

frontier

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RED CHINA IS 25

IT will be twenty-five years on October 1 since China set up a people's democracy under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. It needed no less than twenty-two years of struggle, of a revolutionary war resulting in the gradual ascendancy of the Chinese people, to defeat foreign imperialism and native oppressors posing as patriots, to end exploitation and set up a socialist State which has since been moving ahead at a pace unparalleled in history.

The onward march of the Chinese people under their new socialist organisation means that the oppressed Asian and Third World people are inexorably rising to shake off their long imperialist bondage and to create a new civilisation in which exploitation and the accompanying misery of the millions will be replaced by a common comradesly prosperity. It shows that in this age the oppressed are indeed, potentially, enormously superior to the oppressors, that imperialism and its puppets are indeed paper tigers when confronted with the armed unity of the revolutionary people. It shows what even a small agrarian nation like the Vietnamese, following the unerring trail of the Chinese Revolution, can do—beat off the rabid aggression of the world's mightiest imperialist power, and demonstrate which way the stream of history is flowing.

The triumphant march of Chinese socialism has again, more emphatically than ever, confirmed the truth of the basic Marxist idea that civilised prosperity is the product of common human labour and not the "gift of capital". It has shown that capital need not be imported to an underdeveloped country from foreign shark-pools; it can be produced by the sheer impact of the willing labour of millions of liberated workers upon the raw materials of nature. It has shown conclusively that the way of development for a backward country is revolutionary self-dependence and that the indispensability of foreign aid is a myth concocted by imperialists and their puppets in the exploited countries. That the future lies with the Chinese socialist economy is further attested by the unshakable steadiness of the Chinese prices index (along with a steady gentle rise in wages) while the greater part of the world is in the grip of a disastrous inflation.

Another achievement of the Chinese socialist regime has been to keep the flame of Marxism-Leninism burning amidst the strange and painful reversion of Soviet socialism to capitalism and eventually to a world-exploiting system. This they have done, on the one hand, by ruthlessly exposing the massive

hypocrisy of the present Soviet leaders and, on the other, by carrying the socialist organisation of their own society into its cultural superstructure to purge it of the lingering bourgeois influences. Another way in which China has firmly upheld the Marxist-Leninist principle is by denouncing the practice indulged in by all big reactionaries—with the Soviet Union leading—of exporting revolution (i.e., counter-revolution) and by holding fast to the historical materialist view that revolution in any country can in the main be only the product of its internal class contradictions and is consequently the business of its own people—unless of course it is directly aggressed by imperialism. While Soviet might is a source of universal terror, China's growing strength is a source of increasing assurance to the oppressed peoples of the world.

A review of the first quarter-century of Chinese independence would certainly call for a comparison with our own position. Our propaganda says that while China's social organisation is ruthlessly dictatorial, ours is a benignly democratic one. Reality, however tells a different tale. In India while a handful of corrupt comprador rich are bloated with wealth, the vast millions are poor, famished, in the grip of a thousand miseries, oppressed in a thousand cunning ways. The Chinese have frankly abolished the rule of wealth and set up the rule of the common people who in their teeming millions are well-fed, strong limbed, hard-working and cheerful in pursuing their country-wide creative activities, the fruits of which they themselves visibly share. India, twenty-seven years after her supposed independence, is hopelessly dependent on imperialist aid and technology, and is backsliding every day. China's self-dependent agriculture and industry, driven by the prodigious spiritual energy of her liberated millions, are advancing in steady strides. India's internally oppressive and externally expansionist regime is getting increasingly isolated in the world, while the Chinese Government is winning new friends every day and is being treated with increasing reverence in the international arena. The Indian people, apart from

being ground under poverty, live under a rule of stark police terror.

The silver jubilee of Chinese liberation calls for the deepest thought and self-examination on the part of all who wish to escape from this nightmare of our present civilisation. What is the magic behind the Chinese transforma-

tion? The liberation of the people through the smashing of the instruments of exploitation. However that may come off in the world at large, few have doubts any longer that the Chinese way is the way to the civilisation of the future.

The Rice Combine

A combine of ricemillers, big landlords and blackmoney operators have invested Rs. 100 crores in the paddy and rice trade in West Bengal and they are responsible for "the near famine situation in most of the districts in the State", according to the West Bengal Labour Minister, Mr Gopaldas Nag, who has now taken over charge of the Food Department.

On the basis of a rupee-a-kilogram net profit, the combine has made Rs. 150 crores entirely in liquid untaxed money. Thus in about six months it has built up a fund of Rs. 250 crores which is consistently being deployed to corner all types of foodgrains and essential commodities.

The 450-member general council of the West Bengal Pradesh Congress, which met recently, entirely agreed with Mr Nag's assessment of the factors responsible for the present situation, but appeared rather hesitant in taking prompt action to crush the combine, which was described as enjoying the patronage of a section of the police administration—as if others did not have a finger in the pie. While a section of Congressmen demanded immediate formation of popular committees with the CPI, if necessary, even the CPI(M) and other leftist parties, the Chief Minister, Mr Siddhartha Sankar Ray, emphasised that a wide rope to the committees might lead to a "breakdown of law and order".

Mr Nag's data, on analysis, provide a dismal picture. It is not a question of production or supplies ensured by the central pool. The market arrivals are immediately seized by the blackmoney operators. This has been happening not only in food but also in soap, baby

food, medicines, textiles, steel and building materials.

Last year West Bengal produced nearly six million tonnes of rice. Even if the marketable surplus is calculated at 1.5 million tonnes, the profit, at one rupee a kilogram, to market operators would be Rs. 150 crores. Even in the remotest districts rice is sold at Rs. 4 a kilo. In Calcutta and neighbouring areas, the price is Rs. 5 a kilo. With Central assistance of about one million tonnes, there should not have been any famine conditions in West Bengal.

From evidence submitted at the PCC meeting, more than 150 people died of starvation during the last five weeks in two districts alone. Dr Jainal Abedin, who is Minister for Co-operation and Public Sector Industries, said that in West Bengal Dinajpur and many other areas, hundreds of thousands of people could barely have a meal once a week. In South Bengal, thousands of famished people have started a trek from the villages to nearby railway stations. A travel by suburban trains will give a visitor an inkling of what the situation is like in rural areas. Fields are green with aman paddy but the destitutes who worked on the fields look vacantly. They know that even a good crop will not help them. It means larger profits for those who have money.

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Power Of A Lie

Once Amnesty International released its statement on detention conditions in West Bengal jails, official reaction was immediate and categorical. But for three months the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister of West Bengal did not make the least attempt to reply to its complaints and recommendations. And Amnesty was not the first to take up the matter. Even newspapers and weeklies close to the establishment had published reports of torture in police lock-up and unspeakable conditions in jails over the years, of the numerous jail killings, but nothing moved the authorities until a statement was released by a foreign organisation.

One knows that the governments, both at the Centre and in the State, would lie. But the extent to which some newspapers go in calling the allegations grossly exaggerated, using phrases by officials, is rather amusing when one sees that Amnesty has quoted some of these newspapers themselves. A Calcutta daily, for example, on January 1 reported that 2,000 were held under the DIR and MISA and another 17,800 as Under Trial prisoners. The same paper reported the other day the arrests of another 1,300 "extremists" or so between January and mid-August (this year). There has been no general amnesty or mass release of prisoners in the past few months to our knowledge. Therefore the daily was either thoroughly irresponsible in publishing "grossly exaggerated" reports, or it is now acting under instructions. Couldn't it contact the two or three organisations in Calcutta dealing with this subject, for a more balanced view? Amnesty at least cares to send people out to meet men and women here and to read papers.

The Government, thanks to the many-spandoured laws in operation, can always juggle with figures and facts. "There are no political prisoners in West Bengal", proclaims the clownish Government of West Bengal. The prisoners concerned were involved in violence. Therefore they cease to exist as political beings. Then at times the Government is kind enough to give out

the figures of those detained without trial, keeping quiet about the many thousands held on "specific" charges. These "specific" charges, when they fail to convince the trying magistrate (which is rare), are always replaced.

According to some estimates, the number of those in jails at the moment, is about 5,000-6,000; but there are many thousands on bail who have to report to the police at regular intervals. Perhaps the Government excludes them altogether from the figures it publishes.

About torture (mostly in police lock-up and interrogation centres, not in jails) the fact is that when reports of the terrible mistreatment of Naxalites arrested during the so-called cultural revolution began to filter out, the activists outside picked on those connected with the collection of intelligence in particular cases and finished them. Later the attacks became indiscriminate. The killing of policemen demoralised the force and stopped the gathering of intelligence at the local level and work almost came to a standstill. It was then that the policemen were given blanket licence to do anything they liked, not to bother about whom and how they liquidated, and crores of rupees were spent on the "urban poor" who watched their localities and infiltrated the ranks of the CPI(ML). Departmental enquiries into the police firings were suspended. The police, in a murderous mood, did everything to extract information from the arrested. This was known as "interrogation". Everybody knows that it is a euphemism for torture of the most brutal kind. Those who are tortured do not complain to the magistrate, because they know that the magistrate will not take them home to nurse them but they will have to go back to the prison and face the torturers again. Besides, the Naxalites have always tried to avoid arousing pity for themselves. Didn't the papers report the death of prisoners in jails as a result of torture or cases of suicide for the same reason? Mrs Gandhi and her men know that public memory is short, and very short in an illiterate country like

India where the power of repeated lies is infinite.

The Government has kept quiet about the numerous jail killings and the most suspicious fact that it has not cared to publish any enquiry report.

In the long run, what would stop the inhuman treatment of political prisoners by a government which has raised the police budget like anything since Mrs Gandhi came to power in 1966 while leaving the people to starve is the use of revolutionary force, not petitions or meetings.

A Change Of Actors ?

The sudden burst of governmental activity over the arrests of smugglers is perhaps meant to rebut the charge that the ruling party does not have the power to take action against those who "help" it. What exactly happened is not known nor will it possibly be ever known in full, for many of the smugglers might never get a chance to speak out. But one of the factors certainly was the Union Minister of State for Finance, Mr K. R. Ganesh's melodramatic threat that he would organise picketing before the houses of smugglers on the auspicious day of Gandhi's birth. Mr Ganesh, politically less encumbered than many others as he comes from the rather remote Andaman Islands, has possibly craned his neck too long over the matter and might very well repent it when the ministerial reshuffle at the Centre takes place during the next few weeks.

The fact however remains that Sukur Naran Bakhia, Haji Mastan Mirza and

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Yusuf Patel, who between themselves are believed to earn about Rs. 4 crores a month, could not have risen to such heights unless they enjoyed some kind of protection from high places. What actually prevented the authorities from taking steps a year or two ago is not an unexplained enigma. Will the application of the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) take care of this aspect of the problem? Will MISA ensure that no new dashing figure of the underworld again step into the shoes of the Bakhias and the Mastans? Will it just be a change of actors while the show goes on? Mr Ganesh has assured the nation that what was happening will not be allowed to be repeated. A high-powered committee, true to the style of our government, has also been set up to oversee the operation. But the basic fact remains that so long as one or the other group in the corridor of power finds itself obliged to the smugglers and the like of them, the disease will never be rooted out. With its limitless hoards of black money and its insatiable demand for "phoreen" things, India will remain the hottest favourite for the international smuggling racket. To make a dent on it is extremely difficult and, without full political backing is impossible. What has happened during the last few days shows that the Government can take action within the existing administrative machinery and the legal structure if it wishes to act. It will now have to think up subtler excuses for its policy of supreme inaction against the other lechers of society like the hoarders and blackmarketeers. What is good for the gander ought to be good for the goose.

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

Free To Be Human

FELIX GREENE

I have come to think that knowing a great deal about China has very little meaning in itself unless we can in some way relate it to ourselves, to our own society and to ourselves as individuals. I know many people who have visited China, and who have a tremendous knowledge about China, who read everything they can about that country, and have been there, but have nonetheless missed the essence.

Now the pointlessness of merely accumulating facts about China was brought home to me a few days ago when I listened to a talk by a very eminent American-Chinese expert who has just returned from five weeks there, and who has considerable influence in his own country. He has a vast mental file index of information about China which has been to some extent brought uptodate during his visit. But after listening to him, I felt that he might as well not have been there at all. He went with a number of preconceptions and looking with his own particular coloured glasses saw only what those glasses would permit him to see. He said he was sad (and this is merely an example of his thinking) that the Chinese would not enjoy all the technical achievements of the West. He saw a coming crisis in China between the inevitable demand for more consumer goods and the inability of the Chinese technology to provide them. And he went on to say that modern technology really requires an elite.

It seems to me that he has missed the real point of what the Chinese people are trying to do which is to use technological achievement for the service of the people and not to allow it to control the society. They believe that the quality of relationship between the people is more important than the accumulation of possessions, and people can possess technical skills without it resulting in their becoming an elite. This American professor is a fine gentleman in himself—I do not want to denigrate him as a human being. I am merely using him to show

that the accumulation of factual information on China does not necessarily help one to penetrate into the reality of what they are attempting to do. But it illustrates, at least to me, something even more important, and that is the depth of conditioning process to which we are all subjected in a capitalist world. This last visit to China made me more aware than I had ever been of the complexity, subtlety, the total pervasive influence, that bourgeois capitalist ideology exerts upon us from the moment we are born. It influences every aspect of our lives. It certainly influences our educational system and our moral values, and our relationship with others. Our fears, our aspirations, our ambitions. The very structure of our thinking is influenced by the prevailing ideology of our society starting while we are so young that the cement had not set, so to speak. It is extraordinarily difficult for us to overcome our conditioning and its pervasion of our whole existence or even to be aware that we have been conditioned. One need only to look at the kind of 'cultural' stuff that is dished on to us, the West End theatre (most of it), the cinema, the entertainments, the BBC—you know, the whole of it, to realise how totally non-political it is or how carefully and deliberately it supports the status quo.

I am thinking of various mythologies that have influenced us—the religious mythology of royalty which is deeply rooted in our tribal unconscious, and another mythology that one might call the 'democracy' mythology. Those who support the status quo have succeeded in putting it across to us that by putting a cross on a voting paper every four years for Mr Tweedledum or Tweedledee we are 'democratic'. But democracy, to my way of thinking, has much more to do with the way we feel and act towards each other than the mere machinery of voting. We concentrate on the formal aspects of the democratic process which I believe to be the least essential element that is re-

quired of a society to make it truly democratic. A democracy means that there exist between individuals a thousand invisible threads, threads of trust, and mutual respect and liking—everything that makes us feel at one with each other, and not on guard with each other—creating an atmosphere that does not call for us to be tough or competitive. And I have come to think that democracy and competitiveness are self-contradictory, that as competitiveness comes in, the sense of democracy goes out. We need only look at the society that has developed capitalist competitiveness to its ultimate extreme, the United States, to see to what degree of sadness and isolation, human deprivation and violence it drives people.

Our educational system of course does its best to buttress these already deeply set prejudices and conditioning in ourselves. For some, education establishes a built-in sense of prerogatives and superiority. For a few, education provides the climate in which they come to feel they are something special, and removed from the common run of mankind. Our educational system also establishes in other people—indeed the vast majority—a deep feeling of inferiority, social inferiority, educational inferiority. And for all the privileged as the privileged, it creates a belief that this society cannot be changed, or even radically modified. If in fact the working people of this country wanted to change things, the power lies in their hands. But they have been conditioned to have a kind of pseudo-respect for the supposedly educated, so they too have been inhibited from action. All this (as of course it was intended to) has given rise to our deep-seated Western scepticism, our inability to believe that we could take hold of our society and transform it.

It is no wonder Mao Tse-tung emphasised right from the start the importance of class struggle. We must not forget that China had all these conditioning factors in her society too and in some ways they were practised there to even greater extent than in our Western societies. China had her elites—the educated, the rich, the landlords, the big industrialists. She too had her

intellectuals with their profound conviction of their social superiority. The Chinese were guilty of chauvinism that led them to believe that China was the repository of all that was best and finest in human culture, and all the others were lesser breeds. Thus the Chinese revolutionary leaders had all this to contend with, the same problems that are confronting and confusing us, the same deep-seated scepticism, the same doubt that fundamental change is impossible. Power as with us, was in the hands of a few; the Chinese educational system was designed to provide an intellectual elite. No wonder that from the first Mao Tse-tung said 'Understand class struggle'. And this is to me, at least, the very heart, the root, the very essence of what China stands for and what China tells me. I do not mean the class struggle only in the formal Marxist sense, though that of course is included, and certainly I do not mean it in the very flabby use we make of the word 'class' when referring to social division in our bourgeois society; the upper middle class, the lower middle class and so on. But I am thinking especially of the struggle within ourselves as individuals. I think that our effort must begin with the realisation that we are class conditioned creatures. We are judging society here and everywhere through our particular kind of coloured spectacles and we had better begin to come to terms with that within ourselves—and for those of us with a bourgeois upbringing that is no easy job. The Chinese found it no easy job either. It not only took the original revolution, but the Great Cultural Revolution, really to awaken the people to the extent they were still carrying within them the legacy of division, classes, privileges, elite and that the overcoming of this was as important a part of the revolutionary transformation as the initial struggle to gain control.

The lesson I have come back with from China is really a profound one, and I cannot do it justice because I am not a very learned person. It is the conviction that not only the structure of the society be changed so that the control is in the hands of the working class, but that such change will be dissipated,

and eventually subverted, unless there is a change within human beings too. The professor whom I mentioned earlier, raised another question which I think we need to touch here. He felt that there is in China a lack of individual freedom. This deserves to be mentioned briefly because it is indeed one of the stumbling blocks for any one who talks about China to groups in the West.

I have come to believe that our ideas about the nurturing of individuality and our concepts of freedom are also class conditioned ideas. They are also a part of what has been built into us by the prevailing social system. Our present ideas of freedom of course derive largely from 19th century ideas of bourgeois freedom, freedom for the emerging industrial owners from any social control. In essence this freedom could be expressed as 'me first', 'everyone for himself', grab what you can, and if everybody acted thus, society (so the theory went) would somehow be benefited. That was the basic philosophy of the new 19th century capitalists. We have since given up that rather crude definition of capitalist ideology, but we are still basically operating within the 'me first' capitalist jungle. Individualism in a competitive society is necessary for survival. To get on I must push, I must develop myself, I must make more money and out of this has grown the idea of sacredness of 'me', 'my' individuality, and my 'creativity', and so on. This is a very difficult concept for us to feel and think our way through to but the question I am beginning to ask myself is: is this the only possible kind of freedom? or indeed is it really freedom at all?

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The Chinese are showing us that this concept of individuality which has been developed in the West under capitalism, is really not freedom but another kind of imprisonment. It is the imprisonment of 'me' inside myself. It is the enclosure of me, with all my striving ambitions, fears, defensiveness, which divides me from other people. It is this 'me-ness' which is the prison and in the very depths of our consciousness we know this. And how we hate it all. The perpetual struggle to compete, to be cleverer than other people, to have a better job—the constant striving of me against others to get ahead, or to give my ego a boost, knowing that any advance up to the ladder of success has almost always to be at the expense of someone else. And we call this freedom.

A co-operative society develops an entirely different kind of ethic, a wholly different kind of freedom, and this is what I learnt in China. What we all long for, surely, is to be part of a society which does not divide us from one another, which releases us from prison, the small boring world of me; which allows us to be members of a society in which we do not have to push ourselves. I have seen how the skills and initiative of the Chinese people have been enormously enhanced by the fact that they do not have to compete, or worry about finance or what is going to happen to them when they get old. They are free from myriad anxieties that burden us who live in a supposedly free world, and are thus free to relate to each other as human beings without fear and without defensiveness, all involved in something bigger than themselves.

(Abridged)

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The Academic South Block

I. K. SHUKLA

JUST as the South Block is ill-adjusted to India being a sovereign nation and not a colony of the U.K. (or USA, USSR), so too the seats of higher un-learning in India refuse to surface above the murky state of satellitism that stamped their birth. If the South Block has been guilty of insensitiveness vis-a-vis the various freedom movements in Africa, Latin America and Asia, so too the Valhallas, called universities in India, have revelled in celebrating the dead and irrelevant. Let alone being the conscience-keepers of the community, our universities have by far been the repositories of waste and worthlessness. The snobbishness of stupidity characterising the attitudes and actions of the South Block have invariably been found plaguing the reflexes and responses of our universities. Thus, these latter become the appendages and academic annexes of the South Block, which suits the ruling class fine.

Even after 27 years of 'Independence' the universities persist in continuing with British Literature, calling it all the while, English Literature. Understandably they are scared of calling it British for that would give them away. Transcending the accident of slavery and subjugation, we could, as a sovereign nation, have adjusted our perspective to the demands of freedom and neighbourly reality. Any sensible reflection would show that to broaden our academic horizons as well as national interests it would be in the fitness of things not to ignore the literary creations of these countries and continents which have been using English as the mother tongue for generations. Among the Anglo-Saxons themselves, we have bypassed Canada, Australia and New Zealand, besides the countries of Asia, and more particularly, Africa. Not to respect this fact of life can well be interpreted, as it rightly has been, as racial prejudice, megalomania, inferiority complex and plain ignorance. For our English Literature in post-independence India to be really English, it must comprehend this broad sweep. Either there can

be sections on Canadian, Australian, New Zealandian literatures, or these can be offered, initially, as alternate courses against Anglo-American literatures. It is not being suggested that because Anglo-American literature has had a fairly long run, it be now replaced in our courses with Canadian/New Zealandian/Australian literatures singly or jointly.

Comparative Literature is a discipline apart and that is out of consideration here. Oddly, it has been mostly absent in our universities (Jadavpur is the only exception. Delhi University has suddenly entered the list). Therefore, the studies of African history and culture need not have African literature as a tag on sufferance. True, the study of African literature, whether in English or translation, will predicate that a knowledge of African history and culture form part of it, but only as a background to richer understanding. That is to say, in all conscience, African literature should be taught as an independent unit, full-fledged, and in its own right, because its moods and modes are different in their inspiration and tradition from those of the Western or Anglo-Saxon literature. Christianity may have been a link or a veneer, but it did not amount to much as far as the racial psyche and national experience of African countries are concerned.

Not only has it not occurred to Indian doves that powerful or colonising countries do not necessarily have the very best literature, or a monopolistic hegemony over it, but also they have blandly ignored another fact. Indo-Anglian literature is seriously being studied in quite a few universities abroad—despite its dubious credentials and quality. English is mother-tongue of no State in India, despite the fact that Nagaland has declared it to be its language. And yet our synthetic literature, and not the genuine one in regional languages, is being given attention abroad. It follows, therefore, that the writings of those who have had English as their mother-tongue in Asia and Africa, West Indies, Trinidad

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etc. for generations, deserve greater consideration and possess more genuine entitlement. Are we waiting for these countries to have colonies and Watergates like the U.K. and USA respectively before we deign to accord their literatures academic recognition?

Another instance of the South Block bug in our academe. At no stage are the students now being taught the geography of their State and district. Of distant lands, and India; yes, but not at the stage where they should know the basics. Then, history is being garbled and good part of it consigned to oblivion. For instance, our students do not know the factors responsible for our 'Independence', or the British withdrawal. All written and oral records spread the myth that it was a culmination of Congress efforts and Gandhian techniques. Falsification and betrayal apart, this is dwarfing the minds of the new generation. Our boys and girls should know that factors like the Royal Indian Navy's 'mutiny' in 1946, the upheaval over the INA etc. contributed in various degrees to, and hastened the advent of, freedom from the British yoke. The disaffection in the Navy and Army had given the Britons the creeps. The Congress had launched no movement beyond the Quit India call in 1942. Its leaders were clamped in jail. It was another movement led by the underground team of JP, Dr. Lohia, Aruna Asaf Ali, Achyut Patwardhan that had unhinged the sedate John Bull. Later, it was owned by the Congress, under the aegis of Mr Nehru, as its own, as in the case of the INA. But, significantly, the INA leadership, like that of the 1942 movement, disappeared from the national scene. The two had been just 'used' by the ruling clique in its bid for power.

How colonialism distorts a nation's

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SEPTEMBER 28, 1974

vision through its obliging tools among the indigenes, whom, in the first place, it creates and nourishes before 'transferring' power, is all too evident from the behaviour of the panjandrums nestling in the South Block which is not only an administrative unit of the Government of India, but also the controll-

ing hand of the ruling class operating on the principle of remote control. The variety of imperialism is limitless and the variants of apartheid and colonialism endless like Ravana's head. Where else could it be practised with such cool and such finesse, if not in India, the land of the ineluctable cycle of avatars?

The Press

Old Lady Of Boribunder

PATRAKAR

THE Shiv Sena is reportedly trying to stage a coup and take over the workers' union of the **Times of India** group of publications in the wake of the August 22 token strike in the concern. It is certainly a sad commentary on the level of political consciousness of the journalists and press workers employed by Bennet, Coleman and Company, the proprietors of the **Times of India** group of publications, who may be said to belong to the labour aristocracy of the Indian press. Together with workers of **The Statesman**, they are probably the best paid in the country.

But, as it is, their political consciousness certainly leaves a lot to be desired, particularly that of the journalists. Faced by inaction on the part of the management in conceding their demands, the journalists are a disillusioned bunch; most haven't paid, even cared to pay their union dues. The majority belong to the CPM-backed union whose general secretary is the well-known CITU leader, Mr S. L. Kolhatkar. This union had given the call for the August 22 strike. A smaller faction, consisting of about 200-300 workers, owing allegiance to the Jan Sangh, dubbed the strike as a gimmick.

The Shiv Sena is fully exploiting the present atmosphere of stalemate. Waiting in the wings, it used the recent strike to boost its strength. After the strike it issued a circular which apparently received as many as 1,300 signatures of support. The SS move obviously has

the blessings of the ruling Congress, one of whose leaders in Bombay, Mr Rajni Patel, is also a government-appointed director of Bennet, Coleman and Company. (Mr Patel, who is the president of the BPCC, was incidentally the architect of the Congress-Shiv Sena alliance in last year's parliamentary by-election.) But even this threat has failed to rally the journalists.

Just Demands

The August 22 strike in the company was called by the union because of the failure of the management to respond to its charter of demands submitted 18 months ago. These included wage revision, increased dearness allowance and other things such as house rent allowance, night shift allowance, leave travel concession, medical benefits etc. The union had pressed for direct negotiations but all it could achieve after an agitation last year was an increase of Rs 30 in DA as interim relief with the assurance that they would start negotiations soon.

More than a year has elapsed but the management has not shown any willingness to negotiate, pointing to the Government's announcements inside and outside Parliament regarding the appointment of the Third Wage Board. The union has pointed out that ever since the Government enacted the Working Journalists Act, the TOI management has been flouting the recommendations of the Wage Board. When the first Wage Board for working journalists

submitted its recommendations, Mr J. C. Jain, the general manager at the time, did not implement them even in respect of the few employees who were drawing lower wages than what the Wage Board had laid down. After the second Wage Board's recommendations also, the management rushed to the court; non-journalist employees had to go on 25 days' strike for interim relief and 68 days' strike for final recommendations of the Board.

That the present majority union's demands are just can be judged from the increasing profits of the company. When the present wage level was fixed, the average gross profits of the company were Rs. 45 lakhs (average 1963-65), which went up to Rs. 75 lakhs in 1970, and Rs. 98 and Rs. 145 lakhs in the following two years.

The company suffers from mismanagement and lack of foresight on the part of policy-makers. The paper crisis and the consequential lay-off in the company's Bombay-based periodicals earlier this year, is an instance. One of the main causes of the crisis was the strike at Rohtas Paper Mills, a concern of the Jains, on which the company relied almost entirely for its paper supply for obvious reasons. Another reason, ironically enough, was wastage of paper. Though the company was not getting the required quantum of paper even from July last year, it brought out a number of annuals—particularly that of the **Illustrated Weekly** and **Maharashtra Times**—which are now lying unsold in the godowns! The number of unsold copies of the **Illustrated Weekly** is over 50,000—costing Rs. 5 lakhs. The annuals had to be distributed as a free gift to the company's clients and top executives. In fact the 1972 annual of **Weekly** also faced a similar fate and about 4,000 copies are still gathering dust in the godowns. This in an organisation which has several managers alleged to be experts in their field of work.

Incidentally, the paper crisis brings to the fore a related and interesting, episode. While supplements are being brought out, the number of pages increased (**Delhi Times of India**) and new editions launched (**Delhi Economic**,

Times), **Times Weekly** has virtually been killed in the name of newsprint shortage. It was the best Sunday magazine section published by any newspapers in India. And by all available indications the magazine was not running at a loss. It is assumed that rather than the newsprint shortage the weekly's suspension had more to do with the directive of the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission putting a ban on the 'clubbed sale' of the **Times Weekly** along with the **Times of India**. No wonder the management is now toying with the idea of publishing it as a separate magazine rather than a weekend issue. It may be recalled that a similar directive was issued by the MRTPC to the **Hindustan Times**, which had also subsequently suspended the publication of its weekend **Sunday World**.

While the management talk of economy to employees, the expenditure on the executives at the top managerial level went up by more than 30 per cent compared to 1972. The spending on entertainment, travelling, promotional work, advertising and petrol is colossal. Not long ago a top executive travelled to Germany, Malaysia and other Asian countries for promoting advertising in these regions—while the **Times of India** is not in a position even to meet the local advertising demand. This is happening in a concern which is supposed to be under the control of the Government. Some years ago, following allegations of fraud and misappropriation of money, among other things, the Government went to court seeking an order barring Mr S. P. Jain, the main shareholder of the company, from having anything to do with the publications' management. In accordance with the court judgment, a new board of directors was formed, with the Jains being permitted to nominate only three directors, while the rest of the board consisted of nominees of the court and the Government. But in spite of the preponderance of the Government and the High Court nominees on the board, the Jains continue to be the de facto policy makers. An ex-officer of Sahu Jain was appointed Deputy General Manager; the several sub-committees constituted by

the new board to take decisions on administrative and other matters were also packed with the nominees of the Jains.

TOI editor Shamlal's term expires soon. Resident editors in Bombay and New Delhi, Mr Ajiit Bhattacharjee and Mr Girilal Jain respectively, are in the line. The London correspondent, Mr J. D. Singh, is also a senior man.

One hopes it would not get messy like the recent transfer of power in the **Delhi Statesman**. As is well known now, former resident editor, Kuldip Nayar, was to take over the general managership of **PTI**—but the plan misfired at the last moment. However, the reshuffle plan had gone too far and S. Nihal Singh had been called back from London to take over the editorship. And soon an entirely new post of 'political editor' had to be created for Mr Nayar.

Whoever takes over the editorship, he should take care to see that the ambition of their former man-in-Paris to go down to Peking and become sort of a 'Sinologist' materialises.

Clippings

Where Is Ziauddin ?

In May Bangladesh's political underground received a dramatic and prestigious boost. One of Bangladesh's most senior army officers, Lieutenant Colonel M. Ziauddin, former commander of the Dacca Army Brigade and hero of the Liberation struggle, disappeared. In a widely distributed clandestine leaflet Ziauddin announced that he had joined the "revolutionary" underground.

At the time of the Pakistani crackdown in March 1971, Ziauddin was in West Pakistan. In July Ziauddin, along with a number of other stranded Bengali officers, brought off a dramatic escape from Pakistan and crossed the border into India. Within weeks he and other senior Bengali officers who had escaped were organising fighting units along the Indo-Bangladesh border and within Bangladesh.

Strategically, concepts differed over how the battle should be waged. Bangladesh's commander, General Osmani, and Indian advisers argued in favour of developing conventional brigades and staging raids from bases in India. Ziauddin and several other officers favoured the development of guerilla warfare and insisted that Sector Command Headquarters should all be moved inside Bangladesh territory. Ziauddin himself took command of the Sylhet sector.

Following "liberation", Ziauddin was appointed to the command of the most important brigade in the country, Dacca. He and several officers, however, opposed attempts to restore and rebuild a "conventional army" along traditional concepts and practices. In one brigade in particular, the concept of the "productive army" developed. The officers proposed a policy of "self-reliance" where soldiers were to become workers. All brigades were to raise their own food and begin productive work in the villages.

In the one district where the experiment reached its highest point of development, the army planted 500,000 pineapples and began intensive cultivation of other crops. All officers and men were required to do physical labour every day.

But the experiment was short-lived, it lasted only six months before a major shake-up in commands purged the "plough soldiers". In August 1972 Ziauddin reportedly became deeply disillusioned over the political direction of the country. Independence has become an agony for the people of this country, wrote Ziauddin. "Stand on the street and you see purposeless, spiritless lifeless faces going through the mechanics of life. Generally, after a liberation war the 'new spirit' carries through and the country builds itself out of nothing. In Bangladesh the story is simply the other way round. The whole of Bangladesh is either begging or singing sad songs or shouting without awareness. The hungry and poor are totally lost. This country is on the verge of falling into the abyss".

He alleged that there had been a "betrayal" of the national struggle because of a certain "secret treaty" which he demanded should be made public. He then concluded with a rather harsh state-

ment. Referring to Prime Minister Mujib, who spent nine months of the war in a Pakistani prison, Ziauddin wrote: "We fought without him and won. And now if need be we will fight again. Nothing can beat us. We can be destroyed but not defeated".

For the Commander of the Dacca Brigade, Ziauddin's article was hardly an act of soldierly obedience. It appeared when Mujib was away in London for medical treatment. When he returned to Dacca, the Prime Minister reportedly met Ziauddin and assured him there would be no recriminations if he wrote a formal apology. Ziauddin refused, and late in 1972 he was dismissed from his command and from army service. Several other sector officers who had supported him were also "released" from active duty.

According to reliable sources, Ziauddin spent the next six months travelling around Bangladesh in third-class train compartments. He visited numerous rural areas and attempted to change many of his old personal habits in order

to "declass" himself. He is also said to have become a voracious reader, borrowing various classical Marxist works from new found leftist friends in Dacca. For a while he joined a private firm in Chittagong, but in February this year his closest friends suddenly lost touch with him. He had "disappeared". In late February, a friend received a one-sentence letter from Ziauddin. "I have crossed the line", he wrote..

Besides being popular, Ziauddin is also considered to have been one of the most brilliant young officers in the Bangladesh Army. An intense search by military and police intelligence agencies is now underway to capture the "Red. Lieutenant-Colonel". However it is rumoured that Ziauddin has already begun building up a substantial military force of his own and that in "friendly" areas of the countryside his units move about openly.

In military and Government circles, there is great concern over the "desertion". According to a former associate of Ziauddin, "unlike other under-

IMPERIALISM AND REVOLUTION IN SOUTH ASIA

Edited by

**Kathleen Gough and
Hari P. Sharma**

The book begins with an analysis of the impact of imperialism and capitalism on India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Bangladesh before and after 1947, and examines their effects on the social, economic and political institutions of the Indian subcontinent.

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The fourth section discusses the repression and subsequent resistance struggle in Bangladesh leading to the Indo-Pakistan war and the creation of Bangladesh.

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ground figures, the Government is extremely worried that this man can do something. They knew him well and know that his leadership capability is great."

Ziauddin has one other advantage. Prior to his escape from Pakistan he had been among the Bengali army personnel stranded in the Western region. He came to represent an important link between two groups in the Bangladesh Army. In many cases, soldiers and officers who were repatriated from Pakistan after independence have not been accorded equal military status within the armed forces. Ziauddin is respected by and, in the past, had good relations with both groups—those who were formerly stranded and the freedom fighters.

Ziauddin is not the only military officer who has run up against the authorities and turned to political opposition. Major M. A. Jalil who commanded the Khulna sector during the war of independence is currently locked away in Dacca central jail. Jalil, also considered a popular war hero, was arrested on March 17 in Dacca after he led a procession of 15,000 supporters of the Jatyo Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-National Socialist Party) in a march on the Home Ministers' residence. When Government security forces opened fire on the demonstration, it turned into the bloodiest night Dacca had seen since the surrender of the Pakistani Army.

What becomes clear from the cases of Lt.-Col. Ziauddin and Maj. Jalil is that unless the Government is able to resolve the numerous political and economic problems gripping the country, it may one day face instead an armed insurgency with a sophisticated and experienced military group as its leadership.

(L. Lifschultz in *The Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 15, 1974)

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A Gorky Play

BY A DRAMA CRITIC

THE play *Samanya Asamanya* was staged by the Sampratik branch of the IPTA at Mukta Angan recently. It was a dramatisation of Maxim Gorky's *Samanya Ghatana* and dealt with the fag end of a day in the lives of three daily wage labourers. Physically and mentally at the end of their tether, they have been drinking hard to seek oblivion from their daily privations but the state of drunkenness they are in merely aggravates their inner unrest and sense of insecurity and makes them unusually voluble.

Sariñ Ghosal as Kanta does a piece of consummate acting in the opening drunken scene as the weakest of the three characters constantly in need of reassurance when all of them are thrown into a bout of soul-searching. Sankar Ghosh as Govinda, the most aggressive and down-to-earth of them all, castigates the social system thriving on rank exploitation and sheer blatant injustice. Sakti Bandopadhyay as Ganga, on the other hand manages to retain enough sanity to act as a balancing factor between the two characters on opposite poles as it were. The character of Mala (Krishna Bandopadhyay) the humane prostitute, is imbued with a pathos which seeps into the barren lives of the three characters and rouses their latent protective instincts. Renu Mukherjee as the old lady whose house was being painted gives a moderate display of the sort of double-facedness which is a perennial characteristic of the landed gentry.

Both the roadside scenes were rather well got up with the barest minimum stage props. What left a lasting impression was the realistic garbage bin over which a beggar and his son squabbled for a few morsels from the left-overs of a feast. As far as the lighting effects were concerned, the characters were occasionally left standing in a dark patch. The shadow on the wall which kept haunting Kanta could also have been made more prominent.

Considering the fact that none of the actors and actresses are professionals, they seemed to have enough talent to stand up to many a veteran group.

Two Artists

SANDIP SARKAR

IN the middle of September, Nihilish Das and Prithwis Sikdar held exhibitions in the Academy of Fine Arts. Das was older and seemed to have developed more skills, while Sikdar (b. 1946) was more sincere and had more promise, though he is not mature enough. He fumbles, trips up and falls flat on his nose more than once, like a child who tries to walk but is really capable of crawling, but there is indication that he will walk, and when the time comes he might even run.

He is afraid to draw and this forces him to cut pictures from the magazine and paste them and many a time he does a very sloppy job. Out of 14 exhibits there were only two pure canvases, the rest were either collage-painting or collage. Over and above this he is more interested in preaching and in the process he forgets his art. What struck me as remarkable is his organisation of space which is best shown in his painting 'Fallen Leaves'. Here a lot of space is left in the canvas but the leaves are distributed at the right place and the background arranged in a very competent fashion. He is a surrealist of sorts and uses three dimensions and tones instead of pure colour. It would be better if he stopped pasting and started painting.

Das' exhibition titled 'Dream Palaces of Remorse' had some very good and some very bad canvases. He did not have any name or number and this added to the confusion. He has taken women as his subject matter and tried to grapple with the problem of space, but he seems irrelevant because he has deliberately missed out the stark reality of the oncoming famine. His women, whether sitting or standing or in a frenzy of some fertility rite, are obsessed with their bodies, nude but not always beau-

SEPTEMBER 28, 1974

tiful. To Das woman is a sexpot, and his paintings are surcharged with erotic suggestions which verge on violence, and indicate 'sex' repression. These women have sculptural proportion and their three dimensionality disturbs the pictorial quality. They are mostly in groups and sometimes in singles. Men come in but as a sort of second fiddle. Das has done better in his larger canvases. Fresh colours are juxtaposed with darker tones and lines have a rhythm

and cross hatched. There is something that reminds one of the earlier works of Prakash Karmakar. There was a canvas which had women and horses in a jumble which was very well executed. He seems better when he depends on the fluidity of lines than on masses of colour. At his age one expects more concern for thematic depth than he has shown. He almost looks like a school-boy—quite a competent teenager—who has wild fantasies about sex.

standing by the water, he can weather the excessive heat or tumultuous storm. True, he has used bad quality paint, has never been careful about preserving his canvases, so much so that many of his oil paintings are losing their original vitality. Some have been given away and others lost, but there is enough to convince us about his stature as a painter. Moreover, the structure at the bottom of his paintings has a concreteness about them. They do not float about but are solidly attached to the flat two-dimensional canvases, while asymmetrical lines trace an abstract pattern with grace which is finally valid aesthetically.

Artists Of West Bengal—XIII

SANDIP SARKAR

Ramkinkar Baiz

(Continued from previous week)

His Art

Ramkinkar appeared on the scene at a very crucial juncture: Abanindranath was leaving the world of Indian miniature and Japanese watercolours and trying to assimilate elements of folk art by concentrating on the Mangal kavyas. Rabindranath began to paint peculiar things, which at that time a very few knew how to evaluate. Jamini Ray had just started to take the Kalighat Bazar paintings as a point of departure. Amrit Sher Gill was ready to plunge into the problem of painting Indian rural life in a contemporary fashion. At about this time Benodebehari Mukherjee and Ramkinkar made their appearance.

Ramkinkar's work done in his student days has a finished quality. He could handle wash, watercolours and tempera with ease and professional skill. Probably there is no artist in India today who is as versatile as he is. Over the years his art has undergone changes—sometimes very drastic. He has not gone to the world of classical or even folk art for his inspiration, neither has he rifled from the works of modern European masters. No doubt, there is a sort of syncretism in his art, maybe even an attempt to harmonise consciously what had happened and was happening in Europe. He was not interested in making a detailed study of these movements but in understanding their spirit. He

was saved because he identified with the sky, air, sunbleached landscape, the clouds, trees, seasons and above all with the people of his native Bankura and Birbhum. There was a period when he was engrossed with Cezanne and, still later, possibly the influence of Gaganendranath took him to cubism. There was also a period when he did abstract art. There was, however, nothing imitative in his approach.

His paintings sprang from the soil. His farmers, nursing mothers, men and women at work, or even animals are a part of the landscape. He is a romantic, as Whitman is, and sings not only of the degradation of man, but also of his glory. In this whole sequence, the imagery of procreation, whether he views it veiled in men or nature, takes on a robust tone. The act itself is invested with magical property. In more senses than one, he is a modern priest of the fertility cult.

Like his younger contemporary Gopal Ghosh, he tries to catch the various moods of nature, the slightest rustle of the leaves or the trees in full bloom; the onrush of a mighty storm finds in his brush a willing response. Like some Celtic Druid he sings of trees and they are transformed into the symbol of the phallus and woman becomes the mother goddess. There is something very sensuous and convincing in spite of the underlying symbolism. There is something very human about his cubism and even his abstract work. Like a tree

Like his paintings, his sculpture has a dynamism, a rhythmic motion, a rough texture, an unfinished quality and a built-in tension which help to make an immediate impact. Ramkinkar's sculptures, like classical Indian sculpture and to an extent even terracotta sculpture, are always engaged in some action. In his sculpture the latent quality of Indian sculpture is at work. In ancient times, our artists had to depend on dance to invest the figures with mimetic expression, but with Ramkinkar this expression comes directly from life. He uses the diagonal form to impress this dynamic quality. It seems that what looks changeless and static apparently, is to him something that is really pulsating with movement and has a rhythm that is neither uniform nor predictable. The lines running straight are suddenly broken up, and curve and sometimes bend or tilt in the most unexpected fashion, and subtly mass and weight is distributed to infuse the sculpture with a magic quality. Because surface texture is rough, the inherent tactile quality accentuates the rhythm of the movement. From the core of the sculpture, there is a flow of harmonised non-predictable rhythm. Not only the eyes, ears or the facial expression but the whole body and its limbs are infused with the action and even with the emotion that the artist has been inspired with and this adds to the volume of his sculpture. He has not been at his best where he has attempted to make his sculpture static as his Jaksha and Jakshi in front of the Reserve Bank of

India, New Delhi. The only exception is "Sujata", where the figure is not exactly static but where rhythm is suspended.

It is never good to generalise, but it seems that in Europe a sculpture is in direct opposition to the space that is outside itself, while in India, space is something that sculpture grows into quite naturally. This applies to Ramkinkar's sculpture which is mainly open-air. His 'Lampstand', 'Santal Family', 'Harvester' and all his works would possibly bear this out. Works like 'Factory Whistle' point to his awareness of the social scene.

His portraits bring out the traits of the person without going into details. The artist and commentator seem well balanced. His portraits of Abanindranath or Rabindranath have an expressionistic quality.

In his abstract sculptures, Ramkinkar has been able to infuse also his attitude to art and life. His compositions have strength and a massiveness and seem to be choral music without words. There is power in his distribution of mass and building up of volume. The linear movements are taut with feeling and latent energy. There is evidence of the quest for pure formal organisation. In brief his figurative and non-figurative works are complementary.

Therefore, it would not perhaps be wrong to say that with Ramkinkar, modern Indian sculpture came of age.

Women Soft And Hard

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

IT is not that the director has totally discarded the author in his screen version of Bankimchandra's *Devi Chowdhurani*. In fact, he has too closely followed the story-line of the original to infuse any new artistic approach into the material. Of course, there are interpolations prompted by box-office considerations such as the various masquerades of the heroine to hoodwink the British, some aping of Bombay-style adventure drama and a general crudity in the treatment of the subject. And

somehow the director has copied the original novel quite slavishly but he has totally missed its spirit. He has portrayed *Devi Chowdhurani* as a fearless *Nadya* and there are ludicrous anachronisms in the high-falutin patriotic speeches of the heroine and her vitriolic tirade against the British rulers. But the director has completely forgotten that *Bankimchandra's* novel has nothing to do with hair-rising exploits of a female Robin Hood, although there are some episodes with cloak-and-dagger elements. The theme is the tragic mental conflict of a woman torn between her private sorrows and public duties, with some very interesting sidelights on the contemporary social pattern. But unfortunately the director has neither the resources and the capabilities to build up an action-drama on the Hollywood or Bombay model nor the insight to weave a well-embroidered story of complex, multi-level characterisations with an evocative period atmosphere. *Suchitra Sen* has tried hard to lend charm and personality to the central role, but somehow her age is a definite deterrent. Her best performance is in the masquerade of an old woman. *Basanta Chowdhury's* *Bhabani Pathak* is a cross between *Shri Chaitanya* and a human robot. *Ranjit Mullick* as *Brojeswar* looks a nincompoop all right but he has yet to learn the elementary lessons in diction and voice-throw. The only exception among the gallery of duds is *Sumitra Mukherjee* who in her full-blooded rendering of *Sagar-Bou* offers a pleasant cameo of a saucy nineteenth-century housewife with her pungent native wit. The murky, textureless, shoddy photography of the film makes us doubt that this is the same *Dinen Gupta* who did splendid camerawork in *Ajantrik*, *Ganga* and *Komal Gandhar*.

Bankimchandra also features in *Bikaley Bhorer Phool* as an off-screen commentator when some passages from his *Kapalkundala* are heard on the soundtracks as a background effect to the lovers' rendezvous. *Uttamkumar* appears as a slightly aging debonair hero and *Sumitra Mukherjee* as a girl of easy virtues who needs a shoulder to cry on and a hairy chest to cling to. *Uttamkumar* supplies both and his popular

image is utilised by the director for weaving a fantasy of teenage adulation. The material is pretty thin and the paddings and repetitions are odious. The locale being *Digha beach*, there are some arty attempts to achieve some picture-postcard effect and it is useless to look for any coherent idea in a film which is a shapeless bundle of irrelevant episodes.

Letters

On Unification

'A cadre of the CPI(ML)' raised some important questions in his letter 'On Unification'. ("Frontier", August 24). But something more can be added to it. Some people think that revolution depends on some 'good' people only and not on the massive activities of the people and party cadres. This idea manifests itself in the thinking that the entire party will be united only if some top leaders achieve unity among themselves. Thus they leave the fate of revolution to the good sense of a handful of men. They always stress the organisational procedures, but never take into consideration whether the ranks follow or not. Thus they conclude that the mistake in the meeting of 'revival' in 1971 was that Comrade *Charu Mazumdar* and Comrade *Soumya* were not invited and some non-members of the CC were invited. They fail to see that the vital defect of the so-called 'revived' CC (like the present CC led by *Mahadev Mukherjee*) was that it could not unite the communist revolutionaries of the country under its banner. On the other hand, the 'revival' created confusions and splits.

Much is being said about the 'left sectarian and anti-Marxist' line of Comrade *C. M.* A large portion of such criticism is supposed to be based on the CPC's suggestions. As far as I know, that document never suggested that the '*Charu Mazumdar* line' is anti-Marxist as a whole, but mentioned that only some policies were anti-Marxist. They paid respect to the party and expressed the hope that the few mistakes

which are inevitable for an inexperienced party, could be corrected **within** the theoretical framework of the party.

In the present difficult situation, if we want to achieve unity, the following points must be analysed, (1) What was the objective basis that led to disunity? (2) What is the objective basis of the unity which we want to achieve and (3) What should be the subjective efforts required to reach that target? The CC members who still enjoy the support of the ranks and are integrated with revolutionary practice must be united. But that is only the first step. A concrete formula must be worked out so that the whole party can be united step by step. Opinions about the past may differ. But it is not proper to deny the right of those comrades to be in the party who still believe that the past line was entirely correct.

Arun Goswami
Calcutta

'Conspiracy Again'

Here in Andhra Pradesh the repression of writers and intellectuals, not to speak of revolutionaries, continues. Another "Chittoor conspiracy" case has been hatched. Consequently the acting Secretary of the Revolutionary Writers' Association (Virasam), Mr Bhooman (Lecturer in S. V. University), Mr Shiva Reddy (law student) and Rammurthy Reddy (student) have been arrested in Tirupati. Some more are expected to be implicated in this case. RWA strongly condemns these anti-people actions and demands their release.

Nikhileswar
Jwalamukhi, Hyderabad

In U.P. Jails

There is a good number of Naxalite prisoners in U.P. jails. Many of them have been convicted for life or long imprisonment. The U.P. Government has been denying them political status in jails. They have become victims of certain serious diseases but no arrangement for proper treatment was made. Some of their family members too are

suffering from various diseases. But the Government adopts delaying tactics in the cases of undertrial Naxalite prisoners and their parole applications.

The mother of Ram Chandra Singh, a prominent Naxalite youth leader, writer and poet, confined in Fatehgarh Central Jail under a life sentence, has applied for parole of her son. But she does not know what has happened to her application.

The U.P. Revolutionary Writers' Association demands his immediate release or if that is not possible, release on parole.

Mukti Kumar Mishra
Organisation Secretary
U.P. Revolutionary Writers
Association

Prize-Winners

Malayalam films, having won the President's Gold Medal for 1972 and 1973 consecutively for the best Indian films, might have aroused some curiosity in the minds of the readers of "Frontier". If I decry films in my own language, that might be lauded by class-conscious readers in West Bengal, yet the same kind of people are looked down upon by the highbrow sophisticated cowards who rule the roost in the field of art in Kerala. It is a kind of Nehru's non-aligned policy for the highbrows in the field of art and literature in this State. They know that everything is decaying in the present system, yet they are prettifying everything in the given system. Even the feigned attacks on the Establishment are carried out by the self-proclaimed disciples of existentialist philosophers. For them everything is to be despised in this world. Everybody is immersed in sorrow always. And the high priests of this philosophy in the cinema field are Adoor Gopala Krishnan and M. T. Vasudevan Nair. That they got the awards is not accidental because these two sorrow-kings have great influence on the youth of Kerala. So what the Government of India says is that it is all right we know that everything is bad here, but make the youngsters sad and thus make them powerless to attack the

Establishment. Adoor Gopala Krishnan and M. T. Vasudevan Nair are the best tools of the Government of India to castrate the Kerala youth from the revolutionary point of view. I am not an expert in assessment of films. But after seeing **Swayamvaram** and **Nirmalyam** I felt demoralised. There is no spontaneous warmth in the story-telling style. If there is beauty in mathematics there is beauty in **Swayamvaram** and **Nirmalyam**. When I saw **Calcutta '71** how much spontaneous, warm, emotive enthusiasm I had. I think films should be like that and that is why in my opinion Mirinal Sen is better than Satyajit Ray.

I have been encouraged to write this because I have tried to look at **Dharmayudham** and **Nirmalyam** through the telescope of class war.

As a Marxist analyst points out, films like **Dharmayudham** and **Nirmalyam** look like an attempt on the part of the feudal exploiters of yesterday who are disinherited today to gain the sympathy of the people for their sufferings of today. Whether this was done deliberately by the authors is not important here. This is an attempt to influence the present-day society by these exploiters who have still influence in the superstructure though they are disinherited at the base today. The authors do not write about the sufferings of the exploited who have been victims from the day private property came into existence.

M. N. D. Nair
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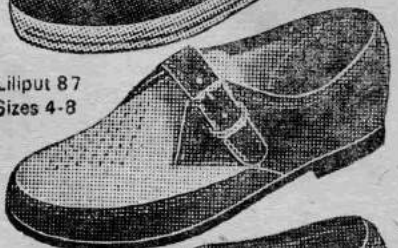
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Liliput 87
Sizes 4-8



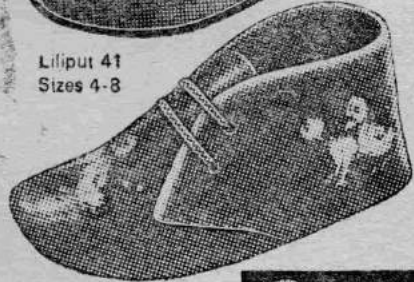
Liliput 26
Sizes 4-8



Liliput 91
Sizes 4-8



Liliput 41
Sizes 4-8



Little Star 01
Sizes 2-5

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