

# frontier

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ACCORDING to police reports, almost all the members of the CPI(ML) Central Committee, the pro-Lin Piao one reconstituted by Mr Mahadev Mukherjee, and its polit-bureau as well as the district committee leaders have been arrested within the course of a few weeks. The arrests began, it is said, after a rather stormy meeting of the Central Committee in early November, at which Mr Mukherjee came in for sharp criticism over the individual annihilation tactic. Mr Mukherjee is reported to have resigned as General Secretary on the spot. He was later arrested, after quite a few of his comrades had been rounded up. The arrests prove that the infiltration of the group has been extensive.

How are these people faring now in jail or police lock-up? Perhaps it is too early for them to be handed over to the jail administration; perhaps they are still being "interrogated", which is a euphemism for torture. The wife of a former journalist who was arrested found him black and blue when she was allowed to see him. And then one can read the following inimitable story in *The Statesman*, Calcutta:

"The Park Street police filed a report on Wednesday (December 18) before Mr B. N. Chandra, Metropolitan Magistrate, sitting in the court of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Calcutta, alleging that Mahadev Mukherjee attempted to commit suicide on December 14 at 7-30 a.m. in a lavatory of the Intelligence Branch Office in Lord Sinha Road, Calcutta, under police lock-up, by putting fire to a napkin wrapped around his hands.

"It was reported that the wearing apparel of Mukherjee and some parts of his body were burnt. On hearing Mukherjee's scream, the constable on duty and others rescued him and after administering first aid, removed him to the police cases hospital, Alipore, where he was attended to and later discharged.

"It was further reported that the constable on duty heard Mukherjee crying out that that 'comrades' allegation against me of misappropriation of Rs. 1.82 lakhs of the party fund is all false' etc.

"The accused Mukherjee is in police custody till December 27 next under the order of the Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate, Alipore, 24-Parganas, in connexion with a case of alleged criminal conspiracy, rioting, murder, dacoity, waging war against the State, sedition etc.

"The Metropolitan Magistrate ordered the issue of a warrant of arrest

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against the accused for producing him before the court on January 2."

Mr Mukherjee was under very strict watch because he had once escaped from hospital while in custody; and it is well known that the police, in their compassion for the prisoners, do not lend them any material with which they can attempt suicide—towels, box of matches and things like that. Besides, of the many ways of committing suicide, putting fire to a napkin wrapped around one's hands must be unique.

It is evident that Mr Mukherjee was in such a shape, as a result of 'interrogation', that he could not be produced in court. The cry about the money was meant to reflect a pang of conscience that had urged him to take his own life.

Maybe on some pretext or another Mr Mukherjee will not be produced in court until he is show-worthy. Our magistrates will not object, they are great believers. If Mr Mukherjee—who is one of the many to undergo an ordeal by fire—is already a burnt out case he may die. The official version of a natural death will be accepted and business as usual will go on. Such is the state of West Bengal.

## No Time To Quarrel

Those who may wonder at the mesmeric power of the Congress President who has been able to make the rival faction leaders of the youth and student wings of the West Bengal Congress to eat from the same organisational trough must have forgotten that only a few days ago the supreme leader of the party had issued the terse direction: "Let there be no differences in the party". The magic wand is hers, not his. Mrs Gandhi was annoyed at the sharp exchanges in the executive of the Congress Parliamentary Party over the question of nationalisation of the sugar industry and Mr K. D. Malaviya's plea for a purge of rightists from the Congress. A self-proclaimed fellow-traveller, Mr Malaviya merely acted up to the latest fraternal call given by the CPI in its draft political resolution for the tenth congress to the progressives within the Congress party to

assert themselves. Mrs Gandhi's admonition left the party's stand and hers as unclear as before. Her behest to the boys to highlight what the party and the Government have done for the people was not very helpful either. What they have done to the people is for everyone to see; the Prime Minister seems to suggest that what they have done for the people is something entirely different.

When the Prime Minister asks her partymen to talk only of the plus points of their party and Government she must have a purpose in view. Almost all Opposition parties agree that she has made up her mind to ask for a sudden dissolution of the Lok Sabha in the next few weeks to force a snap poll. The Constitution may come in the way for the constitutional requirement of delimitation of constituencies on the basis of the 1971 census results has not yet been met. But where there is ingenuity there is a way. There is no provision for President's rule at the Centre, and if the Prime Minister resigns and asks for dissolution of the Lok Sabha in the next few weeks, the country will be left with a caretaker Ministry only. Without a Lok Sabha it will not be possible to pass even a vote-on-account budget to defray governmental expenditure after March 31. A strong case for a one-time exception of the mandatory provision of the Constitution for delimitation of constituencies after every census will thus have been made. One mandatory provision of the Constitution may be used by the Prime Minister to override another.

Even if the Prime Minister does not go in for a snap poll and the present Lok Sabha is permitted to run its full course, there is not much time left for the ruling party to set about in earnest the task of explaining to the people that without their knowing it how much of poverty has been eradicated from the country. The anti-smuggling campaign has lost much of its shine; so some other gimmicks must be on the conveyor line, like a ceiling on urban property. Property-owners know their Government; they will not panic, while the deprived will be impressed. But the party must be ready for deriving full advantage from such socialistic measures. The time for quarrelling over policies and attitudes is up. Congressmen will have to stow

away their differences until the elections are over and dedicate themselves to the all-important task of winning the next elections. At election-time their efforts will be supplemented by active assistance from 500,000 or 1 million Seva Dal volunteers who will be present in every polling booth in the country to serve the voters. God willing, if the party is returned to power there will be enough time for discussing such trivial issues as nationalisation of the sugar industry or for quarrelling over so-called principles and policies of the Congress.

## Devalue, Or....

Devaluation of the rupee is one subject on which most Indians have learnt not to trust ministerial statements. The equivocation that preceded the 1966 devaluation is all too fresh in our memory. The Union Finance Minister, Mr C. Subramaniam, has now pulled all his weight to nip any such speculation in the bud. And the arguments marshalled by him certainly look rational. He has conceded that the rupee has suffered a very considerable fall in value; from 100 paise in 1949, to a mere 27.6 paise now. But there is no question of devaluing the currency on that count. The currencies of many other developing countries—he cited the experience of Indonesia, Pakistan and the Latin American nations—had also been depreciated owing to inflationary conditions. What is more, the dollar, the currency of what Mr Subramaniam described as the strongest economy of the world, is in a similar situation. These parallels, the Finance Minister obviously hopes, should allay any fear that the rupee faces a critical or a unique situation and that it should be singled out for a dose of devaluation.

The argument is good so far as it goes. But the pity is that it does not go far enough. The theory that the internal and the external value of a currency should have some sort of parity has by and large been discarded. And to that extent Mr Subramaniam is on strong ground. But the point is that the degree of inflation in India is far more pronounced than in most other countries.

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During the first three quarters of 1974, it has roughly ranged at an average rate of 30 per cent a year. The second, and the more important, point that works against India is that the balance of payments situation for the country has taken an alarming turn in spite of a marked export growth. It is possible, and indeed likely, that the foreign friends of India would mount a massive operation to help the country tide over the crisis. But would be it without a price? Past records do not support such a view. There has always been an element of arm-twisting in such relief operations, and there is no reason to believe that the aid-givers would refrain from putting such pressures this time also. To force a country to devalue its currency has almost become a neo-colonialist version of making a country surrender its sovereignty by gunboat diplomacy. With a stagnant economy, a big deficit in the balance of payments and increasing reliance on foreign help, India's defence against a forced devaluation is now extremely low. And herein lies the danger.

## No Exit, No Reprieve

A correspondent writes from Delhi: With all his flamboyance the Man from Larkana can learn a lesson or two from the Woman from Allahabad. Both are Prime Ministers in their countries. The former talks of a thousand-year war, the latter quietly transmutes protectorates into associates. This legerdemain has earned her sneaking admiration; and there are screen beauties of yester years eager to be snapped with this doughty lady.

Quite characteristically, their responses to situations and their styles of functioning reveal Mr. Bhutto and

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Mrs. Gandhi for the man and woman they are. Take the issue of passports. Mr Bhutto threatens loudly for all the world to hear that he would impound the passport of this or that opponent. There is a retaliatory chorus of protest all over, that this is despotism and cannot be taken lying down.

In contrast what does the Priyadarshini Government do? It has issued a secret circular to officers which effectively though silently achieves the results which Mr Bhutto's fiat may just dream of. The circular says that when the officer certifies someone's case he also takes the responsibility of certifying from the point of view of police verification and no further police verification is done. Instead of making anything easier for anyone, it makes every officer hesitant. You may be told that this can be done through a usual police verification, and in that case no certificate from any Deputy Secretary or a Stipendiary First Class Magistrate is needed. Easier said than done. This you realise when you visit a police station where you are told, perhaps properly, that it is no function of the police to help you get a passport unless your papers are sent to them by the Regional Passport Officer for verification etc. You are convinced. It impresses you as flawless. But equally flawless, on the surface, is the requirement that you be certified by a Deputy Secretary/Stipendiary First Class Magistrate who must have known you for two years.

The question is how many of us can be so privileged as to enjoy the friendship or acquaintance of a Deputy Secretary or a Magistrate, first or third class? And yet passport poses no difficulty for smugglers, racketeers, contraband pedlars. They get it daily. Who issues to them? Are they all friends of the officials? Why does the Government of India want you to be friends with this traitorous class of officials, or why does it require you to belong to the class of nouveau riche, crooks, gun-runners, and hustlers? Why, as an honest citizen, you are denied a passport, if you want to quit for a job abroad or fulfil some assignment? Ask these and a host of other questions. You will know quickly which class is allowed this as a matter

of right. You are not given a job nor allowed to get away. Commit suicide, or fight, or be labelled unpatriotic. But remember, you are no Gandhi to be the director of, half a dozen firms, or somebody's daughter-in-law to be earning Rs. 9,000 and odd as monthly salary from an insurance company so as not to wish for leaving the country.

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# Peace-mongering In The Indian Sub-Continent

R. P. MULLICK

**I**N the context of the general fear of a nuclear war developing all of a sudden in the Middle East, the nuclear capability of India adds a new dimension to the situation in South Asia. Prospects of peace here now hinge on the calculations of New Delhi regarding its strategic objective of maintaining itself as a dominant power and a future challenger to China.

Japan had suffered grievously during the close of World War II as a target of the first atomic bomb. It had to oppose preparations by nuclear aspirants anywhere in the world to acquire or expand capacities to deliver the "goods" after India's 'accomplishment' in the field of nuclear weaponry. Papers like *Asahi Shimbun* detected and analysed the real intention as against the apparent and deceptive, behind the May 1974 underground explosion in Rajasthan. The explosion indicated the opening of a new chapter in the evolution of India as a bourgeois nation-State, set on the classical imperialist path of employing deterrent military power to achieve political ends. The ruling elite responsible for turning over the State's defence policy from conventional to nuclear weaponry has dropped enough hints ever since, indicating a fixed strategy aimed at acquiring "self-sufficiency" in nuclear fuel as to maintain unhindered progress towards a nuclear stockpile. Narora, where the Congress held a conclave to adopt the power-political decisions to be effected at home, symbolises the new clan of this elite; the site selected for developing "atomic energy for peaceful purposes", will become another landmark along the road to absolute military supremacy in the South Asian region.

What the Chinese Vice-Premier, Mr Teng Hsiao-ping told a non-official delegation from Japan on June 6 is now known. That Russia is behind India's decision to enter and prosper by remaining in the nuclear club has been borne out by the slow though sure-footed po-

litical march northwards. Sikkim has been incorporated as virtually a province, though maintaining the jargon of an "associate" State. Nepal is being cajoled and bullied to accept the annexation of Sikkim, an example of the British imperialistic hang-over. Petrol has been withheld, the Kosi river project virtually jettisoned (because of poor, little Nepal's "apathy" towards the very scheme that would benefit its western region most), diplomatic anger exhibited over Nepalese public expressions of protest against the eclipse of the Sikkimese right to self-determination, and furtive threats are now being held out by stopping the export of essential consumer goods like salt.

## Peace Zone

India's attitude towards the question of a nuclear-free peace zone in the South Asian region brings out its ambivalence. A universally acceptable principle does not become vitiated just because it is sponsored by a neighbouring State with which India had had confrontations since the advent of independence. Yet the U.N. saw these two neighbouring States wrangling and splitting and two resolutions being passed. While New Delhi insisted on an initiative coming from all littoral States concerned in a concerted manner, Pakistan made straight for the ultimate objective of a nuclear free South Asia. Compounded with this sorry exhibition of a persistent refusal to face realities and to present a unitedly agreed front in the U.N., is the "feeling" of the Government of India that "any attempt at solution of the problem of keeping the Indian Ocean free from naval bases will be counter-productive, as the question can be settled only at the U.N. level". (Times of India News service report of the proceedings in the Rajya Sabha, November 15). Yet, when Dr Kissinger came to India and tilted with marvellous diplomatic affability towards the Government

of India's strategic aim of superiority in the Indian Ocean zone, the Defence Minister just talked about the U.S. base of Diego Garcia, agreed to disagree with him, but could not see the necessity of clinching this issue, or the allied one of U.S. naval presence in the area (including entry, at will, of a sizable fleet including vessels equipped with nuclear missiles and power).

The root of the matter is that New Delhi knows well every detail of the armed presence of both the USA and USSR, their cooperative contention in the Indian Ocean, and, since the latter has to be given all indulgence as a "traditional ally", the former cannot be approached formally even on the subject. As a result of New Delhi's studied inaction, cloaked in verbose propaganda for international consumption, its alleged solicitude for creating and maintaining peace in South Asia is a pastime for scoring fine points of political polemics, forgetting the basic tenets of Panchsheel and co-existence on the basis of mutual respect, thus ignoring Pakistan as well as China.

It is for the unbiased to see now that the latter two have won greater international support in the U.N. over their consistent stand in favour of ridding South Asia and the Middle East of the nuclear menace. The chagrin of New Delhi's representative in the U.N. was complete when, closely following on his spurning of a Swedish suggestion for the "placing of all its nuclear activities under international safeguards" in the Political Committee (October 26), the same committee adopted a 13-nation resolution that "noted with concern the expansion of the nuclear club". Strangely enough, the present rulers of India, who have sworn and still swear by peace and non-violence between nations, cannot agree with the simple and forthright suggestion for international supervision of all nuclear explosions, which is necessary if only "to neutralise risks which peaceful nuclear explosions, if at all required, can pose for weapons development and nuclear armament".

## Nearer To Sangh

In opting for nuclear capability, the ruling Congress has come closer to the right reactionary Jan Sangh (a party it



never tires of condemning but whose feathers of supercharged-ultra-nationalism it borrows. What will be the wages of such strategy? The events of December 1971, when the real liberation of East Bengal was stalled by a controlled and super-imposed "liberation" with the help of a still conventional war machine, did leave a new awareness among the ruling class leadership here. It was as though the entire political situation in South Asia acquired a perspective mobility, the ultimate end of which could inspire it with a bourgeois-chauvinistic elan. Despite the cruelly burdensome cost-factor of the "liberation" and the victory, this leadership has continued to nurse the objective of achieving a decisive domination. This concept has by and large bred a sense of urgency to go ahead and perfect its missile strategy. It has seen, since the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973, that tactically effective missiles—surface-to-air, surface-to-surface, air-to-ground, and the submarine-or-speed boat-fired types—can prove devastating in any limited war (regional) of short duration. Hence the need for (i) going all out in the indigenous production of missiles—as announced by the Minister for Defence Production on November 30 in the Rajya Sabha. The public sector corporation, Bharat Dynamics Ltd., at Hyderabad, has already swung into the manufacture of such types; and (ii) importing the same from Russia with which India has a treaty of friendship. If small and insignificant West Asian States, like Abu Dhabi, or the more important, Saudi Arabia, could decide to acquire super-sophisticated combat aircraft and missiles, why not India? It is only a proverbial hair-breadth difference between the attitude of pugnacious defiance (of all the well-meaning peace-directioned

resolutions of the UN) by Israel which is committed to using atomic weapons in any future war, and that oriented towards accomplishing power-deterrence through the self-same strategy which India exhibits, though it is quite capable of masking the strategic purposes and objectives with repetitive moralisations on peaceful intentions. Since the U.S. and the USSR have already shown the way to smaller-than-super powers in West Asia as to how they could acquire, through borrowing or gratuitous aid, missiles and nuclear-energy, the former by emboldening and empowering Israel, and the latter vis-à-vis Egypt, Syria and Iraq, there remains no bar to a re-enactment of that drama in South Asia. Already CENTO-sponsored naval exercises have taken place, spaced over eleven days. Both the super-powers are now decisively increasing their naval presence, and feverishly furnishing bases with all necessary installations for the re-equipment and replenishment of vessels and a sophisticated communications system. India is not lagging behind, thanks to meaningful and interested aid from Russia in the fields of ballistic and satellite-operated communications technology. Should contention and conflict develop between the USSR and China over their disputed borders in the north (Moscow has all but rejected a recent Peking proposal for a non-aggression pact and mutual withdrawal of troops from disputed areas), there is every possibility of India's nuclear-cum-missile strategy coming into open application; reasons for conflict along the northern Himalayan border can be cooked up easily to provide the pretext. It is in this context of a possible future conflagration in Asia, in which nuclear weaponry is likely to be used with no holds barred that the role of Nepal assumes significance. Not without reason, therefore, has a pressure campaign been mounted against Nepal, its alleged "truculence" (meaning insubordination towards the big brother in the South), its allegedly opportunistic balancing of power between China and India. Could there be a cruder distortion of the Nepalese policy of offering sincere friendship to both?

## Who Will Control The World's Resources ?

IN the past year, a battle over the future distribution of the world's resources has emerged that will shape the history of the final quarter of the twentieth century. Third World countries have mounted an unprecedented campaign to develop economic and political power over their resources and to change the terms of international trade. The U.S. has responded with a policy of confrontation, trying to organize the consuming nations in order to break the tenuous unity forged by the raw materials producing countries. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has led the way in trying to maintain the balance of power that favours the rich industrialized nations over the poor developing countries of the Third World.

The oil embargo and price increases that followed last year's October Mideast war marked a dramatic turning point in the move by Third World countries to change this balance. For the first time, the diverse Arab countries achieved the necessary unity to use the political and economic power inherent in their control of the world's exported oil.

The Arab countries found that by acting in concert, they could successfully use their oil as a political weapon to pressure vacillating Western European countries and Japan to move toward greater support for the Arab States and the Palestinians in the Mideast conflict. At the same time, the OPEC countries also found the economic value of unity—since then, they have increased the export price of their oil fourfold. To the OPEC countries, this was long overdue compensation for more than half a century of extraction of their oil at artificially low price by the Western oil companies.

The oil embargo and price increases showed the potential of producers' organizations that had been called for by the fourth Non-Aligned Nations Conference that met in Algiers a month before the October war broke out. The conference—which brought together a record 76 countries and representatives of

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16 national liberation movements condemned multi-national corporations for their "open or camouflaged economic aggression" against Third World nations.

The conference noted that the Third World, with 70 per cent of the world's population, received only 10 per cent of the world's income—and that the situation is getting worse. The developing countries' share in world trade, the conference economic document said, dropped from 21.3 per cent in 1960 to 17.6 per cent in 1970.

Although serious conflicts within the non-aligned nations movement emerged at the Algiers meeting, the political and economic advantages of unity were soon demonstrated by the oil embargo and the confrontations that developed in 1974.

The non-aligned nations then sought to move the debate from Algiers to the world forum of the United Nations. Algerian Foreign Minister Abdelaziz Bouteflika, acting on behalf of the non-aligned nations group, called for a special session of the UN in April to discuss raw materials—an effort to counter moves by the U.S. to organize Western Europe and Japan into a common front of oil consumers to confront the producing nations, and to divide the Third World along the lines of oil consuming and oil producing nations.

Although the U.S. sought to play down the special UN session, it was viewed with extreme seriousness throughout the rest of the world. Fifty countries sent foreign ministers, and several sent heads of state. Henry Kissinger decided at the last minute to attend the session. In a statement that would essentially be repeated by the U.S. throughout the year, Kissinger cautioned Third World countries against forming cartels, and warned that "large price increases coupled with production restrictions involve potential disaster; global inflation followed by global recession from which no nation could escape."

Although no concrete programme emerged from the raw materials conference, the delegates passed without a formal vote a "Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Order" and an "Action Programme" which urged the formation of producers' organizations, price increases for raw mate-

rials, support for nationalization and the elimination or renegotiation of the \$80 to \$100 billion Third World debt to the industrialized countries.

The U.S. expressed open dissatisfaction with the document. U.S. ambassador John Scali charged the Third World with using "steamroller tactics" to push the programme through.

The arguments raised by the Third World countries at the conference about deteriorating terms of trade and the need to raise prices on raw materials were bolstered by a UN study released in April by the UN Conference on Trade and Development. According to the study, terms of trade between industrialized and Third World countries deteriorated by 15 per cent between 1955 and 1972. "In other words", the report said, "the developing lands recorded a loss of some \$10 billion in that period, a figure that exceeds the total public aid to the poorer countries".

The UN conference on raw materials set the terms of debate for three other important UN-sponsored conferences held this year to deal with various aspects of the question of distributing the world's riches.

**\* SEA RESOURCES:** In July and August, 5,000 representatives and observers from 150 countries met in Caracas, Venezuela, to draft a new charter governing the future control and use of the ocean's resources. A major unresolved issue, scheduled to be discussed at the next sea conference in 1975, is whether the sea's wealth should be exploited by a UN agency and used primarily to develop poor countries—or whether, as the U.S. wants, private corporations from the advanced industrialized countries should receive licences to exploit the sea to their own profit.

**\* POPULATION:** At the UN Conference on Population held in August in Bucharest, Rumania, debate focused on the question of whether over-population or economic underdevelopment is the more critical problem. The U.S. led the Western industrialized countries in pushing the Malthusian "population bomb" theory. Third World countries argued that underdevelopment and the grossly unequal distribution of the world's resources and not "over-population"—are

the root cause of starvation and poverty.

**\* FOOD:** Although the same basic conflicts between the Third World and the Western industrialized nations were again raised at the World Food Conference in Rome, the focus of concern was the immediate crisis of potential mass starvation this winter. Delegates were told that nearly 500 million people are suffering from some form of hunger and warned that as many as 20 million people could die from starvation in the coming months.

But even on the issue of more U.S. food aid this year to help meet the world food crisis, the Ford administration took a hard line. Although the U.S. is by far the world's largest producer and exporter of food, the administration has cut back the real amount of grain it is sending overseas to feed the desperately hungry — U.S. food aid has fallen 3 million tons this year. President Ford rejected a request from the U.S. delegation at the conference to increase the U.S. contribution this year by one million tons.

The U.S. attitude at the World Food Conference underscored the policy of confrontation that has been pursued since the oil embargo first raised for the U.S.—the spectre of a more equitable sharing of the world's wealth between rich industrialized countries and the Third World.

From the beginning, Kissinger called for unity among the Western oil-consuming nations to confront the oil producers and force down the price of oil. A cartel of consuming countries, Kissinger suggested, could extend to other important raw materials as well to prevent effective action by Third World producer countries. At the same time Kissinger has sought to isolate the oil producers from other Third World countries that are suffering from higher oil prices.

At the UN session on raw materials in April, Kissinger acknowledged the right of countries to seek fairer prices for their raw materials, but warned Third World nations not to form producers' cartels. Attacking what he called the "politics of pressure and threats", Kissinger told the conference that oil price increases threatened the world with "global inflation" and "recession". This



the one was taken even farther at the opening of the UN General Assembly in September when Kissinger demanded a reduction in oil prices, issuing a veiled threat of military intervention against the oil producing nations, and clearly linking future U.S. food aid with raw materials prices.

Kissinger's efforts to rally the other major oil consuming nations to form a consumers' cartel failed last winter. France, in particular, sought an alternative strategy of cooperation rather than confrontation with the oil producers. The French said that rather than trying to force down the price of oil, the West needed to learn to live with the new reality. France concluded large state-to-state oil deals with the producer nations, exchanging technology, equipment and weaponry for oil. Other consumer nations, including Britain, West Germany, Italy and Japan followed France in concluding bilateral state-to-state oil deals.

By this fall, however, Kissinger had managed to forge enough unity among the major consuming nations to form the International Energy Agency to cooperate on energy. The IEA includes far-reaching provisions that could lead to a consumers' cartel. But it is still not clear that the Western European nations and Japan which import 80 per cent of their oil, most of it from the Middle East—are willing to risk a confrontation under U.S. leadership with the oil-producing nations.

State Department documents have revealed that Kissinger's policy of confrontation over oil extends to all raw materials produced by the Third World. An internal study prepared for Kissinger January 22, 1974 acknowledges that the U.S. could pay "substantial increases" in prices for most raw materials without passing on the cost to the American consumer, but rejects that option and outlines a strategy to break attempts at formation of effective producers' organizations.

This policy has not changed under the Ford administration. A State Department study completed in September and quoted by the *New York Times* November 17, advocates "upgrading relations" with reliable raw materials suppliers including "Canada, Australia, Brazil, Rhodesia and South Africa", while avoiding pay-

ing higher prices to the "less developed countries".

The strategy of the Third World countries has been to try to achieve unity—unity among the producers of the same raw material, and unity throughout the Third World to support the actions of producer groups such as OPEC. The problems facing the Third World countries, however, are formidable. Many of the poorest countries are especially vulnerable because of their dependence on the U.S. for food aid. Bangladesh, for example, caved in to U.S. pressure to halt its trade with Cuba in order to get U.S. grain shipments. Bangladesh is one of the most desperate countries for whom a simple threat not to grant food aid has a powerful impact. Other less vulnerable countries are still aware that the U.S. can exert tremendous pressure against an independent Third World country. The case of Chile is the most dramatic recent example, underscored by the revelation that Kissinger himself approved covert operations and took command of the economic blockade that together led to the toppling of the Allende government.

A major problem facing the developing countries is maintaining the unity of producers and consumers among the Third World nations, a problem that is particularly acute in the case of oil, since it is a vital commodity for all countries. Third World oil consuming nations have been especially hard hit by the increase in oil prices. Besides draining their scarce foreign reserves to pay the petroleum bill, they have had to pay higher prices for imported industrial equipment and other manufactured goods from the developed nations.

One solution, proposed to the Third World by Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, is that the OPEC countries invest their new riches in the underdeveloped world. This, he says, would help the other Third World countries with their balance of payments and give them an immediate stake in supporting OPEC and the larger battle for control by the Third World over its raw materials.

(International Bulletin)

## The Parvathipuram Case

D. KRISHNAMURTY

ON 16-1-1970 a First Information Report (FIR) was registered in the Parvathipuram Taluka Police Station in Srikakulam District of Andhra Pradesh. The names of 148 persons were mentioned in this report among others, stating that the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) popularly known as Naxalites, decided to bring about revolution through violence and that some of the most important people like Vempatapu Satyanarayana, Chowdary Tejeswara Rao and others, at the incitement of Charu Mazumdar Kanu Sanyal and Sushital Roy Chowdhury met at Boddapadu Village in Srikakulam District in or about October 1968, and conspired to commit dacoities, murder landlords, attack the police and other governmental officials to overthrow the Government. The chargesheet mentioned as many as 30 murders, 100 dacoities and about 200 other offences committed by the accused till 26-10-1970, i.e. the date in which it was filed.

The Government did not stop with filing the chargesheet alone. Instead of producing the arrested in a court of law, it shot down Comrades Vempatapu Satyanarayana, Adibhatla Kailasam, Pondala Balakrishna, an engineering college lecturer, Rameshchandra Saho, Dr Devineni Mallikharjunadu, Dr Changanthi Bhaskara Rao, Subba Rao Panigrahi, Panchadi Krishnamurty and his wife Panchadi Nirmala, Thamada Ganapati, Arika Somulu, Rajaram Reddy and many others. At last a chargesheet was filed on 26-10-1970 against 140 people among whom were Chowdary Tejeswara Rao, Kanu Sanyal, Souren Bosu and others. The prosecution has cited 1,024 witnesses on its side and thousands of pages of documents and other material.

The Government played all sorts of tricks to delay the trial and to a great extent it succeeded. The trial began on 14-11-1974, 58 months after the FIR was filed, when the charges were framed against the accused in the Additional Sessions Court at Visakhapatnam. The

charges against Comrade Tejeswara Rao and 74 other accused were conspiracy to overthrow the Government, collection of arms and ammunition, preaching of violence, waging war against the Government and committing of murders, dacoities etc. under various sections of the Indian Penal Code.

The examination of the prosecution witnesses began on 20.11.1974 and till 26.11.1974, three approvers have been examined. With all the past experience and delaying tactics of the Government, nobody can say how many months and years it will take to complete the examination of all the 1,024 prosecution witnesses.

A committee under the presidentship of Sri Tarimala Nagi Reddy, a veteran revolutionary, is looking after the defence arrangements in this conspiracy case as well as many other cases in Andhra Pradesh, particularly in the Agency areas of Srikakulam district, now pending from the committal stage to the High Court and Supreme Court. This Committee is arranging legal defence for all those who want and accept its defence arrangements. It has engaged Sri S. V. L. Narasimham, an experienced and veteran advocate of Guntur town, and Sri K. Ramakrishna Reddy, advocate of Anantapur town. They are defending comrades Tejeswara Rao, Kanu Sanyal, Souren Bose, Chowdhury Sampoolamma, tribal leaders like Govindarao Yendudora, Nimmala Krishna Murty and 28 other accused, mostly peasants and tribal comrades. Others have engaged their own advocates. A few have boycotted the court.

The Parvathipuram case has acquired a unique position in the annals of the revolutionary movement and the judicial system in the country as it involves top ranking leaders of the Naxalite movement and a very large number of witnesses. It is said to be the biggest case ever of this nature in South Asia.

The defence committee has appealed to the public to donate liberally, and offer other help. All this should be sent to T. Nagi Reddy, Sai Nagar, Anantapur; Andhra Pradesh (India).

## Of Games & Gamesters

GYAN KAPUR

WHAT, after all is illegal and what legal? And how far can or should the police interfere in our personal life? These are questions which come to mind on reading a gem of a news item on the anti-smuggling campaign in Bombay and its neighbourhood.

Among those who had the misfortune to fall into the dragnet of the anti-smuggling brigade, it seems, was a priest. Among the things seized from his room, strangely enough, were contraceptives. One is left totally in the dark as to why this should be a crime when the Government is so much committed to family planning. Is it because the police did not expect a priest to have any use for these things and were shocked at the very idea that he might need them? Or is it that they were imported illegally? If so, could not a point be stretched and the priest's work appreciated, any way one looks at it, for the social service he is doing?

The dust seemed to have settled down after the storm caused by the sudden action against freebooters who provided us with those foreign luxuries for which many of us hankered. They have reappeared and business is going on as usual.

If one believes even half of the rumours, a good deal of Bombay City's prosperity of late has been built on the clandestine trade. It was optimistic for the Government or anyone to hope that the smugglers would just sit tight. There were too many people involved. What will happen if they shift their operations to the Eastern Zone, with Calcutta as its base? With its economy in a mess, and large armies of unemployed, the region will no doubt give an open welcome to anything which offers a chance to live for large numbers who are otherwise denied this and would care nothing how it comes. Should it happen, it is certainly not going to be an unmixed blessing.

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For those not possessing a car in Calcutta getting to their places of work

and back home is a daily miracle for which they are thankful to their stars. There are, of course, frequent threats from the West Bengal Chief Minister to close down the Calcutta State Transport Corporation, if its working does not improve. But really no one takes such threats seriously, perhaps, the Chief Minister himself least of all. Anyway, things being as they are, one doubts if it would make much of a difference. Like the power crisis, it seems more and more clear that nothing good will come of it till the whole transport system in Calcutta breaks down completely. Only then some thought may be seriously given to it and order may emerge out of chaos.

Ten of the CSTC's vehicles, it is reported, are to be sold to the Calcutta Corporation as they are found to be unfit for anything. We do not quarrel with this eminently sound proposal. Vehicles in the Calcutta Corporation have a way of getting old before their time. Anyway, it is doubtful if anyone in that august body knows which is a new vehicle and which an old one. So what is the point of buying new ones? The only thing which counts is to inflate the number.

No, we do not quarrel with the proposal; but we do feel it does not go far enough. Why should there be this enormous wastage? All the vehicles of the Corporation, the Tramways and the State Transport Corporation should be pooled and put under one authority. We should do away with the luxury of seats in trams and buses and solve two problems at the same time.

During daytime all the vehicles can carry passengers. At night, they can carry garbage, thus increasing vastly the number of vehicles available for this job. Outwardly, most of the buses hardly differ from the garbage trucks even now.

For *Frontier* contact :

BANKURA NEWSPAPER

AGENCY,

Lokepur,

P.O. & Dist. Bankura.

DECEMBER 28, 1974



If they stink a little in the morning, for those who can't stand it there are the taxis or at least the mini-buses. But we shall have a thoroughly garbage-free Calcutta and enough vehicles to carry all the passengers.

And there will be a bonus too. With all the vehicles out on the streets, day

and night, there will be little use for the big depots of trams, buses and Corporation trucks. We can build nice bungalows for Ministers. MLAs and Councillors, past, present and future. And, perhaps, for a few selected scribes including this one for making such a useful suggestion.

## Chorus

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

**M**RINAL Sen's latest film **Chorus** is an exciting experiment in applying Brechtian techniques to cinema and brings to a fruitful culmination the director's continuous efforts to come out of the trappings of the conventional narrative pattern. Here, as in some of his earlier films, he has tried to use his medium for the projection of socio-political problems and his protests against the tyranny of the establishment which appears in the form of a para-military industrial complex, securely housed in a massive fort-like monstrosity, the outside walls of which bear the delicate shades of Bharuth sculpture, but inside there are the instruments of terror unleashed from time to time by the powers that be. Although termed "a modern fantasy", this film draws its lifeblood from the realities around us today. The director punctuates the episodes with his own interpretations, expressed through the songs sung by the character acting as the classical chorus who wears different costumes each time he appears. An intelligent integration of the "alienation" device into the framework of cinema, this helps the director to underline his social comment without becoming unnecessarily didactic. The film has four episodes: there is the master-plot, which is the main body of the fantasy, the story of the owners of the castle weaving their exploitation schemes; and there are three other stories, a kind of objective reportage of our daily life. The protagonists have been chosen with meticulous care, and they represent the rural scene, the industrial sector and the lower middle-class of the big city. They are all job-hunters scrambling for application forms in front

of the imposing castle. From the hustle-bustle of the queue, the director cuts to the individual stories of the characters and through a creative use of cinema-verite techniques where the characters often talk straight to the camera, he builds up a kind of intellectual report between the characters and the audience. He has been able to condition his film in such a way that the story-telling commands the least attention and we become interested in the characters as social beings, and the goings-on become part of the total social evolution. We are not swept away by waves of an emotional catharsis, but we are awakened to a new understanding of the social problems. To those who want a cut-and-dried storyline as the guiding format in cinema, this film may not mean anything significant, but those who want to gear the movie-camera to document the genuine and universal emotions by doing away with the contrived intrigues of the dramatised realities **Chorus** will be an inspiring example. Here, the people have come out with their flesh-and-blood identity, brushing aside the dolled-up appearances. Their miseries and sufferings are real, so are their protests. By dispensing with the tangles of the narrative pattern, the director has been able to concentrate more on the deeper aspects of the situations he depicts. The psychological revelations and the ideological re-enforcing of the complicated undertones of an event, these two elements make the film's style a forward step for cinema of its kind.

As has been said earlier, this film combines reality and fantasy into a uni-

fied, organic structure. The long queues of the jobless, the stark, ruthless portrayal of the all-round poverty and hunger, the political demonstrations, all these lend an immediacy of appeal to the film leading upto an instant identification. And there is also the element of allegory, the symbolic representation of the "Masters", a legion of monsters in civilised outfit, hidden behind stone-walls and barbed wire. The film assumes deeper a significance of a confrontation between the "Masters" and the job-seekers, when a secret battalion of 30,000 applicants, like the Apocalypse, threatens to be on the march. The news sticks its teeth into the peaceful sleep of the "Masters". In the finale where the defences collapse against people's onslaught, the fantasy of the present becomes the reality of the future.

Some critics have found a kind of wish-fulfilling formula in this ending. It may be added for their enlightenment that in this type of film done on agit-prop model, the film-maker should always be a partisan, of a particular cause and use his artistic methods to weave out the dreams of a better future. There should be a definite wish and it is no shame if he tries to make that wish come true in his creative expression, because after the massacre on Odessa steps, there is always the glorious triumph of Potemkin.

For Frontier contact

C. P. CHOWDHERY,

The English Book Shop,

33, Sector 22,

Chandigarh

# Excellence Of A Bud

I. K. SHUKLA

The Hindi film has been plagued by vulgarities of every description. The parallel cinema or the "new wave" films have only purveyed on the sly what their unpretentious counterparts have done crudely. This has blurred both judgement and taste. Consequently, when sex with a sizzle is absent, or when the promotional props of the FII are lacking, many film-goers and critics are likely to let slip by an event which, given their warm welcome, and deservedly, would remain for long a memorable milestone in India's celluloid history.

Shyam Benegal's first feature film *Ankur* merits serious notice and praise. Both cinematically and thematically it has scored signally even over many veterans with pretensions to perfection. *Ankur* shocks one into recognising that so far romanticism was being peddled under the bastardised version of neo-realism in some of the Bengali and Hindi films made famous for their association with holy names.

The use of colour, the eloquence of the frame, the economy of footage, the music, the effective use of minimal speech, the authenticity of locale, language and life-style portrayed, the photography, take one's breath away for their sheer imaginative simplicity and vigorous selection. Take the case of symbol—the woodpecker and the pelting of stone at the window of the roguish landlord. Any other director would have found it difficult to resist the temptation of overdoing it for our benefit.

The memorable character etching with a few bold strokes will remain a classic parameter of the craft. It is not only the juxtaposition of rural and urban, or literate and illiterate, rich and poor, that gives a significant dimension to the film, for that is too much on the surface—but also the multi-level confrontations and exposures of characters in conflict that make the picture enjoyable and multifariously valid. The diversity of its appeal and the impact of its freshness are its two most remarkable ingredients.

The life of the father shown repeated in that of the feudal son (there is no basic conflict between the two, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding), and the young rake's passage at arms with the maidservant and her husband have been given multi-dimensional seesaw of emotion and motive. And this with a rare command of precision and economy. There is no gimmick, no 'theatre', no swagger—at any point. It is so natural as the seasons are. Sexual infidelity does not always mean marital betrayal—this axiom is embodied by the maidservant, illiterate, unsophisticated, but conscious of and uneasy at her situation, her dilemmas, constricted choice and calls of flesh. That the exploiters of men and women are also stranglers of all morality and innocence, and 'God's gift' (a child), is starkly focussed by the hedonistic Don Juan, a scion of the traditionally rich and traditionally mean. That life in all forms is a miracle warranting reverence and admiration besides gratitude, whatever the origin, comes as an assertion from the dumb drunkard, who, had he the gift of the gab, might have delivered a litany on it in a full-throated song.

Shabana Azmi has no glamour, no salacious appeal. But the performance she has turned in in her first full-length picture has so joltingly taken some film pandits aback, that they have written longish articles on their discomfiture at pegging her down. Their refuge: a patronising homily or two for her benefit. It is doubtful if she needs these. Sadhu Meher (the dumb hero, Bhuvan Shome man) and Sheikh Chand (police Patel) are lifted from life and give no trace of acting. The sixteen-year-old boy silently witnessing the stone thrown at the glass pane of the rich rake's window, and the village urchin who thus more than expiates for his previous sin of having brought misery on Sadhu Meher are the boys who need no indoctrination and "will do the needful" vis-a-vis the system when the time comes—this realisation comes abruptly, startlingly. It is

they of whom any Government must beware, any criminal system must be scared of, for they are legion and 'know things from experience'. The young village kid shatters much of myth and monstrosity surrounding him when he lets fly a stone at the glass-pane. He has come of age, and will defy things he finds wrong and iniquitous. This is his baptism and reflexive initiation into action. He reacts and has a will and a way to let it be known.

*Ankur* may or may not win awards—national or international. We know it is not merit alone that determines this. But, it is a creation whose magnificence will last beyond the passing day and pirouetting cliches. It shatters many illusions and overestimates, purges our judgments, renders us more receptive to the grandeur and glory of life. Hindi screen can well be proud of this tour de force, easily one of the best among the few notable post-independence films.

## Letters

### The Set-Up

Your special correspondent's article entitled 'Naxalite Prisoners In Kerala' (November 30) made depressing reading but produced a greater awareness amongst us of the fascist tendencies that government has succumbed to, specially in its attitude towards political prisoners. The different forms of torture remind one of the methods employed by the Uruguayan authorities to put down the Tupamaros in the early seventies. All the refinements of sadism have been assiduously cultivated and some of our police chiefs are even being sent abroad to master the latest techniques of physical oppression.

What we have got to remember, however, is the background against which this repression is practised. The Congress today is a motley collection of cynical political adventurers who are determined to remain in power behind a facade of radical gestures while practising every conceivable form of deceit. It seems to thrive on lies, evasions and subterfuges. The rights of the common people are being trampled underfoot to help the upholders of the establishment



## FRONTIER

to live in unparalleled splendour and luxury. The country has been sold shamelessly to the capitalists, feudal landlords and the comprador bourgeoisie. All this is being done in the name of order and a life style of a privileged minority which rules the country and exploits the majority shamelessly. It is the order of the big businessman with his secret lockers, foreign bank accounts and expense accounts gimmicks. It is the order of the smuggler, hoarder, jotedar and unscrupulous traders trafficking in human lives by creating an artificial scarcity of all essential commodities and holding the poorer sections of society to ransom. It is this system which creates redundancy and slums and drives millions of young people with no future to delinquency and recidivism.

The victims of police repression are merely rebelling against the life-style of these social parasites and human sharks and this rebellion cannot be put down by potential and third-degree methods. The struggle will continue and gain in dimension till the wealth this country produces is shared amongst all the people, land given to the tiller and the workers claim their rightful position of control over their country.

Samir Mukerjee  
Calcutta

### A Lot To Do

What is to be done? A lot, if we come out of dogma. The question is one of power. They have got it through parliament, through their ownerships and through the army. Our power is in the people. Organise them. Not by spectacular assassinations or clarion calls of revenge. That may arouse them but it doesn't organise them. Small, direct actions could be the way. Seizure of crops here, refusal to pay rent here, more and more, keeping the goal in sight. No good abandoning the cities. Millions live there, unorganised. They are angry. Why not tell them of the futility of elections? Make them ask the candidates to give written promises while telling them of their futility. Organise them for direct action to win their demands. The shop assistants, clerks, peons, hut-dwellers, Harijans, Muslims,

Adivasis all need a clear voice that dares to say: To hell with elections, get on with the class mobilisation.

Girish Patel  
Gautam Appa  
Ahmedabad

### Role of Intellectuals

Today in India one senses a deep feeling of hopelessness amongst those who are sensitive and quick to respond to the subtle nuances around them. Somehow the great democratic experiment hasn't quite come off and all over the country there is a breakdown of values which shows up in our daily actions, thoughts and way of life. Every day we are confronted with a barrage of words in newspapers and magazines—speeches by our politicians and endless puns and innuendoes which bring home to us the utter futility of trying to achieve anything within a system which is riddled with contradictions, inconsistencies and is on the point of breaking up.

In a situation like this, where elections are rigged, politics an unwholesome power game, economic impoverishment faces 70% of our people and the administration is shored up by strong-arm and terroristic methods, what are we thinking beings supposed to do? How does our mental attitude and voice of protest make any difference to the all-pervasive dishonesty and imbecility? But I feel that intellectuals can and must contribute to the discussion of public issues because they are the only social group that is not blindly committed to a particular interest or position. Intellectuals have a commitment only to the truth as they see it. What they have to say in the short run may have no impact on a coarse-grained establishment; but the intellectual, nevertheless, has a vital function to perform, a function that is both moral and practical. The intellectual, by providing an independent standard of evaluation, also provides the possibility for political change. I am afraid our intellectuals have hardly been very active in this matter and seem to be unduly obsessed by their political impotence. This is a terrible tragedy for a country like ours where the masses, politically illiterate and hopelessly puzzled, have been mani-

pulated for years, badgered, bullied and hypnotised into whatever camp and party has the cleverest and most unscrupulous propagandists and salesmen. Our intellectuals must shed their ivory-towerism and come out into the open to discharge their moral responsibilities in a crisis situation.

Anita Mukherjee  
Calcutta

### Telengana & Naxalbari

According to Mr Majumdar (Autumn Number), 'Indian feudalism has long practised counter-revolution under British imperialism and has acquired experience and knowledge from the various class-battles of the peasantry from Tebhaga to Telengana. But in 1967 Naxalbari became its struggle for life where its experience and knowledge were of no use'.

It is evident that Mr Majumdar characterises the Naxalbari movement to be qualitatively different from the Telengana struggle and that he thinks the former was of a higher form.

But what are the historic facts? For the first time in India, during the course of the Telengana armed struggle the Government machinery at the village level was destroyed in about 3,000 villages and people's Raj established there.

Malay Mukhopadhyay  
Calcutta

### Who Led Whom?

It is highly amusing to note in your Special Number that Mr Majumdar has found, 'Before 1947 it was the lower middle class which took an initiative in organising the peasantry's class battle against landlords' and that the lower middle class also took the initiative 'against the British rule'. So, according to Mr Majumdar, our lower middle class had organised and led both the democratic revolution (anti-feudal) and the national revolution (anti-imperialist) just along the Leninist line and especially followed the path of the Chinese revolution led by Mao. The only flaw of our lower middle class had been that they

'took much less initiative, against the Indian bourgeoisie serving the cause of imperialist exploitation whom, Mr Majumdar himself elsewhere declares to be so anti-imperialist that they 'advocated' full freedom in economic matters 'from foreign rule' and that they acceded 'to the movement against British rule in India.' Mr Majumdar thus contradicts himself.

As for the lower middle class launching 'national' and 'democratic' struggles, nowhere in our history we find facts in support of Mr Majumdar's theory.

Apart from the spontaneous peasant movements of the 18th and the 19th century, the only noteworthy peasant movements which took place in the present century, were the 'Stoppage of Salt-Tax' agitation and other 'Non-cooperation' agitations led by Gandhi (not peasant's class-battles), and a movement of a very limited sphere in the United Province led by Nehru.

But the real 'national and democratic' battles were organised by the Communist Party members (defying the bankrupt central leadership) to some extent in West Bengal, in the Hajong Hill areas, and most successfully in Telengana district. The last one liberated nearly 3,000 villages and the battle was waged for six years (1946 to 1951), before it was betrayed and destroyed by the changed but still-traitor central leadership. The Telengana movement is a glorious chapter of our national and democratic revolution, a great anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle, but certainly, that was no middle-class-led affair. The leadership was in the hands of the proletariat, the most advanced class in human history which was represented by the revolutionary communist leaders and cadres.

Therefore, Mr Majumdar's remaining dumb about the role of the proletariat and on the other hand making fantastic claims about the doings of the lower middle class, clearly show that either he does not know what he is talking about or that he is another 'Herr Duhring' trying his hand at finding out a 'total-system' in place of historical materialism. Whatever it might be the net result he achieves is only unmasking himself.

Satindra Bhaumik  
Calcutta

## A Socialist Country ?

Mr Animesh Roy's letter (November 28) asking for details of at least five monopoly houses in the Soviet Union as proof that capitalism has been restored there shows the incredible ignorance of people who think that the mere abolition of private property in the means of production and the establishment of state ownership can be equated with socialism. This out and out revisionist theory held by the CPI and CPM was rejected long ago by Engels. "...neither the conversion into joint stock companies nor into state property deprives the productive forces of their character as capital. The modern state is only the organisation with which bourgeois society provides itself in order to maintain the general external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against encroachment either by the workers or by individual capitalists. . . . The more productive forces it takes over as its property, the more it becomes the real collective body of all the capitalists, the more citizens it exploits. The workers remain wage earners, proletarians. The capitalist relationship is not abolished, it is rather pushed to an extreme". (Engels *Anti-Duhring*, p. 307).

Whether State property is bourgeois or socialist depends on the class nature of the State. The revisionists' argument, which is put forward to hide their treachery, was in fact first put forward by Trotsky ("In Defence of Marxism" 1939-40). His argument was that the State is a workers' State because it owns the main industries, and that the industries are socialist because they are owned by the State. The counter-revolutionary nature of the revisionist CPI and CPM is clear from their acceptance of this Trotskyite theory. The central question in deciding whether a State is capitalist or socialist depends on the system of production. The ownership of enterprises by individuals is a secondary question.

The system of capitalism is the system of commodity production; production for profit, in which labour power appears as a commodity. Under the socialist system the system of wage labour is abolished and each individual

"receives a certificate from society that he has furnished such and such amount of labour (after deducting his labour for the common fund), and with this certificate he draws from the social stock of means of consumption as much as the same amount of labour costs". (Marx: *Critique of the Gotha Programme*). This system certainly does not operate in the Soviet Union. The existence of the system of wage labour is clearly revealed by the facts published in Soviet magazines. For example, in their publication *Planned Economy* we regularly find statistics on large numbers of workers, numbering millions, who are constantly shifting from one enterprise to another, from one industry to another and from agriculture to industry on their own; showing that they are proletarians who sell their labour power.

In fact the Soviet Union has a bureaucratic State capitalist system under which the workers are exploited. Their surplus is expropriated by the ruling class which is embedded in the Party and State machinery and used to finance a high standard of living for the latter. The existence of special luxury shops for high officials, cars, large bank accounts, luxury country houses etc. which the ruling bureaucrat capitalist class has, are well documented facts.

Avinash Talwar  
Delhi

## Gandhiana

This has reference to some 'omissions' in my article "The Academic South Block" (Sept. 28) pointed out in a letter in your November 16 issue. While I confess to plain lack of ability or ambition to add to Gandhiana, it will be pertinent to quote a British admirer of the Mahatma. Towards the end it is eloquent as to why he was an admirer. That law and order mechanism works in concert with the non-violent 'protesters' is edifying. People will learn the due lessons from this unholy connexion. Here is what H. V. Hodson, the author of *The Great Divide*, wrote in a chapter on Gandhi in a book *The History Makers*, edited by Sir John



Wheeler-Bennett and Lord Longford (Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1973): "To attempt a Hegelian synthesis of these antitheses (in Gandhi's make-up) is an abuse of ingenuity. His basic philosophy was no more anti-imperialist than it was capitalist, or anti-state-socialist for that matter. For more than twenty creative years the object of his agitations remained social rather than nationalist; and Indian independence might have come more or less at the time it did, some say even sooner, had there been no Gandhi, no satyagraha movement, no Salt March nor other display of the Gandhian ethic in India. **Certainly the manner of its coming was to him not a climactic triumph but a devastating defeat.** (emphasis mine). His successes in South Africa were limited, though in 1914 he seemed momentarily to have conquered with the passage of the Indian Relief Act; and after the triumph of Afrikaner nationalism in the year of Gandhi's death all that had been gained on the road to equality of status for Asians was eventually lost. Even his anti-imperialism was not anti-British... Had Subhas Chandra Bose's sway

lasted, the history of India's struggle for independence might well have been very different: guerilla or destructive methods might have replaced those of non-violence; alternatively the Congress might have finally split by 1946, with independence clearly on the horizon, and national power within the Congress leaders' grasp, Gandhi's influence was already on the wane. If our complex, vulnerable modern societies are not to be plagued to death by urban guerillas it is the restraint and indeed the success of these non-violent protesters that will save it as much as the established mechanism of law and order. Though they may not know it, M. Gandhi was their great forefather and prophet, their Abraham."

Does it leave any doubt as to whom Gandhi saved and served? That Gandhi's influence was nil as far as our vast bureaucracy was or is concerned is a patent fact of our history. By and large that is true of the police too. How the Congress leadership behaved with regard to the RIN uprising is well documented in the account of B. C. Dutt in his **Mutiny of the Innocents.**

According to him, "It is true that the Mahatma wanted to give the British another chance to prove their bona fides". It is significant that the 1942 ring-leaders (JP, Aruna, Lohia, Patwardhan) left the Congress. Finally, I was writing on a different topic altogether in 'The Academic South Block'.

I. K. Shukla  
Delhi

### "Encounters"

In the name of encounters the Government is murdering the leaders of the masses, who have dedicated themselves to the cause of the exploited in their own way. The Government claims these leaders died in encounters. But the whole edifice of the police claim about "encounters" has been shattered to pieces by the documents filed by the State in cases like the Parvatipuram conspiracy case. The interesting feature of the police version of these "encounters" is that Naxalites or revolutionaries open fire on them and they use their arms in self-defence. But one wonders how it is that not a single police personnel is killed or even injured while several Naxalites and revolutionaries get killed. So far more than 90 Naxalites and revolutionaries have been killed but not a single policeman was even injured. This clearly exposes the fascist methods employed to murder Naxalites and revolutionaries.

In Andhra Pradesh, Naxalite and revolutionary leaders like Vempatapu Satyam, Panchadri Krishna Moorthy and Nirmala, Dr Bhaskar Rao, Mallikarjunudu, Panigrahi Subba Rao and many others were said to have been killed in "encounters". On 9-7-1973 it was reported that Sri Appala Swamy and Arikala Somulu, leaders of the CPI(ML) were killed in an "encounter".

It is our duty to protest against these brutalities and resist the reign of terror let loose by the police in the rural areas. We, therefore, urge the appointment of a High Court Judge to enquire into these "encounters" and punish all those responsible for the deaths of these leaders.

P. Venkateswarlu  
Convenor, Civil Liberties Committee  
Hyderabad

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# Hackneyed Digmarole

HITEN GHOSH

THE bane of Bengali drama is its obsession with abstract ideas in complete disregard of what T. S. Eliot called "objective correlative". Like all that is new to our social and cultural milieu, the ideas are borrowed from the West and grafted on to the traditional sentimental fare. With a little theatrical gift and a certain way with stage-craft and other accessories, the effect may even be moderately pleasing. But when the ideas are not merely an irrelevant excrescence, but seek to stand by themselves the result can be disastrous.

More especially so, if the central problem of a play concerns the meaninglessness of human existence. In Angira's **Bidrohi-Sangbad** (Rangana, December 13) the problem is not dramatically

worked out, that is, developed through situations or presented in appropriate stage imagery. Nor is it posed by anything that happens to or is perpetuated by the characters. The half-baked existentialist dilemma is conveyed by obtrusive inanities uttered by two schicoid bores. The utterances are one long hackneyed rigmarole marked both by poverty of thought and poverty of language. These are interspersed by equally boring and equally otiose gestures. Alarums and excursions there are in plenty, and some vague wildmovements leading to a false climax after a false-build-up. It all ends in much ado about nothing, the final curtain bringing the long-awaited relief.

As there is not even an apology for

a story, one does not get a moment's respite from Maya Ghosh's tense histrionics in a pseudo-tragic vein. The two supporting actors are perfect muffs. Maya Ghosh has considerable acting talents, though in the present role she largely wastes them. Unrestrained by the usual demands of characterisation her tendency to overact runs away with her. She turns out a tour de force of virtuous acting in multiple roles and genres much after Tripti Mitra in **Aparajita**. The whole exercise does little to enhance her fame as an actress.

The sets are pleasing to the eye and the music delights, though neither does seem to correspond with the theme. The lack of objective equivalent is evident here too. The same is true of lighting by Tapas Sen whose technical skill has never had anything to do with an imaginative rendering of the theme.

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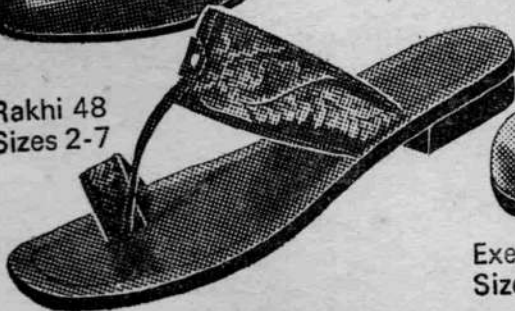
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