

# frontier

Vol. 7: No. 18

AUGUST 24, 1974

PRICE: 50 PAISE

## On Other Pages

COMMENT	..	2
DEVELOPMENT IN THE SUNDERBANS		
BY A CORRESPONDENT	..	4
<i>The Press</i>		
WHEN THE BOSS SAYS 'NO'		
PATRAKAR	..	5
SOCIAL SCENARIO		
B. G.	..	6
WHERE TOMORROW IS LIBERTY		
I. K. SHUKLA	..	7
THAILAND: 'NEUTRAL' SUPPORT FOR LON NOL		
NORMAN PEAGAM	..	11
FFC FILMS		
MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY	..	12
LETTERS	..	13

Editor : Samar Sen

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

## THE HOOLIGAN SPECIAL

**T**HE Youth Congress rally in New Delhi was not exactly the greatest show on earth despite the lavish patronage it received from Congress governments at the Centre and in the States and the importance conferred on it by the Prime Minister herself through her presence. If the objective was to impress upon students, especially of the capital, the ready benefits of membership of the Youth Congress, the rally has clearly failed in its purpose. The lure of perquisites has failed to attract students to the ruling party as is apparent from the rout of the Youth Congress in the election to the student union of Delhi University. The rally would have been forgotten as a non-event but for the vandalism of some of the participants on their way back to Bombay at several railway stations, including Kota, Ratlam, Godhra, Dahod, Baroda, Surat and Bulsar. These defenders of democracy, blessed by the Prime Minister, looted food-stalls, beat up the vendors, and took to rioting when resisted. Enraged at police intervention, they clashed with the police also who fired killing a volunteer. On a search of the special train in which the Youth Congress volunteers were travelling the police recovered packets of 'nirodh', several bottles of liquor, and large quantities of high-quality rice. There were some 80 women among the 1,600 volunteers in the special train.

The episode was raised more than once by the Opposition in Parliament where the Home Minister chose to wear an air of outraged innocence. He denied that the Congress governments in the States had offered any special transport facilities or inducements to the participants in the rally. Special trains were run by the Railways only against payment. The implication was that special trains would be available to any party provided it agrees to defray the charges. The fact of ~~being~~ could not, however, be denied by Mr Dikshit though he contended that the miscreants were not Youth Congress volunteers. His theory was that some undesirable elements had infiltrated into the rally and the special train. Perhaps he took the cue from the Prime Minister who, while speaking at the rally, had wondered at the age of some of the "young" volunteers. She, however, sought to regularise their presence with the remark that they must be young at heart. It is unthinkable that the volunteers who were being taken to New Delhi to attend a rally to be addressed by the Prime Minister had not been thoroughly screened; for security reasons alone none else than proven and trusted supporters of the Congress would have been allowed anywhere near the rally.

The Home Minister's plea that the undesirable infiltrators were responsible for the looting and the rioting will not wash. The so-called infiltrators were regular volunteers of the Youth Congress. They form not the anti-social fringe but the lawless and criminal core of the youth and student wings of the ruling party. They are the architect of Congress victory in elections, for it is they who occupy polling booths, intimidate poll personnel, organise false voting and tamper with ballot-papers and ballot-boxes. They are also the defenders of Congress rule in the States; they terrify rival parties into inaction and aggrieved citizens into silence. The youth and student wings of the ruling party function as a state within a state; they have their own laws and the means to enforce them. All this they do, not without a price. They have struck a deal with the ruling party which promises them immunity from the laws of the land for the services rendered to the party. It is this feeling of immunity that caused the travelling riot. The Maharashtra volunteers imagined that the immunity granted them by the State Government and Congress was valid for the whole country; they proved right till they came to Bulsar. Somebody may have to pay for this. The Congress cannot afford to displease its student and youth supporters. They will not respect the law, the law has to respect them.

## DUSU Elections

A correspondent writes:

The rout of the Congress-CPI combine in the students' union elections of Delhi University is tantamount to a defiant rejection of the ruling party's arrogance of power and the CPI's collaborationist conspiracy. For the fourth year running the Jana Sangh-supported student body, ABVP, has won the battle. This time a Youth Congress rally on August 9 was staged in the capital to instil terror. Truck and train-loads of stormtroopers of the ruling party came from U.P., Rajasthan, M.P., Haryana, Punjab, Bombay. To shore up sympathy for the Congress-supported can-

didates, a phoney stabbing incident was staged too. But the Congress and CPI met with their match in the Jana Sangh in the matter of 'money and manoeuvre.

It would not wash to deb the ABVP victory as that of 'right' reaction. It is the fascist face of the Congress that is getting unmasked daily and this has goaded the uncommitted among students to vote JS candidates in office so that they can withstand the Congress thuggery. This rebuff to the Congress could not come from the so-called leftists on the campus. No 'leftist' among the students or teachers of this capital university cried shame at our External Affairs Minister establishing cultural contacts amidst fanfare with the fascist regime in South Korea which is murdering and jailing poets and writers. To the Indian rulers this is nothing strange. People in India are being arrested for seeing a certain kind of drama, or for buying a certain kind of drama, or for buying a certain kind of poetry. They are also being killed for diverse reasons. The CPI and the CPM want us to believe it all to be democratic, and return the Congress to power in diverse elections. The CPI waxes eloquent over our foreign policy. But what is the record? India stands nowhere near even Bhutto's Pakistan which has granted recognition to Sihanouk's government in exile. What is our record with respect to PRG, Cambodia, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau (on the verge of freedom, North Vietnam and North Korea? The record is a reminder of our satellite and not sovereign status vis-a-vis the Watergate of the free world, the U.S.

The anti-social elements in society have come to wield a dangerous amount of power in India with their money and position. The worst pests and pirates—the bureaucracy, police, parliamentary democrats and 'intellectuals'—are not only enjoying the patronage of the State, they are controlling the commanding heights of this country's polity and social system.

It was a small replica of these forces and enemies of society that was on display when the Youth Congress vandalism appeared to have been State-sponsored. The Kerala band took away an air-condi-

tioner from Delhi, the Gujarat braves helped themselves with the ornaments of their fellow females, the M.P. enthusiasts picketed the CM's residence for having been denied their share in these democratic sports and spoils. Nobody in the Congress, including Dikshit and the PM, knows whose kitty was loosened for the tidy amount of Rs. 1 crore spent on this political orgy. Just like Nixon who did not know who were funding his Committee to Re-elect the President!

If at such a juncture the evil that is the Youth Congress is battered in its very den, not by the CPI/CPM, or any other leftist conglomerate, but by the JS, it is time to ask serious questions about the leftist capitalisation and collusion with the Congress czars. How is it that at all moments of crises in our history the left has betrayed and gone against the people? It is a queer way of rehabilitating itself among people and winning their confidence.

## A Smokescreen Torn

The latest statistics on the working of foreign companies in India released by the Reserve Bank are not going to prove palatable to New Delhi. They have torn to shreds the myths that these companies are spearheading India's technological advance, that they are earning more foreign exchange for the country than they are taking out, and that their hold on the Indian economy is weakening. None of these is happening. The private sector companies with foreign collaboration remitted abroad Rs 262.3 crores during the six years from 1964-65 to 1969-70. The trend has continued during the last four years. The study also reveals that these companies have imported goods worth much more than what they have exported. The result has been that the balance of payments position has suffered a further drainage. As for research and development, the record of the foreign companies has not been such as to write home about either. Out of 872 companies covered by the survey, only 308 had R & D departments

but they were run mostly on a very small budget. Sometimes just very ordinary technology was imported, and once it was introduced, there was hardly any effort to improve upon it or to adapt it to local conditions. The contracts were merely renewed from year to year to allow the import in the hope that the latest technological developments would also be brought into the country one day or the other. But this has not happened; the foreign companies had shown little interest in inducting the latest methods that their overseas principals had developed.

The Reserve Bank's revelation of how the foreign companies are exploiting the country to earn a fantastically high dividend, though most complete, is not really very new. Quite a few committees and studies earlier have painted more or less the same sordid picture. The Industrial Licensing Policy Inquiry Committee under Subimal Dutt expressed righteous indignation that none of the government departments kept detailed files on the working of foreign companies and on the collaboration agreements. And it nearly suggested that this was not just a slip or an involuntary omission. The fact is that the foreign companies' lobby has developed a highly sophisticated well-oiled machinery which helps these units to silence their critics and get away with whatever they ask for. New Delhi has preferred to turn a deaf ear to the misgivings expressed from time to time. In fact, it keeps on spreading a smoke-screen to hide the ugly face of these companies and present them as the country's great friend and saviour. In due course the Reserve Bank's findings will be properly docketed, put in files and forgotten. The fact is that even if New Delhi wants to do something about these companies, it just does not have the will or the power to do so. It has forfeited that power long ago and now can at best be a partner to the loot.

Our sole agent in Bangladesh  
CHALANTIKA BAIGHAR  
14, Banglabazar  
Dacca-1

AUGUST 24, 1974

## Russian Aid

Mrs Gandhi was until recently going about telling foreign correspondents that "we in India would not ask any country for aid" and that India would take aid only if a country on its own gave it on honourable terms. In other words, she was trying to say that India would not beg for aid and other countries, if they wanted to give aid, would have to coax India into accepting it. But Mrs Gandhi does not seem to be following her principle so far as the Russians are concerned. New Delhi on its own keeps on asking for Russian aid.

Last month, the Union Finance Minister, Mr Y. B. Chavan, went to Moscow on a "goodwill" visit. But actually, while there, he asked the Soviet leaders for a new line of credit. He asked for softening of the terms of the Soviet loan that India has already taken and for further rescheduling of the debts. All this probably with the idea of making a desperate, back-to-the-wall attempt to save the Fifth Plan from collapsing. For long, Moscow has been toying with the idea of making India a member of the Comecon, an economic community under Soviet control, just as it would like India to join the Brezhnev Plan, or the Asian Security Plan as it is called.

India, it is stated, has already started maintaining some "link" with the Comecon. When the Soviet Union formally grants loans to India, it would like to channel them through the Comecon, so that the largesse appears big enough in importance. At that stage perhaps India would like to become an associate member of the Comecon and thus firmly be in the economic grip of the Soviet Union. In trade and aid—in aid more in the latter days—India has been getting close to the USSR, despite the fact that India has saddled itself with a lot of unwanted equipment, some at high cost. India also purchases a lot of Russian goods and material at much higher prices than on the international market. The nature of Soviet Russia's socialist exploitation of India can be seen in the form of aid, trade, technical know-how and invest-

ment in industrial development. Soviet aid to India is granted to a project only when full Russian control and authority over the selection of site, planning, nature of production, investment, distribution of production, management, etc., is accepted by India. Coming to the export trade one finds that under a 1972 agreement the Soviet Union was allowed to import one million tonnes of iron and steel from the Bhilai Steel Plant during a period of three years at a rate ranging 10 to 20 per cent below the world market price. India had had to reduce her price for hessian cloth for the sake of her "best" friend in 1973 though she might have got a better price because of shortage of synthetics on the world market. The USSR made India reduce the export duty on jute in 1968, taking advantage of the crisis in the jute industry in that year. In terms of an agreement between the Soviet Union and India in 1969, India agreed to supply 54,000 units of 85-tonne capacity wagons at Rs. 20,000 each for movement under zero degree temperature. The manufacturing cost of wagons was about Rs. 40,000 each, i.e. the deal resulted in a net loss of Rs. 108 crores—a large part of which has to be paid in foreign currency—leaving aside the burden that the common man bears to make up Government subsidy.

The import trade presents an equally deplorable scene. The Soviet Union charges India Rs. 30,000 per tonne of nickel though the world market price is only Rs. 15,000. For tractor spare parts it charges as much as three times more than what it charges European countries. The price India paid for kerosene oil in 1974 was four and a half times higher than what it had paid in the previous year. The Russian newsprint racketeering is well known.

Most of the Soviet Union's investment in India's industrial development is in the public sector undertakings, which ensures royalties, dividends, technical fees, interest, etc., as this sector would never be closed down in spite of heavy losses. Further, the Government of India usually runs the "core sector" which requires huge capital. As the development and expansion of other

sectors as well as the growth of the national economy largely depend on the advancement of the core sector, investment in the same and subsequent control over it enable the investor to direct the national economy in his favour. This explains the Soviet Union's particular interest in this sector.

These are only a few facts and figures which, in spite of the reluctance of the Government of India to disclose them, are available from various sources. If the facts seem to explode the myth of Soviet benevolence towards India, one cannot help it.

the least safeguard against such a possibility.

The rate of knitting the net is calculated at Rs. 30 only per one kg of strings knitted. But the actual payment is Rs 10 to 16 according to the quality of knitting. The available explanation is that other materials are bought at higher rates and the difference is made up in this way. The explanation cannot be called satisfactory.

The vital problem of the fishermen is not being considered by the co-operative, the problem of dacoity. Loss is sure to be incurred and the co-operative as a whole must bear it.

Several people other than the fishermen of the locality think that the society may run for a maximum of two years. But about the repayment of the government loan everybody keeps mum. It is also in the air that another co-operative of farmers is in the offing and the loan will come from the Central Government.

#### Tiger Project

The much publicised 'tiger project' is not meant for the benefit of the people. Each year so many men are killed by the Royal Bengal tiger. The office of the project has been set up at Gosaba and the record will show that more than ninety people from among the fishermen of Gosaba proper alone were killed by tigers in less than twenty years. The toll from the unlicensed jungle goers is obviously not on record.

Jungle going cannot be stopped as interested sections are making a large amount of profit at the cost of the jungle-goers. These people have no other choice. The Government feels no responsibility for the security of these men but is very eager to safeguard the man-eaters!

People of the area are least interested in this benevolent scheme of the Government. The fishermen are afraid that as their number increases the man-eaters will claim more lives.

Of course you hear arguments for preserving wild life from a scientific angle of vision. Once the Nazis experimented with two captive Russians. The Russians were stripped of all their clothes and put inside ice blocks, with the scientific objective of finding out what degree of cold

## Development In The Sunderbans

BY A CORRESPONDENT

HAMILTON once tried to materialise his idea of a co-operative at Gosaba in the Sunderbans. As one of the ruling class in his time he could exercise power which was, to some extent beneficial to the people. For example, moneylenders from outside were prohibited from functioning in his estate. He even introduced his own currency there. Several kinds of co-operatives were introduced under his directions. But his ideas were not based on reality. He could neither study the economic perspective, nor the people of the area and failure was the result in his lifetime. Profits were enjoyed only by the interested sections. The managers of his estate could never be credited with honesty, and even now it is heard 'saheb could easily be flattered'.

There was no other attempt to develop the Sunderbans by the British rulers after the early stage of reclamation.

Curiously enough, Gosaba recently has often been the centre for experimental development schemes in the Sunderbans. The only difference this time is that the Government has neither any clear idea of the people and their problems, nor any sincerity about their development. Some of the schemes may be reviewed here.

#### Co-operatives

About Rs. 600,000 has been sanctioned as a loan to a co-operative of the fishermen of Gosaba, Satjelia and Masjid-bati. These fishermen go to the jungle under the *saindars* of Gosaba.

The co-operative society of the early

fifties, as the author observed, had only its sign-board. The management was under the control of middle-class adventurers who ate up the vitals of the co-operatives in many cases. The poor folk were never interested. In the post-independence period a co-operative of fishermen was organised at the initiative of some political figure. This organisation also did not last. Without taking any lesson from such co-operatives a new one is introduced. Work is in progress. New boats are under construction. Nets are being knitted. The society will have its own motor launch. But scrutiny will reveal that the money will go waste in this case also.

The question why a small particular section of fishermen is included while a large section is excluded remains open. It cannot be argued that a particular area has been chosen, as the fishermen of Pakhisala (a place on Gosaba island and in between Gosaba and Satjelia) are not included.

The fish is to be sold to some government organisation at the rate of Rs. 4 per kg. But at present fish like 'bhetki' are sold even at Rs. 12 per kg. in the market. Naturally the common fishermen cannot be satisfied. In this situation the quality fish may be sold in black markets. A '*saindar*' of the Society refused to let any of his team go with others. This provokes further doubt. Fishing by private organisers cannot be prohibited and the quality fish may go to other markets through them. The Government has

can kill a human being. About the Tiger Project a peasant commented, "This is meant to decrease the number of jungle-goers".

### Cotton Project

The Manmathanagar Government Firm, close to Gosaba, was selected for experiment in cotton production in the Sunderbans. Rs. 1 lakh was spent in this connection in financial 1973-74. The return was only 160 kg. of cotton. Valuable production indeed. Hiring a motor launch and its maintenance cost Rs 54,000 only. The project seems to have been abandoned. Yet a grant of Rs 60,000 is even now ready for disbursement for excavation of tanks for irrigation in the cotton field. Already an amount of Rs 2 lakhs has been disbursed for this work centring around Gosaba. Whoever excavates a tank for irrigation in the cotton field gets 55% of the total expenditure from the Government. But virtually the Government pays the total amount of expenditure. The owners of the tanks made a profit out of it. The labourers got Rs. 12 to 20 per each thousand cubic feet excavated. But the rate calculated by government officials was Rs. 40. No one can be sure that the calculation was not influenced by the owners of the tanks, for in many cases they are the people who wield the power behind the scene.

Some poor fellows from the middle peasantry felt tempted, and borrowed money from several sources and excavated tanks. But payment in their cases was naturally delayed. Measurement, calculation and many other technical things stood in the way in their cases.

This payment is unconditional and as such the tanks are generally not used for irrigation in the cotton field.

In no case does development work get any return. Rather everywhere the prevailing system is strengthened in the whole area. Exploiters get the upper hand everywhere. And the suffering people find no solace in all these development works.

## The Press

# When The Boss Says 'No'

PATRAKAR

THE "Economic Times", a paper not conspicuously known for its bold and forthright editorial policies, was chosen by Time magazine recently for a signal honour: it mentioned its editor, Dr D. K. Rangnekar—whose by-name has hardly ever appeared—as one of the two Indians among about 150 people in the world who play a significant role in guiding the destinies of their respective nations.

Though Time may be blissfully ignorant, it was not as far off the mark as most Indians thought. The editor was hauled by the board of directors of Bennet, Coleman & Co, the proprietors of the Times of India group of publications not long ago for pursuing an independent policy on the question of the railway strike. He was summoned to a board meeting in Delhi and asked to give an explanation for staying off the beaten track—so faithfully followed by the old lady of Boribunder, the Times of India, itself.

Dr Rangnekar stuck to his guns however and sent the board a long stiffly worded written reply where he made no bones about the fact that he thought the board's intervention was a gross violation of the paper's freedom of expression. The chairman of the board, Mr K. T. Desai, who as a judge himself was aware of the dangerous implications of the editor's allegations, tried to persuade him to withdraw the letter which would have had to be included in the official minutes. Dr Rangnekar resolutely refused.

Such cases are, indeed, rare these days. The editors are known to pick up a row with the government now and then but as for the Sethji they are a tamed lot. It concerns the job! Moreover, due care is taken at the time of appointment. An editor's ability lies now in correctly gauging or anticipating the wishes of the proprietors of their papers and, by toeing their line, circumventing the pos-

sibility of getting explicit instructions.

And so today, in the words of Mr Girilal Jain, the resident editor of the Delhi Times of India; "They never issue orders, perhaps once in a while they may indicate that their interests are being hurt but that is all".

Mr Kuldip Nayar, former resident editor of the Delhi Statesman, also agrees that though there is no interference from the owners, "there are general guidelines to the editors... we work within these contours".

### Legmen

While there are guidelines for editors, there are none for reporters. After all a junior man cannot be trusted with policy secrets. At the most they are told things like, don't criticise the municipal corporation for some time because the editor is building a house and wants the nearby milk-depot shifted... or you cannot criticise the police very much now because the IG's son is married to the ed's daughter, or you cannot write against a certain firm or corporation because it has given some concession or free gifts to the boss's wife.

What happens when the editor says no? Dateline Delhi, a cooperative venture of young journalists, interviewed some Delhi legmen and did a beautiful story on the problem last year.

Keith Flory of The Statesman: The time I did my first major feature—an inside story on the corruption in a certain government department—"What difference is it going to make?", the editor asked. 'Don't fret if it cannot be published. Cool it', the chief reporter had said. 'You're young. You've got a lot to learn. Besides, that minister is a friend of the editor's—we cannot possibly hurt him'.

Subhas Kirpekar of the Times of India: The editor just don't respond, even when you do hit off a good story. For instance, if you've taken all the trouble

to do a detailed investigatory report (which often does not take the right side of the government or the board of directors) it is likely that very little of it will be published—just a tiny news item, that's all. And even then, the next day, there will be telephone calls all around—'who is this bloody reporter?' some big shots will shout into the editor's telephone. And then you will be hauled up. All further work on the same field

of investigation will be stopped. And you will be given a firing.

Coomi Kapadia of the Indian Express gave an example: I had done that series of articles on crime. Afterwards, I was called up. 'Don't do any more—even the police have their problems', I was told. And the next day our paper carried a press handout by the IG of Police.

## Social Scenario

B. G.

**I**NDEPENDENCE Day Film. By collage, a good film director will be able to make a fine picture from these assembled fragments of news and reports, collected from a number of daily newspapers. Some may feel depressed and a little uncomfortable at the end of the show. To them I promise to offer some extra scraps of news, before closing this scenario, for their fun and entertainment and relaxation.

Do you know? Nearly 75% of the 1.6 million people in the Purulia district of West Bengal, and possibly in other districts also), have been living for months on one meal a day, of a kind of paste, made of maize, milo and seeds of grass. Many are dying of starvation, not reported in newspapers. Recently, an unemployed middle-aged graduate and his wife, with their two babies, were turned out from their rented house in Tollygunge, for not being able to pay the rent. They used to sleep on the verandah of a local grocer's shop. It is alleged that the couple tried to commit suicide after killing the two babies, as they could not bear the pangs of hunger. In a crowded commuters' local train coming to Calcutta, an angry mother threw her hungry and noisy child onto the lap of a woman vendor, and with tears in her eyes and trembling lips, jumped off onto the platform of a station. 'Sujata at Park Hotel welcomes you to Silver Jubilee Independence Eve celebration, presenting special cabaret by Annabella and Sukanya to Cyril Manuel's music (Advertisement August 14). The Police

Commissioner of Calcutta said that for some time now he had been receiving complaints about extortion of money by anti-social elements from householders on various pleas. Some of them took sides with landlords for evicting tenants. The PC had had the reports verified and had found them partly true.

People in several rural areas in Madhya Pradesh, disclosed the State Minister for Food and Revenue, have been eating roots and leaves, owing to acute scarcity conditions. The MP Government bought a Dakota aircraft at a cost of Rs 50,000, to be used by the Chief Minister for his frequent trips to Delhi. Failing to procure spare parts for the aircraft, the Government purchased another Dakota at a cost of another 50,000 rupees from Indian Airlines. The State Government also decided to import spare parts and spare engine for the aircraft, for which foreign exchange worth Rs 4.30 lakhs was obtained. Earlier more than Rs 2 lakhs was spent on the repairs of the Dakota.

Over 5.4 million landless labourers and 1.5 million uneconomic farmers in Maharashtra's rural areas are on the verge of starvation. The condition of the landless adivasis (tribals) in the State is even worse. Atrocities on the Harijans, on an unprecedented scale, are being committed in Maharashtra, Gujarat, U.P. and in other States. In the Dhulia district of Maharashtra, a predominantly adivasi area, the non-adivasi landlords have decided to set up a para-military organisation to protect their

interests. According to their announced plan, the para-military force will consist of one Major, twelve commanders, fifteen havildars and an undisclosed number of armed guards. They will be equipped with seven jeeps, and scores of motor-cycles and horses. The initial investment has been estimated at Rs. 20 lakhs, and the recurring expenditure will include ammunition worth Rs 10,000 a month. It has not yet been revealed, in how many areas in other States this sort of exercise by the landlords, in the 'non-violent' protection of their class interests, is going on at the moment. A section of the Youth Congress in West Bengal, has recently announced its plan for raising a 'Bhumi Sena' (land army, not 'infantry' in the military sense) for the protection of peasants' interests, and not of landlords' and jotedars'. This is really elevating. Compared to Namdev's and Tilak's Maharashtra, Shri Chaitanya's and Shri Aurobindo's Bengal is far more progressive. But, one of the General Secretaries of the WBPCCC is believed to have said at a meeting on the Wanchoo Commission (July 7) that more than 67,000 court cases had been instituted against poor peasants at the instance of big jotedars in West Bengal, and more than 130 people were held under the MISA for having campaigned for the poor peasants. The majors, commanders and havildars of the 'Bhumi Sena' will now march forward to protect the interests of the poor peasants in West Bengal, in a 'non-violent' way!

\* \* \*

All for the youths, the 'jewels' of our country, particularly the few lakhs (among crores) who have been picked up by the ruling Congress, to fight for socialism, in a 'non-violent' way! There was a Youth Congress rally in New Delhi recently. The police had to open fire when about 2000 volunteers of the Bombay PC Youth Congress looted vendors and railway stalls and turned rioters at Bulsar station in Gujarat, on their journey back from Delhi in a special train. Opposition members alleged in the Lok Sabha (August 14) that most of those who attended the rally had journeyed to and from Delhi without tickets and had

indulged in looting shops at several stations. Liquor bottles were found in their compartments. When Mr Dikshit, the Union Home Minister innocently said that the bottles were empty, members of the Lok Sabha laughed. Provoked by the laughter, the Home Minister angrily asked: 'Who is creating this atmosphere? Ask your leader Mr Jaya Prakash Narayan'. Isn't it a tribute to JP, who has been able, within a few months, to dispel the spell of the charismatic personality of our PM over the youths of our country? By the way, Mr Dikshit had no explanation to offer for the condoms the youths carried.

A majority of the undergraduate hostels of Calcutta University have no superintendents. Most of the boarders in these hostels are 'outsiders'. The bona fide boarders are 'completely at their mercy'. Who are these 'outsiders'? Is it JP's moral duty to answer this question? We do not know. As far as we know, the problem of accommodating these alleged 'outsiders' will be solved soon.

আগামী ২৫শে সেপ্টেম্বর, ১৯৭৪,

প্রকাশিত হচ্ছে

বাজনৈতিক ও মতাদর্শগত মৌলিক রচনায় সমৃদ্ধ

'লেনিম সেন্টার অব ইণ্ডিয়া'র

উদ্বোধনী সংকলন

● ভারতের কৃষক আন্দোলনের দু'টি বিতর্কিত দৃষ্টান্ত দলিল ● জাতীয় ও আন্তর্জাতিক পরিস্থিতির মূল্যায়ন ● ভারতের বিপ্লব ও সোভিয়েত নেতৃত্বের ভূমিকা ● পার্টি, গণ আন্দোলন ও গণসংগঠনের আত্মসমালোচনা ● প্রত্যক্ষ দর্শার চোখে: চীন—১৯৭৪ ● অনগণের জীবনের নানা ক্ষেত্রের অগ্রসর কর্মীদের বিভিন্ন লেখায় মেহনতী মাহত্বের সংগ্রামী জীবনের ছবি।

মূল্য: চার টাকা

গ্রাহক, পাঠক, বিজ্ঞাপনদাতা ও আগ্রহী বিক্রেতা বন্ধুরা অবিলম্বে যোগাযোগ করুন:

লেনিম সেন্টার অব ইণ্ডিয়া

৪৬, মতিশীল স্ট্রীট, (ত্রিতল),

কলিকাতা-১৩

when the ten-storeyed building complex at the Moulali crossing, the foundation-stone of which was recently laid by our Chief Minister, is constructed. It will have wings, with hostel facilities, for young men, as well as girls, for foreign youths, for sport and culture, for youth employment service etc. The youth problem will then be solved, at least in West Bengal, along with many other problems, as the youths of Bengal, trained in this 'Youth Centre', will face the country's crisis 'bravely', 'refraining from violence' (Mrs Gandhi at the Delhi rally).

\* \* \*

Meanwhile the 'tribes' known in this wretched country as the 'leftists', including all brands of communists and socialists, are thumping their thighs and showing their fists and threatening all the time to launch mass struggles in different phases. The signs of fatigue and frustration are writ large on the faces of the followers of Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao and anyone can see it clearly if he cares to look at the expanded veins of the slogan-shouting throats of the 'cadres' in any leftist procession. Despite the fact that most of these revolutionary 'cadres' are not having sufficient nutritious food in these days of soaring prices, the voices of the leftist shouters in a procession are becoming shriller and shriller.

But leftists, minus the CPI, are going to have their own President, anyway. Mr Tridib Kumar Chaudhury, Opposition presidential candidate, speaking at a 'Meet The Press' programme in Madras, said that his candidature symbolised 'the protest of the common man against the manner in which the affairs of the nation are being managed today'. He added that he would shift the residence of the President from Rashtrapati Bhavan if he was elected. But where he would like to shift and reside, he did not mention. We suggest, he should shift to the Andaman Islands and reside among the Andamanese, who are the most neglected and the most unsophisticated of the people of India, and he should rule from there as a 'symbol of protest', to change the 'manner in which the affairs of the nation are being managed today'.

## Where Tomorrow Is Liberty

I. K. SHUKLA

**S**PEAKING at a mass meeting in the Central Hall, London, on October 26, 1971, Amilcar Cabral, the Secretary-General of the Guinea-Bissau liberation movement, PAIGC, since assassinated, said, "the problem of liberations is also one of culture". Frantz Fanon had said as much in the context of Algeria: 'To fight for national culture means, in the first instance, to fight for the liberation of the nation, that material key stone which makes the building of a culture possible'. (The Wretched of the Earth).

Most of the poets in the Portuguese colonies of Africa—Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau—are doing only this; and a documentary testimony is the anthology entitled "When Bullets Begin To Flower", containing poems of resistance from these countries on the verge of independence. Published in Kenya, it has for its editor and translator, Margaret Dickinson who has thankfully acknowledged the help rendered her by Frelimo, MPLA and PAIGC in making this book possible.

It is no wonder that Angola's greatest living poet Agostinho Neto is the president of the MPLA. No rights of citizenship, literacy restricted to a bare 2% of the population, a severe censorship, life harried by starvation, disease, forced labour, and the hooded terror of the secret police PIDE are not exactly the conditions in which arts can be cultivated or appreciated. "In such a situation a poet's vision is likely to make him first and foremost a revolutionary; his poetry, when he can steal the time to write it, will be the expression of this revolution in which his life is spent". Some of the poets included here are among the greatest names in African letters. Agostinho Neto, Jose Craveirinha, Marcelino dos Santos, translated into many languages, are read in French Africa and have been published in East and West Europe. They, however, are nearly unheard of in the English-speak-

ing world. Portuguese, in which they write, does not lend itself that easily to translation, nor is it very widely in use beyond its frontiers, metropolitan and colonial.

Most of their work is banned, and originals are difficult to get hold of. Margaret got her originals "from limited duplicated editions published in Guinea, Algeria and Tanzania by the independence parties themselves". How difficult this must have made her task can be gauged from the fact of her having secured two poems from photocopies.

Beset with these constraints, this collection, as she says, is only to serve as a first introduction to this rich area of African writing and to set it in its context: "the struggle against the most backward and tenacious of all the colonial regimes which Africans have had to fight". In Guinea some poets write in Creole or French too, some of it is represented here. The collection has two broad divisions, captioned 'Before the Struggle' and 'During the Struggle'. The order of poems has been determined by their character and mood and not by the date of their composition.

Thus arranged, the poems, it is stated, form a vivid document on the political development of the people in the Portuguese colonies. But their appeal is wider than this. Although the poets are writing primarily for their compatriots and comrades this need not lessen the impact they have on other people. Their anger and their aspirations are shared by everyone who challenges an unjust established order. The struggle they celebrate is not isolated. Though its immediate aspect is anti-colonial it is more than a struggle for independence. Even while fighting the people are searching for entirely new ways to organise their countries and in doing this they are facing many problems they share with independent countries. The earlier poems may seem to some extent to echo the voices of earlier anti-colonial writers but the later poems belong entirely to the present.

In their anger these poems are rocks of wrath, in their aspirations, they are 'banners of desire trembling in the wind'. They exude a bitterness as 'dark as the mines', and a sadness 'as wispy

and wistful as that of songs lost in the distance'. Thus they succeed in reflecting the granite "will-power of the freedom fighters, their devotion, their courage in the face of tremendous odds, and their quintessential love for their Africa and its peoples". This makes them "some of the most moving resistance poems ever written. They make sad reading", but they are aglow with a faith in the righteousness of their cause and its ultimate victory. History is vindicating them.

#### Colonial History

A quick survey of the colonial history will be useful in any evaluation and appreciation of these poems. Vigorous in their own way they bear the stamp of experience and show a healthy freedom from borrowed anguish and decadent aesthetics which characterises the poets in some of the so-called developing countries. The pictorial vignettes, the sensuous energy, the drum like repetition, the incantatory spell—all point to an ancient source to which every African worth his salt returns—"tortured and magnificent, proud and mysterious".

Angola and Mozambique, though large, have only 12 million people. Their small settler population is, respectively, 4% and 2%. Guinea and Cape Verde are the oldest possessions of Portugal in Africa. The Portuguese were resisted in the three territories ever since their entry at the end of the 15th century. A 17th century queen who led her people against the invaders was Rainha Jinga of Angola. Gungunyana of Mozambique is a well-remembered figure who challenged the Portuguese in 1898. By the end of the 19th century alone did Portugal succeed in bringing much African territory under its rule.

Like the Dutch and the English, the Portuguese launched the slave trade. Angola was thus denuded. At the turn of the century Portuguese colonialism probably did not differ conspicuously from the colonialism of other powers except in so far as the backwardness of the metropolis was reflected in the colonies. Despite this backwardness the first decades of the 20th century saw the emergence of a small educated urban class which included mulattos. Asians

and some Africans who struggled through from the few mission schools. It was then that the first political associations were formed among this tiny section of the population and it was then, too, that a written literature began to take shape.

The poems of this epoch are preoccupied with the miseries brought in the wake of colonialism, even if the criticisms are slightly vague and clothed in abstract and, on occasion, religious terms. The language "is constrained, closely imitating European models".

The Portuguese republic of 1910-1926 allowed the colonies some freedom of speech and association so that there was some verbal political discussion and published criticism of the regime. The coup by Salazar in 1926 ended this small period of mild liberalism. Political organisations and their press were banned. This event fossilised the Portuguese colonies in their suppression and slavery. The story in the colonies of other imperial powers, however, was different in that they campaigned, albeit through reforms, for independence.

"Cultural activities" were now the only legal form of national self-expression available to the intelligentsia. Thus with political discontent increasing, poetry played the role of a mouthpiece. Some of the hated institutions that were the instruments of peoples' exploitation have a special evocative appeal, therefore. Commerce assumed administration when traders were given the right to administer parts of the land. They were called the concessionary company, often known simply as "the concession". An elaborate code legitimised forced labour. This was the Portuguese version of "indentured labour" of the British variety. The penal colony of Sao Tome became a notorious symbol of oppression. Like forced labour there was forced cultivation. Some land was leased out to Africans for cultivating cash crops which must be sold to the company at a price much below that on the free market.

Since the 1900s the South African mines have been drafting Mozambique labour. Hard work there, uncomfortable and dangerous, even with a low salary, offers the illiterate Mozambican an illusion of escape from the plantation, how-



ever temporary, and a chance to earn the bride-price and buy a set of clothes. The South African Government reaps profits from low wages (which are relatively better than those in Mozambique), and pays the Portuguese 46 shillings for every worker recruited. Thus "magaica" is a man returned from the mines with money but a broken health and premature old age.

Only the assimilados could escape forced labour. Who and how many were they? In Angola 30,000 and in Mozambique 4554, in 1950. Rich and educated Africans behaving in every way as the Portuguese. Obviously, not many could, nor many would, qualify for this dubious eminence and exemption. The bush schools in the liberated zones have educated more people in war conditions than the Portuguese ever did during the centuries. "The main achievement" of Portuguese education? The tiny minority of educated Africans cut off from the rest of the population, and unable to use their education in political opposition.

#### Postwar Poets

But the Second World War changed everything. The late forties saw a spurt of radicalism in literature just for this reason. Poetry flourished for being concise, clever in evading the censor, and capable of easy concealment. The postwar poets break loose from the rigidities of form popular with their predecessors. Their styles are varied, dispensing with formal rhythm and often doing away with rhyme. The influence of European writers is still noticeable but it is the influence of the experimental movements of the 30s, of the surrealists and the radical poets, of Aragon in France or Lorca in Spain. There are also new influences of writers from other parts of Africa, mostly the then French colonies, of writers from South America and of the black culture of North America, jazz and Negro spirituals.

More conspicuous is the effort to infuse traditional culture in the 'alien art of written poetry'. African words are used for specifically African things; whole quotations from songs in African languages occur; rhythms of traditional poetry or African music are chosen. Viriato da Cruz led the "vamos desco-

brir Angola" (Let us discover Angola) movement. Mozambique called its literary renaissance by a more colourful name, "Msaho" (the name of a dance festival). It was led by Noemia de Sousa and Craveirinha. Viriato's "Black Mother" reflects nearly all the tendencies dominant in the period: "the international vision of slavery and exploitation, the assertion of the value of African culture, and the call to revolt".

These preoccupations, notwithstanding, there is a wealth of variety: scalding descriptions of some forms of exploitation, a scathing denunciation of Western values thrust on the urbanites in the colonies, the vigour and beauty of African culture, dramatic evocations of the ancient past and the hopelessness of love, resulting, among other things, from illiteracy.

Poetry was not all to engage the post-war intellectuals. They joined illegal associations, held secret meetings and tried to organise an effective underground resistance. The Portuguese arrested the leaders. But, as Margaret says, "the reaction was defiance". (Contrast the behaviour of our poets today).

Their Portuguese education was also a handicap in that it made them suspect as townsmen in the eyes of the rural folk. This weakness makes for their abstruseness and learned allusions, flaws absent from the poetry written during the struggle. Understandably, the talk of resistance tapers to protest instead of rising to, or exhorting to, action. Yet, transcending the linguistic, religious, and cultural differences, Angola, the most "developed" colony with the largest urban population, and victim of severe exploitation, had many illegal associations functioning by the 50s. In 1956 was formed the MPLA. Its aims went far beyond mere formal independence. The PIDE struck, in vain. Neto's arrest in 1960 led his fellow villagers to protest. The Portuguese response was shooting to death 30 people and wounding 200. This white terror led to the armed uprising of February 4, 1961. The activists stormed the prison in the capital, Luanda; 3000 men were killed in the Portuguese reprisal; but the prairie was ablaze. In Costa Andrade's poem 'the 50,000 people dead

unmourned' refers to the massacre beginning with Luanda.

A major setback to the freedom fighters was another movement at the time, the Union of the People of Angola, led by Roberto Holden (who now calls it the Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile, GRAE) among the Bokongo people, based on local ambitions in opposition to the national and democratic policy of the MPLA. Within a year the liberation forces were stonewalled. Because Angola had a larger literate class there was a host of divisions which were played upon by the Portuguese. But by 1964 the MPLA was effective once again in a big way.

In Guinea and Mozambique the struggle had imbibed the lessons from Angola and thus escaped the teething troubles so marked in the case of the latter. Cabral, a friend of Angolan leaders, formed PAIGC in 1956. Eduardo Mondlane formed the Mozambique Liberation Front in 1962. Both parties prepared well and long before launching their first action. The PAIGC and FRELIMO started fighting in 1963 and 1964 respectively, guerillas having penetrated the villages and educated the peasantry as to the aims and needs of the war. FRELIMO suffered a major shock in the assassination of its President, Mondlane, in 1969. Leadership devolved on a Council of Presidency pending elections at the next Congress.

All this had an impact on the writing. Some poets joined the fight and grew with it. Neto is the leader of MPLA, Marcelino dos Santos a member of the Presidency Council, and others are active with their movements. Their inspiration now is war, their audience the masses. Crash literacy courses are making political poetry popular. Some were unable to adjust to new situations. Craveirinha was jailed, Noemia de Sousa went abroad, the younger poets have taken to their life as ducks to water for they have been part of the struggle.

#### Direct and Simple

Their language is direct and simple. No obscure references for them. Their themes are defiance, practical needs of the struggle, reasons for war, hope for the future. These poems are written

## FRONTIER

for the people, their subject matter pertinent to the nation's life. Thus they constitute the incipient national literature.

There will be another kind of poetry when those being educated today in the bush schools start writing.

Let us hope, with the editor of this volume, it will not have to be the poetry of war.

\* \* \*

Rui de Noronha exhorting his companions to Arise and Walk, calls them the 'flesh that seems to sleep walk'.

Noemia's 'Magaica' lit a lamp/to search for lost illusions,/for his youth and his health which stay buried/deep in the mines of Johannesburg./Youth and health,/the lost illusions/which will shine like stars/on some Lady's neck in some City's night. Jose Craveirinha refers to the contract labour thus:

The cattle is selected  
counted, marked  
and gets on the train, stupid cattle.  
In the pen  
the females stay behind  
to breed new cattle.

At the end of a love letter that a contract worker very much would like to write but cannot, Antonio Jacinto, manifests his personal anguish as a public privation

I wanted to write you a letter  
But my love, I don't know why it is,  
why, why, why it is, my love,  
but you can't read  
and I—oh the hopelessness—I can't write.

Viriato da Cruz describes the Black Mother as 'the living drama of flesh and blood which Life has written with the pen of centuries. Her voice becomes for him the voice of all the despoiled, her back merges with the backs of labourers sweating and drummers playing the jazz. In her eyes, then, he sees oceans of grief/lit by the setting sun, andscapes,/violet landscapes/dramas of Cain and Japheth./But I see as well (oh if I see.../I see as well how the light bobbed from your eyes now grows/denominical temptress—like Certainty/glittering steadily—like Hope/in us, your other sons/making, forming, announcing/the day of humanity/THE DAY OF HUMANITY'. Noemia, in exile, 'alien-

ated, distant, self-absorbed' has sighed for the 'strange horizons' and nearly cried 'oh my Africa strange and wild/my virgin raped/My Mother!' Noemia, politically very active in the 50s, now living quietly in Paris, calls herself a shell of flesh/where Africa's revolt congealed/its cry pregnant with hope'. Lest others be similarly congealed, Jose Craveirinha says: 'I want to be a drum/and not a river/a flower/nor even poetry'. Mindelense, working with the PAIGC, a Guinean, calls us to Attention:

We here are the children of a dense night  
which is shattered in places by strange cries  
rages suppressed many hundred years  
today are globules of our own red blood.

What kind of a house Western civilisation has brought the African after a drudgery of 12 hours? 'Sheets of tin nailed to posts/driven in the ground/make up the house'. This from A. Neto. In his memorable language, it is this that makes Africa 'the hot earth with horizons afire'. Before the fire devours them the Portuguese would decamp.

Though the African eyes were now 'wide with nightmares and strange industrialised dreams' they were still the 'moons of amazement', his 'tropical skin' was still 'the savage incantation', his body 'flexible as the fatal lightning of the hunting arrow, his muscles burnished in the hot sun of harvest and hard labour'. That is why he had 'mornings of friendship black and bright, steps of liberty desirous and strong'. With Onesimo Silveira of PAIGC, Africans want a different poem:

A poem without children nourished  
On the black milk of aborted time  
A poem without arms in need of work  
Nor mouths in need of bread  
A poem without words choked  
By the harrows of silence.  
Other times, other voices. Armando Guebazaza, FRELIMO Inspector of Schools, aptly sums up the situation:

This is a time of the certainty of a joyful day  
This is a time of war against rottenness

This is a time of revolt against the whip

This is the time of armed struggle. The time is not far off when Jacinto can 'draw a rainbow on the paper sky/for our son to play with', and when he, like other Africans, will find 'kisses and smiles the tissue of life'.

'Behind prison bars', says Silveira, 'The darkness must be smothered in crires of light'. Jorge Rebelo, gun in hand, can well say: 'It is for you too I am fighting, Mother, that you should not have tears in your eyes/I will shatter all the chains/I will open all the prisons/I will destroy all the tyrants/Mother, it is beautiful to fight for freedom/in every bullet I shoot, there is a message of justice/and old dreams wake like birds. Guebuza, in short-staccato lines, etches a picture of solidarity and resolve: 'My hands/et more your hands/will be lifted fully armed/My strength/et more your strength/shall overcome imperialism/My blood/et more your blood/shall irrigate our our victory'.

"We shall not mourn the dead" and "To point a moral to a Comrade" by Helder Neto and Marcelino dos Santos, respectively, are longish poems. Constraints of space would not allow quoting them in full which alone can do them justice. But the fitting finale to the anthology can well be the poem to conclude this essay. Entitled 'Poem', it is by Jorge Rebelo, FRELIMO Secretary for Information, and editor of the magazine, 'Mozambique Revolution'.

Come, brother and tell me your life  
Come, show me the marks of revolt  
which the enemy left on your body  
Come, say to me "here  
my hands have been crushed  
because they defended  
the land which they own  
"Here my body was tortured  
because it refused to bend  
to invaders  
"Here my mouth was wounded  
because it dared to sing  
my people's freedom"  
Come brother and tell me your life,  
Come relate me the dreams of revolt  
which you and your fathers and  
forefathers dreamed  
in silence

AUGUST 24, 1974

through shadowless nights made  
for love  
Come tell me these dreams become

war  
the birth of heroes,  
land reconquered,  
mothers who, fearless,  
and their sons to fight.

Come, tell me all this, my brother.

And later I will forge simple words  
which even the children can

understand  
words which will enter every house  
like the wind

and fall like red hot embers  
on our people's souls

In our land

Bullets are beginning to flower.

Works backed by bullets force the  
imperialist-colonialist invader out, not  
the ballet of compromises and conces-  
sions. African liberation will once again  
reinforce this dictum.

। আগ্রহী পুস্তক বিক্রেতার অধিলে  
যোগাযোগ করুন ।

১৫ই সেপ্টেম্বর, ১৯৭৪, প্রকাশিত হচ্ছে—

### লং মার্চের কাহিনী

অনুবাদ : অধ্যাপক বিজয়বিহারী পুরকায়স্থ

[ সচিত্র, শোভন বোর্ড বাধাই ] মূল্য : নয় টাকা

দি, ভি, প্রেথানভ এর

### ইতিহাসে ব্যক্তির ভূমিকা

[The Role of the Individual in History]

অনুবাদ : অধ্যাপক বিজয়বিহারী পুরকায়স্থ

মূল্য : তিন টাকা ।

প্রাপ্তিস্থান ও বিক্রয়কেন্দ্র : \* বুকমার্ক C/o অগ্রণী

বুক শ্রাব এ-১, কলেজ স্ট্রীট মার্কেট কলি-১২,

\* নবজাতক প্রকাশন : এ-৬৪ কলেজ স্ট্রীট

মার্কেট, কলকাতা-১২ \* প্রগতি প্রকাশনী :

৯৪/এইচ, কাকুলিয়া রোড, কলিকাতা-১৯

## Thailand: Support for Lon Nol

NORMAN PEAGAM

BANGKOK—One year after the U.S. bombing of Cambodia from Thai bases was ended by order of Congress, Thailand continues to play a critical role in supporting the Lon Nol Government.

The Thai role came to light on June 25 when a large U.S. ammunition cache destined for Cambodia was reported missing here. The supplies, which were apparently stolen while being shipped on barges from Sattahip, Thailand, to Cambodia via Vong Tau in South Vietnam, included: 15 500-pound bombs, 266 boxes of M-16 rifle ammunition, 37 boxes of M-14 and NATO self-loading rifle ammunition, 110 boxes of 50 calibre ammunition, 8 bomb fuses, 5 cases of 105 mm artillery fuses, and 3 cases of bomb components.

Some was recovered at the end of July hidden underwater in crates off the Thai coast about 100 miles south of Bangkok. A joint U.S.-Thai investigation into the losses is now being held.

U.S. military spokesmen here say that about 14,000 tons of U.S. supplies, including small arms, ammunition, food, medicine, and other equipment, are transported from Thailand to Cambodia each month, mostly by barge. Transportation is handled by the state-owned Thai Maritime Navigation Company (TMNC) now managed by Rear Admiral Banpot Sudsawaeng.

Until now, no guards have accompanied these barge convoys and apart from standard shipping precautions the only special measures taken have been protective sandbags and radar surveillance. Red-faced U.S. spokesmen say that gunboats will accompany future convoys. A senior Customs official here has charged that a group of U.S. military officers and Thai police were behind the thefts, which he said had been going on for over a year. But a U.S. military spokesman insists that there were no substantial losses until June 25.

Other forms of vital Thai support for the Lon Nol Government include the provision of rice, sugar and oil (Shell and Caltex deliver two to three million

litres of oil per month to Cambodia from Thailand); U.S.-Thai training facilities for Cambodian pilots at Udorn and for soldiers elsewhere (over 10,000 Cambodian troops have reportedly received training in Thailand); repair facilities for damaged Cambodian planes and helicopters at Don Muang (where they are put back in shape by Thai-Am, a U.S.-Thai company 70 percent owned by the state-run Thai Airways Company); U.S. reconnaissance flights over Cambodia from Thai bases; accommodation for U.S. personnel working in Cambodia; and a high level of propaganda and diplomatic support (for example, the Thai government is almost certain to back the Lon Nol regime in this year's UN vote on Cambodian representation).

Thai officials in the present civilian government adamantly deny that any Thai troops have taken part in the fighting in Cambodia, but even the former military regime conceded that some 'volunteers' may have enlisted on an individual basis.

(New Asia News, August 9, 1974)

For Frontier contact

MANITHAN,

No. 2, Mangesh Street,

T. Nagar,

Madras - 17.

For Frontier contact

BANI PRAKASH,

Panbazar,

Gauhati-1,

Assam.

## FFC Films

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

SINCE its inception the Film Finance Corporation has been the butt of controversy. During the formative years, it had, of course, hardly any distinctive features of its own. It was just another financing body without any positive or definite outlook. Although during that period it financed a few films of quality, the bulk of its money went into the production of the usual big-budget extravaganzas of Bombay and the finance was with so many strings that aspirant newcomers with progressive ideals could never afford the assistance. The policy of buttering up the movie-moguls, of course, boomeranged in no time and more than seventy-five per cent of the loans sanctioned during this period still remains unrealised. But a certain air of change started blowing when a new management took over by the middle of 1968 and the Corporation formulated the policy of financing low-budget, films of high aesthetic quality. Mrinal Sen's **Bhuban Shome** was the first film to get the backing of the Film Finance Corporation's revised policy. The phenomenal success of **Bhuban Shome** justified the Corporation's new stand and soon a large number of bold and energetic group of people burst on the film scene to try their hand at the medium. Among them were film critics, film society enthusiasts, Film Institute alumnis, short-film makers, theatre-producers, journalists and some film technicians. In fact, an amalgam of diverse forces leading to a cross-fertilisation of ideas. Soon a new set of films followed.

That the Corporation's new policy is also a sound business proposition is borne out by the fact that fifty per cent of the loans sanctioned during this period (the "post-Bhuban Shome era" as FFC terms it) has been paid back. A number of FFC-sponsored films have also become internationally known through festivals and specialised screenings and the possibilities of an overseas market for these products are in-

deed very bright. That the Corporation does not shirk from supporting films with radical and controversial issues is proved by its assistance to films like **Garm Hava** and **Padatik**.

Not that the picture is all that rosy. In such a wide variety of novel endeavours, some loopholes and pitfalls are bound to be there. One cannot deny that in its enthusiasm to encourage new talents the Corporation has often been over-liberal in granting loans for some amateurish ventures and often it has encouraged some hyper-esoteric experiments resulting in a blockade of public money. Often, some pseudo-avant garde film-makers have used its platform as a convenient means to prestige and prominence and after attaining recognition at its cost, have merrily drifted into the commercialised cinema. The distance between Bombay, where the Corporation is stationed, and other film-producing centres of the country becomes an extremely limiting factor for film-makers outside Bombay.

### Festival

A festival of FFC-sponsored films recently held in Calcutta under the joint auspices of the FFC and the Federation of Film Societies of India, gave an opportunity to assess the measure of the Corporation's success in building up a movement of a "parallel cinema" in our country. In this festival eight films, representing different regions, were shown and the variety of the fare was indeed striking, ranging from the direct socio-political approach in Mrinal Sen's **Ek Adhuri Kahani** to Moni Kaul's attempt at a formalised pattern in **Duvidha**. Out of the films, Kantilal Rathod's **Kanku** and Chidananda Dasgupta's **Bilet Pherat** have already been shown in Calcutta (the latter was a commercial release) and reviewed in this column. This critic missed the Tamil film **Dikatra Parvati**, based on Rajaji's story dwelling on the hopes and illusions of an ordinary couple. Mrinal Sen's **Ek Adhuri Kahani** (based

on Subodh Ghosh's famous Bengali story **Gotrantar**), though it was successful in doing away with the romantic trappings of the original, suffered from a dichotomy of style. The director chose an intensely dramatic story modelled on purely classical forms, but in his filming he has used the "fragmentation technique" of the modern cinema, leaving major gaps in characterisation and narrative construction. His flaws were the application of non-narrative devices in expounding a basically narrative content. Set in the early thirties, the film dealt with the conflicts of a Bengali young man working in a sugar-mill in Bihar—a tragedy of essentially middle-class contradictions. A bold theme and the director's radical attitude was stated in clear terms. Beautiful use of location is there as also stunning portrayals by such professional stalwarts like Utpal Dutt, Sekhar Chatterjee and Jnanesh Mukherjee and a dazzling performance by Arati Bhattacharya in the heroine's role, but everything finally was reduced to nought because of the director's basic flaw, the unhappy blending of style and content. Satyadev Dubey's **Shantata, Court Charu Ahe** (adapted from Tendulkar's play) would have been quite likeable as a piece of "filmed theatre", if the director had not strayed into flamboyant cinematic exercises of hoary flashbacks. The story of a mock-trial gradually affecting the lives of the main characters, the dark mysteries of the twilight zone where truth and fiction converge—the basic concept of the play was quite powerful and the film's chief asset is the poignant acting of Sulobha Deshpande as Leela Banare, the innocent victim of hostile circumstances. Raj Marbros' **Trisandhya** (a screen adaptation of a famous Malayalam story by Uroob) was remarkable. You have Waheeda Rahaman's excellent acting and the creative integration of picturesque Kerala locations into the theme, but the director's experiments of multi-colour effects to spell out layers of consciousness flopped miserably. Moni Kaul's **Duvidha** was just an intellectual aberration where a beautiful story of human emotions was spoiled by a pointless exercise in cold, sterile formalism. The festival's most

satisfying discovery was Avtar Kaul's charming film *27 Down* (based on a novel by the non-conformist Hindi writer, Ramesh Bakshi). A love-story set in the ordinary surrounding of daily life, the film is full of visual splendour and human warmth. Avtar Kaul showed a sure grip on his medium and an exemplary restraint in treatment. His camera probed the mobile world of railway tracks relating the background to the characters with a profound mystery and this promising film would be a sad reminder of the fact that Avtar Kaul's tragic death was a real loss to the Indian cinema.

## Letters

### On Unification

With due respect to Comrade Santosh Rana and others, I cannot agree with their viewpoint 'on unification' (August 10, 1974). Comrade Rana and others misinterpreted the original proposal for unification (July 13, 1974). The proposal was that "The Central Committee members who are still working and want to lead forward the CPI(ML) should, as a united body, reorganise and consolidate the central committee". Surely this does not mean that ALL (emphasis given by Comrade Rana and others) CC members should unite and revive the CCL. But by disregarding the eligibility qualification contained in the original proposal and misinterpreting this [with the use of the word ALL in capital letters, Comrade Rana and others have actually confused the issue, and raised unnecessary questions, e.g., should the party remain paralysed till the CC member who had joined the ruling Congress be persuaded to come back to CPI(ML). But I don't want to assert that Comrade Rana and others have done this deliberately.

They have raised the question: "If the revival of the CC be a correct step in 1974, why was it wrong in 1971?" But was the CC really revived in 1971? Definitely Comrade S. N. Singh and three other CC members (Gurubuse, Rajkishore Singh and Mahindra Singh) had the right to rebel against the left-sectarian line pursued by Comrade CM and others and

also to convene a requisition meeting. But was it convened properly? If so, then Comrades CM, Soumya and others (who were then outside jail) should have been invited to attend the meeting. As my knowledge goes, at least Comrades CM and Soumya were not invited. Not only that, Comrade Rana, who was not a member of the CC (elected at the Eighth Congress), attended the requisition meeting of November, 1971, convened by Comrade SNS and others. Had he any authority to attend that meeting? Definitely not. And all these lead us to only one conclusion: the requisition meeting of the CC was not held properly, and hence the CC was not properly revived in 1971.

Comrade Rana and others hold that the 'revived' CC of 1971 led by SNS has not only formulated a correct Marxist-Leninist line but has also led the party in implementing it and re-integrating the party with the masses. 'The achievement in carrying forward the revolution by implementing the mass-line is remarkable, though not spectacular'. Is this true? I, as an ordinary cadre actively associated with this group led by SNS, beg to differ. And I do it on the basis of concrete experience on my part and that of my comrades. Comrade Rana and others have been imprisoned for a long time, and are therefore devoid of concrete experience in this connection. Probably the reports that they get second-hand are exaggerated half-truths. Let us face some plain truths. Did the 'CC' resolution of November 7, 1971 contain any positive concrete line? Definitely not. It was positive only in the negative sense, i.e. it correctly negated the 'left'-sectarian deviations of CM's line. Even in that connection it did not fundamentally and emphatically oppose and repudiate the line of individual annihilation, which was the chief manifestation of the 'left' sectarian line. What it really did was to generally oppose a few manifestations of the 'left' line and restate a few general Marxist-Leninist concepts, which were their all the time to be followed but were actually opposed or neglected by ALL the CC members including SNS.

And now even three years after the 'revival' of the CC, no concrete line

has emerged. The CC led by SNS has correctly emphasised the essentiality of mass organisation and mass struggle, but this emphasis has not been linked up with the basic question of building up of the base areas, formation of PLA and also that of the United Front. The question of combination of legal and illegal struggles has been correctly emphasised but the question of "how" has not been solved. Some other basic questions [e.g. what should be the concrete line of action in the democratic struggles? How the peasants' economic struggle should be connected with their armed struggle? What are the basic differences in organisation, method and slogan and also in the line of action between two types of mass organisation, one led by the CPI(ML) and the other by revisionists like CPI(M)?] have not been solved. Time and again we come across the word mass line; but what it actually means in the concrete conditions of India is never clearly stated and analysed, and as a result it, has 'almost' turned into empty jargon. In reality we have got no single concrete line suitable to the particular reality of India, but only some re-statements of a few Marxist-Leninist theories. In the absence of lines for the concrete application of these theories in the concrete conditions of one country, they should not claim to have formulated a correct line and led the party to implement it. Correctness or incorrectness of line determines everything. And the absence of any concrete line, correct or incorrect, denotes the lack of a concrete and correct and able leadership. This is precisely the situation. In this situation no single group (including that of SNS) should claim itself to be the ONLY revolutionary party of India.

Another point should be noted, though it has not been mentioned by Comrade Rana and others. In 1971 the CC led by SNS expelled CM and Soumya and branded them counter-revolutionaries. But in 1974 that expulsion decision has been withdrawn on the plea of 'unity'. Is it a principled stand? If CM is a counter-revolutionary, no earthly reason should lead a revolutionary to call him now a 'Comrade' and to unite with him. But I basically differ with the view that

CM was a counter-revolutionary. In spite of his many fundamental deviations he was a revolutionary, and it was he who boldly raised the banner of armed struggle in contrast with the revisionist road of parliamentarism. If Li li-san of China, in spite of his basic deviations (similar to those of CM) in the 30s could be treated as a comrade and be elected as a CC member in 1945, there is no reason why CM should be branded a counter-revolutionary. Comrade Ashim Chatterjee too treats CM as a revolutionary! But what about Comrade Rana and others? What is their evaluation of CM? We want to know.

Finally, I feel that unity among all the revolutionaries of India (inside and outside the CPI(ML) must be attained. And to attain this unity the original proposal (July 13, 1974) may be viewed as a concrete organisational step forward. I support this proposal and invite all revolutionary cadres to discard their group-mentality and accelerate this process of unity.

A Cadre of CPI(ML)

### Correction

The report published on August 10 that Debarshi Chakrabarti was released on bail is not correct. At the time of writing, August 15, he was in jail.

P. P. Basu

### Garm Hava

Saw 'Garm Hava'. The picture deals with the hardships that the minority community of India had to face at the initial stage of partition. It was a period of mutual mistrust and bickering, but objective observers are of the view that the sufferings of the Hindu minority in Pakistan were far greater than those of the Muslims in India.

The Muslim family shown in this film is fully wedded to feudalism—the Muslim society in India is the last remnant of feudalism. Feudalism is a spent force and the sooner the community realises this the better.

A few words about *Frontier* too. *Frontier* has all along been too indulgent

towards the Indian Muslims as a whole. Like others the Muslim society too is a class-divided society but the political consciousness of its upper and middle classes is woefully poor. To show liberal understanding towards the community can be appreciated but complete absence of critical sympathy (criticism where the contradictions are non-antagonistic can never be made without sympathy—sympathy increases understanding and a critical approach makes one detached and impersonal) can hardly help in correcting certain flaws which have become dated.

A Film-goer  
Calcutta

For *Frontier* contact :

BANKURA NEWSPAPER  
AGENCY,

Lokepur,

P.O. & Dist. Bankura.

## FRONTIER

61, MOTT LANE, CALCUTTA-13

### Subscription Rates

#### INLAND

One Year : Rs. 22.00 Six Months Rs. 11.00

Three Years: Rs. 60.00. Five Years: Rs. 100.00

#### By Surface Mail

All countries: 6 dollars

#### Foreign AIR MAIL Rates (One Year)

America: 18.50 dollars

Europe: 15.00 dollars

The Netherlands: 18.50 dollars

Asia: 13.00 dollars

Please supply FRONTIER for

Six Months/One Year/Three Years/Five Years

I am sending Rs.....

by cheque/money order\*

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Signature

\* Cheques should be drawn in favour of *Frontier*

**SYMBOL OF  
STYLE  
AND  
STATUS**

*Bata*  
*Bata*  
*Bata*  
*Bata*

He does things in style .  
He is one who counts.  
Two new additions to his  
exciting wardrobe.

Bata Executive  
and Bata Consul..  
two neo-classics  
in shoe styling.



Executive 79  
Sizes 5-10

Consul Derby 77  
Sizes 5-10

**1,400 organisations  
in the public  
and private sectors  
have joined  
the progressive club**

**by using Group Insurance  
to set new norms in social securities  
for employees**

A new norm in employee benefits.

19,00,000 low-income employees now have the life-saving security of life insurance. Either by a **token** contribution or sometimes even without it.

A new norm in Industrial Co-operation.

Employees' organisations have also joined together to get the benefit of Group Insurance under an LIC master policy. Employees and employers all over the country

are getting together and helping to extend social security to the needier sections of society.

The members of this enlightened group are drawn from a vast spectrum of organisations. From the U.P. primary & secondary to school teacher organisations and police force, to state road transport corporations, to electricity boards. Add to this a vast array of industrial corporations which vary from electronics to tourism, from warehousing to antibiotics, from banking to petrochemicals, from textiles to tractors. It's a club you could join with profit.

**Life Insurance Corporation of India**