

# frontier

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BY SAMAR SEN FROM 61, MOTT LANE,  
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TELEPHONE: 24-3202

## MORE OF THE SAME

YET another major reshuffle at the top echelon of West Bengal's 'administration' has been announced. Irrelevance is replacing irrelevance. A nonentity elevated to the position of Adviser would not perform any better than what he was doing as Chief Secretary, nor would the quality of bureaucratic endeavour undergo a miraculous alchemy merely by virtue of the fact that the newly inducted presiding deity is being imported from the sinking port. These so-called happenings, let us repeat, are an irrelevance, for this State's 'administration' has ceased to matter. If by administration New Delhi implies the ordering of developmental activities, the promotion of minimally respectable structural reforms in the countryside, increasing the facilities for industrial employment, the expenditure of funds for sanitation or slum clearance, the initiation of a well-thought-out plan so that a worthwhile blueprint would be available for the economic progress of this State, then no administration exists in West Bengal: contrary to what Mrs Gandhi and her henchmen might think in New Delhi nothing of any positive economic consequence has happened here since Mr Dhavan and his performing clowns took over in March. B. B. Ghosh in Writers' Building and all's right with the world—this is a kind of attitude which does not invoke derision, it invokes pity: for it betrays the prevalence of precisely that genre of indolence which, through the centuries, has been the foundation on which revolutions and successful insurgencies have been built. The present non-administration in West Bengal is even incapable of serving Mrs Gandhi's exclusively partisan needs: for it has not been possible on its part to push through any gimmicks, with some short-run advantages, either. The people of West Bengal are by now wise enough to see through the knaveries of kings, just as they are alert enough to be able to identify a bastard as bastard.

The only wing of West Bengal's administration that is functioning, and functioning with a mad blood-lust, is the police. It seems a war has been declared on the young men and women of this State. Everything is permissible in this game: shoot at point-blank range at men listening to a musical recital and no questions will be asked: practise medieval torture against unarmed prisoners arrested without warrant and no questions will be asked; surround a locality with the help of goons, ransack huts and houses, pick up young-looking men and beat them into pulp, no questions

will be asked. Not only will no questions be asked, newspapers and politicians of assorted hues, wearing their hypocrisy on their sleeves, would turn all such episodes around. Everybody, just about everybody in this city talks and knows about the spate of atrocities the police are committing up and down the State: we dare say scores of concrete evidence can be furnished of the kind of barbarities that have been perpetrated in recent weeks and are continuing; the Police Commissioner, bubbling over in mirthful zest, has promised an 'intensification' of such activities. But such tales get lost in purposeful diversions; it is the story of the hapless police constables and sub-inspectors, who are being allegedly murdered in cold blood, and that of the beheading of the non-equestrian statues of past eminences which hog the newspaper space. No doubt a similar apportionment of time will take place in the discussions in Parliament, with the shadow Prime Minister supposedly from West Bengal, Mr Bhupesh Gupta, contributing his sage-sized mite. With no administration operating at all, the police are the exterminator of all they behold. All power to the police, spake Shri. Ajoy Mukherjee; all power to the police, say the police; all power to the police, echoes and re-echoes New Delhi. And now it would appear, all this and the Preventive Detention Act too; if only the CPI is able to get over its qualms, the P.D. Act would be in, in the winter session of Parliament. What a lovely total war it would be then against the people of West Bengal. The policemen would be on to the barricades, and this State's residual trouble would be, as the Americans are wont to say it, 'hopefully' over.

It would not be. If Mrs Gandhi wants to have her war—just as the past jingoes had theirs in 1962—men and women along this fringe would be ready for her and for her policemen. The Linlithgows and John Andersons have a habit of coming back, only they resort to indigenous names. The quality of oppression—the bestiality of it—has

not altered either over the three decades; only, in this age of advancing technology, it assumes a new sophistication. The character of policemen—or their role—too refuses to go through mutations: the progeny of the agents-provocateurs of the past are today's patriotic custodians of Lal Bazar. But each of these is an irrelevance, just as much it was in the 1920s and the 1930s. For oppression only alienates the oppressors. The present may only be an atmosphere of insurgency; if this is transformed into one of open and total rebellion which might lead to anything, Mrs Gandhi can go and tell the Russians that verily she is the daughter of the revolution. It is time she and her advisers—and the gullible among us—made a little analysis about the more conventional roots of some of the current exercises in violence: for example, how many among these can be attributed to the agent-provocateur role of the police force itself. And if the Home Minister herself is a party to these nefarious games—a suspicion which is gaining ground—she should not take it amiss if the people in this part of what is still the same country want to answer her in proper style.

## Murder In Karachi

At the time of writing, not many details of the outrage at Karachi airport have come in. The action has been described—it occurred in the presence of a large number of pressmen, two of whom were killed. But the motive is yet to be explored in depth. The first, and perhaps the correct, impression is that it is the work of anti-communist agents. The man who drove the baggage truck into the line of dignitaries and others is reported to have shouted "Death to the communists."

Islamic fanatics in West Pakistan have been known for their hatred of leftist movements and for their organisations, which seldom suffer from lack of funds. Their foreign friends are legion and they have tre-

mendous resources. Even the U.S. Ambassador is known to have been active in his associations with some of these organisations. The CIA is a force in West Pakistan. And Maulana Maudoodi, the defender of Islam, has never bothered to mince his words and conceal his hostility to anything or any person called socialist.

But give these people the credit of possessing some intelligence. The leaders may not have provided the *direct* incentive for the Karachi attack. It is one thing to attack and murder with impunity leftists at home; killing visiting ministers is another. Ministers and diplomats have been held and killed in other lands for limited objectives. The attack at Karachi airport falls into a different category—it is not, as journalists say, meaningful.

Or is it? Some very intelligent people in East Pakistan suspect that the elections due early next month may not take place at all—that something is cooking in Islamabad. If Sheikh Mujibar Rahman sweeps the polls, it would be difficult even for him to moderate the demand for full autonomy. Moderation will be fatal for his popularity. An assessment that he will capture 80 or 90 per cent of the seats in East Pakistan may induce President Yahya Khan to postpone the elections, though this is likely to make the popular discontent boil over. But he has enough troops and policemen to beget false confidence.

If the suspicion that something is cooking in the west is legitimate, then the insensate incident in Karachi, involving one of the most capable men of Poland, may be looked upon not as an isolated outrage by right-wing agents but as a portent. However, the analysis may not convince many. It would have been much easier for the Government to postpone the elections if some "leftist extremists" could have been involved in some action against men from the "free" world.

The nature of the attack will complicate the problem of providing security to visiting delegations. That



the head of State of a friendly power and his wife could be knocked down and the Deputy Foreign Minister killed by the driver of an airport baggage truck was unthinkable until Sunday.

## Deadlock Again

If you are a small country with easy contacts with big powers who are not friendly to each other but are interested in you for trade and strategic reasons, your size does not matter much. You can bask in your non-alignment and ask for concessions. But Nepal is hemmed in and depends on India for transit facilities. So long as her relations with India were benign, the situation did not cause much anxiety. But we are no longer that *bhai bhai*. Despite the not inconsiderable aid New Delhi has given to Kathmandu, despite the roads and other things built by Indians, the Nepalese, or many of them, no longer embrace them with overwhelming gratitude. Some of them, however, do not mind making a pretty pie by smuggling. That, however, is a sophisticated and profitable profession almost everywhere and should not cause so much heartburning as to disrupt normal intercourse.

One of the reasons for the souring of relations is, the Nepalese say, the overbearing attitude of New Delhi. Nepal was treated like a *de facto* protectorate. Now she wants to stand up. The tendency to assert herself became stronger after the emergence of communist China. Here was an ideal situation—two large powers unfriendly to each other competing for influence in the mountain kingdom which could take aid from both and thrive. But whatever the state policy, the national sentiments of the people are bound to assert themselves and they tend to do this against the power they have known much longer.

The simmering resentment came to a head over the presence of Indian military men in Nepal. The wireless operators on the border did not

provide sweet music to China. Nepal's non-alignment was at stake. After much angry debate, New Delhi gave in.

For a time. Renewal of the 10-year-old trade treaty provided New Delhi with a great and much awaited opportunity to exert pressure on the land-locked country. It was disclosed a few days ago that King Mahendra had agreed to exchange military information with India and that the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu would have a military attache. In the context of Nepal's relationship with China, this was no mean concession. But it appears that the Government of India, not content with this strategic gain, gave full play to the *bania* instinct that dominates our ruling politicians. It would not matter much if some Nepalese traders and smugglers utilised the gaps in the proposed treaty or treaties to make more money—some of the highest men in some ministries of the Government of India have been maligned at times for their links with the Arabian Gulf smugglers. But if you combine the attitude of a general with that of a *bania*, you may not have it all your way. A prolonged deadlock would further embitter India-Nepal relations.

## Policy Correlations

*A correspondent writes :*

The concept of a correlation between the internal and external policies of a country has been with us since the time of Sun Tzu in China, or Chanakya in our country—if there is a compulsive need to parade one's patriotism. But at no time, perhaps, has this relationship been so close and perfect as it is in India of Indira. For every external policy posture we have an equivalent in the internal sector.

The pseudo-leftist posture of bank nationalisation to befool the people at home has its equivalent in the foreign-policy posture of refusing to attend the Jakarta Conference on the ground that it was reactionary—a clever rationalisation

to conceal the "fraternal" arm-twisting of Moscow. The appointment of a monopoly commission, without really meaning to destroy monopoly at home, has its external policy equivalent in the brave posture against nuclear monopolists and in not signing away the nuclear option. The micro-leftism of abolishing the privy purses at home has perhaps its equivalent in India's criticism of neo-colonialism at Lusaka.

But in a major test of the present government's pretensions to radicalism, the government came out in its true colours. The Chief Ministers' conference held some time ago shelved the issue of fundamental land reform. And that has its foreign policy counterpart in our closing the issue of independence from the super-Powers. Mrs Gandhi's speech in the United Nations on its twenty-fifth anniversary has just confirmed this.

## Quebec

Quebec has long ceased to be the backwater of French civilisation but very rarely it attracts world attention. The separatists have made their presence felt very strongly after 1967 when General de Gaulle cried to a cheering crowd "Vive le Quebec libre". Foreign diplomats and Ministers have been kidnapped before; only last April the Guatemalan authorities forced the rebel armed forces to kill the West German Ambassador, Karl von Sprei, by refusing to free some of their members. None of these, however, happened in a developed country. That is why the rich countries of the West reacted differently to the happenings in Quebec. Canada by all accounts is a developed country. Even the province with French majority has made no mean progress since the end of the archaic regime of Premier Duplessis. The fear is that what is being done in Quebec could be performed tomorrow by the urban guerillas of the USA or the UK. A section of the Western press has taken upon itself the onerous task of suggesting

measures that should be taken in face of the violent challenge to society. But let it not be forgotten that the promulgation of martial law in Canada, which suspended the bill of rights, has not been able to contain the extremists but has split the Liberal ranks.

The Quebecois never identified themselves with the rest of Canada. In fact, the English colonialists have been held in contempt for over two centuries. The French act of surrender of New France, which became the first British colony of Canada, is a betrayal never to be forgiven. The feeling of being abandoned to a people who despised their culture, more than anything else, prevented them from looking to France for inspiration. Under the influence of the Church, the Quebecois turned obscurantists and inward looking. Urbanisation was discouraged for that would militate against the pursuit of a spiritual life. The English-speaking Canadians found it convenient to hold Quebec to ransom—the worst period of exploitation being during the regime of Duplessis. This power-crazy politician did great harm to his people by leaving economic affairs to the English community and education to the Church. Certain reformatory programmes were carried out after the Liberal Prime Minister initiated the 'quiet revolution', but the Quebecois still remained foreigners in their own land. Pierre Elliott Trudeau once enjoyed their confidence but there was estrangement as he rose to power as an establishment Liberal.

The Prime Minister must now be ruminating how the separatists could develop such a broad base, which he is reluctant to admit in public. Insufficient autonomy, then granted too late, indifference of the Federal Government to Quebec's problems, the continuing Anglo-Canadian and American exploitation and the lower standard of living of the French community allowed frustration to build up to a crisis point. The kidnapping of James Cross and Pierre Laporte came as a rude shock as the authorities believed that the granting

of certain concessions would keep Quebec quiet. It was also claimed that Front de Liberation du Quebec has ceased to live for all practical purpose. But composed of small units of five or six members, the FLQ is a highly decentralised body. Its members have been able to elude the police dragnet because of their rapport with the masses. Today not merely the symbols of 'English oppression' are attacked, but the Front is also very active in industrial areas.

### *View from Delhi*

## The Poll Star

FROM A POLITICAL  
CORRESPONDENT

THE Congress-O and the Jana Sangh have always dreaded a snap Lok Sabha election and the CPI has all the time been advising Mrs Indira Gandhi assiduously to hold one. On the eve of the winter session of Parliament Mrs Gandhi's decision on a Lok Sabha poll in February 1971 is anybody's guess. There are factors in favour of one: the last four monsoons have been unexpectedly good and so it is fair reckoning that the next year would witness a drought and a bad harvest. The pressure on prices is becoming acute and it is possible that there would be a serious crisis next year. But against this are countervailing factors that militate against an early poll: Mrs Gandhi has not regained control of Uttar Pradesh and the position of her party in Bihar is most vulnerable. Organisationally her party is not prepared for an early election though fund-raising efforts might have succeeded beyond doubt.

There is a good deal of chicanery to the whole game. Both Mr Chavan and Mr Jagjivan Ram have been opposed to an early poll though it is now known that a discussion in depth between Mrs Gandhi and her two detractors took place on October 19 and 20 on the advisability of a

snap election. It is wrong to say the two aspirants to Prime Ministership support Mrs Gandhi's thinking. The options are with her. If the Supreme Court strikes down the executive order de-recognising the princes, Mrs Gandhi might be obliged to seek dissolution of Parliament and ask for a fresh poll. This is just one of the many arguments. But the fact is, a mid-term Lok Sabha poll will not alter the complexion of the Rajya Sabha which in fact technically defeated the Constitution amendment bill on privy purses and privileges. Maybe, Mr N. K. Krishnan of the CPI will scrape through the Rajya Sabha by-election to provide one more vote for the bill (in the place of Mr Acharya Menon who ceased to be a member of the House when the last vote took place). But a Lok Sabha election is hardly the answer to an adverse Supreme Court verdict.

Other compelling reasons might be there in favour of a poll. An adverse Supreme Court judgment could be made the campaign point to confront the rightist parties. But will Mrs Gandhi risk such a gamble? Any gamble defies rational analysis and Mrs Gandhi might well embark on one.

As Mrs Gandhi returned home, Mr T. N. Kaul was in Moscow on what clearly is a puzzling assignment. An assurance of sorts that Moscow will not supply Rawalpindi any more military hardware seems to have been wrested. As for the objectionable maps, the Soviet side showed Mr Kaul some maps which with regard to NEFA have taken a neutral position—it recognises the claim line of either of the contending countries which means it reserves the option to support either of the sides when the dispute goes to a conference table once again.

### Hanoi's Snub

Observers have not failed to note a laboured attempt on New Delhi's part to tone down the attacks on the United States alongside a public stance of cold formality towards the Soviet Union. But the snubbing the Prime Minister's miserable diploma-



tic offensive got from Hanoi is more significant. It was the height of impertinence for New Delhi to suggest or imply that Nixon's proposals (which both the PRG and the DRV have rejected) have something in common with the PRG's. This was what Mr Nixon would have liked New Delhi to say. Sending Mr Eric Gonsalves to give the world the impression that India was trying to find the basis of accord between the United States and the PRG and the DRV was the next act of impertinence.

Mrs Gandhi's statement at Palam doubting the utility of exchanging ambassadors with China just now was perhaps meant as a belated corrective to the campaign built up by her own Foreign Office about signs of relentment on China's part. What seems to have been missed here is the dialectical relationship between the Sino-Soviet border dispute and the Sino-Indian border dispute and the relation of the two to the larger Sino-Soviet ideological dispute. Even the map controversy has a lot to do with the two border disputes.

There are, it is said, signs of Peking's coldness towards the CPI(ML) whose sole claim to legitimacy as India's only genuine Maoist party rested on the recognition conferred on it by the Communist Party of China. Of late, not only have there been fewer references to the "Indian revisionists" (that is the CPI(M) as distinct from the "Dange clique, that is, the CPI but a studied silence a'so on the Calcutta events. This might be a calculated prelude to diplomatic overtures to India.

While the CPI(M) is campaigning half-heartedly for a negotiated settlement with China, the CPI is busy building bridges with the Establishment in New Delhi with an eye on a possible West Bengal mid-term poll. Mr Ajoy Mukherjee has successfully given the impression that he is running the West Bengal administration by proxy and the timing of the mid-term elections is a matter for his decision. The Congress-R is not yet sure that the alliance it is going to rig up will win the State against the formidable Marxists.

Meantime, the Congress-R's alliance with the CPI has come under a severe strain in Kerala over the Rajya Sabha seat. The CPI leadership talked the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee(R) into believing that Mr Bhupesh Gupta is retiring and the CPI needs a senior leader in the Rajya Sabha while in fact Mr Gupta got re-elected in February 1970 and has over five years to go. Mr N. K. Krishnan of Tamil Nadu was foisted

on Kerala as the Congress-R tamely surrendered its claim to Mr Achutha Menon's seat. The Youth Congress in Kerala has charged the CPI with big party bossism. The charge should have a familiar ring for the Lenins of Asaf Ali Road because until the other day it was being hurled by somebody at the Marxists in Kerala and West Bengal. Like life, politics has a cussed logic of its own.

November 1, 1970

## Mending Fences With Peking

R. K. SHARMA

THE hostility between India and China is by now eight years old. The cold war between the two is a little older. Of course, some "wise" spokesmen of India as early as October 1, 1949 warned about the "subversive" and "imperialistic" designs of the Chinese Government, but it was only later that the Indian Government accepted this "wisdom". The Government, whose performance on almost every other front has been faltering or a near failure, made surprisingly effective and vigorous use of this "wisdom".

Things are changing abroad. The dust of the Cultural Revolution has nearly settled in China. The formulators of her foreign policy have undertaken the task of fence mending. During the last few months, Peking has made several gestures towards India, hints, perhaps, for a new beginning in Sino-Indian relations. The obvious aim is to normalise, these and if possible, to patch up the differences.

In Kathmandu, on the occasion of Prince Birendra's marriage, Kuo Mo-jo (who is not a junior boy of Peking but a member of the decision-making echelon) took the initiative in being friendly towards Mr V. V. Giri and Mr Raj Bahadur, our Ambassador.

Again, China hailed the Lusaka non-aligned conference. Quite unusually she refrained from criticising the Government of India's stand at Lusaka and Mrs Indira Gandhi's per-

formance there. In fact, the Chinese agreed with the content and the spirit of the Lusaka meet.

In Cairo, the Chinese Ambassador has had a longish informal meeting with his Indian counterpart.

*Should* the Government of India reciprocate? *Would* it reciprocate even commensurately? The answer is—it *should* but *would not*. It should. In the interests of the peoples of both countries the cold war must end. They at least should normalise their relations. India's dispute with China is not only a territorial one. It is, in the main, a political one. Therefore, it has to be settled politically. The question cannot be entirely left to the experts of international law and soldiers alone.

Secondly, the cold war with China has greatly reduced India's diplomatic manoeuvrability in international diplomacy. Take a careful look at the priority list of China. There India occupies quite low priority. But if we look at India's priority list China occupies the first place and Pakistan comes next. It will not be an overstatement to say that our foreign policy begins and ends with China and Pakistan. In other words, India, vis-a-vis China, has been placed more or less in a position where India has placed Pakistan vis-a-vis Kashmir. This may be unavoidable for a small and unambitious country like Pakistan but for a potentially big power like India, it is definitely not a plus

but a minus. The first casualty has been our policy of anti-colonialism and our solidarity with the Third World.

But the Government of India would not take the right step. The USA and more than the USA, the USSR would not want New Delhi to patch up with Peking. This is the crux of the dilemma. The dilemma is that the duopoly that is the U.S. and the USSR does not want India to emerge as a considerable power to sort out her own problems. What Mrs Indira Gandhi had in mind when she spoke of neo-colonialism of the super-powers (at the U.N.) is nothing but this joint hegemony. What is strange is that she protests against this duopoly but does not break away from it.

One can go a step further and spell out this dilemma a little more boldly. The ruling class in this country feels that it is not in its interest to reach even a workable agreement with China. The ruling party of the ruling class as well as the "opposition" party of the ruling class have almost complete unanimity of outlook on this question. The differences between the two relate more to the Soviet Union than to China.

There is another possibility. True, the Americans are the progenitors of the theory of containment of China. But it is also true that they are a very pragmatic people. Once the U.S. is convinced about China's nuclear deterrence and China proves that she is well qualified to join the club of super-powers, the U.S. might work out some sort of *modus vivendi* with China. In other words, the U.S. would recognise the fact of China's "existence" and her power and would recast its policies accordingly. It may not take too long, not even a decade. What would the Government of India do then? Curse the Americans or curse the Soviets? A rational step would be to reciprocate, at least commensurately, to China's gestures right now and see, without slackening our defence preparedness, if there is any way to mend the fences.

# The Sino-Soviet Dispute

NEVILLE MAXWELL

*The negotiations between China and the USSR on their boundaries are deadlocked. There has been no recent news of border clashes, but bitter attacks on the Chinese Government continue to come from Moscow, and are reciprocated from Peking. As happened with the Sino-Indian border dispute, the merits of the case get lost in the argument, with each side accusing the other of intransigence, and of using the boundary question to cover ulterior and sinister political motives. Are there rights and wrongs in the question, and if so, where do they lie? Neville Maxwell, whose study of the Sino-Indian dispute, India's China War, has been published here, seeks to answer these questions:*

**T**HERE is no substantive territorial dispute between China and the USSR.

The People's Republic of China inherited sweeping irredentist claims when it took power in 1949, Chinese nationalists having long looked forward to the day when, her strength regained, their country might undo the "unequal treaties" of the 19th century and reclaim her lost lands. A government in Peking which tried to implement such claims would have become involved in intractable disputes with several of her neighbours—but most of all with the Soviet Union. Where some of China's other neighbours, such as British India, had nibbled at her territory, Tsarist Russia had bitten out vast tracts. Russia's great thrust of expansion through Siberia to the Pacific and then across, onto the north American continent, turned southward in the 17th century. At first China, under the Manchu dynasty, held the Russians back; but the Russians renewed their pressure in the mid-19th century, taking advantage, like the other imperial powers, of China's decline. They annexed

China's whole Pacific seaboard, pushing the Manchu domains back behind the Amur River and its tributary the Ussuri, and making of those great streams—until then inland rivers of China, closed to Russian shipping—the eastern boundaries between Russia and China. At the same time they annexed other areas which the Manchus regarded as China's in Central Asia.

The Karakhan manifesto of 1920, in which the new Bolshevik government in Moscow pledged to return to China "free of charge and forever" what had been taken from her by the Tsars, encouraged Chinese hopes of regaining her lost territory. But the Karakhan manifesto was not followed up, China found that, far from regaining territory, she would be hard pressed not to lose Sinkiang and Manchuria, to the USSR and/or Japan. Threats to and amputation of what had been China's territory continued up to the very moment in 1949 when, in the words of Mao Tse-tung, she "stood up" from her long prostration. Consolidation of the territory left to China was consequently among the most urgent priorities of the new regime. Central authority was reasserted in Sinkiang (in spite of Stalin's efforts to persuade the war-lord there to proclaim his independence), then in Tibet, where the authority of Peking had not reached since 1911. But there was no attempt to turn the clock back.

The new men who took power in Peking showed themselves interested in the future of China, not in restoring the boundaries of her imperial past. They turned their backs on the vision of *China irredenta*—and on the endless quarrels which such a dream must create—and decided instead to settle their boundaries with their neighbours on the basis of the *status quo*. This meant that China



made no territorial claims against any of her neighbours.

Even when China dropped all territorial claims, however, there remained a need to define her boundaries. In some sectors of her vast frontier the boundary had never been delimited, she was separated from her neighbours either by tracts of no-man's-land or by vague borders established by custom. At the Bandung conference in 1953 Chou En-lai set out his government's policy in such cases, saying that China was ready to determine such boundaries through negotiations with the neighbours concerned; pending settlement, the Chinese would maintain the *status quo*, and would use only peaceful means in settling any differences. Five of China's neighbours accepted that this approach was reasonable and practical, and negotiated boundary settlements: Burma, Nepal, Mongolia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. All of these achieved the boundary alignments they had sought, with marginal modifications by agreement.

### Two Refusing Neighbours

Two of China's neighbours have refused thus to settle their boundaries, maintaining that those are already settled and that Peking's insistence on negotiations is a cover for irredentism: India first, now the USSR. The Sino-Indian dispute is so encased in misrepresentation and misunderstanding that it needs a full study to excavate it. Here it can only be stated that China sought a negotiated settlement on the basis of the *status quo*, while India rejected that approach. India then sought to implement a historically questionable claim to the Aksai Chin territory between Sinkiang and Kashmir by force, under the so-called "forward policy"; and the Chinese attack of 1962 was in response to that military challenge by the Indians.

The problem of the Sino-Indian boundaries was complicated by the question of Tibet's status; but the Sino-Soviet boundary question was relatively straightforward. Once Peking had decided to write off all claim on the areas annexed by Russia in the

19th century, the question became only that of confirming and defining the alignments left by those 19th century treaties, and then moving on to demarcating the boundaries—i.e. marking them out on the ground, a step necessary to any final boundary settlement, which had never been undertaken so far as most of the Sino-Soviet boundaries were concerned.

So far as Peking was concerned, a new boundary treaty—even if confirming the old alignments—would rule out the shame of the old, "unequal treaties". It seemed simple. Chou En-lai remarked in 1960 that it amounted only to "a very small discrepancy on maps [which] is very very easy to settle". But by 1964, when Moscow and Peking took up the boundary question, distrust and hostility between them was advanced, and negotiations broke down. They broke down, it appears, on Moscow's refusal to submit the question to comprehensive negotiations. All the Russians would agree to was to "discuss the question of specifying the frontier line over individual stretches", the implication being that Moscow would decide which "individual stretches" would be discussed. To the Chinese, that looked like the Tsarist approach all over again: and if there is one unshakable and consistent element in all of Peking's policies, it is the insistence on *equality* in dealings between governments.

The question was not exclusively that of the approach to settlement. In some areas there were disputes over exactly what the 19th century treaties said, or meant, and while these were marginal they could still involve hundreds of square miles—or, in the case of the river boundaries in the east, important islands like those at the confluence of the Amur and the Ussuri, and traffic rights. Again, the Chinese stand has been clear: take the original treaty as the basis for settlement; and where that is not decisive, compromise disputes in the light of the *status quo* and in consideration of the interests of local inhabitants.

The Chinese have also suggested

that where there is likelihood of armed clashes over such patches of disputed territory, both sides should withdraw their armed forces from such areas—civil administration not being affected.

The Chinese approach seems, in this analysis, pragmatic and moderate. Why then have the current negotiations in Peking reached a deadlock, as did those in 1964?

An answer might be found in Moscow's account of the dispute with China. This is how the Russians, in official statements describe the Chinese approach:

Using the far-fetched pretext of righting the "injuries" of past centuries, the Chinese Government tries to substantiate its claims to 1,500,000 square kilometres of indigenous Soviet territories... The Chinese leaders are today laying claim to land that Chinese conquerors entered or planned to enter in the remote past....

This is a perversion of the Chinese approach, and it must be deliberate. (That such misrepresentation of Peking's approach has very widely been believed reflects not any subtlety on Moscow's part, but rather the extent of distrust there is against the Chinese. Whenever they are involved in a dispute with anyone, on any issue, it is instantly assumed that the Chinese provoked the dispute, and are at fault).

### 'Pre-emptive Strike'

What is the purpose behind Moscow's misrepresentation of the Chinese approach? There is evidence to suggest that some hawks in the Kremlin believe that the USSR should launch a pre-emptive attack on China before the Chinese become too strong. If these hawks have their way, and the Soviet Government intends to attack China, either by missile salvo or by an invasion of Manchuria (where the Russian Army was in occupation only twenty years ago) and Sinkiang, Moscow's misrepresentations would be intelligible. Governments which themselves intend aggressive action have always tried to make their intended

victim look like the aggressor, who by his own provocations brings retribution on himself.

The real motive behind such action would not be anything that happened along the borders, but rather China's steady growth in power. After the 1955 summit conference Harold Macmillan noted in his diary that the Russians, unhappy with Mao, would have preferred "a weak nationalist or capitalist China they could plunder".

If that put it too strongly, we have the recent Russian warning to China, that "there can be no genuine third force in the world scene in our times... There is no room for one anymore. Those who try to become such a force have come too late in history". China's launching of a space satellite shows that she is becoming just such a third force. The question is whether the Russians will accept it, or try to break China's power while they still can.

## Denigrating Stalin

MONI GUHA

**I**MMEDIATELY after the 20th Congress of the CPSU and Khrushchev's secret report almost all the communist parties of the world, not excluding the CP of China, joined the chorus with Khrushchev in denouncing Stalin. Almost overnight they discovered that some of Stalin's theories were subjective and onesided—that he became conceited and impudent and gave wrong advice to the international communist movement. Surprisingly enough, concrete instances were not given. Nobody attempted, rather dared, to analyse and assess the four brilliant documents discussed at the Nineteenth Congress. Moreover, some comrades, in their overzealousness to prove that Mao Tse-tung is greater and more original than Stalin, misinterpreted some of Stalin's theories, managed to forget some of his brilliant theses and joined the anti-Stalin chorus. While Khrushchev & Co tried to obliterate Stalin from the pages of history, these people recognised Stalin as a continuator of Lenin's cause, as a defender of Lenin, but not as a developer of and contributor to the development of Marxism-Leninism. As such it is no wonder, nor is it an accident, that in the issue of July 25, 1970 of *Frontier*, Mr P. C. Dutta in his "India-China dispute and the Soviet Union" levelled some uncalled for charges against Stalin, though the

CPC said in its "On the question of Stalin": "The facts have shown ever more clearly that their (Khrushchev & Co) revision of the Marxist-Leninist theories on imperialist war and peace, proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, revolution in colonies and semi-colonies, the proletarian party etc. is inseparably connected with their complete negation of Stalin."

Three days before the 19th Congress of the CPSU opened, a collection of comments on the draft of a new text-book on political economy under the title *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* written by Stalin was published in Moscow. The 19th Congress of the CPSU was held in October 1952 and Stalin 'died' in March 1953, within six months of the congress and the publication of his book.

These events occurred in such rapid succession that the policy guidelines of the 19th Congress and the *Economic Problems of Socialism* did not receive the attention and analysis they deserved. A stage-managed silence on the policy guidelines of the 19th Congress was maintained by the leadership of the CPSU after Stalin's death. The four documents, viz *The Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, the Report of the Central Committee delivered by Malenkov, the brief but most significant

closing speech delivered by Stalin to the delegates of the foreign communist parties and the new Party Statutes and the organisational report of the Central Committee, delivered by Khrushchev, were never discussed and analysed. Taken together these documents conveyed an analysis of the international situation and the policy guidelines for the Soviet Union, the world communist movement and the problems of peace and war. The only 'attention' that was given to these documents was Mikoyan's criticism of Stalin's essay as "hardly correct" at the 20th Congress, and as "vulgarily simplified" at the 1961 Congress, and then those documents were buried for ever. Most surprising is the fact that those who do not agree with the onesided negation of Stalin and recognise the great role he played are also not serious at all in reopening the question of Stalin and re-assessing these historic documents.

### Postwar Background

Before going into these documents it is necessary to discuss some aspects of the postwar situation and the imperialist conspiracies in and around the Soviet Union and Stalin's fight against all these. Historical parallels are bad logic, but one may compare the situation in China and the position of Mao Tse-tung in the CPC vis-à-vis Liu Shao-chi & Co to that of Stalin in the Soviet Union in the period from 1945, especially from 1949 up to his death. From 1956 Mao Tse-tung, relinquishing the post of chairmanship of the PRC, concentrated his energies in the party to fighting revisionism and yet it took him more than eight years to launch a frontal attack against Liu Shao-chi & Co. Stalin had been preparing for the final fray from 1949, but before he could set the stage, he died.

One must not forget the notorious Fulton speech of Churchill which set the imperialist ball rolling against the Soviet Union. 'Containment of the Soviet Union' was the war cry of the imperialists. The enemy tried to play his role both from without and within. In December 1948 *New York Times* quoted Truman as say-



ing that he thought some Russian leaders wanted to be conciliatory towards the United States, thus showing the complicity of some Russian leaders in the U.S. conspiracy. Together with the conspiracy of the imperialist powers, beneath the outward appearance of monolithic conformity, incipient revisionist pressures were challenging Stalin and his line. Between the party's wartime losses and the mass admission of new members during and immediately following the war, about half the party membership by 1947 consisted of unseasoned recruits. In a widespread party verification members were subjected to scrutiny for ideological and technical competence. A substantial volume of criticism and self-criticism concerning the charges of inefficiency and in some cases corruption, were reported. At the 1947 meeting of the Cominform, Malenkov indicated that a revision of the party statute was in process to tighten admission requirements and ideological discipline and that a new party programme was being prepared by the Central Committee to replace the obsolete 1919 programme. Although the party statute and the new party programme were in the process of preparation from 1947, the statute could not be presented before the 19th Congress in October 1952, and the new programme could not at all be presented during the lifetime of Stalin. From this one can realise the depth and volume of intransigence inside the party that Stalin had to cope with.

One can only gauge the depth and range of the conspiracy against Stalin and Marxism-Leninism when one goes into the international implications of the Leningrad affair. In one of his letters to Tito, Stalin charged Yugoslavia with complicity with the Leningrad group. The letter accused Djilas of having collected intelligence from the Leningrad organisation during his visit to the city in January 1948. Together with this, Yugoslavia's conspiracy in forming an East European bloc including monarchist Greece, thus drowning the revolution in Greece

and isolating and containing the Soviet Union must not be forgotten.

Keeping this background in mind, let us now discuss whether Stalin remained "almost oblivious of the fact that nationalism and capitalism were striking roots in his own country" (*Frontier*, July 25).

In his famous pre-election speech of February 9, 1946, Stalin laid down the future guidelines of Soviet society keeping in view the development of the international situation, the world economy of capitalism, and refuting the revisionist line of the possibility of peaceful development of socialism. That speech showed that there was to be no respite for the war-weary population of the Soviet Union, no concession to the craving for relaxation and comfort. Instead Stalin set high industrial targets as opposed to light industry and consumer goods, to be achieved by the Soviet economy in the course of three projected five-year plans, that is, by 1961. "Only under such conditions can we consider that our homeland will be guaranteed against all possible accidents" (emphasis added). "The possible accidents" were the possibility of restoration of capitalism from within and without. If one goes carefully through this pre-election speech, one would find the charges against Stalin that he did not count the danger of the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union hollow.

#### Varga's Thesis

Stalin's pre-election speech and the introduction of the postwar Five Year Plan came as a shock both to the imperialists abroad and the revisionists at home. The revisionists could no longer remain lying low. They raised their heads, placing Eugene Varga at the helm. Varga was the chief of the Institute of World Economics and Politics and one of the most eminent authorities on world economy in the communist world. He foretold the 1929 crisis of capitalist economy and subsequently wrote a brilliant book, *The Great Economic Crisis and its Political Consequences*. As such, he was the most suitable person for

the revisionists to counter Stalin's line. In September 1946, Varga published *Changes in Economy of Capitalism resulting from the Second World War*, in which he propagated the relative stabilisation of capitalism through the increasing intervention of the state in the economic process, the possibility of socialist reform in Europe without revolution and the possibility of economic planning under capitalism. His theory further implied that war was not inevitable even while imperialism continued, and suggested a non-revolutionary policy on the part of the Soviet Union, anticipating eventual peaceful gains as a result of the breakdown of colonialism and evolutionary changes in capitalist states. This was pure revisionism, which people tried to introduce in the Soviet Union, immediately after the termination of the war and against which Stalin fought. Khrushchev & Co accepted and adopted all the theories of Varga after Stalin's death.

Immediately after the publication of Varga's book in September 1946, public discussions were organised and the book was severely attacked. Not only were all the "theories" propounded by Varga heatedly rejected, but Varga was also charged with betrayal. In spite of all this criticism which appeared in the *Problems of Economics*, *Problems of Philosophy and Party Life*, Varga remained firm and continued to stick, to the essentials of his position with a reasonable degree of "independence of spirit". This proved how strongly entrenched were the revisionists inside the Party. But Stalin did not stop fighting revisionism, after the first round of his defeat. The criticism and attack on Varga and his line continued through late 1947 and early 1948 and reached a new intensity in October 1948 at an enlarged session of the Learned Council of the Economic Institute of the Academy of Sciences called to discuss the "Shortcomings and Problems of Research in the field of Economics." At this meeting Varga was charged with 'retreat from Marxism-Leninism to reformism', while the bourgeois press claimed him as

a man of "Western orientation." Varga stood firm this time too. However, in March 1949, Stalin was able to muster strong his forces and ultimately Varga was forced to retreat. He promised to correct his errors in a revised edition of his work, which appeared in 1953. He was at particular pains in his letter to Pravda to dissociate himself from those in the West. "I wish to protest most strongly against the dark hints of the war instigators to the effect that I am a man of Western orientation. Today, in the present historical circumstances, that would mean being a counter-revolutionary, an anti-Soviet traitor to the working class."

The attitude to the capitalist world economy was to have a vital bearing on policy direction and as such there was obvious dispute within the Party on this question. Sometimes Stalin had the majority, sometimes he was in the minority. So the fight against revisionism was not a matter of simply thrusting a knife into butter. In all other fields of politics, administration, intellectual and artistic activities the campaign against revisionism was in full swing. Zhdanov's assault was on ideological slackness in literature and arts, in philosophy and other academic fields. Artists and intellectuals were remobilised into the service of the Party's goals, organisations and journals were dissolved or reorganised. It was a sort of cultural revolution on all fronts. These are all well-known facts.

Not all the information regarding Stalin's fight against the revisionist conspiracy is available or known as it was deliberately suppressed subsequently or destroyed. We now know that Mao Tse-tung opposed the Khrushchev line and the line of the 20th Congress on the very morrow of its session, but within two months of the Congress, and on December 29 of the same year the CPC leadership published two articles entitled "The Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" and "More on the Historical experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" basically and principally supporting the 20th Congress. If from this we con-

clude that Mao remained oblivious to the fact that revisionism in his own country and in the Soviet Union was striking roots, then it would be doing injustice to Mao.

#### After Varga, Voznesensky

After Varga came Nikolai A. Voznesensky, Deputy Prime Minister, and Chairman of the State Planning Commission and a member of the Politbureau. Like Varga, Voznesensky was also a precursor of revisionism in the present-day Soviet economics. He had also written a book entitled *The Economy of the USSR during World War II*. This time the revisionists were particularly cautious and they proceeded more cunningly. Voznesensky had been among those who had led the attack on Varga in 1948 and even argued in his book against Varga's belief that capitalist states could engage in planning. But in substance there was no inconsistency between Varga's analysis of capitalism and Voznesensky's prescription for the Soviet economy. With the publication of his book the revisionists made a great noise and as a result the book received a Stalin Prize in May 1948 and was highly praised in Soviet and the world communist press. This must, in no way, be taken that Stalin supported Voznesensky's book or line. Take the example of China. The fate of Liu Shao-chi's book *How to be a good Communist* is well known. But, immediately after the 20th Congress of the CPSU and especially after the Eighth Congress of the CPC, this very book was reprinted twice with certain alterations and additions, with a great fanfare, and introduced in the CPC as one of the compulsory text-books. This, certainly, does not mean that Mao Tse-tung supported the book. He had to swallow many a bitter pill given by Liu Shao-chi & Co and he had to "lie low" for a time. However, the publication of Voznesensky's book and the award of the Stalin prize once more demonstrated how strongly the revisionists were entrenched in the party and administration and how arduous and tortuous was the fight Stalin had to wage

against the revisionists. While rejecting Varga's theory of the possibility of temporary stabilisation of capitalism, non-inevitability of war and a long-term perspective of the competition between the two systems, Voznesensky had advocated a greater degree of "rationality" in the administration of the economy, for taking account of the real costs in assigning prices to producer goods and for reapportioning the balance of economy between light and heavy industries with additional emphasis on consumer goods. All these points were repudiated and demolished by Stalin in his *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*. Despite the Stalin prize, Stalin ultimately was able to organise public discussion on Voznesensky's book and Voznesensky was ultimately relieved of his various positions at a meeting of the Supreme Soviet in March 1949. Yet Stalin had to face stiff opposition. P. N. Fedoseyev, editor of the *Bolshhevik*, continued to praise this book in a guarded way, in the name of review and criticism. Action against P. N. Fedoseyev and others could not be taken before 1952 for the "syco-phantic praise" of Voznesensky.

It will take more than a volume to analyse in detail Stalin's fight against revisionism though the material at our disposal is scanty and disjointed.

The author of "India-China Dispute and the Soviet Union" (*Frontier*, July 25), charges Stalin with the following: (a) great-nation chauvinism; (b) introduction of the principles of special incentives to scientists, managers and specialists guided by the principle of 'pay according to labour' which created conditions for the growth of the 'Soviet bourgeoisie'; (c) unwillingness to see any communist state independent of the Soviet Union politically and militarily and (d) the theory of socialism in one country which later developed into communism in one country. To all this, intend to return later.

One thing remains to be cleared. One should be modest in criticising Stalin and at the same time should take pains to know the 'whys' and 'wherefores' of the events. To prove



the undisputed greatness and originality of Mao Tse-tung one need not belittle Stalin's greatness and originality. Mao Tse-tung's thought is the continuation of Stalin's thought and

activity, plus Mao's own additions. In the art and science of continuation and in the genius and talent of addition and development lies Mao's greatness and originality, not in re-

pudiation and renunciation of Stalin or Stalin's thought. Repudiation will lead us straight to Trotskyism on the one hand and Khrushchevite revisionism on the other.

## Strategy For Development : India, China And The Soviet Union—II

The Chinese Experiment

RANJAN SENGUPTA

UNLIKE in the Soviet Union, the civil war preceded rather than followed the 1949 revolution in China. The Chinese leadership unlike its Soviet counterpart in 1917 had ample opportunity to gain governmental experience, particularly at the local level; as such it came to power much better prepared for building a new order, with a much clearer concept of what was to be done and how. China had already before itself a crystallised socialist development model from which it could draw certain lessons concerning measures and policies to emulate or to avoid, and upon which it could lean for economic support, at least for a while. Although there were significant local variations, the broad outline of the envisaged development pattern in China more or less followed the Soviet example, at least until 1957.

The initial economic conditions in China however, were very much different from those in the Soviet Union in its corresponding stage. The Chinese population pressure per acre of cultivated land in 1952 was almost ten-fold that of the Soviet Union in 1928. The Soviet grain output per capita in that year amounted to 480 kg as against only 220 kg. in China in 1952. Again on per capita basis, China's output of steel, oil, timber and flour was less than 10 per cent of the Soviet production; the corresponding figure was less than 25 per cent for pig iron, chemical fertilisers and sugar and less than 50 per cent for coal, electric power, cement, paper and cotton cloth. Thus in terms of a number of major indicators, China

of 1952 lagged considerably behind the Soviet Union on the eve of its First Plan and slightly behind even contemporary India.

In 1949 China inherited a totally disrupted economy in which both industrial and agricultural production had been drastically curtailed owing to the protracted civil war and the war against imperialism. It is one of China's great achievements that in just two years, by 1952, the phase of recovery was completed. Both industrial and agricultural outputs were restored to their pre-1949 peaks; inflation was arrested; and fiscal and monetary stability was achieved.

The high density of farm population in China could be initially maintained only by intensive land use, based on double-cropping of vast areas and age-old soil conservation and irrigation practices. The crop yields per acre were relatively high, while yields per man were quite low. This fact suggests that crop production had been pushed about as far as traditional practices and methods would permit and that further large improvements in farm output could be attained only through the introduction of new technology and improved practices.

In the first phase of land reform (1949-52), the holdings of the landlords were expropriated and the land was redistributed to the tenant cultivators and landless workers. The average size of farms, therefore, was suboptimal from the standpoint of production efficiency. But it was indeed a tactically necessary stage designed to break the political and eco-

nomic power of the landlords. The private small-scale farming of this period was followed immediately in 1953 and 1954 by mutual aid teams and semi-socialist co-operatives.

### Tractors First?

Without appropriate institutional reform, it was held, technical advance and the resulting increased production in agriculture were impossible. Until 1954 technical progress was to a large extent, though not exclusively, identified with mechanisation; and it was believed that, as in the Soviet Union, collectivisation was possible only when mechanisation had been introduced. But this, in turn, required waiting until China's industry was in a position to supply the necessary equipment. Then in 1954 an important shift in the discussion about the relationship between collectivisation and mechanisation took place. Collectivisation was now seen as a precondition for mechanisation, not vice versa. Furthermore, the concept of "technical reform" of agriculture was viewed in a wider perspective which included much more than mechanisation. For China, it was argued, the high man-to-land ratio and the shortage of machinery called for technical innovations of a labour-intensive type such as double-cropping of rice, close planting, deeper ploughing, and the introduction of improved but traditional types of implements.

The campaign initiated in the summer of 1955 by Mao's speech "On Co-operativisation" led to the "high tide of socialism", so that fully

collective farms were established in most areas of China by the autumn of 1956. In fact by the end of 1956, the process of nationalisation and socialisation of the entire economy was completed both in the countryside and in the cities.

Collectivisation was indeed highly successful, for it was welcomed by the peasantry. And collective farms did prove that they were capable of introducing changes. For example, the extension of double-cropping alone increased the sown area of rice by 12.6 per cent over 1955. There is also sufficient evidence that collectives did mobilise more resources for agricultural work than had ever been possible before.

In 1958 a new strategy was evolved which is known as the Great Leap Forward. The particular features of the Great Leap strategy—mass mobilisation of labour, “walking on two legs”, decentralisation of economic management, and the communes—were all unique to China. The concept of reliance on the “mass line” in order to release the “spontaneous initiative of the masses” and to stimulate “economic development from below” was possibly derived from the experiences during the long civil war from 1927 to 1949. On many occasions in these years, the workers and the peasantry led by local party cadres were isolated and had to make decisions for themselves with minimum or no contact with the party centre. The leaders of such groups had wide latitude, and they in turn had to use maximum initiative and judgment. Acting frequently without benefit of detailed party directives, they had to second-guess party policy and strategy as of that moment. It was therefore held that if this approach was successful in fighting the civil war, then in peace-time giving local cadres a similar latitude in handling the local economy should work that much better. This was of course an unprecedented strategy. Even in the Soviet Union there had been no attempt at mass mobilisation on such a scale and decentralisation had never been carried as far as it was in China during 1958.

Agricultural collectives (740,000 in number with an average membership of roughly 175 households in the spring of 1958), however, were found too small and too numerous to administer and control vast mass-labour projects. Communes, representing an amalgamation of almost 30 collectives and having an average of 4,330 households each, were much better suited to the purpose. Subsequently, of course, further reorganisation took place, restoring a modified form of the collectives that had been displaced; presumably this was done after the mass-labour projects were well under way.

#### No Gigantism

On the industrial front, the year 1957 marked a turning point when the principle of major reliance on “gigantism” in industrial technology was first questioned. As a part of the Great Leap strategy, instead a technological dualism was introduced. This “walking on two legs” policy called for simultaneous development of “the small and the large” and the simultaneous development of “the modern and the indigenous”. Under the slogan “all people to steel”, for instance, backyard furnaces were set up which were good enough for the purpose of manufacturing improved versions of the traditional agricultural implements. Occasionally there were excesses and lapses, perhaps. It might be true that the infamous heavy steel, double-wheeled, double-bladed plough was unsuitable for certain kinds of paddy fields. Nonetheless the fact remains that the ground for a major technological advance in the age-old Chinese agriculture had been prepared.

During most of the 1950's about one-half of China's foreign trade was with the Soviet Union, approximately 20 per cent with other communist countries, and the remaining 30 per cent with others. In the period 1950-55, its import surplus with the Soviet Union amounted to roughly 993 million U.S. dollars, which was financed by Soviet loans. But since 1956, China had an export surplus which was used for repayment. In

fact, 1957 was the year in which China received the last instalment of Soviet loans. Various estimates of the total Soviet loan to China converge on the figure of approximately two billion U.S. dollars, of which only 400 million dollars was economic loan and the remaining 1600 million dollars was military aid and loans which were provided specially during the Korean War. On the other hand, China's foreign aid to various countries during 1954-65 was about 1.5 billion dollars. In this sense the net foreign aid received by China works out to be some 500 million dollars so far; by contrast India had received much more than twelve times as much up to 1966.

The imports from the Soviet Union played a crucial role in the early stage of industrialisation in China. Not only was a large part of imports earmarked for machine-building industries but in order to win the race against time, China depended initially to a significant degree on import of complete plants installed and handed over as turn-key jobs. There is no other country in which complete plant deliveries have assumed as much importance as they did in China—in terms both of the volume of imports and of their role in the country's industrialisation. These complete plant projects constituted an integral part of the Great Leap. Simultaneously with imports of complete plant installations China, of course, developed her own skill and industry for machine-building, so that when in July 1960 the abrupt withdrawal of all Soviet experts and assistance took place, China was well prepared for self-reliance.

#### India: Capitalists & Kulaks

In India it was the bourgeoisie in alliance with the landlords who had led the struggle for independence through their political organisation, the Congress. And as such quite naturally the strategy for economic development in India has been so formulated as to subserve their class interests, even though superficially it appears to have drawn inspiration from the Soviet model.



The kingpin for India's planned development is the system of mixed economy where both the private and public sectors take part. As a matter of fact, the bourgeoisie had always welcomed a large public sector. As early as 1938, the National Planning Committee in which big business constituted its largest single group clearly opted for State intervention in areas where the private sector for one reason or other could not provide sufficient capital. In 1944, the Bombay Plan of Tata, Birla, and six other big capitalists also provided for not only a large extension of State control but also a considerable extension of State ownership and management of the economy. After independence, the five-year plans did faithfully provide for State ownership and control in areas where private enterprise alone could not deliver the goods for various reasons. To take just one example, in 1963 no less a capitalist than J.R.D. Tata supported the projected Bokaro Steel Plan with the following words: India's economy and the standard of living of our people cannot grow without additional steel and it is clear that the private sector, even if permitted to do so, would not be able to undertake on its own a programme of expansion at an average rate exceeding a million tons of new capacity a year. (Statement to the Annual General Meeting on August 23, 1963).

In short, the public sector investment in overheads such as roads, railways, irrigation, and basic industries such as iron and steel, coal, electricity has paved the way for greater expropriation by the capitalists and the affluent kulaks of India.

In line with the development model of the Russian economist, Feldman and Professor Mahalanobis, the five-year plans ritually emphasised investment in basic heavy industries so as to build the industrial foundation for rapid growth in the long run. But in fact, in the implementation of these plans, the shortfalls are greater precisely in the machine-building industry than in almost any other area. If a broad distinction is made between industries manufacturing the

simpler types of machinery and equipment, and heavy machine-building industry, evidently whatever progress has been recorded has been mainly in the former. It is therefore not very surprising that India is still in need of importing over two-fifths or more of its total annual requirements of machinery and equipment.

One of the primary reasons for the slow progress in the sphere of heavy machine-building industry is that industries offering higher rates of profits in the private sector were in a position to compete away the scarce foreign exchange resources; and there was very little in the planning mechanism to ensure that the actual allocation of resources conformed to the priorities laid down. As a result although there have been serious shortfalls in the machine-building industry, other industries of low or no priority such as rayon, sugar, and plastic goods, for example, managed to secure foreign exchange even in periods of acute shortage and often over-fulfilled the targets laid down in the plans.

#### Income Disparities

The inequality of income distribution is a blatant fact in India; and what is worse, there is evidence to the effect that such inequality is increasing. And since the economy operates to a large extent under the stimulus of market forces, a significant part of the investible resources has got dissipated directly and indirectly in meeting the requirements of the wealthy consumers. A fairly high proportion of investment has gone directly into luxury residential housing, for instance. Expenditure on consumer durables and a wide range of non-essential goods has stimulated investment in a variety of industries catering to this kind of demand. Import controls have only raised the prices of these goods and consequently the profitability of producing them within has gone up. The direct and indirect import requirements for such investment have been estimated by K. N. Raj to be of the order of Rs 200 crores a year, which is approximately one-

fourth of the country's total export earnings. No wonder, large deficits in India's balance of payments had been a recurrent phenomenon; and no doubt, India's further development along such a line is crucially dependent on the continuance of foreign aid.

In the sphere of agriculture, the performance so far is unsatisfactory in many ways, and the future prospects are somewhat uncertain. Initially the community development programme was intended to be the main instrument for bringing change in rural India. It was supposed to be the prime vehicle for transmitting knowledge and facilities, for providing the framework for action in rural development. Democratic decentralisation was the theme, the co-operative and the panchayat the primary agencies. The village panchayat was to assure the best village production programme with the requisite local participation, and panchayat organisations at block and district levels were to provide popular lines of command in a democratic structure of administration within the district. The strategy for agricultural development thus rested on the capacity of community development programmes to mobilise more than sixty million peasant cultivators for labour-intensive agricultural production programmes, including popular participation in community works for the construction of capital projects.

The programme certainly did not lack ambition; it was indeed highly utopian and equally reactionary. It was singularly blind to the existing class relationships in rural India. It is not, therefore, surprising that mobilisation of workers of even a single village faced virtually insurmountable barriers of conflicting class interests between those who did the work and those who benefited from it. No wonder, the failure was colossal.

The new agricultural strategy which was first put into practice in October 1965 is in effect a complete sell-out to the kulaks of India. Henceforth development efforts would be concentrated in about one-fourth of the cultivated area where supplies of as-

sured water created fair prospects of achieving rapid increases in production, and within these areas there would be a systematic effort to extend the application of science and technology, including the adoption of better implements and more scientific methods to raise productivity.

Evidently in the irrigated and more fertile areas—which are precisely the select areas for the new agricultural strategy—rents are often not only as high as 50 to 60 per cent of the gross produce (sometimes even more) but, on account of the prevalence of share-cropping and the resulting insecurity to tenants, changeable from time to time. Recently it has been found in the Tanjore District of Tamil Nadu, for instance, that with rents as high as 60 per cent of the gross produce, it would not be worthwhile for the tenants to apply to their land the full amount of package inputs which are considered optimal from a technical point of view; they would apply only to one-third of the package. The sheer logic of the situation would therefore drive out the share-tenants into the ranks of landless labourers in course of time. And the concentration of land in still fewer hands would be the inevitable tendency.

Evidence is mounting to indicate that only the kulaks of India are reaping a disproportionately large share of the benefits of the new strategy. By contrast, the vast majority of farmers have experienced a relative decline in their economic position; and some proportion, representing particularly unprotected tenants cultivating under oral lease, have suffered even an absolute deterioration in their living standards.

The new strategy has not only intensified the process of economic polarisation in the rural areas, it has also contributed to an increased social estrangement between landlords and tenants, and between landowners and labourers. The impact of the new strategy on landless labourers, of course, looks favourable at first glance. With more intensive and diversified cultivation, the demand for labour tends to rise. In

fact, the level of cash wages for agricultural labour has increased in recent years. But the rise in cash wages is definitely lagging behind the rate of inflation. In some cases, actually a deterioration of the wage rate in real terms has been reported. Furthermore, wherever mechanisation is feasible, large farmers are found to be anxious to buy machinery as quickly as possible in order to reduce their dependence on labour. Large-scale agriculture based on machinery has thus arrived on the scene.

In short, thanks to the new strategy, the relics of feudalism in India's agriculture are being swept away by the tides of agricultural capitalism, which is itself slowly but steadily gathering momentum. Lenin had hailed a similar phenomenon in post-Reform Russia.

Does the Green Revolution in India then contain within itself the seeds for a historic mission!

(Concluded)

## Frankly Speaking

SANJOY

**DELHI *dur ast*.** Delhi is still far off. Of course you get to Palam in a little over two hours if the plane is there at all; by train the journey is more assured, if not safer. But it is not distance alone that makes a city far off. It is the atmosphere.

Delhi has grown like anything. The pangs of partition, over which some rich Punjabis and Sindhis mourn over coffee cups or whisky, seem unreal except to those homeless who still survive off the wide arterial roads. The roads, the main roads, put Calcutta to shame. If one considers the exterior, the bhavans, buildings and even the colonies where graded clerks live in Delhi, one has to concede that, in contrast, Calcutta nowadays looks like a decrepit, ruffian town. The wide-eyed wonder of a villager when he first visits Calcutta can be compared to the uneasy surprise of a Calcuttan when he visits Delhi after a long time. It is a city

of road and housing contractors, a city which has thrived on the tragedy of partition and the folly of the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965, on the proneness to pomp of the Jana Sangh administration, on defence contracts, on the phenomenal savings of the prosperous Punjab farmers.

But it is an unreal city. What one calls the soul of a city is missing. Being the capital, it knows and practices politics of sorts. There is no dearth of special representatives and correspondents who probe into the wonderful workings of the parliamentary system, the inner and outer party rivalries, the suave machinations of the bureaucracy. The superstructure is supposed to be based on democracy of the British model. Parliament House is impressive, though whether the vast majority of the members can lay any claim to being impressive or intelligent could be debated without fear if there had been no fear of contempt of the house. The queen has many admirers, many of them young and handsome. Her adversaries, old men with wrinkled faces, have sleepless nights working out strategies in Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Bihar and elsewhere.

Read the newspapers. The well-paid, well-fed, well-housed staff, at least the top layers, are wedded to democracy. The whole attitude, in a land where illiteracy is loud and hunger gnawing, sometimes makes you so sick that you feel like reaching for a chopper when you hear the word 'democracy'.

There are large pockets of poverty in and around Delhi. But they are not as glaring and as pervasive as in Calcutta. One cannot deny that Delhi is rich, though the sinews of industry are not prominent at all. In a sense, it is a parasitic city. But the difference between its Press Club and the one on the Maidan in Calcutta is rather symbolical.

Calcutta is choking. What marks large sections of the population is complete indifference to this fact. But what can one do about it? The lane on which *Frontier* is located is, for instance, almost a public urinal. When someone told a French girl who



had taken part in the 1968 upheaval that we were used to it, she flared up and said that that was "your tragedy, you get used to everything". We wondered: we cannot attack the urinating folk, nor can we build urinals. Perhaps what she meant was that people must organise something big, some bust-up.

This is where Calcutta still holds out some prospects. It still knows how to create a situation in which the very basis of the existing order is questioned. Oh, yes, the city is devilish. Too many anti-socials. Too many wagon-breakers who are not stealing anything but attacking the police. Too many rowdies turned Naxalites. Too many desperate men who think they have something to live—and die—for. Too many "Naxals in collusion with the police". Too many trigger-happy policemen killing Naxalites at sight. Too many politbureaus of decrepit men anxious to rest their buttocks on ministerial chairs again with the help of their revolutionary dialectics. We are grateful to them all for their wisdom, their petulance, and their hatred of the young. We thank them all from the heart of our bottoms. The city is devilish. But better the devil who dares than the angel who dithers. Better the ragged women who brave the police to show some affection to their arrested folk on Brothers' Day than the hypocrites who swear by demos and depend on the demonic police for their survival. Calcutta is hell. But let us not forget that those who live without blame and without praise are also consigned to inferno by Dante.

## Clippings

### "Enemy Within"

The Central Intelligence Agency has told President Nixon that communists in Vietnam have infiltrated more than 30,000 agents into the South Vietnamese Government in an apparatus that has been virtually impossible to destroy.

Because of this, the C.I.A. reported, a resurgence of communist strength in South Vietnam can be expected as United States troop withdrawals proceed.

The report to President Nixon said that the communist agents had included an aide to President Thieu of South Vietnam, a former chief of a province, police officials and highly placed people in military intelligence.

...The C.I.A. says that early last year, after a number of setbacks on the battlefield, the communists decided to shift their long-range strategy from intense military activity to political erosion. They stepped up their infiltration of secret agents into various branches of the South Vietnamese Government.

Most of the agents were natives of the southern part of divided Vietnam, and they were infiltrated into the armed forces, the police force and the South Vietnamese intelligence organizations whose task it was to eradicate the Vietcong and their North Vietnamese allies.

...The C.I.A. says that agents have reached...even into the negotiating team at the Paris peace talks.

The report adds that the enemy network could not exist without the tacit complicity, whether from fear, sympathy or apathy, of the majority of South Vietnamese soldiers and policemen and says that such feelings provide evidence that the Saigon Government could not command the deep loyalty of the men on whom it depends to defend itself.

...There is a permanent imbalance in tactical military intelligence. The enemy is usually forewarned of allied moves and the United States and South Vietnam are usually ignorant of the communists' moves.

Because most Government-held areas are nominally, rather than firmly, controlled, the enemy is able to recruit selectively and to decide freely the people who should be assassinated for maximum political effect.

...The study says that many of the 20,000 full-time operatives are south Vietnamese officers and non-commissioned officers who try to recruit other soldiers to the communist

cause, perform covert assassinations and arrange accommodations in which Government military units, to avoid casualties, tacitly agree not to attack communist forces.

These 20,000 agents are supported by a large network of couriers and keepers of safe houses, where agents can take refuge, says the C.I.A.

A second group of about 7,000 agents is run by the Vietcong military intelligence section, the study says. These agents are distributed throughout all levels of the police, armed forces and civilian administration, principally for espionage purpose.

The third and possibly most dangerous network of agents is made up of an estimated total of 3,000 members of the Vietcong security service who permeate the South Vietnamese police intelligence service, the Army intelligence and military security service, and the Central Intelligence Office, the South Vietnamese counterpart of the C.I.A.

Their main object is to keep the communists informed of how much the Government knows about them and to prevent any penetration by Government agents.

...The study concludes by discussing the lack of significant political commitment to the Saigon Government by the majority of South Vietnamese soldiers. It says that during an 18-month period only 348 soldiers reported that they had been approached by the Vietcong although it was known that the Vietcong had made hundreds of thousands of approaches. (*New York Times News Service*.)

### Sleepless Police Clerks

...A section of the clerks belonging to the office of the Superintendent of Police, 24-Parganas...held a "general" meeting and demanded that they be immediately transferred to "other civil departments in Calcutta, if possible in the 24-Parganas Collectorate, CMDA or to other suitable offices". Individually, they have petitioned the Inspector-General of Police, West Bengal, for such transfer. The petition stated: "We, the police office clerks, are wrongly known

as police personnel in our localities. Thus there is scope for us to apprehend that we, being police office staff, may be victimised." The clerks said that they and members of their families were passing "sleepless nights" because of acute anxiety.

#### Murder off Stage

Mr Biren Debnath (30), said to be an important Naxalite, was shot dead during a scuffle with police at a function in North Calcutta. . . . According to the D.C., North Division, the police received information during the day that Mr Debnath would be acting as the chief volunteer at a "jalsa" in the evening.

The "jalsa" broke up in confusion after the incident as the panic-stricken spectators left with their hands raised in a gesture of peace and as more policemen, guns at the ready, moved into the place. A resident of the locality said the police could be seen carrying the dead man away. Sounds of frequent bomb explosions could be heard in the neighbourhood, according to another resident.

#### A Review

The extremist lawlessness in West Bengal, the review (by the Union Home Ministry) says, has risen steeply since the beginning of April this year. During the period up to the middle of August, a larger number of incidents occurred, involving attacks on educational institutions, Government offices and national symbols. But during the subsequent period, the situation has become worse.

While the Naxalite violence is on the increase, there has been otherwise some decrease in instances of breaches of law and order in the last two months. Excluding the incidents caused by extremists or in which extremists have been involved, the number of incidents of inter-party clashes, including those in peasant and labour sectors, agrarian lawlessness, ghraos and other incidents of lawlessness in West Bengal declined during the last two months after the peak in July. Disturbances in educa-

tional institutions other than those by extremists have also been somewhat fewer. The law and order situation has however, been aggravated by clashes between the CPI(M-L) and other extremist groups on the one hand and the CPI(M) and other parties on the other.

\* \* \*

Since March, the Naxalites are credited with the killing of at least 21 members of the CPI(M). For their part the Marxists have taken equally strong action against their extremist colleagues, accounting for the deaths of 21 Naxalites in all. There were about 123 clashes involving Marxists Naxalites. At least 68 of them are believed to have been initiated by the CPI(M) workers while the remaining 55 attacks were by the Naxalites. (All four extracts from *The Statesman*, Calcutta, October 29).

## Pratidwandi

KIRANMOY RAHA

A new film by Satyajit Ray has always been eagerly awaited. But few have been awaited with as much expectant keenness as *Pratidwandi*, his seventeenth and latest feature film. For here was a subject—contemporary urban youth—he had not tackled before. He has indeed dealt with aspects of contemporary Indian life in some of his earlier films but in none have his characters been drawn amidst the turbulent milieu of today's Calcutta. Opinion about Ray seems to have settled for the view that, for all his mastery, he is essentially a humanist of an earlier era whose artistic vision does not encompass or is inadequate to deal with the altogether new set of values and attitudes that the youth of today have acquired. They are of an area, the opinion has it, foreign and unknown to him.

*Pratidwandi* is an impressive refutation of any such view. Nowhere is there any awkwardness or shying away from exploration of the anger

and the frustration, the cynicism and the bitterness, as also the hope and the confidence, born out of rejection on the one hand and certitude on the other, that impel and colour the restless world of the youth of Calcutta today. What makes *Pratidwandi* one of Ray's major films is not only the assurance with which the new territory has been explored and mapped but also the style in which it has been done. But of that later.

The protagonist in *Pratidwandi* is a young man from a middle class family on the look out for a job. He had to cut short his medical studies because of his father's death, shown in a short pretitile sequence in ghostly negative. Siddhartha is honest and reckless enough to risk the prospect of a job by admiring the Vietnamese anti-imperialist struggle but is, at the same time, cynical about the political parties and their vocabulary of rusted cliches. The ties of the family cling to him but even as he is unable or unwilling to sweep them aside he has no particular faith about either their sanctity or their durability. He has lost one world without gaining another but is not prepared to make a song about it. His growing sense of isolation saddens him but he accepts it without much ado and is even prepared to try to connect on a human level. A bit of an outsider Siddhartha has no inclination to go about setting the world right.

In *Pratidwandi* Ray is engrossed with delving into and delineating the different facets of the personality of his anti-hero instead of creating a crowd of diverse characters as he had done in some of his earlier films. Not that the other characters, with one exception, are negligently or unsympathetically drawn. They exist on their own rights but the attention is on their relationship with and how they affect Siddhartha.

The camera follows the protagonist from the beginning through the chaotic traffic of Calcutta when he goes out to be interviewed for a job and plunges with him into his world of ennui and anguish, his hopes and fears, his indulgence in nostalgic me-



mories of a childhood holiday and his disturbing dreams. In so doing the camera avoids making wry comments or viewing its subject with cold detachment. It conveys in an unemphatic manner the maker's total sympathy with him.

Siddhartha is an indrawn, reflective person but not, for that, a cerebral one. He has not surrendered his sensibilities—not yet at any rate—to the harshness and crudity of some aspects of the surrounding reality. Having grown up in a conventional middle class family when the forces of disintegration had not come to the fore he could not even pretend to like the whisky his friend gave him and is revolted by the call girl they visit later. He is angry enough to want to kill his sister's employer whom he suspects of leading her into bad ways. He even asks his younger brother, a political being of extreme views, for a few bombs, only to earn contemptuous indifference by way of response. But he lacks both the courage and the conviction of a man of action and has to remain content with limiting his sex to libidinous thoughts and his violence to wish-fulfilling day dreams. It is only towards the end when the intolerable social scene around had built up the pressures that he explodes in violent protest.

#### Not A Film of Protest

*Pratidwandi* is however not a film of protest, not overtly anyway, nor a portrayal of what Thoreau called "quiet desperation." Its principal concern is to depict the growing isolation—the alienation if you like—of modern youth in a disorganised, complex city and the snapping of the channels of communication. Somewhat unexpectedly Ray has adopted a direct, almost austere, style in a low key to pursue the concern and fulfil his purpose. There is no stridency in the tone and no highlighting of passages. The images and the signs are conceived in terms of drab visuals common to everyday sights without insertion of obscure symbols. It is only in the dream sequence which brings out beautifully the tortured anxieties of Siddhartha that the imagery has been given freer play.

Otherwise, the economical direction has no use for superfluities or stylistic flourishes.

The result is a very effective communication of the milieu and the predicament of a not untypical youth in Calcutta today. The predicament is of course not solely economic, though in a large measure it issues forth from the basic cause of economic insecurity. More than the grating whimpers of a bemoaning mother and the unloving atmosphere of a household which is forced to depend for sustenance on the daughter as the breadwinner of the family, Siddhartha feels the anguish of the changing and changed attitudes of his younger sister and brother. In one sequence he fails to get a reply to an ordinary question from his brother and remarks, with a touch of bitterness, on how difficult it had become to get any response from him. In another highly poignant sequence he watches silently his sister showing him the steps of ball room dancing. They have both become strangers, the persons he had known and loved best. Even in the depiction of the intimacy that promises to grow between him and a young girl brought up in Delhi there is no mistaking the gap that separates them. In the end, even as he writes to her in an attempt to keep the warmth of his feelings alive, there is a suggestive funeral procession at a distance. There is not much hope really.

*Pratidwandi* has an intricate design which conceals hints of well-madeness. The tapestry is full of finely drawn sketches of persons and it captures the mood of a generation caught up in the maelstrom of change in a cruel and indifferent city. The sounds, the clipped dialogue, the sparse music, the shots of Calcutta, the contrapuntal sequences and a thousand other little things woven into one whole by an even paced, taut editing have gone to make the deceptively simple texture of the film. Into this however has intruded a lapse which I found unaccountable. The young girl's aunt whom her father is going to

marry is almost a caricature. She is a minor character and is of no consequence in the film. But Satyajit Ray is not known for neglecting his minor characters. She is not only an unsympathetic creation, she is ridiculous which, in this film, strikes one as badly out of place.

Ray's demonstrated ability to bring the best out of new actors one had, long ago, taken for granted. And yet the performance he has extracted from Dhritiman Chatterjee is nothing short of amazing. It was a difficult, pivotal role. But not once does he falter or fail to bring out the nuances of Siddhartha's changing moods and inner suffering. I wonder if even Soumitra Chatterjee in his memorable first appearance as Apu had shown as much assurance and finesse as Dhritiman Chatterjee does in *Pratidwandi*.

Satyajit Ray's previous film *Aran-tyer Din Ratri* was not well received by critics in India. I do not know if *Pratidwandi* will be better liked. For me, I shall be greatly interested in being told about its shortcomings as a film and as a study of contemporary youth. I did not find many.

#### Letters

#### Our Intellectuals

It is good that the intellectuals of West Bengal, specially of Calcutta and its suburbs, do not fail to appear before the press with unequivocal statements condemning some selected issues like beheading of the statues of "manishees" etc. But what confuses us thoroughly is their meaningful silence over other burning issues like indiscriminate police firing or unnecessary harassment of the people by the CRP, things that go profoundly against the public interest and normal civic rights.

We are afraid that not a fraction of the spirit (political, philosophical or cultural) that marked those much discussed "manishees" is traceable among the statement-makers of today.

SATYABRATA CHAKRABARTI  
Rajibpur  
24-Parganas

## Backers Of CPM

From time to time something so absurd is launched against *Frontier* that the Editor would blush to take public notice of it. AM's (Letter, September 19) likening of *Frontier*'s role to that of *The Statesman* on the Durgapur strike is one such absurd insinuation. It is made up of current prejudices skimmed from the most superficial semblance of things. The *Swatantra* mouthpiece criticised the CPM for organising the strike while *Frontier* did it, but mildly from an entirely opposite viewpoint, for not organising the strike resolutely enough. *Frontier* initially tried to put teeth to the CPM's bite and glorified its role in the hope that encouraged they would firmly go forward. Why does not AM see this? Instead of analysing the events he bursts into an uproar of synthetic passion. What was the CPM's role? The so-called historic political strike was almost compromised even before it had been started. If only Dilip Mazumder were released and that too on bail, the strike notice would have been withdrawn. The main demand—withdrawal of the CISF—had completely receded into the remotest background. The whole episode gave out the CPM. If a real political strike was intended, then it was an odd idea to forget the main demand and to harp on the secondary demand. If the strike was meant seriously then it was folly not to foresee that it would be given a warlike reception. But the threats of the CPM leadership besides being election blasts are attempts to impress others. And when they have run into a blind alley, when they have sufficiently compromised themselves to make it necessary to give effect to their threats, then this is done in an ambiguous fashion that avoids nothing so much as the means to the end and tries to find excuses for succumbing. Instead of generating strength the petty bourgeois leadership of the CPM, by its equivocation and half-heartedness, had infected the working class with its own weakness. And as is usual, people like AM had the satisfaction of being

able to charge the people with desertion, with 'overreaching' themselves. Seldom had an action been announced with more noise and seldom had the extremely radical pretensions of the CPM leadership suffered such a debacle. The word 'debacle' used by *Frontier* merely recorded the fact of the matter; certainly it was not an expression of delight over the defeat as AM maliciously distorts. If anything could be said against the use of the 'term' it is that it seems to be only too much a truism. The CPM by its arrogance, vacillation and consequent unpreparedness had succeeded, in barely a fortnight, in ruining, temporarily of course, to the delight of Indira Gandhi and the Nanporias, the powerful working class of Durgapur at whose head it stood. Until the sectarian arrogance of the CPM is knocked on the head and that properly and until revisionism of all shades is fought out, unity of the working class and victory is impossible. This is the one lesson the Durgapur strike has hammered home.

I hold that *Frontier* did commit errors—not once did the editorials mention the fact that the strike notice was about to be withdrawn without coming to settlement on the issue it was proposed and that the CPM leadership disastrously underrated the reactionary opposition in one respect and equally disastrously overrated it in another. It is necessary to criticise the errors *Frontier* actually committed, not those groundlessly attributed to it and to do so from a correct stand and with correct methods.

AM started his letter with prejudices and finished it with inaccuracies. About inter-party clashes *Frontier* showed utmost restraint and never onesidedly published accounts of the blood-curdling atrocities committed by the CPM elements on the Naxalites week after week. It refrained from mentioning the fact (newspaper headlines breed violence) that the first political murder (killing a CPM cadre-turned-Naxalite) was committed by the CPM, by the celebrated Nani Saha to be precise, in Belgharia right

after the split in the CPM. What *Frontier* with courage and honesty highlighted week after week was the accounts of police atrocities on the Naxalites. AM has ingeniously confused the issue. *Frontier* also warned the cadres of the left parties to be wary of police acting as agents-provocateur. It reminded the democratic citizens that for the truth about clashes they would have largely to look into other places than newspapers which almost entirely depend on police briefings. A policeman's view of crime, not to speak of political crimes, is hardly the entire one but it offers the illusion of factual information.

The emotional AM is singularly insensitive to the gruesome police atrocities on the Naxalites, but, then it would not prove the CPM point—the story of police-Naxal collusion so sedulously fostered as the protective curtain for the restless militants. Or, A.M. might say like the Russian Cadet, "I see nothing shocking in the arrests and killings...the revolutionary party considers all means fair to overthrow the government and the latter defends itself by its own means". As if in report to the cadets argument Herzen wrote, Lenin says, concerning Chernyshevsky's trial—"And here are wretches, weeds-like people, jelly fish who say that we must not reprove the games of robbers and scoundrels who govern us".

When the whole band of the Bengali Left shamelessly asked for police action against its rivals and when the whole of the so-called left has been infected with constitutionalism and parliamentarism, *Frontier* went on championing the right to rebel and lashed the suppressors, the butchers, the hangmen in the service of better-than-Nijalingappa Indira Gandhi.

A READER  
Calcutta

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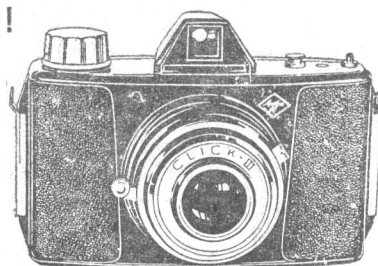
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