

# frontier

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## On Other Pages

COMMENT	2
PRICE POLICY FOR PROMOTING INEQUALITY	
ASHOK RUDRA	4
REPORT ON NAGALAND—I	
FROM A CORRESPONDENT	6
<i>The Press</i>	
FOREIGN JAUNTS	
PATRAKAR	7
OF GAMES AND GAMESTERS	
GYAN KAPUR	8
CAMPAIGNING FOR LIBERATION	
I. K. S.	9
THE TOKYO SUMMIT	
AKIO YAMAKAWA	9
THOUGHTS ON GARM HAVA	
SHAHID AMIN	10
LETTERS	12

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## STAPLING TOGETHER

NO sooner had the waiters at Vladivostok cleared away the champagne glasses than the news leaked out that the two super-powers under the name of 'disarmament' had agreed to embark on another round of nuclear arms expansion, stapling together their armaments programmes, as a U.S. Senator says. U.S.-Soviet talks on the 'limitation' of nuclear weapons produced the Moscow agreement of May 1972, the Washington agreement of June 1973, and now the Vladivostok agreement. The old-fashioned single warhead missile is now being replaced by agreement by a greater number of missiles with deadly multiple warheads. The Soviet Union is developing nuclear submarine ballistic missiles while the U.S. plans to begin production, within three years, of a new family of missiles, namely the 'cruise missile'. When China denounced the disarmament talks as a big fraud, a cruel joke, she was reproached even by some well-meaning people for her sharp polemics. It is now clear that she is very correct. The more they talk about limitations the more nuclear weapons they develop; the longer the security conference, the greater the insecurity.

But are the two super-powers really re-conciled? Are they producing all their arms just to throw them on the scrap heap? The detente they self-congratulatingly shout about is superficial while the contention for hegemony, for markets, for raw materials, is the essence. The question of war and peace can never be understood unless it is seen in the light of social relations, of the social system and of the laws of social development. Just as misery is not the product of corruption, so also war is not the product of an arms drive. They are effects of far deeper causes. Only after the causes of war have been removed will there be a world without war, without arms; certainly not before. That some people in Europe, one of the theatres of the last two world wars, want to see a detente is understandable. But what they see is an increasing monstrous arms expansion, and one violent wave after another of monetary and financial crises. When people define the nature of this great disorder, the Kremlin tall-talkers and, toeing them, our Marxist politburo members excitedly accuse them of being anxious to see the world in disorder. Widespread disorder in the world is an objective fact, independent of man's will.

People of necessity go through a process, on the basis of practice, to gain greater understanding of things. People of the Third World countries

knew what is U.S. imperialism long ago, but in the case of social-imperialism of Soviet Russia, which was the first socialist State, the land of Leninism, they are only gradually getting to know its true features, as its policies are unmasked. Their excessive rates for commodities sold to developing countries and the very low prices paid for imports from these regions have been an eye-opener. Another obvious example is their role in the United Nations on the question of food and population, maritime rights and raw materials. Their argument that the Third World cannot exploit its own resources for 'lack of means' and 'backwardness' is precisely the argument with which the imperialists used to justify their conquest of territories and plunder of poor nations in the last century. The Yankees and Russians now use almost identical arguments against the Third World proposals. The Vladivostok episode once again demonstrates that the U.S. and the USSR are the most ardent militarists of modern times.

## Not Convincing

Leaders of the Government are claiming that the backbone of the smuggling business in the country has now been broken. Almost all the big operators, it is said, have been rounded up and only four or five of them are still at large. The net, we have been assured, is closing on them too. The Presidential order has also reportedly plugged the loophole in the MISA operation whereby the alleged smugglers were being released by courts of law. What exactly prompted the authorities to swing into action with such gusto after 27 years of blanket permissiveness has never been satisfactorily explained by anybody. And Government spokesmen have certainly not come out with a convincing defence when they were pinned down in Parliament and elsewhere that they were scared that if the alleged smugglers rattled off their full story in law courts, many embarrassing facts would come out. The developments are clearly not easily explainable.

In the first place, the links of the

alleged smugglers have not yet been revealed. Were the Mastans really the people who ran the show or were they just the front men of some richer, bigger operators, the sharks of big business? The question cannot be dismissed lightly. The Mastans ran the business with hundreds of crores of rupees, but the scale on which it was being run suggests that nothing short of thousands of crores were involved. Who provided this money? Some people within the country or some foreign rings? But the more important question is that for all its revolutionary fervour, New Delhi has not yet ventured to have a go at the big business houses who cheat the country every year an enormous amount through foreign exchange manipulation and tax evasion and such other economic offences. Newspapers have recently flashed a story on the issue of a warrant of arrest under MISA against a director of a big business house with a vast jute-cum-engineering empire. Such is the respect of these capitalists for the Government that the gentleman concerned eluded arrest for nearly a week. The house is believed to have accumulated about Rs 300 crores outside the country and its members are known to have easy access to the most powerful people of the land. It all looks like a mockery of justice.

## Strains Within The CPI

A correspondent writes:

Moscow mentors did not reckon on the possibility of a split within the CPI, when its leaders openly talked of dividing the Congress into progressives and reactionaries. Now, Mr Rajeswara Rao, party secretary, has announced that splitting the Congress will no longer be a political objective for his party. His admission is welcome, because since 1969, the CPI's policies, instead of weakening the Congress, have only strengthened it, especially in the traditional left citadels of Kerala and West Bengal. They have also damaged the CPI(M) and other left parties, and ironically enough, weakened the CPI both externally as a running dog for the Congress, and internally as a disciplined party.

Signs of fresh dissension within the CPI have been evident in Howrah district. November 9 and 10, the party had called for a district conference. There are 700 active workers in the district, who are represented 1: 10 at such conferences. But instead of 70, only 45 were present, and not all of them together, so the actual attendance at a given moment was very low indeed.

Most of the members stayed away, complaining of a hibernation within the party. Apart from one unimpressive rally in September, there was no programme in recent weeks of the CPI in Howrah, no demonstration, no procession, for instance. The morale among the cadres was at an all-time low, in the present difficult political situation. The popular mood was opposition-oriented, and the party, following its directive not to make things more difficult for the Congress, had alienated itself from the masses.

Alarmed at the lack of interest, the Provincial Committee set up an Inquiry Committee to submit a quick report. This it did, duly taking note of the grievances of field-level workers. The conference ended in a fiasco, with no plenary session at all. The Committee recommended that the entire proceedings be written off. This has been accepted by the PC.

Most of the cadres complain of the high-handedness of Mr Mohammed Ilias and Mr Ram Sen, prominent CPI leaders of Howrah. Ilias is a well-known pro-Congress leader within the CPI. The complaint is that they use their position and authority to keep the cadres down, although the cadres are better informed about local developments. Also, with their grassroot level experience, they tend to be lukewarm about their party's policy of alignment with the Congress.

Such dissidence within the CPI is not a new phenomenon. Even during the present West Bengal Assembly session, Mr Biswanath Mukherjee, the opposition leader, has remained absent most of the time. He, along with Mrs Mukherjee, Mr Somnath Lahiri, Mr Sukumar Gupta, does not see eye-to-eye with the policy of alignment with the Congress. Mr Gurudas Das Gupta, leader of the CPI-affiliated Yuba Sangha, holds similar

views. Even the once pro-Congress Gopal Banerjee, State Secretary, is, along with Indrajit Gupta, MP, now a centrist. But MLAs like Mrs Ila Mitra, Mr Sisir Ghosh, Mr Harashankar Bhattacharya, and Mr Satya Ghoshal, are all pro-Congress. So are the CPI media and the all-India leadership. The result, is, while the dissidents can really do nothing to ventilate their grievances within the party, they are hitting back the only way they can: by withdrawing and resigning from all serious work. Mr Lahiri, for instance was seen only for a day in the Assembly during the present session. Far from transforming the Congress radically, the CPI itself has degenerated into another Congress.

## Examination Reforms

A correspondent writes:

It seems we are in for a fresh dose of educational reform. This time the proposed change will affect the methods of examination. The present mode of assessment and grading according to performance at the final test or term-end or other stated intervals is thought defective. A new system of tests, with abolition of individual ranking and no penalty for failure, is being considered. Hence the novel scheme to pass all comers at the end of the school-term. Initially, it will be tried in a few selected schools—whose names have already been announced—and then will be extended to the others if the experiment goes according to the planners' intentions.

What these intentions can possibly be are anybody's guess. One of them may be to make adoption of unfair means, which has become quite widespread and irresistible at almost all examination centres, unattractive. But then the proposed relaxation will have to be extended to post-school curricula as well. There is no ground for believing that cribbing is resorted to only at lower levels of study. Medical, engineering and other degree and post-graduate examinations, various recruitment and eligibility tests, indeed every category of screening and selecting process in the country, have become suspect and made worthless by resort to

unfair means, political and other influences, intimidation and a wide range of corrupt practices. The simplest solution would, therefore, be to make short work of all examinations as being open to corruption, and then give everybody a degree, a job or promotion regardless of their performance or ability.

Perhaps the experiment is designed to 'reduce the number of candidates for so-called higher education. Somehow it may have occurred to those in authority that dishonesty at examinations is a correlative of lower intelligence quotient. So that only those who find their courses uninteresting or beyond their natural competence, begin to think of deceiving the examiners. To lure away the greater number of these misfits from higher education and training, the government proposes to waive the minimum requirement of a university degree for various public services not requiring specialised skill. But what about the competitive, qualifying examinations to be held for recruitment, promotion etc? How make them immune from malpractice? And then it is an open question whether those go in for higher education or higher vocational training from a natural bent or innate capability, will not scamp their studies and seek to get around examination rigours by the usual methods of cribbing. If school examinations are made less stiff and less invidious in their appraisals eligibility tests for higher courses will have to become only much more rigidly so. This applies to examinations for recruitment and promotion as well. And the more exacting these are, the more liable they will be to corrupt practices. In a badly organised competitive society, diligence or ability does never seem to pay, while corrupt influences often actually do. And so every screening or selection procedure lends itself to attempts at short circuit. Thus the delusion of equality of opportunity into which the new examination system is designed to lull the students will be short lived.

It is clear that the corrupt practices in examinations are related to the general atmosphere of dishonesty prevailing in the country. When a man can get rich or become a high official by dubious methods, there is no use asking our young folk not to try the same or similar tricks

to get a university degree. If one thinks nothing of using bribes, intimidation and various illegal ruses to win an election to Parliament, why boggle at copying to pass examinations? This is all in a day's work in a country where all are equal but some are more equal than others because of corruption. The present effort at reforming the examination is an exercise in futility. It is a price of deliberate deception aimed at the student community on whose support or at least passive allegiance depends the success at election. In the absence of any rational planning of objects of education at various stages no logical and legitimate pattern of evaluation can emerge. In this country schools and colleges depend for their efficiency on private endowments of the rich and these are confined to institutions meant for the affluent and those in larger cities. The government expenditure is limited to ambitious but useless projects at higher levels, again benefiting only the privileged classes. Primary and secondary education for the vast bulk of the population is coldly neglected. But then the bulk of the country's population at present care more for bread or rice than anything else, least of all education.

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### QUARTERLY REVIEW

A Journal of Scientific  
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# Price Policy for Promoting Inequality

ASHOK RUDRA

**I**N our article on Measurement of Inequality (Frontier, November 30) we referred to how measurements based on consumer expenditure figures in current prices would tend to under-estimating the consumption of the rich, thanks to the subsidies and price controls that are in operation on the items consumed by the rich, leaving to the mercy of the market forces those that constitute the basic consumption of the masses. We only gave some indicative examples in that article. In the present article we shall discuss the topic a little more elaborately.

Take foodgrains. It is well known that rationing does exist for all. It exists in the metropolitan city centres and in most of the urban areas. Most rural areas are beyond the reach of this particular price control. Even in those areas where it operates it is known that it very often breaks down; when it does not it supplies only a part of the minimum needs of families for foodgrains.

Thus, the poorest of the country, the landless labourers, the poor peasants etc. have to buy their foodgrains at market prices (whereas the not-so-poor middle class as well as the wealthy who live in towns and cities are provided with at least a part of their foodgrains needs at controlled prices. In some rural areas too the institution of ration shops or fair-price shops exists. But the very poor in the rural sector, being dependent on the rich landowning class, for their very survival, not surprisingly do not get the benefit of the existence of these shops. Their cards are usually made use of by their masters. Also, both in rural and urban areas the very poor are in no position to buy their food in cash and as there is no means of buying rationed food items on credit, ration cards are of no avail to them; they have to buy on the open market or take consumption loans from the landowners at the ruling market price. Our argument is not that there ought not to be any food rationing; but only that in

our system a millionaire gets the benefit of the food control whereas a landless labourer does not.

This is of course true of most of the controlled items of necessities. Thus, take milk. Once again the system operates in such a fashion that fat wives and fat children of the rich can get even fatter with the help of the milk supply schemes that operate in our big cities, the benefit once more spilling over to the not-so-poor urban middle class, whereas the undernourished babies of the really poor have to do without any milk.

Take now housing. Shelter comes immediately after food and clothing in the ranking of importance from the point of view of the essential human needs. Let us forget the rural poor who do not even have any homesteads. In the cities there has been talk of programmes for slum clearance etc. But the slums of Calcutta and Bombay and the jhuggies of Delhi remain as nightmarish as they were 30 years back; they have probably become only more extensive and more crowded. But are there no building activities taking place in the cities? Plentifully. One has just to look around, especially in cities like Delhi and Bombay, to be impressed by the luxury buildings changing the skyline on all sides. Many of them are meant to provide office space both to the government and the private sector. The workers of such offices, especially the officers, must work in increasingly luxurious conditions. But many of the other buildings are meant to be rented out for residential purposes. While many of these residential houses and apartment buildings are being constructed by private parties for the express purpose of being rented out at going market rates, a very large volume of construction of residential houses is also taking place for providing staff quarters to government servants and some other categories of privileged citizens (like the academic community).

The beneficiaries may pay sums ranging from Rs. 30 to Rs. 200 to enjoy residential accommodation whose market rental would be anything from Rs. 300 to Rs. 3,000 or more.

Very much connected with this theme of practically free housing for the selected few is the price control of building materials. For whose benefit does price control of cement operate? While there is a flourishing black market in cement, there is also a large volume of sale at controlled prices. Who gets the permits? Obviously the one who are well-connected; obviously the ones who can afford to pay the highest bribes. Thus a rich tycoon can get cement at controlled prices to construct luxury apartment houses whereas there is no control mechanism to prevent him from asking whatever rent he likes for those apartments. What purpose then is the cement price control serving except to subsidise the tycoon?

Take such an item as electricity which can serve necessary needs as well as luxury demands. When electricity is used to light a house or to run an electric fan, it serves a necessity and by now a large section of even the poor in the cities make such use of power. When electricity is used to run a heater or an air-conditioner or a cooking range or any of the numerous gadgets which the rich and the not-so-poor middle class of this country have learnt to use from the consumers of the affluent countries of the West, it serves luxury. It is typical of the price control system of the country that the electricity rates are lower for the latter users. The poor slum dweller who burns an electric bulb pays for this electricity at three times or so the rate than the rich upper middle class man using an air-conditioner or his wife using a "mixer".

Take another item that could be a luxury or a necessity, depending on its use e.g. telephones. It is well known that one has to wait in a queue to get a telephone connection. A waiting list always means that there are people who are willing to pay more than the controlled price at which a commodity is being sold. In this particular case, the waiting list for telephone indicates that there are people who would be willing

to pay a higher rental for getting a telephone connection than the rate stipulated by the authorities. This means that the use of telephones is being subsidised. There could be some justification for subsidisation when the instrument is used as a necessity, like, say, by a doctor. But what justification could be there to subsidise the use of telephones for wives to talk to their husbands in office or for their adolescent children to talk to their boy friends and girl friends? We have of course been talking only of the subsidy inherent in the rental charged by the telephone authorities. There is once again the select group of government servants and some favoured categories who get telephones free of any charge.

#### Travelling

A third example of an item of consumption which could be partly a necessity and partly a luxury is travelling. When a person travels because he has to on account of some urgent private business, it is a necessity. When he travels because of the pleasure of travelling, or for seeing places and meeting friends and relatives, it is a form of luxury. In any case, the pricing system in this area is such as to blatantly favour the rich and penalise the poor. While the bulk of railway's revenues comes from third class passengers, one knows in what conditions third class compartments are maintained. The conditions enjoyed by our first class passengers—not even those travelling in the fabulous air-conditioned first class but the ordinary first class—are in many respects superior to those provided in any European railway system. The charges for their comforts however are extremely low—there is no doubt at all that they do not cover the costs of the amenities provided. There is direct subsidisation of first class passengers by those who travel third class. As for Indian Airlines it mostly runs at a loss. The figures for loss would be much higher if one were to eliminate the transfer from one government account to another; for a large proportion of the passengers are government servants or travelling on government account (among the latter category, increasingly, are academic busmen travelling around the coun-

try to attend seminars, conferences, selection committee meetings and what not). Those who do not travel on government account usually do so on the account of business houses—practically nobody, except foreign tourists, pays from his pocket. The Indian Airlines would not ever have managed to run if it were to depend on those who pay from their pocket. This is a typical example of fantastic investments being made from out of public funds to enable the business community to conduct their business and to benefit a select group of citizens.

In a poor country like ours, especially given the critical role played by foreign exchange, travelling in foreign countries or sending one's children to foreign countries for education ought to be regarded as among the ultimate in luxuries. Yet this luxury, instead of being made the object for penal rates of taxation, is made cheaply available to the rich by making foreign exchange available to them at a much lower price than they could be prepared to pay. The official exchange rate is around 8.5 rupees per dollar, though there is a thriving black market where the dollar is exchanged for a much higher sum. This simply means that those who have the means to pay are willing to pay much more for a dollar. This being so why should people who want to go abroad for purposes of travelling or who want to send their children for education abroad or for making business deals with foreign parties not be made to pay officially at the rate they are prepared to pay in the black market? The government could have extracted a lot of money out of the rich by this method, which could have been used for productive investments or spent on welfare measures for the poor; but it does not do so.

We now come to the case of motor cars. The blatancy with which every aspect of policy relating to the manufacture and pricing of this object of luxury consumption has been tailored to help the rich at the cost of the poor is truly staggering.

(i) Motor car purchasers can buy new cars at a much lower price than what the market price would be, if there were no controls. The government policy is

to lose a lot of money that it could have earned by way of indirect taxes to benefit the purchaser.

(ii) If a government servant wanted to buy a car, he could get loans from the government at a nominal rate of interest. Also, government servants (along with some associated privilege groups) have quotas allotted to them so that they do not have to wait in the queue.

(iii) Any motor car owner is allowed an income tax exemption to the tune of Rs 2500 as representing his travel costs. This exemption holds irrespective of how much the car runs for business and how much it is run for entertainment.

(iv) By putting a ban on the import of motor cars the government has enabled the private sector firms to continue to make profit whereas they would have been wiped off if they had to face competition with imported cars. The setting up of a highly inefficient motor-car industry (and now expanding it with the addition of the Prime Minister's own family's Maruti) could have had no purpose other than promoting the welfare of the industrial capitalists involved. What the country needs is a tolerably good public transport system and one knows what the conditions are in the big cities!

This has brought us to the subject matter of government's investment policy, which we shall take up in somewhat greater detail in an article that will follow.

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# Report From Nagaland—I

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

THE Linner Line Pass, a necessary document for a non-Naga to enter Nagaland, is granted under Section 'A' Regulation 'V' of 1875. Whatever rationale the regulation had a hundred years ago, at present it seems one of the most anachronistic regulations still on the books. Perhaps, even now some kind of control over unrestricted entry needs to be exercised to prevent the exploitation of the tribal people. But on a recent visit beyond, or rather behind the Inner Line, I found that as far as 'exploitation' of the tribal people by Indian businessmen is concerned, it is going on in full swing. A smart businessman is not going to allow such a minor inconvenience as the requirement to obtain a Pass to come in the way of his business enterprise. And everyone knows that behind all the 'Naga-owned' business thriving in Kohima, there is the not-so-invisible Indian capital, the unctuous Marwari and the aggressive Punjabi and all the rest of them. The number of Indians who, in theory at least should possess an Inner Line Pass seems to be legion even in Kohima; one can only speculate on the total number of pass holders throughout Nagaland. These Government officials, teachers, businessmen, petty shopkeepers and contractors and labourers, not to speak of the army and the police, should be in tens of thousands, at a most conservative reckoning.

And yet, a journalist, a casual visitor, a university teacher who wants to see things for himself, is put to the most unimaginable difficulties before he can secure a Pass. I myself saw the most undesirable kinds of persons, pure and simple adventurers in the tradition of the freebooters of the Company days, having a glorious time making little fortunes in Kohima. But it is not surprising that Indian freebooters should have easy access to Nagaland, for in their own way, they too further the GOI's strategy of containing and finally defeating the Naga people's fight for self-determination. Every bureaucrat, every soldier and policeman maintaining Law and Order by raping local women, every 'cultural' missionary

spreading the Noble Ideals of Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi, be he Naga or Indian, is in fact a most useful agent of the Government of India. It is only people with no personal or official stakes of any kind that are most suspect, whose entry into Nagaland is sought to be discouraged by all possible means, and who are constantly kept under scrutiny during their brief stay there.

Forgetting the Patkoi Range (along which, some military genius recently suggested, there should be erected a barbed wire fencing or something equally silly, to prevent the visit of Naga insurgents to China), there are, broadly speaking, two points of entry into Nagaland. The one most frequently used, of course, is the road from Dimapur; other roads from Mariani and Sonari further to the north-east lead to the Mokakchung and Mon areas. According to the existing rules, the Deputy Commissioner or the Additional Deputy Commissioner of a district is authorised to issue an Inner Line Pass, valid only for the District over which he is in charge. For the majority of visitors who enter Dimapur, there is an authorised official (SDO, Civil) of the Nagaland Government stationed at Dimapur who issues the Pass. If you are not going to Nagaland on an invitation of any department of the Government of Nagaland or of India, on some 'official' work, it will mean at least two days of waiting in Dimapur before you can get the Pass. You submit the application in the morning as soon as the office opens, and if you are lucky, the pass is issued the following afternoon, by which time the last bus to Kohima would have left Dimapur.

The 'inspection' of the Pass is also curious. As the bus approaches the Chumukedima entry point, identified, believe me, as a 'quarantine' point, the guards enter the bus and just intently scan the passengers, and only those whose features are not specifically Mongoloid are asked to show their Passes. This curious racism has some odd side-effects

as it were. If you enter Nagaland from the southern end, nobody asks to show the Pass as the bus leaves Mao on the Nagaland-Manipur border. I myself entered Nagaland from the southern end and though I had prudently provided myself with a 'pass' (of sorts)—of which more anon—I was not in any way bothered till I reached Kohima, and in fact for almost twenty-four hours after reaching Kohima, I was left alone. Evidently, the people of Manipur, provided they are native Manipuris, do not need a Pass to enter Nagaland. But a Bengali resident of Imphal, whose family had made a home there and has been living in Manipur for generations, would still need a Pass, since his features would be, in most cases, non-Mongoloid. But even he can get away provided he is not recognisably alien and strange, as I undoubtedly was when I landed at Kohima, which brings me to my recent experience at Kohima.

Friends in Imphal had assured me that for travellers from Imphal to Kohima and Dimapur, a Pass was not necessary. Nevertheless I got a 'Pass', issued by the DC, Imphal, which clearly identified me and authorised me to spend a few days in Kohima on my way to Dimapur. My arrival was evidently not unobserved by the police—and I was visited by the police the next day, had my 'pass' examined and dismissed as a completely invalid document ('Who is DC Imphal to issue you a 'pass' to enter Nagaland?') and I was taken to the Thana. More questions, more explanations. 'Nobody but the Deputy Commissioner of the District, and the SDO (Civil), Dimapur, is authorised to issue passes.' But what should a man at Imphal do, if he wants to travel to Kohima? Since the Nagaland Government has no officer posted at Imphal, do you expect the traveller

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DECEMBER 7 1971

to fly to Silchar, travel all the way by train to Lumding and Dimapur, secure a Pass, there, and then come up to Kohima? The policemen were naturally not interested in the travails of a single traveller.

Well, I did secure a valid Pass the next day, duly reported to the Thana where the OC not merely suspected me to be a smuggler ('Did you visit Moreh while you were in Manipur?—I should add that Moreh is a border town in Manipur, just north of Tamu in Burma, a place reputed to be a nest of smugglers), but kindly offered me accommodation in the Police Mess, away from the town, where I was assured I would be both safe and comfortable. It seemed as if the Authority was extending itself to 'look after' me. And yet, if I was just a businessman, I would have had no trouble entering Nagaland and staying there as long as I liked.

Is the Inner Line Permit system really necessary? Considering the number of non-Naga residents and the tremendous influx of non-Naga visitors, at least in Kohima, one can't help feeling that the regulation is still kept on the books

and enforced only as a matter of habit and convenience. The couple of days of waiting at Dimapur that any person without 'contacts' should go through, has undoubtedly benefited the many hotels at Dimapur. Visitors of another kind, the poor labourers and the mass of persons namelessly identified as 'deswalis', too, have to grease quite a few palms before they can sneak in and get lost in their little ghettos in Kohima and other towns. Then there is the very real material advantage gained by the existence of the Inner Line Pass system; every Government and semi-Government employee in Nagaland gets a special inner line allowance amounting to a third of his salary. A jolly time is had by all. The Naga people are made to think that the Inner Line Regulations protect them from the exploitation of outsiders; the fact that the exploitation, with a section of the Naga people themselves having no mean share of it, is going on merrily is neither here nor there. Though the Indian presence in its most obnoxious form is there for all to see the Inner Line 'protects' the Naga people from the contaminating influence of the non-Congress political parties.

The way the Inner Line Regulations operate in Nagaland is yet another instance of the genius of India to corrupt everything it touches. A basically humane regulation enacted nearly a hundred years ago, its form is still kept intact despite, or rather because of all the changes that have taken place during the last one hundred years. But the content and the spirit behind the regulations have been corrupted beyond recognition, so that what was once a device meant essentially to protect the Naga people and the British subjects from each other, is now used, at one level, to preserve the illusion that the Naga people continue to be 'protected' from exploitation by the plainmen; and at another level, to regulate the entry of Indians into Nagaland, or at least of such Indians who might not be exactly enthused over GOI's doings there, besides assuring for themselves a free field of operations. It has after all been a long and continuing 'Emergency'.

(To be concluded)

## The Press

### Foreign Jaunts

PATRAKAR

TWO of the 'sports journalists' who accompanied the Indian team to the recent Asian Games at Tehran had nothing to do with journalism, not to speak of sports. One of them, who went as a 'correspondent' of *Youth Times*, was a Jan Sangh corporator of Delhi. Another, who went on behalf of a non-descript Hindi weekly, was a trader by profession. The stunned Delhi Sports Journalists Association went through all its records—only to find with disappointment that these gentlemen were never enrolled with the association, nor will ever be in all probability.

This was not the first incident of this kind. Only recently the Government was snubbed by the intrepid editor of *Hindustan Times* Mr B. G. Verghese, for 'choosing' one of its correspondents to accompany the Prime Minister on her trip to Iran without the editor's prior permission. Verghese refused to be dictated by the PM's secretariat and won the battle by sending a correspondent of his own choice. Last year, there was a scuffle between the editor of *Aaj*, a Banaras Hindi daily, and the PIB over a similar incident.

What is new in the recent Tehran jaunt scandal is that the involved party was not the government but a Jan Sangh leader, Mr V. K. Malhotra, who was the leader of the Indian team. This is indeed a danger signal.

Foreign trips have become one of the most useful methods of the Government to oblige some chosen correspondents, and corrupt the others. In the fitness of things, the PIB should inform the editors of newspapers, whom it wants to be represented on the foreign trips, and accept their nominees. Instead, it is the PIB itself or the Ministry concerned—in the case of the P.M. it is often her secretariat—hhat asks the correspondents of their choice to come along. Editors are just informed, as a routine formality. Timid as they are, there is hardly any

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protest, and over the years this malpractice has rather become the custom.

Consequently, while a sports correspondent may be seen accompanying the Foreign Minister on "an important mission" to New York, some economic correspondent may be nursing his **chhoti** peg in the air-conditioned suite of some foreign hotel where talks of a purely political nature between India and that country might be going on.

Take the HT case. Normally (they should have asked (even if we rule out the editor from the picture) the correspondent covering the External Affairs Ministry. Or it could have been the correspondent covering the Petroleum and Chemical Ministry as the talks were likely to revolve round the oil crisis. But they chose a lady—obviously because she was chummy with the Prime Minister.

However, she would have certainly proved a better choice (she could have written 'Mrs Gandhi and the Women of Iran' or something of that sort) than the nondescript correspondent of a Bhopal daily who was included in the press party. Normally none of his stories (if he ever sends any) are seen in that newspaper and his main function is that of the business representative. And so, to the amazement of the readers, the paper disclosed one morning that it had a correspondent in Delhi all these days, who would now be filing his despatches straight from Tehran. Needless to say, all the 'despatches' sent by the correspondent were of very poor quality.

#### Eat, drink and be merry

The worst hit in this dirty game is professional competence. Newsmen are more concerned with eating, drinking and cornering as much duty-free goods as possible. No one cares for 'coverage'.

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The indecent behaviour of the Indian press corps accompanying the Prime Minister on her visit to the Algiers non-aligned conference is still fresh in memory. The behaviour of the Indian correspondents reached its lowest mark on one particular night when a dinner attended by them was climaxed by drunken quarreling, shouting and banging of doors in the hotel where they resided. At 3 a.m. the Algerian police descended upon the pressmen's party and demanded an

explanation for their boisterous disturbance against which all the residents in the hotel had complained. Next morning the pressmen had to go to the police station and use all their persuasive skill to wriggle out of the trouble.

Much of the responsibility for the present state of affairs, however, can be blamed on the newspapers themselves. After all, it is not obligatory on the part of the government to carry the press corps on foreign trips.

## Of Games And Gamesters

GYAN KAPUR

**I**F words could have changed by magic into physical reality, Calcutta and West Bengal today would be, well, if not Paradise on Earth, at least a tolerable place to live in, with something to eat for everyone and the other necessities of life like shelter, clothing and medical treatment for the sick. And, perhaps, a meaningful education for the children and a tolerably efficient transport system for going about one's business.

For, over the last quarter century, if we have been plentifully supplied with anything, it has been words—spoken or in print. They have all been very generous, the well-meaning men and women to whom the people have looked up; but the end product of the leadership game has always been the same. Words for the people and the spoils for the leaders. Words, of course, cost nothing. It is easy to be carried away by one's own voice over the ubiquitous mike or seeing one's words in print and convince oneself about their importance.

The more deeply one looks, the more one can see that basically there is little change. Only forms change, the content remains more or less the same. The rich are richer, and relatively, the poor, poorer. The only change, perhaps, is that the number of those who come in between is more than it used to be and people are a little more resigned to their fates, a little more callous, a little more inclined to accept things as they are and try to get what they can for themselves and damn the less fortunate.

This columnist has hesitated long whether it is worth adding once again, after the lapse of over three years, to the flood of printed words, still sizeable in spite of the newsprint shortage. But there are words and words. And columnists are human too. So, it is not so difficult, with a little Editorial prompting, to convince oneself that this column may after all carry the seeds of a little change for the better, somewhere, sometime.

\* \* \*

To change the metaphor, the way to financial ruin is paved with good intentions for the West Bengal Food Department. It seems to have a curse laid upon it, maybe by big business whose links with the priests, soothsayers and wizards are always cosy. Now the Department finds itself laden with some Rs 90 lakhs worth of fine rice which nobody apparently wants at the price asked for it, and all the indications are that it will go bad.

Like in previous years, among other things part of the ration in Greater Calcutta was promised in fine Basmati rice during the Puja/Diwali season. Unfortunately, whoever took the decision to buy this rice was sadly out of touch with reality. There were no takers for this fine rice which is supposed to be suitable for pillao and such fancy fare. Actually, few of the ration shops have lifted the stuff, being nearer grass roots.

The big 90-lakh question before the Department now is: Should they sell it



off on the open market, giving rationing the go-by? Or should they let it rot in the godowns? A difficult choice indeed, for them.

Dying people clutch at the proverbial straw. Maybe this is why the Calcutta Stock Exchange, tired of transacting little or no business for weeks has finally agreed to what for them is the revolu-

tionary change of taking a woman as a member.

It is as yet too early to fear that the money for groceries in countless homes will disappear in a little flutter at the Exchange. Or to hope that the occasional rupee saved by pennypinching will finally add up to a nice little investment in some high-yielding stock in the hands of the woman of the house.

## Campaigning For Liberation

I. K. S.

A salvo will seem to have been fired by the African Students' Association in India in favour of a concerted campaign on behalf of the various liberation movements in Africa, on November 21 in New Delhi, though it has not come a day too soon, nor should it have waited this long only for the African nationals or students to launch it. (Sweden, Canada, France, GDR have set up organisation to support the freedom fighters in Africa). What our various congeries—governmental and government propped—have been doing in this direction all these years would not amount to more than pious mouthings and pleasant social gatherings. Perhaps the organisers were ignorant of it or had to be diplomatically polite about it. It was, therefore, surprising to see grey beards among GOI functionaries patronising and kindly consenting to inaugurate the Campaign.

One of these worthies cautioned the Africans against being satisfied just with political freedom. The grey eminence said that economic emancipation would alone give the latter real content. Nobody was supposed to ask him: 'As We Did in India?' The other, as expected, traced the Gandhian Connexion with South Africa. It bothered him least that the liberation movements raging in Africa are the farthest from Gandhian concepts. But, there may be virtue in affecting connoisseurship for the distant drums of a dark continent. Hypocrisy is not partisanship, but it serves as an unction for the ailments of the soul (Atma). And, in

India, there are more remedies for alleviating the spiritual pains than for the mundane ones.

But there was no mistaking the intent or aim of the African students. It was evident from the two-act play *To This Night... A Dawn*. With three Palestinian students in it, it was a brilliant, terrible cameo of the tortures the Africans have been subjected to for the last 300 years, without the Christian conscience of the arrogant whites feeling uneasy about it. Some of the scenes were too close to the reality nearer home for many in the audience to remain unaffected. Will we draw the necessary lessons?

As for the African students, one only hopes, as they intensify their campaign they will have dropped on the roadside some of the encumbrances and embarrassments they have initially, perhaps unwittingly, acquired. Association of bureaucratic grey eminences of India can prove a deadly drag and be a dubious quality, which they can ignore only at their peril. All the same one cannot but wish god-speed to their modest attempts at a breakthrough in enlisting whatever support or succour they can for their freedom fighters in an Asian capital notorious for its philistinism and cynicism.

It is the seventies which are going to prove the decade of destiny both for the coloured people of Africa and the minority white governments. History is marching inexorably and it will sweep away in its tidal wave the oppressors.

## The Tokyo Summit

AKIO YAMAKAWA

**TOKYO:** According to a late November **PARC Confidential** published by the Pacific-Asia Resources Centre of Tokyo, the November 20 Ford-Tanaka joint statement is not only a declaration of principles regarding the relations between the two countries, but is also a preface to a new Ford Doctrine which is to be applied to all the "advanced countries".

It was widely reported that the Ford-Kissinger team put top priority on the oil issue in the meeting with Tanaka, insisting that the oil consuming countries unite in accordance with Kissinger's Five-Point Programme. The Japanese Government accepted this position, thereby transforming the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty establishment into a system through which military and energy problems are linked.

The **PARC Confidential** points out that the U.S. leaders at the time of the Tokyo conference were very conscious of the upcoming EEC conference scheduled for December 9.

Another source reported that Kissinger was concerned that EEC countries might negotiate with oil producing countries before establishing their own unity regarding the energy problem and demanded that the Japanese Government persuade the French Foreign Minister (who arrived in Japan just after Ford departed) to accept the principles set out in the Japan-U.S. Joint Communiqué.

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and control over the recycling of oil dollars.

Furthermore, it reported that another of Washington's prime objectives was to have Japan take over responsibility for the security of the southern part of Korea. It is highly significant that in the recent Cabinet reshuffling Yamanaka Sadanori was moved from chief of the Self-Defence Forces to chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party's Policy Board. He was replaced by the well-known Korea lobbyist Uno Sosuke.

In October, before he was moved, Yamanaka visited the U.S. and conferred with Secretary of Defence Schlesinger on "the responsibility of Japan and the U.S. for security in Asia, especially in the event of emergencies". And just prior to Ford's visit, the chief of the Joint Staff of the Self-Defence Forces visited the U.S. for a series of conferences with top U.S. military leaders.

(New Asia News, November 22, 1974)

## Thoughts On Garam Hava

SHAHID AMIN

"From the position of today's rebellion and refusal, Art itself appears as part and force of the tradition which perpetuates that which is, and prevents the realization of that which can and ought to be. Art does so precisely in as much as it is Form, because the artistic Form (no matter how anti-art it strives to be) arrests that which is in motion, gives it limit and place in the prevailing universe of experience and aspirations, gives it value in this universe, makes it an object among others... work of art... become—the Commodity Form... Art is not (or not supposed to be) a use value to be consumed in the course of the daily performance of men; its utility is of a transcendent kind, utility for the soul or the mind which does not enter the normal behaviour of men and does not really change—it except for that short period of elevation, the cultured holiday; in church, in the museum, the concert hall, the theatre, before the monuments and ruins of the great past. After the 'break, real life' continues: business as usual."

Herbert Marcuse: 'Art as Form of Reality', New Left Review, 74, July-August, 1972.

"It appears as a mystery to us that while the ruling classes are meticulously using the superstructure in diluting the revolutionary fervour of the masses and sowing the seeds of spiritual impotency (sic), the avant-garde of the working class should abstain from ideological and

cultural struggle at the superstructural level to inculcate the masses with revolutionary consciousness and determination."

—Group of Students, Delhi: 'An Intervention on Unification, Letters, Frontier, October 5, 1974

tumhari tahzeeb khud apne khanjar se khudkushi karegi jo shak'he naazuk pe a'shiyan bane ga na paidar hogra.  
—Iqbal.

**W**HAT with Bangladesh, the Q'adains and Baluchistan following in quick succession, one seems impelled as it were by some Hegelian 'cunning of reason' to cross the Wagah border and recite Firaq Gorakhpuri's couplet: 'apnon ke kaam aaye na ghairon ke kaam aaye, yon aadmi the aap bare teem ke' at the 'Q'aid-e-Azam's mazaar.

This is not to say that the fate of Indian Muslims, or for that matter, Indians in general is any better. There is obviously something wrong in the body politic of India for a man of Acharya Kripalani's stature to reschedule a protest match on October 2 into a **Kirtan** and **bhajan** meeting in the morning at Rajghat and a public gathering at the Ramlila Maidan in the evening to add some more grease to an otherwise unctuous deal with the Shahanshah of Iran. Add to all this the fact that Mr. G. Parthasarathi has given up his coveted Vice-Chancellorship of Jawaharlal Nehru University

and a permanent Air India ticket to anywhere in the world, to have extended sessions with Beg and Sheikh Abdullah, and you have got a good enough conjuncture for Sathyu's **Garam Hava**. The fact that it got governmental patronage (tax free) and that it took some two weeks to muster enough courage to face old Delhi audiences really places it well in the India of 1974.

Now the film. That it has got a powerful social content cannot be denied even by its critics. In fact its social impact lies precisely in making the people place whatever message they think the film is conveying in the present conjuncture. Thus a vespa-clad first generation Punjabi from one of the posh South Delhi localities: 'Whatever the film says about Balraj Sahani is all right, but why did that jalebiwala from Jama Masjid distribute jalebis worth a hundred rupees when Pakistan won the Asian gold in hockey at Tehran?' And so on. What is really surprising is the shabby treatment it has received from an otherwise intelligent **Frontier** crowd. Apart from such bland comments like: 'We the undersigned feel that the film is bad' or counter-propositions from across the floor there has hardly been any analysis of the film and its social and ideological content'. I don't think it is a case of **Frontier** oldtimers deserting the old lady for a Mass Communication **Economic** and **Political Weekly**; despite all the hallabaloos there is not a single one of its kind worth even a cursory **nigah**. It is a case of sheer intellectual apathy. Important as it is, let us not get bogged down with repeating the good old phrase about 'you cannot lift a bucket of water from mid-air'. This is not to give the advice to the modern Horatians about there being more things in heaven and earth than are ever dreamt by their philosophy either, but just to start a serious discussion on one of the more important films to have hit the Hindustani film scene.

A work of art, and more so a film, has a social and ideological content independent of its artistic form. We would not go very far if we simply take a film as a projection of the director's personality, or credulously gobble down whatever he has got to say about it. It has to be

viewed within the framework of the societal whole. Lampooning the director at the cross of your ideological standpoint, as some of the Marxists at the Poona Film Institute did to Sathyu, generally generates more heat than light.

There is a lot to commend in **Garam Hava** as an aesthetic experience. There is that beautiful opening shot, or more correctly, the still of a standstill railway engine (notice the frozen steam). The camera catches that fleeting moment of the initial movement of the engine and races against the puffing train to Balraj Sahani at the end of it all. There is that fantastic transitional **kabutar** scene between Geeta and Jalal Agha. The Qawwali is beautifully rendered, which cannot be said about the diction, especially in the case of the wife of Sir Syed. It is with sheer auditory relief that one sees her off to Pakistan. The intimate scenes are in good taste.

The characterisation is well thought out, and bold, even when it is deliberately subdued, as in the case of Balraj Sahani. The words, '**kiliya, mustande**' etc. sound exquisite from the mouth of the good old **daddo**; she might very well have been smoking a **Jabalpuri bidi**. The 'bold daring and resolute' elder Mirza Saheb and the unctuous Fakhru Miyan really sum up between them the calibre and ethos of the Muslim League leadership. Balraj Sahani's business-minded elder son after a temporary two-room house at Lahore's Sir Ganga Ram Road just off the Mall, will live to own a flat in the posh satellite town.

There is a bit more than a typical Muslim middle-class daughter to Geeta's character. The personal tragedy of Partition makes her sacrifice love for sheer marital protection, in a fit of absent-mindedness as it were. Suicide seems the only possible denouement for her personal drama, though one would have preferred not to be burdened with that still with her wielding a Panama blade in the moviehall's corridors.

#### Nationalist Muslim?

It is really round Balraj Sahani that the film revolves, and our appreciation of the film depends on what we make out of him. Making him out to be a

Nationalist Muslim really begs more questions than it answers. Why, for instance, does his elder brother who, at least in his speech gives the impression of being an Indian Muslim **Leagi**, does not stay? He could have joined the **Jamat-i-Islami**, instead of the Congress, as did Fakhru Miyan. Why isn't Balraj Sahani lured by the prospect of taking over a shoe-making concern in Pakistan, which is certainly one of the reasons, and in the case of his son, perhaps the main reason for packing up?

I think that Balraj Sahani is not really the Nationalist Muslim that some of us seem to think, and about which the Indian Government seems to be so happy—witness the National Integration award. And besides, what really determined one Muslim to stay and the other to go? Admittedly, it is not mechanistically linked to particular trades and occupations. But it could not simply be a matter of sheer psychological claustrophobia either. What then explains some Muslims going to Pakistan in the late fifties and sixties? Not just communal riots, to be sure, but the difficulty of carrying out a living. Prof. A. M. Khuroo, now the Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, had some interesting things to say about this in an article entitled, 'Economic Laws of Communalism', a couple of years back.

The long and short of this ail is that the dilemma of Balraj Sahani in **Garam Hava** is really the dilemma of the Muslim petty commodity producer. It is because he is a petty commodity producer that he is so much attached to the social milieu, in fact the two go hand in hand. Not only is he not interested in changing his ways, he actually struggles against the new trade winds in his profession. He has a good reputation in the industry—witness the big order he has received from Ajmani Saheb—but he seems to be losing the race not only because there is a credit squeeze on the Muslims in the trade, but also because he is not willing to change his ways. He is not interested in adjusting to the change in scene, either politically or economically. 'People in the business', as the assistant of Mr Ajmani remarks, 'want finish', but Balraj Sahani won't change. As his elder son rebukes him,

he won't even bother about what is going on in the world (both in the city and more so in the shoe-making industry) outside his **haveli**. He is not bothered about the shoe-makers' syndicate, in fact he refuses its presidency, while another Muslim and his relative, Fakhru Miyan takes the lead in its proceedings and nearly succeeds in making a fortune for himself. The scene where Ajmani peels off the soles of the shoes that Fakhru Miyan has produced like a banana peel, does not simply meet a fitting punishment to the evil guy. It really contrasts the way in which he is throwing himself into the modern market, by fits and starts to be sure, with the way in which Balraj Sahani after a nostalgic survey of his godown, tries to beat the system by organising shoe production under a much more personal and small scale system than he is really used to. If at all Balraj Sahani would budge, he would take two steps backward rather than the standard one step forward. No wonder the prospect of taking over a shoe-making concern in Pakistan does not attract him in the least.

In fact his son really epitomises the middle-class Muslim businessman who blends business and religion to good taste. Unlike the elder Mirza he is not a politician, he is a businessman, who finds a congenial ground in Pakistan. His decision is very rational.

Is his father then in contrast to all this a Nationalist Muslim, the Abul Kalam Azad of the U.P. Muslim shoe-makers and tanners? It seems that Sathyu would like us to believe so. Balraj Sahani is repeatedly shown blabbing something about the sacrifice of M. K. Gandhi and its impact on the communal scene in India. There is that sentimental scene where he has a last good look at the Taj Mahal, the symbol of India!—And then there is all that talk about mingling in the mainstream, nationalist mainstream to be sure. But given the handling of his character, Sathyu can not palm off Balraj Sahani to us as a Nationalist Muslim. And besides, what really explains the presence or absence of this feeling in the Muslims of the sub-continent in that conjuncture or even today anyway? Is it simply a



case of nostalgic memories about the street and by-lanes of one's childhood? Admittedly this is important, but it is interesting to note that under certain conditions, viz. impossibility of earning one's livelihood in the way one has been used to, or one's reduction to the status of a social pariah, this 'nostalgic nationalism' gives way to something else. If 'nostalgic nationalism' is not the basis of bourgeois nationalism, then what precisely is? It is really unfortunate that despite the opportunity in the South Asian case of really analysing the attributes of bourgeois nationalism, we don't really know too much about why some went to Pakistan and some remained behind. And inevitably Sathyu after handling the India of 1947 with some competence mucks it all up in the end. What are we to make of the last scene of Balraj Sahani joining the mainstream? Who are the people who constitute the crowd in which Balraj Sahani seeks to relieve his loneliness and alienation? Sure enough there are some red flags, but then the camera seems to be picking up the faces of students only. Is the tangewallah also there somewhere in the background that our camera can't really identify him? Which class of Muslims are called on to join the mainstream? The way the film is being boosted as progressive, one almost has a feeling that there is a serious pun involved in the word *Ma'hdhar Dhara* when translated into English, which by some quirk of language can best be translated as 'Mainstream'!

The film is definitely ideological inasmuch as it talks about one section of the Muslim community and not another. It is curious the way in which a majority of thinking Indians seem to see a communal problem when it is to a great extent a class one, and ignore a major

section of the minority community altogether.

1. 'A Film-goer, Calcutta's' reply to Balraj Dutt's letter on *Garam Hava* (*Frontier*, October 12, 1974, just about sums up the point that I am making.
2. See Arjun Bandyopadhyay's letter *Frontier*, October 12, 1974, which tackles this point in a *Jab dil hi toot gaya, to jee ke kya kareng* vein.

\*I am grateful to my friend Amitabh Mukhopadhyay for having given me the major ideas for this piece one evening in the Delhi University coffee-house.

## Letters

### Two Kissingers?

"Kissinger Go Back", shouting this slogan the CPI and CPM, organised two separate protest demonstrations on the day and hour of his arrival in New Delhi Palam airport and the American Embassy respectively. Next day, a joint demonstration was held outside the Indian Council of World Affairs headquarters, where Mr Kissinger was to speak.

Kissinger was not to be welcomed and should be forced to go back as he is, "the brain behind CIA activities throughout the world, the killer of Comrade Allende, democracy and socialism in Chile, the main architect of the plan of military bases in the Indian Ocean, responsible for the aggressive designs of Israel in West Asia, agent of world capitalism and imperialism, angel of death for the peace loving people of the world...." This is how Kissinger was described in the Urdu party organ of the CPI, the weekly *Hayat*, dated October 27.

But this was a half truth. The other half of the naked truth was not disclosed by the reformist Communist Parties of India. They dared not inform their cadre and the toiling masses of India that Kissinger was coming to India straight from the "vanguard" of the socialist world, i.e. the USSR, where he had gone on a state visit to hold talks to bring the USSR and the USA closer and ensure further consolidation of the principle of peaceful co-existence among different

social systems (meaning thereby socialist and capitalist systems). He enjoyed the hospitality of the General Secretary of the CPSU, Comrade Brezhnev. He was welcomed in Moscow as the consolidator of peace and harmony. He was regarded as the main force in the USA who had positively influenced the policy of detente immensely after Nixon's unceremonious departure from the White House.

Shams  
Delhi

### Mrs Gandhi's Democracy

The new Congress president Sri D. K. Barooah, stated in a circular to the Congress leaders of Bihar, "Reactionary and opportunist parties, groups and individuals are trying to undermine the fabric of parliamentary democracy having recourse to extra-constitutional means. The right to vote and to be governed by elected representatives is a precious democratic right which the people will never agree to throw away". Almost, in the same tune Mrs Gandhi asserted that she would not agree to the dissolution of any State assembly in the country under pressure. She forgot Kerala, 1959.

In Bihar, in less than nine months since the movement began, about 200 people have been shot dead. There are at present 50,000 BSF and CRP armed forces, in addition to the 40,000 State police force, posted all over the State. If this is not enough, the Army is all the time kept on the alert. Official estimates put the daily expenditure on the police arrangements at Rs 1 lakh. There is not a single important educational institution which does not have armed police pickets. In word, Bihar has the appearance of a police State.

In the second place, the attempt to protect the legislature takes the form of not allowing it to meet except for the minimum constitutional requirements. In these two years the Assembly has been in session for hardly a few months. The State has been ruled through ordinances. Except for the police wing, in all the 31 districts of the state, the administration is totally paralysed. The struggle of the people for normal life is met with

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bullets. The DIR and MISA are misused to lock up opponents of this regime of terror and blood.

Democracy demands the throwing of such a police government which rules through ordinances and MISA. The real issue in parliamentary democracy is precisely the right of the people to recall the representatives when they violate not only the mandate of the people but their promises to them.

Pramatha Sengupta  
Howrah

## The Angolan Agony

We have read your two issues of October 5 and 12 and would like to compliment you for focussing the spotlight on liberation movements all over the world. We like to congratulate Mr I. K. Shukla for having given us an insight into the complexities of the Angolan situation. Even though FNLA and MPLA have announced a cease-fire and entered negotiations with Lisbon, our joy is tempered with caution in view of certain factors, and we still agree with the major points made in Mr Shukla's article. It is a pity, however, that Mr A. Gupta who visited, it seems, Angola etc, has nothing much or original to say. Alas, Lisbon's link with NATO whose kingpin is the USA, the arch enemy of freedom in the Third World, give us cause for anxiety. The Simonstown agreement between the UK and South Africa for joint naval exercises is another affront to us. The Portuguese President, Gomes' recent visit to the USA cannot enthuse us in view of disclosures and avowals that the CIA as an arm of foreign policy of the U.S. will continue to subvert national governments and install dictators who will help the USA to exploit the cheap labour and mineral resources and dump its manufactures on the captive markets of these countries.

Our fears are coming true if 41 deaths in Mozambique on October 21 are any indication. Unless the transfer of power is total and immediate there will be more bloodshed, the blacks dying in larger numbers at the hands of the white settlers, the white troops siding with them, and the transitional government, with

blacks preponderant" in it, feeling inhibited to assert itself, showing itself to be paralysed, if not a puppet vis-a-vis the junta of whites and their troops.

In our support we conclude by quoting from the *Economist*, London, September 14, 1974: "The ratio of blacks to whites in Mozambique is 40 to 1; unaided, no white rebellion has a chance of succeeding. If this week's uprising was planned, and not just a spontaneous protest, it was probably intended to create the sort of anarchy that might provoke South African intervention. Sympathisers are reported to have crossed into Mozambique in response to the dissidents' appeals for South African and Rhodesian support, and mercenaries are said to be gathering at various South African centres". This will be repeated in Angola if we know the whites and their ways. If our leaders are not careful, if they feel tired, if they are impatient for compromises with Lisbon, we are afraid, Mr Shukla's prophecy might come true in the case of Angola: "It will be the last to be free, and quality-wise, perhaps, the least". He hints at his nation's experience.

An African Student  
Delhi

## Postal Workers

The Government has resorted to very strict measures of punishment against the P. & T. strikers. In the course of the railwaymen's struggle more than 40% of 700,000 Central Government employees besides the two million railway workers, intended to go on an indefinite strike but it was called off after a day. The strikers were mainly postal workers and audit employees for whom the withdrawal of the strike was a tragedy. One of the Calcutta dailies considered their strike as "non-event". But the Government does not think so. It punished all the strikers in general by break-in-service and has been imposing many other punitive actions such as 50% deduction of additional dearness allowances etc. The Government is also insisting that strikers express regret for the "offence".

Now the ill-fated postal workers have become victims of economy measures.

About 20,000 are threatened with loss of jobs because of the abolition of the Express Delivery System. The old systems are being gradually abolished and the new system of automation like the PIN Code is being introduced, throwing many workers out of job.

A new development is the go-slow tactic in certain post offices as a protest by the postal workers against stoppages of overtime allowances, though overtime duties continue. The consequent 'disorder' is being blamed on the workers.

The system of Indian Posts & Telegraphs cannot be said to be uneconomic because P. & T. is the maximum revenue yielding concern after the Railways, nor inefficient because the infrastructure of the system is financed mainly by the World Bank. Yet the workers are punished and deprived of their dues.

There are more than 5,000 workers who are not regular employees of the department. They are called "Extra Departmental" staff who are paid anything between Rs 10/- and 20/- per month. They work mainly in village post offices and their work is not less than that of regular workers.

The different trade union organisations are thriving in the P. & T. Department just as a shield of the Establishment. The strike of May 10 was unsuccessful because of internal sabotage by the leadership and it became another handle with which the administration created disruptions among the workers. P. & T. workers, an important part of the working class in India, are an unorganised force under dishonest leadership.

The crisis is deepening and thereby speeding up the process of effective struggle especially after the great debacle of the last strike. The railwaymen went far, yet the strike failed providing good lessons to the workers that: (i) mere economic struggle cannot succeed; (ii) there should be a programme of resistance struggle against repression; (iii) a proper leadership is needed to transform the struggle into a higher form of class struggle; and (iv) conventional trade unionism is obsolete today.

Kanak Roy  
Tripura



## The Contrast

October 1, the national day of People's China, was observed in several West European capitals; there were exhibitions of modern Chinese arts and crafts, books and magazines, posters and paper cuttings etc.

It was interesting, the tremendous interest, enthusiasm and respect with which the local people responded. It is indeed a contrast to what I have seen during Indian Republic day. There would be no local people to organise the occasion. Instead a few local capitalists would be present at the Embassy; if they played host else it would be in Sheraton hotel. There the Ambassador would tell us the story of future "bumper crops" and recite statistics of non-existing development or hang on to the glorious past. Of course there would be photographs of imported machines, green paddy fields, overfed people of the rich community, and a portrait of the Prime Minister. But there

are people who see through the bluff. They can hardly forget frequent advertisements for help to plundered Indians, they see and read too often about the Indian rulers who make frequent trips to beg. This explains why the local people have contempt for the Indian system. It is indeed painful to live in a foreign country and witness this sharp contrast between the prestige of two great countries, both potentially alike. On one side, China's magnificent development and Indira's disgraceful but artificial underdevelopment, China's mounting prestige and India's induced beggary. Both have a great past and heritage, a great civilisation and great potency. Yet India has lost her prestige under the rule of scoundrels. As an Indian it is indeed a painful experience. The towering existence of China points at the failure of the Indian ruling class. This existing contrast should another millions of Indians and convince them of the path of revolution. Therefore, no matter

how painful the contrast might appear, we Indians should in the final analysis be delighted, as it sharpens our consciousness and consequently hastens the funeral of the Indian ruling class.

An Indian living abroad

## Execution Delayed

Sri Kistagoud and Sri Bhoomaiah, Naxalites, were to be hanged at 4.30 a.m. on 26-11-1974 at Secunderabad Jail. The execution was stayed by the Government a few hours before 4.30 a.m.

We request all democratic forces to make representations to the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and the Prime Minister of India for the cancellation of the death sentence on the two.

P. Venkateswarlu

General Secretary

A. P. State Civil Liberties Committee  
Hyderabad

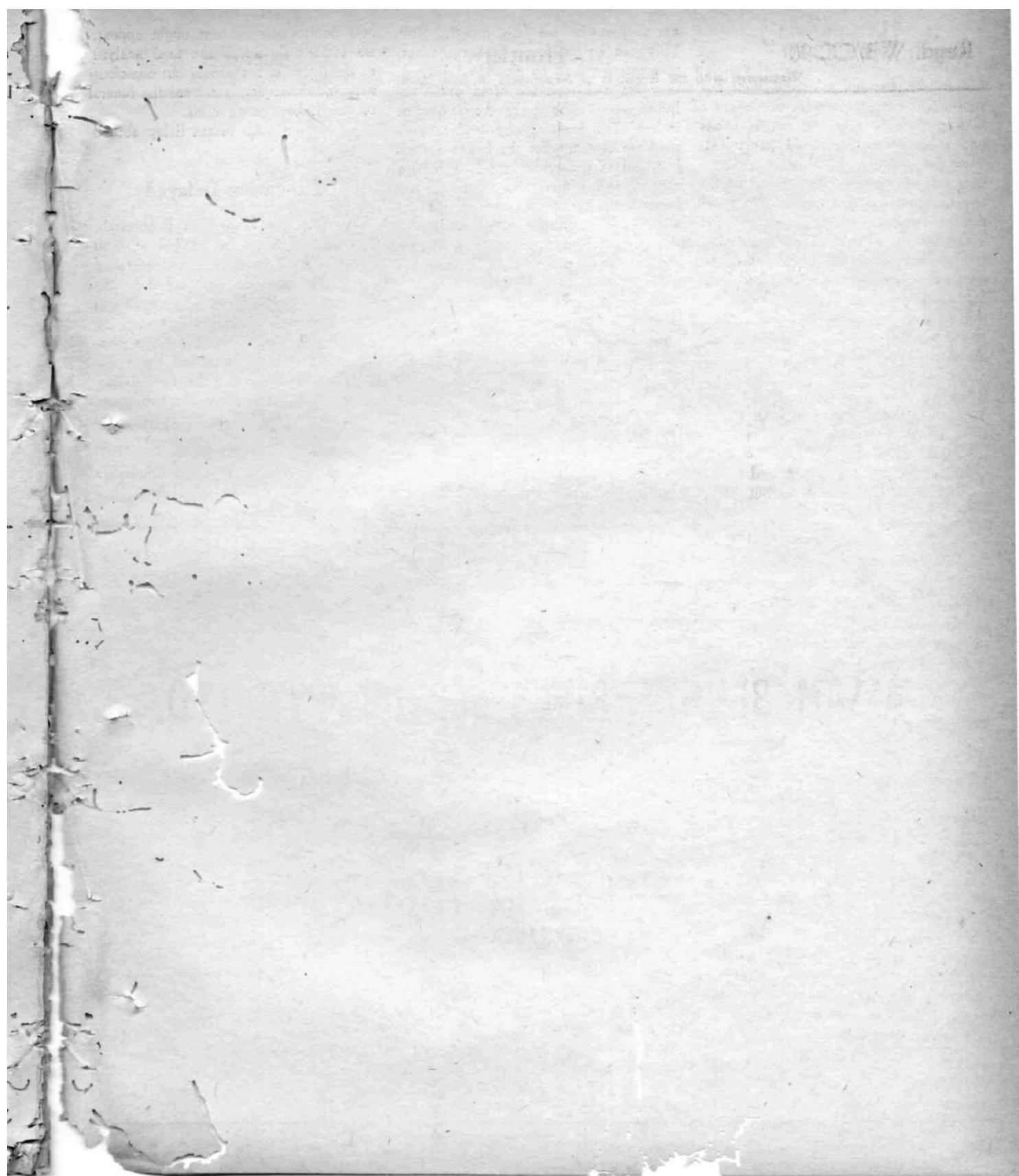
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