called real growth?

Comrade AC claims that the party congress had the unique distinction of upholding the banner of Marxism-Leninism-Mao's thought". But he himself admits that "the whole congress surrendered to left sectarian policies...." Then, what did the congress uphold?

AC: "Negation of the formation of CPI (ML) is the negation of all the valuable experiences of armed struggle, both positive and negative, in the recent past gained through tremendous sacrifice. As such, it is a betrayal of the martyrs". Does he mean that those who think that party formation was wrong are not even revolutionaries, or their understanding of Marxism is so shallow that they will be incapable of understanding the experiences of the revolutionary struggles since then? Now we come to the spirit and the attitude reflected in this 'argument'. In the past, even when the Party formation was being announced Kanu Sanyal hinted that all those who thought party formation to be wrong were non-revolutionary and petty bourgeois. CM also said that all those who did not obey the CC of CPI (ML) were incapable of understanding Marxism-Leninism. According to Comrade AC, all this was said and done in the 'sectarian' past'. In the non-sectarian present also AC declares that all those who hold that the party formation was wrong are betrayers of martyrs, and are incapable of understanding Marxism!

At the stage before the party formation the revolutionary camp was theoretically primitive, confused and vague, orga-

nisationally chaotic and loose; and while Marxism-Leninism-Mao's thought was being propagated in a general way, various good and bad experiments were being performed with weak and scattered resources. Even then the possibility of building up correct theory and practice was high. But party formation led to a stage where (involving the biggest single section of the revolutionary camp) the theoretical level was primitive but sharp, clear and close to left-adventurism, and a strong, coherent but blind sectarian organisation sprang up vigorously, and most of the resources could be concentrated to build up with great power and speed — left adventurism. Here the tremendous growth in the negative direction curbed the possibilities of growth in the correct direction. Thus superficially, the party formation seemed to be a big step forward, but in essence it was a big jump backward—in the main.

We do not think that we betray the martyrs when we analyse like this, but are only trying to achieve the essence of what they stood for, so that the greater sacrifices we must make in the future will be more fruitful.

N. Das
Calcutta

Let us congratulate Comrade Ashim Chatterjee for his stand on unity of the CPI (ML) (January 4, 1975). He has correctly realised that in order to reorganise the CPI (ML) on the correct political line of Spring Thunder it is absolutely necessary to reject Charu Majumdar's 'Left' sectarian line wholeheartedly and unreservedly. This undoubtedly calls for the amendment and revision of the May 1970 Party Congress line and adoption of the Naxalbari road to Indian revolution.

In his latest call Comrade Ashim has repudiated all his previous stands beginning from 'Red Ching Kang Shows Us The Way' of 1971. Never before had he rejected the party line adopted at the May 1970 Congress. Rather he made self-criticism for going against the 'correct party line'.

About Lin Piao's line he says "For out party which suffered immensely be-

cause of the ideology, politics and method of work of Lin Piao, this has special significance". Would he clarify whether he wants to establish that our defeat in the first round of our revolutionary struggle was due to Lin Piao only?

We urge Comrade Ashim to initiate the process of reorganisation of the CPI (ML) on the basis he himself has advocated. As a member of the Central Committee of the CPI (ML) he must start bombarding the 'headquarters'.

Naxalbari Group of the CPI (ML)

The most debated issue before the Marxists-Leninists today is whether the formation of the CPI (ML) was correct or not, whether the CPI (ML) should be reorganised or a new party formed, and if so, how and under whose leadership.

It is accepted today by the whole leadership of the CPI (ML) that the line unanimously passed in the political-organisational report of the 8th party congress had nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought. Rather, such an anarchist line came in opposition to a revolutionary mass line, thus negating the importance of an agrarian programme—which should be the main content of agrarian revolution. And dialectical materialism teaches us that such a line did not appear all at once, and such anarchism in the political line definitely had its impact on the organisational line also, as a result of which the CPI (ML) could never emerge as the only platform of all Marxist-Leninists of India.

The task of building a true Marxist-Leninist party still remains. In this regard, we think, reorganisation of the CPI (ML) as a genuine proletarian party is possible, because the absolute majority of its leadership as well as its cadres are trying to rectify its old anarchist line, rejecting the line accepted in the 8th congress—the line of individual killing—and trying to practise a revolutionary mass line. But on the

questions of how to reorganise, we beg to differ strongly from Comrade Ashim Chatterjee. According to him, the CPI (ML) leadership should get reunited first, next comes the task of unity with all fraternal groups outside the CPI (ML) who ideologically subscribe to Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought and are eager to develop armed peasant struggle. How can the fraternal groups of Marxist-Leninists come next? Isn't it true that there were groups and individuals in different parts of India who, in some aspects at least, preached a more correct line of agrarian revolution compared to that of ours? And it is the party's line of individual killing opposed to a revolutionary mass line and negation of the principles of democratic centralism which are chiefly responsible for the disruption among the communist revolutionaries? So the responsibility of reorganising the CPI(ML) does not lie on different groups of the CPI(ML) only, this is the collective responsibility of all the communist revolutionaries inside and outside the CPI(ML). Let all the quarters of Marxist-Leninists come forward with honest self-criticisms. Let us see that the self-criticisms are true self-criticisms and not self-applauses. Let the leading comrades of different groups including and excluding the CPI (ML), who pursue a revolutionary mass line come forward to form a central leading team, resolve the major differences on the basis of mutual discussions and political ideological struggle within the framework of a single team, prepare a draft programme and draft constitution on the basis of corrections and amendments of those of the 8th congress, prepare a new political-organisational report and an all-pervading self-critical report. This leading team should be given the authority to convene the next congress of the party. It is known that, though there was some differences between different groups of communist revolutionaries, one of the outstanding reasons for not achieving unity is the struggle for leadership among the leaders. This is definitely one of the petty-bourgeois vices which cannot be encouraged any more while proceeding towards organising a prole-

tarian party. The Indian working class and peasantry have already reached the verge of total destruction, they cannot any more entertain this power-struggle at the cost of revolution.

A Group of the CPI(ML)

Not One Way To Revolution

This refers to your editorial, "In one's own way" (January 18, 1975).

It is surprising that a journal so overtly conscious of its obligations to society and its role among the people as **Frontier** is, should choose to deride class and mass struggles of the repressed people of West Bengal simply because the combined front of nine left parties, including the CPM, happen to be associated with their efforts. Needless to point out, these have been apparently unsuccessful; since the grand electoral coup by the Congress in March 1972, brought off on classic fascist lines by putsch-brigands in the payroll of the Central State machinery of political intelligence and coercion, there is not much scope left for peaceable democratic opposition to articulate itself in the State. Yet the fact remains that such attempts by people suffering from exploitation and tyranny constitute the subjective, preparation of their struggle for liberation—the ultimate phase when revolutionary class confrontation takes the form of a people's liberation army being formed to operate in aid of the revolutionary government functioning in liberated areas. At present, objective conditions in India are a prelude to that.

What should the people do when faced with State terror unleashed by the bureaucracy? Sit back, watch helplessly and theorise? When towards the close of August 1974 men of the Central Reserve Police fired on and killed innocent protesters in Cooch Behar (including a teacher who was honest enough to join the agitation taking shape) there was a lightning upsurge of people's anger and action against the forces of the establishment. Since one of the parties of this nine-left party combine then took a leading part in it, would you say,

that all the sweat, blood and accentuation of revolutionary consciousness which the masses gained there as a result, were just a "hoax"?

Thousands have died of starvation in conditions of famine brought about by the present Congress regime of interlopers in West Bengal. But people, though intensely suffering, are dumb with diffidence and frustration. It is this banal climate of the masses sweltering in collective helplessness, and loss of strategic direction, which delights the rulers in Delhi and Calcutta; and the latter want to perpetuate the present crippling psychology of mutual mistrust, derision, and groping in the dark. One finds a disconcerting similarity in the language of your withering criticism of the leftist parties "threatening to launch movement" with the tone of big-money Press.

It is one thing to be alert about the dangers of revisionist thinking that warp the strategy of some left-leader-groups. But it is quite another proposition to try to discover neo-revisionism in honest and dedicated cadres who have had experience of participation in any service to the cause of workers', peasants' and other toiling people's class and mass struggles.

Some years ago the CPM and CPI (ML) cadres were being misled and provoked into fratricidal blood baths, paving the way for the reactionary thugs to recapture powers. Tomorrow, however, these cadres can coordinate their activities when the common revolutionary strategy of the masses (in bondage) gets clear, and the underground area of revolutionary struggle becomes tactically complementary to movements in the open.

New Delhi's planners of white terror have had their day when they could provoke revolutionary fighters in West Bengal into foolish acts of killing potential allies and fellow-travellers, and thus delay the process of unity in revolutionary struggles.

To meet the challenge of these class-enemies of suffering people is the duty of all revolutionaries. Let not the upcoming generation say that the cause of people's liberation was sabotaged because of wobbly thinking by purists

among revolutionaries who had no perspective.

A correspondent
Utter Pradesh

*The point was that the left parties always talk of launching a movement but do nothing. This creates greater confusion and frustration. Editor.

Telengana & Naxalbari

In his explanatory note on "Naxalbari & Telengana" (letter in your issue 18.1.75) Mr Majumdar made some remarks, which I think, demand further explanation. Back in June, 1949, Comrade Balabushevich pointed out that—The peasantry is the most important driving force of the colonial revolutions.—The struggle of Telengana is the vanguard of the peasant revolution...the most important content of the present Indian national liberation movement'. Do these historical observations show that 'Telengana was local' or that the 'impact' of the Telengana movement was really of a lesser nature?

According to Mr Majumdar, 'Naxalbari' identified revolutionaries within the ranks of the Indian working class and peasant movements, 'that... its spread was quick and phenomenal', and 'its challenge to revisionism within the communist movement in India was aggressive. These Telengana could not achieve'. Is this true? When the Telengana struggle began the central leadership was forced to resign, under the pressure of revolutionary cadres in March 1948. In this, Telengana played no mean part and the Andhra comrades continued their bold advocacy of the correct Marxist line for the Indian national and democratic movement. In 1948, in their draft programme submitted to the C.C., they clearly stated that the Chinese path was the only course to be pursued in India. After the Joshi clique was sent packing and when the Telengana comrades were playing the vanguard role in Indian revolution, the new central leadership did their best for a counter-revolutionary turn of a different nature by putting in to practice their Trotskyite overtures. These conspiratorial activities went on

for two long years, thereby causing damage to the Indian revolution, but still that too was not able to extinguish the flame of the Telengana struggle, which refused to copy the Ranadive clique's ultra-left anti-Marxist line. The letter of the new C.C. (formed after the dispersal of the Trotskyite-Ranadive clique) is illuminative on this point. It stated in June 1950: 'The comrades over there (Telengana and the Haiong region) took lessons from their life and experience and therefore were forced to disobey the dogmatic documents of the Politbureau and went surging forward'. And as for influencing inner-party-struggle of a no-less 'aggressive' type, we have enough proof from the same letter of the C.C., which stated.—'Comrades...for the first time in the life of our party you have shown an admirable political initiative and consciousness. have applied the weapon of severe criticism...' etc. We have already seen how much responsible the Telengana movement had been for the nurserous criticism by disowned international leaders of the bankrupt central leadership of the CPI. We will also see that it was the line of the Telengana movement, which, at least, clinched the issue of which path the Indian revolution should follow. In its letters of greetings sent to the CPC, the new C.C., admitted that. "All the parties of the colonial world look upon the Chinese Party as their model". On 19.7.1950, the C.C. further declared, 'The path that had been pursued by China and which is being followed by the South-East Asian countries, is the only correct path for our people too'. So, the Telengana movement set aside the confusion reigning in our movement about the course of our movement, and hence, it is needless to point out that any and all struggles of the Indian new democratic movement can only be a continuation of the Telengana movement, which is the herald of our revolutionary course. The Naxalbari movement, though very short-lived mainly due to its leadership's blatant betrayal, was a continuation of the Telengana peasant movement. Therefore Mr Majumdar's attempt to minimise the 'impact' and the lessons of

the Telengana movement by stating that it belongs to an 'earlier phase' of our history, is superficial and one-sided.

To conclude, I must say that the counter-revolutionary forces were unable to destroy the Telengana movement, which had established people's state-power and had guarded it valiantly until the local leadership submitted to orders of the USSR-returned central leadership. It is well known that to hoodwink the Andhra comrades, the Ajoy Ghosh clique misused Stalin's name. Therefore, the main reason behind Telengana's fall was the conspiracy of the counter-revolutionary central leadership.

Malay Mukherjee
Calcutta

Acu-centres

As President of the West Bengal State Committee, Dr Kotnis Memorial Committee, I take strong exception to the slanderous remarks made against Dr B. K. Basu in your correspondent's report under the caption "Taking care of the Chinese" (February 8, 1975).

Dr Basu, our all-India President, commands universal respect and confidence. It is under his direct guidance that a fine batch of acupuncture doctors have been trained up for working in five acu-centres — Ramnagar, Matiabruz, Uttarpara, Banshdroni and Begumour —run by our Committee in West Bengal.

I would request your readers to visit any of these centres and see for themselves how patients—mainly coming from poorer sections—are being treated free of medical charge and what astounding results have been achieved within this short time. On February 3, the Chinese doctors accompanying their table tennis team visited two centres—Ramnagar and Matiabruz—and were overwhelmed not only by the enthusiastic reception but also by the way our medical workers have mastered this technique. Their impression was broadcast on February 13 from Peking Radio in English, Bengali and Hindi.

At present Dr Vatsala Kotnis, sister

The Raid

Thank you for publishing my letter on January 25 on the raid on **Darpan** and **Frontier**. From the editorial note appended to the letter I have come to know that the office of the **Frontier** was not destroyed. The report which was available to me on January 16 from the local newspapers as well as the two Calcutta dailies I saw after writing the letter mentioned that the offices of both had been destroyed. It is a sad commentary that even with regard to such a serious matter as the attack on newspapers we cannot expect to get correct reports from journalists working in the same city and newspapers published in the same city.

Subhash Chandra Sarker
Bombay

Gauhati and Pandu at present and we will open other centres at Beltala, Silchar, Azra and Naogaon. We were moved when we noticed the efficacy of acupuncture in the West Bengal centres. We decided to send a non-medical youth for training. After training he returned to Gauhati and trained two non-medical youths. Several other non-medical youths are now under training.

Nirmal Datta

Secretary

Dr Kotnis Memorial Committee

Assam

of Dr Dwarkanath Kotnis, from Bombay and Idarjit Singh from Delhi, are being trained in acupuncture under the direct supervision of Dr Basu.

In our acu-centres medical service is free but nobody in his senses would ever suggest that Dr Basu should not charge anything in his personal chamber for his earning.

Hemango Biswas

Calcutta

We have been surprised by the report "Taking care of the Chinese. We did not expect such an untrue report to appear in a magazine like **Frontier**. We have got two medical centres at

APPEAL FOR FUNDS

The newsprint exporters, it appears, have again substantially raised their prices.

And these prices, together with the service charges demanded by dealers these days, are crippling. Printing costs, postal rates, office rent etc. are all going up.

On the other hand, there is very little advertising,

Once again one of the means of survival seems to be donations.

We are therefore asking those to donate who think that FRONTIER should continue.

FRONTIER

Statement required under the Registration of Newspapers

(Central Rules) 1956.

1. Place of Publication : Calcutta
2. Periodicity of its publication : Weekly
3. Printer's name
4. Publisher's " } Samar Sen
5. Editor's " }
- Nationality : Indian
- Address : 15C, Swinhoe Street, Calcutta-19
6. Names and addresses of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the total capital
- Germinal Publications (Pt.) Ltd.
61, Mott Lane, Calcutta-13
- A. Sen, 36/1, Old Ballygunge 2nd Lane, Calcutta-19; P. Tagore, 18, Ballygunge Place, Calcutta-19; K. C. Das, 4, Tilak Road, Calcutta-29; A. Sen, 25, Broad Street, Calcutta-19; J. N. Majumdar, 852 Block 'P', New Alipore, Calcutta-33; Dipti Guha Thakurta, 161B, P. B. Avenue, Calcutta-19; S. Sen, 15-C, Swinhoe Street, Calcutta-19; Gour Mitra, 699F, Block 'P', New Alipore, Calcutta-33; Chitra Chakravarty, P-16, Old Ballygunge Road, Calcutta-19; J. P. Sen, 188/1, R. B. Avenue, Calcutta-29; P. C. Dutta, Dankuni, Hooghly, West Bengal; Sreelata Ghosh, 699 F, Block 'P', New Alipore, Calcutta-33; S. K. Bhattacharya, P-18, Sarsuna Main Road, Calcutta-61; R. Sen Gupta, 2A, Bamunpara Lane, Calcutta-19.

I SAMAR SEN, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated March 1, 1975

SAMAR SEN
Publisher