

# frontier

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## THIEU AT BAY

**T**HE chicken are coming home to roost for President Thieu, and the sky is a little dark over White House, Washington D.C. The military situation has taken a dramatic turn in the Central Highlands and some of the places with whose names the world outside were familiar some two or three years ago are back in the headlines: Pleiku . . . Kontum . . . Hue. Within the course of three weeks the National Liberation Forces have brought vast areas and populations under their control. But, according to many observers, the operations do not as yet amount to a full-fledged offensive. They are more in the nature of a boomerang. As a Hanoi paper points out, Thieu is getting what he has sown—with so much cruelty and cynicism since the Paris agreements were signed in January 1973—with the brazen connivance of the American Government.

Just after the Paris agreements Thieu threw a greater part of his army into what came to be known as a 'territory-flooding' campaign, in the confidence that the vast stocks the Americans rushed in on the eve of Paris, and the savage Christmas bombing of North Vietnam, will seem him through. Thieu mobilised all the armed forces, both regular and regional, the police and other coercive forces in an attempt to 'pacify' the population and occupy Vietcong-liberated areas throughout the country. From company-sized operations, Thieu conducted large-scale, long-term actions deep in the liberated zones, each involving a regiment, a division or even a whole army corps, in coordination with armour, artillery and aircraft. He used a great part of his air force for extermination raids on vast areas under the control of the Provisional Revolutionary Government. In accordance with the scenario provided by Nixon and accepted by his successor, Saigon sabotaged the proposals for national reconciliation and concord, prosecuted the third force and herded millions of South Vietnamese into concentration camps. But his spokesmen told visiting U.S. Senators the other day that there were no political prisoners in South Vietnam, "only criminals and communists".

The U.S. transferred to the Saigon army all the military bases, weapons and other war means used by the U.S. expeditionary force and also millions of tons of fresh weapons and munitions. A few thousand U.S. military personnel are still operating in South Vietnam, under civilian guise. All this in violation of the Paris agreements.

Now that the NLF has struck back and transformed what was believed to be a 'rice war' at the outset into something bigger, and towns and districts are falling,

the cry has gone up that it is the North Vietnamese who are moving deeper, in violation of the 'cease-fire'. Agency reports are playing up the number of refugees fleeing the towns and their suffering, while the fact is that ordinary people are being herded at gunpoint to set out on a great trek.

What the U.S. Congress will do about Ford's frantic demand for more aid to Saigon is not known. If Cambodia goes, Congress may not take it as a big blow to U.S. credibility, because Congress itself was fooled and kept in the dark about the B-52 bombing that had gone on since 1969; and the invasion of Cambodia in 1970 to 'flush out' the North Vietnamese was thought unnecessary. But Vietnam is different. It has shaken American society and morale; the downcast took of the once erect world gendarme has a lot to do with Vietnam, a small country that humbled the giant. The economy, based on lush war production, is now creaking and the 8 million unemployed will not hug the administration for conducting a brutal war in Vietnam. But if Thieu goes and a coalition government takes over, it will be a near-complete defeat for the American Government, which will try to avert it by all means. It is for the American people to thwart the cunning of their Fords and Kissingers. They did it in the case of Nixon.

## Another Coup Fails

Portugal did not turn out to be another Chile, perhaps for the curious reason that it was under a fascist dictatorship for about 50 years, without the liberal illusions about elections and democracy that Allende cherished to the tragic end of his life. The military in Chile succeeded in their bloody, terrible coup because the masses were not mobilised against the army and the Government was rather soft while the CIA was very active, earing aside the generals, the middle-ranking officers of the Armed Forces Movement in Portugal have been able to thwart a counter-revolution because they are not obsessed with the trappings of democracy and because the workers came out in the streets, both in September last and this month and put

up barricades. It is also a fact that some of the most militant unions, whom the communists blamed for going on strike last year, played the leading part in mobilising the resistance. In September railway workers stopped running trains to thwart the demonstration planned by Spinola and his supporters, while other workers prepared for a massive counter-demonstration, with the result that the pro-Spinola demonstration had to be called off and Spinola had to go. Again, the ill-organised coup attempt of March 11 was foiled by masses of men and women who blocked the routes to Lisbon, giving loyal units of the armed forces time to close their ranks. The workers have shown that their economic struggles have also sharpened their political consciousness.

The AFM has carried out extensive purges and arrested top businessmen. The Revolutionary Council it has set up will have extensive legislative powers, with the cabinet acting as the chief executive. It is clear that the AFM will not return to the barracks after the elections to the Constituent Assembly, now scheduled for April 25. The communists want them to continue to play an active role in politics. This close co-ordination between the Communists and the AFM is worrying many, both in Portugal and outside; but since the struggle for power between the new set-up and the fascists is far from over—Spinola himself speaks of further disorder—the AFM will not budge.

The achievements of the AFM in decolonisation have been considerable. In the first stage, the process had the support of sections of big business, because business with the African colonies, with the exception of resources-rich Angola, was declining fast while the barren war was a heavy drain on the metropolitan budget. It is reforms at home that will continue to trouble and antagonise the Portuguese monopoly houses and they will bide their time. They can look forward to the U.S.A. in their future bids for power. The armed forces also have elements which are sullen, in the recent elections to the councils of the AFM, some of the top leftist officers, including the man who commanded the revolt of April 25 last year that toppled the fascist regime, were defeated.

## Drugging People

At a time when 75 per cent of village people in India suffer from malnutrition and are virtually beyond the pale of any worthwhile health service, the Government here allows foreign drug manufacturing companies to loot people of crores of rupees by way of profit, royalty and technical fees. The extent of the loot by foreign cartels will be clear from a comparison of the equity capital of some of the companies and profits they made in one single year, 1973-74 (E.C. stands for equity capital and P. for profit):

Abbot Laboratory, E.C. Rs 0.10 million P. Rs 10.14 million. Anglo-French, E.C. Rs 0.01 million, P. Rs 3.35 million. Boots, E.C. Rs 6.11 million, P. 7.50 million. Cynamide, E.C. Rs 7.01 million, P. Rs 27.70 million, Glaxo Laboratories, E.C. Rs 7.2 million, P. Rs 30.71 million. Pfizer E.C. Rs 5.6 million, P. Rs 41.95 million. Parke Davis, E.C. Rs 10.50 million, P. Rs 23.46 million. Sandoz India Limited, E.C. 15 million, P. Rs 18 million, and Merck, Sharp and Dohme, E.C. Rs 14 million, P. Rs 15.21 million.

The figures are available from papers read out by eminent scientists and doctors at a national convention on Economic Independence and Perspective of the Drug Industry, held recently in New Delhi.

There are 2,343 units engaged in the manufacture of drugs and pharmaceuticals in India with an annual turnover of Rs 300 crores. Of these, 135 are in the organised sector. The organised sector is dominated by 71 foreign companies, 32 of them having more than 50 per cent equity capital. The foreign companies, some part and parcel of the multinationals, mainly live on the urban markets especially in the metropolises of India. Their trade trick is "formulations" with brand names, which are as many as 50,000. These 50,000 formulations are made out of 500 bulk drugs. Any number of formulations are alike in content in the sense that the basic ingredient is the same, but they are in fancy packing and sold at fantastic prices.

The remittances made by these companies in five years between 1968-69 and 1973-74 amount to a total of Rs 30.56 crores in foreign exchange.

## Rupee and Rouble

The Bhai-Bhai spirit just does not work when one of the 'bhais' happens to be a big brother. And that is just what the Russians always were in their dealings with the Indians. The wrangle over how many rupees should make a rouble is just a grim reminder of a basically simple fact. When Indian policy-makers chose deliberately to forget it, they deceived only themselves.

Consider the timing of the Russian initiative. It comes when India's foreign policy options are more sharply limited than ever. The only road from Delhi leads to Moscow. All other roads are closed. Their unilateral fixation of the exchange rate demonstrates that the Russians at any rate will not concede an inch on the new rates, which will give India only 8-odd roubles for every Rs. 100. This is a drop of four roubles. The only point to be decided therefore, is what concessions India can wring from the Russians where repayment of Rs 400 crores immediately is concerned. Hard-line opinion in Moscow cannot be unaware that Mrs Gandhi's regime faces a domestic political challenge that is no less serious than external threats. There is no other sanctuary than Moscow. Can there be a better time than this, to put up the pressure a little, without at the same time straining the fabric of the delicate political relationship between India and the USSR? The Russians are playing a calculating, exploratory game, indulging in some discreet brinkmanship. For this, they must feel indebted to our local pale progressives, whose untiring efforts have brought Nehru's non-aligned India to the level of Byelorussia.

Russian economic aid is rarely without political strings. It should not sur-

prise anyone if, having got India within cleft sticks, the USSR now puts pressure to get her to accept the idea of an Asian Collective Security. It is hardly coincidental that for all the wormth of the bhai bhai spirit, two Russians were caught buying military secrets from an Indian personnel. Clearly, Moscow has begun a multi-pronged quiet offensive presumably to force it towards an openly more pro-Soviet line before the next election. Now is the time for the remaining few good men to become more aware of political realities.

## Nagaland Footnote

The footnote to the governmental crisis in Nagaland came much sooner than expected. On March 10, the Nagaland Nationalist Organisation—allies of the Congress—took over, on the strength of defections from the United Democratic Front headed by Mr Vizol. On March 19 Mr Vizol told the Governor that his party had again the majority in the Assembly; he was advised to hold the trial of strength in the Assembly. On March 20, when the Assembly met, 33 members were on the UDF benches and 27 on the NNO side. But the Speaker adjourned the House sine die; so there was a constitutional breakdown and on March 22 the President of the Indian Union—in which the constituent States have been reduced to the status of C class municipalities—took over the administration of Nagaland, keeping the Assembly in suspended animation. The Government of India wants tempers to cool in the troubled State, which means that it will give the NNO enough time and scope to organise counter-defections and form another Ministry.

Whatever the manoeuvres and manipulations of the Central Government and whatever the success of the loyalists, the crisis in Nagaland will continue. The UDF Ministry was a factor for moderation and some kind of dialogue with the underground. But now that the chips are down the prospect is one of further confrontation. Both the underground and the government know that armed operations are a continuation of politics by other means.

## Working with Young Urban Intellectuals—I

MINT ZIR

### 1. Introduction

THIS is an attempt to analyse the experience of working with young urban intellectuals (college and university students and teachers) of progressive inclinations to help bring genuine change in society. Colleges and universities are getting increasingly politicised. Much concern for the oppressed exists on the campuses and their importance in political struggles is growing. Every passing wave of struggle seems to generate in its wake progressive groups of varying consciousness and commitment. There is hardly any major campus not affected by this process. And one can be certain that increasingly larger numbers will be influenced.

The groups of campus progressives may be active from a few weeks to a few months or even years. Unfortunately, though, a large majority do not last more than a year or two, and only a handful retain a progressive outlook beyond college days. The passage of group members into the national revolutionary movement is rare indeed.

The impact of these groups on their own members and the society and the length of their operational period depend on several factors some of which are identified here. It is hoped that this will help strengthen the progressive groups in these places and help canalise as much of revolutionary potential as exists there.

### 2. Types of Groups and Their Objectives

Although groups of diverse political and social persuasion can be found the discussion here is limited to such groups as can be broadly categorised as progressive in the political sense. Based on their relationship to the organised left parties of the country, these are of two types. First, the intellectual wings of the established left parties and second, the 'independents' i.e. not affiliated to any party. A large majority of young

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intellectuals start out with 'independent' groups except in places where the established left parties have powerful student organisations.

Generally, the independent groups of progressive-minded individuals spring up as a 'fall-out' of specific campus struggles involving confrontation with the academic authorities leading to confrontation with the government authorities, their repressive machinery (police, SRP, BSF, army) and the judiciary. The confrontation gives the students a glimpse of the oppressive system and its organs hidden behind the facade of educational, judicial and various other so-called democratic political institutions. Such experience heightens the consciousness of young intellectuals and makes them inquisitive. A small number of these get together, relate their experience and form a group with the objective of advancing their consciousness and that of others around them.

There may be greater or lesser clarity in objectives depending on the political maturity (acquired during the recent or past struggle) of the core members. The objectives are defined in preliminary meetings. Some of the common ones are:

- (a) to consolidate the experience of any recent intellectual's struggle and study in greater depth the real nature of our institutions so as to increase the level of consciousness of group members themselves; and/or if the group feels more confident, it decides to increase the consciousness of (or 'radicalise') other students or teachers. The work is confined to the campus people or others closely related; or
- (b) it may decide to increase the level of consciousness of the oppressed people residing in the city like slum dwellers, workers, dalits, the poor and other assorted proletariat; or
- (c) the group may combine (a) and (b)— that is involve more of their less conscious friends in working with people; or
- (d) to wage cultural struggle and/or raise funds for progressive causes like, legal aid for political prisoners, victims of repression or in

support of an inspiring liberation movement; or

- (e) to create political activists (cadre) to join the movement full-time or to become a reliable support either from among the intellectuals or the oppressed or both.

### 3. Activities and Work Style

The party-affiliated progressive groups have greater uniformity and continuity in their activities and style compared to the independents. The reason of course is that while the working of party affiliates relates to a centralised plan, the activity and style of the latter are the outcome of their own current thinking.

Depending on the objectives accepted by the group, specific activities are planned. Such activities vary from group to group. These may include one or more of the following.

Since raising of consciousness or—'radicalisation' (as it is generally expressed) is thought to be the main aim, study of progressive literature becomes an essential component; systematic reading of classical Marxist literature is done and Marxian interpretation of various social phenomena is studied. It may take the forms of seminars, workshops or group discussions. Some (not all) groups also wage campus struggles.

Groups committed to objective (c) above, generally undertake programmes of slum improvement—health, family planning, education, housing, cooperative of various kinds, training of slum dwellers in various skills. These are combined with informal conversations with slum-dwellers on political issues like elections, party politics, etc. in the hope that this will 'radicalise' them politically as well. Organisation among workers and the poor is also encouraged. Some (not all) groups also undertake struggles.

Groups committed to objective (d) organise cultural programmes like poetry reading, progressive art shows, preparing short pamphlets, running of newspaper or periodicals etc.

The groups committed to the objective 2(a) rely heavily on published reading material which may consist of progressive literature, theories of scientific socialism, history of society, write-ups on various kinds of liberation struggles etc. Knowledgeable progressive intellectuals (but rarely the known communists) are invited to speak to the group. The group meets regularly. The reading material used may or may not relate directly to the place of work or study of the group members. It is chosen because it is of interest to the group leader is also considered to be of general interest to the group. Along with the study and discussion the group may also undertake campus struggles directed against domination of authorities; irrelevance of education, cost of schooling and various other issues.

The group committed to the objective (b) above choose a community-slum in the neighbourhood or workers locality or the workers of their own institution for work. In such cases generally the group leader or more members have a more coherent progressive outlook. Depending on the specific situation a suitable activity is chosen to enter the community. The activity may be chosen keeping in view the professional competence of the group for the need of the community or on ad-hoc-basis. Sometimes the group may conduct some surveys to ascertain the need of the people or to identify the needy.

A method of solution is then worked out by the group members. The group members suggest the method of solution to the people and encourage them to undertake the project. Commonly the projects of immediate economic significance such as joint marketing, production or distribution are tried. During the course of work, the members informally discuss the political aspects of

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some of the problems. For instance the futility of elections, the need to organise, the incapacity of political parties to solve their problems, the insincerity of the traditional political leaders, etc. are discussed.

The planning of the work, its review etc. is done **outside** the community, generally without the presence of any of their members. Sometimes the lack of physical amenities—place to sit etc. or language—makes this a necessary thing.

#### 4. Likely Outcome

The ultimate objective of any progressive activity is to contribute to the growth of the revolutionary movement. Strengthening one's own consciousness, creation of progressive-minded individuals (be they intellectuals or others), uniting the poor and the proletariat for revolutionary struggle or raising resources for the movement etc. are some of the indices of success. Compared against these most of the independent progressive groups seem to fall much short of expectation or potential.

#### The groups committed to objective?

(a) The group starts with a decision to meet periodically and the topics of discussion are chosen. The periodicity of meetings may be one to two weeks depending on the group resources and member's convenience. After a few discussions the substantive questions appear. The discussion moves to the radical social theories. The focus gets sharper and topics of discussion are narrowed. Though other formulations may be discussed, it inevitably moves closer to the Marxian approach. With this, attendance becomes irregular and thinner—the members are not ready to identify themselves with Marxism. Soon afterwards the phase of disintegration sets in and the group is finally dissolved. It may last five to six months.

The level of consciousness of the group members—the extent of radicalisation—does not reach a critical stage at which it becomes 'self' acting. Most of the members develop a sense of fear. A smaller proportion of members do get 'radicalised' to an extent and develop a rational framework. The understanding however is so inadequate that they lapse into inactivity soon afterwards. Though their consciousness is strengthened to

some extent, it is inadequate to cope with new developments which easily confuse them. They may at best join liberal movements or remain confined to pacifist or reformist outlook.

Very rarely it results in the creation of well rounded thoroughly revolutionary people who subsequently dedicate their lives to revolutionary work. The study may change the perception of the members relating to a number of issues, but the knowledge gained does not reach the stage of conception and cognition.

Those groups which undertake struggles on the campus—against domination of authorities, irrelevance of courses etc. generally create a longer lasting influence on its members. It was observed that the likelihood of creating individuals who will become 'self-acting' is higher among groups which combined the struggle on campus-related issues with the study.

(b) The **Community work:** The community work tends to have a slightly better result. At any rate it seems to have much greater potential. The working life of such groups tends to be longer than the former kind. The commitment with which the group starts is also generally higher in this case. The group members (intellectuals) are exposed to the living conditions of the poor and their culture. They observe the contrast between their living and that of the people. The superfluousness of bourgeois social institutions are playing. The also come to realise the sectarian role the social institutions are playing. The institutions (hospital, schools, new media, police station) to which the bourgeoisie have easy access, the intellectuals discover are beyond the reach of the poor. Not only this, some institutions are seen to be overtly hostile to the poor and play only the suppressive role. This stimulates their thinking and begins to make them feel class conscious. It sets in motion a process of radicalisation. Subsequent reinforcement of this process, however, depends a great deal on the outcome of their further work in the community.

The work in the community, to start with, has to be such as to interest the people. Economic programmes serve this need. Most of these programmes do succeed to an extent but not enough

to lift the poor from the poverty trap. People's response does not come forth in as good a measure as expected. The group feels that people are not appreciating their effort because of lack of tangible results. The group steps up its efforts, more external resources (money etc.) are collected and put into the community in the hope of quick tangible results. Simultaneously the group members talk to the people on political issues. The people's response does not improve appreciably. The group begins to feel—'the people do not want to unite, they do not trust each other or us, they expect too much, they don't want to destroy the system etc.' The phase of withdrawal begins.

The community people do not get politicised. On the contrary they become 'depoliticised'. They may question elections but they do vote subsequently. The group fails to help people realise the political basis of their poverty and misery. The community's human potential, creativity and strength are not unleashed. The group's own process of radicalisation gets stunted. Some members lapse into regular life with the feeling that people do not want change—at least not yet. Others may continue the work by putting in more resources. This in practice further depoliticise the people.

Here again the results are better if the group mobilised the people for the solution—of problems—protest marches to hospital, municipality, police station—than if this is substituted by money or use of their own contacts with these institutions. Generally a durable organisation does not emerge in the community. The group continues to consider itself an outsider, a 'catalytic' agent, rather than integrate with the people and wage a resolute struggle.

(To be concluded)

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# Southern African Struggles

(Press Diary October 1974-January 1975)

NARENDRA SINGH

THE turn of the year 1974 into 1975 witnessed significant developments in the Southern African scene. Rhodesia/ (Zimbabwe) has been in the limelight. The liberation movement succeeded in forcing the white Rhodesian regime into negotiations. Even the rightist British press which usually played down the struggle in Rhodesia, has now begun splashing details.

British complicity in Rhodesia continues, as exposed in the official organ African of ZAPU (Zimbabwe, Peoples Union). ZAPU reports purchase of 41 Britishmade Centurion tanks and surface-to-air missiles from Jordan, and also an unspecified number of supersonic warplanes from South Africa (*Times of Zambia*, November 6).

A way out for the cornered Smith regime appears to have been provided in the offer of the Zambian President, Kaunda. The occasion was the tenth anniversary independence celebrations in Lusaka, with participation of a South African industrialist and the Vice-Chancellor of Cape Town University, virtually unofficial representatives of the South African Government. The offer was to freeze the guerilla war along its present battle lines in Southern Africa, if white settlers were ready to come to the conference table. In the disengagement strategy, South Africa was to withdraw its military and diplomatic support from the Smith regime. President Kaunda stated "Mozambique and Botswana, with their long frontiers are far more relevant to the security of South Africa than the unstable Government of Rhodesia... Armed conflict is intensifying in Rhodesia. The only thing that can halt it is acceptance of a formula that accords with the will of the majority". The diplomacy of developing the external conditions and contradictions between Rhodesia and South Africa has been evidently successful, with mounting pressures from South Africa on the Smith regime.

Soon afterwards, South African Gov-

ernment sources expressed their willingness to withdraw their police units from Rhodesia if the guerilla activities were frozen. The South African Prime Minister Vorster later stated: "I am sure that the Government of Mr Smith is just as interested in reaching an honourable solution as anyone else, and that this matter is enjoying the highest priority. I took the responsibility several years ago of sending the police to Rhodesia, the police—not the army—did not go to Rhodesia to fight Rhodesian's war or protect and safeguard Rhodesia. They went there to fight the terrorists on the way to South Africa".

In October, it was reported that though the Portuguese withdrawal from Mozambique tilted the balance decisively against Rhodesia, yet it was difficult to detect any appreciation of this fact in Salisbury. Thereafter, in November, reports began of a concern among white Rhodesians. *The Economist* London (Nov. 16) reported that shouts of "Zimbabwe Long live Zimbabwe" have been heard at all-black pop concerts, militants were getting more active in the African National Council (ANC), Rhodesian Front (White organisations) demands ban on ANC; farms in the north look like stockades under siege confronted by guerillas, security problems grave with more than half the army black, guerillas are moving south and into eastern highlands, with the climax in greater white emigration than immigration.

## Profile

The African National Council's initials ANC have a strong appeal to the black Rhodesians. It is an old organisation, once the black nationalists' only political voice which was banned in 1959. Bishop Muzovewa's ANC, the present African National Council, was formed only to resist the settlement terms offered by the Smith regime in 1971. The original ANC was replaced first by the National Democratic Party, banned in 1961, and then by ZAPU (Zimbabwe African Peo-

ples Union) which in turn was banned in 1962. ZAPU President, Joshua Nkomo, said to be the father of African nationalism in Rhodesia, then formed the Peoples Caretaker Council (PCC). A split soon afterwards led to the formation of ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union) in 1963 by Ndabaningi Sithole. Both PCC and ZANU were outlawed in 1964 and their leaders detained. ZAPU and ZANU both created new organisations in exile. ZAPU was initially the more militant and was the first to form guerilla forces. These forces are said to have obtained some Russian arms and training, but proved sadly lacking in technical skill. Entering Rhodesia in bands of 100 or more, they were easy targets for Smith's air force. In 1966, Herbert Chitepo, now killed a militant, became ZANU's Secretary General and he is reported to have developed contacts with China. ZANU began giving its guerillas sophisticated training. Its political commissars were able not only to recruit guerillas but also helpers and sympathisers. Over a long period, not one African revealed the presence of strangers to the white authorities.

In 1970, Sithole and Nkomo both appeared to have made an unsuccessful bid in asking their followers in exile to patch up differences and make necessary arrangements for unification. In 1971, Shelton Siwela, said to be a self-styled "Castro revolutionary" made a fresh bid for unity by forming what he called a common front, FROLIZI (Front for Liberation of Zimbabwe). But he attracted only a few dissidents from the rival ZANU and ZAPU camps.

The split among the black nationalist was welcome to the white regime and efforts have continued to foster the split. However, the growing contradictions in the region ironically forced the same regime to try to bring close together the different groups, during the deliberations in Lusaka in December 1974. This has made possible an agreement between the three groups (ZAPU, ZANU and FROLIZI) for unity under the umbrella of ANC, which has the strongest appeal for the black Africans. This was the most positive development in the close of 1974 in the liberation struggle in Rhodesia.

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In December, the curtain on behind-the-scenes drama was raised by a terse Rhodesian statement that two African nationalist leaders, Nkomo of ZAPU and Sithole of ZANU (both detainees for more than 10 years), were flown to Lusaka for talks on Rhodesia's future with black heads of State, and brought back to resume their detention. It appeared that the two leaders were taken separately on or about Nov. 11 for separate talks. The fact that they were released at all, quite apart from the fact that they were allowed to fly to Zambia, indicates a dramatic change in the attitude of the Smith Government, clearly conditioned by the rapid change of events following Portuguese decolonisation and the South African Government's quest for detente. The release of detainees for talks was certain to catch the white Rhodesians off guard. Nkomo and Sithole were reported to have returned to Lusaka again on Dec. 4, for further talks with President Kaunda and other African leaders, President Nyerere and others, who had arrived in the Zambian capital. A well-informed African source said "This is the climactic stage". The discussions were reported around a 5-stage programme proposed by President Kaunda, involving a joint negotiating team of ZAPU and ZANU, ceasefire primarily by ZANU, and a constitutional conference of all concerned including the Smith regime on questions of the present white government, African representation, and elections. (*Daily Telegraph* and *Guardian*, both Br., Dec. 5).

A breakdown of the talks was announced by Mr Smith on the Rhodesian radio on December 7, on two pre-conditions to begin constitutional talks with the black Rhodesians; (1) end of guerilla operations, and (2) no lowering of standards, the latter in reality meaning a restricted franchise based on income, precluding majority rule. Next day, on Dec 8, the South African Prime Minister Vorster accused external forces intervening in the Lusaka talks and exonerated Rhodesia from blame, but emphasised that an agreement on the Rhodesian issue had to be reached because "the alternative is too ghastly to contemplate". He promised that South Africa, having established useful con-

tracts, would now continue to work towards a Rhodesian settlement. An evident reflection of Vorster's pressures on Smith was provided in the latter's fresh broadcast on Dec 11 to tell the Rhodesians that he had reached agreement with the nationalist movements. Smith announced no pre-conditions for the constitutional conference, the two sides to start new negotiations from widely divergent points. Smith also announced a cease-fire with the nationalist guerillas and the release of all African political prisoners to open the way for a constitutional conference. On Dec 8, the leaders of four African nationalist organisations (ZAPU, ZANU, FROLIZI, and ANC), signed a unity accord linking them for the first time under the African National Council (ANC). It was agreed to hold a congress in four months to revise the ANC constitution and enlarge the executive. In a key paragraph, the leaders recognised "the inevitability of continued armed struggle and all other forms of struggle until the total liberation of Zimbabwe". Thus it seemed certain that while President Kaunda returned to the task of negotiation, the guerilla warfare along Rhodesia's borders, and particularly in the north-east, will be accelerated during the four-month rainy season.

In the subsequent discussions, ZANU insisted on immediate majority rule as the precondition for any talks with the Smith regime, but later mellowed under persuasions from Presidents Kaunda, Nyerere and Khama. There appeared to have been some agreement on the idea of a majority rule being introduced gradually, so long as it was in accordance with a mutually agreeable timetable. (*Times*, Br., 10 Dec.).

Differences, however, continue the constitutional conference is still to take place, but the reactions are expressed in the following terms: Smith has repeated his opposition to majority rule and underlined the great gulf in understanding between him and the African leaders. Sithole has justified his grave doubts that any constitutional conference could take place. According to him, Smith has not changed at all and he still sounds like a white Premier of the 1920s. Smith says that he would accept some

form of multiracial government but not on a one-man-one-vote basis. Accepting the stage of black rule, for him is total failure of the Rhodesian policy in the past. African nationalist leaders have refused to attend the proposed constitutional conference unless the white regime fulfilled the eight undertakings drawn up at the Lusaka talks. This was announced in Salisbury by the reconstituted ANC's publicity secretary, Sithole, after a meeting of the ANC central committee. The committee also agreed that any constitutional conference would have to be called by the British Government.

#### ANGOLA

A ceasefire in Angola, the first one, took effect from 22 October under an agreement signed between the Portuguese and FNLA (Front National for Liberation of Angola). Following this, UNITA (Union National for Total Independence of Angola) and MPLA (Movement Popular for Liberation of Angola) also fell in line in laying down arms as part of ceasefire agreements. The next stage was to get nationalist representation in a coalition government. The Portuguese asked the three movements to supply one Minister each to join the present provisional government, which would effectively become a coalition of nationalist soldiers, civil servants and local white politicians, to decide upon electoral law.

Among the organisations engaged in liberation movements, MPLA is reported to be by far the largest and strongest in political terms. Its headquarters in Angola and it has strong support among the Africans in and around Luanda. It has traditional links with the white intellectuals in the capital and enjoys their attraction because of the multiracialism and a sort of liberal Marxism of its leader and founder member, Dr Neto, a poet and a doctor. MPLA, an offshoot of the old Angolan Communist Party, is reported to be an adherent of the Moscow line, with devastating consequences for party unity. Following the first major split in 1963, faction fighting has persisted in the organisation, marked by the departure of the MPLA military commander, Daniel Chipenda, in June 1973. Thus

there are two strong MPLA factions, Neto leading a larger group than Chipenda, and a few others.

FNLA, GRAE (Government Republic of Angola in Exile) has been more militant and militarily stronger than MPLA. FNLA has a powerful well-equipped and trained army of 5000-8000 but with its activity and struggle concentrated in the north, it has little popular and political support beyond. However, its political stature has been heightened on an all-Angolan level because the Portuguese started negotiations on Angola through the Zaire President Mobutu. FNLA had its headquarters in the Zaire capital Kinshasa. Its leader, Holden Roberto, is reported to be ideologically neutral, believing that the ideologies of the major powers do not translate well in African terms and that the communal rural life of the African tribal background would generate its own distinct politics for the evolution of an African socialist State. The Zairean President feels similarly, and also the MPLA dissident Chipenda. Now, FNLA is engaged in tasks to move from northern tribal politics to an all-Angolan national ideology without firm attachment east or west.

The smallest and the most recent of the nationalist forces is UNITA, emerging in 1966 under the leadership of the FNLA's former Foreign Minister, Jonas Sawimbi. He was disgusted with FNLA's tribalism. Reported to be in favour of people's war in Angola on Maoist lines, he set up a communal, cash-free society in the remote bush of eastern Angola. Never a military threat to the Portuguese, the only major action it fought was a defensive one against MPLA when the latter tried to annihilate the smaller movement in the early seventies.

In Cabinda, FLEC (Front for Libe-

ration of Enclave Cabinda) has come into the picture. There seem to be two FLEC organisations in operation, one inside Cabinda and the other outside, the former apparently of those against African rule and the other of African nationalists. (Compiled from *Guardian Weekly*, Br., 19 Oct. and 16 Nov., and radio reports.

On Cabinda itself, there are reported to be differences between the liberation movements. MPLA President Neto has warned that any elements attempting to separate the tin-oil-rich enclave of Cabinda from the rest of Angola will be crushed. This follows reports from Kinshasa about the plans of a liberation group in Cabinda for secession from Angola. (*Times of Zambia*, 12 Oct.). AFP reports of a meeting in Brazzaville between MPLA leader Chipenda and an FLEC leader and an agreement on the principle that the future of the territory was a matter to be determined freely by the Cabindans themselves. (Lisbon Radio, 3 Sept.). In a press interview, FNLA declared that it would not oppose independence of the Cabinda enclave. "if the people of Cabinda wished so". MPLA have even joined forces with Portuguese troops in Cabinda District to neutralise the activities of the secessionist FLEC. (*Daily News*, Tanzania, 6 Nov.).

December was a period of effective all-round diplomatic activity on the part of particularly the African heads of State in the neighbourhood resulting in positive developments on the Angolan scene. Practically all differences between the three liberation movements, MPLA, FNLA and UNITA, obstructing their negotiations with the Portuguese, were resolved. In January, the Angolan freedom talks did start in southern Portugal involving the representatives of the three movements and the Portuguese Government. In the background of his positive start has been the Mombasa agreement between the three movement leaders on 5 Jan. The major point of agreement referred to the oil-rich enclave of Cabinda. The agreement stated their determination to safeguard the territorial integrity of Angola "within its present geographical boundaries", and added: "It is within this context that Cabinda is considered to be an

integral and inalienable part of Angola". After this began the full summit between them and the Portuguese on 10 Jan., leading to the signing of an agreement between the Portuguese Government and the three movements for complete independence of Angola on 11 Nov. this year, and for formation, in the meantime, of a transitional government constituted of equal representatives of each movement and Portugal.

## NAMIBIA

Events in Mozambique and Angola have played a major role in the reappraisal of South African policies towards Namibia. Possibilities have been indicated by the South African official spokesmen of inclusion of representatives of Namibia's main black nationalist movement SWAPO in the "unconditional dialogue" suggested by the white nationalists if a SWAPO member is an elected representative of the Ovambo nation. Ovambo leaders have suddenly announced a general election in the homeland, with the possible participation of SWAPO as a legitimate party. However, SWAPO has rejected any kind of dialogue or cooperation with white-ruled South Africa or "its puppets". A rival movement SWANU (South-West African National Union) has also rejected the move. While welcoming the British step in recognising "the illegality of South Africa's presence in Namibia", SWAPO's London Representative has regarded the decision to halt British trade and investment in Namibia as merely a pious gesture, unless it is accompanied with action to cancel old and recent contracts. (AFP African News Survey, 10 Dec.).

## SOUTH AFRICA

There is an evident policy switch in South Africa. In the background are the revolutionary pressures reflected in the following: looming independence of Mozambique and Angola with their African leadership committed to active support to the liberation fighters in the rest of southern Africa, greater unity and mature diplomacy of the older African leadership in the region in, on one side, helping to resolve the differences between the liberation groups themselves and, on the other, developing the con-

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irradiations between the white regimes of Rhodesia and South Africa, and also concerted support to freedom fighters, particularly of Namibia, in their training and return. The climax was reached in the resounding unity of the Third World countries in the UN, having been able to throw South Africa out of the last UN General Assembly meeting. In sumtotal, besides further defence build-up and closer imperialist collaboration, the South African regime is pressurising the Rhodesian regime into negotiation with the black liberation groups and also on its own looking for compromise approaches to the black African regimes, with minor adjustments in its racist policy coupled with increasing repressive measures.

Sale of U.S. helicopters and reconnaissance aircraft to South Africa was reported in the *Rand Daily Mail*, breaking the UN and British embargo (*Journal of Commerce, U.S.*, 18 Sep.). The Government supported daily *Die Berger* reported the biggest Anglo-South African naval exercise ever held there; it took place in Cape waters later in October. A French flotilla of the 33,000-ton aircraft carrier *Clemenceau* and two frigates with support vessels will visit Cape Town and then sail on into the Indian Ocean. New developments in Southern Africa, with the resultant vulnerability of the Cape sea route and the possibility of an East-West confrontation in the Indian Ocean over Soviet bids for shore bases in Southern Africa are causing increasing concern among NATO's military strategists. A higher priority is placed than before on the maintenance of the Simonstown agreement and continuation of the American naval presence at the Cape. (*Star Weekly, S.A.*, 26 Oct.). Pentagon chiefs are worried over the possibility of a unilateral British withdrawal from the Simonstown Agreement, and they have admitted that the U.S. Navy would very much like to be able to use the South African base at Simonstown. (*Daily Telegraph, Br.*, 4 Nov.) West Germany's continued military support for South Africa has been further exposed by an anti-apartheid group in Germany. Details have been given of the sale of the anti-tank Milan rockets, heavy military trucks, helicopters, etc.,

and of feasibility studies and construction of a uranium plant to produce atomic bombs by the German firms. (*Zambia Daily Mail*, 5 Nov.). The South African Defence Minister Botha has stated that Simonstown and all the technical and military facilities and know-how that accompanied it were available not only for South Africa or for South Africa and Britain alone, but for all Western countries prepared to cooperate in a friendly way. The first consignment of Mirage supersonic fighter bombers will arrive in South Africa early next year. South African pilots were already in France training to fly the new jets, more sophisticated and capable of twice the speed of sound. (*Zambia Daily Mail*, 4, Dec.).

Political trials in a wave appear to be in the offing, following a series of arrests after a pro-Frelimo rally in Durban (*Daily Telegraph, Br.*, 12 Oct.). About 40 black militants have been arrested and are being held incommunicado under the Terrorism Act. Most of the detainees are from the South African Students Organisation and the Black Peoples Convention. The leader of white racists in South Africa, Prime Minister Vorster, has no intention of scrapping apartheid as the price for peace in Southern Africa, according to an exclusive interview in the British *Daily Express*. Vorster has warned South Africa's blacks that there is no chance of there ever being "one man one vote" representation for them in the country's white parliament. (*Daily News, Tanz.*, 18 Nov.). South Africa is not likely to quit the UN, following its suspension from the General Assembly, although it has recalled the Ambassador and also announced to withhold its contribution. There seems to be a growing confusion in government circles over how to make changes in the country's racial policies. The giant Anglo-American Corporation chairman, Harry Oppenheimer, has warned that South Africa faced a period of industrial unrest among black workers.

#### MOZAMBIQUE

Whites in Mozambique queue for visas for South Africa, according to a headline in the *British Times* (23 Oct.). Two units of white Portuguese

commandos who refused to accept the ceasefire and hand over power to guerillas, were on their way back to Lisbon. The Portuguese High Command in Lisbon has placed the blame squarely on the commandos who sought a confrontation with Frelimo troops. Frelimo Vice-President de Santos has told the Algerian News Agency (APS) of Frelimo's determination to step up and consolidate its military potential throughout Mozambique, because "We won political power with arms and we must consolidate it with arms". The Frelimo-dominated transition government was, according to him, taking control of all administrative and socio-economic sectors, and special emphasis was on the population to take an active part in reconstruction. Frelimo is providing valuable assistance to the Rhodesian guerillas, besides a free use of Frelimo bases in Mozambique across the border, as disclosed in a press briefing by the Rhodesian security forces in Salisbury. (*Guardian, Br.*, 27 Nov.).

According to a Zurich based report in the Swedish paper *Aftonbladet* (18 Oct.), a move has been afoot to recruit over 500 Swedish mercenaries to "liberate" Mozambique and hand it over to the local whites. Plans and contacts have been made for a mercenary army, with doctors and technicians, to land on a deserted shore, indulge in jungle warfare and restore the white rule. An extreme rightist group from Mozambique was reported to be regrouping in South Africa and to have had discussions with the right-wing South African leaders in an effort to rally the anti-Frelimo forces. A white mercenary force of 700 is ready for action in either Mozambique or Angola. Financiers in the two territories have agreed to back such a force. Most of the unit is believed to be South African whites, as revealed by the unit's second-in-command in Salisbury (*Guardian, Br.*, 14 Nov.).

For Frontier contact

CURRENT BOOK DEPOT,

The Mall,

Kanpur.

# More Of A Lollipop

A. P. M.

IN an interesting departure from the established pattern of its working, New Delhi has decided to seek out reactions to its latest brainwave in industrialisation—the concept of a national sector. Hitherto, the Government has always thought it necessary to gather voluble support for its ploys, even when chances of serious opposition have been quite remote. This time, such possibility looks even remoter, because the private sector will have every reason to welcome it while the other articulate sections of public opinion might not have even the opportunity to comprehend what is going to happen.

Essentially, the concept of a national sector of economy has sprung from a near-complete understanding reached between the private sector and the men who are at this moment determining national economic policies. Two of the latter, Mr C. Subramaniam and Mr T. A. Pai, are considered by the private sector as its current proteges. Some local businessmen have held discussions with them on the major economic issues and have found, to their infinite delight, that these two members of a government bent upon stabilising the socialistic pattern of society (how rarely does one hear this morale-boosting phrase these days!) are out to establish firmly economic pragmatism with a capital P. Almost equally significant is their conjecture that the pragmatists are being led by no less a person than the Prime Minister herself.

As New Delhi envisages it, the national sector would consist of public sector units, managed and owned by the Government, with private capital participation. It represents a number of departures from the earlier, largely infructuous concept of a joint sector, in which Mr J. R. D. Tata, that admirable tycoon of indomitable optimism, played an important part. The most significant departure is that under the new concept the Government would

invite private capital for investment in its units, originally conceived as rival industrial organisations to privately-owned ones. In a joint sector unit, the private sector usually bids for public finance. Thus, the concept of a national sector admits inter alia that the Government has no other choice but to opt for private capital to run and expand its existing units and set up new ones. A few faint hearts have already raised the bogey of the ownership of government undertakings being surreptitiously passed on to capitalists, but they have been told in no uncertain terms that the case is far from being so dastardly! All that is being conceived is that both public and private capital would exist side by side, this coming to be no doubt a unique instance of co-existence.

The second important departure would be the apparent absence of a private share in managing national sector units. The joint sector idea has largely failed because while the private sector is satisfied with the Government's participation in finance, it has been unsuccessful in seeking a total independence in management. There is a growing tendency among government directors to meddle in affairs which should be basically beyond their intelligence, like bad economic and financial decisions. Directors deputed by the financial institutions are now actually taking sides in shareholders' conflicts, usually again against the ruling cliques. All this unpredictability on the part of government directors has made the private sector very unhappy; thus the largely futile insistence on acquiring the major share of management for itself in joint sector units. The concept of a national sector does away completely with sharing management with the private sector, but this loss might be adequately compensated.

As the private sector looks at it, the very fact that the Government is considering acceptance of private capital for government undertakings engaged

in the most vital economic operations suggests a moral victory for private enterprise. This might not be as naive as it sounds. The Government's attempts to build up a sector rival to the private sector has failed in at least two vital industries—cement and paper—due mainly to a dearth of resources. There have been literally scores of instances when a momentarily angry Government has been made to eat its words after the private sector indicated clearly that until its rate of profitability was allowed to be raised shortages in these two commodities would continue. The public sector has failed to make its presence felt in another bastion of private enterprise, sugar, even as the attempts made in this direction so far have been quite half-hearted. A tussle has been going on between the private sector paper industry and the Government over the former's entry into newsprint manufacturing; the continuing tight position in the availability of this commodity has given an obvious opportunity to the private sector to press its demand in this regard. The Government has been holding out against the pressure not so much out of animosity towards private capital as out of a concern for the future of the Nepa Mills, which is quite likely to be swamped by privately-owned units when these come up. In all these instances, the Government lost the upper hand, long ago; as time passes, the case for the private sector's entry grows stronger.

The understanding between the Government and the private sector has been facilitated largely by the narrowing gap between industrial managers employed by the two sectors. There was a time, not so long ago, when there used to be a clear distinction, essentially intellectual, between the public and private sector managers. Mr Mohan Kumaramangalam changed all this; some top private sector managers were recruited before him by the Government, but it was he who revolutionised the Indian bureaucracy by appointing Mr Wadud Khan a joint secretary to his Ministry. Since then, the switch-over from the private to the government sector has been quite frequent and broad-based. There have been several

consequences of this trend. The most important of these is that managers in the rival sectors have come closer to each other, and managers in the private sector have found out somewhat to their surprise that government managers, especially technologists, harbour their very own kind of indifference towards the public sector ideology. As a matter of fact, some government agencies and undertakings have been behaving "so very business-like" that the private sector, that byword in extracting the last paise out of unwilling customers, is now complaining of pitiless bargaining in respect of prices and in terms of marketing strategies. There are responsible quarters in the HSL who claim that the demand for steel items was deliberately curbed in 1974 only to prove the Steel Ministry's contention that the actual volume of demand is substantially less than indents signify. Private sector consumers have been gasping for long under the no-reason-to-bargain attitude adopted by the STC in marketing canalised items. On the other hand, public sector managers, their ranks now quite effectively infiltrated by ex-private sector men, are demanding increasingly a scope for initiative, chiefly to strengthen the possibility of earning profit for their units. The great equaliser, therefore, is the profit motive; as more public sector managers succumb to its charm, the ideological gap with the private sector narrows.

It is in this context that the concept of a national sector of economy gets concretised. It has to be remembered that while the Government has initiated it, the main beneficiary would be private capital. It has already been mentioned that the propagation of the concept is a tacit admission of the Government's inability to garner adequate resources for industrialisation and of its belief that private capital can be of substantial help in this regard. Expansion in the private sector has been usually financed by institutional finance; it might be that the Government now wishes to reverse the process to a limited extent. But, above all, the concept signifies a further identification of view between the Government and the private sector on one of the basic economic issues—how to augment resources for industrialisation. The entry

of private capital into government units opens up all sorts of possibilities. There is little doubt that if the concept is accepted finally and implemented, the private sector will have won a significant victory. But then the gift would be much more than a lollipop. It might even turn out to be a magnificent cake, to be eaten, distributed and stored.

### Book Review

#### THE NAXALITE MOVEMENT: A MAOIST EXPERIMENT.

By Sankar Ghosh

Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, Price Rs 10.

Comparisons might be odious, but Sankar Ghosh's book presents a far more comprehensive and balanced

account than those books on the same theme by Mohan Ram and Biplab Das Gupta. Though written at different periods, one written when Naxalbari had just begun to assume a more than local significance, and the other published recently, the accounts of Mohan Ram and Das Gupta suffer from the disadvantages of having had to push a line; one anxious to establish that what was being attempted in Bengal had already been tried in the South; and the other, mainly interested in viewing Naxalbari through CPI(M) eyes. Ghosh's book is much less explicitly political: an essentially liberal survey, it has both the strength and weaknesses of such a point of view. Since the more positive merits of this book have been noted in the reviews that have already appeared in other

#### REVOLUTION AND EVOLUTION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

by James & Grace Lee Boggs

More than thirty years of experience in the labour, radical, and black movements in the United States are distilled by the authors in these pages. The first part of the book provides a concise and instructive review of the revolution of the twentieth century, with separate chapters on the Russian, Chinese, Guinea-Bissau, and Vietnamese

revolutions, in which the authors seek to extract the principal lessons from each of these struggles and the special course taken by each. A second section is devoted to the United States, and begins with a survey of the class forces in American history from the settlement of the original thirteen colonies to the present.

(MRP) \$10.00

#### THE SCALPEL, THE SWORD

The Story of Doctor Norman Bethune

by Ted Allan & Sydney Gordon

(MRP) paper \$3.95

#### DAILY LIFE IN REVOLUTIONARY CHINA

by Maria Antonietta Macciocchi

(MRP) paper \$3.95



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papers, I will touch upon them very briefly here, and then try to point out in some detail what seem to me some defects in the book. This is done not in malice, but only as away of suggesting improvements in later editions of the work.

First, the positive aspects of the book. The account given is a good, factual account, making allowance for the gaps. These gaps are mainly in the 'narrative' aspect of the book. But of course, the book does not even claim to be a continuous narrative of the events, as events; it is more concerned with the evolution and development of the tactical line followed by the Naxalites, and the fundamental rethinking that was evident towards the end of the period under review, and which in fact is even now continuing. Another major merit of the work is that the writing is completely unpretentious; Ghosh has written a book which is without a trace of condescension, and what should have been more difficult to achieve, without a trace of sentimentality. He no doubt sympathises with the movement, but the sympathies of a civil libertarian. Precisely because he has no explicit political axe to grind—in so far as it is possible to be such—the narration is less strident and partisan than it could otherwise have been.

But the very civil libertarian sympathy towards the movement—a major source of the strength of the book—has also led to certain weaknesses and imprecise formulations, which need to be noted. Even repeated readings of the book do not tell us anything about the author's own feelings regarding the events he is writing about. After all, one is not concerned here with 'history' of events and people centuries and continents removed from us; the book deals with events in India, more specifically West Bengal, during the past five or six years. History could not be more real and contemporary. And yet, the author continuously falls between the two stools of vague sympathies for the bright young men and women who 'sacrificed' so much, and a wistful regret, born out of the conviction that since the present system is seemingly indestructible, those 'sacrifices' have all been in vain. This vacillation is especially evident in the por-

trait of Charu Mazumdar that emerges out of the book. The author does not seem to have made up his mind in any way about him. At some points, Charu Mazumdar is a genuine revolutionary, hardened through years of participation in the communist movement, and finally evolving a tactical line suited for our specific historical situation; at other points, he is a fanatical egomaniac, almost a psychopathological case, possessed by grandiose visions of being India's Mao Tse-tung; occasionally, he almost hypnotises his credulous following into blood-cultism. He is even all these, at the same time. But the political content of the correct and wrong lines adopted by Charu Mazumdar—these are not clearly brought out.

There are some errors of detail as well. First, a point about the terminology. I have myself been never happy about the term 'Naxalites'; still, it is a useful term to denote a group of communists who, at the present moment, claim to represent the most genuinely revolutionary tradition of the Indian people; whose tactical line is claimed to be the most correct path leading to the establishment of socialism and communism in India. But if 'Naxalites' is a convenient word surely, 'Naxal', an even more hideous formation, is best avoided. Then, there are some contradictory statements. On P. vii, Sankar Ghosh says: "The significance of the Naxalbari movement is that it represents the first experiment with Maoism in this country". But on P. 32, we have this statement: "Naxalbari was not the first armed peasant uprising in India, nor was it the first experiment with Maoism in this country." On P. 35, there is a reference to Charu Mazumdar's 'Naxalbari Thesis': as far as the knowledge of the present reviewer goes, there has never been such a thing as a 'Naxalbari Thesis'. No special preparatory work of theoretical nature was undertaken before launching the struggle in the Naxalbari area, a point most poignantly brought out by the fact that 'Naxalism' outgrew Naxalbari and left it far behind. Sankar Ghosh's account of the alleged Chinese/Yugoslav models followed by the CPI during the Telengana period and the post-Telengana period of urban insurrection, is brief and sketchy. Surely

the point is too important to be so cursorily dismissed.

The account of the way in which the CPI(M) reacted to Naxalbari and the extreme embarrassment suffered by the party, is excellent. But here again, it is difficult to see clearly where the author's own sympathies lie.

On the most important point of the correctness or otherwise of some of the slogans adopted by the CPI(ML) during the early period, especially the slogan 'China's Chairman Is Our Chairman', the book offers valuable new insights. Much of this material has of course already appeared in other papers, including the author's own columns in *The Hindustan Standard*. But it is useful to have a summary of the discussions the CPI(ML) delegation had with the leaders of the CPC, and one only wishes the whole summary of the discussions was cited. However, one should not forget that the source for this summary of the discussions is a document allegedly seized by the police. The materials the police choose to release for public scrutiny, or even those materials 'unofficially' obtained through the police, have to be treated with the necessary caution. It is certainly not beyond the ingenuity of the Indian police to release doctored documents, which for all appearances bear the sign of authenticity, and even contain a modicum of political sense.

At some points, Sankar Ghosh seems to depend rather uncritically on his 'sources'. An instance is his account of the 'differences between Vempataty Satyanarayana and Adibhatla Kailasam on the one hand, and Nagabhushan Patnaik and Appalasuri on the other. The 'source' is apparently an article in *The Times of India*. The reasons for the differences are sought to be found in the 'fact' that they were all from different parts of Andhra, one from the plains and the other from the hills. The actual fact, of course, is that they were all plainsmen, though this 'fact', or even the hypothesised different origins of them, could hardly be taken to have had any influence upon any ideological and political differences they might have had. Another point, while on the subject of sources. The citation of the sources could have been more methodical. Of course, some of the points made could

not be 'attributed'; but surely, the whole book is not the result of 'private and confidential sources of information'. In fact, the back volumes of this very journal provide supporting evidence to almost all the points made in the book, and the value of the book would have immeasurably increased by a systematic method of citing sources and authorities. The same point needs to be made regarding the absence of a bibliography and index.

Despite some of these minor errors of detail and interpretation, Sankar Ghosh's books remains a most valuable account of a brief and turbulent period in the history of Indian revolutionary movement. One wishes, however, that

the author had not been over-anxious to be 'up-to-date'; for, in his anxiety to incorporate the latest events, he has added a long introduction and a brief epilogue, both in the very nature of things, patchy and incomplete. But since, despite all the propaganda to the contrary, the path charted out by the communist revolutionaries has not proved itself to be a blind alley, and since the movement is very much an ongoing and continuing movement, any account of this kind has of necessity to end on a tentative and questioning note. The merit of Ghosh's work is that it has not flinched from even this task.

M. S. Prabhakar

## Two Group Exhibitions

SANDIP SARKAR

**A**N exhibition of paintings by Asoke Biswas, Rama Prasad Ghatak and Asim Basu was on at the Birla Academy, March 13-23.

Asoke Biswas' painting is generally drawing based. However, this time he exhibited one wash painting and the rest were drawings done either by pencil or ink or both. He likes intricate composition and uses straight and curved lines—diagonal, horizontal and vertical—intersecting, and bisecting to build up rhythms that seem to meet at an unseen focal point. His composition hangs on a very delicate balance. He uses foreshortening and elongation very subtly and multi-vanishing points that overlap. His composition sometimes shows a tendency to break into two, but he saves the situation at the very last minute. His characters seem to be people who have a very strong constitution and will. They are either archers or fencers who look like primitive city-dwellers with broad shoulders and foreheads, square jaws, big muscular hands and feet. Their faces are grim and determined. His women seem to be full-blooded with ample bosoms and strong hips. These men and women always struggle against adverse situations, heroically. Waves rise up and the lost Trojan horse re-

appears while people worship the sun. Bijoylakshmi, an enigmatic figure, waits with a garland. Asoke takes old mythical forms and tries to revitalise them. Yet the gap between the present and the past does not seem to close. There is a kind of romantic nostalgia for bygone glories which does not seem to be relevant in contemporary setting in spite of Asoke's effort to make it do so.

Ramaprasad Ghatak is a very imaginative painter who tries to modernise, with some success, the so-called Indian school of painting. He uses high stylisation and creates a fairy-tale world where anxiety and tension is suppressed. He makes simple and direct statements. In most of his temperas the main figure is in the middle with colours outside the main area woven into the composition very simply. There is a primitive quality in his 'Mother and Woman' where he contrasts woman's role of mother and lover. In "Retired Life" the green of the surrounding area goes with the sky and the table, mora and dog. There is pathos in the old man with a walking stick living a sort of vegetable existence. 'Street Singer' shows certain lapses in his composition. The figure has a romantic nonchalance which does not go with his torn lungi

and shirt and outer space does not seem to integrate. In "Thief" an elongated black cat is seen jumping through the window with a fish. There is a quaint quality in the simplified form.

Asim Basu, in spite of his repetitive nature, was not exactly dull, but at times a bit boring. His colours are subdued but fresh and he has a sense of composition. His subjects are not very original and his paintings' seem to float in a contentless sea.

### RABINDRA BHARATI UNIVERSITY

The first annual exhibition of paintings by the faculty of visual arts of the RBU, was on view at the Academy of Fine Arts, March 12—21, and for some special reason not known to us, dedicated to Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy. The university, we are told, has upgraded its diploma to a full-fledged degree course in which a Fine Arts honours student has to take the usual combination subjects.

In spite of all this the exhibition was quite fresh. Instead of the usual studies, portraits etc. which are generally shown in art college exhibitions, the emphasis in this show was on composition. Naturally there was much that was immature and childish, but there was also a kind of naivete that charmed. Except for the Dean all the other professors gave one or two good things. Only L. N. Pachori's 'Composition' seemed somewhat influenced by P. Sagara. The still life section had some works which were impressionistic. Among these Rama Basak's still life stood out for its vivid contrasts of red and blue and simplicity of exposition. Kshitish Chandra Bishal has a primitive palette and almost off-beat colours. His still life has a table cloth coloured in a very sensuous way. Hare' proves that he can be a good illustrator of children's books. Nilima Sen's "Child" crawls

For Frontier contact

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towards a door which is in the background. She utilises space with skill. So does Tripti Das. She pictures a landing with steps going up and down and creates an illusion. Sudhir Ranjan Mukherjee knows how to handle crowd scenes. Particularly his collage of a marriage scene has a lot of pep, while his sketch catches the bustle of a busy street. Uttam Sengupta's collage has a vivid sense of silent drama. Santanu captures the atmosphere of a rain-soaked day in Calcutta streets in his prints.

Special mention must be made of Nemai Sanyal's 'Singer' where elongation and distortion are used with subtle skill. The singer has a harmonium round his neck and as his hands are near to the viewer they painted larger. The treatment on the whole is realistic but with a difference.

Space does not permit this critic to discuss the other good exhibits.

## Letters

### Bonus

The United Bank of India management has imposed arbitrary restrictions denying a good section of the employees

the statutory minimum bonus i.e. 8.33% and subjected them to bonus cuts on the flimsy pretext of impounding. The members have brought to the knowledge of functionaries of the Union the whimsical and high-headed action of the employer. But the union leaders think that the members' grievance is not justified. They justify the management's action even before the management does so. They are attempting to confuse the members so that they refrain from resisting the unjust action of the employer. The leaders are playing second fiddle to the Bank when the Third Bipartite Settlement is being discussed. They seem to be setting out on an anti-trade union path.

An Employee of UBI  
Calcutta

### Small Newspapers

The report of the Fact Finding Committee on Newspaper Economics headed by Dr Bhabatosh Datta and presented by Mr I. K. Gujral, Union Minister of Informations and Broadcasting, in Parliament recommends that small newspapers should get the type of assistance normally available to small industry, and

that NEPA products be reserved for small newspapers at a lower price.

We urge that public sector undertakings, which are still rather reluctant to advertise in small newspapers should be made to allocate 60% of their Rs 6 crore budget to small newspapers according to a policy laid down by the DAVP.

Although the quality of NEPA newsprint is much below standard, the price has shot up from Rs 1500 M. Ton to Rs 3100 M. Ton. The size is always on odd one which, after cutting, trimming and packing operations, comes nearer to the cost of imported newsprint. It is high time the size of the reel was converted only into 20"×30" (D/Crown) and 22"×36" (D/Demy), the standard size of any newspaper, be it a daily, weekly or monthly. The price of the paper should not exceed Rs 2200 per M. Ton. Finally, All India Small Newspapers Association should find a place in the Newspapers Finance Corporation to be set up according to the recommendation of the said Committee.

B. L. SHAH,  
General Secretary,  
All-India Small Newspapers  
Association

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# WBSEB: Switching on a brighter tomorrow



WBSEB supplies power to North and South Bengal for agriculture, industry, railways, domestic and commercial consumptions. In addition it caters to Calcutta's requirements. Both in 1973 and 1974 the Board had to operate all the four units of its Bandel Plant for more than half the year, to help Calcutta in its months of crisis. Also the new Plant at Santaldih has been making available power to DVC for transmission to Calcutta. In North Bengal Jaldhaka continues to be a major source of stable power.

**PROJECTS :** Both Bandel and Santaldih are 'on expansion'. The 2nd Santaldih unit will shortly be transmitting power through the new 220 KV direct line to Calcutta while another giant plant comprising three 200 MW units is in the making at Kolaghat. The hydel projects at Jaldhaka and Kurseong are also 'on expansion'.

## RURAL ELECTRIFICATION :

Power has now reached nearly 10,000 villages in the State. This incidentally means about 7,000 villages have been electrified in just over thirty months.



**FINANCE :** The Board is doing all it can to raise resources. Recently there has been an upward revision of tariff to cover higher rates of fuel, freight and other items. Smooth flow of funds from financial institutions will ensure timely completion of projects for the targeted increase in generation of power by more than 1000 MW by the end of 5th Plan.

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FOR MORE POWER**

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